

# Choice in Medicine

*Alive and Well: One Doctor's Experience with Nutrition in the Treatment of Cancer Patients*, by Philip E. Binzel Jr., MD, Westlake Village, CA: American Media, 1994, 143 pages, paperback, \$9.95. Available from American Opinion Book Services, P.O. Box 8040, Appleton, WI 54913. Add \$2.00 for postage and handling.

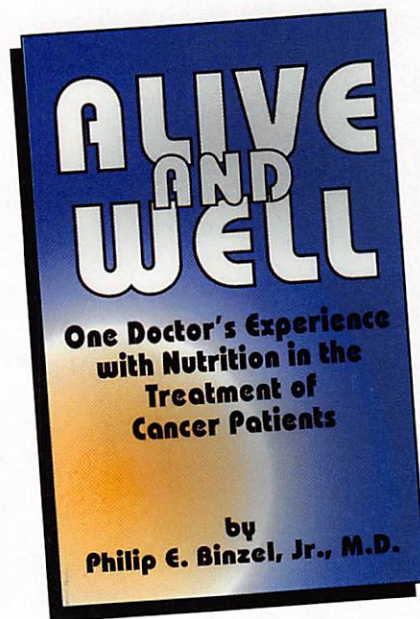
A characteristic of the liberal mind-set is the conviction that most people are incompetent to manage their own private lives without interference from bureaucrats and so-called experts. It is precisely this kind of activity in which a large portion of government bumbledom is involved, piloting ordinary folk through the supposed pitfalls of life and dictating to them about a thousand-and-one commonplace things. Should any citizen fail to heed the commands of the central-government nursemaids, a sharp rap on the knuckles in the form of civil or criminal proceedings, the peremptory confiscation of the transgressor's private property, or even prison time, is deemed appropriate.

To say that this state of affairs is the exact opposite of the Founding Fathers' intentions is to utter an understatement of towering magnitude. Even worse, the more efficient the minions of government become in circumscribing the legitimate activities of decent citizens, the less efficient they are in fulfilling their proper, constitutional role of protecting the nation from enemies, both foreign and domestic.

While many Americans are paralyzed by the sheer size and power of the modern federal leviathan, there is a particular kind of person who does not take kindly to bullying. That sort of person is a true descendant of earlier generations of Americans — tenacious, sensible, and altogether disinclined to truckle before the blustering of supercilious authorities. Such a man is the author of the present volume, a medical doctor, whose intrepid stand in the face of official lies, threats, and illegalities should serve as an inspiration to us all.

Two main themes prevail throughout

the 14 chapters of *Alive and Well*. The first deals with the right of patients to seek relief from the effects of a life-threatening disease by choosing a form of therapy that, while not "officially approved," nevertheless provides cures to many and affords much of the remainder a higher quality of life than they otherwise would enjoy. Establishment bureaucrats, we discover, are determined to deny patients that right, usu-



ally in the name of "protecting citizens from their own folly."

Dr. Binzel relates many interesting and outrageous examples of the fatuous and obdurate stance of government and other health authorities in attempting to prevent him from fulfilling the desire of patients to select the kind of care and treatment they receive. The imperious attitude of the medical mandarins is exemplified by an exchange in which Dr. Binzel inquired about the use of Laetrile with a representative of the Ohio Medical Association. To all of the author's inquiries, the official mindlessly repeated the phrase, "Laetrile is illegal," but then, when forthrightly challenged, at last confessed that there is no statute in Ohio making that alternative cancer treatment illegal. That encounter was only the first of many obstacles overcome by Dr. Binzel. Readers familiar with the methods of totalitarian states

will instantly recognize the grim *modus operandi* described here. And while lesser men would have caved in to these bulldozer tactics, the author confronted them directly, and won.

The second theme of *Alive and Well*, interwoven with the first, is the story of Dr. Binzel's astonishing 20-year record in treating cancer patients with strict nutritional therapy, in concert with a regimen of Laetrile. How great is his success? In his book, Dr. Binzel reports that for patients with primary cancer, 87.3 percent of those he treated are still alive, and of those with the much more serious metastatic cancer, 70.4 percent remain alive. Compare this with statistics from the American Cancer Society: Using "conventional" treatment, the primary cancer survival rate for five years is only 15 percent, while that for patients with metastatic cancer is a minuscule .01 percent. No wonder the partisans of debilitating and expensive radiation and chemotherapy have sought to silence men like Dr. Binzel and subject them to all manner of harassment and professional sanction.

In addition, this book presents several individual case histories in which the author successfully treated cancer, sometimes after other practitioners had surrendered unconditionally, giving up all hope. Of special interest to readers also are details of the doctor's total nutritional program, published in chapter 11, which includes a list of foods essential for optimum health, along with those that he believes should be avoided.

To sustain and protect life has been, historically speaking, the primary mission of medical doctors, a mission epitomized by the ancient and famed Oath of Hippocrates taken by students upon receiving their medical degrees. In recent decades we have witnessed large numbers of practitioners of the medical arts turning their backs on this sacred oath and, in pursuit of enrichment, using their skills to dispense death, rather than preserve life. How refreshing, then, to read this book and renew thereby some measure of our faith in the fundamental integrity of this venerable profession. ■

— FR. JAMES THORNTON