

November 1949

TRADITION WEEK

*A Suggestion For
Thanksgiving
By
Bill*

THE idea is in the air that AA might adopt Thanksgiving Week as a time for meetings and meditation on the Tradition of Alcoholics 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 alkie could sometimes achieve that dubious state called "sobriety, period." How bleak and empty this alleged virtue is, only God or a dried-up drunk can fully testify. The reason? 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 understand 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 vigilant 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 Anonymous for granted. We seem to forget that the whole of modern society is on a dangerous and contagious "drybender." We evidently assume we are so different from other men and women, that disintegration can't hit us. Our unity appears as a gift of Heaven; something to be perpetually enjoyed by us AAs quite without effort.

Criticism is not intended, because our present attitude is natural 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 foresight 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 controversies, they would elevate principles far above personal ambitions. 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.

For the information of the general public and for the instruction of new AA members, the 12 Traditions have just been released in a much condensed "short form" which we hope will be as widely read and understood as the 12 Steps of Recovery. Should this happen, our current growing pains will be lessened and we shall commence to lay up a great store of insurance for the years ahead.

What then could be more appropriate than to set aside Thanksgiving 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 deserve to go on receiving that priceless gift of "Oneness" which God in His wisdom has so freely given to us of Alcoholics Anonymous in the precious years of our infancy.

—Bill—