

GOOD NEWS FOR ALCOHOLICS

GOOD NEWS FOR ALCOHOLICS

Donald W. Hewitt, M.D.

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FOREWORD

I HAVE written this book with the aim that it will serve to bring a ray of hope into the otherwise cheerless life of an alcoholic who is desperately seeking some means of overcoming his destructive habit.

It is principally because I have encountered a hopeless "What's the use?" attitude among so many of the alcoholic cases I have met in the course of my medical practice that I am writing to tell alcoholics of the sure promise of lasting relief and happiness for them in God's Holy Word.

I have seen many a desperate alcoholic, literally at the "end of his rope" and overburdened with a deep-seated sense of the futility and purposelessness of life, change literally to a new creature and gain fresh spiritual strength and hope through God's power in his life.

Medical leaders are constantly reaffirming their inability to cope fully with the alcohol problem and its by-product, the alcoholic. In this book I explain, by means of actual case histories, how even the worst alcoholics can be reclaimed to lives of happiness and usefulness through a combination of medical and spiritual therapy.

Whether you are an alcoholic or not, there is much in this book that will bring you new understanding of the complex problems the alcoholic must face, and the part you can play in helping him solve them.

THE AUTHOR

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1. THE BIBLE COMES TO THE ALCOHOLIC WARD

THERE'S a Mr. Rogers here who wants to talk to you, Dr. Hewitt," my office nurse informed me one morning not long ago. "He says he's from the alcoholic rehabilitation center downtown, and that it's very important that he get in touch with you right away. He's on extension number two."

Henry Rogers was a fine Christian man who had dedicated his life to the welfare of others. He had arrived at the clinic several years previously, almost dead from acute alcoholism. He was put into the hospital ward and gradually nursed back to health. It was only then that I was able to drag from him the admission that it was his overpowering sense of sinfulness that had caused him to progress from social drinking to alcoholic oblivion, and that this had resulted in his becoming an alcoholic. I had many long talks with him and finally convinced him that God would forgive any sin, no matter how heinous, if the sinner would merely repent, ask His forgiveness, and keep His commandments from then on, through His grace.

I could almost see Henry's burden of guilt drop from him, and from that moment on he became one of the clinic's most devoted and consecrated helpers. Every day he would go to the alcoholic hospital ward and conduct Bible lessons for the inmates. As it turned out, it was this phase of the work that Henry wanted to talk to me about.

"Oh, Dr. Hewitt," Henry began, "I've decided to take your advice and go to General Hospital for that operation for double hernia. The only thing that has been delaying me is my reluctance to leave without finding someone to carry on my daily Bible studies in the alcoholic ward. Then last night like a flash it came to me-Dr. Hewitt! I just wondered if you could possibly spare an extra fifteen to twenty minutes a day to give the boys some of the spiritual help they need so badly. I know you're a busy man, but I also know you're a good Christian who will go to any lengths to save a soul for God's kingdom. How about it, doctor?" he ended pleadingly.

"I'll be glad to do it, Henry," I replied promptly. "And you go ahead and have that operation. Don't worry in the least about your Bible lessons. I'll see that they continue uninterrupted while you're away."

"Oh, thank you, doctor!" Henry exclaimed gratefully. "You've taken a great burden from my heart, and I know the boys will be in good hands while I'm gone!"

On my regular daily call at the alcoholic rehabilitation center, located in the heart of the Los Angeles skid row, I found some eleven patients in the ward. All but two of them had already recovered from the acute, tremulous, dreadfully sick phase of their alcoholism and were thus able to talk fairly coherently and to understand what was being said to them. It was an interesting group that illustrated, as no mere words could, the dreadful, degrading effects of alcohol on mankind.

In a corner bed was George Barnes. George was a medical doctor who, after his wife left him, started drinking even more heavily than he had been for years. Although still able to carry on his medical duties in his intervals of sobriety, he would embark on increasingly prolonged alcoholic sprees in the course of which he would sell his car, furniture, clothes, and other personal effects. Then broke, sick, and desperate, he would land in the charity alcoholic rehabilitation hospital ward. This was by no means his first visit, nor would it be his last, I knew, unless he reached out and grasped the spiritual truths so essential to permanent sobriety.

In two adjoining beds were Thomas Albright, a lawyer, and Robert Miller, a newspaper reporter. And opposite them, across the way, was Eddie O'Brien, another lawyer and one-time assistant district attorney in a large mid western town. All these men of above-average ability found themselves on a common footing due to the relentless hold alcohol had obtained on them.

"Good morning, doctor," said O'Brien as I entered the ward. "Isn't it about time that a bunch of us goldbricks got moved upstairs?"

"I'm going to keep you a few days more, Eddie," I replied. "All of you were in pretty bad shape when you came in, and you don't realize how weak you are until you get on your feet and move around a bit."

"Where's Mr. Rogers this morning?" George Barnes wanted to know. "This is the first time I've ever known him to miss a morning giving his Bible lessons. I wonder if he's sick? I did think he looked pretty pale and peaked yesterday, but he's not the kind that ever complains about his health, or anything else for that matter."

"I've got news for you boys," I smiled. "Take a look at your new instructor. I'm going to substitute for Mr. Rogers while he has an operation at the General Hospital. He'll be back in two or three

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weeks, so if you boys will be patient and as long-suffering as you can, I'll do my best to fill in for him.

"Now, all of you boys here have been through the alcoholic mill. You've been in various psychiatric wards, hospitals, sanitariums, state institutions for alcoholics, jails, and all the rest of it. None of those places did anything for you but sober you up. And that's all this place will do for you, too, unless you yourself make an effort to do something about your desperate condition.

"You've got to become unalterably convinced that Christ is the answer. That's your out, and your only out, from an otherwise hopeless situation. You're all very sick men-physically, mentally, and especially spiritually. God is waiting patiently and eagerly for you to ask His help. That's all you have to do-let go, stop trying to do things on your own, and let God take over completely. Just take your alcohol problem and all the other problems that go with it, and toss them into God's hands. He's promised to take over our burdens if we'll just let Him. Why not give it a try, fellows?

"What have you got to lose after all?" I asked. "You've reached the end of the trail here on skid row. You've hit the bottom. You can't go any farther down, so why not see what can be done about going back upward where you really belong? God never fails, and He has promised to save even 'to the uttermost.' That's not a promise from a frail, undependable representative of the human race; it's the sure, unfailing, eternal promise of the Creator of the universe. As such we can put our entire faith in it with complete confidence that it will be fulfilled.

"During the next few days while Mr. Rogers is in the hospital, I am going to bring you a daily Bible lesson. It won't be anything complicated or hard to understand. It'll be based on the Bible and the Bible alone as the inspired Word of God. And I'll-"

"Excuse me for interrupting you, doctor," Eddie O'Brien said quietly. "But that's a point I've never been able to find the authority for. You say the Bible is the 'inspired Word of God.' Have you any conclusive basis for such a statement-I mean some unquestionable authority for it?"

"Yes, there are a number of such authorities, but I'll give you just one at this time. It's a statement by the Apostle Paul, and I think it states the matter about as plainly as any of them. Here's what Paul says:

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Timothy 3:16.

"Now, Eddie," I said, addressing the slender attorney as he lay back in his bed, "I think I can safely say that during all the time I have been connected with this clinic, I have never yet seen an alcoholic attain permanent, contented sobriety unless he first accepted the Bible as the inspired Word of God. Oh, yes, I'll grant you there have been a few who apparently got on a spiritual program and managed to stay sober for a few months and in one or two instances even longer than that. But they weren't happy during this enforced period of sobriety.

"They were on what is generally known as a 'dry drunk.' They were short-tempered, irritable, critical of others, and full of unreasonable and groundless resentments and hatreds. They were staying 'dry' all right, but their sobriety was founded on shifting sands and not on the firm rock of God's promise of salvation to sinners. As was inevitable, most of them slipped back into their old alcoholic drinking ways and, in a majority of instances, found it almost impossible to get sobered up again.

"This may seem a peculiar state of affairs at first glance, but upon further scrutiny a reasonable explanation emerges. It is simply this: During the months of enforced, unhappy sobriety these men and women succeeded in obtaining, they failed utterly to grow spiritually. In fact they made no effort to gain any spiritual insight into their problem, and as a result they remained static or even retrogressed in their mental and spiritual outlooks. When the slip came, as it was bound to come to a status of sobriety based on any such flimsy foundation, these men and women had nothing to fall back on; their sobriety was swept out from under them like a frail bridge caught in the raging torrent of a cloudburst.

"The resultant drunk shook their confidence badly, and as they had placed the burden of their sobriety on their own unaided efforts, it naturally became extremely difficult, if not impossible, for them to get sobered up again."

"That's probably all quite true, doc," spoke up Robert Miller, the newspaperman, who had hitherto remained quietly attentive as I spoke; "but don't you think modern man's faith is a lot less than it was in Jesus' time? Now if we could actually see Jesus perform His miracles, as His disciples did, don't you think that a lot more of us would become believers? Wouldn't many more of us believe then that the Bible is the inspired Word of God? But I guess the age of miracles is really past, isn't it?" he ended with a smile.

"No, I don't think it ever will be past as long as God's Spirit works in man through His Son, Jesus. Why, I can show you some living examples of miracles right here in this rehabilitation clinic. I can show

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you men who had to be carried in here and put to bed—men who cursed the name of the Savior; who begged to be allowed to die; who were unable even to retain water on their stomachs; who had delirium tremens, hallucinations, and alcoholic convulsions. Yes, I've seen men who were literally just a step from the grave come out of it through God's saving power. I've seen these same men gradually take hold of a spiritual program, gradually grow spiritually through daily prayer and Bible study.

"Today I see them helping other alcoholics, both through the incalculable force of their own example and through the patient, tolerant, understanding guidance they learned by studying the life of Jesus and emulating what they found there. If you had followed the careers of these men as I have, you'd agree that here indeed are modern miracles just as great as any that ever took place in ancient times.

"These men have come to me and told me that a new life of serenity and contentment such as they had never before experienced has opened up to them through their daily Bible study. Talk to these men and ask them how they know the Bible is the inspired Word of God; they'll point to themselves and say: 'Look at me now, my friend. I used to be the biggest drunk on the Los Angeles skid row. Now my life has completely changed; old sinful desires have been replaced by an overpowering desire to do God's will. If the Bible isn't the inspired Word of God, could it possibly bring about the radical changes it has in my life?' Can you think of any other book that has ever been published that can do the same? No, you can't because there just isn't another book like the Bible. It's come to us unchanged throughout the centuries because God has protected it and blessed it."

"Well, maybe I'm wrong, doc," Thomas Albright, the other lawyer in the ward, suddenly said; "but from where I sit, the world is heading down the toboggan slide to oblivion at a headlong pace. When they start tossing those atomic bombs around—and it looks as though they will do it any day now—it's going to be the end of this world as we know it. That leaves us only a short time to enjoy life here, so why not stay drunk so that we won't even know what hits us when the bombs do start falling? I just can't see that there's much incentive to stay sober in a topsy-turvy world such as ours where everyone seems to have gone a little mad in one way or another. Anyway, what have we got to look forward to except a lot of steadily increasing grief? My motto's strictly 'Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die!'"

"Tom, you talk just like an atheist," I rebuked him. If you had read your Bible at all, you'd know that this world isn't going to be destroyed by any atomic bomb or man-made device. But the bomb is a significant sign of a coming event equaled only in importance and worldwide impact by the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem almost two thousand years ago. This is nothing more or less than the Second Coming of Jesus Christ to earth. The Bible clearly indicates the signs of the times that will precede the Savior's return, and all of them are found today in the era in which we live.

"I'm glad you brought this subject up, Tom," I continued, "because in our Bible lesson for tomorrow I intend to discuss the subject of Christ's soon coming, and to give some of the incontrovertible evidence that proves the imminence of this outstanding and culminating event in the world's history. So overwhelming and conclusive in its nature is this evidence that no thinking, unbiased Christian can very well deny it. It is one of the most powerful arguments that can be advanced for getting on a growing spiritual program, and the need for haste need hardly be stressed."

The discussion thus far had been handled almost entirely by the two alcoholic lawyers, the doctor, and the newspaperman; but as we talked, I noted that some of the other occupants of the hospital ward—including a machinist, a printer, a pipe fitter, a truck driver, and a carpenter—were evincing a steadily growing interest in the proceedings. Only two of the patients, indeed, showed a total lack of appreciation of what was going on. These were two late arrivals who had been given sedation to curb their "jitters," and who were snoring stentoriously in unison.

"What buffaloes me, doc," said Johnson, the machinist, "is about this millennium business. I was taught when I was a boy in Sunday school and church that the world would get better and better until Jesus came to reign for one thousand years of peace here on earth. Now, as anybody can easily see, the world is getting worse instead of better. There's more crime, wickedness, graft, cruelty, and suffering here on earth today than at any other time in history. How about that, doc? Is there really any percentage in trying to live a sober, decent life under these conditions? If you try to be upright and honest, other people just seem to think you're 'soft' and an 'easy touch,' and they try to take advantage of you. I'm beginning to really lose faith in this millennium idea, as far as this earth is concerned at least!"

"Yes, that idea of a millennium here on earth has always been a fairly popular misconception, Johnson," I replied. "People for the past hundreds of years have shared it, but it's nothing more or less than a superstition. Here again, if you were a conscientious Bible student, you'd know that the Bible clearly says that the inhabitants of the earth are going to grow in wickedness as time passes until they reach a state of

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degeneracy and evil comparable to that found in Noah's time. As the people of that day were so wicked that God sent the great Flood to drown all but Noah and his family, you can be certain that a similar crisis is fast approaching today. Jesus Himself describes the similarity between the wickedness of those early days with today in the following words:

"But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were . . . drinking . . . until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Matthew 24:37-39.

"The Book of Genesis also describes the prevalent wickedness of Noah's time as follows:

"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Genesis 6:5.

"However, I will take up this matter of the millennium in a subsequent lesson, Johnson, and maybe it will clarify things for you."

"What's all the deep thinking about, Tommy?" I asked Albright as I noted him wearing a deep frown of concentration. He started as I addressed him, and then smiled.

"There's something else that has me puzzled, doctor," he began, and that's about the question of sin and its punishment. Now anyone who is an alcoholic has sinned, not only because he is a drunkard, but also because he has done and said things while under the influence of liquor that he never would while sober. I know I've done my share of things I'm thoroughly ashamed of, but I still can't visualize a God who would condemn me or any other sinner to eternal, continuing hell-fire because of these sins. It just doesn't jibe that a God of infinite love and compassion would allow such a thing to take place.

"I'm fifty years old now, and even if I had sinned continuously during this entire period, it is still an infinitesimal length of time when placed alongside the limitless boundaries of eternity. Does it seem reasonable that a God of love and justice would sentence me then to eternal, never-ceasing punishment for sins committed during such a comparatively short period of time? I developed such a resentment when I continued to think the matter over in this vein that I stopped going to church and embarked on the drinking career that has brought me to the Los Angeles skid row and this place. How about that, doctor?"

"That theory of perpetual punishment for sin is just another popular misconception that has crept into modern religion," I replied. "Nowhere in the Bible is it stated that sinners will be condemned to eternal, continuing punishment. What it does say is that unrepentant sinners will be entirely and completely consumed by fire so that it will be as though they had never existed. There are a lot of other doubts, distorted facts, and erroneous beliefs like this one that would never have arisen in the first place if more people in the past had taken just a few minutes a day for Bible study. There is nothing that will exert a more beneficent effect on the alcoholic striving for lasting sobriety than a regular daily Bible study and secret prayer. However, I intend to take up this entire subject of eternal punishment and the final destiny of unrepentant sinners in a later study, when I will give the Bible texts to prove my point.

"Another thing, fellows, I know that most alcoholics don't know how to pray because they have neglected prayer so long and they feel self-conscious about it. But you should never feel that way. Just get down on your knees and talk to God as though He were a friend in the same room with you. Tell Him all your troubles; confide your weaknesses to Him; recite all your shortcomings and sins, safe in the knowledge that He understands your needs and will help you overcome them, provided you are truly sorry for your past mistakes and want to make amends for them."

"You know, doctor, that takes a great burden off my soul," said Robert Miller unexpectedly. "A number of years ago I did something so awful that it has haunted me continually day and night ever since. It is one of the main reasons I became a drunk, because when I was drunk, I could forget about it at least temporarily. Of course when I sobered up, it was just that much worse, but I very seldom sobered up unless I landed in jail or a hospital. I'm ashamed to tell you what it was I did, but do you really think God can forgive me for it, if I ask His forgiveness?"

"It isn't necessary for you to tell me or any other human being about your sins," I replied. "Just get down on your knees in the privacy of your room and confess your wrongdoing to God. Hold nothing back, because God understands us and our frail human natures better than we do ourselves. After confessing your sin, tell God you are truly sorry for it and, with His help, will try to do better in the future. God has given His sure and unfailing promise that if you do this, He will blot out your sin, and it will be as though it had never happened.

"That's not just an idea I dreamed up, Bob; it's a divine promise that is repeated many, many times throughout the Bible. All God asks is that we have a contrite, humble spirit and that we recognize the

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fact that we have sinned in His sight, repent, and make what amends we can from that time on. But the Bible makes it very plain that even heinous crimes like murder and the like will be forgiven if the sinner sincerely and fully repents of his act. As the Bible puts it: ‘Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.’ Only God has the power to do this, so don’t be making any confession of guilt to your fellow men. They are utterly powerless to forgive you or to wipe out your sin.

“Of course as a condition for granting His forgiveness, God expects you to make what restitution or amends you can for the sin you have committed against your fellow men. If you have stolen from someone, He expects you to repay or replace that which you have taken. If you have hurt someone’s feelings through your actions, He expects you to apologize; if you have slandered someone, He expects you to make a public retraction of the falsehood you have been spreading, and so on. When you do make restitution or amends, it proves to God that you are in earnest about reforming your life, and also that you are wholeheartedly sorry and contrite for the sin you have committed and the wrong you have done a fellow being.

“Of course I don’t know the nature of your sin, Bob; but regardless of what it was, I can assure you that God is ready and willing to forgive you right now if you’ll confess the sin to Him, ask His forgiveness, and truly repent for your wrongdoing. Does that answer your question, Bob?”

“It surely does, doctor, and I can’t tell you what a relief it is to hear that God will forgive me. For years I have carried the overpowering burden of that guilty secret with me, until at times I have felt like doing away with myself. Now I can face the world again with a clear conscience and with the wonderful realization that my sin has been forgiven and wiped from the records forever. From now on I’m going to study the Bible and try to get on a true spiritual program. I’m convinced that you’re right when you say that that is the only way that an alcoholic like me will ever gain lasting sobriety.”

“That all sounds very nice, Dr. Hewitt,” Dr. Barnes interjected bitterly, “but you’ve got to look at our situation realistically and not through rose-colored glasses. We’re all alcoholics, and we’ve made such an awful mess of our lives that the prospect of facing the chaos we’ve created appalls us when we’re sober. We have to get drunk in order to be able to tolerate the almost intolerable situation our drinking has brought about.

“You’re a physician, too, and I think you can realize what an untenable position I have made for myself through my drinking. I’m ashamed to face my patients, as I can almost feel the contempt I am sure they have for me as a drunkard. I’m ill at ease with my medical colleagues for a similar reason. I’ve lost confidence in my ability to stay sober, in my capacity to do my work. My judgment has suffered from my continual drinking, and I find myself wavering and uncertain when the occasion calls for a swift, sure decision and decisive action. In short I’ve thrown away all my opportunities and all the golden promise of my youth in exchange for the alluring but false promises contained in a bottle.

“What really is the use of my trying to stay sober now when I have irrevocably ruined all that meant anything to me? Of course I am fully aware of the fact that my drinking is just a form of slow suicide, but bad as it is, it’s still a way out of an almost unbearable situation. When I’m drunk, the alcohol blots out the searing realization of my utter failure in life makes it possible for me to live with myself. When I’m sober, my self contempt and loathing for what I have become make life almost unbearable and get me to thinking of self-destruction as the only way out. Why not just continue on as I am, trying-somewhat vainly, I must confess-to find some slight measure of happiness here on earth during the short time remaining for me?”

I can think of a hundred good reasons why you should give up your drinking and obtain lasting sobriety by turning your life over to God. The most important one is that if you die an unrepentant drunkard, you thereby forfeit any hope of entering God’s eternal kingdom. The Bible is very explicit on the point that no drunkard will inherit the kingdom of God. Is the fleeting, dubious pleasure of the oblivion you derive from drinking in any way comparable to the promise made by God of a life of eternal happiness, peace, and freedom from care and sorrow with Him in heaven? The life we live here is but a brief interlude, a short period of preparation for a never-ending life of bliss with Him. God has given us each the power to choose for ourselves. We can choose to go His way, or we can choose to go our own way; the first leads to eternal life, the other just as certainly to oblivion. God offers us all the priceless gift of immortality; in return He wants only our love and obedience to His commandments.

“But now, fellows, I’m going to have to be on my way,” ended. “This has been a somewhat rambling discussion today, but I just wanted to sound you out and get an idea of what your particular problems might be. I must say you’ve brought up some very interesting points, and during the next few lessons I intend to take up some of the questions you’ve raised, in detail. Tomorrow I’m going to present

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evidence, from the Bible and elsewhere, that points to Christ's soon coming to this earth; and I think when you've heard it, you'll agree that it's of such a strong, incontrovertible nature as to be irrefutable. Well, good by for now, fellows. I'll be seeing you tomorrow about this same time." I picked up my medical case and left the ward to return to my office.

1. After alcoholic patients have recovered from the acute phase of their illness, they are moved upstairs to a roomy, forty-bed dormitory. Meals are served in a nearby place, and there are reading and recreation facilities available. Within a few days more most of the men are sufficiently recovered to accept light yard work or housework, and they are sent out to various sections of the city to perform these chores. The money they obtain thereby is used to pay for room and board and their other personal needs. A nightly religious meeting is held in the chapel downstairs, and daily Bible studies are conducted every morning in the reading room in order to give them a chance to grow spiritually.

2. GLAD TIDINGS FOR THE REPENTANT ALCOHOLIC

THE INTEREST and obviously sincere quest for the truth evinced by these inmates following my first session as substitute Bible teacher greatly heartened me. To me it was just another vivid illustration of the truth contained in the old adage that "man's extremity is God's opportunity." These men had all "hit bottom" both literally and figuratively; they could go no farther down; any change in their status therefore would necessarily have to be either up or a shuffle into oblivion through death.

And to one of the men I had talked to that first day—Robert Miller, the newspaperman—it was the latter. About two o'clock the following morning I received a frantic telephone call that Miller was having a continuing series of alcoholic epileptic attacks. I knew the seriousness of these attacks because I had seen some alcoholics succumb to just one of them. A continuing series of them imposes a tremendous strain on the heart.

I rushed right down to the clinic, but before I could arrive there, Miller had died. I found the alcoholic Dr. Barnes still holding him in his arms as I entered the ward.

"He's gone, doctor," Barnes said quietly. I did what I could for him, but as you know, there isn't a great deal anyone can do when the attacks come one right after the other as Miller's did. But I'm certainly glad you set his mind at rest about his problem before he died."

"Yes, I'm sure that Miller was on the right track at last in his search for sobriety," I answered. "As far as we know, he made a surrender to God, and we can only hope that it was a full one, before the attacks started. But of one thing we can be sure: A loving and compassionate God will understand and extend all forgiveness to a desperately struggling soul seeking Him so earnestly and sincerely even at the eleventh hour. But, fellows, I just want to point out something else. All of us, including myself, have just had a powerful lesson, even though a tragic one. It's the awful danger that confronts all of us if we keep putting things off. Procrastination has been the ruin of many a fine man and woman, and it is keeping many a sinner today from inheriting eternal life.

"Perhaps you say, 'Yes, I know the Bible is the Word of God, that Christ is the Savior, and that I can come to the Father and gain eternal life only through Jesus; but I'm not quite ready yet to give up the pleasures of this life. After all I'm still young; and I enjoy smoking, taking an occasional drink, gambling, and so on. But I fully intend to give these things up later on and become a good Christian.' Maybe those aren't the exact words you used, but the attitude reflected by them is a very common one today.

"The tragic part of it all is that many men and women find their lives cut short unexpectedly as was Miller's. They die in sin and will have to face God in the judgment day with no excuse for their continued rejection of the salvation so freely offered them. This loss of eternal life because of our reluctance to let go of the transient pleasures of this world is one of the saddest, most tragically final things that can happen to a man or woman.

"But now I see it's almost two thirty in the morning, and I'm going to have to go home and get a little rest. But I'll be back on my usual rounds at about ten o'clock, and we'll have our regular Bible study then. As you may recall, we're going to take up the vitally important subject of Christ's soon return to earth as it will affect each one of us."

When I got back to the alcoholic ward shortly after ten o'clock that same day, I found that the pall cast over the other patients by Miller's death still lingered on. The glimpse they had had of death's sudden utter and irrevocable finality had exerted a sobering and thought provoking effect on them. I noted that they

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were unusually silent and attentive as I opened my Bible.

“Now, as any Bible student will tell you,” I began, “the Bible is full of references to Christ’s Second Coming to earth and the signs that will precede that world-shaking event. But among the many prophecies regarding this momentous landmark in the world’s history, none carries more weight or conviction than those made by Jesus Himself.”

“Do you mean that some two thousand years ago Jesus predicted His own return to earth?” asked Eddie O’Brien skeptically. “How is it possible for anyone to foresee events that far ahead?”

“When you ask such a question, Eddie, you are forgetting one important thing,” I reminded him quietly. “That is that Jesus, when He was on earth, merely assumed mortal man’s outer guise. In reality, however, He never lost His divinity as the Son of the living God. Thus He was able to see the whole course of the world’s history past, present, and future just as though it were laid out in a plan before Him. And let me assure you that the vital question of His second coming to earth was one that occupied the minds of His disciples almost as much two thousand years ago as it does many Christians today.

“And as He sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto Him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?” Matthew 24:3.

“Now I don’t think you will have any difficulty in recognizing those questions as being the same ones that have been asked innumerable times since they were first propounded on the Mount of Olives by Jesus’ beloved disciples. They are the very same questions that many people are asking today, even including some alcoholics such as yourselves. But Jesus has given us a clear and unmistakably defined blueprint to follow, lest we become bewildered and confused by the rapidly changing personalities and events of our day. All we need is an understanding of Jesus’ words and the faith to follow His instructions.

“The disciples, of course, made the mistake of confusing Christ’s prediction of Jerusalem’s destruction with a similar one concerning the end of the world and His second coming to earth. So, in order to clear up the matter, Jesus proceeded to outline the outstanding events that would take place from that generation on to the end of the world and which, by their very sequence, would indicate unmistakably the approach of that culminating event in world history. The destruction of Jerusalem, therefore, was merely the first of a series of great events that were to take place in the world’s history preceding Jesus’ return to earth and the end of the world as we know it. Here’s how Jesus describes the first event in the series:

“And Jesus said unto them, See you not all these things? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.” Matthew 24:2.

“And when you shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter there into.” Luke 21:20, 21.

“History bears out with startling accuracy the truth of Jesus’ prophecy, because it records the fact that in AD 66, some thirty five years after Christ’s death, the Roman general Cestius laid siege to Jerusalem and surrounded the city with his army. The Christians who had heard Jesus’ warning as to the signs that would precede the city’s destruction took this as a signal to flee. About three and a half years later, in AD 70, Titus took up the siege of the city; and after five and a half months, during which an estimated 1,100,000 Jews were slain, he succeeded in capturing Jerusalem and laying it in total ruin.

And just by way of showing how Jesus’ prophecy was carried out even to its smallest details, history records that literally ‘There shall not be left here one stone upon another’ was a prediction that came to pass. Historians mention the fact that the pillars of the temple in Jerusalem were ornamented by gold, and that when the temple was set on fire by the Roman conquerors, this precious metal flowed down onto the stones beneath and also filtered in between them. Here the looting soldiery, in an effort to reclaim it, tore the stones apart, thus fulfilling Jesus’ prediction to the very letter.

“There’s a valuable lesson for all of us today in the action taken by those residents of Jerusalem who heeded Jesus’ warning and fled the city when they saw the signs of its impending destruction that Jesus had so unerringly foretold. Today we find ourselves in a similar situation. We have been warned solemnly and often throughout the Bible as to the sure signs of His Second Coming and the end of the world. As we read our Bible, we cannot escape the conviction that we are indeed living now in the very closing days of the earth’s history. If we continue to ignore the clear portents of the age in which we live, reject Christ and His teachings, and refuse to change our sinful mode of life, we will have to face the awful consequences of our folly and the certainty of the loss of eternal life. Those are things that all of us can well ponder deeply and with all the earnestness at our command. There is no middle ground; if we are not for Christ, we are against Him.

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“But getting back to Jesus’ prophecies and their unfailing accuracy: We find that immediately after the destruction of Jerusalem that took place in AD 70, as we have just seen, He foretold the beginning of a period of ‘great tribulation.’

“For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.” Matthew 24:21.

“Here again history bears out the consistent infallibility of Jesus’ words, as it records the annals of almost three centuries of unrelenting torture and persecution carried out against Christ’s followers by the pagan Romans. Some three million Christians, it is estimated, died at the stake, served as living torches, or were thrown to wild beasts in the arena, to satiate the depraved appetite of a degraded, degenerate civilization.

“This period of persecution, bad as it was, was succeeded by one even worse, both in its evil nature and in the time it lasted. This period of persecution extended from the Dark Ages, beginning in AD 538 and extending to as late as AD 1776, and resulted in the deaths of some one hundred million Christians, whose thoughts, actions, and convictions were contrary to the fanatical and bigoted religious tenets of the time.

“Following His prophecy concerning the period of ‘great tribulation’ that would befall Christians in the period immediately following the destruction of Jerusalem, and that would continue unabated for hundreds of years, Jesus made some further predictions affecting those living in comparatively modern times:

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.” Matthew 24:29.

“But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light. And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken.” Mark 13:24, 25.

“Once again, as in the previous instances we have studied, history records the sureness of Jesus’ prophecies. For, on the nineteenth of May, 1780, at about ten o’clock in the morning, there was a total blotting out of the sun’s light that was succeeded by a similar blotting out of the moon as night followed day.”

“Now wait a minute, doc,” Eddie O’Brien interrupted. “I just can’t go for anything like that! To have any such conditions as you describe, you’d also have to have some scientific explanation for the phenomena. The whole thing sounds wholly illogical to me.”

“That’s the lawyer in you speaking, Eddie,” I replied smilingly, “but you have to remember that God is the original scientist. Who else has the power to utilize to the fullest extent the laws of nature but the Creator of the universe Himself?”

“But now let me quote what Webster’s unabridged dictionary of 1883 has to say about this outstanding event, in an article entitled ‘The Dark Day’:

“In some places persons could not see to read common print in the open air for several hours together. Birds sang their evening song, disappeared, and became silent; fowls went to roost; cattle sought the barn yard; and candles were lighted in the houses. The obscuration began about ten o’clock in the morning, and continued until the middle of the next night.”

“A further description of the event is also furnished by writer R. M. Devens, in his book entitled *Our First Century*, in which he graphically portrays it thus:

“The darkness of the following evening was probably as deep and dense as ever had been observed since the Almighty first gave birth to light: it wanted only palpability to render it as extraordinary as that which overspread the land of Egypt in the days of Moses. If every luminous body in the universe had been shrouded in impenetrable shades, or struck out of existence, it was thought that darkness could not have been more complete. A sheet of white paper, held within a few inches of the eyes, was equally invisible with the blackest velvet.”

She paused for a moment and studied the intent, rapt faces of audience. So absorbed were they in the discussion that the proverbial pin could have been heard dropping.

“Now, fellows,” I said, “the point I am trying to emphasize here is the complete infallibility of divine prophecy. The events foretold by Jesus almost two thousand years before they actually took place occurred with an accuracy of detail entirely incomprehensible to mere human understanding. Jesus had said that the day of darkness would follow the end of the great tribulation, or period of persecution of His followers. Well, let’s see if this happened. History does indeed record the fact that the last Christian martyr was burned at the stake in 1776, and that the day of darkness occurred four years later, in 1780. Jesus also

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said that this latter event would be followed by a display of celestial fireworks in which the stars would fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens would be shaken.

“Now, let us see if this event also took place just as Jesus said it would. On November 13, 1833, some fifty-three years after the day of darkness already described, another divine miracle took place, just as it had been unerringly foretold it would by the Master. On that night one of the most awesome and unforgettable sights ever beheld by man took place when the stars fell from the heavens in a display of pyrotechnics never seen before or since by mortal man. The American Encyclopedia, edition of 1881, in an article entitled ‘Meteor,’ describes it thus:

“At Niagara the exhibition was equally brilliant, and probably no spectacle so terribly grand and sublime was ever before beheld by man as that of the firmament descending in fiery torrents over the dark and roaring cataract.”

“And the celebrated astronomer and meteorologist of that day, Professor Olmstead of Yale, describes the widespread visibility of the phenomenon in the following words:

“The extent of the shower of 1833 was such as to cover no inconsiderable part of the earth’s surface, from the middle of the Atlantic in the east to the Pacific on the west; and from the northern coast of South America to undefined regions among the British possessions in the north, the exhibition was visible, and everywhere presented nearly the same appearance.”

Thomas Albright, who had been unusually silent while I had discussed the two divine phenomena just mentioned, now spoke up: I You know, doctor,” he began in a slow, deadly serious tone, “I’ve learned something here this morning. Up to now I’ve lived each moment of my life as though it were going to be my last, on the theory that life is fleeting at best and the future uncertain. But now that I can see the indisputable evidence that we are living in the last days of the earth’s history, and just a short time away from Christ’s return to earth, I realize that time is fast running out on me. I’ve either got to change my life completely or lose all hope of eternal life. I will never stop thanking God as long as I live for guiding my steps to this alcoholic clinic, where I have been given new hope in this life and, better yet, a belief and faith in a future life of eternal happiness with Jesus. But tell me, doctor, are there any further signs foretold by Jesus that His coming is near?”

“Yes, there are, Torn,” I replied; “and when I have given them to you, it will really nail home the fact that Jesus’ return to earth is an event that may occur almost any time now.”

“Did Jesus ever foretell the exact time He would come back to earth?” Dr. Barnes asked intently.

“No, He didn’t,” I replied, “and the Bible says that only God knows the exact hour that it will take place. However, Jesus has given us such clear indications and signs as to make the approximate time or season of His return unmistakable. And there is no gainsaying the fact that, judging from all the signs and portents given in the Bible as to this momentous event in world history, we are now living in the generation that will witness it.

“And the same prophecy regarding the signs that will ensue after the events I have already outlined is recorded in no less than three different books of the Bible, namely Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21. The latter chapter describes the conditions that will be found in the world immediately preceding the Savior’s return to earth as follows:

“Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.” Luke 21:26.

“Can any of us seriously question the fact that these words are an accurate description of the state of the world today? Anxiety is worldwide in its scope. Fear is abroad in the land as never before in history. Insecurity, dread of the future, a loss of faith in mankind, and a doubting of the power of God are but a few of the things we find on all sides of us. People are living today in a mounting dread of another more frightful world war than even the last one. Of the havoc that the atomic bomb may wreak any day; in the continuing fear of poverty and sickness; in the over-all, growing feeling of hopelessness caused primarily by their lost faith and trust in God and engendered and fostered by the chaotic conditions they see prevailing both at home and abroad.

“And then, in the very next verse following the quotation I have just given you, Jesus points out that when these world conditions are found, as they are unquestionably today, the return of the Son of God is very near, indeed.

“And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draws nigh. And He spoke to them a parable: Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; when they now shoot forth, you see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise you, when you see these things

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come to pass, know you that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled.' Luke 21:27-32."

"Why, doesn't that mean then that some of us now living will be here to witness this great event in person?" Dr. Barnes exclaimed with a note of excitement in his voice he was unable to conceal.

"Yes, that's right," I replied. "That is certainly my interpretation of Jesus' words, and if we study the subject a little further, we find that there is only one remaining condition of Jesus' prophecy that now remains to be fulfilled before His return to earth is consummated. Here is the final condition Jesus says has to be met today:

"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." Matthew 24:14.

"Now, fellows, the Bible makes it very clear that it is the generation that hears these signs preached as a witness that is the one that will see Jesus return in all His power and glory. Even a superficial survey of the matter will show you that the gospel message dealing with the soon coming of Christ is today reaching out into the remotest corners of the world, as never before in the earth's history. The same signs we have studied in today's lesson comprise the predominant theme of this worldwide message being disseminated today.

"And, although Jesus' prophecy undoubtedly does contain glad tidings of eternal salvation to His faithful followers who have long and patiently awaited His return, it also contains a solemn warning to all sinners, including drunkards and alcoholics such as you have been for years, and all other types of unrepentant sinners. Let me just quote you what Jesus says on this subject:

"And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch you therefore, and pray always, that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." Luke 21:34-36.

"The study I have given you this morning- has necessarily been a somewhat sketchy one due to the limitations of time. However, it is interesting to note that Jesus' prophecies of His own return to earth are corroborated and substantiated by no less than 380 references to this same event in the New Testament alone. In fact so important is it that roughly one verse in every twenty-five speaks of our Savior's Second Coming.

"And Jesus' own prophecy describing the chain of events that will precede His second coming is duplicated in the Bible by no less than ten other similar chains of predictions,' all having as their culmination and climactic moment His triumphant return to earth as the Savior of repentant sinners.

"If we study all the available prophecies on the subject of Christ's second coming, the conclusion becomes inescapable that we are living in the very closing days of the earth's history. All these divinely inspired predictions made as long as two thousand or more years ago point unerringly to the fact that this is the closing season of the world's history.

"Each of the chains of prophecies I have mentioned foretells a series of events that were to take place in the future history of the world, and the pages of history duly record their fulfillment in exact conformance to their prediction. The next great event is Christ's Second Coming.

"The same God who inspired the writing of these unerringly accurate prophecies has also given us a sure token of His infinite love and compassion through His promise of complete forgiveness to all repentant sinners.

"In concluding today's lesson I just want to say that you should never become discouraged because mere man regards you as a hopeless case just remember always that God, the supreme Ruler and Creator of the universe, the all-powerful, omnipotent One who guides our destinies, never at any time considers that any of us are beyond His aid, no matter how far down we have fallen. To Him we all are His creatures created in His likeness and image; and although likeness to Him may have become dim and terribly tarnished by sin, God is ready and willing today to cleanse us and remove our weaknesses and shortcomings entirely if we will but ask His help in doing so.

"Now, fellows, from our study today I think you can all see that the time left in which you can make a decision to serve God is getting very short indeed. And an additional reason why you should lose no time in changing your way of living and giving yourself completely to God is that you might easily succumb unexpectedly to your alcoholism as did Bob Miller this morning. It is a very serious thing to reject God's plan for salvation when it is offered so freely to you. Now, how many of you are ready to make a decision for God today? Let me see your hands! "

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Instantly every hand in the ward went up. For a few moments my welling emotions prevented me from speaking. And then I said: "God bless you all, and now let us all kneel in prayer and ask God for His forgiveness and His unfailing help to lead better lives dedicated to His service from this moment on."

1. Ten chains of predictions: (1) The Four World Empires, Daniel 2. (2) The Work of Antichrist, Daniel 7. (3) The Sanctuary and 2,300 Days, Daniel 8, 9. (4) A Great Prophetic Forecast, Daniel 11, 12. (5) The Seven Churches, Revelation 1-3. (6) The Seven Seals, Revelation 5, 6. (7) The Seven Trumpets, Revelation 8, 9. (8) The Two Witnesses, Revelation 11. (9) The Work of the Dragon and the 1,260 Days, Revelation 12. (10) The Two-Horned Beast, Revelation 13, 14. (For a complete and detailed study of these outstanding Biblical prophecies, see *The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, by Uriah Smith, available from the publishers of this book.)

3. THE ALCOHOLIC'S FINAL DELIVERANCE

AS I LOOKED back over the first two Bible lessons I had given, I felt greatly heartened to renew my efforts to bring these degraded alcoholic victims fully to Christ. And I found myself genuinely encouraged at their obviously sincere interest in the message I was trying to bring them of God's love and His plan for their eternal salvation. It has been my experience that many alcoholics stubbornly reject Jesus and His teachings because these epitomize and represent everything that is diametrically opposed to the way of life the alcoholic has been following for so many years. Furthermore many alcoholics have become imbued with the totally false notion, fostered by the liquor propagandists, that it is "manly" to drink and, correspondingly, a sign of softness and weakness to become a Christian.

Of course I know that such a philosophy is of satanic origin. As I have repeatedly told the alcoholic patients at the clinic, there is nothing sissified or "wishy-washy" about being a genuine Christian—quite the contrary, in fact. It took nerve, real steadfastness of purpose, and genuine "intestinal fortitude" to chase the money-changers out of the temple as Jesus did; to openly teach doctrines in the same temple that were contrary to the prevalent beliefs of the day. To associate with the poor, the sick, the despised, and the downtrodden in preference to leading a life of ease among the wealthy and highborn, as He could easily have done. Finally, as I have pointed out on numerous occasions, could a weak, vacillating man have gone to a humiliating, cruel death on the cross, knowing his entire innocence of all wrong, and possessing the full power to avoid such a death? No, it took more deep-seated, unwavering faith; more singleness of purpose; more infinite love and compassion than any mere mortal can ever have of himself, to do the things that Jesus did.

As I prepared to give the third lesson in my Bible series, it was plain to me that many alcoholics desperately want to stop drinking, and that they will eagerly accept God's message of salvation if it is presented to them in simple, easily understandable language. I also know that many alcoholics are unusually susceptible to the ridicule of their friends and associates as they seek, with the Lord's help, to make the revolutionary change in their way of life from self-seeking alcoholism to the unselfish service to others that a life with Jesus implies. I have seen men who wanted salvation with all their hearts hesitate to make the surrender necessary because they were afraid of what their friends would say. As I have so often told them, What do we really care what anyone says in a matter involving our own eternal salvation? This is a question of the utmost, vital importance that concerns only God and us, I tell them, so why let anyone else come into the picture?

Upon my arrival at the clinic for my third lesson, I found that a new patient had been admitted early that morning.

"We've been having a lot of trouble with the new patient, doctor," Joe, my ward attendant whispered, nodding to a bed nearby in which a gaunt, unshaven, pale-faced man of about sixty was lying. "He's been hearing and seeing things ever since he came in at about two o'clock this morning."

"He seems quiet enough now," I remarked casually, glancing at the man as he breathed heavily through a face that was wet with perspiration.

"Yeah, I guess he's completely worn out," Joe replied, "but he was carrying on something awful until just a few minutes ago."

just as Joe finished speaking, the patient let out an unearthly screech, leaped out of bed, and scurried toward the bathroom.

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“Stop them! Stop them!” he shrieked in undisguised terror. ‘That gang’s after me again! They’re out to get me! Save me, somebody, save me!’ “ With these words he disappeared from sight into the bathroom.

“Quick, Joe, come with me! “ I said urgently. “And Barnes,” I added, “you and Albright come along too. We’re going to have to restrain this man forcibly, I’m afraid, because in his present condition he may hurt himself or someone else.”

After a brief but violent struggle in which all of us took a hand, the patient was held down long enough for me to give him an injection, and about half an hour later the symptoms of his alcoholic hallucinosis-for such it was-had abated materially, and he had fallen into a heavy sleep.

“Be sure to keep an eye on him, Joe,” I admonished the ward attendant; “and give him ten units of ACTH every four hours, without fail.”

Just as I was about to start my Bible lesson for the day, the door to the ward opened, and a clerk from the front office put his head in.

“Oh, Dr. Hewitt,” he said, “there’s a telephone call from your office, and they say it’s very urgent.”

“All right,” I sighed, “I wonder what it can be this time. My past experience has been that some people consider anything from a bothersome hangnail to a ruptured appendix as being in that category.”

It turned out, however, to be a real emergency that demanded my immediate presence at my office. A little boy had been hit by a drunken driver right in front of my place of business and had suffered a leg fracture and possible internal injuries. Thus it was much longer than I had anticipated until I was able to return to the alcoholic ward to resume my delayed Bible lesson. When I returned, I thought I detected something different in the atmosphere of the place, and I wasn’t long in discovering why. I noticed almost immediately that the bed occupied only a few hours before by the patient with alcoholic hallucinosis was now empty.

“Where’s the new patient, Joe?” I asked as he busied himself with the ward records. He didn’t answer immediately, but his features flushed with embarrassment.

“Well, doctor, you see-,” he began, groping for words. “Oh, he took off, did he?” I interrupted, a trifle harshly, I’m afraid. “I thought I especially warned you to keep an eye on him, Joe.”

“Yes, you did, doc,” Joe replied shamefacedly, “and I don’t really have any good excuse for my negligence. However, shortly after you left there was a big ruckus in the alley out in back. There was some kind of fight between two drunks who had been killing a bottle of wine out there, and one of them ended up getting stabbed. The police and half the neighborhood were out there, and all of us were looking out the windows to see what was going on. That is, all of us except the new patient. He woke up somehow or other, although he was still very groggy, and took off while our attention was elsewhere.”

“I think we had better notify the police,” I replied. “He’s under the influence of sedation and may very easily be arrested on suspicion of drunkenness. I’ll go up front and make the call.”

But as I headed for the front office, I saw a burly member of the Los Angeles police force with our missing patient in tow. The latter was babbling incoherently to the officer, and I could see at once that his hallucinosis had returned in full force. I halted the officer as we met in the hallway.

“I’m Dr. Hewitt, officer, and I was just about to put in a call to police headquarters in case you picked up this patient here. I gave him some sedation a few hours ago and also some other medicine, and I was afraid his actions might be such as to cause his arrest for drunkenness.”

“They sure were, doctor,” returned the officer. ‘My partner and I were cruising around Fifth and Main when we spotted this character. We’re used to unusual sights, as you can well imagine, but I’ve got to admit that a man in hospital pajamas is one that just doesn’t happen every day. We stopped to see what was going on and found that this guy was seeing and hearing things just as we were about to take him over to the ‘psycho’ ward at General Hospital, he happened to mention this clinic, so we thought we’d bring him back here for you to work on.’

“Well, thanks a lot for your trouble, officer. I think we’ll be able to take better care of him this time. He’s got a fairly severe case of alcoholic hallucinosis which could become permanent, but which I am inclined to believe will respond to treatment in this instance. Some of the boys I told to watch him just got a little careless and let him get loose. But I’ll make sure it doesn’t happen again. Thanks again for all your trouble, and if you’ll just bring him back to the ward with me, I’ll fix him up with another injection of ACTH and get him resting comfortably again.”

I turned the runaway patient over to Joe and then got out my Bible and addressed my alcoholic class members as they grouped themselves around Dr. Barnes’s bed in a corner of the hospital ward.

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“Well, fellows,” I said with a smile, “it began to look for a while as though we’d never get around to that Bible lesson, but I guess maybe we can get at it now, unless something else turns up!

“I realize that, to a non-Christian, yesterday’s lesson in which we discussed the signs and portents present in the world today that point unmistakably to the soon ending of the world and Jesus’ return to earth can be nothing but alarming. But to the believing Christian they are just the opposite. They are the culmination of centuries of waiting and watching, of countless generations of persecution and suffering for the Master’s sake the long-awaited, climactic event in the true Christian church’s history.

“Jesus Himself realized that many doubts and fears would assail the Christian in a world full of wickedness and sin; and He offered comfort to His followers in an unforgettable prediction recorded in the world’s greatest book, the Bible, in the following words:

“Let not your heart be troubled: you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And whither I go you know, and the way you know.” John 14:14.”

“May I ask you a question before you go any further?” Eddie O’Brien asked.

“Why certainly, Eddie,” I replied. “I want all of you to ask me any questions that puzzle you as we go along. I don’t say I’ll be able to answer all of them on the spot, but we can certainly look them up together and get the right answers. What is it you want to know, Eddie?”

“Well, when you mentioned that Jesus would soon return to the world, you meant by that His spirit would return, not His physical body, didn’t you?”

“No, Eddie, I meant that He would return in His physical body, the same body He had when He was last on earth, the same body that suffered death on the cross, the same body that was resurrected from the grave, and the same body with which He disappeared from His disciples’ view in a cloud from atop the Mount of Olives almost two thousand years ago. The Bible is very clear on this point, as the following quotation will prove to you:

“And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand you gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into heaven.” Acts 1:1-11.

“If you’ve read your Bible at all, you will recall how Jesus rose from the tomb on the third day after His crucifixion and appeared to His disciples in the flesh shortly after, remaining in their company for the next forty days. On the fortieth day He ascended the Mount of Olives with the disciples, and while they watched in awe-stricken silence, He slowly rose from their sight, as the text I have just given you describes, and disappeared in a cloud.

I might say right here, Eddie, that Jesus’ own disciples, when they first saw Him in the upper room following His resurrection, at once jumped to the conclusion that He was a spirit. However, Jesus lost no time in reassuring them that He retained the same body He had had when He suffered a cruel death on the cross, and He even went so far as to let the Apostle Thomas touch His wounded side and view the nail marks still visible on His hands. And He said unto them, Why are you troubled? And why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself: handle Me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as you see Me have. And when He had thus spoken, He showed them His hands and His feet.” Luke 24:38-40.” “There’s another question I’d like to bring up, Dr. Hewitt,”

Dr. Barnes interjected. “Why did Jesus leave His disciples after being with them for forty days? Wouldn’t their evangelical work have been more effective if He had remained to direct their efforts?”

“Those are good questions, Dr. Barnes, and show that you are doing some real thinking about what we are discussing,” I commented. “I think your questions are answered in the following quotation from the Bible, which reveals that Jesus had some other, even more important, mission to perform that could not be delayed:

“For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.” Hebrews 9:24.

“That quotation makes it clear that Jesus left the world to go to His Father’s dwelling place in heaven, there to perform the vitally important role as intercessor for sinners, including you and me. He is still carrying on this work of infinite mercy, and His intercession in our behalf is the only hope we have of eternal salvation.

“Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He

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ever lives to make intercession for them.’ Hebrews 7:25.

“An additional reason for Jesus’ leaving the world and entering heaven has already been mentioned. It was to prepare a place for His followers, including even the lowest and most degraded alcoholics who have turned to Him in their desperation, and who, with His never-failing aid, have become overcomers.”

“What I can’t quite see yet, doctor, is, Why is it necessary for Jesus to return to earth again? Didn’t He complete all His work when He first came to earth?” asked Tom Albright.

“That, too, is a very good question, Tom; but as you will remember, Jesus repeatedly says throughout the Bible that He will return to the earth a second time, and states His specific reason for so doing in the following words of the great Apostle Paul:

“But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that you sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God. And the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.’ 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17.

“So, you see, fellows, Jesus’ purpose in returning to earth a second time is to raise His faithful followers from their graves in the same manner in which He Himself rose victorious over death and to take them with Him to heaven, together with those of His loyal followers who are still alive on earth at the time of His return. It is a solemn and wonderful thought that you and I may be numbered among the latter group if we have allowed Him to make the changes in our lives that are necessary in order to inherit eternal life. Jesus is also returning to earth to reward specifically His followers for their faithfulness and steadfastness to Him. Jesus describes this aspect of His mission thus:

“For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then He shall reward every man according to his works.’ Matthew 16:27.”

Harry Johnson, the machinist, now spoke up. “Suppose Jesus descended from heaven at some out-of-the-way spot in the world. How would we find out about it and be convinced that it really was Jesus? “ “The Bible specifically answers that question, Harry.

“Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, He is in the desert; go not forth: behold, He is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning comes out of the east, and shines even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.’ Matthew 24:26, 27, 30, 31.

“Behold, He comes with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kingdoms of the earth shall wail because of Him.” Revelation 1:7.

“Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him.” Psalm 50:3.

“From those descriptions of Christ’s coming, you can readily see that it will be of such a nature as to be unmistakable to all the world. But the Bible also warns us to beware of false Christ’s who will seek to confuse us and lead us astray. The Good Book says that an increasing number of these pseudo saviors will arise in various parts of the world as the time for the return of the real Christ draws near. These fake personages are the device of Satan to lead the world astray, the Bible says, and will succeed in their purpose to some extent, even some professed Christians being hoodwinked thereby. The Bible also warns that Satan himself, in a desperate attempt to delude and mislead Christ’s followers, will even impersonate Jesus Himself. Here is the warning sounded in the Bible to all true Christians, lest they be led astray even at the eleventh hour:

Take heed that you be not deceived: for many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ.’ Luke 21:8.

“Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christ’s, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.” Matthew 24:23, 24.

“Of course it should be remembered that true Christians, who have faithfully studied their Bibles,

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will not be easily deceived by Satan's cunningly laid deceptions. They know by heart the true manner of His coming and will not be deluded by any counterfeit thereof, no matter how cleverly it may be conceived and executed. Satan will not be allowed to duplicate the manner of the real Christ's coming as it is described in various places in the Bible, and for that reason he is foredoomed to failure in his efforts to mislead true Christians."

"There's just one other point I'd like to have made clear in our study so far," Harry Johnson said when I paused for a moment. "That's where the Bible refers to Christ's coming 'in His glory.' just what does it mean by that phrase?"

"It's something that mere mortals such as we are can never fully comprehend, Harry," I replied, "because it will be a spectacle of such overpowering beauty, awesomeness, and dazzling brilliancy as to defy human description. But just by way of comparison, let us see what happened in olden times when an angel of the Lord appeared to mankind in his comparatively much lesser angelic glory. And as we listen to that description, let us bear in mind that Christ will return with the entire angelic hosts of heaven, thus accentuating this dazzling splendor many, many thousands upon thousands of times. Here is a description of the Lord's return and an estimate of the number of angels, as found in the Bible:

"When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory.' Matthew 25:31.

"And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne: . . . and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands." Revelation 5: 11.

"Now let us examine the instance given in the Bible where an angel of the Lord appeared to mankind and rolled away the stone in front of Christ's tomb:

"And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men." Matthew 28:2-4.

"But just as surely as the second coming of Jesus will be an occasion for unrestrained rejoicing and gladness for true Christians who have so long awaited this culminating event in the earth's history, so just as surely will it be a day of reckoning and of wailing and lamentation and fruitless remorse for all unrepentant sinners, including alcoholics who have not turned from their sinful ways. Here's how the Bible puts the whole matter:

"And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains. And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?' Revelation 6:14-17.

"But the picture will be vastly different for the true Christian who has cast his sinful ways aside and put his faith and trust unreservedly in Jesus. This includes converted alcoholics, who have cast the burden of their alcoholism and all the sins that go with Him on His shoulders, and all other sinners. Here is how the Bible describes the joyful occasion of Christ's Second Coming as the saved in Christ will experience it:

"And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.' Isaiah 25:9.

"And now.... abide in Him; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming." 1 John 2:28.

"And that, fellows, just about winds up today's lesson. There, taking the three lessons we've had thus far together, you have the whole picture of Christ's Second Coming and the unmistakable signs and events that prove that it may occur any time now. The only question now remaining unanswered is just this: On whose side will you be found when Christ appears? There is no middle ground, no neutral zone-either you are for Jesus and His teachings, or you are against them and on Satan's side.

"God has given each one of us the power to make our own decisions. What is yours going to be? Are you going to continue to drink and commit the other sins that go with it? Are you going to keep on ignoring spiritual things and seeking only the gross, fleeting lusts of the flesh that this world has to offer?

"Or are you going to make a decision for Christ today? Are you going to make your decision now while time still remains?

"I thoroughly agree that sobriety is your immediate and pressing problem, because until you have

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been sober for some time, it is impossible for you to fully grasp spiritual things. However, there is a very real danger in attaining sobriety, as some have by one means or another, including a superficial spiritual experience, that you will end up by confusing this sobriety with salvation. Actually there is a vast difference between the two. All of us know, for instance, of occasional instances where alcoholics have managed to attain some measure of sobriety, but continued to retain other sinful habits such as lying, stealing, gambling, adultery, laziness, gluttony, and like bodily harmful indulgences. There's no doubt that the attainment of sobriety is a great step forward, but unless you also clean up your lives and put all your sins away from you through Jesus' help, you will not be ready for Christ or eligible to enter into God's kingdom.

"Most alcoholics who have progressed as far downward as you find it impossible to stay 'dry' at all unless they decide to make a full surrender of all their sinful habits-not merely their drinking.

"From my experience right here in this alcoholic ward, as well as elsewhere, I am convinced that the alcoholic who manages to stay sober for any length of time but who continues to indulge in the sinful practices I have just mentioned is not only sadly deluding himself, but is a serious stumbling block to his alcoholic friends and associates, who find themselves totally unable to stay sober if they try to emulate him and indulge in these same harmful practices.

"Amid the doubts, perplexities, and uncertainties of this earthly life, and when the temptation to drink or sin in any way assails you with overpowering force, make it a habit to pray to Jesus for strength to overcome. Hold before you at all times the glorious certainty of Christ's soon coming and the everlasting joy and happiness of eternal life in God's kingdom. Live each hour and each day as though you expected Christ to appear, and you will have no regrets. In addition you will find that suddenly life is really worth living-that you now have a real purpose in life, and the futility of your old way of life will appall you as you view it in retrospect.

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifies himself, even as He is pure." 1 John 3:2, 3.

"Well, that's the final text for today, fellows. Tomorrow we'll take up the subject of the millennium which my good friend Harry Johnson over there has already brought up. Until then I'll say good-by, and may God bless all of you!"

ACT14 is a new so-called "wonder drug," recently developed by medical researchers, which has been found to be very effective in clearing up the symptoms of alcoholic hallucinosis in many cases.

4. A THOUSAND YEARS OF SOBRIETY AND HAPPINESS

AS THE TIME for my fourth Bible lesson for the alcoholics in the charity rehabilitation clinic drew near, I had to admit that the interest and sincerity shown by the men left little to be desired. It held out high hopes to me that some of them at least would forsake their old way of life and embark on the spiritual program so essential to their permanent sobriety and eventual full acceptance of God's plan of eternal salvation for all repentant sinners.

But it seemed that the Bible lessons were not going to be allowed to proceed without interruption. No sooner had I opened my Bible and gathered the group in the hospital ward around me than the familiar courier from the front office appeared.

"Yes, Bill, what's the bad news this morning?" I asked as Bill Williams, a former alcoholic and patient of mine who had now been sober over a year and was working as a clerk at the clinic, inserted his head in the doorway and glanced searchingly around.

"Oh, there you are, Dr. Hewitt," he exclaimed as he finally caught sight of me. "We just got an emergency call from the Edison Hotel next door. I don't know whether or not you remember Joe Sweeney, but he's over there in bed, and they say he's just about ready to cash in his chips. The room clerk couldn't get any response from him this morning so used his pass key and got in. The room was full of empty wine bottles and trash of all kinds, and Joe was semiconscious-couldn't understand a word being spoken to him. Could you drop over and take a look at him, doc?" he ended.

"Well, here we go again," I sighed. "Yes, certainly I'll take a look at him," I assured Bill. "Tell them I'll be right over-no," I added as an afterthought, "don't bother; I'll go right now. It sounds as though he's really in very bad shape."

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I remembered Joe Sweeney very well. He was the epitome of an alcoholic type I have encountered quite frequently in the course of the many years I have dealt with the victims of the liquor traffic. He stubbornly resisted any and all attempts to tell him of God's plan of eternal salvation for repentant sinners. In fact he would walk away if the subject was even broached and would lose his temper if it was even suggested that he change his way of life.

"I am doing all right," he'd say in a smug, self-satisfied voice. "Oh, I'll admit that I sometimes drink a little too much, but I can lick that problem by myself. I'm not one of those weak sisters who need someone's shoulder to cry on. I can make it alone, and that's the way I'm going to do it."

Sweeney had been in the hospital ward several times and in increasingly bad physical shape with each succeeding admission. However, so strong is the grip alcohol gets on its victims, that he blamed everything else for his predicament except the booze that really caused it. When in the throes of his alcohol-induced sick ness, he would feel very sorry for himself and would then make a halfhearted acknowledgment that he would have to do some thing about his drinking. But as the effects of the alcoholic sick ness wore off, his old stubborn, belligerent nature would reassert itself once again.

I have found that alcoholics probably have shorter memories as a group than any other to be found in the world today," I remarked somewhat testily on one occasion when Sweeney had just finished one of his typically bombastic utterances regarding his ability to handle his drinking problem by himself. "But I can say without fear of contradiction, that of those short memories yours is by far the shortest! When you arrived in this ward about a week ago, you didn't even know where you were. You didn't even talk sense, and you were seeing and hearing things. I guess you had been drinking buttermilk, but it smelled very much like wine to me," I commented sarcastically. If that's an example of how you propose to manage your problem from now on, I frankly don't feel very optimistic about your chances of success."

But I soon realized that I might just as well save my breath. Sweeney, like some other alcoholics, had succeeded in wrapping himself in an impregnable protective sheathing of overwhelming, self-satisfied egotism; and I realized that unless this received a sufficiently hard jar sometime soon, he would die from his alcoholism. The news that he was possibly in that very condition in the hotel next door, therefore, was no real surprise to me.

With Bill Williams accompanying me, we proceeded to the Edison Hotel and talked to the clerk on duty.

"Yeah, Sweeney's been drunk continually for the past three weeks," the clerk informed me. "I told him he'd better take it easy, but you know Sweeney," he added with a shrug of his shoulders. "You can't tell that guy anything. He thinks he knows all the answers, and he wants to fight the minute he thinks you're trying to tell him how to do anything. He's a hard case all right."

"What room's he in?" I asked.

"Number 311," the clerk replied. "Just a second and I'll show you where it is," he added, taking a key from a large board on which several dozen other similar keys were hanging.

As we walked through the labyrinth of dingy halls of the skid row flophouse, I noted the clusters of empty wine bottles outside of virtually every door.

"Looks as though the boys here really support the wine industry," I remarked caustically, "but I'm pretty sure at least some of them would withdraw that support if they knew what they were drinking. Why, if that stuff were labeled in strict accordance with the pure-food-and-drug regulations, its manufacturers would be forced to put a 'poison' label on it and also a skull and crossbones. I don't know how the health authorities ever allow it to be sold."

"Yeah, nine tenths of the guys in this joint are 'winos,'" remarked the hotel clerk disgustedly, "and if you think for a minute they don't give us a bad time, you're badly mistaken. Why, we had the 'meat wagon' here three times last week, carting off three wine-heads who konked out in bed, and it looks like Sweeney's gonna be the first one this week."

It did indeed look as though Sweeney would be the next victim. As we opened the door of his drab, musty, evil-smelling room, I gazed at the dreadfully shrunken form of what had once been a man, lying on a dirty, stained mattress. The bedclothes had been rolled into a sodden bundle and tossed into a corner along with an assorted litter of empty wine bottles, fragments of half-eaten sandwiches, tin cans, and soiled articles of clothing.

The pallor of death was already on Sweeney's face. His breathing was noisy and labored, and his chest rose and fell spasmodically as he battled for breath. His eyes had rolled back into their sockets so that only the whites of them were visible.

Working swiftly, I opened my medical case and prepared an injection that I hoped would bring

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him back to consciousness, although I was none too sure that any human aid could help.

However, somewhat to my surprise, a few minutes after I had administered the medicine, Sweeney slowly opened his eyes, glanced into our faces, and mumbled something in a low voice. I bent over him and tried to hear what he was trying so hard to say.

"It's too late, doc," he said in a barely audible, gasping whisper between the paroxysms of pain that tore at his body. I had my chances, and I didn't take them. I thought I could make it alone, but—" and even in the dreadful pain he was suffering, he managed a wan smile—"I know now I can't when it's too late. Yeah, too late-too late!" he repeated sadly. "So just leave me, doc, and let me die in peace, will you?"

"No, Joe, it still isn't too late," I answered gently. "The thief on the cross repented with his dying breath and was saved, and you can do the same!"

But even as I finished speaking the words, a horrible shudder ran through his body; and his eyes fixed in the dreadful, unseeing stare of the dead.

"He's a goner, isn't he, doc?" Bill Williams cried hoarsely.

"Yes, his drinking troubles are over at last, I replied sadly, "but I'm afraid Joe is going to have to face his Maker with a soul burdened with unrepented sin. Perhaps if he had lived for even a few minutes more, it might have been different, as he seemed to realize at last the terrible mistake he had made in trying to overcome his drinking and other sinful habits by his own efforts alone. It's just another tragic example of the awful danger that lies in putting off the decision to make a full surrender to God and to change our sinful way of life. Well, there's nothing much more we can do here," I ended, turning to the room clerk who was standing silently beside us.

If you'll be kind enough to call the coroner's office, he'll pick up the body," I said. "When he gets here, please tell him I pronounced Joe dead at 10:35 A.M. on today's date. I'll write that down so you'll be sure to get it right," I added as an afterthought.

"Okay, doc, I'll take care of that," the room clerk replied. "That'll make the fourth time this week that a wino has cashed in his chips. I bet we give the coroner's office more business than any other joint in town, although I hear that some of those dumps down on East Fifth aren't doing so bad either!"

Accompanied by Williams, I returned to the hospital ward at the clinic and prepared to give the fourth Bible lesson in the series, which had been abruptly interrupted by death.

"Do you mind if I sit in on the lesson, doc?" Bill Williams asked earnestly, if a trifle unexpectedly.

"Glad to have you, Bill," I replied heartily. "And if any of the other boys working around the clinic want to attend, let them know from me that they're always welcome too."

I found Dr. Barnes, Tom Albright, Eddie O'Brien, Harry Johnson, and the others in the ward eagerly awaiting my arrival. They glanced up as one when Bill and I entered, and it was at once evident from their expressions that they read Joe Sweeney's fate in our faces.

"Joe's gone, isn't he?" Tom Albright asked somberly. I can see it written in your face."

"Yes, he's gone," I answered sadly, "and I just hope that none of you fellows will make the same mistake Joe did in putting off the vital decision to serve God until it's too late. That's a decision that involves your eternal life, fellows, and is emphatically not a trivial matter, to be dismissed with a laugh or a sneer. It's a decision you have to make for yourself, but God has given you the option of one way or the other. May you all decide soon to serve Him from now on, and from there go on to share life eternal with Him in His heavenly kingdom.

"This morning, as I think most of you already know, I am going to take up the question of the millennium, which our friend Harry Johnson over there brought up during our first lesson together, and which I told him then I would discuss later in detail.

"Now, by way of a brief recapitulation of yesterday's lesson in which we learned further concerning the manner of Christ's second coming, let me give you again the Bible text that vividly describes this awesome and world-shaking event, as it is important also in the study and understanding of the millennium:

"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.' 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17.

"And now let me give you still another text which may shed even further light on the same subject:

"Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment,

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in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? But thanks be to God, which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Corinthians 15:51-55, 57.

"I realize that beginning Bible students sometimes have a little difficulty at first in grasping the full meaning of some of the quotations from God's Holy Word. That is something that will adjust itself as you make it a daily practice to engage in prayer and Bible study. However, the two quotations I have just given you mean simply this: When Christ returns to earth, those repentant, saved sinners who are in their graves will be resurrected. They will be raised in their own bodies this time, but 'incorruptible' and already vested with the immortality that is the gift of God alone. Then this host of the saved dead will be joined in the clouds by another much smaller host of repentant sinners who are still alive on earth when Christ returns. But, as the quotations point out, before this translation to heaven is possible, those still alive and saved remaining on earth must be given the garments of incorruptibility and immortality already possessed by the saved sinners raised from the grave.

"This change is wrought by Jesus' coming, and then all the repentant, saved ones are taken by Jesus to join His Father in heaven. The wicked, unrepentant sinners in the grave are left for the fate that awaits them at a later date. As the saved, repentant host ascends into heaven, it indicates the complete, final victory of Christ over death and the grave which He first demonstrated by His own resurrection from the tomb following His crucifixion on the cross of Calvary.

"In short, this great movement of repentant sinners to heaven will represent the fulfillment of Jesus' promise to repentant sinners which I quoted in yesterday's lesson, but which I think is important enough to repeat here:

"Let not your heart be troubled: you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there you may be also."

"A further text that shows very clearly Jesus' plans to have saved sinners share in His own heavenly glory is the following:

"Father, I will that they also, whom Thou has given Me, be with Me where I am." John 17:24.

"The Bible goes on to say that these thousands upon thousands of repentant sinners who have died in this generation and the countless ones before it who have been resurrected from their graves at His second coming, and also those that have joined them from among the living, will be taken to heaven to abide there with the Master for the ensuing one thousand years.

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them. And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshiped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." Revelation 20:4."

At this point Dr. Barnes asked: "Before you go any further, doctor, would you mind explaining just what was meant in the first part of that quotation you just gave when, in describing the repentant sinners in heaven, it said something about their being given the power to judge others? Who would these others be? Would it be the unrepentant sinners left behind in the world?"

"That's a very good question, Dr. Barnes, and I want to commend you on following the text so closely," I commented warmly. "Yes, these repentant, saved sinners will not only determine the extent of the punishment to be meted out to their unrepentant fellow beings on earth, but they will also pass judgment on the fallen angels who have joined with Satan in their open defiance of God and His teachings. Paul describes the role to be played by the saved in heaven in the following words:

"Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world shall be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know you not that we shall judge angels? How much more things that pertain to this life?" 1 Corinthians 6:2, 3."

"That sounds like a pretty good deal for the folks who took a nose dive," Eddie O'Brien remarked flippantly, "but what of the stubborn, wicked blokes left on earth? What will they be doing during the one thousand years you mentioned?"

Although a little nettled by O'Brien's irreverent attitude, I realized the poverty of his spiritual experience and didn't rebuke him.

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“Well, Eddie, I’ll give you two quotations from the Bible that I think will clear up that question for you:

“And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming.” 2 Thessalonians 2:8.

“In that quotation the Apostle Paul, writing under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, foretells that the wicked living on earth at the time of Christ’s second coming will be destroyed by the overwhelming brightness of His coming. The wicked dead, who are still in their graves, will meet the following fate:

“But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.” Revelation 20:5.

“In other words, Eddie,” I explained, “the wicked dead, who are in their graves at the time of Christ’s Second Coming, will remain there until the one thousand years have passed. Then they, too, will be resurrected to face God’s awful judgment day. Meanwhile let us get a glimpse of the earth’s condition during the one thousand years after the righteous have been removed. The Bible indicates very clearly that it will be a scene of utter desolation and devastation, devoid of all life, gloomy and foreboding as though still haunted by the evil deeds of those God has destroyed and whose bodies still lie around unburied and not mourned:

“Behold, the Lord makes the earth empty, and makes it waste, and turns it upside down, and scatters abroad the inhabitants thereof. . . . The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the Lord hath spoken this word. The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again.’ Isaiah 24:1-3, 19, 20.

“I beheld the earth, and, lo it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the Lord, and by His fierce anger.’ Jeremiah 4:23-26.”

“Another question just occurred to me while you were reading those quotations,” Dr. Barnes interpolated. “What will Satan and his evil angels be doing during this one-thousand-year period? With the righteous in heaven, the wicked living destroyed by the brightness of Christ’s coming, and the wicked dead still in their graves, won’t Satan be, shall we say, in the ranks of the unemployed and temporarily, at least, without material to work his evil designs upon?”

“Yes, that’s right, Dr. Barnes. Satan will have no one to lead astray and into sin during the one thousand years we are discussing. Here’s what the Bible has to say regarding this subject:

“And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled. And after that he must be loosed a little season.’ Revelation 20:1-3.

“Now perhaps I should explain that in the quotation I have just given you, when it says that Satan was bound for a thousand years, it does not mean that he is to be chained in a literal sense of the word, but rather in a figurative sense, by what may be described as ‘a chain of circumstances.’ As Dr. Barnes pointed out a few minutes ago, Satan will be deprived of any victims upon whom to work his evil designs during the one-thousand-year period when the saved sinners sojourn in heaven with the Savior.

“He won’t even have any unrepentant alcoholics to tempt into further degradation, as they too will be dead and in their graves; or, if they happen to be alive at Christ’s second coming, their lifeless and untended bodies will be littering the landscape of the desolated earth.”

“What does that reference to loosing the devil for a ‘little season I mean, and when will that occur?” Harry Johnson asked.

“Those questions are answered in the following quotations, also found in the Book of Revelation in a divinely inspired vision given to the Apostle John, and in the Book of John:

“But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. . . . And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison.” Revelation 20:5-7.

“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.’ John 5:28, 29.

“It might be well for me to explain right here that there will be two separate and distinct resurrections. The first has already been described as taking place upon Christ’s second coming to earth,

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when repentant sinners of all the countless ages of the world's history, including the present generation in which we live, will be taken to heaven with the Lord. The second resurrection, the Bible tells us, will take place at the conclusion of the one-thousand-year period that has already been described, and will include all the wicked, unrepentant sinners of world history from the beginning of time, including those who will be destroyed by the brightness of His second coming. This host of unsaved sinners is graphically described in the Scriptures as being in number 'as the sand of the sea.'

"As the first quotation I have just given particularly shows, Satan will be turned loose to mislead men and women as of old at the end of the one-thousand-year period already mentioned. The Bible describes it thus:

"And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.' Revelation 20:7, 8."

"I would like to ask a question right here, if I may, doctor,"

Tom Albright broke in. "When Satan is loosed again and gathers the forces of evil to do battle, just whom does he propose to fight?"

"I wondered whether anyone would ask that," I remarked with a smile. "Your question is answered for you in the Bible as follows:

"And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city.' Revelation 20:9.

"Before we go any further, I think I should explain something else that possibly has you puzzled. Probably you will want to know how the redeemed sinners, who, as we have seen, are to be taken to heaven after His second coming, got back to earth again and built a marvelous city on the desolated earth. This is how the Bible explains how this is to be brought about, as seen in a divinely inspired vision by the Apostle John:

"And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God." Revelation 21:10.

"The prophet Zechariah was given a similar vision:

"Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle. And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. . . . And the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with Thee." Zechariah 14:3-5.

"Reduced to plain, everyday language, Zechariah's vision and John's vision simply mean that the Holy City will descend from heaven and come to rest on the Mount of Olives near the site of the present city of Jerusalem. The Mount of Olives will be cleft to make room for the city, Zechariah says; and the saints or saved sinners will come with God to earth. It is here that Satan and his vast horde of the wicked will attack the Lord and His followers in the last great, decisive battle between good and evil."

"Does the Bible foretell what side will win this struggle?" asked Tom Albright seriously.

"Yes, it does, and very clearly too," I replied. 'Just listen to this quotation from the Bible:

"And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and encompassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." Revelation 20:9.

"Now, in concluding today's lesson, I would like to have you look over this chart I have with me here," I said, holding aloft a large chart I had acquired for the purpose of illustrating this particular lesson. "As you will note, it contains in highly condensed form all the salient points of today's lesson.

"As Peter brings out in his epistle (2 Peter 3:9-14), the world as we know it now will be totally purified by the cleansing fire sent from heaven and will then be re-created to resemble the earth as it was in the days of Adam, before sin entered the world. I intend to give you some further information regarding the final destruction of the wicked and this marvelous new earth in the next two lessons in this series.

I think all of you can see that God is very eager to save anyone possible; as it is expressed by Peter, He 'is long-suffering to us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.'

"Let's kneel and have a short prayer for renewed strength and faith to do God's will. Let's ask Him to change our lives."

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5. THE UTTER END OF ALCOHOLISM AND OTHER SIN

THIS is Jerry Mason, night clerk at the Edison Hotel, doctor, and I'm sorry to disturb you at this early hour; but there's a man in Room 280 that's ready to 'fold up' unless somebody does something for him. He's all swollen up and can't seem to get a breath."

"Who is it, Jerry?" I asked sleepily. The time was 3:00 AM, and I had just returned about half an hour earlier from an emergency appendectomy operation at a hospital clear across town.

"Why, his name's Larry Higgins," Mason replied. "He says you've treated him before for swollen ankles caused by drinking."

"Yes, that's right," I agreed, "but I haven't seen him for at least six months. Where has he been all this time?"

"Well, I'd say off-hand that he's spent most of it right here in his room sopping up all the wine he can lay his hands on. He only leaves his room about once a week. The rest of the time he lies in bed, sucking on a bottle until he passes out. He even has some of the other winos make the run to the liquor store for him when he runs out of wine."

"Where does he get the money to stay on such a prolonged drunk?" I asked. "Does he have some sort of income or pension?"

"No, I don't think he has any pension or income of any kind," Mason said, "but he works as a movie projector operator-when he's able to, that is. That's a well-paid position. He saves every penny he makes, even scrimps on food and buys all his clothes at second-hand stores, just so he will be able to get enough together to finance a drunk such as he has been on now. He's going to kill himself, just as so many other winos have, if someone doesn't do something to get him away from the wine. When will you be able to see him, doc? I'm really afraid he won't last until morning."

"Well, I'm wide awake now, and I know from my previous treatment of Higgins that he's probably in critical condition, so I'll leave right now. I'll be down there in about fifteen minutes, Mason," I said as I hung up the telephone.

Larry Higgins was another hard-to-reach alcoholic that had been in the charity alcoholic rehabilitation hospital ward on several occasions. However, he was slightly different from the majority of the other alcoholics I encountered, in that he was able to 'nibble' at liquor, usually cheap wine, for several weeks before his drinking became actually of the compulsive variety that characterizes most alcohol addicts. He was somewhat unique among alcoholics in another respect: Somehow or other he would manage to force some food into his mouth every day. It was undoubtedly this latter fact that enabled him to keep going day after day and week after week with his alcoholic binges, since such prolonged drinking without any food would have brought dire consequences much sooner.

I was fully prepared to find Higgins in bad condition, but hardly expected his plight to be as dire as it appeared to be when the clerk, Mason, opened the door to 280 and let me in.

Higgins was lying on his back on a bare, filthy mattress, breathing noisily and painfully. His abdomen was dreadfully bloated and swollen, his face a bright, mottled red with the veins and blood vessels standing out in his neck and forehead like whipcords. He was lying in a suit of soiled underwear, and I noted immediately that his ankles were also terribly swollen. As I entered with Mason, he slowly opened his eyes, groaned, and attempted to sit up. However, so weakened had he become, and so great was the weight of his grotesquely misshapen body, that he was able to move his bulk only a few inches.

"My, am I glad to see you, doc! " he exclaimed as his bloodshot eyes focused blearily on me. He appeared sober, but actually he was in the muddled, disoriented condition crudely but more or less accurately termed "rum-dumb" by uncouth skid row winos. "I'm not here to give you a lecture, Higgins, but I think you realize yourself now that I wasn't just trying to scare you six months ago when I told you that you had serious liver damage [alcoholic cirrhosis of liver] and that just this sort of thing would happen if you kept on drinking. Are you deliberately trying to commit suicide, or what is it you're trying to prove?" I asked as I felt his tender, terribly swollen abdomen and ankles.

I really don't know what my trouble is," Higgins replied frankly. I seem to be able to go along for six months, or even longer sometimes, without taking a drink of any kind; but in the back of my mind there's always the thought that I will start drinking again when I get enough money to keep me from worrying where my next bottle's coming from."

"Well, now, I'm going to be very frank with you, Higgins," I replied when he had finished, "because you might just as well know the plain truth now. You have only a few days-weeks at most-to live if you keep on drinking. And even if you stop right now, I can't guarantee that you'll live much over a year,

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even if you take the best of care of yourself. Your liver is obviously very badly damaged, and from the stethoscope examination I just made of your heart, it too is working under a strain that cannot continue much longer without something giving way. You have a bad heart murmur and every indication of an enlarged heart. Now, Larry, there's still time left for you to completely change your life and attain the sobriety that has eluded you for so long. Why don't you make up your mind right now to turn your drinking problem and all your other problems over entirely to Christ? He will take them all over from you and release you completely from the burden of sin that has become too heavy for you to bear. Thousands of other alcoholics just like you have had marvelous changes wrought in their lives the minute they decided to stop trying to stay sober by their own efforts and let Jesus take over. Why don't you give it a try, Larry?" I pleaded.

"Because I don't want to be a hypocrite, doctor," Higgins replied. "I'm not an atheist by any means, but I have no use for these mealy-mouthed mission stiff's who pretend to be converted and take a 'nose-dive' at the altar just to get a bowl of free soup or a flop for the night. I have never gone to church, but apart from my weakness for liquor, I don't think I've led such a bad life. I haven't cheated anyone; I never beat up my wife-when I had one. I have tried to be fair and square with my fellow men in all my dealings with them. As I see it, if a guy tries to follow the golden rule in his life, that's all that's really necessary."

"No, I can't agree with you there, Larry," I answered, "because I know from my own experience, as well as from what the Bible says, 'there is none righteous, no, not one.' Romans 3:10. It's totally impossible for any human being to live up to the golden rule one hundred per cent; the best he can hope to do is to set it up as his goal and then ask God's help in attaining it. Unless you do this, you are foredoomed to disappointment, frustration, and failure because human nature, standing alone, has proved time without number that it is pitifully inadequate to deal with sin and its own inherent weaknesses.

"Many so-called 'good' men and women have declared their smug, self-satisfaction with themselves, only to discover when they attempted to place their lives alongside the faultless, shining purity of Jesus, that they were in fact 'whited sepulchers' inside of which filthiness and all manner of evil dwelt. We all come to the realization sooner or later, if we study the Bible, that we are sinners in God's sight; and when this realization comes to us in all its stark enormity, we instinctively fall to our knees and ask God's forgiveness. This He has promised to grant freely when we ask it sincerely of Him, and this wonderful ransom from sin was purchased for us by Jesus when He died for us on Calvary. Don't you believe that Christ died for you and me and all other sinners, Larry?" I asked him suddenly.

"No, I can't say that I do entirely," Higgins replied slowly. "As I just said, I think that if a man does his best to lead a good, clean life here, he need have no worries about an afterlife, and I'm not too sure there is one anyway."

"Well, I'd like to take that up with you some other time," I remarked, realizing the futility of continuing the discussion at that time and under the circumstances; "but right now our problem is to decide what can best be done with you. My suggestion is that we call an ambulance and send you to the General Hospital. You'll get the best of care there. They will drain the excess fluid out of your abdomen, and you won't be tempted to do any further drinking. It's going to take time, lots of it, to get you back into some semblance of shape; and I think you'll agree you can't do it here. If you stay on here, you're going to die; and as a physician, and also as your friend, I don't intend to stand idly by and see that happen."

"No, the General Hospital's out!" Higgins declared flatly. "I've been there a couple times before, and I don't want any more of it!"

"Well, there's only one other alternative in that case," I said. "That's to enter our alcoholic hospital ward next door. I think there's a vacant bed right now, and I'll see what I can do to have you admitted. How about that?"

"That sounds better than General Hospital anyhow," Higgins remarked unenthusiastically, "but I don't see why you can't just treat me right here. I promise you I'll knock off the drinking if you do."

"No, that's out!" I retorted. "Right now I can tell you're aching for a drink, and the only thing that prevents you from having one is the fact that you can't get out of bed to have one. Isn't that right?"

Higgins grinned sheepishly. "You win, doctor!" he said. "All right, let's make it next door if you can, and then let's get busy getting rid of some of this excess fluid that's gathered in my body, what say?"

"All right, I'll go telephone the ward and make sure they have a bed ready for you. Mason, you stay here with Higgins, will you, while I put in the call. And no drinking, do you hear?" I admonished, as I went back up to the hotel office.

I was informed that there was a bed available in the ward, and after routing three sleepy and

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reluctant ex-ward patients from their dormitory beds, we finally succeeded in carrying Higgins from his hotel room to the hospital. After first giving him an injection of Novocain, I inserted a large-caliber drainage needle in his swollen abdomen and drained off slightly more than three quarts of excess fluid that had gathered in his abdominal cavity. Higgins's relief was immediate, and his heartbeat returned almost immediately to near normal when the terrific pressure from under the heart was removed.

Practically the entire ward had been awakened by Higgins's early morning arrival, and I noted that my alcoholic Bible students watched intently as I worked over Higgins.

"Think you'll be able to have a class today?" Jested O'Brien. "Maybe you'd better get yourself a cot down here so you won't have to be running back and forth between your office and the Edison Hotel and this place!"

"Don't you worry about me, Eddie," I retorted smilingly. "I'll be on hand as usual at about ten thirty this morning. "You know, Eddie," I continued, "one of the first things a doctor has to learn is how to get along on a minimum of sleep, and also how to cat-nap whenever the opportunity presents itself. I'll be seeing you fellows later on this morning," I said as I returned my surgical instruments to my case and prepared to leave.

"Thanks a lot, doc!" Higgins said gratefully as I opened the door to go. "I'll see you in the morning, and maybe we can talk some more about the subject we started to discuss over at the Edison."

Promptly at 10:30 A.M., as I had promised, I gathered my alcoholic class around me in the ward to start the fifth lesson in the series. I was glad to see that Higgins was among those that sat, Bible in hand, ready for the lesson to begin.

"Now, fellows," I began, "you will recall that right at the end of yesterday's lesson we were discussing the final fate of the wicked and unrepentant at the end of the one thousand years when the saved sinners again descend in the New Jerusalem to earth. There Satan gathers the host of these wicked men and women together under his banner and prepares to attack the Holy City, where Jesus and His redeemed are dwelling. Now let us see what important event takes place even while Satan and his wicked followers are attacking Jesus and His righteous followers. Here is the Apostle John's description of the event as it was revealed to him by God in a divinely inspired vision:

"And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." Revelation 20:11, 12.

"Let us try to visualize, to the best of our limited ability, the awesomeness and solemnity of that scene as the Son of man sits on His glorious throne high above the Holy City and pronounces the awful executive judgment on wicked, unrepentant sinners. The blinding radiance of God, His Father, encircles Him and overflows into the Holy City, suffusing the entire world with its brilliancy. The day of reckoning has finally arrived for the willfully sinful and for the author of all sin and wickedness, Satan himself.

"As you can well imagine, the wicked view the glory and power of the Savior, whom they have so consistently denied, as ones entranced and in a waking dream. Satan, too, and his host of evil angels seem immobilized and rendered mute by the awful majesty and might of the Savior. They, like their evil subjects, realize too late that the full fury of God's long-suffering wrath is about to be unleashed against them. They cower in fear and trembling for the awful punishment that they know is about to befall them.

"As soon as the books are opened that contain the entire record of every human being that has lived on earth and the wicked acts of unrepentant sinners are laid bare for all to see, these willful sinners, including alcoholics who have stubbornly refused to change their way of life, are acutely conscious of Jesus' gaze upon them. As His pure and searching glance falls upon each of them individually, they are intensely and acutely aware of every misdeed, every sin they have been guilty of in the past. They see, too late, just where they have followed the lusts of the flesh instead of the teachings of Jesus. Just where pride, self-satisfaction, and self-sufficiency led them to reject God's help and rely on their own frail strength; just where their continued rejection of God's salvation led them into the toils of the devil. All these things flash before their suddenly awakened consciences as though written in blazing symbols of fire.

I think all of us should give the executive judgment day a lot of solemn thought, because the Bible very clearly says that all of us must stand before God in that day to receive the reward or punishment for our deeds here on earth. This is how the Bible puts it:

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." 2 Corinthians 5:10.

"God makes it very clear in the Bible that the wages of sin, unrepented and unatoned, is death, and

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that eternal life can only be obtained by belief in His Son Jesus and His atoning sacrifice.

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”
Romans 6:23.

“Now let us review briefly one of the important points discussed in yesterday’s lesson. You will remember that Satan and his wicked host were attacking the Holy City, and today we learned that even as they were doing so, Jesus sat in judgment upon them. And as you also learned, ‘fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.’

“If you will recall, back in Lesson 1, Tommy here raised the question of God’s punishment of unrepentant sinners. He said, if my memory is correct, that he just couldn’t understand why a merciful, compassionate God would allow sinners to suffer endlessly throughout time, no matter how heinous their crimes might have been. Is that about what you said, Tommy?” I asked, turning to Tom Albright, the lawyer alcoholic patient.

“Yeah, that’s about what I said,” Tom agreed, “and I must say I still am puzzled on that point.”

“Well, that’s what the Bible says will happen,” interjected Eddie O’Brien, the other alcoholic representative of the legal profession in the ward. “The fact that eternal fire will torture the wicked endlessly throughout eternity is mentioned frequently throughout the Bible.”

“All right, that’s just the point I want to discuss now,” I said placatingly when O’Brien had ended his impassioned outburst. “And before the lesson is over, I think you will agree that although God fully intends to punish unrepentant sinners, He does not intend that they shall suffer ceaselessly for their wickedness.

I thoroughly agree with you, Eddie, that the subject of the fate of the wicked is one that is touched upon frequently in God’s Holy Book, but nowhere have I been able to find a reference to this fate that convinces me it will be a matter of eternal suffering. Rather, I am now going to give you a series of texts which I have listed here from a fine book’ written by Carlyle B. Haynes. Mr. Haynes, in discussing this very subject of the final fate of the wicked, including Satan and his angels, gives the following Scripture texts on the subject. I want each of you to get a pencil and paper and take them down as I read them.”

I paused for a few minutes to allow my patients to get their writing materials together.

“Now,” I recommended, “let’s examine these texts together and see what the Scriptures say of the ultimate fate of the wicked:

“They shall ‘die’ (Ezekiel 18:4); they shall suffer ‘death’ (Romans 6:23); they shall suffer the ‘second death’ (Revelation 20:14, 15); they shall be ‘destroyed’ (Psalm 145:20); they shall suffer ‘destruction’ (Job 21:30); they shall ‘perish’ (Psalm 37:20); they shall be ‘burned up’ (Matthew 3:12; Malachi 4:1). They shall ‘not be’ (Psalm 37: 10); they shall come to an ‘end’ (Psalm 37:38); they shall be ‘consumed’ (Psalm 37:20); they shall be ‘devoured’ (Psalm 21:9); they shall be ‘slain’ (Psalm 62:3); they shall be ‘cut off’ (Psalm 37:9). ‘They shall be as though they had not been’ (Obadiah 16); they shall be ‘silent in darkness’ (1 Samuel 2:9); they shall be ‘no more’ (Psalm 104:35); they shall be ‘blotted out’ (Psalm 69:28); they shall suffer ‘perdition’ (2 Peter 3:7). They shall be ‘ground to powder’ (Matthew 21:44); they shall be ‘hewn down’ (Matthew 3:10); they shall see ‘corruption’ (Galatians 6:8); they shall be ‘torn in pieces’ (Psalm 50:22); they shall be ‘rooted up’ (Proverbs 2:22). They shall be as ‘nothing’ (Jeremiah 10:24); and, they shall be as ‘naught’ (Isaiah 41:12).

“You will note one outstanding characteristic common to all these Biblical quotations concerning the final destiny of the wicked, including unrepentant alcoholics. All of them indicate a painful, but quickly decisive end, and not a long-drawn-out, unending, lingering one of unspeakable suffering.

“After I leave in a few minutes, I want you all to look up these references and study them for yourselves so as to get their real meaning. I am confident that it will cause most of you to revise radically your preconceived ideas on the subject, which originated from ignorance and superstition and have been fostered from the Dark Ages because of a widespread neglect of Bible study and prayer.”

“Supposing that this is true,” Dr. Barnes said, “does God intend to punish all sinners alike? What I mean to say is, Will a mass murderer like Hitler or Stalin be accorded the same treatment as, let us say, one of us alcoholics here who continue to drink in spite of God’s injunction to the contrary?”

“No, Dr. Barnes,” I answered. “The Bible clearly indicates that sin will be judged by God and punished according to its degree and abhorrence in His sight. Thus although all unrepentant sinners will be punished and totally destroyed in the end, some will suffer longer than others in the consuming flames, but none will be condemned to eternal suffering. Is that clear? But now I’ll give you two of the Bible texts that prove this point. The first one is given in the form of a parable by Jesus to illustrate the point we are discussing. In it Jesus illustrates the degrees of culpability in sinfulness and their fitting punishment:

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“If that servant say in his heart, My lord delays his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken. The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looked not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. And that servant, which knew his lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.” Luke 12:45-48.

“And, behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be.” Revelation 22:12.”

“But doesn’t the Bible continually refer to ‘eternal fire,’ the fire that ‘never shall be quenched,’ the ‘everlasting fire,’ and so forth?” queried Harry Johnson, the machinist. “Surely these mean that sinners are to suffer endlessly, don’t they?”

“On the surface, and viewed purely superficially, they might seem to carry such a connotation,” I conceded; “but it is just because Bible study has been sadly neglected, or performed carelessly, that such misconceptions have grown up and been passed on from generation to generation. Let us examine the question more closely, not from any one individual reference to it, but from a variety of such, and see what conclusion we are forced by the evidence to accept. As a starter, let’s take this one:

“And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched.” Mark 9:45, 46.

“You will note that in the quotation I have just given you it mentions twice ‘the fire that shall not be quenched,’ but nowhere does it say that the sinner will suffer endlessly. The point is that the fire that shall never be quenched is not a fire that never shall go out, but rather a fire that cannot be put out until it has accomplished its object. A good Biblical illustration of this point is the one concerning the destruction of Jerusalem. That city was also burned with a fire that ‘shall not be quenched,’ but it is not still burning.

“But if you will not hearken unto Me to hallow the Sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched.” Jeremiah 17:27.

“Next let us study the expression ‘everlasting fire’ as it is used frequently throughout the Bible, and see whether it has the same connotation as the ‘fire that shall not be quenched’ that we have just discussed.

“Even as Sodom and Gomorra, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.” Jude 1:7.

“It is at once clear that the cities of Sodom and Gomorra were totally destroyed by fire, and that that fire has long since gone out. Yet their destruction is clearly described as being accomplished through the vengeance of ‘eternal fire.’ This makes it very evident that the fire is eternal in its effects and not in its duration. This is the same fire that will be used by God to destroy the wicked. It of necessity must be unquenchable, for if it were not, the wicked would put it out before it could accomplish God’s purpose.

“As I see it, most of the confusion concerning the ‘eternal fire’ mentioned in the Bible has arisen from a misunderstanding regarding the translation of the Greek word *aion* and the Hebrew word *olam* into English and the various other languages. Greek and Hebrew scholars agree that both terms are elastic ones which do not necessarily mean ‘never ending,’ but in many cases mean merely ‘as long as they are capable.’

“As a further illustration of the fact that God will visit utter destruction but not eternal and continuing punishment upon the wicked, let me give you another text, which reads as follows:

“And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.” 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9.

“Here again the ‘everlasting destruction’ mentioned refers to the ultimate result and not to any indefinitely continuing process. The wicked are destroyed completely and utterly for all time, never to be raised again, and to be as though they had never existed.

“Following the utter destruction of the wicked, as we learned yesterday, the world itself will be destroyed and cleansed from all its impurities; and God will then re-create the world as it was in the days of

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Adam, before sin entered it. So you can see that both the righteous and the wicked will be given their final rewards right here on earth, where their lives were first lived and their records for good or evil made.

“In closing today’s lesson, I would have you pay attention to the admonition contained in the following Bible text:

“Wait on the Lord, and keep His way, and He shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shall see it.” Psalm 37:34.

“Why don’t you make up your minds, right now-not tomorrow or at some future, undecided date to follow God’s teachings and to change your way of living to conform with His will? He has promised to blot out completely your past mistakes and sins, and if you decide now to turn your drinking and other problems over to Him, you will really be starting a new, sinless life from that time on. And with His help you can be among the eternally saved when the Lord returns soon to gather His faithful to Him.

“But now it’s time to go. I’ll say good-bye until tomorrow at about this same time. God bless and keep you until then,” I ended as the group reluctantly dispersed and I left for my office.

6. THE ETERNAL REWARD OF OVERCOMERS

IT HARDLY seems possible that we’re on our sixth lesson already,” I remarked as I took my seat and glanced around at the hospital ward’s alcoholic patients who were perched on beds, chairs, radiators, or whatever happened to be handy. I was cheered to see that there had been a few additions to the group, including some of the clerks, the cook, and the janitor.

“This morning we’re going to find out more about what the Bible has to say concerning the final home of the repentant alcoholic and all other sinners who are saved by Christ’s atoning sacrifice at Calvary. Haven’t you often wondered yourself just what kind of place God’s elect will inhabit throughout eternity? It’s not just some hazy, nebulous, far-off place in the skies, you know, as some of you may have been taught from childhood. No, it’s called the ‘new earth,’ and it’s the same world we now live in, re-created and refashioned by God to conform with the idyllic conditions that existed in Adam’s time before sin entered and brought about man’s downfall. The Bible gives us some very definite facts concerning the appearance of the new earth that will replace the world we live in now, and makes it very clear that it will be a land of ‘milk and honey’ where anxiety, fear, suffering, and sorrow will have no place.

“As we have already seen, saved sinners of all ages, including those living in this generation at Christ’s second coming, will be taken with Him to spend a thousand years in heaven. Following this period, sometimes called the millennium, Christ will return to earth to judge the resurrected wicked and destroy them utterly; the world as we know it will be destroyed and then re-created, and saved sinners will then make it their home forever. Now-”

A sharp knock at the door interrupted me before I could go on.

“Come in!” I called a little impatiently, recalling all the previous interruptions we had had.

The ward door opened slowly to reveal two of my alcoholic ex-patients carrying a third man between them. The latter had his arms around the necks of the two helping him, with his feet completely off the floor. His face was contorted with pain and had a puffed, unhealthy pallor. His clothes were dirty, ragged, and disheveled. However, somewhat surprisingly, I noted that he appeared to be perfectly sober, although obviously in the throes of a severe “hangover” from a recent drinking bout.

“Who have you got there, Brooks?” I asked one of the men carrying the stricken patient.

“You remember him, don’t you, doctor?” Brooks replied. “He was in the ward about six weeks ago, and you warned him then that if he kept on drinking, he’d probably end up with alcoholic poly neuritis. Well, he has!” he concluded simply. “His name’s Ferguson. Do you recall his case now?”

“Oh, yes, yes!” I replied, a flood of recollection suddenly sweeping over me. “It’s a little hard for me to remember all these cases, but I do remember Ferguson’s case now. As it comes back to me now, I gave him several shots for the symptoms of the poly neuritis he was beginning to show, and they cleared up within about a week. But you didn’t believe me when I told you they’d come back and probably cripple you if you kept on drinking, did you?” I said, addressing Ferguson, who had meantime sunk heavily into a chair and was moaning softly to himself.

Ferguson looked sheepish, but finally managed to speak through teeth clenched in pain.

“I do not know what made me start drinking again, doc,” he muttered. “I guess I’m just a low-down, no-good wino who’d be better off dead! At least that’s what my old man used to say. He kicked me

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out of the house when I came home drunk from a high school dance. I was only sixteen, and I've been drinking heavy ever since. I bummed my way all over the country by 'riding the rods,' hitch-hiking, or just plain walking. I've lived in 'hobo jungles' and drunk everything from 'canned heat' and bay rum to whisky and Tokay wine. But this pain in my legs is so bad now, I can't even bear to put my feet on the ground, and anyway my legs just won't hold me up. I made it to the front of the building this morning, but then I gave out and fell on the sidewalk. "These two guys here"-he pointed to Brooks and his co helper, George Green-they was standing out in front and saw me fall. They knew me from last time I was here, and I asked them if they'd let me see you. Honest, doc, if you'll fix me up again, I'll really try to leave the booze alone!"

"It's not a question of promising me anything, Ferguson," I replied. "You've got to realize that you may become permanently crippled if you keep on drinking. In fact, I don't know yet whether your present condition will respond to treatment. just from its outward manifestations, I would guess that your alcoholic poly neuritis has progressed to a very dangerous stage. Now get your clothes off and get into that bed over there, and I'll be over to examine you and see what I can do.

"I'm sorry, fellows, but I guess you're getting almost as used to these interruptions as I am by now," I said, addressing my alcoholic patient-students as they sat expectantly awaiting resumption of our Bible lesson.

"That's perfectly okay," remarked the irrepressible O'Brien. "We're not going anywhere anyhow, so take your time and get Fergie back on his feet. Is there anything we can be reading?"

"Now that's a good idea! " I said approvingly. "Suppose you all turn to your Bibles and look up Matthew 5:5 and study it over. That will be one of our quotations for this morning, and I would like to see how well you can get its meaning by yourselves. I think some of you are getting to the place now where you will soon be able to understand these quotations with a minimum of supervision. It's then that you'll really enjoy and profit from your daily Bible studies, as the marvelous story of God's wonderful plan of salvation for the sinner unfolds before you, step by step."

By this time Ferguson had managed to undress and slip under the bedcovers. I felt his terribly shrunken legs, and as I touched them as softly as I could, he shrieked with pain. Beads of cold sweat broke out on his forehead, and he clenched his hands into a tight, sweaty knot.

"Take it easy, doc! " he cried. "I can hardly stand the pain even though you don't touch them, and when anything comes up against them, even the bedclothes, it feels as though a thousand needles were being poked into the muscles in the back of them. Can't you give me some more of that same medicine you gave me last time I was here?" he pleaded.

"Yes, in just a moment," I replied. "But first I must find out just where the pain areas are most severe and also how far the poly neuritis has progressed. Like the alcoholism that causes it, alcoholic poly neuritis is a progressive disease; and unless you stop drinking completely, you can, and very possibly will, become permanently crippled and totally unable to walk. I'm not just saying that to scare you, Ferguson, but for your own good. Last time you were here, you weren't in nearly such bad shape, but you went out and started drinking all over again, and you can see what happened. If I am able to get this cleared up, and you go out again and start in drinking, I won't be responsible for what happens. Is that clear? "

Ferguson nodded his head mutely. I guess I should have myself committed to Camarillo State Hospital, and then I'd know I'd be sober for three months at least," he said dully. "I just don't seem to be able to leave the booze alone when I'm out on the street."

"You'll never be able to leave it alone, Ferguson, as long as you try to do it by yourself. But look at these fellows over there," I said, pointing to my Bible class as they intently read the quotation I had given them to look up. "All these fellows have the same problem you have, but they've decided to turn it and the other problems that come with it to God for His solution. Don't you think it might be a good idea for you to do the same, since you're already convinced you can't do it alone? Committing yourself to Camarillo will be helpful in clearing up this alcoholic poly neuritis You've got, but as far as your drinking is concerned, it will be just a temporary stopgap and will solve nothing unless you make an effort to gain a spiritual insight into your condition. When you feel a little better, I'd like to have you join my daily Bible class and see whether you can take hold of God's freely offered help and salvation. He is always ready to extend them to all sinners, including alcoholics such as you."

"I'll be glad to," agreed Ferguson; "but now, doc, please give me something to shake this pain. It's killing me, really it is!"

I gave the suffering Ferguson an intravenous injection of vitamins and glucose and also administered a mild sedative, and in a short time he sank back on his pillow and went to sleep.

"Well, I guess we're ready to continue our lesson," I remarked as I rejoined my alcoholic Bible

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students. “Let’s hope we get through it without any further interruptions.

“As we learned in previous lessons, God will destroy the world, as we know it now, by flame and fire, ‘in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.’

“This all-consuming fire sent by God will utterly destroy the wicked, and it will also purify the earth and remove every trace of the curse laid upon man by his alliance with Satan and his evil angels. The Apostle Peter, after describing the final destruction of sin and sinners and the earth as we now know it, expresses his supreme confidence in the fulfillment of God’s promises in the following words:

“Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness.” 2 Peter 3:13.

“The Apostle John goes even further than Peter and describes the new earth as it was revealed to him by God in a vision:

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new.” Revelation 21:1-5.

“Jesus tells us very specifically what kind of people are to be chosen to live with Him in the new earth, in the following words:

“Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.” Matthew 5:5.

“The psalmist of the Bible sings the same refrain as follows:

“But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.” Psalm 37: 11.

In both of the quotations I have just given, it is stressed that the meek shall inherit the earth. By ‘meek’ is meant those repentant sinners who by their humility and self-surrender of all their sins have won God’s free and complete pardon for their wrongdoing. And when reference is made to their inheriting the earth, the allusion is not to this world, but to the new earth that God will create following this present earth’s complete destruction in the form we know it.

“As we have already learned, the Holy City of God, the New Jerusalem, will descend from heaven and come to rest on the Mount of Olives near the site of the old Jerusalem. This wonderful, divinely created city will far surpass in beauty and magnificence anything ever conceived by the mind of man. It will be the focal point in the lives and activities of God’s redeemed sinners on the new earth.

“A vivid description of this marvelous city is given by the Apostle John as he viewed it in a vision sent him by God. Suffice it to say here that it will be constructed of all manner of precious stones; that it will be 1,500 miles in perimeter, with sides extending 375 miles in the form of a perfect square. God’s throne will be situated in this great city, and the water of life will proceed in a stream from this throne to form the river of life. The tree of life will have trunks on both sides of this river, will bear ‘twelve manner of fruits,’ and will have the property of perpetuating life.

“Here is how the Apostle John describes the Holy City and its inhabitants, in part:

“Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. . . . And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. . . . And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it. . . . There shall be no night there. . . . And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him: and they shall see His face.” Revelation 21:11-27; 22:14.

“That will give you just a glimpse of the truly overwhelming grandeur and beauty of the New Jerusalem. There is much more to the description in the same vein, and for John’s complete vision of the city of God I refer you to chapters twenty-one and twenty two in the Book of Revelation in the Bible.”

“Does the Bible give any similar description of the new earth, doctor?” O’Brien asked.

“Yes, it does, Eddie; I was just coming to that. just listen to these graphic descriptions of what we can expect to find and the conditions we will be living in if we follow God’s teachings and turn from our

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sinful ways:

“And My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.” Isaiah 32:18.

“Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shall call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise.” Isaiah 60:18.

“And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of My people, and Mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them.” Isaiah 65:21-23.

“The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.” Isaiah 35: 1.

“Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.” Isaiah 55:13.

“The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. . . . They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” Isaiah 11:6-9.

“And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity.” Isaiah 33:24.

“I don’t want you to think I’m trying to start an argument, doctor,” Harry Johnson said quietly; “but ever since I can remember going to Sunday school, I’ve been taught that the life hereafter will be purely a spiritual existence. Quite evidently from what you have said today, as well as from previous lessons, that conception of life after death doesn’t jibe with the Biblical quotations you have given us. It’s all very puzzling to me, I’ll frankly admit.”

“Yes, I can see how it would be, Harry,” I remarked sympathetically. “Yet there are literally countless references and allusions in the Bible that point unmistakably to the fact that the life of saved sinners will be lived as all of us are living in the flesh and blood here in the world today. However, there will be these important differences: First, our present bodies will be made incorruptible, as we have already been told, at Christ’s Second Coming. All bodily defects, as well as defects of mind and character, will be remedied, and human beings will be given the precious, God-endowed gift of immortality.

“So when the Bible talks of the inhabitants of the new earth building homes and planting vineyards, it means that they will do so literally and in the flesh. The important difference here being that they will experience none of the fatigue, disappointments, or frustrations that befall mortal men engaged in similar pursuits. There will be no petty bickerings, no unreasoning jealousies, no unfounded resentments in God’s land. Complete harmony will be the keynote of life in the new earth. It will be the perfect land, inhabited by the same type of perfect human beings that were on earth before Adam’s fall. Dwellers in this divinely perfect land will be freed forever from the temptation to indulge in sinful thoughts or deeds, since the master deceiver, Satan himself, and all his evil angels will have been utterly destroyed. Does that make it clearer, Harry?” I asked.

“Yes, I think I am convinced, Dr. Hewitt,” Johnson replied. “I really don’t think there is any other way to interpret the quotations you have given, and although it involves my throwing overboard a whole lot of my former concepts, my good sense tells me that that’s the only thing to do.”

I don’t know whether you will consider this question I am going to ask as being irrelevant, Dr. Hewitt,” Dr. Barnes remarked; “but is it God’s plan that the inhabitants of the new earth will all live in the New Jerusalem, or will some of them take up residence outside of the city, or in the country? The reason I ask this question at all is that you just read a quotation in which reference is made to the building of homes and the planting of vineyards, and those activities immediately suggest that they will necessarily have to be performed elsewhere than in the city itself.”

“That’s a good point, Dr. Barnes,” I commented heartily. “I’m very glad indeed to see that you are paying such close attention to what is being said. Yes, I think the inference you have already drawn from the fact that the inhabitants of the new earth will plan, build, and furnish their own homes and plant vineyards is sufficient proof that they will be able to live interchangeably either in the city or country as they wish. Jesus made it very plain that His Father’s house has ‘many mansions’ and that all the needs of His faithful will be taken care of by Him in the New Jerusalem. Hence any building or planting done by the

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new earth's inhabitants will be done because of their own desire to do it and not because of any crying necessity for it. It seems reasonable to assume that each inhabitant will be assigned a country estate and given free rein to develop and plan it to suit his individual needs. As the Sabbath day of the Lord draws near each week, these country residents will ready themselves to enter God's eternal city, there to worship Him and join in the ever-swelling paeans of praise that rise ceaselessly from within the city. This continued observance of God's holy Sabbath day by the new earth's dwellers is described thus in the Bible:

"For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before Me, said the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me, said the Lord." Isaiah 66:22, 23.

"Actually, as I think all of you are probably beginning to realize by this time, mere human words and the feeble pen of man cannot begin to do justice to the glories and magnificence, the awesome proportions, and the myriad of detail that will comprise God's Holy City and the new earth. What finite mind or imagination, for instance, is capable of even beginning to comprehend a jeweled city 1,500 miles in perimeter? Or a land where sickness, fear, worry, and anxiety-yes, even death itself-is unknown? As the Bible so aptly puts it:

"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." I Corinthians 2:9.

"Also, God has promised us that many of the things that are an unfathomable mystery to human minds in this life will be revealed to His saved children. The promise is made in the following Biblical quotation:

"For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." I Corinthians 13:12.

"This quotation simply means that now, here on this earth, we have to be satisfied to see God's image reflected in the beauties of nature all around us, by the evidence of His unailing power to change human lives, and through reading His holy words in the Bible; but in the new earth we shall have the unspeakable privilege of seeing Him face to face and standing in His presence.

I realize that it is quite understandably difficult for you, as it is for me, to comprehend fully the implications contained in an immortal state in our own bodies. As mere human beings here on earth, our brief life spans are like flickering candles that are quickly snuffed out. But in the new earth there will be no limits set on our faculties. Our minds will be released from all earthbound limitations and free to contemplate the wonders of creative power and the ever-lustrous miracle of God's redeeming love for us. Our loftiest aspirations, often hampered or negated entirely in our earthly lives through sickness or death, will come to full fruition in God's kingdom. All the manifold treasures of the universe will unfold before us, and we shall find new and endless wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, and fresh goals that will call forth all the newly acquired powers of our minds and souls and bodies. Truly such a concept of life in God's new earth is one that our mere finite minds are capable of grasping only in fragmentary fashion, but even the faint glimpse we are able to obtain of these dazzling heavenly vistas is enough to cause us to pause in awe and wonder.

"Now, fellows, you have been given a glimpse of the glories of the New Jerusalem which God has created, and the new earth that is yet to come, and I'm sure that there is no one here listening to me that doesn't want to make his eternal home there with God. But God has laid down certain very specific requirements that must be met before we can ever hope to be among the joyous throng in the New Jerusalem and the new earth. Here is God's solemn warning to unrepentant sinners who stubbornly refuse His compassionate help to transform their sinful lives:

"Know you not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." I Corinthians 6:9, 10.

"And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defiles, neither whatsoever works abomination, or makes a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." Revelation 21:27.

"There is no mistaking God's warning that unless we completely forsake our present sinful ways and turn to Him for forgiveness, we are lost eternally. This is a truly awesome and solemn thought that I think all of us would do well to dwell upon more often than we do. Life here on earth is uncertain at best; we are literally here today and gone tomorrow, as we have been strikingly reminded just within the past few days.

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I cannot stress too strongly the dangers that lie in procrastination. Many a soul has been lost eternally because a man or woman has put off making his or her surrender to God until too late. All of us here still have the glorious opportunity to be among the joyful throng of the saved in God's kingdom, but whether we are found there or not depends entirely upon what decision we must soon make. With God's ever-present help, we must surrender all to Him, allowing Him to remove all defects of character and fashion us after His own image. For those who cast all their sinful burdens upon Him and in His strength win the victory, God has given the following solemn promise:

"He that overcomes shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son."
Revelation 2 1:7.

"Let's close this lesson with a prayer to God for strength and guidance to do His will and be overcomers in His name."

7. GOD'S BOUNDLESS LOVE FOR HUMANITY

"TODAY'S Bible lesson will wind up this series," I announced to my alcoholic ward students as we got ready to start the seventh study of God's Word. "And as most of you who started in with the first lesson will have to move upstairs to the dormitory to make way for the newcomers, I think I'll just start the series all over again and keep on doing so until Mr. Rogers returns. Does that seem like a good idea?"

The group had been augmented by the presence of my alcoholic neuritis patient, Ferguson, and one or two other new arrivals. The latter were still somewhat groggy from their prolonged drinking, but seemed anxious to find out what was going on, and I knew from past experience that such a state of curiosity sometimes leads to great results for the Lord.

"Doctor," began Tom Albright earnestly, "I think I speak for the entire group when I say that never before have I had Bible truths presented to me as you have done it here in the six lessons we have studied together. You've not only cleared up a lot of things that were badly confused in my mind, but you've also brought Biblical characters and events before us in such a way as to make them seem real and living, and not some faint and indistinct beings and doings from the musty pages of the past."

"Yeah, that's right, doc," burst out Eddie O'Brien. "I've had a lot of my skepticism removed by the truths you have given us. I'm a lawyer---or was---" he amended with a grin; "and I just can't escape the sheer logic, common sense, and truth that runs through the Biblical quotations you have given us. The lessons have been a real eye-opening experience to me, and I wouldn't have missed them for anything!"

There was a chorus of assent from the rest of the group as Eddie finished, and I could see that confirmed alcoholics though they were, God's Word had succeeded in reaching through their sin-sick outer shells, and that they were desperately wanting to believe and trust in the divine promises I had read them. I am deeply convinced that many chronic alcoholics can be similarly reached by God's message of mercy and compassion if it is presented to them in simple, understandable language under the proper conditions.

"Today, fellows, I'm going to tell you a story of the overwhelming filial love and devotion of a daughter to an errant, sin-sick, alcoholic mother. I am going to relate it because, touching and forgiving and compassionate as it is in the love it describes, it still falls immeasurably short of the ineffable, infinite love of the Father for His fallen, sinful creatures here on earth. The human mind, in fact, is totally incapable of fully comprehending a love so great that it would induce God to give up His only-begotten Son to die a cruel death on the cross for human sins.

"The case I am going to relate to you is a true-life one that came to my attention while I was practicing medicine in Honolulu some time ago. The mother, whose story I am going to tell, was a caller at my Waikiki Beach office one morning. Here is the story as I recall it:

The face of the patient across the desk from me was hard and prematurely aged, although she appeared to be a woman still in her early thirties. Her lips were a splash of deep red, her eyebrows a plucked, thin line, and her lashes heavily beaded with mascara.

"I don't suppose there's any need for me to tell you my profession," she began tonelessly. "It's written all over me, and believe me I'm not proud of it! But what can I do? Liquor has got me down so that I can't hold any decent job, and in the racket I'm in they're not so squeamish. As long as you can stagger around, no questions are asked. But I know that by your standards and those of society, I've sunk as low as it's possible for a human to go. Isn't that right?" she challenged, her eyes seeking mine desperately for some trace of understanding and compassion.

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“That’s not a question that any other human being is qualified to judge,” I replied, “but I know one thing, and that’s that Christ Himself when He was on earth told another fallen woman just like yourself to go and sin no more. In those few, simple words He wiped out her sordid, depraved past forever. He can do the same for you, Mrs.-” I paused, realizing that I didn’t even know my patient’s name.

“Just call me Molly,” my patient interjected with a dim smile. “I go under the name of Molly Hudson at the joint,” she explained with a shudder of repugnance she was unable to conceal, “but my real name is Myra Bartels, and I come from San Francisco. But for your records, doctor, I think it might be best if you use the name ‘Hudson.’ Is that all right?” she asked anxiously.

“Perfectly all right, Mrs. Bartels,” I assured her compassionately as I inwardly contemplated the awful wreckage of a human life brought about by alcohol. I had already noted that my patient’s hands betrayed the tell-tale tremors of the confirmed alcoholic, and that cold beads of sweat were visible on her forehead and upper lip. As though reading my thoughts, the woman continued somberly:

I wasn’t always like this,” she said as her appealing eyes beseeched mutely for even a shred of understanding. “I just got off on the wrong path and started going with a fast crowd that thought it was smart to smoke, drink, and indulge in promiscuous petting and even worse. When my mother reproved me for attending the theater with some of my questionable companions, I replied defiantly, ‘Oh, there’s nothing wrong about that—it’s just art and life and anyway, I’m old enough to take care of myself!’”

“It was just a small step farther then to sneak out to dances in dimly lit, smoke-filled cabarets, where the sensuous music, close bodily contact, and alcohol combined to get in their satanic work. I found myself swept up in a whirl of excitement that was all the more alluring because I knew it was forbidden. With my blood tingling for further adventure, I slid easily into the seemingly glittering, tinsel life of the cocktail lounge, where all manner of immoral and illicit doings took place in the seclusion of curtained booths and side rooms.

I soon acquired an overmastering craving for alcohol, and as my drinking steadily increased, my moral and ethical values just as steadily deteriorated. One day I met a good-looking, suave young man who flattered me with his persistent attentions. I fell under his spell completely and began a clandestine affair with him. Not until it was too late did I discover that he was a notorious procurer for a vice ring, and anyway it might have made little difference, as I soon found myself entirely under his domination. He easily induced me into the life of shame in which you find me today.

“Oh, I’ve tried to straighten up several times in the few days of complete sobriety I’ve had in the past five years,” she said sadly, “but always the terrible realization of the depths into which I’ve fallen would sweep over me. I’d reach for the bottle again in a futile attempt to blot out the past, and life would continue on drearily as before. I’m sick to death of the life I’m leading, doctor, and I’d give anything to get away from it all, once and for good; but I’m just too weak to do it, it seems,” she ended hopelessly.

“That’s something that every sinner who really wants to forsake his wrongdoing realizes sooner or later,” I remarked. “Far from being a hopeless state, it is in reality an attitude of mind that must come about before God can step in and help. God wants us to become thoroughly aware of our own utter helplessness and dependence upon Him, and if we will acknowledge these things and call upon Him for His never-failing aid, He will willingly give them. He’s ready to help you now, Molly, to overcome both your alcoholism and the other sins that have crept into your life. You have sinned—there’s no question about that—but when you get despondent over your misspent life, remember this: In God’s pure and undefiled sight all of us have sinned and come far short of His glory. There are no human beings in the world today who have not sinned; and unless they ask God’s forgiveness, just as you and I must, they cannot ever hope to enter God’s eternal kingdom, the new earth that He will create in place of this sinful old world in which we live.”

“That is only the first part of my story, doctor. Would you like to listen to the rest of it—the part that really hurts me unbearably and allows me no peace of mind, night or day?”

“What more could there be?” I wondered inwardly, thinking there really could be nothing but actual murder left in her catalogue of misery.

“Yes,” she said, as though reading my inmost thoughts, “there is something worse to tell—the shameful story of a mother’s unnatural behavior toward her own little daughter. Now when I fully realize the harm I have done her and my husband, it’s too late to do anything about it!”

Tears filled my patient’s eyes, and soon her cheeks were mascara-streaked.

“Excuse me, please, doctor, for breaking down like this, but I just can’t help it!” she sobbed as she attempted to wipe away the traces of her tears with a handkerchief.

Perhaps you’re beginning to wonder why I’m telling you all this anyway. You’ll see in just a minute as my story goes on that is, if you wish me to continue,” she added wistfully.

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“Please do,” I said quietly. I don’t know just what I can do to help you, but I shall certainly do everything I can.”

“Thank you, doctor,” Mrs. Barrels said gratefully. I have heard of your wonderful work among alcoholics at your charity clinic, and I felt sure you would understand my problem.

“You see, seven years ago I deserted my home, family, and my only little girl and ran away with the white-slave procurer I have already told you about. I came out here to Hawaii to get as far away from them as I could, so they’d never know how low I’d sunk. That’s what I thought, but four years ago I learned through a friend that my thirteen-year-old daughter had joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Since that time she has repeatedly tried to get letters through to me, even though I have persistently ignored them. When some of them arrived, I was too drunk to even read them; at other times I was too sick and miserable to open them. I had some of them marked ‘Not at this address’ and returned to her unopened. But she has been persistent, and only today I got this letter from her. Something deep down inside me told me that I should open it, so I did, and this is what I found.”

With these words Mrs. Bartels laid the letter on my desk.

“Go ahead; read it,” she urged in a low tone that threatened again to break under the strain of her pent-up emotion. “It’ll tell you the whole shameful story of a mother’s betrayal of her daughter.”

I reached over without further comment, picked up the letter, and read aloud:

“Dear Mom:

“I have tried several times to reach you with letters and once by telephone. I want to see you so much it hurts. Mommy, if I’ve done anything to make you angry or disappointed in me, please forgive me. I know I have never appreciated you as much as I should have. But believe me, as I grow older I understand so many things I never understood before.

“And, Mom, please remember you mean more to me than anyone in the world. If there is any way to prove this to you, only ask it of me, and I’ll do it.

“Only, Mom, please love me and write to me, and don’t ever go away and get out of touch with me again. It has been seven long years since I’ve seen you, and that’s altogether too long.

“If you Can’t Come home, write and ask for me, and I will come wherever you are. I promise not to be any trouble; I only want to be with you.

“If there is anything you need, ask for it; and if I have it, I’ll send it. I want to return some of the favors you’ve done for me.

“Well, Mom, I could go on forever, but I’ll wait until I hear from you before I write more. The last time I wrote fifteen pages, and it sure hurt to see my letter come back. Good night, Mom, and may God bless you and keep you safe. Good night, Mom, dear. I love you. Mary”

Tears of unashamed remorse welled in the eyes of my patient as I finished reading her daughter’s heart-rending letter.

“Oh, what shall I do? What shall I do now, doctor?” she exclaimed in desperation. Is there anything at all I can do to make right again the great wrong I have done her?”

“Yes, there is,” I replied gently. “God is seeking even at this moment to take you back into His merciful, compassionate arms and make you His own. Yes, Mrs. Bartels, your heavenly Father, who loves you with an undying love, is calling you by His Holy Spirit through your daughter. So don’t resist that loving call. Return to your home and family, and in the strength of Christ win back your lost womanhood. Remember, as I have already said, Jesus fully forgave the sins of Mary Magdalene. Go to Him in your weakness and utter helplessness, and only believe that His hand is ready to aid you.

“Let your daughter tell you how this same Jesus is soon coming back to this earth to take home all those who are looking for Him. Let her tell you of the glories of the mansions above, and thereby increase your faith. You will soon learn to love and have complete trust in Jesus every minute of the day, and you will no longer be enslaved by any hereditary or cultivated habit or tendency you may now have.”

A new light of renewed hope had lighted my patient’s face as I spoke, and as I finished, she rose resolutely from her seat.

I don’t really know how to thank you enough for the advice and comfort you have brought me, Dr. Hewitt,” she declared. I’m going to follow your counsel and return to my abandoned home and my neglected husband and daughter, and make what amends I can to both. I’m going to turn my life over completely to Jesus and start a new life with Him.”

There were still tears, but this time of gladness, in her eyes as she shook my hand and departed.

But the human mind and will are weak, vacillating, and uncertain things at best. Somehow or

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other, Mrs. Bartels postponed making a definite move to carry out her resolution; perhaps she lacked the necessary funds to return home and was too proud to ask her daughter for help. In any event about a month later Mrs. Bartels's case was again brought to my attention when a neatly dressed, lovely young girl called at my office.

"Dr. Hewitt, I'm Mary Bartels," she announced when she had seated herself at my desk. "I'm trying to locate my mother. She answered my last letter and said that she'd soon be coming home. However, as day after day passed and she didn't put in an appearance, I decided to come to Honolulu and bring her back myself. You see," she explained simply, "she's all I've got now. Daddy passed away last year just about this time of year, and the house got terribly lonely for me without him and morn both. My aunt moved in to look after the place, but she can never take mom's place.

"Well, anyway, in her letter mom mentioned having been at your office, so when I couldn't locate her at the address she put on her letter, I first went to the police station to see if I could find her whereabouts from them.

"I talked to the lieutenant of the missing persons bureau, and after he had talked to several other officers, he came back and called me into his private office. He was very nice and polite, but also terribly evasive.

"Little girl," he said, "you can't do any good for either your mother or yourself by looking her up. She's changed a lot since you last saw her, and you'll be better off if you just forget about her and go back home."

"But she's my mother-all I've got left in the world, lieutenant!" I cried. "How can I possibly forget the loving mother I used to know, who held me in her arms and gave me such loving care?"

"The lieutenant seemed embarrassed at my question. Finally he said bluntly: 'Well, I guess you're old enough to know the truth, but I'm afraid it's going to hurt. Your mother is not a good woman, Mary. She's been picked up by our vice squad on several occasions, and I wouldn't say she's the type of person fit for you to associate with at your age.'

"I don't care what she is, or what she's done!" I cried wildly. "She is still my mother, and I will do whatever I can to help her!" "Somehow" or other I stumbled out of the police station, my eyes blinded by tears of overwhelming pity for my poor mother. I had only one thought left in mind: I must find my mother at all costs! That was all that mattered any longer! I wandered into a quiet park and sat down on a bench to try to gather my bewildered thoughts together. And as I sat there in utter wretchedness, I suddenly thought of my mother's letter to me. It was in my purse, and although I had read and reread it a dozen or more times already, I pulled it out again and pored over it. It was then I saw her reference to you, and here I am," she ended simply.

"Yes, your mother was a caller here just about a month ago. I haven't seen her since, and I assumed that she had returned to join you in San Francisco. You say your mother wasn't at the address she gave you on the letter. Is that right?"

The girl nodded mutely.

"What is that address?" I next asked her.

"It's 2400 Koa Avenue," she replied, "but I've already made inquiries there, and the woman who answered the doorbell said she'd never heard the name before. She acted as though she was anxious to get rid of me, I thought, and seemed as if she was hiding something from me."

"That's one time I think your feminine intuition was right," I commented grimly. "Come on, Mary, we're going back out to 2400 Koa Avenue again, and this time I think we'll see your mother, or I'm badly mistaken!"

"Do you really think so, Dr. Hewitt?" the young girl exclaimed excitedly. "But why did they tell me she wasn't there? I just can't--"

"Now just hold your horses," I cautioned smilingly. "I could be wrong, you know, but I don't think I am. Come on, we'll drive over right now. My car's out in front-it's that blue Dodge over there."

A few minutes later we pulled up in front of 2400 Koa Avenue, and I noted that it was a pretentious-looking stucco-type home with a nicely kept yard and well-landscaped grounds.

"You stay here in the car for a minute, Mary," I said as the eager young girl started to open the door. "If your mother's here, as I think she is, I want to have a few words with her so she won't get too much of a shock at seeing you so suddenly. Is that okay with you?"

A shadow of disappointment flitted across her face, but then she managed a brave smile.

"I guess I can wait a few moments more after all these years," she said with a tremor in her voice.

"I'll only be a minute," I assured her as I ascended the steps and rang the bell.

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A trim young Japanese maid answered my summons.

“Whom do you wish to see, sir?” she asked with an inviting smile.

“Why, I’d like to have a moment or two to talk to Molly Hudson,” I replied. Then, as the girl seemed to hesitate uncertainly, I added reassuringly, “I’m a doctor and want to see her on a personal matter for just a few moments. I’ll stay out here on the lanai if you’ll be kind enough to call Molly out for me.”

In a few moments Molly Hudson, or Mrs. Barrels as I knew her better, appeared in the doorway.

She was neatly and tastefully dressed, and there was little in her outward appearance that would suggest her nefarious profession.

“Oh, Dr. Hewitt!” she exclaimed. “I thought it must be you when the maid said it was a doctor wanting to see me. What brings you here, doctor? Is there something wrong?”

Suddenly her eyes strayed to my car parked at the curb in front of the house.

“Why, that’s Mary, my daughter, out there!” she cried in panic-stricken tones. “Oh, doctor, why did you bring her here, of all places?” she continued almost hysterically.

“Now, just take it easy, Molly, and listen to me carefully. Your daughter knows all about you, and she’s already told me it doesn’t make the slightest bit of difference to her. She wants you to go back with her, as you promised me you would. I know she’ll never bring up your past, and if you’re smart, you won’t either. Your daughter has given her heart and her life completely to Jesus, and if you’ll only listen to her, you too can begin a new life of peace, happiness, and serenity under His guidance. So come on out and greet your daughter as a loving mother should; and if she asks you to go back with her, as I know she will, promise her you’ll do that-and go through with it this time. Believe me, Molly, Jesus is calling you today through a loving daughter who has never lost faith in you and has never stopped loving you.”

But even as I was talking, Molly had run down the walk toward the gate; and Mary, seeing her coming, had opened the car door and begun to run up the walk to meet her. The two-devoted daughter and sinful, errant mother-flew into each other’s arms and clung to each other desperately. There was a welling feeling of gladness in my heart as I watched their tearful reunion.

Later I drove Mary and her mother to a downtown hotel and left them as they sat arm-in-arm on a bed excitedly asking and answering questions. I instinctively knew as I softly closed the door that Molly’s troubles were over!

About three days later I received another call at my office. This time it was a radiant mother and daughter who had dropped in to say good-bye before catching a San Francisco-bound plane.

“I don’t know how I can ever thank you enough for your help in locating my mother,” Mary began, looking fondly at her mother. “Beginning right now, we’re going to live a new life together, aren’t we, Mom? Mom’s promised to join the church that I belong to, and I’m going to start her off on a wonderful Bible course sent free by the Voice of Prophecy. That’s what got me started out in the right direction, and I know it’ll do the same for mom.”

“Yes, I want to thank you, Dr. Hewitt, for all you’ve done for me and my daughter. I’ve been a very foolish, weak woman; but I’m going to let Jesus take over my life as you and Mary suggest I should, and I already have faith that He won’t ever let me down. And now, good-bye, and thanks again for all you’ve done!”

“To me, fellows, the true story of Mary and her mother is a wonderful illustration of how God sometimes works through our loved ones and dearest friends to bring a soul to salvation. Had not Mary been imbued with the loving, forgiving nature of Jesus Himself, she would have long since lost hope of even finding her mother, much less bringing her to Jesus. But God was talking to her through His Holy Spirit, and God never regards anyone, no matter how low he has sunk in sin, as being ‘hopeless.’ So remember, no matter how degraded you feel yourself, no matter how far down your drinking has taken you, God is standing today, ready and willing to forgive you all your shortcomings. Give your hearts to Him today, fellows, and you’ll never regret it.

“But Mary’s love, her perseverance in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstacles, her faith in her mother, and her confidence that she could help her-great as these characteristics were in her-pale into insignificance when put alongside the illimitable, all-encompassing love, compassion, and forgiveness of God. He doesn’t want any one of us to be lost and is willing to do everything He can to bring us to Him. All He wants in return is our love and faith and belief in Him and His Son Jesus and His atoning sacrifice for us. After all, is that asking too much?”

“Now I’m going to wind up our final lesson together with another brief story that offers a comparison between man’s love for a fellow human being and God’s infinite compassion, love, and forgiveness for weak, sinful humanity.

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“Some of you may already have heard the story of Willie Lear. He lived in Palmyra, Missouri, during the Civil War; and his sympathies, as did the sympathies of so many of his fellow townsmen, lay with the South. He was only eighteen years old when the events I am going to relate took place.

“When Palmyra fell into the hands of the Union forces, many of the town’s inhabitants stubbornly refused to yield, and carried on a harrasing guerilla warfare that proved both costly and extremely aggravating to the Northern armies. Finally the commanding general of the Union forces sent out an order to arrest all those suspected of such activity, and soon a large number of the citizens of Palmyra were under arrest. They were tried by a military court, found guilty, and all were condemned to death. However, it was decided that only ten of the number found guilty would be executed at first. It was thought that the deaths of these ten might then serve as a deterrent to any further guerilla activity. If not, a second lot of ten would be selected for execution, and so on until the guerilla warfare was stamped out.

“The first ten selected for execution were drawn by lot; and Willie Lear, who had been arrested too, found that his name had not been drawn. However, as he looked over the ten men selected to die, he noted a neighbor who was the father of a large family. Willie thought of the deep suffering and hardship that would inevitably come to the innocent family if the father was allowed to die. He decided to do something about it.

“Early next day he presented himself to the commanding officer of the Northern forces and offered himself as a substitute for the condemned neighbor. The commanding officer raised no objections, as his orders merely stated that he was to execute ten men. The condemned man gratefully accepted Willie’s offer, and Willie took his place in line with the nine other doomed men, heard the shouted command, ‘Fire!’ and a moment later fell riddled with bullets, his clothing soaked in his own blood.

“Because Willie loved his neighbor more than he loved his own life, he died that another might live. Of him and others like him through mankind’s history, the Bible says:

“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” John 15:13.

“Can’t you just imagine that man for whom Willie Lear gave up all, viewing Willie’s blood-soaked body as it fell? Can’t you imagine the emotion that must have choked his voice and brought tears of gratitude to his eyes? Wouldn’t he say over and over:

“He gave his life for me. He sacrificed everything that was dear that I might live. If there was only some way I could express my everlasting gratitude to him!”

“The man that Willie Lear made his supreme sacrifice for was a great deal more appreciative than most of us are. We have had a much greater sacrifice made for us, by Jesus, the Son of God, who died for our sins on the cross of Calvary. When Adam and Eve listened to the tempter in the Garden of Eden and sold out their God-given heritage to him, Jesus offered Himself as a living sacrifice to atone for their sin and also that of all mankind in the countless ages to follow.

“He was ‘the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.’ Revelation 13:8.

“For He bath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” 2 Corinthians 5:21.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16.

“You must understand that when Adam and Eve broke God’s holy law in the Garden, they brought down the curse of sin not only upon themselves but upon all their posterity. And because God is just and righteous, as well as loving and compassionate, it was necessary that the penalty of the law be satisfied. Only Jesus, the pure and spotless One, who was one with God when the world was created, could fully satisfy the demands of God’s immutable, eternal law.

“Can we look upon this unspeakable, supreme sacrifice of the sinless Son of God with indifference? Can we make light of it and seek to minimize in any way its supreme importance to us?

“Can we do less than Willie Lear’s neighbor? Don’t we feel moved as he was to exclaim: ‘He gave His life for me. He sacrificed everything that I might live. If there was only some way I could express my everlasting gratitude to Him!’

“Well, my friends, there is a way you can express your gratitude to Jesus. Live for Him day by day by keeping His commandments through His indwelling Spirit. Never tire of telling others of the story of redemption by His blood; never seek to take away any of the glory or credit for our salvation from Him; let us freely admit to all that our only hope of salvation and a life eternal come from His selfless sacrifice for us at Calvary.

“Now, fellows, some of you may have difficulty at first in learning to trust fully in Jesus and His sacrifice at Calvary for you. I suggest, therefore, that you make this a subject of daily prayer. Ask God to

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give you stronger, and ever stronger, faith in Jesus and His death on Calvary for you. Prayerfully study your Bible, dwelling especially on the closing scenes of Christ's life.

"If you fully trust in Jesus, the Christian life is easy, because you won't want to do anything to displease Him, and you will be diligently studying your Bible each day to find out His will for you.

"Now before I bring this lesson to a close, I'd like to ask you a question. How many of you would like to continue another interesting series of Bible lessons each Sunday afternoon at my office? It's a series I have specially arranged for alcoholics and it's called Introductory Bible Lessons for Alcoholics.' I feel sure that you will find it extremely helpful to you in overcoming your drinking first, then also some of the other traits that make it so difficult for you to stop drinking, and to prepare yourself for the soon coming of Jesus. Some of the subjects discussed in the course are: 'God's Steppingstones to Permanent Sobriety,' 'Overcoming Harmful Alcoholic Personality Traits,' 'Avoiding the Fleshly Lusts That War Against the Alcoholic's Soul,' and 'The Converted Alcoholic: Temple for the Holy Spirit.'

"These lessons have already proved highly successful both in helping alcoholics gain lasting sobriety, and as an entering wedge to a complete understanding of God's Word and His plan for our salvation.

I almost -forgot to mention another important thing," I remarked, "and that's that the course I'm talking about is offered you 'free. How many of you are interested in beginning it?"

Every hand shot up.

"Well, that's wonderful, fellows, and I'll be looking for you all this coming Sunday. Be at my office at two thirty, and we'll get started on the series.

"And now, let's have a final prayer together before we conclude our final lesson together in the ward here."

As we knelt and prayed, I offered up my thanks to God for the opportunity He had given me to bring some more sin-sick souls to Him. A few moments later, I shook hands with each member of my class individually and left to continue my other medical duties.

8. THE SEQUEL

AND HE spoke many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow; and when he sowed, some seeds fell, by the wayside, and the fowls came and devoured them up: some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth. And forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: and when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among the thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: but others fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundred fold, some sixty fold, some thirty fold.

"Hear you therefore the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and understands it not, then comes the wicked one, and catches away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received the seed by the wayside. But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that hears the word, and anon with joy receives it. Yet hath he not root in himself, but endures for a while: for when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, by and by he is offended. He also that received seed among the thorns is he that hears the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. But he that received seed into the good ground is he that hears the word, and understands it; which also bears fruit, and brings forth, some an hundred fold, some sixty, some thirty." Matthew 13:3-8; 18-23.

The eternal truth contained in the foregoing excerpts from Jesus' parable of the sower came strongly to me as I followed the careers of some of my alcoholic patients from the charity rehabilitation clinic, particularly those men to whom I had been able to bring some Bible truths in my contacts with them. "Some seeds fell by the wayside."

As this portion of Jesus' lesson to His disciples came to mind, I couldn't help thinking of Larry Higgins, the alcoholic patient whom I found suffering from advanced cirrhosis of the liver in the Edison Hotel and had moved to the charity alcoholic rehabilitation hospital ward. I continued to tap the excess fluid from Larry's badly swollen abdominal cavity, but his condition continued to grow steadily worse, as I was afraid it would; and it was finally necessary to remove him to General Hospital, where there were better facilities available for his treatment. He died there, three months after admittance, still stubbornly rejecting God.

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Larry had had many opportunities in his lifetime to hear God's message of salvation for all sinners, including alcoholics, but continued to turn a deaf ear to it because he didn't think it meant him. Like so many other alcoholics and other sinners, too, he had deluded himself into thinking that as long as he didn't actually break any of God's commandments against stealing, killing, adultery, and the like, he was leading a "passably" good life. And hence God would overlook his other shortcomings such as his drinking, occasional lying, failing to observe His Sabbath day, and the one or two moral lapses he might have now and then. Larry's philosophy, strange as it must seem to a true Christian, is nevertheless a fairly widespread one among even professed followers of Jesus. Of course it is nothing more or less than dangerous rationalization that confuses God's infinite mercy with a man-made concept of an earthly parent's soft-headed and tolerant indulgence of childish foibles.

If any of us are under any such delusion, we should hasten to read God's Word more closely. There we will learn that although God is a God of love and mercy, He is also adamant and implacable where His divine law is concerned. "The wages of sin is death," the Bible very clearly states, and it is sin and nothing else but sin in God's sight to break His commandments.

"Whosoever commits sin transgresses also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." 1 John 3:4.

It is hardly necessary for me to point out that this complacent, self-satisfied attitude is one that is deliberately fostered by Satan to win souls away from Christ. The Bible teaches us very clearly that if we knowingly violate any one of God's commandments, we are just as guilty of breaking the law in His sight as is the man who violates them all.

"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." James 2:10.

"For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sins." Hebrews 10:26.

Also, God is very specific in saying we must sincerely repent of all our sins, turn away from them completely, and then humbly ask His forgiveness for them. The persons who, like Larry Higgins, know what is right and wrong, but continue willfully to do as they want to without regard to God's will can never hope to be saved or inherit eternal life. This isn't merely my opinion; it is a bedrock truth that is reiterated time after time throughout God's Holy Book.

"He that covers his sins shall not prosper: but who so confesses and forsakes them shall have mercy." Proverbs 28:13.

"Some fell upon stony places."

As I read those words, I thought of poor Joe Sweeney, whose earthly career ended in the drab, cheerless alcoholic atmosphere of a dingy skid row hotel. Joe had been an alcoholic wanderer on the Los Angeles skid row for many years. He was well known to the police, to the many missions that dot the area, and he had come to my attention several times as an alcoholic patient in the charity clinic hospital ward. There, and in the various missions he had visited, Joe had had many opportunities to hear God's Word and His loving appeal to sinners; but like so many other alcoholics, his finer spiritual nature had withered and shrunk as his alcoholism had continued to grow. Soon he too succumbed to the arch tempter's whispered words: "Joe, it's too late for you.

You're too great a sinner to ever hope for God's mercy! Just look at you—dirty, unshaven, shaking. Do you think for a minute God is interested in a derelict like you?" With all hope of a life hereafter gone, and only continuing misery, frustration, and defeat ahead of him in his earthly existence, the temporary relief offered by alcohol became irresistible to Joe. He fell lower and lower into self-indulgence and sin.

But in spite of his continued rejection of His Word, God was still in Joe's death room just waiting for the words of contrition that Joe could still say for his sins and that would make all the difference between eternal life and oblivion. But the words never came, as Joe still clung stubbornly to the belief that it was "too late."

How erroneous this belief of Joe's was is vividly and indelibly recorded in the Biblical account of Christ's crucifixion, when the repentant thief hanging beside the Lord expressed his faith in Jesus with his very dying breath and was saved:

"And he said to Jesus, Remember me, Lord, when You come into Your kingdom. Jesus said to him, Truly I say to you today, You will be with Me in paradise." Luke 23:42, 43, The New Testament According to the Eastern Text.

"And some fell among the thorns."

Dr. Barnes's case was one sheer tragedy that has its counterpart in thousands of other lives in the

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world today. It is tragic because it involves partial acceptance of God's message, but falls short of the final goal.

Dr. Barnes had been given an exceptionally fine mind by his Maker. His intelligence rating was at genius level, and until his growing alcoholism caught up with him, he was regarded as one of the most promising physicians of Los Angeles. However, Dr. Barnes's development had lagged badly along spiritual lines. He accepted God's Word from an intellectual viewpoint even while he rejected it in his heart. It was a conflict of such a nature as to make for continual inner turmoil. In addition Dr. Barnes had acquired an inordinate love of money and the things it would buy. His chief aim in life was to build up a successful medical practice that would bring him enough money to provide the worldly goods he craved.

As a consequence he worked long, tedious hours and drove his body and mind to the limits of their endurance. And all the while the inner conflict between what his mind told him was the spiritual truth, but which his heart would not accept, raged unabated. So in order to still the persistent voice of God's Spirit talking to him, and also to combat the weariness of body and mind that his excessive activities brought about, Dr. Barnes began to rely more and more on alcohol as a crutch. But alcohol, as it so often does to such people, took a firmer and firmer grip on his life, until before long it became Dr. Barnes's master; and he became as much its abject slave as the lowliest derelict on skid row. Before long he experienced more and more difficulty in stopping his drinking, and his sprees grew in duration from days to weeks, and then to months.

After such prolonged debauches, he would awaken in some dirty skid row hotel room, in a hospital ward, in the drunk tank at Lincoln Heights jail, or, as on several occasions, in the hospital ward of our charity rehabilitation clinic.

At such times he would experience dreadful periods of remorse and self-incrimination and would humbly listen to the Bible truths brought to the inmates of the ward.

But he still held on to his love of luxury and money, and also to such worldly habits as smoking, excessive coffee drinking, dancing, and doubtful relations with the opposite sex. He knew that only a complete surrender of these things at Jesus' feet could change his way of life-his fine intellect told him that-but he just couldn't bring himself to make the final decision.

He continued to alternate between periods of drunken debauchery, unhappy interludes of enforced sobriety and hard work, and a growing sense of frustration and futility brought about by his lack of any sound spiritual refuge in times of perplexity. Finally, after a particularly severe and prolonged alcoholic bout, he took an overdose of sleeping pills and died suddenly and unsaved after being admitted in a dying condition to the hospital.

Dr. Barnes died because, like so many other people today, he found himself unable to forsake the fleeting, evanescent pleasures of this world for the sure reward of eternal life Promised by God for those who overcome sin with His help. In short, Dr. Barnes failed to pay heed to the Bible's solemn warning concerning the love of worldly goods; and this led him, step by step, into alcoholism and the other sinful practices that usually go with it.

"For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." 1 Timothy 6: 10.

Ferguson, my desperately sick alcoholic patient, who was carried into the hospital ward in a helpless, crippled condition from alcoholic poly neuritis, held out hopes to me at first that he would make the full surrender to Jesus. Outwardly he appeared to absorb the Bible lessons, but I soon realized that it was a realization of his desperate physical plight rather than any other motive that actuated his seeming surrender. Actually he was still retaining his love for his own sinful ways, and soon after his release from the hospital ward, I encountered him on the street outside. He was his old drunken, unkempt self, and he was openly panhandling nickels and dimes to buy another bottle of wine. I turned away, sick at heart, knowing that the drunken spree he was on could very easily be his last.

It was only a few weeks later that I learned Ferguson's fate. He had been found by the police lying in an alley off Fifth Street in the Los Angeles skid row. He was totally unable to get up on his feet, and had also developed another common symptom of alcoholic poly neuritis-he had completely lost his memory of recent events and was also badly disorientated as to time, place, and circumstances (Karsakoff's Psychosis). He was taken by the police to the General Hospital psychopathic ward, and a few days thereafter was transferred to Patron Insane Asylum as a mental case. In the majority of instances such cases are incurable, and the victims become permanently hospitalized.

As one analyzes Ferguson's case, it seems evident that he failed to put his life on the spiritual basis so necessary to permanent recovery from his alcoholism, because he stubbornly clung to his love for

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the sinful habits his alcoholism had brought with it. He wanted salvation, but on his own terms and not God's. And that's just why so many people today cannot ever hope to gain eternal life. They want to set the terms of their own salvation instead of leaving that matter to the infinite and never-failing wisdom of God, and thus of course they are foredoomed to failure unless they change their attitude and way of life completely.

"But other fell on good ground, and brought forth fruit."

Unlike Dr. Barnes, Harry Johnson, the machinist, was a man of physical prowess rather than of intellectual attainment. Yet in his humbler makeup he possessed the qualifications necessary to become an overcomer—the very traits in which the far more intellectually brilliant Dr. Barnes was so signally lacking.

Harry was a plodder, a man of dogged persistence, accustomed and endured to life's disappointments and setbacks. He was providing a good, if not luxurious, living for his wife and three children when his "social" drinking insidiously progressed to alcoholism. His wife found it increasingly difficult to witness the character changes and moral and spiritual deterioration of the man she loved, and after three years of increasing hardship with his growing alcoholic eccentricities and final inability to provide a living for her and the children, she applied for a separation and custody of the children.

From that time on Harry's descent into the maelstrom of alcoholism became swift and complete. He became just another homeless, nameless cipher in the Los Angeles teeming skid row, until his uncertain footsteps were guided by God to the charity alcoholic ward where I first met him.

From the very first lesson on Bible truths I gave him in the ward, Harry commenced his spiritual growth. As day followed day, I could almost feel his desperately groping nature reaching out to God for the help he knew he must have soon, or perish. His interest in the Bible and the truths it contains concerning God's plan of eternal salvation for alcoholics and all sinners became virtually insatiable. Often I would find him upon my arrival at the ward to give my Bible lessons already deeply engrossed in the study of some point from the previous day's lesson that was still not quite clear to him. By patient, often laborious daily study and prayer, he continued to go forward spiritually.

The outward changes in his life immediately became apparent. He threw away his hitherto ever-present cigarettes, gave up drinking coffee, and deserted the reading of cheap, sensational novels he had formerly delighted in. Also, I noticed that the rough, often profane talk he had probably acquired on skid row had been replaced by a quiet, earnest manner without a trace of questionable words.

I followed Harry's progress closely after he left the ward, and when I last met him about two months ago, I stopped and talked to him.

"What are you doing now, Harry?" I asked, noting meantime his clean, neat appearance and the obvious happiness and contentment reflected in his face.

"You probably won't believe me, doc," he answered happily, "but I'm leading the meeting in the clinic chapel tonight. And I'm also conducting my own little Bible class up in the dayroom during the mornings. God has helped me so much that I just have to pass on the good news of His saving power to others who are down and out from alcohol, as I was myself not so long ago. I've been out to see my wife and children several times, and she's delighted at the change in me. When I told her that with God's continuing help I'd never take another drink, her happiness knew no bounds. She wants me to come back to her, and she's promised to help me with my work with alcoholics here at the clinic."

My heart was full indeed as I listened to Harry's story that illustrated so graphically God's unfailing power to save sinners even "unto the uttermost." While man may regard some as "hopeless" in sin and wickedness, God never does; and at the first sign of repentance and sorrow for that sin, He is ever ready to extend His helping hand and His forgiveness.

Tom Albright, the lawyer, was another of my alcoholic Bible students in which the seed "fell into good ground." He stopped his drinking and other sinful habits that were an outgrowth of it, joined the church, and began paying a faithful tithe. He is now an active worker in the church's temperance efforts, and frequently gets up to tell the young people of his own life-and-death struggle with drinking, and how he became the victor through his faith and trust in God and the atoning sacrifice of Jesus. Today Tom is helping straighten out other twisted, broken lives caused by drinking, and he has become a faithful and tireless worker in the Lord's vineyard.

The carpenter and the printer victims of alcoholism in the clinic hospital ward also were successful in staying sober. Like Harry Johnson, they too had hit bottom in their drinking and were at their wits' end to know what to do when they were admitted to the ward. The news of God's willingness to pardon them and also to give them His ever-present help to overcome their terrible habit came with joyful impact. They accepted God's promises joyfully and without reservation and began an entirely new way of life in accord

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with His will. Like Tom Albright, they are both trying to share their new-found freedom from the slavery of liquor with other unfortunates in the same desperate plight they so recently shared themselves.

God continually reminds us that He expects us to preach the gospel to every living creature, and thus we should not neglect any group or individual whom the world may label “hopeless” or “not worth saving.” My experience has been, after many years of medical-missionary work among all classes of people, including alcoholics, that the latter group is easier to reach with God’s message of eternal salvation than is a similar group of average people. This is due, I believe, to the fact that the alcoholic victim, more than the individual not so afflicted, realizes fully the desperateness of his sinful condition and is hence more eager to reach out for what promises so surely to bring him relief from his intolerable condition. For this reason I believe that Christian workers would do well to intensify their efforts among the victims of alcohol, since so many of them will be found to be receptive to the gospel message if it is simply and sincerely presented to them.

Also, I am firmly of the opinion that society as a whole, and professed Christians in particular, share in at least some degree of moral guilt in the growing spread of alcoholism and the increase in the number of alcoholics in this country. They do so because, in too many instances, they have failed to cry out against the evil conditions they have seen grow up around them; and they do so, further, if they fail to take an active and militant part in the crusade against the evils of the liquor traffic that are so evident on every hand. God will not hold guiltless those who are remiss in their duty to their fellow men, and this includes the all too prevalent attitude best summarized by Cain’s reply in olden times: “Am I my brother’s keeper?”

We must make it our responsibility as good citizens and good Christians to lend a hand to those who are weaker and more helpless than ourselves; and among this group the victims of alcoholism should be given priority, since their illness has such widespread and dire consequences upon all aspects of our community life.

Eddie O’Brien, the lawyer, and the truck driver and the pipe fitter, who comprised the remainder of the membership of my original Bible class, have not as yet fully accepted the gospel message. They are still having occasional “slips” from sobriety, but in each instance I think I can detect genuine evidence of spiritual growth which I am still hopeful will someday blossom into a full surrender to God’s will.

In dealing with this type of case where lapses are encountered, we should never allow ourselves to become discouraged or tempted to give up. We must remember that some cases are the results of years and years of alcoholic over-indulgence and other sinful practices and must be treated patiently and at some length before favorable results become apparent.

And even more important, we must always bear in mind that although we may consider some such cases “hopeless,” God never does. To Him we all are His creatures, created in His image and endowed with the potentialities for good or evil. Each one of us, no matter how far sunken in sin we may be, is precious to the Maker; and while there is time, He will continue to speak to us through the still, but persistent voice of His Holy Spirit. As a well-known temperance writer has so aptly expressed it:

“We become too easily discouraged over the souls who do not at once respond to our efforts. Never should we cease to labor for a soul while there is one gleam of hope. Precious souls cost our self-sacrificing Redeemer too dear a price to be lightly given up to the tempter’s power. . . .

“You must hold fast to those whom you are trying to help, else victory will never be yours. They will be continually tempted to evil. Again and again they will be almost overcome by the craving for strong drink; again and again they may fall; but do not, because of this, cease your efforts.”

1. From *Temperance*, by Ellen G. White, pages 128 and 129. Published by Pacific Press Publishing Association, Mountain View, California.

SPECIAL HELPS

The following supplementary reading is strongly recommended as a “must” for the alcoholic patient seeking permanent sobriety:

Introductory Bible Lessons for Alcoholics.

This free Bible correspondence course, prepared by the author of this book, is now available for alcoholics and their friends and loved ones by writing to the publishers of this book.

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The Bible lessons used in the series employ a scientific, spiritual approach that has had success in numerous other alcoholic cases. The course is written in simple language easily understandable by the alcoholic.

This Bible course is also highly recommended for study by non alcoholics who are interested in the problem of alcoholism and alcoholic rehabilitation. It demonstrates, step by step, the successful spiritual methods by which alcoholism can be overcome permanently.

Escape From Alcohol, by Donald W. Hewitt, M.D.

In this book the author has related several true-life alcoholic case histories taken from his medical files, as a means of illustrating why some people recover from their alcoholism and others do not.

A portion of the book has been allotted to an analysis of the reasons underlying some alcoholics' failure to attain lasting sobriety even while they seek it desperately.

The book also takes up at some length the best methods whereby a nonalcoholic can help a victim of the drink habit overcome his weakness.

This book should be read by everyone genuinely interested in the alcohol problem and concerned by the increasing growth of alcoholism in this country. Copies of *Escape From Alcohol* may be obtained from the publishers of this book.

David Dare, by Earle A. Rowell.

This book is the most popular publication with the alcoholic patients in the Los Angeles alcoholic rehabilitation clinic. It has been instrumental in laying the groundwork for the full acceptance of Christ and a belief in the Holy Scriptures. Copies of *David Dare* may be obtained from the publishers of this book.

Steps to Christ, by Ellen G. White.

The opening chapters of this outstanding book tell vividly of God's love for man and of the sinner's need of Christ. It outlines in detail the steps necessary for the alcoholic to follow in order to grow in Christian grace and thereby achieve permanent sobriety and spiritual happiness and serenity. Copies of *Steps to Christ* may be obtained from the publishers of this book.

Your Home and Health, by Ellen G. White.

This is a book for every home where there is an alcoholic problem. It lists the basic principles of healthful living so necessary to obtaining permanent sobriety. It has 380 pages of vital information for alcoholics and is liberally illustrated. Full information concerning this book may be secured by writing to the Pacific Press Publishing Association, Mountain View, California.

The Cigarette and You, by Donald W. Hewitt, M.D.

This book is a scientific, unbiased study of the smoking question based on the latest medical and laboratory research.

In his discussion of the subject the author stresses the importance of smoking as a proven contributory factor in the growing incidence of alcoholism, and presents scientific facts to support his claim.

This book should be read by everyone interested in good health and the alcohol problem, and will be found especially helpful to alcoholics who take the time to read it.

The Cigarette and You may be obtained from the Pacific Press Publishing Association, Mountain View, California.