

# SCHOOL LESSON

## Straight Thinking About Drinking

LESSON TEXT FOR AUGUST 17—Proverbs 20:1; 23:19-21; 29:45; Ecclesiastes 10:17.

MEMORY SELECTION—Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.—Ephesians 5:18

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By WILLIAM CULBERTSON, D. D., Of The Moody Bible Institute, Chicago.

THE increase in the drinking habits of our nation is a source of concern, not only to the forces of morality, but to the liquor interests themselves. How strange it is to have the purveyors of a commodity urge moderation in its use!

Undoubtedly the Bible's answer to this whole problem is the only right one. The Word of God has many strong things to say concerning alcoholic beverages. Wise is the man who heeds the injunctions of Scripture.

### I. Liquor—a Description (Prov. 20:1).

WHAT a striking text this is! Think of its implications. "Wine is a mocker." It grasps its victim in a vicelike grip, and then taunts him in his inability to release himself. The drunkard is a victim of his own appetite, helpless to resist the temptation which ensnares him.

The young person who takes his first drink for sociability is indeed deceived, in that alcoholic liquor never reveals the possible cost which it exacts from the one who takes that first drink. The better part of valor is to leave the stuff alone.

The Word of God says further that "strong drink is a brawler" (A.S.V.). All of us have probably seen how the drunkard enters into conflict entirely without reason. Liquor seems to make a man senseless to danger and quick to express anger.

### II. Liquor—a Warning (Prov. 23:19-21).

THE admonition of this passage is that we should not be found among drunkards and gluttonous men.

Solomon here tells us of one of the results of drunkenness and gluttony—poverty. The drowsiness which is the result of both of these sins does indeed clothe a man with rags.

If, therefore, we have no higher motive than that of self-respect, than that of having enough of this world's goods to make a presentable appearance, we should avoid company with those who will lead us into the same excess that characterizes them. How important it is that we guide our hearts in God's way.

Let us understand, of course, that there are far higher motives for right living than those involved here. However, if we can come to the conclusion to avoid drinking on the basis of a lower motive, how much more important it is to come to the same conclusion on the basis of a higher one. As Christians, that higher motive concerns our testimony before men, our living a life that will cause others to want to know Christ; in short, our living for the glory of God.

### III. Liquor—a History (Prov. 23:29-35; Eccles. 10:17).

IN THE first of these Scripture passages we have what may be called a history of drunkenness. This sin leads to woe, to sorrow, to contentions, to wounds without a cause.

But that is not the end. Look carefully at Proverbs 23:32 and stress the first three words, "At the last." At the last, it does indeed bite like a serpent and sting like an adder.

Such poison is injected into one's body and soul that it seems as though there is no remedy. Thank God, there is a remedy; there is power in the blood of Christ to make the foulest clean.

In verses 33 to 35 we read some of the results of drunkenness: Beholding of strange things (v. 33), utterance of perverse things (v. 33), insensibility which is the result of drinking (v. 35), and inability to avoid succumbing to the same temptation all over again (v. 35).

Is it any wonder that the admonition is "Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it sparkleth in the cup, when it goeth down smoothly." Although man still has a semblance of right thinking, the temptation is great enough to deceive him as to the consequences.

In view of such results, is it any wonder this same Frencher says in Ecclesiastes 10:17 that the land is blessed when its rulers eat and drink for strength and not for drunkenness.

It still is true that righteousness exalteth a nation, but that sin is a reproach to any people. And since the princes of the land as the leaders will frequently personify the people of the land as the followers, happy is that nation which has godly governors.

Released by Western Newspaper Union.



The little girl in the picture gazes across the tumbling waters of the mountain stream and wonders about things.

She wonders about the other side of the stream; about the wild life that flourishes in its depths and along its banks; about the great mystery of the waters as they roll on to the distant river and the far-off sea.

As she grows in years and stature and her mental horizon expands she will know more about these and many other things; but always there will be things to be learned, problems to be solved, mysteries to be explained.

The little girl is a symbol of humanity as she stands and looks and wonders. For man is always peering into the dim distances and wondering what lies beyond.

But there is a key to all human problems and a solution for all mysteries. It is the key of faith. It is found in the Scriptures and the teachings of the Church. It is God's gift to those who live by faith.

Religion helps men to solve present perplexities and lights up the dim beyond.

# Lookin' and Thinkin'



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