

On the contrary, I am willing to admit, that there is nothing in Scripture which denies to us the right to a moderate use of wine. Our Master adorned by His presence the Wedding Feast at Cana, and no doubt partook of, as well as created, the wine used upon that occasion. So also we find the moderate use of wine enjoined upon Timothy for his health's sake. In the face of these passages in Holy Scripture, and having never been persuaded that the wine here referred to was non-intoxicating, I do not attempt to take the ground occupied by some, who maintain that abstinence from wine, &c, is an universal duty.

But nevertheless it may be, and I believe in some cases is, a particular duty. I maintain that a pledge taken by a man in danger of falling, is a lawful, voluntary obligation, assumed in the face of a certain need for it.

If a man wishes to take such a pledge, are we justified in refusing to sanction his action? and further, if we know that such a pledge will be a help to him in his weakness, may it not be our duty to enjoin him to undertake it?

My own answer to the question thus proposed is, that we are in duty bound to afford him the opportunity of promising to abstain.

To prevent a misconception, which may possibly find place in some minds, I may assure you, that this pledge system is not peculiar to any school in theology. I have already adverted to the fact that some are inclined to refuse to sanction the taking of a total abstinence pledge, on the ground that a pledge to "Temperance, Soberness and Chastity," has been taken in Baptism and renewed in Confirmation. I grant that it has; but what I argue for is, that in some cases at all events, a voluntary foregoing of a certain indulgence for a special end, is allowable. To shew that it is not a movement connected with any particular school in theology, I refer to the facts that the Church of Rome on the one hand, and the Christian denominations on the other, far asunder in many things, are yet herein agreed. No Church has entered upon this work with greater zeal in the present day, than has the Church of Rome, and we must allow that none is labouring therein with greater