

THE KING'S DECLARATION.

The "Glasgow Herald," in a leading article on "The King's Declaration of Faith," says:—Controversy, especially in England, is already beginning to rage round the Declaration of Faith—or, as it is called, Declaration against Transubstantiation—which the Sovereign is at present required by law to make at his Coronation. The Roman Catholics resent the wording of this Declaration as an insult to their religion, and the militant Protestant societies claim it as the palladium of British liberties. Our attitude, and, we think, that of most Scottish and English Churchmen, is simple. We are quite willing to see the terms of this Declaration modified so as to make it a declaration of Reformed faith inoffensive to the believers in the Roman Catholic faith, but we would do this out of self-respect and not because we admit for a moment that the Roman Catholics have any legitimate grievance. It is derogatory to those of the Protestant and Reformed Churches that they should adopt the intolerant language towards other faiths which is, and always has been, the practice and policy of the Church of Rome. Our King must be of the Reformed faith, and must make a declaration to that effect, but the terms of the Declaration should be those which a high-minded gentleman in this twentieth century can use without loss of respect for his personal dignity or for the dignity and moderation of his own religion. The present Declaration against Transubstantiation was drawn up at the time of the revolution, and was deliberately offensive in terms. The nation had to protect itself against avowed Roman Catholics such as James VII. of Scotland and II. of England, and against secret Roman Catholics such as Charles II. The terms were drawn so that no Roman Catholic, secret or avowed, could possibly make the Declaration and remain a member of the Roman Church. But the need for violent expressions against another faith has passed away and their use is now an offence to English and Scottish religious propriety. The Roman Catholics have, however, no grievance whatever. The language of the Declaration is no stronger than they use as a matter of permanent ecclesiastical polity towards all "heretics" of other faiths. The Church of Rome claims now, as it did in the Middle Ages, not only ecclesiastical but secular domination, and this claim to secular domination in Rome itself is the cause of a standing political breach between the Government of Italy and the Vatican. Recently when the Queen of Spain gave up the religion of her youth before her marriage with King Alfonso she was required to repudiate the faith of her British relatives and friends in terms which practically consigned them all to perdition. We have every respect for and sympathy with our Roman Catholic fellow-subjects, and we are aware that the mediaevalism of the Roman Church's attitude and language is almost as abhorrent to many faithful believers as it is to Protestants. But so long as the ancient intolerance of the Roman Church is maintained unaltered members of that Church cannot complain against a few surviving monuments in this country of a bygone intolerance on the part of the British people.

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The Montreal Witness of a recent date deals with the same subject in terms following:—Some are voicing the old protest against any alteration in the King's oath, but a far larger voice is in favor of it. Whatever may be the historic origin of this denunciation, it is now, to say the least, anomalous that out of all the innumerable creeds,

savage and civilized, to be found in the King's dominions, the Roman Catholic religion should alone be signalled out for public insult and opprobrium on the occasion of a great state ceremonial. It is known that Queen Victoria and King Edward favored some modification of the oath, and King George is said to have a strong disinclination to denounce a creed of his subjects. Indeed, such a sentiment will be naturally assumed by all men of good feeling. A leading Protestant member of Parliament has written: 'The good breeding which prompts a man to deal courteously with views from which he differs must render this odious formula extremely distasteful to the King, to whom its retention is a mark of the grossest disrespect.' The words complained of are necessarily an offence to millions of loyal Roman Catholics, and surely it cannot be flattering any longer to those who believe in Protestantism, whose only claim to ascendancy is its boasted insistence on religious liberty, to pretend that its security depends upon a form of words to be used by the King in gross disparagement of another faith. In any case, there can now be little doubt that the beginning of the present reign will be signalized by the removal from the Accession Oath of the offensive words, while it still insists upon the continuity of the Protestant succession, and Protestants would do well to accept the change in a Christian spirit.

As to the attitude of Assembly and Anglican Synods that eminently sober paper, the Montreal Gazette, says:—The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada and some of the Church of England diocesan synods declined at their recent meetings to put themselves on record in regard to the King's accession oath, to some clauses of which Catholics make objection. There can be no doubt as to the protestantism of Presbyterian and Anglican representative bodies in Canada. When they do not object to the suggested modification it may safely be held that the oath is not necessary as a defence of the reformed religion in the British Empire.

LITERARY NOTES.

The June Blackwood presents the reader with an inviting table of contents. Fancy Farm, the serial story of Neil Munro, is continued. Then there is a short tale entitled The Mystery of "Auld Maitland," by And Laing, and articles on Westminster Abbey, by W. J. Courthorpe, Edward VIII., the Grove of Ashroth, by John Buchan; and in "Musings without Method," current topics are treated in an able and interesting manner. Leonard Scott Publishing Co., New York.

The May Studio (44 Leicester Square, London, W.C.), will be very welcome because of the many fine illustrations it contains as well as for its instructive letter press. There are several reproductions in colours of the work of well known artists, "The Arrow," from the water-colored drawing by Robert Anning Bell, R.W.S., being especially beautiful. Among the leading features of the number may be mentioned The Charcoal Drawings of Henri Harpignies, by Henri Frantz, with eight illustrations; The Drawings of Lady Waterford, by Mrs. Stewart Erskine, eight illustrations; the paintings of Eugène Serra, by Adriaen Margaux, five illustrations; Studio Talk, by special correspondents in European capitals; and Reviews and Notices. The Studio is the best of art periodicals. Monthly, 30cts. net.

THE WINES OF THE BIBLE.

On this subject Rev. Alexander Corkey, in the Herald and Presbyter, writes:—

One of the best results of genuine Biblical criticism is the new light which has been thrown on the Bible in regard to temperance truth. In former times it was the accepted position that the Bible spoke of only one kind of wine, the wine of commerce one hundred years ago, which, of course, was intoxicating. On this account, as the Bible often recommends "wine," drinking people used to rebuff every effort of temperance workers by saying that God, in His inspired Word, recommended intoxicants to His people.

The critical study of the Bible has entirely changed this question of the Bible and intoxicants. Scholarship has found out that the common word for "wine," in the scriptures, which is "yayin," has four regular meanings. It is a general term, like "vinum" among the Latins. It means (1) Every species of wine made from grapes. (2) The juice of the grape, freshly expressed. (3) A boiled syrup, made from grape juice. (4) Wine made strong and inebriating by fermentation, or the addition of drugs.

Another word used to be thought to always refer to intoxicating wine is "tirosh." Scholarship has found out that this word means often merely "vintage," and it is so translated twice in the Revised Version, and in three places this is given as the marginal reading.

Similarly with the other eleven Greek and Hebrew terms, it has been found by careful and critical investigation of every such word in the Bible, that Professor Moses Stuart was right when he said: "Wine and strong drink were employed by the Hebrews in two different states—the one was a fermented state; the other an unfermented one."

The establishment of this important truth by the critical scholarship of Biblical research has far-reaching results.

Since "wine," in the scriptures, is a common term, like woman, it follows, as a matter of course, that where the Bible denounces wine (as in Proverbs 23: 30, 31) it refers to the bad, poisonous, intoxicating wine, just as Scripture refers to the bad woman when it denounces women, and to bad men when it denounces men. The Bible calls the intoxicating wine "poison," and pronounces a woe against the man who gives it to his brother man.

On the other hand, when the Bible commends "wine" it commends good, wholesome, nutritive, unfermented wine, which science has proved to be one of the best and healthiest forms of drink. When the Bible commends women it commends good women, and when it commends men, it refers to good men.

Another result of this critical study of the Scriptures and the establishment of the true meaning of the "wine" in the Bible, is that the awful charge is wiped off Christ's character that he was a drinker of intoxicating liquors, and that he gave intoxicants to his followers. A proper study and a critical examination of Scripture has blasted this blasphemous slander. As a modern scholar has expressed it: "The idea that the Bible sanctions intoxicants is a pure superstition, handed down to us from ignorant and barbarous times."

An exchange calls attention to the recent statistics published at Washington, which bring the official figures down to June 30, 1909. "The use of beer for the year ending that date was four per cent. less than the total consumption of the previous year, as that year rated three per cent. less than the year before. The per capita consumption of distilled liquors fell from 1.44 gallons to 1.37. The previous year the decline had been from 1.63 to 1.44. The consumption of wines went up more than ten per cent., but the per capita for all wines and liquors is by this last report only 21.85 gallons, which is a gallon and three-quarters less than the high-liquor mark of 1907.