

THE BIBLE AND THE TEMPERANCE QUESTION.

BY W. H. WITHROW, M.A.

PART II.

THE advocates of wine drinking quote, in defence of the system, the accusation brought against our Lord, of being "a man gluttonous and a wine-bibber."* No one supposes that the first of these charges was true, then why the second? The text is as much a sanction of gluttony as of wine drinking, both of which the Scriptures expressly forbid. Our Lord also lent the aid of His own example to the cause of total abstinence. We read that in the agony of His passion, amid the pangs and throes of dissolution, when His exhausted frame was parched with thirst, "They gave Him to drink, wine mingled with myrrh; *but He received it not.*"

The use of fermented wine, even in the celebration of the holy eucharist, is a departure from Scripture precedent, for, as we have already seen, all leaven and ferment were abolished from the celebration of the Jewish passover, and therefore our Lord could not have used intoxicating wine in the institution of His Last Supper.

The passage in Matt. ix. 17, "Neither do men put new wine into old bottles, else the bottles break and the wine runneth out," has been cited as implying the common use of fermented wine. Even if it did, there is here no sanction given to the custom; but Dr. Lees takes the ground that the contrary may be inferred from the passage. He says that fermented wine will burst the strongest bottle, or even iron-bound casks, that new wine if put into old bottles would be the more likely to ferment from the deposits of tartar and gluten on their sides, and that therefore "new wine" was put into "new bottles" to preserve it from fermentation by the complete exclusion of the air.

We sometimes hear the maudlin sentiment that "wine is a good creature of God, and therefore to be received with thanksgiving." Assuredly the wine commended in Scripture is one of

* Matt. xi. 19.