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## A NOTED DIVINE REVIEWS "ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS"

By ELRICK B. DAVIS

In a recent series, Mr. Davis told of Alcoholics Anonymous, an organization of former drinkers banded together to beat the liquor habit. This is the first of two final articles on the subject.

### The Book

When 100 members of Alcoholics Anonymous, the extraordinary fellowship of men and women who have cured themselves of "incurable" alcoholism by curing each other and adopting a "spiritual way of life," had established their cures to the satisfaction of their physicians, families, employers and psychotherapists, they published a book.

It is a 400-page volume of which half is a history of the movement and a description of its methods, and the other half a collection of 30 case histories designed to show what a wide variety of persons the fellowship has cured. It is called "Alcoholics Anonymous," and may be bought for \$3.50 from the Works Publishing Co., Box 657, Church Street Annex Postoffice, New York.

The name of the publisher is that adopted by Alcoholics Anonymous for its only publishing venture. The address is "blind" because the name "Alcoholics Anonymous" means exactly what it says. ..

Among the first reviews of the book to see print was that written by the Rev. Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick for the Religious Digest. That review so attracted at least one well-known Cleveland minister that he obtained a copy of the book, got in touch with the Cleveland chapter of the society, and plans to preach a sermon about the movement.

Dr. Fosdick is himself the author of seventeen books. His review of "Alcoholics Anonymous" follows:

"This extraordinary book deserves the careful attention of anyone interested in the problem of alcoholism. Whether as victims, friends of victims, physicians, clergymen, psychiatrists or social workers there are many such, and this book will give them, as no other treatise known to this reviewer will, an inside view of the problem which the alcoholic faces. Gothic cathedral windows are not the sole things which can be truly seen only from within. Alcoholism is another. All outside views are clouded and unsure. Only one who has been an alcoholic and has escaped the thralldom can interpret the experience.

Truth

"This book represents the pooled experience of 100 men and women who have been victims of alcoholism-and who have won their freedom and recovered their sanity and self-control. Their stories are detailed and circumstantial, packed with human interest. In America today the disease of alcoholism is increasing. Liquor has been an easy escape from depression. As an English officer in India, reproved for his excessive drinking, lifted his glass and said, "This is the swiftest road out of India," so many Americans have been using hard liquor as a means of flight from their troubles until to their dismay they discover that, free to begin, they are not free to stop. One hundred men and women, in this volume, report their experience of enslavement and then of liberation.

"The book is not in the least sensational. It is notable for its sanity, restraint and freedom from over-emphasis and fanaticism.

"The group sponsoring this book began with two or three ex-alcoholics, who discovered one another through kindred experience. From this a movement started; ex-alcoholics working for alcoholics, without fanfare or advertisement, and the movement has spread from one city to another.

"The core of their whole procedure is religious. They are convinced that for the helpless alcoholic there is only one way out-the expulsion of his obsession by a Power Greater Than Himself. Let it be said at once that there is nothing partisan or sectarian about this religious experience. Agnostics and atheists, along with Catholics, Jews and Protestants, tell their story of discovering the Power Greater than themselves. 'Who are you to say that there is no God,' one atheist in the group heard a voice say when, hospitalized for alcoholism, he faced the utter hopelessness of his condition. Nowhere is the tolerance and open-mindedness of the book more evident than in its treatment of this central matter on which the cure of all these men and women has depended. They are not partisans of any particular form of organized religion, although they strongly recommend that some religious fellowship be found by their participants. By religion they mean an experience which they personally know and which has saved them from their slavery, when psychiatry and medicine had failed. They agree that each man must have his own way of conceiving God, but of God Himself they are utterly sure, and their stories of victory in consequence are a notable addition to William James' 'Varieties of Religious Experience.'"