

**SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON ISSUED BY
THE YOUTH TEMPERANCE EDUCATIONAL COUNCIL
& BAND OF HOPE UNION**

(Prepared by Senr. Major G. CARPENTER)

Aim of the Lesson: To expose one of man's great enemies and show what christian young people should do about it.

Bible Readings: Proverbs 23:20, 21 and 31, 32; Isaiah 5:11 & 22; Galatians 5:19-21; I Corinthians 6:10; I Corinthians 8:1-13—notice 13 specially.

All have seen the attractive pictures outside hotels. Splendid young men and attractive girls engaged in some popular sport—well-dressed people entering a splendidly appointed place of entertainment. The purpose of these pictures is to give the impression that alcoholic drink is necessary and desirable for refreshment, for strength and for social custom. Such slogans as, "Whatever the pleasure, beer adds to it", accompany great posters on which it may be, a pleasant family scene is depicted. Everyone appears healthy and happy and their happiness, the poster suggests, is increased by the glasses of liquor which prominently appear.

Let us turn away from these pretty pictures and ask the young police surgeon of Victoria what he has to say. In 1956, he tells us, there were 582 people killed on the roads of his State—375 of them as a result of drink. Sixty out of every hundred of the 13,000 injured on the roads that year in Victoria were because of liquor. A pretty picture indeed. We think of the sorrowing homes—the pain-tortured victims in hospitals and turn again to the smiling faces on the liquor posters. And what of that man in his thirties—well-educated, good family, a one-time top ranking sportsman but now an alcoholic. An alcoholic is a person who has been drawn by an almost irresistible power beyond drinking for pleasure. He or she cannot stop, and finish a bout dirty, weak, having spent perhaps nights lying out under the stars—their nerves, to use their own words "all shot to bits". There are 300,000 of these people—these tragic, defeated advertisements of the drink trade in Australia. There are 3,300,000 of them in the United States of America. As we look at one of these wretched people and talk to their loved ones, we will no doubt feel that the pretty liquor advertisements do not tell all the truth. Of course the liquor trade is out to make money and cannot allow themselves to be over troubled by the people who "do not know when they have had enough". The sad thing is that when they know that, drink has robbed them of the power to stop.

Nowhere in the Bible are we commanded not to drink alcoholic beverages. Many of us know nice people who drink. Some of us know that people who seem quite kind and good, drink sometimes. Even some people who are church members drink in moderation. What then is the young christian to do when he goes out into life—shall he follow the example of these people who seem so kind and nice? Let us never forget that other people take notice of what WE do even though we do not always realise this. There was a young man in prison who wrote to a church friend of his. He told how he was brought up in a home where drink was regarded as a great enemy and kept out of the house. One night he was at a party where drink was served. What was he to do? He did not want to offend his host and yet he had been brought up to regard drink as dangerous stuff. He was about to say no thank you, when he saw his friend with a glass in his hand. The friend was older than he and he concluded that if this good man could drink with safety then it must be alright. He took his first glass and from that moment he fell under the spell of the demon drink. Now he is writing from the condemned cell. The end of his road is a crime which is taking him to the gallows. Here then we see two ways of living. I can say, there is no commandment that I must not drink. Drink does

some people no harm. Lots of people drink then I may as well do the same as the others. On the other hand as I look at the Lord Jesus I see that He did not live to please Himself but had the wellbeing of others as the ruling purpose of His life. This for us too will be true christian living when we deny ourselves something we might have in order that others will not come into danger through our example.

Things to do:

Join the Band of Hope Union.

Prepare a scrapbook—pages on the left to have drink slogans and advertisements and pictures. On the other—the right hand page, collect and paste in cutting from the press and copy in details of damage which drink does. See what a comparison the pages make! And take this comparison to heart.

LESSON FOR OLDER GROUPS.

Aim of the Lesson: To show how total abstinence may be a service to Christ.

Bible Readings: Same as for younger groups. Also Romans 14:13-22 & 15:1.

Introductory: The drinking of alcoholic beverages is part of the pattern of life. It has a very long history and its beginnings are shrouded in the mists of antiquity. There are wide differences of view about drinking even among christian people. We have to discover for ourselves a rule by which to govern our own conduct in this matter. If we are to be abstainers it needs to be for better reasons than simply that drinking may be dangerous for me—maybe a way to poverty for me—may ruin my home—may damage my life. Let us consider this matter further.

Now read the lesson comments as for the junior classes:—"All have seen the attractive pictures—etc.—" to the end.

Things to do:

Class discussion on what we know of the drink industry. If drinking is a part of every day life for the majority, is not the drink industry doing a useful service to the community? Does the drink industry by its concern to make profit lead people to disaster who but for advertising might remain harmless social drinkers? Or—Could a christian own shares in the drink industry with a good conscience?

Join the Band of Hope Union.

Prepare the scrap book as suggested for the junior groups.

Conclusion. From the first to the last the Bible teaches that we have some responsibility for other people. We are taught that we can only serve Christ as we serve Him in serving those round about us. He taught us—"Inasmuch as ye did good, or evil to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me". Let us consider as a slogan for life in thinking of the drink question and the influence that we too may have on others—Romans 15:1. "We that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak and not to please ourselves." As this continues in v. 3—"For even Christ pleased not Himself." In considering then the great needs of other people in the matter of drink, before our own wishes or those of our friends we may truly serve the Lord Jesus Christ by our total abstinence.

Note for teacher. The Bible does not specifically forbid slavery—indeed it shows christians owning slaves. However, the outworking of the gospel makes the owning of slaves unthinkable. The same position may be taken in the fact that the Bible does not forbid drinking. The outworking of the gospel of love leads to total abstinence.