

remark, that the assertion that the Bible does not prohibit the making, vending, and using of the beverages in question, is of no value whatever to those who make it, unless they are prepared to assert the lawfulness of all and every thing not directly prohibited in the sacred volume. No sane man, we suspect, if not under the immediate influence of the drinks in question, would volunteer to be the champion of such doctrine. Does the Bible prohibit gambling? Does it condemn polygamy in express terms? Does it prohibit bull-fighting and horse-racing by name? And can a positive precept against duelling be found on its pages? We trow not. And yet, who is the man that will dare assert the lawfulness of the aforesaid deeds? Were such a Goliath to make his appearance, the astounded universe would congregate to witness the attempt to perform such a feat in the department of morals!

We may further add, that our opponents must prove, not that the Bible does not prohibit the use of Intoxicating drinks, but that it ENJOINS the manufacturing, vending and using of them; for if the Scriptures have not furnished a positive precept in favour of their use, they must admit—inasmuch as they taunt the friends of Abstinence on account of their inability to produce such a precept against them,—that the Divine record has left the whole an open question to be decided on moral grounds. It is true, indeed, that there are some men whose moral nature is so perverse as to suffer them to imagine that no act is sinful, if not prohibited by a positive precept, and that no deed is virtuous except it be enjoined by an express command. They seem to be blind to the fact, that the laws of the Christian dispensation have not been given as a *code*, but that they are to be found in the form of great principles, delivered at different times, and upon different occasions, in narratives, discourses, conversations, and epistles. Our estimate of the moral obligations of Christianity, must, consequently, be formed from principles, and not, as Dymond remarks, from a multiplicity of minute directions in what manner we are to act, but from instructions respecting the motives and dispositions by which all actions are to be regulated. If, therefore, any person requires such a set of commandments as

Thou shalt not manufacture Intoxicating drinks,

Thou shalt not sell Intoxicating drinks,

Thou shalt not use Intoxicating drinks,

he requires, upon this and upon many other subjects, what Christianity has not furnished. In connexion with this, the following remarks by the learned Dr. Whately, Archbishop of Dublin, are strikingly appropriate.—“The object of Revelation is to furnish principles—motives—encouragements—means of assistance in the performance of duty; but no such detailed directions, even in cases where moral right and wrong are concerned, as shall supersede the exercise of reflection, observation and discretion. The Scriptures enjoin charity to the poor, but give no directions as to the best mode of administering our charity. Now it is evident that all different modes of attempting to relieve distress are not equally effectual; and that those which are altogether injudicious, may even lead to more suffering than they remedy. Again: Justice is inculcated in Scripture, as well as by natural conscience; but in public affairs it often happens, that it is public expediency that determines what particular course is just.” (*Lectures on Political Economy*, p. 35. *Second Edition*.) So we would say upon this subject. The word of God binds us to oppose drunkenness, but the selection of means is not minutely directed. Any *lawful* means may be used, but there may be means resorted to, whose only effect would be the increase of the mischief; hence it becomes a duty to adopt the most effectual means, because such means must be the best adapted to enable us to discharge our duty. If God were to furnish men with a minute description of every virtuous deed, and every vicious act, there would be no possibility of their performing either the one or the other, for “even the world itself could not con-

tain the books that should be written,” much less the men expected to read them.

And Christian men do not require such minuteness when their sinful inclinations are not concerned. Many of those who loudly demand a positive precept in favour of Total Abstinence do not expect the sanction of such precepts for the performance of other duties, of the moral obligation of which they do not entertain the slightest doubt. Such precepts as the following:—

Thou shalt establish a Missionary Society;

Thou shalt establish a Bible Society;

Thou shalt establish Sabbath Schools;

are not found, and yet they consider themselves under moral obligation to support the aforesaid institutions. Should they object, and say that they support them, not only on the ground of moral obligation, but on that of what they term *Christian Expediency*, we would ask them to define the word expediency, and see if it gives them any help to get out of the snare in which they are caught by their own reasoning. What is expediency? Is it anything besides a polite substitute for the old blunt terms of duty, and moral obligation, in matters where morality is concerned? Is expediency something at variance with duty? Is it not that which is *conducive to the public good*? And are we under no moral obligation to promote the *public good*? Can the public good be something at variance with what is *right*? And is not that which is right a *duty*, and are we under no *moral obligation* to discharge all our duties towards God and man? It can never be expedient to violate the injunctions of duty;—it can never be expedient to do what is morally wrong, as neither would be conducive to the public good; and true, real expediency is only that which is conducive to the *good of all*, the good of the whole family of man, and the glory of Almighty God. And we have yet to learn that there exists no moral obligation to consult the good of all, and not only to consult it in an indifferent manner, but to consult it in the most effectual way for its immediate and consequent security. Real expediency, therefore, can never be opposed to rectitude, and, consequently, can never cease to be a duty. It is true, that there are many questions of expediency in which morality has no concern, as Dr. Whately remarks, “In what way, for example, a husbandman should cultivate his field, or in what branch of trade a merchant should invest his capital, are questions of expediency in which there is usually no moral right or wrong on either side. But where there is moral right and wrong, it can never be expedient to chuse the wrong. If the husbandman or the merchant should seek to gain increased profits by defrauding his neighbour, this would be at variance with expediency, because it would be sacrificing a greater good to a less. For what would it profit a man if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul.” (*Elements of Rhetoric*, p. 472. *Second Edition*.)

Now, if Christian expediency furnishes no city of refuge where moral delinquents may be safe from the requirements of moral obligation, we may be permitted to add a few remarks, in further explanation of the nature of positive precepts, and moral duties. The objects of positive precepts become duties *because they are commanded*, but moral duties are of universal obligation independent of all enactment, *because they are right*. Yet both are equally binding. The sacrifices, for instance, and other ceremonial observances, became moral duties because they were commanded. The act which brought “sin and every mortal woe” into the world, had in *itself* no moral quality. There was nothing except the direct intimation of heaven, that could have led our first parents to refrain from the fruit of the forbidden tree more than any other tree in the garden. In the words of Dr. Wardlaw, “the obligation to Abstinence arose simply and exclusively from the will of God expressly made known to them; and their sin consequently consisted solely in their violation of that will.” (*Christian Ethics*, p. 211.) So the