

**THE TWO-WINE THEORY
DISCUSSED BY TWO HUNDRED
AND EIGHTY-SIX CLERGYMEN,
ON THE BASIS OF "COMMUNION
WINE"**

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"Communion Wine" by Edward H. Jewett

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EDWARD H. JEWETT

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“COMMUNION WINE.”

BY

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P R E F A C E .

IF some future Disraeli should undertake to write an account of the literary curiosities which have appeared during the present century, he will find abundance of material for a leading article in what has been written and published in support of the generic or two-wine theory. The literature thus produced is curious—indeed, *unique*—on account of the gigantic assumptions and blunderings, misunderstandings and misinterpretings, sanctimonious misjudgings, and acrimonious accusations of opponents contained in it, as well as for the amount of time wasted, and the sums of money spent in propagating a delusion. It is certain to be known through coming generations as the leading *craze* of the nineteenth century.

When, and by whom, the theory originated, is a matter of some doubt; but its birthplace was in the United States, and the time, about fifty years ago. Attractive as a novelty, and offering, as was supposed, a powerful support to the cause of teetotalism, it called out the interest and vigorous advocacy of many, both learned and unlearned. And, as is usual in such cases, there was a jumping at conclusions, before the matter had been carefully examined on all sides. Ancient literature was ransacked, and everything possible was gathered up that had any apparent bearing on the subject. By zeal outrunning discretion, passages were torn from their connections and pressed into the service, whether they had any legitimate bearing upon it or not—thus setting at defiance, as the result has shown, every principle of literary truth and honesty. For well-nigh half a century, the press has teemed with volumes of pretentious learning, such as “The Temperance Bible Commentary”; Kerr’s “Wines: Scriptural and Ecclesiastical”; and Samson’s “Divine Law as to Wines”—all published, or republished, by the National Temperance Society, and accompanied by a host of pamphlets, booklets,

and leaflets, remarkable only for their parrot-like repetitions of what others had said before them. And the delusion still continues, although greatly checked in important quarters; while the work of disseminating pitiable falsehood goes on, stimulated by ignorance and fanaticism, under the patronage of that society. We have ourselves, within the past three years, bought works over its counters, which, for stupidity, dishonesty, and mendacity, are not only a curiosity, but a disgrace to the intelligence and moral honesty of the present generation.

Time, however, works its revenges. Careful examination by scholars has resulted in revealing the utter baselessness and worthlessness of the arguments and authorities brought forward in support of the generic theory. And this is the case all round the circle. The leading scholars of all denominations unite in rejecting it. In marked instances, quotations from classic authors, which have been held up triumphantly as evidence in its favor, are found, upon honest examination, to give most reliable help in confuting it. This is especially the case with the claim that the Greeks and Romans preserved *must* unfermented for use as a beverage; and, by implication, that the Jews did the same. That they preserved *must* for culinary and medicinal uses, is an undoubted fact. But that it was preserved for use as a beverage is an assumption which is contradicted by other facts. (See App. B, pp. 136, 137, 168.) As additional evidence, we refer to Pliny, lib. xxiii. cap. 18, where he speaks of its use for domestic and medicinal purposes, but makes no allusion whatever to it as a beverage. In fact, he states in the same chapter, that it is useless for the stomach, "*Mustum omne stomacho inutile.*"

Why, moreover, so total a silence as there is, with regard to any such use, in the literature of four thousand years, both sacred and profane, previous to the present century? Supposing *must* to have been thus used, it is utterly inexplicable that no Hebrew prophet, heathen moralist, or Christian father ever alludes to it, or recommends it as a safeguard against intemperance. Men like Clement, Tertullian, Jerome, Chrysostom, when denouncing drunkenness, never advise that if people must drink, to drink the "good man's wine"—the pure, unfermented juice of the grape. To give one instance by way of illustration: The last-mentioned,

when dwelling upon the words "use a little wine," 1 Tim. v. 23, writes: "Not only against heretics, but also against the more simple of our brethren (this place is useful), who, when they see some behave improperly through drunkenness, instead of blaming them, revile the fruit given by God, saying, let there be no wine. Let us say to them, let there be no drunkenness; for wine is a work of God, but drunkenness is a work of the devil." Now here, certainly, was a splendid chance to contrast a safe with an unsafe wine. And such instances might easily be multiplied by thousands. If Chrysostom knew of a wine that would not intoxicate, *why does he give no sign of such knowledge?* Instead of that, he points to the abuse of an intoxicating wine, which he says is a "work of God." In a word, the oracles, when consulted, are dumb. This profound and universal silence, taken in connection with the facts already mentioned (App. B, pp. 169-173), has forced the conviction upon reflecting minds, and which is endorsed by common sense, that the whole thing is a delusion.

It is needless, however, to go on "slaying the slain." The theory is DEAD in the estimation of scholars worthy of the name. We have recently had in our hands nearly twenty letters, from Hebrew and Greek scholars and professors in our Eastern universities and theological seminaries—men like Drs. Schaff, Briggs, etc.,—in which they all repudiate it. We do not hesitate to express the conviction that not one first-class Hebrew or Greek professor can be found in the United States who would support it over his own signature.

E. H. J.

