

sooner or later justify our most sanguine expectations. A correspondent of our Rhode Island name-sake "Delta," has furnished to that paper some excellent thoughts on the relations of "moral and legal suasion." Our readers will find in them a confirmation of our views expressed some months ago on the same subject. We subjoin the article:—

In the organization of society there are three important institutions; the family, the church and the State. Each of these institutions has its appropriate work, and each relation, when fully understood, and the obligations arising from these relations promptly discharged, will secure the highest happiness of man. The appropriate work of the family institution is, to guard and guide the infant and youthful mind; to guard it on the one hand against vice and immorality, and to guide it on the other, into the path of virtue and religion. The influence of parental example and instruction will be felt upon society, for good or for evil, in every community.

To the church is assigned the work of moulding public opinion, and in proportion as the great principles of right are inculcated in the family, in the same proportion is the church aided in the work of securing correct public action. But here the church meets a formidable barrier, from bad example, and bad instruction in the family relation, and moral suasion, to a great extent, loses its power upon the morals of men.

It is the duty of parents to teach their children submission to parental authority, and demand of the child the performance of right actions, controlled by right intentions; but where the child is suffered to do very much as he chooses, (as is too true in many instances,) he is taught rebellion against the government of God, and moral suasion, through the presentation of truth, loses its effect upon the mind and heart, and hence his continued rebellion against all just law. Moral suasion here fails to restrain such persons, and hence the necessity of civil government, to restrain by force, or from legal motives.

"The law was not made for the righteous, but for the ungodly; for murderers of fathers," &c. And hence civil government becomes as necessary in the administration of the moral government of God, as the family or the church. As all men will not be influenced by moral principles, or have not honesty enough to be what they see to be right, civil authority becomes a necessity of human nature, to restrain the vicious, and to protect the virtuous. But it may be said in reply, "civil governments have passed bad laws, and have countenanced wrong-doings." This argument might possess some force, if the government asked to protect some wrong-doing but it is simply required to prevent the wrong, by identifying itself with the right, and therefore is as necessary as moral suasion, and should be employed where this fails to secure the rights of men. The same mode of reasoning in relation to the wrongs countenanced by the State to prove legal suasion inexpedient, and inefficient to remove an evil, might be applied, with equal force, to family government, and to the church itself; for both have given countenance to wrong-doing, in many instances. Is the abuse of these institutions proof that they are wrong, and not intended to secure the welfare of man? If not, then the arguments adduced against the use of legal suasion to put down wrong-doing, where moral suasion has failed, are invalid; and the evil should be removed at once, when it is within the reach of law. It may be said, "legal suasion does not reform men who are practising an evil." Neither does moral suasion reform all men; and it is that class of men who will not be influenced by reasoning, that the legal motive should be applied to. With them, in many cases, legal suasion goes even beyond moral, for the former restrains them from the evil, while the latter does not.

"What God has joined together, let no man put asunder." If, for example, the evil of rum-selling can be prevented only by fine and imprisonment, then fine and imprisonment should be resorted to; and there is a certain class of rum-sellers who will not be aroused to their responsibility, till they have had time for reflection, at the expense of the State, on the other side of the Cove. That would be the strongest suasion with such men which could be used, and a few examples would make rum-selling as uncommon and unsafe as counterfeiting, in comparison with which, counterfeiting is an honorable employment.

From the *Christian Ambassador* we take the following, which

will be found to harmonize with the above, and with the spirit of the age:—

In the history of nations it seems that the nature of their laws determine their destiny. There are great laws unalterably fixed in the nature of things, which must be regarded by a nation as well as by an individual, to secure its prosperity and preservation. If not regarded, it hastens on to destruction. It matters not to how high an elevation it has arrived in civilization, if it regards not the great foundation law of government, which is to secure to individual his natural rights, it is destined to ruin and decay. The past speaks loudly of the demoralizing tendency of injustice and tyranny. So interwoven are the interests of men, that a few cannot enjoy freedom long if they look not after the welfare of the whole. And to secure freedom to all that compose a nation, the laws which frame civil government must rest on natural laws as a foundation. If they do not they have no foundation. "No other foundation can be laid upon that which has been laid, and men must build upon it or fall amid the ruins of their own structure without foundation. If a law legalizes that which is an evil to men, it is in opposition to that "higher law" of God, which says "do evil to no man." Which shall be obeyed?

The legalizing of the sale of intoxicating drinks brings evil to men. It destroys domestic peace, social comforts, and national happiness, and is therefore wrong, and in opposition to the law of God, which is right, and brings peace, joy and happiness to men. Which law shall be obeyed? If the liquor traffic continue, what shall be the destiny of this nation? Let those who are at ease be troubled. Let men think and act upon this question. A civil law which is calculated to prevent evil and bring good to men, is in accordance with the law of God, which is to "do good to all men." Therefore, a law to prevent the liquor traffic is an equitable law, founded upon the law of justice, which law is of God. So no man need to fear to use his influence in its favor. The approving smiles of heaven are upon it. Justice and humanity are calling for it, Christianity is waiting for it, to make men sober, so as to clothe them with its divine beauty.

We throw in here an excellent episode—a sort of argument *ad hominem* conversation, which we find among the sketches of Phocion, supplied to Massachusetts *Life Boat*. It is a healthy stream although beginning with Tainted Meat:—

Tainted Meat. Not long since the writer purchased a piece of beef which proved to be tainted. Others bought from the same butcher's wagon, and were equally unfortunate. An enemy to the Anti-Liquor law hearing of it, exclaimed, "I would prosecute the man for selling it;" and I imagine myself pressing the argument with him.

"Why, sir, would you prosecute him?"

"Because, in the sale of tainted meat, the man provokes disease and endangers life. No man has a right to put in jeopardy the lives of his fellow men in such a way."

"Hold, hold! the man sells meat for a living, and this is only a little which is on his hands—he must sell it, or it would be a dead loss to him—besides, he does not wish that it would injure any person. On the other hand, he sincerely hopes it may not."

"I care not for his hopes or his wishes; no man has a right to pursue a trade which endangers the health and life of his fellow men. If he can't get a living in an honest way, then he had better die."

"Why, sir, you express yourself very strongly.—I should almost think you was an advocate of the Maine Law. Let us see. Would you not rather suffer the butcher to furnish your sons with tainted meat, than that the rum-seller should deal out intoxicating drink to them?"

"That's nothing to do with selling meat. It is quite a different thing. Men have always sold rum, and custom and habit have much to do with the right of the matter."

"So have some wicked men always sold tainted meat. Think you custom could ever make it right? Some men have always cheated whomever they could—they have been much in the habit of it, ought we not to overlook it? If custom can make a wrong thing right, we should think by this time it would be quite honorable to defraud. Now tell me candidly, which do you think has done, and is doing, the most injury to mankind, tainted meat, or intoxicating drinks?"