Reverage Alcohol

Louis Rushmore

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By Louis Rushmore

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Special Edition

Brethren Victor Durrington and Louis Rushmore, and sister Betty Burton Choate, through their collaborative efforts to finance and produce it, have made brother Rushmore's book, *Beverage Alcohol*, available free as long as supplies last. Individuals may request this well-rounded and biblical treatment of so-called social drinking and pay only the shipping costs. Groups such as schools of preaching, college classes and congregations may also request free copies for 100% distribution to their members. This free offer is not for resale and only one copy per person, please. Some brethren value *Beverage Alcohol* as the best treatment of this critically important subject presently in print in our brotherhood. For your free copy, email brother Rushmore at rushmore@ gospelgazette.com or place your order online through *Gospel Gazette Online* (www.gospelgazette.com) at the "store" link.

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About the Author

Louis Rushmore, a former Catholic, obeyed the Gospel in 1972 while in the United States Air Force. One year later (evening services on *potluck* Sunday), he preached his first sermon. After several months of preaching for various congregations by appointment, Louis accepted his first fulltime work in 1974.

After realizing the need to increase his Bible knowledge, brother Rushmore enrolled in Memphis School of Preaching in 1975. Additional college work elsewhere emphasized journalism and public speaking.

Over the last 30+ years, Louis Rushmore has preached by appointment or served congregations in several states east of the Mississippi River, Texas, Arkansas and Ontario, Canada. He has written hundreds of articles, many of which have appeared in various Gospel magazines, including *Gospel Advocate*, *Gospel Gazette*, *Christian Bible Teacher*, *The Restorer*, *Therefore Stand*, *Unity in Truth*, *First Century Christian*, *Firm Foundation*, *West Virginia Christian*, *Power* and *Contending for the Faith*. Louis has written several Bible class books: *Church Divine*; *Spirit Summarized*; *Bible Geography*; *Biblical Companions: Bible Geography, Archaeology & Sacred History*; *Parables of Our Lord, Vols. 1 & 2*; *Our Restoration Heritage, Vols. 1 & 2*; *Biblical Variety, Esther, Ruth, Digging Up the Past* and *Cost of Discipleship*.

Brother Rushmore was an instructor at West Virginia School of Preaching for ten years, beginning in 1995. There, Louis taught *Bible Geography*, *Acts*, *1 Corinthians*, *2 Corinthians*, *New Testament Church*, *James* and *English Grammar*. He is available

for and enjoys Gospel meetings and lectureships. Additional experience includes work with radio, television and the Internet. Louis is also past Associate Editor of a state right-to-life magazine. He is Editor of *Gospel Gazette Online* at www.gospelgazette.com (since 1999) and Associate Editor of *The Voice of Truth International*.

Louis and his wife, the former Bonnie Reed, have three grown children. Bonnie and Louis are committed to the service of Christ and busy themselves with publishing religious materials in print and on the Internet. For six years before relocating to Mississippi, Bonnie and Louis served the Lord's church in Cameron, West Virginia where Louis was the minister and one of the elders. Presently, Bonnie and Louis reside in Winona, MS from which they labor for the Lord in world evangelism.

Publisher's Statement

Ours is a multifaceted work that has grown from foreign mission efforts in Pakistan, then in Sri Lanka and on to India, to encompass mass media tools. In order to reach more of the population of India, we took advantage of opportunities to have radio programs, which led to greater involvement in printing literature, and now we use a combination of radio/TV/literature and extensive follow-up and personal work.

So we are great believers in the power of the printed page. When J.C. became ill with recurring cancer, and we were looking for people to come to Winona to help with the work, we were thrilled when Louis and Bonnie decided to make that move. It is not often that one already involved in printing is joined by a couple so perfectly suited to the needs – they write, they have already printed numerous books, they even brought their own printing press! So the Rushmores are a tremendous addition to the mission program itself.

But we are especially thankful for Louis' studiousness and writing ability. In *Beverage Alcohol* he has covered every aspect of the question, honestly and with reference to statistics and specialists in each field, so that the conclusions must have tremendous impact on the readers. In a time of degradation of the American culture and abandonment of the principles of Christianity, a study such as this is sorely needed. May it be the means of pulling many lives back from the brink of alcoholism.

Betty (J.C.) Choate, World Evangelism

Foreword

Not all stories have a happy ending, for instance, that of faithful Noah of old. All of his good work in building the ark whereby he saved his family and himself is overshadowed by his drunkenness. Not only did he suffer because of it, but his family suffered, too. One would think that defenders of alcohol (*social drinking*, really resulting in unsociable conduct) could learn a lesson from Noah. Biblical references to Noah clearly indicate that the problem of alcohol has been around for a long time. Granting Noah the benefit of any doubt, surely he neither planned getting drunk nor hurting his family.

It is my honor and pleasure to highly recommend this fine book by brother Louis Rushmore. It answers those who defend drinking alcohol (in any form) for pleasure.

Having read some of the answers that Louis gave to those who inquired of him about the use of alcohol, I was one of many who encouraged him to put these answers in a book for all to have. Louis is very clear and right to the point in his answers. I strongly recommend it to all elders and preachers as they combat this great problem in the world and sometimes even in the church. *Beverage Alcohol* is full of up-to-date material that puts the question of the use of alcohol where it should be, condemned by Almighty God. It is Bible centered with references to Scripture dealing with this important subject—alcohol and mankind. In fact, if every Christian family were to have a copy of this book, it would be a valuable resource to guide it in the truth about alcohol and its effect on man.

I encourage you to read *Beverage Alcohol*. Check the scriptures cited with an open mind. Doing this, I believe you will clearly see exactly what God meant when he said, "Woe unto them" who give or take strong drink in any amount.

Some say if you want something done, ask a busy man to do it. Louis is very busy teaching and preaching the Gospel as well as writing and publishing many articles and class books. We will be forever indebted to Louis for his time and talent in this good work.

Leonard "Buck" Groves, Minister & Elder
Southern Hills church of Christ, Salineville, Ohio
September 12, 1998

Preface

A few years ago, I penned a short series of articles, the theme of which was: *Legal, But Lost*! One installment addressed *alcohol*. Eventually, the article on alcohol made its way to the Internet along with several other articles I have written over the years.

Occasionally, someone corresponds with me, usually by e-mail, regarding one of these Internet articles. To date, no article has generated more response than my article: *Legal But Lost: Alcohol!* Some correspondence is positive and complimentary. More, however, is negative and critical.

One young student in a northern religious college took special exception to the article and initiated a protracted and lengthy debate through email. He proceeded to pursue vigorously the *biblical right* for Christians to consume alcoholic beverages. (Incidentally, the college he attended prohibited him from drinking, too.)

Over the next several months, in response to my agitated correspondent, I pored over various resources in an effort to reply satisfactorily. It occurred to me that it would be ethical to assume as much as possible an open mind throughout the period of further inquiry. I demanded no less of my young disputant.

This booklet is the product of that research. More than ever, I am convinced that the Bible **does not** favor the consumption of alcoholic beverages. Besides, so-called social drinking should also be an anathema, especially to Christians, in view of medical and historical evidence against alcohol. Overall, the summary of vantage points respecting alcohol is that **the consumption of alcohol is harmful to one's body and soul**.

I am well aware that some members of the churches of Christ also use and argue in favor of *social drinking*. Aside from religion, still sensible deportment portends great personal injury to those who elect to imbibe *Beverage Alcohol*. It is unfathomable to me

that especially any Christian would voice his approval of alcohol, or worse, guzzle that poison to the harm of his body and soul.

Reviewers of this book prior to its publication urged **emphasis** in several places throughout the text, which I obliged where I could. Frankly, in many instances I became so impassioned poring over the evidence, it was difficult for me not to **bold** nearly the whole manuscript!

~ Louis Rushmore, August 29, 1998

Regrettably, a book of this nature is needed, even among members of the Lord's church. Several books of this kind have appeared throughout the years at the hands of religionists of various stripes, as well as from temperance unions, and the need for inclusion of contemporary information and ever circulating the abundance of condemning data respecting beverage alcohol is ongoing. Only at the urging of others have I interrupted virtually every other pursuit to revise and republish my book, *Beverage Alcohol*, at this time. All who are involved in this production send it forth with the deepest and most sincere prayers to God that many may be favorably affected from beverage alcohol by reading this manuscript.

~ Louis Rushmore, February 9, 2007

I can hardly believe that we have given away 4,000 copies of *Beverage Alcohol* over just the last year and a half alone. We have made *Beverage Alcohol* available for free distribution through the Internet, print publications, television and my congregational PowerPoint presentations. Through the generosity of brother Victor Durrington, 10,000 copies of this newly revised edition are available also for free distribution. This current format is a convenient and popular size for reading and shelf storage, and the attractive, full-color cover is esthetically pleasing and inviting. Please tell your friends, family and acquaintances about our book, *Beverage Alcohol*, which can change one's life here on earth as well as one's eternal abode.

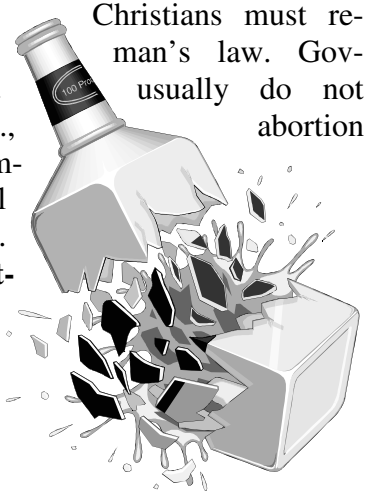
~ Louis Rushmore, September 5, 2008

Chapter 1: An Overview

"Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (Proverbs 20:1). Sin, though approved by society and allowed by civil law, is no less sin before God, the consequence of which is (spiritual) death (Romans 6:23).

Civil government in general is ordained of God (Romans 13:1-7). However, God does not authorize a particular *kind* of government (e.g., Roman Empire, democracy, etc.). God does not pre-authorize specific laws of any government either. The apostles found it necessary to disregard civil government on occasion when it required of them something unlawful in God's law (Acts 4:18-20; 5:28-29). However, they only disregarded civil law to the extent it required them to violate God's law. The apostles were still bound by the balance of man's law under which they lived.

When civil government allows, tolerates, legalizes, taxes or sponsors sin, to that extent faithful Christians must resort to the higher law of God over man's law. Governments sometimes legalize sin, but usually do not *require* participation in the same (e.g., abortion on demand [murder], prostitution, immodesty and even nudity, unscriptural remarriage, gambling, alcohol, etc.). **Christians must persevere in righteousness in spite of *legal permission* or even compulsion to commit sin.**



Alcohol and Government

Liquor was outlawed in the U.S. and its territories between 1919 and 1933, though Rhode Island and Connecticut never ratified the 18th (prohibition) Amendment. In 1929, Utah became the 36th state to renounce prohibition, and later, the 21st Amendment rescinded the 18th Amendment. Several other nations

also practiced prohibition in the early 20th Century, also later to repeal it. Prohibition proved itself unenforceable in view of the general public outcry in favor of the legal consumption of alcoholic beverages. Though their efforts failed in the face of acute opposition, several nations tried to protect their citizens from the real and identifiable perils of alcohol consumption.

Prohibition failed in the sense that it did not amass enough popular base support to preserve and permit effective enforcement of that law. Our so-called *Christian nation* and *silent majority*, or in other words, religious and conservative citizenry in America must shoulder a heavy burden for both the repeal of prohibition and the increasing popularity of social drinking. American religion has provided little resistance and in some cases considerable encouragement regarding alcoholic consumption in our nation.

> Christian churches are partly responsible for the alcohol epidemic raging in America today, because since the repeal of Prohibition in 1933, most of them have abandoned their stand for total abstinence, encouraging instead moderation in drinking. Moderation has led millions to become immoderate drinkers. (Bacchiocchi, "The Preservation of Grape Juice")

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

In view of the billions of dollars of annual losses and human suffering justifiably attributable to beverage alcohol, repealing prohibition can hardly be dubbed an honorable course for this or any other nation.

Alcoholic beverages are legal today and big business for manufacturers, retailers and government. Largely, except for some *dry counties* and age restrictions, alcohol is legal throughout our nation. Tax receipts are sizable for liquor's 20 billion dollars in annual sales. New York once even legalized drunkenness and required police to act as free taxi services for drunks; this shows

the extent to which government has reversed itself from an opponent to a proponent of alcoholic beverages.

Alcohol and the Facts

Alcohol is the most frequently abused drug in our nation. One writer appropriately refers to the time in which we live more than any other point in history as the "Alcoholic Age" (Wesley 26). Alcohol abuse costs 100 billion dollars annually; it costs about five times more to address the abuse of alcohol than the money generated by retail sales of alcoholic beverages. "Alcoholic beverages have become America's number one public health problem, costing over $117 billion a year and claiming at least 100,000 lives per year, 25 times as many as all illegal drugs combined" (Bacchiocchi, "The Preservation of Grape Juice"). Business, industry and government spend large amounts of money annually combating the abuse of alcohol in the work place.

Alcohol is associated with most crime; it is involved in 70% of all murders, 41% of assaults, 50% of rapes, 60% of sex crimes against children, 56% of fights and assaults in homes, 37% of suicides and 55% of all arrests. Further, alcohol is a safety hazard; it is involved in 66% of fatal accidents, 53% of fire deaths, 36% of pedestrian accidents, 22% of home accidents, 45% of drownings, 50% of skiing accidents, more admissions to mental hospitals than any other cause, 50% of all traffic accidents (killing 25,000 and seriously injuring 1,000,000 annually), and is the #1 killer of people 25 and under (the #3 killer in America for all ages) (Elkins and Taylor 2, 34).

Alcohol is also a medical hazard. It is poisonous; half of 1% alcohol in the blood usually results in death. In addition, each alcoholic drink kills brain cells (which the body *does not* replace) and causes memory loss, beginning with the last things learned or memorized.

> Medical research has indicated that "social" drinkers along with heavy drinkers incur some loss of brain cells every time they drink, and that these cells are irreplaceable. The only difference between the losses of "social" drinkers and heavy drinkers are those of degree. (Jeffcoat 114)

"Regular alcoholic drinking does kill brain cells" (Cynthia Kuhn, PhD and others at Duke University Medical Center [1998] qtd. in Russell). "As little as a few days of intoxication can lead to loss of brain cells" (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [2000] qtd. in Russell). **"[T]he brain, is damaged permanently by alcohol.** Brain cells, unlike all other cells of the body, cannot reproduce themselves" (Dr. Marvin A. Block, Chairman of the Committee on Alcoholism of the American Medical Association for ten years qtd. in Copper and Cooper 2 emphasis added).

However, a 1998 collaborative study by an American and a Swedish laboratory of human cadaver brains may indicate the possibility that adult brains can reproduce after all. "This flies in the face of conventional wisdom, which suggests that brain cells, unlike all other cell types, do not reproduce" ("Brain Cells Can…"). "The finding is one of a series of recent discoveries that have overturned years of conventional wisdom about the human brain: that, after birth, once brain cells died off, they could never be replaced" ("Adult Brain Cells Said to Reproduce"). Hope based on this affirmation is that eventually treatments for physical maladies such as "Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease and stroke" will be forthcoming ("Adult Brain Cells Said to Reproduce").

While the Christian shares hopes that new discoveries relating to the regeneration of brain cells may reduce some of the affects of the aforementioned diseases, the affect of alcohol on the death of brain cells and alcoholic hindrance in the regeneration of brain cells remains a grim reality. Anecdotal evidence or the observation of prolonged heavy alcohol consumption speaks to markedly decreased capability of the human mind to demonstrate in action or words rational thought. Put another way, some people appear to have pickled their brains permanently beyond the capacity of meaningful communication and interaction.

Alcohol damages the stomach, liver and kidneys, too. Only cancer and heart disease claim more lives than alcohol each year. Alcohol is a depressant drug that affects the central nervous system. Furthermore, one drink (of beer, liquor or wine) produces an average of .05% alcohol in the blood and accompanying physical impairments. Alcohol combined with medication or other drugs can kill; and, alcohol consumption during pregnancy may

result in birth defects (including facial abnormalities, heart defects, abnormal limb development and less than average intelligence). Even in small quantities, alcohol deadens mental activity and slows muscular response and coordination. It further produces fatigue and lowers physical endurance.

Considering the obvious and real dangers presented by the consumption of alcohol, its popularity remains truly puzzling. Alcohol costs much more money than it generates for manufacturers, retailers or government. It contributes greatly to crime and greatly endangers both body and mind. These observations alone *should* lead thoughtful people to reject alcoholic beverages completely. However, instead, the much-loved consumption of alcohol seems permanently seated in culture and society.

Alcohol and Society

Alcoholic beverages are widely used, as any observant person can easily verify. Some estimates cite about 71% of Americans 18 and up use alcohol; only 29% abstain from its use.

> Slightly more than half of Americans aged 12 or older reported being current drinkers of alcohol in the 2005 survey (51.8 percent). This translates to an estimated 126 million people, which is higher than the 2004 estimate of 121 million people (50.3 percent). …In 2005, rates of current alcohol use were 4.2 percent among persons aged 12 or 13, 15.1 percent of persons aged 14 or 15, 30.1 percent of 16 or 17 year olds, 51.1 percent of those aged 18 to 20, and 67.4 percent of 21 to 25 year olds. ("2005 National Survey")

Most restaurants serve alcohol (including family restaurant chains like Pizza Hut, Ground Round and Chi-Chi's). Where permitted, almost all grocery stores sell alcohol. **Serving alcoholic beverages to guests upon entrance into one's home has become the norm for modern hospitality.** Alcohol also accompanies most social and sporting events; our leaders and heroes (e.g., politicians,

entertainers, athletes and most other public figures) are viewed regularly using alcoholic beverages as well.

Even some religious leaders, among whom is Billy Graham, condone its use. In addition, denominational church *festivals* frequently offer alcoholic beverages, and military chaplains commonly fellowship over cocktails. The Roman Catholic Church (among other churches as well) even uses alcohol in its worship service.

Far from being hailed as sinful, in our society, **alcoholism is said to be a disease**. If so, it is the only disease that is taxed by governments. It is the only disease that typically leads to auto accidents, divorce, murder and rape. It is the only disease for which one can be fined for having too much of it. It is the only disease gladly accepted by its victim. It is the only disease that employs people for its manufacture. It is the only disease regulated by government; and, it is the only disease allowed or disallowed in a community by popular vote. Alcohol[ism] is the only disease bottled and sold! "The alcoholism disease concept originated at the Yale School of Alcohol Studies, a group heavily subsidized by the liquor traffic. Totally without scientific proof the theory is designed to focus attention on the 'diseased' person rather than on the ethyl alcohol and the liquor traffic responsible for spreading the 'disease'" (Editor of *The National Statesman* qtd. in Charen).

"The apostle Paul doesn't call drunkenness a disease. He calls it, along with sorcery, strife, and jealousy, deeds of the flesh (sin). …Since it is not a disease, there is no *medical* cure. However, there is a cure for sin! …Alcoholism is sin, and sin is curable" (Wesley 94-95). Before one rises in objection, granted one's body may be especially susceptible to the effects of alcohol, but it is nevertheless a self-inflicted condition, and *new damage* (previous damage owing to alcohol may be irreversible) to the body from alcohol will not happen simply by removing future doses of alcohol. "So the evidence of a genetic link, while interesting, does not dispose of the question of volition and personal responsibility" (Charen).

People rapidly withdraw themselves from mad dogs, wild beasts, snakes and even spiders. How strange it is when our society then deploys alcohol in every aspect of life, though it has amply demonstrated itself more deadly than marauding hordes of vicious

dogs and ferocious beasts. Man has sufficient evidence available by which to determine alcohol will only harm him. However, God has also warned mankind against its use.

Conclusion

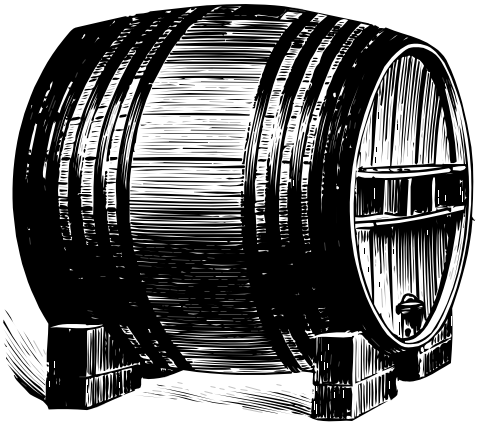
Drunkenness has always been sinful. No law of man can override God's law on any topic, including alcohol. Various national, state and local governments have found cause against alcohol to legislate against it. Alcohol is a dangerous drug. Alcohol costs more than it earns in tax dollars. Alcohol is frequently associated with crime. Alcohol is a safety hazard. Alcohol is poisonous and otherwise harmful to one's health.

> …the reason alcoholic beverages are harmful to the human body, even in small amounts, is because ethyl alcohol is poisonous… In fact, the term commonly applied to the abnormal conditions produced by alcohol, "intoxication," is derived from the Latin term toxicum, meaning "poison." (Jeffcoat 116)

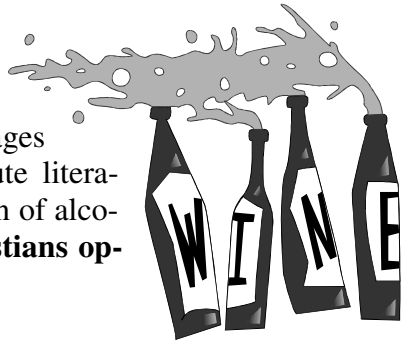
However, the use of alcohol is deeply ingrained into nearly every aspect of society. **Alcoholism is the most unlikely and peculiar *disease***. As if man did not know it was bad for him, **God denounces the consumption of alcohol as sinful**. No plausible defense can be made for alcoholic beverages. Christians must not consume any alcoholic beverages. Christians and the church must oppose this evil to whatever extent possible (James 4:7). "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Ephesians 5:11).

> …[A]lcohol victimizes the unborn, the children, the teenagers…it victimizes men and women and the aging; but that most of all alcohol victimizes moral values, ethical standards, and Christian ideals. …Biblical Christian principles require that we oppose the manufacturing, advertising, distributing, wholesaling, retailing, and consuming of alcohol. (Curt Scarborough)

The reasons are clear why especially the child of God cannot afford to ignore the malicious beverage alcohol.. “Alcoholism is resulting in a deterioration of the nation, the homes and the religious life” (Gardner 97).



Chapter 2: Biblical Considerations



Many conservative religious people have always regarded alcohol as sinful. Some churches oppose the selling of alcoholic beverages close to their buildings or distribute literature opposing the legal consumption of alcoholic beverages at all. **Many Christians oppose alcohol on biblical grounds.**

Old Testament

The consumption of **alcohol is condemned in the Old Testament**. Priests were forbidden to consume alcohol under penalty of death.

> 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 generations: And **that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean; And that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the Lord hath spoken** unto them by the hand of Moses. (Leviticus 10:8-11)

Civil leaders were also forbidden to drink alcohol lest they pervert judgment (Proverbs 31:4-5). Faithful Jews were not allowed even to look upon wine in its intoxicating state (Proverbs 23:31). Alcohol was reserved for medicinal purposes (Proverbs 31:6). Furthermore, drunkenness was punishable by death (Deuteronomy 21:20-21). In addition, Scripture warns against alcohol because it contributes to poverty (Proverbs 23:21). Drinking alcohol demonstrates lack of wisdom as well (Proverbs

20:1). Faithful Jews were further forbidden to be in the company of those drinking alcohol (Proverbs 23:20). Alcohol leads to other immorality and is hazardous to health and safety (Proverbs 23:29-35). It causes God's servants to err (Genesis 9:21-22).

> 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. (Isaiah 28:7)

Drinking alcohol was considered defilement by faithful Jews (Daniel 1:5-8). It was a crime to give alcoholic beverages to another person (Habakkuk 2:15). The Israelites were forbidden to drink alcohol in order to always know God and practice his law.

> And I have led you forty years in the wilderness: your clothes are not waxen old upon you, and thy shoe is not waxen old upon thy foot. Ye have not eaten bread, neither have ye drunk wine or strong drink: that ye might know that I am the Lord your God. (Deuteronomy 29:5-6)

Alcohol is also associated with violence (Proverbs 4:17). Total abstinence from alcohol was praised by God (Jeremiah 35:2-19).

New Testament

The consumption of **alcohol is condemned in the New Testament**, too. Whereas Old Testament priests were forbidden to drink alcohol, Christians are priests (1 Peter 2:5, 9) in the perfect tabernacle (the church, Hebrews 9:11; 8:2) *all* the time. Further, drinking alcohol is expressly forbidden for as much as intoxication begins with the first drink: "And be not drunk ["to intoxicate" *Biblesoft's*] with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18).

> The Greek expression, *mee methuskesthe* "be not drunken" is present tense, imperative, and passive voice. It could accurately be translated today as, "be not being drunken or intoxicated." This prohibits

> the start of a process which ends in a drunken state. …Why, then, did not the translators translate it "be not being drunken?" Because the KJV translators of 1611 did not have the progressive passive as a tool of language with which to work. …not used before 1825 by English speakers. …Therefore, it is Bible but clumsy language that Christians should "be not being drunk" with wine or other spirits. …Do not find yourself in the process of BEING intoxicated and means to avoid the first drink! (Murphey 407)

> Ephesians 5:18…*methuskesthe*, 2nd person plural, present, imperative, passive form of the root word *methusko*. …to *get* drunk, or to *grow* drunk…*the process of*…The clear import of the definition of the term is that we are not to engage ourselves in the process which will make us drunk. …How much liquor starts the process? The answer is *the very first drop*. That means that the social drinker has sinned with his casual drink. (Willis 171)

"Drunkeness [sic] actually is a condition which begins with the first drink and becomes more acute with each successive drink" (Cooper and Cooper 7).

Drunkenness is a sin explicitly cited as keeping people from heaven (1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Galatians 5:19-21). Drinking alcohol is drinking with the devil (1 Corinthians 10:21). Drinking alcohol is a work of the flesh, warring against the spirit of man (Galatians 5:19-21).

Christians are exhorted to be *sober* (1 Thessalonians 5:6, 8; 1 Timothy 3:2-3, 8; 1 Peter 1:13; 4:7; 5:8). Aged women are cautioned against use of alcohol (Titus 2:3). Leaders of the church are especially forbidden the use of alcohol (1 Timothy 3:2-3, 8). Christians are exhorted to avoid every appearance or kind of evil (1 Thessalonians 5:22). It is sinful to harm the body, which alcohol does (1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19-20). Drinking alcohol is sinful and associated with other sins (Romans 13:13).

There is plenty of corroborating biblical evidence for the objective student of the Bible to ascertain that the consumption of

alcohol is not sanctioned by God. All of this, of course, is additional to overwhelming statistical and factual testimony against alcohol. The child of God, therefore, should not want alcohol were it allowed by God, and God does not permit its consumption.

Two key words have been so misinterpreted as to obscure the truth about the use of alcoholic beverages. They are "wine" and "drunkenness." Invariably, when a biblical defense is made [attempted] for social drinking, argumentation centers on these two words. (Tucker 56)

Wine

The word *wine* is used in several instances in the Bible where its use by the children of God is not condemned. The word *wine*, though, is represented in the Bible by 10 Hebrew and 3 Greek words. Sometimes *wine* means first fruits which are ripe first (Numbers 18:12-13). It can mean the cluster of grapes (Isaiah 65:8). Wine can refer to raisins (Hosea 3:1 ASV). Sometimes wine equals the winepress (Nehemiah 13:15). Wine can be the pure juice of the grape (Isaiah 16:10; Proverbs 3:10). It can also refer to alcoholic wine (Genesis 9:21). **The context is the overriding factor determining the definition of both the Greek and English words for wine.**

The reason that careful consideration of context is crucial to ascertain the meaning of the word "wine" in the Bible is expertly explained by Jim McGuiggan.

> But doesn't the word "wine" mean *intoxicating wine*? Not at all. Does the word "water" mean "stagnant water"? Does the word "water" mean "salt water"? Of course not. Water, like "wine," is a generic term and is applied to water in different states, but it doesn't mean salt, fresh, rain, stagnant…water. "Wine" doesn't mean intoxicating

> wine nor does it mean non-intoxicating wine—it is applied to either. (McGuiggan, "1")
>
> The words [for wine in the Bible] *yayin* [Hebrew], *oinos* [Greek], and *wine* [English] are *generic*! …Words like animal, grain, beast, hardware, and bird are all generic. If I were to make this statement, "The fruit was very delicious!", what type or kind of fruit did I eat? Was it a peach, pear, or an apple? Of course, you would not know unless I was more specific. (Wesley 21-22)

Essentially, (1) both alcoholic wine and non-alcoholic wine were known and used by ancient peoples, (2) favorable references to "wine" in the Bible pertain to non-alcoholic wine, and (3) unfavorable references to "wine" in the Bible pertain to alcoholic wine. That this is exactly correct there can be no doubt, when one realizes that "…Scripture both condemns and commends wine itself, **irrespective of the quantity used**" (Bacchiocchi, *Wine in the Bible* abridged edition 10 emphasis added).

> In one class of passages wine is commended and in another class it is condemned, in each case in the strongest and most unmistakable language. …The natural inference is therefore that two distinct or different substances are designated by these totally diverse characterizations. (Jeffcoat 27-28)
>
> Of course, it isn't possible for anything to be both very bad and very good, nor is it logical. Therefore the explanation of these discrepancies must be in the original usage, or in errors of translation, or in our own preconceived interpretation. (Watson 1)

One of the Greek words translated "wine" in the New Testament is "oinos." This is a general word for "wine" (Vine 219). The word "oinos" can also refer to "the vine and its clusters" *(Analytical Greek Lexicon* 285; Berry 70).

Another Greek word translated "wine" in the New Testament is "gleukos." It is defined as "sweet 'new' wine or must" (Vine 219-220) or "must, the sweet juice pressed from the grape"

(Thayer 118). Further, the word "gleukos" means "the unfermented juice of grapes, must; hence, sweet new wine" (*Analytical Greek Lexicon* 80).

Jeffcoat painstakingly defined the numerous Old and New testament words that are translated wine in our Bibles, concluding: (1) the Bible refers to both fermented intoxicating wines and unfermented non-intoxicating wines, and (2) often the biblical context is critical to the comprehension of whether references are to the former or the latter (Jeffcoat 28-41).

Drunkenness

Of course, English dictionaries only reflect the current usage of words. Therefore, they often fail to convey the definition of biblical words. Greek dictionaries of koine Greek, on the other hand, are more reliable for the definition of biblical words. However, English dictionaries concur with the Greek definitions regarding the word "drunkenness."

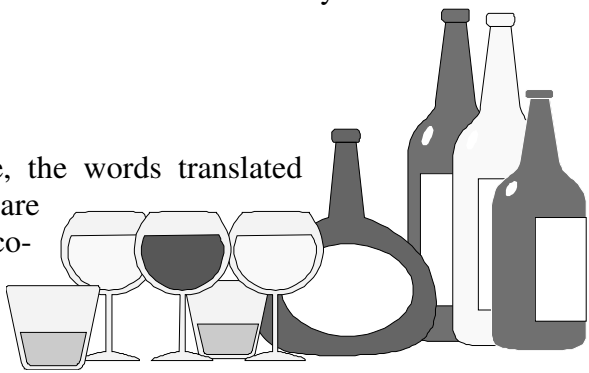
> drunk 1. **having the faculties impaired by alcohol**. 2. dominated by some feeling as if by alcohol. 3. of, relating to, or caused by **intoxication**. (*Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary* 255)
>
> drunken adj. 1. **intoxicated**; drunk. 2. given to drunkenness. 3. pertaining to, caused by, or marked by intoxication: a drunken quarrel. (*Webster's Talking Dictionary/Thesaurus*)
>
> drunk adj. 1. overcome by alcoholic liquor; **intoxicated**. (*Webster's New World Dictionary* 231)
>
> drunken adj. 1. **intoxicated** or habitually intoxicated. (*Webster's New World Dictionary* 231)

The first definition above equates being drunk with intoxication. **Unlike hamburgers, etc., alcohol adversely affects the body upon the first drink** (impairments, etc.). Whereas being drunk includes heavy intoxication, it also includes all degrees of intoxication.

Even English definitions for "drunkenness" indicate that the word is equivalent to "intoxication." **Intoxication occurs with the first drink of alcohol and merely increases with each additional drink.**

> Those who insist that drunkenness is sinful, and at the same time that it is not a matter of degree, should answer the following pertinent questions: (1) Can a person who is drunk (drunk according to your definition of the term) become more drunk? If you answer, "No," how do you explain that which happens to a person who is obviously drunk, and upon additional consumption, loses complete motor control and, perhaps, even falls into a stupor? If you answer, "Yes," and thus admit that a person can become more drunk, how do you conclude that drunkenness is not but a matter of degree? (2) How much ethyl alcohol does it take to cause drunkenness? If you state that you do not know and, yet, agree that drunkenness is sinful, are you not making yourself liable to sin if you imbibe? (Jeffcoat 114)

Conclusion



As stated above, the words translated "wine" in the Bible are non-alcoholic or alcoholic depending on the context in which they appear. With this word, a determination of its meaning independent of the context in which it appears is self-serving rather than bona fide biblical exegesis.

One cannot practice social drinking without violating all the passages that warn against drunkenness. The very nature of **alcohol begins affecting one the moment any of it is ingested**. Greater consumption merely produces greater intoxication. **Drunkenness and intoxication are synonyms.**

Chapter 3: Medical Considerations

Social drinking (i.e., the public consumption of alcohol) is popular in modern society, despite insurmountable evidence that alcoholic beverages greatly jeopardize one's physical, economic and spiritual well-being. One's *spiritual welfare* should primarily concern Christians, though allusions to the effects of alcohol on one's physical and economic health also indict alcohol for the evil that it is. Therefore, the references in this series pertain to spiritual, physical and economic matters to more completely paint the picture of alcoholic beverages and their effect on us. Be assured that neither I nor others who speak against alcohol, especially from a biblical perspective, have the least desire of *arbitrarily* preventing anyone from having a good time. Some critics presume that for some unexplained reason that I (or others) speak against alcohol without cause. We are further charged essentially that we derive misguided gratification from forbidding indulgence in something that God purportedly recommends to mankind as a *blessing*. Let the evidence be allowed to speak for itself. Please, with as much objectivity as possible, examine the following information carefully about *medical considerations*. Our spiritual, physical and economic well-being is at stake.

Drunkenness is temporary mental retardation! ~ Curt Scarborough

Medical Hazard

Generally, the medical complications from the consumption of alcohol have been recognized from times immemorial. However, individuals have as generally excused themselves from culpability for their *social drinking* on the grounds of a distinction between *drinking in moderation* versus *drunkenness*. Of course, everyone universally pleads the former for himself, unless the latter cannot

be successfully contested. Then, personal responsibility is mitigated by relegating the inebriation to an illness. Naturally, people are not usually accountable for the diseases they may contract.

Medically, even small amounts of alcohol pose medical hazards. Truthfully, "…harm is a part of the nature of alcohol" (Van Loh, *Alcohol* Book Two 8).

> By drinking alcohol you place your health at risk. You risk damaging your brain which may result in: memory loss, confusion, disorganisation, decreased work performance, poor coordination, impaired ability to learn new things, hallucinations, fits, permanent brain damage, aggression, suspicion or paranoia, impulsiveness. You risk damaging your heart which may lead to: high blood pressure, irregular pulse, damaged heart muscle. You risk damaging your liver resulting in: impaired liver function, severe swelling and pain, inflamed liver (hepatitis), largely irreversible cirrhosis (scarring), liver cancer. You risk damaging your stomach which may result in the stomach lining becoming inflamed, bleeding and ulcers. You risk damaging your intestines which may lead to inflammation, bleeding and ulcers. You risk damaging your pancreas causing painful inflammation and bleeding. You risk damaging your muscles resulting in weakness and loss of muscle tissue. You risk damaging your nervous system leading to a loss of sensation in your hands and feet caused by damaged nerves (tingling). (Davey)

"There is no minimum (blood-alcohol concentration) which can be set at which there is no effect" (*The Journal of American Medical Association* qtd. in Tucker 56).

Intoxication

Medical information critical of alcohol consumption is widely available and as widely ignored in favor of the popularity of social drinking. "Gail Gleason Milgram, Ed.D., is a Professor and Director of the Education and Training Division at the Rutgers University Center of Alcohol Studies" (Milgram). The following information outlines the effects of even a little consumption of alcohol on the human body.

> Alcohol acts directly on the brain, and affects its ability to work. The effects of alcohol on the brain are quite complex, but alcohol is usually classified as a depressant. Judgment is the first function of the brain to be affected; the ability to think and make decisions becomes impaired. As more alcohol is consumed, the motor functions of the body are affected. …The effects of alcohol are directly related to the concentration (percentage) of alcohol in the blood; however, the effects vary among individuals and even in the same individual at different times. In the following description, the blood alcohol concentrations (BAC) are those that would probably be found in a person weighing about 150 pounds:
>
> - At a BAC of 0.03% (after about one cocktail, one glass of wine, or one bottle of beer), the drinker will feel relaxed and experience a slight feeling of exhilaration.
>
> - At 0.06% (after two cocktails, two glasses of wine, or two bottles of beer), the drinker will experience a feeling of warmth and relaxation; there will be a decrease of fine motor skills and he or she will be less concerned with minor irritations.
>
> - At 0.09% (after three cocktails, three glasses of wine, or three bottles of beer), reaction time will

be slowed, muscle control will be poor, speech will be slurred and the legs will feel wobbly.

- At 0.12% (after four cocktails, four glasses of wine, or four bottles of beer), his or her judgment will be clouded, inhibitions and self-restraint lessened, and the ability to reason and make logical decisions will be impaired.

- At 0.15% (after five cocktails, five glasses of wine, or five bottles of beer), vision will be blurred, speech unclear, walking will be unsteady, and coordination impaired.

- At 0.18% (after six cocktails, six glasses of wine, or six bottles of beer), all of the drinker's behavior will be impaired, and he or she will find it difficult to stay awake.

- At a BAC of about 0.30% alcohol in the blood (after 10 to 12 drinks), the drinker will be in a semi-stupor or deep sleep. Most people are not able to stay awake to reach a BAC higher than 0.30%.

- If the BAC reaches 0.50% the drinker is in a deep coma and in danger of death. As the alcohol level reaches 1% in the blood, the breathing center in the brain becomes paralyzed and death occurs. (Milgram.)

The brain is composed of three basic sections, which are referred to as the cerebrum, cerebellum, and medulla. The cerebrum is the seat of emotions, intelligence, and will. It is the part of the brain which effects personality and ability to act and think correctly. The cerebellum controls consciousness, while the medulla is the center which controls respiration, circulation, and other important

> processes. The effects of alcohol may be compared to dropping water on a sponge. It soaks in from the top, passing through the various sections to the innermost part. Its first effect is to numb the restraining power, the section which informs persons not to do those things which they have learned from years of spiritual, moral, and legal standards that they should not do. With the first section drugged, persons become more confident and less capable. Alcohol then soaks into the second section, which controls reaction, vision, and hearing. With the cerebellum affected, persons become sedated. Eventually, if the alcohol soaks into the third section, which controls the heart and breathing, it may prove fatal. All thinking persons therefore can see the dangers which are inherent in imbibing intoxicating beverages. (Jeffcoat 111-112)

The adverse effects of alcohol consumption described above begin to occur with the first drink. In an effort at self-preservation, the human body invokes "the vomiting reflex…when the poisons quickly reach 0.12% of the blood level" (Wesley 85). Further, the human body's intolerance for alcohol usually causes a drinker to fall asleep before he can consume a lethal dose of alcohol. **Still, people do die from alcohol poisoning. The word intoxication pertains to poison or toxin. Medically, this toxin or poison begins to affect the human body adversely with the first drink.**

Alcohol is an addictive drug! It is even more dangerous because it is socially acceptable and legally approved.
~ Jim McGuiggan

Alcohol a Drug

Dr. Sidney Cohen, a drug abuse expert, describes alcohol as "the most dangerous drug on earth." Alcohol is the most widely used drug on earth and with little restraint or appropriate

acknowledgment of the great health hazard it poses. It bears repeating, that even small amounts of alcohol pose definitive dangers and affect the human body unfavorably.

> Alcohol is a drug and a poison. Consuming it involves a risk that increases with the amount consumed—the only absolutely safe level is zero. (Davey)

> Driving accidents. Even at low blood alcohol concentrations, alcohol impairs your judgment and dulls your reflexes. If you weigh 140 pounds, just two drinks are enough to increase your chances of having a driving accident. ("Alcohol and Health: Proof Positive")

Health Benefits?

Social drinking advocates, even some Christians, will doubtless sense some degree of vindication from recent news releases touting the *healthful benefits of alcohol consumption*. Such jubilation, though, is not justified. First, medical scientists do not universally concur that there are any healthful benefits of alcohol consumption.

> Along with two studies in the British Medical Journal, 1999, refuting claims of less heart disease among drinkers, Dr. Yoshitaka Tsubono, Tohoku U. Graduate School of Medicine, Sendai, Japan, says that studies showing that moderate drinkers live longer are false—"Our results show that (if research is correctly done) the protective effect of moderate drinking is seriously exaggerated." New York 9/12/01 Reuters health (Van Loh, "Runaway" 3)

In addition, the studies behind the favorable press for alcohol consumption carry some significant *disclaimers*. Unfortunately, few people will concern themselves with the true ramifications of this information and only view it as permission to indulge more heavily in the consumption of alcohol—with the purported

blessings of the medical community. The following medical information concludes that the alcohol, even in wine, is not healthful.

The Feb. 27—March 1, 1998, "Eat Smart," *USA Weekend* magazine, pages 8-10, commends limited use of alcohol daily to promote good health. The article author, Jean Carper, cites a British researcher, Richard Doll, M.D., of Oxford University. However, these cautions and disclaimers also were prominently indicated.

> Alcohol is unlikely to reduce mortality in those under 45. In young people, drinking increases deaths from cirrhosis, injuries and violence. …**For teens and young adults: Alcohol has no health benefits, only a higher risk of death**. …If you don't drink: Don't start drinking to promote good health. (Carper Feb 27—Mar 1 8-10 emphasis added)

The following information is from a Thursday, December 11, 1997, article by Jenni Laidman, a *Times* writer (obtained from the internet) copyrighted 1998 by Michigan Live, Inc. The article addresses information gleaned from: "The study, published this week in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, tracked almost a half-million people aged 35 to 69 for nine years beginning in 1982."

> **Alcohol still isn't good for you**, local substance-abuse counselors say in the wake of a new study that shows middle-aged people who drank about one drink a day had a slightly lower death rate. (emphasis added)
>
> Dr. Douglas L. Foster, the medical director of the mental health and chemical dependency programs at Bay Medical Center, warns that the study shows benefits for only a limited group of people—the middle-aged and elderly. Left out of the study are the part of the population most likely to die from alcohol abuse—young men. "That's not the whole

> population. The people who drink tend to be across the age range," Foster said. Plus, **the benefits appear to accrue only in relation to a very small amount of alcohol**, Foster said. "But what the public's going to hear is that for everybody it's OK. What the public needs to hear is that for everybody it's not acceptable," Foster said. Damon Tempey, a clinical psychologist at Bay Area Social Intervention Services, says **alcohol is far from the only way to reduce risk of heart disease. "There are a number of other methods that don't involve alcohol.** There are a lot of ways of raising good cholesterol. You can do it with diet. You can do it with prescribed medication. I would hope this doesn't become an excuse for people to drink," Tempey said." (Laidman emphasis added)

Grape Juice

Comparison of alcohol versus grape juice shows that not only is grape juice superior to alcohol in any health benefits for the heart, grape juice does not pose the threats to human health that alcohol does. The following excerpt is from an internet article by Michelle Badash for HealthGate Data Corp., March 19, 1997.

> It is believed that the benefit of wine, beer and liquor may be due to ethanol, (also known as ethyl alcohol) which is present in all alcoholic beverages. Ethanol is known to increase levels of high density lipoproteins (HDL), the "good" cholesterol which helps carry away plaque from artery walls.
>
> But you don't need to drink alcohol to enjoy these heart benefits. Other studies being presented at the ACC meeting indicated that **purple grape juice is also a very potent shield against heart problems—and may even outweigh aspirin**, the most popular blood clotting preventive remedy. Dr.

> John Folts, of the University of Wisconsin, conducted some smaller studies, and found that **grape juice helps to reduce the "stickiness" of blood clotting cells**, called platelets. (emphasis added)
>
> In one study, funded by Welch Foods Inc., he examined consumption of grape juice to orange and grapefruit juices. **Three glasses of grape juice reduced platelet stickiness by 40%, compared to the other juices, which yielded only a 10% - 15% reduction. When grape juice was tested against red wine and aspirin, the grape juice again came out ahead: 75% reduction of platelet stickiness, compared to 45% for aspirin and red wine.** (emphasis added)
>
> Folts said that findings would probably be similar for any brand of purple grape juice, but not grape "drink," which is not 100% juice.
>
> A key element to the efficacy of grape juice may be compounds known as flavonoids, which are present in other fruits and vegetables. "I think (flavonoids) are going to be a significant part of heart disease prevention," commented Folts. (Badash)

The merits of grape juice correspond to the advertised health benefits attributed to drinking wine, stipulates a 2008 article in *AARP Magazine*. The title of the article is especially telling when one realizes that the benefits touted occur naturally in grapes without the artificial introduction of alcohol: "Fruit of the Vine: What If You Don't Drink?"

> Sipping red wine has long been linked to lower heart-disease risk, but an alcoholic drink isn't the only way to get that benefit. Purple grape juice proved just as effective at lowering total and LDL cholesterol, in animal experiments conducted at the University of Scranton in Pennsylvania. What's

> more, scientists at Universite Louis Pasteur de Strasbourg in France recently found that purple grape juice mimicks [sic] red wine's ability to stimulate nitric oxide production in arterial cells. Nitric oxide is a natural chemical that keeps blood vessels elastic. (28)

A syndicated column, *To Your Good Health*, by Dr. Paul G. Donohue stipulates the dosages of grape juice respectively for men and women to match any professed health benefits of alcohol for the heart.

> If you prefer to remain non-alcohol users, a daily 12-ounce glass of purple grape juice for men and a 9-ounce grape juice for women also does the trick. (Donohue)

Conclusion

Medical information regarding the consumption of alcohol neither reflects favorably on nor provides the least justification for social drinking. Even if alcohol were proven medically to be a boon to personal health (which is decidedly not the case at all), and if it were also true that God forbade its consumption (which he does), faithful Christians still would not engage in social drinking. The fact, however, that medically alcohol consumption can be shown to be a definite health hazard complements biblical restrictions pertaining to its use.

Chapter 4: Historical Considerations

Proponents of social drinking astoundingly defy biblical, medical and historical criticism of that for which they and their fellows long (i.e., the consumption of alcohol). *Historical Considerations* prove that non-alcoholic wine was widely used and preferred under both testamental periods in Canaan. Therefore, the evidence contained herein complements the *Biblical Considerations.* The Hebrew, Greek and English words used for "wine" refer to either alcoholic wine or non-alcoholic wine, depending on the contexts in which they occur. Contexts favorable to the use of "wine," then refer to non-alcoholic wine—grape juice; contexts unfavorable to the use of "wine," then refer to alcoholic wine. Please weigh with objectivity the following evidence.

Typically, defenders of social drinking, even some Christians, summarily dismiss historical testimony as in their favor—without carefully examining the evidence. Anyone who dares to suggest that often "wine" in the Bible refers to unfermented grape juice is accused of distorting the norm of biblical Palestine regarding the subject. In reality, these accusers are guilty of visualizing the biblical world through contemporary spectacles and impressing our norms on ancient civilizations, far removed from us in time, culturally and geographically.

O thou invisible spirit of wine, If thou hast no name to be known by, Let us call thee devil. ~ Shakespeare

Biblical Era Wine

Some reference works to which proponents of social drinking may appeal appear to substantiate the claim that every mention of "wine" in the Bible refers to an alcoholic beverage. For instance,

M'Clintock-Strong Cyclopedia of Biblical Knowledge, concerning "wine," affirms that **alcoholic** wine is meant in the Old Testament. It is suggested that the original language words translated "wine" literally refer to an intoxicating drink, and that clear references to the produce of the vine are merely figurative references to the end result of use of the product, alcoholic wine. Citations from Jewish writing from after the Babylonian captivity are noted, also in support of biblical wine being alcoholic. The conclusion drawn, over several pages during which "wine" is discussed, is that negative statements and prohibitions regarding wine and drunkenness merely refer to excesses. Otherwise, we are told, alcoholic wine was permissible, yea even a blessing from God, and something in which God's children were to rejoice.

Just when it would seem that the entry on "wine" were an unrestricted endorsement on drinking alcoholic wine (except for excesses resulting in drunkenness), the article closes with a reason for which Christians **should not** drink wine today. The alcoholic wine in biblical times derived its alcoholic content through natural fermentation, yielding a small concentration of alcohol compared to the much greater alcohol content in modern, distilled wines and other beverages. It seems, then, that the conclusion is that one cannot drink the modern alcoholic beverages without deriving the same result of excessive consumption of the less alcoholic wine in biblical times. (M'Clintock and Strong 10: 1010-1017).

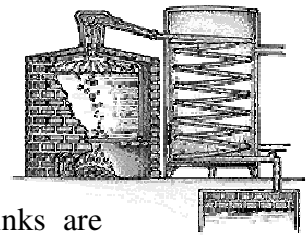
Therefore, the proponents of alcohol are defeated before they begin, because there is little similarity between even alcoholic wine in antiquity and modern wines. If it were the case, as some historians allege, that "wine" in the Bible always refers to alcoholic wine, approval of alcoholic wine that was available then would not justify the alcoholic potency of wine on our shelves today. One drink of what passes for wine now equals several drinks of alcoholic wine of antiquity. Therefore, **if it were the case**: (1) "wine" in the Bible always refers to alcoholic wine, (2) biblically, alcoholic wine was permitted *in moderation*, **then**, *a single drink of modern wine would exceed the supposed biblical moderation*.

Commercially available wine, beer and liquors would be prohibited biblically, even if the Bible and historical evidence permitted the consumption of alcoholic wine in Bible times (which

they do not). **"Natural fermentation produces 11% to 14% alcohol, whereas modern distillation produces an alcoholic content of 40% to 50%."** (Milgram) Alcoholic wine employed in biblical times was as little as 4% alcohol versus contemporary beverages possessing more than 12 times that much alcohol. That means that a quart of wine then consumed on an empty stomach would be required to cause the effect of just a little alcohol today (Jeffcoat 155).

Though M'Clintock-Strong grant that "wine" in the Bible refers to alcoholic wine through natural fermentation, they conclude that due to the greatly increased alcoholic potency of wine today, Christians cannot consume today's wine and alcoholic drinks with biblical approval. The historical record for Palestine does not concur with their observation that all "wine" was alcoholic, but their conclusion based on the modern beverage, if alcoholic wine were biblically sanctioned, is reasonable. What this means is that if the argument of **proponents of social drinking** were correct about biblically sanctioned alcoholic wine in the Bible, they would **still fail miserably to prove biblical sanction** for the consumption of contemporary alcoholic beverages.

Distillation



Obviously, modern alcoholic beverages are not the same item mentioned in the Bible, even when referring to alcoholic drinks. Contemporary alcoholic drinks are much more potent. **The distillation process whereby extra alcoholic potency is artificially applied to modern wines was not discovered until between the ninth to the eleventh centuries A.D.—long after the biblical periods closed. Alcoholic wine of the potency of modern wines was not available in biblical times!**

Further, historical evidence affirms that even the lower alcoholic content wine of biblical times was not widely available or preferred in Palestine. Summarized, historical evidence (including archaeological discoveries) verifies that both fermented and unfermented wines were known by ancient peoples. Further, unfermented wine (grape juice) was preferred and more popular.

Jeffcoat confirms through his research that preventing grape juice from fermenting in antiquity was not only possible (by any of several means), it was frequently desirable (42-46).

Grape Juice

Primarily two factors contributed to the widespread use of unfermented wine or grape juice. First, the grapes grown in Palestine, etc. are especially sweet, because of high sugar content. Due to the high sugar content, grape juice from these grapes does not ferment well *naturally*. Second, in order for fermentation to occur naturally, the temperature must range from 45 degrees to 75 degrees. However, when grapes are harvested in Palestine the temperature exceeds 75 degrees and rises to 100 degrees or more for months. Therefore, grape juice could not under those circumstances ferment *naturally*. "Scientists have discovered that fruit or vegetable juices which contain sugar, or starch which changes to sugar when exposed to the air at a temperature of from forty-five degrees to seventy-five degrees fahrenheit, practically always results in alcoholic fermentation" (Jeffcoat 18-19).

> By putting grape juice into a container at the right temperature, yeast will turn the sugar in the juice into alcohol and carbon dioxide. The grape juice will have fermented. …As yeast works, it causes grape juice ("must") to get hot. But if there's too much heat, the yeast won't work. One modern way to deal with this is to put the juice into large stainless steel containers that have refrigeration systems built around the sides. The winemaker can regulate temperature precisely. ("Turning Grape Juice Into Alcohol")

> Fermentation is possible only between about 40º and 80º F (4º and 27º Celsius). Below the former point fermentation is inoperative and above the latter point the acetous supplants the vinous process. (Bacchiocchi, "The Preservation of Grape Juice")

"If 105 degrees F., is maintained for 'from forty minutes to an hour or more, they (the yeasts) are killed; at still higher temperatures they die more quickly—in ten minutes at 140 degrees F.'" (*American Wines* qtd. in McGuiggan, *The Bible* 40).

However, the excessive heat did cause grape juice to sour quickly. "Hot weather causes it to undergo *acetous*, not fermentation! The juice sours! …It was, therefore, easier to preserve the grape juice (called wine) in its sweet, unfermented condition than it was to turn it into a fermented wine." (Wesley 45-46).

> Warm growing season cause fruit to be sweeter because heat produces more sugar. The grapes of the Bible lands were very sweet. Harvest time or vintage in September was still hot. The valleys of Eshcol and Sorek, famous for their grapes, had temperatures in the vintage months of 100 degrees. These two facts: a) the very sweet fruit with high sugar content and b) the hot temperature at harvest time, would lead the grape juice to start fermenting from bacteria. It would turn sour. …To save the grape harvest from spoiling something had to be done to preserve the juice sweet immediately. (Van Loh, *Alcohol* Book One 23-24)

Historical evidence abounds that the ancients were well aware of how to preserve grape juice from spoiling. "…Cato, (200 years before Christ), Virgil (70 years before Christ), Pliny, and Columella (first century A.D.), among others, were some of the most important writers and historians of their age. They were very well known and honored men. The methods and recipes they have written down explain step by step how to keep juice sweet for a year or more" (Van Loh, *Alcohol* Book One 37).

Besides knowledge of how to preserve grape juice from spoiling, ancient peoples also learned how to preserve fruit and vegetables whole and fresh for years. "Pliny, a Roman naturalist (about 62—113 A.D.)…reported that provisions laid up for sieges continued good for a hundred years. …Columella (first century A.D.) in his book, On Agriculture and Trees, tells how people preserved lettuce, onions, apples and other fruits" (Van Loh,

Alcohol Book One 29). One of the methods to preserve fruit historically has been to pack it in "sawdust or cotton" (McGuiggan, *The Bible* 56).

To preserve the grape juice in its unfermented state prior to it spoiling, primarily four methods of preservation were practiced. The most common remedy to the problem was to boil the grape juice, after which it would neither spoil nor ferment. If boiled for four to five hours, the liquid reduced to a syrup (or must) which was reconstituted with water when desired to drink. Another method of preservation of unfermented grape juice was allowing it to sit under 45 degrees (submerged in a cool cistern, pond or spring) for 40 days or more, during which the yeast settled to the bottom, after which the juice was taken from the top. With the yeast removed, the remaining grape juice would not sour or ferment.

Another method of preservation of the unfermented grape juice was filtration. In this process the grape juice was passed through straining material several times, during which the yeast was removed. Then the grape juice would not sour or ferment. In addition, the ancients discovered that if they added sulfur or a mixture that contained sulfur that the yeast would be neutralized so that the grape juice would neither sour nor ferment.

The least effective but possible way **to prevent grape juice from souring** in their climate was to **seal the fresh grape juice in an airtight container**. Without oxidation, the grape juice could neither sour nor ferment. Whenever the container was opened to drink some grape juice, any remaining grape juice had to be poured into a smaller container that was airtight, to prevent souring or fermentation. (Fermentation would not occur naturally in their climate as stated above, but the grape juice would sour.)

Further, the ancients are known from their writings to have preferred sweet drinks as opposed to alcoholic drinks because the hot climate in which they lived. Alcoholic drinks historically have been preferred by people native to cooler climates (Patton). He quotes from writers from the first century forward regarding the types of wines used in antiquity in what we call the Middle East. Additionally, Patton quoted from scientists regarding the circumstances under which grape juice sours, ferments or will not *naturally* ferment.

The following quotation corroborates the immediately foregoing. Samuele Bacchiocchi provides a somewhat more detailed explanation below of the primary ways in which ancient peoples preserved grape juice.

> **The Preservation of Grape Juice by Boiling, Moisture and Heat** The fermentation of grape juice can be prevented by reducing sufficiently its moisture content or by heating the juice at high temperature. The reason for this is that the growth of the yeast germs, which are the fermenting agents, slows or stops entirely when the moisture content of the grape juice is heated at 150º to 180º F. At such a temperature most of the ferments are destroyed. Both of these results are achieved by boiling the grape juice.
>
> By boiling, the water of the grape juice evaporates, yeasts and molds are destroyed, and the sugar content increases, thus inhibiting yeast growth. This method of preserving grape juice unfermented by carefully boiling it down to a syrup was commonly and successfully used in the ancient world. When desired, the syrup would be drunk diluted with water. Several sources confirm this practice.
>
> …**The Preservation of Grape Juice through Filtration, Separation of Albumen** Another method by which the fermentation of grape juice can be prevented is by separating the albumen, which is located in the lining of the skin and in the envelope of the seeds of the grape, from the other elements. The albumen, as noted earlier, contains the fermenting agents, known as ferments or yeast. By careful procedures the juice of the grapes can be separated from the fermenting pulp. The ancients understood this principle and applied it in two ways: (1) gentle pressing, (2) filtration.

Gentle Pressing. The grapes were brought in from the vineyard and placed in wine vats. The first juice that flowed before the treading began, according to Pliny, was called protropum. "The name," he explains, "was given by some people to must that flows down of its own accord before the grapes are trodden." This juice, that flowed spontaneously from the grapes, was composed almost entirely of the sugar portion of the grapes. The high sugar content of the juice, combined with its relative freedom from yeast, would make its preservation in an air tight container relatively easy.

…*Filtration*. When the fermentable pulp was pressed out together with the saccharin juice, a separation of the former was still possible by means of filtration. It is evident that the ancient means of filtration were far less sophisticated and efficient than those used by the wine industry today. Their basic method consisted of using a bag, called sacco, in which the grapes were placed. A vase was placed below the bag to receive the falling juice. Several Latin writers refer to the use of such strainers or filters in the preparation of wines.

…**The Preservation of Grape Juice Through Cold Storage** Below 40º Fahrenheit. The fermentation of grape juice can be prevented also by keeping it below 40º F (4º Celsius). Nearly all processes of fermentation cease at about 40º F. Fermentation is possible only between about 40º and 80º F (4º and 27º Celsius). Below the former point fermentation is inoperative and above the latter point the acetous supplants the vinous process. By lowering the temperature to about 40º F, the albumen settles at the bottom and the juice does not ferment.

Ancient Method. The ancients were familiar with this method of preservation. When they desired to

> preserve grape juice in its sweet, unfermented state, they would take an amphora and coat it with pitch within and without. Then they would fill it with mustum lixivium, the must that flowed before the grapes would be pressed with a heavy beam and they would seal it carefully with pitch. It was then immersed in a pool of cool water or a cistern and allowed to remain undisturbed for six weeks or two months. After this process the grape juice could remain unfermented and hence it was called semper mustum, that is, permanent must.
>
> …**The Preservation of Grape Juice Through Sulphur Fumigation**. The fermentation of grape juice can also be prevented by the fumes of sulphur dioxide. The method consists in filling the jars nearly full with fresh unfermented grape juice, then burning sulphur dioxide in the empty portion, and while the sulphur fumes are present, the jars are tightly closed. Another possibility is to pour the must into jars or bottles which have been strongly treated with sulphur fumes. The sulphur absorbs the oxygen of the air and inhibits the formation of yeast germs. Sulphur dioxide is widely used today in the wine industry to deal with some of the infection to which wine is subject. (Bacchiocchi, "The Preservation of Grape Juice")
>
> Sulfur absorbs oxygen, thus preventing fermentation long enough for the gluten to settle to the bottom. The juice is then strained or filtered in order to complete the process. Sulfur dioxide was most commonly produced in Bible times by burning candles. (Wesley 40)

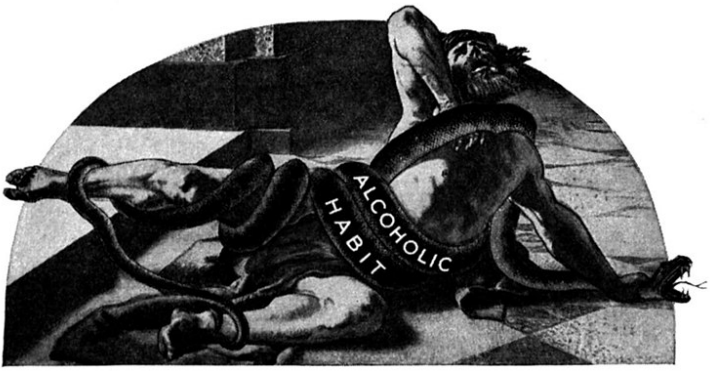
Conclusion

Summarized, both fermented and unfermented wines are referred to in the Bible. Word studies indicate that the Hebrew and

Greek words are often used interchangeably for either alcoholic or non-alcoholic wine. Contextually, then, the words can be discerned as to how they are being used, hence, approval or disapproval.

The combination of information regarding *biblical considerations, medication considerations* and *historical considerations* argues persuasively against biblical authorization for the consumption of alcoholic beverages today. Further acknowledgment of the role of alcohol in the following, tragic examples likewise resolutely testifies against its innocence: ruined lives, ravaged families, tens of thousands of fatal accidents annually, even more unnecessary injuries, greatly contributing to escalating medical costs borne by all, lost work time and economic loss to employers and families, diversion of tax money to counteract the impact of alcohol on various aspects of society and a myriad of health problems. **The most tragic effect of alcohol is its reproach on one's soul.**

I can hear someone now, again, saying, "All of those bad things you mentioned result from *alcohol abuse*, not from *social drinking*." My question is, "Why would a Christian want to drink alcohol, just knowing that it has the potential to unmercifully grasp social drinkers and convert them to the worst alcoholics or otherwise ruin their lives and the lives of others?" At best, the most persuasive *rationalization* favoring alcohol still leaves *every social drinker* liable, by his or her example, for leading other souls to destruction through alcohol.



Chapter 5: Social Drinking

Social drinking is a misnomer. It takes but little power of observation to discern that so-called social drinking often degenerates rapidly into anti-social behavior among its imbibers. However, proponents of *social drinking* christen their pet with the venerable appellation of *moderation*. They contend that alcohol ingested with moderation is socially acceptable. Further, proponents of moderate consumption of alcohol join with opponents of social drinking to condemn the proverbial drunk. Irrespective of and additional to what society will allow, for Christians, biblical information relative to alcohol outweighs all other considerations combined.

> Alcohol is the great dilemma of Western society; a love—hate relationship. Not only does the liquor industry employ thousands of people and raise millions of dollars in tax, but it is an institutionalised part of our cultural and lifestyle. Culturally, it is often expected that we will have a drink when socialising with relatives, friends, or workmates, and on special occasions. However, if you have too much to drink, or become addicted to alcohol, you are looked down upon and risk becoming a social outcast. Yet **anyone can become an alcoholic, and the very next drink could be the one that does it** (although it's unlikely that you will realise it at the time)… **Alcohol is a drug and a poison. Consuming it involves a risk that increases with the amount consumed—the only**

> **absolutely safe level is zero.** (Davey emphasis added)

Moderation

The following quotation defines the use of the word "moderation" as it pertains to various studies and articles based on those studies that attribute a health benefit to drinking alcohol. Doubtless, this "moderation" is far from descriptive of the amount of alcohol for which *social drinkers* welcome these studies. Also worthy of note is the fact that alcohol affects men and women differently, not owing only to weight considerations, but due to singular differences between the physiological make up of men and women. Consequently, not even *moderation*, but only *abstinence* from the consumption of alcohol affects both sexes alike. Biblical exhortations regarding alcohol are not gender specific, bolstering the conclusion that the Bible forbids the consumption of alcohol. Mere exhortations of *moderation* in the Bible would require two prescriptions, one each for the man and for the woman.

> The current 1995 Dietary Guidelines issued by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommend that "if you drink alcoholic beverages, you should do so in moderation." Their definition of **moderate drinking means no more than one drink a day for women and no more than two drinks a day for men**. One drink equals 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine, or 1 1/2 ounces of 80-proof liquor. You may wonder why the recommendation for women is less than for men. The reason for this is that **women have less of the enzyme that helps break down alcohol in the body, and have higher blood alcohol levels than men after drinking the same amount of alcohol**. (Robertson emphasis added)

Wine, Beer & Liquor

Social drinkers are further disappointed that the studies to which they appeal for some sort of justification for their alcoholic consumption do not favor the more popular drinks, beer and liquor.

> Overall, **people who drink moderate amounts of wine are less likely to die than abstainers and beer drinkers. (Liquor drinkers are more likely to die than both abstainers and beer drinkers.)** (Robertson emphasis added)

However, the partiality for wine over other alcoholic drinks may concern the differences between connoisseurs of wine versus beer and liquor. In which case, the genuine health benefits of alcoholic consumption are mitigated, especially in view of non-alcoholic alternatives.

> Most of the reported benefits of wine compared with other types of alcohol may have more to do with the people who drink wine than the wine itself. Wine drinkers are more likely to be nonsmokers, to drink only moderate amounts, and to be better educated. In France, people drink their wine mostly with meals, which contain plenty of vegetables and fruits. The French culture also espouses a low-stress lifestyle. In other words, **wine drinkers may have a lower risk of heart disease to begin with**. (Robertson emphasis added)

Alcohol Vs. Appetite & Diet

Drinking alcohol contributes to an unhealthy diet in many drinkers. At every turn, sufficient detrimental effects of alcohol consumption can be discerned to outweigh the purported benefits. Further, it should be emphasized that ***social drinkers*** **typically consume more than a so-called medicinal gulp of alcohol**

sanctioned by the studies. Even the so-called proof and basis of rationalization underlying *social drinking* falls far short of justifying the degree of typical alcohol consumption in America.

> If you drink alcohol regularly, you may find you have **less appetite for food**. This could leave you susceptible to certain **nutrient deficiencies**. (Robertson emphasis added)

Traffic Accidents

Social drinking as well as heavier drinking reflects itself across the spectrum of society and culture—adversely. Nothing demonstrates the tragic incorporation of alcohol consumption into our way of life more than traffic accidents attributable to alcohol.

> There is a deadly side to alcohol. **Forty percent of all traffic-related deaths (the leading cause of accidental death in the U.S.) are related to alcohol.** (Robertson emphasis added)

> There were 16,189 alcohol-related traffic deaths in 1997, or 38.6 percent of the total, the Transportation Department said Sunday. That was a decrease of about 1,000 deaths from 1996, when drunken driving was responsible for 40.9 percent of the 42,065 traffic deaths. In 1982, 57.3 percent of the 43,945 fatalities were alcohol-related. …**For the first time since record-keeping began in 1975, alcohol-related deaths were below 40 percent of all traffic fatalities.** ("Alcohol-related fatalities in 1997 below 40 percent" emphasis added)

Binge Drinking

Frequently, social drinking deviates from what social drinkers claim is their norm for alcohol consumption. As long as someone else is the *designated driver*, many social drinkers mistakenly presume that heavier

drinking on occasion is relatively harmless. Few social drinkers realize the potential of alcoholic beverages to kill them. "And **binge drinking can produce sudden cardiac arrhythmias, even in previously healthy people**" (Robertson emphasis added).

Among others, especially college students, according to a recent survey by the Harvard School of Public Health, are susceptible to binge drinking. "More than half the nation's college students who drank last year did so intending to get drunk" (Estrin). College students who drink the heaviest are members of sororities and fraternities. Binge drinking is "…defined as **five drinks in a row for men and four drinks in a row for women**" (Estrin emphasis added). **By that standard, virtually all so-called *social drinking* would fall under the classification of *binge drinking*.**

College students who imbibe beverage alcohol typically face increased "…sexual harassment, accidents and injuries, loud outbursts in dorm rooms in the middle of the night and vomit-covered bathrooms" (Estrin). Of course, sometimes the most serious effect of binge drinking is premature death. **"High-profile deaths from alcohol—like those at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Louisiana State last year — sober up their peers, but only until the next party rolls around,"** said Henry Wechsler. He headed studies in 1993 and 1997 (Estrin).

Mixing Alcohol & Other Drugs

Most people are probably somewhat aware that imbibing alcohol and prescription drugs increases the deadly potency of alcohol. However, how many social drinkers are equally concerned about mixing alcohol with non-prescription drugs? Simply because a medicine is not or is no longer federally regulated by doctors' prescriptions does not reduce its potency or its natural propensity to multiply the effect of consuming alcohol with it.

> The effects of alcohol are much greater if you are taking sedatives, sleeping pills, anticonvulsants, antidepressants, antianxiety drugs, or some pain killers. **It's best not to drink after taking any medicine, even over-the-counter types**, especially if you plan to drive. (Estrin emphasis added)

Health Risks

Not only heavy drinkers, but also moderate drinkers—*social drinkers*—risk greater frequencies of cancer attributable to alcohol. The pleasantries associated with social drinking hardly seem to compare to the heartaches, including cancer, that are often multiplied by the consumption of alcohol.

> If you drink heavily, you are far more likely to get cancer of the esophagus, mouth, pharynx, larynx, or liver. **Women who drink three to nine drinks a week are 50 percent more likely to develop breast cancer than women who drink fewer than three drinks a week.** (Estrin emphasis added)

Yet, the number of recommended drinks to enjoy a supposed health benefit from alcohol for one's heart approaches dangerous levels for other health risks.

> The wine can be red or white. Beer or 80-proof whiskey offers similar protection. **Two daily drinks for men and one for women** suffice. One drink is considered to be 5 ounces of wine, 12 ounces of beer or 1.5 ounces of 80-proof whiskey. (Donohue)

Not just heavy drinking, but social drinking is a real and a discernible threat to the unborn when their mothers drink during pregnancy. Dr. Marvin A. Block, Chairman of the Committee on Alcoholism for the American Medical Association for ten years noted that "an unborn child becomes as intoxicated as the mother" (qtd. in Cooper and Cooper 2).

> When mothers drink even moderate amounts of alcohol during pregnancy, their babies are smaller and shorter. Babies of moms who drink heavily during pregnancy often have birth defects that lower their IQ throughout their lives. **Nobody knows exactly how much alcohol is safe during pregnancy.** (Robertson emphasis added)

> Babies of drinking mothers suffer growth and development retardation, along with disfiguring abnormalities. Such babies are often considerably smaller in length and weight, and have smaller hands. They develop a characteristic appearance, which includes "fish mouth, small eyes, low nasal bridge, and hair on the forehead and face." …New discoveries are proving the **monster-making effect of alcohol on unborn children**. (Wilkerson 16 emphasis added)

The adverse effect of alcohol is greatly magnified in children who are given alcohol. For instance, French schoolchildren who once were given diluted wine with their meals developed cirrhosis of the liver. Alcohol given to young children also can cause immediate and permanent brain damage, including retardation (Jeffcoat 126-127).

Disclaimers for social drinking sometimes would be hilarious if the matter were not so **dead serious**. "Even moderate drinking is too much if you: are pregnant or are trying to get pregnant; plan to drive or **do anything that requires skill or concentration…"** (Robertson emphasis added). Imagine that! **One should not drink alcohol if he wants to "do anything that requires skill or concentration." The scope of this warning essentially covers all activities ascribed to intelligent life.** What does that say about *social drinking*?

All Drinking Is Irresponsible!

Crime

The following quotations are from an Internet article originating in Australia and which demonstrate that the problem of alcohol, even among social drinkers, is not confined to the United States. The series entitled *The Drug Data Series, Alcohol* begins with this statement: **"Alcohol consumption is a major factor in death, disease, accidents and crime"** (Davey emphasis added).

Wherever statistics are available, regarding the consumption of alcohol, the figures tell the same dreadful story.

> Alcohol is a contributing factor in many types of crime and contributes to increased crime levels—73% of assaults in Australia, 84% of incidents involving offensive behavior and 77% of all street offenses. In fact alcohol is associated with 50% of all serious crime. Murders, burglaries, suicides and rapes are examples of violent crimes where alcohol is often a factor. Alcohol contributes to increased acts of violence, for example arguments, physical violence and sexual assault. Alcohol is a contributing factor to suicides, injuries, road fatalities and accidents. Figures indicate that in 1992 30% of Australian drivers and motor cycle riders killed in road accidents had a blood alcohol level above the legal limit. A driver with a 0.05% blood alcohol content has double the risk of being involved in a road accident; at 0.1% it is seven times; and at 0.15% it is 25 times. Alcohol contributes to family problems such as wife beating, child abuse, arguments and other types of violence. 40% of divorces and separations involve alcohol related factors. (*Davey*)

Conclusion

"There is no such thing as responsible drinking. It is always irresponsible and dangerous" (Wilkerson 53). Alcohol is a key tool to the contemporary moral debauchery of humanity. Even so-called *social drinking* costs way too much. The destructive characteristics of the consumption of alcohol extend beyond the human misery for which it is often responsible to the spiritual and eternal peril in which it places the souls of mankind who engage it. Above all people, professed Christians should avoid its use. No Christian ought to be an apologist for beverage alcohol.

Chapter 6: Bias Favoring Alcohol

Legal consumption of alcohol persists despite overwhelming evidence of its detrimental effect on mankind. Alcoholic beverages continue to enjoy a favored status though they are responsible for most accidents, numerous fatalities, many health hazards, heightened crime, employee absenteeism, contributing to rising health costs, domestic violence and strife, etc. and imperiling the souls within us. **Only an unreasonable bias can account for the popularity of alcoholic beverages in defiance of a pragmatic evaluation of their detrimental characteristics.**

Misguided Popularity

Unlike smoking, no one wants to tackle the problems alcohol presents to our society because too many people like drinking and are prepared to pay any price to keep on doing so. It's the "Ostrich Syndrome"; the ignorance is bliss mentality. Disagree? In 1986 Australia had 101 homicides which were committed using firearms (32% of the total number of homicides). That year there was a total of 678 firearm related deaths (homicide, suicide and accidents), of these 15% were homicides (suicide was the primary reason for firearm related deaths). In 1996, following a particularly bad incident, the Australian government with strong public support severely restricted private gun ownership. After all, owning a firearm isn't a necessity of life and if we can save just one life isn't restricted firearm ownership justified? In fact it would seem that this action could save in excess of 678 lives a year! According to

Commonwealth figures, in 1992 there were 6,600 deaths in Australia due to alcohol. If the government is prepared to take strong measures over firearms to potentially save over 678 lives a year, why won't it do the same to save over 6,600 lives a year? After all, alcohol isn't a necessity (in fact it's a poison). The answer is simple. Private firearm ownership is not popular, but **drinking alcohol is very popular. So popular, in fact, that many people don't care what misery or suffering is endured by society and families, nor how many people die from alcohol induced liver disease, traffic accidents, cancer, etc., as long as they can drink.** (Davey emphasis added)

Statistically speaking, the U.S. Department of Health reports that **alcohol-related deaths total 100,000 annually from all causes**, including traffic accidents, liver disease, related violence, falls, etc. They put marijuana and other illegal drug-related fatalities at under 10,000 a year. Tobacco, by the way, is responsible for 450,000 deaths a year, according to the same agency. ("Alcohol vs. Marijuana: Which is safer?" emphasis added)

The direct material and medical cost of Alcoholic Beverage Abuse (AB Abuse) in the U.S. alone is estimated to be over 20 billion dollars per year. Absenteeism in the U.S. government due to AB abuse is estimated to be in excess of half a billion dollars per year. **The inestimable social cost is expressed in the suffering, despair, and behavioral aberrations of alcohol-abusers, their families, and their community.** Dr. Sidney Cohen, a drug abuse expert, described alcohol as "the most dangerous drug on earth." (Cohen emphasis added)

Moderation Unreliable

One of the most serious ramifications of drinking alcohol, even among so-called social drinkers, is irreparable damage to one's liver. "Alcohol has been shown to be directly toxic to the liver" ("Alcoholism and Co-occurring Disorders"). Young people as well as older, life-long drinkers can develop cirrhosis of the liver. Further, one does not have to be a heavy drinker to fall victim to health problems brought on by alcohol. Three to four drinks daily are sufficient to imperil one's health permanently.

> Heavy and chronic drinking cause the liver to become fatty and this fat infiltration chokes off the supply of blood that delivers oxygen and other nutrients to liver cells causing them to eventually die. They are replaced with connective or scar tissue and this is called cirrhosis. This results in a drinker's reduced ability to tolerate the drug because there are progressively fewer liver cells to metabolize it. Genetic make-up plays a big role in one's susceptibility to this condition. **Some alcohol users develop symptoms of cirrhosis after just a few years of consuming 3-4** drinks a day, while other heavy drinkers never suffer from this potential killer.
>
> **The liver performs so many vital functions that we cannot live without it.** It is the largest single organ in the body and it handles the majority of the blood that flows from the intestinal tract back to the heart; stores glygogen, the body's storage form of sugar for energy; and breaks down toxic compounds that occur with the body's metabolism. It is very important to "take care of your liver!" Warning signs of cirrhosis include jaundice (yellowing of the skin and whites of the eyes) and the back-up of fluid in the abdomen and lower extremities. At university health services, **physicians have seen cirrhosis in men as young as 19-20** who started drinking

> heavily in their early teens. ("Alcohol and Liver Damage" emphasis added)

Sobriety Techniques Ineffective

Associated with irrational bias approving beverage alcohol, misinformation is commonly touted respecting remedies designed to mitigate the intoxicating effect of alcohol. The notion is that if one drinks too much a simple solution can restore him quickly to a state of sobriety. Under this guise, people mistakenly imagine that alcohol is thereby relatively harmless—as long as they can effectively compensate for its intoxicating effect. "Once alcohol enters the blood stream, contrary to a wide impression, nothing can be done about its effects except to wait until it is metabolized by the body" (Jeffcoat 108).

> **There is only one way to sober up: wait for your body to breakdown and eliminate the alcohol.** It may take an hour or more for your body to breakdown the alcohol in a standard drink (a drink containing 10 grams of alcohol). The following methods do **not** reduce the amount of alcohol in your blood at all: drinking coffee, chewing gum, taking a cold shower, exercising, using a breath freshener, vomiting. (Davey emphasis added)

Co-carcinogen

Among the several dangers attributable to alcohol is an increased likelihood of spreading cancer throughout one's body.

> Researchers in the U.S. and Israel say that **tumors are likely to spread after a night of excessive drinking**. Their findings may explain why heavy drinkers suffer more than twice the usual rate of breast, liver and digestive system cancers. ("Study: Excessive Drinking" emphasis added)

Liquor [alcohol] has many defenders, but no defense. ~ Abraham Lincoln

Excessive drinking need not be a daily event to incur this health risk. Many drinkers occasionally drink excessively even if they do not drink excessively with any regularity. The biggest concern for these people, in their minds, is the selection of a *designated driver*. The drinking public needs to be fully apprised of all the hazards associated with consumption of alcohol. Doubtless few have considered or even heard of this characteristic of alcohol.

Besides the jeopardy in which drinking alcohol places the drinker, the potency of alcohol to harm one's body is magnified when combined with other substances that themselves also pose health woes. This circumstance is not limited to the cooperation between alcohol and prescription, over-the-counter and illicit drugs.

> Speaking at the *Wine & Health Symposium* in Reno, Susan Ebeler said as for existing health officials' view of alcohol, wine and cancer, "it has not been clearly established that ethanol by itself is carcinogenic, but that there is strong evidence that alcohol is a co-carcinogen that can increase the carcinogenicity of other compounds. For example, the effect of alcohol intake on absolute risk for cancer is significantly increased in smokers compared to nonsmokers." ("Study: Excessive Drinking")

I have better use for my brain than to poison it with alcohol. To put alcohol in the human brain is like putting sand in the bearing of an engine. ~ Thomas Edison

Conclusion

Whenever an issue is personalized, rationalization often soon follows. Frequently subjectivity overrides one's objectivity commensurate with his degree of emotional investment. Consequently, mankind demonstrates how adept he is at justifying all types of hideous or outrageous and sometimes criminal behavior. Even religious people have shown themselves capable of excusing the basest immoralities, including adultery and murder. It is little surprise, then, that something as potentially devastating on so many fronts as alcohol is routinely defended—sometimes even by some who profess to be Christians; faithful Christians are disciplined and obedient followers of Christ.

It is neither accident nor coincidence that popular bias favoring the consumption of alcohol continues to rise. Beyond the human propensity to press to his bosom the fruition of hurtful lusts (James 1:14-15; 1 John 2:15-17), the liquor industry is not leaving its future to the mere chance and unpredictable whim of successive generations of potential customers. To stave off social criticism for the horrible affects of alcohol and possible government regulation of the liquor industry, as well as to slyly prospect for tomorrow's customers among today's children, the liquor industry has re-invented itself with a social conscience.

"They decided to set up organizations, really alcohol front groups, that would appear to be socially responsible and public health friendly. …The alcohol industry named their Alcohol Front Groups 'social aspects organizations,' or SAO's" (Van Loh, "Runaway" 1). For instance, the alcohol industry funds purportedly preventative classes in *responsible drinking* for **primary schools**. "Learning responsible drinking in school makes alcohol a part of the curriculum like math. …'education' becomes part of a sales pitch for alcohol" (Van Loh, "Runaway" 2). In cooperation with social organizations like MADD, the alcohol industry promotes programs like *Designated Driver* as an alternative to measures like higher taxes on or fewer outlets for alcohol sales that might actually reduce alcoholic consumption.

The alcohol industry funds *studies* favorable to itself, lobbies governmental bodies heavily accompanied by hefty financial contributions and funds police department programs with the self-

conflicting mission of educating young people about drinking responsibly. In league with the devil takes on a completely new perspective when society (and even Christians) help promote the *devil's brew*.

The façade of the liquor industry funding warnings about alcohol abuse makes about as much sense of the apparent self-conflicting efforts of the tobacco industry to warn the public about the dangers of its products. There is a method in their madness, and it has all to do with enhancing shareholder value in the respective companies that make up either the alcohol or the tobacco industries.

Don't be hoodwinked! The alcohol industry is not interested in succeeding in its announced mission to teach the public to drink moderately rather than to abuse alcohol. "Moderate drinking does not bring in big bucks. …In the US, hazardous drinking or more than 5 drinks a day, accounts for over half the money coming in to liquor dealers and 76% of beer companies income" (Van Loh, "Runaway" 2). Rather than diminishing itself, the alcohol industry experiences a very healthy growth with a very unhealthy product. "If they ever name a national drink, odds are it'll be beer. Consider: In 1980, there were 48 breweries in America. Today, there are 1,500" ("Pouring It On" 23).

Chapter 7: Under the Influence

Driving under the influence of alcohol (DUI) and boating under the influence of alcohol (BUI) are monumental problems in our society today. Every day in nearly every local newspaper (largely excepting only papers in those few communities whose laws prohibit alcohol sales) one can find lists of citations issued for DUI. Frequently, automobile accidents are attributable to DUI and the more spectacular the crash, the higher likelihood that alcohol was a factor. "…[I]n 1992, alcohol-related accidents resulted in approximately 20,000 fatalities" (Brick). Boating while intoxicated is quickly being recognized as a serious epidemic, too—contributing its own share of accidents. BUI has an added risk over DUI of drowning. While alcohol consumption may not always technically and legally qualify as DUI or BUI, even a little alcohol greatly increases one's probability of being involved in a serious accident.

> Alcohol impairs the ability to attend and respond to complex stimuli at very low BACs (e.g., .02%—.03%). It is believed that such laboratory findings translate well to real-world driving situations where it is necessary to pay attention to many different events, such as road and traffic conditions, speed, traffic control devices, lane position, pedestrians, other vehicles, roadway signs, etc., often in a nearly simultaneous fashion. (Brick)

> A BAC as low as 0.02 percent has been shown to affect driving ability and crash likelihood. The probability of a crash rises significantly after 0.05 percent and even more rapidly after about 0.08 percent. (Brick)

"Now, according to the American Medical Association. '*There is no minimum BAC which can be set at which there will be absolutely no effect*'" (Cooper and Cooper 7).

Rationalization regarding the merits or demerits of one kind of alcoholic beverage versus another and their relationship to DUI are baseless. "Although beer is reported as the most commonly consumed beverage prior to the crash, **the type of beverage alcohol bears no relationship to driving impairment**." (Brick)

> Although some persons feel that beer is a relatively harmless beverage, it is a well known fact that persons who drink beer compose a large percentage of alcoholics in various hospitals and clinics. It is equally true that all alcoholic beverages have primarily the same effects on the human body, with the only important difference being the amount of alcohol they contain. Any two beverages containing the same quantity of alcohol will produce virtually the same effect. (Jeffcoat 22)

Blackouts

Not only driving and boating are adversely affected by the consumption of alcohol. Every facet of one's life is potentially a casualty to drinking alcohol. Contrary to popular thought, even small amounts of alcohol imbibed by otherwise healthy people can have far-reaching and devastating effects. One's drinking can hurt others as well as himself. Unfortunately, the harm that occurs as a result of drinking alcohol cannot always be undone.

> Blackouts, defined as periods of amnesia (memory loss), are caused when alcohol consumption levels prevent the formation of memories in the brain. These levels vary from person to person, and the time frame of these memory lapses is not always marked by visible altered states of consciousness.
>
> For example, you and your friends could go to a bar tonight, have some drinks, and discuss the current state of the world in an intelligent and "normal"

manner. But, tomorrow when your friends recall in detail the previous evening's discourse, you may not recall the actual conversation even though you were a full and competent participant. This point is important because blackouts are often confused with passing out, which does constitute a change in consciousness.

Blackouts are common among alcohol abusers, and can be a warning sign to drinkers and their friends that alcohol-related problems exist. For problem and healthy drinkers alike, blackouts are often troubling or traumatic when serious and typically unforgettable occurrences are impossible to remember.

I don't recall slapping her! You're kidding, I took **[censored] [censored] [censored]* my pants off and danced on the bar? Did I *[censored] [censored]* have sex with that guy last night… was he *[censored] [censored] [censored]* wearing a condom? It can be pretty sobering to realize that, in the end, we are responsible for our actions, whether we remember them or not. It's also a shame when we forget, for life, really pleasurable things like a party, meeting new people, or intimate moments of sexual pleasure. ("Alcohol Use and Memory Loss") **[The above paragraph is censored respecting the sensitivities of a wide range of perspective readers of this book.]*

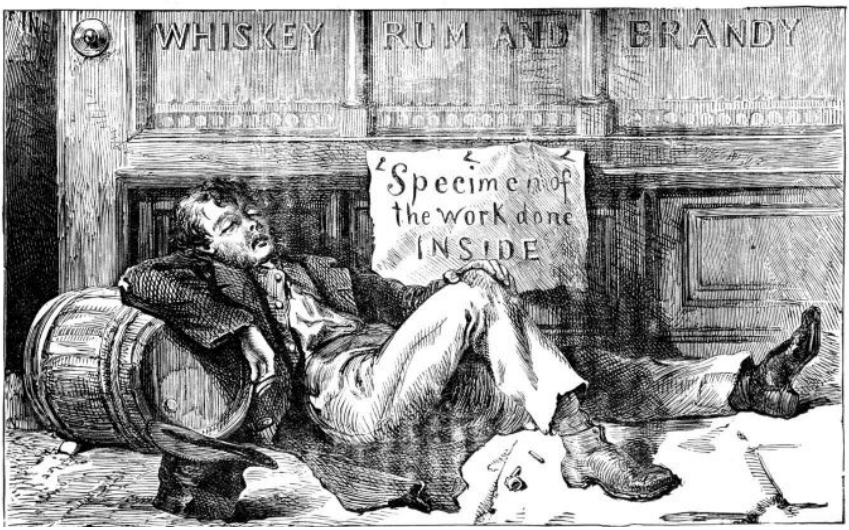
Conclusion

The influence of alcohol clouds otherwise good judgment. Not only is the drinker's life often affected adversely, but the people that love him or otherwise depend on him are directly harmed, too. Families are shattered by alcohol induced domestic violence and fiscal irresponsibility. Employers are short-changed by the employee whose drinking overshadows his performance on the

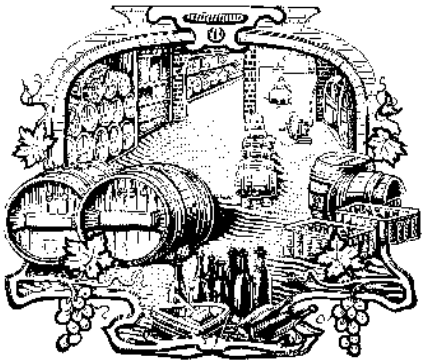
job. Society is robbed by drinkers whose demon in a bottle (or can) contributes to rising health care costs, escalating crime, unnecessary traffic casualties and the expansion of welfare rolls that serve as a safety net for impoverished families.

Imagine going throughout one's life perpetually *under the influence*. Does anyone really want his surgeon, bus driver or airline pilot to be under the influence of alcohol? **The husband, wife, father, mother or children under the influence of alcohol are a sad tragedy looking for a place to happen.**

Would you feel safer if your pilot had a few drinks before takeoff, or if your surgeon had two or three cocktails before entering the operating room? ~ M.H. Tucker



Chapter 8: Fermentation Versus Distillation



Fermentation is a process through which alcohol is generated. However, "[i]f natural processes are left alone, alcohol will not be produced in any form. …If grapes are left alone on the vine they will never produce alcohol" (Wesley 29-30).

> There is a waxy layer called the bloom on the outer skin of the berry. Yeast is trapped in this bloom. The yeast cannot come in contact with the sugary juices inside the berry until the outer skin is broken. Fermentation cannot take place until the yeast comes in contact with these juices. Therefore, the grape cannot ferment on the vine! Without fermentation, there can be no alcohol. (Wesley 42)

> The manufacture of alcohol is wholly man's device. …Rotten fruits of all kinds are rejected as innutritious and unwholesome. So also are decaying meats. It is a strange perversion of all science, as well as of common sense, to rank among the good creatures of God alcohol, which is found in no living plant, but which is to be found only after the death of the fruit, and is **the product of decomposition**. (Wilkerson 22-23 emphasis added)

"…[T]he impression is widespread that alcoholic wine virtually makes itself and nothing could be further from the truth" (McGuiggan, *The Bible* 38).

Fermentation of grape juice into an alcoholic beverage requires the right conditions, which if not present, the liquid will prove unsuitable as a beverage. "The process of fermentation occurs only in the presence of certain conditions such as a moderate temperature, moisture and air in the grape juice" (Bacchiocchi, "The Preservation of Grape Juice"). *Distillation* is an artificial manufacturing process whereby a greater concentration of alcohol than possible through fermentation is produced. Fermentation occurs when:

> The grapes are lightly pressed to release their juice, which is then transferred to the fermentation vats. As the juice converts to a solution of alcohol and water, carbon dioxide is released and, in the case of red wine, tannin and color are absorbed from the grape skins by the fermenting juice. Fermentation continues until all sugar in the juice has been converted to alcohol. ("Wine," *Encarta*)

> Alcohol is produced during a natural process called *fermentation*, which occurs when yeast, a microscopic plant that floats freely in the air, reacts with the sugar in fruit or vegetable juice, creating alcohol and releasing carbon dioxide. The process stops naturally when about 11% to 14% of the juice is alcohol; the product of this fermentation is wine. A similar process is used to make beer. *Distillation* is the process used to make beverages with a higher alcohol content. In this process the fermented liquid is heated until it vaporizes, and then the vapor is cooled until it condenses into a liquid again. Distilled alcoholic beverages (e.g., whiskey, gin, vodka, and rum) contain 40% to 50% alcohol. They are sometimes referred to as "spirits" or "hard liquor." (Milgram)

> The distillation of liquor increases alcohol content. …Whiskey, rum, brandy, and gin are so made, and usually carry an alcohol content of 47 to 54 percent.

> …According to a noted English chemist, John George Noel Gaskin, "Rums may contain from 43 percent to 79 percent by volume of ethyl alcohol…" (Jeffcoat 22-23)

Brandy may be up to 70% alcohol or 140 proof (Harrington).

Distillation

Irrespective of whether alcohol is under consideration, as it is in this series, *distillation* is the "…process of heating a liquid until some of its ingredients pass into the vapor phase, and then cooling the vapor to recover it in liquid form by condensation" ("Distillation," *Encarta*).

> Although Mother Nature can be credited as the inspiration for distillation, adventurous alchemists developed the process. Interested in understanding the composition of matter (and in finding out how to turn it into gold), they boiled it to see what would happen. Once they learned how to capture steam, they had discovered distillation. (Harrington)

The *theory of distillation* was verbalized by a French chemist in the 1800's.

> In the simplest mixture of two mutually soluble liquids with similar chemical structures, the readiness to vaporize of each is undisturbed by the presence of the other. The boiling point of a 50-50 mixture, for example, would be halfway between the boiling points of the pure substances, and the degree of separation produced by a single distillation would depend only on each substance's readiness to vaporize at this temperature. This simple law was first stated by 19th-century French chemist François Marie Raoult. ("Distillation," *Encarta*)

> Distilled alcoholic beverages are possible due to the different boiling points of the two primary ingredients in the original mixture i.e. water and

> ethyl alcohol. Water boils at a temperature of 100 C (212 F), while ethyl alcohol will boil at only 78.3 C (173 F). This differential makes it possible to boil out the alcohol from a beverage such as wine, mead, or beer while leaving the water and other substances behind. This is done by heating the liquid to a temperature above 78.3 C, but below 100 C. The alcohol, on boiling, is captured and recondensed into a liquid of considerably higher alcoholic concentrations. ("Brandy and Whiskey")

> Distillation separates substances based on their volatility. Two substances, such as water and ethyl alcohol, can only be separated if their boiling points differ by at least 1 degree Celsius. If their boiling points are too similar then the vaporized molecules will remain attached as they rise. (Harrington)

"The simplest still is a pressurized system containing a heat source, a tank to hold liquids, a hood or gooseneck tube to collect vapors, and a condenser, or container, where the vapor is turned into liquid" (Harrington). Distillation, though, appears hundreds of years earlier in the historical records of various geographical localities.

> Distilled beverages may date as far back as 800 BC in China with a distillate of Sake. In Europe, distillation was known by at least the eleventh or twelfth century. The Norman English found distillation from grain firmly established in the form of a drink called uisge beatha when they invaded Ireland in the twelfth century. ("Brandy and Whiskey")

Referring to an article in *Encyclopaedia Brittannica* in its article on "Alcoholic Beverages," one source chronicles the historical development of distillation. The year 800 B.C. is ascribed to the following substances to which the process of distillation was applied: rice and millet in China; rice, molasses and palm sap in Ceylon and India; mare's milk in Tatars and Caucasus; and rice in

Japan. Honey was distilled in A.D. 500 in Britain. **Not until A.D. 1000 is distillation noted regarding grapes, and that was in Italy.** Grapes were later used in distillation in Spain in A.D. 1200 and in France in A.D. 1300. The distillation process was also applied to oats in Ireland in A.D. 1100 and to barley in Scotland in A.D. 1500 ("Brandy and Whiskey").

Alcohol Use Is Abuse!

Fermentation

Before the advent of widespread *distillation*, alcoholic beverages were the product of *fermentation*. Even so, widespread distribution and commercialization of alcoholic wine did not occur until popularized by the Greek civilization. Likewise, the Roman Empire fostered the growth of that industry by planting vineyards in Europe and North Africa.

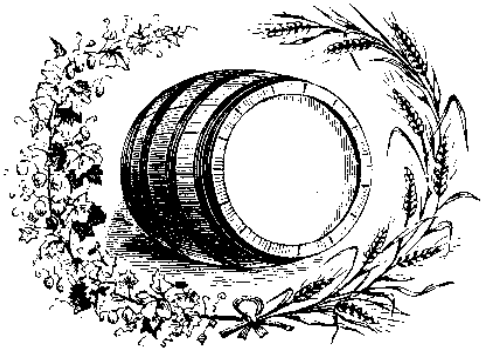
> Wine production dates from at least the earliest known history. Perhaps the earliest vineyards were cultivated between 6000 and 4000 BC, and wine was known by 3000 BC in Mesopotamia. The ancient Egyptians produced wine, but the ancient Greeks first developed viticulture, or the cultivation of grapes, on a commercial scale. ("Wine," *Encarta*)

Distillation is one method to preserve the grape from souring. As addressed elsewhere in this series, grape juice also can be preserved in a number of ways from souring before it ferments. In Palestine, especially before the introduction of *distillation* there, it was common to take measures to preserve the grape juice before it fermented. "It is easier and takes less effort to keep grape-juice from becoming alcoholic wine than it is to make it into alcoholic wine!" (McGuiggan, "1"). Distillation, as cited below, is merely one way of preventing spoilage of grape juice.

> Ethyl alcohol (the substance that makes you drunk) and carbon dioxide are produced during a chemical

> reaction called fermentation, which occurs when water, heat, sugar, and yeast are present. All fermentations—beer, cider, wine, and hard liquors—contain ethyl alcohol. The only difference is that hard liquor has been distilled to remove water, sugar, or other diluents. Hard liquor therefore has a higher percentage of alcohol per volume. In beer and wine, trace elements of yeast and other organisms can sour the liquid. In the case of distilled spirits, however, once the liquor is bottled, it will not change over time. As a result of distillation, all living things—such as yeast and bacteria—have been removed, so liquor will not sour. (Harrington)

Conclusion



"…[T]he much more potent fortified wines and distilled spirits of the twentieth century were unknown until relatively modern times" (Jeffcoat 27). Due to the late date of the development of the process of distillation, alcoholic drinks known in biblical times were apparently moderately composed of alcohol by contemporary standards. Alcoholic content of such drinks anciently was limited to the amount of alcohol produced through the natural process of fermentation. **Even were one to grant that the Bible does not prohibit the ingestion of alcohol and only condemns drinking to excess or drunkenness, appeal cannot be made to the Bible for permission to drink the more potent variety of alcoholic beverages commonly available today.** To drink today's alcoholic beverages, fortified with alcohol through distillation, clearly violates divine injunctions against alcohol, despite claims by some for divine tolerance toward alcohol.

Chapter 9: Intoxication

Proponents of social drinking often claim that alcohol in moderation is harmless. Even Christians sometimes claim that the Bible condemns *drunkenness*—not drinking alcohol.

> The moderation argument **assumes** the use of alcoholic beverages has God's approval. We can't moderately "fornicate," or "steal." what if the use of these beverages is evil—without God's approval—? The question of "moderation" becomes irrelevant. **Remember the assumption in this argument.** (McQuiggan, *The Bible* 22)

Other Christians who recognize that Scripture prohibits the consumption of alcohol sometimes characterize even a single drink of alcohol as being "one drink drunk!" Of course, proponents of alcohol scoff at such a summary statement regarding even meager amounts of beverage alcohol. However, just how much alcohol must one drink before intoxication occurs? How does intoxication occur?

Intoxication Defined

> When someone drinks an alcoholic beverage it flows into the stomach. While it is in the stomach, the drinker does not feel the effects of the alcohol, but alcohol does not remain in the stomach very long. Some of it is absorbed through the stomach walls into the bloodstream, but most alcohol passes into the small intestine and then into the bloodstream, and this circulates throughout the body. Once alcohol is in the bloodstream it reaches

> the brain and the drinker begins to feel its effects. (Milgram)
>
> Alcohol, considered a toxin by the neurologist, is absorbed directly into the bloodstream quite rapidly. Since the brain requires large amounts of blood, it is the first organ seriously affected. …Actually, getting drunk is simply the suffocating of the body cells. This produces an intoxicating effect due to the brain cells not having an adequate supply of oxygen. (Wesley 84)

"…[A]lcohol is detectable in the brain within a half a minute after being swallowed. …that alcoholic beverages undermine the power of judgment—and quickly" (McGuiggan, *The Bible* 23).

Irrespective of the variables between persons who consume alcohol, the process that results in intoxication is the same for everyone. Irrespective of the amount of alcohol one drinks, the body processes alcohol in the same way. However, the discernible *affect* of alcohol can be mitigated by a number of factors, including the size and weight of a drinker, how rapidly one drinks and whether there is food in the stomach.

Regaining Sobriety

Whether one appears intoxicated or how long it takes for an obviously intoxicated person to regain his sobriety depends on how much alcohol one drinks and the body's ability to rid itself of the alcohol.

> The body disposes of alcohol in two ways: elimination and oxidation. Only about 10% of the alcohol in the body leaves by elimination from the lungs and kidneys. About 90% of the alcohol leaves by oxidation. The liver plays a major role in the body's oxidation of alcohol. …The liver can oxidize only a certain amount of alcohol each minute; the oxidation rate of alcohol in a person weighing 150 pounds, for example, is about 7 grams of alcohol per hour. This is equivalent to about 3\4 of an ounce

> of distilled spirits, 2 1\2 ounces of wine, or 7 3\4 to 8 ounces of beer per hour. **If a person drank no more than 3\4 of an ounce of whiskey or half a bottle of beer every hour, the alcohol would never accumulate in the body, the person would feel little of the effects of the alcohol, and would not become intoxicated.** (Milgram emphasis added)

For instance, most drinkers **do not** nurse a single beer for two hours to avoid intoxication. Further, the vast majority of drinkers, besides any avowed appreciation for its *taste*, drink alcoholic beverages to experience a calculated effect—ranging from relaxation to purposeful drunkenness. For that effect to occur, the drinker must embrace some degree of intoxication. It matters not to the child of God who subscribes to divine injunctions that the degree of intoxication in many instances may be *legally permissible*.

Inflaming wine, pernicious to mankind, Unnerves the limbs, and dulls the noble mind. ~ Homer's *Iliad*

Effect

The effect of alcohol on the human body is a matter of degrees, depending on the amount of alcohol consumed. No alcoholic beverages when consumed affect such marginal reactions as to avoid adversely interacting with the body. An article in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, quoted in Jeffcoat's book, *The Bible and "Social" Drinking*, acknowledges that the least trace of alcohol evidences a degree of intoxication.

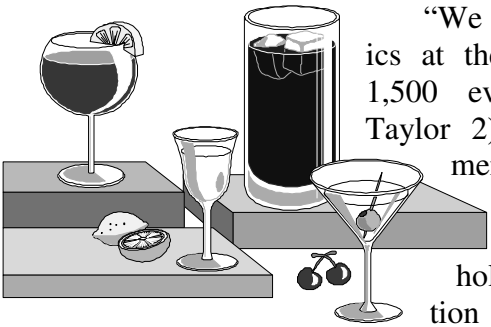
> Blood alcohol of 1/10 of one percent can be accepted as prima facie evidence of alcohol intoxication recognizing that many individuals are under the influence in the 5/100 of one percent range. …**There is no minimum (blood-alcohol concentration) which can be set at which there will be absolutely** no effect. (Minutes of the 1960

> annual meeting of the American Medical Association, and "Are You Fit to Drive?", *Journal of the American Medical Association* qtd. in Jeffcoat 111 **emphasis mine**)
>
> This statement simply means that imbibers are drunk to the extent of the amount they consume. **There is no minimum amount of alcohol in the body fluids which can be accepted as indicating absolutely no impairment by alcohol.** (Jeffcoat 111 emphasis added)
>
> Alcohol acts directly on the brain, and affects its ability to work. The effects of alcohol on the brain are quite complex, but alcohol is usually classified as a depressant. Judgment is the first function of the brain to be affected; the ability to think and make decisions becomes impaired. As more alcohol is consumed, the motor functions of the body are affected. (Milgram)

Conclusion

Intoxication begins with the first drink of alcohol. Intoxication is the effect of alcohol on the body. Alcohol begins to affect the body shortly after being ingested. "Alcohol is different from foods or other drugs in that it does not require digestion before absorption" (Alls 26). Otherwise, successive drinks of alcohol simply produce additional degrees of intoxication. Really, the words **"intoxication" and "drunkenness" are synonyms**. One drink drunk is a valid description of intoxication from both medical and biblical perspectives.

Chapter 10: Alcoholism



"We are now producing alcoholics at the staggering rate of about 1,500 every day…" (Elkins and Taylor 2). Alcoholism affects both men and women, though women who drink are more susceptible to alcoholism than the male population that drinks. "The process of becoming an alcoholic is of shorter duration" for women (Gomberg). **Alcoholism can begin as a subtle shift from social drinking to a dependence on alcohol.** Often the alcoholic is unaware of his dependency or later when rationally one could not refute his alcoholism he adamantly denies the obvious. Alcoholism may also go unnoticed by one's friends at first. Some elderly alcoholics have successfully masked their addictions until their later years, at which time the effects of alcoholism may be confused with the onset of old age.

Warning Signs

Alcohol affects various individuals differently. One cannot know when he begins to practice social drinking that his body is especially susceptible to addiction to alcohol. **The best way to avoid alcoholism is not to start drinking alcoholic beverages.** Warning signs of alcoholism include the following.

> Frequent and constant use of **any type of alcohol** can lead to physical dependence and tolerance to the alcohol. Alcoholism develops in stages, beginning with a **preoccupation with drinking**, and advancing to complete physical dependence. Warning signs of problem drinking

> include: gulping drinks, **drinking to modify uncomfortable feelings**, personality or behavioral changes after drinking, getting drunk frequently, experiencing blackouts—not being able to remember what happened while drinking, frequent accidents or illness as a result of drinking, priming—prepping with alcohol before going to a social event where alcohol is going to be served, **not wanting to talk about the negative consequences of drinking, preoccupation with alcohol**, **focusing all social situations around alcohol**, sneaking drinks or clandestine drinking. ("Alcohol Habit Forming?")

Conclusion

Several indicators of alcoholism in the above quotation appear to characterize the general drinking public. Our society seems to have a "preoccupation with drinking." Drinking is often engaged for the effect, including "to modify uncomfortable feelings." Nobody wants to address the grossly negative effects and tragedies attributable to the consumption of alcohol. Most social functions are attended with so-called social drinking. No wonder drinkers have difficulty evaluating themselves for alcoholism. No wonder one's friends and coworkers are slow to realize that some of their fellows may be alcoholics. No wonder alcoholism and other ill fruits of the legal consumption of alcohol ravage America. No wonder!

Chapter 11: Alcohol in One's Diet

Often unrecognized, alcohol consumption has serious ramifications on the dietary intake. "One ounce of pure **alcohol** contains about 163 calories (or about 105 calories in a 1 1\2 ounce glass of whiskey or gin), but it **does not contain vitamins or other physically beneficial nutrients"** (Milgram).

The small amount of nutritive material in beer is more than offset by the alcohol content. Enough beer to furnish any significant amount of nutriment would contain enough alcohol to cause considerable damage to the body. (Jeffcoat 94-95)

> The United States Department of Agriculture says that 100 grams of "table wine" (12.2 percent alcohol by volume) has 85 calories while 100 grams of "dessert wine" (18.8 percent alcohol by volume) has 135 calories. (*Physiologic Notes On Wine*)

Not only does alcohol not contribute to a healthy diet, the substitution of alcohol for any portion of one's ordinary food intake creates a substantial health risk.

Alcohol Induced Malnutrition

> AB's **[alcoholic beverages] contribute to malnutrition by replacing foods needed for essential nutrients and by interfering with absorption, storage or metabolism of the essential nutrients.** Ethanol may suppress appetite and consumption of food. (Cohen emphasis added)

These risks include **rapid water loss, electrolyte depletion, vitamin deficiency and toxicity to digestive organs**.

> There is rapid water loss (diuresis) within the first several hours of AB [alcoholic beverage] ingestion due to decreased secretion of antidiuretic hormone, a pituitary peptide. …Depletion of tissue magnesium (the serum magnesium level may not be reduced). Replacement of magnesium deficits is a recognized part of treatment of post-intoxication states. Hypocalcemia may also result from magnesium depletion by reducing parathyroid hormone-induced mobilization of calcium from bone. Reduced serum phosphate may lead to muscle weakness and degeneration.
>
> …Folate deficiency occurs in the majority of binge-drinking alcoholics and is a common cause of anemia. Inadequate dietary intake, intestinal malabsorption, and impaired folate storage in the liver all contribute to folate deficiency. Alcohol ingestion also interferes with vitamin B^{12} absorption. Deficiencies of the two vitamins cause large-cell (megaloblastic) anemia.
>
> Thiamine deficiency may occur in long-term alcohol users as a consequence of both inadequate ingestion and malabsorption of the vitamin. With severe deficiency, major brain disturbance or alcoholic psychosis emerges (Wernicke-Korsakoff syndrome). The brain dysfunction is global, with disordered thinking, feeling, remembering, and disturbed motor coordination. Thiamine replacement corrects the grosser dysfunctions of the brain and it has been proposed that alcoholic beverages be fortified with thiamine as a means of preventing this syndrome. Pyridoxine: (B^6) metabolism is disturbed by the process of alcohol oxidation, contributing to anemia.

> Pellagra, or niacin deficiency, is common in chronic alcoholics. Pellagra is recognized by the three D's: Diarrhea, Dermatitis, and Dementia. Vitamin A storage is commonly decreased in alcohol-induced liver disease. With AB, protein-calorie malnutrition often occurs. Liver disease may lead to low blood protein and decreased serum levels of branched-chain amino acids. Micronutrients: Trace element metabolism may be disordered with regular AB input. Alcohol may increase the urinary loss of zinc and the gastrointestinal absorption of iron. Zinc deficiency aggravates vitamin A deficiency, since zinc is needed in the transformation of vitamin A into its active form. (Cohen)

Though not personally abreast of the foregoing terms and processes, the preceding quotation demonstrates serious physiological disruptions in the human body that alcohol consumption causes. In other words, after reading the indented paragraph above (coupled with all else considered thus far respecting the harmful affects of alcohol on the human body), we ought to concur with the over simplified, common sense assessment, "That can't be good," or "That's gotta hurt!"

Alcohol Free for Life at Its Best!

Too Much of a Good Thing?

The acclaimed health benefit of drinking alcohol goes downhill fast with successive drinks.

> **STROKE RISK** One alcoholic drink a day may help prevent fatty deposits that lead to heart attack and stroke. But having more than four drinks a day raises the risk of stroke even more than heavy smoking does, say Italian and Austrian neurologists who studied 826 adults. (Carper July 17-19 12)

Bad News for Beer & Wine Drinkers

Imbibers of beverage alcohol recently rejoiced at the news favoring alcohol as helpful in one's daily diet. Their *spirits* may be somewhat dampened, though, regarding some disclaimers accompanying those accounts.

> **CHOLESTEROL-CUTTING CHAMP** Some scientists have wondered whether other alcohol can duplicate red wine's benefits. One answer: Red wine neutralizes the danger of bad LDL cholesterol better than white wine, beer or red grape juice, Japanese cardiologists have found. …Drinking **white wine actually aggravated the danger. Beer** and red grape juice **had no effect**. (Carper July 17-19 12 emphasis added)

Conclusion

At best, the consumption of alcohol has little benefit to the human body. At worst, drinking **alcohol reduces the efficiency of and harms one's body**. Alcohol may also dull the appetite, resulting in withholding from one's body much-needed vitamins. Too much alcohol, over four glasses a day, poses a serious health risk. There are better and safer alternatives to promote good health beyond what alcohol may promise. Besides, after supposing they have the medical industry's approval, social drinkers often meet or exceed amounts cited in disclaimers—with little or no thought that they may be harming their bodies. Unfortunately, recent news about a health benefit attributed to alcohol doubtless will cause drinkers to imbibe with a false sense of security.

Chapter 12: Advocacy for Alcohol Rebutted

Amusingly, some passionate proponents of alcoholic beverages audaciously assert that all references to "wine" in the Bible pertain to an intoxicating drink. Of course, irrespective of the political or social mood of America, the Bible is not in any real sense subject to contemporary interpretation. Unlike a dictionary, the meanings of biblical words are changeless and are not dependent upon current usage for their definitions.

General Appeal to the Bible

> Starting in 1820 there was a growing movement to outlaw alcohol. Over the next 100 years, these 'Drys' as they were called, were to have a huge effect. In 1880, Kansas became the first dry state. Text books, and even literature, had the mention of wine and alcohol removed from them, nationwide. The Bible, with its many mentions of wine, was a problem, so a campaign was started to convince people that the wine of the Bible was nothing more than grape juice. (Reiss)

To imagine that religious people would attempt, for whatever reason, to distort biblical information is to picture them at their worst. To suppose that generally religious people would heartily accept politically motivated distortion of biblical information is uncomplimentary toward religious people and our government. Such an accusation concurs nicely with efforts by even pious souls to champion beverage alcohol. However, in truth, it is utterly false that every reference to "wine" in the Bible refers to an alcoholic drink. It is true that sometimes the word "wine" is employed in Scripture for grape juice.

Political Issue

The reaction of Americans to prohibition, laws enacted by a benevolent government for its citizenry as current alcohol statistics underscore, was widely unpopular. Popular clamor for legal alcohol, of course, eventually toppled prohibition. During the interim, organized crime seized the moment and provided illegal beverages. The television show *The Untouchables* glamorized and chronicled these years. Still others sought loopholes in prohibition laws.

> In 1920 the Volstead Act and the 18th Amendment, outlawed wine and all alcohol in the United States. Or did it? A small loophole was found in the act, one that was meant to appease the Virginia apple farmers, so that they could continue to make cider. It allowed people to make "nonintoxicating cider and fruit juices exclusively for the use in the home," and not just a little either, 200 gallons a year! The grape growers, who had started to rip out their vineyards, saw a light at the end of the tunnel, and they began to sell 'juice grapes' like wild fire. …Making your own, was not the only way to get wine. Medicinal 'wine tonics' were available without a prescription, and it was soon discovered that if refrigerated, the medicinal herbs would drop to the bottom leaving a palatable wine in the rest of the bottle. By far the most popular way to obtain wine, was as a religious sacrament. Since the Jewish faith called for the use of wine at home, Rabbis were allowed to buy wine for their congregations. Suddenly, everyone was a Rabbi, and the lists of congregations were often little more than a copy of the phone book, and Synagogues sprung up in extra bedrooms. (Reiss)

History thus records the desperation with which man sought his own destruction through alcohol. No more pitiful example of one's passion for alcohol can be found than when religious people, including Christians, attempt to call God as a witness, through the

Holy Bible, for the defense of the much-loved consumption of alcohol.

Straw Men

⇒ ***"The percentage of alcohol in the naturally fermenting wine of the Bible was minimal compared to contemporary wine; God approved intoxicating wine in the Bible but does not condone the wine available today."***

Intoxicating wine in Bible times still resulted in drunkenness despite containing less alcohol than wine and other alcoholic drinks today. "At any rate, Noah and Lot were so drunk they did not know what was going on" (Van Loh, *Alcohol* Book Two 74). Every warning in the Bible against intoxicating wine proves that even intoxicating wine in the biblical era was disapproved by God and harmful to humanity.

⇒ ***"People in Bible times often drank intoxicating wine because there was a shortage of potable water."***

> This is a popular belief today. But water was a special gift of God in the good land He [God] promised Abraham. Wells were common and many house had their own cisterns. Anyone who says there was not enough water contradicts God's own words in Deuteronomy 8:7 and 11:11, 12. …Grape juice was also a gift of God, but nowhere does the Bible say that it takes the place of water. …In a time of drought, water became a problem, but the grape harvest failed also. (Van Loh, *Alcohol* Book Two 74)

The Bible lands east of the Mediterranean Sea, including Palestine, were called the Fertile Crescent because it was well watered, fertile land suitable for growing crops and sustaining populations. In addition to natural freshwater sources, reservoirs and cisterns were abundant complements. A similar ad hoc, off-the-wall and equally fallacious assertion about insufficient water is often charged respecting sufficient water for Christian baptism beginning in Acts 2 with 3,000 people being immersed. Factually,

Palestine had been the center of the world for thousands of years (between Europe, Africa and Asia), sustaining several different nations as well as much sought after by outsiders. Further, Palestine boasted enough water beyond sustaining large populations with fresh drinking water to include sufficient water for Jewish ceremonial washings and later Christian baptism by the thousands.

⇒ ***"Ancient peoples neither knew how to preserve grape juice from fermenting nor had an appreciation for unfermented wine!"***

Ample evidence herein already reviewed demonstrates conclusively that ancient civilizations had the knowledge and desire to preserve grape juice from fermentation. The following quotation further notes an appreciation for unfermented wine. "Aristotle (384—322 B.C.) told about sweet wine that would not intoxicate. Horace (65—8 B.C.) wrote of fumigated wine and said a hundred glasses might be drunk 'without clamor or passion.' Hippocrates (460—370 B.C.) said, 'Sweet kinds of wines do not make the head heavy'" (Van Loh, *Alcohol* Book One 37).

Ancient peoples not only desired to preserve crops and beverages, they could and did as well as needed to preserve crops to ensure their survival.

> Many books, written even before the time of Christ, reveal that people were quite familiar with the principles of preserving meats, fruits, beverages, etc., for extremely long periods of time. This was necessary for survival! Their primary objective was to *prevent* putrefaction, fermentation, decay, decomposition, and corruption of the grape [as well as other fruits and vegetables]. (Wesley 31)

⇒ ***"The word wine in the Bible always refers to an alcoholic beverage!"***

Sentiments such as these are based solely on an unenlightened emotional rationalization to justify social drinking. Several Hebrew and Greek words are translated with the English word "wine" in our Bibles. Irrespective of the variations in meanings that may be discernible between the several words, the overriding factor by

which they derive their meanings pertains to the context in which they are used. Understanding the context in which they are employed is vital to their proper interpretation and explanation.

> The word translated "wine" in English (in Koiné Greek) can refer to either alcoholic or non-alcoholic wine. At present, the term "wine" is almost used exclusively of alcoholic wine, but let us never be guilty of interpretation based solely upon modern day definitions. Consider these examples of the word "wine" being used in Scripture with reference to unfermented grape juice.
>
> Joel 1:10 says, "The field is wasted, the land mourneth; for the corn is wasted: the new wine is dried up, the oil languisheth." (This refers to grapes dried up in the fields which could not be intoxicating.)
>
> Isaiah 65:8 says, "Thus saith the LORD, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all." (Alcoholic wine in the cluster? No, the juice of the grape while in the cluster could not be intoxicating.)
>
> Jeremiah 48:33 says, "And joy and gladness is taken from the plentiful field, and from the land of Moab; and I have caused wine to fail from the winepresses: none shall tread with shouting; their shouting shall be no shouting." (The wine of fresh squeezed grapes coming out of the winepress is grape juice and could not be fermented.) Certainly other passages could be considered, but these are sufficient to illustrate that the word "wine" can refer to alcoholic wine or simply grape juice. (Northrop)

⇒ ***"When you eat fish or onion rings at a restaurant, you're usually getting some beer at no extra charge."***

Contemporary practice, right or wrong, cannot be used to prove the validity or even wrongness of an activity about which the Bible stipulates something. What God through the Bible affirms is all that matters. Man's preferences cannot overrule God. Surely it is not a secret that God will have the last word—in the final judgment. If God condemns consumption of alcohol, which he does through the Bible, man's conduct contrariwise cannot set at naught the will of God.

While it is commonly believed that alcohol completely evaporates from foods that are prepared with it in the recipe, such is not altogether accurate. "Chefs and cooks can't assume that when they simmer, bake, or torch (flambé to the more sophisticated cook) with alcohol that only the flavor remains when they're ready to serve" ("Alcohol Evaporation in Cooking").

> The conventional wisdom accepted by just about everyone in the food world is that all the alcohol you add to a dish evaporates or dissipates during cooking. It's wrong. In fact, you have to cook something for a good **three hours** to eradicate virtually all traces of alcohol. And some cooking methods are less effective at removing alcohol than just letting it stand out uncovered overnight. ("Does Alcohol Really Boil Away in Cooking?" emphasis added)
>
> But despite lore that says all the alcohol burns off when you cook it, that is not always the case! According to a 1992 study by Augustin, et al at the Department of Food Science and Toxicology, Food Research Center in Moscow, Idaho, the amount of alcohol that actually cooks off varies, depending on how long the food has been cooked, how it's been cooked, at what temperature, and based upon the specific alcohol and food ingredients in question. ("Does Alcohol Burn Off")
>
> Alcohol not only evaporates without heat, but the majority also burns off during the cooking process.

> **How much remains in the dish depends on the cooking method and amount of cooking time.** Those bourbon-soaked fruitcakes would have to turn into bricks before the alcohol evaporates. ("Cooking with Alcohol" emphasis added)

Apparently, the size of the cooking vessel plays a part in the amount of alcohol evaporation, too. "…the pot's surface area. The bigger the pan, the more surface area, the more alcohol that evaporates during cooking" ("Alcohol Evaporation in Cooking").

The government has devised an "Alcohol Burn-Off Chart," which can be obtained from a number of sources ("Cooking with Alcohol").

> A study conducted by the US Department of Agriculture's Nutrient Data Laboratory calculated the percentage of alcohol remaining in a dish based on various cooking methods. The results are as follows:

Preparation Method	Percent of Alcohol Retained
alcohol added to boiling liquid & removed from heat	85%
alcohol flamed	75%
no heat, stored overnight	70%
baked, 25 minutes, alcohol not stirred into mixture	45%
baked/simmered, alcohol stirred into mixture:	
• 15 minutes	40%
• 30 minutes	35%
• 1 hour	25%

• 1.5 hours	20%
• 2 hours	10%
• 2.5 hours	5%

> **Now, it may be that the amount of alcohol in a dish is modest to start with, but the fact that some of the alcohol remains could be of significant concern to recovering alcoholics, parents, and others who have ethical or religious reasons for avoiding alcohol**. ("Does Alcohol Really Boil Away in Cooking?" emphasis added)

Since I have "religious reasons for avoiding alcohol," I (and others attempting to honor divine instruction on this matter) would do well to avoid foods that we know have been prepared with alcohol. Especially cooking in one's home, it would be advisable for the child of God to forgo the use of alcoholic beverages in food preparation. After all, even were a Christian to cook his dish containing alcohol for three hours or more on high heat to ensure the complete evaporation of alcohol, the reputation and influence of the child of God would already be tarnished (as well as the image of the Lord's church besmirched) just purchasing the alcohol in the first place. Secondly, the child of God could not be certain that all the alcohol evaporated from his food preparation even with the greatest care because of the several variables involved in the evaporation of alcohol. It would be far better not to see how close one can get to violating divine instruction (on any subject) without actually violating it.

⇒ ***"When a person takes cough syrup he is consuming alcohol. If one can drink cough syrup without sinning, then social drinking is approved, too."***

Once more, an appeal to a medicinal application of alcohol is wrongly supposed to demonstrate that social drinking is divinely approved. Alcohol is not the only drug that can affect a person similarly to the way in which alcohol affects humans. In any case, there often are alternative medicines to alcohol and similar drugs.

Alcohol, once widely used in medicines, has been largely replaced with other medicines that do not possess the same detrimental effect on the human body. (Jeffcoat 128).

Further, social drinking and a medicinal application are not the same. They differ in purpose and quantity. It is merely desperately grasping for angles when one rationalizes that social drinking is acceptable to God by arguing for a medicinal use of alcohol.

The only conceivable way in which a medicinal dose of alcohol could commend anything akin to social drinking is if: (1) One's friends and acquaintances were all ill, (2) all the ill friends were afflicted by a malady that was favorably affected by consuming alcohol, (3) these ill friends assembled themselves together in one place, and (4) all these ill friends drank their medicine together. Incidentally, how many shots of whiskey or bottles of beer constitute a medicinal dosage of alcohol?

Proof Texts

⇒ **"He watereth the hills from his chambers: the earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works. He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth; And wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart" (Psalm 104:13-15).**

By citing the above passage, proponents of social drinking suppose that: (1) the word "wine" appearing in the verse refers to alcoholic wine, and (2) alcoholic wine, not grape juice, would 'make glad the heart of man.' Both points are merely unsubstantiated assumptions.

First, just because some contemporary fellow attributes his happy disposition to the influence of alcohol, is no assurance that all other men now or anciently supposed that they, too, must be intoxicated to enjoy life. Second, the word "wine" is used in the Bible for both alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks. The context is the only way of determining which reference is meant.

Sadly, many people subscribe to the notion that the only way a person can be happy in this world is to be under the influence of alcohol. It does not occur to them, apparently, that something

besides an alcoholic drink could result in "gladness." A total misconception in today's Alcoholic Age is that only wine (containing alcohol) could bring cheer. Nothing could be further from the truth. To be intoxicated can only bring depression, destruction, and disaster in the final analysis" (Wesley 79-80).

To discern from this passage that alcoholic wine is meant, one must come to the text with the presupposition that the reference pertains to alcohol. At the least, I can approach the same passage with the predisposed conclusion that the "wine" here is not alcoholic. In any case, the passage does not on the surface, other than what I have noted, tell whether the "wine" here is either alcoholic or non-alcoholic.

⇒ **"It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak" (Romans 14:21).**

The argument goes something like this:

> I cannot think of a clearer way for an apostle to demonstrate that drinking wine is not inherently sinful. Surely no one would contend that drinking grape juice offended the consciences of weak brethren. The word "wine" must refer to an alcoholic drink which ordinarily Christians were permitted to drink, comparable to the "flesh" which ordinarily Christians could eat.

Reference to Romans 14:21 is the strongest argument proponents of social drinking can make from the Bible. It, however, does not justify social drinking.

Even if Romans 14:21 mentioned in passing alcoholic wine, the context forbade its use because it offended the consciences of brethren. Therefore, Romans 14:21 fails to license *social drinking* because it offends the consciences of brethren. However, it is far from certain that the reference to "wine" here refers to beverage alcohol.

Biblical, historical, scientific and medical evidence to which reference has already been made in this series discount claims for social drinking based on Romans 14. The Romans 14 passage must be understood in harmony with all other biblical, historical and

scientific evidence regarding wine in the biblical world. These considerations alone would preclude the rendering of wine in the Romans 14 context as alcoholic.

The Gospel of Christ was preached to Jews and Gentiles alike (Romans 1:16). It is reasonable to conclude that the church at Rome was comprised of both Jews and Gentiles (Acts 2:10). Romans 14:2-3 portrays Christians at Rome concerned over whether to eat meat or resort to a vegetarian diet for conscience sake.

Especially Gentiles who formerly were idolaters might adopt a vegetarian diet to avoid eating meat that may have been dedicated to idols. For some of them, if they ate such meat, they would remember how they worshipped idols and their consciences would condemn them.

Jewish Christians, aware that some of the meat in the markets may have been dedicated to idols, would doubtless be equally wary of such meat for the same reason. In addition, Jewish Christians who still followed the dietary rules they formerly practiced under Judaism and Jewish tradition might reject food that they suspected was not *kosher*. The apostle Peter was such a Jewish Christian.

> I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me: Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat. But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth. (Acts 11:5-8)

Irrespective of whether the animal were ceremonially clean under Judaism, even improper bleeding of the meat made it unacceptable to Jews and Christians.

> But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from

things strangled, and from blood. (Acts 15:20; see also Acts 15:29; 21:25)

As Romans 14 begins, the weaker conscience appears to be a Gentile Christian who may have been formerly an idolater. (See 1 Corinthians 8:1-13.) Verses two and three introduce a concern regarding what one may or may not eat and be pleasing to God. Verses 6, 15, 17, 20-21 continue to refer to the question of eating. However, references in verse 5-6 to special days are reminiscent of a problem noted among Jewish Christians (Colossians 2:16-17). In addition, references to "clean" and "unclean" in verse 14 concur with references to issues affecting some Jewish Christians in the first century. Then, references to food and drink, too, could apply to Jewish Christians ("Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink…" Colossians 2:16).

The apostle Paul, by inspiration, permitted Christians to hold private opinions, disallowed the elevation of opinions to the level of doctrine and instructed the Roman Christians to demonstrate compassion by not unnecessarily offending the consciences of brethren. In addition, Christians in Rome were forbidden from judging their brethren regarding these opinions.

Further, the *King James Version* in verse 15 refers to eating "meat" which is a translation of a Greek word for food. In verse 17, food is categorized as "meat and drink." Verse 20 refers to food as "meat" and what one "eateth." In verse 21, the food is described as "eat flesh" and "drink wine." Both items were equally offensive for the same reason. Together they represented a unit (i.e., food) in one's diet, but that unit, inclusive of both "meat" and "wine," was to be avoided. For whatever reason the "meat" was to be avoided in this context is the same reason for which the "wine" was to be avoided.

The reason to avoid the food under consideration was to prevent offense to the consciences of brethren. The underlying reasons pertained, depending upon the specific individuals under consideration, either: (1) to avoid food dedicated to idols, (2) to avoid non-kosher food, or (3) both of the foregoing.

It is no more necessary for the "wine" in verse 21 to be alcoholic than would it be necessary to suppose the ridiculous that the "meat" was alcoholic. The meat or flesh was something that

could, if eaten by a strong brother, because it had been dedicated to idols, prompt a weaker brother also to eat whereby he offended his conscience. The "drink" or "wine" was potentially offensive to the weaker conscience for the same reason, dedication to idols. Irrespective of whether it were fermented or unfermented, the wine under consideration, as a matter of conscience and a matter of expediency, was not to be consumed because of its dedication to idols.

Whether the "wine" in verse 21 were alcoholic or non-alcoholic is irrelevant to the reason for which the "wine" **and the "meat"** were avoided. Therefore, Romans 14:21 falls far short of sufficing as a *proof text for social drinking*.

⇒ **"Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities" (1 Timothy 5:23).**

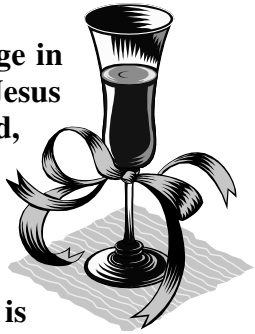
Paul's instruction to Timothy to take wine for his often stomach infirmities hardly argues for the approval of God for the public consumption of alcohol. Irrespective of whether the drink recommended by Paul was alcoholic or non-alcoholic, a medicinal application of "wine" hardly exonerates *social drinking*. Besides, 1 Timothy 5:23 is inconclusive of whether the "wine" in that context is grape juice or alcoholic wine. In either case, such an argument is not substantiated by appealing to a medicinal application to justify social drinking. "This is the language [1 Timothy 5:23] of a doctor's prescription. And Paul was talking about grape juice. What he says could not, in any way, encourage social drinking" (Van Loh, "Moderate Drinking").

Regarding 1 Timothy 5:23, Wesley writes:

> (1) Wine is the recommendation, not beer, whiskey, brandy, gin, or vodka. (2) It was to supplement, not replace, water drinking. …The wine's purpose was to help solve: A) stomach troubles B) frequent ailments. It would be interesting to know how many people actually started drinking wine because of frequent stomach or health problems. (69-70)

Strictly speaking, alcohol is toxic or poisonous. Alcohol has no internal medicinal or curative powers of itself. As a delivery

system for the alleged benefits attributed to an alcoholic beverage today (e.g., beer or wine), alcohol compares miserably with grape juice, which provides the same benefits claimed for alcoholic beverages without the alcohol.



⇒ **"And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come. His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it. And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it. When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now" (John 2:1-10).**

This event is the most popular supposed biblical evidence that social drinking is divinely sanctioned. That Jesus turned water into wine is the first line of quasi-biblical evidence customarily advanced. The validity of reference to John 2:1-10 depends on the unfounded assumption that the "wine" in the passage is alcoholic.

In this series, historical, medical and biblical considerations strongly dispute such a claim. Of special importance is the Jewish law under which Jesus lived, relative to drunkenness. It was a sin to furnish alcohol to another person. "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that puttest thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness!" (Habakkuk 2:15).

The key to our redemption and the hope of spending eternity in heaven is the sinless sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our sins (Hebrews 4:15; 9:28). However, if Jesus sinned, then he could not be that perfect, atoning sacrifice. If Jesus Christ is not our redeemer, then mankind remains hopelessly mired in sin. If mankind is unable to obtain forgiveness of his sins, the eternity that awaits him is not heaven but hell instead. Borrowing a verse from the great discourse regarding the resurrection of Christ, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (1 Corinthians 15:19).

Had Jesus made alcoholic wine, he would have contributed to a state of drunkenness by anyone's definition, as the guests had "well drunk" before Jesus' miraculous conversion of water to wine. Had Jesus made alcoholic wine, he would have clearly sinned for violating Habakkuk 2:15.

> The immediate context of John 2:1-11 is quite clear. The guests at the marriage feast of Cana were able to discern between the quality of the drink that the Lord had made and that which had already been served. If intoxicating wine had been served, and people "well drunk" or "drunk freely" (American Standard Version, 1901) of it (verse 10), then they would not have had such keen discernment. Though the amount is not specified as to what they had previously drunk, if they consumed the six waterpots that Jesus had the servants fill with water and which contained "two or three firkins apiece" (verse 6), then they would have consumed somewhere between 106 to 162 gallons of booze! This is far more than enough to make the most casual drinker drunk. Those who twist this account to condone social drinking say the term "well drunk" refers to the idea that the crowd was so drunk that they could not distinguish. However, the point of "the governor of the feast" to the bridegroom is that the guests were able to discern between the "worse" and the "good wine." If it is the case that these wedding guests were so drunk

that they could not distinguish, then the Lord made the six pots of alcoholic beverage for those who were already strongly under the influence, and caused them to be even more drunk! Thus, the "good wine" of the wedding feast of Canaan must have been the fresh juice of the grape. …Further, consider the general context of the Bible. Habakkuk wrote, "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that puttest thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness!" (2:15). The sin Habakkuk is rebuking is the sin of contributing to drunkenness. If Jesus supplied intoxicating wine to the wedding guests at Cana, then He contributed to their intoxication. Not only did Jesus contribute to it, He, also, condoned and encouraged people to get completely soused! Since intoxication is sinful, then Jesus sinned, and the "woe" of Habakkuk would be upon Him. If this be the case, then it would be better for Jesus "that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea" (Luke 17:2). As a perfect man, Jesus could not have turned water into alcoholic wine and offer such to others. (Northrop)

If "drunk freely" in John 2:10 means "become intoxicated," as some persons affirm, then those under consideration were intoxicated. Since additional wine was not supplied until they had "drunk freely," it follows that Jesus did contribute to intoxication if He supplied intoxicating wine. (Jeffcoat 50)

If the wine thus miraculously produce was fermented, what an orgy of drunkenness would be presented. If there wasn't drunken feasting before, there now would be, and this unholy situation would have been created by our Lord. **It is blasphemy to suggest such a thing.** (Watson 6-7 emphasis added)

The context of John 2:1-10 provides enough incidentals to see that Jesus did not make alcoholic wine at the marriage feast in Cana. Notice in particular verse 10: "And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now" (John 2:10).

The ruler of the feast would have been unable to discern that a better wine was served last—if the wine at that marriage feast was alcoholic. Alcohol dulls the senses and numbs the taste buds so that discernment of a better wine later would have been compromised. The fact that the guests could discern a wine of superior quality (that Jesus made by miracle) indicates that the former wine was not alcoholic.

> The common beverage of the Romans was grape juice, which they mixed with water, both hot and cold, and often with spices. …Fresh grape juice or mustum was boiled until it became thick, after which it was stored to be eaten with bread, or mixed with water to make an unfermented beverage. To give variety of flavor, herbs and spices were often boiled in the juice during its preparation. Such was the superior wine of antiquity, the sweetest and nicest flavored, and not the most intoxicating as some persons have indicated. Many of the wines of antiquity which were alcoholic, were intoxicating only to a small degree. They contained, even diluted, but 4 or 5 percent alcohol. (Jeffcoat 56)

⇒ **"Not given to wine…not given to much wine…" (1 Timothy 3:3, 8).**

Sometimes brethren suppose from the text above that elders are prohibited from drinking any alcoholic beverages, while deacons are allowed to drink alcoholic beverages in moderation. This proposition is wholly false. It is not the case that elders are required to practice complete sobriety while deacons are not under the same obligation.

The wording in the two verses is different in both Greek and English. The intended meaning, though, is essentially the same in

each instance. The greater emphasis and only distinction between the citations toward elders and deacons respectively is one of even more careful guarding of one's influence for elders over deacons.

> A word study of **paroinos** shows that the word is a combination of two Greek words: **Para**, which means *at the side of* or *along side*; and **oinos**, which is the general Greek word for wine. Hence, the word as used indicates that elders, by all means, should not even be found along side of wine. (Cooper and Cooper 6)

One Drink Is One Drink Drunk!

Furthermore, verse eight is no more giving permission for the consumption of a little wine than does Ecclesiastes, with God's approval, permit the children of God to practice a little wickedness. "Be not over **much wicked**, neither be thou foolish: why shouldest thou die before thy time?" (Ecclesiastes 7:17 emphasis added). Note the similar construction of 1 Peter 4:4, though God by inspiration was not approving riotous living: "Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same **excess of riot**, speaking evil of you" (emphasis added). Along with Dub McClish we are amazed and agree: "It is passing strange that some profess to see justification for drinking in two passages which warn men of the evils of same!" (105).

⇒ **"Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved" (Matthew 9:17).**

Regarding new wine and old or new wineskins (Matthew 9:17; Mark 2:22; Luke 5:3-39), some affirm that the fluid under consideration was in the process of fermenting. New wineskins versus old wineskins, it is argued, would expand with the resulting fermentation whereas old wineskins would burst.

> No skin however could remain whole if fermentation should get under full headway. The carbonic acid gas generated by the process would rupture a new skin almost as rapidly as an old one. Job recognized this principle when he stated, "Behold, my breast is as new wine which hath no vent; Like new wine-skins it is ready to burst" (Job 32:19). (Jeffcoat 64)

> Have you any idea how much carbon dioxide gas is produced by one gallon of grape-juice? 50 gallons! (confirmed by Dr. Roy E. Mitchell, professor of chemistry at the Texas Technical University in Lubbock, Texas.) That would be quite a skin—wouldn't it? That's quite a stretch. **The new wine wasn't put in the new skin to *allow* for fermentation but to *prevent it*.** (McGuiggan, "2" emphasis added)

The true purpose of employing new wine skins rather than previously used wineskins was to prevent fermented residue inside the latter skins from promoting fermentation in the fresh grape juice.

> It was desirable to store this food whether in liquid or condensed form in new skins, in order to prevent fermentation which would be induced by using old skins, just as we today use scientific methods of cleanliness for the preservation of our canned fruits. (Watson 4)

> When fresh, clean wineskins (those without hidden corruption; such as leaven, ferment, and/or pharisaic teachings) are used, the unfermented, non-alcoholic wine remains in its original, sweet state. (Wesley 73)

A Christian's attitude toward alcohol must be consistent with his attitude toward all other drugs. (Dan and Katherine Cooper 3)

⇒ **"Since the Lord used alcoholic wine in the institution of the Lord's Supper, not only can we use alcoholic wine in our observance of the Lord's Supper or Communion today, but we can drink alcoholic beverages (in moderation) also."**

It is a fallacious and biblically unsound assertion that Jesus Christ implemented the Lord's Supper with fermented or alcoholic wine. In the first place, one has to assume words into the biblical text respecting the institution of the Lord's Supper that simply are not there! "The Bible uses the words fruit of the vine, never wine, when it speaks of the communion service" (Van Loh, "Moderate Drinking"). Look for yourself (Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 10:16; 11:23-29).

In addition, our Lord instituted the Lord's Supper following the last God-authorized observance year for the Passover. Jesus only had at his disposal for his memorial feast, the Communion, such items as were available at Passover time. Hence, the bread employed in the Lord's Supper was (and is) unleavened bread, that is bread from dough that has not fermented. The prescription for the Passover meal in Exodus 12:15, 19-20 used two different Hebrew words interchangeably referring to the unfermented or unleavened quality of the bread. Verse 20 reads in part, "Ye shall eat nothing leavened…" Notice the biblical definitions of the words "eat" and "leavened" in this verse. The meaning of the former includes "consume" (Deuteronomy 5:25; 7:16; 2 Kings 1:10, 12; Job 15:34; 20:26; Jeremiah 49:27) and the latter means "ferment" (*Biblesoft's*). "Ferment and leaven are classified as synonyms in any thesaurus. Actually, it is impossible to separate the two words" (Wesley 48-49). "[T]he fermenting process is basically the same in both bread and wine" (Cooper and Cooper 5).

> Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread ["unfermented cake or loaf" *Biblesoft's*], and in the seventh day shall be a feast to the LORD. Unleavened bread ["unfermented cake or loaf" *Biblesoft's*] shall be eaten seven days; and there shall no leavened bread ["unfermented cake or loaf" *Biblesoft's*], be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven ["yeast" NIV; "swelling by fermentation"

> *Biblesoft's*] seen with thee in all thy quarters. (Exodus 13:6-7)

Alcohol is a drug—dirty, vicious and brutal.
~ Senator Harold E. Hughes (Iowa)

Hence, during the Passover, Israelites were forbidden from using anything that was fermented; this would extend beyond the bread to include the biblical wine under consideration for the Passover, as well as the items available to our Lord on the heals of the Passover meal with which to institute the Lord's Supper. "Further support for the unfermented nature of the Communion wine is provided by the Mosaic law which required the exclusion of all fermented articles during the Passover feast (Ex 12:15: 13:6, 7)" (Bacchiocchi, *Wine in the Bible* abridged edition 49). "Jesus used unfermented grape juice at all Passover and at the Lord's Supper because He obeyed the Mosaic law. That law said not to use anything fermented during the Passover week. Jesus came to fulfill the law; He did not disobey the law" (Van Loh, *Alcohol* Book Three 12).

In addition, every Old Testament reference that condemns the use of alcoholic beverages likewise would make it impossible for our Lord to use an intoxicating beverage at the institution of the Lord's Supper. For instance: "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that puttest thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness!" (Habakkuk 2:15). See also Proverbs 23:29-35, etc.

Furthermore, Jewish priests were forbidden to use either bread or liquid such as honey in their priestly offerings (Leviticus 2:11; 10:8-10). Jesus Christ, our High Priest (Hebrews 3:1), instituted the Lord's Supper, in which Christians who are described as priests (1 Peter 2:5, 9), participate. It is very proper, then, for Christians to acknowledge the impropriety (sinfulness for going against divine authorization) of using fermented bread or fermented grape juice in the observance of the Lord's Supper.

> It is regrettable also, that young converts can say that they learned the taste of alcoholic beverages at the communion table. In most cases, the drinking of

> alcoholic wine is just one step away from taking other alcoholic beverages. …Such a practice [of using alcoholic wine for the Lord's Supper from its institution onward] would have excluded the Rechabites and Nazarites and followers of John the Baptist, from taking the communion in Christ's day. …The unholy alliance between the church and the liquor traffic continues to exist as long as churches participate in, or support the liquor traffic in any form, or for any purpose. **It would be difficult for the church to confer any higher honor upon, or render any stronger moral support to, the liquor traffic, than to patronize the liquor store to purchase fermented wine for the Lord's Table.** (Watson 10 emphasis added)

"If there is one place that should be safe for an alcoholic, it is the church. But how can they be safe at a communion service where wine with alcoholic content is served?" (Wilkerson 24).

⇒ **"Deuteronomy 14:26 sanctions and recommends the moderate use of alcoholic beverages (i.e., when imbibed with consciousness of appropriate conduct before God)."**

Deuteronomy 14:26 reads, "And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink ["similar drink" NKJV], or for whatsoever thy soul desireth: and thou shalt eat there before the LORD thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou, and thine household" (KJV). Whatever Deuteronomy 14:26 means, respecting "wine" and "strong drink," it must harmonize with other portions of divinely inspired Scripture about the same subject. Someone once said that Scripture is its own best commentary (i.e., other passages that are more easily understood pertaining to the same subject contribute to the proper understanding of more difficult passages). "…Scripture must serve as a guide to understand Scripture. Any problem text must be interpreted not in isolation but in the light of the overall teaching of Scripture. An interpretation of a passage contradicting the whole trend of Scripture must be rejected as wrong" (Bacchiocchi 224). One passage "doctrines" are

suspiciously under substantiated by divine inspiration and scare me; proponents of social drinking (of alcohol) pin their hope for the defense of alcoholic beverages on Deuteronomy 14:26, forasmuch as more feeble strategies of the same sort fall flat upon inspection. The argument that Deuteronomy 14:26 demonstrates divine approval of social drinking is the lone biblical specimen of supposed divine sanction of beverage alcohol.

First, that "strong drink" (KJV) or "similar drink" (NKJV) in Deuteronomy 14:26 cannot refer to and sanction the use of an alcoholic beverage is obvious when one acknowledges that God specifically condemned consuming alcoholic beverages respecting acceptable worship under Judaism; "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" (Leviticus 10:9 KJV). The Bible cannot both disallow (Leviticus 10:9) and allow (Deuteronomy 14:26) the consumption of alcohol under the same Law (Judaism) respecting the same purpose (worship) without making the Bible contradictory. Jewish worship being the same in both passages, the references to "wine" and "strong drink" must refer to different substances (i.e., alcoholic in Leviticus 10:9 and non-alcoholic in Deuteronomy 14:26).

Second, the words "wine and strong drink" constitute an expression that uses two independent words to express a single idea; this figure of speech is called "hendiadys" (*Merriam-Webster's*). This is similar to the grammatical use of the apposition in language where two adjacent nouns are equivalent to each other in meaning. In other words, the affect is saying it twice. Therefore, whatever the word "wine" means in the context in which the expression appears is what the words "strong drink" or "similar drink" mean. The context of Deuteronomy 14:26, then, neither refers to alcoholic wine nor other alcoholic drinks since the Law prohibited the use of alcoholic beverages by Jewish worshippers (Leviticus 10:9). "Strong drink" or "similar drink" in Deuteronomy 14:26 cannot refer to an alcoholic beverage.

Third, in Deuteronomy 14:23, the "wine" associated with the harvest offering was fresh grape juice, coming from a word, *tirosh*, that means just squeezed out (*Biblesoft's*). The reference to "wine" and "strong drink" or "similar drink" in Deuteronomy 14:26 is a

reference to the same beverage for the same purpose at the same occasion and place. The only difference in circumstances between verse 23 and verse 26 is that the participants relative to the latter verse lived far from place of worship, and they had to convert their offers to money so they could travel more easily, but upon arrival at the place of worship, they spent the money to avail themselves of the same offerings. Hence, just as the beverage of Deuteronomy 14:23 was non-alcoholic, the reference to the same thing in Deuteronomy 14:26 refers to the same, non-alcoholic beverage. This means that the word, *shekar*, translated "strong drink" or "similar drink" does not always refer to an alcoholic beverage, but rather the context determines whether the reference is to alcoholic or non-alcoholic beverages. Further, the verb form of *shekar* refers to drinking deeply, but he context must be examined to determine what beverage is being drunk deeply, and whether that beverage is alcoholic or non-alcoholic (Haggai 1:5-6; Song of Solomon 5:1. Context is everything in Bible study, especially when generic words are involved. Robert Young's *Analytical Concordance of the Bible* concurs that *shekar* may be fermented (alcoholic) or unfermented (non-alcoholic), depending upon the context in which it is found (qtd. in Bacchiocchi 231).

Fourth, sometimes *shekar* referred to a sweet beverage, which was obviously not alcoholic since fermented beverages are naturally bitter rather than sweet. In Isaiah 24:9, *shekar* would become bitter and be ruined, along with other ruinations of the Jewish homeland as punishment of God toward his rebellious people. "Isaiah 24:9 suggests that *shekar* in the Old Testament was a beverage valued because of its sweetness, a quality which disappears as the sugar is converted to alcohol" (Bacchiocchi 229).

Fifth, the words "strong drink" have a contemporary meaning that did not correspond to the times existing when Deuteronomy 14:26 was penned.

> The adjective "strong," though consistently used in conjunction with shekar, is not part of the word itself, but an added word. This gives the false impression to a modern reader that people drank distilled liquor in Old Testament times. This obviously wrong because the process of distilling

> alcohol did not develop until around A.D. 500. (Bacchiocchi 229)

Today, Bible students must always be vigilant not to overlay a contemporary template on the ancient past, by which one's interpretation of biblical passages will be flawed.

Sixth, the word *shekar*, which in Deuteronomy 14:26 is translated as "strong drink" (KJV) or "similar drink" (NKJV), provide us our English words "sugar" and "cider," according to numerous dictionaries (Bacchiocchi 232-233). This alone indicates the true nature of the word *shekar*, at least in some of the biblical contexts in which it is found. This bit of information corresponds with the non-alcoholic characteristic of the beverage in Deuteronomy 14:23 and its relationship to the beverage in Deuteronomy 14:26. The context definitively pronounces the "strong drink" or "similar drink" of Deuteronomy 14:26 as non-alcoholic.

Each of the preceding points interacts and concurs with each other respecting the true nature of *shekar* or the "strong" or "similar drink" in Deuteronomy 14:26. The supposed last-ditch effort for imbibers to find biblical sanction for social drinking falls flat upon careful inspection.

Conclusion

For a more thorough treatment of *quasi-biblical proof texts* sought for the defense of beverage alcohol, the reader is invited to review the same in the volume, *The Bible and "Social" Drinking* by W.D. Jeffcoat.

It is bad enough that people, including Christians, passionately desire alcohol, knowing full well that it is hurtful to our society and individuals in particular. It borders on blasphemy to represent God as approving this vice.

Once our nation's lawmakers attempted to spare our country from the misery that alcohol brings. These days, our government licenses and taxes it, providing implicit approval of alcohol. The dangers of alcohol are masked behind a flood of advertising and coffers anxious to receive tribute.

Chapter 13: Summary Observations

When all is said and done, Scripture is explicitly plain that God disapproves of mankind's consumption of alcoholic beverages.

> That there was an intoxicating wine in antiquity is not denied. The Bible and early secular writers however are clear in their denunciation of such wine. (Jeffcoat 47)

These two following verses summarize the biblical teaching about the consumption of alcohol.

> 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. (Proverbs 23:31-32)
>
> Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that puttest thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness! (Habakkuk 2:15)

Sober

Rather than approving some degree of intoxication, the New Testament teaches sobriety. Christians are forbidden to surrender control of their faculties to drugs, inclusive of alcohol.

> Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be **sober**. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be **drunken** are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be **sober**, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for

> an helmet, the hope of salvation. (1 Thessalonians 5:6-8 emphasis added)
>
> Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be **sober**, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 1:13 emphasis added)
>
> But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore **sober**, and watch unto prayer. (1 Peter 4:7 emphasis added)
>
> Be **sober**, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour. (1 Peter 5:8 emphasis added)

Numerous New Testament passages admonish the children of God to be sober.

> Vine defines the term in these words of weighty warning, "signifies to be free from the influence of intoxicants." Thayer says it means to be temperate. Obviously, one is not free from the influence of intoxicants in social drinking. (Elkins and Taylor 11)

Conclusion

According to history, medical science and the Bible, alcohol is a great liability to any one, not only while we are on earth, but also especially as we each cross the threshold of eternity. The evidence is insurmountable against beverage alcohol. Especially professed Christians who make themselves apologists for the evil of social drinking, do so to their own harm and in opposition to the obvious.

> Looking the Bible through from cover to cover, we find not merely scattered references here and there, but in every one of the 66 books, contributing testimony to the moral and social indictment of drinking in society. …we understand…the nature of alcohol, its characteristics and harmful effects, are

> so clearly depicted in Bible narrative, from the days of Noah all the way through the Biblical history, that **it is easy to recognize alcohol as the same potentially devastating, home destroying, soul destroying beverage that it always has been**, and always will be, as long as society countenances its pernicious influence. (Watson 12 emphasis added)

The positive considerations of an alcohol free life present a stark contrast to the fruit of beverage alcohol.

> …[A]bstinence can make life fuller, healthier, more satisfying, enjoyable, and beautiful. It can add years to your life, money to the pocketbook, harmony to the home. It sets a better example for others to follow, it makes highway driving safer, it sharpens ability to make right decisions and to react quickly in case of emergency. It improves one's own self-image and his relationship to others and to his God. (Francis A. Soper "Alcohol: Ten Reasons Why You Don't Need It" qtd. in Davey)

Awake, ye drunkards, and weep! And howl, all ye drinkers of wine. (Joel 1:5)

Vigorous, though unpersuasive, defense of social drinking, in view of biblical condemnation of alcohol and plenty of contemporary evidence of the harm it causes, notwithstanding that Hebrew, Greek and English definitions of "drunkenness" likewise condemn it, only portrays the degree to which society esteems that which will destroy all it can—physically, spiritually, financially, socially and eternally. The proverb still reads:

> Be not among winebibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh: For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags. …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. 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 stricken me, shalt 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. (Proverbs 23:20-35)

The warning is not even to look at the intoxicating wine. Hamburgers, were someone desirous to justify alcohol consumption on the basis of comparison to food, do not fall into the same category. Hamburgers we may eat in moderation, but we should have nothing to do with alcohol.

> Alcohol, imbibed as a beverage, in any form, and to any degree, is positively prohibited in sacred writings. In "any form," includes, but is not limited to drinking of beer, wine, whiskey, and brandy; and, to "any degree" runs the gamut from the so-called social drinker to the pitiful alcoholic who daily drinks himself into stupidity. …indulgence to any extent is wrong because drunkenness is a matter of degree, and begins with the first drop of the fiery liquid. (Woods 21-22)

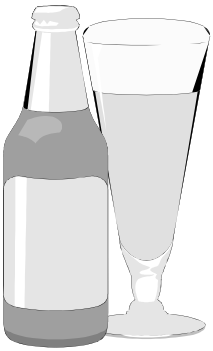
Wilkerson writes, "…if the preacher is to 'stick to his Bible,' preach the whole truth, and to be fair to the Word of God, he MUST **preach against alcohol**" (34 emphasis added). A hearty "Amen" to the following sentiment respecting ministerial and parental responsibilities concerning alcohol.

> Away with this spineless, mousey [sic] 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 the 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 or 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** wake up to the fact that they are the bad examples who have set 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?** (Wilkerson 44-45 emphasis added)

"Intoxicating wine is man's perversion of God's good bounty" (Van Loh, *Alcohol* Book Two 77).

> 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.** (Wilkerson 30 emphasis added)



Chapter 14: Growing Up with Alcohol

Alcohol in My Youthful Home: Bonnie Rushmore

I cannot remember a time when my parents, especially my father, did not drink. Drinking alcoholic beverages was a way of life for my family and the families of my friends throughout my life in Pennsylvania where I grew up. Sometimes my father stopped by the bar after work, arriving home late at night too drunk to make it in the house. On more than one occasion, my mother and brother would have to pick him up out of the yard where he had passed out. Since liquor sales were banned and bars were closed on Sundays, beer was purchased on Friday after the weekly paycheck was received. Frequently, on Saturday evening we would travel 30 miles or so away to an aunt's house. Once we arrived, my parents, aunt and uncle, other relatives and the older children would go to one of the local bars for the night. My older sister would babysit the younger children. Many times, the partiers would arrive home in the wee hours of the morning too drunk to drive home. Thus, we would spend the night. The next day the drinking would continue until we would leave to return to our home later that day. Often times during the summer we would be locked out of the house for the day as we made too much noise going in and out.

One of my earliest memories is watching family members build our house. On one occasion I watched my grandfather fall from the roof that he, my uncle and father were finishing. Fortunately, his injuries consisted of only a few scratches and he climbed the ladder to finish the job. The female members of the family who observed the fall contributed his lack of injuries to the fact that he was intoxicated since all had been drinking throughout the course of the day. The house did not have a square wall in it

and leaned considerably. The only way to keep a door open was to block it open with something. We had our own "Leaning Tower of Pisa" in rural Pennsylvania. I am sure the intoxicated state of the builders was a contributing factor in those leaning walls.

Sometime during my late elementary school years, my parents joined the local Eagles Club, which seemed to center around a bar. Since private clubs were allowed to serve alcohol on Sunday, the weekend trips to my aunt's soon stopped, as my parents would spend Saturday and Sunday with their new friends at the bar. What started out as weekend partying soon turned to nightly trips to the Club. My mother would take dad to work and pick him up each day, stopping at the Club immediately following the end of work (about 3:30 p.m.) and arriving home in time for bed. My oldest brother had joined the Air Force by this time. My older sister often accompanied my parents, leaving my older brother, younger sister and myself to fend for ourselves after school. Many times we would cook supper and wait for them to return home to eat. After many hours we would eat without them. We heated the house with a coal and wood stove and it was not uncommon to come home from school to find the fire had gone out and the house would be freezing cold. We would try to relight the fire and wrap up in blankets until the house would regain some heat.

Alcoholism Should Be Strangled in Its Infancy! ~ David Wilkerson

Many times during those years, the electric bill would not be paid so the electricity would be shut off. On a few occasions the pump on the well burned up and there was no money to repair it so we had no running water. Sometimes the propane tank was empty so we had to heat water on the stove to wash since we had no hot water. We rarely had money for toothpaste, shampoo or other hygiene products deemed unnecessary luxuries. I can say that we never went hungry although there was not an abundance of food, and we had consisted on the cheapest and most basic available. However, there was always money for an unlimited amount of beer either at home during the early years or at the Club during my later years at home.

I rarely went to school on Fridays my junior year. The Eagles Club happened to be located within walking distance of where my father and many others worked and Friday was payday. On Fridays I would skip school, with my parent's permission (they sent a note saying I was sick) so that I could go to town with mom. We would meet my father at the Club; I would take his paycheck and that of several other men and walk to the bank. There I would cash each paycheck and return to the club where the men were drinking their lunch in the form of beer and whiskey. I got to keep the change and frequently if it was a good paycheck an extra dollar or two from each check I cashed. This was my money to spend as I wanted. At the end of the hour we would take my dad back to work and go buy a few groceries. If an individual ran out of money during the course of the week, a local grocery store would allow one to cash a personal check based on the upcoming paycheck. The only stipulation was that some groceries had to be purchased. Maybe that was the grocery store owner's way of ensuring that a few groceries were taken home to the family since drinking was a way of life for most families.

One of the few pictures I have of my father is at my wedding reception. He is standing beside my father-in-law, each holding a bottle of beer, each barely able to stand. My father-in-law proceeded to work after the wedding reception with the attitude, "If they don't want me they can send me home." We took my mother-in-law home following the reception because she was too drunk to drive.

A few months before my wedding, my oldest sister, unmarried and living at home, gave birth to a beautiful baby girl. It was not uncommon to dip her pacifier into whatever one was drinking to calm her cries while they were out drinking. Occasionally my father would put beer in her baby bottle. When she was two and half years old we received a phone call late one night that she had died. Since we were living several hundred miles away, to this day I am unsure exactly what caused her death. I am comforted knowing that she is in heaven and by her early death was spared the lifestyle so common with my family.

In 1979, we once again received a late night phone call from Pennsylvania. My oldest sister had died. According to family reports and newspaper clippings, she and her live-in boyfriend had

spent the day at my parent's home. As was common, alcoholic beverages were readily available. After spending the day with her parents, some of her siblings, nieces and nephews, they returned to their home and started to argue. In the heat of the argument he picked up a 22-caliber rifle and shot her in the head. At the young age of 29, her life was taken in a drunken rage. The man who shot her was given a short prison term and was paroled after 3 years. His defense was that he was "drunk and did not know what he was doing."

It was during this time my brothers also began to drink excessively. My brother just older than I was the worst. He was so intoxicated at my sister's funeral he was uncontrollable. I stayed with my parents for two weeks following the funeral to help clean her trailer and finalize things. While at my parents, my brother stopped by to talk with me. As usual he was drunk. In the course of our talk, I tried to get him to realize what he was putting his wife and three young children through. He became so angry with me that I did not see him again for several years. Fortunately, my brother has settled down with age and maturity. He still drinks on occasion and smokes, but he is the most responsible sibling I have.

My father died in 1982, two months after his 57th birthday. He had been sick for a couple of years with the last few months the worst. He had destroyed his body with the consumption of alcohol and cigarette smoke since his early teens.

As I reflect on my life of fifty years, I have fond memories, good memories, bad memories and memories with little emotional attachment. After reading the above paragraphs one would think I had a horrible childhood filled with bad memories. Most of my childhood memories are not bad memories. Alcohol was a way of life for me and everyone I knew. After obeying the Gospel and seeing how life is supposed to be lived, my husband and I chose to distance our children from the lifestyle of our families. I wanted a better life for my children than I had. Unfortunately, the way one is reared can have long lasting scars, which we strive daily to overcome. Of course, alcohol has no part in our lives today.

I write this to encourage those who drink to stop and see what you are doing to your children. To those who have similar childhood memories, know that you can overcome with time, prayer and God's help.

Alcohol in My Youthful Home: Louis Rushmore

Alcohol was not a big issue in my youthful home, though it was there sometimes and never criticized, but as welcome and as natural when present as air breathed. However, consent to marry my underage wife-to-be was conditional on my father-in-law-to-be being permitted to arrange the wedding reception in the basement of the local Eagles club, and provide the cases of liquor and beer. I remember my drunken father smiling the only time I recall him smiling, beer in hand, immediately before leaving for work in the heart of a steel mill, attired complete with coat and tie. I have lasting memories of my drunken mother throwing a glass and a camera, after which my new wife and I postponed our meager honeymoon long enough to drive my mother home. I don't remember ever seeing my father-in-law sober and infrequently seeing one of my grandfathers when he was not completely inebriated. On one occasion, attempting to teach the Gospel to my brother-in-law and his wife, a drunken uncle drove 20 miles because I wouldn't go drinking with him and burst into the house where the study was ongoing; he hit me in the face, knocking my glasses off and ruined forever what had appeared to be a profitable study to convert souls with the Gospel. Where I was reared, people customarily worked hard, played hard and died hard, and alcohol was party to it all. My wife and I did not easily escape all the affects of our upbringing, but anything respecting alcohol for which we were culpable we have long since repented.

Conclusion

Words don't come freely and tears swell when we remember the adverse affects of alcohol in the lives of our families, and in the lives of friends and their families of our youthful years. In one such family, daddy was a drunk when his first child was born. Later in life and before the birth of successive children, this daddy sobered up and became very religious. However, the damage was done, and that oldest child could not be salvaged from drunkenness and its companion sins that he had formerly at a young age witnessed in his father. Alcohol destroys individuals; alcohol destroys families; alcohol destroys nations. **Worst of all, alcohol destroys souls!**

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God's Plan of Salvation

Hear God's Word

- "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17).

Believe or have faith

- "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16).

Repent

- "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17:30).

Profess belief in Jesus as Lord

- "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:9-10).

Be immersed (baptized) in water

- "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).

Live faithfully

- "…be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Mark 16:16).

To inquire further regarding God's plan for the redemption of humanity, contact the church of Christ in your community, or contact Louis Rushmore at rushmore@gospelgazette.com. **Let's go to heaven together!**

Gospel Gazette Online

In late 1998, *Gospel Gazette Online* (GGO) was born of an idea and a desire to extend one's usefulness beyond the local setting, coupled with the (financial) go-ahead by my wife. From time to time in the past and in various locations around the country, *Gospel Gazette* appeared in printed form. First, *Gospel Gazette* was a quarterly, tabloid-size, newsprint magazine, which was distributed through paid insertion in a city newspaper. Years later, *Gospel Gazette* appeared again as a paperback-size booklet which was mailed to community households.

Gospel Gazette Online made its debut in January 1999 as a monthly, religious Internet journal. Today, it is a 20-page, monthly Gospel magazine read by people all over the world (from all seven continents, including Antarctica). Obviously, GGO via the Internet is available even in some places in the world to which one cannot easily go physically with the Gospel of Christ (e.g. Saudi Arabia and Antarctica). Each issue sports articles by Christian men and women on a variety of biblical subjects as well as several features (an onscreen, interactive crossword puzzle; youth articles; one or more articles by women especially for women; questions and answers; and an audio message). In addition, thousands of articles from past issues appear in the archives and may be selected with the help of the site search engine.

Dozens of brothers and sisters in Christ have lent their studious pens through the pages of GGO to an international readership of both Christians and non-Christians. By design, short, teaching articles populate *Gospel Gazette Online*. Thereby, GGO purposes to edify both Christians and non-Christians with Bible-based lessons. Response from readers reveals a wide array of religious backgrounds, including members of the church of Christ, denominational bodies and world religions. Most fan mail is positive and encouraging, though some of it ranges from critical to

hostile, bordering on hate mail. A couple of the more heartening posts include correspondence about baptisms in Saudi Arabia and the request from a Muslim in Pakistan that I pray for his sick wife. Subsequently, after initial contact through the pages of GGO, and later studying with Christians in his country, he put Jesus Christ on in baptism.

Any good that *Gospel Gazette Online* has done or continues to do is owing largely to the many Christian writers whose articles comprise each issue. Most of my immediate family has had or continues to have a significant role in any successes that may be attributed to GGO. Beyond that, if GGO is a useful tool today, it is also because of a number of persons in the Christian family of God. Periodically, the recipient of lauds from around the globe, if there is anything praiseworthy, let the glory be to God

World Evangelism

World Evangelism is a work of the churches of Christ that has been reaching the masses of the world effectively for 45 years with the Gospel of Christ. World Evangelism reaches the world with the Gospel through radio, TV, internet, massive distribution of literature, foreign Bible schools and campaigns abroad. *The Voice of Truth International* is the prominent facet and most recognized part of World Evangelism to American brethren. Up to 70,000 copies in several languages are printed quarterly. Other areas of World Evangelism include *Global Harvest* magazine, several foreign radio and TV broadcast, internet magazine (Gospel Gazette *Online*), teaching in several foreign Bible Schools, and the publication and distribution of thousands of books and other literature annually. These efforts result in hundreds of responses **daily** and thousands of conversions **annually**.

Foreign Bible school statistics and sites (under the oversight of the Double Springs, AL church of Christ) include:

- 200 students per year (preachers, teachers, leaders) complete Bible schools abroad

- Myanmar Bible College
  Mandalay Bible College
  Myitkina Bible College
  Philippine Institute of Biblical Studies
  Bangalore Institute of Biblical Studies
  Borneo Bible College
  Kalay Bible College
  North India Institute of Biblical Studies

Traveling abroad to teach in these schools and Gospel campaigns help round out the mass media and complement the good labors of brethren native to these parts of the world.

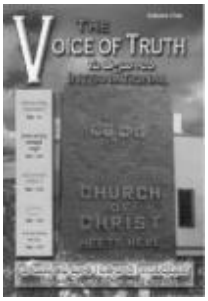
World Evangelism Statistical Summary

- 46 years of foreign evangelism
- 36 foreign weekly radio programs
- 8 foreign weekly TV programs
- 9 foreign Bible schools
- 250,000 responses annually
- 3,500 conversions annually
- 75% to 80% retention rate
- 200 congregations established
- 40,000+ *Voice of Truth International* quarterly (English)
- *Voice of Truth International* (Tamil, Telegu & Spanish)
- Internet (*Gospel Gazette Online*)
- Massive literature distribution
- Foreign campaigns

One of the Oldest & Most Fruitful Contemporary Programs of Evangelism

World Evangelism is worth perpetuating. Will you help Louis & Bonnie Rushmore do their part to carry on the noble, decades old work of J.C. & Betty Choate?

The Voice of Truth International



The most visible aspect of the ongoing labors of World Evangelism to brethren in the United States is *The Voice of Truth International* quarterly magazine. However, what it does overseas speaks to its real importance. Up to 70,000 copies of *The Voice of Truth International* are published in four languages (English, Spanish, Tamil and Telugu). Each issue is populated with articles about God, evidences, the Word of God, salvation, the church, the Christian home, Christian living, Bible characters, sermon outlines, etc. to fill the otherwise void abroad for sound biblical, written materials.

The Voice of Truth International is the size and general appearance of the *Readers' Digest* magazine. Of course, the content of *The Voice of Truth International* is biblical in nature, and it is filled with short teaching articles. Each issue is a veritable library, so important in parts of the world where Christians have few study materials to which they can turn either at home or at church.

Issue number 57 memorialized brother J.C. Choate, founding Editor, and issue number 58 is at the printers as this is writing. You can acquire *The Voice of Truth International* for yourself or your congregation by doing any of the following on the next page.

I want to subscribe to the quarterly magazine, *The Voice of Truth International*. Enclosed is my check for $12.00 for four issues, or $20.00 for eight issues, starting with Volume ____. My address is given below.

I want to order the complete set of volumes in print (52 issues) for the reduced price of $2.00 per copy. My address is given below.

Please send special prices for WBS teachers and their students.

I want to MAKE A GIFT subscription of *The Voice of Truth International*. Enclosed is my check for $12.00 for four issues, or $20.00 for eight issues, starting with Volume ____. The address is given below.

I want to send $25.00 per month (or a multiple), for a box of 35 copies (or multiples) of each issue of the magazine as they are printed. Churches are also urged to use boxes in this way. Or you may send one payment of $300.00 per year for four issues. This will help us to send more cpoies to the mission fields.

We want to give $_____ each month to help send this magazine to mission fields of the world, including the USA.

As a congregation we want to help print and circulate 100,000 copies of each issue of this magazine by making a special contribution to this effort. We can specify where the copies we pay for will be used, whether in our personal work, in jail ministry, overseas, or . . .

(Return this form in an envelope, along with your check, to the following address, stating your wishes.)

The Voice of Truth International
Att. Byron Nichols
Box 11218
Springfield, MO 65808

NAME _____

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What others say about Beverage Alcohol:

It is the best presentation of Biblical, medical and historical facts about the use of alcohol that I have read. ~ T. Pierce Brown

…I highly value your book. All in all it is a tremendously valuable resource. ~ Wayne Jackson

It is my opinion that Louis Rushmore has written the most comprehensive and scholarly treatise on the subject regarding alcoholic beverage among our brethren. It should be read by all brethren who are in a position to influence others through the teaching and preaching of the Word of God. ~ Raymond Elliott

I would recommend Louis Rushmore's book, Beverage Alcohol, as a wonderful resource for any library. He has done a great amount of research to conclusively demonstrate that the Christian should not drink. The book ably addresses all arguments put forth for drinking alcohol. ~ Mark McWhorter

About ten years ago I was given a similar book to read, which challenged my false views about alcoholic wine. You cover this subject as thoroughly, but more concisely, than other books on the same subject. Add to that, your book is great for class studies. Our education deacon and I reviewed several alcohol-issue books to be used in the teenage class. We quickly agreed to use your book because of the easy-to-read format. Many are ignorant to the overwhelming research. Therefore, every teenage and adult class should study this material. Your book makes it simple. ~ David A. Paher

What a blessing in the Lord's work; thank you so much.
~ Robert Rawson

I highly recommend that this book for required reading to every teenager. I also recommend that it be given to any Christian who may sincerely believe that the consumption of alcohol in any amount is acceptable to God. ~ Ernest S. Underwood