

WHAT IS WRONG WITH TAKING A DRINK?

By Dr. Aaron N. Mechel

"What's wrong with taking a drink?"

It was a fine young couple that had come to my study to ask this question. They made it clear that they did not mean **excessive** drinking. Also, that they had to live and move among groups of younger married people, whose moderate consumption of alcoholic beverages was the "thing to do." Said this young husband, "Tell us what you really think. Is there anything wrong with taking a drink?"

Now suppose you had been in my place with the trusting eyes of that young man and woman upon you, or better yet, suppose it had been **your** son or your daughter, who had come to ask their pastor that question. What reply would you honestly want him to make?

You see, friend, we are not dilly-dallying in the realm of the speculative or imaginary.

The problem we are discussing is as **real** and contemporary as the unhappy wife and wretched children of the excessive drinker, living around the corner; as **real** as that home, where a divorce is pending because of a partner who is rapidly drinking himself into incompetence; as actual as that other home, in which there is an empty high chair, because a drunken driver ran down and killed an only child.

Now then, take another look at those two young people in my study with their question. Think carefully. What is your reply? What's wrong with taking a drink?

1. A FLIGHT FROM REALITY

Our reply will be three-fold. First it is best to let **spirituous liquors alone**, because the **drink habit**, look at it however you will, **represents a flight from reality**.

At best, it is an escapism for those who refuse to face up to life's problems with clear and unclouded minds. When a Britisher was asked the reason for his excessive indulgence, he made reply, "Drink is the shortest road out of Manchester." But actually, **is it?** Rather the opposite is true. The drink habit never settles any problem lastingly, but only postpones and aggravates it. Ask the 750,000 addicts—drunkards, the Bible calls them! Many of them are in hospital wards at the expense of the public purse, and they will tell you, "We never drank our problem through to a solution."

Dr. E. Stanley Jones tells the story of the mouse, who found herself in the cellar beside a keg of fermented cider, which was dripping. She took one sip and felt her muscles stiffening into resistance. After a second sip, she sat back on her haunches to say, "Now let the cat come on!" If only "mice men" were adequate to settling their own personal problems, to say nothing of the problems of their age!

And so, let it be said to old and young alike: "If you have that tired feeling, and if you feel inwardly depressed or repressed, and are fed up

with life, remember—the liquor flask is **not** the **shortest**, but the **longest** road out of Manchester."

2. MODERATE DRINKING—A FICTION

It is high time also, that the fiction of "moderate drinking" be revealed for what it really is—a **wholesale deception**. They that are wise will not be taken in by it. Have you ever observed the one-sidedness of the clever advertisements of the liquor interests? Look carefully next time you see an attractive young woman with a flask in her hand, or a fine-looking lad, dressed in the uniform of his country, extolling some brand of whisky. Remember, the vendors of drink willingly debase even the motive of patriotism and the beauty of youth in their greed. The **ultimate victim** of the drink habit is never shown the boy or girl, the man or woman, who were deceived by talk of "moderate drinking," and who thought they could stop at "one glass." Their distorted figures and pitiful faces are not placarded abroad.

In a church of which I was pastor, we invited representatives of "Alcoholics Anonymous" to address a youth convention. In a most winsome and forthright manner the facts were placed before the audience. At the close, one of the young people put this question to the speaker, "In your estimation, is there anything wrong with taking an occasional drink, say at a social gathering, or at a college football game?"

The reply of the veteran alcoholic deserves to be long remembered by all who want to walk the road of life with a firm step. "**That's just where I began to skid, son, at the point of the first drink.** If I had avoided the first or second drink, twenty of the best years of my life would never have been wasted. My advice is **to leave the stuff alone. Stay away from the edge of the ditch.**"

3. MY BROTHER'S KEEPER

But when it is viewed within the specifically Christian structure of life and thought, the problem assumes most urgent focus. Look carefully how you walk. "Am I my brother's keeper?" and the emphatic reply is "Yes!" There is for the follower of Jesus the fact of social responsibility. I have personally known not a few men and women who could easily have developed fondness for drink. They have resisted temptation, they have heard the patter of others' footsteps behind them. They know themselves to be their brother's keeper.

And so the drink habit represents a **flight from reality**. The **fiction of moderate or social drinking is just that—a fiction**. And there is the **fact of social responsibility**. I am my brother's keeper, whether or not I admit it.

A question remains: What hope, if any, is there for the man or woman who is in the vicious grip of the drink habit?

The physician who deals with the body, and the psychiatrist who deals with symptoms of the mind are frankly pessimistic in their reply. In the end,

then, only the Gospel of Jesus Christ answers with a ringing "Yes!"

The defeated man or woman can be delivered from failure and sin, providing they will turn with earnestness and faith to the Great Physician, Jesus Christ.

Sergeant Alvin York, hero of World War I, gave this testimony: "I used to drink liquor; drank it for ten years; drank it until I broke the hearts of those who loved me and prayed for me. And then one night in 1914 I knelt at the altar of a little mountain church in East Tennessee and confessed and repented of my sins. I arose from that altar a new man in Christ Jesus and I broke with liquor **forever**." Notice that last word "**FOREVER**."

Tell that incident—only one out of thousands—to those whom perhaps you know, who are slaves to drink. Tell them that there is a Love that forgives, even from the Cross, a Power that can set them newly on their feet, a Spirit that can make them new creatures in Christ Jesus!

Abridged from "The Union Signal."

THE BLOOD TEST IN OPERATION

The "Daily News," Perth, tells us, Saturday, October 15, that the Blood Test is in operation in that city. The same can be said of Melbourne. We understand that Blood Tests are taken in inquiries made by the coroner. These are said to be extremely interesting. Here is the "Daily News" par from Western Australia:

"In all cases of violent death blood tests are now being made in Perth. The new system has been initiated by Police Surgeon Dr. A. T. Pearson, who has been recently appointed to the post. He has made the test in about nine cases and given the court evidence of the result in one inquest. Dr. Pearson said today that he would take blood samples at autopsies held in cases of fatal road accidents, and suspected cases of murder, manslaughter and suicide. The blood is sent to the Government Analyst, where the percentage of alcohol in the blood stream is determined. 'This is an attempt to cut down the number of fatal road accidents as well as to gain valuable data,' said Dr. Pearson."

—The Clarion Call (Australia)

(Continued from page 4)

Swedish hospitality was marked by a luncheon party offered by the city of Stockholm in the rooms of the magnificent town hall. An excursion by boat "under the bridges of Stockholm" was greatly enjoyed by all the participators.

On the last evening of the Conference the members took part in a very animated dinner in one of the halls of the Skansen, the open-air museum of Stockholm.

The second International Conference on alcohol and road traffic will probably be held in Canada. It will be organised by a committee composed of five members.