

THE WEDDING WINE.

Our Lord's Teachings Opposed to Those of the Prohibitionist.

BY THE REV. GEORGE HODGIES.

"And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, they have no wine." Such a piece of information, whispered at a wedding to a Christian minister to-day, seems probably being a response of satisfaction. The Christian minister would be heartily glad that there was a scarcity of wine. He would rejoice to have a wine famine fall upon the whole country. To have no wine at all would seem to him to be one of the essentials of the millennium.

It is evident, however, that Jesus had no thought of prohibition. The answer which He gave to this appeal shows that He had no wish to banish wine out of Canada in Galilee. Not only is it evident that Jesus was not a preacher of prohibition, but it is quite as plain that He was not Himself a practitioner of total abstinence. "The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous and a wine bibber." Christ quotes this complaint not to criticize it, but to show how impossible it is to please everybody. He compares His own manner of life with that of John the Baptist. "John" He says, "came neither eating nor drinking." Did they like that any better? No; they say, "He hath a devil." The value of this for our present purpose lies in the contrast between Christ and John.

John was an ascetic. He kept out of the world altogether. He had no part in the life of his time except as a stern preacher against the evils of it. Especially, he belonged to one of the numerous total abstinence societies of his day. Jesus was in full sympathy with everything that was good in human life, lived in cities, rejoiced in companionship, sat at men's tables, and never joined any of those associations which exacted a pledge of total abstinence.

On the contrary, so far as the drinking of wine was concerned, not only did He provide the wine for that festivity in Cana, not only was He known and seen by the people to drink wine, but He set the blessed meaning of His life. Ever since then, Christian people, in the most sacred rite of religion, have tasted wine. And this was real wine. It was the fermented juice of the grape. It was a liquor with which it was possible to become intoxicated, as people actually did at Corinth. No other idea which is sanctioned by scriptural scholarship.

There is only one good foundation for a doctrine, and that is the foundation of the actual truth. The life of Christ is the revelation of the mind of God. Over all the centuries of moral progress, we still go back to Him for the absolute ideal of right living. Every reform that has ever been proposed has prospered just in proportion as it voiced His spirit, and the best. It has been found invariably that His way of looking at things is the right way, and that every other view which is broader than that, or narrower than that, is wrong. This is the test-money of experience.

A young man at a theological seminary declared the other day that if he could be assured that the wine at Cana was real wine he would no longer be a follower of Christ. Between the judgment of Jesus Christ and

the judgment of a young man at a theological seminary it is not very difficult to choose.

Now, we want to promote temperance. All decent people are agreed in that. We want to put down intemperance, and to keep it out of the devil. We recognize the fearful curse of it. We see plainly enough that it is the mother of degradation and crime, that it is the enemy of goodness. We that it is the nucleus of sinfulness. We are earnest for reform. But we want to be on the side of a reform that will reform. We want to stand upon a principle that has truth under it.

It may perhaps seem to us that some other doctrine might be more desirable, might be stronger, might have a more powerful influence over the people. If drinking had been set among the forbidden things in the Ten Commandments, if it had been investigated against in the Sermon on the Mount, if it had been classed among the deadly sins and threatened with everlasting damnation, we might have been able to scare more people out of it. But nothing will ever permanently prevail in our world except the truth. And truth in ethics, truth about morality, truth about temperance, is to be discovered in the life and words of Jesus Christ.

And Jesus Christ, as we have seen, had no desire for prohibition, did not practically total abstinence, did not look on drinking as a sin. No plan of reformation which represents drinking as a sin, which teaches total abstinence as the universal rule for man, and tries to secure absolute prohibition, can possibly succeed. There is no fiction, can possibly succeed. There is no fiction, can possibly succeed. There is no fiction, can possibly succeed. There is no fiction, can possibly succeed.

The result of such an attempt, like the result of every other extreme, is reaction. The last end of a community which proceeds upon these mistaken and unscientific principles is worse than the first. How to get rid of drunkenness is the great problem. We all want to get it answered. We cannot afford to lose time and waste strength over any answer that does not meet it. And universal prohibition and compulsory total abstinence will not work. Drinking is no more essentially a sin than eating. Everybody ought to know that.

But drunkenness is sin. "He not drunk with wine, surely ever as in the day—not in rioting and drunkenness." "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God—nor drunkards?" The Word of God is plain and strong against all drunkards.

No doubt one of the great causes of the shameful intemperance is the impurity of liquor. If adulteration could be prohibited, that would be a prohibition indeed. If the juice of the fruits of the earth could be brought to men sweet and clean, pure and unimpounded, there would be a reformation. The traveler sees no drunkenness in Europe. And yet he sees almost universal drinking. It is not drinking that makes men drunkards, it is what they drink. John Calvin, in Geneva, allowed the saloons to be kept open. But every man must say a grace before he drank, and what he drank was good.

HERE is the sum of the whole matter. Drinking is not a sin; drunkenness is sin. Very much as eating is not a sin, but gluttony is sin. The quilt lies in excess. Prohibition, as a public policy, cannot be maintained either on grounds of Holy Scripture or of practical expediency. It will not work. Total abstinence, as a private rule of life, is not to be regarded compulsory. To drink or not to drink is a part of personal liberty; it must be left to every man's conscience.

DOMINION BANK.

Proceedings of The Twenty-Third Annual General Meeting of The Stockholders.

Held at the banking house of the institution in Toronto, on Wednesday, May 30th, 1894.

The annual general meeting of the Dominion Bank was held at the banking house of the institution on Wednesday, May 30th, 1894.

Among those present were noticed Mr. James Austin, Sir Frank Smith, Col. Masson, Messrs. William Ince, John Scott, William Ramsay, C. Cockshutt, W. G. Cassels, William Roy, T. D. Walsley, Stewart, R. S. Cassels, William J. James, H. M. Pellatt, Henry Cavert, James H. B. Bell, E. Bethune, E. Leadley, Aaron Ross, E. B. Osler, W. J. Baines, William Hendrie, John Stewart, S. Blesley, David McGee, G. W. Lewis, Gardiner Boyd, G. Robinson, Walter S. Lee, L. Lorne Campbell, etc.

It was moved by Mr. John Scott, seconded by Mr. John Stewart that Mr. James Austin do take the chair.

Mr. W. J. Baines moved, seconded by Mr. H. M. Pellatt, and

Resolved—that Mr. R. D. Gamble do act as secretary.

Messrs. W. J. Baines and Walter S. Lee were appointed scrutineers.

The secretary read the report of the directors to the shareholders, and submitted the annual statement of the affairs of the bank, which is as follows:

Table with columns: Balance of Profit and Loss account, Profit for the year ending 30th April, Dividend 5 per cent, paid 1st Nov. 1893, Balance of Reserve Fund, etc.

The Reserve Fund of the Bank now amounts to one million five hundred thousand dollars, being equal to its paid up capital.

Your Directors would recommend that for the future dividends be paid quarterly, commencing on the first day of August the next, and they hope the profits of the bank will enable the payment of three per cent. quarterly, equal to twelve per cent. per annum. This will be a convenience to the many small shareholders of the Bank, to whom quarterly dividends will be a great accommodation.

The Directors are sure that the Shareholders will join with them in congratulating Sir Frank Smith, our Vice-President, on the well-deserved honor recently conferred upon him by Her Majesty.

The President, Mr. James Austin, and the Vice-President, Sir Frank Smith, are the only surviving Directors of the original and Board of the Bank. The General Manager, Mr. R. H. Bethune, has been its chief Executive officer since the day it opened.

Resolved.—That the report be adopted. It was moved by Mr. William Ramsay, seconded by Col. Masson, and

Resolved.—That the thanks of the meeting be given to the President, Vice-President and Directors for their services during the past year.

It was moved by Mr. W. S. Lee, seconded by Mr. Henry Cavert, and

Resolved.—That the thanks of the meeting be given to the General Manager, Managers and Agents, Inspectors and other officers of the Bank for the efficient performances of their respective duties.

It was moved by Mr. Gardiner Boyd, seconded by Mr. Henry Cavert, and

Resolved.—That the poll be now open for the election of seven Directors, so that the same be closed at 2 o'clock the afternoon, or as soon before the hour as five minutes shall elapse, without any vote being polled, and that the scrutineers, at the close of the poll, lay to the chairman a certificate of the result of the election.

Mr. C. Cockshutt moved, seconded by Mr. William Roy, and

Resolved.—That the thanks of the meeting be given to Mr. James Austin for his able conduct in the chair.

The Scrutineers declared the following gentlemen to be elected Directors for the ensuing year: Messrs. James Austin, William Ince, E. Leadley, Wilmet Matthews, E. B. Osler, James Scott and Sir Frank Smith.

At a subsequent meeting of the Directors Mr. James Austin was elected Vice-President and Sir Frank Smith Vice-President for the ensuing term.

GENERAL STATEMENT

Table with columns: Capital Stock paid up, Dividend No. 46, Balance due from other Banks in Canada, etc.

R. H. BETHUNE, General Manager, Dominion Bank, Toronto, 29th April, 1894.



BRE... MONTREAL - P. QUEBEC N. LEVIS S.

HEAVY ST...



THE M... LONDON,