

November 1958

Editorial by Bill

THIS is Thanksgiving time; our gratitude should certainly be boundless. Twenty-four years ago this month, I landed in a hospital for the last time. Then and there I received the gift of sobriety. Like all who have since joined AA's ranks, I was given a chance to choose what I would do with my new life. Just like most AAs of today, I chose to try to pass my gift on to the next suffering applicant.

This simple practice of trying to give of one's self without demand for reward (at least sometimes!) has brought incredible blessings—more than my share, I guess. Every practicing AA comes up, however, with just about the same general list of them.

First we receive sobriety, which is the chance to go on living. We try to bring that chance to others and watch them come alive. We slowly discover that our lives have a purpose because God has a plan for us; a plan that we grow little by little toward His likeness and image.

Then follows the conviction that we live in a universe filled with His love—a creation that makes sense. As this vision comes clear we can begin to live in harmony with ourselves and with our fellows. We are going someplace; our destiny becomes secure.

Next we begin actually to welcome our growing pains. Suffering is no longer a menace to be evaded at any cost. When it does come, no matter how grievously, we realize that it too has its purpose. It is our great teacher because it reveals our defects and so pushes us forward into the paths of progress. The pain of drinking did just this for us. And so can any other pain.

Our Twelve Traditions are a prime example of what pain has done for us since we sobered up. Every single AA Tradition was evolved from the immense growing pains of AA's early years; each rests securely upon this foundation. For this reason only, we now have our Twelve Traditional principles that can spell unity, brotherhood and service for all time to come.

What people in this very troubled world of 1958, could possibly have more reasons to be grateful at Thanksgiving than we of Alcoholics Anonymous!