

sion from these passages, I would beg of them to answer one or two questions. Did St. Paul totally abstain from meat, because a weak brother was in danger of offending by eating meat under certain circumstances? No doubt he abstained from meat offered to idols—for that is the kind of meat referred to in the first passage—but only from that. And again—if you believe that there were men in St. Paul's days who were intemperate in the use of meat, men whose God was their bellies, men whom the intemperate use of meat caused to offend—and you can scarcely believe otherwise,—do you think that text first quoted proves that St. Paul on that account totally abstained from meat? You can scarcely think that—and how then do you conclude that this text enjoins a total abstinence from wine because men are intemperate in the use of it? And with reference to the second text—do you not see that the argument you base upon it proves too much? If you think that the text proves that the abuse of wine by a brother obliges you to total abstinence from wine, why do you not also find a proof that you are bound to abstain totally from everything which your brother may abuse?

There are other forcible objections to the use which such make of these passages of Scripture—but time allows me to specify but one, and it is this: the weak brother of St. Paul's days was a very different sort of person from the so-called weak brother of to-day—and their treatment therefore should not necessarily be the same. The conscience of the former was weak through ignorance or over-sensitiveness, while that of the latter is either weak from neglect, or hardened by the assaults of the appetites. A modern commentator places the whole matter in a very clear light when he says: "St. Paul, in his charity, abstained—but did not *make a vow* to abstain—at certain times and places, from *certain* meats which his weak brother thought to be unclean. But in the case of the vow supposed, persons are called on to promise to abstain from wine, etc., not because others regard it as *unclean*, but because others *abuse* it, or *indulge* in it to excess. The cases therefore are not similar."

But if there be any, who notwithstanding all that has been said still advocate "the pledge" to abstinence through a