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ART. I.—THE VARIABLE AND THE CONSTANT
IN CHRISTIAN APOLOGY.

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IN the modern, weakened sense of the word, the Church of Christ has no *apologies* to make. We apologize to no man for our faith, as though there was anything in it to excuse or extenuate. But like the “elect strangers scattered throughout Asia Minor,” to whom St. Peter addressed his 1st Epistle, we hold ourselves “ready for apology to every one that asketh of us an account of the hope that is in us.” The simple self-respect of an honest, rational believer, allows no less than this; our loyalty to our Lord may well add something to the readiness and earnestness of our vindication. For it is He that is called in question, rather than we, by the unbelieving world.

When Christ with his own lips charged his disciples, in clear view of the troubled days and scenes to which he pointed them, not to be anxious, not to prepare before hand their apology even for synagogues, magistrates, and kings, he justified the strange charge by the quieting assurance that a cause higher than their own should have an advocacy higher than their own. “The Holy Ghost shall teach you.” “I will give you a mouth and wisdom.” This was the first provision made for Christian apologies and apologists. And to the last day of the Church’s conflict with unbelief and error, it must fare ill with the defense and the defender of the faith that is not under the same teaching and endowment,—while

a separation upon the grand principles of truth and godliness. Let us hope that the revived Christianity of our age, with all its marvellous increase of power, while saved on the one side from sinking back into Rationalism or spiritual death, will be carefully guarded on the other by the great Head of the Church from being splintered into fragments by a rampant and heady fanaticism, and that the country that gave birth to Plymouthism will see its burial.

ART. IV.—THE WINE QUESTION IN THE LIGHT OF THE LAW OF LOVE.

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ONE of the questions of the hour is the wine question. Its close connection with the whole subject of Intemperance is too obvious to require proof. The man who calls it a "petty" or "childish" question, is only at the threshold of a subject which it would be well for him to enter, before expressing himself with such superficial flippancy. The right settlement of it should begin at the house of God. What is the great law by which God's people should be governed in this matter of wine-drinking?

It is held by very many good men that the temperate use of wine as a beverage is a thing indifferent. They claim that it is neither enjoined nor prohibited in the word of God, and that, therefore, it is without inherent moral quality, and may be fearlessly done or left undone, with a good conscience, in the exercise of Christian liberty. Some stoutly assert and persistently practise this liberty. Others, while vehement in their defense of liberty, concede that it should be exercised in the light of the law of expediency, but they so state the case as to seem to leave the practice of total abstinence still a matter of liberty, and therefore shorn of every element of obligation. They do indeed use the terms "ought" and "duty" and "obligation," but they use them in such connection, and with such qualification, that their binding force is fatally impaired. They associate them with the

scruples of weak brethren. They place them within the limits of a divinely allowed liberty. They contend that actions indifferent are brought into relation to moral obligation only by circumstances and the judgment of the actor, and they sadly weaken even this obligation by an attempt to make the Bible a wholesale endorsement of moderate drinking. To our mind, the very marrow of the grand doctrine of Christian expediency is thus taken away.

What is this doctrine? We fully agree with the author of the article entitled "Church Action on Temperance," which appeared in the October number of the *Princeton Review*, that this is not "a low or lax or unworthy ground of moral action," and that the disposition to associate it with "looseness of moral standards" is due to its perversion. But we greatly fear the disposition will be increased and not lessened by the reasoning of that article.

The doctrine is stated in Rom. xiv. and in 1 Cor. viii. Here we have the law of liberty in things indifferent, as regulated and limited by the law of conscience and the law of love. There is a law of liberty. The Apostle distinctly recognizes it, and in view of it he makes some frank and manly concessions. He says Christian liberty may be freely exercised with reference to all those things that have, in themselves considered, no permanent moral ground for their prohibition: in other words, things that are not in their essential character either right or wrong. Speaking of meats and drinks, and holy days and ceremonies, his noble avowal is, "I know and am persuaded of the Lord Jesus, there is nothing unclean in itself," i. e., there is no essential moral pollution in any of these things. Participation could be had in them without contamination. To touch them is not necessarily to besmear ourselves with the pitch of sin. Eating meat that has been offered to an idol commendeth us not to God. Nor is there any harm in it. For an idol is nothing. Eating makes us neither better nor worse. It is a thing indifferent.

"But," the Apostle adds, "take heed, lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling-block to them that are weak." There were those who thought it wrong to eat the meat or drink the wine of idol sacrifice. To them, there-

fore, it was wrong, though in itself a thing indifferent; and they were in danger of defiling their conscience by being emboldened by the example of others to do what their conscience condemned. Hence the restriction which the Apostle puts upon Christian liberty. Meat makes us neither better nor worse, but that is not the whole of the matter. The law of love is higher than the law of liberty. Under this law, a thing in itself lawful may cease to be lawful and become a sin—a double sin. If your use of liberty, urges the Apostle, becomes a stumbling-block to them that are weak you commit a sin against them, and a sin against Christ. So that, though eating meat is pure in itself, and a thing indifferent, it is sinful to you, if your eating it causes another to offend or to fall. And the grand conclusion is, “It is good (i. e. *right, morally obligatory*—see Dr. Hodge) neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth or is offended or is made weak.”

Now on the supposition that wine-drinking is not wrong in itself, *does this law of love bind us to let the wine-glass alone?* If we keep to a case rigidly analogous to that discussed by the Apostle, the statement of the doctrine of expediency in its application to the wine question would be, “Wine-drinking in itself neither commends us to God, nor forfeits His favor. It is a thing indifferent. But there are brethren who think even the moderate use of wine a sin. To them, therefore, it is a sin. If they drink wine at all their conscience will be defiled. Hence it is a sin for us to drink wine, even moderately, if we thus tempt them to sin. Let us, therefore, drink no wine while the world standeth, lest we make these brethren to offend.”

This is the exact application of the doctrine to the wine question. But would Dr. Atwater have us believe that nearly all abstinence from intoxicating drinks in Christian society is practiced on this ground? and that tens and hundreds of thousands of Christians have felt it not good to drink wine *for this reason*, out of respect to the mere scruples of the very few who think it a sin to drink wine at all? So it seems from his statements and illustrations.

Over and over again, he puts the case as if it were a ques-

tion between weak brethren thinking it a sin to drink wine, and strong brethren who know better; or a question of regard to the scrupulosities of uninformed consciences, by those of superior knowledge.

Now this was indeed Paul's sufficient reason for abstinence from meat. The law of love made it a sin to eat meat if a brother was offended thereby who *thought* it a sin. On *this ground alone* Paul pressed obligation. But how immeasurably is obligation enhanced to abstain from *wine*. It is not simply a question of regard to the scruples of those who think wine-drinking a sin, and who, thus thinking, may be led by the indulgence of others to defile their conscience. It is that, but it is vastly more than that. There are urgent and impelling reasons for abstinence over and above any such reason. It is not for the *scruples* of a few brethren alone, but for the *souls* of tens of thousands, that the law of love says to every child of God, Let the wine-glass alone. It is not simply lest the few brethren who think it a sin to drink wine should be led to drink it, and thereby be led to sin, that Christians are called upon to abstain from wine, but it is because there are thousands in the Church and hundreds of thousands out of the Church, who are weak, inexperienced, of excitable temperament, easily tempted, strong-passioned, and who may be led by Christian example to the use of the wine-cup, and so to excess in the use of it, and to perdition by the curse of it; it is because over the wine-cup, and other intoxicants, men are stumbling in great multitudes to the grave and to hell; it is because wine-drinking, the world over, is an occasion for men to fall, not simply into the sin of a weak conscience, but into all the awful sins that mark the career of the drunkard. To us it seems like inexcusable trifling to ring the changes on "the scruples of weak brethren," in the presence of such awful and unquestionable facts as these.

The second exception we take to the reasoning of the paper referred to, is that it compounds things that differ by its sweeping claims of liberty.

Dr. Atwater says, Jesus, "by drinking wine, vindicated the liberty of his followers to use every creature of God, as good

and fit for food." But still "in the circumstances in which we are now placed," he thinks it "a right and Christian use of liberty, to abstain from the use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage." "But if others judge it right to *use their liberty* otherwise," etc., etc. Evidently in the light of these quotations, liberty sweeps the field. If one man abstains from wine, even though abstinence be "for the edification of his brethren and the welfare of the people, "it is *an exercise of Christian liberty.*" And if another does not abstain in similar circumstance, it is still "*an exercise of Christian liberty.*" Now we undertake to say there is no liberty about it in either case. Liberty and obligation cannot be harnessed together. Liberty has respect only to things indifferent. And a thing indifferent is that concerning which it is a matter of indifference whether it be done or not. The moment it ceases to be that it passes out of the domain of liberty into the domain of obligation, and from being a thing indifferent, becomes a *duty* or a *sin*. Conceding that wine-drinking *in itself* is a thing indifferent, it is no longer that, when it puts a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in a brother's way. It is evil then, morally wrong, a sin. And to abstain is not the use of one's liberty, but the imperative demand of moral obligation. But is not every man at liberty to judge of the circumstances? Certainly. And must he not act according to his own conscience? Certainly. And must he not to his own master stand or fall? Certainly. But a man with a blinded judgment and a perverted conscience may be guilty of sin before God, notwithstanding these things. These questions do not affect the question of obligation, and the liberty they imply and involve is not the liberty of things indifferent. It is just the liberty that Paul exercised, when in conscience he verily thought he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. It is the circumstances that make the imperative duty, not a man's view of them. His judgment of the case will affect his action but it does not affect his obligation. In other words, if his wine-drinking put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in a brother's way, "the relentless gripe of obligation" to let the wine-glass alone *is there*, whether the wine-

bibber feel it or not. It is a sin to him who drinks with offence, whether he does or does not *know* that his drinking is with offence, provided the light is in the world and he will not come to it, lest his deeds should be reproved. The sin does not depend on the *view of the agent*, but upon *the thing done*. To desire property is not wrong in itself. It is neither enjoined nor prohibited. But what if I desire it to the point of covetousness, and yet remain blind to the sin of covetousness, and think my desire still within the limit of things indifferent? Does my judgment of the case lessen the sin of the case, or take away obligation? Did the young man of the Gospel know that he loved his great possessions more than he loved "eternal life," till Jesus said, One thing thou lackest? But his ignorance left him none the less a wicked idolater and worshiper of mammon. And yet Dr. Atwater says "the obligation to do or forbear things indifferent depends first on circumstances, and next on *the view the agent takes* of the tendency of the act in those circumstances." And again, "If they are promotive of moral good or moral evil *in the view of the agent*, it is for *this reason* so far forth obligatory to do or not to do them." In other words, wine-drinking, being in itself a thing indifferent, a man whose moral sense is so blunted, or who is so wilfully blind that he does not see the paramount and overmastering tendency of his use of wine, and that it has passed from a thing indifferent to a sin, may go on putting this stumbling-block and occasion to fall in the way of scores and hundreds, and by his example, they may stumble and perish, and yet he be guilty of no wrong, because in *his view of the circumstances* there is no wrong. He may do what the Apostle calls a *sin*, and he is at liberty to do it under the law of things indifferent, if he happens to think he is not doing it.

And such convenient, go-easy obligation as this is all that can scripturally be brought to bear upon Christian wine-bibbers! While over their example men are tripping to perdition, they are not guilty of the sin of causing them to stumble, because they do not see them go down. That men are thus stumbling can not be denied. The simple, sad, solemn truth is known to the whole world, that thousands upon thou-

sands begin their course to the drunkard's grave at the wine glass ; and yet Christian men are perfectly innocent in the practice of drinking wine, provided they *do not see* there is any wrong in it ! Must a man know that his particular wine offends in some special given case, before he is under obligation to give it up ? Then he must offend before he can know that he offends. He must sin against a brother and against Christ and know that he thus sins, before it is his imperative duty not to sin, and all because the instrumentality with which he sins is a thing in itself indifferent !

Now it is well known that hundreds and thousands of Christians, by precept or practice, are advocates of the use of the wine-cup. Many such drink their wine, and stoutly contend for Christian liberty in the matter. It is just as well known that the public example of just such Christians has been the occasion of many a young man's first step to ruin. Children have been swept to the degradation and doom of drunkenness, through habits formed at their own parents' table. But probably not a man of all these Christian wine-bibbers would say that he ever knowingly put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in another's way. It has been done nevertheless. And with such numbers yearly swept to ruin from the brink of the wine-cup, has ignorance of ever having personally and directly offered the wine-cup to a stumbling brother relieved the wine drinker of all obligation, and left him guiltless ? By no means. Before God, a man is responsible for his *influence*, conscious or unconscious, whether it extend to those whose palms he touches in the grasp of friendship, or to those into whose eyes he has never looked. The effect of the example of Christian wine-drinking is felt far beyond the immediate circle of those with whom such Christians come in contact. And if there be those to whom his example is a stumbling-block, on account of which and over which they go to perdition, then his use of the cup is a sin, and the relentless gripe of obligation is upon him to abstain, whether he so view it or not.

And here we reach the third exception we take to the reasoning of this article on the wine question. It proceeds upon the assumption that all the wine of Scripture, allowed

and enjoined of God as to its temperate use, and made and drunk by Christ, was intoxicating, if used in excess. The ground taken is substantially this: Wine is good, is a gift of God. Throughout God's word divine sanction is given publicly and repeatedly to its moderate use. Everywhere it is spoken of approvingly. Only its abuse is condemned. Christ himself made wine, and used it openly and freely within the limits of moderation. And this wine was alcoholic and intoxicating. To attempt to make it anything else, it is said, is "to wrest the word of God out of its plain and obvious meaning."

It is this effort to make the Bible a wholesale endorsement of moderate drinking which we think tends fatally to impair the obligations of the law of love, in connection with total abstinence. Dr. Atwater says we have a basis for urging total abstinence in the law of Christian expediency and the dictates of Christian love. We fully agree with him. And while we live, we hope to be found with all the strength God shall give us, urging men for the sake of their stumbling fellow men to utterly abstain from all that can intoxicate. But that basis is undermined and taken from beneath our feet, when from one end to the other of the word of God it is held that there is divine warrant for the use of wine in moderation. If this be true there is no ground left us to stand on. About the conscience of no wine-drinker, who believes it to be true, can we ever get the grappling irons of obligation by Paul's exposition of the doctrine of Christian expediency. We have tried it and have failed. And we have failed because an isolated passage of *modern application* can not be made, in the estimation of any man, to outweigh the whole balance of Scripture, because a plea for abstinence on the ground of expediency loses all its force when met by an opposing plea of divine precept and divine example. We say it again, therefore, fearless of sustainable contradiction, that if Christ and the Bible are so on the side of the use of intoxicating wine within the limits of sobriety, as it is held they are by those who say that wine is not wine unless intoxicating, then the doctrine of Christian expediency, in its application to the wine question, is not worth a puff of empty air.

To break the force of this natural and logical conclusion, it is replied that the circumstances of our time and land are so different from those of the times and land of the Bible as to make that a duty now which was not a duty then. Here is the statement of the case in the very words of Dr. Atwater. We give the paragraph entire, that the reader may see its full force.

“If there were no other difference between our present circumstances and those of our Saviour’s day, there is not only the vast abundance of distilled liquors, but the prodigious adulteration of them, and of all kinds of liquors, especially wines, which so often retain the name, while they undergo a real transubstantiation into the veritable whiskey, mixed with drugs and poisons, passing under their name. Is not here a ground of the expediency of abstaining from wine unknown in our Saviour’s time? Besides, it has long been a familiar observation that the people of northern countries have far stronger propensities to drunkenness than those nearer the tropics. Moreover, in a country where distilled liquors were unknown, it was impossible that intemperance should have prevailed on the scale which it reaches in countries where they abound.”

This is all we have ever seen in the way of reply to our position. In substance it is this: The “vast abundance” and “prodigious adulteration” of distilled and other liquors, and the “strange propensities to drunkenness” of the people of northern countries, make it impossible that intemperance should have prevailed in Bible lands and Bible times on the scale which it reaches in this country. Therefore in those times there could have been no obligation of expediency to abstain from wine. This resolves the question into one of *degrees of intemperance*. But will Dr. Atwater tell us upon what scale excess of wine and strong drink must prevail, before we are bound to heed the claims of the law of love? How many must be swept by the use of wine and other liquors into the sin of drunkenness, before the doctrine of Christian expediency can lay its obligations on Christian men to let the wine-glass alone? The Apostle argues that it is

morally obligatory not to drink wine nor anything whereby *thy brother* stumbleth. This modern argument seems to make it depend on *the number of the stumblers*. The Apostle argues that it is a sin for any man to eat with offence. This modern argument seems to make it depend on the *number of offences*. If drunkenness is to great and dreadful excess, and hundreds of thousands are guilty of the sin and crime of it, then the law of love says, Abstain. If drunkenness prevails to a less degree, and only thousands or tens of thousands are stumbling into the sin of it, then the law of love has no application! We are well aware that down this sliding scale, a point might possibly be reached at last, where sobriety and moderation should be so universally the rule that there would be little likelihood of occasioning a brother to stumble by the use of wine. But by the law of Christian expediency, wherever wine-drinking is promotive of moral evil, of which the presence of drunkenness as a common sin is the proof, then it is morally obligatory not to drink wine. Distilled and drugged liquors, and our colder climate, may give intemperance here worse features, and more wide-spread evils, and possibly a greater number of victims than intemperance has in the lands of the Bible. But the question is not one of phases or of *degrees* of drunkenness. It is drunkenness itself. God's word makes drunkenness, whether by wine or whiskey, a damning crime. No drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God.

Does alcoholic wine make drunkards? All sides admit it. Excess in the use of it will produce intoxication. Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? They that tarry long at the wine; wine is a mocker, whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise. The record of Israel's folly is heavy with the surrounding retributions of God, for drunkenness from wine.

Is drunkenness common in Bible lands and warmer climes where wine is used? Are there stumblers there, stumbling by thousands, and stumbling by wine, to the death and doors of the drunkard? Let the missionaries testify. They are familiar with the daily life of the people among whom they

dwell. Rev. Dr. Perkins, missionary to Persia says :* “The extraordinary vintage has made wine almost as cheap as water. Against *the desolating flood which sweep many away*, we are thankful that not a few throw up the only sure barrier of total abstinence.” Dr. Jessup of Syria, the very land of the Saviour, says of a place from which he is writing, † “The *great besetting sin* of the village is wine-drinking. This part of Lebanon is famous for its vineyards and wine, and the people are more given to more excessive drinking than those of any district I have known. *If they will not give up this habit for the sake of the Gospel, I shall have little hope.*” Rev. J. S. Cochran, of the Nestorian Mission, writes of the place of his labors, in the wine-making season. “The whole village of male adults will be habitually intoxicated for a month, or six weeks.” Rev. J. H. Shedd, missionary at Oroomiah, Persia, quoted so approvingly by Dr. Atwater, says :‡ “Ever since the days of Noah that region has been the house of the vine. The wine is made in a very primitive manner, and is *entirely unadulterated*. All the varieties are very light. If any in the world are harmless, they are. But the fact remains that *bestly intemperance is the besetting sin of the people*. During the wine season, bestly drunkenness is too common to excite comment. I have been in large villages on a feast-day, when it was really impossible to find a sober man in the place. The corruption of morals, the degradation of mind, the mid-night carousals, the losses from riotous living, from idleness, quarreling and crime, are too numerous to be exaggerated. Many acquire the passion for stimulants and pass from wine to *ar-rack*, a rum distilled from raisins. Thus wine is a mocker, and multitudes are in the road to ruin through the curse of strong drink. *Among the nominal Christians of Persia, and many other parts of the East, the worst destroyer of the soul and obstacle to the Gospel is wine and the attendant intemperance.*”

Where now are Dr. Atwater’s “changed circumstances.” What now of “distilled liquors” and “prodigious adulteration” and “northern countries!” Here are simply wines,

* Miss. Herald, May 1869. † Miss. Herald, June 1869. ‡ The Interior, July 20th, 1871.

and no adulterations, and southern countries, and yet a riot and ruin of intoxication, a sin and shame of drunkenness, so wide spread that scarcely anything in this country can match it. Here is wine drinking, "the great besetting sin of the people," the "desolating flood which sweeps many away," "the worst destroyer of souls," "doing more than any other one thing to dishonor God." On what more dreadful "scale" than this would Dr. Atwater have intemperance prevail, before he would regard abstinence as an imperative duty. With this awful record, as given us by our missionaries, of "men stumbling into death and hell, and the example of Christians on the side of wine, making them the allies of the destroyer," could any Christian missionary, in the light of the law of love, publicly use the mocker, and be guiltless before God of putting a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way? Surely here is a case imperatively demanding the application of the doctrine of Christian expediency. But the case is not in our country, nor in our climate, nor by reason of our abominable adulterations. It is in the land of the Bible, in a milder climate, and by reason of unadulterated wine.

Go back now one century, two centuries, eighteen centuries, in the same land, in the same climate, concerning the same wine, and is not the ground of the expediency of abstaining the very same, provided intemperance prevail, and stumblers fall, and men on account of the sin of drunkenness are sent out of the kingdom of God? Well, in the time of Christ and the apostles, drunkenness did prevail and stumblers did trip over the wine cup, and go stumbling to perdition. At the wedding in Cana, the governor of the feast, speaking of the general custom at such feasts, said: "Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have *well drunk*"—drunk freely, to inebriation—"then that which is worse." Here is proof of the *habit of excess* at feasts, whether true at Cana or not. Jesus himself warned his disciples, saying: "Take heed lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with drunkenness." Paul enumerates among the sins of his time, "drunkenness and revelings," and he urges the saints at Rome, not "to walk in rioting and drunk-

eness." He counsels the Corinthians to avoid the company of the drunkard, though he be called a brother. And among gross offenders he names drunkards, adding: "Such were some of you." He urges the Ephesians to "be not drunk with wine," and the Thessalonians "to be sober and not drunken." He says a bishop, a deacon, or the aged women, must "not be given to much wine"—"not enslaved to much wine." Peter says directly of the Christians to whom he wrote that they *did* "walk in the time past of their life in excess of wine, revelings and banquetings," wherein it was thought strange by their old companions that they did not run to the same excess of riot.

These passages prove beyond all question that drunkenness was a common sin in the East, in the time of Christ and the apostles, that intemperance and excess abounded, sweeping even within the pale of the church. Such warnings and counsels and exhortations have no meaning otherwise. The article from Smith's Bible Dictionary, so highly commended by Dr. Atwater, says: "The precepts above quoted show the extent to which intemperance prevailed in ancient times, and the *extreme danger* to which the church was subjected from that quarter." That same people Israel were scarred all along their history with the woe and curse of this thing. They had been swept to the fearfulest excesses of intoxication. Priests and prophets, even, had been "swallowed up of wine." And yet we are asked to believe that in these circumstances, in the midst of such abounding intemperance amongst a people accustomed to "rioting and reveling," to "excess of wine and drunkenness," and who at their feasts were commonly "*well drunk*;" with this "*extreme danger*" threatening the Church, Christ made intoxicating wine in large quantities, on a public festive occasion, and offered it to the assembled guests who had already indulged freely in the use of the inebriating beverage. We are asked, moreover, to believe that in the Bible lands, where now Rev. Mr. Shedd, our missionary at Oroomiah, says: "it is taken for granted that a man cannot be at the same time a wine-drinker and an exemplary Christian;" the first missionary to the Gentiles made a deliverance

on the wine question, saying: "It is a violation of the law of love and a sin against Christ to drink wine, or anything whereby a brother stumbleth;" and then notwithstanding this deliverance, and notwithstanding the prevalent and appalling evils of intemperance, notwithstanding the "excess" and "rioting" and "drunkenness" of those times, so that Paul could assume as he did, that one no calling himself a Christian could be a drunkard, notwithstanding the multitudes that were stumbling by the use of wine, and notwithstanding the "extreme danger to which the Church was subjected from that quarter"—this same missionary wrote openly and frequently, enjoining the churches, the bishops, the deacons and aged women "not to be *drunk* with wine wherein is excess," "not to be given to *much* wine." They could drink freely within the limits of moderation, but they must stop short of intoxication. The bishops ordained to preach could go everywhere establishing churches and drinking wine without let or hindrance, provided they did not get drunk. They could do this before those poor converts, not a day's march out of the excesses and revelings and drunkenness of heathendom, and in the full light of the doctrine of Christian expediency and the law of love!

If all this be true—and the men who contend that wine is not wine unless intoxicating, and that intoxicating wine is allowed and approved, as to its temperate use, in Scripture, must believe it to be true—where are the circumstances in which abstinence for the sake of others may be one's duty? They are not conceivable. To plead for abstinence on the ground of expediency is a farce. In the light of these shining examples, abridgment of Christian liberty in the use of wine is nowhere a duty, and indulgence or Christian liberty in the use of wine is nowhere a sin. We should like to know from those who find divine sanction and approval in the word of God, throughout its whole extent, for the use of intoxicating wine within the limits of sobriety, of these facts—and they are facts if their exegesis be correct—if these facts do not take the very marrow out of the grand doctrine of Christian expediency. If not, why not? Let them answer this question.

The force of these facts can not be impaired by any talk about distilled and adulterated liquors, and colder climate. For we go to the very lands of the Bible, where the wine is the same and its effects the same, and the climate the same and human nature the same as eighteen centuries ago, and we show that, "riotings" and "revelings" and "excess of wine" and "drunkenness" were very much the same as they are now. Yet no missionary in Bible lands to-day could hold his place in the confidence of our church an hour, who should officially and publicly and repeatedly endorse the moderate use of alcoholic drinks, and advise the native pastors only to avoid drunkenness.

Nor can the force of these facts be impaired by any talk about "what ninety-nine hundredth of all ministers and Christians do believe and have believed on this subject." That kind of talk, if there had been any weight in it, would have kept us to our old interpretations about the age and revolution of the earth, for it was repeatedly flung in the face of geological and astronomical discoveries. But the scientists "kept pegging away" until the belief of the Christian world was changed. What if we are obliged to correct our exegesis of the Word of God in its bearings on the wine question, as we were on these other questions? Dr. Atwater says "hundreds of thousands of Christians now feel it good on the ground of Christian expediency, not to drink wine. How many could he have counted fifty years ago? Scarcely one. The belief of the church is changing. We are making progress.

Nor can the force of the above facts be impaired by any talk about our position logically involving an impeachment of the morality of Christ and his Word, or by any talk about "the unscriptural footing of the new departure," in "wresting the Word of God out of its plain and obvious meaning." We have had enough of this. It is no new thing. We have had it before on other questions. On slavery; when divine sanction and approval were claimed, and manifold texts of Scripture were marshalled and precept of prophet and Apostle brought to bolster up the iniquity, it being declared that only

the abuse of the system was condemned. And men were charged with an impeachment of the morality of the Bible who held that "slavery was contrary to the spirit of the Word of God." Who now is heard making that word a wholesale endorsement of human bondage? Who doubts now that its whole spirit and trend are against it? So, we believe, are they against the common use of intoxicating wine. If we can not find a direct prohibitory "Thus saith the Lord" for it, neither can we for slavery and many another thing, of the inevitable evil tendencies of which we have no doubt.

We do not believe that what God's Word calls a mocker, a deceiver, a breeder of woe and sorrow and contention, and which at the last biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder, Christ made in large quantity, on a public festive occasion, in the midst of surrounding intemperance, and pressed it to the lips of men who had already freely indulged in the intoxicating beverage. We do not believe that Paul declared it morally obligatory not to drink wine for the sake of a stumbling brother, and then in the midst of prevailing drunkenness, and multitudes of stumblers, wrote publicly to churches, bishops and deacons, endorsing their moderate use of wine. If those who do believe these things find that they are envenomed shafts that strike our adorable Master and His Word, let them remember that the venom comes from their exegesis, not from ours.

The grand doctrine of Christian expediency, in its application to the wine question, is solid ground enough for us to stand upon, as we press the claims of total abstinence. But not without earnest and solemn protest can we see its binding force fatally impaired by making it simply or mainly a condescending deference to the scruples of a few weak brethren, by an advocacy of liberty that sweeps away all obligation, and by an interpretation of Scripture that carries the word of God bodily over to the side of the wine-bibber. O let us have done with the vindication of liberty at the expense of charity! Let us have done with putting up biblical buttresses and building scriptural bulwarks to support and defend a custom whose chief patrons make their haunts roar with responding

applause, because of such building work. When once alcoholic wines and strong drinks are swept away from every Christian side-board and table and social feast, what a mighty barrier will be set against the desolating flood of intemperance! And what an added emphasis will be given to the protest of the Church of God against the sin of drunkenness. O for the hour, God speed it, when every member of every Christian Church in all our land, in the spirit of a pervasive, abounding, all-embracing charity, shall say, "Wine maketh my brother to offend; stumblers by the alcoholic cup are on every side of me. Therefore I will drink no wine while the world standeth!"

ART. V.—TOTAL ABSTINENCE AND ITS SCRIPTURAL BASIS.

A Reply to the Strictures of the Rev. Herrick Johnson, D. D., upon the Princeton Review.

IT HAS of course been apparent to our readers that the preceding article, by our respected friend, Dr. Herrick Johnson, is mainly directed against a previous discussion of the wine question, and "Church Action on Temperance," in the October number of the *Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review*. We had cordially consented to publish Dr. Johnson's strictures upon it before we had seen them, and before any steps had been taken looking to the consolidation of that quarterly with the *American Presbyterian Review*. We none the less cordially insert these strictures now, although under the great disadvantage of placing them before a large body of readers who have never seen our original articles. We shall, therefore, be compelled to expand some parts of our reply more than would otherwise be necessary.

Want of space compels us barely to refer to some things which would justify fuller treatment. He tells us, "Dr. Atwater says, Jesus 'by drinking wine vindicated the liberty of his followers to use every creature of God as good and fit