

ions of others as well as to give our own. We urge on no one the adoption of sentiments which may be thought peculiar to us, but we crave the candid consideration of the reader to the arguments by which we endeavour to support them. Much of the matter we have to present will be new to many of our readers though familiar to those who are acquainted with what has been written in illustration of the Sacred Writings.

The Gospel by Matthew is generally allowed to have been the first written of all the books of the New Testament, though the time when it was written is uncertain, different dates having been assigned it, from A. D. 37 to 64. The Evangelist Mark is supposed to have written his Gospel about the year of our Lord 64. It might be later, but could not be much earlier. Mark furnishes several particulars that are not to be found in any other Gospel, but there is a striking resemblance between his Gospel and that by Matthew, so that an examination of passages in the one necessarily elucidates the corresponding ones in the other. The first text we shall examine is,—

“No man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled and the bottles will be marred; but new wine must be put into new bottles.”—Mark ii. 22.

We deem it proper here to explain the kind of bottles referred to in this text, as they were different from those now in use among us. The Rev. Albert Barnes, in his Notes on the Gospels (Matt. ix. 17), gives the following explanation of them:—“Bottles, in eastern nations, were made, and are still, of skins of beasts. Generally the skin was taken entire from a sheep or a goat, and, properly prepared, was filled with wine or water. They are still used, because, in crossing deserts of sand, they have no other conveyances but camels, or other beasts of burden. It would be difficult for them to carry glass bottles or kegs on them. They, therefore, fill two skins, and fasten them together, and lay them across the back of a camel, and thus carry wine or water to a great distance. They were of course, of different sizes, as the skins of kids, goats, or oxen might be used. Bruce describes particularly a bottle which he saw in Arabia made in this manner, of an ox-skin, which would hold sixty gallons, and two of which were a load for a camel.” This explanation shows the propriety of putting new wine into new bottles rather than those which had been previously used. Barnes supposes that “new skins or bottles would yield to the fermenting wine, and be strong enough to hold it from bursting.” Others, however, with more propriety, contend that the new skins were employed to prevent fermentation. Tr. Lee (in his *Sacred Writings rescued from Impious Perversions*, p. 14.) says, “that were the grape juice once fairly to begin fermenting, it would burst the strongest green skin with the utmost ease; no skin could so expand as to make room for the enormous quantity of carbonic acid gas which would be developed. Its incipient tendency to ferment must be checked at first, or it will otherwise go on and burst the strongest bottle, and even iron-bound casks have been known to give way. The object was not to allow the new wine to ferment, but to preserve its natural qualities, by preventing its fermentation. All art is but an imitation of nature, and the orientals, in this respect, were imitators. They saw the rich bunches of grapes—what our translators call “new wine in the cluster,”—as they hung on the verdant vines in natural skin bottles, for the skin of the grape is a bottle to hold the juice, and to exclude the air. And these beautiful little bottles are divided into compartments or cells, the yeast or gluten being separated from the saccharine matter, in order to avoid fermentation as the fruit hangs upon the tree. It is because of this simple provision that grapes can be preserved, either in their ripe, fresh condition, by carefully preventing them being bruised, and keeping them in cool dry cellars, or in the form of raisins, by allowing the sun to evaporate the water, when they actually become that “in-

spissated wine,” at which a moderation minister sneers as “sweet thick stuff!” Now, in the old skin bottles, deposits of tartar and gluten would have taken place on their sides giving the new wine a disposition to ferment, and this would be aided perhaps by dryness and cracks in the skin admitting the oxygen of the atmosphere. To prevent this, therefore, new skins were selected, into which the new wine was placed, and the air then excluded. Upon the same plan, earthen vessels were used, into which the pure wine was put, which was then sealed up, and buried under ground or placed in cold cellars.”

So much regarding the new bottles. We proceed to notice the new wine which was put into them. The new wine here referred to is that which is newly expressed from the grape—the unfermented juice. “The juice of the grape, when newly expressed, and before it has begun to ferment, is called *must*, and in common language *sweet wine*” (*Popular Encyclopedia*, Article Wine). This doubtless was the kind alluded to in the text under discussion. The expression new wine, in our authorised version of the Scriptures, has not uniformly the same term corresponding to it in the original. In the Old Testament the corresponding Hebrew term (*tirosch*) has usually been understood to designate unfermented juice. For instance, Dr. J. Pye Smith (*Scripture Testimony to the Messiah*, vol. i. p. 428) thus renders Zechariah ix. 17:—

“For how great is their enjoyment, and how great their comeliness!  
Corn and fresh grape-juice (*tirosch*) shall make the youths and the virgins to grow.”

This term, however, is explained by some as a general term for the produce of the vineyard, and it is probable that this will soon become the prevailing sentiment. The Greek term (*gleukos*) rendered *new wine* in Acts ii. 13 ought to be translated *sweet wine*. In the text under discussion there are two Greek terms (*oinos neos*) corresponding precisely to our version *new wine*. For a fuller illustration of this subject we refer our readers to *Anti-Bacchus* (pp. 106, 107.)

The comparison or illustration employed by our Saviour was intended to intimate that there was an obvious impropriety in putting new wine into old skin bottles, which would cause fermentation, and cause the bottles to be spoiled and the wine to be lost, so it was also improper to require his disciples to fast, they being not yet able to bear it. This was one of three illustrations employed by him to show the impropriety of imposing fasting on his disciples in present circumstances. This text refers not to the drinking of wine, but to the method of preserving it. It is acknowledged that it was unfermented when put into the bottles, and we have shown reason for supposing that this method of preservation was designed to keep it such.

We now proceed to notice the account given by Mark of the institution of the Lord's Supper. This took place immediately after the observance of the Passover, “the feast of unfermented things”—Mark xiv. 12. In the English version it is called the feast of *unleavened bread*, but there is no word for bread in the original, and the term employed (*azuma*) is in the plural, and refers to unfermented articles, being applicable to wine as well as bread. This term is employed in the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament in reference to the Passover (see Ex. xiii. 7), and we think it has been satisfactorily shown that fermented wine was excluded from that ordinance. We may refer to Professor Stuart's remarks on this point in our *Journal* for March, and although we cannot express our entire concurrence in the statements of this learned writer there given, yet we agree with him in the main, and his vast acquirements as a biblical scholar entitle his opinion on such a point as this to the very highest respect. Many think that the wine used was made from the dried grape. It may be said, “if the Jews had any unfermented wines among them they might have used them without having any