

## “HE HAS SINNED WITH THE FIRST DRINK”

A brother and noted scholar among us, has surprised us with a shocking statement to the effect that “the first drink” of alcoholic beverages is not sinful. The Doctor stated in a message to the audience a recent Christian University lectures to the effect that one drink is not sinful, though dangerous. [Here’s the quote.](#)

*“Wishing to be perfectly candid, I would not tell a Christian who decides to go against my advice and drink small amounts of alcohol, maybe in his own home, that he has sinned with the first drink, though I would tell him he runs a greater risk of sinning.”*

The brother suggests a contrast between his “advice” and what is “sinful”, that “the first drink” of alcohol, in one’s home (or dorm?) is not sinful, but risky of causing sin later on, but not at the point of alcohol consumption. I wonder how many young men at FHU will not attempt to justify “small amounts” of alcohol in their own room? When I was a student at FHU in the 1950’s, one preacher student was expelled for having a few “small drinks.” How many of such young people might well become alcoholics because of brother Edwards’ statement? No one knows! Here is my reply to the brother’s *thoughtless remarks*.

How many “small drinks” does it take to become intoxicated? One or two or four? If it takes two or more, how close together do they have to be before “intoxication?” If two consecutive drinks are intoxication, then one drink would be “half” intoxication, or a vital first part of intoxication. What if one takes several “small amounts” within an hour, or short period of time and gets heavily intoxicated? Is that not sinful? Even one (maybe the “first”) drink is intoxicating. Is not intoxication (drunkenness) sinful? Webster says an intoxicant is “*something that intoxicates, specifically (a) a drug that intoxicates. (b) alcoholic liquor.*” A “toxicant” is a **poison**. “Drunk” and “intoxicated” are synonymous. Webster’s Thesaurus lists “drunken, high, inebriated, intoxicated, tight, tipsy” as being all the same. One’s “first drink”, and any “first drinks” after that, are always stimulating or exhilarating, especially until there have been so many “first drinks” through the years that it takes more than another “first drink” to become tipsy. When one drinks “small amounts of alcohol”, he has an intoxicant in him, or is “intoxicated.” A “toxicant” (poison) is “in” him. Every swallow of alcohol is a swallow of poison. It may not kill the body instantly, but it poisons the brain and the soul. What is the point in drinking, unless there is **some** stimulation (intoxication)? And, when **that** occurs, the guilt of “drunkenness” has taken place. Isn’t that sinful?

Habakkuk 2:15 pronounces a “woe” upon drinking. God said through the prophet, “Woe to him that gives drink to his neighbor...to make him drunk”, and then in verse 16 He extends the “woe” (or curse) upon the one who gives the drink in that he “also—drinks.” The “woe” is upon the drinker and the one he makes drunk—both now drinkers, or drunk.

The professor’s implication is that he would “advise” people not to drink small amounts of alcohol, but if they do they “risk sinning” (which they haven’t done in drinking small amounts). The argument is that if something is sinful, we should avoid the things that might lead us **to** sinful actions. True, there are **some** sins we can commit, but there are some “sinful” things that might lead us to them, that should also be avoided. For instance, young people should avoid “heavy petting”, because it might well lead to fornication. Well,

“heavy petting” is **lasciviousness**, which is already condemned, as well as **fornication**. So, some sins should be avoided because they may lead to sins of worse consequences in life, but all sin should be avoided.

How many bites of the forbidden fruit did Eve have to take before she sinned? Would the brother have justified her in taking the first bite as not being sinful, but that it might lead her to sin at a later time? Perhaps the brother has not had to deal with the problem of alcoholism in his family, or he would not be so soft on the use of poison.

Were Paul, Peter and John just giving advice when they taught believers to “abstain” from fleshly lusts (Gal. 5:19-21; 1 Pet. 2:11; 1 John 2:15-17)? Paul also wrote that we are to make **“no provision”** for the flesh, “to fulfill the lusts thereof” (Rom. 13:14)? If taking a few drinks in the home or dorm does not “provide” occasion for even further drinking and heavy intoxication, what would provide for such? What about an “alcoholic”, who knows that even “one drink” of alcohol will set him back on the road to ruin, would bro. Edwards still say a few small drinks is not sinful?

Finally, I would like to present some analogies. **First**, speaking of fornication or “illicit sexual relations,” can sexual action be **started** without fornication being **committed**? What difference is there in the first minute of sexual activity and the completion a few minutes later? **Second**, the starting of an automobile. How can one **start** the engine of his car without it **running**? Would one conclude that he can “start” the car without causing the engine to run? The only way to keep the engine from running is to not start the car, for when the car is started, the engine **is** running. It is impossible to start the engine without the engine running.

**So it is with intoxication. When the first drink is taken, intoxication has begun.** The Brother used the expression, “He has sinned with the first drink”, but those words were preceded with words that he would “not tell” that to a Christian as long as he drinks in small amounts in his own home. Preposterous!! Sometimes when a drunk is seen, the remark is made, “He had one drink too many.” TRUE, but which ONE? The last or the first? Had he never taken one drink, he would never have become a heavy drinker, or an alcoholic, to bring hurt and ruin on his family and loved ones.

“Brethren, I’m an alcoholic” were the first words out of the mouth of the Pastor of one of the largest denominations in north Texas, about the year 2018. He went on to say, “About a year or so ago, I could not sleep. A friend told me that if I would take a glass of wine before going to bed each night, I could sleep well. It worked, BUT now I am an alcoholic and cannot live without the alcohol. My wife has left me, and now I am resigning my post here.” **When did my alcoholism begin? Answer: AT THE FIRST DRINK.** The Pastor’s life was in turmoil, because of his first drink. Had ne never taken that first glass of wine, he could have continued on in his pastorate.

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