

WINE AND THE BIBLE.

Perversion of Scripture.

AMONG civilized nations, the Bible is almost universally admitted to be at least an admirable code of morals, even by those who do not regard it as an inspired book. An authority held in such high esteem would necessarily have very great influence in molding the judgments of men and forming their opinions. It is for the purpose of gaining the support of this generally accepted authority that the adherents of any special theory or doctrine appeal to the Scriptures for testimony in favor of the same. It need not be at all surprising, then, that the language of Holy Writ should often be grossly perverted by enthusiasts and unscrupulous persons in their attempts to find for their pet theories the needed indorsement. Illustrations of this use of the Scriptures are very abundant. A large class of modern agitators who call themselves "social reformers," and have made themselves notorious by the laxity of morals advocated and practiced by them, claim to find in the Word of God license for their immorality. Polyg-

amists, likewise, appeal to inspiration in support of their unchristian practice. Only a few years ago, American slavery received from thousands of pulpits a most vigorous support, which claimed to have the sanction of divine authority.

At the present time there is a powerful party which claims that the use of fermented, or intoxicating, liquors is permitted and even sanctioned by the Bible. This party is headed by a few eminent scholars and clergymen, who are chiefly supported by a promiscuous throng of respectable moderate drinkers, rich rumsellers, and gutter drunkards.

If it can be proven that the Bible favors the use of intoxicating drinks in any degree, then the infidel has placed in his hands a most powerful weapon with which to attack the authenticity and sacredness of the Scriptures. If, on the other hand, it can be shown that there is no such conflict between science and common sense and inspiration, then the difficulty vanishes. A careful examination of the subject will convince any candid man that the support which the advocates of the use of liquor claim to derive from the Bible is wholly imaginary; and that the use which is made of the Scriptures in defense of intemperance is a most flagrant perversion of the language and import of inspiration.

The Bible in Harmony with Science.

Inspiration, true science, and sound common sense always agree. Any apparent conflict arises either from a misunderstanding of the meaning of the language employed, or from an imperfect knowledge of the scientific facts supposed to necessitate a disagreement. Science says distinctly and unequivocally, All fermented drinks contain alcohol; alcohol is a poison *under all circumstances and in all doses*. The decision of science is sustained by that of reason; for common sense teaches that a substance with properties like those possessed by alcohol can be nothing else than poisonous. If it is true that the Bible teaches that alcohol—in the form of wine, or otherwise—is good and harmless, then it will be made to appear that inspiration is less wise than reason and science; that man, the creature, has outstripped the Creator in knowledge.

Such a conclusion, though correctly drawn from the premises, is too absurd for belief by one who has a modicum of faith in inspiration; and its manifest falsity would seem to be sufficient to fully expose the weakness of those who would make the Bible responsible for intemperance. The utter worthlessness of all arguments in favor of the use of alcoholic drinks founded on the Bible becomes still more apparent by a careful examination of the character of the wines mentioned in the Bible, and

a consideration in detail of the texts which are claimed to be favorable to the use of alcoholic liquors.

Two Kinds of Wine Recognized in the Bible.

It is undoubtedly true that intoxicating liquors are mentioned in the Bible; and it is equally true that a kind of liquor or wine is recognized and often mentioned which is not intoxicating. Ancient historians preserve the same distinction, making frequent reference to intoxicating wine and its effects, and also to unintoxicating wine and its wholesome properties.

Unintoxicating Wine. The intoxicating property of wine is due to the alcohol which it contains. Wine which contains no alcohol is unintoxicating. Alcohol is produced only by fermentation. Wine which has not undergone fermentation, then, is unintoxicating, since it contains no alcohol. All that is required to preserve wine free from alcohol, and thus from intoxicating properties, is to prevent fermentation. That the ancients were acquainted with several modes of preventing fermentation, is clearly shown by reference to history. Ancient historians describe four principal methods of effecting this, which were as follows:—

1. *Boiling.* In order that sweet fluids should ferment, it is necessary that a certain amount of water should be present. If a portion of the water is removed, fermentation cannot take place. This is easily effected by boiling; and this method was very commonly practiced among the ancients. The fresh juice of the grape was boiled until a considerable portion of the water was evaporated. Sometimes the boiling was continued until the juice

acquired the consistency of sirup. This same method is employed now in the preservation of cider, and the sweet juice of the maple-tree and the sugar-cane, which would speedily ferment and produce alcohol if left to themselves, but can be preserved any length of time in the form of sirup or molasses.

According to Pliny and Virgil, the Romans preserved wine in this way. Pliny mentions wine which had been preserved in this manner and was perfectly sweet, and of the consistency of honey, though two centuries old.

Aristotlê states that "the wine of Arcadia was so thick that it was necessary to scrape it from the skin bottles in which it was contained, and to dissolve the scrapings in water."

"The Mishna [a collection of ancient Jewish writings held in the highest esteem by the Jews] states that the Jews were in the habit of using boiled wine."—*Kitto*.

2. *Filtration*. The fermentation which develops alcohol in a sweet fluid by decomposing its sugar, is largely dependent upon the presence of albumen and certain impurities. These were carefully removed by repeated filtration, after which the purified juice was placed in bottles or casks which were carefully sealed, and buried in the earth or submerged in water, and thus kept cool and sweet.

3. *Subsidence*. The ingredients of fresh juice which aid in exciting fermentation were also removed by keeping the juice sufficiently cool to prevent fermentation until they had settled to the bottom, when the clear liquid was poured off and carefully bottled as after filtration.

4. *Fumigation*. Sulphur is a powerful antiseptic.

tic. The ancients were familiar with this fact, and often preserved the juice of the grape from fermentation by subjecting it to the fumes of sulphur, or by adding to it the yolk of eggs, mustard seed, or other substances containing sulphur. The same methods are now in use for preserving cider.

The fresh juice of the grape or any other sweet fruit, when treated in any one of the above ways, is entirely free from any intoxicating property, and is not only harmless, but palatable and nutritious. Says Prof. M. Stuart, "Facts show that the ancients not only preserved their wine unfermented, but regarded it as of a higher flavor and finer quality than fermented wine."

Intoxicating Wine. As already stated, the intoxicating element of wine is alcohol, which is produced by the decomposition of sugar in the process of fermentation. Alcohol can be made from any juice which contains sugar. The ancients made intoxicating drinks from millet, dates, beans, palm juice, pears, figs, pomegranates, and other fruits, besides the grape. These liquors were known to the Jews, and are frequently referred to in the Scriptures. In Prov. 23:31, we have a striking reference to the fermentation of wine, as follows, according to Dr. Kitto's translation: "Look not thou upon the wine when it is turbid, when it giveth its bubble in the cup, when it moveth itself upright."

Scriptural Distinctions of Wines.

In the English version of the Scriptures, the distinctions made in the original are often obscured or wholly lost. This is especially true in the present instance. In the Hebrew, the lan-

guage in which the Old Testament was written, different kinds of wine are indicated by different words, which are all rendered in the English translation by the one word wine. The principal words thus employed are, יַיִן, *yayin*, שֵׁכָר, *shekar*, and תִּירוֹשׁ, *tirosh*.

Yayin, according to the Biblical critics, refers to the juice of the grape in any form. It might be sweet or sour, fermented or unfermented.

Shekar, or *shechar*, was the term applied to any sweet juice derived from any other source besides the grape. It is sometimes translated honey. It usually refers to the juice of the palm-tree or of its fruit, the date; and like *yayin*, it included the fermented as well as the unfermented condition of the juice.

Tirosh was applied to the ripe fruit of the vine, and to the fresh juice of the grape before fermentation had begun. It is often translated "new wine."

In brief, then, *yayin* means fermented or unfermented wine or juice of grapes; *shekar* means fermented or unfermented wine or juice of the palm-tree, of dates or other sweet fruit. *Tirosh* means the sweet unfermented juice of the grape, or new wine.

The Hebrews used the term *yayin* for wine made from grapes, in any of its stages, just as we apply the term cider to the fresh juice of the apple, or to the same juice after it has fermented or become "hard" by age. The Greek οἶνος, *oinos*, corresponds exactly with the Hebrew *yayin*.

The foregoing is certainly sufficient to show beyond all chance for reasonable doubt that there are two kinds of wine recognized in the Bible, one of

which was sweet, unfermented, and unintoxicating, and the other fermented and intoxicating. The same term is often used for both kinds. If, then, we find the Bible in some instances speaking of wine in terms of commendation, and in others condemning it in the most forcible manner, would it not be most reasonable to suppose that in those cases in which wine is commended, the unfermented kind is referred to? and in those in which it is condemned, that which had undergone fermentation is meant? Any one who has confidence in the inspired character of the Scriptures will have no hesitancy in answering in the affirmative.

We are now prepared to consider some of the texts in which wine is mentioned.

EXAMINATION OF TEXTS.

1. Texts Which Are Said to Favor the Use of Wine.

"In the holy place shalt thou cause the strong wine to be poured unto the Lord for a drink-offering." Num. 28 : 7.

Whatever semblance of argument may be founded upon this text loses all its force upon reference to the original. The term which is here rendered "strong wine" is *shekar*, which might with much greater propriety be translated "sweet wine," since that is the literal meaning of the word. It is so rendered by Kitto, who says that the article referred to in this text was a sweet juice derived from the palm-tree or any sweet fruit other than the grape. That this position is correct is conclusively proven by the testimony of an eminent Jewish rabbi, who says of the Jews, "In their

oblations and libations, both public and private, they employed the fruit of the vine, that is, fresh grapes and unfermented grape juice." "Fermentation is to them always a symbol of corruption."

According to Plutarch, even the Egyptians used only unfermented wine in sacrifices.

"Wine which cheereth God and man." Judges 9 : 13.

The wine referred to here cannot be the fermented kind, for the original word so rendered is *tiros*, which, as previously shown, was always applied to grapes themselves or to the fresh juice. Some learned Bible commentators hold that the word refers exclusively to the whole ripe fruit. Travelers in wine-producing countries assert that the fresh juice of the grape has a peculiarly refreshing effect when taken cool, and that any quantity can be drunk without any of the effects of fermented wine.

"He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man; that he may bring forth food out of the earth; and wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine," etc. Ps. 104 : 14, 15.

The wine referred to here must be of the un-intoxicating kind, for it is represented as being a natural product, like grass, the herb, and oil. Fermented wine is not a natural result of growth.

The Creator never made alcohol in any form. Not a single plant contains it. It is the product of decay and rottenness. As remarked in reference to the preceding text, new wine is a most refreshing and cheering beverage.

"Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish." Prov. 31 : 6.

Even this text is sometimes used as an apology

for the use of liquor, though at the most it could be made to excuse the use of strong drink only in cases of threatened death. An understanding of the real meaning of the text clears up all difficulty attaching to it.

The term, "strong drink," had no reference to distilled liquors, as in present usage. The art of distillation was unknown to the ancients, not being discovered until the ninth century of the present era. Strong drink, then, did not mean a liquor strong in alcohol, like brandy or rum. It referred to a liquor sometimes called "mixed wine," which was a compound of wine with worm-wood, myrrh, nux vomica, and narcotic drugs, which rendered it very intoxicating. It was customary, among ancient nations, to administer this strong or intoxicating liquor to criminals who were about to be executed, in order to stupefy them and thus mitigate their pain. In obedience to the common custom, a draught of this powerful opiate was offered to the Saviour, as he hung upon the cross. It was to this well-known custom that the wise man had reference when he said, "Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish," just as the surgeon would say, Give chloroform to a patient about to undergo a surgical operation.

"The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say Behold a man gluttonous, and a wine-bibber," etc. Matt. 11 : 19.

It will not be denied that Christ drank wine ; but there is not the slightest evidence that he ever drank a single drop of fermented wine. Sweet wines which had been preserved by some one of the methods previously described, were by many persons drank to excess, just as food may be taken in excessive quantity. Such persons were called

wine-bibbers, though they could not be called drunkards. But there is no evidence that Christ belonged to this class. The charge was made by wicked men, his enemies, who also accused him of gluttony, and on another occasion said, "He hath a devil." Was he a glutton? If not—and he certainly was not—how can it be claimed that he was a wine-bibber? The same authority which would prove him to be a wine-bibber, would also make him a glutton and one possessed of a devil.

"When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was (but the servants which drew the water knew), the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, and saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse; but thou has kept the good wine until now." John. 2:9, 10.

a. If the wine referred to above was of an intoxicating nature, then the brewer and the distiller have, as they claim, a sufficient apology for their nefarious business; for in manufacturing alcohol with which to poison their fellow-men, ruin their constitutions, squander their property, and render their children homeless and their wives widows—in all this work of evil, they are only imitating the example of their divine Master! Such a position is too unreasonable to be tenable; for the work of rum savors more of a Satanic than of a divine origin. No; it is impossible for any one but the veriest infidel to regard it consistent for the Saviour of mankind to lend his influence, his example, in favor of a practice which even human wisdom can see is an unmitigated curse to the race.

b. But how was this miracle wrought? It was simply by a shortening of the natural process by which wine is produced. The grape-vine sucks up

water through its rootlets, and by a slow and mysterious process continuing through several months finally converts it into wine in its clusters of luscious fruit. Man obtains it by simply pressing it from the grapes. Christ, by his infinite wisdom, by his knowledge of the intricate processes carried on by the plant, for he made the grape-vine, performed the same work in a moment. The product was the same as though it had been produced in the ordinary way. Is the product of the vine, new wine, fresh grape juice, fermented or intoxicating? No; it is unfermented and wholesome. The grape-vine cannot produce alcohol. The Creator has not formed it in any plant. In simply shortening the natural process of wine-making, then, Christ produced not fermented but unfermented wine.

c. Again, the governor of the feast pronounced the wine produced by Christ the best, saying, "Thou hast kept the *good* wine until now." If we can ascertain which kind of wine was considered *best* among the Jews, we shall be able to settle this question with absolute certainty. An appeal to recognized authority will do this.

Says Dr. Jacobus, "Those were considered the best wines which were least strong."

Prof. M. Stuart says that the ancients regarded unfermented wine "as of a higher flavor and finer quality than fermented wine."

Kitto says of wine which had been preserved from fermentation by boiling, "Such was esteemed [by the Jews] the richest and the best wine."

There can be no doubt, in view of such testimony, that the wine which Christ made, and which the governor of the feast pronounced the

best, was the unfermented kind, which was commonly considered the best among the Jews.

d. Lastly, Dr. Isaacs, an eminent Jewish rabbi, bears the following testimony: "The Jews do not, in their feasts for sacred purposes, *including the marriage feasts*, ever use any kind of fermented drinks."

The Passover Wine.—Was the wine used by Christ and his disciples at the passover supper, just before the crucifixion, fermented or unfermented?

This is an interesting question; for all Christendom have for hundreds of years acted upon the supposition that the wine employed was fermented, and have used this kind of wine in the sacrament. If we can ascertain with certainty the character of the wine employed by the Jews in the passover feast, we shall be able to settle this question satisfactorily. Can we do so? The following facts seem to make the matter sufficiently clear:—

a. The process of fermentation is one of putrefaction or decay. The ancients understood this, and were also acquainted with the fact that fermentation is occasioned by leaven or ferment.

b. Not only leavened or fermented *bread* was forbidden during the passover, but all fermented *things*. Says Kitto, "All fermented *substances* were prohibited during the paschal feast of the Jews, and during the succeeding seven days." Hence, the passover was called the "feast of the unleavened," the word bread being not found in the original.

c. If the body of Christ was necessarily represented by bread which was absolutely free from ferment or leaven, surely his blood—"which is

the life"—should be represented by wine equally free from putrefactive elements.

In view of the above facts, we are certainly justified in the belief that the communion wine used by our Lord was wholly free from alcohol.

"For every creature of God is good." 1 Tim. 4 : 4.

Fermented wine is not a "creature of God." It is the poisonous product of a destructive process, and not the result of a creative act, so that it can in no sense be called a "creature of God." Unfermented wine, the fresh juice of the grape, is certainly good and wholesome, and it may with propriety be called a "creature of God;" for it is one of the products of his hands, as shown by Ps. 104 : 14, 15.

"Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake." 1 Tim. 5 : 23.

This text is regarded by moderate drinkers as their stronghold. Whenever reasoned with on the subject, they quote Paul's advice to Timothy and apply the same to themselves irrespective of the state of their stomachs. In the great majority of cases, the stomach makes no complaint until after the habit of wine-taking has been formed. This fact alone is quite significant, but we would invite the attention of those who seek consolation from this text to the following points:—

a. The fact that it was necessary for Paul to advise Timothy to "drink no longer water, but wine," proves conclusively that Timothy was not in the habit of drinking any kind of wine.

b. Paul recommended wine as a medicine for Timothy on account of some weakness of his stomach, and other infirmities. This would not be

recommending it for the habitual use of well persons.

c. The wine which Paul recommended was such as would be good for Timothy's stomach, else he would not have advised him to use it. Alcoholic drinks are notoriously bad for even a healthy stomach. They interfere with digestion, and are one of the most prolific causes of dyspepsia. Unfermented wine, on the other hand, has just the opposite properties. It is a most wholesome article, and was much esteemed by the ancients for the very purpose for which Paul recommended wine to Timothy. The conclusion is irresistible, then, that the kind of wine recommended by Paul was the unfermented juice of the grape. This position is confirmed by Athenæus, who recommended sweet wine "as being very good for the stomach." Paul certainly could not have recommended fermented wine to Timothy, for Pliny, Philo, and Columella, in speaking of fermented wines, say that they *produced* "headaches, dropsy, madness, and *stomach complaints*." Who will believe that Paul advised Timothy to use the very article that would cause his stomach to become diseased if it were not already so?

"Not given to much wine." 1 Tim. 3 : 8; Titus 2 : 8.

Moderate drinkers claim to find in these and similar texts ample support for their practice. They argue that Paul did not condemn the use of wine entirely, but only its excessive use. In 1 Tim. 3 : 3, Paul says, "Not given to wine," no qualifying word being used. The other expressions evidently do not mean that the use of intoxicating wine in any degree would be allowable. If such a rule of interpretation as moderate drink-

ers adopt were followed in explaining other similar expressions, we should have some very strange doctrines taught. For example, we read, in Eccl. 7:17, "Be not *over-much* wicked." According to the rule referred to, we must understand this to mean that a man may sin in moderation if he is careful to avoid becoming excessively wicked. Such a doctrine would be fatal to Christianity, and obnoxious to reason. Any degree of indulgence in sin is wrong. Any degree of indulgence in intoxicating drinks is also wrong.

We may allow a literal interpretation of the text by reference to the fact that even unfermented wine may be used in excess, just as food may be indulged in to a gluttonous extent. Such use of wine may have been referred to by the apostle.

Let us now consider,

2. Those Texts which Discountenance the Use of Wine and Fermented Liquors.

As already remarked, having shown that two kinds of wine are recognized in the Bible, one of which was wholesome, the other harmful—though often referred to by the same terms—it is most reasonable to suppose that when wine is spoken of in terms of commendation, that which was wholesome is referred to; and when the opposite terms are employed, the contrary kind of wine is meant. This principle should be borne in mind in considering the following scriptures, which are a few of those which condemn the use of wine and strong drink:—

"Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." Prov. 20:1.

No language could better describe the real character of wine and strong drink than the words of

the wise man. "Wine is a mocker;" or in other words, a deceiver. It deludes the drinker with the fancy that it does him good, while it is all the time sapping his life and leading him to certain ruin.

"Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them." Isa. 5 : 11.

There is no solace here for the drunkard. In addition to the immediate ills which he brings upon himself by his revellings, the Almighty has pronounced a woe upon him.

"For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty." Prov. 23 : 21.

Every one has seen the truth of this scripture repeatedly exemplified in the downward career of the drinker, who sinks from bad to worse, squanders his property, and not infrequently dies at last in the poor-house or on the public highway.

"Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to drink mixed wine." Prov. 23 : 29, 30.

The truthful picture which inspiration has here drawn of the real experience of the drunkard is in strong contrast with the glowing descriptions of delightful exhilaration and pleasurable sensations which the tempter gives as the effects of alcohol. No one will dispute the accuracy of the inspired Word who has carefully observed the effects of wine.

"Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder." Prov. 23 : 31, 32.

The wise man here gives a very precise description of fermented wine, and then admonishes us that we should not even look upon it, much less taste it. Surely, this is countenancing the most rigid total abstinence. How can moderate drinkers who believe in the divine origin of the Bible, continue to indulge in even the mildest fermented liquor, in the face of this admonition?

“But judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way.” Rom. 14 : 13.

This text does not mention wine, but it is a very powerful rebuke to those moderate drinkers who maintain that it is only the excess of wine that is harmful, and that so long as they indulge moderately, no one has the right to question the propriety of their course. Some persons may possess sufficient will power to enable them to continue a course of moderate tippling for many years; but their example in using wine will lead to perdition many less resolute persons who have likewise begun as moderate drinkers, but, lacking power to control the appetite for drink, end their career in drunkards’ graves. The Bible makes the moderate drinker in a great degree responsible for the sins and excesses of his weaker brother who fell through attempting to follow an example which he lacked the power to fully imitate.

Here are the qualities of good and bad wine contrasted :—

BAD WINE.

Fermented.
Contains alcohol.
Poisonous.
Intoxicating.
Produced by decay.
A symbol of wrath.

GOOD WINE.

Unfermented.
Contains no alcohol.
Wholesome.
Unintoxicating.
Produced by natural growth.
A symbol of blessing.

"Wine is a mocker."
 "Look not thou upon the
 wine when it is red."
 "Strong drink is raging."
 "Poison of dragons."
 "Cruel venom of asps."
 "Biteth like a serpent and
 stingeth like an adder."
 "Woe unto him that giveth
 his neighbor drink, that put-
 test thy bottle to him."

"Cheereth God and man."
 "Use a little wine for thy
 stomach's sake."

"Maketh the heart glad."

"And he took the cup, and
 gave thanks, and gave it to
 them saying, Drink ye all of it."

Use of Wine by Bible Characters.

If it is still persisted that wine of an intoxicating nature was used by some of the most eminent characters of the Bible, we have only to glance at the effects to see the absurdity of making such a course an example to be followed. It will be found that the effects were notably evil whenever any effects are recorded.

Noah's Drunkenness.—"And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard: and he drank of the wine and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent." Gen. 9: 20, 21. This is the very first mention of wine in the Bible. Its effects upon Noah show that it was intoxicating. It so muddled the brain of this great and good man that he lost all sense of propriety, and fell into a state of insensibility in his tent, in a condition of indecent exposure. This unfortunate occurrence also became the occasion of national misfortune to one line of Noah's descendants, through the disrespect of one of his sons. No doubt the first effects of the wine was exhilarating. Doubtless it dispelled from Noah's mind all anxiety about the future prosperity of his extensive plantation, which was to be repopled, resubdued, and tilled by himself and his descendants. But that it

also blunted those other finer sensibilities of his nature, which should always be acute and active, is quite apparent. Surely, then, there can be nothing here to recommend the use of wine.

Lot's Shame.—The next undisputed mention of wine is in Gen. 19: 34–36. In this instance, the wine employed was doubtless of the kind called “mixed wine,” which possessed most powerful intoxicating properties. The effects in this case were anything but such as would recommend the use of wine; for they led the righteous Lot—who had dwelt in Sodom so many years, surrounded with wickedness, yet preserving his integrity—to commit a crime even worse than that for purposing which the lecherous Sodomites were smitten with blindness.

Nadab and Abihu.—These two sons of Aaron, while under the influence of drink, were so presumptuous as to directly disobey the express command of the Almighty by offering strange fire upon the sacred altar. In consequence of this daring act of disobedience, they were suddenly smitten with death by the hand of the Lord, who evidently designed by this summary act of justice to render them an example to succeeding generations. This is a most striking illustration of the influence of alcohol to render the mind incapable of distinguishing between sacred and common things. It has an unmistakable influence to blunt the moral sensibilities of men.

It certainly will not be argued that in any of these instances the use of fermented, or intoxicating wine was beneficial.

Bible Teetotalers.

While there is no evidence in the Bible that the use of intoxicating wine ever did, or ever could do, any one the slightest possible good, we have the illustrious example of some of the most eminent Bible characters as teetotalers.

The Israelites.—During the sojourn of the children of Israel in Egypt, they were, undoubtedly, total abstainers, since their masters, the Egyptians, at that time made no use of any fermented liquor. During their journey in the wilderness, the Israelites were of necessity abstainers, their only drink being the purest water from the rock. To this long discipline of temperance might be largely attributed that hardihood, fortitude, and bravery, which enabled them to sweep out with astonishing rapidity the enervated nations of Palestine, who had wasted their energies by intemperate and riotous living, and were thus easily vanquished, though protected by strong walls and fortresses.

The Nazarites.—At the time of the establishment of the ceremonial law, there was also instituted an order of teetotalers. They were called Nazarites. They dedicated themselves wholly to the service of God; and one of the conditions of the dedication was total abstinence from the use of wine. To insure a perfect observance of the pledge, all wine was prohibited, whether fermented or unfermented. Many of the finest personages of the Bible were members of this class. It is quite probable that Daniel and his three brethren were Nazarites, since they refused to drink the king's wine, preferring pulse and water.

Samson.—This Hebrew Hercules was a teetotaler from his birth. None of his muscles were weakened by alcoholic degeneration. None of his nerves were paralyzed by stimulants. He was a Nazarite, and is a fair illustration of the incompatibility of alcohol with strength. Milo, the famous Greek who rivaled Samson in his prodigious strength, was likewise a total abstainer as well as a vegetarian.

The Rechabites.—These were a sort of family temperance society. They abstained from the use of wine because commanded to do so by their father; and the Lord commended them for their constancy. If the sons of the present age were as careful to follow the commands of their fathers as were those of ancient times, there would certainly be fewer drunkards. But drink deprives a youth of natural affection. It leads him to trample upon the authority of his father, and treat with contempt the prayers and tears of a loving mother. What a terrible monster is drink!

The Essenes.—The class of Jews known by this name were very temperate in all their habits. They were strict teetotalers, carefully avoiding the slightest indulgence in fermented drinks. They were noted for their rigorous piety. It is thought by many that John the Baptist was a member of this class. He was a Nazarite, at least.

Timothy must have been a total abstainer, since it was necessary for Paul to advise him to take a little wine (sweet wine) for his "stomach's sake." There would have been no propriety in such advice had he been in the habit of using wine. History, as well as the Bible, furnishes numerous examples of temperance. Pythagoras, one of the most renowned philosophers of ancient times, was an ad-

vocate of total abstinence. Neither himself nor his followers made use of wine. Wine was prohibited to those who were training for competition at the national games. It appears evident, indeed, that there have always been societies analagous to temperance societies, or organizations opposed to the use of intoxicating drinks. There are, even at the present day, barbarous tribes the individuals of which are strict abstainers, the use of wine being prohibited by their religion.

The relation of the Bible to temperance may be summed up in the following brief conclusions to which the evidence presented must lead us:—

1. The use of intoxicating drinks is not commanded in the Bible.

2. The use of fermented wine is not recommended.

3. Its use is not countenanced either as a harmless practice or a necessary evil.

4. Total abstinence is nowhere condemned.

5. Many texts commend abstinence, and some command it.

6. There is nothing in the Scriptures which disagrees with the principles of total abstinence, and nothing which sustains moderate drinking.

7. Hence, the Bible agrees with science and common sense in denouncing the use of intoxicating liquors, and commending temperance.

In the face of these facts, can any person who has a particle of faith in the inspiration of the Scriptures, and in man's accountability to his Creator, continue to indulge in the use of wine *in any degree whatever?*

We cannot see how it would be possible for an individual to do so and still preserve "a conscience void of offense."

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