

First therefore was tried the power of a moral engagement; the exposed were persuaded to pledge themselves to entire abstinence from the use of ardent spirits. This proved an effective method, and a visible change for the better began to take place. But it soon became evident that the friends of the cause were now divided into two classes — precisely like the two already referred to among the Corinthians; one consisting of the strong, who could partake moderately and remain temperate; the other of the weak, who, could not touch without excess. The latter gave up their liberty; they deprived themselves of the right to use at all what they were so prone to abuse. But this came to be felt as an unreasonable and galling distinction; and until it should be removed, it was plain no further progress could be made. What then should be done? Precisely what the Apostle recommended to the Corinthians. This division between the strong and the weak should cease: the strong should surrender their position of superiority; all should come under the same obligation; and forthwith the magnanimous pledge was taken — If our moderate use of ardent spirit cause our brethren to offend, we shall taste no more while the world stands, least we cause our brethren to offend.

Under this disinterested action, the reform went prosperously on for a time. But it was by and by apparent, that there still remained an inconsistency in practice, and that a stumbling-block still lay in the way of many. "You counsel us," was the language, "wholly to abandon this indulgence, — (which we were early taught to regard as almost a necessary,) — and you fortify your counsel by abandoning it yourselves. But to most of you that is evidently a very unmeaning act. You in reality give up