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APPENDIX IIIa

“There Is A Solution”

CHAPTER 1.

Referenced against a Reproduction 75th - First Edition, First Printing Big Book.
Then changes referenced against a Fourth Edition First Printing (BB Pg. #'s),
then the various Editions and Printings noted in-between.

But the text found in *Alcoholics Anonymous* is significantly different. The changes are noted below with a ~~single line strikethrough~~ for a word or words edited out of the original document, and **bold text** for wording added during the editing process for the chapter. Also, brackets () are used for some punctuation changes or small changes for easier reading.

Some examples: Coma added in (**,in**) or taken out (~~↔~~), or a period added in (**.**). Or dashes in (**-**) and out is (**-out**) as they are difficult to see with a strikethrough. *Italics represent the wording as it is in the Big Book.* A ***(.)** indicates an omission in the original document. A change in wording from different Editions is indicated by (**-2nd - 4th Ed.**), **purple** and represents the wording of the Fourth Edition. Also, ⁽¹⁾ are notes at end of document for multiple changes in subsequent Editions.

I have attempted to create a true reading of the First Edition, First Printing of *Alcoholics Anonymous*. Parts of the original documents first three paragraphs, have been edited and have been moved to later in the chapter. I've left them in the order of the original document.

The Big Book chapter of **THERE IS A SOLUTION** starts with “We, of ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS,”...

Chapter One THERE IS A SOLUTION

~~"I have never seen one single case in which alcohol mindedness was established in the sense you have it, that ever recovered — that ever recovered. [sic]" These fateful words were spoken to a man we know, some seven years ago. The speaker was a noted doctor and psychologist having world eminence in his specialty. The man to whom he spoke, like many of us before and since, had searched the whole world for the solution of his alcoholic problem. He was a man of ability, good sense, and high character. He had for many years before his encounter with this noted doctor, floundered desperately from one sanitarium to another. He had consulted several of the best known American psychologists and on their recommendation, he had gone to Europe and confined himself for a year in an institution there, at the same time, being under the care of this celebrated physician.~~

Though many bitter experiences had given him ground for skepticism, he left the place with unusual confidence. He felt that his physical and mental condition was unusually good and that above all he had acquired such a profound knowledge of the inner workings of his mind and its hidden springs, that a relapse was unthinkable. Nevertheless, he was drunk in a few weeks, and more baffling still, he could give no satisfactory explanation of why he became that way. So he went back to his doctor whom he had come to admire greatly, and asked him point blank why he could not recover. Why was it that a person such as he, who wished above all things to regain his self control, who seemed to be so rational and well balanced with respect to other problems of life, had proved to be non compis mentis with respect to alcohol. He begged the doctor to tell him the real truth, and he got it. In the doctor's judgment he was utterly hopeless, could never regain his position in society, and he would have to place himself permanently in an institution or hire a bodyguard if he expected to live long. That was the opinion of a great physician rendered after long observation and strenuous work with our friend.

But our friend lives and is a free man. He does not have to have a bodyguard, nor is he confined. There is no place on this earth where he cannot go with complete assurance that disaster shall not again overtake him, provided he remains willing to maintain a certain simple attitude.

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We, of ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, now know at least ~~(one hundred men~~ **[See NOTE (1) below] thousands of men and women - 1st Ed. 4th Pr. to 4th Ed.)** who were every bit once just as hopeless as our friend and they are free men also. Bill. **(All Nearly all - 2nd to 4th Ed.) have recovered.** They have an answer for this terrific problem that really works. solved the drink problem.

We are 'run of the mine' *[sic]* average Americans. All sections of this broad land of ours are represented, country and many of its occupations(-) are represented, Among us is to be found nearly every conceivable as well as many political, economic, social, and religious background backgrounds(.) and shade of belief. We are a crowd of people who would normally would not mix(.) like oil and water, but But there exists among us nevertheless a fellowship, a friendliness, and an understanding which is indescribably wonderful. We are something like the passengers of a great liner(-) the moment after rescue from shipwreck has been averted(-) when camaraderie, (C)amraderie *[sic]*, celebration, joyousness and democracy pervade the whole ship vessel from the steerage to the Captain's table. Unlike the feelings people on of the ship's ship-board passengers, in such a time, these feelings and sentiments do not abate as we commence however, our joy in escape from disaster does not subside as we to go our several individual ways. There are potent reasons why these things are so. In the first place, we have been through many shipwrecks, and at long last there has been the final one at which it seemed we must certainly perish. We have been the victims of a common calamity and have collectively experienced almost every known variety of human misadventure and misery. We have inhabited sanitariums, insane asylums, and occasionally the jails. We have felt the pangs of remorse as shadows have deepened over our disintegrating lives and homes. We are sure that hell promises no more exquisite mental and physical tortures that *[sic]* we have survived. Ask anyone who has had delirium tremens or who has come anywhere near them. We have seen undertaking after undertaking and ambition after ambition destroyed or snuffed out, and that usually at the very point of success. We do not know many alcoholics who have been afraid to die, but we are acquainted with some who have tried it, and who were at the time, sorry

~~they failed. Most of us, in earlier years, have thought well of our abilities, our qualities, and our futures. The hard thing to take has been the gradually dawning realization that these things were not much longer to be. Those successive smashing blows to our pride and self sufficiency have been among the hardest things to bear. Consequently, one important ingredient of~~ **The feeling of having shared in a common peril is one element in the powerful cement which now binds us**(.)(—) ~~is the feeling that we have been victims of a common disaster, even though self inflicted. However common to all of us these troubles have been, they would of themselves, But that in itself would never have bound~~ **held us together as we are now joined.**

The tremendous fact for every one of us ~~has been the discovery of~~ **is that we have discovered** a common solution(.)(—) **We have a way out on with** which we can absolutely agree, and upon which we can join in brotherly and harmonious action. This is the great news ~~that we are confident this book will bear~~ **carries** to those who suffer as ~~we have~~(-) **(from - 2nd to 4th Ed.) alcoholism.**

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An illness of this sort—and we have come to believe it is an illness(-)(—) involves those about us in a way ~~that no other human sickness can. is capable of doing.~~ If a person(-) ~~for instance, has cancer(-) all are sorry for him(-) and no one is angry or hurt(.) Presently he dies off honorably enough, and after the anguish of parting has worn away, people murmur, "Wasn't it too bad about Jim". But not so with the alcoholic illness, for with it there goes~~ (a) ~~seemingly never ending annihilation of all the things worth while in life(.) which It encompasses engulfs all who whose lives touch are near and dear to the sufferer. sufferer's(.) It brings Misunderstanding, misunderstanding(.), fierce resentment, financial insecurity, disgusted friends and employers, warped lives of blameless children, sad wives and parents(-) disgusted friends and employers — anyone can could increase this the list(.) indefinitely.~~

~~Therefore we are certain that We hope this volume should attempt to will inform(-) instruct and comfort all of those who are(.), or who may be affected(.) and that is pretty much everyone. They are many.~~

~~As a group we have had four years of intensive and unique experience on which to draw. During this time we have most intimately touched some two hundred cases of acute alcoholism. The approach to these situations has been unusual in that it has always consisted of men having found the answer for themselves, carrying the message to others as a part of the maintenance of their own cure. Scarcely a day passes that some of us are not in contact with those who are trying to rid themselves of this appalling state of affairs. We have found for ourselves great satisfaction in the knowledge that we may be so happily and peculiarly useful to others. Where you have one alcoholic approaching another upon the basis which we are about to discuss, things are possible and results follow which hitherto have been virtually impossible.~~

Many highly **Highly** competent psychologists **psychiatrists** who have attempted to deal **dealt** with us(-) rather fruitless [*sic*] we are afraid, complain that it is almost **(have - 2nd to 4th Ed.) found it sometimes** impossible to persuade one of us to honestly and without reserve, to [*sic*] **an alcoholic** to discuss his or her situation(-) **without reserve.** Strangely enough(.), ~~so people think,~~ wives, parents and intimate friends(-) **usually** find us even more unapproachable than ~~does do~~ **do** the psychiatrist and the doctor.

Italics this entire paragraph – 1st Ed. 1st Pr. to 4th Ed.)

~~On the contrary(,) an~~ **But the (ex-alcoholic ex-problem drinker - 1st Ed. 11th Pr. to 4th Ed.)** ~~who has found this solution(,) and who is properly armed with facts about himself(,) certain medical and psychiatric information can almost invariably win the complete~~ **generally win the entire** ~~confidence of another one~~ **alcoholic** ~~in a few hours(,) Until that very high degree of mutual~~ **such an** ~~understanding is reached(,) little or nothing can be accomplished(,)~~

~~The fact that~~ **That** ~~the man who is making the approach has had the same difficulty, that he very obviously knows what he is talking about, that his whole deportment and attitude shouts at the new prospect that here he is a man with a real answer, that he has no attitude of (holier than thou,~~ **Holier Than Thou - 2nd to 4th Ed.), nothing whatever except the sincere desire to be helpful(;) that there are no fees to pay, no axes to grind, nor no people to please, nor sermons to be listened to, nor moralizings to be no lectures to be endured(—) **(—)these are the condi-****

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tions we (have - 2nd to 4th Ed.) found most effective. ~~nor any attitude of holier than thou, nor anything whatever except the sincere desire to be helpful, and to lay at the feet of another the same simple kit of tools which has enabled us to literally~~ **After such an approach many take up our** ~~their beds and walk(—) again.~~

~~None of us are making~~ **makes** ~~a sole vocation of this work, nor do we think it would increase its effectiveness~~ **would be increased** ~~if we did. We feel that the elimination of the liquor problem~~ **our drinking** ~~is but a beginning. A much more important demonstration of the our principles upon which we became well~~ ~~lies before us in our respective homes, occupations ((,) out - 2nd to 4th Ed.) and affairs. Every one~~ **All of us spends spend** ~~much of his our spare time in the sort of effort which we are going to describe(,) to you. A few of us are fortunate enough to be so situated that we they can give nearly all (of - 2nd to 4th Ed.) our their time(—) to the work.~~

~~If we kept keep on in 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 frequently overcome by the reflection that within gunshot of us there are close by hundreds are dropping into oblivion every day. this very minute who would recover if they were fortunate enough to have~~ **Many could recover if they had** ~~the opportunity we have enjoyed. How then shall we present the thing that which has been so freely given us(?) to those otherwise splendid people who want victory of John Barleycorn, but who are now discovering that apparently there is no such thing.~~

~~We realize that should a description of our work get into the ordinary channels of publicity in such a way as to involve our personal identities, more harm than good might be done. In all probability we would be besieged by great numbers of people who would only imagine they wish to give up drinking, or whose families think they ought to stop, or who are too badly impaired mentally, or whose alcoholism is complicated by other abnormal conditions of mind or body rendering their condition nearly impossible to deal with at all. And though we treated only with those cases who really want to recover and who are not too seriously handicapped in other ways than alcoholism, we could not begin to deal with them on a personal basis. There are not enough of us, nor have we accumulated the experience that would probably be necessary. Yet, the desire to get this message to thousands of people who could make use of it bears down with great weight upon us all.~~

We have **concluded to publish** ~~come to the conclusion that our dilemma may be partially solved by the publication of an anonymous volume such as you are about to read(,) setting forth the problem as it looks to us(,) we see it. We shall bringing then to bear upon it bring to the task~~ our combined experience and knowledge(.) ~~which ought to~~ **This should** suggest a **definite useful** program of action and attitude for everyone **anyone** concerned ~~in with~~ a drinking situation **problem**. ~~In so doing we realized that we are amateurs and that we have a very great deal to learn period.~~

Of necessity there will have to be ~~a great deal of discussion in these pages of matters medical, psychiatric, social(,) and religious. We are keenly aware that these subjects(,) matters are,~~ from their very nature, ~~are highly~~ controversial. Nothing would please us so much as to write a book which would contain no basis for contention or argument(.) ~~and We are going to shall~~ do our utmost to achieve that ideal(.) ~~knowing however, the impossibility of its complete attainment. It is our sincere belief that the activities and attitudes which have proven vital to the successful solution of our drinking problem ought not to conflict at any point with the views of honest men of good will the world over whatever their race, creed or color. This is the spirit in which we shall try to proceed, remembering always that we may be mistaken here and there on factual matters concerning which there can be honest differences of opinion. We are most anxious not to appear in a role of those who would preach or reform, as we deem such attitudes ill befit the kind of people we have been and to some extent still are. For example, it is rather surprising to most of us that we have not developed a downright hatred for John Barleycorn and all his works, that we have not become intolerant and impatient with those who like to drink, for many sincerely believe that they should not [be] deprived of an age old privilege and pleasure just because a lot of people are softened and made sick by it. We are sure that we have a way of life which, if adopted generally, would render excessive drinking a stupid and impossible practice. Most of us strongly feel sense that real tolerance of other people's shortcomings and viewpoints(,) and a decent respect for the their opinions of mankind, are qualities attitudes which make us~~

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~~more greatly enhance our usefulness~~ **useful** to others(.) ~~for in the last analysis Our very lives(,) as (ex-alcoholics ex-problem drinkers - 1st Ed. 11th Pr. to 4th Ed.)(,) depend upon the our~~ constant thought of others(,) and how we may help meet their needs.

~~If you have read this far, you~~ **You may already** have ~~commenced to ask~~ **asked** yourself why it is that all of us became so ~~desperately~~ **very** ill from drinking. Doubtless you are ~~still more~~ curious to discover how and why, in the face of expert ~~medical~~ opinion to the contrary, we have ~~all~~ recovered from **(a) an** ~~utterly~~ hopeless condition of mind and body. If you are an alcoholic who wants to get over it, you ~~are may already be beginning to ask asking yourself~~ —"What do I have to do?"

~~The main~~ **It is the** purpose of this book (is) to ~~exhaustively, definitely and specifically answer these such questions specifically. We shall tell you what we have done. and to let you know what you can do about it.~~ Before going ~~on to into~~ a detailed discussion, it may be well to ~~briefly summarize the answers~~ **some points** as we see them.

How many times people have said to us(:)(- out) "I can take it or leave it alone(.) **Why can't he?**" (- out) "Why don't you drink like a gentleman or quit(?)"(- out) "That fellow can't handle his liquor(.)"(- out) "Why don't you try beer and wine?"(- out) "Lay off the

hard stuff(.)" "His will power must be weak(.)"(– out)"~~Look what he's doing to his family"~~(–)"~~Why did he start drinking when he knew his wife would leave and the boss would fire him"~~(–)"Or again(–)"~~I drink a quart of whiskey a day and never get drunk, but if that fellow Jones drinks two cocktails, he's sure to be drunk for a week, there must be something wrong with his will power"~~(– out) "He could stop it if he wanted to(.)"(– out) "She's such a sweet girl, I should think he'd stop for her (sake - 2nd to 4th Ed.)."(– out) "The doctor told him that if he ever drank again it would kill him, but there he is(–) all lit up again(.)"(– out)

Now these are commonplace ~~expressions~~ **observations with respect to** on drinkers(–) which ~~you~~ **we** hear all the time. Back of them is a world of ignorance and ~~of complete~~ misunderstanding(.), ~~as to what the trouble really is(–)~~ We see that these expressions **pertain** **refer** to people ~~who each~~ **whose** **react** **reactions** are very differently to alcohol(–) **different from ours.**

~~We observe in them the moderate drinker who has~~ **Moderate drinkers have** little trouble in ~~abandoning~~ **giving up** liquor ~~altogether(–)~~ **entirely** if ~~any~~ **they** have good reason **for it.** ~~appears why he should do so. They can take it or leave it alone.~~

Then we have **a certain type of hard drinker(.)** ~~the man who boasts control over his quart a day, and he~~ **He** may have ~~only a bad~~ **the** habit **badly enough to** ~~which will~~ gradually impair

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him ~~somewhat~~ physically and mentally. ~~Perhaps it will~~ **It may** cause him to die a few years before his time. If a sufficiently strong reason(–) ~~such as(–)~~ ill health, falling in love, change of environment, **or** the warning of a doctor(–)(–) **becomes operative, puts in an appearance(–)** this fellow **man** can also stop(–) **or moderate**, although he may find it difficult and troublesome(–) and may ~~discover it advantageous to get some~~ **even need** medical ~~or psychiatric aid(–)~~ **attention.**

But what about the ~~true~~ **real** alcoholic(?) ~~who~~ **He** may ~~have started~~ **start** off as a moderate drinker(–)(;) ~~who he~~ may or may not ~~have~~ become a continuous hard drinker(–)(;) but ~~who(–)~~ at some stage ~~in~~ **of** his drinking career **he** begins to lose all control of his liquor consumption(.), once he starts to drink.

Here is the fellow who has been puzzling you(.), especially in ~~this matter of this~~ **his** lack of control(–)(.) ~~He who~~ does absurd(.), incredible(.), and tragic things while drinking. He is ~~so often a real~~ Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. He is seldom ~~pleasantly~~ **mildly** intoxicated(–)(.) ~~almost always(–) he~~ **He** is **always** more or less insanely drunk. His disposition while drinking ~~does not square at all with the man you know when sober.~~ **resembles his normal nature but little(.)** ~~When normal he~~ **He** may be one of the finest fellows in the world(–)(.) **yet** 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(.)** ~~has to be met.~~ He is often perfectly sensible and well balanced concerning everything ~~in the world save~~ **except** liquor(.)(–) ~~With but in that respect to that~~ (he **he - 2nd to 4th Ed.)** is incredibly dishonest and selfish. He ~~frequently has ahead of him a promising career, and no matter what his station in life, or his educational and intellectual station, he almost invariably~~ **often** possesses special abilities, skills(.), ~~or~~ **and** aptitudes(–)(.) **and has a**

~~promising career ahead of him. How often have we seen him use these~~ **He uses his** gifts to build up a **bright outlook** ~~very promising prospect~~ for his family and himself, **(and - 2nd to 4th Ed.)** then ~~pull~~ **pulls** the structure down on his ~~own~~ head by a senseless series of sprees. He is the fellow who goes to bed so intoxicated ~~that~~ he ought to sleep the clock around(~~,~~.) ~~yet we find him feverishly searching the house~~ **Yet** early next

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morning **he searches madly** for ~~(a) the~~ bottle he misplaced the night before. If he can afford it(~~,~~) ~~the chances are better than even that during his drinking spells, he has~~ **may have** liquor concealed all over his house to be ~~absolutely sure that~~ **certain** no one gets his entire supply away from him to throw ~~(it)~~ down the waste pipe. ~~Every business mans convention presents much the same spectacle. Certain individuals are always found, going about from room to room in the early morning, sometimes shaking like the proverbial aspen leaf. They tell you they are dying for a drink and can't wait until the bar opens. This is very annoying to their brother business men who may have been twice as indiscreet the night before, but who still want to sleep, and who on awaking have no more inconvenience than a headache and the foolish feeling that they were much too skittish last evening. As matters grow worse(,) for our alcoholic friend, he begins to use a combination of high-powered sedative and liquor to quiet his nerves enough so that he can go to work. Then comes those days~~ **the day** when he simply cannot make it and ~~(he)~~ gets drunk all over again. ~~Finally he begins to appear at hospitals and sanitariums, or he gets in his~~ **Perhaps he goes to a doctor** who gives him ~~(a) dose of morphine [sic]~~ **morphine** and ~~or some high-voltage sedative with which to taper off(,) with.~~ **Then he begins to appear at hospitals and sanitariums.** ~~He leaves the poor fellow with a parting lecture on the evils of strong drink, and an admonition that he must use his will power, and if he cannot drink like a gentleman, he must leave it alone.~~

This is by no means a comprehensive picture of the true alcoholic(~~,~~) as our behavior patterns vary(~~,~~) considerably. ~~The~~ **But this** description should suffice for the moment to roughly identify him **roughly.** ~~in the mind of the reader.~~

~~But you are asking yourself [sic](- out)(")~~ 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, ~~how~~ **why** is it ~~that~~ 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 frequently **still sometimes** displays with respect to other matters?

Perhaps there never will be a full answer to ~~your~~ **these** questions. Psychiatrists ~~and medical men vary considerably in their opinions~~ **Opinions vary considerably** as to why the alcoholic reacts differently ~~than other~~ **from normal** people(~~,~~) and **We are not sure** why, once a certain point is reached, ~~all of the kings horses and all of the kings men~~ **little can be done for him(,) seem to do nothing about it whatever.** ~~We cannot answer the riddle. have, out of our own experiences and observations of each other arrived at some pretty definite conclusions which we are confident are in the main, correct. While they may not entirely square with what the doctors say, they do meet our needs, and they do make sense to us, and we are positive that nine out of ten serious drinkers who honestly review their own experience will agree with us.~~

To begin with, it is self evident that the reaction of our bodies and nervous systems to alcohol has become radically different, in fact very abnormal as compared with the ordinary person, or with even many hearty drinkers. It often takes ten or fifteen years of stiff

~~drinking to bring about this condition in a body predisposed to alcoholism. Most of us now realize that our reaction to alcohol was somewhat abnormal from the very beginning; that we were actually 'hooked' and diseased by it long before grave symptoms, or incapacity to tend to business put in an appearance. The nature of these symptoms and the bodily conditions which seem to lie back of them we shall cover later on. It is enough to say here that we believe ourselves to have been bodily sick and not just foolish at the times we have been drinking.~~

We know that if **while** the alcoholic keeps away from drink (~~(-)~~, **in - 2nd to 4th Ed.**) as he does not get sick(~~-~~) **may do for months or years, he reacts much like other men. We are Equally equally** positive ~~are we~~ that once he takes any alcohol whatever into his system, something happens(**)** both in the bodily and mental sense, which makes it virtually impossible for him to

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~~stop(.) after he has had any alcohol whatever. We believe that the~~ The experience of any alcoholic will abundantly confirm (**that. this. - 2nd to 4th Ed.**) ~~what has just been said.~~

~~All of these~~ These observations would be quite academic and pointless if our friend never took the first drink (~~(-)~~, **in - 2nd to 4th Ed.**) thereby setting ~~in motion~~ the terrible cycle **in motion(.)** ~~that everyone has seen so many times.~~ Therefore, the **real main** problem of the alcoholic centers in his mind(**)** rather than in his body. If you ask him why he started on that last bender(**)** the chances are ~~that~~ he will offer you any one of a hundred alibis(~~(-)~~, **)** ~~many of which we shall list further on.~~ Sometimes these excuses have a certain plausibility, but none of them really ~~makes~~ (**make makes - 2nd to 4th Ed.**) 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~~ **beats - 2nd to 4th Ed.**) himself on the head with a hammer so that he (~~couldn't~~ **can't - 2nd to 4th Ed.**) feel the ache(~~(-)~~, **)** ~~together with the vague notion that it might feel better when he stopped.~~ If you draw this fallacious reasoning to the attention of an alcoholic, he will laugh it off, or become irritated and refuse to talk.

~~Perhaps, once~~ **Once** in a ~~great~~ 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. ~~It is true, that numbers of~~ **Some** drinkers have excuses with which they are ~~some of the time~~ satisfied(~~-~~) **part of the time.** But in their hearts(~~-~~) they really do not know why they do it. ~~As a class, once the disease~~ **Once this malady** has a real hold, they are a ~~terribly~~ baffled lot. ~~Nearly all of them have~~ **There is** the obsession that somehow, some day, they will beat the game(~~(-)~~, **)** ~~which deep down in them,~~ **But** they **often** suspect ~~has them~~ **they are** down for the count.

~~But how~~ **How** surely they have already gone with the wind **true this is**, few of them realize. In a vague way their families and ~~their~~ friends sense that these **people drinkers** are abnormal(**)** ~~and but~~ everybody hopefully (~~waits~~ **awaits - 2nd to 4th Ed.**) the day when the sufferer will rouse himself from his lethargy and assert his power of will.

The tragic ~~thing~~ **truth** is(~~-~~) **that** if the man be a real alcoholic, ~~that the~~ happy day will never (~~seldom~~ **may not - 2nd to 4th Ed.**) arrive. **He has lost**

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control. In the early part of this chapter, we cited the case of a friend who was frankly told of his utter hopelessness by a physician who is possibly the world's leading authority on the subject. 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(,) and let us again emphasize that this **This unhappy tragic** situation has already arrived in **virtually practically** every case long before it is suspected.

Italics this entire paragraph – 1st Ed. 1st Pr. to 4th Ed.)

The fact is(,) that **most alcoholics(,)** all of us for reasons which are yet obscure(,) have entirely lost the power of choice with respect to alcoholic drinks(,) **in drink(,)** Our so(-) called **(- in 1st Ed. 1st Pr. To 4th Ed.)** will power with respect to that area of thinking and action becomes **virtually practically** non-existent(,) We are unable(**in - 2nd to 4th Ed.)** at certain times(,) no matter how well we understand ourselves(,) to bring into our consciousness with ~~suffienc~~ *[sic]* **sufficient** force(,) the memory of the suffering and humiliation of even a week or a month ago(,) **We are without defense against the first drink(,)**

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

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

When this sort of thinking is fully established in an individual with alcoholic tendencies, he has **probably become, in our opinion, just like our friend who consulted the great doctor.** ~~He has~~ placed himself beyond all human aid, and unless locked up, is **virtually certain to may die(,) ,out - 2nd to 4th Ed.)** or (~~to~~) go permanently insane. It is a ~~very grim business indeed.~~ These ~~are the~~ stark and ugly facts which have been confirmed in ~~hundreds of thousands of cases~~ **by legions of alco-**

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holics throughout history(,)(,) ~~and but~~ **But** for the grace of God, **there** would have **been** had (~~one hundred - thousands -~~ **1st Ed. 7th Pr. to 4th Ed.)** more convincing demonstrations(,) ~~among us.~~ **So many want to stop(,) ,out - 2nd to 4th Ed.) but cannot.**

~~But there~~ **There** is a solution(,)(,) *Italics this sentence – 1st Ed. 1st Pr. to 4th Ed.)* and how glorious was the knowledge of it to us. Almost none of us liked the self-searching, the levelling *[sic]* **leveling** of our pride, the confession of our sins of omission and commission **shortcomings** which the process requires for its successful consummation(,)(,) ~~but~~ **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 ~~others~~ **those** in whom the problem had been solved, there was nothing left for us ~~to do~~ but **accept** the proposals placed before us. **to pick up the simple kit of spiritual tools laid at our feet(,)** We have found (~~a~~) **much of heaven** right here on this good old earth and we have

been literally rocketed into a fourth dimension of existence((,) ,out - 2nd to 4th Ed.) that none of which us we had not even dreamed(.) could be a fact.

~~And the GREAT FACT~~ The great fact is just this(,) and ~~no nothing~~ less(-): that all of us we have had deep and effective religious spiritual experiences((,) ,out - 2nd to 4th Ed.) (*added⁽²⁾ - 1st Ed. 2nd Pr. to 4th Ed.) which have in every case revolutionized our whole attitude toward life, toward our fellows((,) ,out - 2nd to 4th Ed.) and toward God's great universe. It is possible that this announcement has given you a severe jolt, followed by thoughts something like these — “Oh, so that’s what it is, I’m so disappointed, I had begun to think these fellows knew what they were talking about.” But let us assure you that you should be cheered up, for if you are a non-alcoholic, you don’t have to have it if you don’t want it, though we confess we should like to see you follow suit, for we think no one should miss THE GREAT REALITY which we have been lucky enough to find. The central fact of our lives today is the absolute certainty that the ~~our~~ Creator of you and me has entered into our hearts and lives in a way which is indeed miraculous(.) to us new and beautiful and He has there commenced to accomplish those things for us which by no stretch of the imagination were we could never do by ourselves(.) humanly capable of.

If by chance you are, or have begun to suspect that you are(,) ~~an~~ as seriously alcoholic(-) as we were(,) think we believe there is no tenable middle(-)of(-)the(-)road solution. You are We were in a position where life is was becoming impossible, and if you have we had passed into the region from which there is no return through human aid, you have we had but just two alternatives(-)(;) One ~~one~~ [See NOTE ⁽³⁾ below] - One - 2nd to 4th Ed.) is was to go on to the bitter end, blotting out the consciousness of your our intolerable situation as best you can. we could(;) and the other(,) to accept spiritual help(.) Or, you can surely find what This

See NOTE ⁽²⁾ below:

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we did because we have found [sic], if you honestly want wanted to(,) are and were willing to make the effort(.) pay the price. After years of living on a basis which now seems to us wholly false, you are not going to get rightly related to your Creator in a minute. None of us has found God in six easy lessons, but He can be found by all who are willing to put the task ahead of all else.

[Inserted here, are parts of the original three paragraphs that originally opened this chapter with strikethroughs, that are corrected.]

A certain American business He was a man of had ability, good sense, and high character. For years He he had for many years before his encounter with this noted doctor, floundered desperately from one sanitarium to another. He had consulted several of the best known American psychologists psychiatrists. and on their recommendation(-) Then he had gone to Europe(,) and confined himself for a year in an institution there, at the same time, being under placing himself in the care of this a celebrated physician(-) ((the psychiatrist, Dr. Jung) - 2nd to 4th Ed.) who prescribed for him. Though many bitter experiences experience had given made him ground for skepticism skeptical(,) he left the place finished his treatment with unusual confidence. He felt that his His physical and mental condition was were unusually good(.) and that above Above all(,) he believe he had acquired such a profound knowledge of the inner workings of his mind and its hidden springs((,) ,out - 2nd to 4th Ed.) that (a) relapse was unthinkable. Nevertheless, he

was drunk in a ~~few weeks(-)~~ **short time.** and ~~more~~ **More** baffling still, he could give **himself** no satisfactory explanation of ~~why he became that way(-)~~ **for his fall.**

So he ~~went back~~ **returned** to his **this** doctor(,) whom he ~~had come to admire~~ **admired(,)** ~~greatly(-)~~ and asked him point(-)blank why he could not recover(.) ~~Why was it that a person such as he(-) who~~ **He** wished above all things to regain his self(-)control(-)(.) ~~He who seemed to be so~~ **quite** rational and well(-)balanced with respect to other problems(.) ~~of life(-)~~ **Yet he** had ~~proved to be non compis mentis with respect to~~ **no control whatever over alcohol. Why was this?**

He begged the doctor to tell him the ~~real~~ **whole** truth, and he got it. In the doctor's judgment he was utterly hopeless(-); **he** could never regain his position in society(-) and he would have to place himself **under lock and key(,) ,out - 2nd to 4th Ed.)** permanently in an ~~institution~~ or hire a bodyguard if he expected to live long. That was ~~the opinion of a great physician~~ **physician's** ~~rendered after long observation and strenuous work with our friend(-) opinion.~~

But ~~our~~ **this friend** **man still** lives(,) and is a free man. He does not ~~have to have~~ **need** a bodyguard(,) **,out - 2nd to 4th Ed.)** nor is he confined. ~~There is no place~~ **He can go anywhere** on this earth where ~~he cannot go with complete assurance that other free men may go~~

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without disaster(,) ~~shall not again overtake him(-)~~ provided he remains willing to maintain a certain simple attitude.

[End of Insert]

~~On the bare chance that~~ **Some of** our alcoholic readers still **may** think they can do without **spiritual help(.)** ~~God(-) let~~ **Let** us ~~complete for~~ **tell** you the **rest of the** conversation ~~which our friend was having had with his doctor(.) the celebrated European man of medicine.~~

~~As you will recall, the~~ **The** doctor said(:)(-out) "**You have the mind of a chronic alcoholic.** I ~~never~~ have **never** seen one single case **recover(,)** **where that state of mind existed to in which** alcohol-mindedness was established in the **extent that it does in sense you(,)** have it that ever recovered." Naturally our **Our** friend felt at that moment as though the gates of hell had closed on him with a sickening clang.

He ~~then~~ said to the doctor, "Is there no exception?"

~~The doctor answered(-)~~ "Yes,(") **replied the doctor, (")**there is. ~~The sole exceptions in~~ **Exceptions to** cases such as yours have been occurring ~~now and then~~ since early times(.) ~~Sporadically(-) here~~ **Here** and there, once in a while, alcoholics have had what are called vital **religious spiritual** experiences. ~~I am not a religious man, to~~ **To** me these occurrences are (a) phenomena ~~fsie/~~(.) 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 ~~commence~~ **begin** to dominate them. In ~~face fsie/~~**fact(,)** I have been trying to produce some such emotional rearrangement within you. With many **types** of individuals the methods which I ~~have been employing~~ **employed** are successful, but ~~they~~

are I have never been successful with an alcoholic of your description(.”)(*added⁽²⁾ - 1st Ed. 2nd Pr. to 4th Ed.) state of mine [sic].”

Upon hearing this, our friend was somewhat relieved(,) as for he reflected that(,) after all(,) he was a very good church member(–)(,) but this **This** hope(,) however, was promptly dashed **destroyed** by the doctor **doctor’s**(,) who told **telling** him that his faith and (**while** - 2nd to 4th Ed.) his religious convictions were very good(,) as far as they went(,) but that in his case they did not spell the **necessary** vital religious **spiritual** experience(,) so absolutely imperative to displace his insanity with respect to matters alcoholic.

See NOTE ⁽²⁾ below:

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~~You and I would say that the patient~~ **Here** was on a very hot spot, that it [sic] probably what he did say and feel. So have we, when it began to look to us as though we must have a vital religious experience or perish(–) **the terrible dilemma in which** ~~Our~~ **our** friend found himself when he had the extraordinary experience, which as we have already told you, made him a free man. did finally have such an experience and we in our turn have sought the same happy end(,)

We, in our turn, sought the same escape(–)(,) **,out - 2nd to 4th Ed.)** with all of the ~~order~~ **the desperation** of drowning men(,) clutching at straws. But what **What** seemed at first to be a flimsy reed(,) has proved to be (a) **the** loving and powerful hand of God. A new life has been given us(–) or(,) if you please **prefer**(,) (“a design for living(“ that really works.

~~That~~ **The** distinguished American psychologist(,) ~~Mr.~~ William James, ~~once wrote a~~ **in his** book ~~called~~(–out) "Varieties of Religious Experience," which indicates a multitude of ways in which men have found **discovered** God(,) As a group, or as individuals, we **We** have no desire to convince anyone that the true God can **there is only one** be discovered in some particular way(–) **by which faith can be acquired**(,) Anyone who has talked with all of us would soon be disabused of the idea. If what we have learned((,) **,out - 2nd to 4th Ed.)** and felt((,) **,out - 2nd to 4th Ed.)** and seen((,) **,out - 2nd to 4th Ed.)** means anything at all, it **indicates means** that all of us, whatever our race, creed(,) or color((,) **,out - 2nd to 4th Ed.)** are the children of a living Creator with whom we may form a new relationship upon very simple and understandable terms(–) ~~the moment any of us become~~ **as soon as we are** willing enough and honest enough to do so(–) **try**(,) ~~Therefore, we waste no time in the kind of~~ **Those having religious affiliations will find here nothing disturbing to their beliefs or ceremonies. There is no friction among us over such matters.** ~~disputation which has so frequently torn people apart.~~

~~We have concluded that~~ **think** it (is) no concern of ours as a group what religious bodies we **our members** shall identify ourselves **themselves** with as individuals. ~~We feel that~~ **This** should be an entirely ones own **personal** affair which he is bound to each one decide **decides** for the best **himself** in the light of his past association, or his **present choice**. newly found religious experience, his convictions and preferences, and above all, his future usefulness. Not all of us (~~have joined~~ **join** - 2nd to 4th Ed.) religious bodies, but **most of us favor such memberships.** we are nearly all agreed that by so doing, each would be taking a step toward new growth and availability for God's purpose.

In the following chapter, there appears an explanation of alcoholism(**,in - 2nd to 4th Ed.)** as we understand it, then a chapter addressed to the agnostic. Many who once

were in this class are now among our members(~~in ; surprising~~ - Surprisingly 2nd to 4th Ed.)

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

Further on(~~in~~ - 2nd to 4th Ed.) clear-cut directions are given showing how we recovered. These are followed by (~~more than a score of personal experiences.~~ [See NOTE ⁴¹⁾ below] - forty-two personal experiences. - 4th Ed.)

~~The next [sic] few chapters are~~ Each individual, in the personal stories(,) narratives of several of us. In these accounts each person will describe ~~describes~~ in his own language ((,) ~~out~~ - 2nd to 4th Ed.) and from his own point of view the way in which he happened to find the living he established his relationship with God. ~~We propose to have told in these~~ These pages a good number of stories, that the reader may get give a fair cross section of our membership and a clear(-)cut (~~- in 1st Ed. 1st Pr. To 4th Ed.~~) idea of what has really actually happened(,) and why we think it happened in their lives.

We hope that no one will be disturbed that ~~consider~~ these stories contain so much self(-) revaluation of the kind that some people might feel revealing accounts in bad taste(,) or unnecessary. Non-alcoholic readers must bear in mind that we ~~Our~~ hope is that many alcoholic men and women(,) desperately in need(,) will read see these pages(-)(,) and we believe that ~~it~~ it is only by fully disclosing ourselves and our problems to complete view that many of them that they will be persuaded to say(,)(-out) "Yes(,) that's me. I am one of them too; I must have this thing."

47 changes in the chapter, from the 1st Ed. 1st Pr. to the 4th Ed. 1st Pr.

Original text taken from the earliest version available in the Stepping Stones Archive (AA 501.1, Alcoholics Anonymous – Early Drafts of Chapter “There Is a Solution,” Box 13, Folder 24).

NOTE: Stepping Stones holds another version in that same folder which, based on a careful comparison of the edits that have been done to the text, is a later version The single version preserved at the GSO Archive in New York City is even later than this second Stepping Stones copy.

NOTES

NOTE ⁽¹⁾

Page 17 in the 2nd Ed. to 4th Ed; - then Page 27 in the 1st Eds.

1st Ed. 1st Pr. "...~~one hundred men~~..."

1st Ed. 2nd Pr. "...~~one hundred men~~..."

1st Ed. 3rd Pr. "...~~hundreds of men~~..."

1st Ed. 4th Pr. "...thousands of men and women..." - to 4th Ed.

NOTE ⁽²⁾

Pages 25 & 27 in the 2nd to 4th Ed; - then Pgs. 35 & 38 from the 1st Ed. 2nd Pr. to 16th Pr.

1st Ed. 2nd Pr. to 16th Pr. - Pg. 35 - * Fully explained—appendix II. Pg. 38 - * For amplification—see appendix II.

2nd Ed. & 3rd Ed. - Pg. 25 - * Fully explained—Appendix II. Pg. 27 - * For amplification—see Appendix II.

4th Ed. - Pg. 25 - *Fully explained—Appendix II. Pg. 27 - *For amplification—see Appendix II.

NOTE ⁽³⁾

Page 25-L29 & 30: in the 2nd to 4th Ed; - then in the 1st Eds. Pg. 36L10 & 11

Original Document: - "...~~two alternatives. One was~~..."

First Printing: - "...two alternatives: ~~one~~ was..."

2nd to 4th Edition: - "...two alternatives: One was..."

NOTE ⁽⁴⁾

Page 29 in the 2nd Ed. to 4th Ed; - then Page 39 in the 1st Eds.

1st Ed. "...~~more than a score of personal experiences~~." (1st Pr. 29 stories, 2nd Pr. on is 28 stories.)

2nd Ed. "...~~three dozen personal experiences~~." (Actually 37 stories.)

3rd Ed. 2nd Pr. (1976) "...~~forty two personal experiences~~." (Actually 43 stories.)

4th Ed. "...forty-two personal experiences." (There is 42 stories.)