

## "WINE IS A MOCKER."

Prov. 20:1; 23:20,21,29-35. – Nov. 22.

IN THIS LESSON wine personifies alcohol, which in one form or another mocks every man who becomes its friend and companion. Realizing this, surely it is true that "Whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." Evidently many of our race are not wise, for millions are thus deceived, notwithstanding the illustrations they have on every hand of wine's deceived friends, wrecked socially, morally, physically and financially.

The Department of Labor in Washington recently issued a bulletin showing the returns made by employers in various industries in the United States regarding the drinking habits of their employees. Of seven thousand employers who answered the question whether, in engaging employees, they discriminated against men who drank, forty-four hundred replied in the affirmative and only sixteen hundred in the negative. The returns divided according to industries were as follows: –

Discriminated	Not against	discriminated
Mining .....	56 per cent	44 per cent
Agriculture .....	72 per cent	28 per cent
Manufacturing .....	79 per cent	21 per cent
Trade .....	88 per cent	12 per cent
Transportation .....	97 per cent	3 per cent

About two thousand employers forbade any use of intoxicants by employees of certain grades, and fifteen hundred forbade it when employees were on duty. We quote: –

"It is worthy of note that the grades of work in which employers require that no liquor shall be used are always those entailing responsibility. For example, in agriculture it was the foremen,

managers, etc., who were required to be abstainers; in manufacturing it was the engineer, fireman, etc.; in transportation, the trainmen, motormen, etc., conductors and the like. It will be perceived that the trades most highly organized show the most disposition to prohibit the use of liquor. Railroads, for example, stand at the top of the list, and agriculture very nearly at the foot, though the temperance sentiment among farmers is vastly stronger than among railroad managers."

The liquor question seems to be less a dispute respecting the wisdom of intoxication and its unprofitableness and more a question of personal liberty. A love of liberty is born in every man, no matter how depraved he may be otherwise, and yet it cannot be disputed that liberty can be used properly only under perfect conditions or under restraints. If all men were perfect, well balanced mentally, and without depraved appetite, and if the surroundings were all perfect, they would need no restraints of any kind, though they would still be subject to divine laws. Under present imperfect conditions all lovers of liberty should appreciate the necessity of self-control, restraint of liberty – especially those who, as New Creatures, have voluntarily placed themselves under divine instruction. Even those who feel the greatest possible confidence in their strength of will should remember that the will grows stronger by its exercise in opposition, and that where it is not thus actively engaged habit is apt to supplant it and become the master. Furthermore, seeing as we do the large proportion of the human family who admittedly are weak in will power and self-control, and realizing the force of example upon such, those who feel themselves strong, in proportion as they love their neighbor as themselves will feel disposed to forego the exercise of liberties which would have the effect of stumbling their weaker neighbors. A noted writer has said:

"My reader, beware of habit! Habit is the most significant word to be found in the English vocabulary. Get an artist to paint it in letters of fire and hang it on the walls of your chamber, where your eye shall

catch its message when you retire and where it may greet you again with the rising sun. Gaze upon it until it is deeply cut into the sanctuary of your inner being, just where the lamp of life may cast its ruddy light over it. Habit is to be your curse or benediction; it is either to conquer you or enable you to conquer. Today it is transforming you into a sycophant or a prince of freedom. Today you are either girding your soul with fetters of sorrow or building a chariot that will conduct you to paradise. Good habits are as potent for emancipation as vile ones are for slavery and anguish. One may resolutely form habits of purity, honesty, fidelity, till he breathes the air of divinity as his native air; – as he eventually becomes expert and master in melody, by years of inexorable drill."

The power of habit is unquestionably a great one either for good or evil, but let us not forget that the human will, however strong or persistently exercised, can only reach its highest attainment and most favorable results when placed under discipleship to Christ – to be taught of God. **[R3271 : page 415]**

The Christian Endeavor World gives the following information regarding the use of liquors in various civilized countries. From this it appears that although the liquor habit has reached terrible proportions in this land and is blighting millions of lives annually, nevertheless the United States is fifteenth in the list. We thank God that it is no worse, and yet long for the time when our prayer, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth," shall be answered in the establishment of the Millennial kingdom under which Satan shall be bound, and all necessary restrictions be put into operation, to the intent that the world of mankind may be uplifted everywhere and brought to a knowledge of the salvation made possible for all through the dear Redeemer's death. The quotation follows: –

"A table recently published showing the amount of all kinds of liquors consumed per capita in twenty-three nations, throws startling

but not astonishing light on the much-talked-of commercial invasion of European markets by America.

"At the head of this list of nations, the heaviest in drinking in the world is the Argentine Republic. Close after it comes France, Italy, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Great Britain, – the nations that are feeling most keenly the commercial aggressiveness of the United States. Fifteenth in the list comes the United States, the commercial rival whose success is making all Europe uneasy. In other words, the difference between successful competition and failure lies largely in the difference between the 6.4 gal. of pure alcohol in all kinds of liquors consumed per capita in France, the 2.63 in Germany, the 1.96 in Austria, the 3.47 in Belgium, the 2.52 in Great Britain, and the 1.26 in the United States."

"At a recent meeting in Birmingham, England, addressed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the presiding officer, Mr. Edwin Smith, said: – 'If we spent on alcohol the same per capita as America, our drinking bill would be about £66,000,000 less than it now is. We cannot succeed commercially while we are handicapped in this way to the extent of forty-eight per cent.'"

The wise man does not say that a moderate use of alcoholic liquors brings woe, sorrow, contentions, complainings, wounds, redness of eyes, etc., and we are not to add to his words. We are to remember, however, that those who tarry long at the wine probably reach that condition through habit, that most of such begin with a fear of the consequences and the intention of becoming moderate drinkers only. Let us beware of the slavery of habit! Even the force and weight of the exceeding great and precious promises are not sufficient to hold our fallen appetites where they are being constantly fed and the chains of habit being forged; hence the wisdom of the exhortation to turn our eyes away from the smooth-flowing wine, to engage our attention and thoughts in some other direction, knowing that wine is a mocker, and that whatever it may promise of rewards and blessings at our first

introduction, "at the last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder." Its tendency is to pervert the judgment in general, so that the eyes will see strange things, as in delirium tremens, and the heart will utter through the mouth perverse things. Surely the new nature could not thrive under such conditions, which tend even to deprave further the old nature. Hence, every New Creature must beware of this seductive influence, and resist it faithfully, as he would make his calling and election sure.

Those who give way to the drinking habit become sottish, careless, as though a man were to lie down to sleep in the sea and not expect to be drowned, or as though he were to lie down upon the top of a mast and not expect to fall and be injured. To such ultimately the only desirable thing is oblivion, to be stupidly insensible to the reproof of friends and the blows of enemies. The waking idea seems to be to seek further intoxication.

A well known temperance worker, when asked to address a Sunday School, desired to bring out the fact that the drunkards of the future must come from the ranks of the boys of today. "Boys," said he, "these men that we see all around us on the street, in the stores, in this church, grow old and feeble and sooner or later will die. Who will take their places and be the men then?" After a moment's pause they answered, "We boys."

"Very true," answered the speaker. "Now, boys, you have all seen men who drank too much, – drunkards we call them. After a while they will die too. Now, boys, tell me who do you think will take their places and be the drunkards then?" Promptly came the answer, "We boys!" The thoughtless answer roused the whole school. Could there possibly be any truth in it? Alas, yes – not true of all these boys, but true of some of them.

With this thought in mind, what child of God could feel indifferent in respect to his example and instruction to all boys over whom he exercises any influence; how carefully his own boys should

be guided, counselled, assisted in the formation of correct principles, correct habits.

A number of young men were one day sitting around the fire in the waiting room of an English railway, talking about a total abstinence society. Just then a policeman came in with a prisoner in handcuffs. He listened to the young men's conversation but did not give any opinion. Mr. McDonald, a minister of the gospel, was also in the room, and hearing what the young men were saying, stepped up to the policeman and said aloud, "Pray, sir, what have you to say about temperance?" The policeman replied, "Well, all I have to say is that I never took a teetotaler to York Castle prison in my life, nor to Wakefield House of Correction either."

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