

Cambridge University Press
0521851823 - Alcohol, Addiction and Christian Ethics
Christopher C. H. Cook
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

ALCOHOL, ADDICTION AND CHRISTIAN ETHICS

Addictive disorders are characterised by a division of the will, in which the addict is attracted both by a desire to continue the addictive behaviour and also by a desire to stop it. Academic perspectives on this predicament usually come from clinical and scientific standpoints, with the 'moral model' rejected as outmoded. But Christian theology has a long history of thinking and writing on such problems and offers insights which are helpful to scientific and ethical reflection upon the nature of addiction. Christopher Cook reviews Christian theological and ethical reflection upon the problems of alcohol use and misuse, from biblical times until the present day. Drawing particularly upon the writings of St Paul the Apostle and Augustine of Hippo, a critical theological model of addiction is developed. Alcohol dependence is also viewed in the broader ethical perspective of the use and misuse of alcohol within communities.

CHRISTOPHER C. H. COOK is Professorial Research Fellow in the Department of Theology and Religion, Durham University, England and a consultant psychiatrist. He is co-author of *The Treatment of Drinking Problems*, 4th edn (2003).

Cambridge University Press
 0521851823 - Alcohol, Addiction and Christian Ethics
 Christopher C. H. Cook
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

NEW STUDIES IN CHRISTIAN ETHICS

General Editor: Robin Gill

Editorial Board: Stephen R. L. Clark, Stanley Hauerwas, Robin W. Lovin

Christian ethics has increasingly assumed a central place within academic theology. At the same time the growing power and ambiguity of modern science and the rising dissatisfaction within the social sciences about claims to value-neutrality have prompted renewed interest in ethics within the secular academic world. There is, therefore, a need for studies in Christian ethics which, as well as being concerned with the relevance of Christian ethics to the present-day secular debate, are well informed about parallel discussions in recent philosophy, science or social science. *New Studies in Christian Ethics* aims to provide books that do this at the highest intellectual level and demonstrate that Christian ethics can make a distinctive contribution to this debate – either in moral substance or in terms of underlying moral justifications.

New Studies in Christian Ethics

Titles published in the series:

1. *Rights and Christian Ethics* Kieran Cronin
2. *Biblical Interpretation and Christian Ethics* Ian McDonald
3. *Power and Christian Ethics* James Mackey
4. *Plurality and Christian Ethics* Ian S. Markham
5. *Moral Action and Christian Ethics* Jean Porter
6. *Responsibility and Christian Ethics* William Schweiker
7. *Justice and Christian Ethics* E. Clinton Gardner
8. *Feminism and Christian Ethics* Susan Parsons
9. *Sex, Gender and Christian Ethics* Lisa Sowle Cahill
10. *The Environment and Christian Ethics* Michael Northcott
11. *Concepts of Person and Christian Ethics* Stanely Rudman
12. *Priorities and Christian Ethics* Garth Hallett
13. *Community, Liberalism and Christian Ethics* David Fergusson
14. *The Market Economy and Christian Ethics* Peter Sedgwick
15. *Churchgoing and Christian Ethics* Robin Gill
16. *Inequality and Christian Ethics* Douglas Hicks
17. *Biology and Christian Ethics* Stephen Clark
18. *Altruism and Christian Ethics* Colin Grant
19. *The Public Forum and Christian Ethics* Robert Gascoigne
20. *Evil and Christian Ethics* Gordon Graham
21. *Living Together and Christian Ethics* Adrian Thatcher
22. *The Common Good and Christian Ethics* David Hollenbach
23. *Self Love and Christian Ethics* Darlene Fozard Weaver
24. *Economic Compulsion and Christian Ethics* Albino Barrera
25. *Genetics and Christian Ethics* Celia Deane-Drummond
26. *Health Care and Christian Ethics* Robin Gill
27. *Alcohol, Addiction and Christian Ethics* Christopher C. H. Cook

Cambridge University Press
0521851823 - Alcohol, Addiction and Christian Ethics
Christopher C. H. Cook
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

ALCOHOL, ADDICTION AND CHRISTIAN ETHICS

CHRISTOPHER C. H. COOK



Cambridge University Press
0521851823 - Alcohol, Addiction and Christian Ethics
Christopher C. H. Cook
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo
Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK
Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521851824

© Christopher C. H. Cook 2006

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
no reproduction of any part may take place without
the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2006

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN-13 978-0-521-85182-4 hardback
ISBN-10 0-521-85182-3 hardback

The Scripture quotations contained herein are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible: Anglicized Edition, copyright © 1989, 1995, by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America, and are used by permission. All rights reserved.

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press
0521851823 - Alcohol, Addiction and Christian Ethics
Christopher C. H. Cook
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

*This book is dedicated to
Ruth Elizabeth Cook
1955 to 1985*

*‘Love is strong as death,
passion fierce as the grave’
(Song of Solomon 8:6)*

Cambridge University Press
0521851823 - Alcohol, Addiction and Christian Ethics
Christopher C. H. Cook
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Contents

<i>General editor's preface</i>	<i>page</i> ix
<i>Preface</i>	xi
1 Alcohol, addiction and Christian ethics: introduction	1
2 An addiction in context: the use, misuse and harmful use of alcohol	9
3 Drunkenness as vice in the New Testament	36
4 Drunkenness as intemperance: Augustine, Aquinas, Luther and Whitefield	52
5 Temperance redefined: the nineteenth-century temperance movement	77
6 Addiction as sin and syndrome: the divided self	127
7 Alcohol, addiction and Christian ethics	171
8 Conclusions	197
<i>Bibliography</i>	202
<i>Index of Bible references</i>	211
<i>Index of names and subjects</i>	214

Cambridge University Press
0521851823 - Alcohol, Addiction and Christian Ethics
Christopher C. H. Cook
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

General editor's preface

This book is the twenty-seventh in the series *New Studies in Christian Ethics*. It is also the third in succession on a medically related issue – a subject largely unexplored in earlier books in the series. The twenty-fifth book was Celia Deane-Drummond's *Genetics and Christian Ethics*, and the twenty-sixth was my own *Health Care and Christian Ethics*. As a qualified doctor, psychiatrist and now Anglican priest, Christopher Cook has the added advantage of both clinical and pastoral experience in this area. It makes him particularly well qualified to fulfil the two key aims of the series as a whole – namely, to promote monographs in Christian ethics which engage centrally with the present secular moral debate at the highest possible intellectual level and, secondly, to encourage contributors to demonstrate that Christian ethics can make a distinctive contribution to this debate.

Christopher Cook's clinical work in the area of alcohol dependence has convinced him that there is a gap in much secular discussion. While he is critical of simplistic moralistic approaches to alcoholism (especially the nineteenth-century Christian Temperance Movement) and is deeply informed by modern biosocial studies, he argues that a careful use of Paul's and Augustine's notion of the divided self can still make a significant contribution today. The latter can suggest an important link between our experience of ourselves and that of those with a medical disorder of severe alcohol dependence. A proper sense of humility can help us to see that some experience of addiction – whether it involves alcohol, food, sex, or simply shopping – is an everyday reality in which each of us experiences a divided self. In addition, he argues that the need for grace is an essential component in any adequate response to addictive disorders – whether it is the explicit Christian concept of God's grace in Jesus Christ or the rather vaguer notion of the need for the 'Higher Power' of Alcoholics Anonymous. Indeed, at an empirical level, he suggests that spiritual or religious experience is often

Cambridge University Press
0521851823 - Alcohol, Addiction and Christian Ethics
Christopher C. H. Cook
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

x *General editor's preface*

and unsurprisingly associated with recovery from addiction (tortuous as it often is).

This well-written book is a helpful and important contribution to *New Studies in Christian Ethics* and deserves to be read widely.

ROBIN GILL

Preface

All sciences being connected together, and having bearings one on another, it is impossible to teach them all thoroughly, unless they all are taken into account, and Theology among them.

(John Henry Newman)¹

It is now twenty years since I first began working as a psychiatrist with people suffering from addictive disorders. From the first, this area of work was for me both a subject of academic inquiry as well as one of clinical endeavour on behalf of those who struggle within themselves. My Christian faith preceded this work, and in many ways motivated it, but it was only much later in life that I was drawn towards the study of academic theology. I was motivated in my studies both by an extension of academic curiosity to another way of understanding human experience and also by a belief that it is only in the light of the grace of God in Christ that we can fully and truly understand our experience as human beings in this world. That belief has not fundamentally changed, but it has grown as I have attempted to explore the nature of human experience as biological, social and psychological as well as spiritual, in its relation to the incarnation of God in Christ. In theological terms, it seems to me that the grace of God in Christ is the hermeneutical key to understanding human being.

The hermeneutical task in theology is often, although by no means always, concerned with texts. My interest in hermeneutics is concerned both with the text of Christian scripture and also with the metaphorical text of human experience. In particular, in the context of the present work, it seems to me that interpretation of the 'text' of the experience of addiction is better achieved when the natural and social sciences are brought together with theology as tools to assist in undertaking the hermeneutical task. As Newman argued in *The Idea of a University* ([1852] 1996),

¹ Newman, [1852] 1996, p. 75.

Cambridge University Press
 0521851823 - Alcohol, Addiction and Christian Ethics
 Christopher C. H. Cook
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

all areas of learning are interconnected. The exclusion of theology from the process of interpreting human experience can therefore be seen only to impoverish our understanding of that experience, unless, of course, one begins with prior atheistic assumptions concerning the human 'text' and its context.

With a few notable exceptions, under the influence of the Enlightenment, the vast interdisciplinary literature that surrounds addiction and alcohol studies has come to exclude theology. It is my conviction that we are much poorer as a result, and I offer this book as a small contribution towards correcting the deficiency. However, I could not have written it without the help of many friends and colleagues, towards whom I am glad to acknowledge my debt of gratitude here.

Many of the debts that I owe are explicitly acknowledged in the text, where I have quoted other authors, living and dead. I am especially grateful to Paul of Tarsus and Augustine of Hippo, whom I have obviously never met face to face, but whom I have come to know through the texts that they left behind them, and with whom I share in the communion of saints. Among those living friends and colleagues who have helped me in ways that are not explicitly acknowledged elsewhere in the text of this book, I would like to thank Professor John Barclay, Professor Virginia Berridge, Dr John Court, Professor Griffith Edwards, and three anonymous reviewers, each of whom read one or more of the draft chapters of this book and kindly provided helpful comments having done so. Griffith has also been an author, mentor and friend from whom I have learned much about addiction over the years, and my debt to him in these respects is especially great.

Numerous other colleagues and students have recommended reading, posed important questions, discussed ideas and generally encouraged me during the course of my writing this book. I cannot mention them all by name, but I would particularly like to thank Dr Carol Harrison, with whom I much enjoyed discussing the section on Augustine of Hippo, and Derek Rutherford and other colleagues at the Institute for Alcohol Studies in London. I am also grateful to the latter, and especially to Judith Crowe, for allowing me to use, and assisting me with access to, the almost unique collection of temperance publications that is held in their library.

I am greatly indebted to Dr Katharina Brett, Senior Commissioning Editor, Religious Studies, at Cambridge University Press, and to Canon Professor Robin Gill, Series Editor. They have both offered much encouragement and constructive advice on numerous occasions. Robin has also taught me much of what I know about applied theology, and has been a

Cambridge University Press
0521851823 - Alcohol, Addiction and Christian Ethics
Christopher C. H. Cook
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Preface

xiii

valued friend. This book would not have been written but for his patient, unfailing and wise support.

Finally, my thanks go, as always, to my wife Joy, and to Andrew, Beth, Rachel and Jonathan, for the countless loving ways in which they have provided such an important part of the context within which this text was written.

THE
TEMPERANCE EXAMINER.

“ Prove all things ; hold fast that which is good.”—*St. Paul.*

No. 11.]

NOVEMBER 1, 1839.

[PRICE 1d.



“ WHICH WAY SHALL I TURN ME?” or, *Ruin and Salvation.*

OLD FUDDLER.—Come along, Charley my boy ; come along ! *Only just one glass !* A short life and a merry one ! that’s my ticket.

CHARLES.—Well, your’e a good-natured fellow, tho’ you’ve ruined yourself by drinking. I was thinking about abstaining ; but surely *one glass* won’t hurt me !

TEE-TOTALER.—Don’t listen to him, my dear Charles. You see what drinking has done for him. If you take *one glass* you won’t know when to stop. You promised to go to our meeting. Come, and learn the blessings of Total Abstinence.

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY J. P. COO, 90, BARTHOLOMEW CLOSE, LONDON.

From *The Temperance Examiner*, no. 11, 1 November 1839