THE idea is in the air that AA
might adopt Thanksgiving Week
as a time for meetings and medi-
tation on the Tradition of Alco-
holics Anonymous. The friend who
hatched this notion tells you—
on another page—why he thinks
the idea good. I heartily agree with
what he says and hope you will too.

Pre-AA, we alkies could some-
times achieve that dubious state
called "sobriety, period." How
bleak and empty this alleged vir-
tue is, only God or a dried-up
drunk can fully testify. The rea-
son? Of course every AA knows
it: nothing has taken the place of
the victim's grog; he's still a man
of conflict and disunity. Comes
then the 12 Steps of Recovery,
bringing to him a "personality
change." The shattered prospect
feels reassembled; he now says he
seems all one piece. We under-
stand exactly what he means, for
he describes the state of being
"at oneness"; he is talking about
personal unity. We know he must
work to maintain it and that he
can't stay alive without it.

Will not the same principle hold
true for AA as a whole? Isn't it
also a fact that the alcoholic is in
no greater peril than when he
takes sobriety for granted? If vigi-
lant practice of sound principle is
a matter of life and death for him,
why isn't that equally so for the
AA group, and for our far-flung
society itself?

Yet many of us still take the
basic unity of Alcoholics Anony-
mous for granted. We seem to for-
get that the whole of modern so-
ciety is on a dangerous and con-
tagious "drybender." We evidently
assume we are so different from
other men and women, that dis-
integration can't hit us. Our unity
appears as a gift of Heaven; some-
ting to be perpetually enjoyed by
us AAs quite without effort.

Criticisms are not intended, be-
cause our present attitude is natu-
ral enough. It stems from the fact
that no society in its infancy has
ever enjoyed more providential
protection against temptation and
untoward happenings than has ours.
Minor troubles we have had, but
none serious enough to test our
adult strength. It's not strange
that we are a bit complacent and
self-satisfied. Surely there need
be no counsel of fear, nor lack of
faith in the prediction that a far
greater time of trial may yet be
ours. When we think our situation
through, simple prudence and fore-
sight will tell us that.

The 12 Traditions of Alcoholics
Anonymous are a distillate of our
experience of living and working
together. They apply the spirit of
the 12 Recovery Steps to our group
life and security. They deal with
our relations with the world out-
side and with each other, they
state our attitudes toward power
and prestige, toward property and
money. They would save us from
tempting alliances and major con-
troversies, they would elevate
principles far above personal am-
bitions. And, as a token of this
last, they request that we maintain
personal anonymity before the open
public as a protection to AA and
as proof of the fact that our society
intends to practice true humility.

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What then could be more appro-
priate than to set aside Thanks-
giving week for discussion of the
practical and spiritual values to
be discovered in our Tradition?
We could thus reinforce our faith
in the future by these prudent
works; we could show that we de-
serve to go on receiving that price-
less gift of "Oneness" which God
in His wisdom has so freely given
to us of Alcoholics Anonymous in
the precious years of our infancy.