

## The Liquor Problem of Today

By Dr Z.T. Johnson

The Liquor Problem as we face it today, is not merely a liquor problem. It is one which involves the social problem, the educational problem, the disease problem, and the ramifications and the outcroppings of all three.

The underlying factors of the alcoholic problem are subtlety, insinuation and suggestion. The approach in most cases is extremely subtle. After the proper contact has been made, then the insinuation and suggestiveness find a firmer lodging place in the thinking of the prospect. Every possible avenue of appeal is taken advantage of and considered from all angles. From the educational angle, the idea is to train people to consider drinking as gentlemanly, a fine social habit, and one which will bring the utmost pleasure to life.

The liquor people would have everyone think that the elite of society are sensible drinkers in every respect. This includes, not only famous brands of liquor, but also brands of wine for the cocktail hour. The advertisements suggest that those who are "in the know", and who know how to live socially can handle their liquor to great advantage to them in every respect. Advertisements and appeals are made in the best magazines and in the biggest newspapers to this type of society.

### Psychological Approach

For the common man, the appeal is on a lower form. The idea is that if he will drink a certain brand of beer or use certain types of wine or carefully drink certain brands of liquor, it will give him the utmost pleasure in life. It will enlarge his circle of friendships; in general, it would make him an all-round asset and give him the best of life. The psychological approach is used to the utmost. The suggestion is made, that it is not how much you drink, but how well you drink which makes the difference. Reams of magazine and newspaper advertising are directed to this approach...

Dealers in alcoholic drinks have also taken a very practical attitude toward their problem, and are attacking it with vigorous effort. They see to it that every possible law favourable to their cause is passed. Underneath most of this subtlety, psychology, suggestiveness, and insinuation lies a great basic tradition, namely that of individual liberty. We are told that citizens must have the right to buy what they please, drink as much as they please, and then to do just about as they please.

### Practical Approach

While we must never forget the individual rights of the citizen, we must also remember our responsibility as Christian individuals and as organisations responsible for the building of moral and Christian character and see to it that weak individuals, at least, have ample protection. The protection which they must have, is the kind, which can be given, however, only when the individual recognises his need for such protection. **Alcoholics Anonymous** is a good example of this type of protection, and the work they are doing is certainly to be commended.

What practical approach can we take toward the solution of this problem? The answer, I think, lies first in the recognition of the enormity of our task.

The information which we have discussed thus far, has been general, with no statistical backing, prepared in this manner, or purpose. Statistics are convincing and overwhelming, but the principal facts behind these statistics, I think, suggest the practical approach to our problem.

### Christian Approach

There must be found a way to combat the subtlety, the insinuation and the suggestion of the dispensers of alcoholic drinks. As I see it, this approach can only be made through Christian people, and Christian organisations. The tragic fact exists, however, that even some Church groups feel that the drinking problem should be left largely to the individual. Many of the ministers of these denominations even encourage drinking of wine and moderate drinking in polite places in society.

Other Church organisations are doing what they can to show people that the best way to combat liquor is to **ABSTAIN FROM IT**.

While the Temperance Forces have been a living symbol of organised opposition to alcoholic consumption in all its phases throughout the years, they have not been able to amass the financial resources necessary to combat the onslaughts of advertising through newspapers, magazines and radio, and never will have sufficient funds to equal the enormous amounts spent by the liquor interests. In my judgment, however, their constant attacks and their continuous appeals to common-sense thinking along these lines, have had an effect far deeper than many of us can comprehend.

Our Churches **MUST** teach Temperance. Our Christian schools and Colleges must constantly remind young people of the dangers of alcoholism and the advantages of sobriety. Practical Christians must ever remember that they are, from the viewpoint of alcoholic drinking, their "brother's keeper," and must be prepared at all times, to lend a hand of assistance, both advisory and practical to young people in particular, who are confused about this problem.

Christian organisations must always be ready to spend as much money that can be obtained to advertise against alcohol, alcoholism and the attendant problems.

Over and above all, every Christian should dedicate himself or herself to **PRAY** that God will give us a truly Christian society, which will be so practical in its attitude towards its major moral problems, that it will rise up in force to meet those problems in the spiritual strength and power that only God can give. Our united prayer should ever be, "**God give us a sober nation.**"

(Adapted from the Union Signal and reprinted from the Australian Temperance Advocate.)

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"The pleasures of not smoking are greater than the pleasures of smoking. Tobacco produces more tension than it relieves. It blunts the senses of smell and taste and greatly increases the unpleasantness of the hangover. It reduces the capacity for physical effort. It diminishes the visual acuity of the car driver. It increases the chance of post-anaesthetic chest infection. Given any initial weakness, it may rot the lungs, the arteries, and the stomach."—Stephen Taylor, B.Sc., M.D., M.R.C.P.