

doubtedly partook at ordinary meals or on festive occasions—that wine they say was not alcoholic or fermented.

Mr. Chairman, will you reflect one moment, that all this wine, from the beginning of the Bible to the end of it, was intoxicating, and how could it intoxicate if it was not fermented, and if it was fermented it was alcoholic, for fermentation is the mother—the fountain of alcohol. That particular wine that was made at Cana—what is said of that?—Take it in connection with other passages. They say to the bride-groom “every man brings forth his best wine first;” when the taste is blunted by satiety “then that which is worse; but thou has kept the good wine” (that is the wine drawn from the water pots) “till the last.” Now what was the *best* wine? The same Scripture says, “no man when he has tasted the old wine straight way desires the new, for he says the old is better.” The old wine was the *best* then, as it has been in the estimation of all men who have used it in all ages of the world—a fact just as well known as the fact that heat proceeds from the sun.

Well sir, then the cautions against the excess of wine. There is not a caution in the Scripture against *fermented* wine or against *alcoholic* wine, but against *WINE*, because there was no other but fermented wine. Well, sir, I am told by another gentleman not of this House nor of this place, but it comes from a source for which I have the highest respect and veneration, and am told that *wine* is sometimes used in the Scriptures as an emblem of wrath, in such passages as “the wine of the wrath of God poured out without mixture,” and “in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red, and he shall pour it out and all the earth shall drink it.” Now what is a fair, true rule of the exposition of these apparent inconsistencies. I say this is, Mr. Chairman. While there was a *true* wine, and a *true* vine, that made a nutritious, wholesome and palatable beverage, that was a blessing, and that God blest and Christ consecrated throughout, there was also a *wild* grape; its clusters were poisonous, it was red, it was fiery, it was that which the young Prophets gathered when Elisha changed the poisonous ingredient of the pot. They brought in this wild vine, and it was boiled, and it was poisonous. Well now, sir, take this key and you will find it turns in all the folds of the sacred pages; and you take the other exposition, and you are involved in inextricable difficulties and absurdities. When men are warned against wine, as they frequently are, and when it is used as an emblem of displeasure or wrath, it is either this excess of its use that they are warned against it is this wine, this *red, fiery, poisonous* cup that was set before the mind of the Jew, ever in contrast with the clusters of Canaan.

Why, sir, I remember very well when this wine question first came up. It is just twenty years ago, in the year 1833, in Philadelphia. I was the first national convention that ever discussed this wine question. I was present and there was not a single man on that floor, to my recollection, that pretended that the use of wine was a sin, or that it was not a blessing. At any rate one of the earliest and most distinguished champions of the temperance cause in this city made this remark in my hearing: “I don’t consider that it is wrong to use wine, but I think the less a man uses it, the better his influence will be, and therefore it is better to let it alone.” That was the sole argument, used according to my recollection. Well now, sir, I say that in the Old Testament and the New Testament; the Saviour himself, in a way that cannot be mistaken, has consecrated and pronounced wine a blessing. Said he, “I am the true vine.” Would He compare himself, the light of the world and the fountain of its spiritual life, to that which was a curse?

We have it consecrated, in that last solemn hour when he was with his disciples for the last time, a memorial of his love to the world—a poisonous cup! and yet that he did so there is no more doubt in my soul than that you and I are here to-night. To me, sir it is sacrilegious imposition to stamp with the brand of infamy what God has blessed, and Christ consecrated. The crown has been taken from the head of the Saviour in his own house, and at his own table, and placed upon the head of Mahomet. Wine is to be looked on, and spoken of, and treated, as a blessing. A man may leave, may deny himself of it