

to abstain from intoxicating drinks *in the present day*, in view of the crime and miseries they are *now* producing than can be found for any other mode of Christian benevolence now in operation in England. That warning of our Lord, "Woe unto the world because of offences," that is, because of the *traps, snares, and stumbling-blocks* that abound in this wicked world, and the direction which *immediately* follows—that if any earthly indulgence, or any earthly comfort, dear and necessary, and (*in its own nature*) as innocent too as the right hand or the right eye, and as truly a "GOOD CREATURE OF GOD," as these beautiful organs are, should, by some untoward combination of circumstances, become an offence and a stumbling-block to our country, or "the world," we must part with it, though the separation cost us a pang like parting with the limbs of the body; and this under the severest penalty and most awful warning, three times pronounced, that ever came from the gentle Saviour's lips, of the "worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched." Paul, too, comes *very near* to the principle of our society, with an "express command," when he commands us to abstain from whatever is "inexpedient," *every* thing by which a brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak, and declares, that it is good not to drink wine, or to do any thing which in *any way* "causes our brother to offend;"—*nearer*, I suspect, than he does to, by far the greater part of, the societies now in existence.

But all this is mere digression from our *main argument*, and even if I were wrong in my application of these particular texts, it does not in the least affect our position, because the demand made upon us, to show an express and *particular* command of God for our particular mode of Christian benevolence, is not tenable for a moment, and the *excuse* for not assisting us is a miserable fallacy. It arises entirely from overlooking the genius and spirit of the Bible, and the *plan* upon which it is constructed. If every case of *conscience*, in which every individual can be placed, in all the varied relations and circumstances of life, and in all the changes which succeeding generations may bring about,—if all the various modes of doing good which Christian benevolence has contrived, or may contrive to the end of the world, were *expressly* provided for in the Bible, with the prefix—"Thus saith the Lord,"—the Encyclopædia Britannica would be a penny pamphlet compared with the book that would require to be written. And how would the poor ever be able to purchase such a book (or rather such a vast library) as this would be? or who would find leisure to study it? But no! blessed be God! the blessed Gospel is not a book of casuistry, nor a statute book of laws! I assert fearlessly, in the face of the whole Christian world, that, if there are two things under the sun, utterly unlike one another, it is the blessed Gospel, and a statute book of laws, or a ponderous tome of casuistry. The Gospel lays down broad principles of action, supreme love to God, and love to man for the dear Saviour's sake, and leaves it to the "honest heart" warmed by the love of Christ, to be the "casuist," in each particular case of conscience. As thus—A case of conscience occurs in which I doubt whether it be my duty to do, or not to do, a particular action, or to give my support to a

proposed scheme of benevolence. I turn over the word of God to learn my duty, and what do I find? Express directions for this particular case? Nothing of the kind! The first words I read are, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and soul, and mind, and strength, and thy neighbour as thyself." Now how am I to apply this to the case now before me? It appears that the law of the New Testament is the law of *Love*. Then *Love* must be the lawyer to explain and apply it. There are many other lawyers that *pretend* to explain it. Selfishness thinks *he* can explain it,—Self-interest,—Carnal ease and indulgence,—Love of the world and its maxims—all these gentlemen are lawyers in their way, and think that they can explain it; but *they cannot! they cannot!* *Love* is the only lawyer that can explain the law of *Love*. They will only mystify the subject with quibbles, and exceptions, and objections, and difficulties, bringing one text of Scripture to contradict another,—the Saviour against the Saviour, and Paul against Paul, in short *any* subterfuge to evade self-denial. But they cannot understand (and how then can they explain!) the law of love! But if I knock at my own bosom, and find that *love* dwells there, then love can explain it to me in a moment. I have just read the two great commandments "on which hang all the law and the prophets." These, my Saviour tells me, are my rule of duty in every case that can possibly occur; and I want to know how to apply it in the case now before me. I take *love* for my interpreter and love immediately explains it to me thus—"Love worketh no ill to his neighbour, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law,"—not only no *intentional* ill, but no ill of *any* kind. Love would hate and abhor any indulgence to the flesh which was attended with danger and jeopardy to a brother's soul. Love says—"If meat or wine or any indulgence of mine make my brother to offend, I will eat no meat and drink no wine while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend."—God forbid that I should "walk uncharitably and destroy with my meat or with my drink him for whom Christ died."

Again the apostle Paul says to me, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ;" and taking *love* for my interpreter, I understand it in a moment, I see in an instant how it bears upon the present case. And agreeably to this injunction, I long to "bear the burden" of the broken-hearted wife and the famished children of the drunkard; I am ready and willing, at any sacrifice of my own indulgence, to bind up the broken heart and to restore the husband and the father. For this purpose I am willing to "bear the burden" of the poor drunkard himself. Therefore I go to him and say:—"Brother, I come to share thy burden, I come to take thee by the *hand*, and to lead thee in the path, the only path, which is safe for thee. Another path may be safe for me, but I want to lead thee in the path in which thou canst walk safely: I can do without the things which destroy thy body and ruin thy soul, and surely thou canst. We will try it together, my brother. For Christ laid down his life for *my* soul, and shall I not give up the pleasures of the intoxicating cup for thine?"

Again, I light upon that command of the loving, self-denying Paul—"We that are strong ought to bear the