

Alcohol on the Mind

The higher qualities of the mind are first rubbed out by alcohol. The delicate capacities of intellectual decision, choice, discretion and will power are those faculties that are first dulled and then wiped out by alcohol because they are the least capable of withstanding its toxic effects.

The fact is undeniable that drinking of alcoholic beverages is becoming an ever increasing problem in our society. There are more drinkers in our country than ever before. The per capita spending on alcohol has increased. The problem of alcoholism cannot be shrugged off as an occurrence confined to skid row derelicts. These are only the excesses of the problem. Alcoholism is in every segment of society.

Drinking in excessive quantities leads a person into serious difficulties. It leads to increasing traffic safety problems. There are still irresponsible people who go behind a steering wheel after having been in a bar.

Recently a 14 year old boy of one of our churches was run over by a car. The driver was a 19 year old boy under the influence of liquor. Drinking leads to family distress. It causes friction, agony and family break up. There are many homes where children have been ruined emotionally, and at times also physically by a parent who could not control him or herself.

Why do people drink? Basically, the excessive drinker has emotional problems. He faces life in an infantile way. He has a problem and instead of facing it, he goes to the bottle. Such people are running away from reality but after the sobering process reality is twice as hard. An excessive drinker is basically a very egoistic person. He tries to gain attention by his drinking. He feels very sorry for himself. He is not too much concerned about the embarrassment and anguish that he may cause his marriage partner.

Is excessive drinking a sin or a sickness? The theory that it is an emotional illness is rather loudly proclaimed today. The Mental Health Division of the Department of National Health and Welfare states that "The Alcoholic is ill emotionally or physically - probably both." There is some truth in that statement. The alcoholic is an emotionally disturbed person. Yet he is also a sinner. His actions are judged by the laws of God as revealed in the Bible. A man may be emotionally immature, but that does not excuse foolish behaviour. He is still responsible to God and therefore guilty. What to do about an excessive drinker? The easiest thing to do is to condemn him. However, this is wrong. We cannot condemn. Rather, he needs our help, our understanding, our concern. He needs to be accepted as a man with a deep personal problem. Above all, we need to point such a person to the cross of Jesus where forgiveness and healing are to be found. He needs the Holy Spirit to strengthen him, for this only can keep him sober. I am convinced that no man with a craving for alcohol can overcome his problem on his own. He needs to learn to lean on the saving power which is available in Jesus Christ.

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