

Cruising and Boozing



David Wilkerson September 1, 1978

Alcohol is the modern Delilah, bent on shearing the church of its locks and robbing it of strength.

I am seeing certain things among young people today that really break my heart. Go to almost any rock concert and study the thousands of young people swaying to the loud music. On stage, a wild and demonic group of drug freaks, dressed in repulsive drag, spit and stomp their way through junglelike sounds. Screaming teen-age girls reach out with uplifted hands, begging to be touched, or glanced at, or spat upon, or vulgarized by some lewd motion. It's a constantly moving mass of possessed bodies, hair and arms flailing about, jumping, falling, tripping out. Most are stoned. They vomit; they pass out; they fall over each other in a pitiful kind of fake ecstasy.

Watch them chugging down six-packs before the concert out in the parking lots. Their vans serve as mobile bars and bedrooms. It's a race to drunkenness by students who purposely want to get "stoned out of their heads." Some have to be carried into the concert by half-sober friends. Others are left outside, draped over bushes and garbage cans, passed out on the curb in drunken stupors, and others are doubled up with stomach pains while staggering in between parked cars. They look like wartime casualties left wounded and bleeding by retreating forces.

Inside, it's like a foretaste of hell, a satanic commercial, advertising what the real thing is like. The sex and punk rock language pours out of the huge banks of amplifiers. It's a Niagara of filth and insolence.

Pills and joints are passed around like Lifesavers. The pills are downed with beer. The joints are smoked between big gulps of wine, beer, and fifths of whiskey poured from thermos bottles. The booze "mellows out" the other highs. The music high, the violence high, the sex high, the drug high, the rebellion high - they're all peaked out by alcohol.

It is a terribly depressing sight to sit in a balcony seat among them, looking out over a sea of restless, stoned youth. Suddenly it dawns on you - these kids are actually worshipping at the devil's shrine. They idolize those demon-possessed performers, even when they know them to be anti-Christ, anti-God, and anti-country.

Drug- and alcohol-sedated minds are like little blobs of clay being molded by the hands of merchandising devils. They look like lambs being led to the slaughter. You feel the icy-cold darkness of demon spirits on the loose. You can almost see the devil weaving a spiderlike web over the audience, and one after another becomes entangled. They wiggle and squirm like creatures trying to free themselves.

Watching them file out of that concert is like viewing a funeral procession. The stench of spiritual death is everywhere. After all the beer, the drugs, the wild music, and the shouting and dancing - they are still empty and lonely. They carry out a load on their backs much heavier than the one they carried in. They came hoping to find freedom; they wanted a release, something to soothe that empty ache deep within.

Instead, they leave, hurting even more. So off they go in their speeding set of wheels to the all-night delicatessens for more beer. If the concert won't satisfy, perhaps a night of "cruising and boozing" will. And not even the sight of head-on collisions can stop them. Even when they see their young friends carried away in ambulances - their sirens screaming. They can attend the funeral of a dear friend with total resignation, as if to say. "Well, at least he

found peace at last. No more searching, no more hassles - death rescued him from emptiness."
Who Are These Stoned Students?

It sounds morbid, and it is. It sounds overstated and exaggerated, but it is not. Just who are these thousands of drinking, drug-taking kids who flock to concerts and who cruise and booze into the early morning hours? Street bums? Cheap harlot-type girls? Ghetto victims? Poverty kids? Ungodly Christ-haters? No! Not at all. Most of them can look you right in the eye and profess, "I am a Christian. I go to First Church. My parents are good Christian people." And it's true. You can find them on any given Sunday, sitting in church with their families. Some of them sing in the choir; others are active in Christian youth work. They respect God; they are not down on Jesus; they occasionally leaf through a Bible.

These modern, young boozers drive around in expensive cars, vans, and pickup trucks. For the most part, their parents don't have the slightest idea about how far they have slipped. They con their parents with an air of innocence.

What saddens me the most about these cruising, boozing, self-deluding Christian youth is that parents, ministers, youth leaders, and the church have demanded so little of them. The church, in general, caters to their drinking life style. The pastor is afraid to speak out against wild music, wild clothes, wild concerts, uninhibited drinking, permissive sex - afraid to speak out for fear they will turn him off and leave the church. Youth pastors put juke boxes in the church recreation halls so their kids can feed their hard-rock appetites after a quickie prayer meeting.

Too often, the pastor, the youth pastor, parents, and half of the deacons can't ask the kids to stay away from booze, simply because they themselves drink. The pastor likes his wine, the parents sip cocktails, the deacons guzzle beer. These sipping saints in the sanctuary are the real root cause of this wave of drinking that, right now, is sweeping over the nation, destroying thousands of our best youth.

Show me a man in the pulpit who drinks, even moderately, and I'll show you a coward when it comes to preaching the truth. I know personally of other ministers who don't touch a drop of alcohol themselves, but who are afraid to speak out against drinking in their congregation - because they don't want to incur the wrath of all the big moneyed, influential members. They would be thrown out on their ears, should they stand up like a prophet of God and cry out against all the wine swilling and beer chugging.

Needed - Preachers With Guts

Where are all the men of God called to be pastors, youth leaders, youth counselors - where are those who love young people enough to challenge them head-on about the horror of drinking?

Away with this spineless, mousey approach to immorality and drunkenness! Away with all this silly talk about not wanting to turn off or offend teen-agers who cruise and booze with their school friends. Away with this unscriptural double talk about a new morality with more freedom to drink in moderation. Away with all the lies that Jesus and Paul drank wine, and that Christians who are not under law can do the same.

God, give us ministers and parents with enough moral courage to put a stop to this flood of permissiveness that approves drinking and fornication for young people. How many more of our kids have to become alcoholics and burned-out shells of humanity before we say, "Enough!"? How many thousands more of our teen-agers must be sacrificed on brewery altars before we get angry enough to speak out? What will it take to convince sipping saints they have become the biggest stumbling block this generation has encountered? When will drinking Christians ever wake up to the fact they are the bad examples who have sent thousands of youth on the road to drunkenness? When will ministers come to realize their silence on this problem is taken as approval for drinking?

No more beer with bibles! No more Christians with cocktails! No more sipping by saints! This generation has had enough of foggy moral standards that allow an "anything goes" life style. They are fed up with preachers of the gospel who excuse their sins. They have lost all respect for churches and ministers who no longer demand they "come out of the world and be separate and clean."

Drinkers Must Be Challenged

This generation needs and wants a message that demands more holiness, more self-denial, more love for Jesus, more separation from a degenerate world. They don't want some beer-sucking saint to pat them on the back and tell them, "Just keep your faith - be moderate in all things - think good thoughts - you're OK - a little drink is good, as long as you stay in church and do good."

Somebody needs to tell this drinking, reveling generation, "You are dead wrong." Here and now, I challenge every young person reading this message. I say to you that drinking any kind of alcohol - beer, wine, whiskey - is wrong in the sight of God. I don't care how many ministers you know who drink. I don't care how many churchgoers drink. I don't care how much your parents drink. I don't care if every politician who calls himself a Christian drinks. I don't care if all your friends drink. That doesn't change a thing, as far as God is concerned. It's still dead wrong!

I know I cannot talk you out of your desire to drink, nor can or will I attempt to scare you out of it. Some will only turn me off and get angry. But you are being challenged, not just by me as a minister - but by the Holy Ghost of God. The Spirit is moving throughout the earth today, calling honest Christians to a life of total surrender, complete separation from sensuality and lust, and total abstinence from alcohol and fornication.

Alcohol's Mysterious Power

Alcohol has a mysterious power. Men can't seem resist it when things go bad. It is so simple, so available, so socially acceptable - and yet, it can destroy the body as surely as cancer. It offers a substitute peace - a temporary relief from pain - healing for aches and sorrow of heart and mind. That's what they offered Jesus when He hung on the cross - "something to relieve the pain." He refused that drink. He hated it. A supernatural life was flowing into Him, and He would not corrupt it with a drink offered by the devil. You can't drug God with alcohol. And you can't drug any of His true children, either. As with Christ, they will have nothing to do with the sacraments of Satan.

Half the civilized world is drugged with alcohol. The leaders of Russia rule with vodka. The French govern under the influence of wine. This nation is led by a congress in which the majority of its congressmen and senators legislate under the influence of martinis and cocktails. Laws are made under the influence of liquor.

The power of alcohol is in its ability to put the life of the soul to sleep. It sears the conscience by numbing it until the pricks are no longer felt. It leads the soul into an everlasting search for pleasure. Its mysterious power lies in the fact it feeds upon itself. It creates a consuming hunger that can never be satisfied. It sweeps victims up in promises of life and happiness, while all the time sinking them down into a dark world of demons, despair, and death. It promises heaven, while bumping them back to hell.

Alcohol is dangerous because it drowns thought. It turns convictions into cowardice. It causes one to go to sleep on God, and it turns heads and hearts away from spiritual things. Alcohol grows on men's insides. What it does to the soul is far more devastating than what it does to the body. It turns the spiritual mind into a sieve that cannot retain the promises of God. Truth is pickled and ejected right out of mind. The passion for God is replaced by a passion for poison. Alcohol then becomes the devil's opium to drug mankind so completely, God is forgotten.

Alcohol is an apparatus clever people use to dull the pain of boredom and the emptiness of life. It is a civilized method to become savage. Mankind is now deadly afraid of being sad and unhappy - so a "cult of cheerfulness" was invented by the devil. The members of this cult are people with troubled minds. Alcohol is their religion, and it offers a "packaged peace." In reality, it is a travesty against truth!

Alcohol is dangerous because people are always looking for something to liven life up. They picture themselves as among those who are missing out on the real joys of life - so they convince themselves a little alcohol will turn on a new blaze of light and happiness. But then the picture breaks down, and the light becomes darkness. They discover play-acting is self-deceiving. Without God at the center, everything turns sour. The happiness hour becomes a downer.

The most dangerous thing about alcohol is that you cannot shut down a craving for it from your side. Only supernatural intervention can tame and annihilate its devilish grip. That is what makes it sinful. It is that mysterious power inherent in its elements that seeks to enslave, inflame, and render helpless all who surrender to it. Alcohol is much more than just a drink - it is a demonic concoction formulated in the devil's own mind, and served up to the world as an antidote to the cross of Jesus.

My Inner Witness

There is something deep within me that cries out against even the thought that Christ Jesus ever drank or produced alcoholic beverages. If I had no Scripture or scientific evidence to back me up, what I have seen with my own eyes - and what I feel in my heart - would be enough.

I walk into a Brooklyn hospital ward to visit a fifteen-year-old boy dying of alcohol poisoning. I see a lad going into a

dark eternity, diseased, broken, and mindless. His eyes are sunken in their sockets - his cheeks are bony and hollow - his inner parts are in decay, his liver filled with corruption - his complexion is palid and his hair is matted. Victor started drinking cheap wine when he was less than ten years old. By the time he was fourteen, he walked the streets of the Bowery like all the other burned-out alcoholics. He slept on the street, covered with newspapers for a blanket.

Victor died in that overcrowded hospital without a friend to his name. He was just one of many such nameless young men and women who die of alcoholism in our big city hospital wards. But when I look into their dying faces, as I look with horror at the devastation caused by alcohol, as I pray over their emaciated bodies - something cries out in me, "Oh God - Your Son Jesus could never have created a drink that does this to kids. Jesus could never have served a drink to His friends that can ruin people like this."

Try it once! Go to any city morgue and look at the remains of teen-agers who were killed in a car crash - a result of drunken driving. Witness those teen-age bodies being laid out on slabs, while weeping parents identify their remains. You, too, will get angry as I do. You, too, will wonder how any God-loving, life-respecting Christian can ever touch a drop of alcohol. How dare we identify Jesus and Paul with such destruction and horror! How dare Christians drink the same beverage that spreads death and terror all across the nation!

Try sitting in the lobby of a motel late at night watching the parade of drinking patrons coming and going to and from the clubs and bars. To me, it is so depressing. In that crowded, smoke-filled room are huddled a restless group, trying to find happiness from a bottle. For hours they sit and drink. The divorced are in there trying to drink away their sense of failure. The traveling salesman is getting stoned, hoping to alleviate his loneliness and mediocrity. Young marrieds and singles dance and sway in drunken stupors, forcing themselves to enjoy what they know will end up as a night of emptiness and depression. With every drink, they get louder and bolder. They find a few hours of courage to face a life of fear. You watch in amazement as these who talk so much about enjoying their happiness hours get up and run to the restrooms - to vomit.

I watch those potbellied men burping their way into the men's room - and I want to weep. Their eyes are so sad; their joy is phony; and it seems they are crying out for help. They make such fools of themselves. They come staggering out of these rest rooms, wipe off their mouths, then march right back into the bar to start all over.

Closing time is the most hideous spectacle of all, as the patrons stagger through the lobby to their cars in the parking lot. They act like frightened little animals being forced to leave the security of their feeding place. The thought of those drunken drivers careening down the highways is terrifying. They can hardly walk, let alone drive an automobile on our busy streets.

I have witnessed these horror parades many times. And the more I see them, the more my heart tells me that the sinless Son of God could never be a part of such a world. Jesus would not put a drink into a person's hand that could lead to drunkenness. Suppose Christ had served up fermented wine at the wedding of Cana. If but one celebrant had too much and left that wedding reception and went out, causing an accident on his journey home - what would he tell the court magistrate? Would he say, "Jesus did it! He made this really good wine; I had a little too much - I got smashed. It all happened at the home of a friend of His mother, Mary."

Go to the Mardi Gras in New Orleans. Watch the hordes of drunken celebrants staggering through the streets. Look at all the homosexual queens strutting around in drag - holding beer cans in their hands. See the thousands of young students falling over each other in drunken stupors. Listen to the parade marshal toast "the god of alcohol." Thousands, from all over the world, gather to drink and celebrate. The streets are wild with music, dancing, carousing, and drunkenness. At times, it seems like hell has spilled over its borders and everybody is worshipping wine, whiskey, and women.

If you are an overcoming Christian, it makes you very sick just to see it happen before your eyes. The sight of multitudes openly flaunting their drunkenness is too much for tender hearts to comprehend. But one thing is sure - you know God is grieved by it all - because you sense a bit of His grief in your own heart. Then you know, beyond any shadow of a doubt, Jesus and alcohol do not mix. He is offended by what it is - by what it does to men - and by any identification with it.

The Bible warns against drinking. The historical facts prove it is deadly harmful. And my heart tells me it is sinful! My inner witness tells me Jesus came to deliver from such wickedness and not to produce and encourage its use.

Jesus made fermented wine? Paul used and recommended it? Not in a million years! The Holy Spirit within me confirms the conviction of my heart. Now, I have the witness of God's holy Word, the proof of science and the convictions of my inner man. I need no other proof.

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