

WORK SHOP FORMAT

- (1) OPEN MEETING WITH MOMENT OF SILENCE FOLLOW BY THE SERENITY PRAYER.
- (2) READ ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS PREAMBLE
- (3) INTRODUCE SELF (SHORT AND SWEET)
- (4) GIVE SHORT RESUME ON LAST WEEK CHAPTER
- (5) READ CHAPTER, ASK THE PREPARED QUESTIONS AND BE SURE ALL PARTICIPATE.
- (6) MEETING SHOULD LAST NOT OVER NINETY MINUTES
- (7) QUESTIONS OVER, CALL FOR SECRETARY REPORT
- (8) COLLECTION
- (9) ASK FOR ANNOUNCEMENTS
- (10) ASK MEMBERS TO READ CHAPTER FOR NEXT WEEK MEETING SOMETIME DURING THE WEEK, BE PREPARED.
- (11) MENTION THE CONFERENCE APPROVED LITERATURE ON TABLE.
- (12) CLOSE WITH LORD'S PRAYER AS USUAL.

Dear Friend:

The Workshop Group idea is solely the study of the three legacies, recovery, unity and service of the program of Alcoholics Anonymous. The information contained in the study books are cross referenced so you may lookup the information in whatever Alcoholics Anonymous Conference Approved Literature indicated.

The Workshop Group is an autonomous body and can function as it wishes as long as it does not effect Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole. The material that has been furnished is only material that has been used in the WORKSHOP GROUP OF POMPANO BEACH, FLA., and at your request we have forward this material for your consideration.

All material as the senders see it, which is an opinion: If members of AA who are interest in the three legacies of Alcoholics Anonymous will hold discussions on this material, by following the format on the inside of the front cover, or a format similar. The senders has found a certain enthusiasm is generated or rekindled in the member's mind for SPONSORSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITY IN THE DAILY WORKING OF THE ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS PROGRAM.

The members of the Wrokshop Group of Pompano Beach is a informed group, not a reformed group. We run our group according to the traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous and we suggest to each member of our group that "if he or she works, the program works." They truly know that the program of Alcoholics Anonymous is a spiritual program and they truly believe that "GOD can do for them, what they could not do for themselves."

May this material give you the answer to more happiness, health and bring more prosperity to you and yours.

Yours in AA

Wesley P.

Group Chairman

RECOVERY

*Maggi Harrison
8-26-98*



WORK SHOP GROUP

POMPANO BEACH WORKSHOP GROUP
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THE WORKSHOP GROUP'S PURPOSE IS TO TEACH THE THREE LEGACIES
OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS--RECOVERY, UNITY, AND SERVICE.

THE WORKSHOP MATERIAL IS INDEXED IN BACK OF EACH BOOK
TO INFORM THE GROUP WHERE SUCH MATERIAL IS LOCATED IN CONFER-
ENCE APPROVED AA LITERATURE.

THE CODE IS AS FOLLOWS:

WORKSHOP BOOK PAGE	STARTING WORDS OF PARAGRAPH	(WHICH AA LITERATURE)		
		AA BOOK (BIG BOOK)	12&12 BOOK	PAGE AND LINE
50	ARRIVED AT	X		53-20

IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT MEMBERS OF AA IN GOOD STANDING ARE
MEMBERS WHO ARE STILL TEACHABLE.

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS IS A FELLOWSHIP OF MEN AND WOMEN WHO SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCE, STRENGTH AND HOPE WITH EACH OTHER THAT THEY MAY SOLVE THEIR COMMON PROBLEM AND HELP OTHERS TO RECOVER FROM ALCOHOLISM.

THE ONLY REQUIREMENT FOR MEMBERSHIP IS A DESIRE TO STOP DRINKING. THERE ARE NO DUES OR FEES FOR A. A. MEMBERSHIP; WE ARE SELF-SUPPORTING THROUGH OUR OWN CONTRIBUTIONS. A. A. IS NOT ALLIED WITH ANY SECT, DENOMINATION, POLITICS, ORGANIZATION OR INSTITUTION; DOES NOT WISH TO ENGAGE IN ANY CONTROVERSY; NEITHER ENDORSES NOR OPPOSES ANY CAUSES. OUR PRIMARY PURPOSE IS TO STAY SOBER AND HELP OTHER ALCOHOLICS TO ACHIEVE SOBRIETY.

THE TWELVE STEPS

1. WE ADMITTED WE WERE POWERLESS OVER ALCOHOL--THAT OUR LIVES HAD BECOME UNMANAGEABLE.
2. CAME TO BELIEVE THAT A POWER GREATER THAN OURSELVES COULD RESTORE US TO SANITY.
3. MADE A DECISION TO TURN OUR WILL AND OUR LIVES OVER TO THE CARE OF GOD AS WE UNDERSTOOD HIM.
4. MADE A SEARCHING AND FEARLESS MORAL INVENTORY OF OURSELVES.
5. ADMITTED TO GOD, TO OURSELVES, AND TO ANOTHER HUMAN BEING, THE EXACT NATURE OF OUR WRONGS.
6. WERE ENTIRELY READY TO HAVE GOD REMOVE ALL THESE DEFECTS OF CHARACTER.
7. HUMBLY ASKED HIM TO REMOVE OUR SHORTCOMINGS.
8. MADE A LIST OF ALL PERSONS WE HAD HARMED, AND BECAME WILLING TO MAKE AMENDS TO THEM ALL.
9. MADE DIRECT AMENDS TO SUCH PEOPLE WHENEVER POSSIBLE, EXCEPT WHEN TO DO SO WOULD INJURE THEM OR OTHERS.
10. CONTINUED TO TAKE PERSONAL INVENTORY AND WHEN WE WERE WRONG PROMPTLY ADMITTED IT.
11. SOUGHT THROUGH PRAYER AND MEDITATION TO IMPROVE OUR CONSCIOUS CONTACT WITH GOD AS WE UNDERSTOOD HIM, PRAYING ONLY FOR KNOWLEDGE OF HIS WILL FOR US AND THE POWER TO CARRY THAT OUT.
12. HAVING HAD A SPIRITUAL AWAKENING AS THE RESULT OF THESE STEPS, WE TRIED TO CARRY THIS MESSAGE TO ALCOHOLICS, AND TO PRACTICE THESE PRINCIPLES IN ALL OUR AFFAIRS.

THE TWELVE TRADITIONS

1. OUR COMMON WELFARE SHOULD COME FIRST; PERSONAL RECOVERY DEPENDS UPON A. A. UNITY.
2. FOR GROUP PURPOSE THERE IS BUT ONE ULTIMATE AUTHORITY -- A LOVING GOD AS HE MAY EXPRESS HIMSELF IN OUR GROUP CONSCIENCE. OUR LEADERS ARE BUT TRUSTED SERVANTS; THEY DO NOT GOVERN.
3. THE ONLY REQUIREMENT FOR A. A. MEMBERSHIP IS A DESIRE TO STOP DRINKING.
4. EACH GROUP SHOULD BE AUTONOMOUS EXCEPT IN MATTERS AFFECTING OTHER GROUPS OR A. A. AS A WHOLE.
5. EACH GROUP HAS BUT ONE PRIMARY PURPOSE -- TO CARRY ITS MESSAGE TO THE ALCOHOLIC WHO STILL SUFFERS.
6. AN A. A. GROUP OUGHT NEVER ENDORSE, FINANCE, OR LEND THE A. A. NAME TO ANY RELATED FACILITY OR OUTSIDE ENTERPRISE, LEST PROBLEMS OF MONEY, PROPERTY, AND PRESTIGE DIVERT US FROM OUR PRIMARY PURPOSE.
7. EVERY A. A. GROUP OUGHT TO BE FULLY SELF-SUPPORTING, DECLINING OUTSIDE CONTRIBUTIONS.
8. ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS SHOULD REMAIN FOREVER NON-PROFESSIONAL, BUT OUR SERVICE CENTERS MAY EMPLOY SPECIAL WORKERS.
9. A. A. AS SUCH, OUGHT NEVER BE ORGANIZED; BUT WE MAY CREATE SERVICE BOARDS OR COMMITTEES DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE TO THOSE THEY SERVE.
10. ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS HAS NO OPINION ON OUTSIDE ISSUES; HENCE THE A. A. NAME OUGHT NEVER BE DRAWN INTO PUBLIC CONTROVERSY.
11. OUR PUBLIC RELATIONS POLICY IS BASED ON ATTRACTION RATHER THAN PROMOTION; WE NEED ALWAYS MAINTAIN PERSONAL ANONYMITY AT THE LEVEL OF PRESS, RADIO, AND FILMS.
12. ANONYMITY IS THE SPIRITUAL FOUNDATION OF OUR TRADITIONS, EVER REMINDING US TO PLACE PRINCIPLES BEFORE PERSONALITIES.

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE
TWELVE STEPS OF AA

"NEAR THE END OF NOVEMBER, A DAY THAT WILL LONG BE REMEMBERED, IT WAS IN THE AFTERNOON, MY TELEPHONE RANG," SAID BILL W., OUR CO-FOUNDER. "IT WAS MY OLD BOARDING SCHOOL FRIEND AND DRINKING COMPANION, 'EBBY'. EVEN OVER THE PHONE I SOMEHOW KNEW HE WAS SOBER. I COULD NOT REMEMBER A TIME WHEN HE HAD BEEN SOBER IN NEW YORK CITY. LONG AGO I MARKED HIM AS A HOPELESS CASE. HE ASKED IF HE COULD COME OVER AND EAGERLY I SAID 'COME RIGHT ON OVER. WE'LL TALK OF THE OLD DAYS.' SOON EBBY STOOD BEAMING IN THE DOORWAY. THEN HE WAS SITTING ACROSS THE KITCHEN TABLE FROM ME. THERE WAS A BIG CROCK OF GIN AND PINEAPPLE JUICE BETWEEN US.

IMMEDIATELY I FELT THAT THERE WAS SOMETHING DIFFERENT ABOUT EBBY. IT WAS NOT ONLY THAT HE WAS SOBER. I COULD NOT PUT A FINGER ON WHAT IT WAS. I OFFERED HIM A DRINK AND HE REFUSED. THEN I ASKED HIM, 'WHAT IS THIS ALL ABOUT? YOU SAY YOU AREN'T DRINKING. BUT YOU ALSO SAY YOU AREN'T ON THE WAGON EITHER. WHAT'S UP?'

'WELL' SAID EBBY, 'I'VE GOT RELIGION.'

WHAT A CRUSHER THAT WAS--EBBY AND RELIGION! MAYBE HIS ALCOHOLIC INSANITY HAS BECOME RELIGIOUS INSANITY. IT WAS AN AWFUL LET DOWN. BUT I HAD TO BE POLITE, SO I SAID, 'WHAT BRAND OF RELIGION HAVE YOU GOT, EBBY?' 'OH,' HE SAID, 'I DON'T THINK

IT HAS ANY SPECIAL BRAND NAME. I JUST FELL IN WITH A GROUP OF PEOPLE, "THE OXFORD GROUP". I DIDN'T GO ALONG WITH ALL THEIR TEACHINGS BY ANY MEANS. BUT THOSE FOLKS HAVE GIVEN ME SOME WONDERFUL IDEAS. I LEARNED THAT I HAD TO ADMIT I WAS LICKED; I LEARNED THAT I OUGHT TO TAKE STOCK OF MYSELF AND CONFESS MY DEFECTS TO ANOTHER PERSON IN CONFIDENCE; I LEARNED THAT I NEEDED TO MAKE RESTITUTION FOR THE HARM I HAD DONE OTHERS. I WAS TOLD THAT I OUGHT TO PRACTICE THE KIND OF GIVING THAT HAS NO PRICE TAG ON IT, THE GIVING OF YOURSELF TO SOMEBODY. NOW, ' HE ADDED, 'I KNOW YOU ARE GOING TO GAG ON THIS, BUT THEY TAUGHT ME THAT I SHOULD TRY TO PRAY TO WHATEVER GOD I THOUGHT THERE WAS FOR THE POWER TO CARRY OUT THESE SIMPLE PRECEPTS. AND IF I DISBELIEVE IN ANY GOD, THEN I HAD BETTER TRY THE EXPERIMENT OF PRAYING TO WHATEVER GOD THERE MIGHT BE. AND YOU KNOW, BILL, IT'S A QUEER THING, BUT EVEN BEFORE I HAD DONE ALL THIS, JUST AS SOON AS I DECIDED THAT I WOULD TRY WITH AN OPEN MIND, IT SEEMED TO ME THAT MY DRINKING PROBLEM WAS LIFTED RIGHT OUT OF ME. IT WASN'T LIKE THE WATER WAGON BUSINESS AT ALL. THIS TIME I FELT COMPLETELY RELEASED OF THE DESIRE, AND I HAVE NOT HAD A DRINK FOR MONTHS. ' "

BILL, OUR CO-FOUNDER, FROM THIS VISIT OF HIS CHILDHOOD FRIEND, EBBY, CONCEIVED THE IDEA THAT IN THE KINSHIP OF COMMON SUFFERING, MAYBE ONE ALCOHOLIC TALKING TO ANOTHER ALCOHOLIC WAS THE ANSWER.

YEARS LATER BILL WAS WRITING THE BOOK, ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS AND HE ARRIVED AT CHAPTER FIVE, AND AT THIS POINT HE WOULD HAVE TO TELL HOW THE ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS PROGRAM FOR RECOVERY FROM ALCOHOLISM REALLY WORKED. THE BACKBONE OF THE BOOK WOULD HAVE TO BE FITTED IN CHAPTER FIVE.

BILL WAS ANYTHING BUT IN A SPIRITUAL MOOD ON THE NIGHT WHEN THE TWELVE STEPS WERE WRITTEN. BILL LAY IN BED WITH PENCIL IN HAND AND WITH A SCRATCH PAD ON HIS KNEE, HE COULD NOT GET HIS MIND ON THE JOB MUCH LESS PUT HIS HEART INTO IT. SLOWLY HIS MIND CAME INTO SOME KIND OF FOCUS.

BILL STARTED THINKING OF EBBY'S VISIT IN THE FALL OF 1934, SINCE THAT TIME THE PROGRAM HAD EVOLVED TO WHAT THEY CALLED "THE WORD OF MOUTH PROGRAM." MOST OF THE BASIC IDEAS HAD COME FROM THE OXFORD GROUPS, WILLIAM JAMES AND DR. SILKWORTH. IT ALL BOILED DOWN TO A PRETTY CONSISTENT PROCEDURE WHICH COMPRISED OF SIX STEPS, AS FOLLOW:

- (1) WE ADMITTED THAT WE WERE LICKED, THAT WE WERE POWERLESS OVER ALCOHOL.
- (2) WE MADE A MORAL INVENTORY OF OUR DEFECTS OR SINS.
- (3) WE CONFESSED OR SHARED OUR SHORTCOMINGS WITH ANOTHER PERSON IN CONFIDENCE.
- (4) WE MADE RESTITUTION TO ALL THOSE WE HAD HARMED BY OUR DRINKING.
- (5) WE TRIED TO HELP OTHER ALCOHOLICS, WITH NO THOUGHT OF REWARD IN MONEY OR PRESTIGE.
- (6) WE PRAYED TO WHATEVER GOD WE THOUGHT THERE WAS FOR POWER TO PRACTICE THESE PRECEPTS.

THIS WAS THE SUBSTANCE OF WHAT, BY THE FALL OF 1938, AA WAS TELLING NEWCOMERS. THE OXFORD GROUP'S OTHER IDEAS AND ATTITUDES HAD BEEN REJECTED, INCLUDING ANY WHICH COULD INVOLVE THEM IN A THEOLOGICAL CONTROVERSY. THERE WAS STILL CONSIDERABLE DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN THE NEW YORK AND AKRON VIEWPOINTS. AA PEOPLE IN AKRON WERE STILL ACTIVE OXFORD GROUP MEMBERS, WHILE NEW YORK HAD WITHDRAWN THE YEAR BEFORE. IN AKRON AND VICINITY THEY STILL TALKED ABOUT THE OXFORD GROUP ABSOLUTES, ABSOLUTE HONESTY, ABSOLUTE PURITY, ABSOLUTE UNSELFISHNESS AND ABSOLUTE LOVE. THIS DOSE WAS A LITTLE TOO RICH FOR THE NEW YORKERS, AND THEY ABANDONED THE EXPRESSIONS. EAST AND WEST PLACING EMPHASIS ON DR. SILKWORTH'S OBSESSION, PLUS ALLERGY. BY NOW THEY KNEW THAT NEW PROSPECTS HAD TO ACCEPT STEP ONE OR GET NO PLACE.

BILL'S MIND RAN OVER THESE DEVELOPMENTS, AND IT SEEMED TO HIM THAT THE PROGRAM WAS STILL NOT DEFINITE ENOUGH. IT MIGHT BE A LONG TIME BEFORE READERS OF THE BOOK IN DISTANT PLACES COULD BE PERSONALLY CONTACTED. THEREFORE, AA LITERATURE WOULD HAVE TO BE AS CLEAR AND COMPREHENSIVE AS POSSIBLE. THE STEPS WOULD HAVE TO BE MORE EXPLICIT. THERE MUST NOT BE A SINGLE LOOP HOLE THROUGH WHICH RATIONALIZING ALCOHOLICS COULD WIGGLE OUT. MAYBE THE SIX CRUCHES OF TRUTH SHOULD BE BROKEN UP INTO SMALLER PARTS. THUS THE PROGRAM COULD BETTER GET THE DISTANT READERS UNDIVIDED ATTENTION,

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AND AT THE SAME TIME BE ABLE TO BROADEN AND DEEPEN THE SPIRITUAL ASPECTS OF THE PROGRAM.

BILL STARTED TO WRITE, HE SET DOWN THE SIX STEPS, RELAXED AND ASKED FOR GUIDANCE. WITH SPEED THAT IS ASTONISHING, BILL COMPLETED THE FIRST DRAFT. IT TOOK THIRTY MINUTES. WHEN BILL REACHED A STOPPING POINT, HE NUMBERED THE STEPS. THEY ADDED UP TO TWELVE. SOMEHOW THE NUMBER SEEMED SIGNIFICANT. WITHOUT ANY SPECIAL REASON BILL CONNECTED THEM WITH THE TWELVE APOSTLES.

HERE IS THE ORIGINAL FORM OF THE TWELVE STEPS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS AS THEY WERE WRITTEN THAT EVENING AND THEY REMAINED AS THE TWELVE STEPS UNTIL THE FOLLOWING HAPPENED.

- (1) ADMITTED WE WERE POWERLESS OVER ALCOHOL--THAT OUR LIVES HAD BECOME UNMANAGEABLE.
- (2) CAME TO BELIEVE THAT A POWER GREATER THAN OURSELVES COULD RESTORE US TO SANITY.
- (3) MADE A DECISION TO TURN OUR WILL AND OUR LIVES OVER TO THE CARE AND DIRECTION OF GOD AS WE UNDERSTOOD HIM.
- (4) MADE A SEARCHING AND FEARLESS MORAL INVENTORY OF OURSELVES.
- (5) ADMITTED TO GOD, TO OURSELVES, AND TO ANOTHER HUMAN BEING THE EXACT NATURE OF OUR WRONGS.
- (6) WERE ENTIRELY WILLING THAT GOD REMOVE ALL THESE DEFECTS OF CHARACTER.
- (7) HUMBLY, ON OUR KNEES, ASKED HIM TO REMOVE OUR SHORTCOMINGS --HOLDING NOTHING BACK.
- (8) MADE A LIST OF ALL PERSONS WE HAD HARMED, AND BECAME WILLING TO MAKE COMPLETE AMENDS TO THEM ALL.

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- (9) MADE DIRECT AMENDS TO SUCH PEOPLE WHEREVER POSSIBLE, EXCEPT WHEN TO DO SO WOULD INJURE THEM OR OTHERS.
- (10) CONTINUED TO TAKE PERSONAL INVENTORY AND WHEN WE WERE WRONG PROMPTLY ADMITTED IT.
- (11) SOUGHT THROUGH PRAYER AND MEDITATION TO IMPROVE OUR CONTACT WITH GOD, PRAYING ONLY FOR KNOWLEDGE OF HIS WILL FOR US AND THE POWER TO CARRY THAT OUT.
- (12) HAVING HAD A SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE AS THE RESULT OF THIS COURSE OF ACTION, WE TRIED TO CARRY THIS MESSAGE TO OTHERS, ESPECIALLY ALCOHOLICS, AND TO PRACTICE THESE PRINCIPLES IN ALL OUR AFFAIRS.

JUST BEFORE THE MANUSCRIPT WAS FINISHED AN EVENT OF GREAT SIGNIFICANCE TOOK PLACE. AT THE TIME IT LOOKED LIKE JUST ANOTHER BATTLE OVER THE BOOK. PRESENT IN HENRY'S OFFICE WERE HENRY, FITZ, RUTH AND BILL. THE ARGUMENT WAS ABOUT THE TWELVE STEPS. AT THIS TIME BILL REFUSED TO BUDGE ON THE STEPS. HE HAD CONSISTENTLY USED THE WORD "GOD" AND IN THE SEVENTH STEP, THE EXPRESSION, "ON OUR KNEES". PRAYING TO GOD ON ONE'S KNEES WAS A BIG AFFRONT TO HENRY, THE SUPER SALESMAN. HE ARGUED, HE BEGGED, HE THREATENED. HE QUOTED HIS BUDDY JIMMY. HE WAS POSITIVE THIS WOULD RUN ALCOHOLICS OFF BY THE THOUSANDS, WHEN THEY READ THE TWELVE STEPS. LITTLE BY LITTLE RUTH AND FITZ CAME TO SEE THE MERIT IN HIS ARGUMENT. BILL WOULD NOT HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH IT. FINALLY BILL AND HENRY GOT TO TALKING ABOUT A POSSIBLE COMPROMISE. WHO SUGGESTED THE WORDS DOESN'T MATTER, BUT THE COMPROMISE DOES IN STEP TWO DESCRIBE "GOD" AS "A POWER GREATER THAN OURSELVES", IN THE THIRD AND ELEVENTH STEPS, "GOD AS WE

UNDERSTAND HIM". IN THE SEVENTH STEP "ON YOUR KNEES" WAS DELETED. AS A LEAD-IN SENTENCE IN CHAPTER FIVE TO ALL THE STEPS THEY WROTE THESE WORDS: "HERE ARE THE STEPS WE TOOK, WHICH ARE SUGGESTED AS A PROGRAM OF RECOVERY". THIS CHANGE MADE THE ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS TWELVE STEPS SUGGESTIONS ONLY.

SUCH WERE THE FINAL CONCESSIONS. THE ATHEISTS AND THE AGNOSTICS WIDEN THE GATEWAY SO THAT ALL WHO SUFFER, MIGHT PASS THROUGH, REGARDLESS OF THEIR BELIEF OR LACK OF BELIEF. GOD WAS CERTAINLY THERE IN THE STEPS. HE (GOD) WAS NOW EXPRESSED IN TERMS THAT ANYBODY COULD ACCEPT AND TRY.

SOME ONE SAID

"THERE ARE NO 'MUSTS' IN ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS"
O' YEAH

- (1) Page 73, Line 33----- MUST BE ENTIRELY HONEST
- (2) Page 74, Line 22----- THE RULE IS WE MUST BE HARD ON OURSELVES,
BUT CONSIDERATE OF OTHERS.
- (3) Page 33, Line 12----- MUST BE NO RESERVATION OF ANY KIND
- (4) Page 62, Line 18----- ABOVE EVERYTHING, WE ALCOHOLICS MUST
BE RID OF THIS SELFISHNESS. WE MUST, OR
IT KILLS US! GOD MAKES THAT POSSIBLE.
- (5) Page 85, Line 18----- EVERYDAY IS A DAY WHEN WE MUST CARRY
THE VISION OF GOD'S WILL INTO ALL OF
OUR ACTIVITIES.
- (6) Page 95, Line 23----- AFTER DOING THAT, HE MUST (NEW COMER)
DECIDE FOR HIMSELF WHETHER HE WANTS
TO GO ON.
- (7) Page 95, Line 26----- IF HE IS TO FIND GOD, THE DESIRE MUST
COME FROM WITHIN.
- (8) Page 44, Line 27----- BUT AFTER A WHILE WE HAD TO FACE THE
FACT THAT WE MUST FIND A SPIRITUAL BASIS
OF LIFE---OR ELSE.
- (9) Page 85, Line 30----- WE HAVE BEGUN TO DEVELOP THIS VITAL
SIXTH SENSE. BUT WE MUST GO FURTHER AND
THAT MEANS MORE ACTION.
- (10) Page 74, Line 5 ----- THOSE OF US BELONGING TO A RELIGIOUS
DENOMINATION WHICH REQUIRES CONFESSION
MUST, AND OF COURSE, WILL WANT TO GO TO
THE PROPERLY APPOINTED AUTHORITY
WHOSE DUTY IT IS TO RECEIVE IT.
- (11) Page 85, Line 21----- THY WILL (NOT MINE) BE DONE. THESE ARE
THOUGHTS WHICH MUST GO WITH US CONSTANTLY.
- (12) Page 159, Line 15---- THESE MEN HAD FOUND SOMETHING BRAND NEW
IN LIFE. THOUGH THEY KNEW THEY MUST
HELP OTHER ALCOHOLICS IF THEY WOULD
REMAIN SOBER, THAT MOTIVE BECAME
SECONDARY.

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- (13) Page 156, Line 18--- BOTH SAW THAT THEY MUST KEEP SPIRITUALLY ACTIVE.
- (14) Page 79, Line 12---- WE MAY LOSE OUR POSITION OR REPUTATION OR FACE JAIL, BUT WE ARE WILLING. WE HAVE TO BE. WE MUST NOT SHRINK AT ANYTHING.
- (15) Page 75, Line 1 ---- BUT WE MUST NOT USE THIS AS A MERE EXCUSE TO POSTPONE.
- (16) Page 83, Line 2 ---- YES, THERE IS A LONG PERIOD OF RECONSTRUCTION AHEAD. WE MUST TAKE THE LEAD. A REMORSEFUL MUMBLING THAT WE ARE SORRY WON'T FILL THE BILL AT ALL.
- (17) Page 14, Line 4 ---- SIMPLE, BUT NOT EASY; A PRICE HAD TO BE PAID. IT MEANT DESTRUCTION OF SELF-CENTEREDNESS. I MUST TURN ALL THINGS TO THE FATHER OF LIGHT WHO PRESIDES OVER US ALL.
- (18) Page 143, Line 19--- THOUGH YOU ARE PROVIDING HIM WITH THE BEST POSSIBLE MEDICAL ATTENTION, HE SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT HE MUST UNDERGO A CHANGE OF HEART. TO GET OVER DRINKING WILL REQUIRE A TRANSFORMATION OF THOUGHT AND ATTITUDE. WE ALL HAD TO PLACE RECOVERY ABOVE EVERYTHING, FOR WITHOUT RECOVERY WE WOULD HAVE LOST BOTH HOME AND BUSINESS.
- (19) MUST IS ALSO MENTIONED (PAGE-NUMBER OF LINE) 10-11, 20-19, 21-24, 29-16, 43-30, 66-30, 69-25, 69-26, 73-33, 78-23, 80-4, 81-11, 82-17, 83-17, 86-14, 89-11, 90-33, 93-25, and 99-1.

CHAPTER ONE
STEP ONE
PART ONE

WE ADMITTED WE WERE POWERLESS OVER ALCOHOL--THAT OUR LIVES HAD BECOME UNMANAGEABLE.

AN ALCOHOLIC IN HIS CUPS IS AN UNLOVELY CREATURE. OUR STRUGGLES WITH THEM ARE VARIOUSLY STRENUOUS, COMIC, AND TRAGIC.

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 AA PROGRAM CARRIES TO THOSE WHO SUFFER ALCOHOLISM.

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.

HERE IS A FELLOW, MAYBE YOU, WHO HAS BEEN PUZZLING, 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 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, 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 AROUND THE CLOCK. YET EARLY THE NEXT 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 A DOSE OF MORPHINE OR SOME HIGH-VOLTAGE SEDATIVE WITH WHICH TO TAPER OFF.

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?"

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.

HOW MANY TIMES PEOPLE HAVE SAID TO US: "I CAN 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."

WHY DOES HE BEHAVE LIKE THIS? IF HUNDREDS OF EXPERIENCES HAVE SHOWN HIM THAT ONE DRINK MEANS ANOTHER 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. PSYCHIATRISTS AND MEDICAL MEN VARY CONSIDERABLY IN THEIR OPINION AS TO WHY THE ALCOHOLIC REACTS DIFFERENTLY FROM NORMAL PEOPLE. NO ONE IS SURE WHY, ONCE A CERTAIN POINT IS REACHED NOTHING CAN BE DONE FOR HIM. WE CANNOT ANSWER THE RIDDLE.

THESE OBSERVATIONS WOULD BE ACADEMIC AND POINTLESS IF OUR FRIEND NEVER TOOK THE FIRST DRINK THEREBY SETTING THE TERRIBLE CYCLE IN MOTION. THEREFORE, THE REAL 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. SOMETIMES THESE EXCUSES HAVE A CERTAIN PLAUSIBILITY, BUT NONE OF THEM REALLY MAKE SENSE IN THE LIGHT OF THE HAVOC AN ALCOHOLIC'S DRINKING BOUT CREATES. THEY SOUND TO YOU LIKE THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE MAN WHO, HAVING A HEADACHE, BEAT HIMSELF ON THE HEAD WITH A HAMMER SO THAT HE COULDN'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.

HOW TRUE THIS IS, FEW REALIZE. IN A VAGUE WAY THEIR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS SENSE THAT THESE DRINKERS ARE ABNORMAL, BUT EVERYBODY HOPEFULLY WAITS THE DAY WHEN THE SUFFERER WILL ROUSE HIMSELF FROM HIS LETHARGY AND ASSERT HIS POWER OF WILL.

ONCE IN A WHILE HE MAY TELL YOU 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, SOME DAY, THEY WILL BEAT THE GAME. BUT THEY OFTEN SUSPECT THEY ARE DOWN FOR THE COUNT.

THE TRAGIC TRUTH IS THAT IF THE MAN BE A REAL ALCOHOLIC, THE HAPPY DAY WILL SELDOM ARRIVE. HE HAS LOST 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. OUR SO-CALLED WILL POWER BECOMES PRACTICALLY NON-EXISTENT. WE ARE UNABLE AT CERTAIN TIMES, NO MATTER HOW WELL WE UNDERSTAND OURSELVES, TO BRING INTO OUR CONSCIOUSNESS WITH SUFFICIENT FORCE THE MEMORY OF THE SUFFERING AND HUMILIATION OF EVEN A WEEK OR 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 TREADBARE 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.

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 NONCHALENT 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 ALL HUMAN AID, AND UNLESS LOCKED UP, IS CERTAIN TO DIE, OR GO PERMANENTLY INSANE. THESE STARK AND UGLY FACTS HAVE BEEN CONFIRMED BY LEGIONS OF ALCOHOLICS THROUGHOUT HISTORY. BUT FOR THE GRACE OF GOD, THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN MORE CONVINCING DEMONSTRATIONS. SO MANY WANT TO STOP, BUT CANNOT.

IF YOU ARE SERIOUSLY ALCOHOLIC, WE BELIEVE YOU HAVE NO MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD SOLUTION. YOU ARE IN A POSITION WHERE

LIFE IS BECOMING IMPOSSIBLE, AND IF YOU HAVE PASSED INTO THE REGION FROM WHICH THERE IS NO RETURN THROUGH HUMAN AID, YOU HAVE BUT TWO ALTERNATIVES: ONE IS TO GO ON TO THE BITTER END, BLOTTING OUT THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF YOUR INTOLERABLE SITUATION AS BEST YOU CAN; AND THE OTHER, TO FIND WHAT WE HAVE FOUND. THIS YOU CAN DO IF YOU HONESTLY WANT TO, AND ARE WILLING TO MAKE THE EFFORT.

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 BELIEVE THAT IT IS ONLY BY FULLY DISCLOSING OURSELVES AND OUR PROBLEMS THAT THEY WILL BE PERSUADED TO SAY, "YES, I AM ONE OF THEM TOO; I MUST HAVE THIS THING."

MOST OF US HAVE BEEN UNWILLING TO ADMIT WE WERE REAL ALCOHOLICS. NO PERSON LIKES TO THINK HE IS BODILY AND MENTALLY DIFFERENT FROM HIS FELLOWS. THEREFORE, IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT OUR DRINKING CAREERS HAVE BEEN CHARACTERIZED BY COUNTLESS VAIN ATTEMPTS TO PROVE WE COULD DRINK LIKE OTHER PEOPLE. THE IDEA THAT SOMEHOW, SOMEDAY HE WILL CONTROL AND ENJOY HIS LIQUOR DRINKING IS THE GREAT OBSESSION OF EVERY ABNORMAL DRINKER. THE PERSISTANCE OF THIS ILLUSION IS ASTONISHING. MANY PURSUE IT INTO THE GATES OF INSANITY OR DEATH.

WE LEARNED THAT WE HAD TO FULLY CONCEDE TO OUR INNERMOST SELVES THAT WE WERE ALCOHOLICS. THIS IS THE FIRST STEP IN RECOVERY. THE DELUSION THAT WE ARE LIKE OTHER PEOPLE, OR PRESENTLY MAY BE, HAD TO BE SMASHED.

1. DO YOU THINK ALCOHOLICS ARE COMIC AND TRAGIC?
2. DO YOU BELIEVE THE AA PROGRAM IS THE SOLUTION TO ARRESTING ALCOHOLISM?
3. DID YOUR LIFE FOLLOW THE DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE PATTERN?
4. DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF ANTI-SOCIAL WHEN DRINKING?
5. DID YOU GET MIXED UP WITH HIGH-POWERED SEDATIVES?
6. WHICH DO YOU THINK IS WORSE, ALCOHOL OR SEDATIVES?
7. ARE YOU ASKING YOURSELF THE QUESTION, "WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO?"
8. ARE YOU ENVIOUS OF MODERATE DRINKERS?
9. DID PEOPLE CRITICIZE YOUR DRINKING?
10. DID YOU THINK THEIR CRITICISM JUST?
11. DO YOU BELIEVE THAT AN ALCOHOLIC'S PROBLEM CENTERS IN HIS MIND?
12. DO OUR FAMILIES REALLY KNOW HOW SICK WE ARE WITH THE ILLNESS OF ALCOHOLISM?
13. DID YOU LIE ABOUT YOUR DRINKING?
14. DO YOU REALLY HAVE ANY HAPPY DAYS AS AN ACTIVE ALCOHOLIC?
15. DO YOU REALLY FEEL YOU LOST THE POWER OVER ALCOHOL?
16. WHAT WAS YOUR DEFENSE AGAINST THE FIRST DRINK?
17. DO YOU THINK IT IS THE THIRD OR FOURTH DRINK THAT REALLY GETS YOU STARTED? THEN WHICH ONE?
18. WHAT THREE THINGS WILL HAPPEN TO A TRUE ALCOHOLIC IF HE CONTINUES TO DRINK?
19. DO YOU BELIEVE THERE IS A MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD SOLUTION TO ALCOHOLISM?
20. DO YOU KNOW WHAT THE FIRST STEP TO RECOVERY REALLY IS?

CHAPTER TWO
STEP ONE
PART TWO

WE ADMITTED WE WERE POWERLESS OVER ALCOHOL--THAT OUR LIVES HAD BECOME UNMANAGEABLE.

WE ALCOHOLICS ARE MEN AND WOMEN WHO HAD LOST THE ABILITY TO CONTROL OUR DRINKING. WE KNOW THAT NO REAL ALCOHOLIC EVER RECOVERED THIS CONTROL. ALL OF US FELT AT TIMES THAT WE WERE REGAINING CONTROL, BUT SUCH INTERVALS--USUALLY BRIEF--WERE INEVITABLY FOLLOWED BY STILL LESS CONTROL, WHICH LED IN TIME TO PITIFUL AND INCOMPREHENSIBLE DEMORALIZATION. WE ARE CONVINCED TO A MAN THAT ALCOHOLICS OF OUR TYPE ARE IN THE GRIP OF A PROGRESSIVE ILLNESS. OVER ANY CONSIDERABLE PERIOD WE GET WORSE; NEVER BETTER.

WE ARE LIKE MEN WHO HAVE LOST THEIR LEGS; THEY NEVER GROW NEW ONES. NEITHER DOES THERE APPEAR TO BE ANY KIND OF TREATMENT WHICH WILL MAKE ALCOHOLICS OF OUR KIND LIKE OTHER MEN. WE HAVE TRIED EVERY IMAGINABLE REMEDY. IN SOME INSTANCES THERE HAS BEEN BRIEF RECOVERY, FOLLOWED ALWAYS BY STILL WORSE RELAPSE. PHYSICIANS WHO ARE FAMILIAR WITH ALCOHOLISM AGREE THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS MAKING A NORMAL DRINKER OUT OF AN ALCOHOLIC. SCIENCE MAY ONE DAY ACCOMPLISH THIS, BUT IT EVIDENTLY HASN'T DONE SO YET.

DESPITE ALL WE CAN SAY, MANY WHO ARE REAL ALCOHOLICS ARE NOT GOING TO BELIEVE THEY ARE IN THAT CLASS. BY EVERY FORM OF SELF-DECEPTION AND EXPERIMENTATION, THEY WILL TRY

TO PROVE THEMSELVES EXCEPTIONS TO THE RULE, THEREFORE NON-ALCOHOLIC. IF ANYONE, WHO IS SHOWING INABILITY TO CONTROL HIS DRINKING, CAN DO THE RIGHT-ABOUT-FACE AND DRINK LIKE A GENTLEMAN, OUR HATS ARE OFF TO HIM. HEAVEN KNOWS, WE HAVE TRIED HARD ENOUGH AND LONG ENOUGH TO DRINK LIKE OTHER PEOPLE.

HERE ARE SOME OF THE METHODS WE HAVE TRIED: DRINKING BEER ONLY, LIMITING THE NUMBER OF DRINKS, NEVER DRINKING ALONE, NEVER DRINKING IN THE MORNING, DRINKING ONLY AT HOME, NEVER HAVING IT IN THE HOUSE, NEVER DRINKING DURING BUSINESS HOURS, DRINKING ONLY AT PARTIES, SWITCHING FROM SCOTCH TO BRANDY, DRINKING ONLY NATURAL WINES, AGREEING TO RESIGN IF EVER DRUNK ON THE JOB, TAKING A TRIP, NOT TAKING A TRIP, SWEARING OFF FOREVER (WITH AND WITHOUT A SOLUMN OATH), TAKING MORE PHYSICAL EXERCISE, READING INSPIRATIONAL BOOKS, CONSULTING PSYCHOLOGISTS, GOING TO HEALTH FARMS AND SANITARIUMS, ACCEPTING VOLUNTARY COMMITMENT TO ASYLUMS--WE COULD INCREASE THE LIST AD INFINITUM.

WE DO NOT LIKE TO BRAND ANY INDIVIDUAL AS AN ALCOHOLIC, BUT YOU CAN QUICKLY DIAGNOSE YOURSELF. STEP OVER TO THE NEAREST BARROOM AND TRY SOME CONTROLLED DRINKING. TRY TO DRINK AND STOP ABRUPTLY. TRY IT MORE THAN ONCE. IT WILL NOT TAKE LONG FOR YOU TO DECIDE, IF YOU ARE HONEST WITH YOURSELF ABOUT IT. IT WILL BE WORTH A BAD CASE OF JITTERS IF YOU GET THOROUGHLY SOLD ON THE IDEA THAT YOU ARE A CANDIDATE FOR ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS!

THOUGH THERE IS NO WAY OF PROVING IT, WE BELIEVE THAT EARLY IN OUR DRINKING CAREERS MOST OF US COULD HAVE STOPPED DRINKING. BUT THE DIFFICULTY IS THAT FEW ALCOHOLICS HAVE ENOUGH DESIRE TO STOP WHILE THERE IS YET TIME. WE HAVE HEARD OF A FEW INSTANCES WHERE PEOPLE, WHO SHOWED DEFINITE SIGNS OF ALCOHOLISM, WERE ABLE TO STOP BECAUSE OF AN OVERPOWERING DESIRE TO DO SO.

MOST OF US HAVE BELIEVED THAT IF WE REMAINED SOBER FOR A LONG STRETCH, WE COULD THEREAFTER DRINK NORMALLY. WE HAVE SEEN THE TRUTH DEMONSTRATED AGAIN AND AGAIN: "ONCE AN ALCOHOLIC, ALWAYS AN ALCOHOLIC." COMMENCING TO DRINK AFTER A PERIOD OF SOBRIETY, WE ARE IN A SHORT TIME AS BAD AS EVER. IF YOU ARE PLANNING TO STOP DRINKING, THERE MUST BE NO RESERVATION OF ANY KIND NOR ANY LURKING NOTION.

YOUNG PEOPLE MAY BE ENCOURAGED TO THINK THAT THEY CAN STOP, ON THEIR OWN WILL POWER. WE DOUBT IF MANY OF THEM CAN DO IT, BECAUSE OF THE PECULIAR MENTAL TWIST ALREADY ACQUIRED, WILL FIND HE OR SHE CAN WIN OUT. SEVERAL OF OUR CROWD, MEN OF THIRTY-FIVE OR LESS, HAD BEEN DRINKING BUT A FEW YEARS, BUT THEY FOUND THEMSELVES AS HELPLESS AS THOSE WHO HAD BEEN DRINKING TWENTY YEARS.

TO BE GRAVELY AFFECTED, ONE DOES NOT NECESSARILY HAVE TO DRINK A LONG TIME, NOR TAKE THE QUANTITIES SOME OF US HAVE. THIS IS PARTICULARLY TRUE OF WOMEN. POTENTIAL FEMININE ALCOHOLICS OFTEN TURN INTO THE REAL THING AND ARE GONE BEYOND RECALL IN A FEW YEARS. CERTAIN DRINKERS, WHO WOULD BE GREATLY

INSULTED IF CALLED ALCOHOLIC, ARE ASTONISHED AT THEIR INABILITY TO STOP. WE, WHO ARE FAMILIAR WITH THE SYMPTOMS, SEE LARGE NUMBERS OF POTENTIAL ALCOHOLICS AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE EVERYWHERE. BUT TRY AND GET THEM TO SEE IT!

IF A MERE CODE OF MORALS, OR A BETTER PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE WERE SUFFICIENT TO OVERCOME ALCOHOLISM, MANY OF US WOULD HAVE RECOVERED LONG AGO. BUT WE FOUND THAT SUCH CODES AND PHILOSOPHIES DID NOT SAVE US, NO MATTER HOW MUCH WE TRIED. WE COULD WISH TO BE MORAL, WE COULD WISH TO BE PHILOSOPHICALLY COMFORTED, IN FACT, WE COULD WILL THESE THINGS WITH ALL OUR MIGHT, BUT THE NEEDED POWER WASN'T THERE. OUR HUMAN RESOURCES, AS MARSHALLED BY THE WILL, WERE NOT SUFFICIENT; THEY FAILED UTTERLY.

IN SOME CIRCUMSTANCES WE HAVE GONE OUT DELIBERATELY TO GET DRUNK, FEELING OURSELVES JUSTIFIED BY NERVOUSNESS, ANGER, WORRY, DEPRESSION, JEALOUSY OR THE LIKE. BUT EVEN IN THIS TYPE OF BEGINNING WE ARE OBLIGED TO ADMIT THAT OUR JUSTIFICATION FOR A SPREE WAS INSANELY INSUFFICIENT IN THE LIGHT OF WHAT ALWAYS HAPPENED. WE NOW SEE THAT WHEN WE BEGAN TO DRINK DELIBERATELY, INSTEAD OF CASUALLY, THERE WAS LITTLE SERIOUS OR EFFECTIVE THOUGHT DURING THE PERIOD OF PREMEDITATION, OF WHAT THE TERRIFIC CONSEQUENCES MIGHT BE.

, CERTAIN NON-ALCOHOLIC PEOPLE WHO, ARE ABLE TO STOP OR MODERATE, BECAUSE THEIR BRAINS AND BODIES HAVE NOT BEEN WARPED AND DEGENERATED AS OURS WERE. BUT THE ACTUAL OR

POTENTIAL ALCOHOLIC, WITH HARDLY AN EXCEPTION, WILL BE ABSOLUTELY UNABLE TO STOP DRINKING ON THE BASIS OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE. THIS IS A POINT WE WISH TO EMPHASIZE AND REEMPHASIZE, TO SMASH HOME UPON OUR ALCOHOLIC MEMBERS AS IT HAS BEEN REVEALED TO US OUT OF BITTER EXPERIENCES.

OUR BEHAVIOR IS AS ABSURD AND INCOMPREHENSIBLE WITH RESPECT TO THE FIRST DRINK AS THAT OF AN INDIVIDUAL WITH A PASSION, SAY, FOR JAY-WALKING. HE GETS A THRILL OUT OF SKIPPING IN FRONT OF FAST-MOVING VEHICLES. HE ENJOYS HIMSELF A FEW YEARS IN SPITE OF FRIENDLY WARNINGS. UP TO THIS POINT YOU WOULD LABEL HIM AS A FOOLISH CHAP, HAVING QUEER IDEAS OF FUN. LUCK THEN DESERTS HIM AND HE IS SLIGHTLY INJURED SEVERAL TIMES IN SUCCESSION. YOU WOULD EXPECT HIM, IF HE WERE NORMAL, TO CUT IT OUT. PRESENTLY HE IS HIT AGAIN AND THIS TIME HAS A FRACTURED SKULL. WITHIN A WEEK AFTER LEAVING THE HOSPITAL, A FAST-MOVING TROLLEY CAR BREAKS HIS ARM. HE TELLS YOU HE HAS DECIDED TO STOP JAY-WALKING FOR GOOD, BUT IN A FEW WEEKS HE BREAKS BOTH LEGS.

ON THROUGH THE YEARS THIS CONDUCT CONTINUES, ACCOMPANIED BY HIS CONTINUAL PROMISES TO BE CAREFUL OR TO KEEP OFF THE STREETS ALTOGETHER. FINALLY, HE CAN NO LONGER WORK, HIS WIFE GETS A DIVORCE, HE IS HELD UP TO RIDICULE. HE TRIES EVERY KNOWN MEANS TO GET THE JAY-WALKING IDEA OUT OF HIS HEAD. HE SHUTS HIMSELF UP IN AN ASYLUM, HOPING TO MEND HIS WAYS. BUT THE DAY HE COMES OUT HE RACES IN FRONT OF A FIRE ENGINE, WHICH BREAKS HIS BACK. SUCH A MAN WOULD BE CRAZY, WOULDN'T HE.

YOU MAY THINK OUR ILLUSTRATION IS TOO RIDICULOUS. BUT IS IT? WE, WHO HAVE BEEN THROUGH THE WRINGER, HAVE TO ADMIT IF WE SUBSTITUTED ALCOHOLISM FOR JAY-WALKING, THE ILLUSTRATION WOULD FIT US EXACTLY. HOWEVER INTELLIGENT WE MAY HAVE BEEN IN OTHER RESPECTS, WHERE ALCOHOL HAS BEEN INVOLVED, WE HAVE BEEN STRANGELY INSANE. IT'S STRONG LANGUAGE--BUT ISN'T IT TRUE?

LACK OF POWER, THAT WAS OUR DILEMMA. WE HAD TO FIND A POWER BY WHICH WE COULD LIVE, AND IT HAD TO BE A POWER GREATER THAN OURSELVES. OBVIOUSLY. BUT WHERE AND HOW WERE WE TO FIND THIS POWER?

WELL, THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT THIS AA PROGRAM IS ABOUT. ITS MAIN OBJECT IS TO ENABLE YOU TO FIND A POWER GREATER THAN YOURSELF, WHICH WILL SOLVE YOUR PROBLEM. THAT MEANS WE HAVE A PROGRAM WHICH WE BELIEVE TO BE SPIRITUAL AS WELL AS MORAL. IT MEANS, OF COURSE, THAT WE ARE GOING TO TALK ABOUT GOD. HERE DIFFICULTY ARISES WITH AGNOSTICS. MANY TIMES WE TALK TO A NEW MAN AND WATCH HIS HOPE RISE AS WE DISCUSS HIS ALCOHOLIC PROBLEMS AND EXPLAIN OUR FELLOWSHIP. BUT HIS FACE FALLS WHEN WE SPEAK OF SPIRITUAL MATTERS, ESPECIALLY WHEN WE MENTION GOD, FOR WE HAVE RE-OPENED A SUBJECT WHICH OUR MAN THOUGHT HE HAD NEATLY EVADED OR ENTIRELY IGNORED.

WE KNOW HOW HE FEELS. WE HAVE SHARED HIS HONEST DOUBT AND PREJUDICE. SOME OF US HAVE BEEN VIOLENTLY ANTI-RELIGIOUS. TO OTHERS, THE WORD "GOD" BROUGHT UP A PARTICULAR IDEA OF HIM WITH WHICH SOMEONE HAD TRIED TO IMPRESS US DURING CHILDHOOD. PERHAPS WE REJECTED THIS PARTICULAR CONCEPTION BECAUSE IT SEEMED INADEQUATE. WITH THAT REJECTION WE IMAGINED WE HAD ABANDONED THE GOD IDEA ENTIRELY. WE WERE BOTHERED WITH THE THOUGHT THAT FAITH AND DEPENDENCE UPON A POWER BEYOND OURSELVES WAS SOMEWHAT WEAK, EVEN COWARDLY. WE LOOKED UPON THIS WORLD OF WARRING INDIVIDUALS, WARRING THEOLOGICAL SYSTEMS, INEXPLICABLE CALAMITY, WITH DEEP SKEPTICISM. WE LOOKED ASKANCE AT MANY INDIVIDUALS WHO CLAIMED TO BE GODLY. HOW COULD A SUPREME BEING HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH IT ALL? AND WHO COULD COMPREHEND A SUPREME BEING ANYHOW?

IN THE PRECEDING CHAPTER, YOU HAVE LEARNED SOMETHING OF ALCOHOLISM. WE HOPE WE HAVE MADE CLEAR THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE ALCOHOLIC AND THE NON-ALCOHOLIC. IF, WHEN YOU HONESTLY WANT TO, YOU FIND YOU CANNOT QUIT ENTIRELY, OR IF, WHEN DRINKING, YOU HAVE LITTLE CONTROL OVER THE AMOUNT YOU TAKE, YOU ARE PROBABLY ALCOHOLIC. IF THAT BE THE CASE, YOU MAY BE SUFFERING FROM AN ILLNESS WHICH ONLY A SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE WILL CONQUER.

THE FIRST REQUIREMENT IS THAT YOU SEE THAT ANY LIFE RUN ON SELF-WILL CAN HARDLY BE A SUCCESS. ON THAT BASIS WE ARE

ALMOST ALWAYS IN COLLISION WITH SOMETHING OR SOMEBODY, EVEN THOUGH OUR MOTIVES MAY BE GOOD. MOST PEOPLE TRY TO LIVE BY SELF-PROPULSION. EACH PERSON IS LIKE AN ACTOR WHO WANTS TO RUN THE WHOLE SHOW: IS FOREVER TRYING TO ARRANGE THE LIGHTS, THE BALLET, THE SCENERY AND THE REST OF THE PLAYERS IN HIS OWN WAY. IF HIS ARRANGEMENTS WOULD ONLY STAY PUT, IF ONLY PEOPLE WOULD DO AS HE WISHES, THE SHOW WOULD BE GREAT. EVERYBODY, INCLUDING HIMSELF, WOULD BE PLEASED. LIFE WOULD BE WONDERFUL. IN TRYING TO MAKE THESE ARRANGEMENTS OUR ACTOR MAY SOMETIMES BE QUITE VIRTUOUS. HE MAY BE KIND, CONSIDERATE, PATIENT, GENEROUS, AND EVEN MODEST AND SELF-SACRIFICING. ON THE OTHER HAND, HE MAY BE MEAN, EGOTISTICAL, SELFISH AND DISHONEST. BUT, AS WITH MOST HUMANS, HE IS MORE LIKELY TO HAVE VARIED TRAITS.

WHAT USUALLY HAPPENS? THE SHOW DOESN'T COME OFF VERY WELL. HE BEGINS TO THINK LIFE DOESN'T TREAT HIM RIGHT. HE DECIDES TO EXERT HIMSELF SOME MORE. HE BECOMES, ON THE NEXT OCCASION, STILL MORE DEMANDING OR GRACIOUS, AS THE CASE MAY BE. STILL THE PLAY DOES NOT SUIT HIM. ADMITTING HE MAY BE SOMEWHAT AT FAULT, HE IS SURE THAT OTHER PEOPLE ARE MORE TO BLAME. HE BECOMES ANGRY, INDIGNANT, SELF-PITYING. WHAT IS HIS BASIC TROUBLE? IS HE NOT REALLY A SELF-SEEKER EVEN WHEN TRYING TO BE KIND? IS HE NOT A VICTIM OF THE DELUSION THAT HE CAN WREST SATISFACTION AND HAPPINESS OUT OF THIS WORLD IF HE ONLY MANAGES WELL? IS IT NOT EVIDENT TO ALL THE REST

OF THE PLAYERS THAT THESE ARE THE THINGS HE WANTS? AND DO NOT HIS ACTIONS MAKE EACH OF THEM WISH TO RETALIATE, SNATCHING ALL THEY CAN GET OUT OF THE SHOW? IS HE NOT EVEN IN HIS BEST MOMENTS, A PRODUCER OF CONFUSION RATHER THAN HARMONY?

OUR ACTOR IS SELF-CENTERED--EGO-CENTRIC, AS PEOPLE LIKE TO CALL IT NOWADAYS. HE IS LIKE THE RETIRED BUSINESS MAN WHO LULLS IN THE FLORIDA SUNSHINE IN THE WINTER COMPLAINING OF THE SAD STATE OF THE NATION; THE PREACHER WHO SIGHS OVER THE SINS OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY; POLITICIANS AND REFORMERS WHO ARE SURE ALL WOULD BE UTOPIA IF THE REST OF THE WORLD WOULD ONLY BEHAVE; THE OUTLAW SAFE CRACKER WHO THINKS SOCIETY HAS WRONGED HIM; AND THE ALCOHOLIC WHO HAS LOST ALL AND IS LOCKED UP. WHATEVER THEIR PROTESTATIONS, ARE NOT THESE PEOPLE MOSTLY CONCERNED WITH THEMSELVES, THEIR RESENTMENTS, OR THEIR SELF-PITY?

SELFISHNESS--SELF-CENTEREDNESS! THAT, WE THINK, IS THE ROOT OF OUR TROUBLES. DRIVEN BY A HUNDRED FORMS OF FEAR, SELF-DELUSION, SELF-SEEKING, AND SELF-PITY, WE STEP ON THE TOES OF OUR FELLOWS AND THEY RETALIATE. SOMETIMES THEY HURT US, SEEMINGLY, WITHOUT PROVOCATION, BUT WE INVARIABLY FIND THAT AT SOME TIME IN THE PAST WE HAVE MADE DECISIONS BASED ON SELF, WHICH LATER PLACED US IN A POSITION TO BE HURT.

SO OUR TROUBLES, WE THINK, ARE BASICALLY OF OUR OWN MAKING. THEY ARISE OUT OF OURSELVES, AND THE ALCOHOLIC IS AN EXTREME

EXAMPLE OF SELF-WILL RUN RIOT, THOUGH HE USUALLY DOESN'T THINK SO. ABOVE EVERYTHING, WE ALCOHOLICS MUST BE RID OF THIS SELFISHNESS. WE MUST, OR IT KILLS US! GOD MAKES THAT POSSIBLE, AND THERE OFTEN SEEMS NO WAY OF ENTIRELY GETTING RID OF SELF WITHOUT HIS AID. MANY OF US HAD MORAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL CONVICTIONS GALORE, BUT WE COULD NOT LIVE UP TO THEM EVEN THOUGH WE WOULD HAVE LIKED TO. NEITHER COULD WE REDUCE OUR SELF-CENTEREDNESS MUCH BY WISHING OR TRYING ON OUR OWN POWER. WE HAD TO HAVE GOD'S HELP.

IN THIS PROGRAM YOU WILL HEAR AGAIN AND AGAIN THAT FAITH DID FOR US WHAT WE COULD NOT DO FOR OURSELVES. WE HOPE YOU ARE CONVINCED NOW THAT GOD CAN REMOVE WHATEVER SELF-WILL HAS BLOCKED YOU OFF FROM HIM. IF YOU HAVE ALREADY MADE A DECISION, AND AN INVENTORY OF YOUR GROSSER HANDICAPS, YOU HAVE MADE A GOOD BEGINNING. THAT BEING SO YOU HAVE SWALLOWED AND DIGESTED SOME BIG CHUNKS OF TRUTH ABOUT YOURSELF.

PSYCHOLOGISTS AGREE WITH US. MEMBERS OF OUR GROUP HAVE SPENT THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS FOR EXAMINATIONS BY PSYCHOLOGISTS AND PSYCHIATRISTS. WE KNOW BUT FEW INSTANCES WHERE WE HAVE GIVEN THESE DOCTORS A FAIR BREAK. WE HAVE SELDOM TOLD THEM THE WHOLE TRUTH. UNWILLING TO BE HONEST WITH THESE SYMPATHETIC MEN, WE WERE HONEST WITH NO ONE ELSE. SMALL WONDER THE MEDICAL PROFESSION HAS A LOW OPINION OF ALCOHOLICS AND THEIR CHANCE FOR RECOVERY!

ANY SCHEME OF COMBATTING ALCOHOLISM WHICH PROPOSES TO

SHIELD THE SICK MAN FROM TEMPTATION IS DOOMED TO FAILURE. IF THE ALCOHOLIC TRIES TO SHIELD HIMSELF, HE MAY SUCCEED FOR A TIME, BUT WILL WIND UP WITH A BIGGER EXPLOSION THAN EVER. OUR WIVES AND WE HAVE TRIED THESE METHODS. THESE FOOLISH ATTEMPTS TO DO THE IMPOSSIBLE HAVE ALWAYS FAILED.

FOR MOST NORMAL FOLKS, DRINKING MEANS CONVIVIALITY, COMPANIONSHIP, AND COLORFUL IMAGINATION. IT MEANS RELEASE FROM CARE, BOREDOM, AND WORRY. IT IS JOYOUS INTIMACY WITH FRIENDS, AND A FEELING THAT LIFE IS GOOD. BUT NOT SO WITH US IN THOSE LAST DAYS OF HEAVY DRINKING. THE OLD PLEASURES WERE GONE. THEY WERE BUT MEMORIES. NEVER COULD WE RECAPTURE THE GREAT MOMENTS OF THE PAST. THERE WAS AN INSISTENT YEARNING TO ENJOY AS WE ONCE DID AND A HEARTBREAKING OBSESSION THAT SOME NEW MIRACLE OF CONTROL WOULD ENABLE US TO DO IT. THERE WAS ALWAYS ONE MORE ATTEMPT--AND ONE MORE FAILURE.

THE LESS PEOPLE TOLERATED US, THE MORE WE WITHDREW FROM SOCIETY, FROM LIFE ITSELF. AS WE BECAME SUBJECTS OF KING ALCOHOL, SHIVERING DENIZENS OF HIS MAD REALM, THE CHILLING VAPOR THAT IS LONELINESS SETTLED DOWN. IT THICKENED, EVER BECOMING BLACKER. SOME OF US SOUGHT OUT SORDID PLACES, HOPING TO FIND UNDERSTANDING COMPANIONSHIP AND APPROVAL. MOMENTARILY WE DID--THEN WOULD COME OBLIVION AND THE AWFUL AWAKENING TO FACE THE HIDEOUS FOUR HORSEMEN--TERROR, BEWILDERMENT, FRUSTRATION, DESPAIR. UNHAPPY DRINKERS WHO SEE THIS PAGE WILL UNDERSTAND!

NOW AND THEN A SERIOUS DRINKER, BEING DRY AT THE MOMENT SAYS, "I DON'T MESS IT AT ALL. FEEL BETTER. WORK BETTER. HAVING A BETTER TIME." AS EX-ALCOHOLICS, WE SMILE AT SUCH A SALLY. WE KNOW OUR FRIEND IS LIKE A BOY WHISTLING IN THE DARK TO KEEP UP HIS SPIRITS. HE FOOLS HIMSELF. INWARDLY HE WOULD GIVE ANYTHING TO TAKE HALF A DOZEN DRINKS AND GET AWAY WITH THEM. HE WILL PRESENTLY TRY THE OLD GAME AGAIN, FOR HE ISN'T HAPPY ABOUT HIS SOBRIETY. HE CANNOT PICTURE LIFE EITHER WITH ALCOHOL OR WITHOUT IT. THEN HE WILL KNOW LONELINESS SUCH AS FEW DO. HE WILL BE AT THE JUMPING-OFF PLACE. HE WILL WISH FOR THE END.

IT IS IMPORTANT AT THIS TIME TO POINT OUT THAT PHYSICAL TREATMENT IS BUT A SMALL PART OF THE PICTURE. THOUGH YOU ARE PROVIDING HIM WITH THE BEST POSSIBLE MEDICAL ATTENTION, HE SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT HE MUST UNDERGO A CHANGE OF HEART. TO GET OVER DRINKING WILL REQUIRE A TRANSFORMATION OF THOUGHT AND ATTITUDE. HE MUST PLACE RECOVERY ABOVE EVERYTHING, EVEN HOME AND BUSINESS, FOR WITHOUT RECOVERY HE WILL LOSE BOTH.

NOW, THE DOMESTIC PROBLEM: THERE MAY BE DIVORCE, SEPARATION, OR JUST STRAINED RELATIONS. WHEN YOUR PROSPECT HAS MADE SUCH RESTITUTION AS HE CAN TO HIS FAMILY, AND HAS THOROUGHLY EXPLAINED TO THEM THE NEW PRINCIPLES BY WHICH HE IS LIVING, HE SHOULD PROCEED TO PUT THOSE PRINCIPLES INTO ACTION AT HOME. THAT IS, IF HE IS LUCKY ENOUGH TO HAVE A HOME. THOUGH HIS FAMILY BE AT FAULT IN MANY RESPECTS, HE SHOULD NOT BE

CONCERNED ABOUT THAT. HE SHOULD CONCENTRATE ON HIS OWN SPIRITUAL DEMONSTRATION. ARGUMENT AND FAULT-FINDING ARE TO BE AVOIDED LIKE LEPROSY. IN MANY HOMES THIS IS A DIFFICULT THING TO DO, BUT IT MUST BE DONE IF ANY RESULTS ARE TO BE EXPECTED. IF PERSISTED ON FOR A FEW MONTHS, THE EFFECT ON A MAN'S FAMILY IS SURE TO BE GREAT. THE MOST INCOMPATIBLE PEOPLE DISCOVER THEY HAVE A BASIS UPON WHICH THEY CAN MEET. LITTLE BY LITTLE THE FAMILY WILL SEE THEIR OWN DEFECTS AND ADMIT THEM. THESE CAN THEN BE DISCUSSED IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF HELPFULNESS AND FRIENDLINESS.

THE GREATEST ENEMIES OF THE ALCOHOLIC ARE RESENTMENT, JEALOUSY, ENVY, FRUSTRATION, AND FEAR. WHEREVER MEN ARE GATHERED TOGETHER IN BUSINESS, THERE WILL BE RIVALRIES, AND, ARISING OUT OF THESE, A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF OFFICE POLITICS. SOMETIMES THE ALCOHOLIC HAS AN IDEA THAT PEOPLE ARE TRYING TO PULL HIM DOWN. OFTEN THIS IS NOT SO AT ALL. BUT SOMETIMES HIS DRINKING WILL BE USED AS A BASIS OF CRITICISM.

SOMEDAY WE HOPE THAT ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS WILL HELP THE PUBLIC TO A BETTER REALIZATION OF THE GRAVITY OF THE LIQUOR PROBLEM. WE SHALL BE OF LITTLE USE IF OUR ATTITUDE IS ONE OF BITTERNESS OR HOSTILITY. DRINKERS WILL NOT STAND FOR IT.

AFTER ALL, OUR TROUBLES WERE OF OUR OWN MAKING. BOTTLES WERE ONLY A SYMBOL. BESIDES, WE HAVE STOPPED FIGHTING ANYBODY OR ANYTHING. WE HAVE TO!

1. DO YOU REALLY BELIEVE THAT YOU MIGHT AGAIN HAVE THE ABILITY TO CONTROL YOUR DRINKING?
2. DO YOU BELIEVE THE DISEASE IS PROGRESSIVE?
3. DO THE METHODS MENTIONED SOUND FAMILIAR?
4. DO YOU CHERISH THE IDEA: "I AM AN ALCOHOLIC"?
5. DO YOU BELIEVE THAT "ONE TIME IN YOUR LIFE YOU COULD HAVE STOPPED DRINKING"?
6. DOES AGE HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE DEPTH OF ALCOHOLISM?
7. DO YOU THINK THAT "JUST BECAUSE YOU ARE NERVOUS, ANGRY, WORRIED OR DEPRESSED" THAT A DRINK WOULD HELP YOUR CONDITION?
8. WOULD YOU SAY " YOU ARE ABSOLUTELY UNABLE TO STOP DRINKING ON THE BASIS OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE"?
9. DO YOU IDENTIFY WITH THE JAY WALKER?
10. DO YOU BELIEVE YOU HAVE LOST YOUR MARBLES JUST LIKE HIM?
11. DO YOU THINK THIS ILLUSTRATION IS TOO RIDICULOUS?
12. WHAT IS THE MAIN PURPOSE OF THE AA PROGRAM?
13. ARE YOU SHOCKED BY THE ANSWER?
14. HAVE YOU LEARNED ANYTHING ABOUT ALCOHOLISM UP TO NOW?
15. DO YOU BELIEVE YOUR LIFE IS UNMANAGEABLE--"SELF-WILL RUN RIOT"?
16. ARE YOU A GOOD ACTOR BETTER KNOWN AS A "HAM"?
17. DO YOU ENJOY RETALIATION?
18. DO YOU BELIEVE YOU ARE SELF-CENTERED OR EGO CENTRIC?
19. WOULD YOU SAY WITHOUT RESERVATION THAT YOU ARE SELFISH AND SELF-CENTERED?
20. DO YOU BELIEVE THAT GOD COULD DO FOR YOU WHAT YOU COULD NOT DO FOR YOURSELF?

21. TELL OF SOME OF YOUR EXPERIENCES WITH THE PSYCHIATRISTS.
22. DID YOU DRINK TO RECAPTURE THE HAPPY MOMENTS OF THE PAST?
23. WILL PEOPLE STILL TOLERATE YOU WHILE DRINKING?
24. HAVE YOU EVER SAID "I DON'T MISS IT AT ALL"? ARE YOU REALLY TRYING TO KID YOURSELF?
25. DO YOU BELIEVE THE PHYSICAL IS ONLY A SMALL PART OF YOUR RECOVERY?
26. WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST ENEMY AS AN ALCOHOLIC?
27. DO YOU BELIEVE "AN ALCOHOLIC'S TROUBLE IS OF HIS OWN MAKING"?

CHAPTER THREE
STEP TWO
PART ONE

CAME TO BELIEVE THAT A POWER GREATER THAN OURSELVES COULD RESTORE US TO SANITY.

"TO CHRIST I CONCEDED THE CERTAINTY OF A GREAT MAN, NOT TOO CLOSELY FOLLOWED BY THOSE WHO CLAIMED HIM. HIS MORAL TEACHING--MOST EXCELLENT. FOR MYSELF, I HAD ADOPTED THOSE PARTS WHICH SEEMED CONVENIENT AND NOT TOO DIFFICULT; THE REST I DISREGARDED," SAID BILL W., AA'S CO-FOUNDER.

"BUT MY FRIEND SAT BEFORE ME, AND HE MADE THE POINT-BLANK DECLARATION THAT GOD HAD DONE FOR HIM WHAT HE COULD NOT DO FOR HIMSELF. HIS HUMAN WILL HAD FAILED. DOCTORS HAD PRONOUNCED HIM INCURABLE. SOCIETY WAS ABOUT TO LOCK HIM UP. LIKE MYSELF, HE HAD ADMITTED COMPLETE DEFEAT. THEN HE HAD, IN EFFECT, BEEN RAISED FROM THE DEAD, SUDDENLY TAKEN FROM THE SCRAP HEAP TO A LEVEL OF LIFE BETTER THAN THE BEST HE HAD EVER KNOWN!

I SAW THAT MY FRIEND WAS MUCH MORE THAN INWARDLY REORGANIZED. HE WAS ON A DIFFERENT FOOTING. HIS ROOTS GRASPED A NEW SOIL.

HAD THIS POWER ORIGINATED IN HIM? OBVIOUSLY IT HAD NOT. THERE HAD BEEN NO MORE POWER IN HIM THAN THERE WAS IN ME AT THAT MINUTE; AND THIS WAS NONE AT ALL.

THAT FLOORED ME. IT BEGAN TO LOOK AS THOUGH RELIGIOUS PEOPLE WERE RIGHT AFTER ALL. HERE WAS SOMETHING AT WORK

IN A HUMAN HEART WHICH HAD DONE THE IMPOSSIBLE. MY IDEAS ABOUT MIRACLES WERE DRASTICALLY REVISED RIGHT THEN. NEVER MIND THE MUSTY PAST; HERE SAT A MIRACLE DIRECTLY ACROSS THE KITCHEN TABLE. HE SHOUTED GREAT TIDINGS.

THUS WAS I CONVINCED THAT GOD IS CONCERNED WITH US HUMANS, WHEN WE WANT HIM ENOUGH. AT LONG LAST I SAW, I FELT, I BELIEVED. SCALES OF PRIDE AND PREJUDICE FELL FROM MY EYES. A NEW WORLD CAME INTO VIEW.

THERE I HUMBLY OFFERED MYSELF TO GOD, AS I THEN UNDERSTOOD HIM, TO DO WITH ME AS HE WOULD. I PLACED MYSELF UNRESERVEDLY UNDER HIS CARE AND DIRECTION. I ADMITTED FOR THE FIRST TIME THAT OF MYSELF I WAS NOTHING; THAT WITHOUT HIM I WAS LOST. I RUTHLESSLY FACED MY SINS AND BECAME WILLING TO HAVE MY NEW-FOUND FRIEND TAKE THEM AWAY, ROOT AND BRANCH.

MY FRIEND PROMISED WHEN THESE THINGS WERE DONE I WOULD ENTER UPON A NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH MY CREATOR; THAT I WOULD HAVE THE ELEMENTS OF A WAY OF LIFE WHICH ANSWERED ALL MY PROBLEMS. BELIEF IN THE POWER OF GOD, PLUS ENOUGH WILLINGNESS, HONESTY AND HUMILITY TO ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN THE NEW ORDER OF THINGS, WERE THE ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS.

I WAS TO TEST MY THINKING BY THE NEW GOD-CONSCIOUSNESS WITHIN. COMMON SENSE WOULD THUS BECOME UNCOMMON SENSE. I WAS TO SIT QUIETLY WHEN DOUBT, ASKING ONLY FOR DIRECTION AND STRENGTH TO MEET MY PROBLEMS AS HE WOULD HAVE ME.

NEVER WAS I TO PRAY FOR MYSELF, EXCEPT AS MY REQUESTS BORE ON MY USEFULNESS TO OTHERS. THEN ONLY MIGHT I EXPECT TO RECIEVE. BUT THAT WOULD BE IN GREAT MEASURE.

SIMPLE, BUT NOT EASY; A PRICE HAD TO BE PAID. IT MEANT DESTRUCTION OF SELF-CENTEREDNESS. I MUST TURN IN ALL THINGS TO THE FATHER OF LIGHT WHO PRESIDES OVER US ALL.

MY FRIEND HAD EMPHASIZED THE ABSOLUTE NECESSITY OF MY DEMONSTRATING THESE PRINCIPLES IN ALL MY AFFAIRS. PARTICULARLY WAS IT IMPERATIVE TO WORK WITH OTHERS, AS HE HAD WORKED WITH ME. FAITH WITHOUT WORKS WAS DEAD, HE SAID. AND HOW APPALINGLY TRUE FOR THE ALCOHOLIC! FOR IF AN ALCOHOLIC FAILED TO PERFECT AND ENLARGE HIS SPIRITUAL LIFE THROUGH WORK AND SELF SACRIFICE FOR OTHERS, HE COULD NOT SURVIVE THE CERTAIN TRIALS AND LOW SPOTS AHEAD. IF HE DID NOT WORK, HE WOULD SURELY DRINK AGAIN, AND IF HE DRANK, HE WOULD SURELY DIE. THEN FAITH WOULD BE DEAD INDEED. WITH US IT IS JUST LIKE THAT."

WHEN THIS SORT OF THINKING IS FULLY ESTABLISHED IN AN INDIVIDUAL WITH ALCOHOLIC TENDENCIES, HE HAS PROBABLY PLACED HIMSELF BEYOND ALL HUMAN AID, AND UNLESS LOCKED UP, IS CERTAIN TO DIE, OR GO PERMANENTLY INSANE. THESE STARK AND UGLY FACTS HAVE BEEN CONFIRMED BY LEGIONS OF ALCOHOLICS THROUGHOUT HISTORY. BUT FOR THE GRACE OF GOD, THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN ONE HUNDRED MORE CONVINCING DEMONSTRATIONS. SO MANY WANT TO STOP BUT CANNOT.

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.

WE THINK IT NO CONCERN OF OURS, AS A GROUP, 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 ASSOCIATION, OR HIS PRESENT CHOICE. NOT ALL OF US HAVE JOINED RELIGIOUS BODIES, BUT MOST OF US FAVOR SUCH MEMBERSHIPS.

QUITE AS IMPORTANT WAS THE DISCOVERY THAT SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES WOULD SOLVE ALL OUR PROBLEMS. WE HAVE SINCE BEEN BROUGHT INTO A WAY OF LIVING INFINITELY MORE SATISFYING AND, WE HOPE, MORE USEFUL THAN THE LIFE WE LIVED BEFORE. OUR OLD MANNER OF LIFE WAS BY NO MEANS A BAD ONE, BUT WE WOULD NOT EXCHANGE ITS BEST MOMENTS FOR THE WORST WE HAVE NOW. WE WOULD NOT GO BACK TO IT EVEN IF WE COULD.

LACK OF POWER, THAT WAS OUR DILEMMA. WE HAD TO FIND A POWER BY WHICH WE COULD LIVE, AND IT HAD TO BE A POWER GREATER THAN OURSELVES. OBVIOUSLY. BUT WHERE AND HOW WERE WE TO FIND THIS POWER?

ONCE MORE: THE ALCOHOLIC AT CERTAIN TIMES HAS NO EFFECTIVE

MENTAL DEFENSE AGAINST THE FIRST DRINK. EXCEPT IN A FEW RARE CASES, NEITHER HE NOR ANY OTHER HUMAN BEING CAN PROVIDE SUCH A DEFENSE. HIS DEFENSE MUST COME FROM A HIGHER POWER.

MOST DOCTORS AND PSYCHIATRISTS AGREE WITH OUR CONCLUSIONS. ONE OF THESE MEN, STAFF MEMBER OF A WORLD-RENOWNED HOSPITAL, RECENTLY MADE THIS STATEMENT TO SOME OF US: "WHAT YOU SAY ABOUT THE GENERAL HOPELESSNESS OF THE AVERAGE ALCOHOLIC'S PLIGHT IS, IN MY OPINION, CORRECT. AS TO THE TWO OF YOU MEN, WHOSE STORIES I HAVE HEARD, THERE IS NO DOUBT IN MY MIND THAT YOU WERE 100% HOPELESS, APART FROM DIVINE HELP. HAD YOU OFFERED YOURSELVES AS PATIENTS AT THIS HOSPITAL, I WOULD NOT HAVE TAKEN YOU, IF I HAD BEEN ABLE TO AVOID IT. PEOPLE LIKE YOU ARE TOO HEARTBREAKING. THOUGH NOT A RELIGIOUS PERSON, I HAVE PROFOUND RESPECT FOR THE SPIRITUAL APPROACH IN SUCH CASES AS YOURS. FOR MOST CASES, THERE IS VIRTUALLY NO OTHER SOLUTION."

THE DISTINGUISHED AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGIST, WILLIAM JAMES, IN HIS BOOK, "VARIETIES OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE," INDICATES A MULTITUDE OF WAYS IN WHICH MEN HAVE FOUND GOD. AS A GROUP, WE HAVE NO DESIRE TO CONVINCe ANYONE THAT THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY BY WHICH GOD CAN BE DISCOVERED. 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.

IF A MERE CODE OF MORALS, OR A BETTER PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE WERE SUFFICIENT TO OVERCOME ALCOHOLISM, MANY OF US WOULD HAVE RECOVERED LONG AGO. BUT WE FOUND THAT SUCH CODES AND PHILOSOPHIES DID NOT SAVE US, NO MATTER HOW MUCH WE TRIED. WE COULD WISH TO BE MORAL, WE COULD WISH TO BE PHILOSOPHICALLY COMFORTED, IN FACT, WE COULD WILL THESE THINGS WITH ALL OUR MIGHT, BUT THE NEEDED POWER WASN'T THERE. OUR HUMAN RESOURCES, AS MARSHALLED BY THE WILL, WERE NOT SUFFICIENT; THEY FAILED UTTERLY.

YES, WE OF AGNOSTIC TEMPERMENT HAVE HAD THESE THOUGHTS AND EXPERIENCES. LET US MAKE HASTE TO REASSURE YOU. WE FOUND THAT AS SOON AS WE WERE ABLE TO LAY ASIDE PREJUDICE AND EXPRESS EVEN A WILLINGNESS TO BELIEVE IN A POWER GREATER THAN OURSELVES, WE COMMENCED TO GET RESULTS, EVEN THOUGH IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE FOR ANY OF US TO FULLY DEFINE OR COMPREHEND THAT POWER, WHICH IS GOD.

MUCH TO OUR RELIEF, WE DISCOVERED WE DID NOT NEED TO CONSIDER ANOTHER'S CONCEPTION OF GOD. OUR OWN CONCEPTION, HOWEVER INDAEQUATE, WAS SUFFICIENT TO MAKE THE APPROACH AND TO EFFECT A CONTACT WITH HIM. AS SOON AS WE ADMITTED THE POSSIBLE EXISTENCE OF A CREATIVE INTELLIGENCE, A SPIRIT OF THE UNIVERSE UNDERLYING THE TOTALITY OF THINGS, WE BEGAN TO BE

POSSESSED OF A NEW SENSE OF POWER AND DIRECTION, PROVIDED WE TOOK OTHER SIMPLE STEPS. WE FOUND THAT GOD DOES NOT MAKE HARD TERMS WITH THOSE WHO SEEK HIM. TO US, THE REALM OF SPIRIT IS BROAD, ROOMY, ALL INCLUSIVE; NEVER EXCLUSIVE OR FORBIDDING. IT IS OPEN, WE BELIEVE, TO ALL MEN.

WHEN, THEREFORE, WE SPEAK TO YOU OF GOD, WE MEAN YOUR OWN CONCEPTION OF GOD. THIS APPLIES, TOO, TO OTHER SPIRITUAL EXPRESSIONS WHICH YOU FIND IN THIS PROGRAM. DO NOT LET ANY PREJUDICE YOU MAY HAVE AGAINST SPIRITUAL TERMS DETER YOU FROM HONESTLY ASKING YOURSELF WHAT THEY MEAN TO YOU. AT THE START, THIS IS ALL YOU WILL NEED TO COMMENCE SPIRITUAL GROWTH, TO EFFECT YOUR FIRST CONSCIOUS RELATION WITH GOD, AS YOU UNDERSTAND HIM. AFTERWARD, YOU WILL FIND YOURSELF ACCEPTING MANY THINGS WHICH NOW SEEM ENTIRELY OUT OF REACH. THAT IS GROWTH, BUT IF YOU ARE GOING TO GROW, YOU HAVE TO BEGIN SOMEWHERE. SO USE YOUR OWN CONCEPTION, HOWEVER LIMITED IT MAY BE.

THAT WAS GREAT NEWS TO US, FOR WE HAD ASSUMED WE COULD NOT MAKE USE OF SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES UNLESS WE ACCEPTED MANY THINGS ON FAITH WHICH SEEMED DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE. WHEN PEOPLE PRESENTED US WITH SPIRITUAL APPROACHES, HOW FREQUENTLY DID WE ALL SAY: "I WISH I HAD WHAT THAT MAN HAS. I'M SURE IT WOULD WORK IF I COULD ONLY BELIEVE AS HE BELIEVES. BUT I CANNOT ACCEPT AS SURELY TRUE THE MANY ARTICLES OF FAITH WHICH ARE SO PLAIN TO HIM." SO IT WAS COMFORTING TO LEARN THAT WE COULD COMMENCE AT A SIMPLER LEVEL.

1. DID YOU ADOPT THE PARTS OF CHRISTIANITY THAT WERE "NOT TOO DIFFICULT"?
2. DO YOU THINK GOD CAN DO FOR YOU WHAT YOU CAN'T DO FOR YOURSELF?
3. DO MOST AAS, WHO HAVE SPENT SOME TIME IN AA, DAY BY DAY, LOOK "INWARDLY ORGANIZED"?
4. DO YOU BELIEVE RELIGIOUS PEOPLE WERE RIGHT AFTER ALL?
5. DO YOU THINK GOD IS CONCERNED WITH US HUMANS?
6. ARE YOU READY TO FACE YOUR "SINS" AND HAVE GOD TAKE THEM AWAY?
7. DO YOU THINK OUR CREATOR HAS THE ELEMENTS OF A NEW WAY OF LIFE?
8. WHAT WOULD YOU CALL "GOD-CONSCIOUSNESS"?
9. DO YOU BELIEVE IT IS IMPORTANT TO PRACTICE THE AA PROGRAM IN ALL YOUR AFFAIRS?
10. ARE ENLARGING YOUR SPIRITUAL LIFE THROUGH WORKS AND SELF-SACRIFICE FOR OTHERS, AN IMPORTANT CRITERIA?
11. DOES THE AA PROGRAM SOUND LIKE UTOPIA TO YOU?
12. WHAT IS THE ALTERNATIVE FOR AN ALCOHOLIC, WORK OR NO WORK?
13. HAVE ALCOHOLICS LEARNED ANYTHING FROM LEGIONS OF ALCOHOLICS THROUGHOUT HISTORY?
14. DO YOU THINK YOU CAN REVOLUTIONIZE YOUR WHOLE ATTITUDE TOWARD LIFE?
15. IS IT ANY OF AA'S BUSINESS WHAT RELIGIOUS BODIES OUR MEMBERS IDENTIFY THEMSELVES WITH AS INDIVIDUALS?
16. WOULD YOU EXCHANGE YOUR SOBER LIFE FOR YOUR OLD WAY OF LIFE?
17. IS THE "LACK OF POWER" YOUR "DILEMMA"?
18. DO YOU AS AN ALCOHOLIC HAVE AN EFFECTIVE MENTAL DEFENSE AGAINST THE FIRST DRINK?

19. IS THERE ANY OTHER HELP AVAILABLE EXCEPT "THE DIVINE POWER"?
20. HAS AA ANY CERTAIN WAY THEY OFFER TO TEACH A MEMBER "HOW TO FIND GOD"?
21. IF A CODE OF MORALS WAS ALL THAT WAS NECESSARY, WOULD YOU HAVE FOUND SOBRIETY LONG AGO?
22. WHAT IS NECESSARY FOR US TO LAY ASIDE IN ORDER TO GET RESULTS FROM THE PROGRAM?
23. DO WE HAVE TO CHANGE OUR CONCEPTION OF GOD?
24. WHAT IS ALL YOU NEED TO START SPIRITUAL GROWTH?
25. DO YOU EVER THINK "I WISH I HAD WHAT ANOTHER PERSON HAS"?

CHAPTER FOUR
STEP TWO
PART TWO

CAME TO BELIEVE THAT A POWER GREATER THAN OURSELVES COULD RESTORE US TO SANITY.

WHATEVER THE PRECISE MEDICAL DEFINITION OF THE WORD MAY BE, WE CALL THIS PLAIN INSANITY. HOW CAN SUCH A LACK OF PROPORTION, OF THE ABILITY TO THINK STRAIGHT, BE CALLED ANYTHING ELSE?

LOGIC IS GREAT STUFF. WE LIKED IT. WE STILL LIKE IT. IT IS NOT BY CHANCE WE WERE GIVEN THE POWER TO REASON, TO EXAMINE THE EVIDENCE OF OUR SENSES, AND TO DRAW CONCLUSIONS. THAT IS ONE OF MAN'S MAGNIFICENT ATTRIBUTES. WE AGNOSTICALLY INCLINED WOULD NOT FEEL SATISFIED WITH A PROPOSAL WHICH DOES NOT LEND ITSELF TO REASONABLE APPROACH AND INTERPRETATION. HENCE WE ARE AT PAINS TO TELL WHY WE THINK OUR PRESENT FAITH IS REASONABLE, WHY WE THINK IT MORE SANE AND LOGICAL TO BELIEVE THAN NOT TO BELIEVE, WHY WE SAY OUR FORMER THINKING WAS SOFT AND MUSHY WHEN WE THREW UP OUR HANDS IN DOUBT AND SAID, "WE DON'T KNOW."

ARRIVED AT THIS POINT, WE WERE SQUARELY CONFRONTED WITH THE QUESTION OF FAITH. WE COULDN'T DUCK THE ISSUE. SOME OF US HAD ALREADY WALKED FAR OVER THE BRIDGE OF REASON TOWARD THE DESIRED SHORE OF FAITH. THE OUTLINES AND THE PROMISE OF THE NEW LAND HAD BROUGHT LUSTRE TO TIRED EYES AND FRESH COURAGE TO FLAGGING SPIRITS. FRIENDLY HANDS HAD STRETCHED

OUT IN WELCOME. WE WERE GRATEFUL THAT REASON HAD BROUGHT US SO FAR. BUT SOMEHOW, WE COULDN'T QUITE STEP ASHORE. PERHAPS WE HAD BEEN LEANING TOO HEAVILY ON REASON THAT LAST MILE AND WE DID NOT LIKE TO LOSE OUR SUPPORT.

THE WRIGHT BROTHERS' ALMOST CHILDISH FAITH THAT THEY COULD BUILD A MACHINE WHICH WOULD FLY WAS THE MAINSPRING OF THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENT. WITHOUT THAT, NOTHING COULD HAVE HAPPENED. WE AGNOSTICS AND ATHEISTS WERE STICKING TO THE IDEA THAT SELF-SUFFICIENCY WOULD SOLVE OUR PROBLEMS. WHEN OTHERS SHOWED US THAT "GOD-SUFFICIENCY" WORKED WITH THEM, WE BEGAN TO FEEL LIKE THOSE WHO HAD INSISTED THE WRIGHTS WOULD NEVER FLY.

WE FOUND TOO, THAT WE HAD BEEN WORSHIPPERS. WHAT A STATE OF MENTAL GOOSEFLESH THAT USED TO BRING ON! HAD WE NOT VARIOUSLY WORSHIPPED PEOPLE, SENTIMENT, THINGS, MONEY, AND OURSELVES? AND THEN, WITH A BETTER MOTIVE, HAD WE NOT WORSHIPFULLY BEHELD THE SUNSET, THE SEA, OR A FLOWER? WHO OF US HAD NOT LOVED SOMETHING OR SOMEBODY? HOW MUCH DID THESE FEELINGS, THESE LOVES, THESE WORSHIPS HAVE TO DO WITH PURE REASON? LITTLE OR NOTHING, WE SAW AT LAST. WERE NOT THESE THINGS THE TISSUE OUT OF WHICH OUR LIVES WERE CONSTRUCTED? DID NOT THESE FEELINGS, AFTER ALL, DETERMINE THE COURSE OF OUR EXISTENCE? IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO SAY WE HAD NO CAPACITY FOR FAITH, OR LOVE, OR WORSHIP. IN ONE FORM OR ANOTHER WE

HAD BEEN LIVING BY FAITH AND LITTLE ELSE.

YET WE HAD BEEN SEEING ANOTHER KIND OF FLIGHT, A SPIRITUAL LIBERATION FROM THIS WORLD, PEOPLE WHO ROSE ABOVE THEIR PROBLEMS. THEY SAID GOD MADE THESE THINGS POSSIBLE, AND WE ONLY SMILED. WE HAD SEEN SPIRITUAL RELEASE, BUT LIKED TO TELL OURSELVES IT WASN'T TRUE.

THAT WAS GREAT NEWS TO US FOR WE HAD ASSUMED WE COULD NOT MAKE USE OF SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES UNLESS WE ACCEPTED MANY THINGS ON FAITH WHICH SEEMED DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE. WHEN PEOPLE PRESENTED US WITH SPIRITUAL APPROACHES, HOW FREQUENTLY DID WE ALL SAY: "I WISH I HAD WHAT THAT MAN HAS. I'M SURE IT WOULD WORK IF I COULD ONLY BELIEVE AS HE BELIEVES. BUT I CANNOT ACCEPT AS SURELY TRUE THE MANY ARTICLES OF FAITH WHICH ARE SO PLAIN TO HIM." SO IT WAS COMFORTING TO LEARN THAT WE COULD COMMENCE AT A SIMPLER LEVEL.

IMAGINE LIFE WITHOUT FAITH! WERE NOTHING LEFT BUT PURE REASON, IT WOULDN'T BE LIFE. BUT WE BELIEVED IN LIFE--OF COURSE WE DID. WE COULD NOT PROVE LIFE IN THE SENSE THAT YOU CAN PROVE A STRAIGHT LINE IS THE SHORTEST DISTANCE BETWEEN TWO POINTS: YET, THERE IT WAS. COULD WE STILL SAY THE WHOLE THING WAS NOTHING BUT A MASS OF ELECTRONS, CREATED OUT OF NOTHING, WHIRLING ON TO A DESTINY OF NOTHINGNESS? OF COURSE WE COULDN'T. THE ELECTRONS THEMSELVES SEEMED MORE INTELLIGENT THAN THAT. AT LEAST, SO THE CHEMIST SAID.

WHEN WE BECAME ALCOHOLICS, CRUSHED BY A SELF-IMPOSED CRISIS WE COULD NOT POSTPONE OR EVADE, WE HAD TO FEARLESSLY FACE THE PROPOSITION THAT EITHER GOD IS EVERYTHING OR ELSE HE IS NOTHING. GOD EITHER IS, OR HE ISN'T. WHAT WAS OUR CHOICE TO BE?

ACTUALLY WE WERE FOOLING OURSELVES, FOR DEEP DOWN IN EVERY MAN, WOMAN, AND CHILD, IS THE FUNDAMENTAL IDEA OF GOD. IT MAY BE OBSCURED BY CALAMITY, BY POMP, BY WORSHIP OF OTHER THINGS, BUT IN SOME FORM OR OTHER IT IS THERE. FOR FAITH IN A POWER GREATER THAN OURSELVES, AND MIRACULOUS DEMONSTRATIONS OF THAT POWER IN HUMAN LIVES, ARE FACTS AS OLD AS MAN HIMSELF.

WE FINALLY SAW THAT FAITH IN SOME KIND OF GOD WAS A PART OF OUR MAKE-UP, JUST AS MUCH AS THE FEELING WE HAVE FOR A FRIEND. SOMETIMES WE HAD TO SEARCH FEARLESSLY, BUT HE WAS THERE. HE WAS AS MUCH A FACT AS WE WERE. AND WE ARE SURE YOU WILL FIND THE GREAT REALITY DEEP DOWN WITHIN YOU. IN THE LAST ANALYSIS IT IS ONLY THERE THAT HE MAY BE FOUND. IT WAS SO WITH US; WHY NOT WITH YOU?

WE CAN ONLY CLEAR THE GROUND A BIT FOR YOU. IF OUR TESTIMONY HELPS SWEEP AWAY PREJUDICE, ENABLES YOU TO THINK HONESTLY, ENCOURAGES YOU TO SEARCH DILIGENTLY WITHIN YOURSELF, THEN YOU WILL HAVE JOINED US ON THE BROAD HIGHWAY. WITH THIS ATTITUDE YOU CANNOT FAIL. THE CONSCIOUSNESS THAT YOU DO BELIEVE IS SURE TO COME TO YOU.

REMEMBER THAT YOU ARE DEALING WITH ALCOHOL--CUNNING, BAFFLING, POWERFUL! WITHOUT HELP IT IS TOO MUCH FOR YOU. BUT THERE IS ONE WHO HAS ALL POWER--THAT ONE IS GOD. YOU MUST FIND HIM NOW!

BESIDES A SEEMING INABILITY TO ACCEPT MUCH ON FAITH, WE OFTEN FOUND OURSELVES HANDICAPPED BY OBSTINACY, SENSITIVENESS AND UNREASONING PREJUDICE. MANY OF HAVE BEEN SO TOUCHY THAT EVEN CASUAL REFERENCE TO SPIRITUAL THINGS MADE US BRISTLE WITH ANTAGONISM. THIS SORT OF THINKING HAD TO BE ABANDONED. THOUGH SOME OF US RESISTED, WE FOUND NO GREAT DIFFICULTY IN CASTING ASIDE SUCH FEELINGS. FACED WITH ALCOHOLIC DESTRUCTION, WE SOON BECAME AS OPEN MINDED ON SPIRITUAL MATTERS AS WE HAD TRIED TO BE ON OTHER QUESTIONS. IN THIS RESPECT ALCOHOL WAS A GREAT PERSUADER. IT FINALLY BEAT US INTO A STATE OF REASONABLENESS. SOMETIMES THIS WAS A TEDIOUS PROCESS; WE HOPE NO ONE WILL BE PREJUDICED AS LONG AS SOME OF US WERE.

OUR DESCRIPTION OF THE ALCOHOLIC, THE CHAPTER TO THE AGNOSTIC, AND OUR PERSONAL ADVENTURES BEFORE AND AFTER MAKE CLEAR THREE PERTINENT IDEAS:

- A. THAT WE WERE ALCOHOLIC AND COULD NOT MANAGE OUR OWN LIVES
- B. THAT PROBABLY NO HUMAN POWER COULD HAVE RELIEVED OUR ALCOHOLISM.
- C. THAT GOD COULD AND WOULD IF HE WERE SOUGHT.

MANY OF US EXCLAIMED, "WHAT AN ORDER! I CAN'T GO THROUGH

WITH IT." DO NOT BE DISCOURAGED. NO ONE AMONG US HAS BEEN ABLE TO MAINTAIN ANYTHING LIKE PERFECT ADHERENCE TO THESE PRINCIPLES. WE ARE NOT SAINTS. THE POINT IS, THAT WE ARE WILLING TO GROW ALONG SPIRITUAL LINES. THE PRINCIPLES WE HAVE SET DOWN ARE GUIDES TO PROGRESS. WE CLAIM SPIRITUAL PROGRESS RATHER THAN SPIRITUAL PERFECTION.

SELFISHNESS--SELF-CENTEREDNESS! THAT, WE THINK, IS THE ROOT OF OUR TROUBLES. DRIVEN BY A HUNDRED FORMS OF FEAR, SELF-DELUSION, SELF-SEEKING, AND SELF-PITY, WE STEP ON THE TOES OF OUR FELLOWS AND THEY RETALIATE. SOMETIMES THEY HURT US, SEEMINGLY, WITHOUT PROVOCATION, BUT WE INVARIABLY FIND THAT AT SOME TIME IN THE PAST WE HAVE MADE DECISIONS BASED ON SELF, WHICH LATER PLACED US IN A POSITION TO BE HURT.

SO OUR TROUBLES, WE THINK, ARE BASICALLY OF OUR OWN MAKING. THEY ARISE OUT OF OURSELVES, AND THE ALCOHOLIC IS ALMOST THE MOST EXTREME EXAMPLE THAT COULD BE FOUND OF SELF-WILL RUN RIOT, THOUGH HE USUALLY DOESN'T THINK SO. ABOVE EVERYTHING, WE ALCOHOLICS MUST BE RID OF THIS SELFISHNESS. WE MUST, OR IT KILLS US! GOD MAKES THAT POSSIBLE. AND THERE IS NO WAY OF BEING ENTIRELY RID OF SELF WITHOUT HIM. YOU MAY HAVE MORAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL CONVICTIONS GALORE, BUT YOU CAN'T LIVE UP TO THEM EVEN THOUGH YOU WOULD LIKE TO. NEITHER CAN YOU REDUCE YOUR SELF-CENTEREDNESS MUCH BY WISHING OR TRYING ON YOUR OWN POWER. YOU MUST HAVE GOD'S HELP.

IT IS PLAIN THAT A WAY OF LIFE WHICH INCLUDES DEEP RESENTMENT LEADS ONLY TO FUTILITY AND UNHAPPINESS. TO THE PRECISE EXTENT WE PERMIT THESE, DO WE SQUANDER THE HOURS THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN WORTH WHILE. BUT WITH THE ALCOHOLIC WHOSE ONLY HOPE IS THE MAINTENANCE AND GROWTH OF A SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE, THIS BUSINESS OF RESENTMENT IS INFINITELY GRAVE. WE FIND THAT IT IS FATAL. FOR WHEN HARBORING SUCH FEELINGS WE SHUT OURSELVES OFF FROM THE SUNLIGHT OF THE SPIRIT. THE INSANITY OF ALCOHOL RETURNS AND WE DRINK AGAIN. AND WITH US, TO DRINK IS TO DIE.

REVIEW YOUR FEARS THOROUGHLY. PUT THEM ON PAPER, EVEN THOUGH YOU HAVE NO RESENTMENT IN CONNECTION WITH THEM. ASK YOURSELF WHY YOU HAVE THEM. ISN'T IT BECAUSE SELF-RELIANCE HAS FAILED YOU? SELF-RELIANCE WAS GOOD AS FAR AS IT WENT, BUT IT DIDN'T GO FAR ENOUGH. SOME OF US ONCE HAD GREAT SELF-CONFIDENCE, BUT IT DIDN'T FULLY SOLVE THE FEAR PROBLEM, OR ANY OTHER. WHEN IT MADE US COCKY, IT WAS WORSE.

YOU HEAR AGAIN AND AGAIN THAT FAITH DID FOR US WHAT WE COULD NOT DO FOR OURSELVES. WE HOPE YOU ARE CONVINCED NOW THAT GOD CAN REMOVE WHATEVER SELF-WILL HAS BLOCKED YOU OFF FROM HIM. IF YOU HAVE ALREADY MADE A DECISION, AND AN INVENTORY OF YOUR GROSSER HANDICAPS, YOU HAVE MADE A GOOD BEGINNING. THAT BEING SO YOU HAVE SWALLOWED AND DIGESTED SOME BIG CHUNKS OF TRUTH ABOUT YOURSELF.

ALTHOUGH THESE REPARATIONS TAKE IMMUNERABLE FORMS, THERE

ARE SOME GENERAL PRINCIPLES WHICH WE FIND GUIDING. REMIND YOURSELF THAT YOU HAVE DECIDED TO GO TO ANY LENGTHS TO FIND A SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE. ASK THAT YOU BE GIVEN THE STRENGTH AND DIRECTION TO DO THE RIGHT THING, NO MATTER WHAT THE PERSONAL CONSEQUENCE TO YOU. YOU MAY LOSE YOUR POSITION OR REPUTATION, OR FACE JAIL, BUT YOU ARE WILLING. YOU HAVE TO BE. YOU MUST NOT SHRINK AT ANYTHING.

THE ALCOHOLIC IS LIKE A TORNADO ROARING HIS WAY THROUGH THE LIVES OF OTHERS. HEARTS ARE BROKEN. SWEET RELATIONSHIPS ARE DEAD. AFFECTIONS HAVE BEEN UPROOTED. SELFISH AND INCONSIDERATE HABITS HAVE KEPT THE HOME IN TURMOIL. WE FEEL A MAN IS UNTHINKING WHEN HE SAYS THAT SOBRIETY IS ENOUGH. HE IS LIKE THE FARMER WHO CAME UP OUT OF HIS CYCLONE CELLAR TO FIND HIS HOME RUINED. TO HIS WIFE, HE REMARKED, "DON'T SEE ANYTHING THE MATTER HERE, MA. AIN'T IT GRAND THE WIND STOPPED BLOWIN'?"

YOU VIGOROUSLY COMMENCED THIS WAY OF LIFE AS YOU CLEANED UP YOUR PAST. YOU HAVE ENTERED THE WORLD OF SPIRIT. YOUR NEXT FUNCTION IS TO GROW IN UNDERSTANDING AND EFFECTIVENESS. THIS IS NOT AN OVERNIGHT MATTER. IT SHOULD CONTINUE FOR YOUR LIFE TIME. CONTINUE TO WATCH YOURSELF FOR SELFISHNESS, DISHONESTY, RESENTMENT, AND FEAR. WHEN THESE CROP UP, ASK GOD AT ONCE TO REMOVE THEM. DISCUSS THEM WITH SOMEONE IMMEDIATELY. MAKE AMENDS QUICKLY IF YOU HAVE HARMED ANYONE. THEN RESOLUTELY TURN TO SOMEONE YOU CAN HELP. LOVE

AND TOLERANCE OF OTHERS IS YOUR CODE.

IN THINKING THROUGH YOUR DAY YOU MAY FACE INDECISION. YOU MAY NOT BE ABLE TO DETERMINE WHICH COURSE TO TAKE. HERE YOU ASK GOD FOR INSPIRATION, AN INTUITIVE THOUGHT OR A DECISION. RELAX AND TAKE IT EASY. DON'T STRUGGLE. ASK GOD'S HELP. YOU WILL BE SURPRISED HOW THE RIGHT ANSWERS COME AFTER YOU HAVE PRACTICED A FEW DAYS. WHAT USED TO BE THE HUNCH OR THE OCCASIONAL INSPIRATION BECOMES A WORKING PART OF YOUR MIND. BEING STILL INEXPERIENCED AND JUST MAKING YOUR CONTACT WITH GOD, IT IS NOT PROBABLE THAT YOU ARE GOING TO BE DIVINELY INSPIRED ALL THE TIME. THAT WOULD BE A LARGE PIECE OF CONCEIT, FOR WHICH YOU MIGHT PAY IN ALL SORTS OF ABSURD ACTIONS AND IDEAS. NEVERTHELESS YOU WILL FIND THAT YOUR THINKING WILL, AS TIME PASSES, BE MORE AND MORE ON THE PLANE OF INSPIRATION AND GUIDANCE. YOU WILL COME TO RELY UPON IT. THIS IS NOT WEIRD OR SILLY. MOST PSYCHOLOGISTS PRO-
NOUNCE THESE METHODS SOUND.

ASSUMING WE ARE SPIRITUALLY FIT, WE CAN DO ALL SORTS OF THINGS ALCOHOLICS ARE NOT SUPPOSED TO DO. PEOPLE HAVE SAID WE MUST NOT GO WHERE LIQUOR IS SERVED; WE MUST NOT HAVE IT IN OUR HOMES; WE MUST SHUN FRIENDS WHO DRINK; WE MUST AVOID MOVING PICTURES WHICH SHOW DRINKING SCENES; WE MUSTN'T THINK OR BE REMINDED ABOUT ALCOHOL AT ALL. EXPERIENCE PROVES THIS IS NONSENSE.

WE MEET THESE CONDITIONS EVERY DAY. AN ALCOHOLIC WHO

CANNOT MEET THEM, STILL HAS AN ALCOHOLIC MIND: THERE IS SOMETHING WRONG WITH HIS SPIRITUAL STATUS. HIS ONLY CHANCE FOR SOBRIETY WOULD BE SOME PLACE LIKE THE GREENLAND ICE CAP, AND EVEN THERE AN ESKIMO MIGHT TURN UP WITH A BOTTLE OF SCOTCH AND RUIN EVERYTHING! ASK ANY WOMAN WHO HAS SENT HER HUSBAND TO DISTANT PLACES ON THE THEORY HE WOULD ESCAPE THE ALCOHOL PROBLEM.

SOMEDAY WE HOPE THAT ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS WILL HELP THE PUBLIC TO A BETTER REALIZATION OF THE GRAVITY OF THE LIQUOR PROBLEM. WE SHALL BE OF LITTLE USE IF OUR ATTITUDE IS ONE OF BITTERNESS OR HOSTILITY. DRINKERS WILL NOT STAND FOR IT.

AFTER ALL, OUR TROUBLES WERE OF OUR OWN MAKING. BOTTLES WERE ONLY A SYMBOL. BESIDES, WE HAVE STOPPED FIGHTING ANYBODY OR ANYTHING. WE HAVE TO!

1. WHAT IS YOUR DEFINITION OF "INSANITY"?
2. WOULD YOU CALL IT INSANITY ON YOUR PART TO ENTERTAIN THE IDEA OF TAKING ANOTHER DRINK, KNOWING THE RESULTS?
3. WOULD YOU CALL IT INSANITY ON YOUR PART, WHILE YOU WERE UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF ALCOHOL?
4. WOULD YOU CALL IT INSANITY TO HAVE THE INABILITY TO FORGIVE YOURSELF FOR THE INSANE THINGS YOU DID UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF ALCOHOL?
5. DO YOU THINK IT IS BETTER TO BELIEVE IN GOD, THAN NOT TO BELIEVE?
6. DO YOU CONSIDER "LOGIC," "REASON" AND "FAITH" THE SAME?
7. DO YOU BELIEVE IN HAVING FAITH IN SOMETHING THAT YOU CAN FEEL, BUT YOU CANNOT SEE?
8. DO YOU HAVE CHILD-LIKE FAITH?
9. DO YOU HAVE A DEEP SEATED IDEA THAT SELF SUFFICIENCY WILL SOLVE YOUR PROBLEM WITH ALCOHOL?
10. DO YOU LEAN MORE HEAVILY TOWARD "GOD-SUFFICIENCY"?
11. DO YOU BELIEVE YOU HAVE THE CAPACITY FOR FAITH, LOVE OR WORSHIP?
12. DO YOU BELIEVE IN "SPIRITUAL RELEASE" FROM ALCOHOL?
13. DO YOU BELIEVE YOU CAN START TRYING TO LIVE BY "SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES?"
14. CAN YOU IMAGINE "LIFE WITHOUT FAITH"?
15. WHICH DO YOU BELIEVE: "GOD IS EVERYTHING" OR "GOD IS NOTHING"?
16. DO YOU BELIEVE DEEP DOWN YOU HAVE ALWAYS HAD THE FUNDAMENTAL IDEA OF GOD?
17. DON'T YOU BELIEVE "SOME KIND OF GOD WAS PART OF OUR MAKE-UP"?
18. DO YOU BELIEVE ALCOHOL IS CUNNING, BAFFLING AND POWERFUL?
19. ARE YOU STILL TOUCHY WHEN REFERENCE TO GOD OR SPIRITUAL THINGS ARE TALKED ABOUT?

20. DO YOU BELIEVE YOUR LIFE IS UNMANAGEABLE?
21. DO YOU BELIEVE THAT NO HUMAN POWER CAN RELIEVE OUR ALCOHOLISM?
22. DO YOU BELIEVE THAT GOD COULD AND WOULD IF HE WAS SOUGHT?
23. ARE YOU WILLING TO GROW ALONG SPIRITUAL LINES?
24. DO YOU BELIEVE SELFISHNESS AND SELF-CENTEREDNESS IS THE ROOT OF OUR TROUBLE?
25. HAS ANYONE THE RIGHT TO SAY "THERE IS NO GOD"?
26. DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF "SELF-WILL RUN RIOT"?
27. DO YOU BELIEVE "RESENTMENTS ARE FATAL" TO AN ALCOHOLIC?
28. DO YOU BELIEVE "YOUR INNER-FEARS" ARE YOUR GREATEST ENEMIES?
29. ARE YOU WILLING TO SWALLOW GREAT CHUNKS OF TRUTH ABOUT YOURSELF?
30. HAVE YOU BEEN A TORNADO IN THE LIVES OF OTHERS?
31. DO YOU BELIEVE GETTING RID OF SELFISHNESS, DISHONESTY, RESENTMENT AND FEAR IS JUST AN OVERNIGHT MATTER FOR AN ALCOHOLIC?
32. ARE YOU TRYING TO "RELAX AND TAKE IT EASY" ONE DAY AT A TIME?
33. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE BECOME "SPIRITUALLY FIT"?
34. DO YOU STILL HAVE AN "ALCOHOLIC MIND"?
35. SHOULD AA MEMBERS BE A SORT OF TEMPERENCE SOCIETY?
36. HAVE YOU STOPPED FIGHTING?

CHAPTER FIVE
STEP THREE
PART ONE

MADE A DECISION TO TURN OUR WILL AND OUR LIVES OVER TO THE CARE OF GOD AS WE UNDERSTAND HIM.

THERE I HUMBLY OFFERED MYSELF TO GOD, AS I THEN UNDERSTOOD HIM, TO DO WITH ME AS HE WOULD. I PLACED MYSELF UNRESERVEDLY UNDER HIS CARE AND DIRECTION. I ADMITTED FOR THE FIRST TIME THAT OF MYSELF I WAS NOTHING; THAT WITHOUT HIM I WAS LOST. I RUTHLESSLY FACED MY SINS AND BECAME WILLING TO HAVE MY NEW-FOUND FRIEND TAKE THEM AWAY, ROOT AND BRANCH.

I WAS TO TEST MY THINKING BY THE NEW GOD-CONSCIOUSNESS WITHIN. COMMON SENSE WOULD THUS BECOME UNCOMMON SENSE. I WAS TO SIT QUIETLY WHEN IN DOUBT, ASKING ONLY FOR DIRECTION AND STRENGTH TO MEET MY PROBLEMS AS HE WOULD HAVE ME. NEVER WAS I TO PRAY FOR MYSELF, EXCEPT AS MY REQUESTS BORE ON MY USEFULNESS TO OTHERS. THEN ONLY MIGHT I EXPECT TO RECEIVE. BUT THAT WOULD BE IN GREAT MEASURE.

MY FRIEND PROMISED WHEN THESE THINGS WERE DONE I WOULD ENTER UPON A NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH MY CREATOR; THAT I WOULD HAVE THE ELEMENTS OF A WAY OF LIFE WHICH ANSWERED ALL MY PROBLEMS. BELIEF IN THE POWER OF GOD, PLUS ENOUGH WILLINGNESS, HONESTY AND HUMILITY TO ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN THE NEW ORDER OF THINGS, WERE THE ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS.

MY FRIEND HAD EMPHASIZED THE ABSOLUTE NECESSITY OF MY DEMONSTRATING THESE PRINCIPLES IN ALL MY AFFAIRS. PARTICULARLY

WAS IT IMPERATIVE TO WORK WITH OTHERS, AS HE HAD WORKED WITH ME. FAITH WITHOUT WORKS WAS DEAD, HE SAID. AND HOW APPALINGLY TRUE FOR THE ALCOHOLIC! FOR IF AN ALCOHOLIC FAILED TO PERFECT AND ENLARGE HIS SPIRITUAL LIFE THROUGH WORK AND SELF SACRIFICE FOR OTHERS, HE COULD NOT SURVIVE THE CERTAIN TRIALS AND LOW SPOTS AHEAD. IF HE DID NOT WORK, HE WOULD SURELY DRINK AGAIN, AND IF HE DRANK, HE WOULD SURELY DIE. THEN FAITH WOULD BE DEAD INDEED. WITH US IT IS JUST LIKE THAT.

THERE IS A SOLUTION. ALMOST NONE OF US LIKED THE SELF-SEARCHING, THE LEVELLING 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.

WE ABANDONED OURSELVES WITH ENTHUSIASM TO THE IDEA OF HELPING OTHER ALCOHOLICS TO A SOLUTION OF THEIR PROBLEMS. IT WAS FORTUNATE, FOR MY OLD BUSINESS ASSOCIATES REMAINED SKEPTICAL FOR A YEAR AND A HALF, DURING WHICH I FOUND LITTLE WORK. I WAS NOT TOO WELL AT THE TIME, AND WAS PLAGUED BY

WAVES OF SELF -PITY AND RESENTMENT. THIS SOMETIMES NEARLY DROVE ME BACK TO DRINK. I SOON FOUND THAT WHEN ALL OTHER MEASURES FAILED, WORK WITH ANOTHER ALCOHOLIC WOULD SAVE THE DAY. MANY TIMES I HAVE GONE TO MY OLD HOSPITAL IN DESPAIR. ON TALKING TO A MAN THERE, I WOULD BE AMAZINGLY LIFTED UP AND SET ON MY FEET. IT IS A DESIGN FOR LIVING THAT WORKS IN ROUGH GOING.

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. GOD 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, NOR EVEN FOR HEAVEN. WE HAVE IT WITH US RIGHT HERE AND NOW. EACH DAY THAT SIMPLE TALK IN MY KITCHEN MULTIPLIES ITSELF IN A WIDENING CIRCLE OF PEACE ON EARTH AND GOOD WILL TO MEN.

WE, IN 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."

EACH INDIVIDUAL, IN THE PERSONAL STORIES, DESCRIBES IN HIS OWN LANGUAGE AND FROM HIS OWN POINT OF VIEW THE WAY HE FOUND OR REDISCOVERED GOD. THESE GIVE A FAIR CROSS SECTION OF OUR MEMBERSHIP AND A CLEAR CUT IDEA OF WHAT HAS ACTUALLY HAPPENED

IN THEIR LIVES.

ONCE MORE: THE ALCOHOLIC AT CERTAIN TIMES HAS NO EFFECTIVE MENTAL DEFENSE AGAINST THE FIRST DRINK. EXCEPT IN A FEW RARE CASES, NEITHER HE NOR ANY OTHER HUMAN BEING CAN PROVIDE SUCH A DEFENSE. HIS DEFENSE MUST COME FROM A HIGHER POWER.

TO ONE WHO FEELS HE IS AN ATHEIST OR AGNOSTIC SUCH AN EXPERIENCE SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE, BUT TO CONTINUE AS HE IS MEANS DISASTER ESPECIALLY IF HE IS AN ALCOHOLIC OF THE HOPELESS VARIETY. TO BE DOOMED TO AN ALCOHOLIC HELL OR BE "SAVED"--NOT EASY ALTERNATIVES TO FACE.

YES, WE OF AGNOSTIC TEMPERAMENT HAVE HAD THESE THOUGHTS AND EXPERIENCES. LET US MAKE HASTE TO REASSURE YOU. WE FOUND THAT AS SOON AS WE WERE ABLE TO LAY ASIDE PREJUDICE AND EXPRESS EVEN A WILLINGNESS TO BELIEVE IN A POWER GREATER THAN OURSELVES, WE COMMENCED TO GET RESULTS, EVEN THOUGH IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE FOR ANY OF US TO FULLY DEFINE OR COMPREHEND THAT POWER, WHICH IS GOD.

YOU NEED ASK YOURSELF BUT ONE SHORT QUESTION. "DO I NOW BELIEVE, OR AM I EVEN WILLING TO BELIEVE, THAT THERE IS A POWER GREATER THAN MYSELF?" AS SOON AS A MAN CAN SAY THAT HE DOES BELIEVE, OR IS WILLING TO BELIEVE, WE EMPHATICALLY ASSURE HIM THAT HE IS ON HIS WAY. IT HAS BEEN REPEATEDLY PROVEN AMONG US THAT UPON THIS SIMPLE CORNERSTONE A WONDERFULLY EFFECTIVE SPIRITUAL STRUCTURE CAN BE BUILT.

EVERYBODY NOWADAYS, BELIEVES IN SCORES OF ASSUMPTIONS FOR WHICH THERE IS GOOD EVIDENCE, BUT NO PERFECT VISUAL PROOF. AND DOES NOT SCIENCE DEMONSTRATE THAT VISUAL PROOF IS THE WEAKEST PROOF? IT IS BEING CONSTANTLY REVEALED, AS MANKIND STUDIES THE MATERIAL WORLD, THAT OUTWARD APPEARANCES ARE NOT INWARD REALITY AT ALL.

HERE ARE ONE HUNDRED MEN AND WOMEN, WORLDLY AND SOPHISTICATED INDEED. THEY FLATLY DECLARE TO YOU THAT SINCE THEY HAVE COME TO BELIEVE IN A POWER GREATER THAN THEMSELVES, TO TAKE A CERTAIN ATTITUDE TOWARD THAT POWER, AND TO DO CERTAIN SIMPLE THINGS, THERE HAS BEEN A REVOLUTIONARY CHANGE IN THEIR WAY OF LIVING AND THINKING. THEY TELL YOU THAT IN THE FACE OF COLLAPSE AND DESPAIR, IN THE FACE OF THE TOTAL FAILURE OF THEIR HUMAN RESOURCES, THAT A NEW POWER, PEACE, HAPPINESS, AND A SENSE OF DIRECTION HAS FLOWED INTO THEM. THIS HAPPENED SOON AFTER THEY WHOLE-HEARTEDLY MET A FEW SIMPLE REQUIREMENTS. ONCE CONFUSED AND BAFFLED BY THE SEEMING FUTILITY OF EXISTENCE, THEY WILL SHOW YOU THE UNDERLYING REASONS WHY THEY WERE MAKING HEAVY GOING OF LIFE. LEAVING ASIDE THE DRINK QUESTION, THEY TELL WHY LIVING WAS SO UNSATISFACTORY. THEY WILL SHOW YOU HOW THE CHANGE CAME OVER THEM. WHEN ONE HUNDRED PEOPLE, MUCH LIKE YOU, ARE ABLE TO SAY THAT CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD IS TODAY THE MOST IMPORTANT FACT OF THEIR LIVES, THEY PRESENT A POWERFUL REASON WHY YOU TOO SHOULD HAVE FAITH.

ON ONE PROPOSITION, HOWEVER, THESE MEN AND WOMEN ARE STRIKINGLY AGREED. EVERYONE OF THEM HAS GAINED ACCESS TO, AND BELIEVES IN A POWER GREATER THAN HIMSELF. THIS POWER HAS IN EACH CASE ACCOMPLISHED THE MIRACULOUS, THE HUMANLY IMPOSSIBLE. AS A CELEBRATED AMERICAN STATESMAN PUTS IT, "LET'S LOOK AT THE RECORD."

IN THE STORIES WHICH FOLLOW YOU WILL FIND WIDE VARIATION IN THE WAY EACH TELLER APPROACHES AND CONCEIVES OF THE POWER WHICH IS GREATER THAN HIMSELF. WHETHER YOU AGREE WITH A PARTICULAR APPROACH OR CONCEPTION SEEMS TO MAKE LITTLE DIFFERENCE. EXPERIENCE HAS TAUGHT THAT THESE ARE MATTERS ABOUT WHICH, FOR OUR PURPOSE, WE NEED NOT BE WORRIED. THEY ARE QUESTIONS FOR EACH INDIVIDUAL TO SETTLE FOR HIMSELF.

ARRIVED AT THIS POINT, WE WERE SQUARELY CONFRONTED WITH THE QUESTION OF FAITH. WE COULDN'T DUCK THE ISSUE. SOME OF US HAD ALREADY WALKED FAR OVER THE BRIDGE OF REASON TOWARD THE DESIRED SHORE OF FAITH. THE OUTLINES AND THE PROMISE OF THE NEW LAND HAD BROUGHT LUSTRE TO TIRED EYES AND FRESH COURAGE TO FLAGGING SPIRITS. FRIENDLY HANDS HAD STRETCHED OUT IN WELCOME. WE WERE GRATEFUL THAT REASON HAD BROUGHT US SO FAR. BUT SOMEHOW, WE COULDN'T QUITE STEP ASHORE. PERHAPS WE HAD BEEN LEANING TOO HEAVILY ON REASON THAT LAST MILE AND WE DID NOT LIKE TO LOSE OUR SUPPORT.

WHEN WE BECAME ALCOHOLICS, CRUSHED BY A SELF-IMPOSED

CRISIS WE COULD NOT POSTPONE OR EVADE, WE HAD TO FEARLESSLY
FACE THE PROPOSITION THAT EITHER GOD IS EVERYTHING OR ELSE HE
IS NOTHING. GOD EITHER IS, OR HE ISN'T. WHAT WAS OUR CHOICE
TO BE?

1. ARE YOU READY FOR YOUR NEW-FOUND FRIEND TO TAKE CARE OF YOU AND TO DIRECT YOU?
2. DO YOU KNOW WHAT MEDITATION WITH GOD IS?
3. DO YOU BELIEVE GOD HAS ALL THE ANSWERS TO ALL YOUR PROBLEMS?
4. DO YOU BELIEVE IT IS IMPERATIVE TO WORK WITH OTHERS?
5. DO YOU BELIEVE THE TWELVE STEPS OF AA ARE A SPIRITUAL SET OF TOOLS?
6. DO YOU BELIEVE THAT THERE IS A WRENCH OR TOOL FOR EVERY NUT?
7. ARE YOU PLAGUED BY SELF-PITY AND RESENTMENT?
8. DO YOU BELIEVE WORKING WITH OTHERS GETS OUR MIND OFF OF OURSELVES?
9. WHAT ARE GOD'S WORKING HOURS?
10. WOULD YOU CALL AA'S WAY "A DESIGN FOR LIVING" THAT REALLY WORKS?
11. DO YOU FIND IN THE PERSONAL STORIES IN THE BIG BOOK A STORY THAT IDENTIFIES WITH YOU?
12. ARE YOU STILL CONVINCED YOU HAVE NO EFFECTIVE DEFENSE AGAINST THAT FIRST DRINK?
13. DO YOU FEEL YOU ARE AN ATHEIST OR AGNOSTIC AND DOOMED AS AN ALCOHOLIC?
14. ARE YOU WILLING TO BELIEVE?
15. DO YOU BELIEVE OUTWARD APPEARANCES ARE NOT INWARD REALITIES AT ALL?
16. ARE YOU REALLY READY TO CHANGE YOUR ATTITUDE TOWARD GOD?
17. DO YOU THINK YOU HAVE BEEN LIVING UNSATISFACTORILY?
18. CAN YOU SAY THAT CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD IS TODAY THE MOST IMPORTANT FACT IN OUR LIVES?
19. HAVE YOU REALLY "LOOKED AT THE RECORD" BEFORE AND AFTER AA?

20. DO YOU BELIEVE ONLY AN INDIVIDUAL CAN SETTLE WITHIN HIM OR HERSELF THE QUESTION OF "GOD"? EACH MUST FIND THEIR OWN CONCEPT. WE KNOW "GOD IS NOT LOST"?
21. DO YOU BELIEVE YOU CAN'T DUCK THE ISSUE OF "GOD"?
22. DO YOU BELIEVE GOD IS EVERYTHING OR ELSE HE IS NOTHING?

CHAPTER SIX
STEP THREE
PART TWO

MADE A DECISION TO TURN OUR WILL AND OUR LIVES OVER TO THE CARE OF GOD AS WE UNDERSTAND HIM.

WHEN WE SAW OTHERS SOLVE THEIR PROBLEMS BY SIMPLE RELIANCE UPON THE SPIRIT OF THIS UNIVERSE, WE HAD TO STOP DOUBTING THE POWER OF GOD. OUR IDEAS DID NOT WORK. BUT THE GOD IDEA DID.

ACTUALLY WE WERE FOOLING OURSELVES, FOR DEEP DOWN IN EVERY MAN, WOMAN, AND CHILD, IS THE FUNDAMENTAL IDEA OF GOD. IT MAY BE OBSCURED BY CALAMITY, BY POMP, BY WORSHIP OF OTHER THINGS, BUT IN SOME FORM OR OTHER IT IS THERE. FOR FAITH IN A POWER GREATER THAN OURSELVES, AND MIRACULOUS DEMONSTRATIONS OF THAT POWER IN HUMAN LIVES, ARE FACTS AS OLD AS MAN HIMSELF.

WE FINALLY SAW THAT FAITH IN SOME KIND OF GOD WAS A PART OF OUR MAKE-UP, JUST AS MUCH AS THE FEELING WE HAVE FOR A FRIEND. SOMETIMES WE HAD TO SEARCH FEARLESSLY, BUT HE WAS THERE. HE WAS AS MUCH A FACT AS WE WERE. AND WE ARE SURE YOU WILL FIND THE GREAT REALITY DEEP DOWN WITHIN YOU. IN THE LAST ANALYSIS IT IS ONLY THERE THAT HE MAY BE FOUND. IT WAS SO WITH US; WHY NOT WITH YOU?

WHEN YOU SINCERELY TAKE SUCH A POSITION, ALL SORTS OF REMARKABLE THINGS FOLLOW. YOU HAVE A NEW EMPLOYER. BEING

ALL POWERFUL, HE MUST NECESSARILY PROVIDE WHAT YOU NEED, IF YOU KEEP CLOSE TO HIM AND PERFORM HIS WORK WELL. ESTABLISHED ON SUCH A FOOTING YOU BECOME LESS AND LESS INTERESTED IN YOURSELF, YOUR LITTLE PLANS AND DESIGNS. MORE AND MORE YOU BECOME INTERESTED IN SEEING WHAT YOU CAN CONTRIBUTE TO LIFE. AS YOU FEEL NEW POWER FLOW IN, AS YOU ENJOY PEACE OF MIND, AS YOU DISCOVER YOU CAN FACE LIFE SUCCESSFULLY, AS YOU BECOME CONSCIOUS OF HIS PRESENCE, YOU BEGIN TO LOSE YOUR FEAR OF TODAY, TOMORROW, OR THE HEREAFTER. YOU WILL HAVE BEEN REBORN.

GET DOWN UPON YOUR KNEES AND SAY TO YOUR MAKER, AS YOU UNDERSTAND HIM: "GOD, I OFFER MYSELF TO THEE--TO BUILD WITH ME AND TO DO WITH ME AS THOU WILT. RELIEVE ME OF THE BONDAGE OF SELF, THAT I MAY BETTER DO THY WILL. TAKE AWAY MY DIFFICULTIES, THAT VICTORY OVER THEM MAY BEAR WITNESS TO THOSE I WOULD HELP OF THY POWER, THY LOVE, AND THY WAY OF LIFE. MAY I DO THY WILL ALWAYS!" THINK WELL BEFORE TAKING THIS STEP. BE SURE YOU ARE READY; THAT YOU CAN AT LAST ABANDON YOURSELF UTTERLY TO HIM.

RESENTMENT IS THE "NUMBER ONE" OFFENDER. IT DESTROYS MORE ALCOHOLICS THAN ANYTHING ELSE. FROM IT STEMS ALL FORMS OF SPIRITUAL DISEASE, FOR WE HAVE BEEN NOT ONLY MENTALLY AND PHYSICALLY ILL, WE HAVE BEEN SPIRITUALLY SICK. WHEN THE SPIRITUAL MALADY IS OVERCOME, WE STRAIGHTEN OUT MENTALLY AND PHYSICALLY. IN DEALING WITH RESENTMENTS, WE SET THEM

ON PAPER. LIST PEOPLE, INSTITUTIONS OR PRINCIPLES WITH WHOM YOU ARE ANGRY. ASK YOURSELF WHY YOU ARE ANGRY. IN MOST CASES IT WILL BE FOUND THAT YOUR SELF-ESTEEM, YOUR POCKETBOOK, YOUR AMBITIONS, YOUR PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS, (INCLUDING SEX) ARE HURT OR THREATENED. SO YOU ARE SORE. YOU ARE "BURNED UP.

NEXT WE LAUNCH OUT ON A COURSE OF VIGOROUS ACTION, THE FIRST STEP OF WHICH IS A PERSONAL HOUSECLEANING, WHICH YOU HAVE NEVER IN ALL PROBABILITY ATTEMPTED. THOUGH YOUR DECISION IS A VITAL AND CRUCIAL STEP, IT CAN HAVE LITTLE PERMANENT EFFECT UNLESS AT ONCE FOLLOWED BY A STRENUOUS EFFORT TO FACE, AND TO BE RID OF, THE THINGS IN YOURSELF WHICH HAVE BEEN BLOCKING YOU. YOUR LIQUOR IS BUT A SYMPTOM. LET'S NOW GET DOWN TO BASIC CAUSES AND CONDITIONS.

IT IS PLAIN THAT A WAY OF LIFE WHICH INCLUDES DEEP RESENTMENT LEADS ONLY TO FUTILITY AND UNHAPPINESS. TO THE PRECISE EXTENT THAT WE PERMIT THESE, DO WE SQUANDER THE HOURS THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN WORTH WHILE. BUT WITH THE ALCOHOLIC WHOSE ONLY HOPE IS THE MAINTENANCE AND GROWTH OF A SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE, THIS BUSINESS OF RESENTMENT IS INFINITELY GRAVE. WE FIND THAT IT IS FATAL. FOR WHEN HARBORING SUCH FEELINGS WE SHUT OURSELVES OFF FROM THE SUNLIGHT OF THE SPIRIT. THE INSANITY OF ALCOHOL RETURNS AND WE DRINK AGAIN. AND WITH US, TO DRINK IS TO DIE.

PERHAPS THERE IS A BETTER WAY--WE THINK SO. FOR YOU ARE

NOW TO GO ON A DIFFERENT BASIS; THE BASIS OF TRUSTING AND RELYING UPON GOD. YOU ARE TO TRUST INFINITE GOD RATHER THAN YOUR FINITE SELF. YOU ARE IN THE WORLD TO PLAY THE ROLE HE ASSIGNS. JUST TO THE EXTENT THAT YOU DO AS YOU THINK HE WOULD HAVE YOU, AND HUMBLY RELY ON HIM, DOES HE ENABLE YOU TO MATCH CALAMITY WITH SERENITY.

YOU MUST NEVER APOLOGIZE TO ANYONE FOR DEPENDING UPON YOUR CREATOR. YOU CAN LAUGH AT THOSE WHO THINK SPIRITUALITY THE WAY OF WEAKNESS. PARADOXICALLY, IT IS THE WAY OF STRENGTH. THE VERDICT OF THE AGES IS THAT FAITH MEANS COURAGE. ALL MEN OF FAITH HAVE COURAGE. THEY TRUST THEIR GOD. NEVER APOLOGIZE FOR GOD. INSTEAD DIRECT YOUR ATTENTION TO WHAT HE WOULD HAVE YOU BE. AT ONCE, YOU WILL COMMENCE TO OUT-GROW FEAR.

IN AA YOU HEAR AGAIN AND AGAIN THAT GOD DID FOR US WHAT WE COULD NOT DO FOR OURSELVES. WE HOPE YOU ARE CONVINCED NOW THAT HE CAN REMOVE THE SELF-WILL THAT HAS BLOCKED YOU OFF FROM HIM. YOU HAVE MADE YOUR DECISION. YOU HAVE MADE A GOOD BEGINNING, FOR YOU HAVE SWALLOWED AND DIGESTED SOME BIG CHUNKS OF TRUTH ABOUT YOURSELF. ARE YOU WILLING TO GO ON?

NOW YOU NEED MORE ACTION WITHOUT WHICH YOU WILL FIND THAT "FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD." YOU SUBJECTED YOURSELF TO A DRASTIC SELF-APPRAISAL. NOW YOU ARE TO GO OUT TO YOUR FELLOWS

AND REPAIR THE DAMAGE YOU DID IN THE PAST. YOU ARE TO SWEEP AWAY THE DEBRIS WHICH HAS ACCUMULATED OUT OF YOUR EFFORT TO LIVE ON SELF-WILL AND RUN THE SHOW YOURSELF. IF YOU HAVEN'T THE WILL TO DO THIS, ASK UNTIL IT COMES. REMEMBER YOU AGREED AT THE BEGINNING YOU WOULD GO TO ANY LENGTHS FOR VICTORY OVER ALCOHOL.

ALTHOUGH THESE REPARATIONS TAKE INNUMERABLE FORMS, THERE ARE SOME GENERAL PRINCIPLES WHICH WE FIND GUIDING. REMIND YOURSELF THAT YOU HAVE DECIDED TO GO TO ANY LENGTHS TO FIND A SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE. ASK THAT YOU BE GIVEN THE STRENGTH AND DIRECTION TO DO THE RIGHT THING, NO MATTER WHAT THE PERSONAL CONSEQUENCE TO YOU. YOU MAY LOSE YOUR POSITION OR REPUTATION, OR FACE JAIL, BUT YOU ARE WILLING. YOU HAVE TO BE. YOU MUST NOT SHRINK AT ANYTHING.

THE SPIRITUAL LIFE IS NOT A THEORY. YOU HAVE TO LIVE IT. UNLESS YOUR FAMILY EXPRESSES A DESIRE TO LIVE UPON SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES, HOWEVER, WE THINK YOU OUGHT TO LEAVE THEM ALONE. YOU SHOULD NOT TALK INCESSANTLY ABOUT SPIRITUAL MATTERS TO THEM. THEY WILL CHANGE IN TIME. YOUR PRACTICE WILL CONVINCED THEM MORE THAN YOUR WORDS. REMEMBER THAT TEN OR TWENTY YEARS OF DRUNKENNESS WOULD MAKE A SKEPTIC OUT OF ANYONE.

THERE MAY BE SOME WRONGS YOU CAN NEVER FULLY RIGHT. DON'T WORRY ABOUT THEM IF YOU CAN HONESTLY SAY TO YOURSELF THAT YOU WOULD RIGHT THEM IF YOU COULD. SOME PEOPLE YOU CANNOT SEE--SEND THEM AN HONEST LETTER. AND THERE MAY BE A VALID REASON FOR POSTPONEMENT IN SOME CASES. BUT DON'T

DELAY IF IT CAN BE AVOIDED. BE SENSIBLE, TACTFUL, AND CONSIDERATE. BE HUMBLE WITHOUT BEING SERVILE OR SCRAPING. AS ONE OF GOD'S PEOPLE YOU ARE TO STAND ON YOUR FEET; DON'T CRAWL ON YOUR BELLY BEFORE ANYONE.

AND YOU HAVE CEASED FIGHTING ANYTHING OR ANYONE--EVEN ALCOHOL. FOR BY THIS TIME YOUR SANITY WILL HAVE RETURNED. YOU WILL SELDOM BE INTERESTED IN LIQUOR. IF TEMPTED, YOU WILL RECOIL FROM IT AS YOU WOULD FROM A HOT FLAME. YOU WILL REACT SANELY AND NORMALLY. YOU WILL FIND THIS HAS HAPPENED AUTOMATICALLY. YOU WILL SEE THAT YOUR NEW ATTITUDE TOWARD LIQUOR HAS BEEN GIVEN YOU WITHOUT ANY THOUGHT OR EFFORT ON YOUR PART. IT JUST COMES! THAT IS THE MIRACLE OF IT. YOU ARE NOT FIGHTING IT, NEITHER ARE YOU AVOIDING TEMPTATION. YOU FEEL AS THOUGH YOU HAD BEEN PLACED IN A POSITION OF NEUTRALITY. YOU FEEL SAFE AND PROTECTED. YOU HAVE NOT EVEN SWORN OFF. INSTEAD, THE PROBLEM HAS BEEN REMOVED. IT DOES NOT EXIST FOR YOU. YOU ARE NEITHER COCKY, NOR ARE YOU AFRAID. THAT IS OUR EXPERIENCE. THAT IS HOW WE REACT SO LONG AS WE KEEP IN FIT SPIRITUAL CONDITION.

IT IS EASY TO LET UP ON THE SPIRITUAL PROGRAM OF ACTION AND REST ON YOUR LAURELS. YOU ARE HEADED FOR TROUBLE IF YOU DO, FOR ALCOHOL IS A SUBTLE FOE. WE ARE NOT CURED OF ALCOHOLISM. WHAT WE REALLY HAVE IS A DAILY REPRIEVE. EVERY DAY IS A DAY WHEN YOU HAVE TO CARRY THE VISION OF GOD'S WILL INTO ALL OF YOUR ACTIVITIES. "HOW CAN I BEST SERVE THEE--THY WILL (NOT

MINE) BE DONE." THESE ARE THOUGHTS WHICH MUST GO WITH YOU CONSTANTLY. YOU CAN EXERCISE YOUR WILL POWER ALONG THIS LINE ALL YOU WISH. IT IS THE PROPER USE OF THE WILL.

YOU MIGHT CONCLUDE THE PERIOD OF MEDITATION WITH A PRAYER THAT YOU BE SHOWN ALL THROUGH THE DAY WHAT YOUR NEXT STEP IS TO BE, THAT HE GIVE YOU WHATEVER YOU NEED TO TAKE CARE OF EVERY SITUATION. ASK ESPECIALLY FOR FREEDOM FROM SELF-WILL. BE CAREFUL TO MAKE NO REQUEST FOR YOURSELF ONLY. YOU MAY ASK FOR YOURSELF, HOWEVER, IF OTHERS WILL BE HELPED. NEVER PRAY FOR YOUR OWN SELFISH ENDS. PEOPLE WASTE A LOT OF TIME DOING THAT, AND IT DOESN'T WORK. YOU CAN EASILY SEE WHY.

ASSUMING WE ARE SPIRITUALLY FIT, WE CAN DO ALL SORTS OF THINGS ALCOHOLICS ARE NOT SUPPOSED TO DO. PEOPLE HAVE SAID WE MUST NOT GO WHERE LIQUOR IS SERVED; WE MUST NOT HAVE IT IN OUR HOMES; WE MUST SHUN FRIENDS WHO DRINK; WE MUST AVOID MOVING PICTURES WHICH SHOW DRINKING SCENES; WE MUSTN'T GO INTO BARS; OUR FRIENDS MUST HIDE THEIR BOTTLES IF WE GO TO THEIR HOUSES; WE MUSTN'T THINK OR BE REMINDED ABOUT ALCOHOL AT ALL. EXPERIENCE PROVES THIS IS NONSENSE.

WE MEET THESE CONDITIONS EVERY DAY. AN ALCOHOLIC WHO CANNOT MEET THEM, STILL HAS AN ALCOHOLIC MIND: THERE IS SOMETHING THE MATTER WITH HIS SPIRITUAL STATUS. HIS ONLY CHANCE FOR SOBRIETY WOULD BE SOME PLACE LIKE THE GREENLAND ICE CAP, AND EVEN THERE AN ESKIMO MIGHT TURN UP WITH A BOTTLE OF SCOTCH AND RUIN EVERYTHING! ASK ANY WOMAN WHO HAS SENT

HER HUSBAND TO DISTANT PLACES ON THE THEORY HE WOULD ESCAPE
THE ALCOHOL PROBLEM.

SO OUR RULE IS NOT TO AVOID A PLACE WHERE THERE IS DRINKING,
IF WE HAVE A LEGITIMATE REASON FOR BEING THERE. THAT INCLUDES
BARS, NIGHTCLUBS, DANCES, RECEPTIONS, WEDDINGS, EVEN PLAIN
ORDINARY WHOOPEE PARTIES.

1. DO WE BELIEVE WHAT WE SEE?
2. HAVE YOU BEEN KIDDING YOURSELF?
3. DO YOU BELIEVE THAT "FAITH IN SOME KIND OF GOD IS A PART OF OUR MAKE-UP"?
4. DO YOU BELIEVE YOU WILL EVER THINK OF GOD AS YOUR "FRIEND"?
5. SELFISHNESS AND SELF-CENTEREDNESS IS THE ROOT OF ALL OUR TROUBLES. DO YOU THINK THAT THE STRONGER YOUR BELIEF OR FAITH IN "GOD" IS, THE LESS YOU ARE INTERESTED IN YOURSELF?
6. COULD YOU GET DOWN ON YOUR KNEES AND ASK GOD FOR HELP?
7. HAVE YOU GOTTEN DOWN ON YOUR KNEES AND ASKED GOD FOR HELP?
8. WHAT IS THE NUMBER ONE OFFENDER OF THE ALCOHOLIC?
9. ARE YOU READY TO CLEAN HOUSE WITHIN YOURSELF?
10. WHAT LEADS AN ALCOHOLIC TO FUTILITY AND UNHAPPINESS?
11. ARE YOU WILLING TO GO ALONG THE REST OF YOUR LIFE, ONE DAY AT A TIME WITH THE BASIS OF TRUSTING AND RELYING UPON GOD?
12. DO YOU THINK SPIRITUALITY IS A WEAKNESS?
13. DO YOU EVER APOLOGIZE FOR BELIEVING IN "GOD"?
14. DO YOU BELIEVE IT IS A WAY TO STRENGTH AND COURAGE?
15. HOW DO YOU COMPLETELY RID YOURSELF OF FEARS?
16. HAS GOD DONE FOR YOU WHAT YOU COULD NOT DO FOR YOURSELF?
17. ARE YOU WILLING TO TURN YOUR WILL AND YOUR LIFE OVER TO GOD AS YOU UNDERSTAND HIM?
18. ARE YOU WILLING, REGARDLESS OF THE CONSEQUENCES, TO RELY AND TRUST IN GOD?
19. DO YOU BELIEVE THE STATEMENT: "THE SPIRITUAL LIFE IS NO THEORY. YOU HAVE TO LIVE IT. "?
20. CAN YOU LEARN TO LIVE "TODAY," WILLING TO TRUST GOD WITH ALL THE WRONGS YOU WILL INVENTORY IN STEP FOUR?

21. AFTER THIS DECISION, "DO YOU STILL FEAR ALCOHOL"? DO YOU FIGHT IT?
22. DO YOU BELIEVE THAT YOU CAN LET UP ON THE SPIRITUAL PROGRAM AND BE A SUNDAY AA?
23. DO YOU PRAY FOR SELFISH ENDS OR DO YOU PRAY TO HELP OTHERS?
24. DO YOU START FEELING A SENSE OF "FREEDOM"?
25. CAN YOU NOW SAY, "THROUGH THE GRACE OF GOD" MY ALCOHOLIC MIND HAS BEEN ALTERED?
26. CAN YOU SAY NOW, "I HAVE 'COURAGE.' I AM 'FEARLESS.' I DON'T FIGHT ANYMORE. I KNOW HOW 'FREEDOM' FEELS."?

CHAPTER SEVEN
STEP FOUR
PART ONE

MADE A SEARCHING AND FEARLESS MORAL INVENTORY OF OURSELVES.

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 HAD 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.

THAT WAS GREAT NEWS TO US, FOR WE HAD ASSUMED WE COULD NOT MAKE USE OF SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES UNLESS WE ACCEPTED MANY THINGS ON FAITH WHICH SEEMED DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE. WHEN PEOPLE PRESENTED US WITH SPIRITUAL APPROACHES, HOW FREQUENTLY DID WE ALL SAY: "I WISH I HAD WHAT THAT MAN HAS. I'M SURE IT WOULD WORK IF I COULD ONLY BELIEVE AS HE BELIEVES. BUT I CANNOT ACCEPT AS SURELY TRUE THE MANY ARTICLES OF FAITH WHICH ARE SO PLAIN TO HIM." SO IT WAS COMFORTING TO LEARN THAT WE COULD COMMENCE AT A SIMPLER LEVEL.

WE LOOKED AT THE HUMAN DEFECTS OF THESE PEOPLE, AND SOMETIMES USED THEIR SHORTCOMINGS AS A BASIS OF WHOLE-SALE CONDEMNATION. WE TALKED OF INTOLERANCE, WHILE WE

WERE INTOLERANT OURSELVES. WE MISSED THE REALITY AND THE BEAUTY OF THE FOREST BECAUSE WE WERE DIVERTED BY THE UGLINESS OF SOME OF ITS TREES. WE NEVER GAVE THE SPIRITUAL SIDE A FAIR HEARING.

ACTUALLY WE WERE FOOLING OURSELVES, FOR DEEP DOWN IN EVERY MAN, WOMAN AND CHILD, IS THE FUNDAMENTAL IDEA OF GOD. IT MAY BE OBSCURED BY CALAMITY, BY POMP, BY WORSHIP OF OTHER THINGS, BUT IN SOME FORM OR OTHER IT IS THERE. FOR FAITH IN A POWER GREATER THAN OURSELVES, AND MIRACULOUS DEMONSTRATIONS OF THAT POWER IN HUMAN LIVES, ARE FACTS AS OLD AS MAN HIMSELF.

AT SOME OF THESE YOU MAY BALK. YOU MAY THINK YOU CAN FIND AN EASIER, SOFTER WAY. WE DOUBT IF YOU CAN. WITH ALL THE EARNESTNESS AT OUR COMMAND, WE BEG OF YOU TO BE FEARLESS AND THOROUGH FROM THE VERY START. SOME OF US HAVE TRIED TO HOLD ON TO OUR OLD IDEAS AND THE RESULT WAS NIL UNTIL WE LET GO ABSOLUTELY.

ARRIVED AT THIS POINT, WE WERE SQUARELY CONFRONTED WITH THE QUESTION OF FAITH. WE COULDN'T DUCK THE ISSUE. SOME OF US HAD ALREADY WALKED FOR OVER THE BRIDGE OF REASON TOWARD THE DESIRED SHORE OF FAITH. THE OUTLINES AND THE PROMISE OF THE NEW LAND HAD BROUGHT LUSTRE TO TIRED EYES AND FRESH COURAGE TO FLAGGING SPIRITS. FRIENDLY HANDS HAD STRETCHED OUT IN WELCOME. WE WERE GRATEFUL THAT REASON HAD BROUGHT US SO FAR. BUT SOMEHOW, WE COULDN'T QUITE STEP

ASHORE. PERHAPS WE HAD BEEN LEANING TOO HEAVILY ON REASON THAT LAST MILE AND WE DID NOT LIKE TO LOSE OUR SUPPORT.

WE ARE SELF-CENTERED--EGO-CENTRIC; AS PEOPLE LIKE TO CALL IT NOWADAYS. WE ARE LIKE THE RETIRED BUSINESS MAN WHO LULLS IN THE FLORIDA SUNSHINE IN THE WINTER COMPLAINING OF THE SAD STATE OF THE NATION; THE PREACHER WHO SIGHS OVER THE SINS OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY; POLITICIANS AND REFORMERS WHO ARE SURE ALL WOULD BE UTOPIA IF THE REST OF THE WORLD WOULD

THIS IS THE HOW AND WHY OF IT. FIRST OF ALL, QUIT PLAYING GOD YOURSELF. IT DOESN'T WORK. NEXT, DECIDE THAT HEREAFTER IN THIS DRAMA OF LIFE, GOD IS GOING TO BE YOUR DIRECTOR. HE IS THE PRINCIPAL; YOU ARE TO BE HIS AGENT. HE IS THE FATHER, AND YOU ARE HIS CHILD. GET THAT SIMPLE RELATIONSHIP STRAIGHT. MOST GOOD IDEAS ARE SIMPLE AND THIS CONCEPT IS TO BE THE KEystone OF THE NEW AND TRIUMPHANT ARCH THROUGH WHICH YOU WILL PASS TO FREEDOM.

GET DOWN UPON YOUR KNEES AND SAY TO YOUR MAKER, AS YOU UNDERSTAND HIM: "GOD I OFFER MYSELF TO THEE--TO BUILD WITH ME AND TO DO WITH ME AS THOU WILT. RELIEVE ME OF THE BONDAGE OF SELF, THAT I MAY BETTER DO THY WILL. TAKE AWAY MY DIFFICULTIES, THAT VICTORY OVER THEM MAY BEAR WITNESS TO THOSE I WOULD HELP OF THY POWER, THY LOVE, AND THY WAY OF LIFE. MAY I DO THY WILL ALWAYS!" THINK WELL BEFORE TAKING THIS STEP. BE SURE YOU ARE READY; THAT YOU CAN AT LAST ABANDON YOURSELF UTTERLY TO HIM.

THE WORDING OF YOUR DECISION IS, OF COURSE, QUITE OPTIONAL SO LONG AS YOU EXPRESS THE IDEA, VOICING IT WITHOUT RESERVATION. THIS DECISION IS ONLY A BEGINNING, THOUGH IF HONESTLY AND HUMBLY MADE, AN EFFECT, SOMETIMES A VERY GREAT ONE, WILL BE FELT AT ONCE.

WE DO EXACTLY THE SAME THING WITH OUR LIVES. WE TAKE STOCK HONESTLY. FIRST, WE SEARCH OUT THE FLAWS IN OUR MAKE-UP WHICH HAVE CAUSED OUR FAILURE. BEING CONVINCED THAT SELF,

MANIFESTED IN VARIOUS WAYS, IS WHAT HAS DEFEATED US, WE CONSIDER ITS COMMON MANIFESTATIONS.

THEREFORE, YOU START UPON A PERSONAL INVENTORY. THIS IS STEP FOUR. A BUSINESS WHICH TAKES NO REGULAR INVENTORY USUALLY GOES BROKE. TAKING A COMMERCIAL INVENTORY IS A FACT-FINDING AND A FACT-FACING PROCESS. IT IS AN EFFORT TO DISCOVER THE TRUTH ABOUT THE STOCK-IN-TRADE. ITS OBJECT IS TO DISCLOSE DAMAGED OR UNSALEABLE GOODS, TO GET RID OF THEM PROMPTLY AND WITHOUT REGRET. IF THE OWNER OF THE BUSINESS IS TO BE SUCCESSFUL, HE CANNOT FOOL HIMSELF ABOUT VALUES.

ON YOUR GRUDGE LIST SET OPPOSITE EACH NAME YOUR INJURIES. IS IT YOUR SELF-ESTEEM, YOUR SECURITY, YOUR AMBITIONS, YOUR PERSONAL, OR YOUR SEX RELATIONS, WHICH HAVE BEEN INTERFERED WITH?

BE AS DEFINITE AS THIS EXAMPLE:

<u>I'M RESENTFUL AT:</u>	<u>THE CAUSE</u>	<u>AFFECTS MY:</u>
MR. BROWN	HIS ATTENTION TO MY WIFE.	SEX RELATIONS. SELF-ESTEEM (FEAR)
	TOLD MY WIFE OF MY MISTRESS.	SEX RELATIONS. SELF-ESTEEM (FEAR)
	BROWN MAY GET MY JOB AT THE OFFICE.	SECURITY. SELF-ESTEEM (FEAR)
MRS. JONES	SHE'S A NUT--SHE SNUBBED ME. SHE COMMITTED HER HUSBAND FOR DRINKING. HE'S MY FRIEND. SHE'S A GOSSIP.	PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP. SELF-ESTEEM (FEAR)

MY EMPLOYER	UNREASONABLE-- UNJUST--OVERBEARING -- THREATENS TO FIRE ME FOR DRINKING AND PADDING MY EXPENSE ACCOUNT.	SELF-ESTEEM (FEAR) SECURITY
MY WIFE	MISUNDERSTANDS AND NAGS. LIKES BROWN. WANTS HOUSE PUT IN HER NAME.	PRIDE--PERSONAL AND SEX RELATIONS SECURITY (FEAR)

GO ON THROUGH THE LIST BACK THROUGH YOUR LIFETIME. NOTHING COUNTS BUT THOROUGHNESS AND HONESTY. WHEN YOU ARE FINISHED CONSIDER IT CAREFULLY. THE FIRST THING APPARENT TO YOU IS THAT THIS WORLD AND ITS PEOPLE ARE OFTEN QUITE WRONG. TO CONCLUDE THAT OTHERS ARE WRONG IS AS FAR AS MOST OF US EVER GET. THE USUAL OUTCOME IS THAT YOU ARE SORE AT YOURSELF. BUT THE MORE YOU FIGHT AND TRY TO HAVE YOUR WAY, THE WORSE MATTERS GET. ISN'T THAT SO? AS IN WAR, VICTORS ONLY SEEM TO WIN. YOUR MOMENTS OF TRIUMPH ARE SHORT LIVED.

IT IS PLAIN THAT A WAY OF LIFE WHICH INCLUDES DEEP RESENTMENT LEADS ONLY TO FUTILITY AND UNHAPPINESS. TO THE PRECISE EXTENT THAT WE PERMIT THESE, DO WE SQUANDER THE HOURS THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN WORTH WHILE. BUT WITH THE ALCOHOLIC WHOSE ONLY HOPE IS THE MAINTENANCE AND GROWTH OF A SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE, THIS BUSINESS OF RESENTMENT IS INFINITELY GRAVE. WE FIND THAT IT IS FATAL. FOR WHEN HARBORING SUCH FEELINGS WE SHUT OURSELVES OFF FROM THE SUNLIGHT OF THE SPIRIT. THE INSANITY OF ALCOHOL RETURNS AND WE DRINK AGAIN. AND WITH US, TO

DRINK IS TO DIE.

IF WE ARE TO LIVE, WE MUST BE FREE OF ANGER. THE GROUCH AND THE BRAINSTORM ARE NOT FOR US. THEY MAY BE THE DUBIOUS LUXURY OF NORMAL MEN, BUT FOR ALCOHOLICS THESE THINGS ARE POISON.

QUESTION

1. DO YOU BELIEVE THAT THROUGH STEPS TWO AND THREE OUR CREATOR HAS ENTERED OUR HEARTS AND LIVES?
2. DO YOU REALIZE YOU ARE DOING THINGS THAT A FEW WEEKS AGO YOU COULD NOT DO FOR YOUR SELF?
3. DO YOU NOW BELIEVE?
4. WHAT DOES THE WORD "SEARCHING" MEAN?
5. DO YOU FIND YOURSELF STILL INTOLERANT?
6. DO YOU BELIEVE YOU HAVE ALWAYS HAD A FUNDAMENTAL IDEA OF GOD?
7. ARE YOU STILL BALKING ON THE IDEA OF GOD RUNNING YOUR LIFE?
8. DO YOU THINK THAT DUE TO OUR ALCOHOLIC PERSONALITY, IT IS HARD FOR US TO TRUST GOD WITH EVERYTHING?
9. DO YOU FEEL YOU ARE GIVING TOO MUCH UP IN YOUR LIFE?
10. DO YOU BELIEVE RESENTMENTS ARE OUR NUMBER ONE "OFFENDER"?
11. HAVE YOU ACTUALLY BEEN PLAYING "GOD" AND NOT REALIZING YOU WERE DOING SO?
12. ARE YOU READY, OR HAVE YOU GOTTEN DOWN ON YOUR KNEES AND OFFERED YOURSELF TO GOD?
13. IS IT A BIG AFFRONT TO YOU FOR ANYONE TO SUGGEST YOU GET DOWN ON YOUR KNEES?
14. DO YOU NOW SEE THE IMPORTANCE OF A DAILY INVENTORY AS THIS GROUP HAS EMPHASIZED?

15. AS A BUSINESS MAN OR WOMAN, IS IT IMPORTANT TO TAKE AN INVENTORY?
16. DO YOU KNOW HOW TO TAKE A PERSONAL INVENTORY?
17. ARE YOU WILLING TO TAKE A PERSONAL INVENTORY?
18. WHAT DOES THE WORD "FEARLESS" MEAN?
19. DO YOU STILL HAVE FEAR?
20. DO YOU BELIEVE FEAR IS YOUR GREATEST ENEMY?
21. DO YOU REALLY THINK THAT YOU CAN JUSTIFY A PERSONAL INVENTORY THAT IS NOT HONEST?
22. ARE YOU WILLING TO WRITE IT DOWN ON PAPER?
23. DO YOU UNDERSTAND THE EXAMPLES OF PERSONAL INVENTORIES?
24. WHAT REALLY COUNTS IN TAKING THIS MORAL INVENTORY?
25. DO RESENTMENTS MAKE US HAPPY?
26. WHAT IS POISON TO AN ALCOHOLIC?

CHAPTER EIGHT
STEP FOUR
PART TWO

MADE A SEARCHING AND FEARLESS MORAL INVENTORY OF OURSELVES.

TURN BACK TO YOUR LIST, FOR IT HOLDS THE KEY TO YOUR FUTURE. YOU MUST BE PREPARED TO LOOK AT IT FROM AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT ANGLE. YOU WILL BEGIN TO SEE THAT THE WORLD AND ITS PEOPLE REALLY DOMINATE YOU. IN YOUR PRESENT STATE, THE WRONG-DOING OF OTHERS, FANCIED OR REAL, HAS POWER TO ACTUALLY KILL YOU. HOW SHALL YOU ESCAPE? YOU SEE THAT THESE RESENTMENTS MUST BE MASTERED, BUT HOW? YOU CANNOT WISH THEM AWAY ANY MORE THAN ALCOHOL.

THIS IS OUR COURSE: REALIZE AT ONCE THAT THE PEOPLE WHO WRONG YOU ARE SPIRITUALLY SICK. THOUGH YOU DON'T LIKE THEIR SYMPTOMS AND THE WAY THESE DISTURB YOU, THEY, LIKE YOURSELF, ARE SICK, TOO. ASK GOD TO HELP YOU SHOW THEM THE SAME TOLERANCE, PITY, AND PATIENCE THAT YOU WOULD CHEERFULLY GRANT A FRIEND WHO HAS CANCER. WHEN A PERSON NEXT OFFENDS, SAY TO YOURSELF, "THIS IS A SICK MAN. HOW CAN I BE HELPFUL TO HIM? GOD SAVE ME FROM BEING ANGRY. THY WILL BE DONE."

NEVER ARGUE. NEVER RETALIATE. YOU WOULDN'T TREAT SICK PEOPLE THAT WAY. IF YOU DO, YOU DESTROY YOUR CHANCE OF BEING HELPFUL. YOU CANNOT BE HELPFUL TO ALL PEOPLE, BUT AT LEAST GOD WILL SHOW YOU HOW TO TAKE A KINDLY AND TOLERANT VIEW OF EACH AND EVERY ONE.

TAKE UP YOUR LIST AGAIN. PUTTING OUT OF YOUR MIND THE

WRONGS OTHERS HAVE DONE, RESOLUTELY LOOK FOR YOUR OWN MISTAKES. WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN SELFISH, DISHONEST, SELF-SEEKING AND FRIGHTENED? THOUGH A SITUATION MAY NOT BE ENTIRELY YOUR FAULT, DISREGARD THE OTHER PERSON INVOLVED ENTIRELY. SEE WHERE YOU HAVE BEEN TO BLAME. THIS IS YOUR INVENTORY, NOT THE OTHER MAN'S. WHEN YOU SEE YOUR FAULT WRITE IT DOWN ON THE LIST. SEE IT BEFORE YOU IN BLACK AND WHITE. ADMIT YOUR WRONGS HONESTLY AND BE WILLING TO SET THESE MATTERS STRAIGHT.

YOU WILL NOTICE THAT THE WORD FEAR IS BRACKETED ALONGSIDE THE DIFFICULTIES WITH MR. BROWN, MRS. JONES, YOUR EMPLOYER, AND YOUR WIFE. THIS SHORT WORD SOMEHOW TOUCHES ABOUT EVERY ASPECT OF OUR LIVES. IT IS AN EVIL AND CORRODING THREAD; THE FABRIC OF OUR EXISTENCE IS SHOT THROUGH WITH IT. IT SETS IN MOTION TRAINS OF CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH BRING US MISFORTUNE WE FEEL WE DON'T DESERVE. BUT DID NOT WE, OURSELVES, SET THE BALL ROLLING? SOMETIMES WE THINK FEAR OUGHT TO BE CLASSED WITH STEALING AS A SIN. IT SEEMS TO CAUSE MORE TROUBLE.

REVIEW YOUR FEARS THOROUGHLY. PUT THEM ON PAPER, EVEN THOUGH YOU HAVE NO RESENTMENT IN CONNECTION WITH THEM. ASK YOURSELF WHY YOU HAVE THEM. ISN'T IT BECAUSE SELF-RELIANCE HAS FAILED YOU? SELF-RELIANCE WAS GOOD AS FAR AS IT WENT, BUT IT DIDN'T FULLY SOLVE THE FEAR PROBLEM, OR ANY OTHER. WHEN IT MADE US COCKY, IT WAS WORSE.

PERHAPS THERE IS A BETTER WAY--WE THINK SO. FOR YOU ARE

NOW TO GO ON A DIFFERENT BASIS; THE BASIS OF TRUSTING AND RELYING UPON GOD. YOU ARE TO TRUST INFINITE GOD RATHER THAN YOUR FINITE SELF. YOU ARE IN THE WORLD TO PLAY THE ROLE HE ASSIGNS. JUST TO THE EXTENT THAT YOU DO AS YOU THINK HE WOULD HAVE YOU, AND HUMBLY RELY ON HIM, DOES HE ENABLE YOU TO MATCH CALAMITY WITH SERENITY.

YOU MUST NEVER APOLOGIZE TO ANYONE FOR DEPENDING UPON YOUR CREATOR. YOU CAN LAUGH AT THOSE WHO THINK SPIRITUALITY THE WAY OF WEAKNESS. PARADOXICALLY, IT IS THE WAY OF STRENGTH. THE VERDICT OF THE AGES IS THAT FAITH MEANS COURAGE. ALL MEN OF FAITH HAVE COURAGE. THEY TRUST THEIR GOD. NEVER APOLOGIZE FOR GOD. INSTEAD DIRECT YOUR ATTENTION TO WHAT HE WOULD HAVE YOU BE. AT ONCE, YOU WILL COMMENCE TO OUTGROW FEAR.

NOW ABOUT SEX. YOU CAN PROBABLY STAND AN OVERHAULING THERE. WE NEEDED IT. BUT ABOVE ALL, LET'S BE SENSIBLE ON THIS QUESTION. IT'S SO EASY TO GET WAY OFF THE TRACK. HERE WE FIND HUMAN OPINIONS RUNNING TO EXTREMES--ABSURD EXTREMES, PERHAPS. ONE SET OF VOICES CRY THAT SEX IS A LUST OF OUR LOWER NATURE, A BASE NECESSITY OF PROCREATION. THEN WE HAVE THE VOICES WHO CRY FOR SEX AND MORE SEX; WHO BEWAIL THE INSTITUTION OF MARRIAGE; WHO THINK THAT MOST OF THE TROUBLES OF THE RACE ARE TRACEABLE TO SEX CAUSES. THEY THINK WE DO NOT HAVE ENOUGH OF IT, OR THAT IT ISN'T THE RIGHT KIND. THEY SEE ITS SIGNIFICANCE EVERYWHERE. ONE SCHOOL WOULD ALLOW MAN NO FLAVOR FOR HIS FARE AND THE OTHER WOULD HAVE US ALL ON A STRAIGHT PEPPER

DIET. WE WANT TO STAY OUT OF THIS CONTROVERSY. WE DO NOT WANT TO BE THE ARBITER OF ANYONE'S SEX CONDUCT. WE ALL HAVE SEX PROBLEMS. WE'D HARDLY BE HUMAN IF WE DIDN'T. WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT THEM?

REVIEW YOUR OWN CONDUCT OVER THE YEARS PAST. WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN SELFISH, DISHONEST, OR INCONSIDERATE? WHOM DID YOU HURT? DID YOU UNJUSTIFIABLY AROUSE JEALOUSY, SUSPICION OR BITTERNESS? WHERE YOU WERE AT FAULT, WHAT SHOULD YOU HAVE DONE INSTEAD? GET THIS ALL DOWN ON PAPER AND LOOK AT IT.

IN THIS WAY YOU CAN SHAPE A SANE AND SOUND IDEAL FOR YOUR FUTURE SEX LIFE. SUBJECT EACH RELATION TO THIS TEST--IS IT SELFISH OR NOT? ASK GOD TO MOULD YOUR IDEALS AND HELP YOU TO LIVE UP TO THEM. REMEMBER ALWAYS THAT YOUR SEX POWERS ARE GOD-GIVEN, AND THEREFORE GOOD, NEITHER TO BE USED LIGHTLY OR SELFISHLY NOR TO BE DESPISED AND LOATHED.

WHATEVER YOUR IDEAL MAY BE, YOU MUST BE WILLING TO GROW TOWARD IT. YOU MUST BE WILLING TO MAKE AMENDS WHERE YOU HAVE DONE HARM, PROVIDED THAT YOU WILL NOT BRING ABOUT STILL MORE HARM IN SO DOING. IN OTHER WORDS, TREAT SEX AS YOU WOULD ANY OTHER PROBLEM. IN MEDITATION, ASK GOD WHAT YOU SHOULD DO ABOUT EACH SPECIFIC MATTER. THE RIGHT ANSWER WILL COME, IF YOU WANT IT.

GOD ALONE CAN JUDGE YOUR SEX SITUATION. COUNSEL WITH PERSONS IS OFTEN DESIRABLE, BUT LET GOD BE THE FINAL JUDGE.

REMEMBER THAT SOME PEOPLE ARE AS FANATICAL ABOUT SEX AS OTHERS ARE LOOSE. AVOID HYSTERICAL THINKING OR ADVICE.

SUPPOSE YOU FALL SHORT OF THE CHOSEN IDEAL AND STUMBLE. DOES THIS MEAN YOU ARE GOING TO GET DRUNK? SOME PEOPLE WILL TELL YOU SO. IF THEY DO, IT WILL BE ONLY A HALF-TRUTH. IT DEPENDS ON YOU AND YOUR MOTIVE. IF YOU ARE SORRY FOR WHAT YOU HAVE DONE, AND HAVE THE HONEST DESIRE TO LET GOD TAKE YOU TO BETTER THINGS, YOU WILL BE FORGIVEN AND WILL HAVE LEARNED YOUR LESSON. IF YOU ARE NOT SORRY, AND YOUR CONDUCT CONTINUES TO HARM OTHERS, YOU ARE QUITE SURE TO DRINK. WE ARE NOT THEORIZING. THESE ARE FACTS OUT OF OUR EXPERIENCE.

TO SUM UP ABOUT SEX: EARNESTLY PRAY FOR THE RIGHT IDEAL, FOR GUIDANCE IN EACH QUESTIONABLE SITUATION, FOR SANITY, AND FOR STRENGTH TO DO THE RIGHT THING. IF SEX IS VERY TROUBLESOME, THROW YOURSELF THE HARDER INTO HELPING OTHERS. THINK OF THEIR NEEDS AND WORK FOR THEM. THIS WILL TAKE YOU OUT OF YOURSELF. IT WILL QUIET THE IMPERIOUS URGE, WHEN TO YIELD WOULD MEAN HEARTACHE.

IF YOU HAVE BEEN THOROUGH ABOUT YOUR PERSONAL INVENTORY, YOU HAVE WRITTEN DOWN A LOT BY THIS TIME. YOU HAVE LISTED AND ANALYZED YOUR RESENTMENTS. YOU HAVE BEGUN TO COMPREHEND THEIR FUTILITY AND THEIR FATALITY. YOU HAVE COMMENCED TO SEE THEIR TERRIBLE DESTRUCTIVENESS. YOU HAVE BEGUN TO LEARN TOLERANCE, PATIENCE AND GOOD WILL TOWARD ALL MEN, EVEN YOUR ENEMIES, FOR YOU KNOW THEM TO BE SICK PEOPLE. YOU

HAVE LISTED THE PEOPLE YOU HAVE HURT BY YOUR CONDUCT, AND YOU ARE WILLING TO STRAIGHTEN OUT THE PAST IF YOU CAN.

IN THIS PROGRAM YOU HEAR AGAIN AND AGAIN THAT GOD DID FOR US WHAT WE COULD NOT DO FOR OURSELVES. WE HOPE YOU ARE CONVINCED NOW THAT HE CAN REMOVE THE SELF-WILL THAT HAS BLOCKED YOU OFF FROM HIM. YOU HAVE MADE YOUR DECISION. YOU HAVE MADE AN INVENTORY OF THE GROSSER HANDICAPS YOU HAVE. YOU HAVE MADE A GOOD BEGINNING, FOR YOU HAVE SWALLOWED AND DIGESTED SOME BIG CHUNKS OF TRUTH ABOUT YOURSELF. ARE YOU WILLING TO GO ON?

PSYCHOLOGISTS AGREE WITH US. MEMBERS OF OUR GROUP HAVE SPENT THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS FOR EXAMINATIONS BY PSYCHOLOGISTS AND PSYCHIATRISTS. WE KNOW BUT FEW INSTANCES WHERE WE HAVE GIVEN THESE DOCTORS A FAIR BREAK. WE HAVE SELDOM TOLD THEM THE WHOLE TRUTH. UNWILLING TO BE HONEST WITH THESE SYMPATHETIC MEN, WE WERE HONEST WITH NO ONE ELSE. SMALL WONDER THE MEDICAL PROFESSION HAS A LOW OPINION OF ALCOHOLICS AND THEIR CHANCE FOR RECOVERY!

IF YOU ARE PAINSTAKING ABOUT THIS PHASE OF YOUR DEVELOPMENT, YOU WILL BE AMAZED BEFORE YOU ARE HALF THROUGH. YOU ARE GOING TO KNOW A NEW FREEDOM AND HAPPINESS. YOU WILL NOT REGRET THE PAST NOR WISH TO SHUT THE DOOR ON IT. YOU WILL COMPREHEND THE WORD SERENTY AND KNOW PEACE. NO MATTER HOW FAR DOWN THE SCALE YOU HAVE GONE, YOU WILL SEE HOW YOUR EXPERIENCE CAN BENEFIT OTHERS. THAT FEELING OF USELESSNESS

AND SELF-PITY WILL DISAPPEAR. YOU WILL LOSE INTEREST IN SELF-ISH THINGS AND GAIN INTEREST IN YOUR FELLOWS. SELF-SEEKING WILL SLIP AWAY. YOUR WHOLE ATTITUDE AND OUTLOOK UPON LIFE WILL CHANGE. FEAR OF PEOPLE AND OF ECONOMIC INSECURITY WILL LEAVE YOU. YOU WILL INTUITIVELY KNOW HOW TO HANDLE SITUATIONS WHICH USED TO BAFFLE YOU. YOU WILL SUDDENLY REALIZE THAT GOD IS DOING FOR YOU WHAT YOU COULD NOT DO FOR YOURSELF.

1. HOW MUCH TIME ARE YOU ACTUALLY SPENDING ON YOUR INVENTORY?
2. DO YOU REALIZE PEOPLE WHO HARMED YOU MIGHT BE SICK TOO, ACTUALLY SICKER THAN YOU?
3. DO YOU BELIEVE IN RETALIATING AGAINST THE SICK?
4. DO YOU BELIEVE THAT GOD CAN HELP YOU TAKE A KINDLY VIEW TOWARD EACH AND EVERY ONE?
5. DO YOU BELIEVE IT IS BETTER TO TAKE YOUR OWN INVENTORY AND LET EVERYONE ELSE TAKE THEIR OWN?
6. DO YOU KNOW JUST HOW POWERFUL FEAR IS IN YOUR LIFE? DOES IT GOVERN YOUR THINKING AND BEHAVIOR?
7. DO YOU BELIEVE TRUSTING GOD IS THE ONLY WAY TO COMPLETELY WIPE OUT FEAR IN YOUR LIFE?
8. DO YOU BELIEVE THAT THERE IS ONLY ONE THING ON EARTH BIG ENOUGH TO HURT YOU? WHAT IS IT?
9. ARE YOU FEARLESS? THROUGH THE GRACE OF GOD?
10. HAVE YOU WRITTEN DOWN YOUR FEARS ON PAPER?
11. DO YOU BELIEVE GOD CAN REMOVE YOUR FEARS?
12. DO YOU APOLOGIZE FOR DEPENDING ON YOUR CREATOR?
13. HAVE YOU LISTED ON PAPER ALL ABOUT YOUR SEX LIFE? (THIS WILL NOT BE DISCUSSED OPENLY)
14. HAVE YOU LISTED ALL PERSONS YOU HAVE HARMED DUE TO YOUR CONDUCT BEFORE AA?
15. WERE YOUR INTENTIONS SELFISH OR NOT?
16. ARE YOU WILLING TO GROW TOWARD MAKING AMENDS WHEREVER POSSIBLE?
17. WHO IS THE ONLY JUDGE OF YOUR SEX SITUATION?
18. IF YOU HAVE A SEX PROBLEM WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO GET RID OF IT?
19. CAN YOU SEE BY WHAT YOU HAVE WRITTEN DOWN IN YOUR INVENTORY WHAT A TERRIBLY DESTRUCTIVE PERSON YOU HAVE BEEN?

20. DO YOU CONTINUE TO SEE THAT GOD COULD DO FOR YOU WHAT YOU COULD NOT DO FOR YOURSELF?
21. DID YOU LIE TO THE DOCTOR ABOUT YOUR ALCOHOLISM?
22. ARE YOU BEGINNING TO ENJOY THE NEW FREEDOM YOU HAVE FOUND IN THE FIRST FOUR STEPS?
23. HAS YOUR OUTLOOK CHANGED?
24. DO YOU FEAR PEOPLE ANYMORE?
25. DOES ECONOMIC INSECURITY BECOME LESS AND LESS EACH DAY?
26. DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHY IN AA WE "LIVE ONE DAY AT A TIME"?
27. DO YOU NOW REALIZE WHY A FEARLESS MORAL INVENTORY IS SO IMPORTANT FOR AN ALCOHOLIC?
28. DO YOU REALIZE YOU WILL USE YOU FOURTH STEP INVENTORY IN STEP FIVE, SIX, SEVEN, EIGHT, NINE, AND TEN?

PERSONAL

INVENTORY SHEET ONE

PERSONAL

NAME _____

DATE _____

FOURTH STEP INVENTORY

ALSO TO BE PART OF STEP 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10

A BUSINESS WHICH TAKES NO REGULAR INVENTORY USUALLY GOES BROKE. TAKING A COMMERCIAL INVENTORY IS A FACT-FINDING PROCESS. IT IS AN EFFORT TO DISCOVER THE TRUTH ABOUT THE STOCK-IN-TRADE. ONE OBJECT IS TO DISCLOSE DAMAGED OR UNSALABLE GOODS; TO GET RID OF THEM PROMPTLY AND WITHOUT REGRET. IF THE OWNER OF THE BUSINESS IS TO BE SUCCESSFUL, HE CANNOT FOOL HIMSELF ABOUT VALUES.

WE DID EXACTLY THE SAME THING WITH OUR LIVES. WE TAKE STOCK HONESTLY. FIRST, WE SEARCH OUT THE FLAWS IN OUR MAKE-UP WHICH CAUSED OUR FAILURE. RESENTMENT IS THE "NUMBER ONE" OFFENDER. IT DESTROYS MORE ALCOHOLICS THAN ANYTHING ELSE. FROM IT STEM ALL FORMS OF SPIRITUAL DISEASE; FOR WE HAVE BEEN NOT ONLY MENTALLY AND PHYSICALLY ILL, WE HAVE BEEN SPIRITUALLY SICK. IN DEALING WITH RESENTMENTS, WE SET THEM ON PAPER. WE LIST PEOPLE, INSTITUTIONS OR PRINCIPLES WITH WHOM WE WERE ANGRY. WE ASKED OURSELVES WHY WE WERE ANGRY. IS IT OUR SELF-ESTEEM, OUR POCKET-BOOKS, OUR AMBITIONS, OUR PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS, (INCLUDING SEX) WERE HURT OR THREATENED. SO WE ARE SORE. WE ARE "BURNED UP." START WRITING: I WENT BACK THROUGH MY LIFE-----

CHAPTER NINE
STEP FIVE

ADMITTED TO GOD, TO OURSELVES, AND TO ANOTHER HUMAN BEING THE EXACT NATURE OF OUR WRONGS.

IN THIS PROGRAM YOU HEAR AGAIN AND AGAIN THAT GOD DID FOR US WHAT WE COULD NOT DO FOR OURSELVES. WE HOPE YOU ARE CONVINCED NOW THAT HE CAN REMOVE THE SELF-WILL THAT HAS BLOCKED YOU OFF FROM HIM. YOU HAVE MADE YOUR DECISION. YOU HAVE MADE AN INVENTORY OF THE GROSSER HANDICAPS YOU HAVE. YOU HAVE MADE A GOOD BEGINNING, FOR YOU HAVE SWALLOWED AND DIGESTED SOME BIG CHUNKS OF TRUTH ABOUT YOURSELF. ARE YOU WILLING TO GO ON?

HAVING MADE YOUR PERSONAL INVENTORY, WHAT SHALL YOU DO ABOUT IT? YOU HAVE BEEN TRYING TO GET A NEW ATTITUDE, A NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR CREATOR, AND TO DISCOVER THE OBSTACLES IN YOUR PATH. YOU HAVE ADMITTED CERTAIN DEFECTS; YOU HAVE ASCERTAINED IN A ROUGH WAY WHAT THE TROUBLE IS; YOU HAVE PUT YOUR FINGER ON THE WEAK ITEMS IN YOUR PERSONAL INVENTORY. NOW THESE ARE ABOUT TO BE CAST OUT. THIS REQUIRES ACTION ON YOUR PART, WHICH, WHEN COMPLETED, WILL MEAN THAT YOU HAVE ADMITTED TO GOD, TO YOURSELF, AND TO ANOTHER HUMAN BEING, THE EXACT NATURE OF YOUR DEFECTS. THIS BRINGS US TO THE FIFTH STEP IN THE PROGRAM OF RECOVERY.

THIS IS PERHAPS DIFFICULT--EXPECIALLY DISCUSSING YOUR DEFECTS WITH ANOTHER PERSON. YOU THINK YOU HAVE DONE WELL ENOUGH

IN ADMITTING THESE THINGS TO YOURSELF, PERHAPS. WE DOUBT THAT. IN ACTUAL PRACTICE, WE USUALLY FIND A SOLITARY SELF-APPRAISAL INSUFFICIENT. WE STRENUOUSLY URGE YOU TO GO MUCH FURTHER. BUT YOU WILL BE MORE RECONCILED TO DISCUSSING YOURSELF WITH ANOTHER PERSON IF WE OFFER GOOD REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD DO SO. THE BEST REASON FIRST: IF YOU SKIP THIS VITAL STEP YOU MAY NOT OVERCOME DRINKING. TIME AFTER TIME NEWCOMERS HAVE TRIED TO KEEP TO THEMSELVES CERTAIN FACTS ABOUT THEIR LIVES. TRYING TO AVOID THIS HUMBLING EXPERIENCE, THEY HAVE TURNED TO EASIER METHODS. ALMOST INVARIABLY THEY GOT DRUNK. HAVING PERSEVERED WITH THE REST OF THE PROGRAM, THEY WONDERED WHY THEY FELL. THE ANSWER IS THAT THEY NEVER COMPLETED THEIR HOUSECLEANING. THEY TOOK INVENTORY ALL RIGHT, BUT HUNG ON TO SOME OF THE WORST ITEMS IN STOCK. THEY ONLY THOUGHT THEY HAD LOST THEIR EGOISM AND FEAR; THEY ONLY THOUGHT THEY HAD HUMBLLED THEMSELVES. BUT THEY HAD NOT LEARNED ENOUGH OF HUMILITY, FEARLESSNESS AND HONESTY, IN THE SENSE WE FIND IT NECESSARY, UNTIL THEY TOLD SOMEONE ELSE ALL THEIR LIFE STORY.

MORE THAN MOST PEOPLE, THE ALCOHOLIC LEADS A DOUBLE LIFE. HE IS VERY MUCH THE ACTOR. TO THE OUTER WORLD HE PRESENTS HIS STAGE CHARACTER. THIS IS THE ONE HE LIKES HIS FELLOWS TO SEE. HE WANTS TO ENJOY A CERTAIN REPUTATION, BUT KNOWS IN HIS HEART HE DOESN'T DESERVE IT.

THE INCONSISTENCY IS MADE WORSE BY THE THINGS HE DOES ON

HIS SPREES. COMING TO HIS SENSES, HE IS REVOLTED AT CERTAIN EPISODES HE VAGUELY REMEMBERS. THESE MEMORIES ARE A NIGHTMARE. HE TREMBLES TO THINK SOMEONE MIGHT HAVE OBSERVED HIM. AS FAST AS HE CAN, HE PUSHES THESE MEMORIES FAR INSIDE HIMSELF. HE HOPES THEY WILL NEVER SEE THE LIGHT OF DAY. HE IS UNDER CONSTANT FEAR AND TENSION--THAT MAKES FOR DRINKING.

NOTWITHSTANDING THE GREAT NECESSITY FOR DISCUSSING YOURSELF WITH SOMEONE, IT MAY BE THAT YOU ARE SO SITUATED THAT THERE IS NO SUITABLE PERSON AVAILABLE. IF THAT IS SO, YOU MAY POSTPONE THIS STEP, ONLY, HOWEVER, IF YOU HOLD YOURSELF IN COMPLETE READINESS TO GO THROUGH WITH IT AT THE FIRST OPPORTUNITY. WE SAY THIS BECAUSE WE ARE VERY ANXIOUS THAT YOU TALK TO THE RIGHT PERSON. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT HE BE ABLE TO KEEP A CONFIDENCE; THAT HE FULLY UNDERSTAND AND APPROVE WHAT YOU ARE DRIVING AT; THAT HE WILL NOT TRY TO CHANGE YOUR PLAN. BUT DON'T USE THIS AS A MERE EXCUSE TO POSTPONE.

YOU MUST BE ENTIRELY HONEST WITH SOMEBODY IF YOU EXPECT TO LIVE LONG OR HAPPILY IN THIS WORLD. RIGHTLY AND NATURALLY, YOU ARE GOING TO THINK WELL BEFORE YOU CHOOSE THE PERSON OR PERSONS WITH WHOM TO TAKE THIS INTIMATE AND CONFIDENTIAL STEP. IF YOU BELONG TO A RELIGIOUS DENOMINATION WHICH REQUIRES CONFESSION, YOU MUST, AND OF COURSE, WILL WANT TO GO TO THE PROPERLY APPOINTED AUTHORITY WHOSE DUTY IT IS TO RECEIVE IT. THOUGH YOU HAVE NO RELIGIOUS CONNECTION, YOU MAY STILL DO WELL TO TALK WITH SOMEONE ORDAINED BY AN ESTABLISHED RELIGION.

YOU WILL OFTEN FIND SUCH A PERSON QUICK TO SEE AND UNDERSTAND YOUR PROBLEM. OF COURSE, WE SOMETIMES ENCOUNTER MINISTERS WHO DO NOT UNDERSTAND ALCOHOLICS.

IF YOU CANNOT, OR WOULD RATHER NOT DO THIS, SEARCH YOUR ACQUAINTANCE FOR A CLOSE-MOUTHED, UNDERSTANDING FRIEND. PERHAPS YOUR DOCTOR OR YOUR PSYCHOLOGIST WILL BE THE PERSON. IT MAY BE ONE OF YOUR OWN FAMILY, BUT YOU SHOULD NOT DISCLOSE ANYTHING TO YOUR WIFE OR YOUR PARENTS WHICH WILL HURT THEM AND MAKE THEM UNHAPPY. YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO SAVE YOUR OWN SKIN AT ANOTHER PERSON'S EXPENSE. SUCH PARTS OF YOUR STORY YOU SHOULD TELL TO SOMEONE WHO WILL UNDERSTAND, YET BE UNAFFECTED. THE RULE IS YOU MUST BE HARD ON YOURSELF, BUT ALWAYS CONSIDERATE OF OTHERS.

WHEN YOU DECIDE WHO IS TO HEAR YOUR STORY, WASTE NO TIME. HAVE A WRITTEN INVENTORY. BE PREPARED FOR A LONG TALK. EXPLAIN TO YOUR PARTNER WHAT YOU ARE ABOUT TO DO, AND WHY YOU HAVE TO DO IT. HE SHOULD REALIZE THAT YOU ARE ENGAGED UPON A LIFE-AND-DEATH ERRAND. MOST PEOPLE APPROACHED IN THIS WAY WILL BE GLAD TO HELP; THEY WILL BE HONORED BY YOUR CONFIDENCE.

POCKET YOUR PRIDE AND GO TO IT! ILLUMINE EVERY TWIST OF CHARACTER, EVERY DARK CRANNY OF THE PAST. ONCE YOU HAVE TAKEN THIS STEP, WITHOLDING NOTHING, YOU WILL BE DELIGHTED. YOU CAN LOOK THE WORLD IN THE EYE. YOU CAN BE ALONE AT PERFECT PEACE AND EASE. YOUR FEARS WILL FALL FROM YOU.

YOU WILL BEGIN TO FEEL THE NEARNESS OF YOUR CREATOR. YOU MAY HAVE HAD CERTAIN SPIRITUAL BELIEFS, BUT NOW YOU WILL BEGIN TO HAVE A SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE. THE FEELING THAT THE DRINK PROBLEM HAS DISAPPEARED WILL COME STRONGLY. YOU WILL KNOW YOU ARE ON THE BROAD HIGHWAY, WALKING HAND IN HAND WITH THE SPIRIT OF THE UNIVERSE.

RETURN HOME AND FIND A PLACE WHERE YOU CAN BE QUIET FOR AN HOUR. CAREFULLY REVIEW WHAT YOU HAVE DONE. THANK GOD FROM THE BOTTOM OF YOUR HEART THAT YOU KNOW HIM BETTER. TAKE THE BIG BOOK DOWN FROM YOUR SHELF AND TURN TO THE PAGE WHICH CONTAINS THE TWELVE STEPS. CAREFULLY READ THE FIRST FIVE PROPOSALS AND ASK IF YOU HAVE OMITTED ANYTHING, FOR YOU ARE BUILDING AN ARCH THROUGH WHICH YOU WILL WALK A FREE MAN AT LAST. IS YOUR PART OF THE WORK SOLID SO FAR? ARE THE STONES PROPERLY IN PLACE? HAVE YOU SKIMPED ON THE CEMENT YOU HAVE PUT INTO THE FOUNDATION? HAVE YOU TRIED TO MAKE MORTAR WITHOUT SAND?

ALTHOUGH THESE REPARATIONS TAKE INNUMERABLE FORMS, THERE ARE SOME GENERAL PRINCIPLES WHICH WE FIND GUIDING. REMIND YOURSELF THAT YOU HAVE DECIDED TO GO TO ANY LENGTHS TO FIND A SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE. ASK THAT YOU BE GIVEN STRENGTH AND DIRECTION TO DO THE RIGHT THING, NO MATTER WHAT THE PERSONAL CONSEQUENCE TO YOU. YOU MAY LOSE YOUR POSITION OR REPUTATION, OR FACE JAIL, BUT YOU ARE WILLING. YOU HAVE TO BE. YOU MUST NOT SHRINK AT ANYTHING.

IF YOU ARE PAINSTAKING ABOUT THIS PHASE OF YOUR DEVELOPMENT, YOU WILL BE AMAZED BEFORE YOU ARE HALF THROUGH. YOU ARE GOING TO KNOW A NEW FREEDOM AND HAPPINESS. YOU WILL NOT REGRET THE PAST NOR WISH TO SHUT THE DOOR ON IT. YOU WILL COMPREHEND THE WORD SERENITY AND KNOW PEACE. NO MATTER HOW FAR DOWN THE SCALE YOU HAVE GONE, YOU WILL SEE HOW YOUR EXPERIENCE CAN BENEFIT OTHERS. THAT FEELING OF USELESSNESS AND SELF-PITY WILL DISAPPEAR. YOU WILL LOSE INTEREST IN SELFISH THINGS AND GAIN INTEREST IN YOUR FELLOWS. SELF-SEEKING WILL SLIP AWAY. YOUR WHOLE ATTITUDE AND OUTLOOK UPON LIFE WILL CHANGE. FEAR OF PEOPLE AND OF ECONOMIC INSECURITY WILL LEAVE YOU. YOU WILL INTUITIVELY KNOW HOW TO HANDLE SITUATIONS WHICH USED TO BAFFLE YOU. YOU WILL SUDDENLY REALIZE THAT GOD IS DOING FOR YOU WHAT YOU COULD NOT DO FOR YOURSELF.

AND YOU HAVE CEASED FIGHTING ANYTHING OR ANYONE--EVEN ALCOHOL. FOR BY THIS TIME YOUR SANITY WILL HAVE RETURNED. YOU WILL SELDOM BE INTERESTED IN LIQUOR. IF TEMPTED, YOU WILL RECOIL FROM IT AS YOU WOULD FROM A HOT FLAME. YOU WILL REACT SANELY AND NORMALLY. YOU WILL FIND THIS HAS HAPPENED AUTOMATICALLY. YOU WILL SEE THAT YOUR NEW ATTITUDE TOWARD LIQUOR HAS BEEN GIVEN YOU WITHOUT ANY THOUGHT OR EFFORT ON YOUR PART. IT JUST COMES! THAT IS THE MIRACLE OF IT. YOU ARE NOT FIGHTING IT, NEITHER ARE YOU AVOIDING TEMPTATION. YOU FEEL AS THOUGH YOU HAD BEEN PLACED IN A POSITION OF NEUTRALITY. YOU FEEL SAFE AND PROTECTED. YOU HAVE NOT EVEN SWORN OFF.

INSTEAD, THE PROBLEM HAS BEEN REMOVED. IT DOES NOT EXIST FOR YOU. YOU ARE NEITHER COCKY, NOR ARE YOU AFRAID. THAT IS OUR EXPERIENCE. THAT IS HOW WE REACT SO LONG AS WE KEEP IN FIT SPIRITUAL CONDITION.

QUESTION

1. ARE YOU CONVINCED GOD CAN REMOVE YOUR SELF-WILL?
2. DO YOU BELIEVE SELF-WILL HAS BLOCKED GOD FROM YOU?
3. CAN YOU SEE NOW HOW IMPORTANT STEPS ONE, TWO, THREE, AND FOUR WERE TO YOU? HAVE YOU TAKEN THEM THOROUGHLY?
4. DO YOU BELIEVE "THE TRUTH WILL SET YOU FREE"? ARE YOU WILLING TO GO DEEPER INTO YOUR HANDICAPS?
5. DO YOU FIND OBSTACLES IN YOUR PATH TO KEEP YOU FROM A NEW ATTITUDE?
6. DO YOU FIND OBSTACLES TO KEEP YOU FROM HAVING A NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR CREATOR?
7. ARE YOU READY TO ADMIT TO GOD, TO YOURSELF AND TO ANOTHER PERSON THE EXACT NATURE OF YOUR DEFECTS?
8. TELL EXACTLY HOW YOU FEEL, ARE YOU REALLY READY TO ADMIT TO ANOTHER PERSON?
9. DO YOU REALLY BELIEVE A SOLITARY SELF-APPRAISAL IS INSUFFICIENT?
10. IN YOUR MIND, WHAT IS THE BEST REASON FOR TAKING STEP FIVE?
11. AS AN ALCOHOLIC DID YOU LEAD A DOUBLE LIFE?
12. DO YOU WANT TO HAVE A GOOD REPUTATION AND YOU KNOW IN YOUR OWN HEART YOU DON'T DESERVE IT?
13. HAVE YOU PRESSED MANY NIGHTMARES OF ALCOHOLISM DEEP INSIDE OF YOU?
14. DO THESE NIGHTMARES GIVE YOU CONSTANT FEAR AND TENSION?
15. DO YOU HAVE A SUITABLE PERSON TO TAKE THIS STEP WITH?

16. DO YOU FEEL POSTPONEMENT IS A MERE EXCUSE FOR YOU?
17. WHAT IS THE KEY TO HAPPINESS IN THIS "OLE WORLD"?
18. HOW CAREFUL SHOULD YOU BE IN CHOOSING THE PERSON YOU TAKE THIS STEP WITH?
19. WHAT IS THE RULE TO FOLLOW IN THIS STEP?
20. WHAT ARE THE BENIFITS PROMISED IF YOU REALLY AND TRULY TAKE THIS STEP?
21. WHAT SHOULD YOU DO AFTER TAKING THIS STEP?
22. DO YOU STILL BELIEVE YOU SHOULD GO TO ANY LENGTHS TO FIND A SPIRITUAL AWAKENING OR EXPERIENCE?
23. WHAT IS PROMISED IF YOU ARE PAINSTAKING ABOUT THIS PHASE OF YOUR DEVELOPMENT?
24. IS GOD STILL DOING FOR YOU WHAT YOU COULD NOT DO FOR YOUR-SELF?
25. WHAT IS THE MIRACLE OF THE FIFTH STEP?

CHAPTER TEN
STEP SIX
PART ONE

WERE ENTIRELY READY TO HAVE GOD REMOVE ALL THESE DEFECTS OF CHARACTER

"THIS IS THE ~~ST~~ STEP THAT SEPARATES THE MEN FROM THE BOYS..." SO DECLARES A WELL-LOVED CLERGYMAN WHO HAPPENS TO BE ONE OF AA'S GREATEST FRIENDS. HE GOES ON TO EXPLAIN THAT ANY PERSON CAPABLE OF ENOUGH WILLINGNESS AND HONESTY TO TRY REPEATEDLY STEP SIX ON ALL HIS FAULTS--WITHOUT ANY RESERVATIONS WHATEVER--HAS INDEED COME A LONG WAY SPIRITUALLY, AND IS THEREFORE ENTITLED TO BE CALLED A MAN WHO IS SINCERELY TRYING TO GROW IN THE IMAGE AND LIKENESS OF HIS OWN CREATOR.

OF COURSE, THE OFTEN DISPUTED QUESTION OF WHETHER GOD CAN--AND WILL, UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS--REMOVE DEFECTS OF CHARACTER WILL BE ANSWERED WITH A PROMPT AFFIRMATIVE BY ALMOST ANY AA MEMBER. TO HIM, THIS PROPOSITION WILL BE NO THEORY AT ALL; IT WILL BE JUST ABOUT THE LARGEST FACT IN HIS LIFE. HE WILL USUALLY OFFER HIS PROOF IN A STATEMENT LIKE THIS:

"SURE, I WAS BEATEN, ABSOLUTELY LICKED. MY OWN WILL POWER JUST WOULDN'T WORK ON ALCOHOL. CHANGE OF SCENE, THE BEST EFFORTS OF FAMILY, FRIENDS, DOCTORS, AND CLERGYMEN GOT NO PLACE WITH MY ALCOHOLISM. I SIMPLY COULDN'T STOP DRINKING, AND NO HUMAN BEING COULD SEEM TO DO THE JOB FOR ME. BUT

WHEN I BECAME WILLING TO CLEAN HOUSE AND THEN ASKED A HIGHER POWER, GOD AS I UNDERSTOOD HIM, TO GIVE ME RELEASE, MY OBSESSION TO DRINK VANISHED. IT WAS LIFTED RIGHT OUT OF ME."

IN AA MEETINGS ALL OVER THE WORLD, STATEMENTS JUST LIKE THIS ARE HEARD DAILY. IT IS PLAIN FOR EVERYBODY TO SEE THAT EACH SOBER AA MEMBER HAS BEEN GRANTED A RELEASE FROM THIS VERY OBSTINATE AND POTENTIALLY FATAL OBSESSION. SO IN A VERY COMPLETE AND LITERAL WAY, ALL AAS HAVE "BECOME ENTIRELY READY" TO HAVE GOD REMOVE THE MANIA FOR ALCOHOL FROM THEIR LIVES. AND GOD HAS PROCEEDED TO DO EXACTLY THAT.

HAVING BEEN GRANTED A PERFECT RELEASE FROM ALCOHOLISM, WHY THEN SHOULDN'T WE BE ABLE TO ACHIEVE BY THE SAME MEANS A PERFECT RELEASE FROM EVERY OTHER DIFFICULTY OR DEFECT? THIS IS A RIDDLE OF OUR EXISTENCE, THE FULL ANSWER TO WHICH MAY BE ONLY IN THE MIND OF GOD. NEVERTHELESS, AT LEAST A PART OF THE ANSWER TO IT IS APPARENT TO US.

WHEN MEN AND WOMEN POUR SO MUCH ALCOHOL INTO THEMSELVES THAT THEY DESTROY THEIR LIVES, THEY COMMIT A MOST UNNATURAL ACT. DEFYING THEIR INSTINCTIVE DESIRE FOR SELF-PRESERVATION, THEY SEEM BENT UPON SELF-DESTRUCTION. THEY WORK AGAINST THEIR OWN DEEPEST INSTINCT. AS THEY ARE HUMBLLED BY THE TERRIFIC BEATING ADMINISTERED BY ALCOHOL, THE GRACE OF GOD CAN ENTER THEM AND EXPEL THEIR OBSESSION. HERE THEIR POWERFUL INSTINCT TO LIVE CAN CO-OPERATE FULLY WITH THEIR CREATOR'S

DESIRE TO GIVE THEM NEW LIFE. FOR NATURE AND GOD ALIKE ABHOR SUICIDE.

BUT MOST OF OUR OTHER DIFFICULTIES DON'T FALL UNDER SUCH A CATEGORY AT ALL. EVERY NORMAL PERSON WANTS, FOR EXAMPLE, TO EAT, TO REPRODUCE, TO BE SOMEBODY IN THE SOCIETY OF HIS FELLOWS. AND HE WISHES TO BE REASONABLY SAFE AND SECURE AS HE TRIES TO ATTAIN THESE THINGS. INDEED, GOD MADE HIM THAT WAY. HE DID NOT DESIGN MAN TO DESTROY HIMSELF BY ALCOHOL, BUT HE DID GIVE MAN INSTINCTS TO HELP HIM TO STAY ALIVE.

IT IS NOWHERE EVIDENT, AT LEAST IN THIS LIFE, THAT OUR CREATOR EXPECTS US FULLY TO ELIMINATE OUR INSTINCTUAL DRIVES. SO FAR AS WE KNOW, IT IS NOWHERE ON THE RECORD THAT GOD HAS COMPLETELY REMOVED FROM ANY HUMAN BEING ALL HIS NATURAL DRIVES.

SINCE MOST OF US ARE BORN WITH AN ABUNDANCE OF NATURAL DESIRES, IT ISN'T STRANGE THAT WE OFTEN LET THESE FAR EXCEED THEIR INTENDED PURPOSE. WHEN THEY DRIVE US BLINDLY, OR WE WILLFULLY DEMAND THAT THEY SUPPLY US WITH MORE SATISFACTIONS OR PLEASURES THAN ARE POSSIBLE OR DUE US, THAT IS THE POINT AT WHICH WE DEPART FROM THE DEGREE OF PERFECTION THAT GOD WISHES FOR US HERE ON EARTH. THAT IS THE MEASURE OF OUR CHARACTER DEFECTS, OR IF YOU WISH, OF OUR SINS.

IF WE ASK, GOD WILL CERTAINLY FORGIVE OUR DERELICTIONS. BUT IN NO CASE DOES HE RENDER US WHITE AS SNOW AND KEEP US THAT WAY WITHOUT OUR CO-OPERATION. THAT IS SOMETHING WE ARE SUPPOSED TO BE WILLING TO WORK TOWARD OURSELVES. HE

ASKS ONLY THAT WE TRY AS BEST WE KNOW HOW TO MAKE PROGRESS IN THE BUILDING OF CHARACTER.

SO STEP SIX--"WERE ENTIRELY READY TO HAVE GOD REMOVE ALL THESE DEFECTS OF CHARACTER"--IS AA'S WAY OF STATING THE BEST POSSIBLE ATTITUDE ONE CAN TAKE IN ORDER TO MAKE A BEGINNING ON THIS LIFETIME JOB. THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT WE EXPECT ALL OUR CHARACTER DEFECTS TO BE LIFTED OUT OF US AS THE DRIVE TO DRINK WAS. A FEW OF THEM MAY BE, BUT WITH MOST OF THEM WE SHALL HAVE TO BE CONTENT WITH PATIENT IMPROVEMENT. THE KEY WORDS "ENTIRELY READY" UNDERLINE THE FACT THAT WE WANT TO AIM AT THE VERY BEST WE KNOW OR CAN LEARN.

HOW MANY OF US HAVE THIS DEGREE OF READINESS? IN AN ABSOLUTE SENSE PRACTICALLY NOBODY HAS IT. THE BEST WE CAN DO, WITH ALL THE HONESTY THAT WE CAN SUMMON, IS TO TRY TO HAVE IT. EVEN THEN THE BEST OF US WILL DISCOVER TO OUR DISMAY THAT THERE IS ALWAYS A STICKING POINT, A POINT AT WHICH WE SAY, "NO, I CAN'T GIVE THIS UP YET." AND WE SHALL OFTEN TREAD ON EVEN MORE DANGEROUS GROUND WHEN WE CRY, "THIS I WILL NEVER GIVE UP!" SUCH IS THE POWER OF OUR INSTINCTS TO OVERREACH THEMSELVES. NO MATTER HOW FAR WE HAVE PROGRESSED, DESIRES WILL ALWAYS BE FOUND WHICH OPPOSE THE GRACE OF GOD.

1. IN YOUR MIND DO YOU DISPUTE WHETHER GOD CAN AND WILL REMOVE DEFECTS OF CHARACTER?
2. DO YOU BELIEVE YOU HAD ANY WILL-POWER BEFORE AA?
3. DO YOU BELIEVE YOU HAVE ANY WILL-POWER NOW?
4. WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE MADE "YOUR OBSESSION TO DRINK VANISH"?
5. HAVE YOU "BECOME ENTIRELY READY" TO HAVE GOD REMOVE THE MANIA OF ALCOHOL FROM YOUR LIFE?
6. HAVING BEEN GIVEN A PERFECT RELEASE FROM ALCOHOLISM, WHY SHOULDN'T WE ACHIEVE A PERFECT RELEASE FROM EVERY OTHER DIFFICULTY OR DEFEAT?
7. DO YOU BELIEVE ALCOHOLISM IS AN ILLNESS?
8. DO YOU WANT TO BE SOMEBODY IN THE SOCIETY OF YOUR FELLOWMAN?
9. DO YOU LIKE THE IDEA OF BEING SAFE AND SECURE?
10. DO YOU BELIEVE YOUR CREATOR GAVE YOU CERTAIN INSTINCTIVE DRIVES?
11. HAS GOD EVER COMPLETELY REMOVED FROM A HUMAN BEING ALL HIS NATURAL DRIVES?
12. WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR NATURAL DRIVES?
13. DO PEOPLE LIKE YOU AND I OVER EXERCISE OUR DRIVES AND DESIRES?
14. IS THIS WHERE OUR HUNGER FOR SATISFACTIONS OR PLEASURES IS MORE THAN WE DESERVE?
15. DO WE DEPART FROM THE DEGREE OF PERFECTION THAT GOD WISHES FOR US HERE ON EARTH?
16. IS THIS THE MEASURE OF OUR CHARACTER DEFECTS, OR IF YOU WISH, OF OUR SINS?
17. WHAT IS GOD'S REQUEST FOR US IN TRYING TO BUILD OUR CHARACTER OR NEW WAY OF LIFE?
18. IS STEP SIX AA'S BEST POSSIBLE WAY OF STATING THE RIGHT ATTITUDE WE SHOULD HAVE?
19. DOES DAILY PROGRESS MEAN "PATIENT IMPROVEMENT"?

20. HOW MANY OF US HAVE THIS DEGREE OF READINESS?
21. DO YOU FIND CHARACTER DEFECTS IN YOUR MAKEUP THAT MAKE YOU FEEL: "NO, I CAN'T GIVE THIS UP YET"?
22. DO YOU AGREE WITH THIS STATEMENT: "NO MATTER HOW FAR WE HAVE PROGRESSED, DESIRES WILL ALWAYS BE FOUND WHICH OPPOSE THE GRACE OF GOD"?

CHAPTER ELEVEN
STEP SIX
PART TWO

WERE ENTIRELY READY TO HAVE GOD REMOVE ALL THESE DEFECTS OF CHARACTER

SOME WHO FEEL THEY HAVE DONE WELL MAY DISPUTE THIS, SO LET'S TRY TO THINK IT THROUGH A LITTLE FURTHER. PRACTICALLY EVERYBODY WISHES TO BE RID OF HIS MOST GLARING AND DESTRUCTIVE HANDICAPS. NO ONE WANTS TO BE SO PROUD THAT HE IS SCORNEED AS A BRAGGART, NOR SO GREEDY THAT HE IS LABELED A THIEF. NO ONE WANTS TO BE ANGRY ENOUGH TO MURDER, LUSTFUL ENOUGH TO RAPE, GLUTTONOUS ENOUGH TO RUIN HIS HEALTH. NO ONE WANTS TO BE AGONIZED BY THE CHRONIC PAIN OF ENVY OR TO BE PARALYZED BY SLOTH. OF COURSE, MOST HUMAN BEINGS DON'T SUFFER THESE DEFECTS AT THESE ROCK-BOTTOM LEVELS.

WE WHO HAVE ESCAPED THESE EXTREMES ARE APT TO CONGRATULATE OURSELVES. YET CAN WE? AFTER ALL, HASN'T IT BEEN SELF-INTEREST, PURE AND SIMPLE, THAT HAS ENABLED MOST OF US TO ESCAPE? NOT MUCH SPIRITUAL EFFORT IS INVOLVED IN AVOIDING EXCESSES WHICH WILL BRING US PUNISHMENT ANYWAY. BUT WHEN WE FACE UP TO THE LESS VIOLENT ASPECTS OF THESE VERY SAME DEFECTS, THEN WHERE DO WE STAND?

WHAT WE MUST RECOGNIZE NOW IS THAT WE EXULT IN SOME OF OUR DEFECTS. WE REALLY LOVE THEM. WHO, FOR EXAMPLE, DOESN'T LIKE TO FEEL JUST A LITTLE SUPERIOR TO THE NEXT FELLOW, OR EVEN QUITE A LOT SUPERIOR? ISN'T IT TRUE THAT WE LIKE TO LET

GREED MASQUERADE AS AMBITION? TO THINK OF LIKING LUST SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE. BUT HOW MANY MEN AND WOMEN SPEAK LOVE WITH THEIR LIPS, AND BELIEVE WHAT THEY SAY, SO THAT THEY CAN HIDE LUST IN A DARK CORNER OF THEIR MINDS? AND EVEN WHILE STAYING WITHIN CONVENTIONAL BOUNDS, MANY PEOPLE HAVE TO ADMIT THAT THEIR IMAGINARY SEX EXCURSIONS ARE APT TO BE ALL DRESSED UP AS DREAMS OF ROMANCE.

SELF-RIGHTEOUS ANGER ALSO CAN BE VERY ENJOYABLE. IN A PERVERSE WAY WE CAN ACTUALLY TAKE SATISFACTION FROM THE FACT THAT MANY PEOPLE ANNOY US, FOR IT BRINGS A COMFORTABLE FEELING OF SUPERIORITY. GOSSIP BARBED WITH OUR ANGER, A POLITE FORM OF MURDER BY CHARACTER ASSASSINATION, HAS ITS SATISFACTIONS FOR US, TOO. HERE WE ARE NOT TRYING TO HELP THOSE WE CRITICIZE; WE ARE TRYING TO PROCLAIM OUR OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS.

WHEN GLUTTONY IS LESS THAN RUINOUS, WE HAVE A Milder WORD FOR THAT, TOO; WE CALL IT "TAKING OUR COMFORT." WE LIVE IN A WORLD RIDDLED WITH ENVY. TO A GREATER OR LESS DEGREE, EVERYBODY IS INFECTED WITH IT. FROM THIS DEFECT WE MUST SURELY GET A WARPED YET DEFINITE SATISFACTION. ELSE WHY WOULD WE CONSUME SUCH GREAT AMOUNTS OF TIME WISHING FOR WHAT WE HAVE NOT, RATHER THAN WORKING FOR IT, OR ANGRILY LOOKING FOR ATTRIBUTES WE SHALL NEVER HAVE, INSTEAD OF ADJUSTING TO THE FACT, AND ACCEPTING IT? AND HOW OFTEN WE WORK HARD WITH NO BETTER MOTIVE THAN TO BE SECURE AND SLOTHFUL LATER ON--

ONLY WE CALL THAT "RETIRING." CONSIDER, TOO, OUR TALENTS FOR PROCRASTINATION, WHICH IS REALLY SLOTH IN FIVE SYLLABLES.

NEARLY ANYONE COULD SUBMIT A GOOD LIST OF SUCH DEFECTS AS THESE, AND FEW OF US WOULD SERIOUSLY THINK OF GIVING THEM UP, AT LEAST UNTIL THEY CAUSE US EXCESSIVE MISERY.

SOME PEOPLE, OF COURSE, MAY CONCLUDE THAT THEY ARE INDEED READY TO HAVE ALL SUCH DEFECTS TAKEN FROM THEM. BUT EVEN THESE PEOPLE, IF THEY CONSTRUCT A LIST OF STILL Milder DEFECTS, WILL BE OBLIGED TO ADMIT THAT THEY PREFER TO HANG ON TO SOME OF THEM. THEREFORE, IT SEEMS PLAIN THAT FEW OF US CAN QUICKLY OR EASILY BECOME READY TO AIM AT SPIRITUAL AND MORAL PERFECTION; WE WANT TO SETTLE FOR ONLY AS MUCH PERFECTION AS WILL GET US BY IN LIFE, ACCORDING, OF COURSE, TO OUR VARIOUS AND SUNDRY IDEAS OF WHAT WILL GET US BY. SO THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN "THE BOYS AND THE MEN" IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN STRIVING FOR A SELF-DETERMINED OBJECTIVE AND FOR THE PERFECT OBJECTIVE WHICH IS OF GOD.

MANY WILL AT ONCE ASK, "HOW CAN WE ACCEPT THE ENTIRE IMPLICATION OF STEP SIX? WHY--THAT IS PERFECTION!" THIS SOUNDS LIKE A HARD QUESTION, BUT PRACTICALLY SPEAKING, IT ISN'T. ONLY STEP ONE, WHERE WE MADE THE 100 PER CENT ADMISSION WE WERE POWERLESS OVER ALCOHOL, CAN BE PRACTICED WITH ABSOLUTE PERFECTION. THE REMAINING ELEVEN STEPS STATE PERFECT IDEALS. THEY ARE GOALS TOWARD WHICH WE LOOK, AND THE MEASURING STICKS BY WHICH WE ESTIMATE OUR PROGRESS. SEEN IN THIS LIGHT,

STEP SIX IS STILL DIFFICULT, BUT NOT AT ALL IMPOSSIBLE. THE ONLY URGENT THING IS THAT WE MAKE A BEGINNING, AND KEEP TRYING.

IF WE WOULD GAIN ANY REAL ADVANTAGE IN THE USE OF THIS STEP ON PROBLEMS OTHER THAN ALCOHOL, WE SHALL NEED TO MAKE A BRAND NEW VENTURE INTO OPEN MINDEDNESS. WE SHALL NEED TO RAISE OUR EYES TOWARD PERFECTION, AND BE READY TO WALK IN THAT DIRECTION. IT WILL SELDOM MATTER HOW HALTINGLY WE WALK. THE ONLY QUESTION WILL BE, "ARE WE READY?"

LOOKING AGAIN AT THOSE DEFECTS WE ARE STILL UNWILLING TO GIVE UP, WE OUGHT TO ERASE THE HARD AND FAST LINES THAT WE HAVE DRAWN. PERHAPS WE SHALL BE OBLIGED IN SOME CASES STILL TO SAY, "THIS I CANNOT GIVE UP YET...", " BUT WE SHOULD NOT SAY TO OURSELVES, "THIS I WILL NEVER GIVE UP!"

LET'S DISPOSE OF WHAT APPEARS TO BE A HAZARDOUS OPEN END WE HAVE LEFT. IT IS SUGGESTED THAT WE OUGHT TO BECOME ENTIRELY WILLING TO AIM TOWARD PERFECTION. WE NOTE THAT SOME DELAY, HOWEVER, MIGHT BE PARDONED. THAT WORD, IN THE MIND OF A RATIONALIZING ALCOHOLIC, COULD CERTAINLY BE GIVEN A LONG-TERM MEANING. HE COULD SAY, "HOW VERY EASY! SURE, I'LL HEAD TOWARD PERFECTION, BUT I'M CERTAINLY NOT GOING TO HURRY ANY. MAYBE I CAN POSTPONE DEALING WITH SOME OF MY PROBLEMS INDEFINITELY." OF COURSE, THIS WON'T DO. SUCH A BLUFFING OF ONESELF WILL HAVE TO GO THE WAY OF MANY ANOTHER PLEASANT RATIONALIZATION. AT THE VERY LEAST, WE SHALL HAVE TO COME TO GRIPS WITH SOME OF OUR WORST CHARACTER DEFECTS AND TAKE ACTION TOWARD

THEIR REMOVAL AS QUICKLY AS WE CAN.

THE MOMENT WE SAY, "NO, NEVER!" OUR MINDS CLOSE AGAINST THE GRACE OF GOD. DELAY IS DANGEROUS, AND REBELLION MAY BE FATAL. THIS IS THE EXACT POINT AT WHICH WE ABANDON LIMITED OBJECTIVES, AND MOVE TOWARD GOD'S WILL FOR US.

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1. DID YOU HAVE ANY TROUBLE GETTING RID OF YOUR GLARING AND DESTRUCTIVE CHARACTER DEFECTS?
2. IF YOU ARE ONE OF THE FORTUNATE ONES WHO HAS ESCAPED THE EXTREMES, DO YOU CREDIT SPIRITUAL EFFORT AS THE REASON?
3. IS ONE OF YOUR CHARACTER DEFECTS THE FEELING THAT YOU ARE SUPERIOR TO THE NEXT GUY?
4. IS YOUR GREED MASQUERADED AS AMBITION?
5. HOW ABOUT LOVE AND ROMANCE?
6. HOW ABOUT SELF -RIGHTEOUSNESS?
7. HOW ABOUT GOSSIP?
8. DO WE CRITICIZE OTHER PEOPLE?
9. ARE YOU A GLUTTON OR DO YOU CALL IT "TAKING YOUR COMFORT"?
10. DO YOU ENVY YOUR FELLOWMAN?
11. DO YOU PROCRASTINATE?
12. WOULD YOU BECOME WILLING TO LET GO OF A CHARACTER DEFECT YOU LIKED IF IT CAUSED YOU "EXCESSIVE MISERY"?
13. DO YOU THINK NOW THAT SPIRITUAL PERFECTION IS YOUR "CUP OF TEA"?
14. DO YOU SEE WHY STEP SIX SEPARATES THE "MEN FROM THE BOYS"?
15. WHAT IS THE ONLY STEP WE CAN LIVE TO PERFECTION?
16. HOW DO WE MEASURE PROGRESS IN OUR AA LIVES??
17. ARE YOU EXPERIENCING A NEW VENTURE IN "OPEN-MINDEDNESS"?
18. "ARE YOU READY" FOR GOD TO REMOVE?
19. WHEN WE SAY "NO, NEVER" ARE WE AGAIN CLOSING OUR MINDS TO THE GRACE OF GOD?
20. IS REBELLION FATAL, AND DELAY DANGEROUS FOR WE ALCOHOLICS?
21. HAS GOD ALREADY HELPED YOU TO OPEN YOUR MIND MORE TO THE PROPOSITION THAT IT IS NECESSARY TO GROW TOWARDS GOD'S WILL FOR YOU?

CHAPTER TWELVE
STEP SEVEN
PART ONE

HUMBLY ASKED HIM TO REMOVE OUR SHORTCOMINGS.

SINCE THIS STEP SO SPECIFICALLY CONCERNS ITSELF WITH HUMILITY, WE SHOULD PAUSE HERE TO CONSIDER WHAT HUMILITY IS AND WHAT THE PRACTICE OF IT CAN MEAN TO US.

INDEED, THE ATTAINMENT OF GREATER HUMILITY IS THE FOUNDATION PRINCIPLE OF EACH OF AA'S TWELVE STEPS. FOR WITHOUT SOME DEGREE OF HUMILITY, NO ALCOHOLIC CAN STAY SOBER AT ALL. NEARLY ALL AAS HAVE FOUND, TOO, THAT UNLESS THEY DEVELOP MUCH MORE OF THIS PRECIOUS QUALITY THAN MAY BE REQUIRED JUST FOR SOBRIETY, THEY STILL HAVEN'T MUCH CHANCE OF BECOMING TRULY HAPPY. WITHOUT IT, THEY CANNOT LIVE TO MUCH USEFUL PURPOSE, OR, IN ADVERSITY, BE ABLE TO SUMMON THE FAITH THAT CAN MEET ANY EMERGENCY.

HUMILITY, AS A WORD AND AS AN IDEAL, HAS A VERY BAD TIME OF IT IN OUR WORLD. NOT ONLY IS THE IDEA MISUNDERSTOOD; THE WORD ITSELF IS OFTEN INTENSELY DISLIKED. MANY PEOPLE HAVEN'T EVEN A NODDING ACQUAINTANCE WITH HUMILITY AS A WAY OF LIFE. MUCH OF THE EVERYDAY TALK WE HEAR, AND A GREAT DEAL OF WHAT WE READ, HIGHLIGHTS MAN'S PRIDE IN HIS OWN ACHIEVEMENTS.

WITH GREAT INTELLIGENCE, MEN OF SCIENCE HAVE BEEN FORCING NATURE TO DISCLOSE HER SECRETS. THE IMMENSE RESOURCES NOW BEING HARNESSSED PROMISE SUCH A QUANTITY OF MATERIAL BLESSINGS

THAT MANY HAVE COME TO BELIEVE THAT A MAN-MADE MILLENNIUM LIES JUST AHEAD. POVERTY WILL DISAPPEAR, AND THERE WILL BE SUCH ABUNDANCE THAT EVERYBODY CAN HAVE ALL THE SECURITY AND PERSONAL SATISFACTIONS HE DESIRES. THE THEORY SEEMS TO BE THAT ONCE EVERYBODY'S PRIMARY INSTINCTS ARE SATISFIED, THERE WON'T BE MUCH LEFT TO QUARREL ABOUT. THE WORLD WILL THEN TURN HAPPY AND BE FREE TO CONCENTRATE ON CULTURE AND CHARACTER. SOLELY BY THEIR OWN INTELLIGENCE AND LABOR, MEN WILL HAVE SHAPED THEIR OWN DESTINY.

CERTAINLY NO ALCOHOLIC, AND SURELY NO MEMBER OF AA, WANTS TO DEPRECATE MATERIAL ACHIEVEMENT. NOR DO WE ENTER INTO DEBATE WITH THE MANY WHO STILL SO PASSIONATELY CLING TO THE BELIEF THAT TO SATISFY OUR BASIC NATURAL DESIRES IS THE MAIN OBJECT OF LIFE. BUT WE ARE SURE THAT NO CLASS OF PEOPLE IN THE WORLD EVER MADE A WORSE MESS OF TRYING TO LIVE BY THIS FORMULA THAN ALCOHOLICS. FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS WE HAVE BEEN DEMANDING MORE THAN OUR SHARE OF SECURITY, PRESTIGE, AND ROMANCE. WHEN WE SEEMED TO BE SUCCEEDING, WE DRANK TO DREAM STILL GREATER DREAMS. WHEN WE WERE FRUSTRATED, EVEN IN PART, WE DRANK FOR OBLIVION. NEVER WAS THERE ENOUGH OF WHAT WE THOUGHT WE WANTED.

IN ALL THESE STRIVINGS, SO MANY OF THEM WELL-INTENTIONED, OUR CRIPPLING HANDICAP HAD BEEN OUR LACK OF HUMILITY. WE HAD LACKED THE PERSPECTIVE TO SEE THAT CHARACTER-BUILDING

AND SPIRITUAL VALUES HAD TO COME FIRST, AND THAT MATERIAL SATISFACTIONS WERE NOT THE PURPOSE OF LIVING. QUITE CHARACTERISTICALLY, WE HAD GONE ALL OUT IN CONFUSING THE ENDS WITH THE MEANS. INSTEAD OF REGARDING THE SATISFACTION OF OUR MATERIAL DESIRES AS THE MEANS BY WHICH WE COULD LIVE AND FUNCTION AS HUMAN BEINGS, WE HAD TAKEN THESE SATISFACTIONS TO BE THE FINAL END AND AIM OF LIFE.

TRUE, MOST OF US THOUGHT GOOD CHARACTER WAS DESIRABLE, BUT OBVIOUSLY GOOD CHARACTER WAS SOMETHING ONE NEEDED TO GET ON WITH THE BUSINESS OF BEING SELF-SATISFIED. WITH A PROPER DISPLAY OF HONESTY AND MORALITY, WE'D STAND A BETTER CHANCE OF GETTING WHAT WE REALLY WANTED. BUT WHENEVER WE HAD TO CHOOSE BETWEEN CHARACTER AND COMFORT, THE CHARACTER-BUILDING WAS LOST IN THE DUSK OF OUR CHASE AFTER WHAT WE THOUGHT WAS HAPPINESS. SELDOM DID WE LOOK AT CHARACTER-BUILDING AS SOMETHING DESIRABLE IN ITSELF, SOMETHING WE WOULD LIKE TO STRIVE FOR WHETHER OUR INSTINCTUAL NEEDS WERE MET OR NOT. WE NEVER THOUGHT OF MAKING HONESTY, TOLERANCE, AND TRUE LOVE OF MAN AND GOD THE DAILY BASIS OF LIVING.

THIS LACK OF ANCHORAGE TO ANY PERMANENT VALUES, THIS BLINDNESS TO THE TRUE PURPOSE OF OUR LIVES, PRODUCED ANOTHER BAD RESULT. FOR JUST SO LONG AS WE WERE CONVINCED THAT WE COULD LIVE EXCLUSIVELY BY OUR OWN INDIVIDUAL STRENGTH AND INTELLIGENCE, FOR JUST THAT LONG WAS A WORKING FAITH IN A HIGHER POWER IMPOSSIBLE. THIS WAS TRUE EVEN WHEN WE BELIEVED

THAT GOD EXISTED. WE COULD ACTUALLY HAVE EARNEST RELIGIOUS BELIEFS WHICH REMAINED BARREN BECAUSE WE WERE STILL TRYING TO PLAY GOD OURSELVES. AS LONG AS WE PLACED SELF-RELIANCE FIRST, A GENUINE RELIANCE UPON A HIGHER POWER WAS OUT OF THE QUESTION. THAT BASIC INGREDIENT OF ALL HUMILITY, A DESIRE TO SEEK AND DO GOD'S WILL, WAS MISSING.

FOR US, THE PROCESS OF GAINING A NEW PERSPECTIVE WAS UNBELIEVABLY PAINFUL. IT WAS ONLY BY REPEATED HUMILIATIONS THAT WE WERE FORCED TO LEARN SOMETHING ABOUT HUMILITY. IT WAS ONLY AT THE END OF A LONG ROAD, MARKED BY SUCCESSIVE DEFEATS AND HUMILIATIONS, AND THE FINAL CRUSHING OF OUR SELF-SUFFICIENCY, THAT WE BEGAN TO FEEL HUMILITY AS SOMETHING MORE THAN A CONDITION OF GROVELING DESPAIR. EVERY NEWCOMER IN ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS IS TOLD, AND SOON REALIZES FOR HIMSELF, THAT HIS HUMBLE ADMISSION OF POWERLESSNESS OVER ALCOHOL IS HIS FIRST STEP TOWARD LIBERATION FROM ITS PARALYZING GRIP.

SO IT IS THAT WE FIRST SEE HUMILITY AS A NECESSITY. BUT THIS IS THE BAREST BEGINNING. TO GET COMPLETELY AWAY FROM OUR AVERSION TO THE IDEA OF BEING HUMBLE, TO GAIN A VISION OF HUMILITY AS THE AVENUE TO TRUE FREEDOM OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT, TO BE WILLING TO WORK FOR HUMILITY AS SOMETHING TO BE DESIRED FOR ITSELF, TAKES MOST OF US A LONG, LONG TIME. A WHOLE LIFETIME GEARED TO SELF-CENTEREDNESS CANNOT BE SET IN REVERSE ALL AT ONCE. REBELLION DOGS OUR EVERY STEP AT FIRST.

1. WHAT IS YOUR UNDERSTANDING OR YOUR BEST DEFINITION OF HUMILITY?
2. DO YOU BELIEVE THAT SOME DEGREE OF HUMILITY IS NECESSARY TO STAY SOBER?
3. IS HUMILITY THE KEY TO HAPPINESS?
4. DO YOU LIKE THE WORD "HUMILITY"?
5. DOES PRIDE DESTROY HUMILITY?
6. IS ONE OF THE BASIC NATURAL INSTINCTS OF AN ALCOHOLIC HUMILITY?
7. DOES AN ALCOHOLIC EVER HAVE WHAT HE OR SHE REALLY WANTS?
8. DO YOU BELIEVE ONE OF OUR CRIPPLING HANDICAPS HAS BEEN OUR LACK OF HUMILITY?
9. WHAT BUILDS HUMILITY IN AN ALCOHOLIC LIFE?
10. DOES AN ALCOHOLIC THINK MATERIAL VALUES ARE THE FINAL END AND AIM OF LIFE?
11. AS AN ACTIVE ALCOHOLIC, WHEN WE HAD TO CHOOSE BETWEEN CHARACTER AND COMFORT, WHICH WON OUT?
12. DOES AN ACTIVE ALCOHOLIC THINK OF MAKING HONESTY, TOLERANCE, AND TRUE LOVE OF MAN AND GOD THE BASIS OF LIVING?
13. COULD YOU SAY THAT AN ACTIVE ALCOHOLIC IS BLIND TO THE TRUE PURPOSE OF LIFE?
14. WERE YOU A "ONE MAN SHOW" AS AN ACTIVE ALCOHOLIC?
15. WERE YOUR RELIGIOUS BELIEFS BARREN BECAUSE YOU WERE TRYING TO PLAY GOD?
16. WHAT IS THE BASIC INGREDIENT OF ALL HUMILITY?
17. WHAT FORCED YOU TO LEARN SOMETHING ABOUT HUMILITY?
18. WAS THE STRAW THAT BROKE THE CAMEL'S BACK THE FINAL CRUSHING OF OUR SELF-SUFFICIENCY?
19. IS THE HUMBLE ADMISSION OF POWERLESSNESS OVER ALCOHOL OUR FIRST STEP TOWARD HUMILITY?
20. DO YOU SEE HUMILITY AS A NECESSITY?

21. IS HUMILITY SOMETHING EASY TO OBTAIN AND KEEP?
22. DO YOU BELIEVE SELFISHNESS AND SELF-CENTEREDNESS ARE THE ROOT OF AN ALCOHOLIC'S TROUBLES AND CAN THESE BE SET IN REVERSE ALL AT ONCE?

CHAPTER THIRTEEN
STEP SEVEN
PART TWO

HUMBLY ASKED HIM TO REMOVE OUR SHORTCOMINGS

WHEN WE HAVE FINALLY ADMITTED WITHOUT RESERVATION THAT WE ARE POWERLESS OVER ALCOHOL, WE ARE APT TO BREATHE A GREAT SIGH OF RELIEF, SAYING, "WELL, THANK GOD THAT'S OVER! I'LL NEVER HAVE TO GO THROUGH THAT AGAIN!" THEN WE LEARN, OFTEN TO OUR CONSTERNATION, THAT THIS IS ONLY THE FIRST MILESTONE ON THE NEW ROAD WE ARE WALKING. STILL GOADED BY SHEER NECESSITY, WE RELUCTANTLY COME TO GRIPS WITH THOSE SERIOUS CHARACTER FLAWS THAT MADE PROBLEM DRINKERS OF US IN THE FIRST PLACE, FLAWS WHICH MUST BE DEALT WITH TO PREVENT A RETREAT INTO ALCOHOLISM ONCE AGAIN. WE WILL WANT TO BE RID OF SOME OF THESE DEFECTS, BUT IN SOME INSTANCES THIS WILL APPEAR TO BE AN IMPOSSIBLE JOB FROM WHICH WE RECOIL. AND WE CLING WITH A PASSIONATE PERSISTENCE TO OTHERS WHICH ARE JUST AS DISTURBING TO OUR EQUILIBRIUM, BECAUSE WE STILL ENJOY THEM TOO MUCH. HOW CAN WE POSSIBLY SUMMON THE RESOLUTION AND THE WILLINGNESS TO GET RID OF SUCH OVERWHELMING COMPULSIONS AND DESIRES?

BUT AGAIN WE ARE DRIVEN ON BY THE INESCAPABLE CONCLUSION WHICH WE DRAW FROM AA EXPERIENCE, THAT WE SURELY MUST TRY WITH A WILL, OR ELSE FALL BY THE WAYSIDE. AT THIS STAGE OF OUR PROGRESS WE ARE UNDER HEAVY PRESSURE AND COERCION TO DO

THE RIGHT THING. WE ARE OBLIGED TO CHOOSE BETWEEN THE PAINS OF TRYING AND THE CERTAIN PENALTIES OF FAILING TO DO SO. THESE INITIAL STEPS ALONG THE ROAD ARE TAKEN GRUDGINGLY, YET WE DO TAKE THEM. WE MAY STILL HAVE NO VERY HIGH OPINION OF HUMILITY AS A DESIRABLE PERSONAL VIRTUE, BUT WE DO RECOGNIZE IT AS A NECESSARY AID TO OUR SURVIVAL.

BUT WHEN WE HAVE TAKEN A SQUARE LOOK AT SOME OF THESE DEFECTS, HAVE DISCUSSED THEM WITH ANOTHER, AND HAVE BECOME WILLING TO HAVE THEM REMOVED, OUR THINKING ABOUT HUMILITY COMMENCES TO HAVE A WIDER MEANING. BY THIS TIME IN ALL PROBABILITY WE HAVE GAINED SOME MEASURE OF RELEASE FROM OUR MORE DEVASTATING HANDICAPS. WE ENJOY MOMENTS IN WHICH THERE IS SOMETHING LIKE REAL PEACE OF MIND. TO THOSE OF US WHO HAVE HITHERTO KNOWN ONLY EXCITEMENT, DEPRESSION, OR ANXIETY--IN OTHER WORDS, TO ALL OF US--THIS NEW-FOUND PEACE IS A PRICELESS GIFT. SOMETHING NEW INDEED HAS BEEN ADDED. WHERE HUMILITY HAD FORMERLY STOOD FOR A FORCED FEEDING ON HUMBLE PIE, IT NOW BEGINS TO MEAN THE NOURISHING INGREDIENT WHICH CAN GIVE US SERENITY.

THIS IMPROVED PERCEPTION OF HUMILITY STARTS ANOTHER REVOLUTIONARY CHANGE IN OUR OUTLOOK. OUR EYES BEGIN TO OPEN TO THE IMMENSE VALUES WHICH HAVE COME STRAIGHT OUT OF PAINFUL EGO-PUNCTURING. UNTIL NOW, OUR LIVES HAVE BEEN LARGELY DEVOTED TO RUNNING FROM PAIN AND PROBLEMS. WE FLED FROM THEM AS FROM A PLAGUE. WE NEVER WANTED TO DEAL WITH THE

FACT OF SUFFERING. ESCAPE VIA THE BOTTLE WAS ALWAYS OUR SOLUTION. CHARACTER-BUILDING THROUGH SUFFERING MIGHT BE ALL RIGHT FOR SAINTS, BUT IT CERTAINLY DIDN'T APPEAL TO US.

THEN, IN AA, WE LOOKED AND LISTENED. EVERYWHERE WE SAW FAILURE AND MISERY TRANSFORMED BY HUMILITY INTO PRICELESS ASSETS. WE HEARD STORY AFTER STORY OF HOW HUMILITY HAD BROUGHT STRENGTH OUT OF WEAKNESS. IN EVERY CASE, PAIN HAD BEEN THE PRICE OF ADMISSION INTO A NEW LIFE. BUT THIS ADMISSION PRICE HAD PURCHASED MORE THAN WE EXPECTED. IT BROUGHT A MEASURE OF HUMILITY, WHICH WE SOON DISCOVERED TO BE A HEALER OF PAIN. WE BEGAN TO FEAR PAIN LESS, AND DESIRE HUMILITY MORE THAN EVER.

DURING THIS PROCESS OF LEARNING MORE ABOUT HUMILITY, THE MOST PROFOUND RESULT OF ALL WAS THE CHANGE IN OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD GOD. AND THIS WAS TRUE WHETHER WE HAD BEEN BELIEVERS OR UNBELIEVERS. WE BEGAN TO GET OVER THE IDEA THAT THE HIGHER POWER WAS A SORT OF BUSH LEAGUE PINCH-HITTER, TO BE CALLED UPON ONLY IN AN EMERGENCY. THE NOTION THAT WE WOULD STILL LIVE OUR OWN LIVES, GOD HELPING A LITTLE NOW AND THEN, BEGAN TO EVAPORATE. MANY OF US WHO HAD THOUGHT OURSELVES RELIGIOUS AWOKE TO THE LIMITATIONS OF THIS ATTITUDE. REFUSING TO PLACE GOD FIRST, WE HAD DEPRIVED OURSELVES OF HIS HELP. BUT NOW THE WORDS, "OF MYSELF I AM NOTHING, THE FATHER DOETH THE WORKS," BEGAN TO CARRY BRIGHT PROMISE AND MEANING.

WE SAW WE NEEDN'T ALWAYS BE BLUDGEONED AND BEATEN INTO

HUMILITY. IT COULD COME QUITE AS MUCH FOR OUR VOLUNTARY REACHING FOR IT AS IT COULD FROM UNREMITTING SUFFERING. A GREAT TURNING POINT IN OUR LIVES CAME WHEN WE SOUGHT FOR HUMILITY AS SOMETHING WE REALLY WANTED, RATHER THAN AS SOMETHING WE MUST HAVE. IT MARKED THE TIME WHEN WE COULD COMMENCE TO SEE THE FULL IMPLICATION OF STEP SEVEN: "HUMBLY ASKED HIM TO REMOVE OUR SHORTCOMINGS."

AS WE APPROACH THE ACTUAL TAKING OF STEP SEVEN, IT MIGHT BE WELL IF WE ASK INQUIRE ONCE MORE JUST WHAT OUR DEEPER OBJECTIVES ARE. EACH OF US WOULD LIKE TO LIVE AT PEACE WITH HIMSELF AND WITH HIS FELLOWS. WE WOULD LIKE TO BE ASSURED THAT THE GRACE OF GOD CAN DO FOR US WHAT WE CANNOT DO FOR OURSELVES. WE HAVE SEEN THAT CHARACTER DEFECTS BASED UPON SHORTSIGHTED OR UNWORTHY DESIRES ARE THE OBSTACLES THAT BLOCK OUR PATH TOWARD THESE OBJECTIVES. WE NOW CLEARLY SEE THAT WE HAVE BEEN MAKING UNREASONABLE DEMANDS UPON OURSELVES, UPON OTHERS, AND UPON GOD.

THE CHIEF ACTIVATOR OF OUR DEFECTS HAS BEEN SELF-CENTERED FEAR--PRIMARILY FEAR THAT WE WOULD LOSE SOMETHING WE ALREADY POSSESSED OR WOULD FAIL TO GET SOMETHING WE DEMANDED. LIVING UPON A BASIS OF UNSATISFIED DEMANDS, WE WERE IN A STATE OF CONTINUAL DISTURBANCE AND FRUSTRATION. THEREFORE, NO PEACE WAS TO BE HAD UNLESS WE COULD FIND A MEANS OF REDUCING THESE DEMANDS. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A DEMAND AND A SIMPLE

REQUEST IS PLAIN TO ANYONE.

THE SEVENTH STEP IS WHERE WE MAKE THE CHANGE IN OUR ATTITUDE WHICH PERMITS US, WITH HUMILITY AS OUR GUIDE, TO MOVE OUT FROM OURSELVES TOWARD OTHERS AND TOWARD GOD. THE WHOLE EMPHASIS OF STEP SEVEN IS ON HUMILITY. IT IS REALLY SAYING TO US THAT WE NOW OUGHT TO BE WILLING TO TRY HUMILITY IN SEEKING THE REMOVAL OF OUR OTHER SHORTCOMINGS JUST AS WE DID WHEN WE ADMITTED THAT WE WERE POWERLESS OVER ALCOHOL, AND CAME TO BELIEVE THAT A POWER GREATER THAN OURSELVES COULD RESTORE US TO SANITY. IF THAT DEGREE OF HUMILITY COULD ENABLE US TO FIND THE GRACE BY WHICH SUCH A DEADLY OBSESSION COULD BE BANISHED, THEN THERE MUST BE HOPE OF THE SAME RESULT RESPECTING ANY OTHER PROBLEM WE COULD POSSIBLY HAVE.

1. WERE YOU RELIEVED WHEN YOU ADMITTED YOU WERE POWERLESS?
2. DO YOU STILL TAKE THOSE SERIOUS CHARACTER DEFECTS LIGHTLY?
3. DO YOU REALIZE THESE SAME CHARACTER FLAWS MIGHT BE WHAT CAUSED YOUR ALCOHOLISM?
4. WHICH OF YOUR CHARACTER DEFECTS WILL GET YOU DRUNK, THE ONES YOU CARE NOTHING ABOUT OR THE ONES YOU LIKE AND ENJOY?
5. ARE YOU GETTING WITHIN YOURSELF A DESIRE TO DO THE RIGHT THING?
6. DO YOU BELIEVE "HUMILITY" IS A DESIRABLE PERSONAL VIRTUE?
7. IS YOUR THINKING OF HUMILITY GETTING A WIDER MEANING?
8. DO YOU FEEL YOU HAVE RECEIVED RELEASE FROM SOME OF YOUR HANDICAPS?
9. DO YOU NOW ENJOY MOMENTS OF SOMETHING LIKE "REAL PEACE OF MIND"?
10. DO YOU BELIEVE "PEACE OF MIND" IS A PRICELESS GIFT?
11. IS YOUR DEFINITION OF HUMILITY WIDENING FROM A FORCED FEEDING ON HUMBLE PIE TO A NEW MEANING OF A NOURISHING INGREDIENT WHICH CAN GIVE US SERENITY?
12. DO YOU THINK THAT YOUR EGO HAS BEEN PUNCTURED? HAS SOME OF YOUR HOT AIR ATTITUDE DEFLATED?
13. CAN YOU SEE HOW HUMILITY HAS BROUGHT STRENGTH OUT OF WEAKNESS?
14. DO YOU BELIEVE PAIN IS THE ADMISSION TO A NEW WAY OF LIFE?
15. IS YOUR ATTITUDE CHANGING TOWARD THE GOD OF YOUR UNDERSTANDING?
16. HAVE YOU BEEN DEPRIVING YOURSELF OF GOD'S HELP?
17. DO YOU BELIEVE YOU HAVE MADE OR HAVE BEEN MAKING UNREASONABLE DEMANDS UPON YOURSELF, UPON OTHERS AND UPON GOD?
18. WHAT IS THE CHIEF ACTIVATOR OF OUR DEFECTS?
19. DO YOU GET A MESSAGE THROUGH STEP SEVEN THAT WE SHOULD TRY A LITTLE HUMILITY?

CHAPTER FOURTEEN
STEP EIGHT

MADE A LIST OF ALL PERSONS WE HAD HARMED, AND BECAME WILLING TO MAKE AMENDS TO THEM ALL.

OUR CO-FOUNDER BILL W. SAID, "MY SCHOOL MATE VISITED ME, AND I FULLY ACQUAINTED HIM WITH MY PROBLEMS AND DEFICIENCIES. WE MADE A LIST OF PEOPLE I HAD HURT OR TOWARD WHOM I FELT RESENTMENT. I EXPRESSED MY ENTIRE WILLINGNESS TO APPROACH THESE INDIVIDUALS, ADMITTING MY WRONG. NEVER WAS I TO BE CRITICAL OF THEM. I WAS TO RIGHT ALL SUCH MATTERS TO THE UTMOST OF MY ABILITY.

" MY FRIEND PROMISED WHEN THESE THINGS WERE DONE I WOULD ENTER UPON A NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH MY CREATOR; THAT I WOULD HAVE THE ELEMENTS OF A WAY OF LIFE WHICH ANSWERED ALL MY PROBLEMS. BELIEF IN THE POWER OF GOD, PLUS ENOUGH WILLINGNESS, HONESTY AND HUMILITY TO ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN THE NEW ORDER OF THINGS, WERE THE ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS."

IF WE ARE TO LIVE, WE MUST BE FREE OF ANGER. THE GROUCH AND THE BRAINSTORM ARE NOT FOR US. THEY MAY BE THE DUBIOUS LUXURY OF NORMAL MEN, BUT FOR ALCOHOLICS THESE THINGS ARE POISON.

THIS IS OUR COURSE: REALIZE AT ONCE THAT THE PEOPLE WHO WRONG YOU ARE SPIRITUALLY SICK. THOUGH YOU DON'T LIKE THEIR SYMPTOMS AND THE WAY THESE DISTURB YOU, THEY, LIKE YOURSELF,

ARE SICK, TOO. ASK GOD TO HELP YOU SHOW THEM THE SAME TOLERANCE, PITY, AND PATIENCE THAT YOU WOULD CHEERFULLY GRANT A FRIEND WHO HAS CANCER. WHEN A PERSON NEXT OFFENDS, SAY TO YOURSELF, "THIS IS A SICK MAN. HOW CAN I BE HELPFUL TO HIM? GOD SAVE ME FROM BEING ANGRY. THY WILL BE DONE."

NOW ABOUT SEX. YOU CAN PROBABLY STAND AN OVERHAULING THERE. WE NEEDED IT. BUT ABOVE ALL, LET'S BE SENSIBLE ON THIS QUESTION. IT'S SO EASY TO GET WAY OFF THE TRACK. HERE WE FIND HUMAN OPINIONS RUNNING TO EXTREMES--ABSURD EXTREMES, PERHAPS. ONE SET OF VOICES CRY THAT SEX IS A LUST OF OUR LOWER NATURE, A BASE NECESSITY OF PROCREATION. THEN WE HAVE THE VOICES WHO CRY FOR SEX AND MORE SEX; WHO BEWAIL THE INSTITUTION OF MARRIAGE; WHO THINK THAT MOST OF THE TROUBLES OF THE RACE ARE TRACEABLE TO SEX CAUSES. THEY THINK WE DO NOT HAVE ENOUGH OF IT, OR THAT IT ISN'T THE RIGHT KIND. THEY SEE ITS SIGNIFICANCE EVERYWHERE. ONE SCHOOL WOULD ALLOW MAN NO FLAVOR FOR HIS FLARE AND THE OTHER WOULD HAVE US ALL ON A STRAIGHT PEPPER DIET. WE WANT TO STAY OUT OF ALL THIS CONTROVERSY. WE DO NOT WANT TO BE THE ARBITER OF ANYONE'S SEX CONDUCT. WE ALL HAVE SEX PROBLEMS. WE'D HARDLY BE HUMAN IF WE DIDN'T. WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT THEM?

REVIEW YOUR OWN CONDUCT OVER THE YEARS PAST. WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN SELFISH, DISHONEST, OR INCONSIDERATE? WHOM DID YOU HURT? DID YOU UNJUSTIFIABLY AROUSE JEALOUSY, SUSPICION OR BITTERNESS? WHERE YOU WERE AT FAULT, WHAT SHOULD

YOU HAVE DONE INSTEAD? GET THIS ALL DOWN ON PAPER AND LOOK AT IT.

WHATEVER YOUR IDEAL MAY BE, YOU MUST BE WILLING TO GROW TOWARD IT. YOU MUST BE WILLING TO MAKE AMENDS WHERE YOU HAVE DONE HARM, PROVIDED THAT YOU WILL NOT BRING ABOUT STILL MORE HARM IN DOING SO. IN OTHER WORDS, TREAT SEX AS YOU WOULD ANY OTHER PROBLEM. IN MEDITATION, ASK GOD WHAT YOU SHOULD DO ABOUT EACH SPECIFIC MATTER. THE RIGHT ANSWER WILL COME, IF YOU WANT IT.

NOW YOU NEED MORE ACTION, WITHOUT WHICH YOU WILL FIND THAT "FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD." YOU HAVE A LIST OF ALL PERSONS YOU HAVE HARMED AND TO WHOM YOU ARE WILLING TO MAKE COMPLETE AMENDS. YOU MADE IT WHEN YOU TOOK INVENTORY. YOU SUBJECTED YOURSELF TO A DRASTIC SELF-APPRAISAL. NOW YOU ARE TO GO OUT TO YOUR FELLOWS AND REPAIR THE DAMAGE YOU DID IN THE PAST. YOU ARE TO SWEEP AWAY THE DEBRIS WHICH HAS ACCUMULATED OUT OF YOUR EFFORT TO LIVE ON SELF-WILL AND RUN THE SHOW YOURSELF. IF YOU HAVEN'T THE WILL TO DO THIS, ASK UNTIL IT COMES. REMEMBER YOU AGREED AT THE BEGINNING YOU WOULD GO TO ANY LENGTHS FOR VICTORY OVER ALCOHOL.

THE INCONSISTENCY IS MADE WORSE BY THE THINGS WE DID ON SPREES. COMING TO OUR SENSES, WE ARE REVOLTED AT CERTAIN EPISODES WE VAGUELY REMEMBER. THESE MEMORIES ARE A NIGHT-MARE. WE TREMBLE TO THINK SOMEONE MIGHT HAVE OBSERVED US.

AS FAST AS WE CAN, WE PUSH THESE MEMORIES FAR INSIDE OURSELVES. WE HOPE THEY WILL NEVER SEE THE LIGHT OF DAY. WE ARE UNDER CONSTANT FEAR AND TENSION--THAT MAKES FOR MORE DRINKING.

USUALLY, HOWEVER, OTHER PEOPLE ARE INVOLVED. THEREFORE, YOU ARE NOT TO BE THE HASTY AND FOOLISH MARTYR WHO WOULD NEEDLESSLY SACRIFICE OTHERS TO SAVE HIMSELF FROM THE ALCOHOLIC PIT. A MAN WE KNOW HAD REMARRIED. BECAUSE OF RESENTMENT AND DRINKING, HE HAD NOT PAID ALIMONY TO HIS FIRST WIFE. SHE WAS FURIOUS. SHE WENT TO COURT AND GOT AN ORDER FOR HIS ARREST. HE HAD COMMENCED OUR WAY OF LIFE, HAD SECURED A POSITION, AND WAS GETTING HIS HEAD ABOVE WATER. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN IMPRESSIVE HEROICS IF HE HAD WALKED UP TO THE JUDGE AND SAID, "HERE I AM."

WE THOUGHT HE OUGHT TO BE WILLING TO DO THAT IF NECESSARY, BUT IF HE WERE IN JAIL, HE COULD PROVIDE NOTHING FOR EITHER FAMILY. WE SUGGESTED HE WRITE HIS FIRST WIFE ADMITTING HIS FAULTS AND ASKING FORGIVENESS. HE DID, AND ALSO SENT A SMALL AMOUNT OF MONEY. HE TOLD HER THAT HE WOULD TRY TO DO SO IN THE FUTURE. HE SAID HE WAS PERFECTLY WILLING TO GO TO JAIL IF SHE INSISTED. OF COURSE SHE DID NOT, AND THE WHOLE SITUATION HAS LONG SINCE BEEN ADJUSTED.

PERHAPS YOU HAVE COMMITTED A CRIMINAL OFFENSE WHICH MIGHT LAND YOU IN JAIL IF KNOWN TO THE AUTHORITIES. YOU MAY BE SHORT IN YOUR ACCOUNTS AND CAN'T MAKE GOOD. YOU HAVE ALREADY ADMITTED THIS IN CONFIDENCE TO ANOTHER PERSON, BUT

YOU ARE SURE YOU WOULD BE IMPRISONED OR LOSE YOUR JOB IF IT WERE KNOWN. MAYBE IT'S ONLY A PETTY OFFENSE SUCH AS PADDING YOUR EXPENSE ACCOUNT. MOST OF US HAVE DONE THAT SORT OF THING. MAYBE YOU HAVE DIVORCED YOUR WIFE. YOU HAVE REMARRIED BUT HAVEN'T KEPT UP THE ALIMONY TO NUMBER ONE. SHE WAS INDIGNANT ABOUT IT, AND HAS A WARRANT OUT FOR YOUR ARREST. THAT'S A COMMON FORM OF TROUBLE, TOO.

WHATEVER THE SITUATION, YOU USUALLY HAVE TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT. IF YOU ARE SURE YOUR WIFE DOES NOT KNOW, SHOULD YOU TELL HER? NOT ALWAYS, WE THINK. IF SHE KNOWS IN A GENERAL WAY THAT YOU HAVE BEEN WILD, SHOULD YOU TELL HER IN DETAIL? UNDOUBTEDLY YOU SHOULD ADMIT YOUR FAULT. YOUR WIFE MAY INSIST ON KNOWING ALL THE PARTICULARS. SHE WILL WANT TO KNOW WHO THE WOMAN IS AND WHERE SHE IS. WE FEEL YOU OUGHT TO SAY TO HER THAT YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO INVOLVE ANOTHER PERSON. YOU ARE SORRY FOR WHAT YOU HAVE DONE, AND GOD WILLING, IT SHALL NOT BE REPEATED. MORE THAN THAT YOU CANNOT DO; YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO GO FURTHER. THOUGH THERE MAY BE JUSTIFIABLE EXCEPTIONS, AND THOUGH WE WISH TO LAY DOWN NO RULE OF ANY SORT, WE HAVE OFTEN FOUND THIS THE BEST COURSE TO TAKE.

THIS BRINGS TO MIND A STORY ABOUT ONE OF OUR FRIENDS. WHILE DRINKING, HE ACCEPTED A SUM OF MONEY FROM A BITTERLY-HATED BUSINESS RIVAL, GIVING HIM NO RECEIPT FOR IT. HE SUBSEQUENTLY DENIED HAVING TAKEN THE MONEY AND USED THE INCIDENT AS A BASIS FOR DISCREDITING THE MAN. HE THUS USED HIS OWN WRONG-

DOING AS A MEANS OF DESTROYING THE REPUTATION OF ANOTHER. IN FACT, HIS RIVAL WAS RUINED.

HE FELT HE HAD DONE A WRONG HE COULD NOT POSSIBLY MAKE RIGHT. IF HE OPENED THAT OLD AFFAIR, HE WAS SURE IT WOULD DESTROY THE REPUTATION OF HIS PARTNER, DISGRACE HIS FAMILY AND TAKE AWAY HIS OWN MEANS OF LIVELIHOOD. WHAT RIGHT HAD HE TO INVOLVE THOSE DEPENDENT UPON HIM? HOW COULD HE POSSIBLY MAKE A PUBLIC STATEMENT EXONERATING HIS RIVAL?

HE FINALLY CAME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT IS WAS BETTER TO TAKE THOSE RISKS THAN TO STAND BEFORE HIS CREATOR GUILTY OF SUCH RUINOUS SLANDER. HE SAW THAT HE HAD TO PLACE THE OUTCOME IN GOD'S HANDS OR HE WOULD SOON START DRINKING AGAIN, AND ALL WOULD BE LOST ANYHOW. HE ATTENDED CHURCH FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MANY YEARS. AFTER THE SERMON, HE QUIETLY GOT UP AND MADE AN EXPLANATION. HIS ACTION MET WIDESPREAD APPROVAL, AND TODAY HE IS ONE OF THE MOST TRUSTED CITIZENS OF HIS TOWN. THIS ALL HAPPENED THREE YEARS AGO.

IF TAKING DRASTIC ACTION IS GOING TO IMPLICATE OTHER PEOPLE, THEY SHOULD BE CONSULTED. USE EVERY MEANS TO AVOID WIDESPREAD DAMAGE. YOU CANNOT SHRINK, HOWEVER, FROM THE FINAL STEP IF THAT IS CLEARLY INDICATED. IF, AFTER SEEKING ADVICE, CONSULTING OTHERS INVOLVED, AND ASKING GOD TO GUIDE YOU, THERE APPEARS NO OTHER JUST AND HONORABLE SOLUTION THAN THE MOST DRASTIC ONE, YOU MUST TAKE YOUR MEDICINE. TRUST

THAT THE EVENTUAL OUTCOME WILL BE RIGHT.

YES, THERE IS A LONG PERIOD OF RECONSTRUCTION AHEAD. YOU MUST TAKE THE LEAD. A REMORSEFUL MUMBLING THAT YOU ARE SORRY WON'T FILL THE BILL AT ALL. YOU OUGHT TO SIT DOWN WITH YOUR FAMILY AND FRANKLY ANALYZE YOUR PAST AS YOU NOW SEE IT, BEING VERY CAREFUL NOT TO CRITICIZE THEM. NEVER MIND THEIR DEFECTS. THEY MAY BE GLARING, BUT THE CHANCES ARE THAT YOUR OWN ACTIONS ARE PARTLY RESPONSIBLE. SO CLEAN HOUSE WITH THE FAMILY, ASKING EACH MORNING IN MEDITATION THAT YOUR CREATOR SHOW YOU THE WAY OF PATIENCE, TOLERANCE, KINDLINESS AND LOVE.

THERE ARE SOME CASES WHERE THE UTMOST FRANKNESS IS DEMANDED. PERHAPS YOURS IS ONE OF THEM. NO OUTSIDER CAN APPRAISE SUCH AN INTIMATE SITUATION. IT MAY BE YOU WILL BOTH DECIDE THAT THE WAY OF GOOD SENSE AND LOVING KINDNESS IS TO LET BY-GONES BE BY-GONES. EACH OF YOU MIGHT PRAY ABOUT IT, HAVING THE OTHER ONE'S HAPPINESS UPPERMOST IN MIND. KEEP IT ALWAYS IN SIGHT THAT YOU DEAL WITH THAT MOST TERRIBLE HUMAN EMOTION --JEALOUSY. GOOD GENERALSHIP MAY DECIDE THAT YOU AND YOUR WIFE ATTACK THE PROBLEM ON THE FLANK, RATHER THAN RISK FACE-TO-FACE COMBAT. YOU HAVE TO DECIDE ABOUT THAT ALONE WITH YOUR CREATOR.

OUR DESIGN FOR LIVING IS NOT A ONE-WAY STREET. IT IS AS GOOD FOR THE WIFE AS FOR THE HUSBAND. IF YOU CAN FORGET, SO CAN

SHE. IT IS BETTER, HOWEVER, THAT YOU DO NOT NEEDLESS NAME A PERSON UPON WHOM SHE CAN VENT HER NATURAL JEALOUSY.

SHOULD YOU HAVE NO SUCH COMPLICATION, THERE IS STILL PLENTY YOU SHOULD DO AT HOME. SOMETIMES WE HEAR AN ALCOHOLIC SAY THAT THE ONLY THING HE NEEDS TO DO IS TO KEEP SOBER. CERTAINLY HE NEEDS TO KEEP SOBER, FOR THERE WILL BE NO HOME IF HE DOESN'T. BUT HE IS YET A LONG WAY FROM MAKING GOOD TO THE WIFE OR PARENTS WHOM FOR YEARS HE HAS SO SHOCKINGLY TREATED. PASSING ALL UNDERSTANDING IS THE PATIENCE MOTHERS AND WIVES HAVE HAD WITH ALCOHOLICS. HAD THIS NOT BEEN SO, MANY OF US WOULD HAVE NO HOMES TODAY, WOULD PERHAPS BE DEAD.

HENRY FORD ONCE MADE A WISE REMARK TO THE EFFECT THAT EXPERIENCE IS THE THING OF SUPREME VALUE IN LIFE. THAT IS TRUE ONLY IF ONE IS WILLING TO TURN THE PAST TO GOOD ACCOUNT. WE GROW BY OUR WILLINGNESS TO FACE AND RECTIFY ERRORS AND CONVERT THEM INTO ASSETS. THE ALCOHOLIC'S PAST THUS BECOMES THE PRINCIPAL ASSET OF THE FAMILY, AND FREQUENTLY IT IS THE ONLY ONE!

1. DO YOU FEEL THAT YOU ARE GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH YOUR PROBLEMS?
2. DO YOU SEE MORE AND MORE THE PATTERN OF TRUTH THE TWELVE STEPS ARE EXTRACTING FROM YOU?
3. ARE YOU REJECTING ANY PART OF THE TRUTH?
4. DO YOU LIKE THE "NEW ORDER OF THINGS"?
5. WHAT IS POISON FOR AN ALCOHOLIC?
6. DOES IT DISTURB YOU TO SEE A SEX POT IN AA? DO YOU FEEL LIKE YOU ARE ELIGIBLE TO CAST THE FIRST STONE?
7. HAVE YOU STARTED TO MAKE YOUR LIST?
8. ARE YOU WILLING TO MAKE AMENDS TO THOSE YOU HAVE HARMED?
9. CAN YOU AGAIN USE YOUR EARLIER INVENTORY TO HELP MAKE THE LIST?
10. DO YOU NEEDLESSLY SACRIFICE OTHERS TO SAVE YOURSELF?
11. SHOULD YOU ADVISE PEOPLE YOU ARE GOING TO IMPLICATE BEFORE HAND?
12. DO YOU THINK IT WISE TO ASK GOD TO HELP YOU IN THESE AMENDS?
13. WILL SAYING YOU ARE SORRY PAY THE BILL?
14. SHOULD YOU, IN THE MEANTIME, TELL EVERYBODY ABOUT THEIR DEFECTS?
15. COULD YOU STAND IN FRONT OF YOUR GROUP OF PEERS AND ADMIT YOUR WRONGS?
16. DO YOU BELIEVE YOU AND GOD ARE THE ONLY ONES WHO CAN APPRAISE YOUR SITUATIONS IN MAKING AMENDS?
17. DO YOU THINK YOUR LIFE IS A "ONE WAY STREET"?
18. DO YOU THINK THAT STAYING SOBER IS ENOUGH?
19. ARE YOU WILLING TO TURN THE PAST TO GOOD ACCOUNT?

CHAPTER FIFTEEN
STEP NINE

MADE DIRECT AMENDS TO SUCH PEOPLE WHEREVER POSSIBLE, EXCEPT WHEN TO DO SO WOULD INJURE THEM OR OTHERS.

THE DOCTOR SAID: "YOU HAVE THE MIND OF A CHRONIC ALCOHOLIC. I HAVE NEVER SEEN ONE SINGLE CASE RECOVER, 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.

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 PHENOMENA. 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."

THERE IS A SOLUTION. ALMOST NONE OF US LIKED THE SELF-SEARCHING, THE LEVELLING 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.

TAKE UP YOUR LIST AGAIN. PUTTING OUT OF YOUR MIND THE WRONGS OTHERS HAVE DONE, RESOLUTELY LOOK FOR YOUR OWN MISTAKES. WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN SELFISH, DISHONEST, SELF-SEEKING AND FRIGHTENED? THOUGH A SITUATION MAY NOT BE ENTIRELY YOUR FAULT, DISREGARD THE OTHER PERSON INVOLVED ENTIRELY. SEE WHERE YOU HAVE BEEN TO BLAME. THIS IS YOUR INVENTORY, NOT THE OTHER MAN'S. WHEN YOU SEE YOUR FAULT WRITE IT DOWN ON THE LIST. SEE IT BEFORE YOU IN BLACK AND WHITE. ADMIT YOUR WRONGS HONESTLY AND BE WILLING TO SET THESE MATTERS STRAIGHT.

WHATEVER YOUR IDEAL MAY BE, YOU MUST BE WILLING TO GROW TOWARD IT. YOU MUST BE WILLING TO MAKE AMENDS WHERE YOU HAVE DONE HARM, PROVIDED THAT YOU WILL NOT BRING ABOUT STILL MORE HARM IN SO DOING. IN OTHER WORDS, TREAT ALL PROBLEMS CORRECTLY. IN MEDITATION, ASK GOD WHAT YOU SHOULD

DO ABOUT EACH SPECIFIC MATTER. THE RIGHT ANSWER WILL COME, IF YOU WANT IT.

IF YOU HAVE BEEN THOROUGH ABOUT YOUR PERSONAL INVENTORY, YOU HAVE WRITTEN DOWN A LOT BY THIS TIME. YOU HAVE LISTED AND ANALYZED YOUR RESENTMENTS. YOU HAVE BEGUN TO COMPREHEND THEIR FUTILITY AND THEIR FATALITY. YOU HAVE COMMENCED TO SEE THEIR TERRIBLE DESTRUCTIVENESS. YOU HAVE BEGUN TO LEARN TOLERANCE, PATIENCE AND GOOD WILL TOWARD ALL MEN, EVEN YOUR ENEMIES, FOR YOU KNOW THEM TO BE SICK PEOPLE. YOU HAVE LISTED THE PEOPLE YOU HAVE HURT BY YOUR CONDUCT, AND YOU ARE WILLING TO STRAIGHTEN OUT THE PAST IF YOU CAN.

THIS IS PERHAPS DIFFICULT -- ESPECIALLY DISCUSSING YOUR DEFECTS WITH ANOTHER PERSON. YOU THINK YOU HAVE DONE WELL ENOUGH IN ADMITTING THESE THINGS TO YOURSELF, PERHAPS. WE DOUBT THAT. IN ACTUAL PRACTICE, WE USUALLY FIND A SOLITARY SELF-APPRAISAL INSUFFICIENT. WE STRENUOUSLY URGE YOU TO GO MUCH FURTHER. BUT YOU WILL BE MORE RECONCILED TO DISCUSSING YOURSELF WITH ANOTHER PERSON IF WE OFFER GOOD REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD DO SO. THE BEST REASON FIRST: IF YOU SKIP THIS VITAL STEP, YOU MAY NOT OVERCOME DRINKING. TIME AFTER TIME NEWCOMERS HAVE TRIED TO KEEP TO THEMSELVES CERTAIN FACTS ABOUT THEIR LIVES. TRYING TO AVOID THIS HUMBLING EXPERIENCE, THEY HAVE TURNED TO EASIER METHODS. ALMOST INVARIABLY THEY GOT DRUNK. HAVING PERSEVERED WITH THE REST OF THE PROGRAM, THEY WONDERED WHY THEY FELL. THE ANSWER IS THAT THEY NEVER

COMPLETED THEIR HOUSECLEANING. THEY TOOK INVENTORY ALL RIGHT, BUT HUNG ON TO SOME OF THE WORST ITEMS IN STOCK. THEY ONLY THOUGHT THEY HAD LOST THEIR EGOISM AND FEAR; THEY ONLY THOUGHT THEY HAD HUMBLLED THEMSELVES. BUT THEY HAD NOT LEARNED ENOUGH OF HUMILITY, FEARLESSNESS AND HONESTY, IN THE SENSE WE FIND IT NECESSARY, UNTIL THEY TOLD SOMEONE ELSE ALL THEIR LIFE STORY.

NOW YOU NEED MORE ACTION WITHOUT WHICH YOU WILL FIND THAT "FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD." YOU HAVE A LIST OF ALL PERSONS YOU HAVE HARMED AND TO WHOM YOU ARE WILLING TO MAKE COMPLETE AMENDS. YOU MADE IT WHEN YOU TOOK INVENTORY. YOU SUBJECTED YOURSELF TO A DRASTIC SELF-APPRAISAL. NOW YOU ARE TO GO OUT TO YOUR FELLOWS AND REPAIR THE DAMAGE YOU DID IN THE PAST. YOU ARE TO SWEEP AWAY THE DEBRIS WHICH HAS ACCUMULATED OUT OF YOUR EFFORT TO LIVE ON SELF-WILL AND RUN THE SHOW YOURSELF. IF YOU HAVEN'T THE WILL TO DO THIS, ASK UNTIL IT COMES. REMEMBER YOU AGREED AT THE BEGINNING YOU WOULD GO TO ANY LENGTHS FOR VICTORY OVER ALCOHOL.

YOU PROBABLY STILL HAVE SOME MISGIVINGS. WE CAN HELP YOU DISPEL THEM. AS YOU LOOK OVER THE LIST OF BUSINESS ACQUAINTANCES AND FRIENDS YOU HAVE HURT, YOU WILL FEEL DIFFIDENT ABOUT GOING TO SOME OF THEM ON A SPIRITUAL BASIS. LET US REASSURE YOU. TO SOME PEOPLE YOU NEED NOT, AND PROBABLY SHOULD NOT EMPHASIZE THE SPIRITUAL FEATURE ON YOUR FIRST

APPROACH. YOU MIGHT PREJUDICE THEM. AT THE MOMENT YOU ARE TRYING TO PUT YOUR OWN LIFE IN ORDER. BUT THIS IS NOT AN END IN ITSELF. YOUR REAL PURPOSE IS TO FIT YOURSELF TO BE OF MAXIMUM SERVICE TO GOD AND THE PEOPLE ABOUT YOU. IT IS SELDOM WISE TO APPROACH AN INDIVIDUAL, WHO STILL SMARTS FROM YOUR INJUSTICE TO HIM, AND ANNOUNCE THAT YOU HAVE GIVEN YOUR LIFE TO GOD. IN THE PRIZE RING, THIS WOULD BE CALLED LEADING WITH THE CHIN. WHY LAY YOURSELF OPEN TO BEING BRANDED A FANATIC OR A RELIGIOUS BORE? YOU MAY KILL A FUTURE OPPORTUNITY TO CARRY A BENEFICIAL MESSAGE. BUT HE IS SURE TO BE IMPRESSED WITH A SINCERE DESIRE TO SET RIGHT THE WRONG. HE IS GOING TO BE MORE INTERESTED IN YOUR DEMONSTRATION OF GOOD WILL THAN IN YOUR TALK OF SPIRITUAL DISCOVERIES.

MOST ALCOHOLICS OWE MONEY. DO NOT DODGE YOUR CREDITORS. TELL THEM WHAT YOU ARE TRYING TO DO. MAKE NO BONES ABOUT YOUR DRINKING; THEY USUALLY KNOW IT ANYWAY, WHETHER YOU THINK SO OR NOT. NEVER BE AFRAID OF DISCLOSING YOUR ALCOHOLISM ON THE THEORY IT MAY CAUSE YOU FINANCIAL HARM. APPROACHED IN THIS WAY, THE MOST RUTHLESS CREDITOR WILL SOMETIMES SURPRISE YOU. ARRANGE THE BEST DEAL YOU CAN AND LET THESE PEOPLE KNOW YOU ARE SORRY YOUR DRINKING HAS MADE YOU SLOW TO PAY. YOU MUST LOSE YOUR FEAR OF CREDITORS NO MATTER HOW FAR YOU HAVE TO GO, FOR YOU ARE LIABLE TO DRINK IF YOU ARE AFRAID TO FACE THEM.

PERHAPS YOU HAVE COMMITTED A CRIMINAL OFFENSE WHICH MIGHT LAND YOU IN JAIL IF KNOWN TO THE AUTHORITIES. YOU MAY BE SHORT IN YOU ACCOUNTS AND CAN'T MAKE GOOD. YOU HAVE ALREADY ADMITTED THIS IN CONFIDENCE TO ANOTHER PERSON, BUT YOU ARE SURE YOU WOULD BE IMPRISONED OR LOSE YOUR JOB IF IT WERE KNOWN. MAYBE IT'S ONLY A PETTY OFFENCE SUCH AS PADDING YOUR EXPENSE ACCOUNT. MOST OF US HAVE DONE THAT SORT OF THING. MAYBE YOU HAVE DIVORCED YOUR WIFE. YOU HAVE REMARRIED BUT HAVEN'T KEPT UP THE ALIMONY TO NUMBER ONE. SHE IS INDIGNANT ABOUT IT, AND HAS A WARRANT OUT FOR YOUR ARREST. THAT'S A COMMON FORM OF TROUBLE TOO.

USUALLY, HOWEVER, OTHER PEOPLE ARE INVOLVED. THEREFORE, YOU ARE NOT TO BE A HASTY AND FOOLISH MARTYR WHO WOULD NEEDLESSLY SACRIFICE OTHERS TO SAVE HIMSELF FROM THE ALCOHOLIC PIT. A MAN WE KNOW HAD REMARRIED. BECAUSE OF RESENTMENT AND DRINKING, HE HAD NOT PAID ALIMONY TO HIS FIRST WIFE. SHE WAS FURIOUS. SHE WENT TO COURT AND GOT AN ORDER FOR HIS ARREST. HE HAD COMMENCED OUR WAY OF LIFE, HAD SECURED A POSITION, AND WAS GETTING HIS HEAD ABOVE WATER. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN IMPRESSIVE HEROICS IF HE HAD WALKED UP TO THE JUDGE AND SAID, "HERE I AM."

WE THOUGHT HE OUGHT TO BE WILLING TO DO THAT IF NECESSARY, BUT IF HE WERE IN JAIL, HE COULD PROVIDE NOTHING FOR EITHER FAMILY. WE SUGGESTED HE WRITE HIS FIRST WIFE ADMITTING HIS FAULTS AND ASKING FORGIVENESS. HE DID, AND ALSO SENT A SMALL

AMOUNT OF MONEY. HE TOLD HER THAT HE WOULD TRY TO DO SO IN THE FUTURE. HE SAID HE WAS PERFECTLY WILLING TO GO TO JAIL IF SHE INSISTED. OF COURSE SHE DID NOT, AND THE WHOLE SITUATION HAS LONG SINCE BEEN ADJUSTED.

IF TAKING DRASTIC ACTION IS GOING TO IMPLICATE OTHER PEOPLE, THEY SHOULD BE CONSULTED. USE EVERY MEANS TO AVOID WIDE-SPREAD DAMAGE. YOU CANNOT SHRINK, HOWEVER, FROM THE FINAL STEP IF THAT IS CLEARLY INDICATED. IF, AFTER SEEKING ADVICE, CONSULTING OTHERS INVOLVED, AND ASKING GOD TO GUIDE YOU, THERE APPEARS NO OTHER JUST AND HONORABLE SOLUTION THAN THE MOST DRASTIC ONE, YOU MUST TAKE YOUR MEDICINE. TRUST THAT THE EVENTUAL OUTCOME WILL BE RIGHT.

OUR DESIGN FOR LIVING IS NOT A ONE WAY STREET. IT IS AS GOOD FOR THE WIFE AS FOR THE HUSBAND.

THERE ARE SOME CASES WHERE THE UTMOST FRANKNESS IS DEMANDED. PERHAPS YOURS IS ONE OF THEM. NO OUTSIDER CAN APPRAISE SUCH AN INTIMATE SITUATION. IT MAY BE YOU WILL BOTH DECIDE THAT THE WAY OF GOOD SENSE AND LOVING KINDNESS IS TO LET BY-GONES BE BY-GONES. EACH OF YOU MIGHT PRAY ABOUT IT, HAVING THE OTHER ONE'S HAPPINESS UPPERMOST IN MIND. KEEP IT ALWAYS IN SIGHT THAT YOU DEAL WITH THAT MOST TERRIBLE HUMAN EMOTION --JEALOUSY. GOOD GENERALSHIP MAY DECIDE THAT YOU AND YOUR WIFE ATTACK THE PROBLEM ON THE FLANK, RATHER THAN RISK FACE-TO-FACE COMBAT. YOU HAVE TO DECIDE ABOUT THAT ALONE WITH YOUR CREATOR.

YES, THERE IS A LONG PERIOD OF RECONSTRUCTION AHEAD. YOU MUST TAKE THE LEAD. A REMORSEFUL MUMBLING THAT YOU ARE SORRY WON'T FILL THE BILL AT ALL. YOU OUGHT TO SIT DOWN WITH YOUR FAMILY AND FRANKLY ANALYZE YOUR PAST AS YOU NOW SEE IT, BEING VERY CAREFUL NOT TO CRITICIZE THEM. NEVER MIND THEIR DEFECTS. THEY MAY BE GLARING, BUT THE CHANCES ARE THAT YOUR OWN ACTIONS ARE PARTLY RESPONSIBLE. SO CLEAN HOUSE WITH THE FAMILY, ASKING EACH MORNING IN MEDITATION THAT YOUR CREATOR SHOW YOU THE WAY OF PATIENCE, TOLERANCE, KINDLINESS, AND LOVE, AND STAY WILLING.

IT IS POSSIBLE TO DIG UP PAST MISDEEDS SO THEY BECOME A BLIGHT, A VERITABLE PLAGUE. FOR EXAMPLE, WE KNOW OF SITUATIONS IN WHICH THE ALCOHOLIC OR HIS WIFE HAVE HAD LOVE AFFAIRS. IN THE FIRST FLUSH OF SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE THEY FORGAVE EACH OTHER AND DREW CLOSER TOGETHER. THE MIRACLE OF RECONCILIATION WAS AT HAND. THEN, UNDER ONE PROVOCATION OR ANOTHER, THE AGGRIEVED ONE WOULD UNEARTH THE OLD AFFAIR AND ANGRILY CAST ITS ASHES ABOUT. A FEW OF US HAVE HAD THESE GROWING PAINS AND THEY HURT A GREAT DEAL. HUSBANDS AND WIVES HAVE SOMETIMES BEEN OBLIGED TO SEPARATE FOR A TIME UNTIL NEW PERSPECTIVE, NEW VICTORY OVER HURT PRIDE, COULD BE REWON. IN MOST CASES, THE ALCOHOLIC SURVIVED THIS ORDEAL WITHOUT RELAPSE, BUT NOT ALWAYS. SO OUR RULE IS THAT UNLESS SOME GOOD AND USEFUL PURPOSE IS TO BE SERVED, PAST OCCURRENCES ARE NOT DISCUSSED.

THERE MAY BE SOME WRONGS YOU CAN NEVER FULLY RIGHT. DON'T WORRY ABOUT THEM IF YOU CAN HONESTLY SAY TO YOURSELF THAT YOU WOULD RIGHT THEM IF YOU COULD. SOME PEOPLE YOU CANNOT SEE--SEND THEM AN HONEST LETTER. AND THERE MAY BE A VALID REASON FOR POSTPONEMENT IN SOME CASES. BUT DON'T DELAY IF IT CAN BE AVOIDED. BE SENSIBLE, TACTFUL, AND CONSIDERATE. BE HUMBLE WITHOUT BEING SERVILE OR SCRAPING. AS ONE OF GOD'S PEOPLE YOU ARE TO STAND ON YOUR FEET; DON'T CRAWL ON YOUR BELLY BEFORE ANYONE.

1. DO YOU BELIEVE YOU HAVE A CHRONIC ALCOHOLIC MIND?
2. DO YOU BELIEVE YOU NEED SOME EMOTIONAL REARRANGEMENTS?
3. DO YOU BELIEVE THE BEGINNING OF A SPIRITUAL AWAKENING IS NECESSARY FOR AN ALCOHOLIC TO BEGIN TO REARRANGE HIS EMOTIONS?
4. HAVE YOU BECOME A USER OF THE KIT OF SPIRITUAL TOOLS AA OFFERS?
5. DO YOU BELIEVE THAT IT IS NECESSARY TO REMOVE FROM YOUR MIND THE WRONGS OF OTHERS, SO THAT YOU MIGHT SEE YOUR OWN WRONGS?
6. IS IT THOROUGHLY UNDERSTOOD BY YOU THAT YOU ARE TO MAKE YOUR OWN AMENDS, REGARDLESS?
7. DO YOU BELIEVE THAT IF "YOU ASK GOD FOR HELP THE RIGHT ANSWER WILL COME"?
8. HAVE YOU COMPLETED YOUR LIST AND ARE YOU READY TO MAKE AMENDS TO THOSE YOU HAVE HARMED.
9. DO YOU FEEL LIKE A BULL IN A CHINA CLOSET?
10. DO YOU BELIEVE THAT PEOPLE WHO HARMED YOU ARE SICK PEOPLE JUST LIKE YOU?
11. DO YOU BELIEVE THE NINTH STEP IS TO PREPARE YOU TO FIT YOURSELF TO BE OF MAXIMUM SERVICE TO GOD AND THE PEOPLE ABOUT YOU?
12. ARE YOU SURE THAT YOU ARE TAKING STEP NINE FOR HOUSECLEANING?
13. HOW DO YOU APPROACH YOUR CREDITORS AND DO YOU CONTINUE TO FEAR THEM?
14. IF YOU ARE IN DEEP TROUBLE DUE TO ALCOHOL, DO YOU WALK UP TO THE JUDGE AND SAY "HERE I AM"?
15. DO YOU BELIEVE YOUR WELL-BEING DEPENDS ON YOUR ABILITY TO RELEASE YOURSELF FROM GUILT AND SHAME OF THINGS YOU HAVE DONE UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF ALCOHOL?
16. CAN YOU SEE BY THE NINTH STEP THAT AS IT SAID IN THE FIFTH CHAPTER "HOW IT WORKS, " WE HAVE TO GO TO ANY LENGTH TO OBTAIN SOBRIETY?

17. DO YOU NEEDLESSLY NAME A PERSON OUTSIDE OF YOUR FAMILY TO AROUSE JEALOUSY IN YOUR SPOUSE?
18. DO YOU FEEL YOU SHOULD ADMIT YOUR FAULTS TO YOUR SPOUSE, BUT NOT IMPLICATE ANY OTHER PERSON?
19. DO YOU BELIEVE A REMORSEFUL MUMBLE THAT YOU ARE SORRY WILL FILL THE REQUIREMENTS OF STEP NINE?
20. ARE YOU GUILTY OF CRITICIZING MEMBERS OF YOUR FAMILY, TRYING TO SHIFT THE BLAME FOR YOUR ACTIONS TO THEM?
21. DO YOU BELIEVE "PATIENCE, TOLERANCE, KINDLINESS, LOVE AND WILLINGNESS TO RENDER THESE ATTITUDES IS THE KEY TO TURNING YOUR HOUSE INTO A HOME"?
22. DO YOU AGREE ON THIS PROPOSITION: "UNLESS SOME GOOD AND USEFUL PURPOSE IS TO BE SERVED, PAST OCCURRENCES ARE NOT TO BE DISCUSSED"?
23. DO YOU REALIZE THIS ONE GREAT IDEA OR FACT IS TAUGHT IN STEP NINE: "YOU ARE ONE OF GOD'S PEOPLE, AND YOU ARE TO STAND ON YOUR OWN FEET, DON'T CRAWL ON YOUR BELLY BEFORE ANYONE"?

CHAPTER SIXTEEN
STEP TEN

CONTINUED TO TAKE PERSONAL INVENTORY AND WHEN WE WERE WRONG PROMPTLY ADMITTED IT.

THE ALCOHOLIC IS LIKE A TORNADO ROARING HIS WAY THROUGH THE LIVES OF OTHERS. HEARTS ARE BROKEN. SWEET RELATIONSHIPS ARE DEAD. AFFECTIONS HAVE BEEN UPROOTED. SELFISH AND INCONSIDERATE HABITS HAVE KEPT THE HOME IN TURMOIL. WE FEEL A MAN IS UNTHINKING WHEN HE SAYS THAT SOBRIETY IS ENOUGH. HE IS LIKE THE FARMER WHO CAME UP OUT OF HIS CYCLONE CELLAR TO FIND HIS HOME RUINED. TO HIS WIFE, HE REMARKED, "DON'T SEE ANYTHING THE MATTER HERE, MA. AIN'T IT GRAND THE WIND STOPPED BLOWIN?"

WE DO EXACTLY THE SAME THING WITH OUR LIVES. WE TAKE STOCK HONESTLY. FIRST, WE SEARCH OUT THE FLAWS IN OUR MAKE-UP WHICH HAVE CAUSED OUR FAILURE. BEING CONVINCED THAT SELF, MANIFESTED IN VARIOUS WAYS, IS WHAT HAS DEFEATED US, WE CONSIDER ITS COMMON MANIFESTATIONS.

THIS IS PERHAPS DIFFICULT--ESPECIALLY DISCUSSING YOUR DEFECTS WITH ANOTHER PERSON. YOU THINK YOU HAVE DONE WELL ENOUGH IN ADMITTING THESE THINGS TO YOURSELF PERHAPS. WE DOUBT THAT. IN ACTUAL PRACTICE, WE USUALLY FIND A SOLITARY SELF-APPRAISAL INSUFFICIENT. WE STRENUOUSLY URGE YOU TO GO MUCH FURTHER. BUT YOU WILL BE MORE RECONCILED TO DISCUSSING YOURSELF WITH ANOTHER PERSON IF WE OFFER GOOD REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD DO

SO. THE BEST REASON FIRST: IF YOU SKIP THIS VITAL STEP, YOU MAY NOT OVERCOME DRINKING. TIME AFTER TIME NEWCOMERS HAVE TRIED TO KEEP TO THEMSELVES CERTAIN FACTS ABOUT THEIR LIVES. TRYING TO AVOID THIS HUMBLING EXPERIENCE, THEY HAVE TURNED TO EASIER METHODS. ALMOST INVARIABLY THEY GOT DRUNK. HAVING PERSEVERED WITH THE REST OF THE PROGRAM, THEY WONDERED WHY THEY FELL. THE ANSWER IS THAT THEY NEVER COMPLETED THEIR HOUSECLEANING. THEY TOOK INVENTORY ALL RIGHT, BUT HUNG ON TO SOME OF THE WORST ITEMS IN STOCK. THEY ONLY THOUGHT THEY HAD LOST THEIR EGOISM AND FEAR; THEY ONLY THOUGHT THEY HAD HUMBLLED THEMSELVES. BUT THEY HAD NOT LEARNED ENOUGH OF HUMILITY, FEARLESSNESS AND HONESTY, IN THE SENSE WE FIND IT NECESSARY, UNTIL THEY TOLD SOMEONE ELSE ALL THEIR LIFE STORY.

UNDER NO CONDITION SHOULD YOU CRITICIZE SUCH A PERSON OR BE DRAWN INTO AN ARGUMENT WITH HIM. SIMPLY TELL HIM THAT YOU REALIZE YOU WILL NEVER GET OVER DRINKING UNTIL YOU HAVE DONE YOUR UTMOST TO STRAIGHTEN OUT THE PAST. YOU ARE THERE TO SWEEP OFF YOUR SIDE OF THE STREET, REALIZING THAT NOTHING WORTH WHILE CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED UNTIL YOU DO SO. NEVER TRY TO TELL HIM WHAT HE SHOULD DO. DON'T DISCUSS HIS FAULTS. STICK TO YOUR OWN. IF YOUR MANNER IS CALM, FRANK, AND OPEN YOU WILL BE GRATIFIED WITH THE RESULT.

YES, THERE IS A LONG PERIOD OF RECONSTRUCTION AHEAD. YOU MUST TAKE THE LEAD. A REMORSEFUL MUMBLING THAT YOU ARE

SORRY WON'T FILL THE BILL AT ALL. YOU OUGHT TO SIT DOWN WITH YOUR FAMILY AND FRANKLY ANALYZE YOUR PAST AS YOU NOW SEE IT, BEING VERY CAREFUL NOT TO CRITICIZE THEM. NEVER MIND THEIR DEFECTS. THEY MAY BE GLARING, BUT THE CHANCES ARE THAT YOUR OWN ACTIONS ARE PARTLY RESPONSIBLE. SO CLEAN HOUSE WITH THE FAMILY, ASKING EACH MORNING IN MEDITATION THAT YOUR CREATOR SHOW YOU THE WAY OF PATIENCE, TOLERANCE, KINDLINESS AND LOVE.

THERE MAY BE SOME WRONGS YOU CAN NEVER FULLY RIGHT. DON'T WORRY ABOUT THEM IF YOU CAN HONESTLY SAY TO YOURSELF THAT YOU WOULD RIGHT THEM IF YOU COULD. SOME PEOPLE YOU CANNOT SEE--SEND THEM AN HONEST LETTER. AND THERE MAY BE A VALID REASON FOR POSTPONEMENT IN SOME CASES. BUT DON'T DELAY IF IT CAN BE AVIODED. BE SENSIBLE, TACTFUL, AND CONSIDERATE. BE HUMBLE WITHOUT BEING SERVILE OR SCRAPING. AS ONE OF GOD'S PEOPLE YOU ARE TO STAND ON YOUR FEET; DON'T CRAWL ON YOUR BELLY BEFORE ANYONE.

NEXT, THINK ABOUT THE TWENTY-FOUR HOURS AHEAD. CONSIDER YOUR PLANS FOR THE DAY. BEFORE YOU BEGIN, ASK GOD TO GUIDE YOUR THINKING. ESPECIALLY ASK THAT IT BE DIVORCED FROM SELF-PITY, DISHONEST OR SELF-SEEKING MOTIVES. THEN GO AHEAD AND USE YOUR COMMON SENSE. THERE IS NOTHING HARD OR MYSTERIOUS ABOUT THIS. GOD GAVE YOU BRAINS TO USE. CLEAR YOUR THINKING OF WRONG MOTIVES. YOUR THOUGHT LIFE WILL BE PLACED ON A MUCH HIGHER PLANE.

WHEN YOU AWAKE TOMORROW MORNING, LOOK BACK OVER THE DAY BEFORE. WERE YOU RESENTFUL, SELFISH, DISHONEST, OR AFRAID? DO YOU OWE AN APOLOGY? HAVE YOU KEPT SOMETHING TO YOURSELF WHICH SHOULD BE DISCUSSED WITH ANOTHER PERSON AT ONCE? WERE YOU KIND AND LOVING TOWARD ALL? WHAT COULD YOU HAVE DONE BETTER? WERE YOU THINKING OF YOURSELF MOST OF THE TIME? OR WERE YOU THINKING OF WHAT YOU COULD DO FOR OTHERS, OF WHAT YOU COULD PACK INTO THE STREAM OF LIFE? AFTER YOU HAVE FACED YESTERDAY, ASK GOD'S FORGIVENESS FOR ANY WRONG. ASK TO BE SHOWN WHAT TO DO. THUS YOU KEEP CLEAN AS YOU LIVE EACH DAY.

IF YOU ARE PAINSTAKING ABOUT THIS PHASE OF YOUR DEVELOPMENT, YOU WILL BE AMAZED BEFORE YOU ARE HALF THROUGH. YOU ARE GOING TO KNOW A NEW FREEDOM AND HAPPINESS. YOU WILL NOT REGRET THE PAST NOR WISH TO SHUT THE DOOR ON IT. YOU WILL COMPREHEND THE WORD SERENITY AND KNOW PEACE. NO MATTER HOW FAR DOWN THE SCALE YOU HAVE GONE, YOU WILL SEE HOW YOUR EXPERIENCE CAN BENEFIT OTHERS. THAT FEELING OF USELESSNESS AND SELF-PITY WILL DISAPPEAR. YOU WILL LOSE INTEREST IN SELFISH THINGS AND GAIN INTEREST IN YOUR FELLOWS. SELF-SEEKING WILL SLIP AWAY. YOUR WHOLE ATTITUDE AND OUTLOOK UPON LIFE WILL CHANGE. FEAR OF PEOPLE AND OF ECONOMIC INSECURITY WILL LEAVE YOU. YOU WILL INTUITIVELY KNOW HOW TO HANDLE SITUATIONS WHICH USED TO BAFFLE YOU. YOU WILL SUDDENLY REALIZE THAT GOD IS DOING FOR YOU WHAT YOU COULD

NOT DO FOR YOURSELF.

YOU SAY THESE ARE EXTRAVAGANT PROMISES. THEY ARE NOT. THEY ARE BEING FULFILLED AMONG US--SOMETIMES QUICKLY, SOMETIMES SLOWLY. THEY WILL MATERIALIZE IN YOU IF YOU WORK FOR THEM.

AND YOU HAVE CEASED FIGHTING ANY THING OR ANYONE--EVEN ALCOHOL. FOR BY THIS TIME YOUR SANITY WILL HAVE RETURNED. YOU WILL SELDOM BE INTERESTED IN LIQUOR. IF TEMPTED, YOU WILL RECOIL FROM IT AS YOU WOULD FROM A HOT FLAME. YOU WILL REACT SANELY AND NORMALLY. YOU WILL FIND THIS HAS HAPPENED AUTOMATICALLY. YOU WILL SEE THAT YOUR NEW ATTITUDE TOWARD LIQUOR HAS BEEN GIVEN YOU WITHOUT ANY THOUGHT OR EFFORT ON YOUR PART. IT JUST COMES! THAT IS THE MIRACLE OF IT. YOU ARE NOT FIGHTING IT, NEITHER ARE YOU AVOIDING TEMPTATION. YOU FEEL AS THOUGH YOU HAD BEEN PLACED IN A POSITION OF NEUTRALITY. YOU FEEL SAFE AND PROTECTED. YOU HAVE NOT EVEN SWORN OFF. INSTEAD, THE PROBLEM HAS BEEN REMOVED. IT DOES NOT EXIST FOR YOU. YOU ARE NEITHER COCKY, NOR ARE YOU AFRAID. THAT IS OUR EXPERIENCE. THAT IS HOW WE REACT SO LONG AS WE KEEP IN FIT SPIRITUAL CONDITION.

THIS THOUGHT BRINGS US TO STEP TEN, WHICH SUGGESTS YOU CONTINUE TO TAKE PERSONAL INVENTORY AND CONTINUE TO SET ANY NEW MISTAKES RIGHT AS YOU GO ALONG. YOU VIGOROUSLY COMMENCED THIS WAY OF LIFE AS YOU CLEANED UP YOUR PAST. YOU HAVE ENTERED THE WORLD OF SPIRIT. YOUR NEXT FUNCTION IS TO GROW IN UNDER-

STANDING AND EFFECTIVENESS. THIS IS NOT AN OVERNIGHT MATTER. IT SHOULD CONTINUE FOR YOUR LIFETIME. CONTINUE TO WATCH YOURSELF FOR SELFISHNESS, DISHONESTY, RESENTMENT, AND FEAR. WHEN THESE CROP UP, ASK GOD AT ONCE TO REMOVE THEM. DISCUSS THEM WITH SOMEONE IMMEDIATELY. MAKE AMENDS QUICKLY IF YOU HAVE HARMED ANYONE. THEN RESOLUTELY TURN YOUR THOUGHTS TO SOMEONE YOU CAN HELP. LOVE AND TOLERANCE OF OTHERS IS YOUR CODE.

IT IS EASY TO LET UP ON THE SPIRITUAL PROGRAM OF ACTION AND REST ON YOUR LAURELS. YOU ARE HEADED FOR TROUBLE IF YOU DO, FOR ALCOHOL IS A SUBTLE FOE. WE ARE NOT CURED OF ALCOHOLISM. WHAT WE REALLY HAVE IS A DAILY REPRIEVE. EVERY DAY IS A DAY WHEN YOU HAVE TO CARRY THE VISION OF GOD'S WILL INTO ALL OF YOUR ACTIVITIES. "HOW CAN I BEST SERVE THEE--THY WILL (NOT MINE) BE DONE." THESE ARE THOUGHTS WHICH MUST GO WITH YOU CONSTANTLY. YOU CAN EXERCISE YOUR WILL POWER ALONG THIS LINE ALL YOU WISH. IT IS THE PROPER USE OF THE WILL.

MUCH HAS ALREADY BEEN SAID ABOUT RECEIVING STRENGTH, INSPIRATION, AND DIRECTION FROM HIM WHO HAS ALL KNOWLEDGE AND POWER. IF YOU HAVE CAREFULLY FOLLOWED DIRECTIONS, YOU HAVE BEGUN TO SENSE THE FLOW OF HIS SPIRIT INTO YOU. TO SOME EXTENT YOU HAVE BECOME GOD-CONSCIOUS. YOU HAVE BEGUN TO DEVELOP THIS VITAL SIXTH SENSE. BUT YOU MUST GO FURTHER AND THAT MEANS MORE ACTION.

IN THINKING THROUGH YOUR DAY YOU MAY FACE INDECISION.

YOU MAY NOT BE ABLE TO DETERMINE WHICH COURSE TO TAKE. HERE YOU ASK GOD FOR INSPIRATION, AN INTUITIVE THOUGHT OR A DECISION. RELAX AND TAKE IT EASY. DON'T STRUGGLE. ASK GOD'S HELP. YOU WILL BE SURPRISED HOW THE RIGHT ANSWERS COME AFTER YOU HAVE PRACTICED A FEW DAYS. WHAT USED TO BE THE HUNCH OR THE OCCASIONAL INSPIRATION BECOMES A WORKING PART OF YOUR MIND. BEING STILL INEXPERIENCED AND JUST MAKING YOUR CONTACT WITH GOD, IT IS NOT PROBABLE THAT YOU ARE GOING TO BE DIVINELY INSPIRED ALL THE TIME. THAT WOULD BE A LARGE PIECE OF CONCEIT, FOR WHICH YOU MIGHT PAY IN ALL SORTS OF ABSURD ACTIONS AND IDEAS. NEVERTHELESS YOU WILL FIND THAT YOUR THINKING WILL, AS TIME PASSES, BE MORE AND MORE ON THE PLANE OF INSPIRATION AND GUIDANCE. YOU WILL COME TO RELY UPON IT. THIS IS NOT WEIRD OR SILLY. MOST PSYCHOLOGISTS PRONOUNCE THESE METHODS SOUND.

AFTER THEY HAVE SEEN TANGIBLE RESULTS, THE FAMILY WILL PERHAPS WANT TO JOIN IN THE BETTER WAY OF LIFE. THESE THINGS WILL COME TO PASS NATURALLY AND IN GOOD TIME, PROVIDED, HOWEVER, THE ALCOHOLIC CONTINUES TO DEMONSTRATE THAT HE CAN BE SOBER, CONSIDERATE, AND HELPFUL, REGARDLESS OF WHAT ANYONE SAYS OR DOES. OF COURSE, WE ALL FALL MUCH BELOW THIS STANDARD MANY TIMES. BUT WE MUST TRY TO REPAIR THE DAMAGE IMMEDIATELY LEST WE PAY THE PENALTY BY A SPREE.

PERHAPS YOU ARE NOT ACQUAINTED WITH ANY DRINKERS WHO WANT TO RECOVER. YOU CAN EASILY FIND SOME BY ASKING A FEW DOCTORS,

MINISTERS, PRIESTS AND HOSPITALS. THEY WILL BE ONLY TOO GLAD TO HAVE YOUR HELP. DON'T START OUT AS AN EVANGELIST OR REFORMER. UNFORTUNATELY A LOT OF PREJUDICE EXISTS. YOU WILL BE HANDICAPPED IF YOU AROUSE IT. PREACHERS AND DOCTORS DON'T LIKE TO BE TOLD THEY DON'T KNOW THEIR BUSINESS. THEY ARE USUALLY COMPETENT AND YOU CAN LEARN MUCH FROM THEM IF YOU WISH, BUT IT HAPPENS THAT BECAUSE OF YOUR OWN DRINKING EXPERIENCE YOU CAN BE UNIQUELY USEFUL TO OTHER ALCOHOLICS. SO COOPERATE; NEVER CRITICIZE. TO BE HELPFUL SHOULD BE YOUR ONLY AIM.

1. DO YOU IDENTIFY WITH A TORNADO?
2. ARE THE FLAWS IN YOUR MAKE-UP SHOWING?
3. ARE YOU WILLING NOW TO DISCUSS YOUR DEFECTS WITH OTHERS?
4. WHAT SIDE OF THE STREET DO YOU SWEEP?
5. IS IT PROPER TO TALK TO YOUR FAMILY ABOUT THEIR DEFECTS?
6. WHAT ARE YOU TO DO ABOUT THE WRONGS YOU CANNOT RIGHT?
7. ARE YOU LIVING THE TWENTY FOUR HOUR PLAN--ONE DAY AT A TIME?
8. DO YOU SAY THANKS AT NIGHT AND PLEASE IN THE MORNING?
9. DO YOU NEW FEEL NEW FREEDOM IN YOUR LIFE AND ARE YOU HAPPY?
10. HAS THE FEAR OF PEOPLE AND ECONOMIC INSECURITY LEFT YOU?
11. DO YOU BELIEVE "IF YOU WORK, THE PROGRAM WORKS"?
12. HAVE YOU STOPPED FIGHTING EVERYTHING?
13. WHAT DOES THE WORD "CONTINUE" MEAN?
14. DO YOU STILL BELIEVE SELFISHNESS, DISHONESTY, RESENTMENTS AND FEARS ARE SOME THINGS THAT ALCOHOLICS HAVE TO WATCH?
15. DO YOU STILL BELIEVE WE SHOULD ASK GOD TO REMOVE THESE CHARACTER DEFECTS?
16. THIS LATE IN THE TWELVE STEPS, DO YOU BELIEVE IT IS POSSIBLE TO START RESTING ON YOUR LAURELS?
17. DO YOU BELIEVE WE HAVE ONLY A DAILY REPRIEVE?
18. DO YOU BELIEVE YOU HAVE BECOME GOD-CONSCIOUS?
19. ARE YOU WILLING TO ASK FOR GOD'S HELP?
20. HOW SHOULD WE TREAT THE FRIENDS OF AA AND THOSE WHO ARE SENDING ALCOHOLICS TO AA?

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN
STEP ELEVEN
PART ONE

SOUGHT THROUGH PRAYER AND MEDITATION TO IMPROVE OUR CONSCIOUS CONTACT WITH GOD AS WE UNDERSTOOD HIM, PRAYING ONLY FOR KNOWLEDGE OF HIS WILL FOR US AND THE POWER TO CARRY THAT OUT.

THUS WAS I CONVINCED THAT GOD IS CONCERNED WITH US HUMANS, WHEN WE WANT HIM ENOUGH. AT LONG LAST I SAW, I FELT, I BELIEVED. SCALES OF PRIDE AND PREJUDICE FELL FROM MY EYES. A NEW WORLD CAME INTO VIEW.

THAT FLOORED ME. IT BEGAN TO LOOK AS THOUGH RELIGIOUS PEOPLE WERE RIGHT AFTER ALL. HERE WAS SOMETHING AT WORK IN A HUMAN HEART WHICH HAD DONE THE IMPOSSIBLE. MY IDEAS ABOUT MIRACLES WERE DRASTICALLY REVISED RIGHT THEN. NEVER MIND THE MUSTY PAST; HERE SAT A MIRACLE DIRECTLY ACROSS THE KITCHEN TABLE. HE SHOUTED GREAT TIDINGS.

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.

I WAS TO TEST MY THINKING BY THE NEW GOD-CONSCIOUSNESS

WITHIN. COMMON SENSE WOULD THUS BECOME UNCOMMON SENSE. I WAS TO SIT QUIETLY WHEN IN DOUBT, ASKING ONLY FOR DIRECTION AND STRENGTH TO MEET MY PROBLEMS AS HE WOULD HAVE ME. NEVER WAS I TO PRAY FOR MYSELF, EXCEPT AS MY REQUESTS BORE ON MY USEFULNESS TO OTHERS. THEN ONLY MIGHT I EXPECT TO RECEIVE. BUT THAT WOULD BE IN GREAT MEASURE.

MY FRIEND PROMISED WHEN THESE THINGS WERE DONE I WOULD ENTER UPON A NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH MY CREATOR; THAT I WOULD HAVE THE ELEMENTS OF A WAY OF LIFE WHICH ANSWERED ALL MY PROBLEMS. BELIEF IN THE POWER OF GOD, PLUS ENOUGH WILLINGNESS, HONESTY AND HUMILITY TO ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN THE NEW ORDER OF THINGS, WERE THE ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS.

BUT IT ISN'T SO DIFFICULT. ABOUT HALF OUR FELLOWSHIP WERE OF EXACTLY THAT TYPE. AT FIRST SOME TRIED TO AVOID THE ISSUE, HOPING AGAINST HOPE WE WERE NOT TRUE ALCOHOLICS. BUT AFTER A WHILE WE HAD TO FACE THE FACT THAT WE MUST FIND A SPIRITUAL BASIS OF LIFE--OR ELSE. PERHAPS IT IS GOING TO BE THAT WAY WITH YOU. BUT CHEER UP. SOMETHING LIKE HALF OF US THOUGHT WE WERE ATHEISTS OR AGNOSTICS. OUR EXPERIENCE SHOWS THAT YOU NEED NOT BE DISCONCERTED.

WE THINK IT NO CONCERN OF OURS, AS A GROUP, 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 ASSOCIATION, OR HIS PRESENT CHOICE. NOT ALL OF US HAVE JOINED RELIGIOUS BODIES,

BUT MOST OF US FAVOR SUCH MEMBERSHIPS.

MUCH TO OUR RELIEF, WE DISCOVERED WE DID NOT NEED TO CONSIDER ANOTHER'S CONCEPTION OF GOD. OUR OWN CONCEPTION, HOWEVER INADEQUATE, WAS SUFFICIENT TO MAKE THE APPROACH AND TO EFFECT A CONTACT WITH HIM. AS SOON AS WE ADMITTED THE POSSIBLE EXISTENCE OF A CREATIVE INTELLIGENCE, A SPIRIT OF THE UNIVERSE UNDERLYING THE TOTALITY OF THINGS, WE BEGAN TO BE POSSESSED OF A NEW SENSE OF POWER AND DIRECTION, PROVIDED WE TOOK OTHER SIMPLE STEPS. WE FOUND THAT GOD DOES NOT MAKE HARD TERMS WITH THOSE WHO SEEK HIM. TO US, THE REALM OF SPIRIT IS BROAD, ROOMY, ALL INCLUSIVE; NEVER EXCLUSIVE OR FORBIDDING. IT IS OPEN, WE BELIEVE, TO ALL MEN.

WHEN, THEREFORE, WE SPEAK TO YOU OF GOD, WE MEAN YOUR OWN CONCEPTION OF GOD. THIS APPLIES, TOO, TO OTHER SPIRITUAL EXPRESSIONS WHICH YOU FIND IN THIS PROGRAM. DO NOT LET ANY PREJUDICE YOU MAY HAVE AGAINST SPIRITUAL TERMS DETER YOU FROM HONESTLY ASKING YOURSELF WHAT THEY MEAN TO YOU. AT THE START, THIS IS ALL YOU WILL NEED TO COMMENCE SPIRITUAL GROWTH, TO EFFECT YOUR FIRST CONSCIOUS RELATION WITH GOD, AS YOU UNDERSTAND HIM. AFTERWARD, YOU WILL FIND YOURSELF ACCEPTING MANY THINGS WHICH NOW SEEM ENTIRELY OUT OF REACH. THAT IS GROWTH, BUT IF YOU ARE GOING TO GROW, YOU HAVE TO BEGIN SOMEWHERE. SO USE YOUR OWN CONCEPTION, HOWEVER LIMITED IT MAY BE.

WE, WHO HAVE TRAVELED THIS DUBIOUS PATH, BEG YOU TO LAY

ASIDE PREJUDICE, EVEN AGAINST ORGANIZED RELIGION. WE HAVE LEARNED THAT WHATEVER THE HUMAN FRAILTIES OF VARIOUS FAITHS MAY BE, THOSE FAITHS HAVE GIVEN PURPOSE AND DIRECTION TO MILLIONS. PEOPLE OF FAITH HAVE A LOGICAL IDEA OF WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT. ACTUALLY, WE USED TO HAVE NO REASONABLE CONCEPTION WHATEVER. WE USED TO AMUSE OURSELVES AS WE CYNICALLY DISSECTED SPIRITUAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES; WE MIGHT HAVE OBSERVED THAT MANY SPIRITUALLY-MINDED PERSONS OF ALL RACES, COLORS, AND CREEDS WERE DEMONSTRATING A DEGREE OF STABILITY, HAPPINESS AND USEFULNESS WHICH WE SHOULD HAVE SOUGHT OURSELVES.

HERE ARE ONE HUNDRED MEN AND WOMEN, WORLDLY AND SOPHISTICATED INDEED. THEY FLATLY DECLARE TO YOU THAT SINCE THEY HAVE COME TO BELIEVE IN A POWER GREATER THAN THEMSELVES, TO TAKE A CERTAIN ATTITUDE TOWARD THAT POWER, AND TO DO CERTAIN SIMPLE THINGS, THERE HAS BEEN A REVOLUTIONARY CHANGE IN THEIR WAY OF LIVING AND THINKING. THEY TELL YOU THAT IN THE FACE OF COLLAPSE AND DESPAIR, IN THE FACE OF THE TOTAL FAILURE OF THEIR HUMAN RESOURCES, THAT A NEW POWER, PEACE, HAPPINESS, AND SENSE OF DIRECTION HAS FLOWED INTO THEM. THIS HAPPENED SOON AFTER THEY WHOLE-HEARTEDLY MET A FEW SIMPLE REQUIREMENTS. ONCE CONFUSED AND BAFFLED BY THE SEEMING FUTILITY OF EXISTENCE, THEY WILL SHOW YOU THE UNDERLYING REASONS WHY THEY WERE MAKING HEAVY GOING OF LIFE. LEAVING ASIDE THE DRINK QUESTION, THEY TELL WHY LIVING WAS SO UNSATIS-

FACTORY. THEY WILL SHOW YOU HOW THE CHANGE CAME OVER THEM. WHEN ONE HUNDRED PEOPLE, MUCH LIKE YOU, ARE ABLE TO SAY THAT CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD IS TODAY THE MOST IMPORTANT FACT OF THEIR LIVES, THEY PRESENT A POWERFUL REASON WHY YOU TOO SHOULD HAVE FAITH.

SO OUR TROUBLES, WE THINK, ARE BASICALLY OF OUR OWN MAKING. THEY ARISE OUT OF OURSELVES, AND THE ALCOHOLIC IS ALMOST THE MOST EXTREME EXAMPLE THAT COULD BE FOUND OF SELF-WILL RUN RIOT, THOUGH HE USUALLY DOESN'T THINK SO. ABOVE EVERYTHING, WE ALCOHOLICS MUST BE RID OF THIS SELFISHNESS. WE MUST, OR IT KILLS US! GOD MAKES THAT POSSIBLE. AND THERE IS NO WAY OF ENTIRELY GETTING RID OF SELF WITHOUT HIM. YOU MAY HAVE MORAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL CONVICTIONS GALORE, BUT YOU CAN'T LIVE UP TO THEM EVEN THOUGH YOU WOULD LIKE TO. NEITHER CAN YOU REDUCE YOUR SELF-CENTEREDNESS MUCH BY WISHING OR TRYING ON YOUR OWN POWER. YOU MUST HAVE GOD'S HELP.

YOU MUST NEVER APOLOGIZE TO ANYONE FOR DEPENDING UPON YOUR CREATOR. YOU CAN LAUGH AT THOSE WHO THINK SPIRITUALITY THE WAY OF WEAKNESS. PARADOXICALLY, IT IS THE WAY OF STRENGTH. THE VERDICT OF THE AGES IS THAT FAITH MEANS COURAGE. ALL MEN OF FAITH HAVE COURAGE. THEY TRUST THEIR GOD. NEVER APOLOGIZE FOR GOD. INSTEAD LET HIM DEMONSTRATE, THROUGH YOU, WHAT HE CAN DO. ASK HIM TO REMOVE YOUR FEAR AND DIRECT YOUR ATTENTION TO WHAT HE WOULD HAVE YOU BE. AT ONCE, YOU WILL COMMENCE TO OUGROW FEAR.

IF A MERE CODE OF MORALS, OR A BETTER PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE WERE SUFFICIENT TO OVERCOME ALCOHOLISM, MANY OF US WOULD HAVE RECOVERED LONG AGO. BUT WE FOUND THAT SUCH CODES AND AND PHILOSOPHIES DID NOT SAVE US, NO MATTER HOW MUCH WE TRIED. WE COULD WISH TO BE MORAL, WE COULD WISH TO BE PHIL- OSOPHICALLY COMFORTED, IN FACT, WE COULD WILL THESE THINGS WITH ALL OUR MIGHT, BUT THE NEEDED POWER WASN'T THERE. OUR HUMAN RESOURCES, AS MARSHALLED BY THE WILL, WERE NOT SUFFICIENT; THEY FAILED UTTERLY.

POCKET YOUR PRIDE AND GO TO IT! ILLUMINE EVERY TWIST OF CHARACTER, EVERY DARK CRANNY OF THE PAST. ONCE YOU HAVE TAKEN THIS STEP, WITHOLDING NOTHING, YOU WILL BE DELIGHTED. YOU CAN LOOK THE WORLD IN THE EYE. YOU CAN BE ALONE AT PER- FECT PEACE AND EASE. YOUR FEARS WILL FALL FROM YOU. YOU WILL BEGIN TO FEEL THE NEARNESS OF YOUR CREATOR. YOU MAY HAVE HAD CERTAIN SPIRITUAL BELIEFS, BUT NOW YOU WILL BEGIN TO HAVE A SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE. THE FEELING THAT THE DRINK PROBLEM HAS DISAPPEARED WILL COME STRONGLY. YOU WILL KNOW YOU ARE ON THE BROAD HIGHWAY, WALKING HAND IN HAND WITH THE SPIRIT OF THE UNIVERSE.

YOU PROBABLY STILL HAVE SOME MISGIVINGS. WE CAN HELP YOU DISPEL THEM. AS YOU LOOK OVER THE LIST OF BUSINESS ACQUAIN- TANCES AND FRIENDS YOU HAVE HURT, YOU WILL FEEL DIFFIDENT ABOUT GOING TO SOME OF THEM ON A SPIRITUAL BASIS. LET US REAS- SURE YOU. TO SOME PEOPLE YOU NEED NOT, AND PROBABLY SHOULD

NOT EMPHASIZE THE SPIRITUAL FEATURE ON YOUR FIRST APPROACH. YOU MIGHT PREJUDICE THEM. AT THE MOMENT YOU ARE TRYING TO PUT YOUR OWN LIFE IN ORDER. BUT THIS IS NOT AN END IN ITSELF. YOUR REAL PURPOSE IS TO FIT YOURSELF TO BE OF MAXIMUM SERVICE TO GOD AND THE PEOPLE ABOUT YOU. IT IS SELDOM WISE TO APPROACH AN INDIVIDUAL, WHO STILL SMARTS FROM YOUR INJUSTICE TO HIM, AND ANNOUNCE THAT YOU HAVE GIVEN YOUR LIFE TO GOD. IN THE PRIZE RING, THIS WOULD BE CALLED LEADING WITH THE CHIN. WHY LAY YOURSELF OPEN TO BEING BRANDED A FANATIC OR A RELIGIOUS BORE? YOU MAY KILL A FUTURE OPPORTUNITY TO CARRY A BENEFICIAL MESSAGE. BUT HE IS SURE TO BE IMPRESSED WITH A SINCERE DESIRE TO SET RIGHT THE WRONG. HE IS GOING TO BE MORE INTERESTED IN YOUR DEMONSTRATION OF GOOD WILL THAN IN YOUR TALK OF SPIRITUAL DISCOVERIES.

THE SPIRITUAL LIFE IS NOT A THEORY. YOU HAVE TO LIVE IT. UNLESS YOUR FAMILY EXPRESSES A DESIRE TO LIVE UPON SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES, HOWEVER, WE THINK YOU OUGHT TO LEAVE THEM ALONE. YOU SHOULD NOT TALK INCESSANTLY ABOUT SPIRITUAL MATTERS TO THEM. THEY WILL CHANGE IN TIME. YOUR PRACTICE WILL CONVINCING THEM MORE THAN YOUR WORDS. REMEMBER THAT TEN OR TWENTY YEARS OF DRUNKENNESS WOULD MAKE A SKEPTIC OUT OF ANYONE.

1. DO YOU BELIEVE GOD IS CONCERNED WITH US HUMANS, BUT HIS CONCERN IS DIRECTLY RELATED TO OUR CONCERN FOR HIM?
2. DO YOU THINK CHURCHES, RELIGIONS AND PEOPLE WHO FOLLOW THESE TEACHINGS ARE RIGHT AFTER ALL?
3. DO YOU FEEL THAT YOUR LIFE HAS BEEN CHANGED BY THE PAST TEN STEPS?
4. IS GOD DOING FOR YOU WHAT YOU COULD NOT DO FOR YOURSELF?
5. DO YOU BELIEVE THAT "YOU HAVE TO THINK GOD, TO KNOW GOD"? DO YOU BELIEVE THIS IS WHAT THE PROGRAM CALLS, "GOD-CONSCIOUSNESS"?
6. WHAT ARE THE ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS TO MAINTAIN THE NEW ORDER OF THINGS?
7. IS THERE ANY MORE DOUBT IN YOUR MIND THAT AA MEMBERS MUST FIND A SPIRITUAL BASIS OF LIFE--OR ELSE?
8. IS IT A CONCERN OF THE GROUP WHAT CHURCH OR RELIGIOUS BODY A MEMBER IS IDENTIFIED WITH?
9. DON'T YOU THINK THAT IT WAS GOOD TO KNOW THAT WE DID NOT HAVE TO CONSIDER ANOTHER'S CONCEPTION OF GOD?
10. HAVE YOU FOUND OUT THAT GOD DOES NOT MAKE HARD TERMS WITH THOSE WHO SEEK HIM?
11. IS GOD'S WAY "EXCLUSIVE OR INCLUSIVE"?
12. ARE PREJUDICES YOU MAY HAVE AGAINST SPIRITUAL TERMS DETERMINING YOU FROM HONESTLY ASKING YOURSELF WHAT THEY MEAN TO YOU?
13. DO YOU AGREE THAT PEOPLE OF FAITH HAVE A LOGICAL IDEA OF WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT?
14. THE HUNDRED MEN AND WOMEN WHO WROTE THE BIG BOOK FLATLY DECLARE TO YOU THAT THEIR LIVES HAVE CHANGED SINCE THEIR ATTITUDES TOWARD A POWER GREATER THAN THEMSELVES HAS CHANGED. HOW ABOUT YOU, HAVE YOU CHANGED?
15. DO YOU BELIEVE ALL YOUR TROUBLES ARISE OUT OF YOURSELF? DO YOU BELIEVE GOD GOT RID OF SELF FOR YOU?
16. JUST HOW MUCH CAN YOU REDUCE YOUR SELF-CENTEREDNESS BY WISHING OR TRYING ON YOUR OWN POWER?

17. IS SPIRITUALITY THE WAY TO WEAKNESS?
18. DO YOU FEEL LIKE YOU ARE NOW WALKING HAND IN HAND WITH GOD, "THE SPIRIT OF THE UNIVERSE"?
19. HAS THE PROBLEM OF ALCOHOL DISAPPEARED?
20. DO YOU FEEL YOU HAVE FITTED YOURSELF TO BE OF MAXIMUM SERVICE TO GOD AND THE PEOPLE ABOUT YOU?
21. IS THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF AA A THEORY OR DO YOU HAVE TO LIVE IT?
22. HAVE YOU FOUND THAT YOUR TIMES OF DRUNKENNESS HAVE MADE SKEPTICS OUT OF ANYONE?

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN
STEP ELEVEN
PART TWO

SOUGHT THROUGH PRAYER AND MEDITATION TO IMPROVE OUR CONSCIOUS CONTACT WITH GOD AS WE UNDERSTOOD HIM, PRAYING ONLY FOR KNOWLEDGE OF HIS WILL FOR US AND THE POWER TO CARRY THAT OUT.

THERE MAY BE SOME WRONGS YOU CAN NEVER FULLY RIGHT. DON'T WORRY ABOUT THEM IF YOU CAN HONESTLY SAY TO YOURSELF THAT YOU WOULD RIGHT THEM IF YOU COULD. SOME PEOPLE YOU CANNOT SEE--SEND THEM AN HONEST LETTER. AND THERE MAY BE A VALID REASON FOR POSTPONEMENT IN SOME CASES. BUT DON'T DELAY IF IT CAN BE AVOIDED. BE SENSIBLE, TACTFUL, AND CONSIDERATE. BE HUMBLE WITHOUT BEING SERVILE OR SCRAPING. AS ONE OF GOD'S PEOPLE YOU ARE TO STAND ON YOUR FEET; DON'T CRAWL ON YOUR BELLY BEFORE ANYONE.

IF YOU ARE PAINSTAKING ABOUT THIS PHASE OF YOUR DEVELOPMENT, YOU WILL BE AMAZED BEFORE YOU ARE HALF THROUGH. YOU ARE GOING TO KNOW A NEW FREEDOM AND HAPPINESS. YOU WILL NOT REGRET THE PAST NOR WISH TO SHUT THE DOOR ON IT. YOU WILL COMPREHEND THE WORD SERENITY AND KNOW PEACE. NO MATTER HOW FAR DOWN THE SCALE YOU HAVE GONE, YOU WILL SEE HOW YOUR EXPERIENCE CAN BENEFIT OTHERS. THAT FEELING OF USELESSNESS AND SELF-PITY WILL DISAPPEAR. YOU WILL LOSE INTEREST IN SELFISH THINGS AND GAIN INTEREST IN YOUR FELLOWS. SELF-SEEKING WILL SLIP AWAY. YOUR WHOLE ATTITUDE AND OUTLOOK UPON LIFE WILL

CHANGE. FEAR OF PEOPLE AND OF ECONOMIC INSECURITY WILL LEAVE YOU. YOU WILL INTUITIVELY KNOW HOW TO HANDLE SITUATIONS WHICH USED TO BAFLE YOU. YOU WILL SUDDENLY REALIZE THAT GOD IS DOING FOR YOU WHAT YOU COULD NOT DO FOR YOURSELF.

AND YOU HAVE CEASED FIGHTING ANYTHING OR ANYONE--EVEN ALCOHOL. FOR BY THIS TIME YOUR SANITY WILL HAVE RETURNED. YOU WILL SELDOM BE INTERESTED IN LIQUOR. IF TEMPTED, YOU WILL RECOIL FROM IT AS YOU WOULD FROM A HOT FLAME. YOU WILL REACT SANELY AND NORMALLY. YOU WILL FIND THIS HAS HAPPENED AUTOMATICALLY. YOU WILL SEE THAT YOUR NEW ATTITUDE TOWARD LIQUOR HAS BEEN GIVEN YOU WITHOUT ANY THOUGHT OR EFFORT ON YOUR PART. IT JUST COMES! THAT IS THE MIRACLE OF IT. YOU ARE NOT FIGHTING IT, NEITHER ARE YOU AVOIDING TEMPTATION. YOU FEEL AS THOUGH YOU HAD BEEN PLACED IN A POSITION OF NEUTRALITY. YOU FEEL SAFE AND PROTECTED. YOU HAVE NOT EVEN SWORN OFF. INSTEAD, THE PROBLEM HAS BEEN REMOVED. IT DOES NOT EXIST FOR YOU. YOU ARE NEITHER COCKY, NOR ARE YOU AFRAID. THAT IS OUR EXPERIENCE. THAT IS HOW WE REACT SO LONG AS WE KEEP IN FIT SPIRITUAL CONDITION.

WHEN YOU AWAKE TOMORROW MORNING, LOOK BACK OVER THE DAY BEFORE. WERE YOU RESENTFUL, SELFISH, DISHONEST, OR AFRAID? DO YOU OWE AN APOLOGY? HAVE YOU KEPT SOMETHING TO YOURSELF WHICH SHOULD BE DISCUSSED WITH ANOTHER PERSON AT ONCE? WERE YOU KIND AND LOVING TOWARD ALL? WHAT COULD YOU HAVE DONE BETTER? WERE YOU THINKING OF YOURSELF MOST OF THE

TIME? OR WERE YOU THINKING OF WHAT YOU COULD DO FOR OTHERS, OF WHAT YOU COULD PACK INTO THE STREAM OF LIFE? AFTER YOU HAVE FACED YESTERDAY, ASK GOD'S FORGIVENESS FOR ANY WRONG. ASK TO BE SHOWN WHAT TO DO. THUS YOU KEEP CLEAN AS YOU LIVE EACH DAY.

STEP ELEVEN SUGGESTS PRAYER AND MEDITATION. DON'T BE SHY ON THIS MATTER OF PRAYER. BETTER MEN THAN WE ARE USING IT CONSTANTLY. IT WORKS, IF YOU HAVE THE PROPER ATTITUDE AND WORK AT IT. IT WOULD BE EASY TO BE VAGUE ABOUT THIS MATTER. YET, WE BELIEVE WE CAN GIVE YOU SOME DEFINITE AND VALUABLE SUGGESTIONS.

THINK ABOUT THE TWENTY-FOUR HOURS AHEAD. CONSIDER YOUR PLANS FOR THE DAY. BEFORE YOU BEGIN, ASK GOD TO GUIDE YOUR THINKING. ESPECIALLY ASK THAT IT BE DIVORCED FROM SELF-PITY, DISHONESTY OR SELF-SEEKING MOTIVES. YOUR THOUGHT LIFE WILL BE PLACED ON A MUCH HIGHER PLANE.

IN THINKING THROUGH YOUR DAY YOU MAY FACE INDECISION. YOU MAY NOT BE ABLE TO DETERMINE WHICH COURSE TO TAKE. HERE YOU ASK GOD FOR INSPIRATION, AN INTUITIVE THOUGHT OR A DECISION. RELAX AND TAKE IT EASY. DON'T STRUGGLE. ASK GOD'S HELP. YOU WILL BE SURPRISED HOW THE RIGHT ANSWERS COME AFTER YOU HAVE PRACTICED A FEW DAYS. WHAT USED TO BE THE HUNCH OR THE OCCASIONAL INSPIRATION BECOMES A WORKING PART OF YOUR MIND. BEING STILL INEXPERIENCED AND JUST MAKING YOUR CONTACT WITH GOD, IT IS NOT PROBABLE THAT YOU ARE GOING TO BE DIVINELY

INSPIRED ALL THE TIME. THAT WOULD BE A LARGE PIECE OF CONCEIT, FOR WHICH YOU MIGHT PAY IN ALL SORTS OF ABSURD ACTIONS AND IDEAS. NEVERTHELESS YOU WILL FIND THAT YOUR THINKING WILL, AS TIME PASSES, BE MORE AND MORE ON THE PLANE OF INSPIRATION AND GUIDANCE. YOU WILL COME TO RELY UPON IT. THIS IS NOT WEIRD OR SILLY. MOST PSYCHOLOGISTS PRONOUNCE THESE METHODS SOUND.

YOU MIGHT CONCLUDE THE PERIOD OF MEDITATION WITH A PRAYER THAT YOU BE SHOWN ALL THROUGH THE DAY WHAT YOUR NEXT STEP IS TO BE, THAT HE GIVE YOU WHATEVER YOU NEED TO TAKE CARE OF EVERY SITUATION. ASK ESPECIALLY FOR FREEDOM FROM SELF-WILL. BE CAREFUL TO MAKE NO REQUEST FOR YOURSELF ONLY. YOU MAY ASK FOR YOURSELF, HOWEVER, IF OTHERS WILL BE HELPED. NEVER PRAY FOR YOUR OWN SELFISH ENDS. PEOPLE WASTE A LOT OF TIME DOING THAT, AND IT DOESN'T WORK. YOU CAN EASILY SEE WHY.

IF CIRCUMSTANCES WARRANT, ASK YOUR WIFE OR A FRIEND TO JOIN YOU IN MORNING MEDITATION. IF YOU BELONG TO A RELIGIOUS DENOMINATION WHICH REQUIRES A DEFINITE MORNING DEVOTION, BE SURE TO ATTEND TO THAT ALSO. IF YOU ARE NOT A MEMBER OF A RELIGIOUS BODY, YOU MIGHT SELECT AND MEMORIZE A FEW SET PRAYERS WHICH EMPHASIZE THE PRINCIPLES WE HAVE BEEN DISCUSSING. THERE ARE MANY HELPFUL BOOKS ALSO. IF YOU DO NOT KNOW OF ANY ASK YOUR PRIEST, MINISTER, OR RABBI, FOR SUGGESTIONS. BE QUICK TO SEE WHERE RELIGIOUS PEOPLE ARE RIGHT. MAKE USE OF WHAT THEY OFFER.

AS YOU GO THROUGH THE DAY, PAUSE WHEN AGITATED OR DOUBTFUL. BE STILL AND ASK FOR THE RIGHT THOUGHT OR ACTION. IT WILL COME. REMIND YOURSELF YOU ARE NO LONGER RUNNING THE SHOW. HUMBLY SAY TO YOURSELF MANY TIMES EACH DAY "THY WILL BE DONE." YOU WILL BE IN MUCH LESS DANGER OF EXCITEMENT, FEAR, ANGER, WORRY, SELF-PITY, OR FOOLISH DECISIONS. YOU WILL BECOME MUCH MORE EFFICIENT. YOU WILL NOT TIRE EASILY, FOR YOU WILL NOT BE BURNING UP ENERGY FOOLISHLY AS YOU DID WHEN TRYING TO ARRANGE LIFE TO SUIT YOURSELF.

IT WORKS--IT REALLY DOES. TRY IT.

WE ALCOHOLICS ARE UNDISCIPLINED, SO LET GOD DISCIPLINE YOU IN THE SIMPLE WAY WE HAVE JUST OUTLINED.

BUT THIS IS NOT ALL. THERE IS ACTION AND MORE ACTION. "FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD." WHAT WORKS? WE SHALL TREAT THEM IN THE NEXT CHAPTER WHICH IS ENTIRELY DEVOTED TO STEP TWELVE.

ASSUMING WE ARE SPIRITUALLY FIT, WE CAN DO ALL SORTS OF THINGS ALCOHOLICS ARE NOT SUPPOSED TO DO. PEOPLE HAVE SAID WE MUST NOT GO WHERE LIQUOR IS SERVED; WE MUST NOT HAVE IT IN OUR HOMES; WE MUST SHUN FRIENDS WHO DRINK; WE MUST AVOID MOVING PICTURES WHICH SHOW DRINKING SCENES; WE MUSTN'T GO INTO BARS; OUR FRIENDS MUST HIDE THEIR BOTTLES IF WE GO TO THEIR HOUSES; WE MUSTN'T THINK OR BE REMINDED ABOUT ALCOHOL AT ALL. EXPERIENCE PROVES THIS IS NONSENSE.

WE MEET THESE CONDITIONS EVERY DAY. AN ALCOHOLIC WHO

CANNOT MEET THEM, STILL HAS AN ALCOHOLIC MIND: THERE IS SOMETHING WRONG WITH HIS SPIRITUAL STATUS. HIS ONLY CHANCE FOR SOBRIETY WOULD BE SOME PLACE LIKE THE GREENLAND ICE CAP, AND EVEN THERE AN ESKIMO MIGHT TURN UP WITH A BOTTLE OF SCOTCH AND RUIN EVERYTHING! ASK ANY WOMAN WHO HAS SENT HER HUSBAND TO A DISTANT PLACE ON THE THEORY HE WOULD ESCAPE THE ALCOHOL PROBLEM.

AFTER ALL, OUR TROUBLES WERE OF OUR OWN MAKING. BOTTLES WERE ONLY A SYMBOL. BESIDES, WE HAVE STOPPED FIGHTING ANYBODY OR ANYTHING. WE HAVE TO!

ALCOHOLICS WHO HAVE DERIDED RELIGIOUS PEOPLE WILL SOMETIMES BE HELPED BY SUCH CONTACTS. BEING POSSESSED OF A SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE, THE ALCOHOLIC WILL FIND HE HAS MUCH IN COMMON WITH THESE PEOPLE, THOUGH HE MAY DIFFER WITH THEM ON MANY MATTERS. IF HE DOES NOT ARGUE AND FORGET THAT MEN FIND GOD IN MANY WAYS, HE WILL MAKE NEW FRIENDS, AND IS SURE TO FIND NEW AVENUES OF USEFULNESS AND PLEASURE. HE AND HIS FAMILY CAN BE A BRIGHT SPOT IN SUCH CONGREGATIONS. HE MAY BRING NEW HOPE AND NEW COURAGE TO MANY A PRIEST, MINISTER, OR RABBI, WHO GIVES HIS ALL TO MINISTER TO OUR TROUBLED WORLD. WE INTEND THE FOREGOING AS A HELPFUL SUGGESTION ONLY. SO FAR AS WE ARE CONCERNED, THERE IS NOTHING OBLIGATORY ABOUT IT. AS A NON-DENOMINATIONAL GROUP, WE CANNOT MAKE UP PEOPLE'S MINDS FOR THEM. EACH INDIVIDUAL MUST CONSULT HIS OWN CONSCIENCE.

WE REALIZE WE KNOW ONLY A LITTLE. GOD WILL CONSTANTLY DISCLOSE MORE TO YOU AND TO US. ASK HIM IN YOUR MORNING MEDITATION WHAT YOU CAN DO EACH DAY FOR THE MAN WHO IS STILL SICK. THE ANSWERS WILL COME, IF YOUR OWN HOUSE IS IN ORDER. BUT OBVIOUSLY YOU CANNOT TRANSMIT SOMETHING YOU HAVEN'T GOT. SEE TO IT THAT YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM IS RIGHT, AND GREAT EVENTS WILL COME TO PASS FOR YOU AND COUNTLESS OTHERS. THIS IS THE GREAT FACT FOR US.

ABANDON YOURSELF TO GOD AS YOU UNDERSTAND GOD. ADMIT YOUR FAULTS TO HIM AND YOUR FELLOWS. CLEAR AWAY THE WRECKAGE OF YOUR PAST. GIVE FREELY OF WHAT YOU FIND, AND JOIN US. WE SHALL BE WITH YOU, IN THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE SPIRIT, AND YOU WILL SURELY MEET SOME OF US AS YOU TRUDGE THE ROAD OF HAPPY DESTINY.

MAY GOD BLESS YOU AND KEEP YOU--UNTIL THEN.

1. AS ONE OF GOD'S PEOPLE DO YOU STAND ON YOUR OWN FEET?
2. HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED THE FREEDOM AND HAPPINESS BORN OUT OF THE PRACTICE OF THE TWELVE STEPS OF AA?
3. IS GOD DOING MORE FOR YOU THAN YOU COULD HAVE DONE FOR YOURSELF?
4. HAVE YOU CEASED FIGHTING--ANYONE, ANYTHING, EVEN ALCOHOL?
5. HOW DO YOU REACT AS LONG AS YOU KEEP IN FIT SPIRITUAL CONDITION?
6. DO YOU TAKE A DAILY INVENTORY? DO YOU ADJUST YOUR LIFE ACCORDINGLY?
7. WHAT IS PRAYER?
8. WHAT IS MEDITATION?
9. DO YOU UNDERSTAND AND LIVE "ONE DAY AT A TIME"?
10. ARE YOU IN THE HABIT OF ASKING GOD FOR INSPIRATION, AN INTUITIVE THOUGHT OR DECISION?
11. DO YOU CONTINUOUSLY ASK GOD FOR FREEDOM FROM SELF-WILL?
12. DO YOU UNDERSTAND THIS STATEMENT: "NEVER PRAY FOR YOUR OWN SELFISH ENDS"?
13. DO YOU MAKE A HABIT OF PAUSING WHEN YOU BECOME "AGITATED OR DOUBTFUL"?
14. DO YOU BURN UP ENERGY FOOLISHLY?
15. COULD YOU SAY OVER AND OVER EACH DAY "IT WORKS--IT REALLY DOES! FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD"?
16. DOES EXPERIENCE PROVE THAT ALCOHOLICS CAN GO AND COME ANYWHERE IF THEY ARE SPIRITUALLY FIT?
17. CAN YOU MEET QUESTION 16 OR DO YOU STILL HAVE AN ALCOHOLIC MIND?
18. DO YOU BELIEVE "BOTTLES ARE ONLY A SYMBOL, " WE ALCOHOLICS MAKE OUR OWN TROUBLE?
19. IS ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS THE ONLY WAY FOR AN ALCOHOLIC TO STAY SOBER AND FIND "GOD"?
20. CAN YOU TRANSMIT SOMETHING YOU HAVEN'T GOT?

CHAPTER NINETEEN
STEP TWELVE
PART ONE

HAVING HAD A SPIRITUAL AWAKENING AS THE RESULT OF THESE STEPS, WE TRIED TO CARRY THIS MESSAGE TO ALCOHOLICS, AND TO PRACTICE THESE PRINCIPLES IN ALL OUR AFFAIRS.

MUCH HAS ALREADY BEEN SAID ABOUT RECEIVING STRENGTH, INSPIRATION, AND DIRECTION FROM HIM WHO HAS ALL KNOWLEDGE AND POWER. IF YOU HAVE CAREFULLY FOLLOWED DIRECTIONS, YOU HAVE BEGUN TO SENSE THE FLOW OF HIS SPIRIT INTO YOU. TO SOME EXTENT YOU HAVE BECOME GOD-CONSCIOUS. YOU HAVE BEGUN TO DEVELOP THIS VITAL SIXTH SENSE. BUT YOU MUST GO FURTHER AND THAT MEANS MORE ACTION.

I WAS TO TEST MY THINKING BY THE NEW GOD-CONSCIOUSNESS WITHIN. COMMON SENSE WOULD THUS BECOME UNCOMMON SENSE. I WAS TO SIT QUIETLY WHEN IN DOUBT, ASKING ONLY FOR DIRECTION AND STRENGTH TO MEET MY PROBLEMS AS HE WOULD HAVE ME. NEVER WAS I TO PRAY FOR MYSELF, EXCEPT AS MY REQUESTS BORE ON MY USEFULNESS TO OTHERS. THEN ONLY MIGHT I EXPECT TO RECEIVE. BUT THAT WOULD BE IN GREAT MEASURE.

THERE MAY BE SOME WRONGS YOU CAN NEVER FULLY RIGHT. DON'T WORRY ABOUT THEM IF YOU CAN HONESTLY SAY TO YOURSELF THAT YOU WOULD RIGHT THEM IF YOU COULD. SOME PEOPLE YOU CANNOT SEE--SEND THEM AN HONEST LETTER. AND THERE MAY BE A VALID REASON FOR POSTPONEMENT IN SOME CASES. BUT DON'T

DELAY IF IT CAN BE AVOIDED. BE SENSIBLE, TACTFUL, AND CONSIDERATE. BE HUMBLE WITHOUT BEING SERVILE OR SCRAPING. AS ONE OF GOD'S PEOPLE YOU ARE TO STAND ON YOUR FEET; DON'T CRAWL ON YOUR BELLY BEFORE ANYONE.

NEVER ARGUE. NEVER RETALIATE. YOU WOULDN'T TREAT SICK PEOPLE THAT WAY. IF YOU DO, YOU DESTROY YOUR CHANCE OF BEING HELPFUL. YOU CANNOT BE HELPFUL TO ALL PEOPLE, BUT AT LEAST GOD WILL SHOW YOU HOW TO TAKE A KINDLY AND TOLERANT VIEW OF EACH AND EVERY ONE.

WHEN YOU AWAKE TOMORROW MORNING, LOOK BACK OVER THE DAY BEFORE. WERE YOU RESENTFUL, SELFISH, DISHONEST, OR AFRAID? DO YOU OWE AN APOLOGY? HAVE YOU KEPT SOMETHING TO YOURSELF WHICH SHOULD BE DISCUSSED WITH ANOTHER PERSON AT ONCE? WERE YOU KIND AND LOVING TOWARD ALL? WHAT COULD YOU HAVE DONE BETTER? WERE YOU THINKING OF YOURSELF MOST OF THE TIME? OR WERE YOU THINKING OF WHAT YOU COULD DO FOR OTHERS, OF WHAT YOU COULD PACK INTO THE STREAM OF LIFE? AFTER YOU HAVE FACED YESTERDAY, ASK GOD'S FORGIVENESS FOR ANY WRONG. ASK TO BE SHOWN WHAT TO DO. THUS YOU KEEP CLEAN AS YOU LIVE EACH DAY.

IF YOU ARE PAINSTAKING ABOUT THIS PHASE OF YOUR DEVELOPMENT, YOU WILL BE AMAZED. YOU ARE GOING TO KNOW A FREEDOM AND HAPPINESS. YOU WILL NOT REGRET THE PAST NOR WISH TO SHUT THE DOOR ON IT. YOU WILL COMPREHEND THE WORD SERENITY AND KNOW PEACE. NO MATTER HOW FAR DOWN THE SCALE YOU HAVE

GONE, YOU WILL SEE HOW YOUR EXPERIENCE CAN BENEFIT OTHERS. THAT FEELING OF USELESSNESS AND SELF-PITY WILL DISAPPEAR. YOU WILL LOSE INTEREST IN SELFISH THINGS AND GAIN INTEREST IN YOUR FELLOWS. SELF-SEEKING WILL SLIP AWAY. YOUR WHOLE ATTITUDE AND OUTLOOK UPON LIFE WILL CHANGE. FEAR OF PEOPLE AND OF ECONOMIC INSECURITY WILL LEAVE YOU. YOU WILL INTUITIVELY KNOW HOW TO HANDLE SITUATIONS WHICH USED TO BAFLE YOU. YOU WILL SUDDENLY REALIZE THAT GOD IS DOING FOR YOU WHAT YOU COULD NOT DO FOR YOURSELF.

NEXT, THINK ABOUT THE TWENTY-FOUR HOURS AHEAD. CONSIDER YOUR PLANS FOR THE DAY. BEFORE YOU BEGIN, ASK GOD TO GUIDE YOUR THINKING. ESPECIALLY ASK THAT IT BE DIVORCED FROM SELF-PITY, DISHONEST OR SELF-SEEKING MOTIVES. THEN GO AHEAD AND USE YOUR COMMON SENSE. THERE IS NOTHING HARD OR MYSTERIOUS ABOUT THIS. GOD GAVE YOU BRAINS TO USE. CLEAR YOUR THINKING OF WRONG MOTIVES. YOUR THOUGHT LIFE WILL BE PLACED ON A MUCH HIGHER PLANE.

THOSE OF US WHO HAVE SPENT MUCH TIME IN THE WORLD OF SPIRITUAL MAKE-BELIEVE HAVE EVENTUALLY SEEN THE CHILDISHNESS OF IT. THIS DREAM WORLD HAS BEEN REPLACED BY A GREAT SENSE OF PURPOSE, ACCOMPANIED BY A GROWING CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE POWER OF GOD IN OUR LIVES. WE HAVE COME TO BELIEVE GOD WOULD LIKE US TO KEEP OUR HEADS IN THE CLOUDS WITH HIM, BUT THAT OUR FEET OUGHT TO BE FIRMLY PLANTED ON EARTH, NEVERTHELESS. THAT IS WHERE OUR FELLOW TRAVELERS ARE, AND THAT IS WHERE

OUR WORK MUST BE DONE. THESE ARE THE REALITIES FOR US. WE HAVE FOUND NOTHING INCOMPATIBLE BETWEEN A POWERFUL SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE, AND A LIFE OF SANE AND HAPPY USEFULNESS.

WE MEET THESE CONDITIONS EVERY DAY. AN ALCOHOLIC WHO CANNOT MEET THEM, STILL HAS AN ALCOHOLIC MIND; THERE IS SOMETHING THE MATTER WITH HIS SPIRITUAL STATUS. HIS ONLY CHANCE FOR SOBRIETY WOULD BE SOME PLACE LIKE THE GREENLAND ICE CAP, AND EVEN THERE AN ESKIMO MIGHT TURN UP WITH A BOTTLE OF SCOTCH AND RUIN EVERYTHING! ASK ANY WOMAN WHO HAS SENT HER HUSBAND TO DISTANT PLACES ON THE THEORY HE WOULD ESCAPE THE ALCOHOL PROBLEM.

UNDER NO CONDITION SHOULD YOU CRITICIZE SUCH A PERSON OR BE DRAWN INTO AN ARGUMENT WITH HIM. SIMPLY TELL HIM THAT YOU REALIZE YOU WILL NEVER GET OVER DRINKING UNTIL YOU HAVE DONE YOUR UTMOST TO STRAIGHTEN OUT THE PAST. YOU ARE THERE TO SWEEP OFF YOUR SIDE OF THE STREET, REALIZING THAT NOTHING WORTH WHILE CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED UNTIL YOU DO SO. NEVER TRY TO TELL HIM WHAT HE SHOULD DO. DON'T DISCUSS HIS FAULTS. STICK TO YOUR OWN. IF YOUR MANNER IS CALM, FRANK, AND OPEN, YOU WILL BE GRATIFIED WITH THE RESULT.

THIS IS OUR COURSE: REALIZE AT ONCE THAT THE PEOPLE WHO WRONG YOU ARE SPIRITUALLY SICK. THOUGH YOU DON'T LIKE THEIR SYMPTOMS AND THE WAY THESE DISTURB YOU, THEY, LIKE YOURSELF, ARE SICK, TOO. ASK GOD TO HELP YOU SHOW THEM THE SAME TOLERANCE, PITY, AND PATIENCE THAT YOU WOULD CHEERFULLY GRANT

A FRIEND WHO HAS CANCER. WHEN A PERSON NEXT OFFENDS, SAY TO YOURSELF, "THIS IS A SICK MAN. HOW CAN I BE HELPFUL TO HIM? GOD SAVE ME FROM BEING ANGRY. THY WILL BE DONE."

YOU HAVE ENTERED THE WORLD OF SPIRIT. YOUR NEXT FUNCTION IS TO GROW IN UNDERSTANDING AND EFFECTIVENESS. THIS IS NOT AN OVERNIGHT MATTER. IT SHOULD CONTINUE FOR YOUR LIFE TIME. CONTINUE TO WATCH YOURSELF FOR SELFISHNESS, DISHONESTY, RESENTMENT, AND FEAR. WHEN THESE CROP UP, ASK GOD AT ONCE TO REMOVE THEM. DISCUSS THEM WITH SOMEONE IMMEDIATELY. MAKE AMENDS QUICKLY IF YOU HAVE HARMED ANYONE. THEN RESOLUTELY TURN YOUR THOUGHTS TO SOMEONE YOU CAN HELP. LOVE AND TOLERANCE OF OTHERS IS YOUR CODE.

YOUR REAL PURPOSE IS TO FIT YOURSELF TO BE OF MAXIMUM SERVICE TO GOD AND THE PEOPLE ABOUT YOU. IT IS SELDOM WISE TO APPROACH AN INDIVIDUAL, WHO STILL SMARTS FROM YOUR INJUSTICE TO HIM, AND ANNOUNCE THAT YOU HAVE GIVEN YOUR LIFE TO GOD. IN THE PRIZE RING, THIS WOULD BE CALLED LEADING WITH THE CHIN. WHY LAY YOURSELF OPEN TO BEING BRANDED A FANATIC OR A RELIGIOUS BORE? YOU MAY KILL A FUTURE OPPORTUNITY TO CARRY A BENEFICIAL MESSAGE. BUT HE IS SURE TO BE IMPRESSED WITH A SINCERE DESIRE TO SET RIGHT THE WRONG. HE IS GOING TO BE MORE INTERESTED IN YOUR DEMONSTRATION OF GOOD WILL THAT IN YOUR TALK OF SPIRITUAL DISCOVERIES.

WE HAVE BEEN SPEAKING TO YOU OF SERIOUS, SOMETIMES TRAGIC THINGS. WE HAVE BEEN DEALING WITH ALCOHOL IN ITS WORST ASPECT.

BUT WE AREN'T A GLUM LOT. IF NEWCOMERS COULD SEE NO JOY OR FUN IN OUR EXISTENCE, THEY WOULDN'T WANT IT. WE ABSOLUTELY INSIST ON ENJOYING LIFE. WE TRY NOT TO INDULGE IN CYNICISM OVER THE STATE OF THE NATIONS, NOR DO WE CARRY THE WORLD'S TROUBLES ON OUR SHOULDERS. WHEN WE SEE A MAN SINKING INTO THE MIRE THAT IS ALCOHOLISM, WE GIVE HIM FIRST AND PLACE EVERYTHING WE HAVE AT HIS DISPOSAL. FOR HIS SAKE, WE DO RECOUNT AND ALMOST RELIVE THE HORRORS OF OUR PAST. BUT THOSE OF US WHO HAVE TRIED TO SHOULDER THE ENTIRE BURDEN AND TROUBLE OF OTHERS, FIND WE ARE SOON OVERCOME BY THEM.

BUT LIFE AMONG ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS IS MORE THAN ATTENDING MEETINGS AND VISITING HOSPITALS. CLEANING UP OLD SCRAPES, HELPING TO SETTLE FAMILY DIFFERENCES, EXPLAINING THE DISINHERITED SON TO HIS IRATE PARENTS, LENDING MONEY AND SECURING JOBS FOR EACH OTHER, WHEN JUSTIFIED--THESE ARE EVERYDAY OCCURRENCES. NO ONE IS TOO DISCREDITED, NOR HAS SUNK TOO LOW TO BE WELCOMED CORDIALLY--IF HE MEANS BUSINESS. SOCIAL DISTINCTIONS, PETTY RIVALRIES AND JEALOUSIES--THESE ARE LAUGHED OUT OF CONTENANCE. BEING WRECKED IN THE SAME VESSEL, BEING RESTORED AND UNITED UNDER ONE GOD, WITH HEARTS AND MINDS ATTUNED TO THE WELFARE OF OTHERS, THE THINGS WHICH MATTER SO MUCH TO SOME PEOPLE NO LONGER SIGNIFY MUCH TO THEM. HOW COULD THEY?

OUR PROGRAM IS MEANT TO BE SUGGESTIVE ONLY. WE REALIZE WE KNOW ONLY A LITTLE. GOD WILL CONSTANTLY DISCLOSE MORE

TO YOU AND TO US. ASK HIM IN YOUR MORNING MEDITATION WHAT YOU CAN DO EACH DAY FOR THE MAN WHO IS STILL SICK. THE ANSWERS WILL COME, IF YOUR OWN HOUSE IS IN ORDER. BUT OBVIOUSLY YOU CANNOT TRANSMIT SOMETHING YOU HAVEN'T GOT. SEE TO IT THAT YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM IS RIGHT, AND GREAT EVENTS WILL COME TO PASS FOR YOU AND COUNTLESS OTHERS. THIS IS THE GREAT FACT FOR US.

LET US NEVER FORGET:

A DOCTOR ONCE SAID: "YOU HAVE THE MIND OF A CHRONIC ALCOHOLIC. I HAVE NEVER SEEN ONE SINGLE CASE RECOVER, WHERE THAT STATE OF MIND EXISTED TO THE EXTENT THAT IT DOES IN YOU." WE FELT AS THOUGH THE GATES OF HELL HAD CLOSED ON US WITH A CLANG.

WE 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 PHENOMENA. 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. "

UPON HEARING THIS, WE WERE SOMEWHAT RELIEVED, FOR WE REFLECTED THAT, AFTER ALL, WE WERE GOOD CHURCH MEMBERS. THIS HOPE, HOWEVER, WAS DESTROYED BY THE DOCTOR'S TELLING US THAT OUR RELIGIOUS CONVICTIONS WERE VERY GOOD, BUT THAT IN OUR CASE THEY DID NOT SPELL THE NECESSARY VITAL SPIRITUAL AWAKENING.

1. CAN YOU EXPLAIN IN DEPTH THE STRENGTH, INSPIRATION AND DIRECTION YOU HAVE RECEIVED FROM THE PREVIOUS ELEVEN STEPS?
2. DO YOU BELIEVE YOU NOW HAVE A NEW GOD-CONSCIOUSNESS?
3. DO YOU SAY "YOU HAVE TO THINK GOD TO KNOW GOD"?
4. DO YOU STILL THINK OF THE PAST AND FEEL GUILTY ABOUT PEOPLE WHO YOU HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO MAKE AMENDS TO?
5. HAVE YOU FOUND THAT IT IS NOT NECESSARY TO ARGUE OR RETALIATE? WHY?
6. ARE YOU REGULARLY SAYING PLEASE IN THE MORNING AND THANKS AT NIGHT?
7. ARE YOU PAINSTAKING IN THIS PHASE OF YOUR DEVELOPMENT?
8. HAVE YOU ELIMINATED FROM YOUR LIFE SELF-PITY, DISHONESTY, AND SELF-SEEKING?
9. DO YOU REALIZE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SPIRITUAL MAKE-BELIEVE AND THE GROWING CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE POWER OF GOD IN YOUR LIFE?
10. DO YOU BELIEVE THAN AN ALCOHOLIC WHO CAN'T MEET THESE CONDITIONS STILL HAS AN ALCOHOLIC MIND?
11. HAVE YOU GOTTEN YOUR SIDE OF THE STREET SWEEPED CLEAN?
12. DO YOU BELIEVE THAT PEOPLE WHO WRONG YOU ARE SPIRITUALLY SICK?
13. DO YOU REALIZE WE HAVE TO PRACTICE OUR PROGRAM EACH DAY FOR THE BALANCE OF OUR LIVES?
14. HAVE YOU PREPARED YOURSELF FOR THE MAXIMUM SERVICE TO GOD AND THE PEOPLE AROUND YOU?
15. IS LIVING THE AA PROGRAM ABSOLUTE ENJOYMENT TO YOU?
16. DOES LIVING THE AA PROGRAM GET REPETITIOUS TO YOU?
17. DOES GOD CONSTANTLY DISCLOSE MORE TO YOU?
18. CAN YOU TRANSMIT SOMETHING YOU HAVEN'T GOT, SUCH AS HELPING YOUR FELLOW ALCOHOLIC ACQUIRE WHAT OTHERS HAVE FOUND IN AA?
19. DO YOU REMEMBER "WHENCE YOU CAME"?

CHAPTER TWENTY
STEP TWELVE
PART TWO-ONE

HAVING HAD A SPIRITUAL AWAKENING AS THE RESULT OF THESE STEPS, WE TRIED TO CARRY THIS MESSAGE TO ALCOHOLICS, AND TO PRACTICE THESE PRINCIPLES IN ALL OUR AFFAIRS.

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 PROGRAM CARRIES TO THOSE WHO SUFFER ALCOHOLISM.

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 SITUATED THAT THEY CAN GIVE NEARLY ALL THEIR TIME TO THE WORK.

WE DO NOT LIKE TO BRAND ANY INDIVIDUAL AS AN ALCOHOLIC, BUT YOU CAN QUICKLY DIAGNOSE YOURSELF. STEP OVER TO THE NEAREST BARROOM AND TRY SOME CONTROLLED DRINKING. TRY TO DRINK AND STOP ABRUPTLY. TRY IT MORE THAN ONCE. IT WILL NOT TAKE LONG FOR YOU TO DECIDE, IF YOU ARE HONEST WITH YOURSELF ABOUT IT. IT WILL BE WORTH A BAD CASE OF JITTERS IF YOU GET

THOROUGHLY SOLD ON THE IDEA THAT YOU ARE A CANDIDATE FOR ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS!

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?

SOME OF YOU ARE THINKING: "YES, WHAT YOU TELL US IS TRUE, BUT IT DOESN'T FULLY APPLY. WE ADMIT WE HAVE SOME OF THESE SYMPTOMS, BUT WE HAVE NOT GONE TO THE EXTREMES YOU FELLOWS DID, NOR ARE WE LIKELY TO, FOR WE UNDERSTAND OURSELVES SO WELL AFTER WHAT YOU HAVE TOLD US THAT SUCH THINGS CANNOT HAPPEN AGAIN. WE HAVE NOT LOST EVERYTHING IN LIFE THROUGH DRINKING AND WE CERTAINLY DO NOT INTEND TO. THANKS FOR THE INFORMATION."

HOW MANY TIMES PEOPLE HAVE SAID TO US: "I CAN 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 OR 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.

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.

THE EX-ALCOHOLIC WHO HAS FOUND THIS SOLUTION, WHO IS PROPERLY ARMED WITH CERTAIN MEDICAL INFORMATION, 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.

PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE SHOWS THAT NOTHING WILL SO MUCH INSURE YOUR OWN IMMUNITY FROM DRINKING AS INTENSIVE WORK WITH OTHER ALCOHOLICS. IT WORKS WHEN OTHER SPIRITUAL ACTIVITIES FAIL. THIS IS OUR TWELFTH SUGGESTION: CARRY THIS MESSAGE TO OTHER ALCOHOLICS! YOU CAN HELP WHEN NO ONE ELSE CAN. YOU CAN SECURE THEIR CONFIDENCE WHEN OTHERS FAIL. REMEMBER THEY ARE FATALLY ILL.

THE KICK YOU WILL GET IS TREMENDOUS. TO WATCH PEOPLE COME BACK TO LIFE, TO SEE THEM HELP OTHERS, TO WATCH LONELINESS VANISH, TO SEE A FELLOWSHIP GROW UP ABOUT YOU, TO HAVE A HOST OF FRIENDS--THIS IS AN EXPERIENCE YOU MUST NOT MISS. WE KNOW YOU WILL NOT WANT TO MISS IT. FREQUENT CONTACT WITH NEWCOMERS AND WITH EACH OTHER IS THE BRIGHT SPOT OF OUR LIVES.

WHEN YOU DISCOVER A PROSPECT FOR ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, FIND OUT ALL YOU CAN ABOUT HIM. IF HE DOES NOT WANT TO STOP DRINKING, DON'T WASTE TIME TRYING TO PERSUADE HIM. YOU MAY SPOIL A LATER OPPORTUNITY. THIS ADVICE IS GIVEN FOR HIS FAMILY ALSO. THEY MUST BE PATIENT, REALIZING THEY ARE DEALING WITH A SICK PERSON.

IF THERE IS ANY INDICATION THAT HE WANTS TO STOP, HAVE A GOOD TALK WITH THE PERSON MOST INTERESTED IN HIM--USUALLY HIS WIFE. GET AN IDEA OF HIS BEHAVIOR, HIS PROBLEMS, HIS BACKGROUND, THE SERIOUSNESS OF HIS CONDITION, AND HIS RELIGIOUS LEANINGS. YOU NEED THIS INFORMATION TO PUT YOURSELF IN HIS PLACE, TO SEE HOW YOU WOULD LIKE HIM TO APPROACH YOU IF THE TABLES WERE TURNED.

IF HE DOES NOT WANT TO SEE YOU, NEVER FORCE YOURSELF UPON HIM. NEITHER SHOULD THE FAMILY HYSTERICALLY PLEAD WITH HIM TO DO ANYTHING, NOR SHOULD THEY TELL HIM MUCH ABOUT YOU. THEY SHOULD WAIT FOR THE END OF HIS NEXT DRINKING BOUT. YOU MIGHT PLACE THE AA BOOK WHERE HE CAN SEE IT IN THE INTERVAL. HERE NO SPECIFIC RULE CAN BE GIVEN. THE FAMILY MUST DECIDE THESE THINGS. BUT URGE THEM NOT TO BE OVER-ANXIOUS, FOR THAT MIGHT SPOIL MATTERS.

USUALLY IT IS WISE TO WAIT TILL HE GOES ON A BINGE. THE FAMILY MAY OBJECT TO THIS, BUT UNLESS HE IS IN DANGEROUS PHYSICAL CONDITION, IT IS BETTER TO RISK IT. DON'T DEAL WITH HIM WHEN HE IS VERY DRUNK, UNLESS HE IS UGLY AND THE FAMILY NEEDS YOUR

HELP. WAIT FOR THE END OF THE SPREE, OR AT LEAST FOR A LUCID INTERVAL. THEN LET HIS FAMILY OR A FRIEND ASK HIM IF HE WANTS TO QUIT FOR GOOD AND IF HE WOULD GO TO ANY EXTREME TO DO SO. IF HE SAYS YES, THEN HIS ATTENTION SHOULD BE DRAWN TO YOU AS A PERSON WHO HAS RECOVERED. YOU SHOULD BE DESCRIBED TO HIM AS ONE OF A FELLOWSHIP WHO, AS A PART OF THEIR OWN RECOVERY, TRY TO HELP OTHERS, AND WHO WILL BE GLAD TO TALK TO HIM IF HE CARES TO SEE YOU.

THE FAMILY SHOULD NOT TRY TO REPRESENT YOU! WHEN POSSIBLE, AVOID MEETING A MAN THROUGH HIS FAMILY. APPROACH THROUGH A DOCTOR OR AN INSTITUTION IS A BETTER BET. IF YOUR MAN NEEDS HOSPITALIZATION, HE SHOULD HAVE IT, BUT NOT FORCIBLY, UNLESS HE IS VIOLENT. LET THE DOCTOR TELL HIM HE HAS SOMETHING NEW IN THE WAY OF A SOLUTION.

WHEN YOUR MAN IS BETTER, LET THE DOCTOR SUGGEST A VISIT FROM YOU. THOUGH YOU HAVE TALKED WITH THE FAMILY, LEAVE THEM OUT OF THE FIRST DISCUSSION. UNDER THESE CONDITIONS YOUR PROSPECT WILL SEE HE IS UNDER NO PRESSURE. HE WILL FEEL HE CAN DEAL WITH YOU WITHOUT BEING NAGGED BY HIS FAMILY. CALL ON HIM WHILE HE IS STILL JITTERY. HE WILL BE MORE RECEPTIVE WHEN DEPRESSED.

SEE YOUR MAN ALONE, IF POSSIBLE. AT FIRST ENGAGE IN GENERAL CONVERSATION. AFTER A WHILE, TURN THE TALK TO SOME PHASE OF DRINKING. SAY ENOUGH ABOUT YOUR DRINKING HABITS, SYMPTOMS, AND EXPERIENCES TO ENCOURAGE HIM TO SPEAK OF HIMSELF. IF

HE WISHES TO TALK, LET HIS DO SO. YOU WILL THUS GET A BETTER IDEA OF HOW YOU OUGHT TO PROCEED. IF HE IS NOT COMMUNICATIVE, GIVE HIM A SKETCH OF YOUR DRINKING CAREER UP TO THE TIME YOU QUIT. BUT SAY NOTHING, FOR THE MOMENT, OF HOW THAT WAS ACCOMPLISHED. IF HE IS IN A SERIOUS MOOD, DWELL ON THE TROUBLES LIQUOR HAS CAUSED YOU, BEING CAREFUL NOT TO MORALIZE OR PREACH. IF HIS MOOD IS LIGHT, TELL HIM HUMOROUS STORIES OF YOUR ESCAPADES. GET HIM TO TELL SOME OF HIS.

WHEN HE SEES YOU KNOW ALL ABOUT THE DRINKING GAME, COMMENCE TO DESCRIBE YOURSELF AS AN ALCOHOLIC. TELL HIM HOW BAFFLED YOU WERE, HOW YOU FINALLY LEARNED THAT YOU WERE SICK AS WELL AS WEAK. GIVE HIM AN ACCOUNT OF THE STRUGGLES YOU MADE TO STOP. SHOW HIM THE MENTAL TWIST WHICH LEADS TO THE FIRST DRINK OF A SPREE. DO THIS AS WE HAVE DONE IN THE CHAPTER ON ALCOHOLISM. IF HE IS ALCOHOLIC, HE WILL UNDERSTAND YOU AT ONCE. HE WILL MATCH YOUR MENTAL INCONSISTENCIES WITH SOME OF HIS OWN.

IF YOU ARE SATISFIED THAT HE IS A REAL ALCOHOLIC, YOU MAY BEGIN TO DWELL ON THE HOPELESS FEATURE OF THE MALADY. SHOW HIM, FROM YOUR OWN EXPERIENCE, HOW THE QUEER MENTAL CONDITION SURROUNDING THAT FIRST DRINK PREVENTS NORMAL FUNCTIONING OF THE WILL POWER. DON'T AT THIS STAGE REFER TO THIS BOOK, UNLESS HE HAS SEEN IT AND WISHES TO DISCUSS IT. AND BE CAREFUL NOT TO BRAND HIM AN ALCOHOLIC. LET HIM DRAW HIS OWN CONCLUSION. IF HE STICKS TO THE IDEA THAT HE CAN STILL

CONTROL HIS DRINKING, TELL HIM THAT POSSIBLY HE CAN--IF HE IS NOT TOO ALCOHOLIC. BUT INSIST THAT IF HE IS SEVERELY AFFLICTED, THERE IS LITTLE CHANCE HE CAN RECOVER BY HIMSELF.

WHEN DEALING WITH SUCH A PERSON, YOU HAD BETTER USE EVERY-DAY LANGUAGE TO DESCRIBE SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES. THERE IS NO USE AROUSING ANY PREJUDICE HE MAY HAVE AGAINST CERTAIN THEOLOGICAL TERMS AND CONCEPTIONS, ABOUT WHICH HE MAY ALREADY BE CONFUSED. DON'T RAISE SUCH ISSUES, NO MATTER WHAT YOUR OWN CONVICTIONS ARE.

OUTLINE OUR PROGRAM OF ACTION, TELLING HOW YOU MADE A SELF-APPRAISAL, HOW YOU STRAIGHTENED OUT YOUR PAST, AND WHY YOU ARE NOW ENDEAVORING TO BE HELPFUL TO HIM. MAKE IT PLAIN HE IS UNDER NO OBLIGATION TO YOU, THAT YOU HOPE ONLY THAT HE WILL TRY TO HELP OTHER ALCOHOLICS WHEN HE ESCAPES HIS OWN DIFFICULTIES. SHOW HOW IMPORTANT IT IS THAT HE PLACE THE WELFARE OF OTHER PEOPLE AHEAD OF HIS OWN. MAKE IT CLEAR THAT HE IS NOT UNDER PRESSURE, THAT HE NEEDN'T SEE YOU AGAIN, IF HE DOESN'T WANT TO. YOU SHOULD NOT BE OFFENDED IF HE WANTS TO CALL IT OFF, FOR HE HAS HELPED YOU MORE THAN YOU HAVE HELPED HIM, IF YOUR TALK HAS BEEN SANE, QUIET AND FULL OF HUMAN UNDERSTANDING, YOU HAVE PROBABLY MADE A FRIEND. MAYBE YOU HAVE DISTURBED HIM ABOUT THE QUESTION OF ALCOHOLISM. THIS IS ALL TO THE GOOD. THE MORE HOPELESS HE FEELS, THE BETTER. HE WILL BE MORE LIKELY TO FOLLOW YOUR SUGGESTIONS.

HE CAN SEE 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 DEPARTMENT 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 WE HAVE FOUND NECESSARY. AFTER SUCH AN APPROACH MANY TAKE UP THEIR BEDS AND WALK AGAIN.

1. ARE WE ALL IN AGREEMENT THAT WE HAVE A COMMON SOLUTION TO ALCOHOLISM?
2. DO WE AS INDIVIDUAL AA MEMBERS MAKE A SOLE VOCATION OF THIS WORK?
3. WHO DIAGNOSES WHETHER AN INDIVIDUAL IS AN ALCOHOLIC OR NOT?
4. DOES AA EXPECT TO DRY UP THE WORLD?
5. SHOULD WE FORCE THE ALCOHOLIC TO FOLLOW OUR WAY OF LIFE?
6. DO YOU BELIEVE THE WORLD TODAY HAS AN UNDERSTANDING OF ALCOHOLISM?
7. SHOULD YOU BE ARMED WITH MEDICAL INFORMATION AND FACTS ABOUT THE SOLUTIONS WHEN YOU APPROACH ANOTHER ALCOHOLIC?
8. WHAT IS THE MOST PROVEN WAY TO GET IMMUNITY FROM ALCOHOLISM?
9. WHAT IS A WISE THING TO DO WHEN YOU FIND A PROSPECT FOR AA?
10. SHOULD YOU TRY TO STOP HIS DRINKING?
11. SHOULD YOU TALK TO THE PERSON OR PERSONS MOST INTERESTED IN HIM LIKE HIS WIFE, MOTHER, BROTHER, SISTER, ETC. ?
12. DO YOU FORCE YOURSELF ON HIM?
13. SHOULD YOU TELL HIS LOVED ONES, NOT TO BE OVER-ANXIOUS?
14. SHOULD THE NEW PROSPECT ASK TO SEE YOU OR SHOULD HIS FAMILY DEMAND HE SEE YOU?
15. DOES THE FAMILY ATTEND YOUR FIRST MEETING WITH THE PROSPECT?
16. IF A DOCTOR IS INVOLVED WHAT IS HIS PART?
17. SHOULD THE FIRST MEETING BE ALONE WITH THE PROSPECT?
18. ON YOUR FIRST APPROACH, WHO DO YOU TALK ABOUT, YOU OR HIM?
19. DO YOU BRAND HIM OR HER AS AN ALCOHOLIC?
20. DO YOU AROUSE HIS RELIGIOUS CONCEPTIONS?

21. AFTER OUTLINING THE PROGRAM WHAT NEXT DO YOU GO INTO GREAT DETAIL ABOUT?
22. IF HE DOES NOT GO ALONG WITH YOU, WHO HAVE YOU HELPED THE MOST?
23. IS TWELVE STEP WORK A PLACE TO DISPLAY YOUR STRONG DESIRE TO HELP OTHERS?

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE
STEP TWELVE
PART TWO-TWO

HAVING HAD A SPIRITUAL AWAKENING AS THE RESULT OF THESE STEPS, WE TRIED TO CARRY THIS MESSAGE TO ALCOHOLICS, AND TO PRACTICE THESE PRINCIPLES IN ALL OUR AFFAIRS.

SUPPOSE NOW YOU ARE MAKING YOUR SECOND VISIT TO A MAN. HE HAS READ THIS VOLUME AND SAYS HE IS PREPARED TO GO THROUGH WITH THE TWELVE STEPS OF THE PROGRAM OF RECOVERY. HAVING HAD THE EXPERIENCE YOURSELF, YOU CAN GIVE HIM MUCH PRACTICAL ADVICE. SUGGEST HE MAKE HIS DECISION WITH YOU AND TELL YOU HIS STORY, BUT DO NOT INSIST UPON IT IF HE PREFERS TO CONSULT SOMEONE ELSE.

CONTINUE TO SPEAK OF ALCOHOLISM AS A SICKNESS, A FATAL MALADY. TALK ABOUT THE CONDITIONS OF BODY AND MIND WHICH ACCOMPANY IT. KEEP HIS ATTENTION FOCUSED MAINLY ON YOUR PERSONAL EXPERIENCE. IF DOCTORS OR PSYCHIATRISTS HAVE PRO- NOUNCED YOU INCURABLE, BE SURE AND LET HIM KNOW ABOUT IT. EXPLAIN THAT MANY ARE DOOMED WHO NEVER REALIZE THEIR PREDIC- AMENT. DOCTORS WHO KNOW THE TRUTH ARE RIGHTLY LOATH TO TELL ALCOHOLIC PATIENTS THE WHOLE STORY UNLESS IT WILL SERVE SOME GOOD PURPOSE, BUT YOU MAY TALK TO HIM ABOUT THE HOPE- LESSNESS OF ALCOHOLISM, BECAUSE YOU OFFER A SOLUTION. YOU WILL SOON HAVE YOUR FRIEND ADMITTING HE HAS MANY, IF NOT ALL, OF THE TRAITS OF THE ALCOHOLIC. IF HIS OWN DOCTOR IS WILL- ING TO TELL HIM THAT HE IS ALCOHOLIC, SO MUCH THE BETTER.

EVEN THOUGH YOUR PROTEGE MAY NOT HAVE ENTIRELY ADMITTED HIS CONDITION, HE HAS BECOME VERY CURIOUS TO KNOW HOW YOU GOT WELL. LET HIM ASK YOU THAT QUESTION, IF HE WILL. IF HE DOES NOT ASK, PROCEED WITH THE REST OF YOUR STORY. TELL HIM EXACTLY WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU. STRESS THE SPIRITUAL FEATURE FREELY. IF THE MAN BE AGNOSTIC OR ATHEIST, MAKE IT EMPHATIC THAT HE DOES NOT HAVE TO AGREE WITH YOUR CONCEPTION OF GOD. HE CAN CHOOSE ANY CONCEPTION HE LIKES, PROVIDED IT MAKES SENSE TO HIM. THE MAIN THING IS THAT HE BE WILLING TO BELIEVE IN A POWER GREATER THAN HIMSELF AND THAT HE LIVE BY SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES.

YOUR CANDIDATE MAY GIVE REASONS WHY HE NEED NOT FOLLOW ALL OF YOUR PROGRAM. HE WILL REBEL AT THE THOUGHT OF A DRASTIC HOUSECLEANING WHICH REQUIRES DISCUSSION WITH OTHER PEOPLE. DO NOT CONTRADICT SUCH VIEWS. TELL HIM YOU ONCE FELT AS HE DOES, BUT YOU DOUBT IF YOU WOULD HAVE MADE MUCH PROGRESS HAD YOU NOT TAKEN ACTION. ON YOUR SECOND VISIT TELL HIM ABOUT THE FELLOWSHIP OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS. IF HE SHOWS INTEREST, LEND HIM YOUR COPY OF OUR BIG BOOK.

UNLESS YOUR FRIEND WANTS TO TALK FURTHER ABOUT HIMSELF, DO NOT WEAR OUT YOUR WELCOME. GIVE HIM A CHANCE TO THINK IT OVER. IF YOU DO STAY, LET HIM STEER THE CONVERSATION IN ANY DIRECTION HE LIKES. SOMETIMES A NEW MAN IS ANXIOUS TO MAKE A DECISION AND DISCUSS HIS AFFAIRS AT ONCE, AND YOU MAY BE TEMPTED TO LET HIM PROCEED. THIS IS ALMOST ALWAYS A MIS-

TAKE. IF HE HAS TROUBLE LATER, HE IS LIKELY TO SAY YOU RUSHED HIM. YOU WILL BE MOST SUCCESSFUL WITH ALCOHOLICS IF YOU DO NOT EXHIBIT ANY PASSION FOR CRUSADE OR REFORM. NEVER TALK DOWN TO AN ALCOHOLIC FROM ANY MORAL OR SPIRITUAL HILLTOP, SIMPLY LAY OUT YOUR KIT OF SPIRITUAL TOOLS FOR HIS INSPECTION. SHOW HIM HOW THEY WORKED WITH YOU. OFFER HIM FRIENDSHIP AND FELLOWSHIP. TELL HIM THAT IF HE WANTS TO GET WELL YOU WILL DO ANYTHING TO HELP.

IF HE IS SINCERELY INTERESTED AND WANTS TO SEE YOU AGAIN, ASK HIM TO BE SURE TO READ THE BIG BOOK IN THE INTERVAL. AFTER DOING THAT, HE IS TO DECIDE FOR HIMSELF WHETHER HE WANTS TO GO ON. HE IS NOT TO BE PUSHED OR PRODDED BY YOU, HIS WIFE, OR HIS FRIENDS. IF HE IS TO FIND GOD, THE DESIRE MUST COME FROM WITHIN.

IF HE THINKS HE CAN DO THE JOB IN SOME OTHER WAY, OR PREFERS SOME OTHER SPIRITUAL APPROACH, ENCOURAGE HIM TO FOLLOW HIS OWN CONSCIENCE. YOU HAVE NO MONOPOLY ON GOD; YOU MERELY HAVE AN APPROACH THAT WORKED WITH YOU. BUT POINT OUT THAT WE ALCOHOLICS HAVE MUCH IN COMMON AND THAT YOU WOULD LIKE, IN ANY CASE, TO BE FRIENDLY. LET IT GO AT THAT.

DO NOT BE DISCOURAGED IF YOUR PROSPECT DOES NOT RESPOND AT ONCE. SEARCH OUT ANOTHER ALCOHOLIC AND TRY AGAIN. YOU ARE SURE TO FIND SOMEONE DESPERATE ENOUGH TO ACCEPT WITH EAGERNESS WHAT YOU OFFER. IT'S A WASTE OF TIME AND POOR STRATEGY TO KEEP CHASING A MAN WHO CANNOT OR WILL NOT WORK

WITH YOU. IF YOU LEAVE SUCH A PERSON ALONE, IN ALL LIKELIHOOD HE WILL BEGIN TO RUN AFTER YOU, FOR HE WILL SOON BECOME CONVINCED THAT HE CANNOT RECOVER ALONE. TO SPEND TOO MUCH TIME ON ANY ONE SITUATION IS TO DENY SOME OTHER ALCOHOLIC AN OPPORTUNITY TO LIVE AND BE HAPPY. ONE OF OUR FELLOWSHIP FAILED ENTIRELY WITH HIS FIRST HALF DOZEN PROSPECTS. HE OFTEN SAYS THAT IF HE HAD CONTINUED TO WORK ON THEM, HE MIGHT HAVE DEPRIVED MANY OTHERS, WHO HAVE SINCE RECOVERED, OF THEIR CHANCE.

PERHAPS YOU ARE NOT ACQUAINTED WITH ANY DRINKERS WHO WANT TO RECOVER. YOU CAN EASILY FIND SOME BY ASKING A FEW DOCTORS, MINISTERS, PRIESTS AND HOSPITALS. THEY WILL BE ONLY TOO GLAD TO HAVE YOUR HELP. DON'T START OUT AS AN EVANGELIST OR REFORMER. UNFORTUNATELY A LOT OF PREJUDICE EXISTS. YOU WILL BE HANDICAPPED IF YOU AROUSE IT. PREACHERS AND DOCTORS DON'T LIKE TO BE TOLD THEY DON'T KNOW THEIR BUSINESS. THEY ARE USUALLY COMPETENT AND YOU CAN LEARN MUCH FROM THEM IF YOU WISH, BUT IT HAPPENS THAT BECAUSE OF YOUR OWN DRINKING EXPERIENCE YOU CAN BE UNIQUELY USEFUL TO OTHER ALCOHOLICS. SO COOPERATE; NEVER CRITICISE. TO BE HELPFUL SHOULD BE YOUR ONLY AIM.

FOR MOST NORMAL FOLKS, DRINKING MEANS CONVIVIALITY, COMPANIONSHIP, AND COLORFUL IMAGINATION. IT MEANS RELEASE FROM CARE, BOREDOM, AND WORRY. IT IS JOYOUS INTIMACY WITH FRIENDS, AND A FEELING THAT LIFE IS GOOD. BUT NOT SO WITH US IN THOSE

LAST DAYS OF HEAVY DRINKING. THE OLD PLEASURES WERE GONE. THEY WERE BUT MEMORIES. NEVER COULD WE RECAPTURE THE GREAT MEMORIES OF THE PAST. THERE WAS AN INSISTENT YEARNING TO ENJOY AS WE ONCE DID AND A HEARTBREAKING OBSESSION THAT SOME NEW MIRACLE OF CONTROL WOULD ENABLE US TO DO IT. THERE WAS ALWAYS ONE MORE ATTEMPT--AND ONE MORE FAILURE.

THE LESS PEOPLE TOLERATED US, THE MORE WE WITHDREW FROM SOCIETY, FROM LIFE ITSELF. AS WE BECAME SUBJECTS OF KING ALCOHOL, SHIVERING DENIZENS OF HIS MAD REALM, THE CHILLING VAPOR THAT IS LONELINESS SETTLED DOWN. IT THICKENED, EVER BECOMING BLACKER. SOME OF US SOUGHT OUT SORDID PLACES, HOPING TO FIND UNDERSTANDING COMPANIONSHIP AND APPROVAL. MOMENTARILY WE DID--THEN WOULD COME OBLIVION AND THE AWFUL AWAKENING TO FACE THE HIDEOUS FOUR HORSEMEN--TERROR, BEWILDERMENT, FRUSTRATION, DESPAIR. UNHAPPY DRINKERS WILL UNDERSTAND!

YOUR PROSPECT MAY BELONG TO A RELIGIOUS DENOMINATION. HIS RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND TRAINING MAY BE FAR SUPERIOR TO YOURS. IN THAT CASE HE IS GOING TO WONDER HOW YOU CAN ADD ANYTHING TO WHAT HE ALREADY KNOWS. BUT HE WILL BE CURIOUS TO LEARN WHY HIS OWN RELIGIOUS CONVICTIONS HAVE NOT WORKED, AND YOURS HAVE GIVEN YOU VICTORY. HE MAY BE AN EXAMPLE OF THE TRUTH THAT FAITH ALONE IS INSUFFICIENT. TO BE VITAL, FAITH MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY SELF SACRIFICE AND UNSELFISH, CONSTRUCTIVE ACTION. LET HIM SEE THAT YOU ARE NOT THERE TO

INSTRUCT HIM IN RELIGION. ADMIT THAT HE PROBABLY KNOWS MORE ABOUT IT THAN YOU DO, BUT CALL TO HIS ATTENTION THE FACT THAT HOWEVER DEEP HIS FAITH AND KNOWLEDGE, THERE MUST BE SOMETHING WRONG, OR HE WOULD NOT DRINK. SAY THAT PERHAPS YOU CAN HELP HIM SEE WHERE HE FAILS TO APPLY TO HIMSELF THE VERY PRECEPTS HE KNOWS SO WELL. FOR OUR PURPOSE YOU REPRESENT NO PARTICULAR FAITH OR DENOMINATION. YOU ARE DEALING ONLY WITH GENERAL PRINCIPLES COMMON TO MOST DEMONINATIONS.

IT IS NOT THE MATTER OF GIVING THAT IS IN QUESTION, BUT WHEN AND HOW TO GIVE. THAT MAKES THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FAILURE AND SUCCESS. THE MINUTE WE PUT OUR WORK ON A SOCIAL SERVICE PLANE, THE ALCOHOLIC COMMENCES TO RELY UPON OUR ASSISTANCE RATHER THAN UPON GOD. HE CLAMORS FOR THIS OR THAT, CLAIMING HE CANNOT MASTER ALCOHOL UNTIL HIS MATERIAL NEEDS ARE CARED FOR. NONSENSE. SOME OF US HAVE TAKEN VERY HARD KNOCKS TO LEARN THIS TRUTH: JOB OR NO JOB--WIFE OR NO WIFE--WE SIMPLY DO NOT STOP DRINKING ALCOHOL SO LONG AS WE PLACE DEPENDENCE UPON OTHER PEOPLE AHEAD OF DEPENDENCE ON GOD.

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 HAVE A PROGRAM 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 VIEW-POINTS 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.

THE DISTINGUISHED AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGIST, WILLIAM JAMES, IN HIS BOOK, "VARIETIES OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE," INDICATES A MULTITUDE OF WAYS IN WHICH MEN HAVE FOUND GOD. AS A GROUP, WE HAVE NO DESIRE TO CONVINCЕ ANYONE THAT THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY BY WHICH GOD CAN BE DISCOVERED. 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.

HIGHLY COMPETENT PSYCHIATRISTS WHO HAVE DEALT WITH US (OFTEN FRUITLESSLY, WE ARE AFRAID) FIND IT ALMOST 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.

WE HAVE SHOWN YOU HOW WE GOT OUT FROM UNDER. YOU SAY: "YES, I'M WILLING. BUT AM I TO BE CONSIGNED TO A LIFE WHERE I

SHALL BE STUPID, BORING AND GLUM, LIKE SOME RIGHTEOUS PEOPLE I SEE? I KNOW I MUST GET ALONG WITHOUT LIQUOR, BUT HOW CAN I? HAVE YOU A SUFFICIENT SUBSTITUTE?"

YES, THERE IS A SUBSTITUTE, AND IT IS VASTLY MORE THAN THAT. IT IS A FELLOWSHIP IN ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS. THERE YOU WILL FIND RELEASE FROM CARE, BOREDOM, AND WORRY. YOUR IMAGINATION WILL BE FIRED. LIFE WILL MEAN SOMETHING AT LAST. THE MOST SATISFACTORY YEARS OF YOUR EXISTENCE LIE AHEAD. THUS WE FIND THE FELLOWSHIP, AND SO WILL YOU.

"HOW IS THAT TO COME ABOUT?" YOU SAY. "WHERE AM I TO FIND THESE PEOPLE?"

YOU ARE GOING TO MEET THESE NEW FRIENDS IN YOUR OWN COMMUNITY. NEAR YOU ALCOHOLICS ARE DYING HELPLESSLY LIKE PEOPLE IN A SINKING SHIP. IF YOU LIVE IN A LARGE PLACE, THERE ARE HUNDREDS. THESE ARE TO BE YOUR COMPANIONS. HIGH AND LOW, RICH AND POOR, THESE ARE FUTURE FELLOWS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS. AMONG THEM YOU WILL MAKE LIFELONG FRIENDS. YOU WILL BE BOUND TO THEM WITH NEW AND WONDERFUL TIES, FOR YOU WILL ESCAPE DISASTER TOGETHER AND YOU WILL COMMENCE SHOULDER TO SHOULDER YOUR COMMON JOURNEY. THEN YOU WILL KNOW WHAT IT MEANS TO GIVE OF YOURSELF, THAT OTHERS MAY SURVIVE AND REDISCOVER LIFE. YOU WILL LEARN THE FULL MEANING OF "LOVE THY NEIGHBOR AS THYSELF."

1. SUPPOSE YOUR PROSPECT ON THE SECOND VISIT SAYS HE IS READY. WHAT DO YOU SAY TO HIM?
2. WHAT DO YOU CONTINUE TALKING ABOUT?
3. DO YOU TALK ABOUT THE SPIRITUAL FEATURES OF THE PROGRAM?
4. SHOULD YOU TELL HIM HE HAS AN INCURABLE DISEASE, BUT IT CAN BE ARRESTED AND HOW IT CAN BE ARRESTED?
5. SUPPOSE YOUR PROSPECT REBELS AGAINST A DRASTIC HOUSECLEANING. WHAT DO YOU DO?
6. SHOULD YOU RUSH YOUR PROSPECT INTO AA?
7. DO YOU TALK "DOWN" TO AN ALCOHOLIC?
8. IF HE FINDS GOD, WHERE DOES HIS DESIRE COME FROM?
9. SHOULD WE LEAVE HIM WITH THE IDEA "AA IS THE ONLY WAY TO STAY SOBER"?
10. WHAT IS A WASTE OF YOUR TIME AND POOR STRATEGY ON YOUR PART?
11. DO YOU BELIEVE YOU ARE "A PLANTER OF AA SEEDS"?
12. WHERE IS A GOOD PLACE TO FIND ALCOHOLICS WHO MIGHT WANT WHAT YOU HAVE TO OFFER?
13. DO YOU LET THESE PEOPLE KNOW "YOU HAVE THE ANSWER, THEY DO NOT"?
14. DID YOU BELIEVE YOU COULD RECAPTURE THE GREAT MOMENTS OF THE PAST AGAIN?
15. DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE FOUR HORSEMEN--TERROR, BEWILDERMENT, FRUSTRATION, AND DESPAIR?
16. ARE YOU AN INSTRUCTOR OF RELIGION?
17. DO WE PUT OURSELVES ON THE PLANE OF A SOCIAL WORKER?
18. DO MATERIAL NEEDS HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH STAYING SOBER?
19. WHAT DO OUR VERY LIVES DEPEND UPON?
20. IS THERE ONLY ONE WAY TO FIND GOD?
21. WILL AN ALCOHOLIC DISCUSS HIS PROBLEMS WITH EVERYONE?
22. IS THERE A SUBSTITUTE FOR ALCOHOL AND A BETTER LIFE FOR AN ALCOHOLIC WHO IS STILL DRINKING?

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO
STEP TWELVE
PART TWO-THREE

HAVING HAD A SPIRITUAL AWAKENING AS THE RESULT OF THESE STEPS, WE TRIED TO CARRY THIS MESSAGE TO ALCOHOLICS, AND TO PRACTICE THESE PRINCIPLES IN ALL OUR AFFAIRS.

BOTH YOU AND THE NEW PROSPECT MUST DAY BY DAY WALK IN THE PATH OF SPIRITUAL PROGRESS. IF YOU PERSIST, REMARKABLE THINGS WILL HAPPEN TO YOU. WHEN WE LOOK BACK, WE REALIZE THAT THE THINGS WHICH CAME TO US WHEN WE PUT OURSELVES IN GOD'S HANDS WERE BETTER FOR US THAN ANYTHING WE COULD HAVE PLANNED. FOLLOW THE DICTATES OF A HIGHER POWER AND YOU WILL PRESENTLY LIVE IN A NEW AND WONDERFUL WORLD, NO MATTER WHAT YOUR PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES!

BURN THE IDEA INTO THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF EVERY MAN THAT HE CAN GET WELL REGARDLESS OF ANYONE. NO PERSON ON THIS EARTH CAN STOP HIS RECOVERY FROM ALCOHOL, OR PREVENT HIS BEING SUPPLIED WITH WHATEVER IS GOOD FOR HIM. THE ONLY CONDITION IS THAT HE TRUST IN GOD AND CLEAN HOUSE.

ALCOHOLICS WHO HAVE DERIDED RELIGIOUS PEOPLE WILL SOMETIMES BE HELPED BY SUCH CONTACTS. BEING POSSESSED OF A SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE, THE ALCOHOLIC WILL FIND HE HAS MUCH IN COMMON WITH THESE PEOPLE, THOUGH HE MAY DIFFER WITH THEM ON MANY MATTERS. IF HE DOES NOT ARGUE AND FORGET THAT MEN FIND GOD IN MANY WAYS, HE WILL MAKE NEW FRIENDS, AND IS SURE TO FIND NEW AVENUES OF USEFULNESS AND PLEASURE. HE AND HIS

FAMILY CAN BE A BRIGHT SPOT IN SUCH CONGREGATIONS. HE MAY BRING NEW HOPE AND NEW COURAGE TO MANY A PRIEST, MINISTER, OR RABBI, WHO GIVES HIS ALL TO MINISTER TO OUR TROUBLED WORLD. WE INTEND THE FOREGOING AS A HELPFUL SUGGESTION ONLY. SO FAR AS WE ARE CONCERNED, THERE IS NOTHING OBLIGATORY ABOUT IT. AS A NON-DENOMINATIONAL GROUP, WE CANNOT MAKE UP PEOPLE'S MINDS FOR THEM. EACH INDIVIDUAL MUST CONSULT HIS OWN CONSCIENCE.

FOR THE TYPE OF ALCOHOLIC WHO IS ABLE AND WILLING TO GET WELL, LITTLE CHARITY, IN THE ORDINARY SENSE OF THE WORD, IS NEEDED OR WANTED. THE MEN WHO CRY FOR MONEY AND SHELTER BEFORE CONQUERING ALCOHOL, ARE ON THE WRONG TRACK. YET WE DO GO TO GREAT EXTREMES TO PROVIDE EACH OTHER WITH THESE VERY THINGS, WHEN SUCH ACTION IS WARRANTED. THIS MAY SEEM INCONSISTENT, BUT IT IS NOT.

IF HE IS NOT INTERESTED IN YOUR SOLUTION, IF HE EXPECTS YOU TO ACT ONLY AS A BANKER FOR HIS FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES OR A NURSE FOR HIS SPREES, DROP HIM UNTIL HE CHANGES HIS MIND. THIS HE MAY DO AFTER HE GETS HURT AGAIN.

HE MAY BE BROKE AND HOMELESS. IF HE IS, TRY TO HELP HIM ABOUT GETTING A JOB. GIVE HIM A LITTLE FINANCIAL ASSISTENCE, UNLESS IT WOULD DEPRIVE YOUR FAMILY OR CREDITORS OF MONEY THEY SHOULD HAVE. PERHAPS YOU WILL WANT TO TAKE THE MAN INTO YOUR HOME FOR A FEW DAYS. BUT BE SURE YOU USE DISCRETION. BE CERTAIN HE WILL BE WELCOMED BY YOUR FAMILY, AND THAT

HE IS NOT TRYING TO IMPOSE UPON YOU FOR MONEY, CONNECTIONS, OR SHELTER. PERMIT THAT AND YOU ONLY HARM HIM. YOU WILL BE MAKING IT POSSIBLE FOR HIM TO BE INSINCERE. YOU WILL BE AIDING IN HIS DESTRUCTION, RATHER THAN HIS RECOVERY.

THIS SORT OF THING GOES ON CONSTANTLY, BUT WE SELDOM ALLOW AN ALCOHOLIC TO LIVE IN OUR HOMES FOR LONG PERIODS. IT IS NOT GOOD FOR HIM, AND IT SOMETIMES CREATES SERIOUS COMPLICATIONS IN A FAMILY.

NEVER AVOID THESE RESPONSIBILITIES, BUT BE SURE YOU ARE DOING THE RIGHT THING IF YOU ASSUME THEM. SELF-SACRIFICE FOR OTHERS IS THE FOUNDATION STONE OF YOUR RECOVERY. A KINDLY ACT ONCE IN A WHILE ISN'T ENOUGH. YOU HAVE TO ACT THE GOOD SAMARITAN EVERY DAY, IF NEED BE. IT MAY MEAN THE LOSS OF MANY NIGHTS' SLEEP, GREAT INTERFERENCE WITH YOUR PLEASURES, INTERRUPTIONS TO YOUR BUSINESS. IT MAY MEAN SHARING YOUR MONEY AND YOUR HOME, COUNSELING FRANTIC WIVES AND RELATIVES, INNUMERABLE TRIPS TO POLICE COURTS, SANITARIUMS, HOSPITALS, JAILS AND ASYLUMS. YOUR TELEPHONE MAY JANGLE AT ANY TIME OF THE DAY OR NIGHT. YOUR WIFE WILL SOMETIMES SAY SHE IS NEGLECTED. A DRUNK MAY SMASH THE FURNITURE IN YOUR HOME, OR BURN A MATTRESS. YOU MAY HAVE TO FIGHT WITH HIM IF HE IS VIOLENT. SOMETIMES YOU WILL HAVE TO CALL A DOCTOR AND ADMINISTER SEDATIVES UNDER HIS DIRECTION. ANOTHER TIME YOU MAY HAVE TO SEND FOR THE POLICE OR AN AMBULANCE.

WHEN YOUR MAN ACCEPTS YOUR OFFER, POINT OUT THAT PHY-

SICAL TREATMENT IS BUT A SMALL PART OF THE PICTURE. THOUGH YOU ARE PROVIDING HIM WITH THE BEST POSSIBLE MEDICAL ATTENTION, HE SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT HE MUST UNDERGO A CHANGE OF HEART. TO GET OVER DRINKING WILL REQUIRE A TRANSFORMATION OF THOUGHT AND ATTITUDE. HE MUST PLACE RECOVERY ABOVE EVERYTHING, EVEN HOME AND BUSINESS, FOR WITHOUT RECOVERY HE WILL LOSE BOTH.

NEXT, ASSURE HIM THAT YOU ARE NOT PROPOSING TO LECTURE, MORALIZE, OR CONDEMN; THAT IF YOU HAVE DONE SO FORMERLY, IT IS BECAUSE YOU MISUNDERSTOOD. SAY, IF YOU POSSIBLY CAN, THAT YOU HAVE NO HARD FEELINGS TOWARD HIM. AT THIS POINT, BRING OUT THE IDEA OF ALCOHOLISM, THE SICKNESS. ENLARGE ON THAT FULLY. REMARK THAT YOU HAVE BEEN LOOKING INTO THE MATTER. YOU ARE SURE OF WHAT YOU SAY, HENCE YOUR CHANGE OF ATTITUDE, HENCE YOUR WILLINGNESS TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM AS THOUGH IT WERE A DISEASE. YOU ARE WILLING TO LOOK AT YOUR MAN AS A GRAVELY-ILL PERSON, WITH THIS QUALIFICATION--BEING PERHAPS FATALLY ILL, DOES YOUR MAN WANT TO GET WELL, AND RIGHT NOW? YOU ASK BECAUSE MANY ALCOHOLICS, BEING WARPED AND DRUGGED, DO NOT WANT TO QUIT. BUT DOES HE? WILL HE TAKE EVERY NECESSARY STEP, SUBMIT TO ANYTHING TO GET WELL, TO STOP DRINKING FOREVER?

WE ARE CAREFUL NEVER TO SHOW INTOLERANCE OR HATRED OF DRINKING AS AN INSTITUTION. EXPERIENCE SHOWS THAT SUCH AN ATTITUDE IS NOT HELPFUL TO ANYONE. EVERY NEW ALCOHOLIC

LOOKS FOR THIS SPIRIT AMONG US AND IS IMMENSELY RELIEVED WHEN HE FINDS WE ARE NOT WITCH-BURNERS. A SPIRIT OF INTOLERANCE MIGHT REPEL ALCOHOLICS WHOSE LIVES WOULD HAVE BEEN SAVED, HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR OUR STUPIDITY. WE WOULD NOT EVEN DO THE CAUSE OF TEMPERATE DRINKING ANY GOOD, FOR NOT ONE DRINKER IN A THOUSAND IS WILLING TO BE TOLD ANYTHING ABOUT ALCOHOL BY ONE WHO HATES IT.

YOUR JOB NOW IS TO BE AT THE PLACE WHERE YOU MAY BE OF MAXIMUM HELPFULNESS TO OTHERS, SO NEVER HESITATE TO GO WHERE THERE IS DRINKING, IF YOU CAN BE HELPFUL. YOU SHOULD NOT HESITATE TO VISIT THE MOST SORDID SPOT ON EARTH ON SUCH A MISSION. KEEP ON THE FIRING LINE OF LIFE WITH THESE MOTIVES, AND GOD WILL KEEP YOU UNHARMED.

SO OUR RULE IS NOT TO AVOID A PLACE WHERE THERE IS DRINKING, IF WE HAVE A LEGITIMATE REASON FOR BEING THERE. THAT INCLUDES BARS, NIGHTCLUBS, DANCES, RECEPTIONS, WEDDINGS, EVEN PLAIN ORDINARY WHOOPEE PARTIES. TO A PERSON WHO HAS HAD EXPERIENCE WITH AN ALCOHOLIC, THIS MAY SEEM LIKE TEMPTING PROVIDENCE, BUT IT ISN'T.

YOU ARE NOT TO SIT WITH A LONG FACE IN PLACES WHERE THERE IS DRINKING, SIGHING ABOUT THE GOOD OLD DAYS. IF IT IS A HAPPY OCCASION, TRY TO INCREASE THE PLEASURE OF THOSE THERE; IF A BUSINESS OCCASION, GO AND ATTEND TO YOUR BUSINESS ENTHUSIASMATICALLY. IF YOU ARE WITH A PERSON WHO WANTS TO EAT IN A BAR, BY ALL MEANS GO ALONG. LET YOUR FRIENDS KNOW THEY ARE NOT

TO CHANGE THEIR HABITS ON YOUR ACCOUNT. AT A PROPER TIME AND PLACE EXPLAIN TO ALL YOUR FRIENDS WHY ALCOHOL DISAGREES WITH YOU. IF YOU DO THIS THOROUGHLY, NO DECENT PERSON WILL ASK YOU TO DRINK. WHILE YOU WERE DRINKING, YOU WERE WITHDRAWING FROM LIFE LITTLE BY LITTLE. NOW YOU ARE GETTING BACK INTO THE LIFE OF THIS WORLD. DON'T START TO WITHDRAW FROM LIFE AGAIN JUST BECAUSE YOUR FRIENDS DRINK LIQUOR.

YOU WILL NOTE THAT WE MADE AN IMPORTANT QUALIFICATION. THEREFORE, ASK YOURSELF ON EACH ACCASION, "HAVE I ANY LEGITIMATE SOCIAL, BUSINESS, OR PERSONAL REASON FOR GOING TO THIS PLACE? AM I GOING TO BE HELPFUL TO ANYONE THERE? COULD I BE MORE USEFUL OR HELPFUL BY BEING SOMEWHERE ELSE?" IF YOU ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS SATISFACTORILY, YOU NEED HAVE NO APPREHENSION. YOU MAY GO OR STAY AWAY, WHATEVER SEEMS BEST. BUT BE SURE YOU ARE ON SOLID SPIRITUAL GROUND BEFORE YOU START AND THAT YOUR MOTIVE IN GOING IS THOROUGHLY GOOD. DO NOT THINK OF WHAT YOU WILL GET OUT OF THE OCCASION. THINK OF WHAT YOU CAN BRING TO IT. BUT IF YOU ARE SPIRITUALLY SHAKY, YOU HAD BETTER WORK WITH ANOTHER ALCOHOLIC INSTEAD!

ASSUMING WE ARE SPIRITUALLY FIT, WE CAN DO ALL SORTS OF THINGS ALCOHOLICS ARE NOT SUPPOSED TO DO. PEOPLE HAVE SAID WE MUST NOT GO WHERE LIQUOR IS SERVED; WE MUST NOT HAVE IT IN OUR HOMES; WE MUST SHUN FRIENDS WHO DRINK; WE MUST AVOID MOVING PICTURES WHICH SHOW DRINKING SCENES; WE MUSTN'T GO

INTO BARS; OUR FRIENDS MUST HIDE THEIR BOTTLES IF WE GO TO THEIR HOUSES; WE MUSTN'T THINK OR BE REMINDED ABOUT ALCOHOL AT ALL. EXPERIENCE PROVES THIS IS NONSENSE.

MANY OF US KEEP LIQUOR IN OUR HOMES. WE OFTEN NEED IT TO CARRY GREEN RECRUITS THROUGH A SEVER HANGOVER. SOME OF US STILL SERVE IT TO OUR FRIENDS IN MODERATION, PROVIDED THEY ARE PEOPLE WHO DO NOT ABUSE DRINKING. BUT SOME OF US THINK WE SHOULD NOT SERVE LIQUOR TO ANYONE. WE NEVER ARGUE THIS QUESTION. WE FEEL THAT EACH FAMILY, IN THE LIGHT OF THEIR OWN CIRCUMSTANCES, OUGHT TO DECIDE FOR THEMSELVES.

ANY SCHEME OF COMBATTING ALCOHOLISM WHICH PROPOSES TO SHIELD THE SICK MAN FROM TEMPTATION IS DOOMED TO FAILURE. IF THE ALCOHOLIC TRIES TO SHIELD HIMSELF, HE MAY SUCCEED FOR A TIME, BUT WILL WIND UP WITH A BIGGER EXPLOSION THAN EVER. OUR WIVES AND WE HAVE TRIED THESE METHODS. THESE FOOLISH ATTEMPTS TO DO THE IMPOSSIBLE HAVE ALWAYS FAILED.

SOMEDAY WE HOPE THAT ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS WILL HELP THE PUBLIC TO A BETTER REALIZATION OF THE GRAVITY OF THE LIQUOR PROBLEM. WE SHALL BE OF LITTLE USE IF OUR ATTITUDE IS ONE OF BITTERNESS OR HOSTILITY. DRINKERS WILL NOT STAND FOR IT.

AFTER ALL, OUR TROUBLES WERE OF OUR OWN MAKING. BOTTLES WERE ONLY A SYMBOL. BESIDES, WE HAVE STOPPED FIGHTING ANYBODY OR ANYTHING. WE HAVE TO!

1. WHAT DICTATES SHOULD YOU FOLLOW ?
2. WHO CAN GET WELL OR RECOVER FROM ALCOHOLISM ?
3. IS YOUR WAY THE ONLY WAY FOR A MAN TO FIND GOD ?
4. DO WE FINANCE THOSE WE TWELVE STEP ?
5. IF YOUR PROSPECT IS ONLY INTERESTED IN FINANCES, WHAT DO YOU DO ?
6. SHOULD YOU IN A SMALL WAY ASSIST YOUR NEW MEMBER WITH MONEY, HELPING TO FIND EMPLOYMENT, ETC. ?
7. SHOULD YOU TAKE THE NEW MEMBER HOME WITH YOU WITHOUT YOUR FAMILIES APPROVAL ?
8. WHAT IS THE FOUNDATION STONE FOR OUR RECOVERY ?
9. PHYSICAL TREATMENT IS BUT A SMALL PART OF RECOVERY. WHAT IS THE MAIN CHANGE ?
10. DO YOU LECTURE, MORALIZE AND CONDEMN A NEW MEMBER OR AN OLD MEMBER OF AA ?
11. SHOULD WE SHOW INTOLERANCE OR HATRED TOWARD ALCOHOL ?
12. SHOULD YOUR FRIENDS CHANGE THEIR HABITS JUST BECAUSE YOU HAVE STOPPED DRINKING ?
13. CAN YOU GO ANYWHERE AND WILL GOD KEEP YOU UNHARMED ?
14. IS AA'S RULE, "NEVER GO NEAR ALCOHOL" ?
15. SHOULD WE SHIELD AN ALCOHOLIC FROM TEMPTATION ?
16. SHOULD WE KEEP AND SERVE ALCOHOL IN OUR HOMES OR NOT ?
17. WHAT QUESTIONS DO YOU ASK YOURSELF SO YOU CAN BE AROUND ALCOHOL AND HAVE NO APPREHENSION ?
18. WHAT CAN WE DO IF WE ARE SPIRITUALLY FIT ?
19. DO YOU BELIEVE IT IS AA'S BUSINESS TO EDUCATE THE PUBLIC ON THE GRAVITY OF ALCOHOL ?
20. WERE YOUR TROUBLES OF YOUR OWN MAKING ?
21. ARE BOTTLES ONLY A SYMBOL ? CAN WE CONTINUE TO FIGHT ANYBODY OR ANYTHING ?

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE
STEP TWELVE
PART TWO-FOUR

HAVING HAD A SPIRITUAL AWAKENING AS THE RESULT OF THESE STEPS, WE TRIED TO CARRY THIS MESSAGE TO ALCOHOLICS, AND TO PRACTICE THESE PRINCIPLES IN ALL OUR AFFAIRS.

CESSATION OF DRINKING IS BUT THE FIRST STEP AWAY FROM A HIGHLY STRAINED, ABNORMAL CONDITION. A DOCTOR SAID THE OTHER DAY, "YEARS OF LIVING WITH AN ALCOHOLIC IS ALMOST SURE TO MAKE ANY WIFE OR CHILD NEUROTIC. THE ENTIRE FAMILY IS, TO SOME EXTENT, ILL." LET FAMILIES REALIZE, AS THEY START THEIR JOURNEY, THAT ALL WILL NOT BE FAIR WEATHER. EACH IN HIS TURN WILL BE FOOTSORE AND WILL STRAGGLE. THERE WILL BE ALLURING SHORTCUTS AND BY-PATHS DOWN WHICH THEY MAY WANDER AND LOSE THEIR WAY.

NOW, THE DOMESTIC PROBLEM: THERE MAY BE DIVORCE, SEPARATION, OR JUST STRAINED RELATIONS. WHEN YOUR PROSPECT HAS MADE SUCH RESTITUTION AS HE CAN TO HIS FAMILY, AND HAS THOROUGHLY EXPLAINED TO THEM THE NEW PRINCIPLES BY WHICH HE IS LIVING, HE SHOULD PROCEED TO PUT THOSE PRINCIPLES INTO ACTION AT HOME. THAT IS, IF HE IS LUCKY ENOUGH TO HAVE A HOME. THOUGH HIS FAMILY BE AT FAULT IN MANY RESPECTS, HE SHOULD NOT BE CONCERNED ABOUT THAT. HE SHOULD CONCENTRATE ON HIS OWN SPIRITUAL DEMONSTRATION. ARGUMENT AND FAULT-FINDING ARE TO BE AVOIDED LIKE LEPROSY. IN MANY HOMES THIS IS A DIFFICULT THING TO DO, BUT IT MUST BE DONE IF ANY RESULTS ARE TO BE

EXPECTED. IF PERSISTED ON FOR A FEW MONTHS, THE EFFECT ON A MAN'S FAMILY IS SURE TO BE GREAT. THE MOST INCOMPATIBLE PEOPLE DISCOVER THEY HAVE A BASIS UPON WHICH THEY CAN MEET. LITTLE BY LITTLE THE FAMILY WILL SEE THEIR OWN DEFECTS AND ADMIT THEM. THESE CAN THEN BE DISCUSSED IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF HELPFULNESS AND FRIENDLINESS.

WE FAMILIES OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS HAVE FEW SECRETS. EVERYONE KNOWS ALL ABOUT EVERYONE ELSE. THIS IS A CONDITION WHICH, IN ORDINARY LIFE, WOULD PRODUCE UNTOLD GRIEF. THERE WOULD BE SCANDALOUS GOSSIP, LAUGHTER AT THE EXPENSE OF OTHER PEOPLE, AND A TENDENCY TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF INTIMATE INFORMATION. AMONG US, THESE ARE RARE OCCURRENCES.

IF THERE BE DIVORCE OF SEPARATION, THERE SHOULD BE NO UNDUE HASTE FOR THE COUPLE TO GET TOGETHER. THE MAN SHOULD BE SURE OF HIS GROUND. THE WIFE SHOULD FULLY UNDERSTAND HIS NEW WAY OF LIFE. IF THEIR OLD RELATIONSHIP IS TO BE RESUMED, IT MUST BE ON A BETTER BASIS, SINCE THE OLD ONE DID NOT WORK. THIS MEANS A NEW ATTITUDE AND SPIRIT ALL AROUND. SOMETIMES IT IS TO THE BEST INTERESTS OF ALL CONCERNED THAT A COUPLE REMAIN APART. OBVIOUSLY, NO RULE CAN BE LAID DOWN. LET THE ALCOHOLIC CONTINUE HIS NEW WAY OF LIFE DAY BY DAY. WHEN THE TIME FOR LIVING TOGETHER HAS COME, IT WILL BE APPARENT TO BOTH PARTIES.

LET NO ALCOHOLIC SAY HE CANNOT RECOVER UNLESS HE HAS HIS

FAMILY BACK. THIS JUST ISN'T SO. IN SOME CASES THE WIFE WILL NEVER COME BACK FOR ONE REASON OR ANOTHER. REMIND YOUR PROSPECT THAT HIS RECOVERY IS NOT DEPENDENT UPON PEOPLE. IT IS DEPENDENT UPON HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. WE HAVE SEEN MEN GET WELL WHOSE FAMILIES HAVE NOT RETURNED AT ALL. WE HAVE SEEN OTHERS SLIP WHEN THE FAMILY CAME BACK TOO SOON.

WHEN WORKING WITH A MAN AND HIS FAMILY, YOU MUST TAKE CARE NOT TO PARTICIPATE IN THEIR QUARRELS. YOU MAY SPOIL YOUR CHANCE OF BEING HELPFUL IF YOU DO. BUT YOU MAY URGE UPON A MAN'S FAMILY THAT HE HAS BEEN A VERY SICK PERSON AND SHOULD BE TREATED ACCORDINGLY. YOU SHOULD WARN THEM AGAINST AROUSING RESENTMENT OR JEALOUSY. YOU SHOULD POINT OUT THAT HIS DEFECTS OF CHARACTER ARE NOT GOING TO DISAPPEAR OVERNIGHT. SHOW THEM THAT HE HAS ENTERED UPON A PERIOD OF GROWTH. ASK THEM TO REMEMBER, WHEN THEY ARE IMPATIENT, THE BLESSED FACT OF HIS SOBRIETY.

ANOTHER RULE WE OBSERVE CAREFULLY IS THAT WE DO NOT RELATE INTIMATE EXPERIENCES OF ANOTHER PERSON UNLESS WE ARE SURE HE WOULD APPROVE. WE FIND IT BETTER, WHEN POSSIBLE, TO STICK TO OUR OWN STORIES. A MAN MAY CRITICIZE OR LAUGH AT HIMSELF AND IT WILL AFFECT OTHERS FAVORABLY, BUT CRITICISM OR RIDICULE OF HIM COMING FROM ANOTHER OFTEN PRODUCES THE CONTRARY EFFECT. MEMBERS OF A FAMILY SHOULD WATCH SUCH MATTERS CAREFULLY, FOR ONE CARELESS, INCONSIDERATE REMARK

HAS BEEN KNOWN TO RAISE THE VERY DEVIL. WE ALCOHOLICS ARE SENSITIVE PEOPLE. IT TAKES SOME OF US A LONG TIME TO OUTGROW THAT SERIOUS HANDICAP.

WHETHER THE FAMILY GOES ON A SPIRITUAL BASIS OR NOT, THE ALCOHOLIC MEMBER MUST. THE OTHERS MUST BE CONVINCED BY HIS CHANGED LIFE BEYOND A SHADOW OF A DOUBT. HE MUST LEAD THE WAY. SEEING IS BELIEVING TO MOST FAMILIES WHO HAVE LIVED WITH A DRINKER.

THE ALCOHOLIC MAY FIND IT HARD TO RE-ESTABLISH FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH HIS CHILDREN. THEIR YOUNG MINDS WERE IMPRESSIONABLE WHILE HE WAS DRINKING. WITHOUT SAYING SO, THEY MAY CORDIALLY HATE HIM FOR WHAT HE HAS DONE TO THEM AND TO THEIR MOTHER. THE POOR CHILDREN ARE SOMETIMES DOMINATED BY A PATHETIC HARDNESS AND CYNICISM. THEY CANNOT SEEM TO FORGIVE AND FORGET. THIS MAY HANG ON FOR MONTHS, LONG AFTER THEIR MOTHER HAS ACCEPTED DAD'S NEW WAY OF LIVING AND THINKING.

FATHER HAD BETTER BE SPARING OF HIS CORRECTION OR CRITICISM OF THEM WHILE THEY ARE IN THIS FRAME OF MIND. HE HAD BETTER NOT URGE HIS NEW WAY OF LIFE ON THEM TOO SOON. IN TIME THEY WILL SEE THAT HE IS A NEW MAN AND IN THEIR OWN WAY THEY WILL LET HIM KNOW IT. WHEN THIS HAPPENS, THEY CAN BE INVITED TO JOIN IN MORNING MEDITATION, THEN THEY CAN TAKE PART IN THE DAILY DISCUSSION WITHOUT RANCOR OR BIAS. FROM THAT POINT ON, PROGRESS WILL BE RAPID. MARVELOUS RESULTS OFTEN FOLLOW SUCH A REUNION.

AFTER THEY HAVE SEEN TANGIBLE RESULTS, THE FAMILY WILL PERHAPS WANT TO JOIN IN THE BETTER WAY OF LIFE. THESE THINGS WILL COME TO PASS NATURALLY AND IN GOOD TIME, PROVIDED, HOWEVER, THE ALCOHOLIC CONTINUES TO DEMONSTRATE THAT HE CAN BE SOBER, CONSIDERATE, AND HELPFUL, REGARDLESS OF WHAT ANYONE SAYS OR DOES. OF COURSE, WE ALL FALL MUCH BELOW THIS STANDARD MANY TIMES. BUT WE MUST TRY TO REPAIR THE DAMAGE IMMEDIATELY LEST WE PAY THE PENALTY OF A SPREE.

ONE MORE SUGGESTION: WHETHER THE FAMILY HAS SPIRITUAL CONVICTIONS OR NOT, THEY MAY DO WELL TO EXAMINE THE PRINCIPLES BY WHICH THE ALCOHOLIC MEMBER IS TRYING TO LIVE. THEY CAN HARDLY FAIL TO APPROVE THESE SIMPLE PRINCIPLES, THOUGH THE HEAD OF THE HOUSE STILL FAILS SOMEWHAT IN PRACTICING THEM. NOTHING WILL HELP THE MAN WHO IS OFF ON A SPIRITUAL TANGENT SO MUCH AS THE WIFE WHO ADOPTS THE SELF-SAME PROGRAM, MAKING A BETTER PRACTICAL USE OF IT.

IT IS POSSIBLE TO DIG UP PAST MISDEEDS SO THEY BECOME A BLIGHT, A VERITABLE PLAGUE. FOR EXAMPLE, WE KNOW OF SITUATIONS IN WHICH THE ALCOHOLIC OR HIS WIFE HAVE HAD LOVE AFFAIRS. IN THE FIRST FLUSH OF OF SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE THEY FORGAVE EACH OTHER AND DREW CLOSER TOGETHER. THE MIRACLE OF RECONCILIATION WAS AT HAND. THEN, UNDER ONE PROVOCATION OR ANOTHER, THE AGGRIEVED ONE WOULD UNEARTH THE OLD AFFAIR AND ANGRILY CAST ITS ASHES ABOUT. A FEW OF US HAVE HAD THESE GROWING PAINS AND THEY HURT A GREAT DEAL. HUSBANDS AND WIVES HAVE

SOMETIMES BEEN OBLIGED TO SEPARATE FOR A TIME UNTIL A NEW PERSPECTIVE, NEW VICTORY OVER HURT PRIDE, COULD BE REWON. IN MOST CASES, THE ALCOHOLIC SURVIVED THIS ORDEAL WITHOUT RELAPSEBUT NOT ALWAYS. SO OUR RULE IS THAT UNLESS SOME GOOD AND USEFUL PURPOSE IS TO BE SERVED, PAST OCCURRENCES ARE NOT DISCUSSED.

IF YOU HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN SOLVING YOUR OWN DOMESTIC PROBLEMS, TELL THE NEWCOMER'S FAMILY HOW THAT WAS ACCOMPLISHED. IN THIS WAY YOU CAN SET THEM ON THE RIGHT TRACK WITHOUT BECOMING CRITICAL OF THEM. THE STORY OF HOW YOU AND YOUR WIFE SETTLED YOUR DIFFICULTIES IS WORTH ANY AMOUNT OF PREACHING OR CRITICISM.

1. DO YOU BELIEVE LIVING WITH AN ALCOHOLIC MAKES SPOUSES AND CHILDREN NEUROTIC?
2. DO WE GOSSIP IN AA CIRCLES?
3. WHAT ARE YOU TO DO WITH A CONDITION IN TWELVE STEP WORK WHERE THERE IS DIVORCE, SEPARATION OR JUST STRAINED RELATIONS IN THE FAMILY?
4. IN CASE OF A DIVORCE OR SEPARATION WOULD THERE BE UNDUE HASTE FOR THE COUPLE TO GET TOGETHER?
5. CAN AN ALCOHOLIC RECOVER WITHOUT HIS FAMILY?
6. DO YOU PARTICIPATE IN YOUR NEW PROSPECT'S FAMILY QUARRLES?
7. DO WE TALK ABOUT HIS OR HER FAMILY CONDITIONS WITH OTHER AA PEOPLE?
8. DOES THE FAMILY LEAD THE ALCOHOLIC IN SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND UNDERSTANDING?
9. DO CHILDREN SOON FORGET?
10. SHOULD A NEW MEMBER START CORRECTING OR CRITICIZING HIS CHILDREN?
11. SHOULD YOU RECOMMEND AL-ANON AND ALATEEN FOR HIS FAMILY?
12. DOES IT HELP THE ALCOHOLIC RECOVER IF HIS FAMILY ADOPTS THE SELF-SAME PROGRAM?
13. DO COUPLES DIG UP PAST MISDEEDS AND REMIND EACH OTHER OF THESE MISDEEDS?
14. SHOULD WE TELL THE NEWCOMER HOW WE SOLVED OUR FAMILY PROBLEMS?

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR
STEP TWELVE
PART THREE

HAVING HAD A SPIRITUAL AWAKENING AS THE RESULT OF THESE STEPS, WE TRIED TO CARRY THIS MESSAGE TO ALCOHOLICS, AND TO PRACTICE THESE PRINCIPLES IN ALL OUR AFFAIRS.

ONCE MORE: THE ALCOHOLIC AT CERTAIN TIMES HAS NO EFFECTIVE MENTAL DEFENSE AGAINST THE FIRST DRINK. EXCEPT IN A FEW RARE CASES, NEITHER HE NOR ANY OTHER HUMAN BEING CAN PROVIDE SUCH A DEFENSE. HIS DEFENSE MUST COME FROM A HIGHER POWER.

EACH INDIVIDUAL, IN HIS PERSONAL STORY, DESCRIBES IN HIS OWN LANGUAGE AND FROM HIS OWN POINT OF VIEW THE WAY HE FOUND OR REDISCOVERED 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 HEAR THESE STORIES, AND WE BELIEVE THAT IT IS ONLY BY FULLY DISCLOSING OURSELVES AND OUR PROBLEMS THAT THEY WILL BE PERSUADED TO SAY, "YES, I AM ONE OF THEM TOO; I MUST HAVE THIS THING."

WE KNOW HOW HE FEELS. WE HAVE SHARED HIS HONEST DOUBT AND PREJUDICE. SOME OF US HAVE BEEN VIOLENTLY ANTI-RELIGIOUS. TO OTHERS, THE WORD "GOD" BROUGHT UP A PARTICULAR IDEA OF HIM WITH WHICH SOMEONE HAD TRIED TO IMPRESS US DURING CHILD-

HOOD. PERHAPS WE REJECTED THIS PARTICULAR CONCEPTION BECAUSE IT SEEMED INADEQUATE. WITH THAT REJECTION WE IMAGINED WE HAD ABANDONED THE GOD IDEA ENTIRELY. WE WERE BOTHERED WITH THE THOUGHT THAT FAITH AND DEPENDENCE UPON A POWER BEYOND OURSELVES WAS SOMEWHAT WEAK, EVEN COWARDLY. WE LOOKED UPON THIS WORLD OF WARRING INDIVIDUALS, WARRING THEOLOGICAL SYSTEMS, INEXPLICABLE CALAMITY, WITH DEEP SKEPTICISM. WE LOOKED ASKANCE AT MANY INDIVIDUALS WHO CLAIMED TO BE GODLY. HOW COULD A SUPREME BEING HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH IT ALL? AND WHO COULD COMPREHEND A SUPREME BEING ANYHOW? YET, IN OTHER MOMENTS, WE FOUND OURSELVES THINKING, WHEN ENCHANTED BY THE STARLIT NIGHT, "WHO, THEN, MADE ALL THIS?" THERE WAS A FEELING OF AWE AND WONDER, BUT IT WAS FLEETING AND SOON LOST.

WHEN, THEREFORE, WE SPEAK TO YOU OF GOD, WE MEAN YOUR OWN CONCEPTION OF GOD. THIS APPLIES, TOO, TO OTHER SPIRITUAL EXPRESSIONS WHICH YOU FIND IN THIS BOOK. DO NOT LET ANY PREJUDICE YOU MAY HAVE AGAINST SPIRITUAL TERMS DETER YOU FROM HONESTLY ASKING YOURSELF WHAT THEY MEAN TO YOU. AT THE START, THIS IS ALL YOU WILL NEED TO COMMENCE SPIRITUAL GROWTH, TO EFFECT YOUR FIRST CONSCIOUS RELATION WITH GOD, AS YOU UNDERSTAND HIM. AFTERWARD, YOU WILL FIND YOURSELF ACCEPTING MANY THINGS WHICH NOW SEEM ENTIRELY OUT OF REACH. THAT IS GROWTH, BUT IF YOU ARE GOING TO GROW, YOU HAVE TO BEGIN

SOMEWHERE. SO USE YOUR OWN CONCEPTION, HOWEVER LIMITED IT MAY BE.

YOU NEED ASK YOURSELF BUT ONE SHORT QUESTION. "DO I NOW BELIEVE, OR AM I EVEN WILLING TO BELIEVE, THAT THERE IS A POWER GREATER THAN MYSELF?" AS SOON AS A MAN CAN SAY THAT HE DOES BELIEVE, OR IS WILLING TO BELIEVE, WE EMPHATICALLY ASSURE HIM THAT HE IS ON HIS WAY. IT HAS BEEN REPEATEDLY PROVEN AMONG US THAT UPON THIS SIMPLE CORNERSTONE A WONDERFULLY EFFECTIVE SPIRITUAL STRUCTURE CAN BE BUILT.

WE, WHO HAVE TRAVELED THIS DUBIOUS PATH, BEG YOU TO LAY ASIDE PREJUDICE, EVEN AGAINST ORGANIZED RELIGION. WE HAVE LEARNED THAT WHATEVER THE HUMAN FRAILTIES OF VARIOUS FAITHS MAY BE, THOSE FAITHS HAVE GIVEN PURPOSE AND DIRECTION TO MILLIONS. PEOPLE OF FAITH HAVE A LOGICAL IDEA OF WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT. ACTUALLY, WE USED TO HAVE NO REASONABLE CONCEPTION WHATEVER. WE USED TO AMUSE OURSELVES AS WE CYNICALLY DISSECTED SPIRITUAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES; WE MIGHT HAVE OBSERVED THAT MANY SPIRITUALLY-MINDED PERSONS OF ALL RACES, COLORS, AND CREEDS WERE DEMONSTRATING A DEGREE OF STABILITY, HAPPINESS AND USEFULNESS WHICH WE SHOULD HAVE SOUGHT OURSELVES.

THE SPIRITUAL LIFE IS NOT A THEORY. YOU HAVE TO LIVE IT. UNLESS YOUR FAMILY EXPRESSES A DESIRE TO LIVE UPON SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES, HOWEVER, WE THINK YOU OUGHT TO LEAVE THEM ALONE. YOU SHOULD NOT TALK INCESSANTLY ABOUT SPIRITUAL MATTERS TO THEM. THEY WILL CHANGE IN TIME. YOUR PRACTICE WILL CONVINC

THEM MORE THAN YOUR WORDS. REMEMBER THAT TEN OR TWENTY YEARS OF DRUNKENNESS WOULD MAKE A SKEPTIC OUT OF ANYONE.

HERE ARE ONE HUNDRED MEN AND WOMEN, WORLDLY AND SOPHISTICATED INDEED. THEY FLATLY DECLARE TO YOU THAT SINCE THEY HAVE COME TO BELIEVE IN A POWER GREATER THAN THEMSELVES, TO TAKE A CERTAIN ATTITUDE TOWARD THAT POWER, AND TO DO CERTAIN SIMPLE THINGS, THERE HAS BEEN A REVOLUTIONARY CHANGE IN THEIR WAY OF LIVING AND THINKING. THEY TELL YOU THAT IN THE FACE OF COLLAPSE AND DESPAIR, IN THE FACE OF THE TOTAL FAILURE OF THEIR HUMAN RESOURCES, THAT A NEW POWER, PEACE, HAPPINESS, AND SENSE OF DIRECTION HAS FLOWED INTO THEM. THIS HAPPENED SOON AFTER THEY WHOLE-HEARTEDLY MET A FEW SIMPLE REQUIREMENTS. ONCE CONFUSED AND BAFFLED BY THE SEEMING FUTILITY OF EXISTENCE, THEY HAVE SHOWED YOU THE UNDERLYING REASONS WHY THEY WERE MAKING HEAVY GOING OF LIFE. LEAVING ASIDE THE DRINK QUESTION, THEY TELL WHY LIVING WAS SO UNSATISFYING. THEY SHOWED YOU HOW THE CHANGE CAME OVER THEM. WHEN ONE HUNDRED PEOPLE, MUCH LIKE YOU, ARE ABLE TO SAY THAT CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD IS TODAY THE MOST IMPORTANT FACT OF THEIR LIVES, THEY PRESENT A POWERFUL REASON WHY YOU TOO SHOULD HAVE FAITH AND PRACTICE THESE PRINCIPLES IN ALL OF YOUR AFFAIRS.

THERE IS A VAST AMOUNT OF FUN ABOUT IT ALL. WE SUPPOSE SOME WOULD BE SHOCKED AT OUR SEEMING WORLDLINESS AND LEVITY. BUT JUST UNDERNEATH THERE IS DEADLY EARNESTNESS. GOD 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, NOR EVEN FOR HEAVEN. WE HAVE IT WITH US RIGHT HERE AND NOW. EACH DAY THAT SIMPLE AA TALK MULTIPLIES ITSELF IN A WIDENING CIRCLE OF PEACE ON EARTH AND GOOD WILL TO MEN.

YOU MUST BE ENTIRELY HONEST WITH SOMEBODY IF YOU EXPECT TO LIVE LONG OR HAPPILY IN THIS WORLD. WHEN IT WILL SERVE ANY GOOD PURPOSE, YOU SHOULD BE WILLING TO ANNOUNCE YOUR CONVICTIONS WITH TACT AND COMMON SENSE. THE QUESTION OF HOW TO APPROACH THE MAN YOU HAVE HATED WILL ARISE. IT MAY BE HE HAS DONE YOU MORE HARM THAN YOU HAVE DONE HIM AND, THOUGH YOU MAY HAVE ACQUIRED A BETTER ATTITUDE TOWARD HIM, YOU ARE STILL NOT TOO KEEN ABOUT ADMITTING YOUR FAULTS. NEVERTHELESS, WITH A PERSON YOU DISLIKE, WE ADVISE YOU TO TAKE THE BIT IN YOUR TEETH. HE IS AN IDEAL SUBJECT UPON WHICH TO PRACTICE YOUR NEW PRINCIPLES. REMEMBER THAT HE, LIKE YOURSELF, IS SICK SPIRITUALLY. GO TO HIM IN A HELPFUL AND FORGIVING SPIRIT. BE SURE TO CONFESS YOUR FORMER ILL FEELING AND EXPRESS YOUR REGRET OF IT.

MOST DOCTORS AND PSYCHIATRISTS AGREE WITH OUR CONCLUSIONS. ONE OF THESE MEN, STAFF MEMBER OF A WORLD-RENOWNED HOSPITAL, RECENTLY MADE THIS STATEMENT TO SOME OF US: "WHAT YOU SAY ABOUT THE GENERAL HOPELESSNESS OF THE AVERAGE ALCOHOLIC'S

FLIGHT IS, IN MY OPINION, CORRECT. AS TO TWO OF YOU MEN, WHOSE STORIES I HAVE HEARD, THERE IS NO DOUBT IN MY MIND THAT YOU WERE 100% HOPELESS, APART FROM DIVINE HELP. HAD YOU OFFERED YOURSELVES AS PATIENTS AT THIS HOSPITAL, I WOULD NOT HAVE TAKEN YOU, IF I HAD BEEN ABLE TO AVOID IT. PEOPLE LIKE YOU ARE TOO HEARTBREAKING. THOUGH NOT A RELIGIOUS PERSON, I HAVE PROFOUND RESPECT FOR THE SPIRITUAL APPROACH IN SUCH CASES AS YOURS. FOR MOST CASES, THERE IS VIRTUALLY NO OTHER SOLUTION."

BUT IT ISN'T SO DIFFICULT. ABOUT HALF OUR FELLOWSHIP WERE OF EXACTLY THAT TYPE. AT FIRST SOME OF US TRIED TO AVOID THE ISSUE, HOPING AGAINST HOPE WE WERE NOT TRUE ALCOHOLICS. BUT AFTER A WHILE WE HAD TO FACE THE FACT THAT WE MUST FIND A SPIRITUAL BASIS OF LIFE--OR ELSE. PERHAPS IT IS GOING TO BE THAT WAY WITH YOU. BUT CHEER UP, SOMETHING LIKE HALF OF US THOUGHT WE WERE ATHEISTS OR AGNOSTICS. OUR EXPERIENCE SHOWS THAT YOU NEED NOT BE DISCONCERTED.

THERE IS A BETTER WAY--WE THINK SO. FOR YOU ARE NOW TO GO ON A DIFFERENT BASIS; THE BASIS OF TRUSTING AND RELYING UPON GOD. YOU ARE TO TRUST INFINITE GOD RATHER THAN YOUR FINITE SELF. YOU ARE IN THE WORLD TO PLAY THE ROLE HE ASSIGNS. JUST TO THE EXTENT THAT YOU DO AS YOU THINK HE WOULD HAVE YOU, AND HUMBLY RELY ON HIM, DOES HE ENABLE YOU TO MATCH CALAMITY WITH SERENTIIY.

TAKE UP YOUR LIST AGAIN. PUTTING OUT OF YOUR MIND THE

WRONGS OTHERS HAVE DONE, RESOLUTELY LOOK FOR YOUR OWN MISTAKES. WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN SELFISH, DISHONEST, SELF-SEEKING, AND FRIGHTENED? THOUGH A SITUATION MAY NOT BE ENTIRELY YOUR FAULT, DISREGARD THE OTHER PERSON INVOLVED ENTIRELY. SEE WHERE YOU HAVE BEEN TO BLAME. THIS IS YOUR INVENTORY, NOT THE OTHER MAN'S. WHEN YOU SEE YOUR FAULT WRITE IT DOWN ON THE LIST. SEE IT BEFORE YOU IN BLACK AND WHITE. ADMIT YOUR WRONGS HONESTLY AND BE WILLING TO SET THESE MATTERS STRAIGHT.

ABANDON YOURSELF TO GOD AS YOU UNDERSTAND GOD. ADMIT YOUR FAULTS TO HIM AND TO YOUR FELLOWS. CLEAR AWAY THE WRECKAGE OF YOUR PAST. GIVE FREELY OF WHAT YOU FIND AND JOIN US. WE SHALL BE WITH YOU IN THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE SPIRIT, AND YOU WILL SURELY MEET SOME OF US AS YOU TRUDGE THE ROAD OF HAPPY DESTINY.

MAY GOD BLESS YOU AND KEEP YOU--UNTIL THEN!

1. ARE YOU READY TO LIVE A LIFE OF PRACTICING ALL OF THESE SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES IN ALL OF YOUR AFFAIRS?
2. DO YOU BELIEVE DRUNK-A-LOGS ARE STILL IMPORTANT TO YOU AND ALSO TO THE NEW MEMBER?
3. DO WE STILL KNOW HOW AN ACTIVE ALCOHOLIC FEELS?
4. WHEN AA SPEAKS OF GOD, WHOSE CONCEPTION OF GOD DO THEY SPEAK OF?
5. WHAT IS THE KEY TO "BEING ON YOUR WAY IN AA"?
6. DO YOU STILL FEEL PREJUDICES AGAINST ORGANIZED RELIGION?
7. DO YOU BELIEVE AA IS FOR ALL CREEDS, RACES AND COLORS?
8. IS THE SPIRITUAL LIFE A THEORY?
9. DO YOU REALIZE YOU ARE EXACTLY LIKE THE FIRST 100 MEN AND WOMEN WHO LIVED THE AA PROGRAM?
10. ARE YOU HAVING FUN IN AA?
11. DO YOU BELIEVE NOW THAT "HEAVEN" OR UTOPIA IS HERE ON THIS EARTH?
12. WHAT IS THE KEY TO HAPPINESS?
13. DO DOCTORS AND PSYCHIATRISTS AGREE WITH THE AA WAY OF LIFE?
14. WHEN YOU ARRIVED IN AA WERE YOU HOPING AGAINST HOPE YOU WERE NOT A TRUE ALCOHOLIC?
15. DO YOU PLAN ON TRUSTING AND RELYING ON GOD EACH DAY FOR THE BALANCE OF YOUR LIFE ONE DAY AT A TIME?
16. HAVE YOU FOUND YOUR ASSIGNMENT BY GOD, HELPING OTHER ALCOHOLICS?
17. WILL YOU CONTINUE ON A DAILY BASIS TAKING AN EXACT INVENTORY OF YOURSELF, FORGETTING EVERYONE'S FAULTS BUT YOUR OWN?
18. DO YOU THINK THAT DOING YOUR DAILY INVENTORY, REALIZING YOUR DAILY WRONGS AND BEING WILLING TO SET EACH MATTER STRAIGHT IS THE KEY TO HAPPY LIVING WITHOUT ALCOHOL?

XIII

REC PAGE	WORDS	AA	12&12	BOOK PAGE-LINE
1	AN ALCOHOLIC	X		16-4
1	THE TREMENDOUS	X		17-21
1	AN ILLNESS	X		18-1
1	HERE IS A FELLOW	X		21-13
3	YOU MAY*	X		20-4
3	MODERATE DRINK.	X		20-29
3	HOW MANY TIMES	X		20-15
3	WHY DOES HE	X		22-16
4	PERHAPS THERE	X		22-9
4	THESE OBERVAT.	X		23-3
4	HOW TRUE THIS	X		23-22
5	ONCE IN A	X		23-18
5	THE TRAGIC	X		23-32
5	THE FACT IS	X		24-6
6	THE ALMOST	X		24-13
6	THE ALCOHOLIC	X		24-10
6	WHEN THIS	X		24-20
6	IF YOU ARE	X		25-25
7	WE HOPE	X		29-11
7	MOST OF US	X		30-1
7	WE LEARNED	X		30-11
9	WE ALCOHOLICS	X		30-15
9	WE ARE LIKE	X		30-25
9	DESPITE ALL WE	X		31-8
10	WE ARE SOME	X		31-17
10	WE DO NOT LIKE	X		31-30
11	THOUGH THERE	X		32-5
11	YOUNG PEOPLE	X		33-15
11	MOST OF US	X		30-1
11	TO BE GRAVELY	X		33-24
12	CERTAIN NON-	X		39-2
12	IF A MERE	X		44-25
12	IN SOME	X		37-18
13	OUR BEHAVIOR	X		37-28
13	ON THROUGH	X		38-9
14	LACK OF POWER	X		45-9
14	YOU MAY THINK	X		38-17
14	ON THROUGH	X		38-9
14	WELL, THAT'S	X		45-13
15	WE KNOW	X		45-26
15	IN THE PRECEDING	X		44-1
15	THE FIRST	X		60-25
16	WHAT USUALLY	X		61-11
17	OUR ACTOR	X		61-28
17	SELFISHNESS--	X		62-6
17	SO OUR TROUBLE	X		62-16

XIV A

REC PAGE	WORDS	AA	12&12	BOOK PAGE- LINE
18	IN THIS	X		70-33
18	PSYCHOLOGISTS	X		73-25
18	ANY SCHEME	X		101-16
19	FOR MOST	X		151-1
19	THE LESS	X		151-13
20	NOW AND THEN	X		151-23
20	IT IS IMPORTANT	X		143-15
20	NOW DOMESTIC	X		98-23
21	THE GREATEST	X		145-18
21	SOMEDAY	X		103-14
21	AFTER ALL	X		103-18
24	TO CHRIST	X		11-1
24	BUT MY	X		11-14
24	I SAW	X		11-32
24	HAD THIS	X		11-18
24	THAT FLOORED	X		11-21
25	THUS WAS	X		12-25
25	THERE I	X		13-6
25	MY FRIEND	X		13-29
25	I WAS	X		13-20
26	SIMPLE, BUT	X		14-3
26	MY FRIEND	X		14-33
26	WHEN THIS SORT	L X		24-28
26	THE GREAT FACT	X		25-16
27	WE THINK IT	X		28-23
27	QUITE AS	X		39-14
27	LACK OF POWER	X		45-9
27	ONCE MORE	X	?	43-26
28	MOST DOCTORS	X		43-12
28	THE DISTINGUISHED	X		28-9
29	IF A MERE	X		44-25
29	YES, WE	X		46-13
29	MUCH TO OUR	X		46-21
30	WHEN, THEREFORE	X		47-1
30	THAT WAS GREAT	X		47-22
33	WHATEVER THE	X		37-3
33	LOGIC IS GREAT	X		53-35
33	ARRIVED AT	X		53-20
34	THE WRIGHT BROS.	X		52-28
34	WE FOUND TOO	X		54-7
35	YET WE HAD	X		55-3
35	THAT WAS GREAT	X		47-22
35	IMAGINE LIFE	X		54-22
36	WHEN WE BECAME	X		53-15
36	ACTUALLY WE	X		55-9
36	WE FINALLY	X		55-16
36	WE CAN ONLY	X		55-23
37	REMEMBER THAT	X		58-25
37	BESIDES A SEEMING	X		47-32

XIV B

REC PAGE	WORDS	AA	12&12	BOOK PAGE- _LINE
37	OUR DESCRIPTION	X		60-13
38	SELFISHNESS--	X		62-6
38	SO OUR	X		62-16
39	IT IS PLAIN	X		66-10
39	REVIEW YOUR	X		68-3
39	YOU HEAR	X		70-33
39	ALTHOUGH THESE	X		79-5
40	THE ALCOHOLIC	X		82-24
40	YOU VIGOROUSLY	X		84-18
41	IN THINKING	X		86-28
41	ASSUMING WE	X		100-32
41	WE MEET	X		101-6
42	SOMEDAY WE	X		103-14
42	AFTER ALL	X		103-19
45	THERE I	X		13-6
45	I WAS TO	X		13-2
45	MY FRIEND	X		13-28
45	MY FRIEND HAD	X		14-28
46	THERE IS A	X		25-4
46	WE ABANDONED	X		15-6
47	THERE IS	X		16-8
47	MOST OF US	X		16-14
47	WE IN TURN	X		28-4
47	EACH INDIVIDUAL	X		29-6
48	ONCE MORE	X		43-26
48	TO ONE	X		44-10

XV

REC PAGE	WORDS	AA	12&12	BOOK PAGE- LINE
48	YES, WE	X		46-13
48	WE NEED	X		47-14
49	EVERYBODY	X		48-26
49	HERE ARE	X		50-23
50	ON THE	X		50-16
50	IN THE	X		50-8
50	ARRIVED AT	X		53-20
50	WHEN WE	X		53-15
54	WHEN WE	X		52-24
54	ACTUALLY WE	X		55-9
54	WE FINALLY	X		55-16
54	WHEN WE	X		63-1
55	GET DOWN	X		63-13
55	RESENTMENT IS	X		64-22
56	NEXT WE	X		63-32
56	IT IS PLAIN	X		66-10
56	PERHAPS THERE	X		68-11
57	YOU MUST	X		68-18
57	IN AA	X		70-33
57	NOW WE	X		76-15
58	ALTHOUGH THESE	X		79-5
58	THE SPIRITUAL	X		83-11
58	THERE MAY	X		83-19
59	AND WE	X		84-30
59	IT IS EASY	X		85-13
60	ASSUMING WE	X		100-32
60	WE MEET	X		101-6
61	SO OUR RULE	X		101-23
64	THE GREAT	X		25-16
64	THAT WAS	X		47-22
64	WE LOOKED	X		50-1
65	ACTUALLY WE	X		55-9
65	AT SOME	X		58-19
65	ARRIVED AT	X		53-20
66	WE ARE	X		61-28
66	RESENTMENT IS	X		64-22
67	THIS IS	X		62-28
67	GET DOWN	X		63-13
67	THE WORDING	X		63-26
67	WE DO	X		64-16
68	THEREFORE, YOU	X		64-8
68	ON YOUR	X		65-3
68	BE AS	X		65-7
68	GO ON THROUGH	X		65-34
69	IT IS PLAIN	X		66-9
70	IF WE ARE	X		66-19

REC PAGE	WORDS	AA	12&12	BOOK PAGE-LINE
72	TURN BACK	X		66-23
72	THIS IS OUR	X		66-31
72	NEVER ARGUE	X		67-9
72	TAKE UP	X		67-14
73	YOU WILL	X		67-25
73	REVIEW YOUR	X		68-3
73	PERHAPS THERE	X		68-11
74	WE NEVER	X		68-18
74	NOW ABOUT	X		68-28
75	WE REVIEWED	X		69-12
75	IN THIS WAY	X		69-18
75	WHATEVER YOUR	X		69-25
75	GOD ALONE	X		69-33
76	SUPPOSE WE	X		70-5
76	TO SUM UP	X		70-15
76	IF YOU HAVE	X		70-23
77	IN THIS	X		70-33
77	PSYCHOLOGISTS	X		73-23
77	IF YOU	X		83-28
81	IN THIS PROGRAM	X		70-33
81	HAVING MADE	X		72-1
81	THIS IS	X		72-14
82	MORE THAN	X		73-11
82	THE INCONSISTENCY	X		73-16
83	NOT WITH STANDING	X		74-24
83	YOU MUST BE	X		73-33
84	IF YOU	X		74-13
84	WHEN WE	X		75-3
84	POCKET YOUR	X		75-11
85	RETURN HOME	X		75-22
85	ALTHOUGH THESE	X		79-5
86	IF YOU ARE	X		83-29
86	AND YOU HAVE	X		84-30
89	THIS IS THE		X	64-1
89	OF COURSE		X	64-10
89	SURE, I WAS		X	64-16
90	IN AA MEETINGS		X	65-3
90	HAVING BEEN		X	65-10
90	WHEN MEN		X	65-16
91	BUT MOST		X	65-26
91	IT IS NOWHERE		X	66-4
91	SINCE MOST		X	66-9
91	IF WE ASK		X	66-17
92	SO STEP SIX		X	66-23
92	HOW MANY OF		X	67-3
95	SOME WHO		X	67-12
95	WE WHO HAVE		X	67-21

REC PAGE	WORDS	AA	12&12	BOOK PAGE- LINE
95	WHAT WE		X	68-1
96	SELF RIGHTEOUS		X	68-11
96	WHEN GLUTTONY		X	68-19
97	SOME PEOPLE		X	69-6
97	MANY WILL		X	69-18
98	IF WE WOULD		X	69-29
98	LOOKING AGAIN		X	70-6
98	LET'S DISPOSE		X	70-11
99	THE MOMENT		X	70-24
101	SINCE THIS		X	71-1
101	INDEED, THE		X	71-4
101	HUMILITY, AS A		X	71-13
101	WITH GREAT		X	71-20
102	CERTAINLY NO		X	72-11
102	IN ALL THESE		X	72-23
103	TRUE, MOST		X	73-5
103	THE LACK		X	73-17
104	FOR US		X	74-1
104	SO IT IS		X	74-11
107	WHEN WE		X	74-18
107	BUT AGAIN		X	74-8
108	BUT WHEN		X	75-18
108	THIS IMPROVED		X	76-3
109	THEN, IN AA		X	76-11
109	DURING THIS		X	76-20
109	WE SAW		X	76-6
110	AS WE		X	77-14
110	THE CHIEF		X	77-24
111	THE SEVENTH		X	78-4
113	OUR CO-FOUNDER	X		13-14
113	MY FRIEND	X		13-29
113	IF WE ARE	X		66-20
113	THIS IS OUR	X		66-32
114	NOW ABOUT	X		68-28
114	REVIEW YOUR	X		69-12
115	WHATEVER YOUR	X		69-25
115	NOW YOU	X		76-15
115	THE INCONSISTENCY	X		73-16
116	USUALLY, HOWEVER	X		79-14
116	WE THOUGHT	X		79-25
116	PERHAPS YOU	X		78-25
117	WHATEVER THE	X		81-17
117	THIS BRINGS	X		80-6
118	HE FELT	X		80-14
118	HE FINALLY	X		80-6
118	IF TAKING	X		80-1
119	YES, THERE	X		83-1
119	THERE ARE	X		82-4

XVIII

REC PAGE	WORDS	AA	12&12	BOOK PAGE- LINE
119	OUR DESIGN	X		81-32
120	SHOULD YOU	X		82-14
120	HENRY FORD	X		124-5
122	THE DOCTOR	X		27-5
122	HE SAID	X		27-11
122	YES, REPLIED	X		27-12
122	THERE IS	X		25-4
123	TAKE UP	X		67-14
123	WHATEVER OUR	X		69-25
124	IF YOU HAVE	X		70-23
124	THIS IS	X		72-14
125	NOW YOU	X		76-15
125	YOU PROBABLY	X		76-28
126	MOST ALCOHOLICS	X		78-13
127	PERHAPS YOU	X		78-25
127	USUALLY, HOWEVER	X		79-14
127	WE THOUGHT	X		79-25
128	IF TAKING	X		80-1
128	OUR DESIGN	X		81-32
128	THERE ARE	X		82-4
129	YES, THERE	X		83-1
129	IT IS POSSIBLE	X		124-25
130	THERE MAY	X		83-19
133	THE ALCOHOLICS	X		82-24
133	WE DO EXACTLY	X		72-14
133	THIS IS	X		64-17
134	UNDER NO	X		77-28
134	YES, THERE	X		83-1
135	THERE MAY BE	X		83-19
135	NEXT, THINK	X		86-15
136	WHEN YOU	X		86-5
136	IF YOU ARE	X		83-29
137	YOU SAY THESE	X		84-12
137	AND YOU HAVE	X		84-30
137	THIS THOUGHT	X		84-16
138	IT IS EASY	X		85-13
138	MUCH HAS	X		85-23
138	IN THINKING	X		86-24
139	AFTER THEY	X		99-9
139	PERHAPS YOU ARE	X		89-15
142	THUS WAS I	X		12-20
142	THAT FLOORED ME	X		11-25
142	THE GREAT FACT	X		25-16
142	I WAS TO	X		13-24
143	MY FRIEND	X		13-29
143	BUT IT ISN'T	X		44-16
143	WE THINK	X		28-23

IXX

REC PAGE	WORDS	AA	12&12	BOOK PAGE-LINE
144	MUCH TO OUR	X		46-21
144	WHEN, THEREFORE	X		47-1
144	WE WHO	X		49-21
145	HERE ARE ONE	X		50-23
146	SO OUR	X		62-16
146	YOU MUST NEVER	X		68-18
147	IF A MERE	X		44-25
147	POCKET YOUR	X		75-11
147	YOU PROBABLY	X		76-28
148	THE SPIRITUAL	X		83-11
151	THERE MAY BE	X		83-19
151	IF YOU ARE	X		83-29
152	AND YOU HAVE	X		84-30
152	WHEN YOU	X		86-5
153	STEP ELEVEN	X		85-31
153	THINK ABOUT	X		86-19
153	IN THINKING	X		86-29
154	YOU MIGHT	X		87-10
154	IF CIRCUMSTANCES	X		87-20
155	AS YOU GO	X		87-31
155	IT WORKS	X		88-8
155	WE ALCOHOLICS	X		88-9
155	BUT THIS IS NOT	X		88-11
155	ASSUMING WE	X		100-32
155	WE MEET	X		101-6
156	AFTER ALL	X		103-14
156	ALCOHOLICS WHO	X		131-13
157	WE REALIZE	X		164-11
157	ABANDON YOURSELF	X		164-20
157	MAY GOD	X		164-27
159	MUCH HAS	X		85-23
159	I WAS TO TEST	X		13-24
159	THERE MAY BE	X		83-19
160	NEVER ARGUE	X		67-9
160	WHEN YOU	X		86-5
160	IF YOU ARE	X		83-29
161	NEXT, THINK	X		86-15
161	THOSE OF US	X		130-7
162	WE MEET THESE	X		101-6
162	UNDER NO CONDITION	X		77-28
162	THIS IS OUR	X		66-32
163	YOU HAVE	X		84-20
163	YOUR REAL	X		77-3
163	WE HAVE BEEN	X		132-13
164	BUT LIFE	X		161-16
164	OUR PROGRAM(BOOK)	X		164-11

REC PAGE	WORDS	AA	12&12	BOOK PAGE- LINE
165	LET US	X		27-4
165	A DOCTOR ONCE	X		27-6
165	WE SAID	X		27-11
165	YES, REPLIED	X		27-12
166	UPON HEARING THIS	X		27-27
168	THE TREMENDOUS	X		17-12
168	NONE OF US	X		19-13
168	WE DO NOT	X		31-30
169	IF WE DEEP	X		19-12
169	SOME OF	X		38-26
169	HOW MANY	X		20-15
170	MODERATE DRINKERS	X		20-34
170	PRACTICAL	X		89-1
170	THE KICK	X		89-8
171	WHEN YOU	X		90-1
171	IF THERE	X		90-8
171	IF HE DOES	X		90-28
171	USUALLY IT	X		90-15
172	THE FAMILY	X		91-3
172	WHEN YOUR	X		91-10
172	SEE YOUR	X		91-20
173	WHEN HE	X		91-31
173	IF YOU ARE	X		92-9
174	OUTLINE OUR	X		94-14
174	HE CAN	X		91-31
178	SUPPOSE NOW	X		96-15
178	CONTINUE TO	X		92-21
179	YOUR CANDIDATE	X		94-25
179	UNLESS YOUR	X		95-1
180	IF HE IS	X		95-21
180	IF HE THINKS	X		95-27
180	DO NOT BE	X		96-1
181	PERHAPS YOU	X		89-15
181	FOR MOST	X		151-1
182	THE LESS	X		151-13
182	YOUR PROSPECT	X		93-18
183	IT IS NOT	X		98-8
183	OF NECESSITY	X		19-25
184	THE DISTINGUISHED	X		28-9
184	HIGHLY COMPETENT	X		18-14
184	YOU HAVE	X		152-11
185	YES, THERE	X		152-17
185	HOW IS THAT	X		152-24
185	YOU ARE GOING	X		152-26
187	BOTH YOU	X		100-5
187	BURN THE	X		98-20
187	ALCOHOLICS WHO	X		131-30

REC PAGE	WORDS	AA	12&12	BOOK PAGE- LINE
188	FOR THE	X		97-33
188	IF HE IS	X		95-16
188	HE MAY BE	X		96-23
189	THIS SORT	X		97-22
189	NEVER AVOID	X		97-3
189	WHEN YOUR	X		143-15
190	NEXT, ASSURE	X		142-3
190	WE ARE	X		103-3
191	YOUR JOB	X		102-23
191	SO OUR	X		101-23
191	WHY SIT WITH	X		102-9
192	YOU WILL	X		101-29
192	ASSUMING WE	X		100-32
193	MANY OF US	X		102-29
193	ANY SCHEME	X		101-16
193	SOMEDAY WE	X		103-14
193	AFTER ALL	X		103-19
195	CESSATION OF	X		122-20
195	NOW, THE	X		98-23
196	WE FAMILIES	X		125-8
196	IF THERE	X		99-18
196	LET NO	X		99-30
197	WHEN WORKING	X		100-14
197	ANOTHER PRINCIPLE	X		125-18
198	WHETHER THE	X		135-1
198	THE ALCOHOLIC	X		134-17
198	FATHER HAD	X		134-27
199	AFTER THEY	X		99-9
199	ONE MORE	X		130-19
199	IT IS POSSIBLE	X		124-25
200	IF YOU	X		100-25
202	ONCE MORE:	X		43-26
202	EACH INDIVIDUAL	X		29-6
202	WE HOPE	X		29-11
202	WE KNOW	X		45-26
203	WHEN, THEREFORE	X		47-1
204	WE NEED ASK	X		47-14
204	WE WHO	X		49-21
204	SPIRITUAL LIFE	X		83-11
205	HERE ARE ONE	X		50-23
205	THERE IS A VAST	X		16-9
206	MOST OF US	X		16-14
206	YOU MUST	X		73-34
206	MOST DOCTORS	X		43-12
207	BUT IT ISN'T	X		44-16
207	THERE IS	X		68-11
207	TAKE US YOUR	X		67-14
208	ABANDON YOURSELF	X		164-21
208	MAY GOD BLESS	X		164-27