

## PROHIBITION THE MASTER METHOD

"Let us examine the laws relating to intoxicating liquor. They are a strange medley of prohibitions and permissions. It will be found from experience that they succeed to the extent that they embody prohibitions and that they fail in so far as they contain permissions. Thus the present licensing laws in England have some merit, not because they allow the sale of intoxicants in certain premises and at certain times, but because they prohibit the general sale of intoxicating liquors, because they prohibit its sale, even in licensed premises, for 15 or 16 hours a day, and because they prohibit the sale to persons under a certain age. An investigation into the drink problem and its social results will clearly establish the fact that all the trouble arises from the permissions under the law, and not from the prohibitions.

"If we define prohibition as a principle then, of course, there are differing degrees of the application of that principle. Unfortunately, in the minds of many people, prohibition has come to mean the social condition resultant from the application of the principle of prohibition, regardless of the fact that a state of complete prohibition is, from a practical point of view, as idealistic as a state of complete truthfulness or complete honesty.

"We do not condemn the laws prohibiting theft because a certain minority of the population disobey these laws and offend the social conscience. We should not, therefore, judge prohibition because it is to some degree evaded; but we should judge it in comparison with the nature and extent of the drink problem in the community before prohibition became operative.

"We can never make progress towards our ideal by lowering the application of the principle. . . . Every problem of licensing reform can be tested in the light of the prohibition principle, always reminding ourselves that such reform is only effective in so far as it prohibits or restricts the sale of drink and that it is ineffective in so far that it is permissive in its intention. . . . There can be no doubt that where prohibition is effectively enforced, and where it has the support of public opinion, it does represent the most successful way of dealing with the liquor traffic."

These excerpts are from a lecture delivered under the auspices of the World Prohibition Federation, by Mr. H. Cecil Heath, B.A., Barrister-at-Law (London), at a conference held July, 1948, in Lucerne, Switzerland. The full lecture is obtainable from the Federation, 32, Buckingham Palace Road, London, S.W.1. (Price 3d. each, post free.)

## ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

During the past week we have come into possession of the book entitled "Alcoholics Anonymous." Some time ago we published under the title "The Alcoholic Foundation" a full page account of this great approach to the liquor problem as it exists in the lives of thousands of people all over the world. The book referred to contains detailed personal accounts of the operation of "Alcoholics Anonymous," and the stories are moving and convincing to a remarkable degree.

The "Patriot," an Australian Temperance Journal, while expressing agreement with the very largely accepted theory that alcoholism is a disease, says, quoting from "A Psychiatrist":

"It may be true that it is a disease, but if we pound that idea into people, they get the idea that they have no responsibility, any more than they are responsible for contracting the measles. They shift the blame to me. I am a bad doctor because I can cure less than 50 per cent. of the alcoholics that come to me. If they keep on drinking, the medical profession is to blame for not figuring out a way to stop them."

And in a later issue, we find the following paragraphs:

"We agree that if alcoholism is a disease, it 'should be treated as such.' Smallpox, diphtheria, scarlet fever, measles, infantile paralysis are treated as diseases. Their sources are investigated—and cleaned out. Their victims while sick, are isolated for the protection of the public. **No one makes money selling the germs that cause these diseases.** 'None of these diseases breeds crime. They crowd no jails, no auto fatalities are charged to them, nor do they cause that dread disease—syphilis (though alcohol does).'"—R. W. Bascom, in *Hammer Away*, September-October, 1947.

We are told over and over again that alcoholism is a disease. Mrs. Leigh Colvin, a W.C.T.U. leader in U.S.A., declares that "if alcoholism is a disease, it is a self-inflicted one. No person ever contracted the disease because of a germ, or through physical contact. If it is a disease, it is the only one that makes a man commit immoral acts. Cancer or tuberculosis do not inspire a man to immoral acts or to murder. Alcoholism is not a disease, but an alibi."—(Alibi here, means the personality has been ousted by alcohol.—Editor "The Patriot.")

It will be noted that, though these quotations appear to be chary in their expressions of approval of the suggestion that "disease" may be the proper designation of a great deal of alcoholism, they do not make a denial of the possibility. That, as a disease, it is "self-inflicted," does not make it any the less a disease. The man who by perpetual overwork brings himself to the verge of physical and mental disaster cannot be said to be anything but a case for medical treatment because he himself is responsible for his condition, and

whatever our indignation may lead us to feel towards the victim of his own weakness and folly, pity and desire to do everything possible for his reclamation should give us cause to welcome any method likely to bring this about.

Once again, we publish the Twelve Steps laid down as the basis of the cure which has worked for so many of those under the ban of the fatal craving.

One of these ex-victims says:

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.

2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

3. Made a decision to turn our wills and our lives over to the care of God **as we understood Him.**

4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

5. Admitted to God, ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

8. Made a list of all the persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

10. Continued to take personal inventory, and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

11. Sought by prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God **as we understood Him**, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

12. Having had a spiritual experience as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics and to practise these principles in all our affairs.

World membership now exceeds 60,000. Each of these people is bound by his own consent to help other people who are still in the power of the evil thing. Nearly 2,000 groups are functioning, and it is good to know that New Zealand has its centre also. Complete anonymity is a feature of the A.A. membership.

Our prayers and thanksgiving for so many set free from the bonds of sin are surely rightly to be offered.

## "DISEASE SOLD HERE"

Alcoholism is a disease or, if you prefer, a sickness.

We license places where you can go and expose yourself to this disease if you wish to do so.

In fact, you can buy a case of alcoholism at hundreds of thousands of stores maintained for sale of this illness.

In order that no one who wants this disease will be unable to know where he can catch it, approximately one hundred million dollars is spent every year advertising how and where the disease may be acquired.

—The Wesley Quarterly.