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REVIEW SECTION.

L—HOW CAN THE PULPIT BEST COUNTERACT THE INFLUENCE OF MODERN SKEPTICISM?

NO. I.

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"SKEPTICISM" is a wide term, embracing in its scope all forms of unbelief, philosophical and scientific, moral and religious, critical and practical. And "modern" is no small expression. It includes, at least, the period of the last two centuries, or, if limited still more, our present age. It covers not merely the shallow, coarse, and flippant infidelity of a Voltaire, Paine and Ingersoll, but that deeper, far more dangerous, more imposing academic infidelity of Spinoza and Hume, Hegel and Comte, Huxley, Spenser and Clifford, together with all that the so-called "Higher Criticism" has accomplished in disparagement of the authority of God's Word as ages have received it. The whole phrase means, in short, the result of the recent "Time-Spirit," or "Spirit of the age," the so-called advanced "Culture," which seeks in our days to do for Christianity what the Reformation of the sixteenth century did for Popery—viz., break its back!

The subject is a comprehensive one. In one word, it invites us to consider how best the minister of Christ, the preacher of the gospel, may meet successfully and "counteract" the various forms of Naturalism, so current in our times. Clearly, the refutation of error, not less than the impartation of truth, falls within the legitimate province of the pulpit. Apologetic and polemic, not less than didactic, are a true homiletic discipline. The "good seed" must be distinguished from the "tares," the "wheat" from the "chaff," the "birds of the air" from the "branches of the mustard-tree," the "leaven" from the "meal." The great "Teacher sent from God," the Apostles, the Apologists standing next them in the sub-Apostolic Church, and history, both sacred and profane, have taught us this. The student of the past knows full well that there is not a heresy, now rife in

But why pursue this further? Texts abundant everywhere. And the peculiarity is this, that every one of them directly leads to Jesus Christ. We cannot preach from anything in God's word, we cannot "speak as the oracles of God speak," and not find Christ in all. To preach Christ, therefore, is to preach all truth, and to refute all error at the same time. Christ is the "I am," the "Creator," the "Judge," the "Rewarder," the "Image of God," the Revealer, the Standing Wonder of the World, and, like God, the "All in all." "By Him are all things, and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." He is everywhere, in Nature as in Grace, and to deny Him in His person, offices, and relations to the world and God, is to deny all science, and to cut away the ground of all certitude in things both natural and spiritual. All false science, and all false philosophy, is refuted in the faithful preaching of "the truth as it is in Jesus." The study of error will only show us this the more clearly, and lead us to closely follow Him who has said, "I am the *Light of the World*; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

II.—PAUL'S LAW OF CHARITY AS AN ARGUMENT FOR TOTAL ABSTINENCE.

BY THEODORE L. CUYLER, D.D., BROOKLYN, N. Y.

PAUL'S "Law of Charity" has been discussed in the *HOMILETIC REVIEW* (Dec. No.) by my well-beloved friend, Dr. Howard Crosby, in his characteristic style. He is a bold and rapid thinker, and blurts forth his convictions with more of candor than of regard for either consistency or consequences. He has won an honorable distinction by his manly war against New York dram-shops, at the same time that he was denouncing the Maine law of Prohibition, whose very title is "an act for the suppression of tippling-houses." From one side of his pulpit he thunders against drunkenness; from the other side he trains his guns on the doctrine of entire abstinence from the only thing which turns human beings into miserable drunkards. He warns young men stoutly against the final plunge of Niagara; but not against toying and coquetting with the first glassy flow of the uppermost Rapids.

Dr. Crosby errs at the outset in pronouncing Paul's utterances in the epistles to Rome and Corinth as the "grand stronghold" of us total abstainers; if that were so, then its capture would be the ruin of our cause. We base our objections to intoxicating wines, as well as whiskey or gin, on the *essential nature* of alcoholic beverages. We oppose the use of intoxicants because terrible experience shows that the use inevitably tends towards abuse. We oppose the drinking-usages *in toto*, because they are not demanded by any necessity, and yet involve infinite perils; because alcoholic beverages (we are not

talking of medicines) are not a proper and needed nutriment, supply no strength or permanent warmth, and work infinite harm to thousands where they can possibly help a single one. We do not need to quote any of the Bible-warnings against wine as a mocker, or as containing in it the adder's sting; if the Bible were silent, we can discover enough arguments against intoxicants in the very laws which the Creator has written upon the human body.

Dr. Crosby well says that "Christianity works with the concrete, not with the abstract"; our Christianity condemns that identical concrete thing, intoxicating drinks—in large doses because they are deadly, in small doses because they are dangerous, and lead to larger ones. Whatever disputes there may be about the nature of Oriental wines twenty centuries ago, we know what "wine" means now as well as Dr. Crosby knows what the word "theatre" means now. And if he can use legitimately against the modern play-house what the Apostle said about "lasciviousness" and "revellings," so can we use against the modern drinking-usages (a very *concrete* thing) what Paul uttered in regard to eating certain meats and imbibing certain drinks. Is our use of this "so-called law of charity" a legitimate argument to be piled on top of all our other arguments in favor of total abstinence from intoxicants?

We believe that it is, and shall continue to use it in opposition to the dangerous drinking-usages, by whosoever practiced. Paul declares in the 14th chapter of his Epistle to the Romans: "It is good neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine, nor to do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth." So cautious and conservative a commentator as the late Professor Charles Hodge, of Princeton, interprets this passage as follows: "that is, abstaining from flesh, wine, or anything else which is injurious to our brethren is right, *i.e.*, is morally obligatory." To which sound interpretation we teetotallers say *Amen!* The clear, simple principle is, that every one who has a spark of philanthropy should gladly give up a needless luxury or self-indulgence in order to help in saving others from a fearful curse.

The great Apostle introduces the same principle when he is writing to the Corinthian Church in regard to meats offered to heathen idols. He tells his brethren that, if one man's doing what may be harmless for himself should lead another to do what should be very harmful to him, then the first-mentioned person would put a stumbling-block in the path of the other. Things which are not always sinful in themselves should be cheerfully given up for the welfare of another; the legal liberty of any man or woman, whose heart is in the right place, should never be exercised when moral evil is likely to flow from such an exercise. Especially will no social usage be directly encouraged which inevitably tends to the physical and spiritual ruin of those "for whom Christ died." Our brother Crosby will not deny that the drink-

ing-customs are the chief snare in tempting the young especially into the use of the intoxicating glass. Very few ever begin to drink by themselves. The influence of example, the requirements of a bad "fashion," draw millions into the vortex—and the hell beneath it. The drinking-usages increase the difficulty of the inebriate's reformation. The drinking-usages support the saloons which Dr. Crosby so abominates. Quite too large a number of those who profess and call themselves Christians give the same twist to Paul's precept that Dr. C— does, and throw the whole weight of their personal influence in favor of the ruinous drinking-usages. God's people will never lift the world up out of a pit as long as they are down in the pit themselves.

Self-denial is a principle which lies at the core of Christianity. Dr. Phillips Brooks, of Boston, in one of his powerful discourses, when referring to this voluntary abstinence from intoxicants, remarks: that "there is a moral beauty in such a voluntary act which, in its degree, is of the same kind with the sacrifice of Christ." While such men as Dr. Brooks, and Bishop Lightfoot, and Dr. Hodge, and Archdeacon Farrar, and Albert Barnes, put the same interpretation on this Pauline precept of self-denial as we, and tens of thousand of other Christians do, it is supremely ridiculous for our New York neighbor to flout it as a mischievous blunder, or as the ebullition of ignorance or fanaticism.

In dealing with the question of abstinence from an intoxicant, we must keep in mind that it is not a merely negative article about whose use or non-use one may toss up a copper. The essential *nature* of intoxicating beverages, as tending to kindle depraved appetite, as tending to provoke excess, as tending to inflame the brain, and in possessing a subtle influence to enslave those who use them—this nature of the article itself must be taken into the account. We do not pretend that every one who drinks an occasional glass of wine becomes a drunkard. But we do affirm that every one who drinks wine throws the whole weight of his influence in favor of the drinking-usages which do make the drunkards. A glass of intoxicating wine is not an "innocent beverage" in the same sense that a glass of milk or a glass of water is innocent. No one can reasonably be asked to abstain from either of these latter beverages for the sake of his neighbor. They have no tendency to inflame bad appetite, no tendency to breed excess, no tendency to disorder the brain, no tendency to get fatal mastery over both body and soul. If wine and whiskey (for some American wines contain twenty per cent. of alcohol) did not contain these dangerous qualities, how could they make my weaker brethren "stumble"? If not essentially *dangerous* to others, why should I be asked, by any law of charity, to abstain from their use? It is not enough for me to intrench myself in selfishness and say, "my wine-bottle does *me* no harm." My wine-bottle is my voluntary contribution to the drinking-

usages of society which are hurling millions into eternal damnation ! Can that wine-bottle be pronounced "innocent" ? *No ! No !*

Dr. Crosby has been very outspoken in his denunciations of the American stage, and in his frank, incisive style has affirmed that "the theatre is a nasty place." Suppose some church-member should say to him, "I only attend the theatre occasionally, and I only go when I can witness an unexceptionable play. The theatre never harmed me or my family." Dr. Crosby would probably reply to him : "The American stage is a concrete institution. It is to be judged as a *totality*; and as such it encourages lasciviousness and endangers character, and pollutes both performers and spectators, and ruins thousands. If you patronize the stage with your money and your personal influence, you become an abettor of it, and you must take your share of the responsibility." *Amen* to that, brother Crosby ! You are now sending the Pauline principle of abstinence for the sake of others, like a Minie-rifle ball, right into that church-member's conscience.

But suppose, again, that your theatre-going Christian had been reading your article on Paul's law of charity, and quoting your own language, should say : "It is my own sole judgment that has any authority in the premises. It is a matter between me and my God *in foro conscientiæ*. I am to see what act of mine may make my brother stumble in his piety, and I am to refrain from that act; but no man is to usurp dominion over my soul and order *my* abstinence from the theatre from *his* view." If you discovered that your Fourth Avenue church-members were all turning theatre-goers under this plea of yours, you would probably say to them : "My dear people, it is about time that you looked into your own *consciences* to see whether they are governed by the law of brotherly love, or by the laws of Belial."

It is one the of the most commendable traits in your character, my brother (if you will low me to be as personal as you are towards us tee-totallers), that when you undertake to defend a bad position, your heart gets the better of your consistency. In your article, therefore, you surrender your whole position when you say, "my duty as a Christian is to seek the maintenance and growth of piety in my brethren. If I am convinced that any possible act of mine may interfere with this, and may be a stumbling-block over which my Christian brother will fall, it is my duty to avoid that act." Nobly said ! None of us total-abstainers could have said it more concisely. Now, you must know that the wine-bottle may be, and often is, just as dangerous to a "Christian brother" as it is to an ungodly convivialist. And if the bottle were only dangerous to those who are out of Christ, is it not your "duty as a Christian" to do as much for those whom you try to convert as for those who are already converted ? Is it not an equally obligatory duty to take stumbling-blocks out of the way of the worldlings ? Now, the drinking-usages are terrible stumbling-blocks in the

path of both Christians and unconverted sinners. And I have heard your frankly expressed opinions about wine-drinking, and your severe denunciations of total abstinence quoted more than once in defence of the drinking-usages. Just as you would make no headway in persuading a young man from the theatre who would say to you, "I saw you at the theatre the other night," so you will not be in a position to warn him against the notoriously insidious dangers of the wine-cup as long as you defend the practice of wine-drinking. You make your "liberty" an occasion of stumbling to others. This whole "argument of *example*," which you rather sneer at, is really a most tremendous argument against any Christians attempting to play with the serpents which are coiled in every wine-bottle. If your or my use of wine is so light a matter that it will cost no hardship to abandon it, then surely we may do it as a wholesome example to others. If the habit is so confirmed that the abandonment would be a hardship, then the sooner we give it up for our own sake the better.

In one portion of his article Dr. Crosby limits and belittles Paul's dictum to such diminutive dimensions that we might well wonder why Paul ever took the trouble to utter it. Dr. C—— makes it a "conditional" direction, only to be observed by Christians, and only towards other Christians, and then only dependent upon the "if" that some particular Mr. A. or Mr. B. may be harmed by my drinking an intoxicant on some particular day, in some particular place! A concurrence of several "possibilities," which might happen rarely in a lifetime, are requisite in order to give Paul's dictum any authority at all! But this golden utterance of the great Apostle is too broad, too comprehensive, and too glorious to be whittled down to any such petty pin-points as these. There is nothing conditional about it. Paul squarely declares: "it is good not to drink wine, or do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth." This is as distinct an enunciation of a general principle as that other Bible declaration: "it is good for brethren to dwell together in unity." One of these is just as accordant with the spirit of Christianity as the other. The whole spirit of Sacred Scripture is often the best interpreter of controverted texts. This glorious declaration of Paul in favor of so ordering our conduct as to do our neighbor the utmost possible good, and the least possible harm, is a coinage of the same divine mint which issued the "golden rule," and the commands to bear one another's burden—to seek not our own, but the things of others—to keep the body under, and treat it as a temple of the Holy Spirit—to so live as not to put an occasion of falling in another's way. The plain, untortured teaching of this text has inspired millions to refuse an indulgence which would be fraught with harm to their fellow-men. So general, so comprehensive, and so practical is the principle laid down by Paul in this text that it is to-day the best rule by which to regulate our amusements and many of

our social usages. It is a "stronghold" for us total-abstainers from the bottle: strong in its knowledge of human nature, strong in its support to conscience, strong with the unselfish sweetness and strength of LOVE.

After walking carefully and candidly around my good brother Crosby's ingenious exegetical structure, I do not find it strong in any particular, except it be in the epithets launched at us abstainers from the decanter. As a "paste-board fortress" for the protection of the drinking-usages, it will be a popular place of resort for all those who believe that "the drinking of wine is sanctioned and commanded by the Word of God, and must remain as the general rule." For all those who like this sort of beverages, this will be just the sort of logic which they will like. Ingenious and pretentious as my brother's logical structure may be, it cannot stand against the powerful instincts of unselfish Christian love. Even the sigh from the broken heart of one poor drunkard's wife will blow it down.

III.—THE PLACE OF THE SENSIBILITY IN MORALS.

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IN the leading article of the December number of the HOMILETIC REVIEW, Dr. Gregory imputes the decadence of public morality in Massachusetts and in the country at large, and also the debate at Des Moines, to certain moral teachings in the higher institutions of the country. Among those who teach these corrupting doctrines he refers particularly to me. In connection with this, he says, I am quoted as saying two things in the debate referred to, neither of which I did say. Where he got his quotations I do not know, but they are not to be found, nor anything like them, in the verbatim report of the debate as printed by Houghton & Mifflin, nor in any other report that I have seen. The second quotation makes me speak of "the merits of the question." On that point I said nothing. My remarks had sole reference to the best method, in the present emergency, of selecting candidates for missionary work. Dr. Gregory had, therefore, no basis for inferring, as he does, my "attitude" on the theological question. Of that, it is sufficient to say here, that I stand with Dr. Clark as his position is given in his published speech. So much for misrepresentation, which I do not charge as intentional.

Of the essay at large, I think it may be said that the essence of it, briefly and fairly stated, is contained in three propositions:

1st. That for a man to desire and seek blessedness in connection with holy activity, as it is implied in the Beatitudes that he should, is selfishness. It is different from Epicureanism, but is on the same plane, and is, on the whole, rather worse.

2d. That for a man to desire and seek for the perfection, and so the