

*Ward Transferred:*

Mendon Ward, Hyrum Stake transferred to Logan Stake.

*Those Who Have Passed Away:*

W. Ellis Bay, former president of the Garfield Stake, passed away August 16th, 1947.

Edith Grant Young, wife of Clifford E. Young, Assistant to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, passed away August 20, 1947.

## ELDER JOSEPH F. MERRILL

*Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

During the few minutes allotted to me in this conference, I desire to give brief consideration to a problem that is arousing more and more attention among those thinking people of America who are deeply concerned with their moral and spiritual welfare. I refer to the liquor problem—one of the most challenging and difficult of all unsolved internal problems that face the country today, a problem of major importance. Of course the point of view from which I shall look at this problem is that given me by the moral teachings and standards of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Yet I hasten to say that in respect to the liquor problem the teachings and standards of multitudes of people in other churches and organizations are similar to our own. Some of them recognize as clearly and keenly as we do that drinking is an evil that all good, right-thinking people should unite to eliminate.

## USE OF ALCOHOL DESTRUCTIVE

I use the word "drinking," as meaning the imbibing of a liquid containing *alcohol*, which is a definite chemical compound, once described by the *Journal* of the American Medical Association as

. . . a poison inherently, absolutely, essentially; in a drop or in a gallon, in all quantities and in every quantity. Plainly its quantity cannot affect its chemical constitution.

And when drunk, what does alcohol do? In the language of the late Robert G. Ingersoll:

. . . alcohol burns up men, consumes women, destroys life, curses God, and despises heaven. It suborns witnesses, defiles the jury box, and stains the judicial ermine. It bribes voters, corrupts elections, endangers the government, degrades the citizen, debases the legislature, dishonors the statesman. It brings shame, not honor; terror, not safety; despair, not hope; misery, not happiness. It destroys peace and ruins morals; it murders the soul; it is the father of all crime, the mother of all abominations, the devil's best friend.

In the language of the First Presidency of the Church:

Drink brings cruelty into the home; it walks arm in arm with poverty; its companions are disease and plague; it puts chastity to flight; it knows neither honor nor fair dealing; it is a total stranger to truth; it drowns conscience; it is the bodyguard of evil; it curses all who touch it. Drink has brought more woe and misery, broken more hearts, wrecked more homes, committed more crimes, filled more coffins than all the wars the world has suffered.

It is involved in more traffic accidents and fatalities, and sends more patients to mental hospitals than any other single factor.

#### BILLIONS OF DOLLARS WASTED

Yet notwithstanding these facts, which warrant a bitter arraignment of alcohol, there are an estimated one hundred million Americans over fifteen years of age, fifty million of whom drink more or less regularly. According to the United States Department of Commerce these people spent for alcoholic beverages during 1946 nearly nine billion dollars (\$8,770,000,000). This is more than was spent during the same period for all types of public and private schools including school and university libraries, and for state and federal government services in the fields of health, welfare, old age assistance, etc.

Of the fifty million drinkers, it is estimated that three million drink excessively, that is, are alcoholics—people who have measurably lost control of their drinking. They have acquired the disease of alcoholism, as it is termed by the experts. One who suffered from this disease—Mrs. Marty Mann, now executive director of the National Committee for Education on Alcoholism—said in her Columbia Broadcasting System broadcast last December:

These were the most painful years of my life. I suffered constantly, not just one kind of pain, but all kinds of pain. I suffered physically, mentally, emotionally, financially, and socially—in every department of my life. I tell you, honestly, and on behalf of those three million human beings, that alcoholism is the most *painful disease* known to man.

#### LECTURES ON "YOU AND ALCOHOL"

Some of you may remember that several months ago the Columbia Broadcasting System carried over its network thirteen lectures entitled "You and Alcohol," described as

A series of broadcasts examining the problem of alcoholic consumption in the United States and its effect upon our people and our institutions, delivered on Tuesday nights, beginning November 12, 1946.

The preface to these lectures said:

Since alcohol touches the lives of large numbers of people, it seemed logical to Columbia to consider it a problem in which radio's special and unique functions could be usefully employed to translate the problem into plain, arresting terms and to bring it directly to the attention of millions of listeners.

Each of the thirteen speakers was considered an expert on the phase of the subject of which he spoke. I have just quoted one of the speakers. Nine of the others were doctors in various fields of research—medicine, neurology, psychology, sociology, psychiatry. Seemingly they all agreed with Mrs. Mann—as do medical experts generally—that alcoholism is a disease, as certainly as pneumonia, tuberculosis, and cancer are diseases, and should be treated as such. One of these speakers, Dr. Lyman C. Duryea, wrote:

As a physician, I am concerned about those people who drink to excess and cannot control their drinking [alcoholics]. These people need medical care. . . . They are sick people.

### ALCOHOLISM A DISEASE

The alcoholic (compulsive drinker, Dr. Duryea calls him) finds it absolutely impossible to drink in moderation. This means all alcoholic beverages, as well as medicines, or anything else containing alcohol. Complete abstinence is his only salvation. The person with an alcohol problem must remember that he is a sick person and that never again can he take a drink "of anything that contains alcohol." So, let us admit that alcoholism is a disease. However, there is one peculiarity about the disease—it is *never* acquired by anyone who does not take his first drink. This is a fact. Let everyone remember it.

As just stated, according to accepted figures, fifty million Americans drink. Of this number, three million, one in sixteen—six percent acquire the disease of alcoholism, become sick and in need of treatment. This is more than twice the number afflicted with tuberculosis, we are told. These figures indicate the magnitude of the problem. (I divert to express the opinion that the most certain and by all odds the least expensive treatment for alcoholism is that given by Alcoholics Anonymous, groups of which exist all over America.) I stated that no one ever becomes an alcoholic who does not take his first glass.

But something more can be said. According to the experts on alcohol, no one who begins to drink—be he rich or poor, master or servant, learned or ignorant, can ever know until it is too late, if he continues to drink, whether or not he will get the alcoholic disease. No medical examination can determine this. The change from controlled to uncontrolled drinking occurs suddenly and without warning, so the experts tell us. Thus there are two things to be remembered about this disease of alcoholism: It costs nothing to avoid getting it, and nothing to avoid its recurrence, if once rid of it. Total abstinence is the certain remedy both before and after.

### BILL TO PROTECT ADVERTISING OF LIQUOR

And now let us go to another phase of the alcohol problem—that of advertising. On May 12 and 13 of this year (1947) the committee

on interstate and foreign commerce of the United States Senate gave a public hearing in Washington, D. C., on Senate Bill 265, by Senator Arthur Capper of Kansas, which would prohibit all types of advertising of any kind of alcoholic beverage. The proponents of the bill were able and well prepared and backed by many resolutions of church and other organizations, as well as by thousands of petitions, numerous signed. In supporting the bill Senator Capper said:

The growth and extent of the liquor habit in the United States in the last few years alarms me. We were told preceding repeal, by the advocates of repeal, that the manufacturers and dealers of alcoholic beverages would discourage excessive drinking. Yet in 1946 the national drink bill was nearly nine billion dollars, eighty-nine dollars for every person in the United States over eighteen years old—about one-fourth of the federal budget for the coming year. Now, Mr. Chairman, I believe that the tremendous amount of advertising seeking to whet the appetite for drinking, seeking to create new customers, especially among women and children, has much to do with the greatly increased amount of alcoholic consumption during recent years.

Bishop Wilbur E. Hammaker, of the Methodist Temperance Board, in his testimony said:

Our judges all the way up through the Supreme Court have decided again and again that the liquor business is hurtful to life, is an enemy of the well-being of society and lives only by sufferance. It has no inherent or inalienable rights. . . . Tragedy stalks the liquor business; it is constantly violating the very laws that permit its presence in our midst. Its history is sordid, shameful, slimy, scrofulous, rather than glad, noble, and fine as its ads try to tell us.

In his statement before the committee, Mr. O. G. Christgau, superintendent of the Iowa Anti-Saloon League, among other things, related that Mr. P. S. Dupont, president of the Association Against the Prohibition Amendment, wrote two years prior to repeal the following:

Advertising is one of the most fruitful means of increasing business and of promoting sales. As it is the policy of this country to reduce sales of liquor, no advertising of any kind should be permitted manufacturers or sellers.

President Roosevelt in proclaiming the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment declared:

The objective we seek through the national policy is the education of every citizen toward a greater temperance throughout the nation.

Compare these statements with the fact that during 1946 more than one hundred million dollars was spent in advertising alcoholic beverages.

Dr. Glen Cunningham, internationally famous some years ago as an athlete and now a university professor, was a witness before the committee. Among his statements were these:

In my work with thousands of young people during the past fifteen years, I have noticed an alarming increase in the number who use alcoholic beverages. Every person, conscious of the startling increase in delinquency among youths, in deaths and injuries from accidents, in murder and rape, in impoverished and broken homes, and in the number of mental diseases, realizes the urgent need for the passage by Congress of Senator Capper's bill. The cost in human misery, maimed bodies and minds, the lost lives, makes it inestimably more important that the advertising of alcoholic beverages which contribute so heavily to these great tragedies, be brought under control.

### SUPPORT OF CAPPER BILL URGED

In view of the results that follow the consumption of beverage alcohol, why do the American people tolerate it? I leave the answer to them. In any case, the vast sums spent for widespread, alluring, deceptive advertising have had much to do with it and with greatly increased consumption, especially among women and teen-agers. But may I ask you, the Mormon people, why do you tolerate it? You accept and teach the Word of Wisdom as a divine revelation in which alcoholic drinks are proscribed. Thus it logically follows that Latter-day Saints, if true to their faith, cannot conscientiously indulge in drinking; the informal world knows this. Church members cannot indulge without displeasing God and without losing more or less the respect of their non-Mormon friends, many of whom look upon Mormon drinkers as weaklings or hypocrites.

But may we not with perfect propriety and expectation of favorable response ask all Church and non-Church members who love their fellow men and will work for their best good to do whatever in their power is feasible to reduce the consumption of alcoholic beverages to the smallest attainable limits? As one means to this end let us actively support the Capper Bill and pray that it will become law, thus going far to eliminate every type of beverage alcohol advertising. But this bill will not become law except over the strenuous opposition of the financially powerful liquor industry—an industry that has spent hundreds of millions of dollars and continues to spend vast sums in advertising.

Representative Joseph R. Bryson said at the Senate committee hearing the following:

Advertising shapes our lives and molds the rising generation. We eat, drink, dress, and think according to advertising. Immature youths are particularly impressionable. This advertising comes to us, mainly by press and radio. If the artificially stimulated demand for intoxicants is to be checked, the advertising of liquor must stop. Liquor advertising negates the educational efforts of the home, the school and the church on the dangers of alcohol. How foolish it is to teach youth the dangers of liquor while allowing the stuff to be advertised in the most alluring of terms.

### CHURCH FOR TOTAL ABSTINENCE

Again I ask: Why do the Mormon people tolerate the drinking

of alcoholic beverages by their members? They all know the Church stands irrevocably for total abstinence. Many answers are given, but perhaps one of the most frequent and basic is that no one may be denied his "free agency"—his right to drink. But I ask, may one be permitted to indulge his free agency when to do so endangers the safety, peace, good, and happiness of others? The answer of our civil laws is *no*.

Satan the devil, a personal being, is abroad in the land with a multitude of helpers. Back to him stems the source of all sins, crimes, wickedness, and troubles of the human family. Satan's ambition is to handicap the Lord's work. This he tries to do by leading away and using the Father's children in any and every way that brings misery, distress, and destruction to them. Let us resolve to resist him wherever his influence is manifested, as it certainly is in all phases of the liquor problem.

#### LIQUOR ADVERTISING UNMORAL

In the light of all that can be truthfully said of the effects of consumed alcohol are we not amply justified in declaring that liquor advertising is unmoral and wrong? To encourage and induce human beings, particularly the youth and immature, to destroy themselves is wicked in the sight of God and criminal in the sight of man. As I see it nothing more mild can in truth be said of the vast alcoholic beverage promotion business. Back of it all may be found some of the keenest and ablest minds working, planning, and scheming how to get more and more people to drinking.

Behold, verily, thus saith the Lord unto you: In consequence of evils and designs which do and will exist in the hearts of conspiring men in the last days, I have warned you, and forewarn you, by giving unto you this word of wisdom by revelation. (D. & C. 89:4.)

Surely Satan is working through these men to the injury and destruction of our fellow men.

Of course many of these people move in respectable and so-called high grade society. But this does not change the fact that their business is damnable and should not be advertised. Traffic in morphine, marijuana, stealing, gambling, prostitution, and many other evils, is not permitted to be advertised. Yet in its evil results does not the liquor traffic outrank any one of these wicked businesses? In justice to youth, the unwary, and people generally, is not the elimination of every variety of liquor advertising the very least we can do in this matter. Let us sincerely and wholeheartedly support the Capper Bill S265.

Brethren and sisters of this Church, by promise and covenant we are obligated to serve God and work for the good of our fellow men. May we be faithful to our obligations, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.