THE HARVESTERS



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THE ALCOHOL PROBLEM

By Jackie M. Stearsman

Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise (Pro. 20:1).

Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things. Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast. They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again (Pro. 23:29-35).

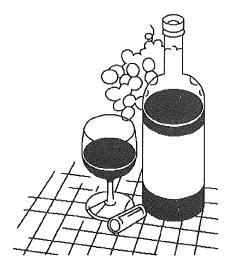
Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that puttest thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness! (Hab. 2:15).

Woe unto them that rise up

early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them! (Isa. 5:11).

Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink: (Isa. 5:22).

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God (I Cor.



6:9-10).

These passages in no way exhaust the verses in the Bible that warn men of the danger and sin of alcohol consumption. Though the danger is real, and the message is clear, there are still those who will not learn and will experience the bitter woes of alcohol to their shame.

A NATIONAL EPIDEMIC

"Drunk driving is national epidemic, what one reformer calls 'America's socially accepted form of murder.' [Emphasis added] . . . More Americans have died at the hands of drunk drivers during the past two years than were killed in Vietnam; on average, about three Americans are killed and 80 are injured by drunk drivers every hour of every day. The drunken slaughter over the past decade is a staggering one-quarter of a million Americans— the entire population of Rochester, N.Y. Safety experts say that one out of two Americans will be victimized by a drunk driver in his life-time. . . . America's tacit acceptance of drinking [Emphasis added] and driving has the effect of loosing time bombs on the nation's highways." (Newsweek, September 13, 1982, pp. 34–35.)

Those who seek to justify alcohol consumption will usually seek to do so on the "social drinking" basis. The article in Newsweek will destroy the myth of the innocence of social drinking. The Bible demands that we test a teaching by its fruits. The fruits of alcohol consumption point in one direction—down. It is a horrible evil!

JESUS AND ALCOHOL

Some people read into the account of Jesus turning water into wine in Cana of Galilee (Jno. 2:1-11) and his being labeled as a glutton and winebilber (Matt. 11:19) is Biblical approval of the use of alcohol as a beverage. Name-calling is not proof of guilt. The context of Matthew 11 clearly indicates that the terms "winebibber" and "glutton" were being used in a slanderous way, and an honest investigation of this will show the charges to be unfounded.

To understand the turning of water into wine requires a broader perspective and proper handling of the total teaching of the Bible lest false conclusions be reached (II Tim. 2:15).

Jesus lived without sin (Heb. 4:15; Jno. 8:46) and he lived in perfect harmony with the demands of the law and the prophets (the Old Testament) and he taught obedience to the very least commandments, condemning any who failed to keep them (Matt. 5:17-20). The term "wine" in Greek is a generic term. The word itself does not imply intoxicating beverage. If intoxicating beverage is intended the context must determine it; in John 2 1-11 it is

read into the text. With Jesus's sinlessness affirmed in the Bible and with the sins of strong drink clearly stated in the Bible (see opening passages), the only conclusion to draw from the total information at hand is that there is no support for socially drinking alcoholic beverages to be found in the miracle of Jesus turning water into wine.

PAUL AND ALCOHOL

Paul's admonition Timothy is sometimes used as an endorsement of "social" alcohol consumption. Such assertions are without foundation. A passage often cited is, Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities (I Tim. 5:23). Note that Paul felt it necessary to write Timothy to drink a little wine for his frequent allments. Had drinking alcoholic beverages been the universal custom of the day and a natural occurrence, Paul would not have needed to admonish Timothy as he did. It is self-evident that Timothy was abstaining from alcohol when it could have been used to his advantage medicinally.

The Bible does not forbid the use of alcohol or other drugs for medicinal purposes, but it does condemn the use of any drugs Cincluding alcohol) for the gratification (just) of the flesh, and Paul in other passages affirms this Read truth. again Corinthians 6:9-10 (included in the opening paragraphs) and try to justify the sins listed there by prefacing each of them with the word "social." Is social fornication, social idolatry, social adultery, social homosexuality (effeminate, abusers of themselves with mankind), social theft, social covetousness, social cursing, and social extortion acceptable? practiced only in moderation,

would such be honorable? The answer is clearly NO!

Any evil action, though given social acceptability, remains evil.

Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! (Isa. 5:20-21).

The same Holy Spirit who Old Testament inspired the prophets was one with the Christ, and inspired the Apostle Paul. He did not order Paul to advise Timothy to do what He had forbidden in other passages. The teachings of Paul furnish no justification for the consumption of alcohol for social and fleshly gratification (Gal. 5:19–21)

PETER AND ABSTINENCE

The Bible contains a clear expression on the subject of total abstinence of alcohol in non medicinal usage in the words of Peter: Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul (I Pet. 2:11).

With this passage before us, let us consider some questions: (I) What are fleshly lusts? In this context the flesh is the physical part of man as contrasted with the

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soul or the eternal nature. The flesh is to be controlled by the spiritually minded (Rom. 8:5-17; Jas. 1:12-16). The desire (appetite) for an object may be present, but the satisfaction of the appetite must be determined by the dictates of God as revealed in the Bible. (2) What is the soul? The soul as used in this verse has reference to the part of man that is composed of his higher, spiritual nature. (3) What does it mean to abstain? It means to hold back, to refrain from, etc. (4) From what are we to abstain? Peter demands that we abstain from all things that come as a result of the lust of the flesh, which would war against the soul! (5) Who will affirm that alcohol consumption is not a lust of the flesh? (6) Where is the individual who will affirm alcohol consumption does not war against the soul?

There is no way to make the issue plainer than did Peter in this passage. Alcohol consumption for nonmedicinal purposes wars against the soul! Drinking alcoholic beverages is included in the lusts of the flesh, and the faithful and wise will abstain.

THE FRUITS

In the Newsweek article from which we have quoted there is a chart prepared from the National Safety Council figures from 1980 that verifies the statement, "Drunk driving accounts for fully half of all fatalities—and kills far more Americans each year than other accidents" (p. 27). The chart lists the following causes of accidental deaths: Airplane crashes—1,200; Firearms—1,800; Suffocation by ingested objects-3,100; Poisons — 4,300; Fire, burns—5,500; Drowning—7,000; Falls—12,000; and Drunk driving-26,300.

The Pinellas Comprehen-

sive Alcohol Services, Inc., in a letter August 5, 1981, to church leaders in Pinellas County, stated: "Alcohol is the number one drug choice for young people in Pinellas County. A high percentage of our children of high school, middle school and even elementary school age are drinking alcoholic beverages. Many more children are negatively affected by the drinking problems of their parents."

The alcohol problem is an epidemic that is worldwide in scope. It exists nationally and locally, and all of us are affected by it. With the potential dangers of alcohol consumption so vividly portrayed, how can anyone refuse to be concerned?

CONCLUSION

Experience has spoken in these words.

We drank for happiness, and became unhappy.

We drank for joy, and became miserable.

We drank for sociability, and became argumentative.

We drank for friendship and made enemies.

We drank for sleep and awakened without rest.

We drank for strength and felt weak.

We drank "medicinally" and acquired health problems.

We drank for relaxation and got the shakes.

We drank for bravery and became doubtful.

We drank to make conversation easier and slurred our speech.

We drank to forget and were forever haunted.

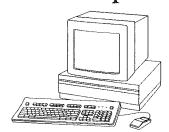
We drank for freedom and became its slaves.

We drank to erase problems and saw them multiply.

We drank to cope with life and invited death.

(Author unknown)

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Student's Wife Baptized

Bernadette Lafleur, the wife of full time student Dumas Lafleur, was baptized by brother Carr, November 15, 1991. Brother Carr had baptized Dumas last year. Sister Lafleur had been licensed to preach for the Church of God of Prophecy. We are rejoicing over her conversion and feel that she will be a great asset to her husband as together they serve the Lord.

Registration Schedule

Florida School of Preaching

Spring Semester 1992

Date	Phone		
Name			
Address			
City	State Zip		
	Check Classes Desired		
Hours	Course	Instructor	Credit
Monday 8:30 to 12:00 1:00 to 4:30	Miracles & Parables Practical Work of the Church	Davis Franklin	3 3
Tuesday 8:30 to 12:00 1:00 to 4:30 7:00 to 9:30 p.m.	The Cults General Epistles Topical Studies	Stearsman \Stilwell Blackman	3 3 2½
Wednesday 8:30 to 12:00 1:00 to 4:30	Hermeneutics-Special Romans	Stearsman Carr	3 3
Thursday 8:30 to 12:00 1:00 to 4:30 7:00 to 9:30 p.m.	Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians New Testament Greek	Stilwell Davidson Stearsman	3 3 2½
Friday 8:30 to 12:00 1:00 to 4:30	Bible Georgraphy and Archeology Christian Evidences	Franklin Stearsman	3 3

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