

THE CANADA TEMPERANCE ADVOCATE,

DEVOTED TO

TEMPERANCE, EDUCATION, AGRICULTURE AND NEWS.

VOL. X.

AUGUST 1, 1844.

No. 15.

THE WINE QUESTION.

[Many have indulged in severe animadversions, on those who are opposed to the use of intoxicating wine at the Lord's Supper; and many more shrunk from the discussion or even the consideration of the question with a sensitiveness which though growing out of excellent motives and feelings, is nearly allied to superstition; but it is rare indeed to find any one willing to support by argument the present practice, as contradistinguished from the use of the fruit of the vine in an unfermented state. It is therefore an opportunity not often to be met with which we now enjoy of laying before the readers of the *Advocate*, a series of papers on both sides of the question, which it will be seen were originally intended for and up to a certain point published in the *Harbinger*, a religious journal of this city. We would add that "Subscriber," or any other who is disposed to defend the present custom, will have a fair field in the *Advocate*, to lay his views and arguments before the public, provided they be compressed within reasonable limits; and we cannot but think that whilst many pious men's minds are agitated on the subject it is the duty of such as believe they have reasons for continuing the use of alcoholic wine to bring them forward, that if valid, all scruples may be removed, and if not the practice may be given up.—Ed.]

No. 1.—FOR THE HARBINGER.

MR. EDITOR.—To those whose minds may be unsettled as to the propriety of the use of wine at the Lord's Table, as a symbol of his blood shed for the sins of the world, and who would desire some substitute, from the idea that the wine used by our Saviour, was not what is considered such at the present day, the following extracts from "*Perkin's Residence in Persia*" may not be uninteresting, as showing what is regarded as *wine* by eastern nations. Its insertion in the columns of the *Harbinger*, will oblige.

A SUBSCRIBER.

"Inquiries have often been proposed to me on the subject of the wines in Persia; and I may here, as appropriately as any where, state the facts in the case. The juice of the grape is used in three ways in Persia, when simply expressed, it is called *sabeel*, i. e. sweet liquor. It is not drunk in this state, nor regarded as fit for use, any more than new unsettled cider at the press in America; nor is it even called wine until it is fermented.

A second and very extensive use of the juice of the grape is the syrup made from boiling it from this sweet state, which resembles our molasses, and is used in the same way for sweetening, but is never used as a drink. This is in fact neither more or less than oriental molasses. The third use of the juice of the grape is the distillation into arrack or Asiatic brandy.

The wines of Persia are in general much lighter than those of Europe, but they are still always intoxicating. In making these statements I throw down no gauntlet for controversy on the much vexed wine question, but wish simply to communicate information; were I to hazard the expression of personal feeling and opinion on this general subject, it would be that of deep regret for any approximation in the tenacity of the age to the removal of the sacred landmarks of Scripture Institution.—Page 236.

No. 2.—TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,—As you have admitted a communication on what may be called the alcoholic side of the wine question, into your last number, I trust you will think it only fair to admit a reply. Your correspondent relies on an extract from *Perkin's Residence in Persia*, to the effect that the juice of the grape is extensively used both as a fermented liquor—in which state only it

is called wine—and as a syrup made by merely boiling it, in which state it is used in the same way as molasses with us for sweetening, but never as a drink. Now this last is precisely the mode in which very many of the ancient wines were used, merely to mix with water, not as a drink by themselves. The common quantity of water in which the wine was diluted was six parts to one, but some wines were so thick (i. e. not only boiled to a syrup but to a paste) that they served for twenty times their own weight, or bulk of water.

If the case of Persia be at all analogous to that of Palestine in Scripture times, and I see no reason to doubt it, for however language and names may change the natural character of a country and its productions generally continue the same. If it be analogous, I say, then the Jews must have had the two distinct preparations of the juice of the grape described above; but what was the latter called? Surely an article so extensively used must have been sometimes spoken about, and if so, will any one be so kind as point out the name employed to designate it. If there be no distinct name, is it not reasonable to infer that it is to be found included in the general term wine, which is to be understood according to circumstances, either to mean the first or second of the preparations described. And this is all we contend for. But even assuming that the word wine was always applied to the fermented juice, an admission by no means warranted by evidence, still that word is no where applied to the symbol of Christ's blood, so that unless it could be proved that the fruit of the vine was never used except in a fermented state, this assumption, so far from making in favor of the common practice, would be directly against it.

If the Holy Spirit, in describing the article used as a symbol of Christ's blood, avoids the word "wine," which might be understood to mean intoxicating drink, and uses the phrase "fruit of the vine," which we have no reason to believe ever implied intoxicating qualities, it surely affords presumptive evidence, to say the least, that the unfermented preparation is intended; but if, in addition, we bear in mind the law of the passover, by which every thing leavened (i. e. fermented) was excluded from the houses of Jews when the Lord's Supper was instituted, a law which the Jews still observe, by using the unfermented fruit of the vine at the passover, surely the proof in favor of that article, as the emblem to be used at the Lord's Supper, amounts as nearly to demonstration as the nature of the case will permit.

I need not reply to the gratuitous and very uncharitable charge of "removing Scripture landmarks," brought against those whose chief desire is to exalt the authority of Scripture above that of tradition and custom. All my difficulties, which I confess are great, would be obviated by a single good argument from Scripture, in favor of the present practice. Would it not then be kind in any of its numerous and learned supporters, to bring forward such an argument, if it exists, and if there be none such, would it not be Christian duty in them to consent to relieve those whose consciences are troubled in partaking of the intoxicating cup? I wait a reply.

I am dear Sir, your most obedient servant,

JOHN DOUGALL.

No. 3.—FOR THE HARBINGER.

MR. EDITOR.—In the last number of your excellent periodical, a communication appears from Mr. John Dougall, commenting upon the extract from "*Perkin's Residence in Persia*," inserted in the *Harbinger* for April. My object in communicating the extract alluded to was to show from *Facts* in regard to the customs of Persia and other oriental countries, that the term wine was only applicable to the fermented juice of the grape, that this is the only article in general use as a beverage, and that the syrup of grapes was used in the same manner as molasses or other syrups with us. Now, while Mr. Dougall admits this to be the case, he goes on to state that the "latter was precisely the