Temperance Column.

THE BIBLE AND TEMPE-RANCE.

By the Rev. Charles Courtenay. Vicar of Emanuel Church, Liverpool, Author of "Temperance Home Truths," etc.—Continued

[A Paper read before the Quarterly Meeting of the Liverpool council of the C.E.T.S. and printed by request.]

There is one text which is free quently bandied to and from in controversial circles. I mean that addressed to Timothy by St. Paul, "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stemach's sake, and thine often infirmities" (1 Tim. v, 23).

1. Now whatever this text means it certainly gives no sanction to everyone to take strong drink. It was a personal matter, addressed to Timothy alone.

2. Neither does it sanction much drinking, "A little wine" only.

3. Neither does it support the habitual use of strong drink. It was for a special time, and for a special use.

4. Neither does it lend any aid to those who are well and strong. Timothy was an invalid, and needed medicine.

5. Neither is this text to be laid hold of by every invalid. What is one man's meat may be another man's poison.

The fact is, there is wonderfully little authority to be extracted from this text by anyone who desires to take strong drink. The conduct of those, who, not only are not called Timothy, but have nothing the matter with their stomachs, is more curious than reasonable.

But there is a principle to be extracted from this precept which is clear enough, that, medicinally. wine may be of service, and may be lawfully used, especially when prescribed by authority other than ourselves. The use of wine in this connection bears the same relation to internal sicknesses, as the external use of wine in the case of the wounded man by the road-side into whose wounds the good Samaritan poured oil and wine.

There is one other class of texts I must now refer to. They are found in the Revelation of St. John. Here is one: "Babylon is fallen .

. because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." (xiv. 8).

Two verses beyond we read, "The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation.'

Here is wine in the worse possible connection—a symbol of unutterable curse and ruin. Is this a condemnation of wine in itself, as some have stated? Or is it not simply and more naturally thisthat not wine, but excess of wine is here in question? I do not think we have a right to see any condemnation of wine in such passages as these. They are simply figurative expressions to represent apparently the delirium which accompanies Babylonian fornication on the one hand, and the outpouring of the wrath of God on the other.

Now it may be felt by that I have been yielding all along the line to the opponents of Temperance, and have been playing in full into their hands. Well, I myself have been keenly conscious that so far as I have already read. I have exposed myself to the risk of being suspected of being an alcoholic Jesuit, or an Intemperance wolf in Teetotal sheep's clothing. A Licensed Victualler pleading for the trade, or a toper insisting on having his little drops, would not, I know, despise the arguments of this paper. I cannot help it, I have given you what I conscientiously feel to be the teaching of the New Testament on the use of strong drink. I have pointed out: First, that drunkenness is most

decisively condemned.

Secondly, that the Apostles and disciples do not stand out before us champions for Abstinence. Many of them may have been Abstainers, but we are not so told.

Thirdly, that our Lord, in the popular estimation, drank winethat He made wine miraculouslythat He set wine apart as one of the symbols of redemption-that He used wine parobolically—that He tasted and received wine on the Cross.

Fourthly, I have pointed out that the Apostolic teaching nowhere condemns the use of strong drink. St. Paul condemns excess again and again. Neither, may I say, does he absolutely approve of it in so many words, except in one case, and that in case of sickness.

(To be Continued.)

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