

Many persons consider entire Abstinence unscriptural, because it is nowhere expressly commanded. We admit the premises, but deny the conclusion. Our duty is not limited to those things which are expressly enjoined or prohibited. There is no precept that women should communicate, and shall we, therefore, exclude them from the ordinance of the Supper. Our Confession of Faith recognizes legitimate inference as no less binding than express injunction. Let us see, then, how far it is a legitimate inference from the word of God, that we should abstain from customary drinking. As a guide to the interpretation of scripture, this principle is always held by Divines, that when any sin is forbidden, every thing which leads to it is also virtually prohibited. This will be made plain by an example. The command, "thou shalt not steal," not only forbids actual theft, but also idleness, which would reduce us to poverty, and expose us to the temptation to steal. Now, if all that leads to intemperance be prohibited, when we are forbidden to be drunk; moderate drinking, its most prolific source, must be a violation of the Divine Law.

It has been asserted, also, that it is unlawful to abstain from intoxicating liquors because every creature of God is good, and, therefore, not to be refused. We do not deny that God's creatures are good, nor will we say, with some, that alcohol is a creature of the Devil. But the creatures of God are good, only for the particular uses for which they were designed; and while, for such uses they should not be rejected, they are not good for every purpose. Poison is not good for daily food, nor are intoxicating liquors good for customary drinking. Nor is it always wrong for us to abstain from a thing, the use of which is in itself lawful.—The Apostle says, that in some circumstances, it is good not to eat meat. Granting, then, that the use of these liquors is not unlawful, abstinence from them may sometimes be justifiable.

Nay, we may even proceed a step further. There may be circumstances in which it may even be our *duty* to abstain from that which may be in itself lawful. Of this we have an illustration in the 8th Chapter of the 1st Corinthians. The heathen were accustomed to offer to their idols sheep, oxen, and other animals fit for food. Of these, part was consumed on the altars; and the remainder divided among the worshippers, who feasted on it, in-