

# Women and Wine

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Proverbs 31: 3 - 4



“Do not give your strength to women, nor your ways to that which destroys kings. It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, nor for princes intoxicating drink.”  
Proverbs 31: 3 – 4.



# I. Introduction

Proverbs 31 mentions three essential aspects of an effective leadership (text written to king Lemuel)

1. The importance of a strict abstinence regarding the consumption of alcohol.

(31: 4 – 7)

2. The defense of the poor, needy, and weak.  
(31: 8 – 9).

3. The valuable influence of a virtuous wife  
(31: 10 – 31)





## WINE

"I would not put a  
thief in my mouth  
to steal my brains."

William

Shakespeare, *Othello*



## WINE

"Negative freedom is freedom from: freedom from oppression, whether it's a colonial power or addiction to alcohol oppressing you. You need to be freed from negative freedom.

Positive freedom is freedom for, freedom to be. And that's what's routinely ignored today."

Os Guinness



## WINE

"Alcohol doesn't console, it doesn't fill up anyone's psychological gaps, all it replaces is the lack of God. It doesn't comfort man. On the contrary, it encourages him in his folly, it transports him to the supreme regions where he is master of his own destiny."

Marguerite Duras,  
French writer.



## WINE

"Recovery from addiction requires hard work, a proper attitude and learning skills to stay sober, not drinking alcohol or using other drugs. Successful drug recovery or alcohol recovery involves changing attitudes, acquiring knowledge, and developing skills to meet the many challenges of sobriety."

Dennis Daley, PhD motivational quote





## WINE

"Man was born free,  
yet everywhere he is in  
chains."

Jean-Jacques Rousseau





## WINE

"There is no greater gift than realizing the constant presence of the Divine and His Absolute Power to create and restore all things."

Marta Mrotek,

*Miracle in Progress:  
A Handbook for Holistic  
Recovery*



## DEFENSE OF THE POOR

"Like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man-made and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings."

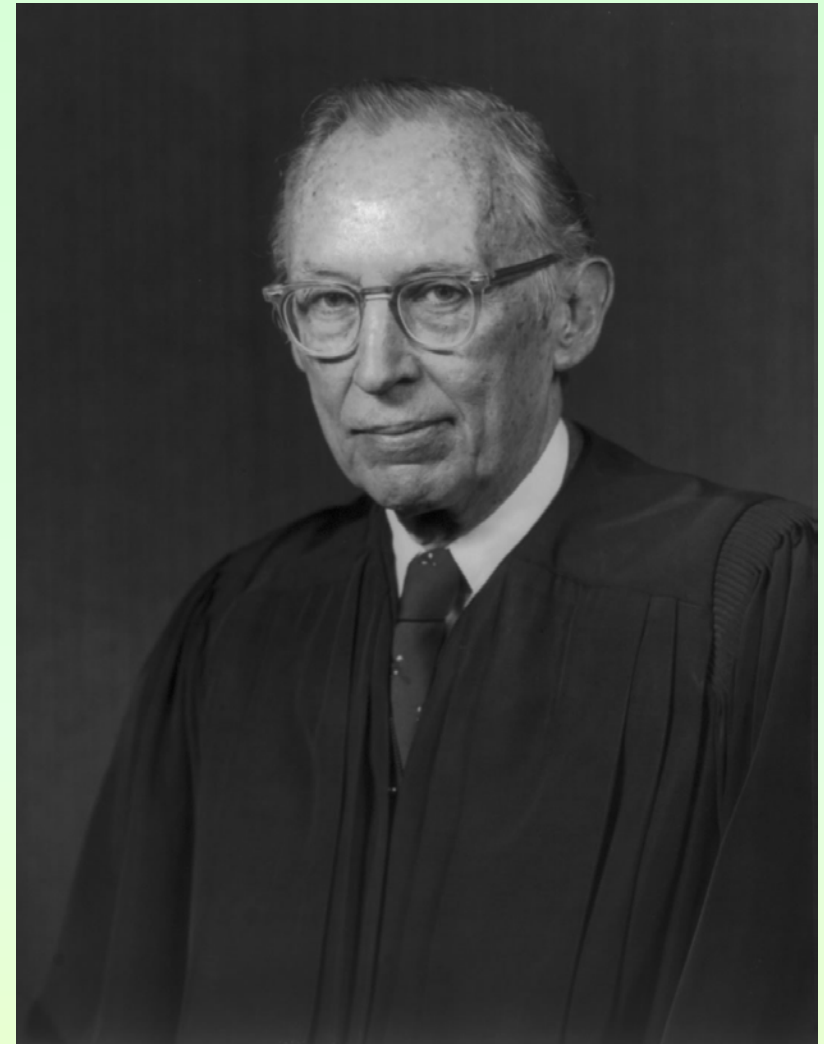
Nelson Mandela, speaking at the launch of Britain's Make Poverty History campaign



## DEFENSE OF THE POOR

"Equal justice under law is not merely a caption on the facade of the Supreme Court building, it is perhaps the most inspiring ideal of our society. It is one of the ends for which our entire legal system exists...it is fundamental that justice should be the same, in substance and availability, without regard to economic status."

Lewis Powell, Jr., U.S. Supreme Court Justice



## DEFENSE OF THE POOR

"This is our special duty,  
that if anyone specially  
needs our help, we should  
give him such help to the  
utmost of our power."

Cicero





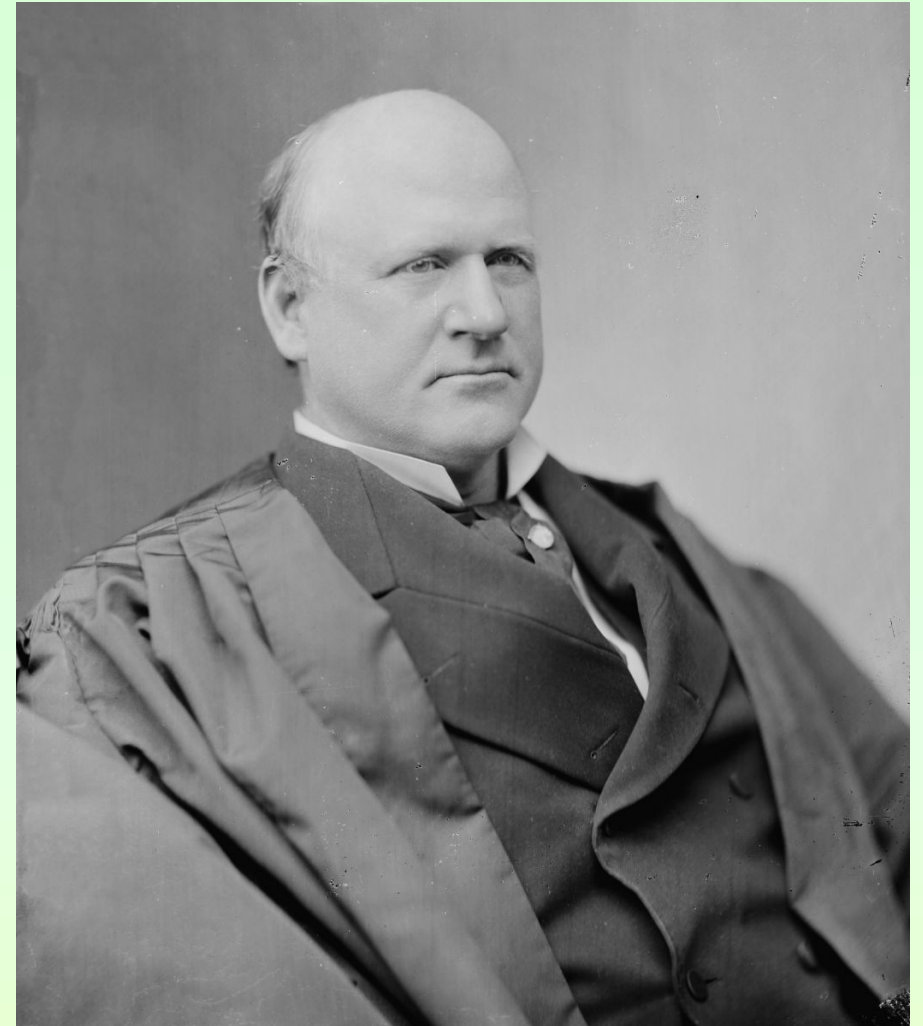
## DEFENSE OF THE POOR

"Where justice is denied, where poverty is enforced, neither persons nor property will be safe."  
Frederick Douglass



## DEFENSE OF THE POOR

"Our Constitution is color-blind . . .  
In respect of civil rights, all citizens are  
equal before the law. The humblest is the  
peer of the most powerful."  
John Marshall Harlan



## WOMEN

“When you have a godly husband, a godly wife, children who respect their parents and who are loved by their parents, who provide for those children their physical and spiritual and material needs, lovingly, you have the ideal family.”

Jerry Falwell





## WOMEN

"It's important to have a husband that lives and believes the same way you do. Otherwise, you're asking for problems."

J.E.B. Spredemann, *An Unforgivable Secret*





## WOMEN

“Men marry women with the hope they will never change. Women marry men with the hope they will change. Invariably they are both disappointed.”  
Albert Einstein



## WOMEN

"We were made for love, for sweet surrender. Marriage, in this as in so many other ways, was specifically designed to enable us to fulfill our heart's desire, which is to acquiesce graciously in all that we were meant to be and to do."

Mike Mason, *The Mystery of Marriage* (Sisters, Oregon: Multnomah, 1985), p. 185.



“God Himself gave Adam a companion. He provided “an help meet for him”—a helper corresponding to him—one who was fitted to be his companion, and who could be one with him in love and sympathy. Eve was created from a rib taken from the side of Adam, signifying that she was not to control him as the head, nor to be trampled under his feet as an inferior, but to stand by his side as an equal, to be loved and protected by him. A part of man, bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, she was his second self, showing the close union and the affectionate attachment that should exist in this relation. “For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it.” Ephesians 5:29. “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one.” Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 46.



# II. Context





## Book of Proverbs – Structure

|              |                 |  |
|--------------|-----------------|--|
| <b>INTRO</b> | 1: 1 – 1: 7     | The Fear of the Lord for young man:<br>Purpose of the Book, First lesson                                   |
| <b>1</b>     | 1: 8 – 9: 18    | Wisdom 101 (Introduction to Wisdom)  |
| <b>2</b>     | 10: 1 – 24: 34  | Wise Children (Proverbs for the Youth)   |
| <b>3</b>     | 25: 1 – 29: 27  | Wise People (Proverbs for general public)  |
| <b>4</b>     | 30: 1 – 30: 33  | Wisdom of Agur   |
| <b>5</b>     | 31: 1 – 31: 9   | Wisdom of King Lemuel's Mother   |
| <b>CONCL</b> | 31: 10 – 31: 31 | Finding the Virtuous Wife with the Fear of the Lord<br>Conclusion of the Book, Last lesson before marriage |

The message of the king Lemuel begins with an statement of value given to children (son of my vows). In fact, the Old Testament concept of education cannot be fully understood if we forget that “children are a gift from the Lord, they are a reward from Him” (Psalm 127: 3, NLT). And it is the preciousness of children that places education as the priority #1 in the life of parents. If we cease to teach children about the importance of following God’s path, they will choose very soon their own way and miss a meaningful life, while losing eternity.



## Proverbs 31, Structure

|               |                |         |   |
|---------------|----------------|---------|---|
| Introduction  | I              | 1 - 2   | King Lemuel's Word: Preciousness of children      |
| Women         | A              | 3       | Wrong relationship with women can be destructive  |
| Wine          | B <sub>1</sub> | 4       | Alcohol is not for Kings and Princes              |
|               | B <sub>2</sub> | 5       | Alcohol helps to forget the law and the justice   |
|               | B <sub>1</sub> | 6       | Irony: Alcohol is for those who are perishing     |
|               | B <sub>2</sub> | 7       | Irony: Alcohol helps to forget poverty and misery |
| Equal Justice | C <sub>1</sub> | 8       | Open the mouth for the Speechless                 |
|               | C <sub>2</sub> | 9       | Open the mouth for the Poor                       |
| Women         | A'             | 10 – 31 | Finding a virtuous woman                          |

We don't know who was the king Lemuel. There are several options, but the most plausible is that it is one of the names given to Salomon in this book to Salomon. His mother, Bathsheba, did everything to prepare himself for the challenging task of being the king. And the meaning of the name (Lemuel is: consecrated to God, belonging to God), shows the absolute priority of the king's heart: consecration to God preclude consecration to alcohol, corruption, or immorality.





In v. 6 and 7 Lemuel is using irony, in order to underline how dangerous the friendship with wine can be. This text is not a promotion of moderation. The message is clear: wine is for those who are perishing.



In v. 8 and 9 the mother of Lemuel is insisting on the importance of equal access to the justice for all, especially for those who are defenseless: poor, needy, speechless... Defending those who are weak is defending the entire humankind.



# III. Three main dangers for an effective leadership: women, wine, and injustice





## Leader's liability

"Whoever destroys a soul, it is considered as if he destroyed an entire world. And whoever saves a life, it is considered as if he saved an entire world."

Mishnah Sanhedrin  
4:9; Babylonian Talmud



## 1. Weakened by the wrong relationships to women

“Do not give your strength to women”

The book of Proverbs is not against a healthy relationship between a man and a woman in an appropriate context. The chapter 5 promotes the beauty of the faithfulness, and a renewed joy of sharing without ceasing the words and gestures of love within the marriage relationship. “Drink water from your own cistern... Rejoice with the wife of your youth...” (5: 15 – 20).

The problem is more on the level of the unfaithfulness. Giving strength to women means entering regularly into new relationships with them. It is working against God’s project during the Creation, where He created Adam and only one Eve. Not hundreds.

Being attracted to other women is not necessarily beneficial for inner peace (increased guilt), for emotional satisfaction, or for the pleasure of eyes. The item #d confirms the physical aspects as not essential.

- a. 48% of men rated emotional dissatisfaction as the primary reason they cheated.
- b. 66% of cheating men report feeling guilt during the affair.
- c. 77% of cheating men have a good friend who cheated.
- d. Only 12% of cheating men said their mistress was more physically attractive than their wife.

Gary Neumann, The Truth about Cheating





"We live in an era where there is constant change, and we get bored easily, we need more excitement, more stimulation, and so many times men or women go find it in another relationship, instead of making their own relationship more exciting and finding other ways to show love and ignite their passion. And so most of the time, they end up lonely.

Commitment, relationship, love takes time, and it takes dedication, and it's all worth it, because you need to love and feel loved to feel alive and be happy. And if you don't know how to maintain and to show your love for the other person just search about it. You have all the information in front of you, and we live to learn, not be stubborn in our ignorance. Not everyone had a good example in front of them, and so you need to learn yourself in order to make your relationship work. If you love enough the other person you will do the effort to make it work."

Nancy Ebrahim

"All good is hard. All evil is easy.  
Dying, losing, cheating, and  
mediocrity are easy. Stay away from  
easy." Scott Alexander



"My husband admitted he was in love with her, but he said he loved me. Translated, that means, I want everything. Translated, that means, I don't want to hurt you yet. Translated, that means, I don't know what to do, give me time. Why, why should I give you time? What time are you giving me? I am in a cell waiting to be called for execution. I loved him and I was in love with him. I didn't use language to make a war-zone of my heart. 'You're so simple and good,' he said, brushing the hair from my face. He meant, Your emotions are not complex like mine. My dilemma is poetic. But there was no dilemma. He no longer wanted me, but he wanted our life. Eventually, when he had been away with her for a few days and returned restless and conciliatory, I decided not to wait in my cell any longer. I went to where he was sleeping in another room and I asked him to leave."

Jeanette Winterson



“Every student needs to understand the relation between plain living and high thinking. It rests with us individually to decide whether our lives shall be controlled by the mind or by the body. The youth must, each for himself, make the choice that shapes his life; and no pains should be spared that he may understand the forces with which he has to deal, and the influences which mold character and destiny.”  
Ellen G. White, Education, p. 202.



## 2. Weakened by the consumption of Alcohol

"it is not for kings to drink wine,  
nor for princes intoxicating drink."

Kings and princes has the duty of  
maintaining their health and the  
capacity of discernment at the  
best level possible.



“In a small informal study, New Scientist journalist Andy Coghlan finds that moderate drinkers may gain significant health benefits from just a month of abstinence from alcohol. Coghlan ginned up the study by recruiting nine colleagues, self-described as “normal drinkers,” to participate in an annual abstinence challenge held in the United Kingdom: “Janopause.” Within the study group, some participants continued to drink normally while others abstained completely from alcohol for the month. Surprisingly, Coghlan found results that contradicted the opinions of many liver experts, who maintain that abstinence among moderate drinkers confers no benefit to health, The Daily Mail reported Sunday. Clinicians at Royal Free Hospital in London who tested the participants found that liver fat levels fell by 15 percent on average among those abstaining from booze, indicating recovery on the part of the liver. Those who quit alcohol for the five-week study period lost 3.3 pounds on average while cholesterol and glucose levels dropped by five percent and 15 percent, respectively. As an ancillary benefit, the teetotallers also reported feeling more alert at work. “If someone had a health product that did all that in one month, they would be raking it in,” liver health expert Kevin Moore said.”

Medical Daily, January 5, 2014.

"Results from a large UK-based study found that drinking even low-to-moderate levels of alcohol -- less than 3 drinks per day -- can increase a woman's risk of developing certain cancers. In the Million Women Study, University of Oxford researchers tracked cancer incidence and alcohol use in nearly 1,300,000 middle-aged women in the United Kingdom. The average age of the women in the study was 55, and about 3 out of 4 identified themselves as drinkers. Among these women, the average alcohol intake was about one drink per day. Nearly 69,000 women were diagnosed with cancer over the study period, which had a follow-up of just over 7 years. Women who drank were found to be at increased risk of cancers of the oral cavity, pharynx (throat), esophagus, larynx (voice box), rectum, liver, and breast. And the risk for these cancers increased with the number of drinks a woman consumed, regardless of the type of alcohol she drank. Based on these findings, the researchers estimated that in the UK, alcohol accounts annually for about 11% of all breast cancers, 22% of liver cancers, 9% of rectal cancers, and 25% of cancers of the oral cavity, pharynx, esophagus, and larynx. Women who drank and were current smokers were at an even higher risk for cancers of the oral cavity, pharynx, esophagus, and larynx."

Rebecca Viksnins Snowden, American Cancer Society, February 25, 2009.



We need to be careful not to create a culture of prohibitions: 'Don't do this or that'. As John Stuart Mill mentioned in his book 'On Liberty':

"Christian morality (so called) has all the characters of a reaction; it is, in great part, a protest against Paganism. Its ideal is negative rather than positive; passive rather than action; innocence rather than Nobleness; Abstinence from Evil, rather than energetic Pursuit of Good: in its precepts (as has been well said) 'thou shalt not' predominates unduly over 'thou shalt.'"

However, what John Stuart Mill doesn't say is that there may be positive and negative philosophic or ethic values. It is impossible to pursue exclusively positive aspects of a reality, while ignoring the negative side of things. This is why true values promote what is good and warn about what has to be avoided. And this is the purpose of the Book of Proverbs.

“Remember that you are daily weaving for yourself a web of habits. If these habits are according to the Bible rule, you are going every day in steps heavenward, growing in grace and the knowledge of the truth; and like Daniel, God will give you wisdom as He gave to him. You will not choose the paths of selfish gratification. Practice habits of strictest temperance, and be careful to keep sacred the laws which God has established to govern your physical being... The better you observe the laws of health, the more clearly can you discern temptations, and resist them, and the more clearly can you discern the value of eternal things.”

Ellen G. White, *The Youth's Instructor*, August 25, 1886, 135.{Te 188.3}

### 3. Weakened by unfair judgments

“Open your mouth for the speechless, in the cause of all who are appointed to die. Open your mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy.”



This is how Elie Wiesel, Nobel Peace Prize in 1986 reacted to the injustice. Acting and writing to defeat it. He wrote 57 books after his experience in Buchenwald and Auschwitz.

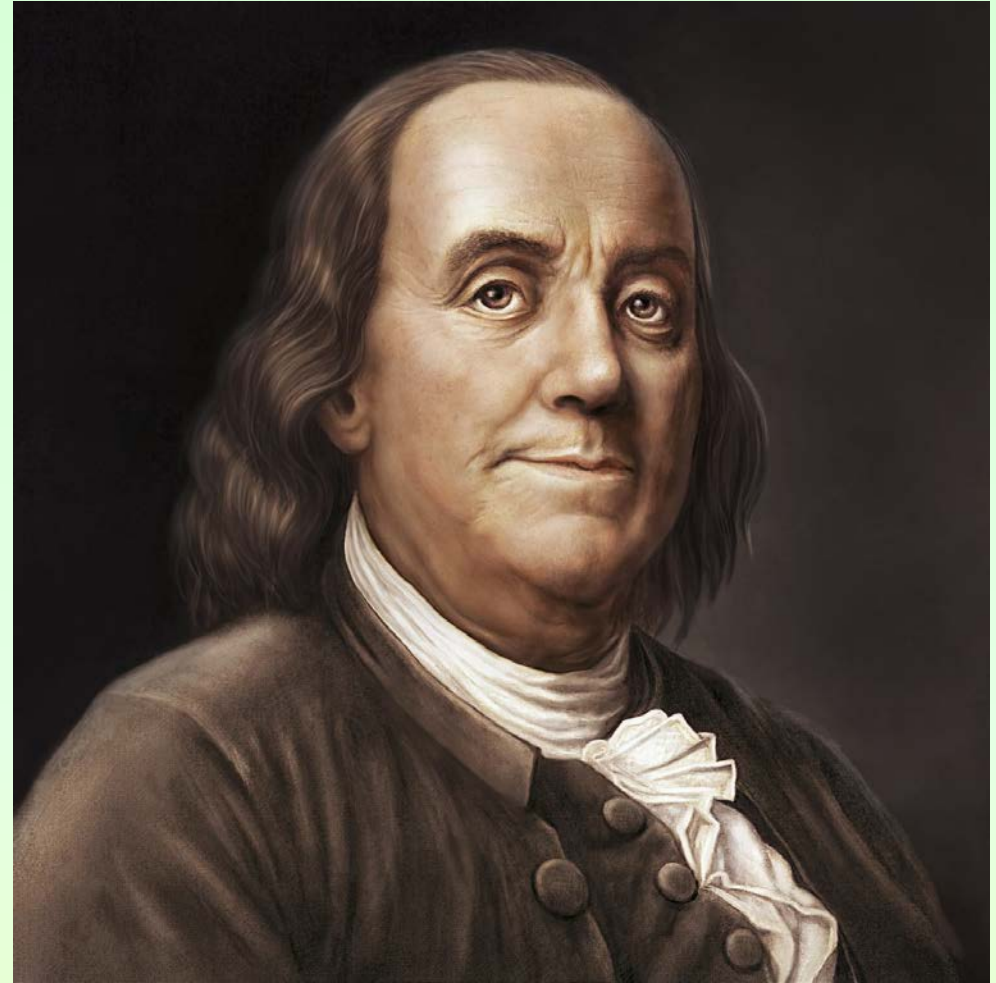
“There may be times when we are powerless to prevent injustice, but there must never be a time when we fail to protest.”





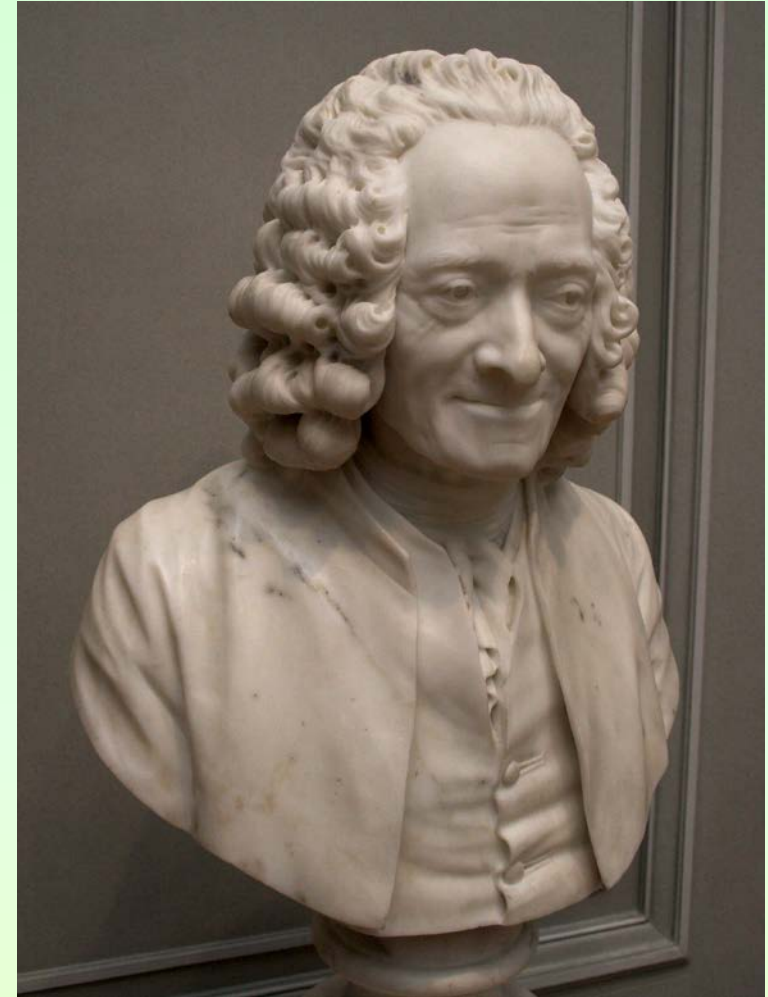
“Justice will not be served until  
those who are unaffected are as  
outraged as those who are.”

Benjamin Franklin



"It is better to risk saving a guilty person  
than to condemn an innocent one."

Voltaire, *Zadig*



“Where justice is denied, where poverty is enforced, where ignorance prevails, and where any one class is made to feel that society is an organized conspiracy to oppress, rob and degrade them, neither persons nor property will be safe.”

Frederick Douglass



# V. Conclusion





“God celebrated the first marriage. Thus the institution has for its originator the Creator of the universe. “Marriage is honorable” (Hebrews 13:4); it was one of the first gifts of God to man, and it is one of the two institutions that, after the Fall, Adam brought with him beyond the gates of Paradise. When the divine principles are recognized and obeyed in this relation, marriage is a blessing; it guards the purity and happiness of the race, it provides for man’s social needs, it elevates the physical, the intellectual, and the moral nature.”

Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 46.

“They say they will love, comfort, honor each other to the end of their days. They say they will cherish each other and be faithful to each other always. They say they will do these things not just when they feel like it, but even — for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health — when they don't feel like it at all. In other words, the vows they make at a marriage could hardly be more extravagant. They give away their freedom. They take on themselves each other's burdens. They bind their lives together in ways that are even more painful to unbind emotionally, humanly, than they are to unbind legally. The question is, what do they get in return?

They get each other in return. Assuming they have any success at all in keeping their rash, quixotic promises, they never have to face the world quite alone again. There will always be the other to talk to, to listen to. If they're lucky, even after the first passion passes, they still have a kindness and a patience to depend on, a chance to be patient and kind.”

Frederic Buechner, *Beyond Words*.

“Marriage is sanctified when it is cherished and honored in holiness. That union is not merely between husband and wife; it embraces a partnership with God (see Matt. 19:6).”  
Russell M. Nelson



“The Bible nowhere teaches the use of intoxicating wine, either as a beverage or as a symbol of the blood of Christ. We appeal to the natural reason whether the blood of Christ is better represented by the pure juice of the grape in its natural state, or after it has been converted into a fermented and intoxicating wine.... We urge that the latter should never be placed upon the Lord’s table.... We protest that Christ never made intoxicating wine; such an act would have been contrary to all the teachings and examples of his life.... The wine which Christ manufactured from water by a miracle of his power was the pure juice of the grape.”

Ellen G. White, *The Health Reformer*, July 1, 1878. p. 113.



"A single glass of wine may open the door of temptation which will lead to habits of drunkenness."

Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, vol. 4, p. 578.



The holy principles that God has given are represented by the sacred fire; but common fire has been used in place of the sacred. Plans, contrary to truth and righteousness, are introduced in a subtle manner on the plea that this must be done, and that must be done, because it is for the advancement of the cause of God. But it is the devising of men that leads to oppression, injustice and wickedness. The cause of God is to be free from every taint of injustice. It can gain no advantage by robbing the members of the family of God of their individuality or of their rights. All such practices are abhorrent to God...

Ellen G. White, Christian Leadership, p. 31.



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