

Temperance and Intemperance

THIS MESSAGE is not only to Christians, but to everybody. It is a message on temperance and intemperance. We are living in an intemperate age. People go to extremes on many things. A man who claims to be a Christian at all today should give renewed attention to the way he lives—to temperance, and especially to the principles of true temperance.

One of the essential characteristics of a Christian life is temperance. We read in 2 Peter 1:5, 6: "Beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance."

Temperance is synonymous with sobriety. "Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." Titus 2:12. While the Christian faith as revealed in the Holy Scriptures prepares us for another world, we are to live in this world soberly.

True temperance is also moderation. "Let your moderation be known unto all men." Philippians 4:5. Real temperance is absolute abstinence from all that is evil, and the moderate and proper use of that which is good. Self-discipline is essential to temporal achievement in this world. "Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things." 1 Corinthians 9:25.

Those who succeeded in winning the laurel crown of victory at the Olympic games were temperate in their eating and drinking. They took the right kind of exercise. They did this to obtain an earthly crown which would soon fade away. But how much more necessary it is for us in our spiritual quest, as the apostle reminds us in verse 25: "Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible." We do what? We do as they did. We are temperate in all things.

Let me say this: We are not going to have perfect tem-

perance by merely shutting off intoxicating drinks, bad as they are. We must start by civilizing the kitchen. As Henry Ward Beecher said: "We must apply scientific wisdom and knowledge to the department of cookery. Bad cooking is a perpetual temptation to drink."

Now just a few words about alcoholic intemperance. Listen to the command of the Holy Spirit to the apostle Paul in Ephesians 5:18: "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit."

The wine of Bible times was very weak and mild compared with the wine of today, not to mention distilled spiritous liquors. When the alcoholic content of wine rises to around 10 per cent, it kills the alcohol-producing bacteria so that the alcohol cannot become stronger. Therefore, the wines condemned by apostolic command were these so-called light wines. What would the apostle have said about the spiked wines of 18 to 20 per cent alcoholic content? What would he have said of brandy, whisky, and these various drinks that bring such trouble and sorrow upon the human race?

Robert S. Carroll reminds us that alcohol forms no tissues. It cannot be stored as energy. It offers no protection to the body. Only a very small amount of alcohol is usually oxidized for fuel. It tends to neutralize the vital alkaline reserve and furnishes an excess of lactic acid in the muscles. Its harmful effects in the human system are many. Many are made sick by it. "In the day of our king the princes have made him sick with bottles of wine." Hosea 7:5.

It brings on a staggering gait. "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." Isaiah 19:14.

It inflames the emotions. "Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them!" Isaiah 5:11.

Alcohol doesn't really stimulate. It's a depressant. It slips rosy glasses over our eyes to hide the real truth. It changes our emotional tone from minus to plus, from depression to ex-

altation, from fear to recklessness. We are told again and again, "If you drink, don't drive." But drinkers continue to drive, and the slaughter on our highways continues everywhere. What shall we think of a civilization that cannot control this ridiculous and unnecessary destruction of human life?

When we realize that millions of gallons of this trouble-bringing poison are consumed, is it any wonder that the human race today is in such terrible trouble? What shall we think of rulers and of governments which permit it to continue? We all know the ultimate effects of alcoholic intemperance—sorrow and strife everywhere.

If you could only see the mail that comes into The Voice of Prophecy! Thousands and thousands of letters every week, and hundreds of them are enough to make the angels weep—stories of broken homes, broken hearts, broken bodies, broken lives, broken minds, all directly attributable to beverage alcohol. Why continue it? Why break up your home? Why ruin your life?

You may have victory over this thing. You may be a ruler over it, instead of having it rule you. Here is a picture of thousands who may be listening to this broadcast. It is found in Proverbs 23:29, 30. And remember that, although it was written nearly three thousand years ago, it is just as true today as it was then. "Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babblings? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine, they that go to seek mixed wine."

We know of this sorrow. We see it every day. It breaks our hearts—the contentions caused by it, the babbling, the foolish words, the wounds without cause, the redness of eyes. We know the whole sad story.

Then poverty—think of the poverty caused by drinking; wages used up, jobs lost, estates destroyed, health undermined. Listen again to the wise man, this time from Proverbs 21:17: "He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man: he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich."

Remember this, friend, the verdict against alcohol has been

brought in by the highest and most competent authorities in the land. This is not the ranting and raving of a fanatic. It is plain truth, and you know it's true. Chemically, alcohol is a poison. It's a criminal. Economically, it's a waster. Physiologically, it's a depressant and not a stimulant. Psychologically, it's a blighter of the finest intellectual capacities of the human race.

I am not speaking of something of which I am ignorant. These terrible facts come from experience in the homes and lives of relatives of mine—whole fortunes dissipated, brilliant lives snuffed out in darkness. Surely the Word of God is true when it says in Proverbs 20:1: "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."

In view of its known effects, why should we put this enemy into our mouths to "steal away our brains," as the great poet said? It's evil and only evil.

Who in particular should abstain from it? Listen, statesmen! "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." Proverbs 31:4, 5.

I wonder if one reason that we have had so much confusion in high quarters in the last few years and months, so much skulduggery in places where justice should reign, so much corruption in officialdom, is not the fact that this great principle has been forgotten. Do you suppose alcohol has had anything to do with it? I am sure that those who know have no doubts on this question. And here is a plain Bible statement that statesmen and rulers should leave it alone.

In all probability, in the majority of cases, alcohol is taken for its depressant effect. A great many hope thus to escape from worries and anxieties, or to find freedom from the restraint of social conventions and self-criticism.

Another class who, above all, should leave alcohol alone is spiritual leaders. In Leviticus 10:9 we read the word of God to the priests of Israel: "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 generations." This is quite important if God pronounced sure death on drinkers who entered the holy temple of God in the service of the Most High.

And does God think any better of it today? Notice with what drunkenness is classed in Galatians 5:19, 21: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, . . . Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like." They are all together in the same class.

Who will find no place in the kingdom of heaven? Listen to 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10: "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."

Here are some incentives to temperance—and I mean temperance in all things—real, right, plain, clean living.

First: Temperance helps us effectively to resist temptation, and is co-operating with God. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." 1 Peter 5:8. That's why we are to be sober—because temptation in all phases of life is continually about us.

Second: We should be temperate because of the nearness of the end of time. "The end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore [or because of this] sober, and watch unto prayer." 1 Peter 4:7.

How can we prepare for the great events just before us if we are not sober and temperate? And temperance includes—

First: Eating wisely. "Blessed art thou, O land, when thy king is the son of nobles, and thy princes eat in due season, for strength, and not for drunkenness!" Ecclesiastes 10:17. We are not to be indifferent to the health of the body. We are not to deceive ourselves into thinking that intemperance is no sin and will not affect our spirituality. "A close sympathy exists be-

tween the physical and moral nature. The standard of virtue is elevated or degraded by the physical habits. Excessive eating of the best of food will produce a morbid condition of the moral feelings. And if the food is not the most healthful, the effects will be still more injurious."—*Counsels on Health*, p. 67. Yes, eating wisely is a part of temperate living.

Second: Avoid intoxicants and other harmful things. "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess." Ephesians 5:18. Notice, we said, Avoid intoxicants and *other* harmful things. Don't forget that the consumption of tobacco is reaching astronomical heights. This, without doubt, is because of its narcotic effect. We are becoming a race of addicts to alcohol and nicotine. Isn't it about time for a new worldwide declaration of independence?

Third: True temperance includes, all-round self-control. "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." 1 Corinthians 9:27. The only recreation that is legitimate is that which truly recreates. As a result of our play, whatever it is, we should have a better body, a clearer head, and finer fitness for the task and the road ahead. If any of our habits leave us less fit, the chances are we are on the wrong road and what we are doing has become a dissipation.

The apostle Paul urged the importance of sobriety and true temperate living upon—

First: All men, from youth to old age. "Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded." Titus 2:6. "That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children." Verse 4. "That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience." Verse 2.

Second: All administrators. "He reasoned [with Felix] of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come." Acts 24:25.

Third: The Christian ministry. "A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous." 1 Timothy 3:2, 3.

And after all is said and done, temperance must begin in our thinking. The apostle Paul makes this point, too, in Romans 12:3: "I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."

States of mind and prevailing habits of thought register themselves in bodily, as well as moral, conditions. Right thinking leads to health. Right thinking leads to happiness. Right thinking leads to God, "for as [a man] thinketh in his heart, so is he," declares the Holy Word in Proverbs 23:7. Therefore, we appeal to you, radio friends, in the words of Holy Writ: "Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober." 1 Peter 1:13.

Then the fruits of true temperance will be in your life, will be seen in you wholly—spirit, soul, and body. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." Galatians 5:22, 23.