

OTHER BOOKS

TWELVE STEPS AND TWELVE TRADITIONS
An interpretive commentary on the A.A. program
by a co-founder

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS COMES OF AGE
A brief history of A.A.'s first two decades

AS BILL SEES IT
(formerly THE A.A. WAY OF LIFE)
Selected writings of A.A.'s co-founder

DR. BOB AND THE GOOD OLDTIMERS
A biography, with recollections of early A.A. in the Midwest

PASS IT ON
Bill W.'s life story; how the A.A. message reached the world

DAILY REFLECTIONS
A book of reflections by A.A. members for A.A. members

BOOKLETS
CAME TO BELIEVE . . .
Spiritual experiences of 75 A.A.'s

LIVING SOBER
Practical suggestions heard at meetings

A.A. IN PRISON: INMATE TO INMATE
Former Grapevine articles by people who found A.A. in prison

3 BODY DISEASE - BODY MIND SPIRIT
3 SEPARATE PARTS - BUT ALL EQUAL

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

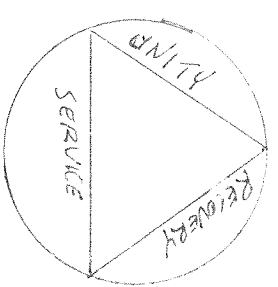
The 1st Promise
A The Story of

How Many Thousands of Men and Women
Have Recovered from Alcoholism

THIRD EDITION

THE SYMBOL WAS TAKEN FROM THE BOOK IN 1994
R/C of COPYRIGHT ISSUES

UNITY - FOUND
IN THE FELLOWSHIP
12 TRADITIONS
PART OF DISEASE IT
TREATS IS THE BODY



RECOVERY
1st/64 pgs of Book
TREATS THE MIND
12 STEPS

SERVICE FOUND IN
CARRIES THE MESSAGE
PART OF THE DISEASE IT
TREATS IS THE SPIRIT

12 CONCEPTS

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS WORLD SERVICES, INC.

NEW YORK CITY
1976

PROMISE IF I TAKE ACTION IN THESE
THREE AREAS I CAN RECOVER WHOLE

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TEXT BOOK - NOT A NOVEL - MEANT TO BE DONE IN ORDER

DESIGNED TO TRANSMIT THE TRUTH AND A SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE TO A READER WHO KNOWS NOTHING ABOUT WHAT IS CONTAINED IN THE BOOK

ALERT READER

PREFACE - TELLS SUBJECT PURPOSE + PLAN OF THE BOOK

THIS IS THE THIRD EDITION OF THE BOOK "ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS." THE FIRST EDITION APPEARED IN APRIL 1939, AND IN THE FOLLOWING SIXTEEN YEARS, MORE THAN 300,000 COPIES WENT INTO CIRCULATION. THE SECOND EDITION, PUBLISHED IN 1955, REACHED A TOTAL OF MORE THAN 1,150,000 COPIES.

BECAUSE THIS BOOK HAS BECOME THE BASIC TEXT FOR OUR SOCIETY AND HAS HELPED SUCH LARGE NUMBERS OF ALCOHOLIC MEN AND WOMEN TO RECOVERY, THERE EXISTS A SENTIMENT AGAINST ANY RADICAL CHANGES BEING MADE IN IT. THEREFORE, THE FIRST PORTION OF THIS VOLUME, DESCRIBING THE A.A. RECOVERY PROGRAM, HAS BEEN LEFT UNTOUCHED IN THE COURSE OF REVISIONS MADE FOR BOTH THE SECOND AND THE THIRD EDITIONS. THE SECTION CALLED "THE DOCTOR'S OPINION" HAS BEEN KEPT INTACT, JUST AS IT WAS ORIGINALLY WRITTEN IN 1939 BY THE LATE DR. WILLIAM D. SILKworth, OUR SOCIETY'S GREAT MEDICAL BENEFACTOR.

THE SECOND EDITION ADDED THE APPENDICES: THE TWELVE TRADITIONS, AND THE DIRECTIONS FOR GETTING IN TOUCH WITH A.A. BUT THE CHIEF CHANGE WAS IN THE SECTION OF PERSONAL STORIES, WHICH WAS EXPANDED TO REFLECT THE FELLOWSHIP'S GROWTH. "BILL'S STORY," "DOCTOR BOB'S NIGHTMARE," AND ONE OTHER PERSONAL HISTORY FROM THE FIRST EDITION WERE RETAINED INTACT; THREE WERE EDITED AND ONE OF THESE WAS RETITLED; NEW VERSIONS OF TWO STORIES WERE WRITTEN, WITH NEW TITLES; THIRTY COMPLETELY NEW STORIES WERE ADDED; AND THE STORY SECTION WAS

* TELLS ME THE FIRST PART OF THE BOOK IS WHERE THE RECOVERY IS - THE PROBLEM

DISCOVERED THE CEILING

divided into three parts, under the same headings that are used now.

In this third edition, Part I ("Pioneers of A.A.") stands unchanged. Nine of the stories in Part II ("They Stopped in Time") are carried over from the second edition; eight new stories have been added. In Part III ("They Lost Nearly All"), eight stories have been retained; five are new.

All changes made over the years in the Big Book (A.A. members' fond nickname for this volume) have had the same purpose: to represent the current membership of Alcoholics Anonymous more accurately, and thereby to reach more alcoholics. If you have a drinking problem, we hope that you may pause in reading one of the forty-four personal stories and think: "Yes, that happened to me," or, more important, "Yes, I've felt like that," or, most important, "Yes, I believe this program can work for me, too."

THE LAST QUESTIONS NEED TO BE ANSWERED BEFORE STEP 3.

FOREWORD TO FIRST EDITION

This is the Foreword as it appeared in the first printing of the first edition in 1939

WE, OF Alcoholics Anonymous, are more than one hundred men and women who have recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body. To show other alcoholics precisely how we have recovered is the main purpose of this book. For them, we hope these pages will prove so convincing that no further authentication will be necessary. We think this account of our experiences will help everyone to better understand the alcoholic. Many do not comprehend that the alcoholic is a very sick person. And besides, we are sure that our way of living has its advantages for all. ~~NOT OUR WAY TO QUIT DRINKING~~

It is important that we remain anonymous because we are too few, at present to handle the overwhelming number of personal appeals which may result from this publication. Being mostly business or professional folk, we could not well carry on our occupations in such an event. We would like it understood that our alcoholic work is an avocation. ~~HOBBY NOT PAID~~

When writing or speaking publicly about alcoholism, we urge each of our Fellowship to omit his personal name, designating himself instead as "a member of Alcoholics Anonymous."

Very earnestly we ask the press also, to observe this request, for otherwise we shall be greatly handicapped.

We are not an organization in the conventional

sense of the word. There are no fees or dues whatsoever. The only requirement for membership is an honest desire to stop drinking. We are not allied with any particular faith, sect or denomination, nor do we oppose anyone. We simply wish to be helpful to those who are afflicted.

We shall be interested to hear from those who are getting results from this book, particularly from those who have commenced work with other alcoholics. We should like to be helpful to such cases.

Inquiry by scientific, medical, and religious societies will be welcomed.

MIND

BODY

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS.

SPIRIT

FOREWORD TO SECOND EDITION

(1939-1955)

16 425 LA-752

Figures given in this foreword describe the Fellowship as it was in 1955

SINCE the original Foreword to this book was written in 1939, a ~~very~~ ¹⁹⁵⁴ prodigious miracle has taken place. Our earliest printing, voiced the hope "that every alcoholic who journeys will find the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous at his destination. Already," continues the early text "twos and threes and fives of us have sprung up in other communities."

Sixteen years have elapsed between our first printing of this book and the presentation in 1955 of our second edition. In that brief space, Alcoholics Anonymous has mushroomed into nearly 6,000 groups whose membership is far above 150,000 recovered alcoholics. Groups are to be found in each of the United States and all of the provinces of Canada. A.A. has flourishing communities in the British Isles, the Scandinavian countries, South Africa, South America, Mexico, Alaska, Australia and Hawaii. All told, promising beginnings have been made in some 50 foreign countries and U. S. possessions. Some are just now taking shape in Asia. Many of our friends encourage us by saying that this is but a beginning; only the augury of a much larger future ahead. *PREDICTION*

The spark that was to flare into the first A.A. group was struck at Akron, Ohio, in June 1935, during a talk between a New York ¹⁹⁴⁵ stockbroker and an Akron physician. Six months earlier, the broker had been relieved of his drink obsession by a sudden spiritual

DR 1308

Ebby Thacher

PRE AA
Pg 292

experience, following a meeting with an alcoholic friend who had been in contact with the Oxford Groups of that day. He had also been greatly helped by the late Dr. William D. Silkworth, a New York specialist in alcoholism who is now accounted no less than a medical saint by A.A. members, and whose story of the early days of our Society appears in the next pages. From this doctor, the broker had learned the grave nature of alcoholism. Though he could not accept all the tenets of the Oxford Groups, he was convinced of the need for moral inventory, confession of personality defects, restitution to those harmed, helpfulness to others, and the necessity of belief in and dependence upon God. FA 74

PRINCIPALS

NOT HIMSELF
SOBER

Prior to his journey to Akron, the broker had worked hard with many alcoholics on the theory that only an alcoholic could help an alcoholic, but he had succeeded only in keeping sober himself. The broker had gone to Akron on a business venture which had collapsed, leaving him greatly in fear that he might start drinking again. He suddenly realized that in order to save himself he must carry his message to another alcoholic. That alcoholic turned out to be the Akron physician. ROB

This physician had repeatedly tried spiritual means to resolve his alcoholic dilemma but had failed. But when the broker gave him Dr. Silkworth's description of alcoholism and its hopelessness, the physician began to pursue the spiritual remedy for his malady with a willingness he had never before been able to muster. He sobered, never to drink again up to the moment of his death in 1950. This seemed to prove that one alcoholic could affect another as no nonalcoholic

Behind Willingness is hopeless desperation knowing I'm going to drink AGAIN

* THE WORK IN AA IS NOT THE STEPS
ITS TAKING PEOPLE THROUGH THE STEPS

Bill D
Sto 24
Pg 182

It also indicated that strenuous work, one alcoholic with another, was vital to permanent recovery.

Hence the two men set to work almost frantically upon alcoholics arriving in the ward of the Akron City Hospital. Their very first case, a desperate one, recovered immediately and became A.A. number three. He never had another drink. This work at Akron continued through the summer of 1935. There were many failures, but there was an occasional heartening success. When the broker returned to New York in the fall of 1935, the first A.A. group had actually been formed, though no one realized it at the time.

A second small group promptly took shape at New York, to be followed in 1937 with the start of a third at Cleveland. Besides these, there were scattered alcoholics who had picked up the basic ideas in Akron or New York who were trying to form groups in other cities. By late 1937, the number of members having substantial sobriety time behind them was sufficient to convince the membership that a new light had entered the dark world of the alcoholic. BILL SYRS

It was now time, the struggling groups thought, to place their message and unique experience before the world. This determination bore fruit in the spring of 1939 by the publication of this volume. The membership had then reached about 100 men and women. The fledgling society, which had been nameless, now began to be called Alcoholics Anonymous, from the title of its own book. The flying-blind period ended and A.A. entered a new phase of its pioneering time.

With the appearance of the new book a great deal began to happen. Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, the

YES RECEIVED THEOLOGIAN

noted clergyman, reviewed it with approval. In the fall of 1939 Fulton Oursler, then editor of *Liberty*, printed a piece in his magazine, called "Alcoholics and God." This brought a rush of 800 frantic inquiries into the little New York office which meanwhile had been established. Each inquiry was painstakingly answered: pamphlets and books were sent out. Businessmen, traveling out of existing groups, were referred to these prospective newcomers. New groups started up and it was found, to the astonishment of everyone, that A.A.'s message could be transmitted in the mail as well as by word of mouth. By the end of 1939 it was estimated that 800 alcoholics were on their way to recovery.

In the spring of 1940, John D. Rockefeller, Jr. gave a dinner for many of his friends to which he invited A.A. members to tell their stories. News of this got on the world wires; inquiries poured in again and many people went to the bookstores to get the book "Alcoholics Anonymous." By March 1941 the membership had shot up to 2,000. Then Jack Alexander wrote a feature article in the *Saturday Evening Post* and placed such a compelling picture of A.A. before the general public that alcoholics in need of help really deluged us. By the close of 1941, A.A. numbered 8,000 members. The mushrooming process was in full swing. A.A. had become a national institution.

Our Society then entered a fearsome and exciting adolescent period. The test that it faced was this: Could these large numbers of erstwhile erratic alcoholics successfully meet and work together? Would there be quarrels over membership, leadership, and money? Would there be strivings for power and

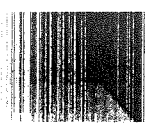
prestige? Would there be schisms which would split A.A. apart? Soon A.A. was beset by these very problems on every side and in every group. But out of this frightening and at first disrupting experience the conviction grew that A.A.'s had to hang together or die separately. We had to unify our Fellowship or pass off the scene.

As we discovered the principles by which the individual alcoholic could live, so we had to evolve principles by which the A.A. groups and A.A. as a whole could survive and function effectively. It was thought that no alcoholic man or woman could be excluded from our Society; that our leaders might serve but never govern; that each group was to be autonomous and there was to be no professional class of therapy. There were to be no fees or dues; our expenses were to be met by our own voluntary contributions. There was to be the least possible organization, even in our service centers. Our public relations were to be based upon attraction rather than promotion. It was decided that all members ought to be anonymous at the level of press, radio, TV and films. And in no circumstances should we give endorsements, make alliances, or enter public controversies. *MEANS EVERY THING*

This was the substance of A.A.'s Twelve Traditions, which are stated in full on page 564 of this book. Though none of these principles had the force of rules or laws, they had become so widely accepted by 1950 that they were confirmed by our first International Conference held at Cleveland. Today the remarkable unity of A.A. is one of the greatest assets that our Society has.

While the internal difficulties of our adolescent

580
510 RM
Pg 342



period were being ironed out, public acceptance of A.A. grew by leaps and bounds. For this there were two principal reasons: the large numbers of recoveries, and reunited homes. These made their impressions everywhere. Of alcoholics who came to A.A. and really tried, 50% got sober at once and remained that way; 25% sobered up after some relapses, and among the remainder, those who stayed on with A.A. showed improvement. Other thousands came to a few A.A. meetings and at first decided they didn't want the program. But great numbers of these—about two out of three—began to return as time passed.

Another reason for the wide acceptance of A.A. was the ministrations of friends—friends in medicine, religion, and the press, together with innumerable others who became our able and persistent advocates. Without such support, A.A. could have made only the slowest progress. Some of the recommendations of A.A.'s early medical and religious friends will be found further on in this book.

Alcoholics Anonymous is not a religious organization. Neither does A.A. take any particular medical point of view, though we cooperate widely with the men of medicine as well as with the men of religion.

Alcohol being no respecter of persons, we are an accurate cross section of America, and in distant lands, the same democratic evening-up process is now going on. By personal religious affiliation, we include Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Hindus, and a sprinkling of Moslems and Buddhists. More than 15% of us are women.

At present, our membership is pyramiding at the rate of about twenty per cent a year. So far, upon the

total problem of several million actual and potential alcoholics in the world, we have made only a scratch. In all probability, we shall never be able to touch more than a fair fraction of the alcohol problem in all its ramifications. Upon therapy for the alcoholic himself, we surely have no monopoly. Yet it is our great hope that all those who have as yet found no answer may begin to find one in the pages of this book and will presently join us on the high road to a new freedom.

LOOK AT YOUR PARTICIPATION IN AA

- 1) *ARE YOU WORKING WITH OTHER ALCOHOLICS
THINK THROUGH THE STEPS?*
- 2) *HAVE YOU CONTINUED TO ACTUALLY DO THE
STEPS YOURSELF?*
- 3) *DO YOU HAVE A GROUP THAT YOU ARE
COMMITTED TO?
ARE YOU IN AA OR ARE YOU
AROUND AA?*

FOREWORD TO THIRD EDITION

By March 1976, when this edition went to the printer, the total worldwide membership of Alcoholics Anonymous was conservatively estimated at more than 1,000,000, with almost 28,000 groups meeting in over 90 countries.¹

Surveys of groups in the United States and Canada indicate that A.A. is reaching out, not only to more and more people, but to a wider and wider range. Women now make up more than one-fourth of the membership; among newer members, the proportion is nearly one-third. Seven percent of the A.A.'s surveyed are less than 30 years of age—among them, many in their teens.²

The basic principles of the A.A. program, it appears, hold good for individuals with many different lifestyles, just as the program has brought recovery to those of many different nationalities. The Twelve Steps that summarize the program may be called *los Doce Pasos* in one country, *les Douze Etapes* in another, but they trace exactly the same path to recovery that was blazed by the earliest members of Alcoholics Anonymous.

In spite of the great increase in the size and the span of this Fellowship, at its core it remains simple and personal. Each day, somewhere in the world, recovery begins when one alcoholic talks with another alcoholic, sharing experience, strength, and hope.

¹In 2001, over 1,000,000 groups, with A.A. activity in approximately 150 countries. In 2001, one-third are women; about one-eighth, 30 and under.

NOT OPINIONS KNOWLEDGE OR BELIEFS

- ① THE PROCESS STARTS HERE
- ② 1st 1/2 of 1st STEP
- ③ AM I POWERLESS PHYSICALLY? DO I LOVE MY DRINKING?
- ④ WHY AM I POWERLESS PHYSICALLY?

THE DOCTOR'S OPINION

"WE ADMITTED WE WERE POWERLESS OVER ALCOHOL"

WE OF Alcoholics Anonymous believe that the reader will be interested in the medical estimate of the plan of recovery described in this book. Convincing testimony must surely come from medical men who have had experience with the sufferings of our members and have witnessed our return to health. A well-known doctor, chief physician at a nationally prominent hospital specializing in alcoholic and drug addiction, gave Alcoholics Anonymous this letter:

To Whom It May Concern: **ME Q**

I have specialized in the treatment of alcoholism for many years. **BILL W.**

In late 1934 I attended a patient who, though he had been a competent businessman of good earning capacity, was an alcoholic of a type I had come to regard as hopeless. **WANTS TO STOP + CANT**

In the course of his third treatment he acquired certain ideas concerning a possible means of recovery. As part of his rehabilitation he commenced to present his conceptions to other alcoholics, impressing upon them that they must do likewise with still others. This has become the basis of a rapidly growing fellowship of these men and their families. This man and over one hundred others appear to have recovered.

I personally know scores of cases who were of the type with whom other methods had failed completely. Q

These facts appear to be of extreme medical importance; because of the extraordinary possibilities of rapid

REMEDY - TREATMENT THAT CURES OR RELIEVES

THE DOCTOR'S OPINION

growth inherent in this group they may mark a new epoch in the ^{history} ~~history~~ of alcoholism. These men may well have a remedy for thousands of such situations. You may rely absolutely on anything they say about themselves.

Thine experience Very truly yours,
William D. Silkworth, M.D.

The physician who, at our request, gave us this letter, has been kind enough to enlarge upon his views in another statement which follows. In this statement he confirms what ~~we~~ who have suffered alcoholic torture must believe - that the body of the alcoholic is quite as abnormal as his mind. It did not satisfy us to be told that we could not control our drinking just because we were maladjusted to life, that we were in full flight from reality, or were outright mental defectives. These things were true to some extent, in fact, to a considerable extent with some of us. But we are sure that our bodies were sickened as well. In our belief, any picture of the alcoholic which leaves out this physical factor is incomplete.

The doctor's theory that we have an allergy to alcohol interests ^{me} ~~us~~. As laymen, ^{my} ~~our~~ opinion as to its soundness may, of course, mean little. But as ex-problem drinkers, we can say that his explanation makes good sense. It explains many things for which we cannot otherwise account.

Though we work out our solution on the spiritual as well as an ^{unseen} ~~invisible~~ plane, we favor hospitalization for the alcoholic who is very jittery or befogged. More often than not, it is imperative that a man's brain be cleared before he is approached, as he has then a better chance of understanding the nature of his problem.

THE CYCLE OF CRAVING MUST BE INTERRUPTED

ALLERGY A CONDITION OF UNUSUAL SENSITIVITY TO A SUBSTANCE WHICH IN LIKE AMOUNTS DOES NOT AFFECT OTHERS

THE DOCTOR'S OPINION

ter chance of understanding and accepting what we have to offer.

The doctor writes: ONLY AFTER I DRINK

The subject presented in this book seems to me to be of paramount importance to those afflicted with alcoholic addiction.

I say this after many years' experience as Medical Director of one of the oldest hospitals in the country treating alcoholic and drug addiction. HE IS AN AUTHORITY AND EXPERT

There was, therefore, a sense of real satisfaction when I was asked to contribute a few words on a subject which is covered in such masterly detail in these pages.

→ We doctors have realized for a long time that some form of ^{spiritual} ~~spiritual~~ ^{therapy} ~~therapy~~ was of ^{prime} ~~prime~~ ^{importance} ~~importance~~ to alcoholics, but its application presented difficulties beyond ^{our} ~~our~~ ^{conception} ~~conception~~. What with ^{our} ~~our~~ ^{ultra-modern} ~~ultra-modern~~ standards, ^{our} ~~our~~ ^{scientific} ~~scientific~~ approach to everything, we are perhaps not well equipped to apply the powers of ^{good} ~~good~~ that lie outside our ^{synthetic} ~~synthetic~~ ^{human} ~~human~~ knowledge.

Many years ago one of the leading contributors to this book came under our care in this hospital and while here he acquired some ideas which he put into practical application at once.

Later, he requested the privilege of being allowed to tell his story to other patients here and with some misgiving, we consented. The cases we have followed through have been most interesting; in fact, many of them are amazing. The unselfishness of these men as we have come to know them, the entire absence of profit motive, and their community spirit, is indeed inspiring to one who has labored long and wearily in this alcoholic field. They believe in themselves, and still more in the Power which pulls chronic alcoholics back from the gates of death.

Of course an alcoholic ought to be freed from his physical addiction at once.

LOOK WHAT HE SAYS RIGHT AWAY - HE CANT HELP ME WITH A SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE

(THE MIND)

IS THERE ANY THING ELSE?

DO I BELIEVE IN THE POWER?

THE GATES OF DEATH?

ONLY HAVE A COUPLE?

DO THESE REMEDIES RELIEVE ME?

ACT UP

THE BODY

craving for liquor, and this often requires a definite hospital procedure, before psychological measures can be of maximum benefit.

We believe, and so suggested a few years ago, that the action of alcohol on these chronic alcoholics is a manifestation of an allergy; that the phenomenon of craving is limited to this class, and never occurs in the average temperate drinker. These ~~alcoholic~~ types can never safely use alcohol in any form at all, and once having formed the habit, and found they cannot break it, once having lost their self-confidence, & their reliance upon things human, their problems pile up on them and become astonishingly difficult to solve. McLOWN OR ANYONE ELSE'S

Trothy emotional appeal seldom suffices. The message which can interest and hold these alcoholic people must have depth and weight. In nearly all cases, their ideals must be grounded in a power greater than themselves; if they are to re-create their lives. PROMISE (CHANCE TO START OVER)

If any feel that as psychiatrists directing a hospital for alcoholics we appear somewhat sentimental, let them stand with us a while on the firing line; see the tragedies, the despairing wives, the little children; let the solving of these problems become a part of their daily work, and even of their sleeping moments, and the most cynical will not wonder that we have accepted and encouraged this movement. He feel, after many years of experience, that we have found nothing which has contributed more to the rehabilitation of these men than the altruistic movement now growing up among them.

Men ~~and women~~ drink essentially because they like the effect produced by alcohol. The sensation is so elusive that, while they admit it is injurious, they cannot after a time differentiate the true from the false. To them, their alcoholic life seems the only normal life. They are restless, irritable and discontented, unless they can again experience

RESTLESS - CAN'T STAY STILL
IRRITABLE EASILY ANNOYED
DISCONTENTED NEVER SATISFIED
THESE ARE AT FEELINGS - THEY ARE A STATE OF BEING

IF ONLY A FEW WHY WAST THAT ENERGY?

WHO DENY THIS?

CAN I TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT ALONE?

HOPELESS

WHAT CAN A DRUG OR TREATMENT REALLY DO FOR ME?

the sense of ease and comfort which comes at once by taking a few drinks—drinks which they see others taking with impunity. After they have succumbed to the desire again, as so many do, and the phenomenon of craving develops, they pass through the well-known stages of a spree, emerging remorseful, with a firm resolution not to drink again. This is repeated over and over unless this person can experience an entire psychic change there is very little hope of his recovery. AM I SCREWED? WILL I DRINK AGAIN?

On the other hand—and strange as this may seem to those who do not understand—once a psychic change has occurred, the very same person who seemed doomed, who had so many problems he despaired of ever solving them, suddenly finds himself easily able to control his desire for alcohol, the only effort necessary being that required to follow a few simple rules. WORK REMAINING STEPS THAN TELL THEM

Men have cried out to me in sincere and despairing appeal: "Doctor, I cannot go on like this! I have everything to live for! I must stop, but I cannot! You must help me!"

Faced with this problem, if a doctor is honest with himself, he must sometimes feel his own inadequacy. Although he gives all that is in him, it often is not enough. One feels that something more than human power is needed to produce the essential psychic change. Through the aggregate of recoveries resulting from psychiatric effort is considerable, we physicians must admit we have made little impression upon the problem as a whole. Many types do not respond to the ordinary psychological approach. INTERESTING THEM WITH THEM

I do not hold with those who believe that alcoholism is entirely a problem of mental control. I have had many men who had, for example, worked a period of months on some problem or business deal which was to be settled on a certain date favorably to them. They took a drink a day or so prior to the date, and then the phenomenon of craving at once became paramount to all other interests so that the

FAVORABLY - NOTHING TO DO WITH FEELINGS
THIS IS NOT AN ATTEMPT TO ESCAPE THE UNPLEASANT

MY INSANE MIND WILL TELL ME I'M DECIDING TO DRINK. BUT IN REALITY THE DECISION HAS ALREADY BEEN MADE. TO DRINK AND GIVE UP WHAT I WANT
 XXVIII THE DOCTOR'S OPINION

important appointment was not met. These men were, not drinking to escape; they were drinking to overcome a craving beyond their mental control. So how important are my feelings?
 There are many situations which arise out of the phenomenon of craving which cause men to make the supreme sacrifice rather than continue to fight.

The classification of alcoholics seems most difficult, and in much detail is outside the scope of this book. There are, of course, the psychopaths who are emotionally unstable. We are all familiar with this type. They are always "going on the wagon for keeps." They are over-remorseful and make many resolutions, but never a decision.

There is the type of man who is unwilling to admit that he cannot take a drink. He plans various ways of drinking. He changes his brand or his environment. There is the type who always believes that after being entirely free from alcohol for a period of time he can take a drink without danger. There is the manic-depressive type, who is, perhaps, the least understood by his friends, and about whom a whole chapter could be written.

Then there are types entirely normal in every respect except in the effect alcohol has upon them. They are often able, intelligent, friendly people. Have I identified my Alcoholic?

All these, and many others, have one symptom in common: they cannot start drinking without developing the phenomenon of craving. This phenomenon, as we have suggested, may be the manifestation of an allergy which differentiates these people, and sets them apart as a distinct entity. It has never been, by any treatment with which we are familiar, permanently eradicated. The only relief we have to suggest is entire abstinence. For the physical

This immediately precipitates us into a seething caldron of debate. Much has been written pro and con, but among physicians, the general opinion seems to be that most chronic alcoholics are doomed. Am I screwed?

Can I do this on my own?
 Just not drink?

NO CHOICE OVER THIS ACTION
 MY MIND CAN NOT EXPLAIN WHY A CLEANING HAS A CANNOT CONTROL
 WITH MY MIND MY BODY PILOT AUTO

WHAT HE WAS LIKE

WHAT HE IS LIKE NOW

DETOX

THE DOCTOR'S OPINION

What is the solution? Perhaps I can best answer this by relating one of my experiences.

About one year prior to this experience a man was brought in to be treated for chronic alcoholism. He had but partially recovered from a bleeding stomach and seemed to be a case of pathological showing symptoms of inertial deterioration. He had lost everything worthwhile in life and was only living, one might say, to drink. He frankly admitted and believed that for him there was no hope. Following the elimination of alcohol, there was found to be no permanent brain injury. He accepted the plan outlined in this book.

One year later he called to see me, and I experienced a very strange sensation. I knew the man by name, and partly recognized his features, but there all resemblance ended. From a trembling, despairing everybody had emerged a man brimming over with self-reliance and contentment. I talked with him for some time, but was not able to bring myself to feel that I had known him before. To me he was a stranger; and so he left me. A long time has passed with no return to alcohol.

When I need a mental uplift, I often think of another case brought in by a physician prominent in New York. The patient had made his own diagnosis, and deciding his situation hopeless, had hidden in a deserted barn determined to die. He was rescued by a searching party, and, in desperate condition, brought to me. DR Following his physical rehabilitation, he had a talk with me in which he frankly stated he thought the treatment a waste of effort unless I could assure him, which no one ever had, that in the future he would have the "will power" to resist the impulse to drink.

His alcoholic problem was so complex and his depression so great, that we felt his only hope would be through what we then called spiritual therapy, and we doubted if even that would have any effect.

HE KNOWS HE CANT STOP DRINKING- NO MATTER WHAT

WHAT HAPPENED
 WE'LL BEAT IT

WHAT HAPPENED

WHAT HE IS DOING

WHAT LIVES

THE DOCTOR'S OPINION

However, he did become "sold" on the ideas contained in this book. He has not had a drink for a great many years. I see him now and then and he is as fine a specimen of manhood as one could wish to meet.

I earnestly advise every alcoholic to read this book through, and though perhaps he came to scoff, he may remain to pray. From a Dr - Best in the County

William D. Silkworth, M.D.

THE DR HAS GIVEN ME THE 1ST
1/2 OF THE 1ST STEP AND HE
CAN'T HELP ME WITH IT.

HIGH LIGHT HOW I FEEL, THOUGHT +
DRANK LIKE RICE IN 1ST 8 PGS

THE DIFFERENCES ARE NOT IMPARTANT

Chapter 1

BILL'S STORY

WAR FEVER ran high in the New England town to which we new, young officers from Plattsburg were assigned, and we were flattered when the first citizens took us to their homes, making us feel heroic. Here was love, applause, war; moments sublime with intervals hilarious. I was part of life at last and in the midst of the excitement I discovered liquor. I forgot the strong warnings and the prejudices of my people concerning drink. In time we sailed for "Over There." I was very lonely and again turned to alcohol. We landed in England. I visited Winchester Cathedral. Much moved, I wandered outside. My attention was caught by a doggerel on an old tombstone:

"Here lies a Hampshire Grenadier
Who caught his death
Drinking cold small beer.
A good soldier is ne'er forgot
Whether he dieth by musket
Or by pot."

Ominous warning—which I failed to heed. Twenty-two, and a veteran of foreign wars, I went home at last. I fancied myself a leader, for had not the men of my battery given me a special token of appreciation? My talent for leadership, I imagined, would place me at the head of vast enterprises which I would manage with the utmost assurance.

they seek. At these informal gatherings one may often see from 50 to 200 persons. We are growing in numbers and power.*

An alcoholic in his cups is an unlovely creature. Our struggles with them are variously strenuous, comic, and tragic. One poor chap committed suicide in my home. He could not, or would not, see our way of life.

There is, however, a vast amount of fun about it all. I suppose some would be shocked at our seeming worldliness and levity. But just underneath there is deadly earnestness. Faith has to work twenty-four hours a day in and through us, or we perish.

Most of us feel we need look no further for Utopia. We have it with us right here and now. Each day my friend's simple talk in our kitchen multiplies itself in a widening circle of peace on earth and good will to men.

Bill W., co-founder of A.A., died January 24, 1971.

* In 2001, A.A. is composed of over 100,000 groups.

A process that involves surrender with out hope only defeats itself.

Chapter 2

IS THERE IS A SOLUTION ?

WE, OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, know thousands of men and women who were once just as hopeless as Bill. Nearly all have recovered.

They have solved the drink problem. 10th Step Promise

IN CONSTANT ESCAPE

We are average Americans. All sections of this country and many of its occupations are represented, as well as many political, economic, social, and religious backgrounds. We are people who normally would not mix. But there exists among us a fellowship, a friendliness, and an understanding which is indescribably wonderful. We are like the passengers of a great liner the moment after rescue from shipwreck when camaraderie, joyousness and democracy pervade the vessel from steerage to Captain's table. Unlike the feelings of the ship's passengers, however, our joy in escape from disaster does not subside as we go our individual ways. The feeling of having shared in a common peril is one element in the powerful experience which binds us. But that in itself would never have held us together as we are now joined.

The tremendous fact for every one of us is that we have discovered a common solution. We have a way out on which we can absolutely agree and upon which we can join in brotherly and harmonious action. This is the great news this book carries to those who suffer from alcoholism. ?

Common shared by a number in a group - widely or generally known
1st 100 us in the book - not us in
CALI TIONS - ANI ACTIONS OR PROCESSES OF SOLVING PLMS

ENVELOPE TO FLOW OVER-ENCLOSURE

THE ROOT

An illness of this sort—and we have come to believe it an illness—involves those about us in a way no other human sickness can. If a person has cancer all are sorry for him and no one is angry or hurt. But not so with the alcoholic illness, for with it there goes annihilation of all the things worth while in life. It engulfs all whose lives touch the sufferer's. It brings misunderstanding, fierce resentment, financial insecurity, disgusted friends and employers, warped lives of blameless children, sad wives and parents—anyone can increase the list.

We hope this volume will inform and comfort those who are, or who may be affected. There are many.

Highly competent psychiatrists who have dealt with us have found it sometimes impossible to persuade an alcoholic to discuss his situation without reserve.

Strangely enough, wives, parents and intimate friends usually find us even more unapproachable than do the psychiatrist and the doctor. NO SAFETY

But the ex-problem drinker who has found this solution, who is properly armed with facts about himself, can generally win the entire confidence of another alcoholic in a few hours. Until such an understanding is reached, little or nothing can be accomplished.

12th STEP That the man who is making the approach has had the same difficulty, that he obviously knows what he is talking about, that his whole deportment shouts at the new prospect that he is a man with a real answer, that he has no attitude of Holier Than Thou, nothing whatever except the sincere desire to be helpful, that there are no fees to pay, no axes to grind, no people to please, no lectures to be endured—these are the conditions

under which these are the conditions under which we have found most effective. After such an approach many take up their beds and walk again.

WAS HE LIKE ME & DOES HE LIVE LIKE THAT WHY ANYMORE & DOES HE HAVE AN ANSWER FOR ME &

None of us makes a sole vocation of this work, nor do we think its effectiveness would be increased if we did. We feel that elimination of our drinking is but a beginning. A much more important demonstration of our principles lies before us in our respective homes, occupations and affairs. All of us spend much of our spare time in the sort of effort which we are going to describe. A few are fortunate enough to be so situated that they can give nearly all their time to the work.

12 STEP

If we keep on the way we are going there is little doubt that much good will result, but the surface of the problem would hardly be scratched. Those of us who live in large cities are overcome by the reflection that close by hundreds are dropping into oblivion every day. Many could recover if they had the opportunity we have enjoyed. How then shall we present that which has been so freely given us?

We have concluded to publish an anonymous volume setting forth the problem as we see it. We shall bring to the task our combined experience and knowledge. This should suggest a useful program for anyone concerned with a drinking problem.

Of necessity there will have to be discussion of matters medical, psychiatric, social, and religious. We are aware that these matters are, from their very nature, controversial. Nothing would please us so much as to write a book which would contain no basis for contention or argument. We shall do our utmost to achieve that ideal. Most of us sense that real tolerance of other people's shortcomings and viewpoints and a respect for their opinions are attitudes which make us

more useful to others. Our very lives, as ex-problem drinkers, depend upon our constant thought of others and how we may help meet their needs. Q

You may already have asked yourself why it is that all of us became so very ill from drinking. Doubtless you are curious to discover how and why, in the face of expert opinion to the contrary, we have recovered from a hopeless condition of mind and body. If you are an alcoholic who wants to get over it, you may already be asking "What do I have to do?"

It is the purpose of this book to answer such questions specifically. We shall tell you what we have done. Before going into a detailed discussion, it may be well to summarize some points as we see them.

How many times people have said to us: "I can't take it or leave it alone. Why can't he?" "Why don't you drink like a gentleman or quit?" "That fellow can't handle his liquor." "Why don't you try beer and wine?" "Lay off the hard stuff." His will power must be weak. "He could stop if he wanted to." "She's such a sweet girl, I should think he'd stop for her sake." "The doctor told him that if he ever drank again it would kill him, but there he is all lit up again."

Now these are commonplace observations on drinkers which we hear all the time. Back of them is a world of ignorance and misunderstanding. We see that these expressions refer to people whose reactions are very different from ours. REACTIONS TO BOTTLE Moderate drinkers have little trouble in giving up liquor entirely if they have good reason for it. They can take it or leave it alone. Q

Then we have a certain type of hard drinker. He may have the habit badly enough to gradually impair

WHY DO I?

QUESTIONS TO ASK ME?

DO I BELIEVE PEOPLE WHO CAN DO THESE THINGS ARE PHYSICALLY + MENTALLY DIFF. FROM ME?

ONLY 3 TYPES OF DRINKERS WHAT KIND Am I?

DID I START AS A HARD DRINKER?

him physically and mentally. It may cause him to die a few years before his time. If a sufficiently strong reason—ill health, falling in love, change of environment, or the warning of a doctor—becomes operative, this man can also stop or moderate, although he may find it difficult and troublesome and may even need medical attention. DETOX CAN I STOP OR MODERATE? But what about the real alcoholic? He may start off as a moderate drinker; he may or may not become a continuous hard drinker; but at some stage of his drinking career he begins to lose all control of his liquor consumption, once he starts to drink.

CAN I STAY STOPPED ON MY OWN LIKE A MODERATE OR HARD DRINKER

Here is the fellow who has been puzzling you, especially in his lack of control. He does absurd, incredible, tragic things while drinking. He is a real Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. He is seldom mildly intoxicated. He is always more or less insanely drunk. His disposition while drinking resembles his normal nature but little. He may be one of the finest fellows in the world. Yet let him drink for a day, and he frequently becomes disgustingly, and even dangerously anti-social. He has a positive genius for getting tight at exactly the wrong moment, particularly when some important decision must be made or engagement kept. He is often perfectly sensible and well balanced concerning everything except liquor; but in that respect he is incredibly dishonest and selfish. He often possesses special abilities, skills, and aptitudes, and has a promising career ahead of him. He uses his gifts to build up a bright outlook for his family and himself, and then pulls the structure down on his head by a senseless series of sprees. He is the fellow who goes to bed so intoxicated he ought to sleep the clock around. Yet early next

THE PHYSICAL

morning he searches madly for the bottle he misplaced the night before. If he can afford it, he may have liquor concealed all over his house to be certain no one gets his entire supply away from him to throw down the wastepipe. As matters grow worse, he begins to use a combination of high-powered sedative and liquor to quiet his nerves so he can go to work. Then comes the day when he simply cannot make it and gets drunk all over again. Perhaps he goes to a doctor who gives him morphine or some sedative with which to taper off. Then he begins to appear at hospitals and sanitariums.

This is by no means a comprehensive picture of the true alcoholic, as our behavior patterns vary. But this description should identify him roughly.

Why does he behave like this? If hundreds of experiences have shown ^{him} that one drink means another ^{drunk} ~~debacle~~ with all its attendant suffering and humiliation, why is it he takes that one drink? Why can't he stay on the water wagon? What has become of the common sense and will power that he still sometimes displays with respect to other matters?

Perhaps there never will be a full answer to these questions. Opinions vary considerably as to why the alcoholic reacts differently from normal people. We are not sure why, once a certain point is reached, little can be done for him. We cannot answer the riddle.

I know that while the alcoholic keeps away from drink, as he may do for months or years, he reacts much like other men. ~~We~~ are equally positive that once he takes any alcohol whatever into his system, something happens, both in the bodily and mental sense, which makes it virtually impossible for him to

DO I DRINK THE WAY I INTEND TO DRINK?

PHYSICAL CRAVING

REVIEW THIS

MENTAL OBSESSION BEFORE I DRINK

stop. The experience of any alcoholic will abundantly confirm this. Does my experience confirm this?

These observations would be academic and pointless if ~~my~~ friend never took the first drink, thereby setting the terrible cycle in motion. Therefore, the main problem of the alcoholic centers in his mind.

rather than in his body. If you ask him why he started on that last bender, the chances are he will offer you any one of a hundred alibis. Some of these excuses have a certain plausibility, but none of them really makes sense in the light of the havoc an alcoholic's drinking bout creates. They sound like the philosophy of the man who, having a headache, beats himself on the head with a hammer so that he can't feel the ache.

If you draw this fallacious reasoning to the attention of an alcoholic, he will laugh it off, or become irritated and refuse to talk. IF I SAW THE TRUTH

Once in a while he may tell the truth. And the truth, strange to say, is usually that he has no more idea why he took that first drink than you have. Some drinkers have excuses with which they are satisfied part of the time. But in their hearts they really do not know why they do it. Once this malady has a real hold, they are a baffled lot. There is the obsession that somehow, someday, they will beat the game. But they often suspect they are down for the count.

How true this is, few realize. In a vague way their families and friends sense that these drinkers are abnormal, but everybody hopefully awaits the day when the sufferer will rouse himself from his lethargy and assert his power of will.

The tragic truth is that if the man be a real alcoholic, the happy day may not arrive. He has lost IS THE TRAGIC TRUTH ACCEPTABLE?

Am I powerless mentally?

Why am I powerless mentally?

Why am I powerless mentally?

OBSESSION AN IDEA THAT PUTS WITH ALL MENTAL OBSESSION

MY BODY

NO ALCOHOL IN MY

WANTS TO STOP BUT CAN'T

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

24 control. At a certain point in the drinking of every alcoholic, he passes into a state where the most powerful desire to stop drinking is of absolutely no avail. This tragic situation has already arrived in practically every case long before it is suspected.

The fact is that most alcoholics, for reasons yet obscure, have lost the power of choice in drink. They so-called will power becomes practically nonexistent. We are unable, at certain times, to bring into our consciousness with sufficient force the memory of the suffering and humiliation of even a week or a month ago. We are without defense against the first drink.

The almost certain consequences that follow taking even a glass of beer do not crowd into the mind to deter us. If these thoughts occur, they are hazy and readily supplanted with the old threadbare idea that this time we shall handle ourselves like other people. There is a complete failure of the kind of defense that keeps one from putting his hand on a hot stove. So?

The alcoholic may say to himself in the most casual way, "It won't burn me this time, so here's how!" Or perhaps he doesn't think at all. How often have some of us begun to drink in this nonchalant way, and after the third or fourth, pounded on the bar and said to ourselves, "For God's sake, how did I ever get started again?" Only to have that thought supplanted by "Well, I'll stop with the sixth drink." Or "What's the use anyhow?"

When this sort of thinking is fully established in an individual with alcoholic tendencies, he has probably placed himself beyond human aid, and unless locked up, may die or go permanently insane. These stark and ugly facts have been confirmed by legions of alco-

ALCOHOLIC INSANITY

- THE ONLY REQUIREMENT IS A DESIRE TO STOP IS THAT ENOUGH?
- WILL THINK THE DRINK THEN WORK?

MY WILL? MY CHOICE

THERE IS A SOLUTION

holics throughout history. But for the grace of God, there would have been thousands more convincing demonstrations. So many want to stop but cannot. Hopeless There is a solution. When almost none of us liked the self-searching, the leveling of our pride, the confession of shortcomings which the process requires for its successful consummation. But we saw that it really worked in others, and we had come to believe in the hopelessness and futility of life as we had been living it. When, therefore, we were approached by those in whom the problem had been solved, there was nothing left for us but to pick up the simple kit of spiritual tools laid at our feet. We have found much of heaven and we have been rocketed into a fourth dimension of existence of which we had not even dreamed.

The great fact is just this, and nothing less: That we have had deep and effective spiritual experiences which have revolutionized our whole attitude toward life, toward our fellows and toward God's universe. The central fact of our lives today is the absolute certainty that our Creator has entered into our hearts and lives in a way which is indeed miraculous. He has commenced to accomplish those things for us which we could never do by ourselves.

If you are as seriously alcoholic as we were, we believe there is no middle-of-the-road solution. We were in a position where life was becoming impossible, and if we had passed into the region from which there is no return through human aid, we had but two alternatives: One was to go on to the bitter end, blotting out the consciousness of our intolerable situation as best we could; and the other, to accept spiritual help. This

IF I'M HEARING ANYTHING BUT HOW TO HAVE A DEEP + EFFECTIVE SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE, THAN I'M HEARING MIDDLE OF THE ROAD

I DIE W/ID GOD?

ACTION DRUNK OR SOBER? RULES MUSTS

IS WHAT IS REQUIRED FOR ME TO CHANGE AND ITS MY ONLY SOLUTION?

HAVE I?

* Fully explained—Appendix II.

26 ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS Q

ACCEPT SPiritual HELP we did because we honestly wanted to, and were willing to make the effort? Am I? Do I WANT TO?

A certain American business man had ability, good sense, and high character. For years he had floundered from one sanitarium to another. He had consulted the best known American psychiatrists. Then he had gone to Europe, placing himself in the care of a celebrated physician (the psychiatrist, Dr. Jung) who prescribed for him. Though experience had made him skeptical, he finished his treatment with unusual confidence. His physical and mental condition were unusually good. Above all, he believed he had acquired such a profound knowledge of the inner workings of his mind and its hidden springs that relapse was unthinkable.

MENTAL DEFENSE

Nevertheless, he was drunk in a short time. More baffling still, he could give himself no satisfactory explanation for his fall. WHY DO I ADMIRE PEOPLE w/ NO SO he returned to this doctor, whom he admired, and asked him point-blank why he could not recover. He wished above all things to regain self-control. He seemed quite rational and well-balanced with respect to other problems. Yet he had no control whatever over alcohol. Why was this?

He begged the doctor to tell him the whole truth, and he got it. In the doctor's judgment he was utterly hopeless; he could never regain his position in society and he would have to place himself under lock and key or hire a bodyguard if he expected to live long. That was a great physician's opinion. STOP 1

But this man still lives, and is a free man. He does not need a bodyguard nor is he confined. He can go anywhere on this earth where other free men may go

CAN I QUIT FOREVER w/o SPIRITUAL HELP?

THERE IS A SOLUTION without disaster, provided he remains willing to maintain a certain simple attitude.

Some of our alcoholic readers may think they can do without spiritual help. Let us tell you the rest of the conversation our friend had with his doctor.

The doctor said: "You have the mind of a chronic alcoholic. I have never seen one single case of recovery where that state of mind existed to the extent that it does in you. Our friend felt as though the gates of hell had closed on him with a clang. Q INVERT (ask yourself)

SHAME DR SILK WORTH SET ASIDE PRAYING

He said to the doctor, "Is there no exception?" "Yes," replied the doctor, "there is. Exceptions to cases such as yours have been occurring since early times. Here and there, once in a while, alcoholics have had what are called vital spiritual experiences. To me these occurrences are INEXPLAINABLE. They appear to be in the nature of huge emotional displacements and rearrangements. Ideas, emotions, and attitudes which were once the guiding forces of the lives of these men are suddenly cast to one side, and a completely new set of conceptions and motives begin to dominate them. In fact, I have been trying to produce some such emotional rearrangement within you. With many individuals the methods which I employed are successful, but I have never been successful with an alcoholic of your description." * Hopeless

Upon hearing this, our friend was somewhat relieved, for he reflected that, after all, he was a good church member. This hope, however, was destroyed by the doctor's telling him that while his religious convictions were very good, in his case they did not spell the necessary vital spiritual experience. Q

YOU ARE SCREWED ALCOHOLIC INSANITY

DESCRIPTION OF A SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE

* For amplification—see Appendix II. Pg 509

DR SILK WORTH CAN'T HELP ME WITH MY BODY DIZ TUNGS CAN'T HELP ME WITH MY MIND

Here was the ^{STEP 1}terrible dilemma in which our friend found himself when he had the extraordinary experience, which as we have already told you, made him a free man.

We, in our turn, sought the same escape with all the desperation of drowning men. What seemed at first a flimsy reed, has proved to be the loving and powerful hand of God. A new life has been given us or, if you prefer, a design for living that really works.

The distinguished American psychologist, William James, in his book "Varieties of Religious Experience," indicates a multitude of ways in which men have discovered God. We have no desire to convince anyone that there is only one way by which faith can be acquired. If what we have learned and felt and seen means anything at all, it means that all of us, whatever our race, creed, or color are the children of a living Creator with whom we may form a relationship upon simple and understandable terms as soon as we are willing and honest enough to try. Those having religious affiliations will find here nothing disturbing to their beliefs or ceremonies. There is no friction among us over such matters.

We think it no concern of ours what religious bodies our members identify themselves with as individuals. This should be an entirely personal affair which each one decides for himself in the light of past associations, or his present choice. Not all of us join religious bodies, but most of us favor such memberships.

In the following chapter, there appears an explanation of alcoholism, as we understand it, then a chapter addressed to the agnostic. Many who once were in this class are now among our members. Surprisingly

AGNOSTIC BELIEVE GOD IS UNKNOWN OR PROBABLY UNKNOWN

enough, we find such convictions no great obstacle to a spiritual experience. A Promise

Further on, clear-cut directions are given showing how we recovered. These are followed by forty-three personal experiences. NO OPINIONS

Each individual, in the personal stories, describes in his own language and from his own point of view the way he established his relationship with God. These give a fair cross section of our membership and a clear-cut idea of what has actually happened in their lives.

We hope no one will consider these self-revealing accounts in bad taste. Our hope is that many alcoholic men and women, desperately in need, will see these pages, and we believe that it is only by fully disclosing ourselves and our ^{OUR} problems that they will be persuaded to say, "Yes, I am one of them too! I must have this thing!"

PURPOSE OF STORIES

— THESE 2 QUESTIONS MUST BE ANSWERED BEFORE STEP 3

— DO I STOP DENYING THE WAY I INTEND TO?