

38; Mark 7: 3; John 3: 25. John is an accurate reporter, he mentions number, material and size. Firkin—i. e. "Four-kin"—the fourth part of a barrel. About nine gallons. The six-pitchers together would hold between 108 and 162 gallons. This was a very large quantity of wine. God's blessings never come in stinted measure. Wine was the ordinary beverage of the country. Whether this was intoxicating or not will always be a matter of discussion. The duty of Christians to abstain from alcoholic drinks in our day is not affected by the decision of the point. Granting that it was intoxicating, it does not follow that Jesus would approve of the use of wine now when so much harm is done by it. At what point the water became wine, we are not informed. The natural inference is that the whole was changed. *Lympha modesta Deum vidit et erubuit.* "The modest water saw its God and blushed." 8. **The governor**—lit. "the tablemaster." He was the chief of the servants, and it belonged to his office to taste the meats and drinks before they were placed on the table. The view that the "governor of the feast" was a president, or chairman, chosen by the guests from among themselves, is advocated by Alford, Schaff, and others. Such a dignitary could more appropriately use jocular freedom in remonstrating with the bridegroom. 9. **The water that was made wine**—does not distinguish this from water that had remained unchanged, but the proper translation is, as in R. V. "the water now become wine." This is not an illustration of Romish transubstantiation. "The water had been made wine in form as well as in substance; it looked like wine and tasted like the best of wine; but the pretended change of bread and wine in the Eucharist contradicts all the senses and is a complete delusion." (Schaff). **Knew not whence it was**—His words prove that this was not water mingled with wine, but water changed into wine. His testimony was impartial. 10. **Have well drunk**—R. V. "have drunk freely." Tyndal and Cranmer translate "when men be dronke." He spoke sportively as was not unbecoming in the license of the festive occasion. It is a wonderfully graphic touch to the narrative. The statement does not imply that any one then present was the worse of wine. We may be quite sure that Jesus would not have sanctioned by his presence any such abuse of his gift. It was merely a proverbial expression, and referred either to a custom which might be joked about, when to insinuate that it was followed would be an insult, namely, substituting inferior wine when the power of nice discrimination was destroyed through partial intoxication, or else it refers to the very proper practice of diluting the wine with water to prevent unseemly excess on the part of any. 11. This was Christ's first miracle. It proved that he was indeed the Son of God, and the faith of his disciples was confirmed.

Christ's example as to wine. (Condensed from Peloubet's Notes). I. *Wrong*

Inferences. (1) It is a wrong inference to imagine that the precepts of Christ do not require total abstinence in our circumstances. (2) It is one of the worst of fallacies to argue that because a certain thing is right, therefore another thing with the same name is right; or because an act is right under certain circumstances, therefore that act is also right under entirely different circumstances.

II. *Difference of Circumstances.* It is of the utmost importance to remember the difference between those times and ours. (1) The chief agents of intoxication now are something very different from the wines of those days, and were altogether unknown then. The greatest danger of wine-drinking to-day is its leading to stronger drinks, a danger then unknown. (2) The circumstances are entirely different, and the temptations to drunkenness, while real, were much less than now. There were no open bars, no saloons. "The wines were usually very light, and with slight intoxicating properties, and they were usually mingled with two or three times their quantity of water." (Edersheim).

III. *Conclusions.* (1) There is a right and proper use of the fruit of the vine. There are few things more delicious and healthful than the juice of the grape fresh from the vines. Most have heard of the "grape cure," and many know from experience that the demon of dyspepsia is cast out by taking each morning a draught of grape juice, one's own mouth being the wine press. (2) Christ's example shews that drinking some kind of wine is not a sin *per se*, and that the time may come in the millenium, perhaps, when it may be right. (3) It is perfectly right to wholly abstain from wine and all intoxicating drinks. There is no law, human or divine, that requires us to use what is so dangerous to ourselves and others. (4) There certainly can be no proof that the wine Christ made was intoxicating, or that its superior goodness was in anything but a finer flavor, a more delicious taste. (5) In this wonderful miracle we cannot for a moment suppose that Christ would minister to intemperance, either in that age or in any other. It is clear that neither Christ's precepts nor his example justifies the ordinary drinking usages of society to-day, with their bars, wine shops, beer gardens, fiery wines and strong liquors, and all their attendant evils. (6) The principles of the Bible and of Christ are wholly on the side of temperance. (7) The basis of total abstinence is the giving up of that which may be lawful in its self, whenever it becomes dangerous to ourselves or the means of evil to others. This is our Christian duty and privilege.

"To force total abstinence out of this lesson, or to force it into the lesson, is impossible. To argue that Christ did not create real wine, but something that looked like wine and tasted like wine, while yet it was not wine, is unwise. To teach that wine-drinking is itself a sin, goes contrary to the Scriptures. To argue that no man can be a true believer and