

THE N.S.W. TEMPERANCE ALLIANCE LEAFLET

Is Alcoholism a disease?

If it is —

it is preventable!

1. It is the only disease that is contracted by an act of the will;
2. It is the only disease that requires a licence to propagate it;
3. It is the only disease that is bottled and sold.
4. It is the only disease that requires outlets to spread it;
5. It is the only disease that produces a revenue for the government;
6. It is the only disease that provokes crime;
7. It is the only disease that is habit-forming;
8. It is the only disease that is spread by advertising;
9. It is the only disease without a germ or virus cause, and for which there is no human corrective medicine;
10. Diseases are not to be controlled. Diseases are not to be taxed or voted on. Diseases are to be conquered.

Dr. ANDREW C. IVY, Ph.D., M.D., D.Sc., Professor of Physiology and Head of the Department of Clinical Science, University of Illinois, U.S.A., says:

If it is a disease —

“All we have to do to answer the question of whether to drink or not to drink is to answer seriously and honestly another crucial question: Does the consumption of alcoholic beverages make better citizens; make people more fit to perform their work; promote public health, individual and social morality, and true happiness; or solve the problems which cause many people to drink alcoholic beverages? If it does, then everyone should drink. If it does not, then why do so many people insist on the privilege of drinking when that privilege produces seven million alcoholics in my country, and 300,000 in Australia?

“Finally, I abstain for another unquestionable reason, namely, I desire to avoid completely any responsibility for causing, by example, my own children or the sons and daughters of other parents to become victims of

alcoholism and of all the other tragedies which result from the consumption of alcoholic beverages.

“Everyone who has any sense of responsibility would recommend abstinence for the driver of a motor car. Who, then, can logically recommend that a person take a one-in-ten chance of wrecking his own life and spoiling that of his loved ones by becoming an alcoholic?

“Alcoholism or the alcohol habit is a disease as morphinism or the morphine habit is a disease. But alcoholism is due to a vice which leads to a disease, the toxic cause of which is alcohol. In medicine we try first to *prevent disease*; when we cannot prevent it, we then try to cure it. *Abstinence is the only certain and known or scientific way to prevent alcoholic intoxication and alcoholism.*”

Alcohol and Mortality Rates

Lincoln National Life Insurance Company findings with respect to the effect of drinking are cited in the

book *Selection of Risks*. Since 100 per cent is the normal mortality expectancy, the effects of drinking in different degrees are clearly evident. Five of the classifications reflecting drinking habits and the mortality rate of each are:

Intoxicated six times a year for a day or evening only, the mortality rate jumps from 100 to 277 per cent.

Intoxicated once a week for a day or evening only, from 100 to 328 per cent.

Intoxicated not oftener than three times a year, but lasting two or three days, from 100 to 332 per cent.

Intoxicated more than above, to 482 per cent. (Alert.)

The Three Attributes of Alcohol

by

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Alcohol has been aptly described

as a third-class food, a second-class drug, and a first-class poison.

The value of alcohol as a food is negligible because, though it is oxidised in the body, it is of very little value as a source of energy, because the rate at which it can be burnt in the tissues cannot be increased to meet the body's needs; moreover, alcohol contains no vitamins, nor does it contain any essential food factor.

Alcohol is a second-class drug, because anything that alcohol can do, other drugs can do better.

The proof of this can be found by comparing the records of a modern pharmacy with those of fifty years ago, for whereas physicians once prescribed brandy and other alcoholic liquors for various ailments nowadays alcohol is regarded by doctors as being definitely second-rate.

The claim, however, that alcohol is a first-class poison is well known to all those who have experience in the disastrous effects it produces on the nervous system in particular, and other organs generally.

AN EVIL—DIRECT AND INDIRECT

Broadly speaking, two forms of alcoholic poisoning may be encountered: acute alcoholic poisoning and chronic alcoholism.

Acute alcoholic poisoning is familiar to everyone, for it produces the characteristic picture known as drunkenness. It manifests itself principally by producing serious impairment of function of the brain and spinal cord, and as a result adversely affects the efficiency of both mind and body.

Contrary to popular belief, alcohol is not a stimulant, but a depressant, and its effects are similar to those of an anaesthetic.

The most serious results of consuming alcohol stem from this depressant effect, for it clouds the subject's judgment and saps his moral fibre.

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