

duce the very self-same effect, as new wine did upon the maids, that is, it was to make them cheerful, or, as the original might be rendered, *it was to make them speak*. Many of you, I am persuaded, have witnessed this prophecy fulfilled to the very letter. Have you never seen young men making themselves cheerful with MALT LIQUORS, while the young maids were producing the same effect with the blood of the grape? Nor is there the slightest doubt on my mind, that the prophet hailed this event as a special manifestation of the great goodness of God. And for this very reason, that when the kingdom of Christ was extended from the river to the ends of the earth, many countries, disqualified by their local situation, from yielding wine to cheer his people, would then be supplied with a drink from corn possessing the same stimulating qualities which has been long known in wine. 'His prophecy also, teaches us that the corn would yield a more stimulating drink than wine, inasmuch as young men generally require a more powerful stimulus than maids do, to produce the same degree of hilarity or cheerfulness. After this quotation, will you believe, with the absolutes, that not a word is said in the Bible regarding ardent spirits?'

Who can read the above extract without being amazed at the manner in which Scripture language is employed? As if the prophet, looking through the long vista of future ages, should see, in the far distant perspective, young men drinking malt liquors, whisky, &c., and the sight should be so delightful as to fill his holy soul with joy. If Scripture be interpreted in so careless and prejudiced a manner, because there seems a kind of superficial something in the language, that might, by sad twisting, be wrested into such a meaning, would not the inference deduced, at once lead us to see, to say the least, its doubtfulness and suspiciousness. Yet Mr. M. asserts, that there is not the slightest doubt on his mind. I have looked several commentaries on the passage, and no one has even hinted at such a meaning. It has remained for Mr. M. to make the discovery. It is well known to Bible Expositors, that we must not merely take words or sentences in an isolated manner, but we must regard the context and the general tenor of Scripture. Now corn is nowhere, in Scripture, used as he interprets it here. The best interpreters render it, "How great is his goodness—how great is his beauty—the corn, that is the harvest, gladdeneth the young men, and the vintage, the maidens." Young women were commonly employed in gathering the grapes during the time of vintage, as young men were in reaping during harvest. The idea in the passage is, that the victory mentioned in the chapter shall be accompanied with universal prosperity, resembling that enjoyed by a nation secure from external foes, and amply supplied with the means of subsistence (corn), and even luxuries, of which the usual representations in Scripture are "corn and wine." The Psalmist says, in Ps. iv. 7, "Thou has put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased." Does the Psalmist refer to the gladness of those who are merry with malt liquors, made of corn, and also wine? No, malt liquors were not known, and it is evident he refers not to gospel times, but to a gladness arising from great abundance of temporal mercies, it is exactly similar to that in Isaiah, ix. 3, "They joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil." Is it not a most flagrant perversion of meaning, to make the passage then mean, that they were to make a noise as through wine, but not with wine, but with corn, that is, drink made of it, or, in other words, ardent spirits. Corn, there, no more means whisky, or any malt liquor, than does dew, in the following passages, mean, "mountain dew"—(Song of Solomon) "My head is filled with dew;" and in the same prophet Zechariah, who uses the word corn, viii. 12, "The earth shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew."

This passage (Zech. ix. 17,) is referred to again, and the argument discovered and derived from it, is employed as a fundamental

one—it is Mr. MURRAY's principle weapon against total abstinence. Oh! it is making God's word speak in a mysterious and uncertain manner—the trumpet is giving a most uncertain sound—it is mistaking the "trump of Jubilee" for the note of alarm and the sound of warfare. In page 93, he says:—"It has been shewn, that the prophet Zechariah, ix. 17, after looking forward in the visions of the Lord, to the ages of the Christian church, was led by the spirit of God, to hail with holy rapture the introduction of that very drink, which is here (in the Temperance volume) represented as poisonous, and hurtful, and forbidden in the word of God; for he says, "corn shall, &c." Again, page 95, he says, "We remark, that the use of ardent spirits is not an awfully pernicious practice. The bare supposition of the contrary, is an insult to the Spirit of the Lord, who, speaking by the prophet Zechariah, hailed the introduction of ardent spirits, as a proof of the great goodness and great beauty of the Lord God of Israel." Again, page 114, he says, "We know that God foretold, by his prophet, the use of distilled liquors, as a great blessing to his church and people." Again, page 122, we have the remarkable statement, by way of retort against the "absolutes," who say that ardent spirits are a device or suggestion of Satan,—“Although the father of evil did not suggest ardent spirits till 600 years after the Bible was completed, we find, from Zech. ix. 17, that the father of mercies did suggest them, nearly 700 years before the Bible was completed; but he suggested them, not as an evil, but a blessing to man, and consequently we shall look in vain in the Bible for any law against the traffic in them."

The Reverend author thus proceeds on the ground of his own interpretation, fanciful and weak as it is, to answer all arguments; but the foundation is most unsound, and the reasoning superinduced upon it, requires not to be demolished piece-meal, but must totter and fall as a whole. Oh; there is such a thing as "handling the word of God deceitfully"—we do not say that he has done so intentionally—the idea is too abhorrent to be for one moment entertained, but we think he treats the sacred word with great superficialness and inadvertency, and that he is so strongly biased towards his own views, as to attempt making Scripture square with them, instead of squaring them with Scripture. At all events, we can scarcely think that he can hold the same interpretation now, as he did then, and if he do not, then we say, that since he has made such frequent use of it, since he has laid such emphasis on it, since he has grounded arguments and appeals upon it, that it is a duty he owes to his God, to his fellow Christians, to moderate drinkers, to the distiller, the trafficker and the poor drunkard, (who fancies himself a moderation man) honestly to come forward, and let the light of truth become as wide and extensive as this darkness of error. We do not speak of his views of the temperance question in general, but of this passage in particular. If, however, he still conscientiously views the passage in the same light, we of course ask no such retraction.

I fear I have dwelt too long on this part, there are many other portions of the book, which are very, very shallow, and the arguments it would be easy to confute, but I have occupied too much room already. I shall conclude with one short extract, which must be like "a sweet song" to the moderate drinker, and a kindly opiate to the perturbed conscience of the trafficker in ardent spirits; it is taken from pages 106-7, and is another "piece of the stone" as an additional sample of the "nature of the building."

"It is generally admitted, that there is much more difficulty in obtaining wine free from adulteration, than ardent spirits, and this difficulty always increases in the direct ratio of the price of the wine above the price of ardent spirits. Still every one knows that it is the alcohol, and not the watery part of the wine which gives it the quality of exhilarating the animal spirits. Now, if the