

September 1976

Big Book

Twelve Promises

Eleven of them offer growth beyond sobriety

WE ARE ALL familiar with the first great promise of Alcoholics Anonymous — that through its teachings and by working the Twelve Steps, we can recover from alcoholism and be able to attain and maintain sobriety. Great as this promise is, it is not the only promise the program makes — contrary to the current belief of many.

I was well into my twenty-fourth year of continuous sobriety in the AA program, at a meeting 1,200 miles away from my home group, before it was brought to my attention that the Big Book makes us eleven other promises besides that of sobriety.

On page 96 of the original 1939 edition of *Alcoholics Anonymous*

and starting in the last paragraph on page 83 of the second and third editions, are these assurances: "We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others. That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows. Self-seeking will slip away. Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change. Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us. We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us. We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves."

In all three editions, these words follow: "Are these extravagant promises? We think not. They are being fulfilled among us — sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialize if we work for them."

Go back and read the eleven promises again. They are beautiful. They assure us of happiness, serenity, peace, and freedom from regret, self-pity, selfishness, and insecurity. Are not these the things we so desperately sought, along with sobriety, when we came to AA? I believe that they are and that newcomers should be informed of these promises when they are being told of the AA way of life.

W.C., Shelbyville, Ind.