

application, and holds us firmly in its grasp so long as there are brethren capable of stumbling, being offended and made weak through our conduct. The difficulty is to get men, and even Christian Ministers, to acknowledge that it is in force constantly and without intermission. They see that it is of temporary obligation, that they come under its power occasionally, now and then, but not always. One has recently published a sermon in which he teaches that young people should be total abstainers until they are 21 years old. He declares also that "it was a good thing for the priests to abstain from wine and strong drink when offering sacrifices or expounding the law, so as to have the brain clear and the judgment calm."

He concedes, still further, that we should abstain from wine when sitting at dinner among "a jolly set," beside a classmate, since our taking it might cause him to stumble and fall.

What have we to say to this view of the law of love? Does it fully and fairly express its meaning? We think not. If young people find it wise and good to abstain for 21 years, no valid reason can be given why they should do otherwise for the rest of their lives. It would be manifest folly to throw away the habits of restraint and power of self-government thus acquired and adopt a new course. And we are unable to discover any reason from common sense, science or scripture why a person should not do his utmost to have his "brain clear" and his "judgment calm," not occasionally or when rendering special services, but *always*, every day of his life; and this, it is acknowledged in the statement cited, is the effect of abstinence from wine and strong drink—surely a good rule, therefore, to follow constantly. The Rechabites were specially honored of God for having obeyed their father's command binding them perpetually to this rule; but had that command involved anything morally wrong and injurious they could not have received the Divine approval for obeying it, for that would be to commend them for wrong doing (Jer. 45). John the Baptist came neither eating nor drinking, and yet Jesus declared him to be, as a prophet—a revealer of God's mind and a teacher of the people—second to none ever born of women. He did not denounce him, as the fashion now is in some quarters with regard to total abstainers, as narrow, unsympathetic, and a misinterpreter of scripture, because of his abstemiousness. He freely accorded him the liberty which he exercised of limiting himself to the simple diet of locusts and wild honey.

But what of our being among a "jolly set" at dinner? We are told that we should then abstain lest our example should injure them. Their presence limits the liberty we might otherwise enjoy. Very good. But how can we separate the force of our example from such persons at any time, especially if we publish in the pulpit, on the platform, and in the newspapers our determination to be respectable moderate drinkers? Is