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Biographies

THE WAIL OF A DRUG ADDICT

By

D. C. Van Slyke

*“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without
which no man shall see the Lord” Heb 12:14*

Spreading Scriptural Holiness to the World

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THE WAIL OF A DRUG ADDICT

By

Evangelist D. C. Van Slyke

Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company
Grand Rapids, Michigan, U.S.A.

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Fifth printing October 1966
Printed in the United States of America

Digital Edition 10/04/97
By Holiness Data Ministry

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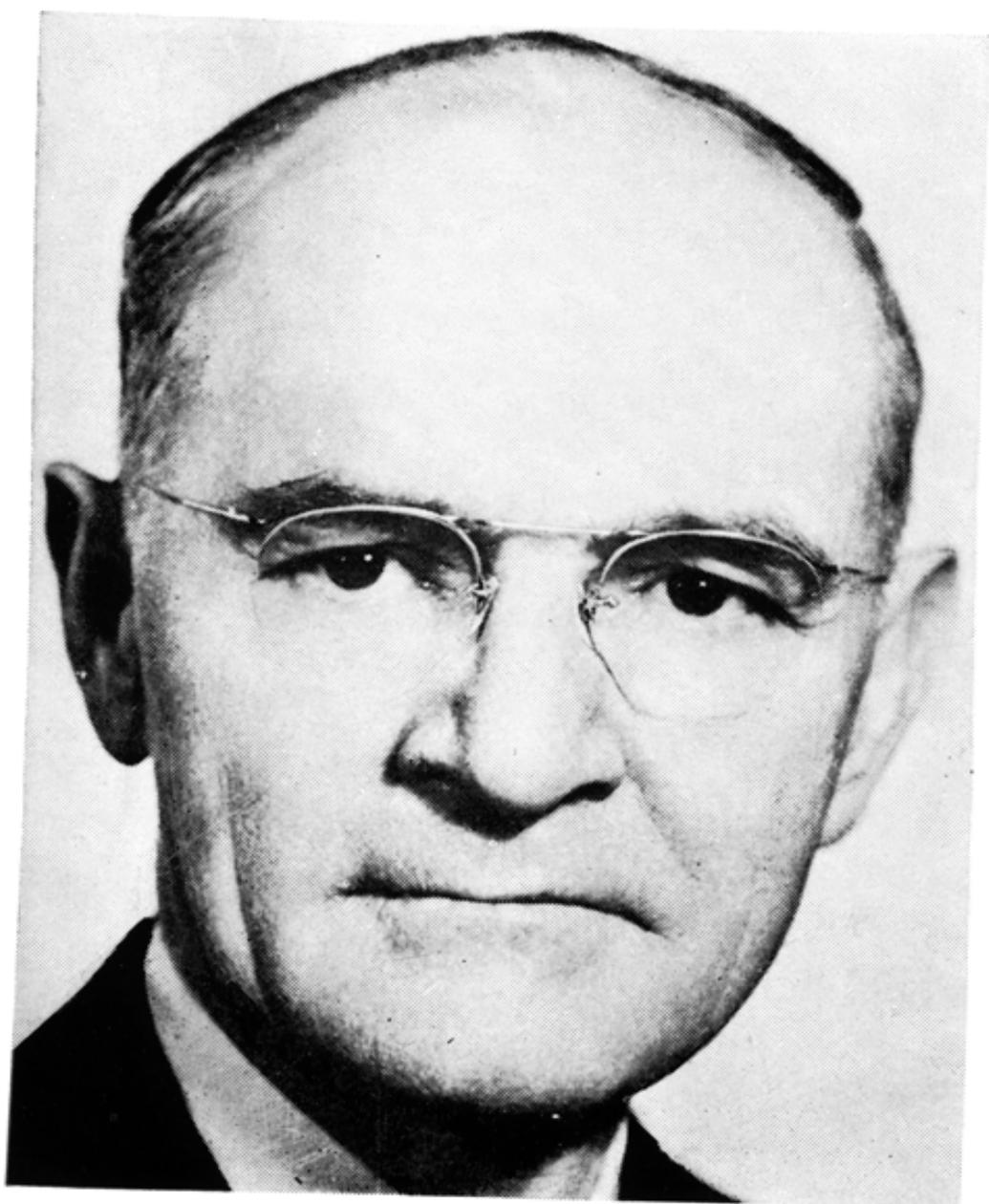
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Yours for Souls,
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FLYLEAF TEXT

What a story! What despair and degradation! What misery and woe! What victory! What deliverance! What ineffable joy! From the depths to the heights, through Jesus Christ our Lord!

May we urge all who are defeated in the battle of sin to read this book. There is a way out for all.

Anyone who knows someone addicted to drink or drugs should see that such an one has a copy of this book. Only one who has gone through it all will be able to tell them good news such as this, that will awaken sleeping hope and bid faith arise out of the grave.

There is hope — there is help. At the very end of all human resources and efforts, when a man "lays hold on God and His promises."

That is the subject of this thrilling autobiography. It will stir the depths of your being, scatter the cobwebs in your own experience, and bring renewed faith, love and zeal to the heart of the reader.

Preachers of the Word, you will want this book to stimulate you to reach out in faith for even the worst, and persist in loving, believing patience till the victory is won.

This narrative, so simply told, pushes back the curtains of our "slowness of heart to believe" and reveals new depths to the meaning of "redemption."

All will be blessed by this thrilling example of the marvelous grace and power of our living Savior.

THE WAIL OF A DRUG ADDICT

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FOREWORD

In July of 1935, with the permission and blessing of Rev. Earl C. Pounds, District Supt. of the Idaho-Oregon District, Church of the Nazarene, we went to Vale, Oregon to enter into a Home Mission campaign. As we left the North Side church at Nampa, Idaho, a mother asked us to be sure to visit her son who was engaged in business in Vale. Some time after our arrival we remembered our promise and sought out the son and had a visit with him. While visiting in his Leather Shop our attention was drawn to his co-laborer because of his unusual appearance. He was tall and very thin and the expression of his face was grim and hard. There was an unearthly pallor on his countenance and there was not a flicker of a smile to show that he wanted to be friendly. His eyes were shifty and suspicious and his thin, red mustache accentuated the grimness of his features.

After leaving the place of business we inquired as to his name and were impressed to find it was D. C. Van Slyke. In addition to his name we found that he was a notorious character in the community, and that he had spent much time in jails up and down the country. Also we found that he was termed an incurable morphine addict and would go to any end to obtain the drug.

We are ashamed to admit it never entered into our mind that a man so bound by sin and habit could ever be saved. We made no attempt to visit him or even pray for him. We were concerned with finding someone with less need for God to save. We probably wouldn't have admitted that God would be unable to save such a man but that it was extremely unlikely that He would do so. However we failed to take into consideration that a godly grandmother had prayed for many years for her wayward grandson. Little did we realize that we were to be the instruments that God would use in answering her prayer. May God always keep before our minds that there are no cases too hard for Him and that "He works in mysterious ways, His wonders to perform."

In June of 1937 we were in the midst of a revival meeting with Bro. Ray Davis, then pastor of First Church, Boise, Idaho when, to our utter surprise, D. C. Van Slyke, accompanied by his wife, walked into the church. It was the first indication to us that he was concerned about God or his own soul. It was the first step of many to be taken in the next nine months that followed. Somehow we sensed that here was a man who was desperate for help of some kind. We took him to Camp Meetings, Zone Rallies and Revivals all over the country. We talked about him to our friends and asked them to pray for him. We introduced him to all the praying people we could contact and plead with them to pray earnestly for him. We went to the home almost every day and talked and prayed that God would give the victory. In short we did everything, in our experience, we could think of. Many times we were discouraged but God would not remove the burden. Many times we were criticized for our methods and seeming ineffectiveness. Nevertheless God was working and there came a time when, through His power and His alone, victory came. He burst the bonds of sin and habits asunder and set a captive soul free. Never will we forget the shouts of praise and thanksgiving when Bro. Van Slyke and others realized that God had given the victory. We must leave the details for Brother Van to tell in his book. It is enough for us to tell that God gave the victory. May every

soul that happens to peruse the pages of his book realize that God is able "to make the vilest sinner clean." If you have been saved, find a soul, no matter how unclean, and lead him to the Saviour who is able "to cleanse ... from all unrighteousness." If you have not been saved and are bound by the devil and sin, "His grace is sufficient for thee."

Forrest Hill, Pastor,
Church of the Nazarene,
Roseburg, Oregon,
Feb. 2, 1945.

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INTRODUCTION

The value of personal testimony to the regenerating power in the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the sanctifying power in the baptism of the Holy Ghost as a second work of grace in winning lost souls to Christ, can never be fully realized until eternity unfolds its supernatural secrets after the day of grace is finished, and we meet in His holy presence.

Who knows how many souls have been won by the reading of a "tract" which was based on personal experience and which had been prayerfully placed by a Christian worker? Then, too, think of the uncountable number of Christians who have been led into deeper experience in the divine; some of whom have caught the vision of the need in a far away land, and given themselves for the salvation of the heathen; some to die horrible deaths to carry out their vision, just because they read the biography, or autobiography of some devoted Christian.

While preaching in the Idaho-Oregon district campmeeting in August 1937, one evening during the altar call, a man came forward and knelt limply at the altar under terrible conviction for sin. He prayed with much weeping for a while, then looked up at me and called me to him, and asked if I thought God would forgive such a wicked creature as he. I told him that Christ forgave me and I knew He could him. This man turned out to be D. C. Van Slyke, the author of this book, or life story. This was the beginning of a battle against gambling, morphine addiction, tobacco, and whiskey habits. God saved him that night, and the story of this life and the wonderful results of God's grace in his heart and life began.

Having watched his growth and development spiritually, mentally and physically, for God healed him of cancer also, I saw an evangelistic ministry begin, that has kept him busy since his remarkable experiences of grace, and that has carried him into nearly all parts of the nation, and has placed him upon Campmeeting platforms; and a ministry of God that has been blessed with many souls, for he carries a deep concern for the lost.

Having been privileged to read a good portion of the manuscript, I am persuaded that this book will find its way into the library of many Christian workers, and soul winners, and will be the means of the salvation of many souls who have almost given up in despair, and will strengthen the faith of many a soul winner to go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in.

Glenn Griffith, District Supt.
Idaho-Oregon District.

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Chapter 1 BEGINNINGS

"Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." Eccl. 12:1.

The first book of the Bible is named Genesis meaning creation or beginnings. Beginnings are commencements. To the students Commencement exercises at completion of his education means beginnings for the chosen line of endeavor.

As the writer was denied the educational advantages that he now sees he should have had, the only commencement exercises afforded were those which took place in the cradle in which he lustily used lungs, hands, and feet in trying to make his wants known.

I was born in Elmore, Minn., in the year 1898 and in the month of January the fifteenth day, of Delevan A. and Maude E. Van Slyke. I was not to know for long the care of a mother, for she passed away when I was little more than two years of age. Providence, however, was to place me in good hands. My mother's mother, Mrs. Augusta McArthur, took me and raised me as her very own. She was an old-fashioned, shouting, second blessing Free Methodist preacher, who loved God more than anything in this whole wide world. You can well imagine the bringing up that was mine, and for this I am exceedingly thankful.

In looking back on these years I recognize only one fault that was hers, which I believe is rather prevalent with grandmothers, and that is, she was utterly inadequate to the task of spanking. I have never yet seen a grandmother who could spank. Most of them are good on the pumpkin pie, the delicacies, the coos, the cuddling, and the pat, but of absolutely no account when it comes to the paddle or the spank.

I was one child that needed correcting and correction, and lots of both. This, as already stated was sadly lacking in my case. However, I can remember when grandmother, at some particular provocation or other ordered me to the bedroom, and as a means of punishment, I must learn the first Psalm. I was charged not to leave the room until I could recite this particular portion of Scripture by heart.

Needless to say, the Psalm was learned in short order. I have forgotten many of the coos. the pats, and the spankings, but this first Psalm has stayed with me through thick and thin, as I have never forgotten it. I now ponder in writing these lines, that if I had been sent to the room to learn a portion of Scripture as a means of punishment every time the occasion demanded, I most assuredly would be well versed in the Scriptures. In fact I would perhaps know them almost all by heart.

Grandmother prayed mightily for me; not only prayed, but also cared for, and tried to instruct me in the path I should take. She wished me to amount to something, but as I look back in memory, I can see that I surely was a problem child. Everything she wished me to be, I wanted to be the opposite, and am afraid I most generally was.

Many times she would look at me, shaking her head after some particular provocation, and say:

"Well, I wonder if there is any use of me trying any more! You just can't make a whistle out of a pig's tail, that's all there is to it."

She never lived to see her prayers for me answered; but answered nevertheless they were, and, now looking back upon this world from the heavenly host she knows the grandson whom she labored over, prayed for, and wept many tears in behalf of, is now treading the path that leads to celestial glory and eternal happiness.

This servant of the Most High, as did Hezekiah, walked before God in "truth and with a perfect heart" and "did that which is good in his sight." Multiplied hardships, much self denial, and many experiences were hers while fulfilling the commission given to preach the gospel.

Among the remarkable experiences which came to her in line of duty was the time she purchased a horse from a horse trader, hitched it to her buggy and drove into town. What a fine spirited animal this seemed to be. It didn't take the whip to make this horse go. No sir! All the little daughter had to do, who was driving, was hang onto the lines with flushed face, and dancing eyes, as the buggy wheels whirred through the mud. Mother and daughter were both elated over their deal with the trader, and the good buy they had made.

They had a particularly long distance to travel, eight or nine miles it must have been and over very muddy roads, so they did nothing to curb the furious pace of the horse. They were late, and grandmother was to preach that evening, so they gave the animal free rein.

When they arrived in town, the horse being in a sweaty lather, they drove at once to the livery stable where she requested care for him. The proprietor gave one look at the creature, and turning white, grasped him by the bit and called to his helpers to come quick and help him unhitch the animal. They came running and while the livery man held onto the bit with a grasp of death they quickly dropped the tugs and led the animal from the shafts and took him to the rear of the livery stable, and there several men gathered around the horse, examining him, questioning each other, and looking from time to time at the buggy in which sat the mother and daughter.

The men finally seemed to reach a conclusion and the proprietor came to the buggy and asked:

"Where did you get this horse?"

"Why, what is the matter! Is he stolen?" grandmother asked.

"No, this isn't a stolen horse; but where did you get him?"

"Oh, I got him from a certain horse trader," she replied, giving the name of the man.

"Well, this horse trader should be in the penitentiary," the livery man exploded. "This horse is a notorious outlaw. He's a bolter, a runaway. He has kicked and smashed several rigs to pieces and it's a wonder you both were not killed in getting here."

He refused to hook up the animal, telling grandmother she would have to get another horse before returning home. God had indeed protected his servant. Surely, "the angel of the Lord encampeth about them that fear him, and delivereth them."

Somewhere down the line grandmother must have prayed through for me. God in his omniscience knows when is the best time to take the "golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of the saints" and when to pour them out. Sometimes we may think that God doesn't hear our prayers but beloved remember they are being preserved and at the opportune time, God will call for the vial, the contents will be poured out, and the prayer request fulfilled.

I believe this was so in my case for I well remember in one of my first revival efforts held in the Free Methodist church at Deer Flat, Idaho, a lady in the congregation arose and thus testified:

"I can recall when that man (pointing to me) who is now preaching was a little boy, and his grandmother came into this very church, holding him by the hand, walked up to me and said: 'Sister D_____, some day this boy is going to preach the gospel.' I have heard how this man had lived and was living. It seemed as if nothing would avail to stop him; that he surely had gone too far down the broad way of destruction; but here today, in this very same church, I see with my own eyes and hear with my own ears this man, whose grandmother told me would preach the gospel."

This lady then started to shout and with glory upon her countenance, tears streaming down her face, she continued:

"This was told to me thirty or more long years ago, and in spite of all the devil could do, here he stands doing just that! Why, I am going home and pray with renewed hope for my boys."

She evidently did, for not long after, one knelt at the mourner's bench in this preacher's meeting. Surely the God of Elijah is still on the throne and answers prayer.

When I was very young I was gloriously saved. I have never forgotten it. I suppose I was hardly more than eight or nine years of age when this took place. I was up in the foot hills of Hermon, California, with a sling shot or nigger shooter as we called it, hunting birds. For some unexplainable reason, that is, to the finite, I felt a very strong urge to pray. Strange that a child so young, while engaged in a mission of killing birds, would not only receive but should obey this urge.

I was all alone and crept under a large tree and started to pray. After only a few words, heaven opened on my childish soul. I can remember it yet. Glory was under that tree and I was in the midst of it. This was a foretaste of glory divine that I was never after to forget. I do not know what all I said, but I do know I was praying at the top of my voice, telling God I would serve Him; that I would

no more throw stones at birds, that I would be a Christian boy. I arose happier than I thought it possible to be in this present world and ran home to grandmother.

I felt too happy to say much and I just slipped into the bed room to lie down and rest for a moment. It didn't seem as if I had much more than lain down, when a rap sounded at the door. Grandmother answered and I heard a man talking to her. He was a near neighbor and an unsaved man, but nevertheless he seemed filled with awe. He evidently had been in the foot hills the same as I, for he had witnessed that which transpired under the tree and heard my prayer.

He was saying, as I recall it, "Such praying I have never heard — and upon his face was a heavenly light such as I have never seen depicted on the face of any human before." He went away very deeply impressed.

I look back upon that scene and now I realize as never before all that I could have been, and all that God could have done, had I only been true to the call given to me then, the call to preach the gospel; for I was so called.

I used to play church. I would take a text, even though I couldn't read at all, stand before a long mirror and preach to that large congregation which consisted of the reflection of one red headed boy and God would come upon me in holy anointing power, I would get blessed, tears would flow, and "line upon line, precept upon precept" would be hurled at the old dresser mirror, but like so many congregations I was to face in later years it answered, not as the children of Israel, "when all the congregation said, Amen, and praised the Lord, but as so many modern churches do," when all the congregation said nothing.

Time went on and a few years later we moved to Idaho. Here grandmother in spite of her age and infirmities filed upon a homestead: and from here I went to school, as I was now about twelve or thirteen years of age.

I had backslidden and was once again a very unruly and headstrong boy. Once again, God in his infinite love and mercy called me to the altar in a revival meeting in the Deer Flat Free Methodist church and again He graciously poured out his blessing and forgiveness upon the lad he had called to preach. I was happy once more.

Such a change took place in my young life that the teacher, who had had much trouble with me because of mischievousness walked a couple of miles or more to see grandmother and to learn what in the world had happened to me. For now, she told grandmother, I was a model pupil, earnest in my studies, did not whisper, talk, throw spit wads, make faces, or do those things I was forever doing before. She seemed much perplexed and wished grandmother to explain what had come over me.

It didn't take her long to tell the teacher "that if any man (or boy) be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature, old things are passed away: behold; all things are become new."

Later on, I again backed up on the call of God to preach because I was ashamed to testify for the Saviour. You know we not only overcome the enemy by "the blood of the lamb," but also by the word of our testimony. We must testify to saving grace in order to keep it. This I failed to do.

Also I, above all things, did not wish to be a preacher. I had by this time seen enough of the life of sacrificial living demanded of a holiness preacher so that I desired no part of it. I wished to amount to something and, when about seventeen years of age, I started out to try and fulfill my ambitions.

Now, you will probably laugh at some of these ambitions and the things I tried to do for, first of all, I set my stakes to be the world's champion broncho buster. I thought now that I am not to be a holiness preacher, I might just as well be the world's champion rodeo performer.

I secured first of all a cowboy hat. You know all good cowboys and rodeo performers wear cowboy hats. Next I secured a large bandanna to put around my neck; all good cowboys wear large and brilliant colored bandannas about their necks, at least that is what I was told. Then came cowboy boots, long shank spurs, chaps, and a saddle. You never saw a good rider without all these, and so I obtained them all, wide leather belt included. Last, but by no means least I had to have a horse. Now here is where everyone agrees with me I am sure and that is you never saw a good cowboy without a horse.

With the acquirement of all these I at once set out to fulfill my ambition. This would have been fulfilled no doubt, only that I had a slight fault in my riding, and that was, even though I was a good rider, in fact the best I know of, this one little fault which kept me from realizing my ambition was the fact that I couldn't stay on the broncho's back quite long enough. I rode phenomenally well while there, but I couldn't STAY there long enough. This was my only trouble.

Next, I decided I would be a professional baseball player but that ambition did not materialize either. I presume I was a good ball player all right, but evidently not good enough, so this air castle also toppled and fell.

Soon after these failures, as I had a good physique, I decided I would be the welterweight boxing champion of the world. I tried my best to accomplish this ambition, training faithfully. I would do my "road work" as it is called, that is run two or three miles every morning, to develop wind and endurance.

Then I would go to the gymnasium and work out strenuously every afternoon, skip rope, shadow box, punch bag, and train with sparring partners boxing from four to six rounds.

I trained and boxed faithfully for two or three years trying to be the champion, but I hadn't been boxing very long until I discovered that almost every one I met in the ring had the same ambition I did, and that was to be the welterweight champion of the world, and as only one can be champion at a time, and they had better physical qualifications to back up their argument than I had, this ambition also did not materialize, and after three years or so of bruises and blows, I drifted out of prize fighting for good.

The essential reason however for leaving the ring was my increasing dissipation. At first, I abstained from smoking and drinking before bouts, for one must live clean in order to keep in condition. This is one vocation, if it may be so called, where emphasis is placed upon the physical. One must be in tip top condition with speed and endurance at his command if he is to succeed. This takes rigid discipline and self denial. I did not like to do this for I enjoyed going to parties and dances, especially where liquor could be had. I began to drink more and more. Even the iron constitution that God gave me was unequal to the terrific strain imposed by booze and blows and my fighting days were over.

Another ambition, and one of the few that was realized is my marriage, which I must make mention of here as it comes under the heading of Beginnings.

I believe the Lord in His mercy and foreknowledge had a hand in choosing my help mate. You know God said, "It is not good for man to be alone." A deep sleep therefore was put upon Adam, one of his ribs taken and a helpmate made for him. Now you notice God didn't take a bone from the head of man to make a woman, for that would have made the woman ruler over the man. Neither did He take a bone from the foot, for then man would have trodden her underfoot. But He took a rib close to the heart of man, that man might love, cherish and care for her.

Marriage therefore should be God led, for a man has twenty-four ribs, hence there are twenty-three chances out of twenty-four of picking the wrong rib, which many do in this day, and their marriage ends upon the rocks of disaster. But God in His wisdom helped me to pick the right woman, Miss Viva Conklin, whom I married at Caldwell, Idaho and who stayed with me through thick and thin, thus enabling me to enter the ministry with a clean record in that respect.

After leaving the ring I next obtained a job as brakeman on the railroad working on the Los Angeles division and tried hard to make a go of it. For five years I held the job with seemingly everything but one in my favor, and that was, I could not keep away from liquor or booze parties.

I had a family by this time, three fine children, good paying job in train service, and all as aforementioned seemed now in my favor, all but an almost forgotten call to preach, and an unbreakable cigarette and booze habit.

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Chapter 2 TROUBLE

"The way of transgressors is hard." Prov. 13:15.

Never was a truer saying: most transgressors have more pain and difficulty to reach the regions of despair, than the righteous have, with all their cross-bearings, to get to the kingdom of heaven. I found from actual experience "The way of transgressors is hard."

Numbers of people have asked me how I ever started using narcotics. I'll tell you my first step, one that many young boys and girls are taking today apparently without any thought of the future, and that's cigarettes. Trouble starts with them. If people think they do not mean much, let them try to stop the habit. Cigarettes, in spite of all the poppy-cock put out by the tobacco companies, breaks down not only the physical but the will power as well.

I went from cigarettes to booze. I swore when I first started to smoke I would be a moderate user of tobacco; I would never be a drunkard but soon I not only had the tobacco habit to contend with but also Demon Rum. I tried time and again to quit cigarettes but was never able to do it for any length of time. I think the longest period I ever went without smoking after quitting the habit was about thirty days and that only once. I used to throw away my tobacco, and swear I would never touch it again, but it seemed I always watched where I threw it, and would soon find it again, and be back in the same old rut.

Also I tried time and again to stop drinking, for at first I was what they call a periodical drunkard. I would go upon a protracted spree and after a couple of days, would sober up and swear I would never touch it again. Perhaps I would go a month or so without it and would think that I had it whipped when here came the Egyptian Taskmaster, the booze bottle, and in spite of good resolutions, will power and all, he would get me by the nap of the neck, force me down town, take my money, sick me on in a drunken brawl, tear my clothes, black my eyes, if he didn't also get me thrown in jail, and at last bring me home, a discouraged, hopeless, friendless, moneyless, heartbroken creature.

I can remember, when, money gone and now sobered up, I would look upon the sleeping children, and a wife, patient and true with a husband such as this to provide for a needy family, and swear that this was one time I meant what I said, "Never another drop." But the Taskmasters of Egypt are unyielding in their demands and, without God, man is helpless.

While under the influence of alcohol one night in Los Angeles, a companion and I decided we wanted and would take a joy ride. Seeing a nice new car parked on a side street with the key in the lock, we clambered in and proceeded to take possession. Then, the engine now started, we attempted a hasty getaway in the heavy traffic. But the owner observed what was taking place and before we

could get any distance, he caught up with us, followed by a dozen or so of his friends, for this was down in the part of the city called "Wop Town." In an instant a free-for-all fight was in progress.

I'll never know what all took place in this fight as about all I can remember is fists, boots, curses, grunts and groans. I know my companion was knocked almost under a street car and nearly run over, and if the guardian angel had not protected us, we would both have been killed, for we were in a very tough portion of the city. Some one must have turned in a riot call since along came the patrol wagon in great haste and we were bundled off to jail in a hurry.

I recall upon awakening, in our cell next morning, after this escapade, we knew we had certainly been in a terrible fight. My eyes were almost swollen shut, lips puffed, face badly bruised, and my hands swollen so badly from blows I had struck that I could hardly close them. This was all bad, for my companion had fared about as I had, but worst of all we were in real trouble. We soon discovered we were not in the "Drunk Tank," where the alcoholics are confined, but were in the "Grand Larceny" tank with the "big shots" as they are called in the underworld — those who were in for big offenses and were headed for the penitentiary.

One young man in particular I remember who was just out of the prison hospital with a bullet wound in his chest. He had been shot by an officer in making the arrest, if I remember rightly, and the wound on the right side of his chest looked very inflamed and irritable and he would keep no bandage upon it. He was exceedingly restive having little to say as he paced to and fro in his cell. This young man was a holdup, caught in the very act, and was headed "up the river," as they called it, for the penitentiary.

I noticed others, besides this young man, who were hard faced, tight-lipped, cold eyed individuals, all facing a stretch, or term in the state prison and I understood a little better the motto "Crime doesn't pay." This wasn't a very pleasant awakening, you may be sure. Surely here was trouble and trouble a-plenty. I swore if I ever got out of that mess I would never, never take another drink. Here we were charged with suspicion of grand larceny, labeled as car thieves, caught in the very act and it seemed we were headed for the "big house." But God must have stepped in and saved me from the stigma of an ex-convict, for after three days of questioning and investigations, the detectives having found I had a good record as brakeman on the railroad and because of influence brought to bear by a near relative of mine, we were released, my friend and I, without a charge being placed against us and I went home firmly resolved never to touch another drop.

After this narrow escape from the penitentiary, I really endeavored to settle down and for some time things went smoothly. I wish to say here in regard to my drinking while working for the railroad that all this transpired without their knowledge, for the railroad does not tolerate employees that drink. These escapades happened while off duty or on leave of absence and you may be sure they were hushed up so the company officials never learned of them.

Later, I obtained a run from Niland to Calexico, California, on a local, the train making one trip each way every day. Right across the line from Calexico was Mexicali, Mexico. In fact, Calexico and Mexicali were one town, half on the United States side and the other half on Mexican soil. This was in the days of prohibition in the United States but the Mexican side of this town, Mexicali, was wet,

in fact, all of it was nothing more than saloons, gambling halls, opium dens, and places of vice, a modern Sodom and Gomorrah. Here was a place filled with all the filth and spawn of those who loved darkness and hated the light "because their deeds were evil."

After a night of gambling, drinking and carousal in this den of iniquity, coming back to my room with good resolutions broken and money gone, and remembering some of the sights I had witnessed, I would wonder why the God of heaven would allow such wickedness to go unpunished even for a moment. Many a man here had lost his job, his money, his loved ones, his character and even his life. Many a person had gambled his all away at the games of chance, then in desperation, trying to regain his losses, embezzled from his employer, and losing this, gone to a suicide's grave. Here the white slave marts were plied, here men lived from the earnings of women in prostitution, here modesty was unknown, honesty a myth, and the truth unheard. This was a place of trouble, sorrow and despair to all who patronized its nefarious trade.

As soon as possible I transferred to another run having realized I couldn't last long here. I moved to Indio, California and "bid in" a pool freight run between Indio and Yuma, Arizona. Once more the Egyptian Taskmaster, Demon Rum, and his associates had been too much for me. Once again I determined to start anew.

For sometime things went smoothly, but there was always someone the Taskmaster used to trip me. One night after previous lapses and just in from my run to Yuma, I resolved to go straight home and to bed and thus escape the drinking crowd. My wife and three small children were at this time in Idaho, having gone there on a visit to her folks, and I was all alone.

I had barely retired for the night when the door rattled and two of my railroad friends demanded to be admitted. They were carrying a tub full of bottled beer. They requested me to help them dispose of the contents of the tub, that is, via drinking. At first I refused saying I was off the stuff for good. But it did not take long for persistence to wear down my good resolution and soon I was going the rounds. Before many hours a drunken brawl was in progress and much was done that can never be undone. The next day I found myself, as well as my two friends, out of a job. Someone had informed the company about the affair and my days of railroading were over.

If ever a man was utterly disgusted, discouraged, dependent and in trouble, it was this one. Here was I, wife and children in Idaho, and myself in Indio, California, with no money, no friends, no job. I had just sent traveling expenses to my wife to come on home and had rented a new house in which to live, and she was now ready to leave, when, in the parlance of the railroad I had "blown up." I lost a regular run, easy hours and labor, good salary, and a chance of promotion, all these when jobs were scarce, all because of the stuff that has cursed humanity from Noah's day to this. I was so utterly discouraged I didn't think there was any use to even try any more.

I sent wife a wire to stay where she was until she heard from me. I drew up ten days back pay that I had coming, all the money I possessed in the world, and just walked off from all our possessions in Indio, which were not much but all we had nevertheless; didn't try even to pack or take a thing, just grabbed the next train I could get and started empty handed for Idaho, to join my family. This is one trip that will never be forgotten while in the veil of mortality, for almost in the throes of

delirium tremens, I was tempted time and again to end it all, but God must have seen fit to intervene, for in due season I arrived at my destination.

The next years were to be among the most sorrowful of my life. I was to find out what trouble really meant. I determined, once again, and with all the will power of my being, never to touch another drop. I secured employment but soon found that alcohol was still the king. This job went the way of others. I secured another one, but again I proved unreliable because of the fires of appetite burning within. Now, driven by these consuming fires I became definitely identified with the underworld. Released from jail after my first offense, I continued to make and sell the stuff that has been a curse to humanity. I thought if I cannot make an honest living, because of this habit, perhaps I can make a dishonest one. So I plied the nefarious trade with its excitement and its danger as well as its evil consequences in one manner or another for the succeeding unhappy years. Much of the time I carried a gun. Providentially I was spared from using it and thereby becoming a victim of the hangman. But I went from one jail to another — for, in spite of all that the booze interests say of the period — prohibition made the life of the bootlegger precarious.

While in jail, for I was in jail so much of the time, one individual jested, "He is doing a life term, on the installment plan," I met up with a very proficient gambler. He also was in jail even though he was proficient. I have met lots of proficient individuals in the "jug" as the inmates call it. He proceeded to show me how I could carry on a life of ease and contentment, live in the land of plenty, become a "big shot" in the underworld, and really amount to something, if I would but listen to him, learn his trade and travel his pathway.

He then told me he beat all poker games and won great sums of money by the simple art of cheating the game via "the cold deck." He was a "cold decker;" that is one who slips in a different deck of cards from the ones being played with; a deck that is all fixed up beforehand so that every one playing will receive the exact hand the dealer wishes him to have. Needless to say the dealer always has the best hand and all the other players go broke on the play, he winning everything.

I was told this was the best "racket" of all, that it beat bootlegging all hollow, and he would show me how it was done. I got a needle and thread and sewed a "big pocket" on the inside of my coat, fixed a pocket on my vest for the "cold deck" to rest in, and then started to learn the movements of the "switch." It was not long, as I had plenty of time to practice, until I had the switch "down pat," as he expressed it.

Next I learned to "top" with the dice. This consisted of holding four dice in one hand, concealing one pair, a pair of tops or dice so mis-spotted all you can do is throw seven or eleven with them. These points, of course always win on the coming out, or first throw of the dice, the object of the "topper" being to pick up the square dice, place his bet, then palm the square dice, and throw the "tops." Thus every time the tops were thrown they won. I practiced this by the hour also and before long was "proficient."

The time came for our release, and not long after my new found friend, the gambler and I were plying the "trade" for all we were worth. I noticed that I was almost always the fellow to put the "cold deck" in the games. Only on very rare occasions did he ever attempt to slip the "cover" in. I

wondered why. He explained that even though I was "proficient," yet I could develop to a much higher degree of proficiency. Therefore I needed practice, much practice.

Things went thus with varying success, until one time down in a basement room with a group of hard boiled gamblers, my hand fumbled on the "switch," because I had been drinking too heavily, and I was caught in the very act of cold decking. This is a very serious offense in the gambling world, and my partner and I were fortunate in getting out of there with our lives. My cold decking friend then told me, that one should never get caught. He went on to say he was caught once, and then proceeded to show me the scar left by a forty-four revolver bullet which had plowed right through his stomach.

I could now understand what he meant when he said that I must practice so as to be "proficient." Also I began to see the light, why I needed so much "practice." I am sure he was thinking of the time when he was caught, when one of the gamblers he had been cheating pulled the forty-four and let him have it in the stomach. In other words I was the "cat's paw." We soon parted company, for I thought, if I am the fellow to get shot I might as well have all the money instead of splitting with him.

In later years I ran onto him again. He was broke, very ragged, had a beautiful black eye, face bruised, and lips puffed. He didn't look so proficient. I think he needed "practice," for it looked to me as if he had been "caught."

In the meantime the poison I was dispensing to others, for I went back to bootlegging, was destroying my own body and soul. Drinking now became so habitual that everything else was crowded out. Here I was, Dee Van Slyke, the grandson of an ambassador of Christ, now a drunkard as well as bootlegger. I was learning through terrible experience the truth of the proverb about wine — "At the last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder." Delirium tremens! When I took the first glass of wine, that first mug of beer, could I have but seen myself, as I was now! The horrors of those days and nights — they cannot be described. Only those who have sunk to the depths of human wreckage can know the fear and the anguish of one in the state of delirium tremens.

One fateful morning after a particularly hard time of drinking and dissipation, I awoke so nervous I could hardly get a glass of water to my lips in spite of an awful burning thirst. About noon my wife took me to the doctor and he worked with me nearly all the rest of the day, but I got no better, seemed only to get worse. About nine o'clock that evening I had hemorrhage of the stomach. I heard the doctor tell my wife that he would have to put me to sleep if he was ever to stop the hemorrhage, and then and there I received my first shot of morphine. In a very short time after the hypo was given I went to sleep.

My stomach was in such shape that I had to live on strained soup for nearly two weeks but I noticed the craving for alcohol had left me and my nerves were strangely quieted for the first few days after the doctor gave me the drug. But if I could have only realized the trouble ahead of me, and which I was now entering into, I would have cried out in the words of the text, "The way of transgressors is hard."

THE WAIL OF A DRUG ADDICT

By

Evangelist D. C. Van Slyke

Chapter 3 DARKNESS

"And thou shalt grope at noonday, as the blind gropeth in darkness, and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways." Deut. 28:29.

It was not long, after the ordeal with my stomach, before I was back to drinking again and almost as bad physically as before. I would occasionally swear off and do my best to quit, but alcohol was the master. I noticed then that if I took a hypo the craving for liquor would leave and with it that terrible nervous feeling. I thought I had discovered a good way to sober up and to stop the craving for alcohol. I next decided that instead of waiting until I had been on one of my protracted sprees and had spent all my money and made a fool of myself in general, why not take a hypo before all this? So I started keeping a few morphine pills around and when I felt these spells coming on, I would take a shot. I believed I had discovered a new cure for alcoholism. I expected to use the drug just long enough to get the alcohol out of my system, and then cease using the narcotic.

I was told by those in the underworld, if I could go seventy-two hours without morphine, I would be over the worst; that then I would start to improve. But they didn't tell me that the first three days and nights spent without the drug, after acquiring the habit, would be hours of such torment that no one could stand it without help. They didn't tell me it would be a period of going down, down into such pain and torment that suicide would be preferable to the torment. They didn't tell me that every hour would seem like a day; that there was more to the morphine habit than just craving; that there is a physical reaction as well, when the drug is taken away.

They didn't tell me that every bone in your body would ache as a jumping tooth-ache; that every nerve and fiber of your being would be on fire and screaming for the stuff; that your stomach would be tied in knots with cramps; that it would seem as if bugs and ants were in the joints throughout your body, clawing and digging with no way for the sufferer to ease the terrible sensation except by taking more morphine. They didn't tell me, that even though a person went through the seventy-two hour period, he would not sleep for almost a month afterward: that he would walk the floor nearly the night through; that even when the physical reaction ceased, yet there was something more: in that morphine does something to the mind and that a drug addict may never come back, for though you can take it out of the body you cannot take it out of the mind.

In order that we may understand better what an addict is up against I will give this brief treatise on morphine found in a medical book:

"Morphine is a derivative of opium and opium is one of the oldest and most useful drugs in medicine. The action of opium is due principally to the morphine it contains and morphine lessens all the activities of the brain except the imagination which is more active. The higher functions of the brain such as the will, judgment, reasoning and concentration are all decreased. The action of the

imaginative center of the brain, however, is greatly increased. The addict is able to combine old impressions that have been stored up in the brain more readily into new ones. Vivid dreams therefore occur continually during the sleep brought on by opium or morphine. Even when the user is awake but under the influence of the drug, his mind may be absorbed in various thoughts and dreams which inspire a feeling of pleasure and comfort, and which absorbs his thoughts so that he forgets everything — pain, worries, cares, even the idea of time. Because of these pleasurable effects, opium and morphine are habit-forming if given more than a few times.

The increased activity of the imagination is more marked in the educated and higher intellectual types. Some of the best literary works in the world have been written while the author was under the influence of opium."

For relieving pain and inducing sleep on the part of their patients physicians ordinarily prescribe one-quarter of a grain of morphine, but an addict soon requires much more than this, for morphine is an antidote to itself and the doses must soon be enlarged to produce the same effect. Thus an addict soon builds up a tremendous "habit" and takes anywhere from ten to twenty-five grains a day, or even more. In Pendleton, Oregon State hospital, where I later took a cure, I was informed that it was possible to build a habit up to thirty-five grains a day. When that no longer satisfied or produced the desired effect, and the user tried to increase the dose, death usually stepped in and took a hand.

At the time of deliverance I was using about ten grains a day. I had used much more than this even as high as twenty or twenty-five grains a day. In other words, I was taking into my system enough morphine to put from eighty to one hundred ordinary people asleep, for a physician (as already stated) gives to the average patient one-quarter of a grain to a dose, and as there are four quarters in one grain, twenty-five grains would be enough to put one hundred persons asleep. I would like to say that a ten grain habit is considered a big habit in the underworld because of the scarcity of the drug and the expense involved. The craving is always for more and as already explained, there comes a limit beyond which the user cannot go and live. When this limit is reached it becomes necessary for him to reduce to smaller dosage and this is not at all pleasant.

I well remember the first time I was obliged to take a cure which was certainly not of a voluntary nature on my part, for the officers raided the place where I was then living, having obtained moonshine whiskey, and I was lugged off to jail. They also found in my possession morphine and I was promptly charged with violation of the Harrison Narcotic Act. The officers realizing they had a drug addict on hand, and wishing to be as merciful as possible, called a doctor, who came faithfully to see me twice a day for forty-two days, giving me reducing doses and finally taking me off morphine completely.

I went through indescribable torment, even though the doctor, a fine Christian man, tried all that he knew to make it bearable. I knew now from actual experience what was meant by the gang when they talked about "kicking the habit." I knew now what others had gone through who told of their suffering while kicking their habit in jails. They were not as fortunate as I however, as many told of having to "kick it cold turkey," that is, without any reducing doses or drugs whatsoever.

At the end of the forty-two days I received my last shot, for the doctor had been gradually reducing the dose day by day until now I was getting little more than water in the hypo. He told me I could now make it. He had taken a special interest in my case, and talked much to me, brought me a Bible to read, and tried in every way to point me to Christ. He requested that when I was released I come at once to his office, for he wished to further instruct me. I'll never forget the few remaining days in which I lingered in confinement, awaiting impatiently the expiration of my sentence. Time hung so heavily upon my hands. The days seemed so long. Nothing could I do that would interest me. I was the counterpart of a caged animal, walking to and fro in his den and wishing for freedom.

One day while thus walking, I stopped, sat down and held consultation with myself, and wondered what was the matter with me. Why did I wish freedom? Why were the days so long? Why was I so restless? Then I discovered what was meant when they said, "You can take it out of the body but you can't get it out of the mind." I thus questioned myself, saying, if they would make you these propositions what would you do? Supposing the officers would now say:

"If you will give up your wife and family, your hopes of the future, your liberty, and will forever stay here in this jail, we will give you all the morphine you wish — or if you consent to give up the drug and we can fix it so you can never again get another shot, we will at once turn you loose to freedom, your family and a future."

Which proposition do you suppose I would have taken? Morphine! for I was convinced I could not live without it. Why was I anxious for the doors to open? Why were the days so long? Because I wanted morphine, wanted it more than anything else in the world. The doctor had taken it out of the physical but it was still in the mind.

When the day of freedom came, I kept my promise and went to see the doctor who had so faithfully administered unto me. We had a long talk. He gave me much good advice; telling me to keep away from the associates I was forever running with; to keep company with good people, and above all, be faithful in going to church. He then took me in his car, drove twenty-five miles to the next town where I wished to go, trying as a father would to help his son, and his parting words were, if I remember aright:

"Don't forget the Nazarene, the man of Galilee." For He alone, the doctor realized, must be the One to help.

I wasn't away from the doctor over an hour I suppose, until I hunted up a "connection," as it is called by the addict, and obtained a shot. In a very few days I was down in the same old "hog wallow," just as had, and a little worse than ever before. I was now, a person who had once known God, as the one we read of in Scripture: "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he sayeth, I will return into my house from whence I came out: and when he is come he findeth it empty, swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first."

The addict finds himself up against it in every way. The cost of morphine is prohibitive, in the first place. Buying in the legitimate way from druggists on a doctor's prescription the price ranges from six to ten dollars for one hundred one-half grain tablets. However, many victims of the habit cannot obtain prescriptions from the doctor adequate for their needs. Therefore, they are driven to the dope peddlers who at great risk to themselves engage in the traffic.

The bootlegger's price reaches a dollar a grain and in times of scarcity brought on by activities of narcotic agents or other causes, skyrockets. But the addict explores every possible opening and exhausts every resource to acquire the drug. Some of the methods used to squeeze prescriptions from doctors are so fantastic as to seem unbelievable. He tries to work upon the doctor's sympathy. An addict is a notorious liar. He will tell or claim anything in order to obtain the drug. He pleads with physicians, telling them he has an incurable disease such as cancer and consumption, or other painful ailments in order to influence him to write a prescription for the drug. The addict calls this "making the doctor" and is ever on the alert for one whose sympathies can be worked upon.

When one finds himself a slave to the habit, whether acquired knowingly or innocently, he is usually driven to the underworld by the irresistible forces at war on him. Reputation, manhood, family, honor, friends, home — all are sacrificed — the drug must come first. It is his life's blood. If he has anything to eat, well and good, but morphine comes first. The drug takes first place over all things in the addict's life.

One occasion in particular now comes to my mind. A young man also an addict, with whom I was well acquainted came to me in search of the drug. He was an addict of long standing and had a "big habit." The "panic" was on as all known connections were shut down because of federal officers in town. He was in a bad way physically and needed a shot very badly. I also was completely out, having just taken my last shot and was preparing to leave in search of more.

"Don't you know," he asked, "where I can get a shot; can't you tell me of a connection? Man, I'm sick! I can hardly stand."

"No," I told him; "I am clear out myself. I just took my last shot a few moments ago. But I will go with you and we will see if we can't make contact somewhere. We will have to get some morphine, that's all there is to it!"

Down the road we started, walking and hitch hiking, going from one town to another, from "connection" to doctor, every place, but we couldn't obtain even a shot. The panic was surely on. Finally, about evening we found a medical man who pitied us, and we obtained enough morphine for a "fix up" as it is termed in the underworld.

By now we were having a real old fashioned "yen," that is, we were showing very strongly the symptoms of an addict out of morphine. We were yawning continually, eyes watering, legs aching, stomach crampy and every nerve and fibre of our being screaming for the drug. The pupils of our eyes were so dilated they seemed all pupil, whereas under the influence of the drug they contract to mere pin points.

We could not wait to get into a decent place for a "shot," so we secured a lid from a tobacco can to use as a "cooker" and a small bottle of water, and crawled under an old warehouse. We always carried our "outfits" with us, that is the hypo needle and syringe, and there amidst the dust, dirt, cobwebs, flies and spiders we proceeded to take our "fix up." By now we were both real "sick" and trembling so we could hardly wait even to fix our shots. The morphine was divided, and with no words or waste of time, we got out the "outfits" and started to prepare the shots, each man for himself.

Now in case you have never seen an addict take a "shot" and that you may be able to understand a little more the life of an addict I will try and explain how it is done. First, we took the tobacco lids and put the morphine tablets in them. We then took our eye droppers, which we used for the "gun" or hypodermic syringe and filled the barrel of the dropper with water which we then put on the morphine tablets in the tobacco lid or "cooker." A lighted match was then held under the "cooker" until the tablets were dissolved. Then a little pellet of cotton was placed in the "cooker" and the liquid strained through the cotton and sucked up in the eyedropper. Next the eye dropper was inserted into a hypodermic needle and held there by means of a washer made of a cigarette paper. Now a tourniquet was placed on the arm and when the veins were filled with blood and standing out, the hypo needle was injected into the vein, the rubber bulb on the eye dropper compressed and the contents injected into the blood stream. This is called "main line" shooting and the addict receives a "kick" this way that he receives in no other, a peculiar prickly, soothing sensation going at once over the whole nervous system and the addicts' "yen" with all its misery at once disappears.

After taking our "shots," we relaxed for a few moments enjoying the soothing sensation of the narcotic. We could not tarry long. This was only a "fix up" so we must get going, for in a very few hours the "yen" would be back again and we must have a supply to fall back upon.

I'll never forget the young man with me whom I will call Scot. He pointed to an empty morphine tube, after putting his "outfit" away, and said sharply:

"Do you see that stuff? Well, let me tell you something! Because of it I have never had a home! I have never had a wife or children! I have had no friends! I have been an outcast having to slink down alleys; afraid of police; the stigma of a 'hop head' upon me. I have no clothes, many times have had nothing to eat, I have slept in box cars with a newspaper for a covering, and all because of this stuff. It's taken every cent I could scrape together, all I can get by hook or crook goes for this — and Red (they didn't call me Brother Van in those days) now the habit is so big I can't get enough dope to satisfy it, I am in misery all the time. I know not what to do — I have tried time and again to quit, but it's no use, it's got me!"

Here truly was one who was groping in the darkness, for he knew not which way to turn and his way surely had not prospered.

I noticed also when he took his shot, two very large, ragged and deep scars on his forearm. I asked him how he received them and he seemed hesitant to reply, but finally told me the following:

He, with a group of addicts were arrested and placed in jail. It was a large city, and there the officers are more "hardboiled" than in the smaller towns, and so the "hyps," another name for addicts, were faced with the fact they must "kick the habit" and it looked as if they must "kick it cold turkey." They pled with the jailer for a doctor but their pleas were refused.

Finally in desperation they somehow obtained a safety razor blade and severed, or at least tried to, the arteries in their arms putting deep and dangerous slashes in the forearm. The jailor was faced with the fact that he must get a physician at once, or he would have a bunch of suicides on his hands. From the appearance of the scars on Scot's arm it looked very much as if he intended to have the job finished before the doctor or anyone else could get there.

I could understand why he had done this, for to an addict with a big habit, and of long standing, death is preferable to "kicking the habit cold turkey." Needless to say that when we both crawled out from under the old warehouse, we kept going until we obtained a supply of the drug.

Another time I ran out of the drug when in Reno, Nevada. You know Reno has a slogan: "The Biggest Little City in the World." They say that anything under the sun can be purchased in Reno. Anything! No matter what it may be, just as long as you have the money to pay for it and it isn't too high priced either. This "Little City" with its gambling halls and places of vice never sleep. They are open continually. Its gambling dens are wide open, going full blast any time of the night or day you may wish to enter. (The devil works at his job. Oh! that some professed Christians would so work and be as loyal and energetic as Satan's followers are to him.)

These gilded palaces of the game of chance never stop. At three A. M. the roulette wheel still spins; at five A. M. the dice still roll; at seven A. M. the black jack dealer still deals; the stud and draw poker games are still in session. The professional gambler is still on duty, hard eyed, poker faced, thoughts unreadable, ready to fleece his victim even to the last cent. The game goes on. Perhaps by the roulette wheel a movie queen, or one of the elite of society, placing her bets of "big money" on the number she hopes will win. At the dice table stands the pallid faced youth, cigarette hanging limply from his lips, trying vainly to woo the goddess of chance. So it goes clear on down from the movie queen with big stakes, on down to a little old ragged news woman punching her nickles in a slot machine trying to win the "jack pot."

After making the rounds I went into a saloon in which was a bartender with whom I was well acquainted. I asked him where I might procure the drug or make a "connection." He cautioned me to be very careful, telling me the federals were in town and were picking up addicts right and left.

"But," he continued, giving me the wink, "go down to the Mispah hotel and wait in the lobby. It will not be long until you can spot your man."

I hastened at once to the hotel that he had indicated and though it was about five o'clock in the evening, I saw that many of the inmates were just arising. The night was their day: they were those "who loved the darkness because their deeds were evil." I found a seat in the lobby and proceeded to watch for my man.

I'll never forget the motley group that came from their rooms and filed down the long stairs: women, young in years but old in crime and dissipation; hard eyed, painted denizens of the red light district, bold, brazen, immodest, drinkers, marijuana smokers, drug addicts; for money would do anything. Young men also in the number; pick pockets, gamblers, drunkards, those who were living off the earnings of a harlot; hard faced and evil eyed; they also would do anything for money. It wasn't long until my eyes beheld the man I was looking for. The pasty face, the pin point pupils, the morphine expression gave him away.

I promptly introduced myself and, after a few short words that he might know I was "alright," and "in the know," I secured my purchase and was soon upon my way.

As I think back upon that group I can say: truly, the mark of the beast will be placed not only upon those who worship him in the great tribulation, but it is placed even in this age upon all who serve sin and Satan, the mark of Cain placed there by the fingers of dissipation and rebellion against God.

Later on I moved to a frontier town named Burns, Oregon, where I rented a hotel and tried to make a go of it. My habit was now built up to such an extent that it was taking every dime I could rake and scrape together. Everything went for the drug that never satisfies, that always calls for more. Also my health by this time was not of the best. The dope was doing its work and I was nothing more than skin and bones. Again I wondered if there could be the possibility of a cure. I was deadly in earnest in my desire to be freed from morphine. I realized that I could not last long at the pace I was going and my habit was now so big it was with difficulty held in check.

I called a doctor with whom I was well acquainted and asked him if there was not something he could do, something known to medical science whereby if a man really wished to cease using the narcotic he could be helped in his desire. He then asked me how badly I desired to stop using the drug. I told him with all the desire and will power of my being; that my will power didn't amount to much but such as it was I wished to break the habit. He studied for sometime, then asked me another question.

"Do you wish to break the habit bad enough to go to jail?" This question was a stumper, for I had been in jail so much I certainly didn't yearn to go of my own accord.

"Why must I go to jail? I asked.

"If I take your case," he explained. "I must know the exact amount of morphine you are getting. I want you confined so I will know you cannot get any drugs whatsoever only as I give you.

He paused for several moments seemingly absorbed in his own thoughts, then continued: "I will give you reducing doses. I will make it just as easy for you as I can. I will take your case and see what can be done. But only on the one condition, and that is, you must go to jail and remain there while I treat you."

"All right," I replied, "if that is what it takes, then to jail I go."

We immediately went to see the sheriff, and the doctor explained to him what we wished to do, and arrangements were made for me to enter the jail. This was one time I was going to the bastille and pay my own board while there. In fact, this is the only case I know of a man while in jail paying his own board bill. I was now given a "hype" and locked within.

The doctor came faithfully morning and night and the reduction treatment was given. I'll never forget the suffering and misery that now was mine. The physician was doing his best, but no matter how conscientious he may be or how hard he tries there are some things beyond a doctor's power. It seemed as if he hardly had time to get way from the court house after giving my shot before the craving and misery began again. When he gave me a hypo in the morning, it seemed that evening would never come so I could get another "shot." Then, after the evening dose it seemed that morning would never dawn. I would walk the cell, up and down, to and fro, no sleep, wondering if day would ever break, suffering the torment of the damned, with nerves on fire, and appetite screaming for appeasement. I know what it means to them "who long for the morning" and even more to those "who long for death."

This went on for some time, I presume two or three weeks, when I asked the jailor if I could not take a walk down an alley or somewhere near, that perhaps it would help to relieve the terrible ache in my legs. It was about one hour until I would be locked in for the night, and as they did not watch me as close as they did the other prisoners because I was in there voluntarily, he consented, and I started down an alley on my walk.

I walked just a short distance until I came across a bootlegging establishment as it was in the days of prohibition, and I wondered, as I looked at the entrance, if it would be possible to drink myself unconscious and thereby bring relief from torment. I finally decided to try and do just that and at once entered the liquor establishment and sat down.

I drank considerable but it seemed the alcohol didn't affect me as it should and I saw I could obtain no relief this way. Drinking seemed only to make me worse so I left and dragged myself back to the jail house. I evidently stayed longer in the booze parlor than I thought for the jailor had locked up for the night and gone home. From all appearances he had grown weary of waiting and given me up as a bad job. Here I was, surely in a predicament, for I was locked out of my own jail! The prisoners inside called to me to go on home, saying the jailor was tired of fooling with me and I had better get gone before they locked me up on their own accord and threw the keys away.

I slunk away and when I came walking into the hotel, wife said:

"Well, where in the world did you come from? I thought you were in jail?"

"I thought so too," I replied wearily, "but I guess I am not."

"What will you do now? You know the doctor will not handle your case any longer? You are completely out of morphine and I don't know where or how you intend to get any."

Oh, I don't know what I will do!" I dejectedly exclaimed as I sat down.

I tried to control myself, going to bed and doing my best to make it through until morning. But a little after midnight I arose and put on my clothes. This awakened wife and she said sharply:

"Where are you going? What are you going to do?"

"I can't sleep or rest," I answered. "So I am going to take a walk."

I immediately turned out the light, left the room and started down the street. I was in such misery that come what would, I simply must have help. Just two blocks from the hotel was a drug store. I went straight to it, walked around to the back door, laid down on my back and started to kick through the door.

Now you might say: "I should think you would have been afraid that the town marshall might hear you, making all that noise breaking in, and have shot you."

Friend! I didn't care if he did, in fact I was almost wishing that he would. I was in such torment, death had lost its fear. I kicked a panel out of the door, crawled through the hole thus made, and soon found the narcotic box, put it under my arm, crawled out again and was soon back in the hotel.

Wife, upon espying the steel box in my hands, nervously exclaimed:

"Dee! What in the world have you done! Don't you know they can now put you in the penitentiary?"

"I don't care where they put me." I told her. "I have suffered all I can stand. The penitentiary may come, or death may come, but there is one thing I do know, and that is, before they get here I am going to have a little sleep, a little rest from this awful torment. This may be the last night's sleep I ever get, therefore I am going to do my best to get a good one."

With this I mixed up a shot which in the parlance of the addict, was big enough "to tear my head off, then hid the box of narcotics, went to bed and in almost an instant was sound asleep.

The next I knew someone was vigorously shaking me by the shoulder. I opened my eyes and looked up in the face of the sheriff, then the deputy, the town marshall, and next the state police. It seemed as if all the law in eastern Oregon was gathered around my bedside. They inquired, "How do you feel?"

I want to inquire of you reader, "How would you feel?"

I didn't feel very good you may be sure of that. You know the devil told me that I would have a hard time serving Christ and preaching the gospel. But he forgot to mention the terrible and awful time I would have serving him. He doesn't tell people these things, but in time, if they continue to serve him they will find out.

The officers next told me to get up, to put on my clothes and we would all take a little walk. We walked alright! Right up to the county jail! They promptly unlocked the door and this time I entered, nothing being said about the board bill. This time I didn't need to worry about paying it as the county would assume the obligations.

Do you know how they discovered I was the one who had broken into the drug store? There was nothing taken or disturbed but the box of narcotics. I was later informed that the money taken in that day in trade had been left in the till, not even put in the safe and, not a thing disturbed except the narcotics. With me out of jail, it didn't take much detective work on their part to figure out the culprit.

I would like to say here that the officers involved in the case surely tried to help me. They understood what I was up against. They could have sent me to the state prison. But they didn't. They still tried to help me. It wasn't long until an attorney came to see me.

"Do you still wish to take the cure?" he inquired solicitously.

"Yes," I replied hastily, "if such a thing is possible."

"Would you be willing to go to the Pendleton State Hospital for a cure? You know they have five doctors over there. They have a wonderful institution and know how to handle such cases as yours. If you will go there and take the cure, the officers here will dismiss the charges placed against you of breaking into the drug store."

He hesitated a moment, and then continued: "This must be a voluntary commitment on your part. Do you consent to being committed to this institution? You know legally you will be considered insane. You must stay until the doctors there release you.

He smiled as he again asked, "Do you still want the cure?"

"Yes! I certainly do." I told him. "If there is such a thing as a cure and getting rid of this habit, I am ready to go right now.

In a very short time I was taken before the court, and committed to the state hospital as a Morphia Maniac, then placed back in jail to await the coming of the hospital car.

THE WAIL OF A DRUG ADDICT

By

Evangelist D. C. Van Slyke

CHAPTER 4 DESPAIR

"Him that is in misery — Which long for death, but it cometh not; and dig for it more than for hid treasure; Which rejoice exceedingly, and are glad, when they can find the grave." Job. 3:20, 21, 22.

Time passes swiftly in spite of the fact that it may seem on occasion like an eternity. During the few days I remained in jail awaiting the hospital car the doctor continued the reducing treatment, but soon the means of conveyance arrived with an attendant as well as the driver and I was bundled in, and in a few moments headed for Pendleton, Oregon and the state hospital.

I will never forget how I felt when we arrived at the institution. It had been a long journey and we were tired. It was about nine o'clock in the evening and, as I had been given my last "shot" before leaving Burns, I was now in the throes of a terrible "yen." Truly, it seemed I was sick unto death. As we walked down the long corridor of the hospital to the "receiving ward" where the head attendant was waiting for us I wondered how I would ever endure the ordeal that lay before me.

I was promptly registered in, all my clothes taken from me and given a hot bath and a suit of pajamas. One of the doctors was then called, who gave a slight examination and a sedative, (no morphine or reducing doses here) after which I was taken to the "short hall" or violent cells in the receiving ward and there locked within a heavily barred room. The attendant then said "good night" and I was left alone to await the morning.

Here I stood in a violent room in the state hospital a morphiamanaic, filled with despair, and wondered how on earth I was ever to live through the nameless dreads which were before me. The room was devoid of furniture — nothing within it, except a steel cot, mattress and sheets, pillow and pillow slip. This was all for there was no chair, dresser or rugs, just bare cement floor and walls, heavily barred window, great thick reinforced door with a slot cut in it so the attendants could peek through and see how the patient was faring without opening the door.

Many times I was to glance at the slot in the door, which was about big enough to put your hand through, and see two eyes staring at me. These were not always the eyes of the attendants. Some of the patients, who were allowed the liberty of the ward, wished to see the new patient, and how he was progressing. I noticed also some writing upon the wall. It was distorted writing and some of the letters were written backward. The author had evidently tried to inscribe the words, "Jesus Saves." "Couldn't they even get that right in here," I thought as I threw myself upon the cot and tried my best to restrain myself and endure patiently the suffering which was mine.

All that transpired in this room I cannot remember. It was only a short while before I started to have hallucinations. I was suffering intense agony. Now I must reap what I had sown. For in spite of good conscientious medical men who were doing all they knew to help relieve me, I was in

dreadful and indescribable agony. I knew better than to do what I had done. I had a dear old fashioned grandmother who prayed for, watched over, and cared for me. She told me I couldn't do as other people did. She insisted there was only one thing for me to do, that was to give my heart to God.

As I look back, I can realize that she knew much more about this than I gave her credit for. In fact, I found her right in all these things. She knew me better than I knew myself. I said as far in dissipation as I would go, would be the cigarette; that I would never be a drunkard; then, when I was drinking I'll go no further, I will never use drugs. But I realized here at last I had about reached the end of the trail, that grandmother was right, I couldn't do as other people.

Thrown in with misery and agony were hallucinations. I evidently had been unconscious for when I opened my eyes I was still lying on the cot. I could now see as plain as could be, my wife and the doctor, who in Burns, Oregon, tried so hard to help me. They seemed to understand the agony that was mine: they seemed to wish to help me. I thought if I could only get one shot of morphine to alleviate the awful torment, what a help it would be! Perhaps the doctor and my wife could be of assistance. I knew they would if they could. Perhaps the doctor would give at least one shot to me, a little one, no doubt, but enough to help ease the terrible pain and anguish. My reasoning however was all in vain. I was seeing things. The physician and wife were not there in person, only the image of a distorted brain. Hallucinations! Despair!

Once again I slipped away into the realm of merciful oblivion. How long I remained so I do not know. But when I came back to consciousness, (not to rationality) O, the indescribable suffering and torment! I happened to glance at the window and there I saw, as plain as could be, a tube of morphine, a little tube, twenty one-quarter grain tablets, Upjohn Morphine Sulphate, with the Federal stamp and seal upon it. There it was wedged in between the bars and just behind the heavy coarse screen that covered the window. I wondered how in the world it got there. Perhaps someone smuggled it in for me. Narcotics had been smuggled to me when in jail and perhaps some of my friends had done the same for me here.

I crawled from the cot upon which I had been lying, every nerve set on fire by the morphine tube I saw in the window, every nerve and fiber of my being pleading for the drug. I was so weak I could hardly crawl to the window, perspiration was streaming down my face, but here at last was to be relief from my misery, it was to be found in the little brown tube lodged between the bars. I inserted my finger between the mesh of the screen trying desperately to loosen it, but my finger was not long enough. I couldn't reach it! What was I to do? Here was ease and rest from my torment. I must have it! Every part of my being now, at sight of the tube, had been awakened to a frenzy, every desire magnified a thousand times, nerves screaming now for appeasement, nerves that would not be denied — they must have morphine.

I glanced around for something with which I might dislodge the tube but the room was bare. I rolled up the mattress upon the bed, hunting for anything I might be able to use. I found a piece of heavy paper and rolled it into a roll about the length and thickness of a lead pencil. At last I believed I had solved the problem. I could obtain the shot. Soon tortured nerves would be at rest. I crawled back to the window once more and inserted the paper to dislodge the tube of morphine. It seemed

as if I could not even wait the moment it would take to get the tube in my hands and the narcotic in my system. I had gone as far as I could go.

The pencil-shaped roll of paper slipped behind the tube. It was long enough. How thankful I was for that. I now tried to pry the tube loose but the paper roll seemed to pass right through it, or bend back, I couldn't tell which. I tried again and again but to no avail. I ground my teeth in rage, I cursed and swore, I wept and pled, I moaned and groaned but to no advantage. The morphine tube was not there. I was seeing things! There it was so near, and yet so far. Better a thousand times never to have seen it, than to see it, have all the passions set on fire a thousand times greater than ever before, and not to be able to procure it.

Oh friend! O wayward one! O Christ rejector! Sinner! Stop and THINK!! WHAT WILL HELL BE LIKE? All through eternity, groping down the sooted corridors of the doomed and the damned, every base and evil passion, every habit that was unbreakable here, every desire for evil in all its forms a thousand times magnified, the soul in perdition sees it, cries out for it, pursues after it with imagination set on fire by the flames of hell and sin, always just within his grasp, yet never obtainable, for as the morphine tube in the window of the asylum — IT ISN'T THERE. With a sob I threw myself upon the cot and once more passed into merciful oblivion.

In a very short time I regained consciousness. It seemed I was in greater torment than ever before.

"O God, I thought, "I can never stand this another moment."

Surely my punishment seemed as did Cain's, greater than I could bear. I longed for death. I thought to die is much to be preferred over this agony. Anything that would bring relief from this awful torture would be welcome. Suicide seemed to be my only hope. How was I to accomplish it? I tore a sheet into strips and tied the strips together into a rope affair. Now for something over which to hang the sheet rope. I could find nothing. I would not be denied. I made a noose, placed it about my neck and tried to pull it tight, but I was too weak, and the attendants were keeping a close watch over me, therefore I was unable to end my suffering this way. Wanting to die! But unable to fulfill my wish. I was now as those in the text of this chapter: "Which long for death, but it cometh not; and dig for it more than for hid treasures; Which rejoice exceedingly, and are glad, when they can find the grave.

How I longed for death, for it seemed to be the only way of escape from this excruciating misery. I thought if I can only sever an artery in my arm, perhaps that will bring the desired result. I tried with my teeth to reach one but I could not. They were not sharp enough, I was much too weak, and as already mentioned, the attendants were watching lest I do harm to myself.

This was the crisis of the suffering and in a few more days I started to mend slowly, the terrible torment was abating, yet there remained the dull hard ache throughout my body, a terrible depressed feeling, and a maddening sense of something gone from my life that I could not live without.

In a few days I was released from the "short hall" and was given another room, a much nicer one, on the receiving ward and was allowed the liberty of the floor. I could now mingle with other

patients and visit with them. It seemed that all I talked with were perfectly normal, that is, to hear them tell it and the only reason they were confined in the hospital was that outside influences and enemies that had caused them to be so confined.

One man in particular seemed perfectly normal in all conversation and action. He told me the reason for his confinement was a secret invention of his that if put in use would revolutionize the business world and put lots of millionaires into bankruptcy, hence money and big influence kept him in the state hospital. He was perfectly sane, so he said, just a victim of circumstance. I walked away almost inclined to believe the fellow, but upon asking the attendant about him, I was promptly informed that such talk as I had just listened to was the reason for his being here. This happened to be his delusion which came from a distorted mind.

I talked to others and many of them seemed to be laboring under similar delusions; they all had enemies that were trying to get their money, land or property, and in some cases loved ones. They were not in the asylum because of any mental disorder but because of outside influences working against them.

After hearing this for a few days I slipped away in a room by myself, sat down and held consultation. I thus questioned myself:

"Why are you here?"

"I am here to take the morphine cure." I answered.

"Are you certain that you are all right mentally? Are you sure you are a drug addict? Perhaps you just THINK you have been using the drug all these years. This might be your hallucination, you might just think you are an addict. Why! you may be hopelessly insane just like some of the others you have been talking to. What about it?"

That is quite a problem to face, is it not? But the aches and the pain, and the scars from the hypo needle upon my arms answered the questions for me. No! This was no hallucination. I was an addict and a bad one and in terrible physical condition.

I'll never forget the first time I saw the inmates from the women's ward marching around the hospital for their morning exercise. I was sitting on the heavily barred porch of ward number one when this took place. There were about fifteen hundred patients confined in the hospital at this time and about half of these were women. Those who were marching for exercise were the ones confined to the various wards and not to be intrusted with liberty privilege. What a motley group they were: some in straps, their hands strapped to their sides, others strapped to one another, some leaning far forward and some with heads shaven. A few had tried to beautify themselves, others seemingly cared nothing for personal appearance; some were trying to be light hearted, others were not to be comforted; some young in years, others about to the end of life's pathway; some dressed in gingham with a few ribbons, others in heavy blue denim with a large leather strap about the waist. Truly despair was upon them.

Sin caused it all, someone's sin, for here were people reaping the inevitable, for God's word says: "They that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same." Those who go on in sin may think they are just hurting themselves, that how we live or what we do is strictly our own affair, that it is none others' business, but we should always remember this: others cannot reap FOR us, but others can and WILL reap WITH us. All this was caused by sin, someone's disobedience to God.

Now, I wouldn't for the world leave the wrong impression with the reader in regard to all those confined in asylums. I am sure all know there are persons innocent from gross transgressions of the law of God, even those who are Christians, but because of ill health and nervous disorder brought on by no fault of theirs, are placed here for treatment. But in the main, all will agree, I am sure, that it is the direct personal breaking of the commandments of God in one form or another that is the cause of their affliction. Sin, therefore, someone's sin, is the underlying cause.

One of the attendants informed me that one out of every five brought to the institution, whether man or woman, was suffering from the social disease, syphilis. He then asked me to consider how prevalent the disease must be, as those who were brought to the hospital had it at such an advanced stage it affected their mind.

"But," he said, "Just think of the multiplied thousands who have the social disease and it has not yet reached this advanced stage. These are only a few brought to our attention."

Reader, please consider this! Think of statistics in regard to social diseases so alarming, juvenile delinquency such a problem, and realize that the spread of these infectious diseases are not limited to the brothel, but are rampant on the dance floor, and in the licentious movie crowd, and those of loose morals. How thankful, therefore, we should be for churches that stand out against the theater, the ball room, and worldly amusement. How thankful that mothers and fathers should be for Christian young people and Christian recreation.

Later on as I was allowed more liberty I began to see other sorrowful sights. I will always remember the trip I made to the violent ward with another attendant. We had to take a patient to that particular ward. Here, two big husky attendants keep charge. Here no liberty was allowed. Patients in this ward were confined to strong rooms or straps. All the liberty they could be trusted with was three hard backless benches right in front of the attendant, who sat behind a small table.

The newcomer took the first bench, then if he proved tractable and caused no disturbance, he was allowed to take the second bench back from the first. If, in time, he proved trustworthy on this bench then he was extended the greatest privilege and liberty allowed on this ward and that was the third and last bench in the row. This was the limit of liberty extended, for remember this was the violent ward and the inmates were not to be trusted under any circumstances.

Here, in a heavily barred room, sat a young man in solitary confinement with his hands strapped to his sides. I was informed that he once had been one of the leading boxers on the Pacific Coast. He had a fine physique but had taken too many blows upon the head and was, in the parlance of the boxing world, "punch drunk," in fact, so punch drunk that all he knew was fight. They told me that was the reason they had to keep him by himself: he would keep fighting both patients and attendants.

Keepers of the ward thought that if perhaps they strapped his hands to his sides, that would solve the problem and he might be allowed some liberty, enough at least for him to walk up and down the hall and thus get some exercise. But this failed, for he would kick, bunt, and maltreat every one that came in contact with him, so all that could be done was straps and solitary confinement. He had thus been confined for several years. All he did was sit in straps on the edge of his cot and stare at the floor.

I wonder if this young man ever thought, when Satan held up the temptation of glamor, praise and white lights of success in the fight game, if this would be his lot: alone, in straps, demented, unvisited, and forgotten in an asylum, hopelessly insane. Truly a terrific price to pay for a few short months of money and popularity.

Never will I forget one case brought to the receiving ward which I helped care for. This was a young man who had suddenly gone insane while his folks were away on a visit in the east. He was brought in heavily strapped. The attendant warned to keep an eye upon him at all times, that the patient was desperate and would do anything. He was at once stripped in preparation for a bath. He was only of slight build but it took about all the strong men combined with the "riot squad" to get him into the tub and give him his bath. He was like an eel, he had attendants and the "squad" strung all over the bath room. Finally, when it looked as if there wasn't a hand hold left upon him, he was put into the tub. Then, in the water he changed his mind about getting wet and decided to drown himself. Now it was about all we could do to hold his head out of the water and keep him from drowning.

He was given alternately hot and cold shocks with water, the object being to bring him out of the violent spasm. First the tub was filled with water so hot perspiration would break out all over him, then quickly drained and filled with water so cold it would make his teeth rattle. This went on for some time but it seemed to do little good, so the "treatment" ceased.

He was now taken to the "short hall" and there confined in a violent room. Finally, he had to be placed in straps and kept strapped to his cot. He would fight the straps all day and night. He never seemed to tire or give up. He would inch the cot across his room just by bouncing his body up and down. He would eat nothing and we had to "tube" him, that is to feed him with a tube through the nose. He kept getting weaker and weaker until one day the attendant came to me and said:

"Come with me. We have a body to prepare for the morgue. The young man has just died."

Other patients allowed the freedom of the ward, came and glanced at the remains of the young man we were preparing for the morgue, and I will never forget a little Japanese who upon seeing the body, smiled, and pointing to it said to me, "Pretty soon me be like that." He smiled so eagerly as he spoke that anyone could see he longed for that day to come. He was one of those that "long for death, but it cometh not; and dig for it more than for hid treasures." He had to be watched very closely because he was continually trying suicide.

The young man was fully prepared for the morgue and we carried him out, but now the grief stricken parents and sister must pay in sorrow for that which sin had done.

When we see misery and suffering such as this, how thankful we can be for our Christ, salvation, and the eternal hope we have, and how we should buckle on the armour of God and fight against Satan, sin and his works as never before.

One night there was a particular commotion on ward three if I remember correctly, but I gave it no unusual attention since there was plenty of that there. I was awakened by the noise, but in a short time went back to sleep. Next morning one of the attendants said to me:

"Did you know there was a murder committed on ward three last night?"

"No, I didn't," I replied, "What happened?"

He then related the following to me: A patient, supposedly harmless, a roommate of another, had risen in the night, obtained a shoe with a hard leather heel and slipped over to the bedside of his sleeping roommate and struck, and struck hard and often, at the defenseless head of his imagined enemy. I will not attempt to describe the room, as the attendant described it, but suffice to say the patient stood and beat upon the head of his room mate for almost an hour before the night attendant found him. He had literally beaten the head almost from the body and was still striking hard when found.

He was brought to ward one, the receiving ward, and by doctor's orders placed in full restraint. It became my lot to help care for him. Now that you may understand the meaning of full restraint I will tell you how we cared for him. He was placed in solitary in a room devoid of all except a cot. He was allowed the liberty of this small room during the day but at night he was thus placed in full restraint. At seven o'clock sharp he was prepared for bed, (they retire early in the state hospital) and this is the way I would get him ready for the night: first I would have him stretch out on the cot, then heavy straps were fastened to his ankles and strapped to the bed so his legs could not move; next his wrists were fastened in straps and securely buckled to the cot; then an extra heavy strap was applied to his mid-section and passed clear around him and the cot and was drawn as tightly as possible.

He was so strapped he could not move. Just about all he could do was open and close his eyes, and mouth. But this was not all I had to do. Next came the restraining sheet. This was made of heavy canvas reinforced with leather and held in place with heavy leather straps. This "sheet" completely covered Freddie, as we call him, leaving only the face uncovered, and was strapped very tightly to the bed. Now he was ready for the long night. He must remain in this condition until five-thirty in the morning. He could not move and, as already stated, about all he could do was open his eyes and mouth.

When Freddie was thus secure for the night, then I must turn out the lights and plunge his room into darkness. This was full restraint. These were doctor's orders. For even here there must be discipline and patients must learn that they must obey and be corrected for violating the rules of the institution. Freddie had committed an awful crime and he must be taught, if at all possible, that he must never do this again.

I was hard hearted in those days and had seen many pitiful and terrible sights, but this one moved me more than any other. Perhaps it was because of my own experience in the "short hall" when I was suffering such agonies and "seeing things" that gave me an insight into that which Freddie must suffer. I knew what he must endure. I knew his hallucinations were as real to him as if they were actually happening.

I knew that Freddie would be seeing things all the night through. I realized his distorted brain would imagine terrible and awful things creeping out of the darkness. I knew horrible monstrosities would be hovering over his prostrate form and he, Freddie, powerless to move. I knew the perspiration would run from his brow and moans of torment and despair would be wrung from his lips. Yes, I was hard hearted but this was too much for me. I hated to turn out the light. I hated to leave him there alone in the straps. But doctor's orders must be obeyed. I would look at Freddie. I could see fear depicted in those eyes. He did not want me to leave. He did not wish to be alone, but I must go. I would say "good night, Freddie." He would look at me so pitifully and say, "good night." I then turned out the light. The room was plunged into darkness. I pulled the heavy door shut behind me. There was no way this door could be opened from the outside. The lock would snap in place, I would go to my room and Freddie was left alone to await the morning.

I would retire and in a short while be asleep. Then I would awaken. What was it that caused me to so awake in the middle of the night? I would feel uneasy. Then I heard it, that which aroused me from slumber. This, that I heard made my flesh crawl. What was it? Freddie over there in his room, in his straps, with his hallucinations, monstrosities, and torments and he was PRAYING. Louder and louder sounded the prayer until it would reach a scream. Over and over he repeated it. Praying, yes praying, but the wail of a lost soul. Praying thus: "Oh God, Oh God! ! I am crazy, I am crazy! Over and over he repeated it, louder and louder he wailed, but no answer came.

He was reaping that which he had sown. He was "eating of the fruit of his own way." Here, I firmly believe, was a lost soul, still encased in a body of flesh, but a soul that was doomed, the die had been cast, destiny was set, and the eternal destiny of this soul wore the destination tag thus labeled hell.

Strange as it may seem Freddie was crazy about something all right, but he was sane enough to know what put him there. Licentiousness, gross disobedience to the laws of God and man, brought unto him disease and death of mind, and worst of all a soul damned forever in eternity's night.

After about thirty days of confinement I was conversing one day with one of the doctors who happened to be on the ward and our conversation drifted to narcotics. He spoke of the morphine habit and the large amounts required after using the drug for a great length of time. For, as already stated morphine is an antidote to itself and the dose must be increased every few days to get the desired effect. He then explained much that was already familiar to me, saying it was possible to build a habit as high as thirty-five grains a day. Then comes the time this amount will not satisfy and the addict tries to increase the doses again, but that is as high as the human body can go in assimilating the drug and then death will come.

About all you can do, I was informed, is come every so often to a hospital or some place and take reducing treatments.

"Yes," I said, "I know all this. But why are you talking to me about reducing doses and treatment? I am in here for a cure. A fellow that is cured doesn't need to keep taking reducing doses and treatment."

"Why man, listen," the doctor stated, "an inebriate, or a habitual drunkard, should stay at least for a year in here. And you! A man that has used morphine as long as you have! Why, you can just about imagine how long YOU should stay. Listen, we don't intend to cure you. With that he walked away.

You can just about imagine how I felt. Here was my last hope, this was the last straw, and I knew the doctor was right, for they could not do the impossible. Even though I wished to be free from the torments of the habit, yet deep in my mind I still wanted and craved morphine and did not feel life was worth living without it."

There is a maxim that "the devil takes care of his own." This is correct if we apply it as to keeping his followers eating of the fruit of sin, and opening ways and means to partake of forbidden fruits. For not long after my conversation with the doctor a way was opened that I might make a "connection" and obtain an occasional shot of morphine without his knowledge.

Because of the great reduction of the drug, and because of my having gone completely without it for the first thirty days of my confinement, also regular hours, I gained appreciably in weight and appearance so that at the time of my release sixty days later I looked much improved. But even though the external seemed much changed, yet the internal was the same. The habit was still there and morphine was master.

THE WAIL OF A DRUG ADDICT

By

Evangelist D. C. Van Slyke

CHAPTER 5

THE CRY

"This poor man cried." Psa. 34:6.

There was nothing now to look forward to — nothing ahead but misery, disappointment, and death. Upon leaving the hospital in this frame of mind and afflicted in body as I was, I would gladly have changed places with anyone living. "What is the use?" I thought, "All this suffering and torment in vain, I'll not even try to break the habit again." I gave up. I was whipped and knew it. I was in such misery that I gladly would have changed places with the blind. If a sightless beggar would have come to me and asked for pity, I would have laughed at him. Even when a funeral procession went by, it aroused no sympathy within me. I thought, "Why should they be weeping? The one in the casket is out of his misery." I gladly would have traded places with him. My mind was filled with suicide. I said, "I am going to take a big shot of morphine one of these days and end it all." Life held no future. Death seemed the only way out.

But we know that man's extremity is God's opportunity. Sometimes man must reach dire straits before God can speak to him. I know it was so in my case, for an impression came so forcefully and clear, a voice I could not mistake, saying, "Listen, you have tried everything, doctors, friends, and will power; you have tried all and they have failed. Why not try the old fashioned religion your grandmother used to have?"

My mind at once went back to the old time camp meetings to which grandmother took me when I was a little boy; when God in His power came upon the people, the saints shouted and wept for joy and were laid out under the power of the Most High. You know people used to be laid out under His power. I remember seeing grandmother, as well as many others, stretched out in the straw before God. Other little boys would come to me on some of these occasions and say:

"Your grandmother is dead."

I would answer, "No, she isn't. She is just under the power," and I would continue playing. Thank God I was born in the fire. Oh that we could see more of it today! I am not talking about fanaticism and other forms of devilism, but about old-fashioned pentecostal power and glory that used to be so prevalent among the holiness people.

I thought if I only could get something like that. Just like grandmother used to have; something real that gave people the power to break the habits of sin and live clean and holy lives. Oh, if God would only come upon me in the old time power, I was sure He could knock all the morphine and cigarette habits out of me! I went home and mentioned this to my wife and she replied:

"Well, I think so, too."

I don't know if she really thought so then, as she was unsaved and didn't have the religious background that I had, but she was willing for me to try most anything just so I could be cured of the awful habit.

Not long after this impression and conversation with my wife, I started to go to church occasionally and a revival meeting opened in the little Church of the Nazarene at Vale, Oregon. This church was one that had been dug out of the raw by a young minister by the name of Forrest Hill. Just a little, hard scrabble work, but God was with them. The evangelist for this meeting was a Rev. Ray Davis, then pastor of First Nazarene church at Boise, Idaho.

I'll never forget the services that I attended. The people, how they sang! They were few in number and the building was small but it seemed like a camp meeting to me. How their faces shown as they were singing! They seemed to enjoy their religion. I thought: "Why, these people aren't serving God just to keep from going to hell, they seem to serve Him because they really enjoy it."

They didn't have much in a material way, but they had something I didn't have and that was joy and unspeakable glory. It made me hungry for that which they possessed.

One night as the preacher preached it seemed as if his face shone as the face of Moses when he came down from the mount after spending forty days with God. The evangelist seemed so happy and blest as he spoke. He came down from the platform and walked down the aisle as he brought the message, and I thought: "Surely that man is preaching because he enjoys it. He isn't serving God just from fear of Him and fear of going to hell if he didn't, but he is serving God because it is a delight to do so."

This made me more hungry still. I realized these people were so happy, and I? I was so miserable. I asked my wife after we returned home from the service:

"Wife, did you see that preacher's face shine as he preached?" It seemed a heavenly glow was upon him, he seemed so happy. "Oh, if I could only get what he has," I said to myself, I would be willing to do anything, yes anything, even to preach the gospel — if I could be that happy and be rid of all the misery, woe and despair." I even slipped into the bedroom at one time and knelt beside the bed and broken heartedly asked if He couldn't give me a job.

"Lord, I don't know what I could do," I said, "but if I could do anything, I would be willing to do it, if I only could be happy."

After this prayer I went out doors and as I lit a cigarette, I wondered why I had done like that — asking God for a job. Why, what could I do for God or anyone else? I couldn't even take care of myself. What could God do with me, a cigarette fiend, dope head, gambler, cusser, having no mind, no will power, nothing?

Back to the meeting wife and I went and the next night the evangelist gave an altar call. I don't know that I was particularly under conviction in any way, but I do know that I decided something must be done and I was the one that had to do it, conviction or no conviction. It was one of the

hardest things I ever did, going to the altar. It seemed it took about all my strength to let loose of the back of the seat and walk down the aisle. But God helped and I started forward and then knelt before the mourner's bench.

The evangelist and pastor had evidently been praying for something unusual to happen in this meeting and surely it had happened. Here at the altar knelt the notorious one; here, was old Van Slyke, the hop head, the gambler, the cusser, the one that everyone thought had gone too far. The sheriff said there wasn't any use, doctors said the same, and preachers were saying:

He's gone too far. There isn't anything left. No character, nothing left to work upon."

I tried to pray but I couldn't get very far. Others tried to pray but they didn't seem to make much headway either. Finally, I left the altar after the pastor, evangelist and the saints had tried to encourage me. I was very disheartened and just as soon as I stepped out of the church, I reached for a cigarette and started to light it when the wife said:

"What are you doing there?"

"Why, I'm lighting a cigarette, can't you see?"

"Yes," she replied, "but you have been to the altar and you know you shouldn't be smoking now."

"Oh," I said, "the reason I am smoking is that I didn't get anything."

Strange, isn't it, that she knew I shouldn't be smoking after coming from the altar? I wonder how she knew? You remember she didn't have the bringing up I had. But she had enough natural religious sense to know a person shouldn't try to use tobacco in any form and profess religion.

I went home very, very discouraged, wondering if all was to fail. My last hope had been salvation. Was that to fail also? Why hadn't I received something when I went to the altar? Why was it so hard to pray? Had I gone too far and sinned away my day of grace? All these and many more thoughts filled my mind. But I determined not to give up. I would continue to pray; look to God and hang on until I received something from the skies. Here's where the good pastor, Brother Hill, was used much of God in my behalf. He won my confidence and friendship. He took charge and care of me as a long lost brother. Both he and his wife prayed, wept, held onto God, and tried every way possible to assist me. I did pray as I drove my truck and would wonder if the time would ever come when I could be free from the awful habit and curse which were upon me.

Finally the time came for district camp meeting which was to be held at Nampa, Idaho. I had continued to attend church more or less regularly, and the church held onto God in prayer for me. So, at the pastor's suggestion, I loaded the truck with as many of the church members there at Vale as we could haul, and we soon arrived at our destination fifty miles away.

This was in the fall of 1937 and V. Littrell and Dist. Supt. Glenn Griffith were the workers and there was a large crowd of people present. I remember as I stood watching this great crowd of people

I was wondering if, after all, there might be some mistake, and there wasn't really anything to this religious business but a condition of mind; if, perhaps, after all, I had been mistaken. I had prayed so much and gone to the altars and yet I had received nothing. Perhaps there wasn't anything to it. As I stood thus meditating a man walked up to me, and putting his hand on my shoulder said,

"Brother, they cannot all be wrong. Can they?"

And with that he walked away and left me. I thought surely he is right. There must be something to it, for in that crowd were educated people, doctors, business men, teachers, those who were highly educated. Surely there must be something to attract and draw. These people were too smart to be fooled by some passing fancy and go year after year attending meetings, paying the expenses, and denying themselves without receiving something more than just in the mind. Yes, I must be the one who was thinking wrong just before the brother spoke to me.

I went into the tent and seated myself. The preacher, after the formalities were over, soon launched out in the message. To this day I don't know what he preached about. I suppose he did the way I most generally do, preached about fifteen minutes too long. My mind wasn't on the message. I was thinking if only I could get old time religion. The altar call was given and then something seemed to say to me:

"Now is your chance. Go forward on this altar call."

But arguments from the other side started also. They said: "No use, you have been to the altar a good many times and never received anything yet. You have gone too far. There isn't any use."

But the Spirit prompted again and with an unusual pull;

"This is the time, Go."

So I determined that once more I would go, and sink or swim, live or die, I was going to find out if there was a prayer answering God in heaven who could and would help me and deliver me from my habits and trouble and forgive my sins.

I wasn't long in reaching the altar after this decision was made and Brother Hill and others were gathered around me and prayer was soon on its way to the throne. Now I don't know how some people come to the altar but I know how I went that night. I had the firm conviction that here was one time I had to have help. If God ever did hear a cry or prayer of man I was determined that He must hear mine. I was desperate. This was life or death to me. If God heard, I lived. If not, I died. That was all there was to it. I had to have help and I had to get my prayer through.

I started praying, and, brother, I prayed. I forgot everyone around me, I pounded the mourner's bench, I yelled, I cried, I moaned, I groaned, I poured out my heart to God, and readers, I made lots of noise and commotion. You know when we really get down to business we get away from a lot of this nicety nice business that's so prevalent around the altars today. When people really get stirred and realize they are slipping into hell and God alone must help them, they lose some of their

politeness and fine manners. Who ever heard of a person slipping over a cliff and just about gone, very politely saying, "Please someone, if I am not intruding, will you please pass me the rope?"

No! they don't act like that. They yell. "HELP! HELP! Throw me a rope! Quick! My God, save me!!

You may say: "Well, preacher, why do you have to pray so loud and make so much noise about it?"

I answer, "I don't know as we do have to, but sometimes it seems necessary to loosen things up and rout the devil."

I fear it is sometimes with us as it was with Uncle Buddy Robinson who was to preach in a very cold, formal church one day. Just before bringing his message, he asked all to stand and he lit into praying at the top of his voice. He was hollering and praying as loud as he could when one of the big D. D.'s walked over and laying his hand on his arm said:

"Brother Robinson, don't you know the Lord isn't deaf? He can hear even if you don't pray so loud."

Uncle Buddy, looking up as he wiped his brow, stared at the big man blankly for a moment then replied:

"Brother, I know the Lord isn't deaf, but He sure is a long way off from this place."

Perhaps that's the reason we make so much noise sometimes in praying.

Workers at the altar were gathered around me and were giving instructions and praying with and for me. It may have been with me a good deal, at least in feeling, as it was with one brother who came to the altar and on one side of him was a group pounding him on the shoulder yelling:

"Hold on, brother! Hold on!"

And on the other side another group pounding him on the other shoulder and yelling:

"Let go, brother! Let go!"

So he said he held on with one hand and let go with the other, trying to follow instructions until finally God came to his soul.

So it was with me. I had done everything they told me and everything I knew when right in the midst of my most urgent petitions something gave. Oh, brother, I'll never forget it. The windows of heaven opened upon my soul. All my burdens were gone. I never was so happy in all my life. The next thing I knew I was on my feet and had my arms around a rather fat man's neck. I don't know as

I particularly love fat men, but I know I loved this one. In fact I loved everybody. You know Old Time Religion makes one love everybody. Someone said:

"Did you get through?"

"Sure!" I replied, "I got through."

Then the devil spoke and said: "How do you know you got through? You better wait awhile here before you go testifying so strongly. How do you know you are delivered from morphine and cigarettes?"

Well, that took some wind out of my sails and I went over and sat down but I still felt a great load taken from my shoulders and peace and joy were in my soul.

A lady then walked up to me and said: "Brother, did you get through all right?"

"Sure, I got through."

Then the tempter said once more: "What's the matter with you? Telling all these good people you got through? You better wait and see what's going to happen about this morphine and cigarette habit you have?"

Well, that took some more wind out of my sails and all at once I started to crave a cigarette. The Devil said: "See, I thought you were testifying a little early. You thought you were saved. You still have the same old habits."

By this time I began to crave a cigarette as never before. It seemed as if I could hardly wait to get one lighted and to my lips.

A short time afterwards we left the tent and were loaded in the truck for the return trip to Vale. Fifty miles to go, and oh how I craved a smoke! I wondered if I would be able to last it out until we arrived home. In the front seat with my wife and myself was a very pious looking lady, and I thought I must smoke and didn't wish to in front of her unless I could sort of get her consent. So I said:

"Sister, did you ever hear of a fellow being to the altar and getting saved and, Oh we will say, just smoking one cigarette afterward?"

She didn't even bother to turn her head as she answered:

"No sir, I NEVER did!"

So my hope was gone. I drove as fast as I could and unloaded my passengers as soon as possible and then when wife and I were alone I took my smoke. I couldn't wait another moment.

I thought. "What in the world is the matter? I never felt so happy and peaceful when at the altar tonight I heard from God. Why is this cigarette habit still with me? Why do I still crave it? I thought I was saved and here I have had to smoke already."

Then I thought perhaps God would take the morphine habit away first of all, then cigarettes last. But by now I was getting in the throes of a "yen" or badly in need of a shot and I began to realize the habit was still there.

I was very disheartened and went to bed determined that I would have to fight the habits as never before, but praying God to deliver me. I rolled and tossed, prayed, tried to use will power, tried to sleep, but I could not. The old ache and pains were there and finally about five in the morning I said to wife:

"I give up. Get the hypo needle and hand me the morphine, I am in such a shape I can go no longer."

Wife brought the needle and morphine, and friends, I could hardly see to take the shot of morphine, for the tears. The thought came again and again:

"What is the matter? I was so blessed and happy last evening. I felt sure I heard from God. I really had received something. And yet, this, my only hope seemed to have failed."

No one will ever imagine how I felt, for after prayers, tears, and burdened hearts, and seeming triumph, yet here I was taking another shot of morphine.

After the shot was taken, I walked the floor and I talked to God.

"Oh Lord, you know my condition. You know I can never quit these habits unless you help me break their chains. Why was I so happy and testified that You had saved me? Lord I had counted so heavily upon You, and yet, after all this I have had to take a shot of morphine and smoke a cigarette. Oh Lord! What in the world is the matter? You know there are some things I cannot do. I can never break this awful morphine habit or even cigarettes unless You break them for me."

Then clear as could be came this impression:

"You say you cannot break the morphine habit? You say you cannot stop cigarettes in your own strength. You say these are things you cannot do. Well, I want now to ask you a question: 'What CAN you do to serve Me? Will you be willing to do what you can?' You know God doesn't expect, or ask us to do the things we cannot do. But He does expect us to do the things we can do for Him."

I answered, "Yes Lord, I will do the things I can and will trust Thee to take care of the rest."

From that moment I started to feel better again, for God had heard and was working out in His own good way. I would like to say right here that I have lots of sympathy and consideration for a poor sinner trying to get back to God who has habits that are unbreakable unless God steps in — and

who comes to the altar and feels somehow he has prevailed with God and, because he cannot break the habits in a moment of time, feeling discouraged and throwing up the battle. Don't do that, dear friend, if you might be so tempted. Trust God. Keep hanging on. Give God time to work and if you really are in earnest and the habit seems unbreakable, remember the words of David: "Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in Him and He will bring it to pass."

As I was walking up and down the room and praying and meditating, I happened to look down at my left hand and noticed the gold ring I was wearing. The Lord spoke to me about this, saying:

"You know your bringing up. You know what the Scriptures teach as to wearing of gold and worldly adornment. Here is one of the things you can do now. You can take THAT off."

"Yes," I said, "I can take that off." So off it came.

Next the Lord mentioned to me:

"What else can you do?"

I searched my mind for something else I could do to please Him. I thought: "Well, I have taken the ring off, now what more can I do?" Then it came clear as a bell "You can stop the swearing habit. You don't need to swear."

"Yes, Lord," I said, "these two things I can do for You and I will do them."

Not wear a gold ring or swear, not much was it? But oh how much better I now felt. I was serving the Lord with all my strength.

Now the Lord made it clear that I should go to church; that I could testify and let the people know I was trying to serve God. So to church I went. The first service I attended was a prayer meeting, and upon arriving the Lord said: "Testify, give witness that you are trying to serve Me."

"Lord," I said, "What will these people think? Here I am still using tobacco and morphine and then testifying. The people will think I am the biggest hypocrite on earth."

"No matter what the people think, you said you were willing to do what you could for Me. Now go ahead and testify."

So I testified. It wasn't much of a testimony. I certainly didn't say I was saved and sanctified. About all I could say was that I needed help, and ask for their prayers. But when I sat down I felt much better in my soul. Some way I felt strengthened. Every time we witness for the Lord we just come to that much more strength. Scripture says — "They overcame him (satan) by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony." I believe testimony is essential to overcoming the enemy, and the one who doesn't testify doesn't overcome him.

Then the pastor asked all to kneel in prayer and for that one who felt so led to lead in prayer. No one seemed to feel a burden of prayer and a great spirit of quietness seemed to settle down upon us. I was wishing someone would lead out in prayer, but no one did. I knew what I had to do and that was lead in prayer myself. Oh, how I dreaded it. I said: "Lord, what in the world will these people think? Here I am testifying and then praying both at the same service. They will, sure as the world, think I am the biggest farce on earth."

But the Lord spoke again. "Listen, no matter what they think, I want you to pray, and pray OUT LOUD."

"Yes, Lord," and I prayed and prayed out loud. I LED in prayer. Oh how easy some professors of religion seem to get by, that is if they are getting by, for one hardly ever hears them pray, let alone lead in prayer. Upon arising I again felt better and a little stronger someway.

A few days later, while at home, the Lord spoke again telling me that all Christians have a family altar. I know there are professors of religion who do not have family prayer, but all Christians do, and they never think of starting the new day without first going to God in prayer at the family altar.

This was one of my heaviest crosses — when I was faced with the fact I must set up the family altar, and do this in my present condition of tobacco using and morphine. I have three fine boys and I thought surely this will turn them against religion. For a man who is still using tobacco and still in the clutches of morphine to set up a family altar before an unsaved family seemed more than I could do. But obey God I must. So in the bedroom I went and got out the old Bible, the one grandmother had given to me when I was a little boy. I walked from the bedroom and how strangely my family looked at me that morning.

I stood by my chair for a moment before sitting down and thus spoke to them:

"Boys," I said, "there is something I cannot do. You know about my habits. You know about morphine and the thing has me for I cannot quit unless God undertakes. But there are some things I can do, and one of these is, I can from now on in my own home have family prayer."

How strangely they looked as I read a few verses from the old family Bible. How strange it seemed to me. To be reading the Scripture in family worship from the Bible grandmother had given me, and, the first family altar in my home. We then knelt and I prayed and asked God's blessing upon us, asking Him to help me break the habits of sin, live for Him as I should live and be the father that I should be.

From that time forth I have been faithful to the family altar. I would no more dream of trying to live a day without first asking God's blessings and protecting care upon my family and myself than going out in willful sin against God. Has family prayer paid me? Did it pay me to obey the Lord and build the family altar when He said to build? Oh yes, paid a thousand fold. One particular comfort is this. As I now write these lines, I have a boy, Loren, who is a prisoner of the Japanese, having been on Corregidor under Wainwright when it went down. For two years we have only received a couple of cards, his name being signed to one, saying he was well. But the consolation I have is this: he has

something to remember his father by besides drug addiction. He can remember when the family altar was set up in his home and he knows the Lord God of heaven can break the bands of cancelled sin and set the prisoner free.

All this time I was asking God to take the morphine habit away. The church continued to pray for me. Rev. Hill would just about button hole everyone he thought could pray and ask prayers for me. I would continue to go to the altar asking God to help. Preachers were praying for me and I will never forget one night while at the altar Rev. Glenn Griffith, my District Superintendent, laid his hand on my head and how he did pray. This was the thing uppermost in my mind, to have the morphine habit broken for I knew I must preach and even now I was studying and trying to learn, but my mind was in such a shape I could not retain much that I read.

About this time I had a lot of good advice? You notice I put a question mark after this. The advice was that I had better keep a little morphine always on hand. Because if I tried to quit the drug instantaneously my heart might be overtaxed and it would kill me. Therefore I should always keep a supply on hand to fall back on. For they said, (these were not holiness people, needless to say) if God wishes to cure you of the drug habit He can do so whether you have any drugs or not. Then just in case He didn't heal, if you were to throw yourself completely on His mercy, you would have the drug to fall back upon and thus would be on the safe side. Needless to say this kind of faith didn't get me, nor will it get anyone, very far.

THE WAIL OF A DRUG ADDICT

By

Evangelist D. C. Van Slyke

CHAPTER 6 THE LORD HEARS

"And the Lord heard him." Psa. 34:6.

On the night of February the 9th, 1938, Wednesday night, while in the church at Vale and right after a session of prayer and testimony, the Scripture came to me so forcibly and clear: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thought, and let him return unto the Lord and He will have mercy upon him and to our God for he will abundantly pardon." "Let the wicked forsake his way" — that was it. In spite of all opposite advice, I was to stop using morphine, and throw myself upon the Lord and His mercy.

I arose to my feet and told the Christians the Scripture that had come to me so plainly. I also told them I was all out of medicine, as I called it; that I had taken the last dose just before coming to prayer meeting and I did not wish to go and get any more; that I felt like throwing the whole thing over on the Lord, and I was going to make a last stand fight to stop the habit and believed somehow God would see me through. Rev. Hill said:

"Do you really mean that, Brother Van?"

"I surely do," I replied quickly.

He then turned to the church and asked for a show of hands of those who would join an all night chain prayer band for me and my deliverance. Who would take the first hour from ten to eleven? Up went a hand. Who would take the time from eleven to twelve? Up went another hand. From twelve to one? One to two? Two to three? Three to four? Four to five? Five to six? etc. In just a moment the hours were all filled. Then he made a general request for the rest of the church to hook on in the chain of prayer wherever and whenever they were able.

After prayer meeting was dismissed the pastor came to me and putting his hand on my arm said:

"Brother Van, be strong and of good courage. There is to be a stream of unbroken prayer going to the throne all night for you. You must now trust God with all your heart.

"If the going gets too heavy," he continued, "no matter what the hour may be, don't fail to at once come down and awaken us. Wife and I, as well as the church, are going to do all in our power to help. We believe God for victory and we are going all out to win."

Going home after the service I felt strangely and unaccountably happy. How clear the skies seemed, how bright the stars, how large and awe inspiring the moon! How wondrous the works of nature! "Oh Lord, Our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! Who hast set thy glory above

the heavens." God seemed near. I burst out singing, then stopped and thought, "Why am I singing?" then I realized — why, I am happy! I walked a few more steps, then started to whistle. How strange it seemed — for me to be whistling and singing.

Then it came to me so clearly.

"Dee, how long has it been since you have been happy and been able to whistle and sing?"

I went back in memory to the time I was a little boy, to the time they used to call me "sunshine" not just because my hair was red, but they said: "He is surely a happy-go-lucky boy. Nothing seems to worry him. Worry rolls off his back as water from a duck."

Why, I used to sing and whistle all day long. Then I asked myself the question:

"How long has it been since you have been able to whistle and sing?"

To whistle and sing? Why friends, I had not even been able to smile with any degree of mirth behind it for ten long years, and more! Oh that's what sin and satan will do for one. But now I was happy again and whistling and singing as I once did. What was the cause? Why I was so happy? Then it dawned on me. Undoubtedly at last God, seeing the time was ripe, heard the wail of an addict and was going to deliver me from the drug habit. That was it! Sure as I was alive. The sagging shoulders straightened, my head came up again, and it seemed the old spring returned to my steps. Joy was in my heart and soul.

I could hardly wait to get home. I know I almost ran into the house. Even after entering the door I couldn't stop. Through the front room I went, and into the kitchen. But the kitchen couldn't hold me so, back in the front room I came. I was feeling good, brother — the clouds had rolled away. Wife tried to talk to me and asked what in the world was the matter with me, but I couldn't stop to talk, I felt too good. So out to the kitchen I tore. Finally wife got me stopped and once again asked:

"Dee, what in the world is the matter with you anyway? Tell me at once"

"Why," I said, "Viva, don't you understand? I believe that, sure as I am born, God is going to deliver me from this morphine habit."

"Well, do you know," she replied, "I have felt that way all day."

Then my oldest boy spoke up: "That's right, Dad, I believe you have taken your last trip for that stuff."

How wonderful it was going to be now. No more would I have to pay \$15.00 every five days and drive two hundred miles to get morphine. No more would I have the stigma of "Hop Head" fastened upon me. No more would my family have this reproach upon them. Now I could be a man among men. Now I could have some of the commonplace necessities that my family so badly needed. Now all my money would not have to go for morphine. I would tithe, go to church, serve God, testify,

pray, shout and sing along with the rest of them with a conscience void of offense toward God and man.

I went to bed thinking and dreaming what I would do on the morrow. I would awaken early, eat a hearty breakfast, get in the truck and zip to the mountains and bring back a big load of produce. I lay there and dreamed how I would soon be out of debt and how well and happy we would be, and how I would serve the Lord. I will never forget that evening. It seemed, as I lay there dreaming of the tomorrow, with not a care or worry, yes, angels were all about as I slipped away into slumber.

How do you suppose it was when I awoke? Well, it seemed as if the room was filled with devils, as if every imp from the pit was there and the devil himself not satisfied with the job, had come along in person to oversee it. It was about five o'clock in the morning and how sick I was. I could hardly get my head from off the pillow. The devil said:

"Where is that big breakfast you were going to eat?"

Breakfast? That was the last thing on earth I wanted. No, I didn't care for breakfast. I wanted morphine. Every nerve and fibre of my being was screaming for the stuff.

Then the devil started in again, saying:

"Listen man! Look how sick you are! You may die. All these years using morphine and now not even a morning shot to help you just a little bit to start the day. Why man, you haven't even started on the first day yet without morphine, and you know it means three days of this and every day will be a little worse than the day before, and look how terribly sick you are now and you haven't even started the first day. Listen to reason, you! You know you can't do this. Common sense tells you so! You are going against advice of doctors and friends. You have been listening to a bunch of fanatics, these holiness people telling you, God would break this habit on you. God expects you to have some sense. You will have to get a little morphine and keep trying to reduce. That's your only way out. God isn't helping you now. Look at yourself and the condition you are in, feel those nerves, feel that awful gnawing agony, you are never going to make it. You had better get going for some morphine before you are too sick to go."

Then I got angry, angry with the Lord and angry with everybody and everything.

Finally I could stand it no more. Out of bed I jumped, grabbed my clothes and flew out of the bedroom. Wife by this time was in the kitchen, had the fire going and was brewing a pot of coffee for me.

"I've had enough," I told her, "there is no use; everything has failed and I am giving up for the last time. Get the oldest boy up, have him dress, and we will get the truck started and go for morphine."

Every one was dejected and discouraged by this time and I will never forget the look upon the faces of wife and son as I made ready to leave.

I walked over to the door and took hold of the knob when God took hold of me and stayed my hand saying:

"Do you mean to say that you are going to run off and back down now? Do you know that there has been a faithful little group of pilgrims up at one hour periods, missing sleep, enduring the cold and discomforts of sub zero weather, just for you? They have been on their knees before the throne, pleading for your deliverance. Do you mean to tell me that you are going to slip away like this, and leave them, and perhaps cause some of them to lose faith in their God?"

There is no honor in a drug addict, but God put some in this one, for I could not go, I could not leave the room, so I found a chair and sat down.

Observing my action wife said: "What is the matter? Aren't you going to go?"

"No," I responded, "I cannot sneak off this way. I don't know what to do. I will give God until eight o'clock to relieve this pain and if He doesn't, then I will go and get some morphine. I will run down and tell the minister what I have decided and if God doesn't help by then I will leave — that is all there is to it! I will not be running off without them knowing it, anyway."

I left the house to awaken the minister. It was now about five-thirty A.M. Soon I was rapping upon the door of the little red brick house where he was sleeping. This little brick house was a one room affair that had been built by the former owner of the property for a wayward son, addicted to drink and this little structure had been built so that he could come in at night when returning from his sprees and not disturb the rest of the family. The house was made fire proof as a further protection.

It was here that I was kept and the hallowed spot where they prayed me through. A place the pastor sometimes slept in if company came, and now used as a study. Brother Hill was soon awakened and asked:

"Is that you Brother Van?"

"Yes, this is me."

"Are you having a hard time?"

"I am having an awful time, and I need help from God, if a man ever did."

He at once arose and had prayer with me. His wife also dressed, went into the parsonage, and got the coffee pot going. I told the pastor of my decision: that I would give the Lord until eight o'clock to heal me. If He didn't by then I would leave.

"We must be patient," Brother Hill said. "You know we cannot tell the Lord what to do or how to do it. What we must do is to trust Him and let Him handle the case."

"I know that is so," I answered sharply, "but nevertheless I have to have some help."

I was suffering just about all I could stand right then. Prayer was made again in my behalf by the pastor and it seemed that I felt some better. In a short time he withdrew into the parsonage and I was left alone with my thoughts. Eight o'clock came and I didn't leave. Nine o'clock arrived and still I didn't go. Then the preacher returned to the little brick house, sat down. "Now Brother Van," he began, "here is one decision you must make. We are not going to keep you here against your will. You can go or you can stay. It's up to you. If you stay, and I pray you will, we will battle this thing out together. We will pray, take care of you, and do all in our power to help. You will have to face this battle sometime if ever you are to quit this habit and it might as well be now. But if you feel you cannot do it and you must go, you had better get going, because you are a pretty sick man right now, and if you wait much longer you may not be able to leave."

With that he left me to make my decision. But the saints were hanging onto the horns of the altar, and prayer was still ascending to the throne. God was heaving and moving, and so was the devil, you may be sure. He came to give his counsel once again.

"Man, are you crazy? Why do you still persist in hanging around here? Only one solution to your problem, that is morphine. You better get going while you can. If you stay here and listen to this preacher's advice, you will surely die. You will never come out of here alive, and besides you know you will be out of your head, a raving maniac and you may kill someone. These people don't understand as you do, what they are tackling. Remember this, it can't be done. It is against all reason. Yes, you will never come out of here alive, if you stay here you are done for, sure as the world."

But God again came to the rescue. I remember when He came. I felt power from on high come upon me. I leaped to my feet and said: "Old Devil, sink or swim, live or die, kill or get killed, come what may, I will not leave this place alive and still be using morphine. I am staying and battling this thing out, and battling it to the end, so help me God."

I must have been making quite a bit of noise in my combat with the devil for in a moment the pastor was at hand. He seemed to sense I had made a right decision for his face was smiling. I took him by the hand as I said:

"Brother Hill, I have made up my mind. I am going through with this. Now listen! I wish to say this while in my right mind, for the time soon will come when I will be out of my head with misery and pain. Don't let me out of that door. I will want to go out after awhile, no doubt, but don't let me out. It may take five men to hold me in here but regardless of what comes, live or die, keep me in here until this battle is won, until I am either victor or dead, one of the two."

We shook hands upon it, and while shaking he replied:

"All right old boy! We are going into this with you. You can rest assured we will do our best. We will keep some one with you all the time. There will be prayer going up constantly for you. God will give us the victory."

On this particular day the church was having a zone rally and people and preachers from all over the zone began to gather in about ten A.M. There were many praying people there that day; men and women who could really pray and jar the mud sills from under hell and the devil; saints of God, who were upon praying ground; preachers who being called upon to pray, just loosened their collars, rolled up their sleeves, fell upon their knees, and cut loose with all their voice and might to bombard the Mercy Seat.

Oh Friend, I never heard such praying. I had to have help and those present knew it. This was no perfumed, powdered, bouquet affair. This was a battle against the powers of darkness, the forces of hell, demons from the pit. Saints must be dead to opinions of the world, dead to the flesh and the devil, endued with power from on high, to succeed here. These prayers must be backed with a burdened soul, with moans, groans, tears, deadly earnestness and a holy walk before God in order to prevail.

These prayers were so laden, for as they prayed it seemed as if some of the tenseness of drawn nerves and muscles were relieved. But when prayer stopped, then torture set in again. I prayed, myself, until I could pray no more, I was so weak, I was finally stretched out on the bed exhausted.

I heard afterward that some of the people down town heard all this praying and said: "What in the world is the matter with those Nazarenes? What is coming off up there anyway?"

"Don't you know?" someone replied, "why those Nazarenes have Old Van Slyke, that hop head, cigarette fiend, gambler, liar, and what not, up there by the parsonage and are trying to pray the devil out of him and the Lord in," or words to that effect. Surely they didn't mean OLD Van Slyke. Surely not that fellow! Trying to pray the devil out of him? What a joke! Well, they or anyone else could never do it. And how some of them laughed at the idea. Some even gathered around the brick house to hear the praying and see how the battle came out.

The prayers went on in the little brick house when at about two o'clock in the afternoon something happened. I will never forget it as long as I live. There was a pastor from Parma, Idaho, in the room praying for me by the name of A. R. Herring. I never heard a man pray as he did. I thought he would break a blood vessel. I declare unto you, he prayed across that room as hard as he could go. He rounded the corner on high and came back with added speed and momentum. He knocked over the stand with a pitcher of water on it, and if I remember it was set up again only to go down in defeat once more. He just wouldn't give up and right in the midst of a fresh assault on the throne, something gave. Hallelujah!!!

A different atmosphere in the room now. This preacher walked over to my bed and said:

"Brother, I couldn't leave you as you were here on this bed of pain and the shape you are in. I should have gone a long time ago. My wife sits out in the car now, waiting for me. But brother, I couldn't leave you this way. I just couldn't that's all. But I can leave you now, thank God! You are all right."

"How do you know I am all right?" I asked with perplexity.

"The old gospel wagon has now left heaven," he shouted.

"How do you know the wagon has left?"

He replied, "I heard the bells ring when she left."

With that he walked over to the door as unconcerned as you please, put on his coat and hat, and smilingly bowed out, entered his car and nonchalantly started for home. God had heard the cry and he knew it.

THE WAIL OF A DRUG ADDICT

By

Evangelist D. C. Van Slyke

CHAPTER 7 DELIVERANCE

"And saved him out of all his troubles." Psa. 34:6.

The battle still raged in the little brick house. Even though the brother had prayed through to victory, yet the battle remained to be fought. Now I cannot remember all that took place in this crucial struggle, for most of the time I was completely out of my head with pain and was having hallucinations.

Those who were in the battle said they never saw a man suffer as I did. They said I would get upon my hands and knees on the bed and ceaselessly turn around and around. They must watch me, for I would endeavor to drive my head into the side of the wall trying to knock myself unconscious. They knelt by the bed and prayed:

"Oh God, help this poor man. Listen Lord! We are well and strong and we can share some of his sufferings, put therefore some of it upon us.

Along toward evening they said I took it into my head to go boat riding. Some tried to dissuade me from the idea and to get my mind on something else. But I was determined and so a young man by the name of Eldon Hunter took me by the arm and asked: "Won't you let me accompany you?"

"I would be glad to have you go with me," I replied in my ravings.

Wherupon he took me by the arm, walked me across the room, turned me around and walked me back to the bed, set me down upon it, bounced the bed up and down and asked: "How do you like it?"

I replied, "Oh just fine."

It must have seemed like a great boat ride to me.

Later in the night I became worse. They said I continued to turn and writhe in agony upon the bed. Finally they conceived the idea of taking me for a walk. They thought perhaps by so doing they could wear me down and take some of the tension from my nerves that might at least relax a little more. So they took me out, a man on either side, and about three others following while all prayed and held onto God for me. The pastor's wife could not sleep of course and was following in the rear praying and asking God to help.

But when they finally brought me back to the house, it seemed that I was worse than ever.

One of the men, a brother Martin, who was in on this battle told me afterward: "Brother Van, there are some things about this that you do not know. If you ever write a story of this deliverance I want to put in a chapter myself. You know we gave you up for lost once, that is, we very nearly did. We thought you were surely dying. I went for the doctor and asked him if he would come up and help. The doctor refused to take the case saying: 'If I took the case I would only lose him. He has gone too far. You better give it up as a bad job. Better give the fellow a shot of morphine and let him go. There is no use.' Next I went to the sheriff, got him out of bed, and told him what was going on and asked: 'What will happen if Van Slyke dies in the brick house? Could there be any charges brought against the church or a scandal started to the effect that the church people were to blame for his death.'"

"No, don't worry about that," the sheriff replied, "if he dies, let him die. A man in that shape is just as well off dead as alive."

And the sheriff was right, for a man in that condition is better off out of his misery as far as this life is concerned, providing there is no chance for his salvation.

After hearing this report, the little group continued to pray more earnestly and hold on a little tighter. There were CCC boys who belonged to that church who walked in eight miles from their camp and sat up with me all night, and then went back to their camp arriving in time to go on duty. This kind of prevailing and earnestness has its reward for God was watching and knew the hearts of all concerned and as I had gone as far as I could go, and the saints had gone as far as they could, so now He stepped in.

Now remember what I said about what would happen on the second and third day; that they were the worst of all; that an addict by this time is almost a raving maniac; that in the state hospital such a case as this would be in solitary confinement and very likely in a straight jacket.

It was not to be like this in my case, however, for the Lord came to the rescue. I had gone as far as I could and the Lord knew it. When we go as far as possible and do all we can, then God will not fail. The watchers by the bedside said that at last I passed off into deep sleep. They tip-toed to the bedside, then out.

"Look at that man sleep," they said. "He is as relaxed and is sleeping as quiet as a new born babe."

This you know is something unheard of. A morphia-maniac asleep at a time such as this. By all means I should have been in a straight jacket. But friend, God has the best straight jacket I know of.

Finally, I awakened. They asked me if I was hungry.

"I am," I replied.

They brought me something to eat.

"Why don't you eat?" they asked as they saw I hesitated.

"I wish to ask the blessing first," I answered simply.

O friend, I didn't just tip my head and mutter a few words of thanks. I was so weak I could hardly make it, but nevertheless I crawled out of bed, knelt beside it and asked God to accept thanks for His care over me. Back to bed I went, ate the food and in a little while was asleep again.

Next, I remember a man coming through the door and saying: "Brother Van, would you like to have a shave?" I felt of my face and I surely needed it.

"What day is it?" I demanded.

"Sunday," he replied.

"This, Sunday?" I exclaimed.

Why, just think, the worst was over. This was the fourth day. I came into the little brick house on Thursday, and now it was Sunday. I had been four days without morphine. Praise the Lord. I was on the up-grade. I told him I wanted a shave. He gave it to me and I will never forget that shave. Brother, he left the longest mustache I ever saw left on a human, it seemed to me. It reached almost back to my ears.

"What time is it?" I asked next.

"Almost time for church."

"Get my clothes," I said.

"What in the world do you want with your clothes?"

"I wish to go to church."

The pastor and all were praising God and giving thanks for this wonderful victory.

"Do you think you can make it?" He asked. "You are pretty weak right now."

"Yes, I can make it with a little help," I said.

My clothes were brought to me and I dressed. I was so weak I could hardly get into them or walk. Perspiration streamed from my face but I would not give up and so to church I went. There was a man on either side helping me. My legs were wobbly and I could hardly make it, but by their help I entered the church and was set down in a seat.

Services started and I don't remember whether there was preaching that night or not. Seemed to me about all the saints did was to look at me. They glanced at me and the long mustache and then they would laugh. Next they would cry. Then they would laugh again, then cry and praise God. Pretty

soon, one started down the aisle praising God, then another one arose to his feet shouting the blessing. Brother, God was there. I will never forget it. These saints had a shouting spell coming. They could afford to celebrate; they had taken a man whom the doctors said was incurable, hopeless, and in spite of all opposition, and the battling from the enemy had claimed the promises of God and had pleaded the blood of Christ and there this man sat alive and the drug habit a thing of the past.

I remember one fellow in particular, when the battle was going hard and seemingly against us, walk the floor with tears streaming down his face and pleading with God for me. After some time, he turned to me and said:

"O Brother Van, we cannot give up. We must hold on. We must win this fight. There are thousands and thousands of souls dependent on the success of this battle."

I thought how could it be possible that thousands and thousands of souls were depending on the outcome of this battle? But it was so, there were great numbers of souls depending on the outcome and God was talking to this brother and showing the necessity of holding on. And now that major battle was won they surely had a blessing coming and God was giving it to them, for they laughed, shouted, cried, and praised God for giving the victory.

After service, the pastor asked:

"Don't you think it best to stay with me for a few days and not go home?"

A doctor had told him, if I did come through the battle, not to let me go back to my old environment, but to keep me with new people and in new surroundings.

I felt, however, that it was best for me to go home. After some hesitation he said that if I felt that was the thing to do, to go ahead, but that I was perfectly welcome to stay with him. The doctor had also told him not to let me even think or talk about morphine, and if I tried to talk about it to get my mind on something else right away.

Back home I went and of course wife was with me for she was present at the service. They thought it best for her to stay away as much as possible when the battle was heavy, but now that it was over, they sent for her and she was there in the church. I didn't get any sleep to speak of for thirty days or more.

I slept but a few moments at a time for the first month. I ached and pained; I would walk the floor at night but I didn't walk it alone. Jesus walked with me. I could feel His presence. Just about all I could do was walk the floor and weep for joy in spite of pain and ache. If my legs would ache so it seemed I could stand it no longer, then I would get the Bible and hold it upon them as I walked. If my stomach started to cramp, then I would hold the Bible over it. Brother, the Bible is the best "hot water bottle" I know of, for it seemed to take the ache and pain away. When I tried to sleep, I would take the Bible to bed with me, hold it over my heart, for I felt better when it was near, and then I would receive a few moments rest.

Remember my saying that a doctor had warned that I was not to be allowed to even think about morphine, to keep my mind on something else. I was not to be allowed to speak or talk about it for at least a year. Well, that's just about all I ever did talk about for the first few months. It seemed that about the first thing anyone coming to my home would mention would be morphine. They would ask me if I craved it in any way; if I could tell them a little about how it was used; if I could or would come and give a little lecture on its evils to a particular group? So it went, about all I talked about was morphine.

But remember the text says, "This poor man cried unto the Lord and he heard him and delivered him out of all his troubles." God did just that. I had no desire for the stuff whatsoever. I can truthfully say I have never desired it in any way, only once, which I will explain later, since God delivered me. It was not a question of God giving me will power over the drug, God simply took the habit, desire and all away, and made me as any other normal person would be. Praise His Holy Name!

Later on, while in a revival meeting at a certain place I was invited to see a man who was dying from cancer. The poor man being in much pain all the time and having only a short time to live was given morphine regularly of course. (It is a blessing to man when so used and given under doctor's orders.) I visited with the fellow for a few moments and he told me what they were giving him. He said he guessed it was dope. He then asked his wife to get the box of tablets and let me look at them to see if I knew what it was. The box was placed in my hand and sure enough they were old familiar one-half grain morphine tablets I had used so long. I held them in my hand and gazed at them. There was a time when this would never have been safe to do. But now I looked upon them with repugnance and wondered that I could ever have used a drug like that. I handed them back and soon left the home, thanking God for complete deliverance.

Another time just before I was to go upon the operating table for a very serious operation, (this was about one year from the time of my deliverance), the doctors knowing my history, were very hesitant about giving me morphine, for they knew that even one shot might be enough to set me off again on the habit. It was like putting a match to a powder keg. But the operation being of the nature it was, they could not give ether or a spinal. They decided they would have to risk it and give at least one hypo before I went upon the table.

I knew the danger also and I prayed and asked God to care for all. The shot was given and after the operation was over and the effects of the morphine were gone, I discovered that deliverance was still full and complete, I thought:

"Oh, I do hope they don't have to give me any more of that stuff."

There was a bad taste in my mouth and the sensation from the effects of the morphine instead of being exhilarating and comforting, as it used to be, gave now only a sense of nausea. No will power needed here to win a battle, I just simply didn't want anything to do with morphine; it seemed as rat poison to me. You may say:

"Well, perhaps that wasn't morphine given you." But it was, for I went to particular pains to find out. Oh! our God is able to deliver all who will but trust in Him.

Next came the battle to conquer the cigarette habit. Strange as it may seem, God did not see fit to take this habit away with the morphine. Even after the drug habit was gone, yet I still had the cigarette habit. I knew this, was to be a hard battle also for many times had I tried to stop their use, but had failed. I had smoked almost all my life, using tobacco when very small, taking it slyly, whenever the chance presented itself. Even in school I would slip away from the study room and smoke before I could go on with my studies.

I told the Lord if He would but let me get one good nights' sleep and my nerves come a little more under control, as this was only a few days after my deliverance from narcotics, I would make a last ditch effort to conquer the cigarettes. But I didn't even wait for the night's sleep, I went into the bedroom and prayed. I placed the Bible upon the bed, rested my hand upon it and cried thus:

"Oh Lord, Thou dost know I never could quit this habit in the many times I have tried. Thou knowest that I wish to quit. Lord, You have said You would not let us be tempted above that ye are able to bear. Now, I am claiming this promise. I mean business and if You ever see me reach out to so much as take a cigarette to smoke or any other tobacco, just open the gates of hell under my feet. Lord, don't let me do it."

From that time to this I have never taken a smoke or used tobacco in any of its forms. I came back to Christ just exactly as I went away, step by step. Cigarettes were the first step down and the last step back. Oh, yes, I had to use my will power for a few days, but God was with me, strengthening it, and giving me deliverance.

Now about the time that I wanted morphine so badly after the deliverance. As already told, I was called to preach. My call and deliverance were hinged to each other. Deliverance was conditional upon my preaching and obeying God in all things. Doors started to open right away, that is, for a Sunday morning or evening service. This particular occasion happened just a few weeks after my great victory. I was to preach in a little country school house about fifty miles away. I still had my truck but no gas to take a trip of this distance. A car had been promised for me, but this Sunday morning everything went wrong. The ones sent to get the car were delayed and finally came with it just about forty minutes before the service. It had one tire almost flat, the radiator was boiling, the engine sounded as if a monkey wrench was flying around loose inside of it, and I saw that I never could make it to the service.

I at once decided there was no use trying to preach anyway. It appeared all foolishness. I had no money, no clothes, no car, nothing. I would give it up at least until I had a thousand dollars in the bank and a new car. After this decision, needless to say, I did not feel very good. Something said:

"Well, you did your best, why don't you go to church down here? You still have time to do that."

But I was stubborn. I said:

"No! If I can't go to the country church and preach, I won't go any place, that's all there is to it."

Into the house I went and by this time you can well imagine how I felt. Something seemed to say, will you go?

I said, "No, I am through with this crazy idea of my trying to preach."

Then out of a clear sky I started craving a cigarette. I went to the cupboard, for there had been some cigarettes up there that we had neglected to throw away. I started hunting. Wife heard me and called:

"What are you doing there?"

I mumbled something in reply, and she said: "I know what you are doing. You are after those cigarettes. Well, I burnt them up just yesterday. They are gone. Dee, were you going to smoke and give up now? You know, if you do, the morphine habit will come back upon you."

She started to weep and asked me to pray for her. But I was in too much trouble myself to pray for anyone else. I told her I couldn't pray, that I needed it worse than she did and I walked into the bedroom.

Then I started craving morphine. Oh, how the craving possessed me. The old "yen" was coming back. This, was torture I couldn't stand, so down to my knees I fell. I cried unto God:

"Lord, I can't stand this. I must have help or I am gone. I have more than I can bear."

Then the voice of the Lord came to me.

"Dee, will you preach and obey Me? Listen, you — you took your life and made a shipwreck of it. When your life was wrecked and foundering on the rocks of disaster you called to Me for help. I heard your cry and came, took the ship off the rocks and I will still take it and guide it, but there's to be only one hand upon the tiller and that is Mine. You guided the ship for almost thirty years and look where you put it — on the rocks, and sinking. I know the sea of life Dee, I know where the rocks of disaster lie, and if you will let Me have it completely, I will guide you safe and sound to the haven of rest. Will you let Me have it? Will you preach?"

"Yes Lord," I cried, "I'll preach. I'll go anywhere you tell me. If I have money all right, if not, all right. If I have a means of conveyance all right, if not all right. I'll walk, if able, if not crawl. Oh, Lord, I'll do anything, only bring me relief just now."

The answer came. "I am taking you at your word. As long as you do that, I will place a hedge around you. You will crave no morphine or drugs, I will give you victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil."

Hallelujah! From that day to this He has given it.

Many times have I had in my hands a hypodermic needle and syringe — but friend, when I do, I feel a good deal as the Children of Israel must have felt when they surveyed the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore after their wonderful deliverance from Egypt, the land of bondage and slavery. These taskmasters who had held their noses to the grind stone and would not even let them call their soul their own; who had them laboring every day grabbing brick with one hand and straw with the other, these taskmasters were dead. They saw them so upon the sea shore. No more Egypt for them; no more brick-making and toil and sweat such as Pharaoh gave. Now it was deliverance.

I look back and I can see lots of the taskmasters of Pharaoh who were over me: The gambling master, that one who led me by the nose into gambling dives and took all that I made away from me. He bothers me no more, for he is dead upon the shores of deliverance. The taskmaster of alcohol is dead also. What a relief to get rid of him! Every time I tried to keep a good resolution and say I would serve him no more, here he would come, lead me off, take my money, ruin my resolution, put a dark brown taste in my mouth for the morning after, set my nerves screaming from abuse and dissipation, and wail a song of discouragement and remorse in my ear. Now as I handle the hypodermic syringe, I realize another taskmaster is dead. This was king of all. No more aches and pains such as he gives. No more two hundred mile drives for him. No! thank God, he is dead upon the sea of redemption and I, as Moses and the children of Israel, can sing now the "Song of Deliverance."

THE WAIL OF A DRUG ADDICT

By

Evangelist D. C. Van Slyke

CHAPTER 8

HOPE

"But I will hope continually, and will yet praise thee more and more." Ps. 71:14.

After deliverance from Egyptian bondage and the singing of the glad song I found that there was yet much to be done. I had not yet taken the second crossing of the river Jordan or arrived in the Canaan Land experience of holiness nor met the Man with the drawn sword signifying that ahead lay a battle of conquest and much land to be possessed.

But within my soul was a new joy, a new hope continually springing up and ever enlarging and now the future seemed to hold that which would enable me to praise Him more and more, for I knew that I must at once enter the ministry and be about the Master's business. God was still on the throne and God never forgets, for He held in remembrance the call He had given to this man when only a little lad, the call to preach the blessed gospel and God was still working in his behalf.

First of all, the Lord got hold of my wife. He knew that I should now have a helpmate who was not only loyal and true but one that was saved and sanctified as well. God was speaking to her and speaking through my wonderful deliverance and redeemed life. Now then there may be some of us who do not give the gentler sex the credit due them in the realm of mentality. But there is one thing I do know, wife did not get excited and jump into this religion business hastily. She gave it deep consideration. Altar calls were made when we went to church, and personal workers very zealous for the Lord, came and tried to persuade her to go forward for prayers, but she would shake her head and say, "Not tonight."

"Why did she do this?" Some may wonder and say, "I would think she could hardly wait to get salvation after this great miracle of deliverance."

She was mediating and thinking very deeply. Remember she knew her husband. She knew his great and good resolutions of the past and how long they lasted. She was watching me and my actions and seeing how deep this great transformation had gone. In other words, she was trying religion out on her man. She knew that if it worked on me, if it gave will power to resist the old crowd, the narcotics, the cigarettes; if it took away the cuss words and violent fits of anger, that there was surely something to it.

She saw that God had given her a new husband, that he was a new creature, one with different ideals, desires and thoughts. In fact, she had obtained a writ of divorcement and didn't have to go to Reno to get it either. She obtained one lawfully and Scripturally, one that was heaven sent, for she now had a new spouse.

I will never forget the night, just a couple of weeks after I was delivered, that she came to the altar and gave her heart to God. The transaction between God and the wife was completed in a very short time, for God saw she meant business, intended to do what she told Him she would do, and a moment later arose with the full assurance of sins forgiven and the peace which passeth understanding within her heart. We were happy indeed, when we went home that night.

Next morning while wife was preparing breakfast I noticed that she was very, very nervous and much upset. I asked as to the cause, and she replied:

"It is surely strange that on this morning, the morning of all mornings, my first day in which I am trying to live a Christian life that everything goes wrong that I try to do. I am so nervous I hardly know what to do."

"What makes you so nervous, Viva? Is it the old cigarette habit?"

She had been for long years a heavy cigarette smoker. When God delivered me, she would not smoke before me, as she didn't wish to tempt me, but would go out doors or down cellar to smoke.

"Yes," she said, "that's it. I want to smoke very badly."

"Did you really get religion last night, Viva?"

"Yes," she answered, "I did."

I blurted out, "Why don't you smoke then?" Something seemed to reproach me saying, "Why in the world are you telling this woman such as this? Are you trying to get her to lose her salvation?" But the question was already asked and could not be recalled.

After a moment's hesitation, she said, "Well, I believe I will smoke this once, for I am very nervous."

Down in the cellar she went. It seemed to me that she had hardly reached the bottom of the stairs when I heard her bouncing up them as fast as she could climb. She walked into the room where I was.

Having a queer look upon her face, she said, "I guess I didn't want that cigarette as bad as I thought I did. When I lighted up to smoke, you know, Dee, my first puff tasted just awful, and I couldn't smoke it."

"Well, Viva, remember this, the next one will taste a whole lot worse. You might as well forget about it. No relief or comfort will come that way anymore."

And from that day to this she has not taken another cigarette or touched tobacco in any form. Yes, truly in the words of the text of the chapter heading, I can look toward heaven and say, "I will yet praise Thee more and more."

Next came the boys, all three of them, and they were converted. (They have since let down, but they met the God of Elijah and will never forget it and I am praying and asking all who read this to whisper up a prayer that they may return unto Him.)

Now, we were all in one accord. What a difference in the home and what joy to be so united! Christ in the home brings unity; and Christ in the home brings joy.

It was not long, you may be sure, till the news of my conversion and call to preach was noticed abroad. It was told to the old associates and in the old environment; how they did laugh at first. I was told afterward by one who knew, how the old gang joked and scoffed at the idea of any reformation coming into my life, and especially at the idea of my preaching the Gospel. Around the gambling tables it was brought up for discussion. My friend told me such conversations as this took place:

"I hear 'Red' has quit the dope. Someone was telling me he's reformed. Heard he has gone to preaching."

"PREACHING!" someone hollered. "Did you say preaching? That guy preaching! Where do you get that stuff? There's no such thing as that 'Hop Head' turning over a new leaf. No sir!! Listen, you guys, that fellow hasn't turned over any new leaf!! I KNOW him. He is just SMART. He's playing a new game. He has a new racket. The Federals were after him, and he knew it. That's his way out. He's playing the religious racket, but watch and see, it won't last long. He will blow up, as always, for that guy is past reform or reformation."

After I had been saved a year or so I again asked my friend how the old gang was taking it? I knew some of them must be getting a great "kick" out of me preaching. I asked particularly about one young man of my acquaintance, who seemed about the most worthless and honorless of all, as to how he felt

"J___ , must have a great laugh."

"No," my friend replied, "No, they don't laugh now. They thought at first you were pulling a fast one. But now, they realize it is the truth. Why, Dee, that bunch knows something happened to you. They think you should stay with it. They are proud of you."

You can be assured this gave me new hope and joy, to know that the old gang was convinced it was real.

Even though I was filled with new born hope, you may be sure the enemy of souls was doing his best to destroy that hope and bring discouragement and thwart the plan of God. He attacked me through finances as I was in dire straits for money. I had no clothes suitable for the pulpit. Only one suit, and the trousers of that suit were decidedly unsafe as I found out while kneeling for family worship one morning.

The rent was due and the store bill was mounting. The cupboard, needless to say, was bare, and there was no money to supply the many needs. I had a nice truck which I had bought new just a year

or so before I was converted and I had it nearly paid for. Even then I was trying to get away from the old life and gang. I was hauling posts, poles and wood from the nearby mountains and I thought surely now I could soon pull out of debt and get some real necessities for myself and family.

But everything I tried tied up. The payments for my truck were far behind and I was in danger of losing it. I tried, oh so hard, to get things going, but to no avail. The elements and all seemed against me. If I got an order for a load of cord wood consisting of four cords which retailed for \$32.00, the roads would be in such shape I could not get through to pick up the load. Or if I got through with the truck, then I would find the woods were in such shape that the men who cut the wood couldn't get it out to the loading place. Or if, by almost a miracle, I did get through and got the load and made it back from the mountains, then I couldn't sell it. Or if I found a buyer and sold my load, then I found he didn't have money to pay for it. And so it went from bad to worse.

I decided there was no use in trying to do anything with the truck until spring came and the weather cleared. Then perhaps I could do something else for awhile. I tried to get work but nothing was found. It seemed as if other people could find work and keep busy but not I. I didn't know what to do, with worries piling up, rent due, my truck about to be taken, debts all around, and everything going backwards.

Finally, a short job showed up. A lady wished two large trees removed from her property, as her neighbor had built a new house next to hers, and she was afraid that these trees, being very old, would some day be blown down and damage her neighbor's home. She told me she would pay me well if I would fell the trees, cut them into stove wood, and cord the wood for her.

Here at last was a job which would provide some badly needed finances. I took the boys and the truck and we started out with zeal to accomplish the job so providentially furnished. We attacked the first tree, which was felled in short order and it came down just in the position and place planned for it. Next, the cut was made on the other tree so it would fall as it should. Then the saw went to work and soon this large tree towering into the heavens would be lying beside the other one. But when the sawing was finished and the old giant started to topple, something happened.

The devil himself must have been in a gust of wind that sprang up, for this particular gust caught the falling giant and stayed its progress. The tree seemed to sway back and forth undecided where to fall, then seeing the nice new modern stucco building just beneath hesitated for another moment then to our horror came crashing down squarely upon it. Needless to say, the money received from this job went for the repairs of the house.

Next I tried salesmanship. I thought surely I could make some sales for business stationery. I had solicited many times before and had always been able to get at least a few orders, and one trip I had taken in about fifty dollars in a day. So I determined to try my fortune again at this. I came to a hotel from which I had once taken an order for letterheads and hotel stationery and I thought surely I would get a return order. I approached the manager but to my amazement my tongue seemed to cleave to the roof of my mouth. I tried to talk and tell him that I wished to take a renewal order for stationery, but I could see he wasn't making head nor tail of my sales talk and I fled from the hotel in confusion. I said to myself:

"Well there is one thing I do know and that is, I will never try to sell or take orders for that any more."

Even though satan was working his best to discourage and get me to give up and say there was no use, yet God was working and watching the battle that was on. The little church at Vale with its members and pastor were watching and praying too.

I'll never forget a couple of poundings we received from them. I had been used to lots of pounding, as termed in the underworld, but here was one of a different kind. The door opened one evening and here came the pastor with members of the church who had prayed and labored with me. Their arms were filled with packages of groceries and good things to eat. This, if I remember aright, was done at least two times and others brought in things on different occasions. What an encouragement this was, and what a blessing. You know the devil can't whip a crowd like that.

I was studying, reading the Bible, praying and preaching every time the opportunity presented itself and you may be sure the pastor was doing all in his power to help and encourage me. I preached my first sermon in his church just two weeks after my deliverance. It wasn't much of a sermon, let me tell you. I took a text in Genesis and one in Revelation. I thought by so doing I might avoid the error of getting off my text. I imagined I could at least stay somewhere in between them. But there is one thing I do know, I went through the Bible faster, I believe than any other preacher or theologian ever did. I preached from Genesis to Revelation and back again, I preached all I knew, and am afraid some things I didn't know, and in just about fifteen minutes I was through. There I was standing before my congregation as empty and barren as a last year's bird's nest. In conclusion, I summed up the sermon by saying:

"Well! I don't know whether this sermon has helped you any or not, but it has certainly helped ME a lot." And with that I sat down.

Next I preached at Nyssa, Oregon, for Brother Vern Martin who was pastor there and who helped me pray through to victory in the battle at the little brick house at Vale. I preached on the "Prodigal Son" that is, I tried to, but I jumped around in the Bible too much for the Prodigal and he couldn't keep up, therefore I soon lost him and was preaching about everyone and everything else.

And so it went; I kept preaching wherever an open door showed up, and when none existed, I preached to the corn stalks down on my father-in-law's farm. I had to preach, that was all there was to it. God put the preach into me and it just had to come out. There are lots we can use for a congregation, if we will, cows, for instance. You know a fellow can pour it on the cows in the corral. Even though it might be fly-time, yet they are attentive listeners. They seem to nod in approval as they solemnly look the speaker over and switch the flies away. Jugs, did you ever preach to jugs? You will not get much response in the way of Amens, but one thing they will do, they will stay with you until the end. Pine knots? Yes, they are hard to move but not much harder than some people. Grass hoppers? Not so good, for like many people you have to get them on the jump, because they come for only one service.

In about three months after my deliverance the District Assembly came in session at Emmett, Idaho. My pastor, Brother Hill, came and got me and almost insisted that I attend with him. The church had elected me as one of the delegates. I'll never forget that Assembly in all my life. God was surely there. Dr. J. G. Morrison, who has now gone to glory, and Rev. Glenn Griffith, the District Superintendent, were presiding.

The last night of the Assembly I was taken to the platform by the District Superintendent and introduced as an evangelist. I have since wondered how in the world Brother Griffith could ever see anything about me that God could use. I couldn't talk, I had no mind to speak of, as I could hardly retain anything that I read or heard. My language was in the vernacular of the underworld. Here I stood before that great Assembly of people on the platform, being introduced as an evangelist on the District. I found out afterward that a lady sitting in the congregation made this remark to my pastor:

"That man a preacher! ! An evangelist? ? ? Why that's the hardest boiled looking preacher I ever saw.

"Well, if you think he is hard looking now," the pastor replied, "you should have seen him when we first looked on him."

The last day of the Assembly wife came over and I noticed she was very quiet and seemed lost in thought. On the way home she finally spoke:

"I have something to tell you. I did not wish to say it before because you seemed so happy. I didn't wish to worry you. But you know, Dee, yesterday (Saturday) they came and took the truck because you are so far behind in your payments. You have lost it and do not have a truck any more."

This seemed like the last straw. Here I had waited for the weather to clear up and the roads to dry out so I could start hauling again. The roads were good now, as it was the first of May and I could get almost any place in the mountains with produce and bring back loads of posts, poles or cord wood. I had several orders taken for produce and was planning to start hauling right away to clear the truck, pay up my back debts, and get some much needed cash.

But now the truck was gone. What was I to do? Times were hard then and jobs were scarce. I was heavily in debt. How could I ever pay out? My, how I hated to lose that truck, a brand new 1936 model General Motors, all paid for but six payments! Now it was gone. Seemed like the last straw, the one which broke the camel's back, had fallen, and there was little hope left.

Next morning at breakfast I was certainly sinking into (and just about under) the slough of despondency. Here I was, no money, nothing to eat, no job, no education, nothing at all. How was I ever to make it? In my heart was that burning desire to proclaim the Gospel that God gives to those called to preach. I had to preach, that was all there was to it. But how could I?

There were ordained elders and men that had been in the ministry many years and yet they seemed to be on the side lines; they had good education and were fluent in conversation; they knew how to

build sermons and to meet people and put on a nice appearance. How could I ever succeed? I feared there was not much hope.

I asked for the Bible while wife came and sat down beside me for family prayer. I said:

"Wife! what in the world will we do for something to eat? Now that the truck is gone we will surely starve."

With that I opened the Bible and looked upon the Scriptures before me. They read "Trust in the Lord, and do good: so shalt thou dwell in the land, and VERILY THOU SHALT BE FED." Ps. 37:3.

"Why look here, Viva," I cried, for these words surely were burning home to me. "We will not starve, the Bible says here that we will be fed! My! How much better that makes me feel."

Next I asked, "Lord, what about this fervent desire within my heart to preach and win souls for Thy kingdom?"

Then my eyes fell upon these words in the Psalms, that I had opened to:

"Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart!" Well, Hallelujah, hope was climbing fast now.

"One more question, Lord. How will I ever get started in the ministry handicapped as I am, and so many who are much better prepared for Thy work than I am, seemingly on the shelf?" Again I read:

"Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring IT TO PASS." Well Glory! The top was about to come off the hope thermometer now. I was thankful the truck was gone. I would never need it any more. I was to preach until Jesus came for me or the church, and I would be fed while so doing.

THE WAIL OF A DRUG ADDICT

By

Evangelist D. C. Van Slyke

CHAPTER 9 COURAGE

"As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: Be strong and of good courage." Josh. 1:5, 6.

God was preparing now to use me and launch me out in the field to which he had called me. My pastor once again requested that I fill the pulpit for him on a Sunday evening. I will never forget that particular evening and the way God came upon the church and preacher.

I had heard lots about unction and about preaching under its power, but had never experienced it. But this night unction was to come upon message and messenger and I was to know the meaning of preaching under that indefinable mysterious something that comes only from the throne of God.

As I was waiting for the Young People's meeting to close, (the evening service followed immediately after), something seemed to say:

"You surely have the wrong message and line of thought tonight. You have spent all day in meditation and prayer on the wrong subject. You shouldn't try to preach a sermon such as you have prepared to this group of people. They are all Christians that are gathered here and you have the wrong message.

But it was too late to change now. This was the only communication I had. It was either preach this or not preach anything, and so to the pulpit I went with a heart filled with misgivings. I took my text and undertook to preach. I had only said a few words when something happened to me that had never occurred before. Next I knew I was over on one end of the platform, my mouth was wide open and the preach was flowing. My! I had never had an experience like this before.

"Well, how easy preaching is," I thought. "Why there is nothing to it."

Words were coming faster than I could get them out. I felt strangely exhilarated; felt that I had strength enough to rend a lion, slay a thousand Philistines or tear down the gates of Gaza.

The thought came to me to stand over on the other end of the platform and proclaim the word of God, so over I went and the preach just continued to roll. Why, brother, I never saw anything like it. I was hooked up and couldn't get unhooked. The Lord had me, my mouth was going it, and the message was going forth like a torrent. Next, I found myself making the altar call and eight souls came forward to the mourner's bench and seven hands were raised for prayers. I don't believe I ever was more happy in my life.

I used to think it would be a thrill to be the conqueror of a wild bucking mustang and carry off the prize money as world's champion broncho buster, or be in the big leagues, the score tied, last inning,

two out and two strikes and three balls on the batter and then hit a home run, or be in the ring with the world's boxing champion and see him lying prostrate at my feet.

But reader if you wish a real thrill of joy and mastery in the Lord, just get to the place where you know you can't make it unless God helps you. You know your sermon is a dismal failure, you know when you attempt to preach you will stammer and your tongue cleave to the roof of your mouth. The devil tells you that you will end up in "the brush;" you go to the pulpit almost nauseated, knees knocking together, heart throbbing so hard you almost wonder if they can hear its beat down in the congregation; you start to preach and suddenly you feel the wonderful exhilarating, strengthening, quickening, holy joy and power come upon you; you feel demons flee; you feel principalities and powers give way, and the battle is climaxed with penitent and earnest seekers at the altar seeking God. Oh that is a thrill, that is the romance of preaching!

As I ponder upon my few years in the ministry, how thankful I am that I dug deep and founded my spiritual house upon the rock. How thankful I am that when digging for the foundation I didn't stop with sand, hardpan or clay but I kept going until I struck solid rock, the fire flew and I knew at last I had arrived. I will never forget when I received the witness to my sanctification and heart cleansing. It was more than a dry faith process with me. When I had done all I could do, and had come to the end of myself, put my all on the promise, sink, swim, live, or die, and arrived on believing ground, then the fire fell and it went through me from the top of my head to the bottom of my feet.

This which happened to me was that spoken of by the prophet Joel:

"And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh."

This was that spoken of by Jesus:

"But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you."

This was that which enabled Paul to say:

"And I, brethren, when I came to you, come not with excellency of speech or of wisdom — but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." Rom. 2:1, 4.

This was that which meant not only heart cleansing but power as well. How thankful am I that wife and I both received the blessing.

Soon after losing the truck, wife was requested by her folks, who live on a farm at Caldwell, Idaho, to come home and help care for her ailing mother. We, therefore, gave up the residence in Vale which we were renting and moved to the farm where I spent my time studying the preacher's course, prescribed by my church, reading the Bible and praying.

Soon after arriving an invitation came from Brother Finch, the pastor at Payette, Idaho, to preach for him Sunday morning and night. Here was an open door, so away I went for the day. I'll remember

that day as long as I live. The morning service was one of glory. I just took a text and went "everywhere preaching the gospel." Homiletics, English, or method didn't stand a chance that day. Pulpit manners and all were torn to shreds while Brother Finch and the church shouted me on and God sent over twenty seekers to the altar, and what an altar service it was, with more seeking in the evening service.

Next, God opened the door at Greenleaf Friends Church, where Rev. Milo Ross was pastor, for an evening service two Sundays in succession. God moved mightily in both of these services filling the altars with many seekers and happy finders. Seemed all I had to do was just stand up and start talking about anything pertaining to the kingdom and God's saving power, give the invitation and seekers came from every part of the house. A love offering of twenty-five dollars was taken up for me. This looked about as large as one thousand dollars at this time. It was surely a great blessing and very badly needed just then. God was fulfilling the promise made to me at the morning prayer service in Vale when I became so discouraged because of losing the truck.

The way opened for me to go to the Columbia River Conference at Sanders, Idaho, where the Free Methodist Church held its camp and Conference. I had been there only a couple of days when the District Elder came to me while everyone was at supper and said:

"I have talked it over with other preachers and somehow we feel that you should bring the evening message."

I nearly fell through the floor from surprise.

"What in the world can I say that will be of any effect or help," I thought. "Why I hardly know one text from another. My pulpit manners and English are away below par and there are men of God here who have been preaching for years and who know how to handle crowds and show real finesse in the pulpit."

But I had promised God that if He would save me I would enter every open door and would do the best I could with what I had at hand.

"I will take the service," I finally told the District Elder, "and will do the best I can." He thanked me, and then went on to say:

"I am sorry we couldn't give you more time to prepare but we only decided just a few minutes ago that you were the man to bring the message."

On thinking back I believe it was a good thing they gave me no time to prepare, for I didn't have anything to prepare. About all I could do was whisper up a prayer for help and go to the platform.

I pondered what in the world I should say. What could I preach? It seemed to me that this was about the largest congregation I had ever faced. The platform was filled with preachers, and a sea of faces was before me. If ever anyone felt like running and trying to escape, it was this preacher.

But I had to stay by my guns. I told God I would preach and this was what it meant, so I must go through with it.

After the formalities were over and immediately before the District Elder, C. Emory Damon, was to introduce me, the impression came clear and forcefully, have them sing the old hymn "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name." Why this hymn? This was the song that dear old grandmother requested me to have them sing at her funeral, for she said:

"I wish people to know that death to me is not a time of dread and sorrow, but a triumphal entry into the regions of bliss, made possible by Jesus and His name.

And as the congregation stood and sang:

"All hail the power of Jesus' name,
Let angels prostrate fall,
Bring forth the royal diadem
And crown Him Lord of all."

The windows of heaven opened upon my soul. Seemed as if the angelic choir were singing this hymn and then and there I was sure grandmother knew that the one she had reared, wept over, prayed and cared for, had at last answered the call to preach. Even though in her life time she never saw her prayers in this respect answered, for her boy was traveling still the thunder roads which lead to destruction and misery, yet she now knew her prayers had prevailed and the little grandson had come back to Father's House at last and was going forth to battle for the Lord.

She, being a preacher herself, knew that this man needed help. She understood that unless unction came, unless the Holy Spirit quickened, that no one can really preach. For until people have heard the gospel of Christ preached under divine anointing, they have never heard the real message of Pentecost. If there was any way for her to get before the throne and put in an extra supplication for me, I knew she would do it.

At the conclusion of the song the next thing I realized I was preaching. I forgot my text, forgot the bishop, the elders, the congregation, forgot homiletics, poise, manner and mannerisms; I forgot all except there might be someone in that vast audience who needed God. When the smoke of battle had cleared away the long altar was filled with many seekers, for God was there.

Upon returning home from this conference, revival doors opened more and more. A call came from Midvale, Oregon, for a week's meeting and God surely blessed with seekers and finances for a new suit of clothes. Next came a full time revival at Caldwell, Idaho, where Rev. Earl C. Williams was pastor. God came on the scene and blessed mightily. I am sure the pastor must have wondered, worried and prayed as to the outcome of this meeting with such a preacher and such preaching.

I would go to him just about thirty minutes before service and say:

"Brother Earl, I am as dry as a sun-baked barrel. I don't have anything to preach and I do not know of anything to say.

"Go ahead, God will help and furnish the thoughts and words," he would say encouragingly.

I was digging out a brand new message every day and you must remember I didn't have much building material.

I just about murdered the King's English in every sermon. I asked the pastor's wife to please write down my mistakes in grammar. She was very faithful in this, but it surely kept her writing and after the service in the parsonage when she handed me the list you should have seen it. To the dictionary I would go, sweat and stew trying to rectify the mistakes. To these dear people I owe much for instruction, boosting and encouragement in my ministry. After three weeks of revival, the church praying and boosting, the list finally became a little shorter.

Now the calls for meetings started coming from many churches and I was kept continually busy, going from one call to another. After a few months of this I began to be very nervous, to lose weight and ache considerably.

"I must be studying too hard and staying too close to my room," I thought. "I must get out more, take some exercise or I will have a nervous breakdown."

But exercise did not help in this case as I became no better, only growing worse. Finally, I felt the urge to go to California and visit my aunt who had helped care for me when a boy. This impression came so strongly I could not resist it any longer.

I said to the wife, "We must go to California. I don't know why, but I do know we must go. I feel the Lord would have it so. Perhaps some of my relatives need me or God has a meeting there for me. I don't understand this, I don't have any finances in store but go we must."

We now had a car as God made that possible, and in the car we started for Pasadena.

How Satan did fight this trip! He put everything possible in our way. First it was flat tires and then blow-outs. Next, the engine became overheated, becoming so hot it stuck. We were climbing a hill when this happened. The heat guage was defective and registered normal. I could not imagine what had caused it to stick so suddenly this way. The engine was dead with the pistons frozen to the block. I prayed earnestly.

"Oh God, why You wished me to go to California I do not know. I am out of money and here is this car with no way to fix it. I have tried to jar the engine loose but I can't do it. Oh Lord! You made this old world and surely You can fix this engine for me! I broke down and wept. Here I was, sick, no money and the car in this condition.

After praying I slipped behind the steering wheel, stepped on the starter and, lo, the engine turned over. Miracle of miracles!

"Wife, God is hearing prayer. He is fixing this old bus, sure as the world." I shouted.

I looked down the road and there came another car. I asked the driver if he would take me to the top of the hill as the radiator was bone dry. He promptly hooked onto me and to the top of the hill we went. Then I started coasting down the other side. Next, I put the car in gear. Would the engine run? Yes, it was turning over, so I let it rotate without turning on the ignition thinking this would help cool it. Just at the bottom of the hill was a farm house where I obtained water. The radiator was filled, the engine was now started and running perfectly and away we went for Pasadena. No more trouble now at all with respect to the car but we did have to wire for money, which we received.

Upon arriving in Pasadena, I had a mechanic inspect my car. It was not running so well now. He went into the motor and when I came to the garage, he showed me what had happened saying:

"Man, how long have you driven this car in this shape? Look here at this piston."

The rings were all broken, and some of the piston was welded to the engine block. I told him what had happened and he looked amazed at my coming so far with an engine in such condition. Needless to say the engine was rebored and new pistons put in. Yes, God can and will fix an automobile if He must in caring for His servants.

My aunt, Mrs. Ruth Albright, who was a trained nurse, seeing the state of my health promptly took me to a large clinic for examination. I noticed that several seemingly prominent doctors were especially interested in my throat. After examinations were ended, I was placed in one doctor's hands and he made an appointment for me. I was to come to his office at two-thirty that afternoon for further examination.

At the office I was informed that I was in a very serious condition, that is, my aunt was so informed as they did not think it best for me to know about my condition just yet. They told her an operation was essential, that it was serious, and required immediate attention, I would have to have radium and deep therapy treatments after the operation and I must cancel all engagements and begin treatment at once. In other words, I had cancer of the throat.

This doctor, a very prominent physician and surgeon, then inquired as to my finances, if I were able to arrange for hospital expenses, etc. When informed of my past life and that I was an evangelist and just starting in the ministry, he turned to my aunt and said graciously:

"You do not need to worry. I will take the case regardless of money and I will see you through."

My aunt was very much impressed by the providence which had placed me in this doctor's hands.

"Dee," she remarked afterward, "he is one of the outstanding doctors in the research work for cancer and if there is anyone who can help in this case, it is he."

Arrangements were made for the hospital and in a short time I was placed on the table for operation. This was a very serious ordeal to undergo, but God had placed me in the hands of a skilled

surgeon. The tumor or cancer was fastened on one side to the jugular vein and on the other very near to the nerves which control the vocal cords. You may well imagine the skill required to remove this growth. For some reason known to the doctors I was not placed under anesthetic, just given a local and sedatives. I was in a semi-conscious state. Although I could feel them operating I had no sensation of pain, but was exceedingly sick at my stomach and longed for water, and was groaning.

This groaning business bothered the surgeon who was operating.

"It's been a long time since I have had to torture a man like this," he said to one of the nurses, "but it's just one of those things that cannot be helped."

Somewhat unnerved he said to me, "Man! surely we are not hurting you THAT bad! Can't you do something else besides groan? Listen! Try something else, don't groan so. Swear a little, yes, SWEAR, only don't groan."

Now then, what was I to do? I was under doctor's orders. They say a good patient will try to mind the doctor. Well, I did want to be a good patient and the doctor had said to swear a little and to stop groaning. All this came to me in a semi-conscious condition. Swear a little! That was it. But reader, I wish to ask you something. How can a man swear if he can't find any cuss words. Now there was a time in my life when I was really proficient in the line of cussing, one place where I was fluent. But now? Why friend, I couldn't find a single cuss word, not a single one, and best of all neither could I find any cuss word making machinery.

Then it dawned on me so clearly, of course not, second-blessing holiness takes that out of a man and gives him a clean heart. Yes, I thought, praise God it works. I had the witness even then. The doctor said, "SWEAR!"

I said, "PRAISE THE LORD!"

I wasn't praising the Lord because I felt someone was half killing me but, because I had a pure heart. I felt so good after praising the Lord that I said it a couple more times for good measure. The Lord then stepped in and I went to sleep and when next awakened, the operation was over and I was resting comfortably in my hospital bed.

Surely God was caring for me. The hospital scarcely even made it a bill. The doctors would take nothing for the operation and the deep therapy treatments were given at half-price.

After a couple of months of treatment I was informed I could now again enter the evangelistic field but must report back to the doctors at least every six months and preferably three. I felt God had given me a promise when everything looked so dark as to the outcome of the operation and the promise was this: "In his neck remaineth strength, and sorrow is turned into joy before him." Job 41:22. So with high courage I again set out to win souls.

My health was very bad. I ached all day long and my appetite was poor. I could gain no weight and sometimes when preaching it would seem as if I would fall. I then went to another physician who

examined me and said the cancer was still there. He gave me about a year to live. Another doctor examined me also and gave the same opinion. The church where I was then engaged in a revival meeting was informed of the doctor's report and they went to praying. How they did pray!

A healing service was held for me and I will never forget one brother who came to me and with tears streaming down his face saying:

"Brother Van, if the Holy Ghost ever told me anything in my life, He just now told me that you would get well."

I didn't have much faith myself. I couldn't understand it. Why did God send me to Pasadena and put me in the hands of those great doctors if it were to be all for naught?

I'll always remember my District Superintendent, Rev. Glenn Griffith, saying, after the healing service:

"Go ahead and call Brother Van for meetings, don't worry about his dying. God has something to say about this. He is not going to die. He is going to live."

I thought, "Well, brother you surely have more faith than I have," but I kept on preaching.

At the close of the meeting I immediately went to another in Washington. I would lie abed all day, and then so weak I could hardly go to the pulpit at night God was blessing and great unction was upon me! Finally I was in such pain that the pastor took me to a very prominent doctor in the city and he went over me carefully saying after examination:

"Do you really want to know what I think you should do? Well, it is this. You catch the next train out of here for Pasadena."

"Why," I replied with consternation, "can't I finish this meeting before I go."

"No! You can't even preach another sermon. You are liable to wake up some morning and find your voice completely gone. You go back at once to where they first treated you and let them examine you again."

After leaving the office, I said to the pastor:

"I feel as if God would have me finish this meeting anyway in spite of what the doctor said. So sink or swim, live or die, I am staying."

On the following day, I found out afterwards the pastor conferred with the doctor about my case.

"I didn't wish to tell that man that there isn't any hope for him," the doctor told him, "but his throat is just full of cancer. About all he can do is to hurry back to where they began the treatments and see if there is anything more they can do."

I finished the meeting and then set out for Pasadena with a heavy heart.

I made up my mind to this however, no matter what the doctor said, cancer or no cancer, treatment or no treatment, I would preach. I would let him examine me once again but I wasn't going to stop preaching; I was going to keep going until I died.

After arriving in Pasadena, I was taken at once to the doctor. He had been informed as to the reports about me. He looked me over very, very painstakingly.

"One indisputable way I can find out about this," he said, "if you can't stay long enough for me to observe your throat for awhile, and that is to operate again and take a specimen and have it analyzed at the laboratory. But I want to tell you this, if that is all cancer instead of radium reaction, you won't begin to live a year, I'll tell you that right now. Come up in the morning and I will open your throat and take a specimen of the apparent growth there and have it analyzed."

To the operating table I went, and now I had to wait a couple of days for the report. I was as one waiting the verdict before a judgment bar, a verdict of life or death. But some way I ceased to worry. I wished they would hurry back with the report so I could get out of there and get back to preaching, for no matter what the analysis determined, I was going to preach. In a couple of days the word came. Doctor was all smiles when he saw me:

"Man, I have some good news for you," he said, "the specimen is negative. No cancer. All is clear. The so-called tumor is nothing more than radium reaction."

Well, glory to God. As I traveled down the road leaving Pasadena a few days later the promise came to me once more: "In his neck remaineth strength, and sorrow is turned into joy before him." God still lives and answers prayer.

Just one more time was I bothered with my throat and that was two years later while in a meeting at Emmett, Idaho. My throat started to swell, the ache came back and once again I would lie abed nearly all day and then get up in time to preach at night. I went to a doctor nearby and he declared the cancer was coming back. He then called in his associate, for this was a clinic, and he also looked me over and pronounced the same verdict. They advised me to stop the meeting at once, as preaching irritated the throat, and go back to Pasadena for further treatment.

"No, I'm going to finish this meeting."

I was then asked if I would not take a few deep therapy treatments while so doing. I shook my head, for I thought if this thing is coming back again, treatments of any kind will not help.

I returned to the church that night and gave the pastor the physician's report. He promptly laid the whole case before his church at the opening of the evening service, explaining:

"Doctors have just told Brother Van that the cancer is coming back in his throat. Now I wish for the church to kneel and get hold of God for this man."

Down to their knees they went and such praying one very seldom hears. The whole church, of nearly three hundred people, laid hold of the horns of the altar in my behalf. God literally walked in the building that night. How the Holy Ghost came! A great altar service took place with no preaching or singing. They just came to the altar and victory was theirs.

The swelling started to leave my throat and I at once felt better. I conferred with the doctor, he looked me over again and said:

"I know, Brother Van, you may feel better but listen, you better go back to California and let them give you the once over again. Now will you not do what I say in regard to this?"

"Yes, I would, doctor," I replied, "but I have another meeting starting in a couple of days in another section of this country and I must go to it."

The doctor stared at me helplessly. I suppose he thought, What's the use?"

Finally he said, "Well, do you have any other meetings slated after this one?"

"No, this is the last one."

"Well then, will you go after this is finished?"

I promised that I would.

I left at once for the meeting and continued to improve and feel better. At the close of the campaign I returned to my doctor friend and said to him.

"Doctor, I want you to look me over thoroughly. You know I feel too good to go to California now. Why, I feel like a two year old."

He examined my throat, punched, prodded, and then punched and prodded some more. Finally he stepped back, looked at me, shook his head and said:

"Well, I guess you don't have to go. Your throat is all right."

From that day to this it has never bothered in this respect any more. This was over five years ago. These years have gone and the last time my throat was examined by a cancer specialist who had the history of my case, the verdict was:

"Your throat is perfect as far as a cancer is concerned. A perfect cure."

Hallelujah, the God of Elijah still lives, God still heals today and the day of miracles is NOT past.

THE WAIL OF A DRUG ADDICT

By

Evangelist D. C. Van Slyke

CHAPTER 10 HAPPINESS

"Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God." Psalm 146:5.

This, the last chapter, will be more or less reminiscent but I will mention one or two incidents heretofore omitted.

In looking across the short span of my ministry I see much cause for improvement. I recollect many blunders committed and many, many mistakes. I ask for wisdom from Him, "that giveth freely to all men," that zeal and knowledge may be combined. I wish to be much more used of God. My prayer is that: Every step I take down life's pathway, I may be considered more worthy to be entrusted with the sacred things of God.

However, in spite of blunders, the sweat and toil of evangelism, and soul winning, I can truly say: this is a good way, and a happy path to tread. I never really knew what life meant, or the meaning of happiness, until I unreservedly placed my all in His hands.

Satan told me this path of righteousness was a hard and restricted way. But as usual he lied. He also told me that if I entered "the little brick house," at Vale, Oregon, and cast myself upon prayer and God it would be the end for me.

He said, "You have gone too far; there is no hope. If you resort to prayer and God as a means of breaking these habits of sin, you will surely die."

Well, he told the truth for once. Someone has said, "Give the devil his dues," so I will try. He said, that I would die, and I did. Yes, I died February the tenth, in the year 1938. Died in "the little brick house" at Vale, Oregon.

Something happened, however, that I am sure the devil never figured on. Jesus was walking that day down the dusty road near the place where the dying man was confined. He stopped, for He heard some of the saints calling unto Him, and calling urgently. He could tell by their cry that they were in distress and desperately in need of help. They were calling loudly, pleading that He give immediate attention. He at once responded to the call and upon entering the little brick house, saw the man upon the cot dying in trespasses and sin; saw the group of prayers around the bedside and saw the utter hopelessness of the situation and Jesus let the man on the cot die.

However, something now took place that I am sure Satan tried his best to prevent. Jesus came that we might have life, therefore, He took the one on the cot by the hand, pulled him to his feet, and thus resurrected a new creature, one who was in Christ Jesus. Yes, the gambler, the liar, the thief, the drug

addict died and a new creature was born, one to whom he gave new life, new hope, new ambitions, new joy and happiness. This new man was to know now the meaning of happiness; what it really means to live; to know life as it should be; to have the joy of leading others to Christ.

This new creature was faced with the fact, he must not only preach the blessed gospel of Christ, but there were back tracks to be straightened, and by His grace and help they have been made straight as light and opportunity presented them.

One time in particular I call to mind when the Holy Ghost made mention of the fact that I had some unfinished business that needed attention. This particular offense happened many years before and even though I had forgotten, yet the Holy Ghost had not. I promised God that I would at once straighten it up, but I was a little slack in attending to that which I must do. I have found it best to mind God, and when He tells us to do a thing, to do it then and there, and not procrastinate.

A few days later I was preaching to a large congregation and bearing down heavily on all manner of sin when, lo, I looked right into the face of a man in the congregation from whom I had stolen six chickens. He was the very one the Lord had called to mind over the unfinished business.

You may rest assured that my message promptly ceased. I was "in the brush."

"Oh God," I thought, "if You will just help me to finish this sermon, I'll settle with this fellow before he ever gets out of the church."

God took me at my word and enabled me to finish the message. Immediately following the altar call I hastened to catch the man before he left the building. I caught up with him just before he stepped out doors and taking him by the arm asked:

"Brother did you ever miss any chickens?"

He looked at me bewildered for a moment, and then replied:

"Yes, I have missed lots of them. Why?"

"Well," I replied, "I don't know where lots of them have gone, but I do know where six of them went."

He looked more perplexed than ever as I continued:

"I happened to be in a party one day, and it was a drinking party. We decided a chicken dinner would be enjoyable. We had the dinner all right and you furnished the chickens, even if you didn't know it. The Holy Ghost brought this to my attention. I had forgotten all about it, as it happened several years ago. I now wish to straighten up with you and pay you for the damage done."

Tears came to his eyes as he said:

"Why brother! You don't owe me anything. I have done just as bad, only worse. No sir, I'll not take a dime. You are forgiven and now just forget it."

Well, thank the Lord, that's out of the way and it bothers me no more. But if I had not minded the Holy Ghost and done that which He brought to mind, I am afraid I would of been very sensitive to chicken preaching. Chances are that about every place I would have gone to meeting, the preacher would have dug up the old rooster, that crowed Peter under conviction, and given a long discourse on the feathered fowl. I might have left in a huff; climbed up a "miff tree" as far as I could get, and cried in a loud voice to one and all:

"What's the matter with that preacher anyway? He is forever and eternally preaching on chickens. Seems he harps along that line. He is riding a "hobby." Why doesn't he preach a pure heart and let the feathers and chickens take care of themselves?"

But now, that is all under the blood. I can stand some red hot preaching along this line, feast upon the feathered tribe, and without a qualm of conscience, say Amen to all. How wonderful it is, "to have a conscience void of offense toward God and man."

Not only is it a great blessing to have sins forgiven, but how much greater to have the sinful nature cleansed from our hearts. Justification delivers from guilt and condemnation, but sanctification delivers from unholy tempers and abnormal appetites; for justification has to do with sin as an act, that is sins committed, but sanctification has to do with sin as a principle — the sin nature, the result of the curse.

When I obtained "the blessing" (heart cleansing) it was more than a dry faith proposition, which has become so prevalent at our altars today. It was more than just "say you are all on the altar and take it by faith." Don't tell me the disciples waited in the upper room for ten days, then walked out on a dry faith proposition. No sir! They received something. The Comforter had come. They not only had the Holy Ghost but the Holy Ghost had them. They were not only "cleansed from all unrighteousness" but they were "endued with power from on high." So it was with this preacher for I received something from God that I will never forget.

It seemed as if fire went through me and glory flooded my soul. I remember crying aloud: "O God, how could I ever have doubted Thee." I was instantaneously changed from a doubter to a believer. How thankful I am that I know beyond the shadow of a doubt that the work is done.

I look no longer at the past with its sorrow, disappointments, and suffering, for as Paul, I am, "forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

I am now traveling the King's Highway. Scripture proclaims there is such a thoroughfare for we read, "And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness." Isa. 35:8. How thankful I am that God in his mercy is not willing that any should perish, no matter how flagrant their sins, for He loves humanity whom He created.

I read also that Satan is a being of hate, and in his hatred and wrath against the Most High, is doing all in his power to destroy that which God loves, therefore; he hath also constructed a highway, a roadway, "that leadeth to destruction;" and many there are which are traveling its nefarious course.

Jehovah recognizing this fact revealed to Isaiah that there is a highway prepared by Divinity, whereby man may tread, which leads from the depths of degradation and despair to eternal exaltation and joy. Therefore, even though sin is rampant, and iniquity doth abound, and this old world is reeling to and fro as a drunken man; yet the prophet proclaims the glad tidings to one and all that, "An highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness."

I find this highway a plain way; meaning clear, evident, easily recognized, for God in His infinite wisdom has so signboarded the way that "Wayfaring (traveling) men, though fools, shall not err therein."

I find that this is not only a plain way, that is easily recognized, but it is made for a plain people who are not luxurious, for they are without ornament, but nevertheless a pleasant faced group, adorned in the regalia of heavenly royalty and headed for Mount Zion.

I find also that this is a clean way, for the Infinite Builder hath decreed that: "The unclean shall not pass over it." This great highway planned by the Master Constructionist even before creation is the way of salvation, and starts with every individual at conversion. It is the way provided by Infinite Wisdom whereby we may not only be delivered from the bondage of sin, but we may be "cleansed from all unrighteousness" as well.

The traveler will soon find upon entering the highway (at conversion) that there is also "a way", (heart cleansing) and inspiration says, "And it shall be called the way of holiness." God said, "This is the way, walk ye in it." — "For we are not called unto uncleanness but unto holiness." — "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God."

I find that this is a safe way. No atheist, agnostic, destructive critic, modernist, formalist, or fanatic travels the way of holiness. Therefore, they cannot deter the "pure in heart" traveler, for he is well aware of the fact that any other highway which places the emphasis on other than heart purity is a delusion. This is a safe way for, "No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon." The image is that of a raised causeway, too high for wild beasts to climb, therefore the redeemed, the people of God, shall enjoy their blessedness secure from every enemy and danger.

I find, after seven years of travel, that this is a joyful way prepared for the ransomed of the Lord, who shall come to Zion, "With songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

I find the Saints a favored people, with this "blessed hope" founded upon the word of God, His oath and promise; a blessed people traveling this highway and looking toward heaven. I thank my God that He ever considered me worthy to be among the privileged few to walk the thoroughfare that leads to the city, "Which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God."

"Amazing grace! how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed!

Thro' many dangers, toils and snares,
I have already come;
'Tis grace hath bro't me safe thus far.
And grace will lead me home.

When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we first begun."