indulgence, a worse destructiveness." In other words, penalties and
the threat of penalties appeared ineffective in changing the drinking
habits of alcoholics. There was also the maxim, perhaps still believed
by some, that there was no use trying to rehabilitate an excessive drinker
until he came to the self-realization that he could not handle his liquor.

In other occupational systems the alcoholic employee has been
forced to undergo "crisis precipitation," that is, he was induced to make
a choice between entering a therapy program or losing his job. The
individual is brought face to face with a critical choice, but this crisis
must be precipitated with a certain finesse. After all, as Harrison Trice
remarks, "alcoholics are so notably thin-skinned, whatever their level of
employment, that it is advisable to handle all of them as if they were
executives." 39

GIVE UP ONE OR THE OTHER

It is a momentous suggestion that a priest should be confronted
with the choice of giving up either his drinking or his ministry, and even
the most authoritarian religious superior is reluctant to force a confron-
tation of such seriousness. Yet this is, in effect, the kind of advice now
found in the clergy policies for treatment and rehabilitation. In
ecclesiastical circles, however, this approach is often called "benevolent
coercion" or among the alcoholic priests themselves, "tough love." 40
Bishop McCarthy thought this special understanding should be brought
from the leaders of NCCA to the bishops and superiors: "the under-
standing that tough love is required, that benevolent coercion is re-
quired at times." It is urged also that this "toughness" should be
exercised by one priest to another:

At times it requires courage, even heroic courage, to confront a
brother priest and tell him that he is destroying himself and others. It is
the kind of love that is willing to run the risk of sacrificing even a
long-standing friendship, rather than stand by mutely and timidly while
you watch this friend go down the drain. 41

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reminiscent of the words of a socially aware pastor, David Phelan, who advised the delegates to the 1896 Total
Abstinence convention that "the greatest enemy we have to contend with today is not the appetite for liquor but
the habit of despair. There are drunkards today because they are desperate. They do not see any way out of their misery, so
they take to the glass as their last and final resort." Quoted in Bland, Hibernian Crusade, p. 209.