

## THE SOWER

A Weekly Department of Religious and Secular Thought Contributed by REV. JAMES A. TURNER, Pastor, M. E. Church, Patton, Pa.

### SOME REASONS WHY.

It is interesting to know what intelligent, cultured, young people are thinking and saying, today, and so we are giving our column this week, to a statement that a representative of the better element of the youth of the land made recently at a convention of Young People at New Westminster, British Columbia, on September 20, 1938. This statement is by Warren Oliver, member of Williscroft "Y", Ladner, Canada, and is as follows:

Tonight I should like to tell you why I, and a host of other young people, intend to steer clear of alcohol.

As a young person, I want a good time, and so far I've managed to have a perfectly marvelous time without alcohol for a companion. It seems to me that the prospect of a hangover the next day would be a mighty wet blanket at any gay party. I don't want, nor do I intend, to have to pay for my fun with two days of alkalinizing—or whatever it is that clears one's head after a drinking party. I haven't the time. I'd be missing a lot of other good times, and wasting time that might be put to profitable use.

I have heard people say that they just couldn't have a good time without a little liquor in the punch to liven up the party. Personally, if I were to find myself so bored with life and with my friends that I had to supply artificial pep to make a success of my parties, I'd call myself a most inadequate hostess, and take a course on entertaining, to learn a few new games and stunts. (That's a GOOD one, girlie, and well put! Perhaps the reason some people guzzle liquor to have a good time is because they have no wits when they are sober.)

They say that a little alcohol makes a group of people more companionable, more at ease; mostly the guests will talk more than they mean to and tell more than they should, but nobody is really listening anyway. A very pleasant, inspiring evening would be had by all, I suppose! Be that as it may, it's not my idea of a good time. (Nor is it the idea of anyone else who believes that you can have a good time without descending to alcoholic drooling.)

In the words of Lady Astor, "When I'm having a good time I want to know it. I don't want my brain muddled with alcohol."

We young people can find popularity and comradeship in better, safer pursuits. A high school boy wrote to Dr. Daniel A. Poling as follows: "I am 18 years old. I have never been in a saloon in my life. Honestly, I am so intoxicated with life and the baseball team I am captain of—and my best girl—that I don't need anything stronger to pep up my jaded nerves. But every time I pick up a newspaper, a magazine, or a modern novel, I find references to the 'dissipated, dissolute, degenerate youth of your land.' I don't like to be classed in any such category and I know a hundred fellows who feel the same way."

Thinking young people have too much respect for themselves to risk being classed in any such category. In these days when keeping well and physically fit is so strongly emphasized in our schools, a word to the wise is sufficient to keep young people from poisoning their systems with alcohol. Aside from the great harm that this poison is known to do to our bodies, how much self respect could I possess, if every time I looked in the mirror, I saw a tipsy, bleary-eyed drunkard?

"I have to live with myself, and so, I want to be fit for myself to know. I want to be able, as days go by, Always to look myself straight in the eye.

I don't want to stand with the setting sun, And hate myself for the things I've done."

And, too, I want the respect of other people. The good opinion of others is of paramount importance to a young person. We want to be respected. They say that young people on the whole are very conservative; that its the older folk who don't give two hoots of what others think of them! We young people, just venturing on the road of adulthood, find there's a lot to learn, and "caution" is an admirable byword. We have our house of life to build, and we want all the world to see a goodly house in the making.

Young people as well as old have an effect on others. We may be going along pretty smoothly, when suddenly we realize that we are influencing other lives. It's a shock at first, especially for those of us who work with younger children, to find that no matter what we say, it's what we do that teaches, or unteaches, the lesson we are trying to drive home. As the L. T. L.'s say in their song:

"Simply telling isn't teaching, Folks watch what you do."

This summer it was my privilege to be a leader of 13-year-old girls at C. G. I. T. Camp. For ten days I ate, worked, and played with about a dozen of these impressionable girls. During several meals I noticed that one girl seemed to have trouble handling her knife and fork. It turned out that she had always manipulated her fork with her left hand, but because she saw me using my right hand, she felt that she must do likewise. We are watched, at such a camp, every minute of the day, and how we want to be the very best influence for those girls.

How could I, then, be an example to other young people, if I indulged in alcoholic beverages?

Here is a slant on this question that may be a new one to some of you. It was new to me this summer when Mrs. Williams presented it to a number of us. Believe it or not, you are someone's hero. No matter who you are, someone thinks you're mighty fine. You are looked up to as a pattern to follow. In fact, you're on a pedestal. I said at the beginning, that as a young person, I want a good time. To this I shall add, that as a Christian young person, I want the right kind of a good time. I can truthfully say that in the church I have had my best times, and have found my best friends.

What are my obligations as a follower of Christ? The great Commandment of Jesus, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy strength . . . and thy neighbor as thyself," gives no place to alcohol. Under this law, the whole self, body, mind, soul, is required for the full manifestations of love to God. The body is the Temple of the Holy Spirit, in which God is to be glorified. It ought not, therefore, to be subjected to any risk of impairment; is full strength is to be conserved and developed that in perfect self-mastery it may be used in loving service to him. Thus our personal habits are to be deliberately determined by the principle: "Whether ye eat or drink or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

Paul said, "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor." Here then are tests by which our personal attitudes toward the use of drink and the liquor business may be decided. Can they be retained "to the glory of God?" Do they "work ill" to our neighbor?

In these days when innumerable signboards tell us to buy cigarettes to aid digestion, and when newspaper advertisements reveal to us the amazing fact that liquor steadies our nerves, we are hopelessly bewildered unless we have the mental and physical power to reason through this question of Temperance. Sir Walter Scott once wrote, "When a man has not a good reason for doing a thing, he has a good reason for letting it alone."

How great a value do we place upon these God-given lives of ours! Rich precious blood was shed upon a cross that we might have them. Are we, then, to fritter them away, drinking cocktails? Let us rather "present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service."

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