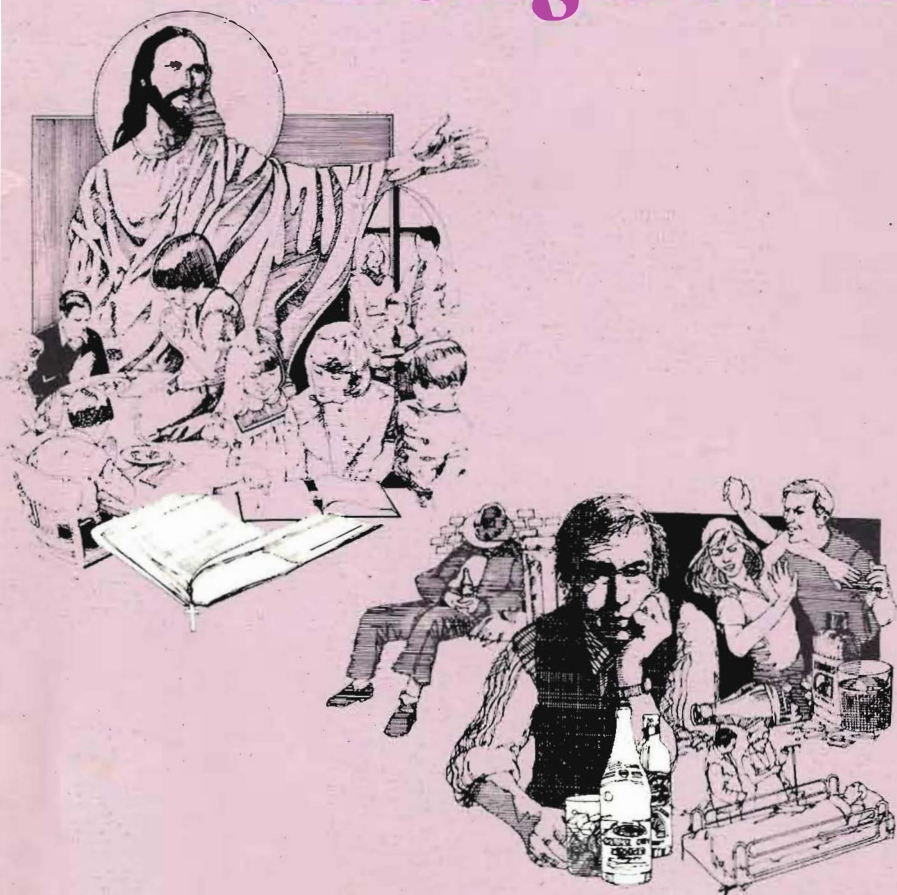


# The Bible and Strong Drink



**HOWARD WINTERS**

Introduction by James Meadows



THE BIBLE  
AND  
STRONG DRINK



# THE BIBLE and Strong Drink

by  
Howard Winters

*“The most crucial drink in the making of a drunkard is the first one, not the last one.”*

— Charles E. Crouch

WIN-MORE PUBLICATIONS  
P.O. Box 117  
West Jefferson, North Carolina 28694

## TO MINNIE,

*my lovely wife, who has constantly supported me in the long and seemingly impossible task of becoming a writer; who has unselfishly shared the love that should belong to her alone with a typewriter; and who has endured the lonely hours of "writers' widowhood" with patience and understanding. What a woman! What a blessing from God she has been to me!*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	7
Preface.....	9
1 Do We Care?.....	13
2 Do We Want the Truth?.....	17
3 It Brings Shame.....	20
4 It Makes Unaware of Impending Evil.....	24
5 It Blurs Distinction.....	26
6 It Distorts Vision.....	30
7 It Leads to Disregarding the Lord's Work.....	33
8 It Brings Sorrow.....	35
9 It Steals the Heart.....	37
10 It Bites Like a Serpent.....	39
11 It Produces Miseries.....	41
12 It Destroys.....	44
13 It Deceives.....	48
14 It Maddens.....	51
15 It Makes Insensible.....	55
16 It Impoverishes.....	58
17 Miscellaneous Evils.....	61
18 It Keeps One Out of the Kingdom.....	65
19 It is Condemned.....	69
20 Moderation or Drunkenness?.....	73
21 The Expanding Drinking Problem.....	78



## INTRODUCTION

Howard Winters is one of the most dedicated men it has ever been this scribe's privilege to know. He has meant, and continues to mean, as much or more to the Carolinas than any other individual. His whole life has been one of helping people and preaching and teaching the word of God.

For years Howard has served as editor of **Carolina Christian**. His sharp mind and gifted pen have contributed invaluable material helpful to many lives. He encourages and invites others to contribute articles to **Carolina Christian**. It continues to grow every year under his leadership.

Howard Winters' book **The Bible and Strong Drink** is a valuable addition in this needed field. For more than 15 years the author has written and rewritten this material. It is obvious that it comes from a heart that has witnessed and grieved over the effects of strong drink. One may not always agree with every detailed conclusion reached by the author, but one will learn many valuable lessons.

It has been this scribe's privilege to read the original manuscript of this material. The author has tried and, in most cases, has successfully discussed almost every phase of strong drink as revealed in the Bible. Although there is some repetition in the material, its arrangement has given greater impact to the overall truths.

It is this scribe's conviction that this book should be widely distributed and read. Surely many souls will be helped in overcoming strong drink and others will be stopped before they start.

James Meadows

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

It is with deep gratitude I acknowledge my indebtedness to and the contribution made by each of the following in the production of this book:

To Clayton Winters and James Meadows (two noble men of God) who took time out of their busy schedule to read the manuscript and make valuable suggestions and corrections, which in every case were improvements. And to James P. Stutts who read part of the manuscript and offered some suggestions and approving words. Without their encouragement, this book would have probably died in manuscript form.

To Judy Redd and Juanita Barnett, employees of Faith Printing Company — to Judy for her fantastic work on the cover and to Juanita for her patience and understanding in my many demands pertaining to typesetting and makeup.

## PREFACE

This book is not designed, as the reader will soon learn, to give statistics as to the cost and destructiveness of alcohol (although some statistics are given or referred to in a few places) — I have left that department to statisticians and to more capable authors in that realm; nor has it been my purpose to study the results of alcohol in the human body and mind — I leave that aspect of the subject to medical men. This work was designed with only one end in view, namely, to emphasize the fact that the Scriptures teach that the use of alcoholic beverages for the purpose of intoxication is an evil. Thus I have been concerned here only with what the Scriptures teach. I have tried not to go beyond that one concept. Of course I have discussed many of the present-day evils of alcohol but, as far as it has been possible for me to do so, I have included only that which to my mind emphasized the Biblical view of strong drink. It has been my aim to put the use of alcoholic beverages, for the purpose of intoxication, into a Scriptural perspective. All that is included is there because I thought it would aid in understanding the Biblical teaching. Nothing has been included for any other purpose.

I make no secret of it: I am prejudiced against all forms of intoxicating drink. I hate it with a passion. I hate it because of what I see it doing to children, husbands, wives, communities, our nation, the world, the church, and even to some members of the body of Christ who have been deceived by its lures. There is no question about it, its use is devastating to homes, to happiness, to industry, to peace, to prosperity, to spiritual welfare. My hatred for it goes back as far as I can remember, even before I became a Christian and when I would occasionally indulge in its unholy consumption. And so from the very dawn of my preaching life I declared war on it, and I have never sounded a retreat . . . nor do I ever expect to. What it is, what it does, and all that its manufacture, sale, and consumption stand for is diametrically opposed to the cause of Christ, the Christian system, the cause for

which I have devoted my whole life and being. There is simply no compatibility between Christianity and strong drink. And as surely as one cannot serve two masters, he cannot live for Christ supremely and devote one minute of his time to the use of alcoholic beverages as an intoxicant. Thus I conceive it to be a divine obligation of every Christian to oppose the liquor traffic with everything he has, with his wealth, with his power, with his influence, as well as with his practice, ballot, and word.

It was because I so view strong drink, and because I want to do something about it, to help those who drink to stop and to encourage those who do not drink to never start, that I wrote this book. It is simply a one-man effort to try to clean the earth of a little of this vast scourge.

While the actual writing of it has been done in a relatively short period of time (about eight months), this book has been brewing in my mind and heart for many years. A shorter form of it was written as a lecture (delivered as two 45-minute sermons) while I lived in Wilmington, North Carolina. There were some brethren there, two of which were leaders in the church at that time but who have since moved away, who defended the practice of social drinking (unfortunately, I think there have been some of this kind in every church for which I have preached in the Carolinas). I was asked by some of the members (and they composed the vast majority) who opposed drinking in any form to preach on the subject. I went to work and carefully prepared the lecture (which I divided into two parts for presentation) in manuscript and announced that I would preach on the subject for two specified Sunday nights. One of the two men who defended its use came to me and positively prohibited me to carry out my plans, then or ever. This was just like adding fuel to the fire. I informed him that I could not honor his "request." And I would fill my obligation just as it had been announced. Because of this (and some other related factors) I was soon relieved of my duties in Wilmington. I then relocated in Burlington. But that did not lessen my hatred for strong drink . . . nor did it change what the Bible says about it. I just continued to preach and write against its evils at every opportunity (even though I have sternly avoided making a hobby of it). Brethren have not always agreed with me on the subject but I have never again been fired over it. But to be fired does not concern me a great deal (although I must confess that it hurt my ego tremendously); what the Bible teaches does. I therefore, believe that the time is long past due for us to take a long, hard look at what the Scriptures have to say about this sinful practice. We must not

settle for popular appeal, public opinion, or the practice of society. We must know the truth — the truth as it is taught in the word of God.

In the summer of 1976 I moved to West Jefferson, North Carolina, a lovely little mountain town which enjoys a good deal of the peace, quiet, and tranquility of former days before the pressures of modern living invaded our lives. The town (in fact, the whole of Ashe County) had been “dry” for many years, but a short while after my family and I had moved in we were informed that a beer and wine referendum would be coming up for a vote. With this information I plunged into the community efforts to defeat it. I used our radio program, the pulpit, and the local paper through which to speak out against both drinking and the referendum. This involved the church (and I think the church ought to be involved in such battles). And so again I found myself embroiled with a minority of brethren who tried to defend drinking in moderation. They thought my preaching and my efforts against the referendum were out of line and unscriptural. But this was nothing new for me. I knew what the Bible said . . . and I knew what the devil wanted. And I fully intended to preach the truth and let others do the compromising with Satan. The election passed, but in the process the church had become better known and appreciated by the good people of the community. They knew our stand (or at least the stand of the majority). And in my judgment, this cannot fail to present us with many opportunities to spread the gospel of Christ. I do not know what the future may hold, but I know at this time I still survive and I still have a strong desire to do everything in my power to eliminate strong drink from the face of the earth.

But back to the story: When the election was over in West Jefferson we had suffered a crushing defeat. The “wets” won big. There was nothing I could do (for the time being) but to accept the decision of the majority. But this did not keep me from being disappointed and dissatisfied with our efforts. I was especially dissatisfied with the material (or the lack of it) that had been available to us from the Scriptural perspective. We had plenty of statistics, sad stories, and selected paragraphs, but very little from the religious standpoint. I therefore determined to write a small booklet showing what the Scriptures teach about strong drink. I knew it was too late for the past election, but I could have it ready when the next battle came along (the next one came sooner than I expected, even before I had finished this book, but that is another story, one that cannot be told here — and we won it). But even before I had finished the first chapter I concluded that it would not be possible for me to say what I wanted to say within the confines of a

small booklet. I then decided to extend it to about 20 chapters (there are actually 21), hoping that by some means it could be published and distributed in the larger size. And so this latter project has been carried to completion.

Now it is finished (or at least I have reached a place where I am willing to stop for a time). I now submit it to the public to judge as to its usefulness — to determine whether I have been successful in doing what I set out to do. As I conclude, I am eternally grateful to my heavenly Father for the fascinating adventure of writing it. It is my hope and prayer that it will cause Bible-believing people (no one else will be interested in its contents) to stop and think — think about what the grand old Book of the ages has to say about this scourge that has cursed man down through the ages. If this happens, even to a small degree, the laborer will be rewarded for his labor, and both his effort over the years to teach the truth and the publication of this book will be justified.

May the will of the Lord be done!

## CHAPTER 1

# DO WE CARE?

“I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul.” (Ps. 142:4.) David here depicts himself as in total distress. He looks around him for help. There is no one there who knows him or who will serve as a refuge — no one there to care for his soul. This could well be the cry of millions of souls today. They are lost in sin, caught in the web of habit, bound by Satan, and few there are who care. Will this continue to be their plight, or will the followers of Christ rise up to lend a helping hand — rise to bridge the gap with compassion between them and Christ, the true refuge of souls?

Do we care? That is the question.

1. Do we care about the lost souls in the world, in our own country, in our community, in our neighborhood? There are millions of them. They have lost their way. They are addicted to sin. They are “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.” (Eph. 2:12.) But do we care? God cared enough to send His Son into the world. Christ cared enough to die on the cross. The early Christians cared enough to devote themselves wholly to the salvation of souls. The early church cared enough to suffer persecution. Do we care enough to carry out the great commission, to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature? Surely we do. But what would be our attitude toward a thing that causes hundreds of thousands of souls to be ruined in this life and lost forever in eternity, that contributes heavily to their rejection of Christ, that causes the preaching of the gospel to fall on dull and listless ears? If it were possible would we cry out against its evil or even vote to make its sale illegal? Do we care enough for the lost to try to remove this stumbling block from their path?

2. Do we care about the church and its progress? The Lord’s church is the most vital institution this old world has ever known. It was built by Jesus (Matt. 16:18), purchased with His own precious blood (Acts

20:28), made up of all the saved (Acts 2:47), and will be received by Christ at His coming to be with Him forever (Eph. 5:27). But there are scores of factors in the modern world that hinder the progress of the church, such as man-made churches, counterfeit gospels, human philosophies, etc., many over which we have little or no control. We have permitted worldly philosophies to make a greater impact on the minds of men than we have made with the gospel of Christ. And these philosophies have closed millions of minds to truth and right. But there is one factor that stands in the way of the church in most communities, that makes progress far more difficult, and often nearly impossible, over which we do have some control, at least at times. Men love it more than they love the church, the truth, their families, or even their own lives when they become slaves of it. It is thus a strong current that draws them away from the church and all it stands for. Do we care enough about the church and its progress to work to remove this factor from society and therefore create a more suitable environment for church growth?

3. Do we care about young people and their problems? No generation of young people have faced more temptation and incentives to fall into sin than the present one. Sexual promiscuity is the order of the day. When I was growing up in the poverty-stricken mountains of East Tennessee a loose person was the exception, socially ostracized. But today those who maintain purity are the ones considered oddballs and misfits. Peer pressure has forced many a youth to sacrifice virtue. Then there is the drug problem. It is presented to them as a cure all for modern pressures — it is the heavenly cop-out. But this is not all: they are taught in school that they are the offspring of lower forms of life. They are here by the process of evolution rather than by the creative power of an Almighty God. Thus they are taught that they came from nowhere — they are here by pure chance. They have no reason for being here. And when it is all over, they have nowhere to go — nothing to hope for except the gloom of the grave. Their faith in God and in true values is thus shattered. There are many other problems that make life difficult for youth today, but there is one that looms larger than all the rest in its potential dangers. It is said that 80 percent or more of all teenagers engage in it, at least on occasion, and 10 percent have a definite problem with it. That means that at least 10 percent are addicted to it for life, that they have lost all control over it. Now suppose we could do something to help eliminate this problem. Do we care enough about youth to do so?

4. Do we care about the quality of family life? I am speaking of more

than our own families. Do we care about the quality of life in the family next door, down the street, around the world? The family is the stabilizing unit of society, but it is presently under strong attack. Divorce is probably the family's worst enemy and it is stalking through the land with devastating force. Nearly half of all marriages now end in divorce. And there are no divorces without shattered lives, broken homes, and a weakened quality of family life. But there is one thing that contributes to divorce as much if not more than any other single factor. It does so by reducing the quality of family life. But in addition to this, it causes hardships, destroys love and respect, instills fear, disrupts the family income, and weakens the ties that bind. It is a thing we often have a chance to voice approval of or oppose. We are even given a chance occasionally to either vote it in or vote it out. Do we care enough about the quality of family life to oppose everything that contributes to its destruction?

5. Do we care about the mass slaughter on our public highways? Nearly 50,000 die each year on our roads in this country, a large percentage of whom are young people. Additional hundreds of thousands are hurt, disabled, and maimed for life. Property damage runs into the millions of dollars.

The Viet Nam struggle was the most unpopular war in which this country has ever engaged. The slaughter there became unbearable for most Americans. Young people rose up in great numbers to protest against it. They carried their protest to the schools, to the streets, and to the government. And they kept on protesting until the government called a halt and suffered a humiliating defeat. It became the first war the American people ever lost. As we look back, regardless of what our views may have been then, we can more readily see why young people became so outraged. They were the ones who were giving their lives for a cause they did not fully understand. Yet in that long conflict only about 50,000 Americans were killed, about the same number killed each year on our highways. There needs to be an uprising and mass demonstrations against this slaughter. But there is one factor involved in one-half of the highway fatalities. It is either directly or indirectly responsible for nearly 25,000 people being killed each year in automobile accidents. Do we care enough about the slaughter on our highways to help remove that factor?

Do we care? That is the question.

But what is the factor in our society which causes souls to be lost, slows the progress of the church, increases the problems and burdens of youth, destroys the quality of family life, and contributes to 50 per-

cent of the fatalities on our highways? It is alcoholic beverages.

When souls, the church, youth, the family, and those dying on the roadways of America cry, "Does anyone care for our souls?" what will our answer be? Do we care? How much do we care? Do we care enough to do something about the destructive power of strong drink?

## CHAPTER 2

### **DO WE WANT THE TRUTH?**

What does the Bible say about strong drink? This is the crucial question. Those of us who are willing to let the Bible settle every question must rest our whole case here. If it teaches that it is an evil, that its use is sinful, then we have no choice but to so teach; on the other hand, if its use is authorized, if it is permitted, if it is useful, we have no choice but to acquiesce in its manufacture, sale, and consumption. We must stand where the Scriptures stand, say what they say, believe what they teach. And fortunately for us, we do not have to go far in our search before we find the answer, an answer that is clear and unequivocal. The Bible is a sober old Book!

While this whole study is designed to show what the Scriptures teach about strong drink, I will start with just one verse. The wise man said, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." (Prov. 20:1.) This renders a strong verdict: the man who is overcome by strong drink is a deceived fool. He is a fool because he permits himself to be deceived into thinking that alcohol is a medicine when in reality it is the disease, that it is the solution when it is the problem, that it is a good when it is an evil, that it produces joy when it brings misery. When its deception is complete, it turns on the deceived and mocks him.

But there are many more deceptions about strong drink than the drinking of it. It deceives those who make it, those who sell it, and those who authorize its sale — they are deceived into thinking that good can come from evil, that there can be drinking without drunkards. But the drunkard is just the end product of a long chain of evil events. He is simply the consequence of producing, selling and legalizing a destructive brew. And whatever the drunkard may be, he is to a large degree because of the maker, the seller, and the legalizer of alcoholic beverages. Remove any link in the chain (for example, legalization) and the probability of drunkenness and all its evil consequences are greatly reduced. The causes and the consequences are in-

separable. There is simply no way to separate the consequences of drunkenness from the legalization, production, and sale of strong drink. Thus the drinker, the legalizer, the producer, and the seller must all share in the consequences of drunkenness and its attendant evils.

For example, a preacher acquaintance, who was at the time preaching for the Lord's church in Hendersonville, Tennessee, was driving from his home to make a visit in a hospital in Nashville. As he drove toward his destination, a speeding car roared across the median and struck his car with devastating force. He was rushed to the hospital but all effort to save him was in vain. In a few days he was dead. He had become another innocent victim of a drunken driver — one of thousands who must pay the supreme price each year. Strong drink had caused another valuable life to be lost. And there is no doubt but that the drunken driver will have to give an account to God in the day of judgment for his actions, and perhaps for all the good that the preacher might have done had he been permitted to live and work in the kingdom of Christ. But is he accountable alone — is he the only guilty one involved? What about those who made and sold him the drink? Do they not share the responsibility? I believe they do, if not directly, then indirectly. But what about the voters of Nashville who voted to make the manufacture, sale, and consumption of alcoholic beverages legal? Are they completely innocent of the blood of this just man? Those who can believe that they are can believe in a consequence without a cause. The legalization, manufacture, and sale are all necessary links in the evil chain. We cannot vote and then totally disregard the consequences of our vote.

And so it becomes necessary to ask, do we want the truth?

I recently studied with a lady who at first impressed me as having a great desire to know the truth, the will of God as it is revealed in the inspired Scriptures. She kept repeating over and over, "I want to know what the Bible teaches." As we continued our studies she seemed to become more delighted to have found someone who was willing to say what the Bible says, no more and no less. I was confident that she would obey the gospel. But we struck a snag: at her own request we came to the Bible subjects of working miracles and speaking in tongues. She had distinct and established beliefs on these matters, beliefs that were contrary to common sense, reason, and the Scripture. When she saw this she at first hedged, but then decided that what the Bible teaches was not nearly so important as her own experiences and feelings. She then let her true motives come to light. Rather than want-

ing to know what the Bible teaches she wanted to know that the Bible teaches what she already believed. And there was a world of difference in the two.

This seems to be characteristic of many people, especially when it comes to the subject of strong drink. They are long on saying they want to believe and practice the Bible, but they are extremely short on actually accepting and following it. When the Bible brands strong drink as an evil, they can create all kinds of reasons to conclude otherwise. They seem to have very little trouble in substituting their own ideas for what the Bible says. They thus want to follow the Bible as long as the Bible teaches what they practice, but they have no trouble departing from it when it contradicts what they already believe. It is therefore not the truth they want; they want what they already believe to be the truth.

Do we want the truth about strong drink? If so, read on. If not, then it would probably be wise to stop here because the Bible pulls no punches. It brands strong drink as an evil of the first magnitude. If we want the truth, the Bible will reveal that to us; but if we want the use of strong drink to be the truth there is no comfort for us in the Scriptures.

## CHAPTER 3

### IT BRINGS SHAME

Strong drink has probably led to more shame and disgrace than any other single evil in the history of man. It stifles conscience and often makes the drinker unaware of his actions. Soon after the flood, "Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard: And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without. And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and saw not their father's nakedness. And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him. And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren." (Gen. 9:20-25.) The implication of this passage seems beyond doubt to me. Ham committed the repulsive and unthinkable sin with his father, the homosexual act. This I conclude because of the following reasons:

1. It is simply impossible to read the text without getting the feeling that there is more involved here than for a son to see his father undressed.

2. As far as I know, no society has ever considered it a sin, much less such a grievous one as is here involved, for one male to see another male in the nude.

3. To "see the nakedness of" or "to uncover the nakedness of" nearly always carries a sexual connotation in the Bible. See for example Leviticus 18:6-19.

4. Noah awoke from the wine "and knew what his younger son had done unto him." More is certainly implied here than that he knew his younger son had seen him naked. He knew something repulsive had happened.

5. The penalty (a perpetual curse upon Canaan and his descendants) seems out of proportion for a lesser offense. The penalty is severe enough to indicate a far more unthinkable sin than could possibly be conceived in just viewing mere nakedness. In short, the penalty sug-

gests a homosexual act.

The Bible in no uncertain terms condemns all homosexual practices as unthinkable sins (this includes lesbianism), such sins as are not once to be named among Christians (Eph. 5:3). Homosexuality derives its name of sodomy from the corrupt intentions of the men of Sodom who wished to have Lot present the messengers of God to them for their abuse (Gen. 19:4-9). It was positively forbidden by the Lord. "Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination." (Lev. 18:22.) Under the law of Moses, it carried the death penalty (Lev. 20:13), and it was not tolerated in the land of Israel — it was not considered acceptable to decent society (1 Kings 15:12; 22:46). Those who were guilty of practicing it were called sodomites (Deut. 23:17; 1 Kings 14:24; 15:12; 2 Kings 23:7).

Its repulsiveness can also be seen by what the Bible calls it, both in the Old and New Testaments. It is called wickedness (Gen. 19:7), an abomination (Lev. 18:22), a vile thing (Judges 19:22-24), a dishonoring of the body (Rom. 1:24), uncleanness (Rom. 1:24), vile affections (Rom. 1:26), unnatural and unseemly (Rom. 1:27), abusing oneself (1 Cor. 6:9), and defiling oneself (1 Tim. 1:10). "For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet." (Rom. 1:26,27.)

But in addition to all this Paul undoubtedly listed it among the works of the flesh. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." (Gal. 5:19-30.) It is my conception that the first four words in this list cover all kinds of sex sins. The word "uncleanness" (Greek *akatharsia*) was probably meant here to cover the homosexual. It is the same word as is used in Romans 1:24 where Paul says, "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lust of their own hearts. . . ." There can be little or no question but that the word "uncleanness" here refers to homosexual sins. And that, in all probability, is what Paul had in mind in listing it among the works of the flesh.

There is, therefore, no way, from the Biblical point of view, to prac-

tice homosexuality without sinning, without sinning in a most repulsive way. One might as well try to justify the practice of stealing, lying, committing adultery, murder or any other crime as to try to justify sodomy. No sin can be committed with impunity, but the Bible places this one high on the list of the worst among the sons of men. It cannot be ignored, and anything that might encourage it or cause it to be practiced must be utterly rejected.

Admittedly, at this point I do not know, nor do I think the evidence is beyond question on either side (although I think it is abundantly in favor of something that is developed by the individual in reaction to his environment), whether the homosexual condition is self-imposed or in-born, or both. But I do know that its practice is sinful. The Bible leaves no question about that. So regardless of the source of the condition, it must be controlled, abstained from, just as is the case with all other sins. A difference should, therefore, be made in a homosexual condition (and by this I mean any of the conditions that are not self-imposed or that one possesses through no fault of his own) and the actual practice of it. If one is born with some inclination toward it (and I am not in any way convinced that it is a problem of heredity) then he must contain himself just as the unmarried must control their sexual drives. If such a condition is in-born it would not be wrong, any more than would the normal sexual desire. But the actual practice can never be condoned any more than could the normal sex drive outside of marriage. God prohibited the practice and what God has condemned man has no right to approve.

Since strong drink and homosexuality met in Noah and Ham, I think alcoholism could be used to illustrate the way God expects homosexuals to act. It is said that there is no cure for alcoholics. If one is an alcoholic he must live and die an alcoholic. But the Lord has a plan by which such persons can be saved. If they wish to be Christians, to make a contribution to the world, and be accepted by the Lord and His people they must abstain from *all* alcoholic beverages. They cannot continue to drink (even though they are addicted to the drug) and be recognized as faithful Christians. God's plan calls for total abstinence from alcohol in any shape or form. There is no other way. Now suppose the homosexual condition is partially in-born, a condition that one must accept and live with; God still has a solution to the problem, namely, total abstinence from the practice. Under such a condition one could conceivably be a homosexual and still be a faithful Christian, but there is simply no way he can practice his perversion and be right in the sight of God. The practice can never be made right, even if society should

accept it, and human churches approve it, and “ordained” ministers preach it. It is a sin and nothing can change that fact. And one cannot live in or practice sin and be pleasing to God.

In Noah we have the shameful results of drinking. In the act of Ham we have an illustration of the repulsive things that may be done to one while he is drunk. In both we have a Scriptural warning: the use of strong drink brings shame.

## CHAPTER 4

### **IT MAKES UNAWARE OF IMPENDING EVIL**

Those who drink run the risk of blacking out or going for hours without being aware of their actions. They run the risk of not knowing what they might do or what might be done to them. Innumerable crimes have been committed in drunken stupors. Billy Sunday told of a preacher who, many years ago, was quietly sitting at his breakfast table one Sunday morning when the doorbell rang. He answered it to find a trembling 12-year-old boy standing at the door. The boy was on crutches because his right leg was off at the knee. When the door was opened the boy pleaded with the preacher, "Please, will you come to the jail and talk with my Papa? He murdered my mother. He was a good and kind man when he was not drinking. But whiskey did it. I am left alone now to support my three little sisters. Will you go and talk with him? And will you come and be with us when they bring him back? The governor says we can have his body when they hang him."

The preacher hurried to the jail and talked with the man. He had no knowledge of what he had done. He said, "I don't blame the law. But it breaks my heart to think that my children must be left in a cold and heartless world. Whiskey did it!"

The preacher was at the house when the undertaker drove up and carried in the pine coffin. He sadly observed as the little boy went up to the coffin and leaned over and kissed the cold form of his father. As he sobbed he called to his sisters saying, "Come and kiss Papa's cheeks before it is too late." The little girls hurried to the coffin, one by one, shrieking in agony. Police, whose hearts were adamant, buried their faces in their hands and rushed from the house. How many such scenes have been reenacted in the annals of history? Only God knows!

The sordid story of Lot and his two daughters also illustrates how strong drink makes one unaware of impending danger. "And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountains, and his two daughters with him; for he feared to dwell in Zoar: and he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters. And the firstborn said unto the younger, Our father is

old, and there is not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth: Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father. And they made their father drink wine that night: and the firstborn went in, and lay with her father; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose. And it came to pass on the morrow, that the firstborn said unto the younger, Behold, I lay yesternight with my father: let us make him drink wine this night also; and go thou in, and lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father. And they made their father drink wine that night also: and the younger arose, and lay with him; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose. Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father.” (Gen. 19:30-36.) This unthinkable act, as repulsive as it has been to the minds of millions, could never have been on the pages of Biblical history had it not been for intoxicating drink.

What happened to Lot can happen to anyone who drinks when a “blackout” period occurs. But one does not need to go all the way back to ancient history to observe this fact. Ask any woman who has ever blacked out how she feels about what may have happened during that time. She will in all probability be horrified at the very thought. Don Murrey said, in an article in the *Saturday Evening Post* (Jan. 27, 1962) that it is biologically and psychologically impossible for a woman to be casual about blackouts. While the blackout is an experience shared by all alcoholics, according to Murrey, women suffer a special horror at what might have happened while they were unconscious.

In the January/February (1979) issue of *Your Church* there is an item which tells of a 15-year-old girl who, after a football game, went out with several friends and shared a few six packs. She had had no previous experience with alcohol and was soon blacked out on the back seat of the car. The driver delivered the rest of the young people to their homes and then took advantage of the situation. Like Lot, this girl neither cooperated nor resisted. She could not because of the alcohol in her system. The alcohol, however, did not prevent her from becoming pregnant and later being faced with other undesirable decisions. It had simply made her, as it does thousands of others daily, unaware of the impending evil.

## CHAPTER 5

# IT BLURS DISTINCTION

Under the influence of strong drink one cannot discern between the holy and the unholy, the clean and the unclean, right and wrong. "And the Lord spake unto Aaron, saying, Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generation; And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean." (Lev. 10:8-10.) No one who drugs his mind can think clearly. In fact, the blurred distinction (the escape from reality) is the fundamental purpose of intoxication. All misuse of drugs is for a mind-altering purpose.

And just here we should be reminded that alcohol is a drug — the widest used and the most dangerous of all drugs (the most dangerous because it deceives more people and leads more into addiction). All the arguments, therefore, that can be brought against the abuse of drugs can be urged, with greater force, against alcohol. Of course I am speaking here of drugs used for the purpose of altering the mind and not, when properly used, for medical purposes. While there are many things wrong with drugs used for pleasurable effects, I will list and discuss briefly only four.

1. Drugs are habit forming. One starts with a pleasure; the pleasure turns into a habit; the habit soon becomes an addiction; and the addiction often destroys both the mind and the body — it reduces one to a mere shadow of what he should be. Drug addiction is undoubtedly one of the saddest and most pitiful sights the human mind can conceive — a human being totally enslaved to drugs. Addiction occurs when one loses control of himself, when his willpower is ruled by his appetites, when the body and mind demand a drug stimulant to perform pleasurable functions, when the drug controls the man rather than the man controlling the drug, when the body says, "I must have drugs" and the mind has not the functioning power to say "no" to the body. When this drug-induced fantasy is the only haven to which one is will-

ing to turn, he is addicted, crushed, subordinated. The only security one knows is the cop out. The drug addict is thus a weakling who desires to show strength; he wants security but, of all people, has the most insecurity; he seeks recognition as a master when he is in reality a slave. He longs for others to see his worth, but his condition makes him worthless in their sight. His addiction soon becomes his only reason for living.

2. Drugs give a false sense of security. All men need to feel secure. But when one turns to drugs to fill this need they give him a sense of relief, freedom, and value, but they have deceived him — his needs are filled only in delusion. As the effect of the drugs wears off, the delusion disappears and stark reality (a thing the drug abuser cannot endure) faces him with new force and demands. And since he cannot face the real world with its real problems he must return to drugs again and again for escape. He is hooked, caught in a web, enslaved . . . addicted!

A French writer by the name of Charles Baudelaire made a statement about drugs in the nineteenth century that still ought to cause one to ponder the problem long and seriously before exploring the pleasures. He said, "He who has recourse to a poison to enable him to think, will soon not be able to think without the poison. Imagine the horrible fate of a man whose paralyzed imagination is unable to work without the aid of hashish or opium. . . . But man is not so deprived of honest means of gaining heaven, that he is obliged to invoke the aid of pharmacy or witchcraft; he need not sell his soul in order to pay for the intoxicating caresses and love of houris. What is a paradise that one purchases at the expense of one's own soul?" That is a good question, one that we should ponder long. Nothing is comparable in value with the soul. Jesus said, "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt. 16:26.)

3. The cost of drugs is outrageous. But to make matters worse, drugs destroy one's ability and desire for useful and constructive work. The habit, however, must be supported. Can the addict honestly earn enough to keep him going? No, by no means. He is forced to turn to ill-gotten gain. Most addicts are thus forced to steal, cheat, practice prostitution or, perhaps even worse, turn to peddling drugs to others.

It is almost impossible for the average person to conceive of the cost of a drug habit. When my wife and I served as program chairmen for our local PTA in Duncan, South Carolina, we asked the drug division of the police department in Spartanburg to come out one night and tell us about drugs, the addicts, and how we could help with the problem.

After the officer who came made his presentation he opened the floor for questions. In due course someone asked him about the per-day cost of drugs. He replied that it depended upon the amount it took to satisfy the habit, but that the usual amount was from \$30 to \$60 per day. He then told of one 11-year-old girl whom they had arrested whose habit was costing her more than \$1,000 a day. Now it is obvious that an 11-year-old girl cannot earn that much money (even if the drug left her in physical condition to earn anything). Where did she get it? She got it by committing any kind of crime that was necessary to raise that much money. Thus the cost of drugs is back of a large percentage of the crimes committed in this country. We must not fool ourselves: crime and drugs go hand in hand.

4. Drugs violate the Scriptural injunction of temperance or self-control. Temperance (self-control, ASV) is listed as one of the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:23), and is among the "Christian graces," those things which are to be added to each Christian life (2 Pet. 1:6). It comes from the Greek word *enkrateia*, which means, according to Vincent, "Self-control, holding in hand the passions and desires." The word denotes the ability to discipline oneself or to keep his own life in control; to be in command of his own mental powers as well as his actions; to be able at all times to discern between good and evil. But when one is drugged, or intoxicated, he loses control of himself. Thus the use of drugs for a mind-altering purpose is a violation of the Scriptural injunction of temperance.

While all will admit that alcohol is a dangerous drug, there is a vast amount of effort being expended by drunks, social drinkers, sympathizers, medical men, lawmakers, politicians, the public, and even such grand organizations as Alcoholics Anonymous to convince us that alcoholism is a disease, a sickness to be treated, rather than an addiction to be shunned. And while I have no disposition here to argue with their arguments, especially if they mean a sickness of the mind, a sickness of the soul, a sin-sickness (for the sober old Book says that "whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise," Prov. 20:1), but there are some stubborn facts that get in their way.

First, those who so argue desperately want it to be a disease, something they can cure and still be able to consume alcohol at will. In short, they want to find some means that will enable them to drink without becoming drunks — to drink an addictive drug without becoming addicted to it. This desire blurs their sense of reason. Alcoholism is an addiction, and the fact will forever remain that there can be no drinking without drunkenness to one degree or another.

Second, the cause of alcoholism is absolutely ignored. With all the sophisticated arguments that are made (including the foolish one which says against all logic, reason, and common sense that the cause of alcoholism is unknown) for alcoholism being a disease, even the most naive know both the cause and the cure. The cause is alcohol. The cure is total abstinence. (I know that there are those, including psychologists and psychiatrists, who say that this solution is too naive, that it ignores all the complex problems involved, but I challenge them to produce one single example of one who has a problem with alcoholism who abstains from the use of alcohol. It simply cannot be done.) We therefore know both the cause and the cure; we are simply not willing to accept either.

Third, if alcoholism is a disease, why not be consistent and say that all other habits and addictions are diseases? Is smoking a disease? It is as much so as alcoholism. Is drug addiction a disease? It is as much so as alcoholism. The fact about the matter is that smoking, alcoholism, and drug habits are all self-imposed addictions. They all fall into exactly the same category. They are all either diseases or addictions, and only a blurred distinction, a false method of reasoning, can make a difference. No total abstainer ever had any problem with either one. Without tobacco there would be no smoking habit; without drugs there would be no drug addiction; without alcohol there would be no alcoholism. The cause is known and the cure is available in each case, even if the majority is not willing to accept it.

## CHAPTER 6

# IT DISTORTS VISION

Regardless of whether one has in view mental or physical sight, strong drink distorts vision — it prevents one from seeing what is clearly before him. Isaiah, the strongest indicter of strong drink in the Bible, cried out against it saying, “But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment.” (Isa. 28:7.) While this passage primarily applied to priests and prophets, the teachers of Isaiah’s day, the principle would, with equal force, apply to all others and in all situations. There is no escape from the fact: strong drink causes all who indulge in it to err in vision.

For example, Dr. Leonard Goldberg, of Sweden’s Caroline Institute showed, as was reported in the *Reader’s Digest*, the effects of even a small amount of alcohol on driving ability. The *Digest* stated, “Dr. Goldberg concluded that even a slight amount of alcohol ‘caused a deterioration of between 25 and 30 percent in the driving performance of expert drivers.’ And on three tests most closely corresponding to actual driving, ability was impaired on the average of 41.8 percent.” According to the *Digest*, those who have conducted studies have concluded that alcohol becomes a factor in causing accidents when the concentration of alcohol is as low as .03 percent, which concentration can result from one beer or cocktail.

The study assigned four reasons for the decline in driving ability. They were: (1) It slows down reaction. (2) It creates false confidence. (3) It impairs concentration, dulls judgment. (4) It affects vision. All this was anticipated by the grand old book 800 years before the coming of Christ. It seems, however, that most Americans have yet to learn that alcohol drastically affects vision.

But there are many other ways by which vision (mental perception) is distorted by strong drink. It closes the mind to plain facts and sound

reason. And there is probably no better illustration of this than the arguments used to try to justify "social drinking." Those who wish to indulge in this form of drinking say that the Bible condemns drunkenness, not drinking. But they blind themselves to the fact that there can be no drunkenness without drinking . . . and that there can be no drinking without drunkenness to some degree. "Social drinking" simply means drinking with others or drinking with social approval. But the number present when one drinks does not change the effects or the consequences — social approval does not remove the evil. It is still drinking, still engaging in that which the Scriptures prohibit. Clayton Winters, while he was still a very young preacher, wrote the following article entitled "Social Drinking." It expresses my views exactly and I quote it here in full, making its sentiments my own.

"Am I opposed to social drinking? Let me tell you something: I have seen too much not to be. Too many times I have been in the homes where god alcohol reigned supreme only to see small children without sufficient clothing to hide their nakedness and without sufficient food to nourish their bodies. Too many times I have looked into their sad pleading eyes — eyes which show a maturity far beyond their years — eyes which seem to ask the question, 'What kind of a world have we been brought into?' Too often I have been asked by the wives of drunkards: 'Isn't there something, anything, you can do to stop my husband from drinking before it breaks our home and destroys our marriage?' Too often I have been stopped along the public highways only to see someone bleeding, maimed, or dying because of an over indulgence in alcohol. Too many times I have been called into the home of a drunkard, only to find him completely broken in body and spirit; to hear him beg, 'Please, please help me break myself from this awful habit before my life is totally ruined and my soul eternally lost.' Too many times I have stood by helpless, being able to extend nothing but sympathy and encouragement. And after all this you ask me if I am opposed to social drinking!

" 'But do you not know that a little drink now and then is not the cause of all these problems?' Indeed I do. But I further know that an alcoholic does not become such all at once either. Alcoholism starts with the first drink. I recall when I was a small boy, running around in knee pants. I thought that before a boy could prove himself to be a man he would have to learn to smoke. At that time I could not afford a ready-rolled cigarette, and I could not roll one myself; but I solved that problem by persuading my older brothers to roll them for me. Then I would smoke and puff and gag and cough and splutter and usually lose

my latest meal, a thing that nearly all beginners experience frequently. I well recall one day when James, Howard, and myself stole away to the tobacco barn and made for ourselves a cigar from the untreated tobacco. Perhaps it was not one of the finest, but it was a cigar just the same. After a few puffs it was a full half day before Howard was able to get to the house. I know no better way to describe the feelings on such an occasion than to say that one was too sick to live but not quite sick enough to die. Nevertheless I finally learned to smoke . . . and to enjoy it. But soon I found it was not only enjoyable but almost indispensable. I had the habit. I had learned to smoke! (Later I learned that it was even more difficult to break the habit than it was to develop it.) Just so, the alcoholic does not become such over night. In fact, you may find a white blackbird as easily as you can find an alcoholic who did not start off with an occasional drink and perhaps as a social drinker.

“ ‘But surely you are not saying that all who drink socially become problem drinkers?’ By no means, but about one in nine does. So the question should be, is the pleasure derived worth the risk involved? Young people, as well as older ones, should weigh the benefits against the consequences before they take their first drink. See where the road ends before you travel it. And one of the best ways to do this is to go into the homes to which my work leads me. See for yourselves the broken homes, the financial bankruptcy, the spiritual degradation, the agony, the heartbreak of the alcoholic and all those connected with him. When you have the facts, you can then decide for yourselves. You can ask, ‘Is this what I want my life to be? Is this the proper action toward those who mean the most to me? Is this the highest value life has to offer?’ Should you candidly contemplate these things, you would not only flee from the temptation of the first drink, but you would also avoid the company of those who would encourage you to drink.”

## CHAPTER 7

# IT LEADS TO DISREGARDING THE LORD'S WORK

Jesus said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matt. 6:33.) To seek the kingdom first means that everything else in life must take second place to it. Priority belongs to the Lord. And whatever leads to a disregarding of that priority is wrong, totally wrong. Thus nothing less than absolute surrender, total commitment, is acceptable to Christ.

The work of God requires the total being, the whole man, body, soul, and spirit. When Jesus said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15), He gave to His disciples the most momentous task ever vouchsafed to the sons of men. It would take all of them with all they had to do all that He required of them. It was an all consuming task. There was no place for half-hearted action, and there were no part time positions in the Lord's vineyard. Those who were not totally committed to Him and to His cause were simply not suitable for the kingdom. It is no different now. The Lord demands all that we have, nothing less, nothing more.

But it is a fact beyond question that those who indulge in strong drink have no regard for the Lord's work. Their hearts, their time, their money, their talents are given to that which pertains to alcoholic beverages. By the time alcohol receives its portion, there is nothing left for the Lord and His work. Isaiah spoke of this condition saying, "Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them! And the harp, and the viol, the tabret, and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts: but they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hand." (Isa. 5:11, 12). Amos adds, "And they lay themselves down upon clothes laid to pledge by every altar, and they drink the wine of the condemned in the house of their gods." (Amos 2:8.) Those who drink thus have little or no place in their hearts for God, and they have no time to devote to His work. All their time is consumed, from

early in the morning until late at night, in getting, drinking, and wearing off the consequences of strong drink.

Spiritual life cannot survive when the mind is saturated with alcohol. Heraclitus of Ephesus (a Greek who lived approximately 500 years B.C.) believed that the basic or fundamental composition of the world is fire. He conceived of the soul of man being a spark from that original flame. With this concept of the soul, he concluded that for the soul to become moist (by the consumption of strong drink) was either pleasure or death. He said, "When a man is drunk he is led by the hand of a breadless boy, stumbling, not knowing whither he goes, for his soul is wet." While I certainly do not agree with the philosophical conclusion of Heraclitus, I cannot help but wonder if his erroneous philosophy did not lead him to a profound truth, at least in principle. A drunk man, or a man who is drinking, has a wet soul — a soul that is dead to God. It is wet because strong drink:

*Drowns the soul in destruction and misery.*

*Overwhelms spiritual life.*

*Extinguishes the flame of reason.*

*Moistures the body.*

*Washes away substance and energy*

*Soaks the brain — damages it beyond repair.*

*Waters down self-respect.*

*Floods out concern for others and interest in everything else.*

*And its rapids keep one out of the kingdom of heaven.*

To "wet the soul" is to extinguish its spiritual life. And drunkenness wets the soul — those who drink "regard not the work of the Lord."

## CHAPTER 8

# IT BRINGS SORROW

There is no end to the sorrow brought by strong drink. Millions bear witness to this fact. And if you need it confirmed, I suggest that you secure a copy of the book called *Alcoholic Anonymous* and read the accounts given by alcoholics themselves. While it cannot reveal everything (that is not its purpose), it will be shocking and it will show you, at least to some degree, the depths of sorrow to which strong drink leads.

But the Bible pointed this out long ago. "They shall not drink wine with a song; strong drink shall be bitter to them that drink it. The city of confusion is broken down: every house is shut up, that no man may come in. There is a crying for wine in the streets; all joy is darkened, the mirth of the land is gone. In the city is left desolation, and the gate is smitten with destruction." (Isa. 24:9-12.) While strong drink deceives its victims into thinking that its rewards are mirth and happiness, the fact is, "They shall not drink wine with a song; strong drink shall be bitter to them that drink it." It promises one thing but delivers another.

But the sorrow does not end with the drinker himself. It involves his family, his friends, his community, and often innocent people who do not even know him. Mothers have spent endless hours praying for drunken sons. Divorce courts have been filled because wives could no longer endure the burdens imposed by a drunken husband, or vice versa. Children are thus left homeless. Drunkenness has forced employers to fire employees, thus creating extreme hardships on families. House and furniture payments have gone unmade and rent left unpaid because the money was spent for strong drink. Families have gone hungry, debts neglected, friendships destroyed, etc., because of the love for beverage alcohol. This year alone, nearly 50,000 people will be killed on the highways of America, half of which will be caused either directly or indirectly by drunken drivers. The sorrow produced by 25,000 deaths, many of them innocent victims, is simply im-

measurable. A Georgia school girl had observed the slaughter caused by strong drink on the highways and wrote a prize winning essay, which she called "A Fool in Action." Here is her telling statement: "Take one regular, natural-born fool, add two or three drinks of liquor and mix the two in a high-powered motor car. After the fool is thoroughly soaked, place his foot on the gas and release the brakes. Remove the fool from the wreckage. Place in a black, satin-lined box, and garnish with flowers."

On and on one could go enumerating the sorrows caused by strong drink until the facts would become staggering, but there is no need to argue an unquestionable fact: strong drink brings sorrow. "Who hath sorrow?" The answer comes sure and certain: "They that tarry long at the wine: they that go to seek mixed wine." (Prov. 23:29, 30.)

As someone has well observed:

*We drank for happiness, and became unhappy.*

*We drank for joy, and became miserable.*

*We drank for sociability, and became argumentative and unsocial.*

*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 and cowardly.*

*We drank to make conversation easier and slurred our speech.*

*We drank to forget and were forever haunted.*

*We drank for freedom and became slaves.*

*We drank to erase problems and saw them multiply.*

*We drank to cope with life and invited death.*

## CHAPTER 9

# IT STEALS THE HEART

The more one drinks the more committed he becomes to it. Hosea informs us that strong drink steals man's devotions. He says, "Whoredom and wine and new wine taketh away the heart." (Hosea 4:11.) This simply means that whoredom and wine take all the devotion the heart has to give — they take what belongs to God and center it in self. Strong drink has a tendency to become the most vital thing in one's life. It takes first place in the heart.

But this violates a divine principle, namely, that all man is and all he has belong to God. They are His either by right of creation, ownership, or purchase. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein." (Ps. 24:1.) "For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the fields are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof." (Ps. 50:10-12.) "The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts." (Hag. 2:8.) "Behold, all souls are mine: as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die." (Ez. 18:4.) Upon this concept Paul shows that it is wrong for a Christian to honor or recognize idols in any manner or fashion. He says, "But if any may say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that shewed it, and for conscience sake: for the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof." (1 Cor. 10:28.) Now since all is the Lord's, nothing, not even one's own soul, belongs to man in the absolute sense. All man's possessions are simply a trust committed to him by God, and in the final day he must give an account to God as to how he has made use of all that which was given to him. We therefore have no right to use our possessions for selfish indulgence. What belongs to God, no man has the right to devote to selfish ends.

But a Christian belongs to God. He is one who has given himself totally and absolutely to Him. Consequently he is not his own (1 Cor.

6:19, 20). He has been crucified with Christ (Gal. 2:20). He is dead and his life is hid with Christ (Col. 3:3). He is a bond servant (a slave by choice) of Christ (Rom. 6:16-18). He has denied himself (Matt. 16:24) — he has stepped out of himself and let Christ step in to take control of his life. His body is the dwelling place of Christ and His Spirit (Col. 1:27; Eph. 3:17; 1 Cor. 6:19). “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” (2 Cor. 5:17.) When one has this new life, when he is devoted to Christ, it is altogether unfitting for him to devote his body to anything other than that which pertains to God and His will.

Somewhere I read that Napoleon once commanded the sculptor Johann Van Dannecker to come to Paris and make a statue of Venus for him. Dannecker refused. He replied, “I cannot do it. A man who has made a statue of the Savior would commit sacrilege if he should employ his art in carving a pagan goddess.”

The principle upon which Dannecker refused to carve a statue of Venus should be the same principle by which every Christian should absolutely refuse alcoholic beverages. It would be sacrilege to permit a heart that has been devoted to Christ to be stolen away by wine. It is impossible to love Christ supremely and still give one’s heart to strong drink.

“Wine taketh away the heart” — it takes away the devotion that rightly belongs to God. Strong drink becomes one’s master. “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” (Matt. 6:24.) Neither can one serve God and strong drink. God demands the whole heart — total commitment to Him. So does strong drink — it takes away the heart. One must therefore choose between the two. The heart cannot be divided. It cannot be God and strong drink; it must be God or strong drink.

## CHAPTER 10

### IT BITES LIKE A SERPENT

It is extremely foolish to do a thing while ignoring its consequence. It is foolish to walk among poisonous serpents as if they do not bite. Just so, it is foolish to drink alcoholic beverages without seeing the end results. The Bible says, "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." (Prov. 23:31, 32.) "At the last," not at the first, is the time to determine the consequences of a thing. Thus if one wants to see the real results of strong drink, he must look to its end product, not at its sparkling promises. "At the last" is the time when all things are properly judged.

If those who legalize, produce, and sell beer, wine, and whiskey were to tell the truth in their advertisements their ads would be similar to the following, which I have clipped from an unnoted source: "WANTED! 100 new customers as most of our old ones have dropped out. Ten committed suicide, twenty are in jail, fifteen are in the poor house, one has been executed for murder, three are in mental hospitals and the rest are broke. We must have new customers now! Young, fresh and strong for they will not live to stay with us long. Come and see us. We have brands that will cause you to disgrace your family, paralyze your mind, warp your body, and lose your self-respect and most of your friends." That is looking at the consequences. "At the last it biteth like a serpent."

It is the nature of a poisonous serpent to bite; it is the nature of strong drink to destroy. I clipped the following from some bulletin or news sources but failed to record either the date or the source:

"A specialist in alcohol research indicated social drinking as destroying brain cells. Dr. Melvin H. Knisely, head of the Department of Anatomy at the Medical College of South Carolina, told a news conference in Washington, D.C., that so-called social drinking may result in a 'great deal of damage' to the brain. 'When his level of social drinking is such that he feels very happy, a man is beginning to kill a few

brain cells.' He stated that as many as 10,000 brain cells were destroyed at a time and the effect was cumulative and could be significant over a long period of drinking.

"Dr. Knisely, attending the 28th International Congress on Alcohol and Alcoholism recently, described outward manifestations of brain damage as increasing forgetfulness and progressive loss of ability to work efficiently. As an example of the ravages of alcohol upon the brain itself, he said the bodies of 'skid row' drunks showed such extensive destruction of cells that their brains were worthless for use in teaching normal brain structure to medical students.

"Knisely pointed out that alcohol caused agglutination, or 'thickening' of the blood and can lead to blockage of blood flow through some of the brain cells. Starved for oxygen for as little as three minutes, the affected cells die. The specialist explained, 'The damage is permanent.'"

Under the heading, "The World's Greatest Criminal," some unknown writer composed the following:

*I am the greatest criminal in history.*

*I have killed more men than have fallen in all the wars of the world.*

*I have turned men into brutes.*

*I have made millions of homes unhappy.*

*I have transformed many ambitious youth into hopeless parasites.*

*I make smooth the downward path for countless millions.*

*I destroy the weak and weaken the strong.*

*I make the wise man a fool and trample the fool into his folly.*

*I ensnare the innocent.*

*The abandoned wife knows me; the hungry children know me; the parents whose child has bowed their gray heads in sorrow know me.*

*I have ruined millions, and shall try to ruin millions more.*

*I am Alcohol.*

Truly, "At the last it biteth like a serpent!"

## CHAPTER 11

# IT PRODUCES MISERIES

Few things, perhaps nothing, have produced more miseries than strong drink. The wise man asked, "Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath redness of eyes?" The answer is given with unerring finality: "They that tarry long at the wine: they that go to seek mixed wine." (Prov. 23:29, 30.) How many broken hearts, how many lost jobs, how many abused and neglected families, how many sleepless nights, how many divorces, how many prison sentences, how many deaths, how many lost souls have been caused by strong drink? No one but God alone knows, but there is no question but that the total misery caused by it is staggering. "Who hath woe . . . sorrow . . . contentions . . . and wounds without cause?" "They that tarry at the wine."

Several years ago I read the story of a black preacher who prayed earnestly for the Lord to deliver his people from the "upsettin' sin." "Brudder," one of the members replied, "you an't got the hang of dat ar word. It's besettin', not upsettin'." "If dat's so, its so," said the preacher, "but I was prayin' de Lord to save us from the sin of 'toxication, and if dat an't an upsettin' sin, I donno what am." The more I have thought about this story the more I have become convinced that the preacher had expressed a profound truth: the sin of drunkenness is an upsetting sin.

1. It upsets the mind. The intellect is beclouded (Isa. 28:7). The power of reason is lost under its influence.

2. It upsets the body. As the amount of alcohol increases in the bloodstream, control of bodily functions decrease. "The Lord hath mingled a perverse spirit in the midst thereof: and they have caused Egypt to err in every work thereof, as a drunken man staggereth in his vomit." (Isa. 19:4.)

3. It upsets the stomach. The digestive system is interrupted and often the stomach is unable to hold its contents. Isaiah, in speaking of this condition, said, "For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean." (Isa. 28:8.) The brew that sickens is an

upsetting brew.

4. It upsets fathers. It causes them to neglect their families, abuse their children, and often to act more like beasts than men. An unknown poet has effectively expressed the difference in a child's mind between the homecoming of a sober father and in a drunkard in a poem called "Papa's Coming."

*He swung on the gate and looked down the street,  
Awaiting the sound of familiar feet,  
Then suddenly came to the sweet child's eyes,  
The marvelous glory\* of morning skies,  
For a manly form with a steady stride,  
Drew near the gate that opened wide,  
As the boy sprang forward and joyfully cried,  
"Papa's coming!"*

But the picture changes drastically when the father comes home drunk:

*The wasted face of a little child,  
Looked out of the window with eyes made wild,  
By the ghostly shades in failing light,  
And the glimpse of a drunk man in the night,  
Cursing and reeling from side to side,  
The poor boy, trembling and trying to hide,  
Clung to his mother's skirt and cried,  
"Papa's coming!"*

5. It upsets mothers. It causes them to neglect health, reputation, character, homes, husbands, children, and even God. There are now perhaps as many as three million alcoholic women in this country, and the number is increasing at an alarming rate. Those who have studied the alcoholic women say that they are not the old hags or the blowzy creatures who never live in a nice neighborhood. The average female alcoholic is one of superior intelligence, has a better-than-average income, is usually between thirty-six and fifty years old, and has two or three children. They live in nice neighborhoods, drive expensive cars, wear good clothing, and put on an extremely good front. But internally their lives are a wreck and their homes are in shambles. They have degraded themselves to a place no mother should be.

6. It upsets children. With them, home is often a place of horror rather than a haven of love. They often must go without food and clothing. They are left to survive without parental discipline (but not

without parental abuse). And they are seldom welcomed home when the parents are drinking.

7. It upsets love. Affections are often turned to disrespect — the loved becomes the unloved. The love of alcohol replaces the love of everyone and everything else — God, family, and friends must take second place to strong drink. Wife, children, home, property, job, faith, and all other values must be sacrificed on the altar of alcohol.

8. It upsets joy and happiness. They are turned to despair. And while strong drink deceives one into thinking that it is the road to happiness, it always leads to misery.

9. It upsets character. Virtue is destroyed. No drunkard is the man God designed him to be.

10. It upsets reputation. Reputation is what others think of one. But only a drunk can speak well of one who drinks (and even that must often be taken with a grain of salt).

There is therefore no doubt about it: drinking is an upsetting sin. It upsets all the great values of life and in return for them gives only miseries.

## CHAPTER 12

# IT DESTROYS

The Bible says, "Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of a heavy heart." (Prov. 31:6.) Most commentators interpret this verse to have reference to a proper use of wine. According to them, if a man is in severe pain, if he is ready to perish, then give him wine to relieve his suffering. The crucifixion of Christ is usually cited as an example of this use. When Jesus cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" one who stood by "took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink." The vinegar here was a soured wine. Jesus was perishing. So they gave it to Him, probably to help deaden the anguish. And while there certainly can be no Scriptural objection made to the use of alcohol for medical purposes, and the point made on this verse is well taken, this does not seem to me to be the meaning Solomon had in mind. The two previous verses condemn its use as a means of perverting judgment. It does not seem likely that in the very next one the author would be saying, "Yet there is a proper use of strong drink. Give it to him who is perishing." I have always understood the verse to mean that if a man wishes to perish, if his desire is to destroy himself, if he is prepared to have a heavy heart, then let him drink. Alcohol is a sure road to destruction, both here and in eternity. If destruction is what one seeks, then let him drink. If this is the case (and I believe it is) then this verse is not approving drink, even as a medicine, but is saying that it is a sure way for one to destroy himself.

But unquestionably, regardless of what this verse teaches, strong drink destroys:

1. It destroys health. Few things (and perhaps nothing bottled and sold) are more destructive of health than the improper use of alcohol. According to a report I received a few years ago (and a more recent one indicated that it may even be worse now), heart trouble is our nation's number one killer, cancer is the second, and alcoholism is number three. But there is a strange irony in this: we spend millions of dollars

each year trying to find a cure for heart diseases and cancer, but turn right around and legalize the manufacture, sale, and consumption of alcoholic beverages. How inconsistent can people get? Truly, “The legs of the lame are not equal.” (Prov. 26:7.)

2. It destroys wealth. In 1972 this country was shocked (or at least the part of it that can be shocked at anything anymore), even those of us who have always expected the worst from the consumption of beverage alcohol, by a news release which said, “A recent report to Congress by the National Institute on Alcohol abuse puts its cost at \$25 billion and nine million warped lives each year.” Passing over the nine million warped lives momentarily, take a look at the cost of alcohol to this nation. The total sales for the beverage that year was approximately \$15 billion. While I have not taken the time to check the exact percentage, I suspect that the total tax collected from the sale was in the neighborhood of \$4 billion. Yet the cost to the American taxpayer was \$25 billion. (Both the sales and cost of intoxication have soared since then: the sales now stand at approximately \$35 billion annually, and undoubtedly the costs have equally increased, probably to \$60 billion or more.) This simply means that for every dollar of tax collected from the sale of alcohol the taxpayer had to foot a \$5 drunkenness bill. But that may not give the whole picture: for every dollar in retail sales (and the retail price does not go to care for the problems related to drunkenness) the public had to put up a \$1.70 to pay the cost incurred by drinking. Thus drinking destroys both the wealth of the drinker and the public.

3. It destroys usefulness. According to the report quoted above, there were nine million warped lives caused by alcoholism in 1972. That was nearly five percent of the total population. These are people who have lost all control of themselves as far as drinking is concerned. They are practically useless to God, family, industry, or to their community. The only thing they are suitable for is to consume more alcohol. (And speaking of cost, we must subsidize their drinking with our tax dollars and help support their neglected families, pay policemen to protect us from them, and build institutions in which to keep them now that their usefulness is totally destroyed.)

4. It destroys lives. There are those who say, “It is our business if we drink; it doesn’t hurt anyone but us.” But in this they are wrong, dead wrong. Drinking is not a private affair. We must all pay for drunkenness in its terrible consequences.

Every time we go out on the highway our lives are in danger of being snuffed out by a drunken driver — it is said that one meets or passes a

drunk driver every two minutes on our public highways. During the Carolina Lectures in 1976, conducted by the Cape Fear Church of Christ in Fayetteville, N.C., I was privileged to stay in the home of the J.D. Mandels. We talked of many delightful things and enjoyed the finest of Christian fellowship. One of the things they spoke of more than once was their two precious children, a son and a daughter. In the fall of 1977 I was deeply saddened to read in the Cape Fear bulletin that the son for this fine Christian couple had been killed in a car-motorcycle accident. But to make it even sadder, the accident had been caused by a drunken driver. The Mandels had to pay the price of an only son for another's drinking. And I would like to see the person who could convince the Mandels that it is only the drinker's business if he drinks, that no one will get hurt but him.

The fact is, nearly 25,000 people will be killed this year on the American highways by drivers who have been drinking. The next one killed by one may be you or me, or one of our children, or a close friend, or a neighbor. Drinking destroys lives, and the lives of the drinkers as well as those who are innocent. Everybody must, therefore, pay in lives for strong drink. Drinkers are not an island unto themselves.

5. It destroys influence. One of the Christian's most valuable assets is his influence for good. This is presented in the New Testament under such figures as leaven (Matt. 13:33; 1 Cor. 5:6, 7), light (Matt. 5:14-16; Phil. 2:15), and salt (Matt. 5:13). Influence is not limited to good alone. It may be either good or bad. But a Christian's influence should always be for right and against the wrong. He is a living example of the power of Christ in one's life — a display window for Christianity. Unfortunately the only gospel some will ever know is the gospel they see in the lives of those who follow Christ. For this reason Christians must be extremely careful as to what they lend their influence. They must consider the impact it may have on others, and especially the morally weak.

Many people (and even a few members of the church) are of the opinion (contrary to all Scriptural evidence) that to imbibe strong drink in moderation is both Scriptural and healthful. They speak out in favor of it and try to teach others that no one has a right or Spiritual grounds upon which to oppose the consumption of alcoholic beverages for the purpose of intoxication (except to the extent of drunkenness). They thus, by word, example, and influence, encourage its use. But this is a dangerous practice, a totally false opinion, and one that, if held at all, should be held in the strictest secret. No man, much less a Christian,

should ever teach another man, by word, conduct, or influence, that it is right to drug his mind with alcohol, to any degree whatsoever.

To illustrate the danger of such opinions and what they do to one's influence, when expressed, consider the following story that is often told in the society of Alcoholics Anonymous:

Many years ago a well-known preacher stood up at a church meeting and spoke favorably of wine. He contended that its use was genteel, healthful, and within the limits of Scripture. When he had finished an old man wanted permission to speak. He said, "A young friend of mine who had long been intemperate, was at length prevailed upon, to the great joy of his friends, to take the pledge of entire abstinence from all that could intoxicate. He kept the pledge faithfully for some time, struggling with his habit fearfully, till one evening in a social party glasses of wine were handed around. They came to a preacher present, who took a glass, saying a few words in vindication of the practice. 'Well,' thought the young man, 'if a preacher can take wine and justify it so well, why not I?' So he took a glass. It instantly rekindled his slumbering appetite. And after a downward course, he died of delirium tremens — a raving madman."

The old man paused for a moment before he was able to continue. Then swallowing hard to clear the lump from his throat he added, "The young man was my son. And the preacher was the same man who has just addressed this assembly on the same subject."

That preacher's influence was given to a destructive cause and (for all practical purposes) it was destroyed for all good. And so will it be with any man who lends his good name to the support of strong drink.

6. It destroys souls. No person who is addicted to drinking can develop or even maintain his spiritual life (see the chapter on "Stealing the Heart") and Paul says that drunkards cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven (see the chapter on "It keeps one out of the kingdom"). By not entering the kingdom here, there is no hope of entering the kingdom in eternity. Thus spiritual life is crushed here and the soul is lost forever in the world to come.

There is, therefore, no escape from the conclusion: strong drink destroys.

## CHAPTER 13

### IT DECEIVES

“Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.” (Prov. 20:1.) Strong drink deceives in almost every conceivable way. For those who indulge in it, it creates a false sense of confidence, ability, warmth, happiness, joy, security, etc., but in all cases the exact opposites are true. It simply deceives the drinker. Alexander Maclaren has some splendid comments on this verse in his *Exposition of Holy Scripture*. He says, “Intemperance delights in scoffing at all pure, lofty, sacred things. It is the ally of wild profanity, which sends up its tipsy and clumsy ridicule against Heaven itself. If a man wants to lose his sense of reverence, his susceptibility for what is noble, let him take to drink, and the thing is done. If he would fain keep these fresh and quick, let him eschew what is sure to deaden them. Of course there are other roads to the same end, but there is no other end to this road. Nobody ever knew a drunkard who did not scoff at things that should be revered, and that because he knew that he was acting in defiance of them.”

Strong drink deceives individuals — it makes them believe that they are something they are not. For a number of years I worked with a man (he was always very considerate of and friendly with me) who spent everything he earned on strong drink. He never had a dime for anything. Yet he was a good worker, earned a high salary for his class of work, and was well liked by everyone who knew him. But each Friday afternoon when he drew his week’s pay he would get a taxi and head for the liquor store. He stayed in the taxi and drank until every cent was gone. He would then “dry out” and be back on the job on Monday morning, absolutely broke. This he did every week of his life. One day I asked him, “Tom, why do you spend everything you earn on drink?” Without a moment’s thought he replied simply but seriously, “Why be a pauper all the time when you can be a millionaire part of the time.” Drink had deceived him — he was not a millionaire any of the time! Alcohol only made him feel that way. Had he faced the real fact

he would have seen that drinking was the thing that made him a pauper all the time — his millionaire status was only his drugged imagination.

Strong drink even deceives governments. The Scriptural function of government is to protect its citizens from evil. This fact is clearly outlined by Paul in Romans 13. But when a nation legalizes the manufacture, sale, and consumption of intoxicating drink, knowing full well what it does to the human mind, body, and life, it has abandoned its proper function — it has provided the means of destruction rather than protection. But this was done in the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment, and it was done under the pretext that prohibition had failed. But not so. Prohibition had not failed. But the Twenty-First Amendment has failed, and failed utterly. It has not failed in the sense of the manufacture, sale, and consumption of intoxicating drink; it has failed, absolutely, as a means of control. If anything in this world is out of control it is the use of alcoholic beverages in America. Legalized sales have brought us to the edge of disaster. Alcohol is now our number-one drug problem, and the only drug problem that is sanctioned by a constitutional amendment.

It is the ultimate in unreasonableness to argue that the way to control strong drink is to legalize its manufacture, sale, and consumption. Legalization does not control it; it lets it loose. It makes it more readily available for a larger number of people. One could as successfully argue that the way to control a mad dog is to turn it loose and then warn everyone of the danger. Can a loose dog be controlled as successfully as a tied one? “Control” is simply a proof of deception. Social sanction and easy accessibility are undoubtedly the cause of millions of alcoholics today. Drinking appears right because the constitution sanctions it. There is little or no social conscience against that which the constitution approves. This is deception — deception of the government.

But it may be that the manufacturers of strong drink are not as deceived as they appear — they are not as deceived as they want the public to be. Have you ever asked yourself how brewers feel about their product, especially among their employees. Do they encourage them to drink their brew, to “live it up,” to be sure to have a generous helping before coming to work, or to insist that their drivers have “one for the road” before going out to make a delivery? In short, do the makers of strong drink want drunkards as employees?

In 1961 I came across the following news item, which I found to be extremely interesting, enlightening, and even amusing: “A San Diego beer firm, the H.A. Lazzetti Company, and the Teamster’s local are

reported on be wrangling over whether the company's truck drivers may use the company's product with their lunches. The Company says that its 25 drivers may not drink beer and then drive an eight-ton truck. The union claims that the company has no right to tell them what they may have for lunch. The company hired a private detective to shadow a couple of drivers who were suspected of violating the rule against drinking on the job. The detective carried a hidden camera in a lunch box and took pictures of the drivers in a cafe drinking beer. The drivers were fired."

Now how does that strike you? Can you imagine McDonald's firing its employees because they were caught eating hamburgers for lunch? Or the Ford Motor Company hiring detectives to make sure that its employees do not drive Ford cars? Or a dairyman prohibiting his workers from drinking milk? There is something deceptive about a business which is forced to prohibit its employees from using its product.

## CHAPTER 14

# IT MADDENS

Strong drink is absolutely senseless. There is simply nothing good that can be said for it. But perhaps even worse than being senseless, it causes men, even some who make no use of it, to abandon all reason in their effort to justify its manufacture, sale, and consumption. The arguments they use are contrary to common sense, logic, and the Scriptures. Jeremiah observed this trait and said, “Babylon hath been a golden cup in the Lord’s hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad.” (Jer. 51:7.) To be mad, in the sense here used, is to be senseless, disordered in mind, unrestrained by reason, and illogical. And that describes precisely some of the arguments that have been used in favor of strong drink. I have already noticed some of the illogical and senseless arguments, such as: (1) If legalized less will be drunk. This foolish argument simply says that people drink it only because it is against the law. But the fact is accessibility and availability always increase its use. (2) That the way to control it is to legalize it. This illogically reasons that strong drink can be controlled easier if it is legal than if it is illegal. But not so. Control has totally and absolutely failed. There is nothing in all the world more out of control than strong drink under “control.” (3) It brings in revenue. But again the argument is one sided and against all known facts. For every dollar collected in revenue from strong drink the public must foot an additional five dollars in tax money to take care of drunkenness and its related problems. Unquestionably then strong drink maddens.

But perhaps nothing illustrates the maddeness that is associated with strong drink better than the ill-abuse of national prohibition. The eighteenth Amendment to the constitution of the United States stated: “After one year from the ratification of this article the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors within, the importation thereof into, or exportation thereof from the United States and all territory subject to the jurisdiction thereof, for beverage purposes is

hereby prohibited.” This made it most difficult to obtain strong drink in any form, and when it was obtained it had to be both made, sold, and purchased in violation of the law. This did not set well with those who wanted alcoholic beverages to be more accessible. They thus began to agitate for repeal.

“By 1930 hostility to prohibition was well organized and generously financed. It had abandoned its agitation for legalization of light wines and beer and was insisting upon repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment. Although politicians generally had avoided the issue and the platforms of the major parties had been models of evasion, some educators, publicists, and political leaders had openly championed the cause of repeal for a decade. In the campaign of 1932 the Democrats favored outright repeal, while the Republicans advocated reference of the question to the voters in their respective states. After the Democratic victory Congress passed a resolution repealing the Eighteenth Amendment, which was ratified by special convention in three-fourths of the states. On December 5, 1933, the State Department announced that the twenty-first Amendment to the constitution was in effect.” (A letter to Clayton Winters from *The World Book Encyclopedia Information Service*, dated Nov. 22, 1962.)

And so prohibition ended, not because it had failed but because it was not practiced. It was repealed, not because it had caused more drunkenness, but because men loved drink more than they feared its consequences. I continue with the letter quoted above:

“Prohibition may have been a failure, but has repeal been a success?”

“The prohibition amendment was repealed . . . 25 years ago (this report was made in the mid 1950’s). Since that time promotion of drinking has constituted a major business . . . in itself, claiming the highest-paid talent of the advertising profession. The results are summarized by the American Business Man’s Research Foundation of Chicago, which is neither ‘wet’ nor ‘dry,’ but is concerned with discovering and publishing the truth.” The report is then given as follows:

(1) ‘Crime induced by or directly related to drinking alcoholic beverages has increased 28.6 per cent in the 25 years.’ Arrests for drunken driving have soared 207 per cent. Crime not basically stemming from use of alcohol rose only 9.6 per cent.

(2) Insanity attributable to alcohol increased in this period ‘three times more than that of other mental disease cases.’

(3) Poverty, measured in numbers of dependent children, has in-

creased: 'The number of dependent children cases has doubled, rising from 15 per 100,000 of population to 30.'

"(4) Alcoholism has increased. 'The number of those who cannot drink unless they drink to drunkenness has increased 68 per cent since repeal.' The figures: 'In 1934 there were 2,808 alcoholics per 100,000 adult Americans; in 1956 there were 4,718.'\*

"(5) Taxes have increased as a result of crime, traffic problems, and dependency caused by increased consumption of alcoholic drinks. Yet local governments, which have to bear nearly all the costs, receive only two per cent of the taxes derived from liquor production and sale . . .

"(6) Fatal motor vehicle accidents involving drinking drivers have greatly increased. 'Percentage of alcohol-involved cases are estimated by safety authorities to have risen to 50 per cent . . . Drinking is hampering increased auto and road safety precautions and driver education programs.'

"(7) Economic waste has soared. 'Over the 25 years since prohibition was repealed, \$181.9 billion has been spent by the American public on alcoholic beverages.\*\* This is more than twice what we have spent on schools. These billions have often been spent out of funds needed by families and businesses for legitimate needs.

"(8) 'Social waste is reflected in the loss from useful live of nearly 5,000 alcoholics out of 100,000 adults,' plus others who have to take care of alcoholics or who suffer because of the alcoholics' affliction."

While this report is now old, it still reflects the senselessness of legalizing the manufacture, sale, and consumption of alcoholic beverages. All will admit that we have a problem with strong drink, but all do not agree on the solution to the problem. We face it as did the people in the following poem, which I have copied from somewhere:

### THE FENCE OR THE AMBULANCE?

*'Twas a dangerous cliff, as they freely confessed,  
Though to walk near its crest was so pleasant;  
For over its terrible edge there had slipped  
A duke and full many a peasant;  
So the people said something would have to be done  
But their projects did not at all tally.  
Some said, "Put a fence round the edge of the cliff";*

\*About five per cent of the total population. The only way the percentage has changed since 1956 is to continue to increase.

\*\*These figures hardly represent a drop in the bucket to what is being spent today. The annual amount now is about \$35,000,000,000, and is increasing every year.

*Some, "An ambulance down in the valley."*

*But the cry for the ambulance carried the day,  
For it spread through the neighboring city;  
A fence may be useful or not, it is true;  
But each heart became brimful of pity  
For those who slipped over the dangerous cliff,  
And the dwellers in highway and alley  
Gave pounds or gave pence, not to put up a fence,  
But an ambulance down in the valley.*

*"For the cliff is all right, if you're careful," they said,  
And if folks even slip and are dropping,  
It isn't the slipping that hurts them so much  
As the shock down below when they're stopping."  
So day after day as the mishaps occurred,  
Quick forth would the rescuers sally,  
To pick up the victims who fell off the cliff,  
With their ambulance down in the valley.*

*Then an old sage remarked: "It's a marvel to me  
That people give far more attention  
To repairing results than to stopping the cause  
When they'd much better aim at prevention.  
Let us stop at its source all this mischief," cried he,  
"Come neighbors and friends, let us rally;  
If the cliff we still fence, we might almost dispense  
With the ambulance down in the valley."*

*Better guide well the young than reclaim them when old,  
For the voice of true wisdom is calling:  
"To rescue the fallen is good, but 'tis best  
To prevent other people from falling."  
Better close up the source of temptation and crime,  
Than deliver from dungeon or galley;  
Better put a strong fence round the top of the cliff,  
Than an ambulance down in the valley.*

The fence at the top of the cliff is prohibition; repeal is the ambulance in the valley. It is absolutely senseless to argue that the way to control a thing is to legalize its manufacture, sale, and consumption. If legalization is the solution, why not legalize all drugs? Why not control crime by legalization and taxation? Why not? Because we know better. And we would know better than to try it with strong drink had we not been maddened by it.

## CHAPTER 15

### **IT MAKES INSENSIBLE**

I have already discussed one aspect of this when I talked of the black out periods which often occur among heavy drinkers. But here I turn to another aspect, namely, the drinker becomes insensible to God, to other people, to problems, to needs, and even to himself. Alcohol becomes the most important thing in his life. And he will crush anybody or anything that comes between him and it. And the more he drinks the more it will become the center of his life. When he is addicted to it, nothing else matters. He must have strong drink, even if it means to blaspheme God, spurn love, trample other people, and ignore every need of the world and those who live in it. Life itself, the highest and noblest instinct that God created in man, must take second place to strong drink.

Solomon draws a word picture of one who drinks until he becomes insensible to his surroundings, who courts danger, and who is beaten without his knowledge. "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 striken me, shall 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." (Prov. 23:31-35.) But regardless of the shame, the sin, the danger one may encounter, or the beatings he may receive while drunk, this verse says, and experience teaches us, that the drunk will arise to seek drink yet again. He knows no stopping place. And he seeks it regardless of what it does to him or to others. His greatest concern (and often his only concern) is for strong drink.

Advertisers take advantage of this characteristic of alcoholic beverages. They try to convince us that strong drink belongs in the best circles of society and is always the popular thing to do. They know that if they can sell us on the idea that to be socially acceptable we

must drink that we will soon be hooked, and once hooked we will become insensible to everything else. We should therefore fortify ourselves: strong drink does not belong among those who care about God, man, or the world. Strong drink belongs, but it does not belong in decent society. An unknown author has expressed this well in a few appropriate lines under the heading, "Beer Belongs."

*"Beer belongs," the brewer tells us.  
Beer belongs? Yes, let us see  
All that flaunted beer belongs to:  
Beer belongs to tragedy —  
Beer belongs to drunken driving,  
Beer belongs to highway wrecks —  
Bodies bruised and maimed and bleeding —  
Broken arms and legs and necks!  
Beer belongs to family quarrels,  
Hatred, infidelity;  
Beer belongs to childhood blighted,  
Doomed to insecurity.  
Beer makes dads act queer and foolish,  
Beer makes mothers silly too.  
Children ask why should folks drink it —  
"Beer belongs!" that's why they do!  
Beer belongs to rape and murder —  
Bestial crime of every sort;  
Beer belongs to jail and prison  
Beer belongs to crowded courts.  
Beer belongs to cheapened morals —  
Stolen virtue — loath disease,  
Heartaches, tears, remorse and sorrow,  
Beer belongs to all of these!  
Beer belongs to all of these!  
Caring not for God nor man!  
Beer belongs to filthy taverns  
Breaking every legal ban.  
Beer belongs to gross corruption —  
Beer belongs to bribe and threat —  
Beer belongs to all that's sordid!  
Truly "beer belongs" — and yet  
If our land to beer surrenders*

*Nor forsakes the flowing bowl —  
Nor condemns its power to ruin  
Human hearts and mind and soul —  
Ne'er shall we come to greatness!  
Ne'er shall our destiny fulfill!  
Beer destroys the greatest nation!  
Help us, Lord, to do thy will!*

But the drinker becomes insensible to all the things to which strong drink belongs . . . because he belongs to strong drink. He is its slave and it holds his whole life firmly in its clutches. He may say, "I can drink it or leave it alone." But he always drinks it — he never leaves it alone. "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness." (Rom. 6:16.)

## CHAPTER 16

# IT IMPOVERISHES

One does not have to be an expert to observe that strong drink impoverishes. It is simply not compatible with labor, industry, or investment. It reduces one's ability to earn wealth while at the same time consumes rapidly that which has already been accumulated. And this is precisely what the Bible teaches. "He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man: he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich." (Prov. 21:17.) "For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags." (Prov. 23:21.) This we would have known from experience, even if the Bible had not said it.

When I was a boy one of our neighbor families inherited a small fortune, said to be approximately \$50,000 in cash besides some stock and a large farm. They were the envy of our community. How fortunate we thought they were. But the father (and eventually the whole family) started drinking heavily. And in only a few years he was totally bankrupt, had lost all his friends, and his health was completely destroyed. In only a short while he died of an alcohol produced disease, leaving his family penniless and almost homeless. Drinking had brought him from wealth and health to poverty and death. As it turned out, he was the most unfortunate man in our community — unfortunate because he became a lover of strong drink.

In more recent years, a personal friend (an unfaithful member of the Lord's church, and one with whom I have often worked in an effort to get him to rededicate his life to Christ) received a large amount of insurance money, enough to purchase for himself one of the best homes or start his own business. But rather than investing in either, or in any other useful thing, he took the gloomy road of strong drink. Less than two years later when I visited him he was in deep poverty, homeless, and his health was broken. But even worse, he was broken in spirit — he had no job, was unable to work if he could get one, was having family problems, and was simply at his rope's end. He had drunk away his fortune and health and had nothing left but a hopeless and useless

future. "He that loveth wine . . . shall not be rich."

Some unknown writer has summed up the evils of strong drink, one of which is that it causes poverty, in what he called the ABC's of Alcohol (my source had omitted "m" and I have added that letter in my own words):

- A — arms more villains
- B — breaks more laws
- C — corrupts more morals
- D — destroys more homes
- E — engulfs more fortunes
- F — fills more jails
- G — grows more gray hairs
- H — harrows more hearts
- I — incites more crime
- J — jeopardizes more lives
- K — kindles more strife
- L — lacerates more feelings
- M — makes more misery
- N — nails more coffins
- O — opens more graves
- P — pains more mothers
- Q — quenches more songs
- R — raises more sobs
- S — sells more virtue
- T — tells more lies
- U — undermines more youth
- V — veils more widows
- W — wrecks more men and women
- X — x-cites more passions
- Y — yields more disgrace
- Z — zeroes more hopes than any other American foe.

There is simply no place or time when drinking is appropriate. Several years ago in the short-lived magazine named *Kerygma*, O. Hobart Mowrer, a professor of psychology at the University of Illinois, raised the question, "What, then, is normal drinking?" He replied, "Paradoxically, the answer seems to be: Drinking only when you don't need to!" But if one drinks only when he does not need to, he engages in a senseless and expensive practice, a practice that has no Scriptural justification and one that may lead to poverty. Thus it has long been my stated convictions that:

1. If one drinks only when he has no need of it, drinking is ex-

travagantly foolish.

2. If one drinks when he has need of it, drinking is extremely dangerous. (Those who feel a need to drink are in the greatest danger of becoming alcoholics. Their need leads them to more and more drink until they become addicted. In short, the need to drink intensifies with drinking.)

3. If one drinks just to become drunk, drinking is inexcusably sinful.

When, then, should one drink? *Never!* All drinking is either extravagantly foolish, extremely dangerous, or inexcusably sinful. Total abstinence is, therefore, the only answer to the drinking problem. There is simply no “wet” road to sobriety.

## CHAPTER 17

### MISCELLANEOUS EVILS

The limitations of this work will not permit me to discuss at length all the Bible has to say about strong drink, but I do want to call attention to a few more verses that should be considered in this connection. While my discussion of each will of necessity be short, I will try to point out the evil involved and it should not be too difficult for anyone who wishes to expand on the thought of each passage.

1. Strong drink perverts judgment. "It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink: Lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted." (Prov. 31:4, 5.) Virtue has been lost, crimes committed, lies told, and lives ruined because strong drink has perverted judgment — because it lessened the vision of danger and made wrong look right.

2. Strong drink stifles conscience. "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink, that putteth the bottle to him, and make him drunk also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness! Thou are filled with shame for glory: drink thou also, and let thy foreskin be uncovered: the cup of the Lord's right hand shall be turned unto thee, and shameful spewing shall be on the glory." (Hab. 2:15-17.) There is a double woe here: that of giving his neighbor drink and doing so for the purpose of practicing shameful sins with him — to look upon his nakedness, to uncover his foreskin.

3. Strong drink gives false hope. "Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and to morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant." (Isa. 56:12.) This shows that drinking was habitual with them, that it was planned from day to day. As Albert Barnes observes, "There was an intention to continue it. It was not that they had been once overtaken and had erred; but it was that they loved it, and meant to drink deeper and deeper." But as they continued their indulgence they expected things to be better in the future — "to morrow shall be as today, and much more abundant." But tomorrow would be only another day of drunkenness for them. The

hope that strong drink gave for a better tomorrow was a false hope. And it always is.

4. Strong drink inflames. "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.) By inflame is meant that strong drink incites to excessive or unnatural actions or feelings. It causes one to act or react without reason, and often the action is violent.

5. Strong drink distorts all sense of value. Every dearly held value known to man, including respect for human dignity, freedom, and life, must take second place to the desire for drink when one is deceived by its ruinous course. Joel gives a true picture of this distorted sense of value when he says, "And they have cast lots for my people; and have given a boy for a harlot, and sold a girl for wine, that they might drink." (Joel 3:3.) What a depraved act: they traded a boy into slavery for sex and sold a girl for wine that they might drink. Today, as it was then, men will commit any kind of cruel crime for strong drink. When one is addicted to it, it becomes the most important thing in his life — more important than truth, right, life, love, or freedom. It totally distorts one's sense of value.

In fact, one's sense of value is so distorted that he usually cannot endure in another the characteristics which drink produces in himself. Several years ago I read a story which said that a drunken soldier was brought to Alexander the Great in the days of his prime and accused of showing his back to the enemy in the heat of battle. Alexander asked, "What is his crime?" "Drunkenness and cowardice, sir," came the reply. "What is his name?" inquired Alexander. "The same as yours, sir," replied his aides. At this the famous leader gave a prolonged stare at the offender and then exclaimed, "Soldier, either change your habits or change your name." The interesting thing about this is that Alexander himself is said to have been a drunkard and many believe that his early death was caused by his habits of debauchery.

6. Strong drink leads to sacrilege — profaning the holy. "Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein. Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them. They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and stone." (Dan. 5:2-4.) These vessels were holy — that is, they had been devoted to the service of

God in the temple at Jerusalem. To use them for any other purpose was to profane the holy. But the holy meant nothing to Belshazzar, just as it means nothing to most of those who drink.

7. Strong drink is a sin of the darkness. Paul said, "For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night." (1 Thess. 5:7.) Like all sin, drunkenness (or drinking) hides its true colors. For example, how many advertisements for strong drink have you seen which show you the anguish of alcoholics, the broken families, the dependent children, the damaged property, the bloody accidents, the increased insurance rates, the maimed bodies, the bereaved families, the untold miseries, the destruction of honesty, the loss of industry, etc. that are caused by beverage alcohol? All the consequences of strong drink are ignored — kept in the dark.

If advertisers of strong drink told the truth their ads would be similar to the following:

Instead of saying "where there is life" there is strong drink, the ad would say, "Where there is strong drink there is misery and death."

Instead of "the best of two worlds" it would be the worst of both worlds — drunkenness, shame, and poverty in this world and in the world to come eternal destruction.

Instead of "The beer that made Milwaukee famous," it would be the beer that has filled millions of drunkards' graves and made millions of other alcoholics — the beer that has made America infamous.

Instead of "Have one for the road" it would be, "If you have one for the road you may find that you will soon be spread out on the road, bleeding and dying along with additional innocent victims."

Strong drink is definitely a sin of the night — a sin that keeps its true nature hid in darkness.

8. Strong drink is debauchery. Paul says, "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." (Eph. 5:18.) The word "excess" here is often misunderstood. It is a mistake to interpret it to mean that one is not to drink to excess, or as J.B. Phillips paraphrases it, "Don't get your stimulus from wine (for there is always the danger of excessive drinking)." This leads to the conclusion that strong drink in moderation is not condemned, but only the excessive use of it (drunkenness). But this is not even remotely what Paul said. The American Standard Version renders the verse, "And be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot." But perhaps the Revised Standard Version chooses an even better word to express Paul's thought. It renders the verse as follows: "And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery." And that is precisely what it is. Strong drink is ex-

cessive (in any amount), it is riot, it is debauchery. And there is simply no way to justify its use in any degree or amount when the purpose is for intoxication.

## CHAPTER 18

# IT KEEPS ONE OUT OF THE KINGDOM

No indictment in the Scriptures against strong drink is more severe than the one which says that it keeps one out of the kingdom of God. The consequence of this statement is staggering to the mind. It leaves the one who drinks in a state of hopelessness.

The highest and grandest privilege God ever granted to the sons of men is the right to be a Christian, a member of the church of Christ, a citizen of heaven's kingdom. But to be a citizen of the kingdom of heaven one must turn away from the world and the lust thereof and be a follower of Jesus Christ — be like Christ in heart, word, and deed. But drunkenness (and without drinking there can be no drunkenness) is not Christ-like; rather it is world-like, flesh-like, lust-like. The Bible lists it among the works of the flesh. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like." Now watch what is said: "Of which I tell you before, as I have told you in time past, they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." (Gal. 5:19-21.)

But this is not all. Paul says again, "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." While this had been true of them, notice in particular what happened when they entered the kingdom: "and such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of God." (1 Cor. 6:9-11.) "And such were some of you!" They had been fornicators, idolaters, thieves, drunkards, but they were such no more. They had changed, and without that change they could not have entered the kingdom of God.

But to see the serious nature of this we need to raise and answer four fundamental questions:

1. What is the kingdom of heaven? In the final analysis, it is that over which God rules and reigns. It is not an earthly kingdom but a heavenly one. It is not material but spiritual (Rom. 14:17). It was foretold by all the prophets — that which God had promised in ages past. Both John and Jesus came preaching that it was at hand (Matt. 3:2; 4:17). The Jews had a preconceived idea of what the kingdom would be when it came. They thought that Jesus would set up a literal kingdom, rule from a literal throne in Jerusalem, and subdue all nations by the literal machinery of war. But to offset this materialistic concept of the kingdom Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world.” (John 18:36.) “And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom is within you” or in your midst. (Luke 17:20, 21.) This should prove that the kingdom of heaven is spiritual in nature. It is God’s reign over the hearts and lives of men. It is God’s system or the church. Jesus promised to build His church and at the same time told Peter that He would give unto him the keys to the kingdom (Matt. 16:18, 19). This shows that the church and the kingdom are one and the same — they are both made up of all the children of God.

2. How does one enter the kingdom? Entrance into the kingdom is by the new birth. Jesus said to Nicodemus, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” (John 3:5) This same process is called conversion (Matt. 18:3), a translation (Col. 1:13), and doing the will of God (Matt. 7:21). All these are simply different ways of saying that one enters the kingdom by becoming a child of God. This makes the kingdom of God and the family of God identical — in the former God is seen as the King and in the latter as the Father. But the family of God and the church are the same (1 Tim. 3:15). All citizens of the kingdom are children of God and all children are in the family of God and the family of God is the church of God. So to enter the kingdom, one must become a Christian. And one becomes a Christian by believing in Christ as God’s Son (John 8:24), repenting of sins (Luke 13:5), confessing openly the faith one has in his heart (Rom. 10:9, 10), and by being buried with Christ in baptism (Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21), from which he arises to walk in a new life (Rom. 6:3, 4; 2 Cor. 5:17).

3. What does it mean to be in the kingdom? Since the kingdom of

God means the rule of God, the government of God, the system or order of God, to be in the kingdom means that one has submitted himself absolutely to Christ, that he obeys Christ in all things (Heb. 5:8, 9), that he lives for Christ, that Christ is his King. It means that he is saved from his sins, is a child of God, a citizen of the heavenly kingdom, and that he has hope for heaven when this life is over.

4. What does it mean not to enter the kingdom? It means that Christ does not rule one's life. Or as Paul expresses it, "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the common wealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." (Eph. 2:12.) Those outside the kingdom are aliens, foreigners. Paul gives a five-fold picture of their condition:

First, the alien is without Christ. To be without Christ is to be lost — to be without the principles of Christ, without the system of Christ, without the fellowship of Christ, without the only one who can deliver us from the evils of this world.

Second, he is alien from the commonwealth of Israel. He is not a citizen in the kingdom of heaven. His citizenship is earthly, not heavenly. This means that he has not been born again, not a Christian. He has no country of his own, and no country to seek. His citizenship is in the world and that will soon pass away (1 John 2:15-17).

Third, the alien is a "stranger from the covenants of promise." While admittedly this is a difficult statement, I believe that the covenants of promise are simply the covenants culminating in the New Testament, the revealed will of God for all ages to come. The promise pertains to the spiritual blessings which are found only in Christ, such as the forgiveness of sins, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and eternal life. How sad to be a stranger from such promises!

Fourth, the alien has no hope. Of all the deplorable states in which one might plunge himself, none could be worse than this. Hope is the anchor of the soul (Heb. 6:19), the full assurance of faith (Heb. 11:1; 6:11), and that by which one is saved (Rom. 8:24). But the alien has no hope — no hope for the forgiveness of sins, no hope for the future, no hope for a resurrection to a better state, no hope of eternal life! Such a state seems unendurable to my mind. Dante said of his *Inferno*, "Abandon hope, all ye who enter here." But the alien has no hope, not even before he enters the *Inferno*.

Fifth, the alien is without God in the world. But when man is without the true God he makes for himself gods of clay. "There is none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) But to us

there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." (1 Cor. 8:4-6.) Few things are more irrational than to see men bow down and worship the creation of their own hands — to worship the creature rather than the Creator. Thus man either worships and serves the true God or else he turns to idols — idols made by man. To say that one is without God is, in essence, to say that he is an idolater.

It would be difficult indeed to draw a darker or more hopeless picture than this, "Without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. Yet this is precisely what it means not to enter the kingdom.

Thus when Paul says that the drunkards (those who indulge in strong drink) cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven he is saying in essence that they will be lost, that they have no hope for eternal life. Nothing could be more serious than this.

## CHAPTER 19

# IT IS CONDEMNED

While I have not discussed every passage in the Scriptures which deals with strong drink, I have discussed enough to show that the Bible, from beginning to end, condemns it as an evil when used for the purpose of intoxication — an evil that must be shunned, repudiated, and opposed by every faithful child of God. The Scriptures are a unit. They do not contradict themselves nor do they teach that a thing is evil in one place and then sanction it in another. Every passage, when properly understood, will harmonize with every other passage in the Bible. Thus no passage can be found that will teach something different from the ones herein discussed. They all have a single message. Thus I conclude that the Scriptures abundantly and unequivocally teach that the use of alcoholic beverages for the purpose of intoxication is an evil. There is absolutely no other conclusion to reach and be honest with the evidence presented. If we want the truth, this is it: the Bible condemns strong drink as an evil.

But in the face of all this array of Scriptural teaching there are still those who boldly and confidently say, “We know the Bible says all this but it also sanctions the use of strong drink in moderation.” Now I do not want to sound rude, and I will say it with all the respect I can have for those who make such claim, that is simply not true. The Bible does not sanction evil in any shape or form. And any passage that is used to justify the use of alcoholic beverages (as we know them today and for the purpose of intoxication) is a passage woefully wrested from its context — a passage used to teach something the Holy Spirit never even remotely had in mind. Perhaps this can best be seen by putting it into syllogistic form:

1. The Scriptures do not sanction that which they teach to be an evil.
2. But the Scriptures teach that strong drink when used for the purpose of intoxication is an evil.
3. Therefore the Scriptures do not sanction the use of strong drink for the purpose of intoxication.

The only way to deny this conclusion is to deny either the major or the minor premise. But I have proved, beyond any question whatsoever, that the Bible teaches that strong drink is an evil (if I have not proven this then, in my judgment, nothing can be proven). There is therefore only one alternative for those who say that the Bible sanctions the use of strong drink in moderation and that is to say that the Bible sanctions evil. But the Bible was written to deliver us from evil, not to approve our indulgence in it. The conclusion is therefore inevitable: strong drink is not sanctioned by the Scripture. Rather the Scriptures condemn it.

George W. DeHoff once wrote: "One who would insist that Jesus made, endorsed or used intoxicating beverages in view of what the Bible has to say about their use, simply exposes his ignorance and dishonesty in handling the truth. Bootleggers, whores, crooks, gamblers, may endorse the drinking of intoxicants. Members of the church who have not really studied the problem may endorse drinking to a limited extent, but the Son of God — NEVER!" (*God's Plan for Us, A Junior Workbook*, p. 11.)

"But," some will object, "Jesus made wine and all the apostles, if not everyone in Bible times, used it." It is true that Jesus did make wine (John 2:6-10) at a wedding feast, and both He and the apostles obviously sanctioned the use of that which He made. But what kind of wine was it?

There are a large number of words in the Bible translated wine. They range in meaning all the way from the growing fruit on the vine (Judges 9:13) to fermented or intoxicating wine (Prov. 20:1). Thus the word wine does not always mean intoxicating drink. In fact, Young's Concordance defines the New Testament word (*oinos*) as "Grape juice." In addition to the two references already given (the growing fruit and fermented wine), the word wine also refers to the cluster of grapes (Is. 65:8), to the firstfruit, or the first gathered fruit (Num. 18:12), to dried up clusters of grapes (Joel 1:10), to that which is gathered in, the fruit itself (Jer. 40:10), to the treaded out juice of the grape (Isa. 16:10), and to the pure juice of grapes still in the vats (Joel 2:24). Jesus Himself made a distinction between fermented and unfermented wine when He said, "Neither do men put new wine into old bottles (old wine-skins, ASV): else the bottles brake, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles (new wine-skins), and both are preserved." (Matt. 9:17.) The old wine was already fermented and the wine-skin (for so the word bottles here means) hardened. If new wine, unfermented wine, was put

into an old wine-skin, hardened with age, it would burst. New wine must be put in new, flexible wine-skins so it could have room to expand in fermentation.

But observe another passage where a distinction is made. It is said of John the Baptist, "For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink." (Luke 1:15.) Here wine is one thing and strong drink is another. On this verse Albert Barnes has a powerful comment. He says, "The kind of wine commonly used in Judea was a light wine, often not stronger than cider in this country. It was the common drink of all classes of people." But even the strong drink was not what we know as alcoholic beverages. Barnes continues, "It is not easy to ascertain precisely what is meant by the word (strong drink), but we are certain that it does not mean strong drink in our sense of the term. Distilled spirits were not then known. The art of distilling was discovered by an Arabian chemist in the ninth or tenth century; but distilled liquors are not used by Arabians. They banished them at once, as if sensible of their pernicious influence; nor are they used in Eastern nations at all. Europe and America have been the places where used, and there it has beggered and ruined millions, and is yearly sweeping thousands unprepared into a wretched eternity. The strong drink among the Jews was probably nothing more than fermented liquors, or a drink obtained from fermented dates, figs, and the juice of the palm, or the lees of wine, mingled with sugar, and having the property of producing intoxication. Many Jewish writers say that by the word here translated strong drink was meant nothing more than old wine, which probably had the power of producing intoxication." (*Barnes's Notes* on Luke 1:15.)

From this we can surely see that all wine in the Bible was not intoxicating, and therefore does not fall under the heading of strong drink. But how can we tell which is meant? Very simply. When it is approved, nothing more is meant than the fruit of the vine; when it is condemned, it means that which intoxicates. Those who depend on the Scriptures to sanction their right to drink beverage alcohol must depend on a book that condemns the very thing they say it sanctions. If they are honest with the Bible they must do either one of two things: (1) abandon the use of alcohol, or (2) seek justification for its use from some other source. When a passage of Scripture, any passage of Scripture, is used to sanction the use of strong drink as we know it today, it is used absolutely and utterly erroneously.

Remember then the Bible condemns strong drink. Nothing can ever change that fact. And, for this reason, you can know assuredly that any

wine that is or seems to be sanctioned by the Scriptures is something other than strong drink. This fact, and this fact alone, utterly repudiates every argument that has ever been made on any passage in the entire Bible to try to justify the use of alcoholic beverages, in this century, in the centuries past, or in the centuries to come.

## CHAPTER 20

# MODERATION OR DRUNKENNESS?

The Bible leaves no doubt as to where it stands on the improper use of strong drink — that is, alcoholic beverages for the purpose of intoxication. Solomon summed it all up when he said, “Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging (brawler, ASV): and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.” (Prov. 20:1.) Two vital facts should be observed from this verse: (1) strong drink is an evil — a mocker, a brawler. (2) Those who are deceived thereby are not wise. But in the face of all this, there are still those (even professed Christians) who try to defend and justify the use of strong drink in moderation. But it cannot be done, either reasonably or Scripturally.

One thing should be clearly understood: the Scriptures (even though the word “wine” is often used to describe both) make a sharp distinction between the use of wine (grape juice or a very light wine greatly diluted) and the consumption of strong drink. The proper use of the former is approved; the latter is always condemned. There is no exception to this rule. But if the word “wine” is used for both, how may one tell which is under consideration in a given verse? Very easily. When its use is approved, the former is meant; when it is condemned, disapproved, or seen as an evil, the latter is under consideration. The Bible does not condemn the use of strong drink in one place and approve it in another.

In my judgment, the Scriptures are as clear as a cloudless summer sky on this subject: the consumption of strong drink is an evil. I have given scores of passages to prove this, but consider again the following:

“But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment.” (Isa. 28:7.)

“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.” (Prov. 23:29-32.)

“He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man: he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich.” (Prov. 21:17.)

“For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags.” (Prov. 23:21.)

I do not see how anyone could seriously and sincerely study such passages from the sober old Book and reach any conclusion but that strong drink is an evil.

But the Scriptures are not alone in recognizing that alcoholic beverages are an evil. Most of the great writers and leaders of the world have concurred. For example, Harry Golden, a man who admitted to drinking a great deal but who said that he rationalized “the process in a million different ways,” brings some exceedingly strong indictments against it. He says: “As a writing man I believe I can deliver a fairly coherent essay of maybe five thousand words on the value of opium and its by-products, morphine and heroin, but I know, in all honesty, that I cannot write a single half-page, doubled-spaced, on the value of alcohol as a beverage. . . . All that I know about drinking is bad. Very bad. Fights, split lips, filth, blood running down a man’s face, a man brutally beating his wife, his daughters, his friends . . .” (*You’re Entitled*, p. 26.)

But if strong drink is an evil, it is folly of the worst kind for some professed Christians (or anyone else for that matter) to try to justify its use in moderation, such as a social drink, an occasional beer, a glass of wine, or a few sips of whiskey. It is simply not possible to practice evil in moderation. And the Bible does not sanction evil in any shape or form. Any passage that is used to justify the use of alcohol for the purpose of intoxication is one that is woefully wrested from its context. Moderation is simply not a Scriptural concept in relation to strong drink. The only alternative is to totally abstain from it. This the Scriptures do enjoin.

One of the characteristics of evil is to parade itself as good, thus deceiving those who are entangled in its web. In short, a characteristic of evil is to deceive. And this is precisely what strong drink does. It deceives the drinker into thinking he is drinking in moderation rather than drinking to drunkenness.

Thus those who drink, regardless of the amount, deceive themselves into thinking that it is an evil only in an amount excessive of that con-

sumed by them. Perhaps no one but an admitted alcoholic (and he must admit it before he will admit to having a problem) sees himself as a drunk (or at least drunk to the degree in which the Bible condemns his drinking). The fact is, however, everyone who drinks is drunk to some degree. To what degree can one partake of evil and yet be pure? What degree of drunkenness does the Bible condemn? While some differ radically with my conclusion, I believe that the Scriptures condemn any degree of drunkenness, even the degree of being only one drink drunk. If this is the case (and I believe it is, whether we are willing to admit it or not), one is deceiving himself when he argues for moderation . . . or when he tries to practice it. There is simply no justification for trying to practice evil in moderation.

The Bible (not me) says that the one who is deceived by strong drink is not wise. He is a fool, say the Scriptures. He is a fool because he has been deceived into thinking that wrong is right, as long as it is done in moderation. But wrong is not right . . . in any degree. Strong drink in any amount is either an evil or else it is not an evil at all; but if it is not an evil the Bible is wrong in condemning it as such. But the Bible is right. The consumption of strong drink for the purpose of intoxication (regardless of the amount) is wrong. Drinking in moderation is just a lesser degree of drunkenness.

There are two questions which naturally grow out of the concept here presented, namely, "Does this not imply that it would be right to drink for purposes other than intoxication? And does this not make the purpose for which it is done, rather than the drinking, the wrong?" These are legitimate questions, and I will now deal with them in the order raised.

1. "Does this not imply that it would be right to drink for purposes other than intoxication?" Probably so, but that conclusion is not necessarily implied. It should imply (or at least this is what I mean by it) that the use of alcoholic beverages would not be wrong if they were used for the right or proper purpose. But no right use of them can be for the purpose of intoxication *per se*. If there is a proper use of alcohol, then it is not wrong to use it for that purpose. My conclusion is simply that it is wrong to use alcohol, in any amount, for the purpose of intoxication.

Alcohol within itself is not wrong, nor is the proper use of it wrong. I often use rubbing alcohol to clean my glasses. How could this be wrong? While in Greenville a few weeks ago I heard several newscasts say that gasahol was coming to upper South Carolina. The reports went on to say that this was a mixture of 90% unleaded gas and 10%

alcohol. Who could argue that it is wrong to use alcohol as fuel? Along this same line Paul said to Timothy, “Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake and thine often infirmities.” (1 Tim. 5:23.) The expressions “for thy stomach’s sake” and for “thine often infirmities” simply mean that Timothy was to use the wine (which here is obviously fermented) for a medical purpose. I have never argued (nor do I think anyone can do so reasonably) against the use of alcohol for medical purposes. In fact, I understand that just a few years ago (I do not know how it is now) that alcohol was the base for most medicine taken in liquid form. And while there may be some, I do not know of a single Christian who believes that a medical use of alcohol is wrong. But there is a world of difference in taking a spoon full for medicine, for therapeutic reasons, and in taking even the same amount to drug and alter the mind. That is the real issue.

2. “Does this not make the purpose for which it is done, rather than the drinking, the wrong?” This is a challenging question and frankly I cannot give what I would consider the absolute answer. To answer it fully would require making finer distinctions than I am capable of making at this point. But perhaps I can best sum up my thinking on the subject by saying that the wrong purpose makes the drinking wrong. This is simply to say that the wrong purpose makes a wrong act. Both are therefore wrong.

Let me illustrate this. It would be wrong for a man (a doctor or anyone else) to take a knife and maliciously cut a ten and one half inch incision several inches deep in my side, when the intent was to take my life or to harm. We simply do not have the right to so cut the body of another human being. Yet this is precisely what happened to me a few months ago. I entered the hospital at Winston-Salem and my doctor cut deep into my body to remove a kidney stone. The incision turned out to be ten and one half inches long and several inches deep. But did my doctor do wrong? No. Well, why not? Because his purpose was to save, not to destroy.

Now in the illustration, is it the purpose or the plunging of the knife into another that is wrong? I conclude that it is both when the purpose is to harm; it is neither when the purpose is to help. Thus as I see it an evil purpose results in an evil act while a good purpose (in the category of things of which I am speaking) results in a good act. How could it be otherwise? So I believe the case is with the use of alcoholic beverages. The wrong purpose results in a wrong act. This makes both the purpose and the drinking wrong when the purpose is for intoxication.

I conclude therefore that there is no justification for the use of

alcoholic beverages when the purpose is for intoxication. Such use constitutes an evil. And moderation is nothing short of evil (drunkenness) in a lesser degree.

## CHAPTER 21

# THE EXPANDING DRINKING PROBLEM \*

The Twenty-First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States has totally, completely, and absolutely failed. It is time for reason to replace wantonness — time to do something about the situation. The Twenty-First Amendment repealed the Eighteenth Amendment which prohibited the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors in, into, or from the United States or any territory subject to its jurisdiction. The Twenty-First Amendment thus sanctions the manufacture, sale, and transportation of intoxicating liquors. But in so doing it disregards the proper function of government. Governments are designed and authorized by God (Rom. 13) to protect their people from evil. The powers that be should make just laws, enforce them, and punish the violators. But a government is foolish which sanctions that which will destroy its citizens.

How any civilized nation could adopt a law that sanctions the manufacture, sale, and transportation of intoxicating liquors, knowing full well what it does to human lives, minds, and bodies, is beyond my poor power to comprehend. But it was done here in America, and done under the pretense that prohibition had failed and that stronger controls were needed. But prohibition had not failed; we had failed prohibition. But now as we look at the hundreds of distressing and destructive fruits of legalized liquors, we are forced to exclaim with our whole being that the Twenty-First Amendment has utterly failed. It has not failed in the sense of the manufacture, sale, and transportation of intoxicating drinks; it has failed, absolutely, in the sense of control. If anything in this world is out of control it is the use of alcoholic beverages in America. Its legalized sale has brought us to the edge of disaster. Alcohol is now our number-one drug problem, the only drug problem that is sanctioned by a constitutional amendment. Something is deadly wrong and something must be done if we are to restore sobriety to this country and to its people.

\*Lifted from my Thinking Through column in *Carolina Christian*.

It is the height of stupidity (or so it seems to me) to argue that the way to control strong drink is to legalize its sale and thus make it more available. It was said by the promoters of the Twenty-First Amendment that there would not be nearly so much drinking if it was not a violation of the law to purchase drinks. Such reasoning (?) is repulsive to common sense, logic, and the Scriptures. Even the devil, much less rational men, should be ashamed to justify sin by such means. One might as well argue that the way to control a mad dog is to turn him loose and warn everyone of the danger. After all, if everyone knows the dog is loose they will be on the lookout and fewer people will get bitten. A loose dog can be controlled better than a tied one, according to this reasoning.

We are now faced with a new and rapidly expanding problem: children are turning to alcohol in huge numbers. The chickens (of the Twenty-First Amendment) are coming home to roost. An article by Brenda Pashal in the *Greenville (S.C.) Piedmont* for Friday, February 28, 1975, had a frightful headline, *Younger Students Turning to Alcohol*. At the head of the article was a startling picture of two children, not more than 10 or 12 years old, passing a bottle of wine between them. The article states that middle schools (junior high) and elementary students are using more and more alcoholic beverages, and most of them get the drinks at home, either with or without their parents' permission. It cites a study in New York City which showed that one in 10 junior and senior high school students had a drinking problem. It also showed that in this age group 80 percent of males and 75 percent of females drink either beer, wine, or hard liquor (or all three), but usually only on special occasions. Think of that! Nearly 80 percent of junior and senior high students drink and 10 percent have a definite drinking problem! But that is in New York, someone is likely to say. Yes it is, but according to Joe Vaughn, drug abuse education consultant for Greenville County schools, the situation is not vastly different in Greenville, South Carolina. And what is true of Greenville County is not likely to be vastly different in other places. This is frightfully alarming.

But what is the reason back of this fearful problem among children? There are, no doubt, many factors, but basically it is social sanction and easy accessibility. What the constitution sanctions there is little or no social conscience against. It is viewed as right because the constitution approves it. As far as availability is concerned, nearly any child, regardless of age, can purchase, or have purchased for him, any amount of strong drink (youth today have far more money than parents

had a generation ago, and if they do not have it they can get it by some dubious or devious means). Joe Vaughn, the official quoted earlier, said, "A lot of these little stores sell alcohol to kids knowing they're minors and there's always a wino hanging around who'll buy it for them for a dollar or two." This should shock us into seeing that there is no control of alcoholic beverages in effect, especially in its "legalized" sale. So obviously the Twenty-First Amendment has sold us a shabby bill of goods. Legalized sale is not the mean by which to control drinking. Nor is prohibition the ultimate answer, but it helps. The answer lies in total abstinence by the total population.

The expanding drinking problem among children has brought us to the point where something must be done: we must either save them from strong drink or it will destroy them and they in turn will destroy this country. But what are we going to do? Sit back and say, "You cannot legislate morals," or rise up and remedy a national disaster? We legislate against murder, rape, drugs, etc., all of which are moral issues. God has legislated against strong drink (cf. Prov. 20:1; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:18), and we think it is time to return to God's way. And to repudiate the Twenty-First Amendment, thereby reinstating the Eighteenth Amendment, would be a long step in the right direction.



## **Books From Win-More Publications**

**A NAME YOU CAN TRUST!**

**The Work Of The Holy Spirit** by Howard Winters. A major contribution to the study of this vital subject. Totally refutes neo-pentecostalism, and proves that the Spirit works today indirectly, through the word of truth. 232 pages, colorfully bound. Price \$4.00.

**The Second Coming And Other Sermons** by Guy N. Woods. Ten of the finest sermons from one of the greatest preachers in the 20th century. A must for everyone who wishes to have a clearer understanding of the Scriptures. 175 pages. Beautifully bound in cloth with colorful dust jacket. Price \$5.00.

**The Holy Spirit — His Indwelling and Work** by Howard Winters. A short study of the Holy Spirit, His indwelling and work. "The best, clearest, most concise short statement setting forth the truth on this subject that we have seen." — Ira Y. Rice, 48 pages. Price \$1.50.

**The Bible and Strong Drink** by Howard Winters. Proves that the Bible teaches that strong drink is an evil. Social drinking, nor any other form, cannot be justified by the Scriptures. This book challenges the most dreadful drug problem in America. It should be placed in the hands of everyone, studied in every class room, and preached from every pulpit. 80 pages. Price \$2.50.

**The Heart of Romans** by Howard Winters. A workbook with an outline and explanatory notes on Paul's letter to the Romans. The comments make this a mini commentary as well as a class study book. 36 pages. Price \$1.00.

**Basic Bible Studies** by Howard Winters. A 13-lesson workbook on fundamental Bible subjects, such as God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Church, Christian living, etc. 31 pages. Price 80¢.

### **ORDER FROM**

Win-More Publications  
P.O. Box 117  
West Jefferson, N.C. 28694