

# **The Bible And Alcohol Part 4 Wine In The Apostolic Church**

## **Endtime Issues No. 31**

**12 November 1999**

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### **Dear Members of the Endtime Issues Newsletter:**

Words fail to express my gratitude to the many of you who have emailed me over 1000 messages during the past few days expressing appreciation for the last newsletter (no. 30) dealing with "Christian" rock music in the SDA church. The many reports you have sent me from different parts of the world about the rock/pop music being played in your churches, have convinced me that the infiltration of rock music into our SDA church is a serious worldwide problem that needs to be addressed without delay.

It was not my intent to write a book on this subject, for two reasons. First, I am not a musician and consequently my research and writing on music would be limited primarily to a Biblical/theological definition of the role of music in public and private worship. Second, I am already working on a book on POPULAR HERESIES, where I trace the origin and development of 10 popular heresies held by Catholics and/or Protestants today. These include such beliefs as the immortality of the soul, the worship of the saints, Papal infallibility, Sunday sacredness, the Rapture, Once Saved always Saved, eternal torment, etc. I feel that such a book can be a powerful witnessing tool to help many Christian understand the origin, development, and unbiblical nature of some of their cherished beliefs.

The many reports you have sent me from different parts of the world about the problem of rock music in our Adventist churches, have caused me to reconsider my plans. I decided to lay aside for the time being my research on popular heresies, giving priority instead to a book on "Christian" rock music. I feel that there is an urgent need to address in a scholarly and yet popularly written way this sensitive and divisive issue.

It would seem that the gradual adoption of "Christian" rock and other forms of contemporary music by an increasing number of Adventist congregations, may prove to be even more divisive than the issue of women's ordination. The reason is that the presence in the church of ordained women, who serve in a submissive and respectful way, does not necessarily detract from the quality of the worship experience. On the other hand, rock music played and sung during the divine service, is very offensive to those who are not prepared to accept the secularization of church worship.

The overall objective of this new book on THE CHRISTIAN AND ROCK MUSIC is to help Christians to see the difference between sacred and secular music, encouraging them to make the appropriate choices for the music played in both private and public worship.

Providentially the Lord has impressed several musicians to contribute chapters to this symposium. In fact, five musicians have already accepted to prepare a chapter on different aspects of rock and contemporary music. Two of them have written their dissertation on contemporary music. Another two contributors were rock musicians prior to their conversion and will address the subject from a compelling experiential perspective.

My contribution to this symposium will be largely editorial and theological. Editorially, I plan to divide each chapter with heading and subheading as I do with all my books, in order to facilitate the reading of the material. Theologically, I plan to address the music question in the context of the Biblical view of worship and of the Endtime call to promote the true worship of God by abandoning the deceptive worship of Babylon.

By God's grace we plan to complete this project by March/April 2000 so that we can have the book available before the General Conference. I will be sure to keep you informed on the progress of this project. In fact I plan to share some excerpts of this timely book on our newsletters.

### **SUDDEN DEATH OF MY FATHER**

Last night, Friday November 12, my sister Maria called us at 4:00 a. m. from Rome, Italy, to inform us that our father, aged 87, had passed away at the hospital few hours before. This has been a very sad day for me, because I earnestly desired to see my father before he died. He had a heart attack a month ago which paralyzed the left side of his body, but I was told that he was showing signs of improvement. I had rescheduled some speaking engagements in order to be able to fly to Rome on November 25 and spend a week with my dad. Unfortunately he did not last that long.

To be able to attend my dad's funeral on Monday November 25, I am flying immediately to Rome, canceling this weekend seminar (November 12-13) at Canadian Union College Church.

Truly I can say that the Lord has blessed me with godly parents. My father loved the Lord and the church. He had memorized much of the New Testament and was always eager to keep abreast with my Biblical research. His greatest joy was to visit some lonely soul and share with them the truths of the Word of God. Dad always challenged me to stand up for what I believed to be God's truth, even it meant facing opposition. His earthly life has come to an end but his influence in my life lives on.

## WINE IN THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH

**Editorial note.** In the previous three issues we look at Biblical teaching regarding the use of alcoholic beverages from the perspective of the Old Testament and the teaching of Jesus. In this final installment we focus on the teachings of the Apostolic Church. This study provides vital information ignored by most Christians. You may be surprised, for example, to learn about some specific apostolic admonitions to total abstinence in the context of the preparation for the coming of Christ. This essay represents a brief summary of chapter 6 of my book *WINE IN THE BIBLE*, now available in a new edition.

The importance of the Apostolic Church as a model for Christian beliefs and practices extends to her teachings on the use of alcoholic beverages. The way the apostles understood, preached and practiced the teachings of Jesus and of the Old Testament regarding alcoholic beverages is fundamental to determine whether we as Christians today should take our stand on the side of moderation or on the side of abstinence.

The specific New Testament references to "wine" (*oinos*) outside the four Gospels are thirteen,<sup>1</sup> eight of which occur in the book of Revelation, where "wine" is used mostly symbolically to represent either human depravity or divine retribution. In addition to the texts mentioning "wine" specifically, there are in the New Testament over twenty passages admonishing Christians to be "sober" or "temperate." In most cases, as we shall see, these admonitions are directly related to drinking practices. We shall briefly examine first some of the wine-texts and then some of the admonitions to abstinence.

### ACTS 2:13: "FILLED WITH NEW WINE"

The apostles had scarcely begun their messianic proclamation when they were accused of drunkenness. On the day of Pentecost the first company of believers received the gift of tongues, enabling them to preach the Gospel in the languages of the people gathered for the feast at Jerusalem. While thousands believed in Christ as a result of the miracle, others began mocking the disciples, saying: "They are filled with new wine" (Acts 2:13).

Some assume that the mockers would not have accused Christians of being drunk unless they had seen some Christians drinking alcoholic wine on previous occasions. The weakness of this reasoning is that it assumes that the accusation of the mockers was based on factual observation of Christian drinking. Mockers, however, do not necessarily base their slander on factual observation. Moreover, if the mockers really wished to charge the disciples with drunkenness, they would have accused them of being filled with "wine" (*oinos*) and not with "grape-juice" (*gleukos*).

**The Irony of the Charge.** In view of the established meaning of *gleukos* as un-intoxicating grape juice, the irony of the charge is self-evident. What the mockers meant is "These men, too abstemious to touch anything fermented, have made themselves drunk on grape juice." Or as Ernest Gordon puts it in modern speech, "These guys are drunk on soft drink."<sup>2</sup>

One can hardly fail to see in the irony of the charge that the apostles were drunk on grape juice (their usual beverage) an indirect but very important proof of their abstinent lifestyle and inferentially of the abstemious life-style of their Teacher.

Historical confirmation of this practice is provided by the testimony of Hegesippus, who lived immediately after the apostles. Writing regarding "James, the brother of the Lord, [who] succeeded to the government of the Church in conjunction with the apostles," Hegesippus says: "He was holy from his mother's womb; and he drank no wine nor strong drink, nor did he eat flesh."<sup>3</sup> We can assume that the strict abstinent life-style of James, who for a time served as the presiding officer of the Jerusalem Church, served as an example for Apostolic Christians to follow.<sup>4</sup>

## EPHESIANS 5:18: "DO NOT GET DRUNK WITH WINE"

A powerful Biblical indictment against intoxicating wine is found in Ephesians 5:18, where Paul admonishes the Ephesians, saying: "And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit" (Eph 5:18). The passage consists of two major statements placed in contrast (antithesis) to each other: "drunk with wine" versus "filled with the Spirit."

The antithesis suggests that the contrast is not between moderation and excess, but between fullness of wine and fullness of the Spirit. The two statements point to an inherent incompatibility of nature and operation between the sources of such fullness, namely, inebriating wine and the Holy Spirit. Such a mutual incompatibility precludes the sanction for a moderate use of intoxicating wine.

**What is Debauchery?** Paul's admonition "Do not get drunk with wine" is followed by a warning which in the RSV is rendered "for that is debauchery." A literal translation of the Greek text would read: "And do not get drunk with wine, in which [en ho] is debauchery [*asotia*-literally, 'unsavableness']." The RSV rendering of "en ho-in which" with "for that" makes the condition of being drunk with wine, rather than wine itself, the subject of "debauchery." This construction of the sentence is based not on any exegetical necessity of the text, but on the assumption that the moderate use of fermented wine was allowed in New Testament times.

Historically, numerous translators and commentators have seen "wine" rather than the state of drunkenness as the cause of debauchery. The reason is the position of oino ("with wine"), which in Greek comes immediately before the relative "in which." Support for this is provided also by the fact that the words "do not get drunk with wine," as *The Interpreter's Bible Commentary* points out, "are cited from Prov. 23:31 (the LXX according to Codex A),"<sup>5</sup> where the text condemns the use of intoxicating wine ("Do not look at wine when it is red"), rather than its abuse.

Among the ancient translations which render Ephesians 5:18 as a condemnation of intoxicating wine itself, mention can be made of the famous Latin Vulgate (about A. D. 400), which reads: "et nolite inebriari vino, in quo est luxuria" ("And be not inebriated with wine, in which is voluptuousness"). The connection between vino "wine" and quo "which" is unmistakable in this Latin translation, because the relative quo has the same neuter gender of vino, upon which it depends.

**Modern Translations.** Numerous modern translations follow the Vulgate in its faithful literalness. For example, the French Synodal Version reads: "Ne vous enivrez pas de vin: car le vin porte ꝑ la dissolution" ("Do not inebriate yourselves with wine, for wine leads to dissoluteness"). To remove any possibility for misunderstanding, the translators have repeated the word "wine" in the relative clause. The same clear connection is found in the French translation of David Martin, in the French Version d'Ostervald, in the margin of the New American Standard Bible, in the Robert Young translation, in the Good News German Bible ("Die Gute Nachricht"), in the Italian Protestant version Riveduta by Giovanni Luzzi, as well as in the Italian Catholic Version produced by the Pontifical Biblical Institute.

In the light of the numerous ancient and modern translations which have rendered the relative clause of Ephesians 5:18 as a condemnation not of drunkenness but of wine itself, it would appear that on account of their predilection for wine some English translators have chosen, as Ernest Gordon puts it, to "save the face of wine while condemning drunkenness."<sup>6</sup>

## 1 TIMOTHY 5:23: "USE A LITTLE WINE FOR THE SAKE OF YOUR STOMACH"

When the subject of wine in the Bible is brought up, the first text which seems to come to mind to most people is 1 Timothy 5:23, where Paul counsels Timothy saying:

"No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments." This text has been used during the past nineteen centuries by countless people to justify their drinking alcoholic beverages. Thus, it is important for us to establish the nature of Paul's counsel and its application for us today.

**The Nature of Paul's Advice.** Paul's advice to Timothy must be regarded first of all as an expression of paternal concern and not as a mandatory injunction. The apostle is not ordering his beloved son in the Gospel to drink wine freely; rather he advises him to use a little wine "for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments."

The prudent caution of the apostle's language is most significant. He does not say, "No longer drink water," but rather, "No longer drink only water." He does not say, "Drink wine," but rather "use a little wine with water." He does not say, "for the physical pleasure of your belly," but rather, "for the medical need of your stomach." Even if the "wine" were fermented, this text does not support its regular use in any way. He did not say to Timothy, "Drink . . ." but "Take . . ." The verb "take" is used by a doctor when prescribing the dosage of a medication to a patient. Similarly the adjective "little" implies a very moderate use of wine. This sounds more like a doctor's prescription to a patient than a general principle for all people.

**Timothy Had Been an Abstainer.** Another fact often ignored is that the advice "No longer drink only water" implies that Timothy, like the priests and Nazarites, had abstained until that time from both fermented and unfermented wines, presumably in accordance with the instructions and example of Paul. Earlier in the same epistle Paul tells him to require of a Christian bishop to be not only abstinent (nephalion), but also a non-participant at drinking places and parties (me paroinon-1 Tim 3:2-3). It is reasonable to assume that the apostle would not have instructed Timothy to require abstinence of church leaders without first teaching him such a principle. The fact that Timothy had been drinking only water implies then that he had been following his master's counsel very scrupulously.

The abstinence of a Christian minister was presumably based on the Old Testament legislation prohibiting priests to use intoxicating drinks (Lev 10:9-10). The natural feeling would be that a Christian minister should be no less holy than a Jewish priest, especially since the reason for the Mosaic law remained the same: "You are to distinguish between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean; and you are to teach the people of Israel all the statutes which the Lord has spoken to them by Moses" (Lev 10:10-11). The principle of abstinence was not violated by Paul's recommendation, because the use of a little wine was recommended not for the pleasure of the belly but for the medical need of the stomach.

**The Kind of Wine.** It is generally assumed that the wine Paul recommended to Timothy was alcoholic. But this is by no means certain, for two reasons. First, because the term oinos ("wine"), as we have shown, was used in a generic way to denote either fermented or unfermented wine. Second, because there are historical testimonies attesting the use of unfermented wine for medical purposes.

Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) recommends the use of a sweet grape juice, called *glukus* in Greek, because, he says, "though called wine [oinos], it has not the effect of wine . . . and does not intoxicate like ordinary wine."<sup>7</sup> Athenaeus, the Grammarian (A.D. 280), specifically counsels the use of unfermented "sweet wine" (*glukon oinon*) for stomach disorders. He writes: "Let him take sweet wine, either mixed with water or warmed, especially that kind called protopos, the sweet Lesbian *glukus*, as being good for the stomach; for sweet wine [*oinos*] does not make the head heavy."<sup>8</sup> Here we have advice which sounds strikingly similar to that of Paul, with the difference that Athenaeus qualifies the kind of wine recommended, namely, the sweet wine, called "lesbian" because its alcoholic potency had been removed.

A similar advice regarding the medical use of wine is given by Pliny (A. D. 79), a contemporary of Paul and author of the celebrated Natural History. He recommends using

a boiled, unfermented wine called *adynamon* for sick persons "for whom it is feared that wine may be harmful."<sup>9</sup> He also recommends to avoid the side effects of alcohol by using wines whose alcohol content had been removed through filtration: "Wines are most beneficial when all their potency has been overcome by the strainer."<sup>10</sup>

In light of these testimonies, it is reasonable to assume that the wine recommended by Paul to Timothy may well have been unfermented. Ellen White supports this conclusion, saying: "Paul advised Timothy to take a little wine for his stomach's sake and oft infirmities, but he meant the unfermented juice of the grape. He did not advise Timothy to take what the Lord had prohibited."<sup>11</sup>

## ADMONITIONS TO ABSTINENCE

The apostolic admonitions to abstinence are expressed through the Greek verb *nepho* and the adjective *nephalios* (1 Thess 5:6-8; 1 Pet 1:13; 4:7; 5:8; 2 Tim 4:5; 1 Tim 3:2, 11; Titus 2:2). There is noteworthy unanimity among Greek lexicons on the primary meaning of the verb *nepho* as "to abstain from wine" and of the adjective *nephalios* as "abstinent, without wine."<sup>12</sup>

This meaning is attested in the writing of Josephus and Philo, who were contemporaries of Paul and Peter. In his *Antiquities of the Jews*, Josephus writes of the priests: "Those who wear the sacerdotal garments are without spot and eminent for their purity and sobriety [*nephalioi*], not being permitted to drink wine as long as they wear those garments."<sup>13</sup> Similarly, Philo explains in his *Special Laws* that the priest must officiate as *nephalios*, that is, totally abstinent from wine, because he has to carry out the directions of the law and must be in a position to act as the final earthly court.<sup>14</sup>

If Josephus, Philo and a host of other writers used *nepho/nephalios* with the primary meaning of "abstaining from wine," we have reasons to believe that Paul and Peter also used these terms with the same meaning. This conclusion is supported, as we shall see, by the context in which these terms are used. Yet these words have been usually translated figuratively in the sense of being "temperate, sober, steady." Such inaccurate translation has misled many sincere Christians into believing that the Bible teaches moderation in the use of alcoholic beverages, rather than abstinence from them. Let us examine some of the apostolic admonitions to abstinence.

**1 Thessalonians 5:6-8.** In his letter to the Thessalonians Paul admonishes the believers to "be sober" in view of Christ's sudden and unexpected coming, saying: "So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober [*nephomen*]. For those who sleep sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. But, since we belong to the day, let us be sober [*nephomen*], and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation" (1 Thess 5:6-8).

This passage consists of a number of contrasting parallels: light and darkness, day and night, waking and sleeping, to be sober and to be drunk. In light of the contrasts between the sons of the day who are sober and those of the night who are drunk, it is evident that the exhortation to "be sober" means not merely to be mentally vigilant but primarily to be physically abstinent.

This conclusion is supported by the connection between sobriety and wakefulness: "Let us keep awake and be sober" (v. 6). The first verb, *gregoromen*, refers to mental watchfulness and the second, *nephomen*, to physical abstinence. Otherwise it would be a needless repetition (tautology): "Let us keep awake and be awake." It is evident that Paul connects mental watchfulness with physical abstinence, because the two go together. Mental vigilance in the New Testament is often connected, as we shall see, with physical abstinence. This will become clearer as we consider the other passages in question.

1 Peter 1:13. The admonition to physical abstinence, expressed through the verb *nepho*, occurs again three times in the first epistle of Peter (1:13; 4:7; 5:8). It is

noteworthy that in all the three texts, Peter's exhortation to abstinence is given in the context of readiness for the imminent return of Christ. This implies that Peter, like Paul, grounds his call to a life of abstinence and holiness in the certainty and imminence of Christ's return.

The first usage of *nepho* by Peter occurs in 1 Peter 1:13: "Therefore gird up your minds, be sober [nephontes], set your hope fully upon the grace that is coming to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." Here Peter, like Paul, correlates mental vigilance ("gird up your minds") with physical abstinence ("be sober").

The admonition to "be abstinent" assumes a radical form in 1 Peter 1:13 because it is followed immediately by the adverb "teleios," which means "perfectly" or "completely." Thus, the correct translation is, "be completely or perfectly abstinent." Most translators, presumably because of their predilection for drinking, have chosen to make *teleios* a modifier of the following verb *elpisate* ("set your hope"), thus, rendering it "set your hope fully" (RSV) or "hope to the end" (KJV). But the idiom used elsewhere in the New Testament for "to the end" is not *teleios* per se, but a compound such as *mechri telous* or *heos telous* (Heb 3:6, 14; 1 Cor 1:8; 2 Cor 1:13).

It is noteworthy that the Vulgate, Jerome's famous Latin translation which has served as the official Catholic Bible throughout the centuries, translates *teleios* as a modifier of *nephontes*, thus, "*sobrii perfecte*" ("perfectly sober"). In my view Jerome's translation reflects accurately the intent of Peter, who repeats his call to abstinence twice again in his epistle. Thus, the correct translation should be: "Therefore gird up your minds, being wholly abstinent, set your hope upon the grace that is coming to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

**1 Peter 4:7.** The second usage of *nepho* occurs in 1 Peter 4:7: "The end of all things is at hand; therefore keep sane [*sophronesate*] and sober [*nepsate*] for your prayers." Here again Peter exhorts Christians to keep mentally vigilant and physically abstinent. The meaning of *nepho* as abstinence from wine is suggested also by the context, where Peter contrasts the past lifestyle of "licentiousness, passions, drunkenness, revels, carousing and lawless idolatry" (1 Pet 4:3) with the new lifestyle of temperance and abstinence. The passage may be paraphrased as follows: "The end of all things is at hand; therefore be sober in mind and abstemious in life in order that you might be able to maintain a healthy devotional life at this critical time."

**1 Peter 5:8.** The third usage of *nepho* occurs in 1 Peter 5:8: "Be sober [*nepsate*], be watchful [*gregoresate*]. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking some one to devour." Just as in the previous two instances, here also Peter associates mental vigilance with physical abstinence, because the two are mutually dependent. Intoxicating drinks diminish the power of conscience and reason, thus weakening inhibitions to evil-doing. The ultimate result is that the Devil is better able "to devour," literally, "drink down" (*katapino*) such persons.

The contrast between *nepsate* (from *ne piein*, "not to drink") and *katapiein* (from *kata piein* "to drink down") has been recognized by Adam Clarke, who comments: "It is not every one that he can swallow down. Those who are sober and vigilant are proof against him; these he may not swallow down. Those who are drunk with the cares of this world, and are unwatchful, these he may swallow down. There is a beauty in this verse, and striking apposition between the first and last words, which I think have not been noticed; -Be sober, *nepsate*, from *ne* not, and *piein*, to drink-do not swallow down-and the word *katapien*, from *kata*, down, and *piein*, to drink. If you swallow strong drink down, the devil will swallow you down. Hear this, ye drunkards, toppers, tipplers, or by whatsoever name ye are known in society, or among your fellow-sinners, strong drink is not only your way to the devil, but the devil! s way into you. Ye are such as the devil particularly may swallow down."<sup>15</sup>

Summing up, the five usages of *nepho*, two by Paul (1 Thess 5:6, 8) and three by Peter (1 Peter 1:13; 4:7; 5:8), all show an amazing consistency in urging both mental

vigilance and physical abstinence. It is also significant that all five admonitions to abstinence are given in the context of the preparation for the imminent return of Christ.

**Nephalios as Physical Abstinence.** The adjective *nephalios* is used three times by Paul in his description of the qualifications desired of bishops, women and older men. The first two instances occur in 1 Timothy 3:2, 11: "Now a bishop must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate [*nephalion*], sensible [*sophrona*], dignified, hospitable, an apt teacher, no drunkard [me paroinon]. . . The women likewise must be serious, no slanderers, but temperate [*nephalious*], faithful in all things." The third instance is found in Titus 2:2, "Bid the older men be temperate [*nephalious*], serious, sensible [*sophonas*], sound in faith, in love and in steadfastness."

Earlier we noticed that the adjective *nephalios* is used by contemporary authors such as Philo and Josephus to denote abstinence from wine. This literal interpretation is supported by the fact that in 1 Timothy 3:2 and Titus 2:2 the adjective *nephalios* occurs together with *sophron*, the first to denote physical abstinence and the second mental vigilance. The connection between the two requires a literal interpretation of *nephalios*, as abstinence from wine.

**"No Drunkard."** Some argue that the literal interpretation of *nephalios* as abstinent is contradicted by *me paroinos*, rendered "no drunkard" by the RSV. Their reasoning is that Paul could not have enjoined a bishop first to be abstinent and then "no drunkard," that is, moderate in the use of wine. This apparent contradiction is resolved by recognizing that the meaning of *paroinos* goes beyond "addicted to wine, drunken"<sup>16</sup> to the complementary idea of being *para* "near" *oinos* "wine," that is, near a place where wine is consumed. "The ancient *paroinos*," as Lees and Burns explain, "was a man accustomed to attend drinking parties, and, as a consequence, to become intimately associated with strong drink."<sup>17</sup>

Albert Barnes, a respected New Testament commentator, explains the meaning of *paroinos*, saying: "The Greek word (*paroinos*) . . . means, properly, by wine; that is, spoken of what takes place by or over wine, as revelry, drinking-songs, etc. Then it denotes, as it does here, one who sits by wine; that is, who is in the habit of drinking it. . . . It means that one who is in the habit of drinking wine, or who is accustomed to sit with those who indulge in it, should not be admitted to the ministry. The way in which the apostle mentions the subject here would lead us fairly to suppose that he did not mean to commend its use in any sense; that he regarded it as dangerous and that he would wish the ministers of religion to avoid it altogether."<sup>18</sup>

The meaning of *paroinos* as "near wine," that is, near a drinking place, is supported by ancient and modern Greek lexicons. The *Lexicon Graeci Testamenti Alphabeticum*, published in 1660, defines *paroinos* in Greek and Latin as "*para to oino, apud vinum*," which may be translated "near or in the presence of wine."<sup>19</sup> Liddell and Scott define the related word *paroinios* as "befitting a drinking party."<sup>20</sup>

Understood in this sense, *me paroinos* does not weaken *nephalios*. On the contrary, it strengthens it. What Paul is saying is that a bishop must be not only abstinent, but he must also withhold his presence and sanction from places and associations which could tempt his abstinence or that of others. This fits well with Paul's admonition in 1 Corinthians 5:11, "I wrote to you not to associate with any one who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or robber-not even to eat with such a one."<sup>21</sup>

The fundamental reason given by Paul for living abstinent and godly lives is eschatological: "For the grace of God has appeared for the salvation of all men, training us to renounce irreligion and worldly passions, and to live sober, upright, and godly lives in this world, awaiting our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity and to purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds" (Titus 2:11-14). Healthful and holy living is commended in the Scripture not merely for the sake of personal

health and goodness, but primarily for the sake of God's desire to dwell within us in this present life (1 Cor 3:16-17; 6:13) and to fellowship with us in the life to come.

It is this hope of being ready to receive Christ, and to be received by Him on the day of His glorious appearing, that should motivate every Christian to "purify himself as he is pure" (1 John 3:3). It is to this hope that Peter appeals when he urges mental vigilance and physical abstinence in those three texts examined earlier. His admonition to "gird up your minds, be completely abstinent" is followed immediately by the exhortation "set your hope upon the grace that is coming to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet 1:13).

For Christians who believe in the certainty and imminence of Christ's Return, the apostolic admonitions to abstain from intoxicating beverages assumes added significance: they represent a tangible response to God's invitation to make concrete preparation for the second coming of Christ.

## CONCLUSION

The Biblical teachings regarding the use of alcoholic beverages can be summarized in one sentence: the Scripture is consistent in teaching moderation in the use of wholesome, unfermented beverages and abstinence from the use of intoxicating fermented beverages. The practical implication of this conclusion can also be stated in one sentence: when we accept the Biblical teaching that drinking alcoholic beverages is not only physically harmful but also morally wrong, we will feel compelled not only to abstain ourselves from intoxicating substances, but also to help others to do likewise.

## NOTES ON CHAPTER VI

1. Rom 14:21; Eph 5:18; 1 Tim 3:8; 5:23; Titus 2:3; Rev 6:6; 14:8; 14:10; 16:19; 17:2; 18:3, 13; 19:15.
2. Ernest Gordon, *Christ, the Apostles and Wine. An Exegetical Study* (Philadelphia, 1947), p. 20.
3. As quoted by Eusebius, *Church History* 2, 23, 4, eds. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church* (Grand Rapids, 1971), vol. 1, p. 125.
4. An investigation into the lifestyle of such Jewish Christian sects as the Ebionites, the Nazarenes, the Elkesiates and the Encratites, might provide considerable support for abstinence from fermented wine in the Apostolic Church. Some information in this regard is provided by G. W. Samson, *The Divine Law as to Wines* (New York, 1880), pp. 197-210. The value of his research, however, is diminished by the lack of accurate references.
5. *The Interpreter's Bible* (New York, 1970), vol. 11, p. 714.
6. Ernest Gordon (n. 2), p. 31.
7. Aristotle, *Meteorologica* 387.b. 9-13.
8. Athenaeus, *Banquet* 2, 24.
9. Pliny, *Natural History* 14,18.
10. *Ibid.*, 23, 24.
11. Ellen G. White, "The Marriage in Cana of Galilee," *The Signs of the Times* (September 6, 1899): 6 .

12. See, for example, G. W. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford, 1961), s. v. "Nepho"; James Donnegan, *A New Greek and English Lexicon*, 1847 edition, s. v. "Nepho"; Thomas S. Green, *A Greek-English Lexicon to the New Testament*, 1892 edition, s. v. "Nepho"; E. Robinson, *A Greek and English Lexicon of the New Testament* (New York, 1850), s. v. "Nepho"; G. Abbott-Smith, *A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament*, 1937 edition, s. v. "Nepho"; Hesychius of Alexandria, *Hesychii Alexandri Lexicon*, 1858 edition, s. v. "Nephalios"; Demetrios C. S. Byzantios, *Lexicon Epitomou tes Ellenikes Glosses*, 1939 edition, s. v. "Nephalios."
13. Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 3, 12, 2, trans. William Whiston, Josephus Complete Works (Grand Rapids, 1974), p. 81.
14. Philo, *De Specialibus Legibus* 4, 183.
15. Adam Clarke, *The New Testament of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ* (New York, 1938), vol. 2, p. 869.
16. Henry G. Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 1968 edition, s. v. "paroinos."
17. Frederick R. Lees and Dawson Burns, *The Temperance Bible-Commentary* (London, 1894), p. 367.
18. Albert Barnes, *Notes, Explanatory and Practical on the Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, to Titus and to Philemon* (New York, 1873), p. 140.
19. *Lexicon Graeci Testamenti Alphabeticum*, 1660 edition, s. v. "Paroinos."
20. Henry G. Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 1968 edition, s. v. "Paroinios." The same meaning is given in the modern Greek-English Lexicon by G. Giannakopoulou and E. Siapenou, *Ariston Ellenoaggaikon Lexicon*, 1971 edition, s. v. "Paroinos."
21. Emphasis supplied.

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