Pillars of the Truth

Article #20

*Does One Alcoholic Drink Constitute Sin?*

Wesley Simons

DOES ONE ALCOHOLIC DRINK CONSTITUTE SIN?

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I was at the church building studying when the phone rang. I answered the phone and a man asked, “Are you the preacher who answered the question on social drinking on the TV program, *Know Your Bible*?” I told him that I did not answer that question. He was upset that the preacher had taught that social drinking was a sin.

I assured him that if I had answered the question then I would have pointed out that social drinking is a sin. He wanted to know if I thought one drink would damn one’s soul. I told him: “Yes!” I also pointed out that he believed the same thing. He stated that he did not believe that one drink would damn one’s soul. I said, “Sir, it amazes me that you do not know what you believe.” This somewhat shocked the man. He dogmatically denied believing that one drink would damn one’s soul.

I decided to prove to him that he believed one drink would damn a soul. I said, “Sir, if you believe in social drinking, then you must know your toleration point.” He stated that he did. I asked him what it was. He said four drinks (I have forgotten the exact number, so we will use one to make the point). I asked him, “What happens if you take drink number five?” He said it would be sin and he would be damned. I said, “See, I told you that you believed that one drink would damn your soul.” You believe that it is drink number five and believe that it is drink number one. Therefore, we both believe that one drink will indeed condemn a man. We need to find out which drink it is that damns one!

I told him what I needed from him was Bible authority for taking the first four drinks. He tried to use Jesus turning water into “intoxicating” wine in John chapter two. I asked him if he was teaching his children to drink. He said, “No!” I asked him why? He said that he did not want them to do that. I asked him if he was trying to bring his children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. He answered, “Yes.” I replied, “If you are trying to bring your children up in the teachings of our Lord, then why not teach them to drink alcoholic beverages since (according to you) Jesus turned water into intoxicating wine.” If Jesus authorizes social drinking, then this is what we ought to teach our children, but he knew

this was wrong and would not want his children involved in it.

I asked him if he would offer those who come to visit him a drink of whiskey? He said, “No.” I

again chided him for not teaching his fellowman what he claims the **Lord authorized. He seemed** **to be ashamed of what he believed that Jesus** **taught.** He did not want his children drinking. He did not want his neighbors drinking, but he said, Jesus said it would be OK. Is his wisdom greater than our Lord’s? What nonsense!

There is not a man living who knows his toleration point because it varies (depending on what one has eaten, body size, etc. A rehabilitation doctor told me that there was not a man living who knew his toleration point). Not only that, but a man would have to commit sin trying to find his toleration point. He would try one day and get drunk and say that amount is too much and over and over he would have to repeat the process. When a man takes one drink, he is one drink drunk. If not, why not? The Bible is right:

“Wine *is* a mocker, strong drink *is* raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise” (Pro. 20:1). God is trying to appeal to our minds (Mark 16:15; John 6:44-45; 8:32). Therefore, we have a God-given obligation to be sober-minded.