

Grey reeled to the chair—"Ay, yes—had our pictures taken—my wife and children; oh yes, it is you; I will call them." He rose to leave the room, but leaned in indecision on an old chest of drawers. He called to the family to come in, as they had friends there.

While he was bawling out these almost unintelligible commands, a door opened from an adjoining apartment, and his wife entered. Her little girl followed with eyes red with weeping. She shrank from her degraded father with concealed dread. But for her mother, alas! I hardly recognised her. "Diy sorrow had drunk her blood, an unnatural paleness lingered on her wasted features, and an unearthly glare beamed in her undimmed eye. She looked the very picture of despair.

Grey "begged to be excused," as he passed with tottering steps from the room. I referred to former times, their change of residence, &c. The poor abused wife told me, in a few words, with what an awful calamity that family had been visited. Intemperance had been there. The husband, the father, in two short years, had become a drunkard. Affliction had gathered upon a happy circle, and un-mixed sorrow had been poured upon the innocent. I could hear no more. The contrast between our first and second meeting kept crowding upon my memory. I felt that in continuing the conversation, I must be imparting and receiving pain. I kissed the little girl, and as I opened the door to retire, the light fell upon the family group, through the green gauze with which it was enveloped. There, too, were the beautiful mother and child. And as I looked upon the pictured group, and then upon the attenuated being before me, whose hand clasped, with all the mother's fondness, the opening bud in her arms, whom poverty and sorrow awaited, my heart melted, and, man as I was, the tear rose unbidden to my cheek, and I passed the threshold with an aching heart.

This is no fancy sketch. It is, alas! too true, as one at least will testify, if ever this hasty tale should meet his eye. It may be, that in his wanderings the friend of my youth may see this record of early scenes, and recognise it as readily as he would a portrait from his own features.

THE MORAL OBLIGATION OF TOTAL ABSTINENCE

Prize Essay lately Published in London.

BY EVAN JONES.

PART THE SECOND.

CONTENTS.—Principles of moral obligation explained.—The will of God the law of moral obligation.—Universality of the law.—Unchangeable nature of *Right* and *Wrong*.—The Scriptures the standard of the law.—The non-condemnation of drinking usages in Scripture considered.—the assertion of no weight.—A positive precept in their favour necessary, or the question must be decided on moral grounds.—Principles of morality under the Christian dispensation—how given—not in positive precepts.—Object of Revelation.—Inconsistency of opponents.—Expediency, no city of refuge.—Nature of positive precepts and moral duties—all our duties are not mentioned by name.—No wrong without remedy, a cardinal principle—application thereof.—Holy love the law of the universe—test of the law—the test illustrated.

In our opinion the question before us is simply this:—**IS THE MANUFACTURE, SALE, AND USE OF INTOXICATING BEVERAGES, AS ARTICLES OF DRINK, AGREEABLE TO THE WILL OF GOD?** We say *agreeable to the will of God*, for if man is a subject of moral government, the will of the Governor must be his moral law. In the words of Dr. Wardlaw, (*Christian Ethics*, p. 147, 4th Edition), "If the moral government of God be granted, and the consequent subjection of man to that government, it evidently follows as an instant and unavoidable sequence, without even a single link of interme-

diating reasoning to connect it with the premises, that the rule by which he is to be regulated, must be **THE WILL OF THE SUPREME GOVERNOR.**" If there be a God he must rule, and if he rule his will must be law. **Virtue**, or moral rectitude, or **THE RIGHT**, must therefore consist in the conformity of the principle of the heart, and the conduct of the life, with the Divine will. And it must be further evident, as Dr. Wardlaw says, "that under the administration of the same Divine Ruler, there can be only one moral law for the whole community of mankind. Right and wrong in their great essential principles and requirements do not vary with climate, locality, condition or time." Strictly speaking the whole conduct of mankind ever since the entrance of sin into the world may be comprehended in two words—**RIGHT** and **WRONG**. Good and Evil, or virtue and vice, are the two antagonistic principles which contest the supremacy of our world. Vice is the same from age to age, and the essential qualities of virtue are the same from everlasting to everlasting. Their external manifestations may differ, but with their internal nature, "there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." The destruction of the golden calf by Moses, and that of the brazen serpent by Hezekiah, were two very different actions, but the principle of both was precisely the same. Achan "coveted the goodly Babylonish garment; and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight." Ananias and Sapphira sold a possession, and kept back part of the price. The external characteristics of the actions widely differed, yet they sprang from the same "root of bitterness." The language of the Divine lawgiver must, therefore, be the same from age to age,— "what I say unto you, I say unto all;" what he says in regard to the offences of one age, he says in regard to those of another. The denunciations which he utters against the vices of one generation, he proclaims against those of another.

If God has given an universal law to the world, we may reasonably infer that he has furnished men with a standard whereby they may judge whether or not they obey its injunctions. Had man kept his first estate, the decision of conscience might have been taken as an unerring standard of moral rectitude; but in consequence of his rebellion against his Maker, he has lost his disposition to obey the Divine will, and though, as a subject of moral government, he is still intelligent and accountable; yet his conscience has become an incompetent standard of right and wrong. But as the Holy Scriptures come from the author of our original moral nature, "they are," as Wardlaw remarks "with respect to the rule of duty, in precise harmony with the dictates of conscience in that nature," and as such they are our only standard of right and wrong.

Hence our appeal must be to "the law and to the testimony."—Scripture must decide whether it be right or wrong to countenance intoxicating drinks. Here our opponents will exclaim with delusive joy, "Hast thou appealed unto Cæsar? unto Cæsar shalt thou go." Let it be so. On this ground we shrink not from standing before the great tribunal of the universe. Of course, we shall be met by the flourishing assertion, that the word of God does not prohibit either the manufacture or the use of the beverages in question. It is not our intention at present to meet this with a counter assertion, and say that they are prohibited. We do not pursue this line of argument, on account of its being a disputed question. Our design in this Essay is not so much to settle disputed points, as to convince men that the manufacturing, vending, and using intoxicating liquids as articles of drink are unlawful, because wrong, and wrong because at variance with the laws of moral rectitude. And we are persuaded that the best way to attain this object is to draw conclusions from undisputed premises, and to substantiate our position by proofs which neither indifference nor civility can gainsay. We may, however, be permitted by