

Total Abstinence

WHEREAS the drinking of alcoholic beverages has brought about the following alarming reported results which are harmful to the work of God, to the individual and to society:

1. Warping some 10 million lives in the United States;
2. Causing incalculable grief to the unfortunate families involved;
3. Causing 40% of the problems brought to family courts (directly or indirectly);
4. Leading to alcoholism which is a complex, progressive malady;
5. Shortening by 10 to 12 years the life of heavy drinkers;
6. Contributing as a factor in those who commit suicide, 31% of whom are alcoholics;
7. Increasing the suicide rate since suicide for alcoholics is 58 times that of non-alcoholics
8. Contributing as a factor in at least 50% of motor vehicle fatalities yearly;
9. Increasing the number of teenagers who use alcohol;
10. Causing almost 50% of all arrests in the United States (directly or indirectly);
11. Deadening some of the brain cells in the cerebral cortex each time alcohol is ingested, which cells are never regenerated, which explains why 40% of all males admitted to state mental hospitals suffer from alcoholism;
12. Affecting the brain by depressing the higher functions of judgment and social restraint; attacking the simple motor functions of reaction time and vision; and then impairing balance, coordination and sensory perception; and

WHEREAS all Christian believers are called upon to be "sober" by use of the Greek word *nepho* (or one of its derivative forms) some eight

times in the New Testament (1 Thess. 5:6, 8; 2 Tim. 3:2; 11; Titus 2:2; 1 Pet. 1:13; 4:7; 5:8);

WHEREAS the word for "sober" ("nepho" or its derivatives) has been given such meanings as (1) "to be free from the influence of intoxicants" (Vine's *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*); or (2) "to abstain from wine" (Strong's *Exhaustive Concordance*); or (3) "free from all infusion or addition of wine, as vessels, offerings, etc." (Thayer's *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*); or (4) "without wine, unmixed with wine, no wine in it, drink no wine, or wood other than vine twigs" (Liddell and Scott's *Classical Greek Lexicon*); and

WHEREAS the Christian believer's body is "the temple of the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. 6:19, 20), with which he should glorify God and which he should "yield" at all times to the Lord (Rom. 6:13), and which he should not defile by the drinking of alcoholic beverages which greatly pervert the functions of the body, mind, and morals; and

WHEREAS, the drinking of alcoholic beverages leads to various kinds of "evil" and is an "evil" in and of itself, and the Bible warns Christian believers to "abstain from every appearance (or form) of evil" (1 Thess. 5:22); and

WHEREAS Christian believers should be willing to say with the Apostle Paul that, "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak" (Rom. 14:21), and the drinking of alcoholic beverages is one of these great "stumbling" blocks and "offenses" for believers and unbelievers alike; and

WHEREAS the only sure and certain way of avoiding any possibility of becoming a victim to the alluring, deceiving and addicting sin of drunkenness (cf. 1 Cor. 5:11; 6:10; Rom. 13:13; Eph. 5:18; Gal. 5:21) is to abstain entirely from the drinking of alcoholic beverages; and

WHEREAS most fundamental Baptist Churches historically have taken the position of total abstinence from alcoholic beverages; and our own GARBC fellowship on previous occasions has passed resolutions favoring total abstinence from alcoholic beverages; and the majority of the churches in fellowship with the GARBC have church covenants which commit their members to "abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drink as a beverage" or words which carry a similar

meaning; and, due to changing ethical standards, there have been mounting pressures on Christians to lower their standard of total abstinence from alcoholic beverages to that of "moderation" only;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we, the messengers of the churches in fellowship with the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches, meeting in annual session in Lakeland, Florida, June 26–30, 1978, for all the foregoing reasons, reaffirm our historic position of total abstinence from alcoholic beverages which we believe to be, both specifically and in principle, not only a soundly Biblical position, but also the only practical position for God's people; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution be published in *The Baptist Bulletin* at the earliest date possible and circulated to all the churches in fellowship with the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches and our other brethren as well, for their mutual encouragement in this "evil day" in which we "stand" (Eph. 6:11–14).

Lakeland, Florida
June 26–30, 1978