While alcoholic clergy were enormously helped by spiritual programs for continuing sobriety there arose the debate whether special facilities should be instituted for the treatment and rehabilitation of alcoholic priests. The protagonist for this view, and the founder of the Guest House sanatoria, was Austin Ripley, a devout Catholic alcoholic layman. He had a deepfelt respect for the priesthood and a genuine sympathy for those suffering the problems he had endured. At first he brought the sick priest into his home and tried to help on the basis of his experience in alcoholic recovery. After assisting a small number of priests in this way, with very little success, he rented an unused convent as a sanatorium.

CLERGY NEED SPECIAL FACILITIES

Ripley faced objections from two directions. One was from those who believed alcoholism is no respecter of persons or status and the alcoholic should be treated as a sick individual, not as one who is in a particular occupation or profession. Most large rehabilitation centers, especially those under public auspices, follow this policy of admitting patients regardless of sex, age, occupation or social class. McLlwain tells that his fellow patients at the Alcoholic Rehabilitation Center in North Carolina included "all sorts," from college students to grandmothers, from well-educated professionals to manual workers.20

If alcoholism is placed in the category of illness it is logically a "leveler" for all those who suffer from it. Hospitals treat people according to the disease they suffer and logically give the same treatment to all who have the same illness. Roman remarks that a kind of "populism" is in "much of the alcohol–problem field which in turn may have its roots in the precepts of Alcoholics Anonymous." 21 There is a democratic openness characteristic of A.A. fellowship where "the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking."

Austin Ripley stood against this "populist" generalization when he insisted on special treatment facilities for the clergy, and evidence is now accumulating in support of his thesis. In industry and government, alcoholics at the managerial level resist treatment in the same program with alcoholics at the level of the shop and assembly line. The military finds separate programs for officers and soldiers more satisfactory than a program that attempts to treat both. Many priests who attend A.A. groups prefer to dress in civilian garb, reluctant to identify themselves as clergymen. Larger urban dioceses sponsor A.A. groups for priests only; New York had one as early as 1956; Chicago continues to promote