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BY JOHN B. BRATTON. "OUR COUNTRY—MAY IT ALWAYS BE RIGHT—BUT RIGHT OR WRONG, OUR COUNTRY." AT $2 00 PER ANNUM.

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Temperance.

TEMPERANCE ADDRESS,

Delivered by the Rev. JOHN N. HOFFMAN, on the evening of the 25th ult. in the First Presbyterian Church in this Borough.

The publication, of this address was called for by a unanimous vote of those present at the time. A few points, not essentially connected with the argument, are omitted for the sake of brevity.

In compliance with a *public* solicitation, and influenced by a sense of obligation towards God and man, we have met you, to advocate the cause of sound morality. Without any special reference to the recent discussions, or to the various modes or forms, by which this cause has been, or is sustained, we design to press the claims of Temperance on the *basis of the Gospel*, because we believe it to be the cause of humanity, of religion, of the church, and of God; without however, sanctioning much that has been said and done, in relation to this subject, the sad result of which might have been avoided, by a more considerate procedure. Disregarding the dictates of reason, philosophy and christianity, men have rushed into opposite extremes; have resorted to abuse, to undue harshness and violence in language; to ridicule and accusation; and in this manner, by repelling the mind and exciting the feelings, have neutralized the very effects they designed to produce. Conflicting statements, and opposite opinions have agitated and embarrassed public sentiment. Not satisfied with the obvious principles of the Gospel, men have resorted to scholastic disquisition, introduced extraneous matter, to support assumed positions, and ransacked the dusty records of antique lore, to establish a favorite theory. In this manner, opinions have been as confidently asserted, as they were absolutely denied; counsel has been darkened by many words, so that the public mind has been unsettled, tossed to and fro, until its agonized convulsions resemble the upheavings of the ocean, when *neptunic* fires shake its deep foundations.

We come back to Gospel principles. We have no sympathy for the eulogized authorities of past ages, when total abstinence formed, as yet, no part in the code of christian morals; and when even the learned, however brilliant the halo of intellectual glory which encircled their brows, knew as little of the nature and claims, of American temperance, as the subject of an absolute monarchy in the wilds of Siberia, knows of the elements of American independence.—*As well might we appeal to a Russian serf, an Austrian boor or a Turkish bashaw, to define the nature of a republican government, as to ancient authorities, to decide the question of temperance.* We deprecate the *interposition of ancient or modern authorities*, when they prove antagonistic to an *enlarged* christian morality. We appeal to a higher authority; to a "more sure word," which is as clear and distinct in its requirements, as it is final and infallible in its decisions. We refer to the more pure, more excellent and advanced system of morality, contained in the Gospel of Christ. From this source we will attempt to demonstrate:—

That such are the circumstances of the age, that according to Gospel principles, the use of fermented or alcoholic drinks, as a beverage, is an immorality, and an evil.

I. And in order that we may at once exhibit the foundation of our entire argument, we utterly disclaim the usual mode, of referring to the *tolerated* morality of the old Testament, as final and conclusive authority in the case. We here assume a position, which some may appear startling, and which has hitherto remained unnoticed in this discussion. We allude to the acknowledged and obvious distinction between the standard of morality which obtained in the Old Testament, and that which is required by the more finished and developed system of the New. And on this, perhaps novel position, we base our first argument;—a position, which amid the excitement of partisan warfare and intellectual gladiatorship, has been too much neglected. We shall assign to it its proper place, and hold it up in all its practical moment. And from it, we will show, that if the O. T. in its liberal sense and practice, is to decide the morality of our day, the foundation of civil life, and the very elements of human society, would be convulsed.

In order to form a proper view of this subject, we must consider a characteristic feature which has distinguished the administration of God, in the world. What theologian—what intelligent christian does not know, that God, from the beginning, graduated his revelations according to the existing state of human society. In proportion as the moral, physical and intellectual powers of man were developed, in the same proportion he extended and enlarged his revelations. Thus, the Adamic covenant was admirably suited to that primitive state of simplicity, innocence and happiness. And when in process of time, the circumstances of human life were essentially changed, and the human powers, by these circumstances were pressed into a more enlarged and developed exercise, the patriarchal constitution, as corresponding with that stage of improvement, was conferred upon man. And when, in later ages, the human race had reached a still higher grade of intellectual developement, the Mosaic institutes were given, which in their requirements were adapted to the age for which they were designed—and these were intended to be preparatory to a *final* and *perfect* code of morals, which was to be revealed to man, when once the world would be prepared for it. Accordingly we find, when the Augustan age arrived; when philosophy had more fully enlarged the human intellect; when the arts and sciences had been more extensively cultivated; the rights and wants of humanity more distinctly understood, and when the immortal longings of the soul, required a more satisfactory solution of human destiny, and responsibility,—then, the last glorious and finished dispensation, the Gospel, was bestowed. And in this, there is given to us a most pure, perfect, comprehensive and all sufficient code of morals, by which our lives are to be regulated. And, does not reason, analogy, civil developements, and the mode of the divine legislation, all prove that the final dispensation would embrace a more spiritual and comprehensive morality.

Having now seen that God gradually enlarged and unfolded his revealed purposes, Heb. i, 1, 2, in proportion as time and society advanced; let us now proceed to exhibit the distinction alluded to, and the more spiritual nature and superior obligation of the N. T.

We refer you to our Lord's own exposition. This will not be called into question. In his sermon on the mount, he unfolds the more comprehensive and spiritual nature of his doctrines, and asserted the Jews that a higher standard of moral purity was requisite to qualify them for his kingdom. He proceeded to this purpose before them a number of particulars, illustrating the more elevated significance which he attached to his precepts, and to show that the whole moral law, to which they had given but a partial and limited interpretation, was now to receive its full spiritual application. Among other cases, he referred to the law respecting murder, which they had received simply in its literal meaning; but he so enlarged its import, as to make even hatred a violation of it. Thus, also St. John applies it: "He that *hateth* his brother is a murderer." *John iii, 15.* In like manner, our Lord introduced the law respecting divorce, according to which, they had been permitted to put away their wives even on trival grounds, by giving them a *writing of divorcement*. This he modified to such an extent, as to prohibit it altogether, except for one special cause. He spoke of *lex talionis*, the law of retaliation, by which they had been permitted to take revenge upon an offender;—"an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." To this law, in accordance with the *general spirit* of his Gospel, he gave a far more elevated construction; so that instead of seeking retaliation, we should not even resist evil, but return good for evil. Thus too, whilst polygamy was tolerated in the O. T. it is directly prohibited, in the N. T. And when, on another occasion, the Jews referred to the difference of our Lord's doctrines respecting divorce, and appealed to the laws of Moses, he declared to them that Moses had permitted these things only on account of the hardness of their hearts.

These illustrations, which might be multiplied, are sufficient to establish the more excellent and comprehensive morality of the Gospel. Apply the argument to the subject of temperance, which is certainly included in the range of christian duties, and you will have a sufficient foundation for it. Accordingly we must conclude, that, temperance under the N. T. is entirely a different thing from temperance under the O. T.—that under the Gospel economy, it is to be as much more perfect and comprehensive than it was under the Mosaic, as our Lord's construction of murder, retaliation and divorce, is superior to the meaning which the Jews gave the same. Who will venture to deny these conclusions?

Why then go back to the O. T. to define practical duties, which exist in the brighter illustration of the Gospel? Are we in this manner to pass by the very system which we have voluntarily adopted as the rule of our faith? "The law was our schoolmaster to lead us to Christ." If then we are professedly christians, "we are no longer under the schoolmaster." "Ye are not under the law." "The law was the *shadow of good things to come.*" Shall we reject the *substance* and go back to the *shadow*? Shall we? Are we to have recourse to an imperfect morality, which was *permitted* to man in an undeveloped stage of existence, when much was tolerated on account of ignorance and corruption? Is it proper for *us to overlook a most finished and excellent ethical system*, and to go back to an antiquated code, suited to other climes and darker ages, to learn lessons of virtue and temperance? Is it rational, that in the *19th century, surrounded by the full blaze of Gospel light*, we should go back to old Lot to learn the art of *temperance*; or to wicked Ham, to obtain lessons about distilling wine; or even to good old Noah, to receive instruction how to curse a son? With the same propriety, we might resort to the same source to obtain permission to put away our wives, for trival causes; and, with equal propriety we might encourage polygamy and then appeal to Moses, to sanction the unhallowed deed. Is it not therefore just as absurd, in view of the foregoing statements, to plead for the *moderate* use of wine on the *supposed* sanction of the O. T. as it would be to call for a *moderate* number of wives, on a similar authority? For if the former is tolerated so is the latter.

We speak with confidence; then, when we assert, that against this argument, no valid objection can be made. Admitting, that the O. T. does tolerate the use of fermented and alcoholic liquor—what then? Why it tolerates it on the same ground that it tolerates divorce, polygamy and retaliation—on the ground of the hardness of their hearts. And that all of them with other sins are embraced in the same category, and that their abettors have their proper penalties assigned them, you will see in 1st Cor. vi. 9, 10.

And what intelligent Bible reader does not know, that it was a prominent design of the Saviour, by means of his word, to elevate the standard of morality among men? Hence he furnished a more sublime and exalted system, and illustrated the more spiritual excellence of his precepts, by his ennobling example. This trait is strikingly exemplified, among other instances, in the fact, that *whilst* Moses permits retaliation, the Saviour not only prohibits revenge and hatred, but *even directs* that we should return good for evil, forgive our enemies, and pray for them!—This instance characterizes his whole system, and displays its perfection.

And have we by such means made no advance in christian morals? Has the world existed in vain for the last two thousand years? Have not human science and christian experience, the fulfillment of prophecy, the development of history, researches of travellers and the investigation of pious talent, furnished increased facilities for biblical interpretation? Are not the plans, and purposes of God more clearly understood, and moral duty more distinctly defined? If not then might we go back to the age of the inquisition to discover the science of torturing heretics; or even to the early history of New England, to learn the most approved method of burning witches.

Now, have we not demonstrated our first ground? Have we not shown that as human society advanced, the plans of God were more fully developed? Have we not proved, from our Saviour's own explication, the more spiritual and comprehensive morality of the Gospel? do not, therefore, these statements sweep away the whole tissue of false argumentation, which has been founded upon the supposition that the O. T. sanctions the use of intoxicating liquor? There is not a particle of it left. And he who makes the *practiced morality* of the O. T. the rule of his life, is one thousand, eight hundred and forty eight years behind the age.

2. The *results* at which we have arrived, will be amply sustained, by the following argument, in support of our main theme, that existing circumstances, on Gospel principles, render the habitual use of intoxicating liquor an immorality.

In order to make our way clear, as we proceed, we must enquire: What is an immorality? What are those circumstances? Which are those Gospel principles?

What is an immorality? We quote an authority, not that we deem it necessary, but, for the sake of avoiding the charge of onesidedness, by not giving our own explanation. Buck's Theological Dictionary defines an immorality to be—"An action inconsistent with our duty towards man and consequently a sin against God." In conformity with this definition, which will probably not be gainsayed, we shall prove that such circumstances do exist as to render such a habit an immorality.

What are some of those circumstances?

First. That according to the united and reiterated testimony of the most pious, conscientious and experienced physicians, and other qualified witnesses, the habitual use of ardent spirits, even moderately used, is injurious to, and destructive of physical life; and that according to the same unquestioned authority, our wines contain too much of the alcoholic principle, mingled with deleterious drugs, not to produce the same unhappy effects.

Second. The experience of mankind proves that even the *moderate use of distilled or fermented drinks*, by creating a morbid and unnatural appetite, gradually leads to excess and intemperance; and that the most cautious, moderate drinkers, have been imperceptibly led to increased indulgence, and finally plunged into irretrievable ruin.

Third. That the vice of intemperance, has spread dismay and despair over our world; has assailed the holiest sympathies, desolated the fondest hopes and cursed the fairest prospects of humanity, has stricken the brightest intellect, blighted the tenderest affections, and convulsed the noblest relations of society; has assailed domestic happiness, ruined social intercourse, and invaded the sanctuary of God; has plunged individuals, families and communities into poverty, contempt and shame, blasting the fruits of industry, grappled with the mightiest genius, and with a deadly aim, struck its poisoned shaft deep into the life blood of humanity—thus causing a life of sorrow, gloom and tears, a wretched and untimely death and an eternity of wailing and despair.

Fourth. That by using intoxicating drinks, in any *manner or form, as a beverage*, we exhibit an example, that conflicts with the obligations of religion and humanity; we encourage the intemperate in their course of profligacy and sin, and at the same time peril our own safety.

In view of these undeniable facts, it is not difficult to point out those principles of the Gospel, which are violated by the habitual use of ardent spirits.

One single quotation would be sufficient to establish our point. Rom. xiv. 21, "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy *brother stumbleth*, or is offended, or is made weak." This passage, even if we possessed no other ground, would be amply sufficient for all the purposes of total abstinence. The principle embraced therein, admits of a *general application*. If any of our habits exert a pernicious influence on others, it amounts to a violation of our duties toward men, and is therefore a sin against God.

In the application of this principle to ourselves, we arrive at similar conclusions. We are commanded not to kill. Now, when the united testimony of competent witnesses declare, that the habitual use of exciting drinks, is destructive to life, and when we have daily proofs of the fact before our eyes, how can we persevere in a practice, which we know will produce such results upon us, as to shorten our lives, and yet pretend to obey the Gospel. And if that person does not commit a sin, who knowingly indulges in a habit that will destroy his health, and even his life, then we know not the meaning of sin—then may a man commit suicide, and yet be guiltless. This is not gospel morality. "Ye are not your own; ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your bodies, and in your spirits *which are his*."—1st Cor. vi. 15 to 20. And under the same circumstances, the use of intoxicating drinks, as a beverage, constitutes an immorality in relation to *others*. Who does not know the influence of example? Who has not witnessed the effect produced by the character and conduct of men, upon those around them? Are there not circumstances connected especially with this indulgence which adds a tenfold power to example? The considerations of wealth and fashion, taste and refinement, together with the alluring nature of exciting drinks, serve to render the force of example more dangerous in connection with this subject, than on *any other*. Is it difficult, then, to demonstrate that such an example, having such a tendency, is opposed *to numerous passages of the Gospel*?

How can we pray, "lead us not into temptation," when at the same time we are knowingly tempting others, by our example, to an indulgence that may prove their ruin? We see the intemperate around us; we know how quickly they seize upon every thing that countenances their immoral habits; we know they will be encouraged by our example; we know that they are rapidly destroying themselves, and we encourage them by the sanction of our own practice,—all this we know, and will withall attempt to pray, "lead us not into temptation!" Ah! does not such a practice prove its subject to know more of the qualities of the cup, than of the nature of prayer?

(The following among other texts were introduced in the address, the application of which is here omitted for the sake of brevity: Luke vi 31; 1st Thes. v. 22, 1st Cor. xiii. 10, Rom. xiv. 13, 1st Tim. v. 22.)

But we need not multiply passages. These among others are sufficient to show that we cannot innocently indulge a habit which inflicts so serious an injury on others. We add the direct proof, that such a habit, under *such* circumstances, is an immorality.

Our Lord declares, Matth. xviii. 7, "woe to *him*, through whom *offence* cometh." Now what constitutes an offence? Paul tells us in Rom. xiv. 21 "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor *any thing*, whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is *offended*, or is made weak." Here you perceive that among other things, by drinking wine we give offence, and Paul says: "Wherefore, if meat make my brother to *offend*, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend." And he tells the christians at Rome; "but if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably."—Applying this principle, (which certainly was not intended for that age, or for that individual case alone) *it would imply*:—when you see that you are inflicting an injury on others by your example, and yet persevere, you are violating the laws of christian charity. And now, to sum up the whole of this part of our argument, and to seal the truth of our statement;—the Ap. Paul, referring to this very thing, about giving offence by an example, absolutely declares it to be a sin, 1st Cor. viii. 12, "But when ye sin so against the brethern, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ." "This decide—I speak as unto wise men, judge ye what I say."

We might here show, that even in the O. T. total abstinence was as well known, as distinctly recognized, and approved of God as in the present day.—And we adduce several instances of such an abstinence; for the purpose of afterward drawing an argument of great moment therefrom. We remind you that a formal organization of this kind existed, among the decendants of Rechab, who solemnly pledged themselves to abstain from all wines; and even when the Lord directed the Prophet Jeremiah to set wine before them, and tell them to drink, such was their strict conscientiousness and firm adherence to their pledge, that they withstood this severe test—vide, Jerem. chap. xxxv. In consequence of this singular fidelity, the Lord conferred peculiar favors upon them. Was he not pleased with their abstinence?

We also refer you to the vow of the Nazarite, as recorded in Numb. vi. 2–4.

The argument we draw from the recorded facts, which certainly hold up the opposite of the great question, *in a fair and honorable light, is this*;—that to a more advanced and perfect service of God, the *use of wine, was even then considered as an impediment*. Whenever therefore they desire to devote themselves more fully and supremely to the worship of God, they utterly abandoned the use of wine.—*Why did they do this?* If wine was no hindrance; if it did not interfere with the purity of their service, if it was a "good thing" and entirely harmless, why abandon it? Surely they must have considered it, *even then, an obstacle to a more pure and developed* Worship of Jehovah. And why would God have enjoined it in these and other cases, and conferred his special favor upon those that obeyed? The conclusion is irresistably forced upon us, that by such a course of abstinence, their worship and intercourse with God, would sustain a more spiritual, ennobling and acceptable character.* And does not this fact speak volumes in favor of temperance, under the specific circumstances of the present age?

And under the more developed and spiritual morality of the Gospel, the christian should adopt this characteristic of the Nazarite; as the more perfect dispensation of Christ, requires a higher standard of moral purity; and hence we should abandon every thing that immediately or remotely injures ourselves or others.

Having however conclusively demonstrated, that the *historical* morality of the O. T. is not our rule of life; and having in this manner, swept away all foundation of moderate drinking, as drawn from that source, we now come to those statements in the N. T. which have been perverted to the same unhallowed ends.

3. We begin with the assertion, that from Matth. to Rev. there is not the slightest authority, either direct or indirect, to sanction the use of wine, as a *beverage*. And wherever such an opinion prevails, it is the monstrous progeny of a false and onesided scripture interpretation. To form a proper conception of the Gospel, or of its doctrines, we must consider it as a beautiful and harmonious whole, and keep in view its *general* object and design, bearing and tendency. Whenever we tear it to pieces, detach separate fragments from their essential connection, in order to suit our fanciful views, we assault the integrity of the Gospel; pervert its solemn significance; and pervert its holy and spotless character; would the innocent and immaculate Redeemer; he, whose life was holy, harmless and undefiled; he, who could appeal to his past life in the presence of all his foes, and challenge them to convict him of any one sin; would such a Being with a full prescience of what preversions his actions *would be exposed to, knowingly practice a habit, that would be used as an argument against him?* Had he not the *prospective* good of his church in view?—*Could he therefore have yielded to a habit, that in the 19th century would be employed to sanction intemperance?* 'Tis impossible.

In support of this view, we draw the argument from his own mode of action. This will afford us an adequate solution of any doubtful point. His general life, constitutes the best commentary of his seperate acts. We propose the rule:—that we can best judge how a person would have acted in a supposed case, by bringing into view the manner in which he did act in similar or analogous cases. We can refer to a case which is perfectly in point, and strictly analogous;—in which, seeing that his course was designed to be perverted, he cautiously avoided that result, by not complying with their desires. They asked;—"is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar," &c. It will be remembered, that at this time the Jews were tributary to the Romans, whose government, the former hated with a perfect hatred. By this question they intended to entrap him in order to find cause for accusation. They well knew that let him answer affirmatively or negatively he would be committed. Had he said, that it was lawful, they would have excited the populace against him, as an enemy of their nation. Or had he said that it was not lawful, they would have accused him to the Romans, as a traitor and a rebel against their government. As an omniscient Being he perceived their artful cunning, and *instead of giving them a direct* answer as they desired, he said;—"Why tempt ye me? shew me the tribute money," and when this was presented, he asked;—"Whose image and superscription *is on it? They replied, Cæsars*;—*then said he*, "give to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to *God the things that are God's*." *Thus knowing* their designs, he avoided a direct answer, and completely foiled them in their artful schemes. In the same manner as an omniscient Being, he must have foreseen, that by *using wine as a beverage, he would* expose himself to their censures, and hence drawing our conclusions *from* his general character and life, by every principle of analogy and logical deduction, we must *conclude that he was not chargeable with this practice.* We think that we have exposed the case honestly and conclusively; and it is certainly a consideration of deep moment, that this view presents a fair and triumphant vindication of our Lord's character.

These statements will also apply to the marriage at Cana. The circumstances recorded in connexion with this interesting occasion, have all been misconstrued, by overlooking the official and *mediatorial* operations of our Saviour. For the sake of illustration, we introduce this subject by supposing a case:

Suppose a husbandman, on examining his fields, and finding one which in point of fertility, and luxuriance, did not answer his grasping expectations, would solemnly raise his voice and pronounce a curse upon that field. What would you think of such an act? And suppose that when reproved for it, he would refer to the example of our Lord and say; "I am but *doing what our Lord himself did; he cursed* the fig-tree, and surely I may not culpable in imitating his example." What would you say? Would you not consider the act of cursing the field as criminal in itself, as his reference to the example of Christ was wicked and profane? Such a misapplication, gross and pernicious as it is, has been made of this subject under consideration.

It is indeed to be regretted that our Lord's official acts are so miserably perverted, and when the important truth is overlooked, that such acts were performed in the execution of his *mediatorial* purposes. Inexcusable evil has been occasioned by such a course.

Consider then, that our Lord performed acts in a threefold relation; as God, as Redeemer and as a man. His divine acts are far beyond our reach, and never could be designed for our imitation. And his *mediatorial* offices were also exclusively limited to himself. What he accomplished as *Redeemer*, is not intended as an example for us. That however which he performed as a man, namely the practice of moral duty, we are commanded to receive and imitate. Now in the present instance, he acted exclusively in his *divine* and *mediatorial* relations. Every circumstance connected with the transaction distinctly proves this.

It occurred in the early part of his public ministry; for the Evangelist says that it was the beginning of his miracles. Here an occasion was offered (of which he availed himself) to make an impression upon those very persons whom he would naturally desire, for many important reasons to be the first fruits of his labors, the first to believe in his divinity and Messiaship. These were his mother, relations and earliest friends. It was a matter of great importance that those who had been his first friends and intimate companions, should be won over to his kingdom, so that his enemies might not afterward appeal to them and say, that his *familiar associates* and relations did not believe him. That such was his immediate design in performing the miracle, and that he here acted in his mediatorial capacity is evident from the result; for it is said that he thus "manifested forth his glory and his disciples *believed* on him." Here you have the design, that this his first great act should awake public attention and display his glory; and hence as God he performed the miracle, that he might lay the foundation of his ministry as Saviour of the world. The *occasion* was given both by the assembly of persons and the want of wine. Now, who would have the presumption to say, that in all this there exists an example for our imitation, or that any part of it is designed as a pattern for us?

Nor is this all. In connection with its immediate design it presents a beautiful illustration of his whole economy. In this light it sets forth a symbolic representation of the relation (which Christ by his mission designed to illustrate and sanctify) existing between himself as bridegroom and the church as his bride.—Rev. xix. 7.—xxi. 9. As he generally improved all current events to explain the nature of his kingdom and laws, and to instruct his disciples, he availed himself of the occasion of an actual marriage to lead the minds of those present to the holy relationship and tender affection which existed between him and his church—Eph. v. 23–33.—and to assure his flock that as he had now relieved the wants of the bride and her friends, so he would not fail in any exigency that might afterward occur. The wine itself was a striking and expressive emblem of the *gifts of his grace; and a beautiful type of the spiritual* strength and joy which he would confer upon the subjects of his heavenly affections—Isa. xxv. 6—lv. 1. Such were the high and holy ends which he designed to accomplish on this interesting occasion.—What ground then is there here for the misapplication alluded to? *This high and significant illustration* of the mysteries of redeeming love, so expressive of *tender sympathy; so rich in unmerited grace*, whose elevated mediatorial meaning has escaped the astute conception of *modern Judaizing moralists*.—Oh! is it not trifling with the strictly official acts of the Saviour, not to recognize their connection with the scheme of human redemption, but to rob them of *all their moral and official glory, and to interpret* them into an encouragement to sensual indulgence? Is it not presumption, is it not high-handed daring, to misconstrue the sublime purposes of his remedial offices; to misapply the highest acts of his divinity; to overlook through ignorance or prejudice; the spirit, significance and intention of this characteristic wonder; to pervert its sacred meaning by tearing it asunder from the economy of grace; and, instead of viewing it as an essential feature in the mighty scheme of human deliverance, to perpetrate the gross *outrage of reducing it to an occasion of pampering* the appetite, or even to a mere *fashionable* debauch! Nay! we have not so learned Christ. Surely we cannot be so dull of apprehension as not to recognize its connection with his entire scheme of mercy; or to overlook its moral glory and sublime significancy?

You see then that by taking this consistent and elevated view of the subject, it stands before us in all its moral magnificence and glory. This conception of the whole subject removes every difficulty; and you will perceive that we have just as little encouragement therein to the use of wine, as a beverage, as *we have authority to imitate our Lord's example in* cursing the fig-tree. What would you think of the man who would utter a curse upon any object around him, and appeal to our Lord's example to legalize the act? Or what would be your reflections if you were to see a man approaching an open grave, and calling upon the lifeless clay to come forth and live? Would you not unhesitatingly conclude that in neither of these instances we can or should pretend, to follow our Lord; that there is no example here for our imitation, and that in both cases the Saviour acted in his official and mediatorial offices? And yet such a course would not be more absurd, than when we explain the marriage at Cana, so as to imply a sanction of the habitual use of wine.

The objection has been made—why did he not perform some other miracle? why select a subject that would be liable to be perverted? Be cautious how you judge the doings of our Lord! Shall we, sinful, weak and short-sighted creatures, undertake to criticise the glorious acts of Him who was endowed with infinite wisdom, and who, as an infallible being, always selected the best means for the highest purposes? Bold arrogance! And what miracle of his was not abused? When he healed on the Sabbath, his enemies found fault. When he drove out devils, they attributed it to the power of Beelzebub. When he opened the eyes of the person born blind, what a storm was excited. And hence, had he adopted some other course at Cana, it would have met with a similar misconstruction.

This act however is triumphantly vindicated by those principles of exegesis by which we have already explained the miracle. Let it be recollected that he performed no miracle except on certain conditions. These were, among others, that a suitable occasion was offered; that the occasion corresponded with the dignity of a miracle; and that a proper and worthy object could be attained. He never made the opportunity, or performed a useless and untimely miracle. But when a proper occasion was offered he improved it, to develope and carry out this gracious designs.—These distinctions will appear more clear when they are contrasted with the lying wonders and false miracles of more recent times. A single example will suffice; that of a supposed saint who had been decapitated, and who, as we are gravely told, deliberately took his head under his arm; got astride a mule, and sailed across the ocean. Such miracles were never wrought by our Saviour. They all had an important end in view; suitable to the nature of a miracle, and were called forth by an occurring event. Now, at the marriage at Cana not only was an opportunity offered by the want of wine, but a great object, as we have shown, was accomplished. Had there existed any other want, it might have been a different miracle. Had there been a want of bread, *that* probably would have been miraculously supplied. As however it was wine that was lacking, it offered the occasion of a glorious and expressive miracle. The conclusion is unavoidable that Christ, as God, in introducing the administration of grace, might employ any *means, use any AGENTS*, and adopt any MODE consistent with his perfections, that he thought proper; and that we have no right to misapply any of *his ORIENTAL acts*, as examples for our imitation.

We might rest the matter here, as our interpretation if properly applied, will remove every difficulty in the case. As however great stress has been laid upon several points connected with it a brief explanation of them may not be out of place. The wine itself must have been PERFECT. All the works of the Deity, as they came directly and immediately from his hands, sustained the highest perfection. When this world was created God himself pronounced it *good*. Sin has since impaired it. So when man was first created, he was holy, pure and innocent. Thus Christ, as God, could not perform an imperfect work. If the wine contained any deleterious or intoxicating qualities it was imperfect, and such a conception would conflict with his divinity. Hence we conclude with Clark, that the wine was pure and nutritious. Could we obtain such wine, we might use it.

Another egregious blunder is often committed in relation to the expression—"when they have well drunk," which we have heard applied to that occasion. Now if any one will take the trouble to read the passage carefully, he will find that the expression has no reference whatever to the marriage at Cana. The *disciplinarians* spoke of *crowded occasions*, not of the present one, saying that on such occasions it was customary to give the good wine first, &c.; hence it has no reference to that time or place, and there is therefore no evidence that any of the guests had indulged to excess.

Besides, the Greek term, though it does sometimes have the meaning of drinking to excess, yet not necessarily so, or always. Numerous proofs could be given. One will suffice. In Isaiah lxiii. it, the prophet describes the abundant blessings of the godly, under the emblem of a watered garden; where the Septuagint uses the same term employed above. Here it certainly cannot mean that the garden was drowned, or overwhelmed, or saturated with water, for this would have injured vegetation; and then it could not have been a proper emblem of the delighted beneficiary. But it means that the garden was sufficiently watered.

NOT HAVING ONE DROP TOO MUCH OR TOO LITTLE.

P. S.—The address was closed at this point, in consequence of the lateness of the hour, and a number of important items, which are inseparably connected with the subject, had to be deferred to a future occasion.

*The theologian must not be reminded, that we do not allude to those eternal laws of morality, which are always binding upon man, such as are contained in the decalogue; but to that lower standard of practice, which in accordance of human imperfection, was tolerated by the O. T.—The individual who would interpret the foregoing argument, so as to imply a reflection on the O. T. displays too much ignorance or prejudice, to merit a serious reply.

*The attempt to meet this argument, by asserting that God had allusion to the wine offered at idolatrous feasts, is shown to be futile and groundless by the expression in the text, "or any thing," which shows its general application; as well as by many other parallel passages; speaking of silence, as perpetrating other acts.

Political.

ADDRESS OF THE DEMOCRATIC STATE CONVENTION.

The representatives of the Democrats of Pennsylvania, in Convention assembled, felicitate their political friends upon the prosperous condition of their country and the brilliant triumph of her arms. Since the delegates of the Democracy of the State last met within this Hall, to make known their choice for President of the United States, vast and important events have illuminated the pages of our history, and effected the destinies of our political union. We look abroad and meet none of the evidences of the evils prophesied by Federalism with its thousand tongues. We see our commerce expanding to the most distant ports and whitening the most distant seas. Manufactures have flourished beyond all precedent and example. Mechanics, and corporate and individual industry, are producing to honest enterprise a sufficient competence. Our credit at home and abroad is unsuspected and firm; exchanges are equal in the midst of a foreign war—and the great measure which separated the government from the Banks, intended only for a time of peace, has preserved our moneyed circles and greatcities from the disasters consequent upon all those expansions which occur during periods of National speculation.

Since 1844, a new and flourishing State has been added to our confederacy; and a war long deferred by ourselves, and long provoked by Mexico, although it has been prosecuted, (after having been commenced by the latter,) into the heart of the enemy's country, and has made those who intended only to prevent aggression, the avengers of accumulated wrongs—has served to elevate our character before the nations of the earth; to display new elements of national strength; and to present new reasons for the perpetuity of our political institutions. The present general administration, which came into power on the 4th of March, 1845, has lived to see its policy and its principles fully vindicated by the test of time; and its firm and fearless Executive, who did not hesitate to avow his great reforms, and to pursue them unflinchingly to completion; is greeted by the tributes of the reluctant witnesses, who deny confess to the wisdom and foresight of his measures. Pennsylvania, which was first to be prostrated under the iron hand of free trade—according to the horoscope cast for her by our political seers—still stands before her sisters, with her fair fields unblighted; her iron hills alive with the hum of industry, and her teeming valleys jocun with the voice of well rewarded toil.

It is under auspicious circumstances like these that the delegates of the Democratic party of Pennsylvania, assembled once more to express their unalterable attachment to Democratic principles, and to reassert their satisfaction at the experience of the past, and their confidence in the prospect for the future.

The grave duty of expressing a preference between the several distinguished names, presented to the country, in connexion with the high office of President of the United States, has been committed to this Convention by the Democrats of Pennsylvania. We do not conceal, what indeed it would be in vain to conceal, that the country will require of the Executive, who *shall take his seat on the 4th of March*, 1849, peculiar abilities. Never before has it been more essential, that a vigilant *guardianship* of our blessed political Union, should be exercised. Never before has that unequalled political compact, been so insidiously threatened. Never before have the theories of our enemies, of our country, assumed a more fascinating or a more dangerous aspect. He that shall govern the helm of the ship of State, for the next four years, must be a man equal to this pressing and formidable emergency; He must bring to the performance of its duties, not only great experience, wise discretion, and a well poised intellect, but he must show to the country that his fealty to their institutions is not bounded by the horizon of local partizans, but is broad and general as the spirit of freedom itself. He must respect the sacred and inviolable compromises of the Constitution. He must keep before him always the sacrifices which all portions of the Union made, which that Constitution was launched into being under circumstances full of peril. He must remember that as our territory expands and our civilization progresses—as the genius of Republicanism forces its way down to the very shores of the Pacific, and crashes beneath the wheels of irresistable progress the feeble and bloody despotism of another age—the experience of free government itself may depend upon the fact, that our Chief Magistrate should be mindful of the experience of the past. However the timid may hesitate and doubt, the mission of this Republic is one which, under providence, cannot be hemmed in by geographical divisions. However the cautious statesman may shrink from and envy the probability of our example civilizing and controlling this entire continent, even while the dreams of calamity, the sublime expectment is vindicating itself, and making still stronger the fabric of religious and political liberty in this hemisphere. To the Democratic party the question is full of interest, for to that party the grave duties arising under it, will be hereafter committed. Already we have seen nothing in the triumph of Democratic principles, since the organization of our government, to make us fearful for our country in time to come. These principles, and the measures which have been originated under and by them, have ever been assailed and doubted by the Federalists, with equal ability and malignity. From the moment when the illustrious JEFFERSON proclaimed the great creed upon which the organization has since been founded, to the time when his example was imitated by JACKSON, VAN BUREN and POLK, a busy and relentless antagonism has constantly been on the alert, decrying the practicability and misrepresenting the benefits of anticipating the evil consequences of the Democratic policy. How often have we seen whole communities swayed and chilled by the ominous predictions of Federalism, while deploring and deprecating the tendencies of Democratic principles to ruin, often have we seen these predictions silently rebuked who should have been first to denounce and deny them! The eloquent and impressive commentary upon this long and consistent hostility to the Democratic creed, is to be found in the fact, that at this day hardly a relic remains of the Federal policy, while thousands who have been adding to the leaders now bear unwilling testimony to the complete and sweeping success of Democratic principles. We have lived to see Webster bearing witness against a BANK, &c.

(Concluded on fourth page.)