

OUR LORD'S EXAMPLE.

OPPONENTS of the prohibition movement make great capital of our Lord's example, particularly at Cana of Galilee. They claim that if He saw fit to make wine for a marriage feast, that we, prohibitionists, declare ourselves better judges than He when we demand the extermination of all intoxicating beverages.

My opinion is, that it is not fair to make a comparison of our position and His, "who did all things well." Some of the reasons for this opinion may be stated here.

In the first place it is not fair to compare the staple drink of Palestine (allowing for the sake of argument that Christ made wine which might intoxicate) with that of the present day. One thing we have good authority for stating, that is, that the *wine* proper of Eastern countries, at the time when our Lord was on earth, was the pure juice of the grape. Whether *our* wines are, may be judged from a special note on a wine dealer's card, which is in my possession. This note reads as follows: "Our Communion Wine *guaranteed* pure juice of the grape." (The italics are mine.) Indeed it is a fact patent to all that our wines are not pure grape juice, but contain spirits to a greater or less degree.

So we see that we cannot make a favorable comparison even in the case of wine. Where then will whiskey and other spirits appear? I find but one instance where words of approval occur in the Holy Scriptures of "strong drinks," and that an extreme case. This beverage as nearly corresponds with our spirits as any drink of Bible times can be said to do. The denunciations of it are many and forcible, as for instance Solomon's words (Prov. 20, 1.) "Strong drink is raging."

The second objection to the comparison is that the races are differently constituted with regard to the use of liquor. How comparatively few instances do the impartial records of Holy Writ mention of drunkenness at all! And of the drunkards of the Bible the majority appear to have been Gentiles. Of course Noah and Lot

cannot be taken into account, since they lived before the Jewish nation came into existence. After the children of Israel became a nation and lived in their own land there are only one or two instances of drunkenness mentioned. David makes Uriah drunk with a distinct object. Elah, an Israelitish usurper, is slain when drinking himself drunk. Our Lord, in his earnest denunciations against the crying evils of His day, very seldom and with no extraordinary emphasis, mentions this sin. I think, therefore, that all will acknowledge that the Jews were what we may call a "temperate" race, using the expression in its now generally received sense. When we place beside this statement the following, "That England is the most religious and *most drunken* country in the world," we may well claim that our Lord would, if on earth to-day, be less likely to approve of the use of intoxicants than He was in His own day. And that the statement I have just quoted affects us in Manitoba is patent to all. Do not the majority of our immigrants come from the British Isles? Are not Canadians of British descent? And can we say that our new country, apart from this grand prohibition movement, shows signs of being any more temperate than the mother land?

And this last point forms an introduction to an entirely different view of this question. If we are to be guided by our Lord's example, we shall surely not go far astray if we follow out His precept. Let us then take a glance at an instance of the latter. Not once but several times we find our Lord laying down precept of the following kind, "If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off and cast it from thee." By the word "offend" we understand to be a cause of stumbling or stumbling block. With this explanation, he who runs may read in these words quoted, that even things which are of most use to us are to be sacrificed, rather than that we should be lost eternally. Such being the case, surely we are justified in demanding the removal from our midst of that which, even for medicinal use, is fast being supplanted by less pernicious drugs. Indeed, I think, when we read the evidence of scores of medical men, and by no means the mediocrity of the profession, against the use of