


A Cloud
of Witnesses
Two Big Books and Us

Barbara B. Rollins
with OAStepper



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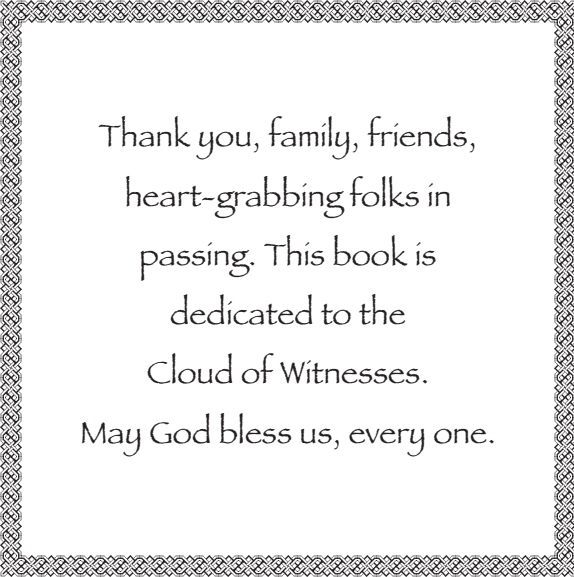
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Thank you, family, friends,
heart-grabbing folks in
passing. This book is
dedicated to the
Cloud of Witnesses.
May God bless us, every one.


Introduction

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. ~ Hebrews 12:1-2 (NIV)

We have come to believe He would like us to keep our heads in the clouds with Him, but that our feet ought to be firmly planted on earth... We have found nothing incompatible between a powerful spiritual experience and a life of sane and happy usefulness. ~ *Alcoholics Anonymous*, page 130.

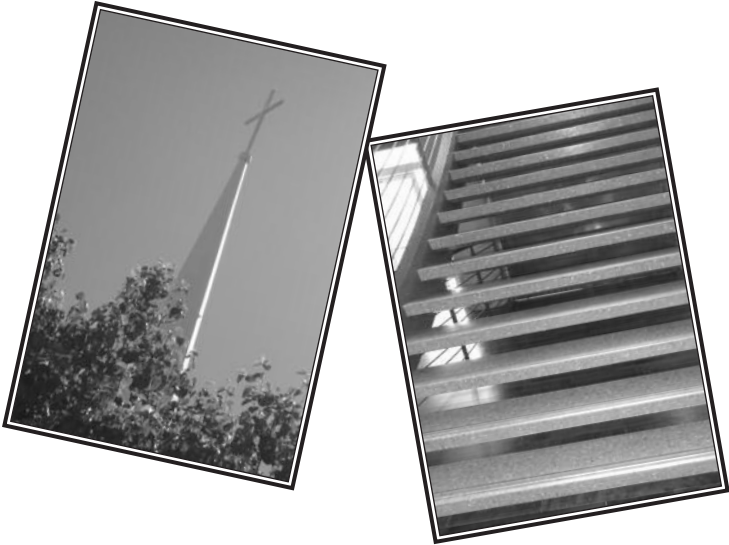
Solitude, the anthesis of seclusion, has nothing to do with isolation. We replicate the universe and humanity – history, past, present, and yet to come – and the spirit of holiness and of our fellows melds uniquely to individualize each of us.

Be quiet and feel the presence of God and your own cloud of witnesses. Pause in chaos to sense their peace, to claim your peace.



God, make me an old-timer
in the rooms of recovery
one day at a time.

Hebrews Chapter One





Hebrews 1:1-2 (NASB)

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 55

Actually we were fooling ourselves, for deep down in every man, woman, and child, is the fundamental idea of God. It may be obscured by calamity, by pomp, by worship of other things, but in some form or other it is there.

God's out there, up there, everywhere
power beyond power
love beyond love
shouting through thunderstorms
whispering through a cricket's chirp
speaking to us though we don't listen
sending his essence, his doppelganger,
his son
to show us, help us hear,
get the fundamental truth
to echo the eternal song of love,
of acceptance, of peace,
of hope.
He molds the world —
he cares for me.

God – calamity, pomp, other things
distract me from
truth around me – in me – of me
the me that is
you and your
word.



Hebrews 1:3-4 (NIV)

The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 129

Dad may feel that for years his drinking has placed him on the wrong side of every argument, but that now he has become a superior person with God on his side.

I've lived on the ladder
isolated on my rung
above most folks
below a few —
below God
too far up there to notice,
above the masses.
Who set my rung?
I did. After I'd done so much,
become so important,
excelled.
Not knowing what others had done —
even the miraculous —
ignorance is bliss.
Superior bliss.
Superior arrogance.

God, I need the crowd of people around me
to stop me from isolating,
From hibernating.
To let me learn what they have to teach me,
what you would teach me through them.



Hebrews 1:5-6 (NIV)

For to which of the angels did God ever say,

“You are my Son;
today I have become your Father”?

Or again,

“I will be his Father,
and he will be my Son”?

And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says,

“Let all God’s angels worship him.”



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 52

Our ideas did not work. But the God idea did.

God's not an artichoke heart,
worth getting to but buried, hidden, isolated.
God is the lifeblood, boundless, pervasive.

God's not in the universe;
the universe is in God. If God's
your co-pilot, you're in the wrong seat.

Don't go to God with a list of things
to fix, his marching orders. Report for duty
ready to hear him give your orders for today.
You can't keep the hair on your head from
falling out; he can hold worlds and stay
their course. If you don't like the god you met
in church or synagogue or at the mosque,
toss him out. God's out there, everywhere,
anywhere, not in the air but the air itself. Toss
out your inadequate god and meet the real thing
but most of all understand that you're not god.

WOW. God, what an honor to be
a grain of sand on your beach.



Hebrews 1:5-9 (NIV)

For to which of the angels did God ever say,

“You are my Son;
today I have become your Father”?

Or again,

“I will be his Father,
and he will be my Son”?

And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says,

“Let all God’s angels worship him.”

In speaking of the angels he says,

“He makes his angels spirits,
his servants flames of fire.”

But about the Son he says,

“Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever,
a scepter of justice will be the sceter of your
kingdom.

You have loved righteousness and hated
wickedness;

therefore God, your God, has set you above
your companions

by anointing you with the oil of joy.”



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 3

For the next few years fortune threw money and
applause my way. I had arrived.

Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 49

...we...chose to believe that our human intelligence
was the last word, the alpha and the omega, the
beginning and end of all. Rather vain of us, wasn't it?

Praise me.
Tell me I'm good,
affirm my moth-eaten self-esteem
so I can believe my lies,
endure my doubts.
Praise me more than others
for what you say of them
I hear negating me.
I must be special
for inside me I know I'm nothing
a façade, a farce.
Tell me I'm good,
preserve the gossamer lies.

Free me from giving praise so I'll get it,
from seeking center stage.
Remind me I'm your brag – or sag –
that all praise I might generate is yours.



Hebrews 1:10-12 (NLT)

He also says to the Son,
“In the beginning, Lord, you laid the foundation of
the earth
and made the heavens with your hands.
They will perish, but you remain forever.
They will wear out like old clothing.
You will fold them up like a cloak
and discard them like old clothing.
But you are always the same;
you will live forever.”



Alcoholics Anonymous Page 84

Are these extravagant promises? We think not. They are being fulfilled among us – sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialize if we work for them.

Always.

Before anything,
after everything,
always.

We have no yesterday,
we have no tomorrow,
we have only right now.

But we have always.

We have no laurels

to rest on,

no accomplishments to tout.

We have no manifest destiny.

We have today, to act in faith

or act as if,

to do the next right thing
with the promise of always.

God, let me fold up my pride,
my ambition, my fears,
my longing for the easy way out
like old clothing
and work for always.



1:13-14 (NLT)

And God never said to any of the angels,
“Sit in the place of honor at my right hand
until I humble your enemies,
making them a footstool under your feet.”

Therefore, angels are only servants – spirits sent to care for people who will inherit salvation.



Alcoholics Anonymous Pages 131-132

Being possessed of a spiritual experience, the alcoholic...may bring new hope and new courage to many a priest, minister, or rabbi, who gives his all to minister to our troubled world.”

Warts, scars, pocks and all
I'm here to help
if there's a use,
for such as me.

Others younger, stronger,
more agile, more congenial,
make more sense,
but if you can use
these assets, this old tired body,
to minister, to serve, to carry the message,
okay. I'm ready,
just point me in the right direction
and tell me your will,
give me power to carry it out.

God, I offer myself to Thee – to build with me and
to do with me as Thou wilt.
Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do
Thy will.

Take away my difficulties, that victory over them
may bear witness
to those I would help
of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of life.
May I do Thy will always!*

Hebrews Chapter Two



Hebrews 2:1 (NLT)

So we must listen very carefully to the truth we have heard, or we may drift away from it.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 85

What we really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition.

God's love
persists.
We're not cast off
for human frailties.
Obsession may recede
as truth prevails,
yet I'm not cured, I'm not safe,
I'm not home free —
for insidious insanity
innocuously intrudes
to pilfer peace,
to cast me back
on fear, on doubt,
powerless,
encased in guilt —
when I neglect
to claim the prize.

God, I seek a reprieve today,
I seek your peace,
your warm embrace
as I persist in hope.



Hebrews 2:2-4 (KJV)

For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward;

How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;

God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 7

Understanding myself now, I fared forth in high hope. For three or four months the goose hung high. I went to town regularly and even made a little money. Surely this was the answer – self knowledge.

But it was not, for the frightful day came when I drank once more. The curve of my declining moral and bodily health fell off like a ski jump.

You can't say I don't know how –
I've watched – lived – the program working.
Divers miracles, indeed, gifts of God
wonders, signs.
Proffered, available,
here for the taking.
Who would decline?
Who would choose
the gloom?
Who would fall away
from truth, from love?
Who would choose defeat?
Cunning, baffling, insidious
it is, this pariah of addiction.
I pray I choose the gift today
and each today to come.

God, let me not neglect your grace.



Hebrews 2:5-6 (NLT)

And furthermore, it is not angels who will control the future world we are talking about. For in one place the Scriptures say,

“What are mere mortals that you should think about them,
or a son of man that you should care for him?”



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 151

The less people tolerated us, the more we withdrew from society, from life itself. As we became subjects of King Alcohol, shivering denizens of his mad realm, the chilling vapor that is loneliness settled down. It thickened, ever becoming blacker.

Woe is me,
worthless piece of
excrement.

Shivering madness,
chilling self-contempt,
thickening blackness.

Mortal. Morbid.

Meaningless.

How could anyone care for me
when I don't care about me?

I don't know.

I only know
the Son of Man does
care for this odious
daughter of man.

If God be for me
how can I be against me?

God, thanks for loving me
until I can love myself
and for sending other people
to model that love for me.



Hebrews 2:7 (KJV)

Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands:



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 46

How could a Supreme Being have anything to do with it all? And who could comprehend a Supreme Being anyhow? Yet, in other moments, we found ourselves thinking, when enchanted by a starlit night, “Who, then, made all this?” There was a feeling of awe and wonder, but it was fleeting and soon lost.

When my life feels chaotic,
that's not what's intended,
not what can be, should be.

When I pause to look
at the wonder,
the majesty,
the mystery all around,
I know without a doubt
my internal chaos isn't real,
isn't natural,
isn't what should be.

When I get out of the way
the world works
like it was designed to work,
like chaos is fine, just beyond my ken.

God, erase my chaos,
my doubt, my mess,
and show me your mystery
and majesty
and love.



Hebrews 2:8 (KJV)

Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 84

We vigorously commenced this way of living as we cleaned up the past. We have entered the world of the Spirit. Our next function is to grow in understanding and effectiveness. This is not an overnight matter. It should continue for our lifetime.

Recovered.

The steps worked,
admitted,
believed,
submitted,
inventoried,
confessed,
readied,
released,
persisted,
prayed,
served.

Recovered. But still
a work in progress
contingent on staying the course
today, each day.

God, relieve me of my pride
in accomplishment, in recovery.
Thanks for what has come,
keep me aware you're willing for more.



Hebrews 2:9 (NLT)

What we do see is Jesus, who was given a position “a little lower than the angels”; and because he suffered death for us, he is now “crowned with glory and honor.” Yes, by God’s grace, Jesus tasted death for everyone.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Pages 152-153

...fellows of Alcoholics Anonymous. Among them you will make lifelong friends. You will be bound to them with new and wonderful ties, for you will escape disaster together and you will commence shoulder to shoulder your common journey. Then you will know what it means to give of yourself that others may survive and rediscover life. You will learn the full meaning of “Love thy neighbor as thyself.”

Others walked first
before; some still walking.

Others moved on
crowned with glory
honor.

Some walk with us,
share the pain,
speak some truth
just what we need here,
now.

Others follow where we lead
even when we feel we're stumbling,
stumbling, needing leading,
but we lead
hopefully in the right
direction.

Thanks, God, for the folks around,
for choosing the right ones
to lead us, to walk with us,
and to teach us with our own
words when they seek our
help.



Hebrews 2:10 (NLT)

God, for whom and through whom everything was made, chose to bring many children into glory. And it was only right that he should make Jesus, through his suffering, a perfect leader, fit to bring them into their salvation.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 152

Some day he will be unable to imagine life either with alcohol or without it. Then he will know loneliness such as few do. He will be at the jumping-off place. He will wish for the end.

We have shown how we got out from under.

Scraping barrel bottom
garners festering gunk,
escapes ego's inflation,
leads to U-turn
toward better, higher, desirable.

Scraping barrel bottom
qualifies as expert,
slants insight to identify
with other barrel scrapers
long after barrel's left behind.
My hand to yours, misery shared,
hope handed down to hopeless,
my barrel-bottom recovery
proof abrasive annihilation
isn't necessary, isn't inevitable.
I put my hand in yours – from the bottom
or the top – means I'll never
scrape barrel bottom
again.

God, I thought you'd left, deserted me,
cruel, heartless – until I found
how much despair
presages ecstasy.



Hebrews 2:11 (NIV)

Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 17

We are like the passengers of a great liner the moment after rescue from shipwreck when camaraderie, joyousness and democracy pervade the vessel from steerage to Captain's table. Unlike the feelings of the ship's passengers, however, our joy in escape from disaster does not subside as we go our individual ways. The feeling of having shared in a common peril is one element in the powerful cement which binds us.

Powerful cement,
brothers bound,
family forged,
made holy —
outside in, inside out —
holiness from horrible,
friends and family from
fiends and foes.

Peril perishes,
a coterie congeals.
Unashamed of ghastly pasts
we revel in wretchedness
remembered,
made powerful cement.

Hallelujah for the disease,
the dis-ease,
that propelled me to your loving arms
and my fellows hurled here, too.



Hebrews 2:12 (KJV)

Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.



Alcoholics Anonymous, 4th edition Page **xiii**

When writing or speaking publicly about alcoholism, we urge each of our Fellowship to omit his personal name, designating himself instead as “a member of Alcoholics Anonymous.”

Among us,
between friends —
though people we never met —
we declare his name, our names,
bare secrets closest friends don't know.
Away from here, I just know you, no explaining
where, how.

I want to tell it on the mountain,
proclaim recovery for the taking,
share the gift, name the names,
proffer evidence.

But wisdom concedes the gift
of anonymity, looking not at us as proof
but higher, to power, to peace.

God, you're our proffer, our peace.
Give me humility to know
people can recover without my proclamations.



Hebrews 2:13 (NLT)

He also said,

“I will put my trust in him,”

that is, “I and the children God has given me.”



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 124

The alcoholic's past thus becomes the principal asset of the family and frequently it's almost the only one!

Shame, humiliation, well-deep
sorrow
embedded in my soul.

How could I have inflicted
my pain, my angst, on children
gifted to me,
on young lives held in trust?

Joy, humility, sky-high
jubilation
exploding from my soul.

Recovery – like addiction – spreads
throughout families,
gifting children and children's children
with hope, with sanity, with peace.

God, thank you for second chances,
for children who turned out fine
despite the drama.
Thanks for time to mend.



Hebrews 2:14 (NLT)

Because God's children are human beings – made of flesh and blood – the Son also became flesh and blood. For only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the devil, who had the power of death.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 153

How can they rise out of such misery, bad repute and hopelessness? The practical answer is that since these things have happened among us, they can happen with you. Should you wish them above all else, and be willing to make use of our experience, we are sure they will come. The age of miracles is still with us. Our own recovery proves that!

The devil made me do it —
the devil that's my need,
my habit, my compulsion.
The devil held me, made me want to die,
made me need to die to break free,
to live.

Impossible, the task —
impossible to turn around,
transmogrify debris,
craft elegance from dung.
Had not a cloud of witnesses
walked the steps ahead,
left footprints through the minefield,
I'd have given up, stayed dead,
dismissing the folly of the path.

God, thanks for leading me,
for sending others, a visible, tangible
example of hope, of life.



Hebrews 2:15 (NLT)

Only in this way could he set free all who have lived their lives as slaves to the fear of dying.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 66

But with the alcoholic, whose hope is the maintenance and growth of a spiritual experience, this business of resentment is infinitely grave. We found that it is fatal. For when harboring such feelings we shut ourselves off from the sunlight of the Spirit. The insanity of alcohol returns and we drink again. And with us, to drink is to die.

Slaves to the fear of dying?
Maybe. But how about the fear
of living?

Talk about scary!
Death, I know. Death is living
in fear
in resentment.

But fear is not the end —
resentments can vanish —
Jesus sets us free,
recovery sets us free
to the sunlight of the Spirit
to live,
to life.

Thank you for resentments
prayed away,
for spirit's sunlight.



Hebrews 2:16 (NIV)

For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 51

When many hundreds of people are able to say that the consciousness of the Presence of God is today the most important fact of their lives, they present a powerful reason why one should have faith.

Angels those alcoholics weren't,
an angel I'm not.

Like Abraham I give up waiting
for God's promises
and take matters into my hands.

I misunderstand,
get scared and lie to save
myself,
forsaking the parts worth saving
in the process.

God wins, though,
no matter what I do.

God wins,
and with his triumph
I win.

God, take me,
my character defects,
my plans, my hopes, my dreams,
and trump them with
Heaven on earth.



Hebrews 2:17 (KJV)

Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 75

We pocket our pride and go to it, illuminating every twist of character, every dark cranny of the past. Once we have taken this step, withholding nothing, we are delighted.

Mercy me!
Mercy! Me?
Merciful to me!
How can you know
my baseness,
my depravity,
and accept me?
How can one so good,
so pure,
not shun me
but hug me,
accept me,
love me?
Mercy!

God of grace,
God of mercy,
thank you for your faithfulness.



Hebrews 2:18 (NLT)

Since he himself has gone through suffering and testing, he is able to help us when we are being tested.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 117

The faith and sincerity of both you and your husband will be put to the test. These work-outs should be regarded as part of your education, for thus you will be learning to live.

Pain is always the teacher,
which makes the pain
more tolerable
if I can just remember that,
if I can go past seeing some wisdom
and really buy into the notion.
Pain does make me more tolerant
of others facing their pain, their fears,
unless I take credit
for God's grace
in creating in me
a better person.
When I forget the source of grace
I renounce the gift by forgetting
the Source.

God, the source of all that's good
help me to trust you through the pain
of growth.

Hebrews Chapter Three



Hebrews 3:1 (KJV)

Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;



Alcoholics Anonymous, 4th edition Page **XXXI**

From a trembling, despairing, nervous wreck, had emerged a man brimming over with self-reliance and contentment. I talked with him for some time, but was not able to bring myself to feel that I had known him before. To me he was a stranger, and so he left me. A long time has passed with no return to alcohol.

Holy brethren, us?

Brethren, certainly, but holy?

Yes.

Our pasts are not us – we're not

who we were,

not barrel-bottom scum

anymore.

We're changed,

lifted to the fourth dimension

of existence,

holy, brethren with each other

children of the

power to change.

God, you took me from

a despairing nervous wreck

and made me holy. What can I do

for you?



Hebrews 3:2 (NIV)

He was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all God's house.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Pages 47-48

Besides a seeming inability to accept much on faith, we often found ourselves handicapped by obstinacy, sensitiveness, and unreasoning prejudice.

Say Moses died at 120,
less wandering forty years, twice,
lose maybe five more years
after shedding sandals
for the burning bush —
at my age was he scared,
maybe obstinate, touchy,
hating Egyptians?
Did Moses learn faithfulness?
When? In an instant, picking up that rod?
In seven days of plagues?
During forty nights and days on Sinai?
I've got only one day,
one night,
right now.
But I'm faithful now.

Lord, Paul talked about
the shield of faith,
helmet of salvation,
and sword of the spirit.
I pray for all of that
and the grace to accept it when offered.



Hebrews 3:3 (NIV)

Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 63

God, I offer myself to Thee – to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt.

He's building.
I'm not even the building,
just the materials – and but a piece.
What do I make him
when I
set the plan,
dictate who he's to help
and how?
How dare I tell him
what I need,
order his prompt obeisance?
Worthy is the Lamb.
Worthy of respect,
worthy of honor,
worthy of submission.

God,
I offer myself to Thee —
to build with me
and do with me
as Thou wilt.*
I believe!



Hebrews 3:5-6 (NIV)

“Moses was faithful as a servant in all God’s house,” bearing witness to what would be spoken by God in the future. But Christ is faithful as the Son over God’s house. And we are his house, if indeed we hold firmly to our confidence and the hope in which we glory.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 68

We can laugh at those who think spirituality the way of weakness. Paradoxically, it is the way of strength. The verdict of the ages is that faith means courage. All men of faith have courage. They trust their God. We never apologize for God. Instead we let Him demonstrate, through us, what He can do. We ask Him to remove our fear and direct our attention to what he would have us be. At once, we commence to outgrow fear.

What would God have me be?

Fearless.

A person of hope,
one who holds on to courage.

No, that's not what I mean...

Doctor, lawyer, merchant,
writer, teacher, judge,
mother, wife, woman.

What does God want me to be?

Fearless.

A person of hope,
one who holds on to courage.

Then all these things —
or at least the right ones —
will be given.

God, take my fears —
which you know are legion! —
and show me what you want me
to be.



Hebrews 3:7-9 (NLT)

That is why the Holy Spirit says,
“Today when you hear his voice,
don’t harden your hearts
as Israel did when they rebelled,
when they tested me in the wilderness.
There your ancestors tested and tried my patience,
even though they saw my miracles for forty
years.”



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 94

Your candidate may give reasons why he need not follow all of the program. He may rebel at the thought of a drastic housecleaning which requires discussion with other people. Do not contradict such views. Tell him you once felt as he does, but you doubt whether you would have made much progress had you not taken action.

“Insight,
that’s what I lacked.
You’ve shown me how it works.
I know from here I’ll be just fine,
my problems fixed, my life aligned.
I admire your dedication,
your fervor,
but I don’t need
the constant prod,
the repetition.
I thank you for your help.”
Yeah, that was me. I said all that.
But now I’m back.
I’m listening.

God, if I could fix it I would have.
Let me let go so you can fix it
and hold it together
as long as I release it to you
each day,
each hour,
each now.



Hebrews 3:10-11 (NLT)

“So I was angry with them, and I said,
Their hearts always turn away from me.
They refuse to do what I tell them.’

So in my anger I took an oath:

‘They will never enter my place of rest.’”



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 76

Now we go out to our fellows and repair the damage done in the past. We attempt to sweep away the debris which has accumulated out of our efforts to live on self-will and run the show ourselves. If we haven't the will to do this, we ask until it comes. Remember it was agreed at the beginning we would go to any lengths for victory over alcohol.

Can you make amends to God?
I turn my heart to him,
I seek his way – to know and walk.
I understand his wrath.
Like Daddy, tired of my
“I’m sorry”
saying, “Don’t be sorry.
Don’t do it!”
I don’t want to, God,
don’t want to wander back
the way I came,
to self-will, to heart turned inward.
I offer my amends, God,
not “I’m sorry,”
but living in your will.

God, I’m willing to go to any lengths.
Make it true, God.



Hebrews 3:12-13 (NIV)

See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 85

Every day is a day when we must carry the vision of God's will into all of our activities. "How can I best serve Thee – Thy will (not mine) be done." These are thoughts which must go with us constantly. We can exercise our will power along this line all we wish. It is the proper use of the will.

I sit here, steeped in resentment,
wanting to respond, to show my holiness.
He's wrong. He's arrogant. He deserves my wrath.
God should strike him down
for treating me like this.
I carry the vision of God's will
for him, how he should treat me,
how he can serve, be worthy
of respect, of my stopping
this behavior just to irritate him.
I'm not the purveyor of God's will for him.
If I want to show holiness, worthiness for Him
I have to stop irritating him.
It's not about how he treats me.
God will treat me right if I release the resentment,
exercise proper use
of my will.

I've done it, God. You know he doesn't deserve it:
turning off my radio when he, coming in,
turned on the TV. He doesn't deserve it.
But I need your grace, your love,
especially when I long for at least respect
from him.



Hebrews 3:14-16 (KJV)

For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;

While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.

For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 12

It was only a matter of being willing to believe in a Power greater than myself. Nothing more was required of me to make my beginning. I saw that growth could start from that point. Upon a foundation of complete willingness I might build what I saw in my friend.

The beginning of our confidence,
willingness to believe,
unhardened hearts
not provoking —
steadfast to the end,
steadfast but – just these baby steps,
not fulfillment,
not worthy lives,
abounding wisdom —
just the beginning,
in the beginning and lasting
to the end,
even if it's just the beginning
but maybe the wisdom,
the worth
will slip in.

God, you know I want to do
full-blown or not at all.
I need to hide my ineptness, my humanity.
Thanks for willingness to believe,
for taking what I can give
and growing it.



Hebrews 3:17-19 (NIV)

And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the desert? And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 123

God, they believe, almost owes this recompense on a long overdue account. But the head of the house has spent years in pulling down the structures of business, romance, friendship, health – these things are now ruined or damaged. It will take time to clear away the wreck. Though old buildings will eventually be replaced by finer ones, the new structures will take years to complete.

Time.

Right now is all I've got,
so God, you can fix it all
right now.

I'm here. I'm willing.
I've changed, you know,
set aside childish things,
taken on the right path.
Why must I struggle still?
Don't you understand, I'm here,
ready,
willing – or at least willing to be willing.

Tell him I've changed,
he's to respect me now.
Tell her I'm honest now.
What? I must prove it?

Do it?

Live it?

Don't leave me in this desert
I made!

God, was it forty years of amends?
How long did it take
for those children of yours to get it?
And this one?

Hebrews Chapter Four



Hebrews 4:1-2 (NIV)

Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. For we also have had the good news proclaimed to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because they did not share the faith of those who obeyed.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 44

To be doomed to an alcoholic death or to live on a spiritual basis are not always easy alternatives to face.

A three-leg stool, they say —
physical, emotional, spiritual —
recovery requires all three.
But really, spiritual comes first
for the others to last,
to manifest.

Recovery means
the spiritual becomes primary,
a recovered person an avatar,
God in me, not like a blueberry
in a muffin
but like the ocean in a wave.

God, I offer myself to Thee.
Build with me, use me, freed from
bondage, a picture of
your power, your love,
and your way of life.



Hebrews 4:3-5 (NLT)

For only we who believe can enter his rest. As for the others, God said,

“In my anger I took an oath:

They will never enter my place of rest,”

even though this rest has been ready since he made the world. We know it is ready because of the place in the Scriptures where it mentions the seventh day: “On the seventh day God rested from all his work.” But in the other passage God said, “They will never enter my place of rest.”



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 58

Those who do not recover are people who cannot or will not completely give themselves to this simple program, usually men and women who are constitutionally incapable of being honest with themselves. There are such unfortunates. They are not at fault; they seem to have been born that way. They are naturally incapable of grasping and developing a manner of living which demands rigorous honesty. Their chances are less than average.

The writer flips
back and forth
Psalms – Genesis – Psalms,
wondering, pondering,
shuffling puzzle parts —
my kindred spirit millennia ago.
Predestination clashes
with compassion,
renders vile images
of God.

What turns us away from proffered grace
justifies in panicked minds some other course.
Why does honesty alienate the bejesus from us?

God, help me to grasp
and develop
a manner of living
in rigorous honesty.



Hebrews 4:6-7 (NIV)

Therefore since it still remains for some to enter that rest, and since those who formerly had the good news proclaimed to them did not go in because of their disobedience, God again set a certain day, calling it “Today.” This he did when a long time later he spoke through David, as in the passage already quoted:

“Today, if you hear his voice,
do not harden your hearts.”



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 25

The central fact of our lives today is the absolute certainty that our Creator has entered into our hearts and lives in a way which is indeed miraculous. He has commenced to accomplish those things for us which we could never do by ourselves.

Hard hearts today?

No. Maybe tomorrow.

Certainly yesterday,

but not today.

Today I will hear his voice —
yeah, I know, I normally hear his voice —
but today I'll listen, not harden my heart.

He's commenced to accomplish.

And commenced and commenced,
after each "today" when I stopped him,

hardened my heart,
played god, kept the reins.

I'm ready for moving past

commencement,

ready for graduation

ready to live.

God, I open my heart to you.
Give me the courage not to slam it shut,
let it be pliable clay, ready for your
artisan's hands.



Hebrews 4:8-11 (NLT)

Now if Joshua had succeeded in giving them this rest, God would not have spoken about another day of rest still to come. So there is a special rest still waiting for the people of God. For all who have entered into God's rest have rested from their labors, just as God did after creating the world. So let us do our best to enter that rest. But if we disobey God, as the people of Israel did, we will fall.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Pages 87-88

As we go through the day we pause, when agitated or doubtful, and ask for the right thought or action. We constantly remind ourselves we are no longer running the show, humbly saying to ourselves many times each day "Thy will be done." We are then in much less danger of excitement, fear, anger, worry, self-pity, or foolish decisions. We become much more efficient. We do not tire so easily, for we are not burning up energy foolishly as we did when we were trying to arrange life to suit ourselves.

Special rest
waits
for us, for God's folk.
Special rest in a pause,
a reality check on show-running,
in trading will-power
for the will of God.
Danger dissipates,
fear dissolves,
foot-in-mouth syndrome cured.

Special rest
rewarded by more energy
than ever could be crammed
in any miniscule bottle
for ransom at cash registers.

God, lead me by still waters,
restore my soul,
fill my cup brimful,
the overflow a salve.



Hebrews 4:12-13 (NIV)

For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Pages 13-14

Belief in the power of God, plus enough willingness, honesty and humility to establish and maintain the new order of things, were the essential requirements.

Rigorous honesty,
obfuscation sliced away,
soul exposed,
naked truth,
unmasked psyche.
Healing comes,
though, through exposure,
through access, wounds laid bare —
a healing salve,
the Balm of Gilead.
Perfect peace, at ease,
fears cascade.

My Creator, how can you know me,
inside out, to the rotten core,
and love me still? I don't know.
I only know, you do!



Hebrews 4:14-16 (NLT)

So then, since we have a great High Priest who has entered heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we believe. This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin. So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 146

After your man has gone along without drinking for a few months, you may be able to make use of his services with other employees who are giving you the alcoholic run-around – provided, of course, they are willing to have a third party in the picture. An alcoholic who has recovered, but holds a relatively unimportant job, can talk to a man with a better position. Being on a radically different basis of life, he will never take advantage of the situation.

Fair's fair.

Rules are rules.

I can't compete with Superman's
strength, flight, imperviousness.
But some other sexagenarian woman
I'll take on.

Don't lecture me, preach to me,
tell me my weaknesses
until you've been there, done that,
know the helplessness,
the powerlessness, the humiliation.

Been there, done that,

I'll hear you,

I'll seek your way out,

your helping hand

gladly.

Been there, done that.

Fair's fair.

God, thanks for understanding us,
for sinking to our mire
in order to lift us
beyond hope's wildest fancies.

Hebrews Chapter Five



Hebrews 5:1-3 (NLT)

Every high priest is a man chosen to represent other people in their dealings with God. He presents their gifts to God and offers sacrifices for their sins. And he is able to deal gently with ignorant and wayward people because he himself is subject to the same weaknesses. That is why he must offer sacrifices for his own sins as well as theirs.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 94

Outline the program of action, explaining how you made a self-appraisal, how you straightened out your past and why you are now endeavoring to be helpful to him. It is important for him to realize that your attempt to pass this on to him plays a vital part in your own recovery. Actually, he may be helping you more than you are helping him.

Jesus tagged as hypocrite
he who set himself up
to remove a speck
with a log in his own eye.
Wilson understood when he wrote
the book —
not when he started: preaching, dragging
drunks to the Oxford Group.
When a real leader leads,
the people say, “We did it ourselves.”*

God, I don't want to be better than,
lower than,
other than.
I want to be your child,
sister to the world.

*Lao-tsu



Hebrews 5:4-6 (NLT)

And no one can become a high priest simply because he wants such an honor. He must be called by God for this work, just as Aaron was. That is why Christ did not honor himself by assuming he could become High Priest. No, he was chosen by God, who said to him,

“You are my Son.

Today I have become your Father.”

And in another passage God said to him,

“You are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek.”



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 95

You will be most successful with alcoholics if you do not exhibit any passion for crusade or reform. Never talk down to an alcoholic from any moral or spiritual hilltop; simply lay out the kit of spiritual tools for his inspection. Show him how they worked with you. Offer him friendship and fellowship. Tell him that if he wants to get well you will do anything to help.

God doesn't choose the qualified,
he qualifies the chosen.
Of myself, I'm nothing, powerless.
Powerless over what I put in my body,
powerless over my family,
powerless over my future,
powerless to carry the message.
Like Melchizedek for Abraham
or Ebby for Bill,
I may be a ship in the night,
forgotten but for how God used me
to touch a life.
That's fine with me.
God help me, though, if
the call is to be Abraham or Bill!
But like Isaiah, I stand on holy ground
and say, "I'm here, God. Use me."*

I'm here, God. Use me.
And qualify me for the call.



Hebrews 5:7-10 (NIV)

During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 13

I was to test my thinking by the new God-consciousness within. Common sense would thus become uncommon sense. I was to sit quietly when in doubt, asking only for direction and strength to meet my problems as He would have me. Never was I to pray for myself, except as my requests bore on my usefulness to others. Then only might I expect to receive. But that would be in great measure.

Funny. Didn't Jesus say public prayers
were their own reward,
private ones mattered?

You reckon he ranted to God in private?
Reverent submission, not public display.

What anybody else thinks of me
is none of my business.

Hum. I guess the prayers at the bottom of the page
don't matter. They're real when I type, though —
maybe public displays later.

Made perfect, he became the source
of eternal salvation.

Made sane,
I can become the source
of salvation from insanity
for those who see him through me.

God, let the words of my mouth – or keyboard –
and the meditations of my heart
be acceptable.



Hebrews 5:11-12 (NLT)

There is much more we would like to say about this, but it is difficult to explain, especially since you are spiritually dull and don't seem to listen. You have been believers so long now that you ought to be teaching others. Instead, you need someone to teach you again the basic things about God's word. You are like babies who need milk and cannot eat solid food.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 62

So our troubles, we think, are basically of our own making. They arise out of ourselves, and the alcoholic is an extreme example of self-will run riot, though he usually doesn't think so. Above everything, we alcoholics must be rid of the selfishness. We must, or it kills us!

The Shoe Department
of recovery.
The Slippers, the Sneakers,
and the Loafers.
It's a simple program,
not easy.
You have to WORK
the Steps,
to practice these principles
in all your affairs.
Stop directing the play,
look at yourself, the only person you can
change,
and do – by giving up on trying,
by surrender.
Then you can learn.

God, remind me to listen to me
when I say such things —
and to you all the time.



Hebrews 5:13-14 (NIV)

Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 129

If the family will appreciate that dad's current behavior is but a phase of his development, all will be well. In the midst of an understanding and sympathetic family, these vagaries of dad's spiritual infancy will quickly disappear.

How dark is the glass

I look through?

Do I speak as a child,
understand as a child,
reason as a child?

A wise woman used to say
the trouble with people being
born again
is they stay there and
never grow up.

God, make me an old-timer
in the rooms of recovery
one day at a time.

Hebrews Chapter Six



Hebrews 6:1-3 (NLT)

So let us stop going over the basic teachings about Christ again and again. Let us go on instead and become mature in our understanding. Surely we don't need to start again with the fundamental importance of repenting from evil deeds and placing our faith in God. You don't need further instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And so, God willing, we will move forward to further understanding.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Pages 63-64

Next we launched out on a course of vigorous action, the first step of which is a personal housecleaning, which many of us had never attempted. Though our decision was a vital and crucial step, it could have little permanent effect unless at once followed by a strenuous effort to face, and be rid of, the things in ourselves which had been blocking us.

Ah, the recovery waltz,
one, two, three, oops,
one, two, three, oops.
Important Steps, to be sure,
but the first three
feel safer, less exposed, kinder
than the road ahead.
So we linger, cover fundamentals
again and another time.
We risk, though,
blocking ourselves,
cutting ourselves off
from the sunlight of the spirit.
When we move on to
further understanding,
we're closer still to
promises
fulfilled.

God, give me the courage to face my fears,
to move to what seems treacherous ground,
knowing you hold my hand on the walk
to bliss.



Hebrews 6:4-6 (NIV)

It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 32

Then he fell victim to a belief which practically every alcoholic has – that his long period of sobriety and self-discipline had qualified him to drink as other men. Out came his carpet slippers and a bottle. In two months he was in a hospital, puzzled and humiliated. He tried to regulate his drinking for a while, making several trips to the hospital meantime. Then, gathering all his forces, he attempted to stop altogether and found he could not.

Recovery – so glorious,
the most important thing in my life —
joy beyond joy, peace beyond peace.
New vistas open, new challenges;
courage enhanced by program,
I move forward.

Reading? Meditation?
Calls? Meetings?
Sure. So very important —
but first I must...
then there's...

Recovery – so glorious.
How did it slip away?
Why can't I pull it back?
I've tasted the manna from heaven.
Where did it go?
I'm powerless.

God, all things are possible
for you. Thanks for reeling me back in.
I pray for those standing at the doors,
wanting back in. Give them the courage to ask.



Hebrews 6:7-8 (NLT)

When the ground soaks up the falling rain and bears a good crop for the farmer, it has God's blessing. But if a field bears thorns and thistles, it is useless. The farmer will soon condemn that field and burn it.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 96

We find it a waste of time to keep chasing a man who cannot or will not work with you. If you leave such a person alone, he may soon become convinced that he cannot recover by himself. To spend too much time on any one situation is to deny some other alcoholic an opportunity to live and be happy.

Let me love him
until he can love himself.
But convince me I can't save him,
can't pull him to joy, to peace,
can't push him to right thinking,
can't help him
because I decide to.
When he's stuck in thorns
and thistles,
I make it worse
when I try to pull him out.
I do best if I let the thorns
and thistles burn out.

God, stop me when kindness intended
is damage inflicted.



Hebrews 6:9-12 (NIV)

Even though we speak like this, dear friends, we are confident of better things in your case – things that accompany salvation. God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them. We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure. We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 98

Burn the idea into the consciousness of every man that he can get well regardless of anyone. The only condition is that he trust in God and clean house.

The only condition
has an “and” in it.

But a cynical analytical attitude isn’t the one
that gets God trusted *and* the house clean.

We are not to be lazy
but imitate those
who got where we want to be
who have recovery.

Act as if and it will be.

Diligence to the end,
clean house.

It’s not just, “Let go
and

let God” —

not if I expect God to
work in the background
on auto.

I have to be there, willing
to know his will,
willing for the power
to carry it out.

God, teach me to believe.
Give me surrender and diligence.



Hebrews 6:13-17 (NIV)

When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for him to swear by, he swore by himself, saying, “I will surely bless you and give you many descendants.” And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised.

Men swear by someone greater than themselves, and the oath confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument. Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 50

Here are thousands of men and women, worldly indeed. They flatly declare that since they have come to believe in a Power greater than themselves, to take a certain attitude toward that Power, and to do certain simple things, there has been a revolutionary change in their way of living and thinking. In the face of collapse and despair, in the face of total failure of their human resources, they found that a new power, peace, happiness, and sense of direction flowed into them.

Funny.
You have to believe
there's a god
and you're not it.
Unless you're God.
But I'm not.
I can't swear on me
'cause I can't deliver
but thank God, I don't need to.
I show up, suit up,
do what God says,
and leave the results to him.
Works for me.
Yeah! It *works* for me.

God, relieve me of the bondage of self
that I may better do your will.



Hebrews 6:18-20 (NLT)

So God has given both his promise and his oath. These two things are unchangeable because it is impossible for God to lie. Therefore, we who have fled to him for refuge can have great confidence as we hold to the hope that lies before us. This hope is a strong and trustworthy anchor for our souls. It leads us through the curtain into God's inner sanctuary. Jesus has already gone in there for us. He has become our eternal High Priest in the order of Melchizedek.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 65

Nothing counted but thoroughness and honesty.

It's impossible for God
to lie.

Well, I'm better at that than
God – if being able to is better
but it's not. I know.

I've lived that life, lived that lie.
I don't want to ever return there.

Honesty is the anchor,
the key to God's inner sanctuary,
and I'm welcome there!

God wants my honesty,
my soul laid bare before him,
he knows my secrets,
loves me anyway,
and sends me people
who incarnate
such love.

God, make me honest with you,
with others,
and with myself.

Hebrews Chapter Seven



Hebrews 7:1-3 (NLT)

This Melchizedek was king of the city of Salem and also a priest of God Most High. When Abraham was returning home after winning a great battle against the kings, Melchizedek met him and blessed him. Then Abraham took a tenth of all he had captured in battle and gave it to Melchizedek. The name Melchizedek means “king of justice,” and king of Salem means “king of peace.” There is no record of his father or mother or any of his ancestors – no beginning or end to his life. He remains a priest forever, resembling the Son of God.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 46

Much to our relief, we discovered we did not need to consider another’s conception of God. Our own conception, however inadequate, was sufficient to make the approach and to effect a contact with Him. As soon as we admitted the possible existence of a Creative Intelligence, a Spirit of the Universe underlying the totality of things, we began to be possessed of a new sense of power and direction, provided we took other simple steps.

“Howard,” Howard be thy name,
“GUS,” Guy UpStairs,
“Charlie,”
“The Universe,”
“Mother Nature,”
“The Great Spirit.”
Melchizedek?

Makes me think of the teacher
whose swear word was
Shostakovich, the Russian composer.
A rose by any other name,
God is God,
either is or is not,
but is.

Salem. Jerusalem to us.
Holy is holy is holy.
We’re all walking on holy ground.
Take off your shoes,
and get comfortable with
the power greater than all power.

God of no beginning, no end,
no limits to power
or to love,
thank you for loving me!



Hebrews 7:4-6 (NIV)

Just think how great he was: Even the patriarch Abraham gave him a tenth of the plunder! Now the law requires the descendants of Levi who become priests to collect a tenth from the people – that is, their brothers – even though their brothers are descended from Abraham. This man, however, did not trace his descent from Levi, yet he collected a tenth from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 84

Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us... Are these extravagant promises? We think not. They are being fulfilled among us – sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialize if we work for them.

Abraham had promises.

So do we.

Abraham had plunder? Funny.

We have plunder? Not funny.

Amends time? We had plunder,
not now.

But we have the promises.

And willingness to make amends
can make it possible to make
amends.

Blessings

trump plunder

any time.

God, walk me through the fear
to the promises.



Hebrews 7:7-10 (NLT)

And without question, the person who has the power to give a blessing is greater than the one who is blessed.

The priests who collect tithes are men who die, so Melchizedek is greater than they are, because we are told that he lives on. In addition, we might even say that these Levites – the ones who collect the tithe – paid a tithe to Melchizedek when their ancestor Abraham paid a tithe to him. For although Levi wasn't born yet, the seed from which he came was in Abraham's body when Melchizedek collected the tithe from him.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Pages 56-57

Thus was our friend's cornerstone fixed in place. No later vicissitude has shaken it. His alcoholic problem was taken away. That very night, years ago, it disappeared. Save for a few brief moments of temptation the thought of drink has never returned; and at such times a great revulsion has risen up in him. Seemingly he could not drink even if he would. God had restored his sanity.

Miracles prove
the maker of miracles.
Rooms of recovery
rebound with proof,
echo the praise
of the Power who heals,
of the hope,
of the promises
fulfilled,
of the promises yet
to transpire.
Without question
that which I sought,
the desires and longings
of Justin, Jane, Janet, and Jack
miraculously fashioned
demonstrate a power
greater than I am,
greater than we are,
greater than humanity.

God, thanks for the proof
even when I don't have Gideon's
faith.



Hebrews 7:11-13 (NIV)

If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the law was given to the people), why was there still need for another priest to come – one in the order of Melchizedek, not in the order of Aaron? For when there is a change of the priesthood, there must also be a change of the law. He of whom these things are said belonged to a different tribe, and no one from that tribe has ever served at the altar.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 42

“...I knew from that moment that I had an alcoholic mind. I saw that will power and self-knowledge would not help in those strange mental blank spots. I had never been able to understand people who said that a problem had them hopelessly defeated. I knew then. It was a crushing blow.”

We know how to recover,
how to lose weight,
to stop drinking,
to just say no.

We're experts on the how,
on the science.

Will-power we have,
in spades most the time,
but with this, the biggy,
it fails. We can't.

Powerless.

Hopeless.

Insane

in our own ability to solve,
to break the chains.

But there is a power that can.

Thanks, Power that can.



Hebrews 7:14-17 (NIV)

For it is clear that our Lord descended from Judah, and in regard to that tribe Moses said nothing about priests. And what we have said is even more clear if another priest like Melchizedek appears, one who has become a priest not on the basis of a regulation as to his ancestry but on the basis of the power of an indestructible life. For it is declared:

“You are a priest forever,
in the order of Melchizedek.”



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 27

“Exceptions to cases such as yours have been occurring since early times. Here and there, once in a while, alcoholics have had what are called vital spiritual experiences. To me these occurrences are phenomena. They appear to be in the nature of huge emotional displacements and rearrangements.”

Reliable testimony.

Established procedures.

Standard protocol.

Expectations.

Outside the box.

Exceptions to the rule.

Innovative methods.

Miracles.

Phenomena.

Not on the basis of regulation

but on the basis of the power
of an indestructible life.

Huge emotional displacements.

Rearrangements.

Miracles.

Recovery!

God, normal doesn't work

for me. I've proven it.

Thanks for the miracles.



Hebrews 7:18-21 (NLT)

Yes, the old requirement about the priesthood was set aside because it was weak and useless. For the law never made anything perfect. But now we have confidence in a better hope, through which we draw near to God.

This new system was established with a solemn oath. Aaron's descendants became priests without such an oath, but there was an oath regarding Jesus. For God said to him,

“The Lord has taken an oath and will not break his
VOW:
‘You are a priest forever.’”



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 31

Here are some of the methods we have tried: Drinking beer only, limiting the number of drinks, never drinking alone, never drinking in the morning, drinking only at home, never having it in the house, never drinking during business hours, drinking only at parties, switching from scotch to brandy, drinking only natural wines, agreeing to resign if ever drunk on the job, taking a trip, not taking a trip, swearing off forever (with and without a solemn oath), taking more physical exercise, reading inspirational books, going to health farms and sanitariums, accepting voluntary commitment to asylums – we could increase the list ad infinitum.

A solemn oath
is a solemn oath
but some are useless,
others eternal.
I swore I would but I didn't.
I swore I could but I couldn't.
Rules and laws never made perfect,
but hope exists,
hope with a new system,
established by one who can keep
a solemn oath,
made by one who never breaks his vow,
a hope, a promise
forever.

God, my will's useless,
abused, maimed, denigrated.
I give it to you
gladly.



Hebrews 7:22-25 (NIV)

Because of this oath, Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.

Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 58

Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path. Those who do not recover are people who cannot or will not completely give themselves to this simple program, usually men and women who are constitutionally incapable of being honest with themselves.

Completely.
Not a plurality,
not more likely than not,
not clear and convincing evidence,
not even proof beyond a reasonable doubt.

Completely.
A hundred ten percent.
Cannot completely give
self to Steps,
can't be honest
even to the committee
in the mind.
Completely hopeless.
But letting go,
surrender —
surrender to one whose
completely works,
saves us from
self,
saves us to
life.

God, I surrender all.
Completely



Hebrews 7:26-28 (NLT)

He is the kind of high priest we need because he is holy and blameless, unstained by sin. He has been set apart from sinners and has been given the highest place of honor in heaven. Unlike those other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices every day. They did this for their own sins first and then for the sins of the people. But Jesus did this once for all when he offered himself as the sacrifice for the people's sins. The law appointed high priests who were limited by human weakness. But after the law was given, God appointed his Son with an oath, and his Son has been made the perfect High Priest forever.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 12

Thus was I convinced that God is concerned with us humans when we want Him enough. At long last I saw, I felt, I believed. Scales of pride and prejudice fell from my eyes. A new world came into view.

When we want him enough!?
How much more could I want him —
I begged, pleaded, bartered,
ranted, raged, rebelled,
ignored, cadged, beseeched,
supplicated,
pestered,
sacrificed for,
badmouthed —
I sought him every way I could.
It didn't work.
Until pride and prejudice sloughed off,
until I wanted him badly enough
to give up.

God, show me so I can see,
touch me so I can feel,
love me until I believe.

Hebrews Chapter Eight



Hebrews 8:1-2 (NLT)

Here is the main point: We have a High Priest who sat down in the place of honor beside the throne of the majestic God in heaven. There he ministers in the heavenly Tabernacle, the true place of worship that was built by the Lord and not by human hands.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 11

The wars which had been fought, the burnings and chicanery that religious dispute had facilitated, made me sick. I honestly doubted whether, on balance, the religions of mankind had done any good. Judging from what I had seen in Europe and since, the power of God in human affairs was negligible, the Brotherhood of Man a grim jest. If there was a Devil, he seemed the Boss Universal, and he certainly had me.

Heaven – high above,
distant, apart, away.
The antithesis of Earth,
Nothing in common with wars,
burnings, chicanery.
Negligible connections.
Heaven – nothing to do
with life on Earth —
except everything!
What love, what grace
pulls even a thought
from perfection
to chicanery, to squalor,
to me?

Amazing grace,
how sweet the sound
that saved a wretch like me!



Hebrews 8:3-5 (NLT)

And since every high priest is required to offer gifts and sacrifices, our High Priest must make an offering, too. If he were here on earth, he would not even be a priest, since there already are priests who offer the gifts required by the law. They serve in a system of worship that is only a copy, a shadow of the real one in heaven. For when Moses was getting ready to build the Tabernacle, God gave him this warning: “Be sure that you make everything according to the pattern I have shown you here on the mountain.”



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 14

My friend had emphasized the absolute necessity of demonstrating these principles in all my affairs. Particularly was it imperative to work with others as he had worked with me. Faith without works was dead, he said.

Patterns,
rules,
recipes,
curriculum —
tough as heck for me
to follow – I can't teach
a lesson plan I wrote myself!

Principles,
proposals,
suggestions,
Steps —
I want to follow, want to realize
the absolute necessity, the imperatives.

But I can't teach
a lesson plan I wrote myself,
can't cook with exactly the ingredients
written down.

I know I need to read, to listen, to accept, to
surrender.

But that's so tough.
I can't teach my own curriculum.

God who made the pattern,
give me the fortitude to follow it!



Hebrews 8:6-7 (NIV)

But in fact the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, since the new covenant is established on better promises.

For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 124

Henry Ford once made a wise remark to the effect that experience is the thing of supreme value in life. That is true only if one is willing to turn the past to good account. We grow by our willingness to face and rectify errors and convert them into assets.

Mistakes are made
for learning from,
for growing past,
for building on.
Lives once wrecked
and wretched
wield wondrous
hope to pilgrims
anxious to emulate
the footfalls, to follow
step by step
in the trek
to recovery.

God, take my life and let it be
redemptive in your hands
for others
who see themselves mirrored.



Hebrews 8:8-9 (NIV)

But God found fault with the people and said

“The time is coming, declares the Lord,
when I will make a new covenant
with the house of Israel
and with the house of Judah.
It will not be like the covenant
I made with their forefathers
when I took them by the hand
to lead them out of Egypt,
because they did not remain faithful to my covenant,
and I turned away from them, declares the Lord.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 54

Did we not have confidence in our ability to think? What was that but a sort of faith? Yes, we had been faithful, abjectly faithful to the God of Reason. So, in one way or another, we discovered that faith had been involved all the time!

We found, too, that we had been worshippers. What a state of mental goose-flesh that used to bring on! Had we not variously worshipped people, sentiment, things, money, and ourselves? And then, with a better motive, had we not worshipfully beheld the sunset, the sea, or a flower? Who of us had not loved something or somebody? How much did these feelings, these loves, these worships, have to do with pure reason? Little or nothing, we saw at last. Were not these things the tissue out of which our lives were constructed? Did not these feelings, after all, determine the course of our existence? It was impossible to say we had no capacity for faith, or love, or worship. In one form or another we had been living by faith and little else.

Imagine life without faith!

Faithful.

Full of faith.

Full of confidence

in someone, something.

Can fear survive

absent faith? Wouldn't the void

be filled with resignation,

apathy, lethargy,

not fear?

Fear demands a counterweight,

a worthy opposite,

not some wimpy

void.

Maybe having so much fear

benefits,

makes faith easier to find,

builds capacity for faith.

God, can you really use the fear?

Is that why I have so much? Wow. Awesome!



Hebrews 8:10-13 (NLT)

“But this is the new covenant I will make
 with the people of Israel on that day, says the Lord:
 I will put my laws in their minds,
 and I will write them on their hearts.
 I will be their God,
 and they will be my people.
 And they will not need to teach their neighbors,
 nor will they need to teach their relatives,
 saying, ‘You should know the Lord.’
 For everyone, from the least to the greatest,
 will know me already.
 And I will forgive their wickedness,
 and I will never again remember their sins.”

When God speaks of a “new” covenant, it means he has made the first one obsolete. It is now out of date and will soon disappear.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Pages 160-161

The very practical approach to his problems, the absence of intolerance of any kind, the informality, the genuine democracy, the uncanny understanding which these people had were irresistible. He and his wife would leave elated by the thought of what they could now do for some stricken acquaintance and his family. They knew they had a host of new friends; it seemed they had known these strangers always. They had seen miracles, and one was to come to them. They had visioned the Great Reality – their loving and All Powerful Creator.

Old we knew, comfortable
like worn-out slippers,
though holes let pebbles through,
and tattered strings snagged
dust balls, scattered leaves.

A glance at new
melts out-of-date illusions
shows the tatters we wear,
makes us anxious to reach for better,
newer, right
we never knew we'd want.

God, open my eyes to what I settle for.
Show me what I should reach for.

Hebrews Chapter Nine



Hebrews 9:1-3 (NLT)

That first covenant between God and Israel had regulations for worship and a place of worship here on earth. There were two rooms in that Tabernacle. In the first room were a lampstand, a table, and sacred loaves of bread on the table. This room was called the Holy Place. Then there was a curtain, and behind the curtain was the second room called the Most Holy Place.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 87

Nevertheless, we find that our thinking will, as time passes, be more and more on the plane of inspiration. We come to rely upon it.

What a holy place
these rooms seem,
as we enter to find ourselves
at home
where we've never been
before.

Wondrous, love incarnate,
understanding, soul mates.
How holy do these rooms feel,
spiced with years of
memories, recovery
glowing with a fine
patina.

These holy rooms
grow more holy
as more is revealed.

Holy, holy, holy,
holy is your name.

Thank you for sharing your name
with your children.



Hebrews 9:4-5 (NLT)

In that room were a gold incense altar and a wooden chest called the Ark of the Covenant, which was covered with gold on all sides. Inside the Ark were a gold jar containing manna, Aaron's staff that sprouted leaves, and the stone tablets of the covenant. Above the Ark were the cherubim of divine glory, whose wings stretched out over the Ark's cover, the place of atonement. But we cannot explain these things in detail now.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 64

Taking a commercial inventory is a fact-finding and a fact-facing process. It is an effort to discover the truth about the stock-in-trade. One object is to disclose damaged or unsalable goods, to get rid of them promptly and without regret.

Incense altar, Ark of the Covenant,
Aaron's staff, manna,
Ten Commandments, (second edition —
replacing smashed first set).

Last year's must-have
Christmas gift,
the gadget ready to
storm the market —
five years back,
the new electronic
masterpiece
that has them lined up
out the door.

Stuff. Just things,
though priceless or
out-of-date
discardables.

When things attain preeminence
it's time to
set them all aside
without regret.

God, let me never put
anything ahead of
my need for a closer
relationship with you.



Hebrews 9:6-8 (NIV)

When everything had been arranged like this, the priests entered regularly into the outer room to carry on their ministry. But only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance. The Holy Spirit was showing by this that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still functioning.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 6

Nevertheless, I still thought I could control the situation, and there were periods of sobriety which renewed my wife's hope.

Still: up to and including
the present time;
even now.

The time of hope
before the change,
before it comes,
before recovery.

Maranatha,
come, Lord Jesus.
Bring the change,
make it happen,
I crave recovery,
thirst for the change —
¡Ojalá que sí!

God, when I still don't get it,
show me how to be still and seek it.



Hebrews 9:9-10 (NIV)

This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper. They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings – external regulations applying until the time of the new order.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 28

We, in our turn, sought the same escape with all the desperation of drowning men. What seemed at first a flimsy reed, has proved to be the loving and powerful hand of God. A new life has been given us or, if you prefer, “a design for living” that really works.

Easter.

New life, resurrection,
new birth,

a design for living that works!

Only looking back can I see how hard

I tried, how many ways I attempted

to claim sanity,

to heal myself.

My gifts, my sacrifices,

my determination

were only ceremonial,

just lame attempts

flimsy reeds.

Useful for seeing how great this is,

for relating to others still clinging

to flimsy reeds.

God, you sought me

when I was too busy to find you.

Thanks for the patience.



Hebrews 9:11-13 (NLT)

So Christ has now become the High Priest over all the good things that have come. He has entered that greater, more perfect Tabernacle in heaven, which was not made by human hands and is not part of this created world. With his own blood – not the blood of goats and calves – he entered the Most Holy Place once for all time and secured our redemption forever.

Under the old system, the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a young cow could cleanse people's bodies from ceremonial impurity.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 69

We reviewed our own conduct over the years past. Where had we been selfish, dishonest, or inconsiderate? Whom had we hurt? Did we unjustifiably arouse jealousy, suspicion or bitterness? Where were we at fault, what should we have done instead? We got this all down on paper and looked at it.

Guilt.

Insidious, invidious, hideous
guilt.

Like Lady Macbeth haunted by Duncan's blood
guilt

permeates, paralyzes, persists.

How can we cleanse ourselves?

How can the guilt be relieved?

By facing what we did,
by understanding,
admitting,
amending.

Thanks be to God
for ways to move past guilt
to glory.



Hebrews 9:14-15 (NIV)

How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance – now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 83

So we clean house with the family, asking each morning in meditation that our Creator show us the way of patience, tolerance, kindness and love.

A personal housecleaning
ridding my life not just
of pesky clutter,
undone to-do lists,
well-aged New Years Resolutions,
but of deadly stuff,
acid eating away
at my heart, at my lungs,
at my being.
Fear, hate, envy,
self-loathing,
if-only's,
shattered shoulds,
fractured woulds,
the lethal stuff
I've hauled around
all these years.

Create in me a clean heart,
O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.
Do not cast me away from Your presence,
and do not take Your holy spirit from me.*

* Psalm 51:10-11 (NASB)



Hebrews 9:16-17 (NLT)

Now when someone leaves a will, it is necessary to prove that the person who made it is dead. The will goes into effect only after the person's death. While the person who made it is still alive, the will cannot be put into effect.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 11

Doctors had pronounced him incurable. Society was about to lock him up. Like myself, he had admitted complete defeat. Then he had, in effect, been raised from the dead, suddenly taken from the scrap heap to a level of life better than the best he had ever known!

Jesus told Nicodemus
he had to be born again.
He said flesh comes from flesh,
spirit from spirit.
God so loved he gave his son.
Just believe – no more – and
Spirit gives spirit where flesh condemns.
We've turned away from light,
loving darkness, doing evil.
Fear blocks the light.
Just believing,
being ready to live by truth,
walks into light,
in the light,
seeing miracles,
living miracles.*

God, my fear is huge,
but it's not larger than your light.
I believe.
I believe!

*John, Chapter 3



Hebrews 9:18-22 (NLT)

That is why even the first covenant was put into effect with the blood of an animal. For after Moses had read each of God's commandments to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, along with water, and sprinkled both the book of God's law and all the people, using hyssop branches and scarlet wool. Then he said, "This blood confirms the covenant God has made with you." And in the same way, he sprinkled blood on the Tabernacle and on everything used for worship. In fact, according to the law of Moses, nearly everything was purified with blood. For without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 77

It is harder to go to an enemy than to a friend, but we find it much more beneficial to us. We go to him in a helpful and forgiving spirit, confessing our former ill feeling and expressing our regret.

“Forgive us our sins
as we have forgiven those
who sin against us.”

I’d rather shed blood
than forgive sometimes —
my own, even, not the blood
of calves or goats.

In fact, I’d rather shed my blood
than kill – or hurt – calves or goats.

I feel so unworthy,
so low, so base
nothing could matter less than me.

Nobody could rank lower.

But this is about forgiveness —
how did I get here, to the ladder rungs?

Who’s sinned against me?

I have. I’ve dismissed me,
shunned me.

I forgive me.

I matter.

God, teach me to accept gifts —
yours, and others’.

Teach me to reach out when I need help.



Hebrews 9:23-26 (NIV)

It was necessary, then, for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 93

But he will be curious to learn why his own convictions have not worked and why yours seem to work so well. He may be an example of the truth that faith alone is insufficient. To be vital, faith must be accompanied by self sacrifice and unselfish, constructive action.

Faith alone.

Yep, tried that.

Didn't work so well.

And was it self-sacrifice

I lacked?

Unselfishness?

Constructive action?

I sacrificed myself for everybody,
trying to please, trying to win
affection.

Unselfishness? I had no self
exposed, had merged myself
in someone else,
his thoughts, his feeling,
his will.

Constructive action?

Certainly action.

But not unselfish, not other-centered —
not constructive.

God, reconstruct me
so I can find myself in self-sacrifice,
unselfish constructive action.



Hebrews 9:27-28 (KJV)

And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 26

He begged the doctor to tell him the whole truth, and he got it. In the doctor's judgment he was utterly hopeless; he could never regain his position in society and he would have to place himself under lock and key or hire a bodyguard if he expected to live long. That was a great physician's opinion.

Hopelessly doomed.
Appointed to die,
physically maybe – preferably?
Socially certainly.
Loss of freedom, of self-respect,
of life worth living.
Sentenced to nullity
to nothingness.
Suddenly, sentence negated,
nunc pro tunc,
quashed.
Phoenix rising,
regeneration,
hope survives,
soars,
exulting.

I was lost but now am found,
was blind but now I see.
My life is past, Lord.
This one's all yours.

Hebrews Chapter Ten



Hebrews 10:1-4 (NIV)

The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming – not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. If it could, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins, because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 85

It is easy to let up on the spiritual program of action and rest on our laurels. We are headed for trouble if we do, for alcohol is a subtle foe. We are not cured of alcoholism.

Wake praying,
turning life and
living it over to God,
Move through the day
surrendering again then again.

Yesterday's piety
counts for nothing,
commitments coming
tomorrow, next year,
fifty years out
count for nothing.
Today matters, just this day,
just this surrender,
just today's willingness
and peace.

God, I'm an errant toddler
straying from safety,
forgetting the
peace of compliance,
of surrender. Show me.



Hebrews 10:5-10 (NIV)

Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said:

“Sacrifice and offering you did not desire,
but a body you prepared for me;
with burnt offerings and sin offerings
you were not pleased.

Then I said, ‘Here I am – it is written about me in
the scroll —

I have come to do your will, O God.’”

First he said, “Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them” (although the law required them to be made). Then he said, “Here I am, I have come to do your will.” He sets aside the first to establish the second. And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 59

Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

God's will.

God's will, God's will,

God's will!

Te Deum.

Tedium.

Okay. But why the "only" —

I've a perfectly good will,

worked just fine for

most everything,

all but the compulsion.

God's will for that,

mine for the rest!

Why NOT!?

Mine works.

It got me where I am.

Or where I was

when I stumbled into

the rooms of recovery.

Oops. Okay.

God's will.

God, I'm here to help.

But I need help

to remember I'm here to help,

not to lead.



Hebrews 10:11-14 (NLT)

Under the old covenant, the priest stands and ministers before the altar day after day, offering the same sacrifices again and again, which can never take away sins. But our High Priest offered himself to God as a single sacrifice for sins, good for all time. Then he sat down in the place of honor at God's right hand. There he waits until his enemies are humbled and made a footstool under his feet. For by that one offering he forever made perfect those who are being made holy.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 60

No one among us has been able to maintain anything like perfect adherence to these principles. We are not saints. The point is, that we are willing to grow along spiritual lines. The principles we have set down are guides to progress. We claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection.

“Made perfect.”

Past tense.

“Being made holy.”

Present progressive.

The first 100 in A.A.

said they had recovered,
but claim spiritual progress,
not perfection.

I want to be made perfect.

But I resent the continuing efforts
to be made holy.

Can't I have recovery on a silver platter?

Nope. Not if I want progress.

Not if I want to be made holy.

God, I disdain people
who don't try to see to their needs,
to grow. In this,
I seek your help, your will,
to walk your path, not theirs.



Hebrews 10:15-18 (NLT)

And the Holy Spirit also testifies that this is so. For he says,

“This is the new covenant I will make
with my people on that day, says the Lord:
I will put my laws in their hearts,
and I will write them on their minds.”

Then he says,

“I will never again remember
their sins and lawless deeds.”

And when sins have been forgiven, there is no need to offer any more sacrifices.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 70

Our former enemies sometimes praise what we are doing and wish us well. Occasionally, they will offer assistance. It should not matter, however, if someone does throw us out of his office. We have made our demonstration, done our part. It's water over the dam.

Gonna lay down my heavy load
down by the riverside,
amends made —
upfront and honest,
water over the dam.

Guilt has to have a greater density
than osmium, much less lead.

Heavier than a heavy heart,
weight piled on weight with heavy hand
guilt crushes.

How delightful,
lighter than air,
to walk away from guilt,
leaving it with
lighthearted
heartfelt
amends.

For new life,
for release,
for lightness,
thank you, God.



Hebrews 10:19-23 (NIV)

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 153

Our hope is that when this chip of a book is launched on the world tide of alcoholism, defeated drinkers will seize upon it, to follow its suggestions. Many, we are sure, will rise to their feet and march on. They will approach still other sick ones and fellowships of Alcoholics Anonymous may spring up in each city and hamlet, havens for those who must find a way out.

Our hope,
the hope we possess,
our expectation,
our desire,
a person or thing
that may save us.
Hope, for he who
promised is faithful;
hope for a book,
an idea,
a truth.

Hope for others to march on,
hope for a path
through the curtain,
through our uncertainty.
Hope. Eternal hope,
hope proven
by that which others
hoped for before.

Oh, God, our hope
in ages past,
our hope for years to come —
thank you.



Hebrews 10:24-25 (NLT)

Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Pages 159-160

In addition to these casual get-togethers, it became customary to set apart one night a week for a meeting to be attended by anyone or everyone interested in a spiritual way of life. Aside from fellowship and sociability, the prime object was to provide a time and place where new people might bring their problems.

The more we get together
the healthier I am.
No longer an island
staving off oceans,
I'm an integral
part, a drop, a wave,
surrounded by fellows
so like me I know welcome warmth
I couldn't have fathomed to exist.
When I feel like I don't need
a meeting,
a meeting is what
I most need.

God, thanks for meetings.
Help me hold up my end
so the meeting can hold
me.



Hebrews 10:26-31 (NIV)

If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know him who said, “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” and again, “The Lord will judge his people.” It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 154

Of course he couldn't drink, but why not sit hopefully at a table, a bottle of ginger ale before him? After all, had he not been sober six months now? Perhaps he could handle, say, three drinks – no more! Fear gripped him. He was on thin ice. Again it was the old, insidious insanity – that first drink.

Dreadful to fall into God's hands?

Isn't a word missing – a not?

Dreadful to fall, not into the hands

of the living God —

anywhere but into his

will, into his hands.

If he doesn't hold me,

catch me,

I glide

down the slide,

collapse

into relapse,

blaze into malaise.

Hold me, God,

let me rest in your cupped

comfortable

hands.



Hebrews 10:32-35 (NLT)

Think back on those early days when you first learned about Christ. Remember how you remained faithful even though it meant terrible suffering. Sometimes you were exposed to public ridicule and were beaten, and sometimes you helped others who were suffering the same things. You suffered along with those who were thrown into jail, and when all you owned was taken from you, you accepted it with joy. You knew there were better things waiting for you that will last forever.

So do not throw away this confident trust in the Lord. Remember the great reward it brings you!



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 15

We commenced to make many fast friends and a fellowship has grown up among us of which it is a wonderful thing to feel a part. The joy of living we really have, even under pressure and difficulty.

Home.

Home where people know me,
the day we meet.

Home

where love and understanding
infuses frightened
folk.

Home where hope permeates,
where poverty and affliction
fade to faceable,
where perspective
expands to include a horizon
where dreams come true.

God, thank you for
community, for friends,
for human acceptance.



Hebrews 10:36-38 (NIV)

You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.

For,

“In just a little while,
he who is coming will come
and will not delay.”

And,

“But my righteous one will live by faith.
And I take no pleasure
in the one who shrinks back.”



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 85

It just comes! That is the miracle of it. We are not fighting it, neither are we avoiding temptation. We feel as though we had been placed in a position of neutrality – safe and protected. We have not even sworn off. Instead, the problem has been removed. It does not exist for us. We are neither cocky nor are we afraid. That is our experience. That is how we react so long as we keep in fit spiritual condition.

God's will,
every day, one day at a time,
we persevere.

Persevere? Continue
through difficulty, perhaps
without hope of success?
Why persevere? Certainly
a daily commitment.

But hope? Hope abounds.

Hope's promised.

Hope's delivered.

We keep on keeping on
for the hope.

God, show me your will
for me today,
and give me power to carry
it out.

Hebrews Chapter Eleven



Hebrews 11:1-3 (KJV)

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

For by it the elders obtained a good report.

Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 16

Faith has to work twenty-four hours a day in and through us, or we perish.

The elders obtained a good report.
How many people have stayed
in the rooms, waiting for a miracle
based on the substance – the import —
of things hoped for,
evidenced by recovery in others.
Evidence of potential miracles
can be peace in a face,
serenity in a life,
potential incarnate
in the formerly hopeless.
We may never see these hoped for things,
yet want what these folks have.

God, grant me faith,
give me courage to demand
nothing more, wisdom
to know that's all I need.



Hebrews 11:4-6 (NIV)

By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith he still speaks, even though he is dead.

By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death; he could not be found, because God had taken him away. For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 50

Whether we agree with a particular approach or conception seems to make little difference. Experience has taught us that these are matters about which, for our purpose, we need not be worried. They are questions for each individual to settle for himself.

So does it matter if the one
beside me
is the same kind of different as me?
If they work their program
in ways I can't see,
does the different different hurt?

No, of course not —
but certainly!

What different different do we mean?
Different Steps? Different surrender?
There's a difference in differents here.

God, make me a purist where it matters,
tolerant – and trusting – when it's
none of my business.



Hebrews 11:7-10 (NLT)

It was by faith that Noah built a large boat to save his family from the flood. He obeyed God, who warned him about things that had never happened before. By his faith Noah condemned the rest of the world, and he received the righteousness that comes by faith.

It was by faith that Abraham obeyed when God called him to leave home and go to another land that God would give him as his inheritance. He went without knowing where he was going. And even when he reached the land God promised him, he lived there by faith – for he was like a foreigner, living in tents. And so did Isaac and Jacob, who inherited the same promise. Abraham was confidently looking forward to a city with eternal foundations, a city designed and built by God.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 62

This is the how and why of it. First of all, we had to quit playing God. It didn't work. Next, we decided that hereafter in this drama of life, God was going to be our Director. He is the Principal; we are His agents. He is the Father, and we are His children. Most good ideas are simple, and this concept was the keystone of the new and triumphant arch through which we passed to freedom.

I don't want to do that.
I really don't want to do that.
Would you believe REALLY??
I asked her to sponsor me,
not to boss my life.
Isn't there an easier, softer way?
No? Tried before?
I know. They call it faith.
They call it act as if.
They have what I want.
I want faith, I want recovery, I want serenity,
I want what they have.
I'll do what they say to do
but I don't have to want to,
do I?

God, I'm willing to be willing
to walk these Steps.



Hebrews 11:11-12 (NLT)

It was by faith that even Sarah was able to have a child, though she was barren and was too old. She believed that God would keep his promise. And so a whole nation came from this one man who was as good as dead – a nation with so many people that, like the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore, there is no way to count them.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 162

Some day we hope that every alcoholic who journeys will find a Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous at his destination. To some extent this is already true. Some of us are salesmen and go about. Little clusters of twos and threes and fives of us have sprung up in other communities, through contact with our two larger centers...

[Note to 4th edition: “Written in 1939. In 2003, there are over 103,000 groups. There is A.A. activity in approximately 150 countries, with an estimated membership of over two million.”]

What I desire so desperately
for me
moves through me,
never stopping,
including me into
the swelling tide,
the growing multitude,
the fellowship of grateful
recipients of the
healing stream,
a stream that benefits the whole,
those before, those to come,
those yet unborn
who find in
movement
hope and home.

God, thanks for the seed
growing to a mighty tree
then into a forest.
Use me to swell the flow.



Hebrews 11:13-16 (NLT)

All these people died still believing what God had promised them. They did not receive what was promised, but they saw it all from a distance and welcomed it. They agreed that they were foreigners and nomads here on earth. Obviously people who say such things are looking forward to a country they can call their own. If they had longed for the country they came from, they could have gone back. But they were looking for a better place, a heavenly homeland. That is why God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 152

Yes, there is a substitute and it is vastly more than that. It is a fellowship in Alcoholics Anonymous. There you will find release from care, boredom and worry. Your imagination will be fired. Life will mean something at last. The most satisfactory years of your existence lie ahead.

A city prepared,
a fellowship to fire imagination,
most satisfactory
for years and years.
Initial relief,
pink cloud
or bare knuckle,
evolving to
serenity,
peace,
joy,
fulfillment,
and promises come true.
Intuitively,
we thrive.

God, your promises are unbelievable
until we find ourselves living them.



Hebrews 11:17-19 (NLT)

It was by faith that Abraham offered Isaac as a sacrifice when God was testing him. Abraham, who had received God's promises, was ready to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, even though God had told him, "Isaac is the son through whom your descendants will be counted." Abraham reasoned that if Isaac died, God was able to bring him back to life again. And in a sense, Abraham did receive his son back from the dead.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 138

The only answer I could make was that if the man followed the usual pattern, he would go on a bigger bust than ever. I felt this was inevitable and wondered if the bank was doing the man an injustice. Why not bring him into contact with some of our alcoholic crowd? He might have a chance. I pointed out that I had had nothing to drink whatever for three years, and this in the face of difficulties that would have made nine out of ten men drink their heads off. Why not at least afford him an opportunity to hear my story?

More than I can bear
is not more than I can bear
when my walk
is not a lonely trail,
a solitary trial,
but accompanying
my God.

The unthinkable happens
but I'm not in charge.

Powerless, I turn to Power
and surrender
my will
with my fears,
with my tears,
with my way unclear,
and find
answers and comfort near.

Tame my fears,
take them,
and lead me to what you would
have me
be.



Hebrews 11:20-22 (NIV)

By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future.

By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons, and worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff.

By faith Joseph, when his end was near, spoke about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and gave instructions about his bones.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 68

The verdict of the ages is that faith means courage. All men of faith have courage. They trust their God. We never apologize for God. Instead we let Him demonstrate, through us, what He can do.

Sightless.

Sight unseen.

Doing what we're told
when it feels insane,
insanity itself.

Trusting what we can't see,
going against every single instinct,
every cogent thought.

Clinging to faith when
there's nothing else
to hold on to.

Faith means courage.
Courage comes only
when I let go and know
I'm not in charge,
that I don't have to
have courage.

God, the gift of faith
cannot be imagined when I don't have it.
Living without it can't be imagined
otherwise.



Hebrews 11:23-28 (NIV)

By faith Moses' parents hid him for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king's edict.

By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward. By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible. By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 53

Arrived at this point, we were squarely confronted with the question of faith. We couldn't duck the issue.

We persevere,
seeing him who is
invisible.

We see him in men and women,
in serendipity we know is
God's hand,
his gentle touch.

We see him in
insane lives made useful,
productive,
exemplary.

We see him in
relationships healed,
in lives made whole,
in miracles
galore.

Thank you for being visible in people
until we can see the invisible
by faith.



Hebrews 11:29-31 (NLT)

It was by faith that the people of Israel went right through the Red Sea as though they were on dry ground. But when the Egyptians tried to follow, they were all drowned.

It was by faith that the people of Israel marched around Jericho for seven days, and the walls came crashing down.

It was by faith that Rahab the prostitute was not destroyed with the people in her city who refused to obey God. For she had given a friendly welcome to the spies.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 62

Above everything, we alcoholics must be rid of this selfishness. We must, or it kills us! God makes that possible. And there often seems no way of entirely getting rid of self without His aid.

I can do it myself!
So natural, young children
proclaim it.
So inherent in our approach
to living, the need to
show you, to show myself,
to show off.
How can I dare
trust, release,
how can I let it go?
How can I not be in charge
of this decision,
of this relationship,
of my life?
How?
By faith.

God, give me faith
and the humility
to rely on faith
and on you.



Hebrews 11:32-34(NIV)

And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 158

That afternoon he put on his clothes and walked from the hospital a free man. He entered a political campaign, making speeches, frequenting men's gathering places of all sorts, often staying up all night. He lost the race by only a narrow margin. But he had found God – and in finding God had found himself.

That was in June, 1935. He never drank again. He too, has become a respected and useful member of his community.

Too many to tell of,
the miracles,
the lives reclaimed,
the acts of courage,
the contributions to the world.

A single story can move me
but when I know too many more
could be told to sit and hear,
that's even more special,
more indicative
of the hope out there
for me.

For those who walked this way before,
thank you, God. For their faith,
for their lives,
for their example.



Hebrews 11:35-39 (NIV)

Women received back their dead, raised to life again. Others were tortured and refused to be released, so that they might gain a better resurrection. Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated – the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground.

These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised. God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 27

“Here and there, once in a while, alcoholics have had what are called vital spiritual experiences. To me these occurrences are phenomena. They appear to be in the nature of huge emotional displacements and rearrangements. Ideas, emotions, and attitudes which were once the guiding forces of the lives of these men are suddenly cast to one side, and a completely new set of conceptions and motives begin to dominate them. In fact, I have been trying to produce some such emotional rearrangement within you... but I have never been successful with an alcoholic of your description.”

Did cavemen know
they lived too early?
Did medieval man
know he could have waited
for air conditioning and
flush toilets?
Do I look back on wasted years,
knowing I found the
rooms of recovery late?
Did I know then something better
would come?
What will life be like in a thousand years?
We can't worry about yesterday
or tomorrow.
We can't long for history
or the future.
God comes at our own right time.

God, I trust your timing. Thanks.

Hebrews Chapter Twelve



Hebrews 12:1-2 (NASB)

Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 160

Many a man, yet dazed from his hospital experience, has stepped over the threshold of that home into freedom. Many an alcoholic who entered there came away with an answer. He succumbed to that gay crowd inside, who laughed at their own misfortunes and understood his. Impressed by those who visited him at the hospital, he capitulated entirely when, later, in an upper room of this house, he heard the story of some man whose experience closely tallied with his own. The expression on the faces of the women, that indefinable something in the eyes of the men, the stimulating and electric atmosphere of the place, conspired to let him know that here was haven at last.

So great a cloud
of witnesses,
saints preceding,
people of faith,
A Cloud of Witnesses
through ages and eons —
people who know the rigors of the path,
watching for us to
shed our baggage,
take off and run – or fly
for the joy set before us,
for the promises,
the hope
pulling those
after us into
the cloud of witnesses.

Thank you, God, for saints
surrounding me with love.



Hebrews 12:3-6 (NLT)

Think of all the hostility he endured from sinful people; then you won't become weary and give up. After all, you have not yet given your lives in your struggle against sin.

And have you forgotten the encouraging words God spoke to you as his children? He said,

“My child, don't make light of the Lord's discipline,
and don't give up when he corrects you.

For the Lord disciplines those he loves,
and he punishes each one he accepts as his
child.”



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 79

Reminding ourselves that we have decided to go to any lengths to find a spiritual experience, we ask that we be given strength and direction to do the right thing, no matter what the personal consequences may be. We may lose our position or reputation or face jail, but we are willing. We have to be. We must not shrink at anything.

Offer myself to thee,
any lengths,
not my will but thine.
So far from natural, normal,
as I've always understood
natural, normal.
So unlike my impulses.
So right when I finally give up, surrender,
lay down my weapons,
my plan, my intelligence,
my control,
my life
and trust.

God, let it be true,
I will not shrink at anything.
Thy will be done.
Not mine.



Hebrews 12:7-11 (NIV)

Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 88

It works – it really does.

We alcoholics are undisciplined. So we let God discipline us in the simple way we have just outlined.

“I’m only doing this
for your own good.”
“This hurts me worse than you.”
“Because I say so, that’s why!”
Discipline. I respected my parents
for discipline.
“When I say jump, jump and ask
how high on the way up.”
God disciplines,
perfect discipline,
perfect guidance through tough times,
not imperfect like any human parent’s.
When we respect it,
we thrive.

God, I know my bumbling mistakes
hurt you – and me.
Thanks for guiding me
in better paths.



Hebrews 12:12-13 (NLT)

So take a new grip with your tired hands and strengthen your weak knees. Mark out a straight path for your feet so that those who are weak and lame will not fall but become strong.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 95

Never talk down to an alcoholic from any moral or spiritual hilltop; simply lay out the kit of spiritual tools for his inspection. Show him how they worked with you. Offer him friendship and fellowship. Tell him that if he wants to get well you will do anything to help.

As I reach back
to help you up the hill,
I see where I am, where I've been,
how far I've come.

As I share wise words
shared by others who came before me,
they echo in my head,
the very thing I need to hear.

I share with you my path
and for the first time see
those obstacles I passed
provided necessary strength for
others further on.

By showing you the path,
I find my way.

God, thanks for teaching me
in sneaky ways,
puzzles for my mind.



Hebrews 12:14-17 (NLT)

Work at living in peace with everyone, and work at living a holy life, for those who are not holy will not see the Lord. Look after each other so that none of you fails to receive the grace of God. Watch out that no poisonous root of bitterness grows up to trouble you, corrupting many. Make sure that no one is immoral or godless like Esau, who traded his birthright as the firstborn son for a single meal. You know that afterward, when he wanted his father's blessing, he was rejected. It was too late for repentance, even though he begged with bitter tears.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 64

Resentment is the “number one” offender. It destroys more alcoholics than anything else. From it stem all forms of spiritual disease, for we have been not only mentally and physically ill, we have been spiritually sick. When the spiritual malady is overcome, we straighten out mentally and physically.

How often I've
masticated
the poisonous root
of bitterness,
fretting away hours resenting
the air you breathe.
How often I've seen your
insidious habits,
hated them,
ridiculed them,
abhorred them
until I recognized them in me.
I've begged with bitter tears.
Yet when I got honest,
admitted I might have contributed —
the lion's share —
then I saw peace,
received grace.

God, give those who trouble me
all the blessings I want in my own
life.



Hebrews 12:18-21 (NLT)

You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire; to darkness, gloom and storm; to a trumpet blast or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them, because they could not bear what was commanded: “If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned.” The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, “I am trembling with fear.”



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 46

We looked upon this world of warring individuals, warring theological systems, and inexplicable calamity, with deep skepticism. We looked askance at many individuals who claimed to be godly. How could a Supreme Being have anything to do with it all?

God, if you're a Hellfire and
Damnation God, I'm not interested.

If you're a chiding, ridiculing God,
I'm opting out.

If you damn children to the
seventh generation for their
ancestors' faults, no thanks.

If you command me
without giving me the strength to do
what you ask,
no thanks.

God, you're not.
You're loving, kind,
gentle,
educating,
mentoring,
so I think I'll hang around,
joyfully.



Hebrews 12:22-24 (NLT)

No, you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to countless thousands of angels in a joyful gathering. You have come to the assembly of God's firstborn children, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God himself, who is the judge over all things. You have come to the spirits of the righteous ones in heaven who have now been made perfect. You have come to Jesus, the one who mediates the new covenant between God and people, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks of forgiveness instead of crying out for vengeance like the blood of Abel.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 14

There was a sense of victory, followed by such a peace and serenity as I had never known. There was utter confidence. I felt lifted up, as though the great clean wind of a mountain top blew through and through. God comes to most men gradually, but His impact on me was sudden and profound.

Sudden sometimes,
profound for sure,
the embrace of the majesty,
the joy of the assembly
of people
whose lives God guides.
Victory, peace, serenity,
confidence.
Forgiveness,
“need” for vengeance forgotten,
lifted up
to revel in mountaintop
winds
of joy.

God, your amazing grace is
sudden,
enduring,
profound and
amazing.



Hebrews 12:25-29 (NIV)

See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven? At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, “Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.” The words “once more” indicate the removing of what can be shaken – that is, created things – so that what cannot be shaken may remain.

Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our “God is a consuming fire.”



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 164

We realize we know only a little. God will constantly disclose more to you and to us.

How often have I refused to listen?

How many times have I
known enough, deemed
my choices sufficient, smart?

I know less than an inch in the
multi light-year universe
of knowledge

and stand here, smug.

How often have I missed

the wisdom God

wanted me to have?

Am I listening today?

God, let it be.

Hebrews Chapter Thirteen



Hebrews 13:1-3 (NLT)

Keep on loving each other as brothers and sisters. Don't forget to show hospitality to strangers, for some who have done this have entertained angels without realizing it! Remember those in prison, as if you were there yourself. Remember also those being mistreated, as if you felt their pain in your own bodies.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 89

Life will take on new meaning. To watch people recover, to see them help others, to watch loneliness vanish, to see a fellowship grow up about you, to have a host of friends – this is an experience you must not miss. We know you will not want to miss it. Frequent contact with newcomers and with each other is the bright spot of our lives.

Addiction is so lonely,
so internalized
even in the midst of crowds,
or those you know best.

Recovery is so public,
so expansive,
such a message to shout
to strangers who
in an instant can become
friends, confidants,
fellow travelers.

It's good to have them —
without friends to share with,
I would explode from the joy.

God, thank you for people
who care about me
and who give me the opportunity
to love.



Hebrews 13:4-6 (NIV)

Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral. Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said,

“Never will I leave you;
never will I forsake you.”

So we say with confidence,

“The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid.
What can mere mortals do to me?”



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 127

Since the home has suffered more than anything else, it is well that a man exert himself there. He is not likely to get far in any direction if he fails to show unselfishness and love under his own roof.

How do you
start over when
the play's the same,
the characters part of your
body and soul,
the past looms large
barricading souls
moving parallel paths,
touching only to fling arrows
and insults?

How do you change your
life when recovery
changes you?

God, let the hurts heal,
the souls meld,
the harmony happen.



Hebrews 13:7 (NLT)

Remember your leaders who taught you the word of God. Think of all the good that has come from their lives, and follow the example of their faith.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Pages 73-74

We must be entirely honest with somebody if we expect to live long or happily in this world. Rightly and naturally, we think well before we choose the person or persons with whom to take this intimate and confidential step.

Someone who has
what I want —
peace, a good life
full of meaning,
faith evident day by day,
a leader to teach me the
word of God.

Someone I can be honest with,
someone I will be honest with,
I think well before choosing,
but I choose.

I choose.

I take the leap
and get a sponsor
and listen
and learn.

Thank you, God,
for sponsors. Give me the
courage to be sponsored.



Hebrews 13:10-14 (NLT)

We have an altar from which the priests in the Tabernacle have no right to eat. Under the old system, the high priest brought the blood of animals into the Holy Place as a sacrifice for sin, and the bodies of the animals were burned outside the camp. So also Jesus suffered and died outside the city gates to make his people holy by means of his own blood. So let us go out to him, outside the camp, and bear the disgrace he bore. For this world is not our permanent home; we are looking forward to a home yet to come.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 31

Despite all we can say, many who are real alcoholics are not going to believe they are in that class. By every form of self-deception and experimentation, they will try to prove themselves exceptions to the rule, therefore nonalcoholic. If anyone who is showing inability to control his drinking can do the right about-face and drink like a gentleman, our hats are off to him. Heaven knows, we have tried hard enough and long enough to drink like other people!

To be like other people,
to drink, eat,
shop, play —
live like normal folk...
no, we're doomed to reside
outside the gates, apart,
not like the others.
Still, look who's here,
outside the gates!
Those here are real,
are awesome,
are wondrous.
Those here have grace,
peace, serenity.
Who could want to dwell
elsewhere?

Thank you, God, for the addiction
that brought me to these rooms
and the people here.



Hebrews 13:8-9 (NLT)

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. So do not be attracted by strange, new ideas. Your strength comes from God's grace, not from rules about food, which don't help those who follow them.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 87

Being still inexperienced and having just made conscious contact with God, it is not probable that we are going to be inspired at all times. We might pay for this presumption in all sorts of absurd actions and ideas.

Insanity.

As stupid as stupid can be
when stubbornness reigns
and I buy in again
to folly, to trying harder,
to holding my mouth different,
to “practice makes perfect”
when practice of this never made me
anything but insane.
She said it would work,
and I bought in again
knowing I’m not like normal folk.
The new idea wasn’t really new,
just that same old insanity
trying to pull me away from
the truth.

God, nothing is new and improved.
You have the same old truth,
the same yesterday, forever,
and TODAY! Hold me to it tightly.



Hebrews 13:15-16 (NASB)

Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.

And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 87

We ask especially for freedom from self-will, and are careful to make no request for ourselves only. We may ask for ourselves, however, if others will be helped. We are careful never to pray for our own selfish ends.

Pray constantly,
but not for yourself?
Not to benefit just you,
at least.

A sacrifice of praise.

Give thanks.

Unselfishly.

Sincerely?

What if I'm not worried about others,
just need guidance for me,
my needs met?

Why not pray for me?

I'm supposed to have worth,

I matter.

I'm worthy.

Oh.

Yeah. That's the problem.

I need to pray for surrender,

for humility. Then the rest

will come naturally.

God, teach me to pray —
but especially, God,
teach me not to be self-centered
in prayer.



Hebrews 13:17-19 (NIV)

Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you.

Pray for us. We are sure that we have a clear conscience and desire to live honorably in every way. I particularly urge you to pray so that I may be restored to you soon.



Alcoholics Anonymous, 4th edition Page XXVIII

We feel, after many years of experience, that we have found nothing which has contributed more to the rehabilitation of these men than the altruistic movement now growing up among them.

So, who's a leader?
Whose authority do I submit to?
We're all leaders. I'm one
for her and him,
she's mine, and she is, too.
A newcomer can lead me
to see a truth, a revelation,
not even knowing what he said.
We lead each other —
confidence? Sure.
We do because that way
the work is no burden to anyone —
and because we know it works.
We just don't understand
how.

Thank you, God, for all I learn, for all
my comrades. I do pray for our leaders —
all of us.



Hebrews 13:20-21 (NIV)

Now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Pages 83-84

We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace.

We will know peace,
for we know God and God is peace.
We look back at the past,
at the turmoil, the shame, the fear,
and we know peace.
Knowing peace, we applaud the past,
for we understand only with that past
could we comprehend the greatness of
this gift, this peace.
Doing God's will,
pleasing God for it's our joy,
not out of duty,
we finally grasp the full impact
of serenity.
Peace.

God of peace,
thank you for being there, guiding me
helping me to find you as I
searched in all the wrong places,
and finally in the right place.



Hebrews 13:22-24 (NIV)

Brothers and sisters, I urge you to bear with my word of exhortation, for in fact I have written to you quite briefly.

I want you to know that our brother Timothy has been released. If he arrives soon, I will come with him to see you.

Greet all your leaders and all the Lord's people. Those from Italy send you their greetings.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 55

If our testimony helps sweep away prejudice, enables you to think honestly, encourages you to search diligently within yourself, then, if you wish, you can join us on the Broad Highway. With this attitude you cannot fail.

Exhortation —

emphatically urging.

A brief writing to encourage,
best wishes from others far away,
some perhaps known,
some known only for they share
the marvelous message.

The testimony of those
who walked these steps first, who sent
their brief word, chip of a book,
of exhortation.

Brothers and sisters all,
across millennia.

God, thank you for your messengers,
sponsors, mentors,
elders, angels
among us.



Hebrews 13:25 (NASB)

Grace be with you all.



Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 164

Abandon yourself to God as you understand God. Admit your faults to Him and to your fellows. Clear away the wreckage of your past. Give freely of what you find and join us. We shall be with you in the Fellowship of the Spirit, and you will surely meet some of us as you trudge the Road of Happy Destiny.

May God bless you and keep you – until then.

The Lord bless you and keep you.
Walk in grace all your days.
Know the hope inherent in recovery,
whether you've reached the peace,
the serenity, or only caught a brief hint of it.
Give to those who follow,
carrying the message on to them,
building ever larger the amazing
fellowship of the spirit,
walking in unison the
Road of Happy Destiny.

God, to you be the power and the glory
and the honor for ever and ever
in this your kingdom among us.

About the Authors

Authorship of Hebrews

“But as to who wrote the epistle, only God knows the truth.” Origen (185-254)

While Paul’s name was long associated with Hebrews, doubts abounded as to that possibility from the beginning. Other suggestions include:

- * Paul’s companion **Barnabas**, whose authorship would explain many similarities to Paul’s theology.
- * **Luke**, author of the gospel and Acts, and according to Eusebius of Caesarea (263-339), translator of Hebrews from Hebrew to Greek. While all three books address Jewish issues, Luke tended to look to Palestinian Jews and Hebrews to the Diaspora.
- * **Apollos**, Martin Luther’s proposal, instructed in theology by Paul’s friends Priscilla and Aquila; and (saving the best for last)
- * **Priscilla**. With her husband Aquila, she hosted the church at Rome in her home. Paul listed her second in a chapter of named church leaders (Romans 16). Of seven biblical references to the couple, Priscilla is named first five times. As an apostolic teacher, she instructed Apollos. And what better reason to explain the redaction of authorship than embarrassment that the author was a woman?

Authorship of *Alcoholics Anonymous*

“We, of Alcoholics Anonymous, are more than one hundred men and women who have recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body.”
(*Alcoholics Anonymous*, foreword to the first edition)

While certainly a committee of many assisted with editing, the principal author of the book was Bill Wilson (1895-1971). Co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous, he was born in Vermont, raised by his maternal grandparents, married Lois Burnham, served in World War I, graduated from law school although too intoxicated to pick up his diploma, speculated in stocks, and drank.

After four addiction-necessitated hospitalizations under the care of Dr. William D. Silkworth (who described alcoholism as a physical allergy and mental obsession) and an encounter with his friend Ebby Thatcher, sobered through the Oxford Group principles, Wilson never drank after December 11, 1934. He worked with other alcoholics to pass on the ideas granting him the gift of sobriety.

Brought together with Dr. Bob Smith, an alcoholic member of the Oxford Group, the pieces had come together for the formation of Alcoholics Anonymous which dates its founding to June 10, 1935. The group was nameless until the 1939 publication of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*, a name they took as theirs.

About Barbara B. Rollins

Barbara Rollins loves big books – heavy volumes, law books, children’s arm-fulls, coffee-table tomes – and, especially, the Bible and *Alcoholics Anonymous*.

She’s handled her share of titles as teacher, Christian educator, secretary, lawyer, judge, mother, and writer. Married for decades, mother of married sons, grandmother of twins, Sunday school teacher, Rotarian, Toastmaster, genealogist, historian, editor, and publisher, she’s read, written, and loved writing of all shapes and kinds. Graduate degrees in Christian Education and in Law only started her education. A student of the history of Twelve-Step programs, she draws understanding from eclectic literature and correspondents around the world.

Besides the first in this series of meditations on scripture, *A Time for Verse – Poetic Ponderings on Ecclesiastes*, her published works include a children’s forensic series (*Blood Evidence*, *Cause of Death*, *Ballistics*, and *Fingerprint Evidence*), the young adult novel *Syncopated Summer*, and the anthologies of *Silver Boomer Books: Silver Boomers*, *Freckles to Wrinkles*, *This Path*, *From the Porch Swing*, *Flashlight Memories*, and *The Harsh and The Heart*. Barbara is a principal in Silver Boomer Books, at home in Abilene, Texas.

May God bless this offering.

About OAStepper

OAStepper is a compulsive overeater. Her life? Whoa! Wow! Whee!!!! That life had become unmanageable long before finding Overeaters Anonymous December 17, 2006. More than a hundred pounds lighter than her highest weight, OAStepper rejoices in life, more than willing – anxious, even – to carry this message to other compulsive overeaters and to practice the Twelve-Step principles in all her affairs.

In part, that is through writing – this book, as well as her well-received first book *Slender Steps to Sanity – Twelve-Step Notes of Hope*. She blogs at OAStepper.blogspot.com. OAStepper is:

Unashamed

Ought to, should, what will people think?
I tried, earnestly, doggedly, determined
for years on end, and even when I caught most
of the oughts, did lots of the shoulds,
played the role to please the crowds,
shame dogged me, hounded me, howled
my deficits though only I could hear.
Then I admitted insanity and found Power
to change me, to accept me, to stand
here before you and continue my life,
but changed, unashamed.

Other Books from
Eagle Wings Press

imprint of Silver Boomer Books

Slender Steps to Sanity
Twelve-Step Notes of Hope

by OAStepper, Compulsive Overeater
May, 2009

Writing Toward the Light
A Grief Journey

by Laura Flett
July, 2009

A Time for Verse
poetic ponderings on Ecclesiastes

by Barbara B. Rollins
December, 2009

Survived to Love

by Ed H
August, 2010

White Elephants

by Chynna T. Laird
February, 2011

Books from
Silver Boomer Books:

Silver Boomers
prose and poetry by and about
baby boomers

March, 2008

Freckles to Wrinkles

August, 2008

This Path

September, 2009

Song of County Roads

by Ginny Greene
September, 2009

From the Porch Swing
memories of our grandparents

July, 2010

Flashlight Memories

April, 2011

The Harsh and the Heart

Patriot Dreams

coming June, 2011

Books from
Laughing Cactus Press
imprint of Silver Boomer Books

Poetry Floats
New and selected Philosophy-lite
by Jim Wilson
August, 2009

***Bluebonnets, Boots and
Buffalo Bones***
by Sheryl L. Nelms
September, 2009

not so GRIMM
gentle fables and cautionary tales
by Becky Haigler
November, 2009

Three Thousand Doors
by Karen Elaine Greene
August 2010

Milagros
by Tess Almendárez Lojacono
coming December, 2010

The Cloud Each Day

God, make me an old-timer
in the rooms of recovery
one day at a time.



Walk with us daily.
www.EagleWingsPress.com/daily
Thank you for
walking this far
hand in hand,
our Cloud of Witnesses.