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"WINE IS A MOCKER."

NOV. 26. – PROV. 23:29-35.

"Wine is a mocker; strong drink is raging, and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." – Prov. 20:1.

VERY RARELY indeed do we discuss the subject of intemperance: not because we do not realize it to be a crying evil, one of the most dreadful elements of and accessories to the degradation of our race, but because so far as we know our readers few of them would have need of advice or reproof along this line. As for the world, it is not our attempt to revolutionize and reform it along the lines of total abstinence or temperance in respect to the liquor evil, the social evil, the profanity evil, the backbiting evil, the war evil, the lying evil, or others. And this is not because we have no sympathy with reforms in all these various directions, but because, according to our understanding of the divine Word, it is God's plan that another and higher work be attended to now by the Lord's ambassadors – viz., the work of gathering out a people for his name, spiritual Israel, the holy nation, the peculiar people, the royal priesthood, the Church, the body of Christ – under whose ministration in glory, in a coming age, the world's reformatory uplift is to be accomplished, under conditions that will be adequate and make success certain.

An intelligent and very earnest reader of the WATCH TOWER publications remarked the fact that he had been struck with the absence of all appeals on the liquor question, the tobacco question, gambling, etc., and yet he said – "When I began reading these publications I was a moderate drinker, an habitual smoker and chewer of tobacco, and altho not a gambler I was well versed in cardplaying as a social diversion and time-killer. But since reading the WATCH TOWER publications my life has undergone a complete change in respect to all of these things. I asked myself the question, Have I or have I not consecrated my all to the Lord, covenanting with him to use life, voice,

strength, influence, and means to his glory, to the best of my knowledge and ability? I answered, Yes. The question then came, Can you see in what manner your drinking of wine or smoking or chewing tobacco or playing a social game of cards will be to the Lord's glory, to the increase of your influence for righteousness, or a proper expenditure of time and money, in harmony with your covenant? I was obliged to answer myself, No; that these things would all be contrary to my covenant, and I therefore abandoned them in the Lord's name and strength. But now what I want to know is, what was the nature of the influence exercised upon my mind by the reading of MILLENNIAL DAWN which produced or helped to produce these results? for, as I said before, I cannot remember anything directly upon these subjects in this reading matter, and on the contrary, other books which I have had and read which did deal with these subjects pointedly and explicitly, failed utterly to make any impression upon me. Why is this? How is this? What is it that has such influence over me?"

We answered, that undoubtedly the good influence exercised was the spirit of the truth, operating upon the good ground of an honest and consecrated heart. We pointed out that the effort of our publications is to strike the axe of truth at the root of the evil tree, instead of attempting to lop off the various evil branches. A thorough consecration to the Lord is in opposition to every form of sin and in harmony with everything that is good, noble, true, pure. The difficulty with a majority of those who are truly consecrated to the Lord is that they have been mistaught. They have been misled to believe that Christianity is merely morality and civilization, instead of being taught by the divine Word that Christianity is a following of Jesus' footsteps in full consecration to the Heavenly Father's will in all matters.

They have been taught that the chief work of the Christian is to get saved and to save others; and by saved is generally understood a breaking off of the **[R2532 : page 250]** gross immoralities, a conformity to civilized usages, and a membership in some earthly church. False views of the Church's mission evidently have much to

do with this setting up of false standards in the name of Christianity. Thinking men have realized the impossibility of securing the conversion of the world along the Scriptural lines of full consecration to the Lord. It was realized long, long ago that such hopes are baseless from what we know of humanity in general, and having in mind the erroneous thoughts that God had committed the conversion of the world to the Church, the effort was made to bring about at least a partial reformation of the conduct of the world. Thus the high standard for the Lord's people as set forth in his Word has been, to the majority of Christian people, a dead letter, and to the majority of ministers an unknown or at least an untaught lesson, because in violent opposition to their cherished but unscriptural theory respecting the conversion of the world by human agencies.

Thus we see what a great loss true Christianity and true Christian teaching sustained through the introduction **[R2533 : page 250]** of a false hope, a false theory, and through the abandonment of the original hope set before us in the gospel – the faith, the hope, that God is now electing, selecting, polishing and preparing a little flock of faithful covenanters, who in his own due time, as the body, the bride, the joint-heirs with Christ glorified, will be given the power and great glory necessary to the establishment of righteousness in the world, – the binding of Satan and of sin, the opening of the blind eyes of corrupted humanity, and the unstopping of the dull ears that all may hear, and know the truth respecting the divine character and gracious provision of our Heavenly Father's plan for the world's salvation – and to an opportunity of sharing in that salvation everlastingly, if they will.

While still adhering strictly to the same principles, *viz.*, the pointing out of the necessity for full consecration on the part of those who would be of the Lord's flock, we nevertheless think it not amiss to occasionally draw attention to the Scriptural presentation on the subject of intemperance in the use of intoxicating liquors. It is neither necessary nor proper that we should take the radical and unscriptural ground seemingly taken by so many who advocate total

abstinence, *viz.*, that to even taste liquor is a sin, a grievous sin. We can go no further on any point than do the Scriptures, when they declare, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is *not wise.*" In harmony with the intimation of these inspired words is the thought that whoever trifles with this mocker is in danger of being deceived by it, of being ensnared, of being injured, of being wrecked.

Of course, the dangers are greater to some than to others, but dangers there are to all: and especially as our race has grown weaker physically and more nervous through the changed conditions peculiar to our times. Undoubtedly under present circumstances and conditions the movement toward total abstinence is an excellent one; we merely urge that the claims for total abstinence should be presented on their own true, proper basis, and not upon any misrepresentations of the Scriptural teachings on this subject.

We can certainly without impropriety urge upon the Lord's people the language of the Apostle, "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is *excess*, but be filled with the spirit [the new wine, the new exhilarant, the new antidote for care and pain and trouble]." (Eph. 5:18.) Realizing the nervous pressure of our day we may certainly urge that each should consider for himself whether or not the use of wine at all under present conditions might not be improper, as being dangerous. And it would appear that those who get most thoroughly filled with the spirit have in it the new wine, the new exhilarant of the new nature in which they can rejoice most, and of which they cannot partake to excess and injury.

It is in place here for us to remind ourselves of our Lord's words, through the Apostle, that no drunkards shall inherit the Kingdom of God. (1 Cor. 6:10; Gal. 5:21.) We are not to understand these texts to teach that no one who has *ever* been drunk can enter into the Kingdom of God, but rather that whoever has come under the influence of the Gospel call and been begotten of the holy Spirit must of necessity

receive so much of the spirit of a sound mind that he would not be deceived by the mocking wine and the insane influence of strong drink. (2 Tim. 1:7.) On the contrary, if any had been unwisely addicted to the use of liquors to intoxication he must, under the instructions of the Lord's Word and the leadings of his holy Spirit, become more thoroughly instructed in the way of righteousness, and sanctified to God, else he can never be accepted as one of the overcomers, one of the "little flock," who through the wisdom that cometh from above, and in laying hold upon the power of God in Christ, are enabled to break the bonds of Satan which have enslaved them.

NOAH'S INTOXICATION EXCUSABLE.

For the sake of some who may be inclined to excuse a certain amount of dissipation in view of Noah's drunkenness (Gen. 9:20,21), we should say a word in defence of the patriarch. The record is that Noah was a God-fearing man whom God recognized and especially favored because of his righteousness; and the fact that he became intoxicated after having had six [R2533 : page 251] hundred years of experience has not only struck Christian people with astonishment, but has inclined some weaker characters to excuse their own unwisdom by his course.

In Noah's defence we call attention to the fact that his intoxication was after the flood and was purely accidental. The flood itself was a part of a great change in the aerial conditions of our earth: to our understanding the flood was produced by the precipitation to the earth of an immense quantity of water which previously had surrounded the earth at a distance as a cloudy canopy.

The breaking of this canopy or envelope of water not only produced the flood, but altered the conditions of nature so that storms, rains, etc., resulted, things which had never been before. (Gen. 2:5,6.) Another result, we believe, was the production of an *aciditous* condition of the atmosphere tending toward ferment, which directly affected human longevity, so that according to the

Scripture records the average of human life quickly decreased from eight and nine hundred years to one hundred. This ferment from the changed atmosphere, affecting the grape, produces "must," and thence the alcoholic condition which produces drunkenness. According to the record, Noah's drunkenness was the result of the first vintage of grapes after the flood, and it evidently was contrary to all his experiences preceding the flood. As we have no record of his ever having become intoxicated afterward we are justified in supposing that this one instance was the result of ignorance respecting the changed character of the grape product fermented. From this standpoint nothing will be seen in Noah's conduct calculated to encourage or excuse drunkenness on the part of those who know very well that "wine is a mocker."

Those who have received the holy Spirit and who have found it to be the spirit of a sound mind should seek to inculcate some of their new soundness of judgment on all matters to others as they have opportunity – especially to their children, who subsequently learning the source of that sound judgment may be the more favorably influenced toward a full consecration of themselves to the Lord, thus saving them from many disasters, moral and physical, to which they may be exposed if left without the wise counsel of those to whom they should and do look naturally for lessons of instruction and for helps in the way to nobility of life and character.

We give below a portion of the lesson under consideration in the form of a wine glass, and some remarks of an unknown author in the form of a decanter, which may be interesting to the children and impressive to their memories.

THE DRUNKARD'S WOE-CUP.

"Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath
contentions? who hath complaining? who
hath wounds without cause, who hath
redness of eyes? They that tarry

long at the wine; they that go
to seek out mixed wine.
Look not thou upon the
wine when it is red,
when it giveth
its color
in the
cup,
when it goeth
down
smoothly:
at the
last it biteth
like a serpent, and
stingeth like an adder."

THE OLD DECANTER.

"There was an old decanter,
and its mouth was gaping
wide; the rosy wine had
ebbed away and left its
crystal side; and the
wind went humming
humming, up and
down the sides it
flew, and through
its reed-like, hollow
neck, the wildest notes

it blew. I placed it in
the window, where the
blast was blowing free, and
fancied that its pale mouth
sang the queerest strains to me.
"They tell me – puny conquerors!
the Plague has slain his ten, and
War his hundred thousand of the very
best of men; but I," – 'twas thus the bottle
spake – "but I have conquered more than all
your famous conquerors so feared and famed of
yore. Then come, ye youths and maidens all, come
drink from out my cup, the beverage that dulls the
brains and burns the spirits up; that puts to shame
your conquerors that slay their scores below, for
this has deluged millions with the lava tide of
woe. Though in the path of battle darkest
waves of blood may roll; yet while
I killed the body, I have damned
the very soul. The cholera,
the plagues, the sword, such
ruin never wrought as I, in mirth or
malice, on the innocent have brought.
And still I breathe upon them, and they
shrink before my breath; and year by year my
thousands tread the dismal road of DEATH."
