

The Beer Can **By Kent Heaton**

It was lying on the side of the road on the corner to my house. A single beer can discarded as a piece of trash by a person who had used its contents to fill a pleasure and then thrown out the window. I have seen hundreds of discarded cans and this one was no different with the exception of what it represented at that moment. The appeal of its contents had caused a person to purchase it and then consume the momentary feeling of pleasure. When the can was emptied, it had no use and was carelessly thrown out for someone else to pick up. It was empty. It had no use. It had lost its appeal. It was but for a moment. It was worthless.

Man has always sought for the momentary pleasures to fill his void. Looking for the appeal of alcohol man seeks out these cans of vipers poison and drinks his fill and while finding a sense of satisfaction for the moment realizes that it is only for a moment. His life is like the can he threw away – emptied, rejected, little use, shallow and unfulfilled. Lives have been destroyed because of intoxicating drink. Families are torn apart daily by its presence in the home. Young people live with consequences of their actions through the use of alcohol for the rest of their lives. As Herman Melville wrote in “Moby Dick,” it is truly a “demon.”

The wise man wrote in Proverbs 23:29-35, “Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaints? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who linger long at the wine, those who go in search of mixed wine. Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly; at the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper. Your eyes see strange things, and your heart will utter perverse things. Yes, you will be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea, or like one who lies at the top of the mast, saying, ‘They have struck me, but I was not hurt; they have beaten me, but I did not feel it. When shall I awake, that I may seek another drink?’ “People of God have been shown by the Lord that alcohol has no value in their lives and no purpose. The great tragedy of its use is the end result – like a discarded can on the side of the road.

The appeal of momentary pleasure has driven many to the basement of alcohol’s deceit. There is no value in following a life of drunkenness or even flirting with the dangers of drinking as many do in what they refer to as “social drinking.” That makes as much sense as “social fornication.” The appeal of the Lord is for His people to be “obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, ‘Be holy, for I am holy’” (1 Peter 1:14-16). Peter quotes from Leviticus 11:44 where the appeal of God to the people is for them to “sanctify” themselves before Him. One cannot sanctify themselves with a beer in hand.

Someone will pick the beer can up and throw it away. It will be left to families to pick up the pieces of shattered lives. Many who have found themselves in the slavery of alcohol will find their lives thrown on the side of the road as nothing more than an empty life. Christ has the answer and it is found in His love, His mercy, His forgiveness and His strength to overcome. He is the way out of sin, He is the only truth one can find about sin and He is the only one who can give life to empty lives (John 14:6). His path leads to the Father and to salvation. Don’t throw your life away. Be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18).

True Worship Starts With Me **By Dee Bowman**

I will take home something if I bring something.
I will get something out of it if I give something to it.
I will be edified by others if I seek to edify them.
I will be encouraged if I am first an encourager.
I will be uplifted if I lift up others.
The Lord will be closer to me if I draw closer to Him.
Worship, even in public, is a private affair. It starts with me.

The Slippery Slope of Worry

“Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble” (Matt. 6:34).

We, as frail human beings, often envision and worry about things which most of the time will never occur. There is a story about a man standing on a crowded bus. The young man standing next to him asked, “What time is it?” The man refused to reply. The young man moved on. The man’s friend, sensing something was wrong, asked, “Why were you so discourteous to the young man asking for the time?” The man answered, “If I had given him the time of day, next he would want to know where I am going, and then we would talk about our interests, and if we did that, he would invite himself to my house for dinner, and if he did, he would meet my lovely daughter, and if he met her, they would both fall in love, and I don’t want my daughter marrying someone who can’t afford a watch.”

Let us not worry about something that might occur in the future. We have enough evils in the present without adding the burdens of tomorrow.

Defying the Wolves

“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves” (Matt. 7:15). “For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them” (Acts 20:29-30).

The May 1987 edition of the National Geographic included a feature about arctic wolfs. Author L. David Mech described how a seven-member pack had targeted several musk-oxen calves who were guarded by eleven adults. As the wolves approached their quarry, the musk-oxen bunched in an impenetrable semicircle, their deadly rear hooves facing out, and the calves remained safe during a long standoff with the enemy. But then a single ox broke rank, and the herd scattered into nervous little groups. A skirmish ensued, and the adults finally fled in panic, leaving the calves to the mercy of the predators. Not a single calf survived.

Both Jesus and Paul warned of grievous wolves. Wolves cannot destroy the local congregation as long as each member holds rigidly to the truth. It is only when members break ranks that many become easy prey.

Both Sides of the Fence

“He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad” (Matt. 12:30). At the outbreak of the Civil War, a certain individual could not decide which cause to support, the North or the South. He had friends on both sides; thus, he decided to be neutral. He wore a gray jacket and blue trousers, thereby dressing for both the Confederacy and the Union. One day the neutral man was caught in the middle of a skirmish between the two armies. He stood up and shouted that he was neutral in this fight and expected to be allowed to leave the field before the battle closed in on him. However, Union sharpshooters, seeing the gray jacket, riddled it with bullets. And, Confederate marksmen, seeing the blue pants, filled them with lead. We have no way of knowing if the above story is true or not; however, the point is well taken. In important issues one cannot be neutral. He must make his stand one way or the other.