

May 1957

"Let
There be
Light..."



Elsie's letter to her AA sponsor, Betty T., first appeared in the February "Exchange Bulletin" from GSH. The Grapevine editors felt it speaks eloquently to all of us.

THIS MORNING IT ARRIVED just like that—I mean the Big Book in braille! The postman placed in my arms four of those six precious volumes, cautioning me to not drop them. Drop them—how could I? This for which I have waited so long! The postman has probably never seen a face like mine, but homely as this "pan" may be, I'm sure he has never seen a smile such as the one that spread over it as I stood clutching the four boxes in my arms. This old face literally beamed, and the "Thank you" I gave him must have been something out of the ordinary in his experience.

I stood there for a long moment holding those boxes in my arms, clasping them to my breast as tenderly, lovingly, gently, as a mother holds her newborn infant. Then, jolted back to reality, I placed them almost reverently in my big chair.

With the hungry eagerness of a person who has reached the point of starvation I quickly opened each box, my fingers gliding over the table of contents until I found Volume Two in which Chapter Five is first.

You had spoken of this chapter so much, and I have heard a little of it—so I read Chapter Five. I mean I studied it carefully, and this took all morning. First things being first, I, with the help of God, hope next to copy this entire chapter in braille so as to be able to carry it around with me along with the 12 and 12 ("Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions"—Ed.) After that I will finish reading the Book . . . the chapter, "A Vision for You," must be in volumes one or five, which are probably on the way somewhere between here and New York, and I will have them also at any moment

As I read, question after question was answered for me. The words

"must" and "honesty" appeared many times over and over again. The brevity, the simplicity, the direct approach of the entire chapter was amazing in itself. Being so complicated, and so mixed up as I am, I needed something just this simple—and so did plenty of other folks, else it would not have been written in just this way.

If there was ever a possibility of the door of Heaven being opened for me it happened this morning. As my fingers glided across those pages I had a sudden experience, a contact with God that I've never had before. I know you and other helpful friends have paved the way for this, that I might be in a receptive mood.

Eight years ago it wouldn't have meant a thing, but this was just the right time, the right day, and I find I am ready. I fervently pray I shall recover. It is my decision. In Chapter Five I found the key that opened the door. Should I throw away that key the door will close.

There is hope for me if I continue each moment to turn my will and my life over to the loving God of my understanding and this morning He is nearer to me . . . I feel I do understand Him better.

As of this moment I repose serenely on Cloud 19, being thankful in silent meditation. I know then the grim realism of this troubled world will bring me sharply back to earth at any moment, but I pray I may

Ed. note—Elsie has not confined her gratitude to beautiful letters . . . she has transcribed "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions" into braille. Information about these copies may be obtained by writing to: Sec'y, HFD Group, 1319 14th Street, Santa Monica, California.

make a safe happy landing when the time comes.

God in His infinite mercy and wisdom has been so good to me, ever mindful of my needs, supplying me with numerous blessings—too many to count in a day. My blindness—alcoholism — addiction — and all these physical ailments that some may speak of as crosses—they are not really crosses at all, only as I make them so. They are indeed blessings, for without them God would not enter into my heart, because I would in that case refuse to admit Him.

What people here on earth see of me is but a fleeting material thing, but the soul is eternal, and it belongs to God. If I continue living I know I will make mistakes, for being human I am subject to error and weakness. But I fervently pray to live my best each moment, for a just God expects no more than my best—which He knows is all I have to offer.

Being honest with God and myself should leave me no cause for worry, no reason to fret over mistakes of the past, present or future. In this way I can enjoy the happy hours, and all the good things in life. You have reminded me at times that you have short-comings and are not perfect, but perhaps it is the imperfection that brought you to understand me, and to set my feet on the road to recovery....

Elsie T., Cincinnati, Ohio