

that it should preserve its self-control, and not be in subjection to any appetite or desire, however innocent that desire may be in itself. This is a scriptural rule which Christians often neglect. They are slaves to certain forms of indulgence which they defend on the ground that they are not in themselves wrong; forgetting that it is wrong to be in bondage to any appetite or habit."

2. Our liberty to use things indifferent is limited by the effect of that use on others. Your Committee cannot enumerate all the weighty arguments which the Scriptures employ to urge on Christians the duty of self-denial for the good of others—the following Summary must suffice.

1. They appeal to the law of love—the Christian's highest law—whose fervent appeals and kind, considerate presence are inseparable from all the relations of life, and whose peculiar voice in all times and circumstances is heard with supreme authority saying: Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others, and thus seek by a sweet yet irresistible power, to lay a wholesome and holy restraint on the practical assertion of our liberties. Hear the great Apostle of the Gentiles: Let no man seek his own but every man another's *weal*. Take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to them that are weak. But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not according to love. 2. The repulsive contrast which is established between the conduct of that Christian who refuses to deny himself in so insignificant a thing as the taste of meat and the self-denial of Christ, in self-sacrifice on the accursed tree! Destroy not thy brother by thy meat for whom Christ died: As if, says Bengel, you made more of your food than Christ of his life! 3. Not only the death of Christ but his whole life as one of self-denial for the good of others is appealed to to enforce this duty on His followers who are commanded to imitate Him and to walk in the light of His life. 4. They enforce the duty of self-denial by a reference to the honor of religion. Let not your good be evil spoken of—your good, your religion, the Gospel or Kingdom of God, the Church of the living God. Cherish a sacred regard for the character, preserve inviolate the fair name of the religion of Jesus, let not the practice of its professors be in open antagonism with its principles, and in conflict with the example of Christ our Head. 5. The selfish one-sided exercise of liberty in things indifferent is pronounced by Paul to be positively sinful. The persistent adherence to such a course when it injures a weaker brother, the Apostle holds to be a violation of the moral law in both the tables—to be a sin against God and man.

When ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ; 1 Cor. 8: 12. See the enormity of the offense. To wound a weak conscience and thwart the object of Christ's death, for this is what is meant here by sinning against Him. Let us also note that Paul expresses his double sin in the direct form, though it is but the consequence of a selfish exercise of a natural right or liberty.

Now all this, your Committee feel, applies with equal force to the temperance reform, as it does to the subject directly intended by Paul. The law of love with all its generous impulses and supreme authority, binds Christians to abstain for their brother's sake if they need not for their own; the repulsive contrast between their refusal to abandon their wine and other liquors by which myriads perish and Christ dying on the cross, is as strong as in the case first noted. Do Christians value their cups more than Christ did His life? The honor of religion demands abstinence. What a reproach drunkenness has brought upon the church,—whose pale, whose altars even it has polluted, is because Christians have not done more to arrest its destructive march. The self-denying life of Christ from His cradle to the cross pleads for temperance; pleads with the Christian to deny himself for the good of his erring, weak brother. The weakness of our brother's conscience demands abstinence, and a wholesome dread of being found guilty of the heinous offence of thwarting the objects of Christ's death demands it—abstinence not for a single occasion, week or year, but in the strong language of Paul, while the world standeth. Clearly, then, duty to God and duty to man demand abstinence. The Scriptures distinctly teach that we are placed under moral obligation to abstain from indulging in things indifferent, when the use of them is the occasion of sin to others.

From what has been advanced, your Committee think the duty of the Church in reference to the present use of alcoholic liquors cannot be doubtful. The Church should, by the authority vested in her by her Head, apply to that use the standing appointments of God, known and binding in His house in all ages and dispensations, viz., that no member of Christ's body has a right by doing what to himself might be lawful and innocent, to cause his brother to sin. It should seek by every scriptural means to enlighten all men, especially professors, as to the enormity of the sin of violating this law of love—to induce all to feel the moral obligation involved in this subject to be so great that by the force of conscience they shall be constrained to abstain. Appeal should be constantly made to pious and benevolent feeling: to the ex-