

should abstain from the use of alcoholic wine, and other alcoholic drinks, as intrinsically poisonous in a moral and physical point of view: and 2d. That all christians in all ages in their normal state of health, should abstain from the use of alcoholic wine and other alcoholic drinks, as intrinsically poisonous in a moral and physical point of view:—according to the word “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to every good work,” 2nd Tim. iii. 16, 17.

Having thus endeavoured to bring out the truth of Scripture upon the text, we now proceed to consider:

II The doctrine that there is only one cup and *that* salutary, which, there are two modes of drinking, one lawful, and the other unlawful,—one permitted, and the other prohibited.

In consulting the commentaries immediately accessible to us, we find little to satisfy. It seems as if their authors had shrunk from grappling with the subject, and merely glossed over it in their remarks.—We refer to the writings of Burkitt, Scott, and Barnes. Thus Burkitt—upon the text which we have had under review, and its context—“Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils: Ye cannot partake of the table of the Lord, and the table of devils,” offers the following comments by way of explanation:—“That is, ye cannot have communion with Christ and with idolaters, too: your communicating with Christ in the Lords’ Supper is utterly inconsistent with communicating with devils in the idol feasts, for this were to do homage to two contrary lords, God and Satan, and to profess service to both.” He then goes on to say that a “sacramental table is here described,” and that “it is impossible that those that hold communion with sin, and particularly idolatry, can be worthy partakers at the Lord’s Table.” Scott does not surpass Burkitt in his exposition of this portion of holy writ, for neither of them distinguishes between the things which differ in sense in these two adjoining but remotely connected passages. Thus Scott in his note on verses 18–22, attempts to explain both in the following words: “Indeed they could not render the ordinances of Christ consistent with these abominable rites (their sacrifices to devils, fallen angels, and malignant demons); and if they attempted it, they would provoke the Lord to jealousy by this familiarity with His detested rivals; as if they were ‘stronger than He,’ and could defend themselves against His judgments; even as a woman though not guilty of gross adultery, must excite the suspicion and indignation of her husband, if she associated familiarly with the man of whom he entertained a peculiar jealousy.”

The nearest approach to an explanation of the passage, “Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils,” by itself, is that of Barnes; but even it is far wide of the mark. He says in his note on verse 21st, “Ye cannot drink,” &c., “This does not mean that they had no physical ability to do this, or that it was a natural impossibility, for they certainly had the power to do it; but it must mean that they could not consistently do it. . . . This is a striking instance in which the word *cannot* is used to denote not natural but moral inability.” He then descants upon the custom of drinking toasts at feasts, as a practice that partakes still of the nature of heathenism, and originated in the heathen custom of pouring out or drinking wine in honour of their gods. “It was one of the abominations of heathenism,” continues he, “to suppose that their gods would be pleased with the intoxicating draught.” All these commentators seem nearly agreed as to the

sense which they attach to this complex passage, making no distinction between the two sentences which, we believe, contain two separate and most important doctrines. Their interpretation of the whole passage, as far as we can discover from their notes, is simply this: that the Corinthians could not consistently with their profession of christianity, and without provoking the Lord to jealousy, be present at, and partake of the Lord’s table, and of the feasts which the heathen celebrated in their temples in honor of their idols, &c.

The objections which we have to urge against this interpretation may be included under the following heads:

1st. The views of Burkitt, Scott and Barnes, if they afforded a just and adequate representation of the doctrine contained in the whole passage—“ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord’s table and the table of devils”—would show that the first division of that passage was superfluous and unnecessary to the establishment of that doctrine.

2nd. The nature of the language used by the Apostle in the passage—“ye cannot drink”—“the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils”—does not admit of its being intelligibly used in conjunction with the terms “the table of the Lord, and the table of devils.”

3rd. The ordinary interpretation affords no solution of the enigma, that liberty was granted by the apostle to the Corinthians to eat whatsoever was sold in the shambles (market), or presented at a feast, “asking no question;” but that no liberty was given by him to drink whatsoever was sold in the market, or presented at a feast for their acceptance.

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It has been shown already that the meaning of the expression “the cup of the Lord” is “the wine of blessing” or “the good or unfermented wine;” and of the expression the cup of devils, “fermented wine, or the wine in which is the principle of moral and physical destruction.” If the terms “the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils,” were used by the apostle to signify *essentially* the same wine, possessing kindred qualities; and the only thing in the drinking of it which he represented as objectionable was the contingency of its being drunk by a Christian communicant at the idol feast of idolaters, and in company with them, after it had been offered in sacrifice to idols (a difference of relation not of kind); no reason can be seen why this passage should have been introduced at all into this didactic discourse, for then the wine spoken of would have belonged to the same category as other articles of drink or food used at the Lord’s table, or at the feasts of idols, to which no exception was taken on their own account, and all addressed by the apostle would have been fully aware of its being one of the things included under the general term “the table of the Lord” as much as bread, and which it was therefore lawful to use equally with bread upon all occasions, except in the circumstances stated above in connexion with idol worship. The same reasons exist then, according to this view, why bread (or any other indifferent article) should have been specified by the apostle as well as wine, in the passage referred to, or both omitted; but no notice whatever having been taken of bread by him in that passage, neither ought any no-