

The Wines of Scripture.

BY REV. ROBERT WALLACE.

WHEN the friends and supporters of the liquor traffic are driven from every other quarter they take refuge behind the wine of Scripture and argue that the Word approves of intoxicating wine except when used to such excess as to produce drunkenness. We affirm that the use of intoxicating wine is never spoken of with approval in the Divine Word. God may have tolerated the use of it for a time just as He tolerated polygamy, divorce and slavery, but He never approved of it. On the contrary He held forth examples of warning against it, as in the case of the fall of Noah, etc. In the case of Noah no doubt it was fermented and intoxicating wine; but Noah is condemned for the use of it, and his case is held forth as a warning against the use of such wine; and it may have led to the practice of boiling down new wine to prevent fermentation, as was generally done in after times. Now we must take into account the circumstances in which such portion of Scripture was written. Thus, for instance, we find more frequent reference to the use of wine and stronger prohibitions and warnings against it in some portions of Scripture than in others. The reason of this is to be found in the fact, which contemporary history corroborates, that the tendency to intoxication is much greater in certain periods than in others. Thus there is little reference to this evil in the early ages of Jewish history, because, like most nomad eastern nations, the Hebrews were a temperate people. As wealth and luxury increased during the days of Solomon, and afterwards intemperance, through the use of fermented and drugged wines, became more prevalent. Hence we have more frequent and severe prohibition in the Proverbs of Solomon and in the writings of the prophets. The lapsing of the people of Israel into idolatry was accompanied by an increase of intemperance and kindred evils. Heathen idolaters were much addicted to intoxication and revelry in connection with religious ceremonies. Hence the frequent reference in the Prophets to the association of drunkenness with music, dancing, and impurity. Thus in Isaiah v., 11-12, we are told that the ungodly Jews delighted in scenes of carnal excitement, but forgot their Maker, Benefactor and Redeemer and the great end for which they were created—to serve and obey God. By their long and severe captivity the Jews were cured of idolatry, and to a great extent of intemperance, so that when our Lord was on earth it was not a national vice nor prevalent evil among them. Hence there are few references to it in the Gospels. But after converts had been gathered in from among the heathen, who had been previously addicted to this vice, it is not to be expected that its tendency would at once disappear. In the case of many converts then, as with heathen converts now, intoxication was their besetting sin, by which they brought suffering and sorrow upon themselves and the Church of Christ. Hence the Apostles, in their letters to those converts, use special warnings against this special source of danger. Thus Paul says, "Many walk of whom I have often told you, and now tell you, even wearying, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and who glory in their shame." Jude calls such persons "spots in your feasts of charity," and believers are enjoined to separate from them and to abhor their practices as "Crucifying the Lord afresh." Rom. xiii. 12. Eph. v. 18; I. Cor. vi. 9, 10; xix. 20; Gal. v. 21; I. Peter iv. 3, 4; II. Peter ii. 20-22; II. Thess. iii. 6, 14, 15.

But does not the Bible approve of the use of wines that were intoxicating? We affirm that the use of intoxicating wine is never spoken of with approval in the Divine Word. In some cases wine is spoken of as a blessing, in others as a curse. It will not do to say that it is the abuse that is disapproved of, for it is the wine itself that in some passages is pronounced a blessing and in others a curse. Can any Christian believe that the wine by which Noah was dishonoured and Lot defiled, which caused prophets to err and priests to stumble, which is a mocker

and causes wounds without cause, is the same with that which the Divine Word says "Makes glad the heart of man," and which the Jews were enjoined to drink as an act of worship? That it is the same thing that is a symbol of the mercies of salvation and the outpouring of the wrath of God, that it is an emblem of the pleasures of piety and the pleasures of sin?

Literary Notes.

THE November *St. Nicholas* contains the first one of a series of stories of India and the jungle by Rudyard Kipling.

THE complete novel in the November number of Lippincott's is "An Unsatisfactory Lover" by Mrs. Hungerford ("The Duchess"). It tells, in the style which has charmed so many readers, of an inauspicious wooing and an interrupted courtship, which at length led to a happy result—for the lover did not always remain unsatisfactory.

MESSRS. W. A. Wilde & Co., Boston, have just issued "Peloubet's Select Notes" for 1894. It is Dr. Peloubet's 20th annual commentary on the International Sabbath school Lessons, and, like its predecessors, presents the Scripture truths in an attractive, comprehensive, and convincing manner, from both spiritual and practical standpoints.

IN "The Country School in New England," written and illustrated by Clifton Johnston, the author describes the winter and summer terms, the scholars in their classes and at the blackboard, their punishments, their fishing and coasting, their duties and amusements on the farm—in short, the every-day life of the boys and girls of rural New England in the days of our fathers and our own. Every phase of his subject is aptly illustrated with pictures from life. There are over sixty illustrations in this delightful book, which is to be published immediately by D. Appleton & Co.

Births, Marriages and Deaths.

Births.

At the Manse, Dorchester, Ont., on the 19th October the wife of Rev. W. A. Cook, of a son.

Marriages.

MILLICAN—BIRCHAM—At the residence of the bride's father, Waterloo, by the Rev. Wm. Millican, father of the groom, W. J. Millican, Galt, of Osgoode Hall, barrister-at-law, to Mary Emily, daughter of G. W. Birgham, Esq., M.D.

BROWN—BALLINGAL—At Torric Farm, South Dumfries, Brant County, on October 25th, by Rev. E. Cockburn, Fred. W. Brown, of Paris, to Kato Ballingal, third daughter of Mr. David Ballingal.

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