

THE

# preacher's magazine

JULY '77

**PREACHING  
CHRISTIAN  
HOLINESS**

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## Forgive Us Our Syndromes



**W**E HAVE FOUND THE SOLUTION for the sin problem. We believe “if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

So it is our syndromes, rather than our sins, that should concern us. “A syndrome,” according to dictionaries, “is a set of symptoms or signs typical of a disease, disturbance, or condition in animals or plants.”

As branches of the Living Vine, or if you prefer, members of the Body of Christ, these symptoms should concern us. They indicate weaknesses rather than wickedness. They are not sins but syndromes.

One of the most common is the “Bigger Is Better” syndrome. It begins innocently enough, since our commission is to make disciples of all nations. This means our numbers should increase, as indeed they will. The disease shows its first signs when we begin to focus our thoughts more and more upon larger numbers, and less and less upon the persons these numbers represent. It becomes more important to us how many are in attendance than *who* is present.

The “Bigger Is Better” syndrome becomes more complicated as the disease spreads. The victim becomes increasingly preoccupied with quantity and less concerned with quality. Size is all-important and must be realized at any cost. Where once it seemed sufficient to be larger than last year, now it becomes vital to be larger than anybody else.

Other complications follow. Questionable methods are employed if they bring results. The whip is used more often, and the sheep are driven relentlessly on. Occasionally—although this symptom is a very rare complication—the numbers are padded through clever or careless methods of counting. The statistics are there, larger than life, but they do not accurately reflect real size.

Worst of all, a pastor who is afflicted with this malady can begin to believe that he did it all. His congregation is larger, his building more prestigious, and his salary more comfortable because *He* possesses skills

and abilities that ordinary men lack. He forgets Christ's words: "Upon this rock I will build my church" (Matt. 16:18). If the disease is allowed to spread, debilitating effects upon humility, compassion, and spirituality can take a frightful toll. The pastor feels it and so do his people.

The "Money Can Buy It" syndrome is more subtle but no less destructive. It is easier, as a rule, to contribute money than to give time and energy. But buying a bus alone will not produce a bus ministry. It takes more than hiring another associate to bring growth.

Any successful pastor will testify that dedicated, tireless, persistent efforts must be invested along with money. Spending money does not solve problems.

Money is the most overrated commodity on today's market of values. It can buy a house, but it cannot make a home. It can pay for medicine, but it cannot purchase health. It can acquire things, but things do not satisfy the soul. If anyone should know this, it should be the preacher, whose Master has challenged him to "go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me" (Matt. 19:21).

Several other syndromes threaten the health of the Body of Christ. One of these is extremely treacherous. It is "The Map Is the Territory" syndrome. It makes people more concerned with their "maps"—that is, the feelings, thoughts, suppositions, beliefs, and theories "inside" their skins, than with the "territories"—the facts and realities maps only represent.

A university professor fed his class samples of a crisp, bland-tasting pastry which they liked fairly well—until he told them they were eating dog biscuits. The real taste faded in importance as their "maps" of such fare dramatically influenced their reactions.

We can be guided primarily, if not exclusively, by our "maps" rather than our "territories." This would explain the responses of a class of ministerial students in a holiness seminary when shown two sets of statements, both sets taken from the general superintendents of their denomination. One set of statements appeared on letterheads of denominational authorities, the other set on a letterhead of a large, nonholiness sister denomination of considerable prestige. Typical descriptions of statements appearing on letterheads of their own denominational leaders were "authoritarian," "unimaginative," and "trite." Typical comments in response to statements appearing on stationery of the other denomination were "innovative," "exciting," and "creative." Their "maps" were keyed with suppositions of greener pastures on the other side of the ecclesiastical fence. This clouded their concepts of the "territory," which was the counsel of their own leadership.

Trouble, confusion, and danger are likely to occur (1) when the map inadequately represents the territory, and (2) when the individual is *unaware* that he is dealing with the map rather than the territory.

It is great to be born again, and wonderful to be filled with the Spirit. *Thank You, Lord. Now, help us heal ourselves. Make us aware of the symptoms which warn us of a sickness that could hinder our usefulness.*

*Forgive us our syndromes.*



# CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGICAL ISSUES

C. S. COWLES, Professor, Northwest Nazarene College

## ***Christian Families in Crisis***

**H**E SLIPPED in the kitchen door as innocuously as possible. It was almost midnight. It had been a stimulating evening—dinner meeting with the educational council, prayer service, choir practice, and then coffee with some close friends at a nearby restaurant.

His wife was still up, sulking before the television set. He ventured a tentative greeting. Without a word, she leapt to her feet, grabbed a hammer, and hurled it at his head with uncommon force. Only his quick reflexes averted a disaster.

Though the hammer missed its target, it scored a direct hit in terms of causing my school-principal friend to reevaluate his whole attitude toward his wife and their seven children. So caught up had he become in the work of the church that he had unwittingly been guilty of gross negligence in regard to his wife and children. Fortunately he was able to make some radical shifts in priorities. He asked himself, "What shall it profit the servant of the Lord if he gain the whole world and lose his own family?" Together he and his wife set out on a new road toward a rediscovery of those rich spiritual treasures potentially theirs within the circle of their own family. Now, instead of one solitary evangel, a whole

family is united in the work of the Lord.

### **A sickness unto death**

"Uneasiness" best describes the prevailing mood among pastors and church leaders as they face the unprecedented incidence of marital conflict and divorce penetrating the church. There was a time in our recent past when the church seemed to be a dependable bastion against the emerging social disease of divorce.

An administrator in one of our Christian colleges shared with me his concern over the fact that seven marriages among the school's faculty had broken up during the previous year. This was in contrast to a quarter-century in which he could recall only one other divorce.

A fellow pastor recently shared with me the crises that were tearing apart his church families. In his 30 years of ministry, he could recall only two divorces occurring among his membership. Now there were five leading families that were in the process of dissolving their marriages. He admitted that this was only the visible tip of a lurking iceberg of marital conflict within the church. By far the largest portion of his time was being spent in marital counseling. He dropped his head in his hands

and cried, "A plague has hit my church!"

Plague it is! I asked a former theology professor what his dominant impressions were regarding the state of the church upon his reentry into the pastoral ministry. His answer was direct and unequivocal: The greatest crisis facing the church centered in those tensions that were undermining and destroying the Christian home. If he were to excommunicate the divorced people in his church, he would immediately lose one-fourth of his leadership and over one-third of his congregation.

### **An "impossible" possibility**

To a sensitive person, it hardly seems possible that such a plague of family instability and breakdown could be sweeping the church. This is a phenomenon unique to our times. Not one divorce is mentioned in the Bible, with the possible exception of Abraham putting away his concubine, Hagar—and the Bible covers a 1,600-year span of recorded history! While the church has faced almost every conceivable threat to its existence, divorce has never been one of its problems. Throughout most of its history, the incidence of severe marital conflict has been so slight and the possibility of divorce so minimal that the subject is passed over in virtual silence. The sanctity of the marital union and the inviolability of the home has simply been taken for granted.

Not so any longer. The Episcopal church at its General Conference in 1973 became the last major Protestant denomination to remove its strictures against divorced people joining the church. Even the Roman Catholic church in America admits that divorce among its members is fast approaching that of the national averages. It seems as if the church is as helpless to stem this black tide as

a riverboat captain is in trying to change the course of the river. It is a disagreeable—yes, a scandalous—situation but a fact of church life which we can no longer afford to ignore.

In searching for some understanding of the causes behind this contemporary "plague," many factors immediately suggest themselves. Technological society with its high incidence of mobility has broken up the extended families of a more rural and agrarian economy, creating a situation of unprecedented rootlessness and instability. Our cultural fixation upon family problems which dominates all forms of media, tends to focus upon the bizarre, the problematic, the perverse, and the shocking, implicitly conveying the impression that all families are this way. The rapid rise of women in terms of equality with men, and their newfound financial independence, has certainly had its impact. The unabashed materialism of our culture with its accompanying work compulsiveness and "success syndrome" serves to undermine the integrity of the home.

Moral laxity, working mothers, alcohol, drugs, absentee fathers, and many more causes could be added to this list. But, for our purposes, one factor that is universally overlooked among us as a potential cause for the marital breakdown of the Christian family is the church itself.

### **The church against itself**

Without question, the mainline churches in America today are family-centered institutions. They make their greatest appeal and draw their largest support from stable family units. And yet their philosophy of a superabundantly active program militates against that very family structure which they strive so insistently to serve. The church has largely bought into society's prevailing

attitude that motion equals progress and activity means growth. In its laudable eagerness to evangelize and expand its saving influence, the church makes demands upon its committed pastors and laity which renders the development of a genuine family life all but impossible.

When I asked the pastor of a thriving, record-breaking, growing congregation the cause for so many marital failures among his leadership, he candidly admitted that over-involvement of his men in the program seemed to be the most visible and voiced factor. Knowing the demands which he laid upon his "company of the committed," I was not surprised.

A young pastor dropped by to see me. Things were not going well in the parsonage. His wife frequently absented herself from church services and almost never accompanied him on social occasions. Her unrelenting depression made him wonder whether she might need psychiatric help. I asked him about his work habits. He heaved a sigh as he began to enumerate all of the demands upon his time. In addition to normal parish duties, he was a member of a dozen or more denominational and community organizations. He was also taking postgraduate work at a nearby university. He exclaimed that he hadn't enjoyed one night at home in the last two and a half months, nor had he taken a day off during that time.

I asked him if he saw a connection between his wife's attitude toward the church and his frenetic schedule. I'll never forget the look of awestruck amazement that crossed his face when he put these together. It was incredible to me that he hadn't seen this earlier. But then he asked me why his wife had never raised the issue of his overcommitment to his work. And then he answered his own question by noting that she too had

been raised in a philosophy of Christian commitment which put God first, the church second, and others third, and then the family with whatever is left. To question that ordering of priorities was tantamount to admitting a defective level of dedication. So her heart and emotions did what her mind and will could not do: subvert the commitment through psychosomatic illnesses and prolonged periods of depression.

Realizing that there isn't much future in a holiness church for a divorced minister, this young pastor had the courage to radically alter his whole life-style. He decided to launch his marital-renewal program by taking a week's leave of absence for a second honeymoon. The church board responded by granting him two weeks with full pay. Evidencing a wisdom greater than his own, they were aware of, and troubled by, the problem that was undermining their pastor's effectiveness. They were delighted to help him get his priorities straight.

What is that pastor's name? His name is "Legion"!

### **Rethinking the relationship between church and home**

The answer to the dilemma of the church itself in reference to the integrity of the Christian home is not to be found in a wholesale scuttling of programs. But the time has come for the church to ask what is gained when a father is taken out of the home and away from his own children in order to reach and teach someone else's children. We are beginning to understand that the church cannot begin to fulfill the God-given role of mother and father for the child, or function as "surrogate parents," regardless of how finely tuned the program.

A recent study of middle-class fathers, reported in the *Scientific American* journal, illustrates the

emotional starvation which can occur even in the most committed Christian home. When the fathers were asked how much time they spent with their one-year-old infants, most estimated that they spent from 15 to 30 minutes a day talking to and playing with their children. But a hidden microphone attached to the infant's shirt told another story. "The data indicates that fathers spend relatively little time interacting with their infants. The mean number of interactions per day was 2.7, and the average number of seconds per day was 37.7."

The church can no longer afford the luxury of watching its program proliferate and its organizations flourish while wives and children are perishing for want of those primary relationships with the husband and father upon which healthy personal growth depends. Nor can it regard itself as the ultimate end and sole object of the Christian family's devotion. Rather, the church must have the courage to recover its servant character after the example of its Lord who said, "The Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45, RSV).<sup>\*</sup> The church must come to see itself as an institution called to serve the needs of the family. And one of the ways it

<sup>\*</sup>All scriptures from the *Revised Standard Version of the Bible*, copyrighted 1946 and 1952.

can accomplish this is simply to reduce the pressure of and opportunities for involvement in family-fracturing activities.

When considering some fresh proposal or dealing with established ministries, the church must constantly ask the question, "How can we equip the family to be itself in the exercise of its God-given rule of being the gracious womb of human kindness?"

There is no higher calling, no greater responsibility, no loftier mission laid upon parents than that of providing a nest woven of human love and accepting care for their children—who just happen to be made in the image of God, and who are destined to live forever! "For what shall it profit the parent if he gain the whole world and lose *that* soul?" (Mark 8:36, CSC paraphrase).

At his wife's nagging insistence, a busy executive took a day off to go fishing with his boy. At the close of the day, the father penned in his journal, "Went fishing with my boy today: day wasted." Meanwhile, in the next bedroom, a very tired little fellow wrote in his diary, "Went fishing with my dad today: greatest day of my life."

Editor's note: This article is abridged from the new book *The Festive Family*, by C. S. Cowles, and is used with permission of the publishers, Impact Books, John T. Benson Publishing Co., Nashville, Tenn.

## The Cellars of Affliction

Samuel Rutherford used to say that whenever he found himself in the cellars of afflictions, he used to look about for the King's wine. He would look for the wine bottles of the promises and drink rich draughts of vitalizing grace. . . . It is a great thing to be led through green pastures and by still waters; I think it is a greater thing to have a "table prepared before me in the presence of mine enemies." God will enable us to be masters of all our circumstances, and none shall have a deadly hold upon us.

—John Henry Jowett

In following the advice of the Master, fellowship is assured all the way. We begin with Him at the bottom and rise with Him to the heavenlies

## **Sit Down in the Lowest Room**

(Luke 14:10)

**W**HEN JESUS ADVISED A MAN who was invited to a wedding supper to "sit down in the lowest room," He was but introducing him to a chapter of His own autobiography and suggesting that the life story of the invited guest be patterned after that of His own.

The Good Shepherd's "follow me" is clearly seen in these instructions, and through them there shines forth the Master's desire for fellowship with the guest. And all such fellowship must begin "in the lowest room," for that is the throne room of the Master.

There could be no embarrassment to the guest in the lowest room. He had been invited and was entitled to a place, and if by taking the lowest he was mistaken, the correction of the mistake could only mean "worship in the presence of them that sit at meat."

This advice of the Master points the way—the only way—to permanent and enjoyable exaltation—that

which is given by the "Lord of all"—and that exaltation is given only to the meek in spirit.

Note the pattern of the Master's life, and His instruction to the invited guest will find its proper place.

The Father called upon His Son to be a guest of the human race. It was a long journey from the home of His preincarnate glory to the arms of a virgin girl. Whatever may have been His attributes before, of this we are sure, He had no "omni" qualities while on earth. He was not omnipresent, omnipotent, or omniscient while in the form of man—at least that is what He said.

If He had but descended from heavenly glory to the highest level of human existence, the step would have been well nigh infinite; but "being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself" (Phil. 2:8) to the low position of servant, and lower still, He drank the cup of being made sin.

In His ministry, He claimed poverty and denied that He was One to sit at meat, but was among men as a servant. When returning from the field of toil, He prepared the meal for the household, and when they had eaten, He partook of what was left. He washed the dishes and the feet, and no one sat beneath Him—He had the lowest seat.

He did not sit in despondency but



by  
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in dignity and in faith. The laws of the Kingdom which He set forth for others to follow He knew full well would work for himself. He desired exaltation and even prayed, "O Father, glorify thou me . . ." (John 17: 5); but He despised self-exaltation and preached that "whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased" (Matt. 23:12). In the same breath, He extolled the exaltation of Another and pointed the way—the only way—to its attainment: "He that shall humble himself shall be exalted."

The closing chapter of His biography substantiated His claim. His exaltation grew out of His self-abasement. The "wherefore" of Phil. 2:9 is significant. The seat at the Father's right hand was given to Him because He had humbled himself.

What an exaltation it was! There was "given him a name which is above every name," "angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him" (1 Pet. 3:22).

This high honor was not self-assumed. It was bestowed. He sat on the lowest seat, and the Lord of All escorted Him to the highest seat. "Christ glorified not himself . . . but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son . . ." (Heb. 5:5).

In His instruction to the "guest," He was exhorting us all to obey the law of the Kingdom and to rest assured that the trek downward led upward at last, not by self-seeking and human striving, but by a divine decree. The ascent is guaranteed by the descent.

In following the advice of the Master, fellowship is assured all the way. We begin with Him at the bottom and rise with Him to the heavenlies. "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him" (2 Tim. 2:12).

It takes faith to follow the Master—faith to believe that what He says is true and faith to wait for its fulfillment. "The joy that was set before him" was distant while the Cross "endured" was present. The gap of time between promise and fulfillment must be spanned by the bridge of faith. The "lowest room" may be life's sole abode. While the higher one is "reserved in heaven for you," often the labors are in time and the reward in eternity. This led the great apostle to exclaim, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (1 Cor. 15: 19).

Some receive partial payment in this life as Daniel and the three Hebrew children, and others "died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off" (Heb. 11:13).

Needless to say, the way pointed out by Jesus by example and by word is not the course recommended and followed by those of this world order. It was to correct the honor-seeking spirit of the "guests" that Jesus uttered His message. He was pointing the way to an enduring honor bestowed by the Master of the house.

In like manner, He is pointing us to an everlasting award, bestowed amid the splendor of the ages unending. He desires for all the highest and the best, and, by His own blood drops, marks the path to their attainment. Without the pattern of His life we might falter by the way, but heeding the exhortation to "consider him . . . lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds" (Heb. 12:3), we press on, "being confident . . . that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6).

**Recognize that He who was able to create your body is well able to make repairs.—Rufus Moseley**

# Wesleyana



## **John Wesley, The Practical Physician**

By George E. Failing\*

**J**OHN WESLEY was an omnivorous reader with the widest range of interests. He read autobiography, history, astronomy, physics, theology, drama (such as Shakespeare), poetry, and extensively on medicine.

At age 44 (in 1747), Wesley first published an 118-page book entitled *Primitive Physic*, a book that went through numerous editions and several revisions (the 23rd edition in 1791).

Wesley believed that these physical bodies, as fashioned by the hand of God, contained no seeds of corruption or dissolution. All creation was "friendly to human nature as long as man was at peace with his Creator." But when man rebelled against the Sovereign of heaven and earth, "seeds of weakness and pain, of sickness and death, are now lodged in our inmost substance." So all nature conspires to make life hazardous and painful: "The heavens, the earth, and all things contained therein, conspire to punish the rebels against their Creator . . . the sun and moon shed unwholesome influences . . . the earth exhales poisonous damps . . .

the beasts of the field are in a state of hostility . . . the air around us is replete with the shafts of death."

Mercifully, however, "the grand Author of nature" provided ways to lessen those inconveniences that cannot be wholly removed, to soften the evils of life and prevent in part our sickness and pain. Wesley believed that medical treatment from the earliest ages was chiefly traditional, passed down from generation to generation. Many remedies were discovered by accident and proved by experiment. But men became philosophical, inquiring how medicine secured certain effects.

So physicians (for whom Wesley had small respect), "examined the human body, the nature of the flesh, veins, arteries, nerves; the structure of the brain, heart, lungs, stomach, bowels." Then doctors discarded the "simple medicines" and medicine became an obtruse science which clever doctors used to secure honor and gain. These physicians filled their writings with "technical terms, utterly unintelligible to plain men and introduced into practice abundance of compound medicines," leav-

\*Editor, *The Wesleyan Advocate*.

ing the masses of mankind unable financially to secure either doctor or medicine.

How did Wesley become a "practical physician"? He answers: "I have only consulted experience, common sense, and the common interest of mankind." So Wesley "prescribes" single-ingredient remedies, easy and economical to obtain, and lists them in order of potency, from the weaker to the stronger. Wesley then lists these simple rules of health:

1. Use plain diet, easy of digestion, and this as sparingly as you can.

2. Drink only water, if it agrees with your stomach. (Wesley wrote a long letter advising against the daily and repeated use of strong coffee and tea as being harmful to those with weak nerves.)

3. Use as much exercise daily, in the open air, as you can without weariness—a minimum of two hours a day.

4. Sup at six or seven on the lightest food; go to bed early (by 9 p.m.), and rise betimes (between 4 and 5 a.m.).

5. Too much sleep (more than seven hours for a healthy man) is unhealthy. (All the above quotations taken from *Works*, Vol. XIV, pp. 307-15.)

Wesley believed that 99 out of 100 "distempers" were caused by intemperance, indolence, or irregular passions. Intemperance extended to any kind or quantity of food which impaired health. Too much meat, even too many pickles. By indolence Wesley meant simply "the want of due exercise." Said an outstanding physician of his time: "To how many thousands have I prescribed exercise? And how many have punctually followed my prescription? To this day,

I know not one." Walking was preferred to any other exercise; riding on horseback would require twice the time for equal benefits.

Finally, passions should be regular. Wesley observed keenly the psychosomatic origins of many physical illnesses. Here is the classic passage which is reproduced verbatim. "The passions have a greater influence on health than most people are aware of. All violent and sudden passions dispose to, or actually throw people into, acute diseases. The slow and lasting passions, such as grief and hopeless love, bring on chronic diseases. Till the passion which caused the disease is calmed, medicine is applied in vain. The love of God, as it is the sovereign remedy of all miseries, so in particular it effectually prevents all the bodily disorders the passions introduce, by keeping the passions themselves within due bounds. And by the unspeakable joy, and perfect calm, serenity, and tranquillity it gives the mind, it becomes the most powerful of all the means of health and long life" (*Works*, Vol. XIV, p. 316).

For serious illness, when life was in immediate danger, "I advise every man, without delay to apply to a physician that fears God.

"I have only to add that as God is the sovereign disposer of all things, and particularly of life and death, I earnestly advise every one, together with all his other medicines, to use that medicine of medicines—prayer." Wesley proved the power of prayer in healing, both personally and in the testimonies of thousands of witnesses, since Wesley believed that for those diseases sometimes occasioned by Satan (*Works*, VI, 378), prayer and faith in the power of God were the only effective cures.

**Hunt for self-pity as you would hunt for lice, and loathe it with the same loathing.**

—E. Stanley Jones

# *Faith in* **ACTION**

## **It Is a Call**

**T**HE PREACHER had preached a simple gospel message. The Holy Spirit was moving. The gospel was penetrating my heart. Even as a boy of nine, the realization of my personal accountability to God began to press my soul with awesome choice. My sins looked blacker than ever. That night I stepped out, and God genuinely saved me.

Several months later, my mind began to think in terms of a lifework. Relating my thinking to Mother, I said, "Mother, I believe I want to be a singer." But some time later, just before my tenth birthday, I walked into the garden where my mother was working and said, "I have decided I am going to be a preacher instead of a singer." God had been talking to me and impressing me with this call. My expression to my mother was a declaration of my intentions to do what God wanted me to do. In prayer

meeting the next Wednesday night, I stood and told the people I was called to preach. Telling the people helped me then, as did the encouragement they gave me in the years to come.

As time went on, I began to form, almost subconsciously, ideas and images of the ministry. It was a great thrill to hear the preachers tell of mighty revivals and souls saved under their ministry. Sometimes the reports ran into the score for single meetings and services. The illustrations sounded so exciting. In my heart I was saying, "I want to do that." The image I was developing seemed to be so romantic. Even as I attended college, there was a great thrill that raced through my being as I thought about being a truly evangelistic pastor. I suppose there is something in every preacher-to-be that makes him want to "set the woods on fire." (The desire is there yet, but not exactly in those terms.)

Soon I was faced with my first assignment. It took only a short time for me to realize that the ministry was different from what I had imagined it to be. There were the hours of study, visitation, organizing, promoting, money raising, boosting, youth work, Sunday school drives, and other jobs that are peculiarly the



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minister's. This was no sacrifice, for I enjoyed the work. Even the low salary did not trouble me. The thing that troubled me was that I was doing all of this and not seeing the results. My experience, coupled with my previous image of the ministry, became a foothold for those subtle words, "Are you really called?" Before there was time for reply, the voice continued, "If you were really called, you would be seeing more results." The results were what troubled me, and the tempter knew it.

My reply to the voice did not come immediately, and I can't say I ever made an official reply. I began to think, to pray, and to meditate on my call. The Holy Spirit gave me some help. The facts began to come to mind.

1. There was the firm knowledge that the Lord had impressed a call upon my heart as a child; and not only that, the call had grown with time and training.

2. It began to dawn upon me that God had called me to preach and hadn't called me to my romantic concept of the ministry.

3. It was obvious that I was not born nor called in another day. It was today I must preach and serve.

4. The call for me was not something I could pick up and lay down.

I could feel Paul's "Woe is me" weighing upon my heart.

5. There was the realization that I could be happy only in the will of the Lord.

6. Despite the subtle voice, there was still that heavenly pull that let me know I had a mission for the Kingdom issued by the King himself. Go I must! Not to go was to fail the King. My job was to go, and the results were with God. The results did come later, but interestingly enough, only after I had resolved to stick to it.

The resolve of my soul is to be as faithful as Jeremiah, in spite of the times; as alert as Ezekiel's watchman; and leave the rest to a faithful God. And "by all means" and methods "save some," and thus reach people, in God's way, for my day.

For me it IS a call in all the power of the present tense. Though the situation is different from my forefathers in the ministry, and though times have changed, my call is to this present age. Since this experience, I often sing Charles Wesley's "A Charge to Keep I Have," with the second stanza having special import to me:

*To serve the present age,*

*My calling to fulfill;*

*Oh, may it all my powers engage*

*To do my Master's will.*

## What's Back of the Name?

A certain American-made piano was once advertized on signboards along our railways and highways. Below the name of the piano on the signboard always appeared this motto: "The quality goes in before the name goes on." Needless to say that as far as advertisement goes, it was one of the gifted hits of the century. Sermons may be found on signboards as well as in stones.

A name ought to stand for quality whether in pianos or Christian character.

Usually those who complain the loudest  
and criticize the most, give the least

## Give like a Christian

**H**OW PEOPLE USE, spend, and give their money is one of the best indications of their true character. This is an indicator so outstanding that both saint and sinner are aware of it.

Sometime ago an Internal Revenue Service man told the following story:

“The other day I checked a strange return. A fellow with an income under \$5,000 claimed he gave \$624 to some church. To be sure, he was within the 15 percent limit, but it looked mighty suspicious. So I hopped a bus and dropped in on him to ask him about his contribution. I thought he’d get nervous like most do and say that he ‘might have made a mistake.’ But not this fellow! He came back at me with that figure of \$624 without batting an eye. ‘Do you have a receipt from the church?’ I asked, figuring that I would make him squirm.

“‘Sure,’ he said confidently. ‘I always drop them in the drawer where I keep my budget envelopes,’ and off he went to fetch his receipts.

One look at them and I knew he was on the level. So I apologized for bothering him and explained that it was my duty to check on deductions that seemed unusually high. As we shook hands at the door, he said, ‘I’d like to invite you to attend our church.’

“‘Thanks,’ I replied, ‘but I belong to a church myself.’

“‘Excuse me,’ he said, ‘that possibility hadn’t occurred to me.’

“As I rode home, I kept wondering what he meant by that last remark. It wasn’t until Sunday morning when I dropped my usual quarter into the collection plate that it came to me!”

It took his own miserliness to bring home his own state of affairs and why the other brother had not considered him a religious person.

After one family had returned home from the morning service, Dad began knocking the service and complaining about the preaching. Mother criticized the choir, and Big Sister was running down the organist for some blunder she had made. But it all quieted down in a hurry when Little Brother, who had noticed the miserly little piece of money Dad had dropped into the offering plate, piped up. He simply said, “Well, folks, I thought it was a *pretty good sermon for a dime!*”

Almost without exception, those who complain the loudest, grumble the worst, and criticize the most bitterly always give the least. They are



by  
**William S. Deal**

Author, Counselor  
El Monte, Calif.  
The Wesleyan Church

generally of that caliber of the “chaff which the wind driveth away.” Unfortunately, however, some of the “chaff” gets stuck in the crevices and corners of the church, and the wind does not drive it away.

Maybe the wee wisdom of the lad in the following story was not too far wrong: Little Jimmy’s uncle placed a crisp new dollar bill in his little hand. Then he said, “Be careful how you spend this, Jimmy. You know the old proverb, ‘A fool and his money are soon parted.’”

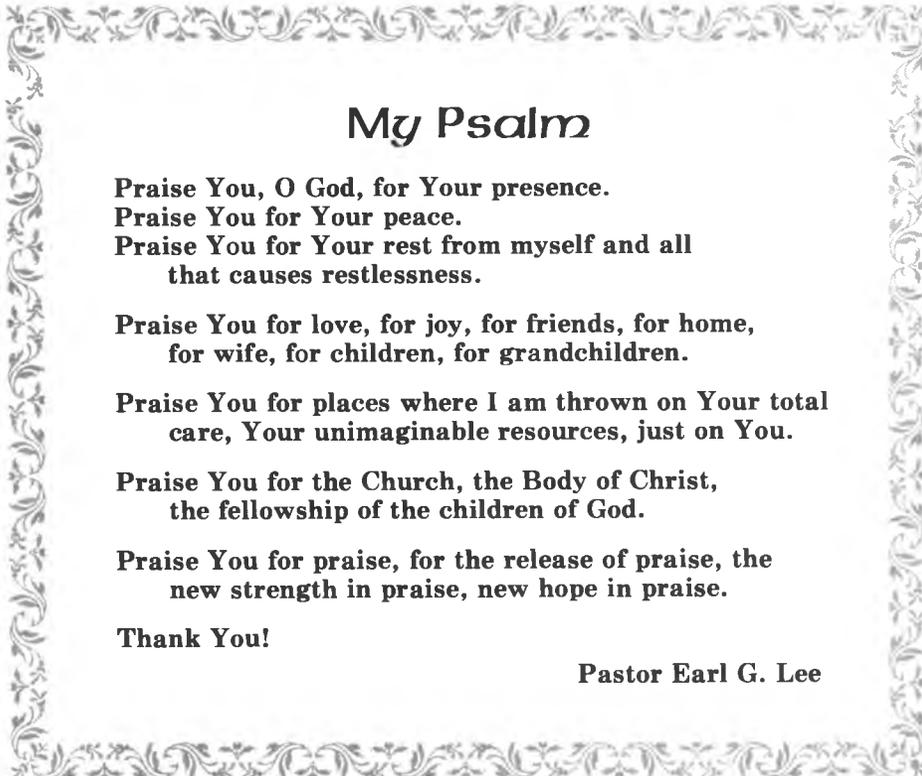
To this the lad replied, “I’ll remember what you said, Uncle Bill. But thanks anyway for parting with it.”

This lad probably totally misunderstood his uncle. But we do well to

remember the lesson that there is a world of difference between the foolish person who parts with his money for fleeting, selfish, sinful purposes and the one who invests his money for Jesus’ sake and the kingdom of heaven’s cause. “For where a man’s treasure is, there will his heart be also,” Jesus said.

It is still “more blessed to give than to receive,” just as Jesus said. Check up on your giving. Don’t “give ’til it hurts” as some say, but better, “Give ’til it brings deep-down joy to do so.” Then you will be giving in the true Christian spirit and not “grudgingly,” or as the Pharisees did.

A person’s giving may be a good gauge of his spiritual life. How does yours check out in this light?



## My Psalm

**Praise You, O God, for Your presence.**

**Praise You for Your peace.**

**Praise You for Your rest from myself and all  
that causes restlessness.**

**Praise You for love, for joy, for friends, for home,  
for wife, for children, for grandchildren.**

**Praise You for places where I am thrown on Your total  
care, Your unimaginable resources, just on You.**

**Praise You for the Church, the Body of Christ,  
the fellowship of the children of God.**

**Praise You for praise, for the release of praise, the  
new strength in praise, new hope in praise.**

**Thank You!**

**Pastor Earl G. Lee**

# Eight Secrets for Winning More Souls

By Asa H. Sparks\*

Charles B. Roth, one of the distinguished sales experts in our country, has written several books on salesmanship, including *How to Hold and Develop a Customer*, *1,000 Ways a Salesman Can Increase His Sales*, and *How to Sell Your Way to Success*. In a recent magazine article, he set down his 10 secrets for closing sales. Eight of these can be directly applied to winning souls.

He stated that the difference between \$5,000 men and his \$250,000 "king of salesmen" was that the top salesman (or the top money men in selling) were the strong closers. The first rule is, If you want to make more money in selling, simply learn how to close more sales. This can be directly applied to the pastoral ministry: If you want to be more successful in winning, simply learn how to close more calls.

These rules for making sales—and for winning souls—are secret rules simply because so often we fail to learn them and use them. Following are the eight secret rules adapted for soul winning:

1. Never call unless you intend to close. Many salesmen fail because when they go into the room, they are prepared for failure. They often make what salesmen call "goodwill calls," "friendship calls," "missionary calls." The same is true of preachers. We make Sunday school calls, prospect calls, hospital calls. Like the salesman, we must make up our minds before we call that we are going to get the order for the soul.

2. Try to close with your very first word. Don't hem and haw and beat around the bush and wait for the

proper time or the psychological moment. These never come. Try as early as you can for a witness with your very first words. We can "psychology" our people right out of heaven as we sit around in their living rooms sipping coffee and waiting for the proper moment to witness to them.

3. Close on every resistance. The minute a buyer brings up an objection or a resistance, try to close him then and there. Don't answer the resistance—try to close. The reason: "A buyer who has thrown a resistance to you has lost his balance just like a boxer who has missed a heavy punch. He is wide open." Usually his resistance is a sign he is weakening and is afraid he cannot afford to become embroiled in the minute and insignificant theological arguments that are often presented to us as resistance. The important thing to always remember is that Jesus will save, and that Jesus will save *now*.

4. Keep right on trying time after time. The fact that you have failed does not mean that the conquest is over. It may mean that it is only beginning. The salesman who is successful is the one who is willing to try that tenth time if need be. One top salesman made 23 attempts to close before he got the job done, and as you witness and deal with the men and women of your church continually, try to close. Try to get them to the point of personal and genuine commitment to God.

5. Give him a choice. Your wife has used this time and again to get you to either mow the grass or dust the living room. The salesman will offer you a choice between a brown or black suit. Give your prospect a choice. Not a choice of yes or no, but a choice of whether he or you will lead in the first prayer.

6. Do something fast. It is possible to talk a client in and out of a sale just as it is possible to talk a prospect

\*Pastor, Church of the Nazarene, Vandalia, Ohio.

in and out of conviction. Whatever you do, do something. Cause him to kneel and pray. Have him read the Bible with you. Show him the scriptures that apply. Spring into action at once.

7. Make him somebody special. The surgeon you trust uses this technique. The salesman you buy from uses it, but sometimes we pastors forget that the prospect is the greatest person to deal with. Don't be afraid to point out how he is special and how he can count for God.

8. Ask for what you want. The simplest way to get what you want is often to ask for what you want. It works in selling as in other areas of life. The salesman asks for your

order. The preacher resists this point, feeling it puts him in the beggars' role, and yet the only way we can win souls is to ask for what we want—for their faith and trust in God to step out into a new life—a new creature in Christ Jesus.

Gaylord B. Buck, another sales executive, always admonished his salesmen as follows: "Listen, fellows, keep on asking for business. Nearly every prospect will turn you down a few times, but no prospect ever lived who could turn a salesman down forever."

This same statement could be paraphrased for your calling ministry. Keep after that prospect. Don't be the first to give in.

## Practical Points

*that make a difference*

### I Needed My Pastor Desperately, but He Was Out Winning Souls!

Dear Son:

This hasn't been the best of weeks for Mother and me. Hail took our wheat, and some of the cattle became sick and died. To top it all off, Jane came home to tell us that her husband had left her without support. We needed help and let our pastor know about it. If he had only come for a visit and prayer, I think I could have taken it—but he told us that if we were where we ought to be spiritually, we could take it, and he never showed up at the home at all. He was too busy winning souls to Christ!

Now I appreciate his energy and vision, but he has forgotten that there is a flock to care for, and has never

learned the skills of pastoral care and concern. He is too busy to sit down and talk to anyone.

I am only a farmer and don't understand much of modern church organization, but it seems to me that the earth can teach us something. The seed is not only planted, but cultivated, protected, and watered before the harvest. It takes all the skills of farming to raise a crop.

We are not fed on Sunday but exposed to a description of what has happened during the week. *We are a going concern—all the time!* But I have noticed something lately. We are eroding at the edges. Those who were formerly with us are no longer here. Even those who were won to Christ are losing their enthusiasm. I have a sneaking suspicion that evangelism must be complemented by discipling if the church is to truly grow. What do you think? What did your seminary professors tell you? Isn't there another side?

Love,  
Dad

JULY

NAZARENE

FOCUS

FOR  
PASTORS  
and LOCAL  
CHURCH  
LEADERS

Compiled by the General Stewardship Commission

EARL C. WOLF, Executive Director  
STEPHEN J. SORENSEN, Office Editor

General Superintendent Strickland



## Preaching Holiness

ALL NAZARENE PREACHERS must be holiness preachers. In the process of preparation for ordination, vows are made to proclaim by ministry and teaching the cardinal doctrines of the Bible. Central in our Wesleyan theology is the doctrine of holiness.

Holiness preachers, however, do not become great standard-bearers by having made vows. The best holiness preachers are molded by strong convictions which develop from an inner life sanctified by the Holy Spirit. To these preachers holiness is an experience to be sought and a life to be lived. These convictions become the heart of one's preaching priorities. Topics of current interest, special emphasis, etc., have their place, but the preaching of holiness takes priority in one's pastoral and evangelistic ministry.

This does not imply a narrow, circumscribed ministry, for there is great scope in the presentation of the holiness message. The great doctrines of the Bible are wonderfully related to it. The doctrines of atonement, sin, salvation—and all others related to Christian experience—are related to holiness. The doctrines of Christian living and outreach are also related to it. Moreover, the doctrines of the Church and its ultimate victory in the Second Coming of Christ are likewise related to holiness. To preach holiness is to unfold all of the beautiful biblical truths which relate to the total revelation of God to man.

This is the year of "Lifting Up Christ—Our Sanctifying Saviour." Let us preach holiness with holy convictions. Let the message be clear and understandable. Let the message be biblical. Let it be proclaimed as an experience and a life. Let it bring a refreshing revival to our blessed Zion.

# Need Prospects?

*Many pastors say, "We do not have that many new people coming to our church to develop a good prospect list."*

Here are some suggestions . . .



- **Friendship and Worship Cards**

Invite every person in the congregation to fill out the card. Using this method, "guests" will be more willing to sign. Offer each "guest" a special gift to be sent to them the following week. This gives a reason to get their address.

- **Special Events**

Periodically have a major public interest event (concerts, known speakers, etc.), preferably in a neutral auditorium or in the sanctuary. Register all who attend, either by Friendship and Worship Card, ticket, or as special "guests."

- **Baptismal Service**

Use the following form as an embossed invitation card: "Mr. John Doe requests the pleasure of your company at his baptism in public witness of his faith in Jesus Christ. This service of celebration will take place (time, date, etc.)." (One church experienced over 50 visitors as a result of this service).

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(FR-129)

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## Love's Response —

(VA-506)

A companion set of three teaching filmstrips are available from Nazarene Publishing House and should be used for follow-up study to accompany the new 16-mm. film *And God Gave Dominion*. These go into detail relative to financial stewardship, time, and talent. They can be used either in conjunction with the film or separately. Color. Set includes 3 filmstrips, 3 cassettes, and leader's guide. **\$28.50**.



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Part III—Our responsibility as stewards to our “beautiful and now fragile” earth and to those who inhabit it. 40 frames.

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**Mr. Bob Rimington**  
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Mr. Rimington serves as Canada West district treasurer and college trustee. He has also served as minister of adults and administration of a local church.



**Dr. E. E. Zachary**  
Representative

Dr. Zachary has served as a pastor and for 32 years as district superintendent, including pioneer work in Australia.



**Dr. O. J. Finch**  
Representative

Dr. Finch has served the church as pastor, evangelist, district superintendent, college president, and General Board member.



**Rev. Carl J. Swanson**  
Representative

The business world and service are a part of Rev. Swanson's life. He has been an advertising manager, college development officer, and pastor.



**Mr. Harlan Heinmiller**  
Representative

Former General Motors executive, district young peoples' president, and General Board member, Mr. Heinmiller is now office manager of Life Income Gifts and Bequests.



**Mr. Clyde E. Ammons**  
Representative

For 43 years Dr. Ammon pastored in Iowa and Texas. He has served as short-term missionary, college trustee, and General Board member.



**Rev. Henry E. Heckert**  
Representative

Rev. Heckert has served as a pastor and counselor in the area of estate planning for Eastern Nazarene College.



**Mr. Arthur A. Croy**  
Representative

Mr. Croy has been a Nazarene layman for 35 years. He was circulation manager at the Nazarene Publishing House and has been a real estate developer in recent years.

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## RACE and DISCRIMINATION



1976 "Manual," Paragraph 904.3

**W**E, THE MEMBERS of the Seventeenth General Assembly of the Church of the Nazarene, wish to reiterate our historic stand of Christian compassion for men of all races. We believe that God is the Creator of all men, and that of one blood are all men created.

We believe that each individual, regardless of race, color, or creed, should have equality before law, including the right to vote, equal access to educational opportunities, and to all public facilities, and to the equal opportunity, according to one's ability, to earn a living free from any job or economic discrimination.

We urge our churches everywhere to continue and strengthen programs of education to promote racial understanding and harmony. We also feel that the scriptural admonition, "Follow peace with all men" (Hebrews 12:14), should guide the actions of our people. We urge that each member of the Church of the Nazarene humbly examine his personal attitudes and actions toward other races, as a first step in achieving the Christian goal of full participation by all in the life of the church and the entire community.

We reemphasize our belief that holiness of heart and life is the basis for right living. We believe that complete understanding between racial groups will come when the hearts of men have been changed by complete submission to Jesus Christ, and that the essence of true Christianity consists in loving God with one's heart, soul, mind, and strength, and one's neighbor as oneself.

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## \* CRADLE ROLL SUNDAY

STEWARDSHIP



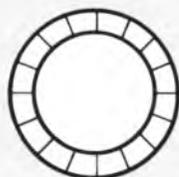
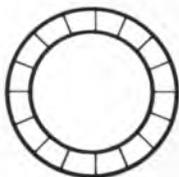


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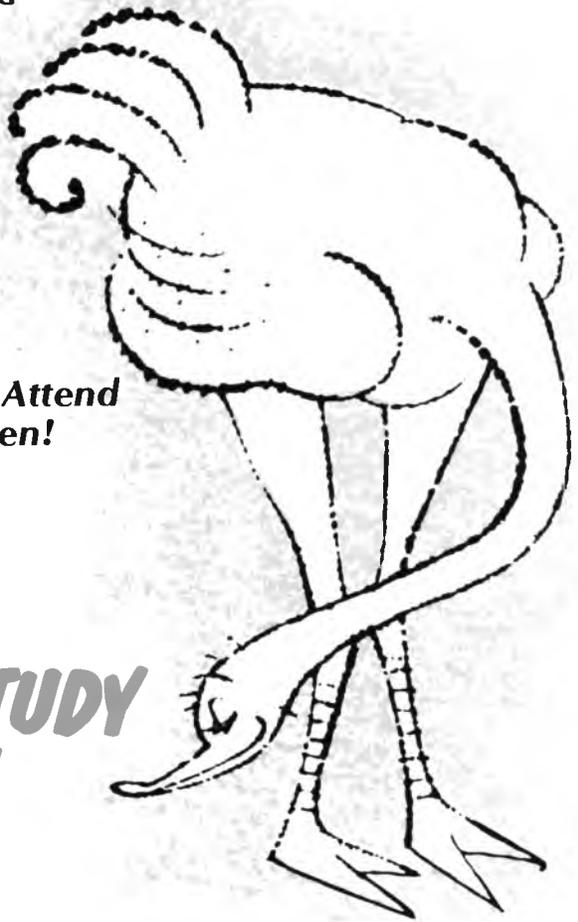
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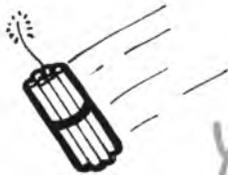


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If you would like more information about the Nazarene Supplemental Retirement Program, or if you know of another myth that could use a little TNT (*Truth, Not Tale*), please write to us:

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<small>New Enrolled in the Department</small>	<small>Teacher Pupils</small>	<small>Number of Teachers Recommended</small>	<small>Number of Teachers You Have Now</small>	<small>Number of Teachers You Need to Add</small>
	1-7	Nurs. Crib and 1 Yr. Old		
	1-8	Nurs. 2 and 3 Years		
	1-9	Kind. 4 and 5 Years		
	1-12	Primary Grades 1-2		
	1-12	Middler Grades 3-4		
	1-14	Junior Grades 5-6		
	1-17	Jr. Hi Grades 7-9		
	1-22	Sr. Hi Grades 10-12		
	1-30	Single Y.P. Ages 18-23		
	1-36	Adults		
		Total		

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# THE PREACHER'S WIFE



## **The Pastor's Wife—On Reading**

By Betty B. Robertson\*

**T**HERE ARE LADIES in your congregation that no one will be able to reach except you—the pastor's wife. I have found this true in my own life. There are women in our church who are hurting and burdened with problems. They need someone to care about them and their deepest concerns.

By no means do I feel adequate in a "counselor" role. So I depend heavily upon the Holy Spirit's guidance and direction. He gives wisdom when I lack it, furnishes answers when I see no solution, guides into areas of discussion that are needed.

Besides total reliance upon the Holy Spirit, I spend much time reading the Bible and also saturating my mind with other people's ideas, experiences, and thoughts. In so doing I find answers and directions in which my own background and experiences are toally lacking.

When I enter a Christian bookstore, I ask God to lead me to those books which I need to read—either for my own spiritual growth or to prepare me for the needs of someone else. Inevitably my attention will be drawn to certain sections and specific titles, only to find later that because

I filled my mind with that material, God was able to use me to minister.

I was able to give the book *Me, Obey Him?* by Elizabeth Handford, to a lady whose marriage was disintegrating. God used the concepts outlined in the book to speak to her about His perfect will for her life, and gradually relationships are healing and the disharmony dissolving.

The material in *The Gift of Inner Healing*, by Ruth Stapleton, opened my mind to the possibilities of freedom available through this avenue. God has given me many opportunities to share this positive biblical principle with others. Consequently, hatred, bitterness, unforgiveness, emotional barriers, wrong attitudes have changed into openness to God, stability, release from guilt, new directions, and fresh beginnings.

The book *What Happens When Women Pray* opened new vistas in my own prayer experience. It also gave me principles for leading our weekly ladies' Bible study group into new depths of prayer and faith.

Such books as *The Art of Counseling*, by Rollo May, have enabled me to be aware of basic principles in the counseling relationship. And since a great percentage of the counseling process involves simply listening, the

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book *The Awesome Power of the Listening Ear*, by John Drakeford, has been beneficial to me.

There are many books in my personal library which I have been led to loan out for reading to others. Often God can speak to an individual in this way when all other avenues are blocked. Some of the books in this category include:

*Dare to Discipline*, James Dobson

*Hide or Seek*, James Dobson

*What Wives Wish Their Husbands Knew About Women*, James Dobson

*You Can't Begin Too Soon* (Guiding little children to God), Wesley Haystead

*His Stubborn Love*, Joyce Landorf

*I'm Out to Change My World*, Ann Kiemel

*To Live in Love*, Eileen Guder

*Dream a New Dream* (How to rebuild a broken life), Dale Galloway

*Just Across the Street* (How to be a growing Christian), Dale Oldham

*The Wider Place* (God offers freedom from that which limits our growth), Eugenia Price

*You can Win with Love*, Dale Galloway

*How to Handle Pressure*, Narramore

*For Women Only* (The fine art of being a woman), Petersen

*Speaking of Miracles*, Abigail Allen

*How to Keep the Family That Prays Together from Falling Apart*, Elva Anson

God has impressed me with a ministry of reaching out and touching the lives of those who are hurting. Many times I will be the only one who can, so I want to be adequately prepared and continually ready. One of my top priorities is reading.

## God Is Everywhere

The other night after returning home from revival services, my wife and I knelt by our bed to have our devotional and prayer time before bed. Our little daughter, already under the covers in her cot next to our bed, was watching intently. As we finished our devotions, my wife turned to her and said, "Come on, get down on your knees here and pray with us."

"But Mommy," she replied, "I thought that you could pray to God anywhere."

As we travel all across America sharing the blessing of God with many people, it seems that we have become so religiously rigid. There are only certain times, certain ways, and certain places that we can communicate with God. Or so it seems.

Yet that is the farthest thing from the truth. The Bible is full of illustrations of people talking with God in all phases of life. While on the job, walking down the road, in the courtroom, in the fields, anywhere. We, too, can and should talk with God anywhere, everywhere, all the time.

Remember you can talk with God anywhere, and you'll be blessed for it.

—RONALD S. COMBS

# Bewitched or Blessed?

By Neil E. Hightower\*

TEXT: "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?" (Gal. 3:1).

The greatest frustration of God's grace is the doctrine and practice of salvation by the law. This is true both historically, theologically, and experientially. It is true whether we are talking about Moses' law, Buddha's law, or holiness law.

All insistence on keeping of the law before you can receive God's approval and salvation substitutes performance for heart experience. It shifts the salvation spotlight from Christ to the initiate. Such legal struggle, whatever the fabric, comes out to the same end—frustration of God's gospel of salvation by faith.

Salvation by law means that Christ's death was in vain. It means that God was mistaken in His plan. It certainly suggests that at best Christ was only a noble martyr, helping to foil the plans of his religious enemies in the Jewish hierarchy, and deluded in His concept of universal sacrifice.

Yet there is a "sweet reasonableness" about legal religion. It seems so orderly, and it seems to give a great deal of weight to the ability of man to cope with his situation. Salvation by the law is such a bewitching philosophy. Many have fallen prey to its beguiling dogmas, for it makes a man feel good when he can point with pride to his blameless condition as touching the law.

The Galatian believers were on the dangerous ground of being either bewitched or blessed. And so it is in every generation of the Church. We note first in our text that here was a group of

## I. BEWITCHED BELIEVERS

These believers were bewitched by sev-

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eral factors. They were bewitched by the *pressure of tradition*.

Salvation by law has such an honorable history. It began somewhere back in intertestamental times, when the sect of Pharisaism was taking its form as a spiritually motivated civil protest. Its chief exponent in the "watershed" days of a dying Judaism and a rising Christianity was Saul of Tarsus—until Christ unseated him on the road to Damascus. Somewhere primitive Christianity was sidetracked—perhaps in the influence of stern ascetics of the second and third centuries—and gradually monastic Christianity resulted in the unbiblical teachings of the Roman church. And even holiness legalism is an ever-present danger.

These believers were likewise bewitched by the *cunning cry of Judaziers*, "You need something extra, in addition to your faith." Paul described it in verse 3: You begin with an act of faith, but perfection is reached by your own works and in the flesh. This is the old "growing into holiness" theory; you gradually increase in holiness until death finally sanctifies you. The truth is that this concept is the death of Bible holiness.

These believers were bewitched by the *claims of physical descent*. To Jesus the cry of the multitude was "We have Abraham as our father." This theme song was being sung in the Galatian church. In simple essence it claims that the pedigree of a believer is determined by his physical heredity. It crops up in Christianity in several costumes. It is the darling philosophy of those who believe in baptismal regeneration. It is the uncritical and unexamined reply of the many (even in holiness ranks) who are willing to let their parents, or a previous generation, have faith for them. It equates culture with conversion.

These believers were bewitched by the *false promise of life by the law*. The law can give "life" of a kind, but it is not eternal life. At best it is only a positional kind of standing in God's sight. It must always point to a higher life; it can only cast the shadows of types, not realities. It can provide the correct sacrifice and even the knife, but it cannot provide the grace that makes the sacrifice acceptable.

These believers were bewitched by the *fallacy of historicity*. They felt that the law of Moses, coming 430 years after the Abrahamic Covenant, superseded the promise of salvation by faith. They gladly took refuge in a system that permitted the multiplication of regulations that glorified human effort. Salvation by faith never permits a man to pray with himself, "I am glad I am not as other men," as the Scripture reveals of the Pharisee in the Temple; but salvation by law does.

These believers were bewitched by *prolonged infatuation with the school-master*. They preferred the closed system of the law to the open challenge of faith. They preferred milk instead of meat. The elementary lessons of "tutors" was much more palatable than the advanced lessons of the University of Faith (cf. Gal. 4:2).

But God never intended for His people to live the life of the bewitched, but rather to enjoy the

## II. VICTORY OF BLESSED BELIEVERS

Paul focuses first of all on believers *blessed by being children of faith*. We are not children through the will of the flesh, but by the will of God. We become children by a birth from above, a supernatural regeneration. We are made the true Israel of God, because as Paul says, "He is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter" (Rom. 2: 29).

We are *blessed with faithful Abraham*. We share in his blessing and glory because we are among his spiritual descendants.

We are *blessed because we are redeemed from the curse of the law*. Because Christ became our curse by hanging on the tree, we are freed from the curse of spiritual alienation and death. He is the ram caught in the thicket of man's sin, and willingly substituted for the deserving victim—every member of the human race.

We are *blessed because we receive the promise of the Spirit through faith*. The indwelling Spirit of Christ enables us to see our sonship and to cry to our Heavenly Father. The promise transcends physical heredity and gives us a spiritual

heredity in the Holy Spirit. He dwells with us in conversion and dwells completely in us in sanctification.

We are *blessed by the conviction of the Spirit of our sinfulness*. The law is the tool of the Spirit in this conviction. It is only when we truly see ourselves as God sees us that there is hope of rectification.

We are *blessed because we are made joint heirs with Christ* of all the promise of God. We share in His inheritance as our Elder Brother. Because He was born of a woman under the law, we are made spiritual sons through adoption into the family of God. We, as wild olive branches, are grafted into the stock of God's true Israel.

This blessed life is not accidental, nor is it the reward of God for our performance. It is, from start to finish, an act of divine grace. It requires our spiritual identification with His crucifixion. This is hard on our ego and our self-esteem. Legal religion allows us to compare ourselves with other people, and usually we can come out of the comparison saying, "I'm not as bad as the other fellow." But spiritual religion, salvation by faith through grace, insists on the only permissible comparison, that of ourselves with Jesus Christ. Invariably our cry then becomes the same as the Apostle Peter's when he saw the great power of Christ: "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord."

If we would be blessed believers, and free from the bewitching reasonableness of legal religion, then our full and complete consecration is required. Such a consecration will take the form of crucifixion, a dying to the carnal claims of the self, as Paul described it in Gal. 2:20, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

Here there is both the crisis of identification and the maintaining of the work of grace by daily surrender and dependence on Jesus. Salvation by faith is, therefore, dynamic. It traces the unfolding of faith's daily adventures with the living Word of God. Salvation by law is static. It traces the obituary of spiritual death.

The choice lies clearly before every be-

liever: Will we be bewitched or blessed believers? We can frustrate the grace of God, as Paul reminds us in Gal. 2:21.

Let us not be so foolish as having begun in the Spirit to feel that we are made perfect by glorying in the flesh. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

## THE STARTING POINT

### *Christian Life-style*

In Paul's Second Epistle to the Thesalonians, three phrases are offered which outline the Christian life-style or pattern for living.

In 2:13 (TLB),\* there is the phrase "Trust in the truth." It might be termed "stewardship of truth." Belief meets its test in trust. If love is the way of truth—and the Bible confirms this truth—the Christian is under mandate to trust the way of love.

In 3:16 (TLB), there is the phrase "Stay away from laziness." It might be called the "stewardship of time." Laziness denotes waste. And not a few times does the Bible admonish wise use of time and treasures.

In 3:13 (TLB), there is the phrase "Never be tired of doing right." Or the "stewardship of life's opportunities." The right thing, spiritually, is always the

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### **By C. Neil Strait**

Pastor, First  
Church of the Nazarene  
Lansing, Mich.

right time emotionally, mentally, physically—as E. Stanley Jones always reminded his readers.

So here are three phrases that offer guidelines for successful Christian living.

### *A Thought from the Lord's Prayer*

The Lord's Prayer is a model given to us by our Saviour. One of the exciting phrases is "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" (Matt. 6:12).

The words "Forgive us" denote boldness—boldness of confidence (that He will forgive), and boldness of confession (that we need forgiveness). Heb. 4:16 says, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

The words "as we forgive" denote *beauty*—because it is God's way, and because it is the way of healing. "As we forgive" is the secret to God's offered forgiveness. Matt. 6:14-15 spells this out for us: "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

The words "forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" suggest balance—balance between accepting and giving. We are not capable or worthy of receiving forgiveness from God until we have been givers of forgiveness to others.

### *Three Words*

Dr. Mendell Taylor, in his book *Devotional Dimensions in the Lord's Prayer* (Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1975, pp. 42-43), mentions the meanings of three words that could be a "starting point" for a sermon.

The words are: *redeem*, which means "to buy back"; *reconciliation*, "to bring back"; and *religion*, which means "to bind back."

### *Relational Preaching*

Bruce Larson, in his book *The Relational Revolution* (Word Books, 1976, p. 20), says: "Many of us head for church hoping to hear something about a God who makes sense out of no sense, a God

who cares for us in spite of everything, and who says I love you and forgive you. Instead, the sermon frequently has nothing to do with our need and rather seems to reflect the preacher's latest interest."

May our sermons always have something to do with needs and life and hope.

### *Let the Bible Speak*

James S. Stewart, the great British preacher, has this good word for preachers: "I am sure the preacher's task today is not to propound theories and opinions, certainly not to use isolated texts as pegs for his own views and arguments; it is to take this book and let it speak for itself"

(James S. Stewart, *King For Ever*, Abingdon, 1975, p. 154).

### *Something to Consider*

G. Curtis Jones, in his book *The Good Life*, gives the preacher something to think about when he writes: "Christians deserve answers to their questions concerning the meaning of life, destiny, dimensions of brotherhood, and the nature of eternal life" (Pilgrim Press, 1976, p. 61).

It is good now and then to ask ourselves how well we are doing in answering the questions of the pew.

# IN THE STUDY

## ***Seeds for Sermons***

**This month we invite you to conclude the reading of the Psalms. In April our Bible reading was the first two sections of the Psalms which concluded with Psalm 72. The last two sections are Psalms 73—150.**

*July 3*

### **MIDDLE SUNDAY—MIDDLE VERSE**

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 118

TEXT: "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man" (v. 8).

INTRODUCTION: Today is the middle Sunday of 1977, and our text is the middle verse of the Bible. This "hinge verse" of the Bible is fitting for today—our Canadian brethren look back to July 1 and Dominion Day; Americans look forward to July 4 and Independence Day. From the Rio Grande to the Yukon we pause in remembrance of great men who have

gone before us. Nevertheless, the Psalmist says it is better to trust in the Lord than man. In the Lord we find our strength, song, and salvation (v. 14).

### **I. A BETTER STRENGTH**

Psalm 118 was the favorite of Martin Luther who said: "This is the psalm that I love . . . for it has often served me well and has helped me out of grave troubles, when neither emperors, kings, wise men, clever men, nor saints could have helped me" (BBC, III, p. 385). Great words of



**by**  
**Mark E. Moore**

Pastor  
Church of the Nazarene  
Sylvania, Ohio

strength are found in vv. 5-7. Today we express confidence in our great nation. Missionary Doll, when returning to the United States after 13 months of imprisonment, said, "Sing 'My country, 'tis of thee, *sweet land of liberty*.'" We express greater confidence in the Lord.

## II. A BETTER SONG

The first 14 verses deal with a better strength, the next 6 verses with a better song, the last verses (21-29) tell of a better salvation. An atheistic white man said to a group of blacks years ago: "Look at you; you are poor, persecuted, rejected; you have nothing; and yet you sing. What do you have to sing about?" To which one replied: "We've got Jesus to sing about!" Our song is better, for we sing of one who is our Rejoicing, our Victor, our Life, our Chastener (much kinder than the devil). He is the One who opens for us the gates of righteousness (vv. 15-19).

## III. A BETTER SALVATION

Christ became the Fulfillment of the prophecy of vv. 22-23 (cf. Mark 12:10-11; 1 Pet. 2:7). Salvation built on Christ the Cornerstone is not only a better salvation—it is our only salvation. Upon this Cornerstone we build till we die. The last lines David Livingstone penned in his diary before his boys found him dead kneeling beside his bed, were: "My Jesus, my King, my Life, my All; to Thee I again dedicate myself."

**CONCLUSION:** The Psalmist concludes his circle of praise in v. 29 where he began in v. 1. Around the horns of the altar I tie afresh my cords of love (vv. 27-28).

"Oh, to grace how great a debtor / Daily I'm constrained to be! / Let that grace, now like a fetter, / Bind my yielded heart to Thee" (From "Come, Thou Fount").

July 10

## CAN GOD? GOD CAN!

**SCRIPTURE:** Psalm 78. Scripture reading: vv. 1-8.

**INTRODUCTION:** The opening sentences of this psalm are the strong statements of a man who is saying: As far as I am concerned, my children will be taught of

God. What a fitting declaration of determination for all parents this Children's Day. To this I add two words from v. 19: "Can God?"

## I. CAN GOD?

The Psalmist divides his thought into three main areas, telling how their fathers failed God by asking, Can God—(1) supply our daily bread; (2) provide daily deliverance; (3) be my daily God? Each section begins with the statement of our fathers provoking and tempting God (vv. 17f., 40f., 56f.). Jesus taught us to pray for daily bread—but they said, "Can God furnish a table?" Jesus had us pray: "Deliver us from evil," but they forgot that daily deliverance is ours through God (v. 42). Jesus taught us to pray, "Our Father," but their "Can God?" fears caused them to fail in trusting His Word and in their worship (vv. 56-58). How cleverly the tempter has used these two words to defeat God's people. "Can God?"

## II. GOD CAN!

The intent of this psalm is the declaration of determination to so build a foundation of faith for our children that they will never say, Can God? but rather, God can! God can, for God has! God has supplied our every need—food and water (vv. 25, 15). He has guided and protected (vv. 13-14). He is a God of great mercy and compassion worthy of daily adoration (vv. 38-39). Do not tempt and provoke God by your doubts. For God can!

**CONCLUSION:** I conclude with two quotes from M. Lunn on faith from his book *The Lunn Log*. "There is such a faith as meets disappointments, disaster, and disillusionments with a firm: 'Sirs, I believe God.' Such a faith adds up to a religion of reality." "Faith is positive, certain, sure. The moment doubt enters and faith wavers, there is no longer faith."

July 17

## FORGIVE ME, LORD, I FORGOT

**SCRIPTURE:** Psalm 73

**INTRODUCTION:** It is difficult to select only five psalms from the great library of those we are covering this month. This psalm

reminds me of the hymn which says, "Tell me the old, old story, for I forget so soon."

### I. I KNEW, BUT I FORGOT (vv. 1-15)

I know God is good (v. 1). This is an established fact, but I began to doubt and question. I looked at the ungodly and became envious of their prosperity (v. 3). I seemed to have more trouble than they (v. 5). They were more affluent than I (v. 7). They could flout God and still prosper (vv. 8-12). Self-pity reaches its climax (vv. 13-14) and one begins to ask, Does it pay to serve Jesus, every day, in every way? At this point Asaph's testimony is like that of a young man in my church years ago who said to another, "I'm a Christian, but if I weren't, I wouldn't be because it is too hard."

### II. I RENEWED, AND I REMEMBERED (vv. 17-22)

I renewed my church attendance (v. 17) and (inferred) my prayer life and communication with God. Asaph said, I was foolish, ignorant, a beat (v. 22). Job said, "I uttered that I understood not . . . Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent" (Job 42:3, 6). How our outlook changes when we are in touch with God!

### III. HE KNEW, HE DIDN'T FORGET (vv. 23-28)

I nearly lost my grip on God, but He kept His grip on me (v. 23). I nearly lost my way, but He was *the Way* and kept on guiding (v. 24). He knew the failing of my heart and gave me strength from His great heart of love (v. 26).

I am so glad He doesn't forget! I am like the little boy learning to walk who said, "Daddy, let me take your hand." He tripped and fell. Then he said, "Daddy, you take my hand."

CONCLUSION: If I miss heaven, I've missed everything. And if there were no heaven to gain, no hell to shun, I still desire Jesus more than anything this world can offer (v. 25).

July 24

## BLESS THE LORD

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 103

INTRODUCTION: If this is your favorite

psalm, you are not alone. John Ruskin counted it the most precious of his "brain furnishings." A Scottish martyr sang it as he stood on the scaffold of execution. David Livingstone penned the opening verses in his diary when Stanley reached him with supplies as starvation was threatening. I count it my favorite psalm personally and in my pastoral ministry.

### I. WHAT GOD WILL DO (vv. 1-8)

"Behind the praise of the psalmist is a wonderful portrayal of God. The first verse tells us that He is holy, the second that He bestows benefits upon men, the third that He forgives and heals, the fourth that He redeems and crowns, the fifth that He satisfies and renews, the sixth that He is just and executeth righteousness, the seventh that He reveals His will, the eighth that He is merciful."<sup>\*</sup> God's divine healing (v. 3): "It is first spiritual and then physical." On this verse I like to emphasize healing that is (1) preventive (cf. Exod. 15:26—"none of these diseases"), (2) redemptive (cf. James 5:16—"Confess your faults . . . pray . . . be healed"), (3) the divine touch of God.

### II. WHAT GOD WILL NOT DO (vv. 9-12)

He will not demand a purgatory to purge our sins (v. 10). He will not torment us with forgiven sins (v. 12). Yet, for all His mercy, He will not fail to be God (v. 9). The other side of mercy's coin is wrath. Let me not forget this!

### III. WHAT GOD CANNOT DO (vv. 13-19)

He cannot forget His children (v. 13). He cannot forget our human weaknesses. "God understands . . . and knowing our weakness He has patience and mercy."<sup>1</sup> He cannot change. His covenant cannot fail. His throne cannot be overthrown (vv. 17-19).

CONCLUSION: As any picture is enhanced by proper framing, so the Psalmist has set this picture of God in a frame of praise (vv. 1-2, 20-22). Your life and my life frame the picture of God that many see today. I cannot be a frame of praise and "I cannot praise God with 'all that is

<sup>\*</sup>These quotes are from my collection of old Sunday school teachers' *Journals* by (1) Dr. E. P. Ellyson and (2) Bertha Munro, written 48 years ago, June 23, 1929.

within me' so long as I harbor any sin in my heart, or any selfwill. My thoughts do not bless Him when they are filled with trash, nor my emotions when they are set on the world."<sup>2</sup>

July 31

## INTO THE WORD AND ON TO THE WORLD

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 119

INTRODUCTION: "Into the Word and on to the World" was the NYI theme of the Church of the Nazarene for one quadrennium. This theme is oft repeated in this great psalm. There are so many good verses in this psalm that we often fail to read it in its entirety. We are like the one who couldn't see the forest for the trees.

### I. I HAVE

Many times the Psalmist has stated, "I have stuck unto [clung to, glued myself to] thy testimonies" (v. 31). I have respect for Thy Word (v. 6); wholeheartedly sought Thee (v. 10); hid Thy Word in my heart (v. 11); testified of Thee (v. 13); rejoiced in Thy ways (v. 14); have great respect for God's Word (v. 15).

John Quincy Adams said, "I speak as a man of the world to men of the world; and I say to you, Search the Scriptures! The Bible is the Book of all others, to be read at all ages, and in all conditions of human life."

### II. THEY HAVE

Alas, when we go into the world, we find many are not charitable to the Bible believer. (1) Princes (vv. 23, 161) may speak against you and even persecute you without a cause. As princes would be fellow workmen for a king, your fellow workmen are not always kind to the Bible believer. (2) The proud (vv. 51, 69, 78, 85) have me in derision or hold me in contempt. They forge lies against me, deal perversely, dig pits, and tempt me to fall. (3) The wicked (vv. 61, 95, 110) have robbed me—perhaps out of an advancement I deserved or by nonpayment of a debt to me. Some go out of their way to destroy anyone who has faith in God.

### III. I HAVE

I return where I started. Into the Word—on to the world—back to the Word. The only alkali for the acid of the soul when illwill or revenge threatens is the sweetness of His Word. Notice in every instance, whether it be with a fellow workman, the proud, or the wicked, the verse of scripture did not conclude until he said, I went back to God's Word! He testifies that he kept victory in the world because he kept a delight in the Word (v. 92).

CONCLUSION: One told me that v. 165, "Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them," meant to him: Nothing shall off-end them, upset them, or cause them to fall. Surely our foundation is firm—firm in His excellent Word.

By  
**Ralph Earle**

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**Gleanings**  
from the Greek

## 2 Corinthians 7

**"Filthiness" or "Defilement"?** (7:1)

The noun *molysmos* (only here in NT) comes from the verb *molyno*, which means "to stain, soil, defile" (A-S, p. 296). So it means "defilement." Arndt and Gingrich translate and interpret the passage this way: "from all defilement of body and spirit, i.e., outwardly and inwardly" (p. 528). J. I. Packer says that it signifies "the moral and spiritual defilement that comes from embracing the pagan lifestyle" (TDNT, 1:449).

**"Perfecting"** (7:1)

The verb *epiteleo* comes from *telos*, "end." The prefix *epi* is a preposition

meaning "upon," but here probably has the intensive function—"bring fully to completion." In 8:6 it means "complete" (NASB)<sup>1</sup> or "bring to completion" (NIV).<sup>2</sup> Delling notes that one meaning of *telos* is "'completion' as a state, 'perfection'" (TDNT, 8:49). "Perfecting" seems to be the best translation here.

#### "Holiness" (7:1)

The word *hagiosyne* occurs only three times in the NT (Rom. 1:4; 2 Cor. 7:1; 1 Thess. 3:13) and its cognate *hagiotes* only once (Heb. 12:10).

But the adjective *hagios*, "holy," from which these are derived, is found 229 times. The verb *hagiazō*, "sanctify," occurs 29 times, and the noun *hagiasmos*, "sanctification," 10 times. So there is a great deal of emphasis on holiness in the NT.

In Kittel's *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* 27 pages are devoted to *hagios* and its derivatives. Procksch says that *hagiosyne* "means 'sanctification' or 'holiness' rather than sanctifying, but as a quality rather than a state" (TDNT, 1:14). It is the quality of being holy. The sanctified Christian needs to have his whole inner being and outward life so permeated by the Holy Spirit that it all becomes holy.

#### "Receive" or "Make Room"? (7:2)

No less than 18 Greek verbs in the NT are translated as "receive" in the KJV. In most cases it is either *lambano* (133 times), *dechomai* (52 times), or one of the numerous compounds of these verbs (e.g., *paralambano*, 15 times).

In contrast to these, the verb here is *choreō* (nine times in NT), which is translated "receive" only here and in Matt. 19:11. It comes from the noun *choros*, which means "place" or "space." Thayer says that here the verb means "make room for one in one's heart" (p. 674). So both the NASB and NIV have: "Make room for us in your hearts"—a very meaningful translation.

1. From the *New American Standard Bible*, copyright © The Lockman Foundation, 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971.

2. From *The New International Version*, copyright © 1973, by New York Bible Society International. Used by permission.

#### "Defraud" or "Exploited"? (7:2)

The verb *pleonekteō* is found mainly in 2 Cor. (2:11; 7:2; 12:17-18)—elsewhere only in 1 Thess. 4:6. Its basic meaning is that of taking advantage of someone (cf. NASB). The proper word for that today is "exploit" (NIV), which the *American Heritage Dictionary* defines as "1. To employ to the greatest possible advantage . . . 2. To make use of selfishly or unethically" (p. 463). "Defraud" (KJV) means "to take by fraud," which is not exactly the point here.

#### "Boldness of Speech" or "Confidence"? (7:4)

This is one word in Greek, *parresia* (see comments on 3:12). Paul is not here talking about "boldness of speech" (KJV), but "confidence" (NASB, NIV).

#### "Glorying" or "Boasting"? (7:4)

The latter (NASB) is the better translation of *kauchesis* (see on 1:12). It may be rendered "take pride" (NIV).

#### "Troubled" or "Harassed"? (7:5)

It seems to us that "troubled" is too weak a translation for *thlibō* (see comments on 4:8). "Afflicted" (NASB) is used today mostly for physical ailments. So probably "harassed" (NIV) is better.

#### "Fightings" or "Conflicts"? (7:5)

The noun *mache* (related to *machaira*, "sword") literally means "a fight." But in the NT (2 Cor. 7:5; 2 Tim. 2:23; Titus 3:9; Jas. 4:1) it is "only in plural and only of battles fought without actual weapons" (AG, p. 497). So it means "a strife, contention, quarrel" (A-S, p. 280). "Conflicts" (NASB, NIV) expresses it well.

Bauernfeind notes that as early as Homer's *Iliad* the word was used "in the general sense of conflict, for battles of words." But he adds the observation: "It is not clear whether the *machai* to which Paul was exposed in 2 Cor. 7:5 embraced physical threats" (TDNT, 4:527-28).

#### "Earnest Desire" or "Longing"? (7:7)

For *epithesis* all the standard lexicons give "longing." In the NT it occurs only here and in v. 11, where it is rendered "vehement desire."

Schoenweiss observes: "When Paul

speaks of desire and longing in a good sense, he uses *epipotheo* . . . *epipothesis* . . . and *epipothia*”—the last found only in Rom. 15:23. He adds: “This word-group is used 13 times in the NT, 11 of them being in the Pauline writings and always in a good sense” (TDNT, 1:458). Paul was a man of strong feelings and he uses strong terms.

#### “Fervent Mind” or “Zeal”? (7:7)

In keeping with our last remark is the fact that the Greek word here, *zelos*, is used more frequently (five times) in 2 Corinthians than in any other book of the NT. In this Epistle the apostle is expressing strong emotions, more than in any other of his letters.

Our word “zeal” comes from this word, and it is translated that way most often (six times) in the KJV. But it is also translated “envying” five times and “envy” once. Only here is it rendered “fervent mind.” In 2 Corinthians it carries a good sense always except in 12:20 (“envyings”). In 11:2 it is translated “jealousy,” but in a good sense.

#### “Repent” or “Regret”? (7:8)

The more common Greek verb in the NT (34 times) is *metanoeo*, which is always translated “repent” in the KJV. The word here (twice) is *metamelomai* (six times), also rendered “repent” always. Each of these two words, interestingly, occurs in only one passage in Paul’s Epistles (*metanoeo* in 12:21). Aside from that, *metanoeo* is found exclusively in the Synoptic Gospels, Acts, and Revelation. However, the noun *metanoia*, “repentance,” occurs four times in Paul (see comments on Rom. 2:4). It is found here in vv. 9 and 10.

After emphasizing the fact that the two verbs seem to be used somewhat interchangeably in Greek literature, Thayer concludes: “But that *metanoeo* is the fuller and nobler term, expressive of moral actions and issues, is indicated not only by its derivation, but by the greater frequency of its use, by the fact that it is often employed in the imperative (*metamelomai* never), and by its construction with *apo,ek*” (p. 405). He also notes that *metamelomai* properly means “it is a care to one afterwards,” whereas *metanoeo* means “change one’s mind.”

Trench, in his *Synonyms*, says that in both sacred and secular writers there is “a very distinct preference for *metanoia* as the expression of the nobler repentance.” He adds: “He who has *changed his mind* about the past is in the way to change everything; he who has an *after care* may have little or nothing more than a selfish dread of the consequences of what he has done” (pp. 260-61).

Michel has an excellent treatment of the words in their context in this passage. He writes: “In 2 C. 7:8-10 there is again a plain distinction between *metamel-esthai* and *metanoein*. Paul is not sorry that he sent a severe letter (*ou metamelomai*, 7:8). Even if it caused pain, this was according to God’s will. . . . it is now clear to him that the pain was necessary to bring the Corinthians to a change of heart (. . . *eis metanoian*, 7:9). Suffering which corresponds to God’s will brings about a change of heart which is to salvation and which will not be rued [. . . *metanoia, ametameletos*, 7:10]” (TDNT, 4:628-29).

The adjective *ametameletos* (only v. 10 and Rom. 11:29) is properly translated “without regret” (NASB). And of course the verb *metamelomai* in v. 8 should be rendered “regret” (NASB, NIV).

#### “Carefulness” or “Earnestness”? (7:11)

*Spoude* literally means “haste” (as in Mark 6:25; Luke 1:39). Then it came to mean “eagerness, earnestness” (AG, p. 771). The last is the best translation (NASB, NIV). The same goes for “care” in v. 12.

#### “Clear” or “Innocent”? (7:11)

The adjective *hagnos* literally means “pure,” as in 11:2. But for this passage Arndt and Gingrich suggest “innocent,” (p. 11), as does Hauch (TDNT, 1:122). That fits very well (NASB, NIV).

#### “Have Confidence” (7:16)

The verb *tharreo* is almost confined to 2 Cor. in the NT (5:6, 8; 7:16; 10:1-2). Elsewhere it is found only in Heb. 13:6. Its heavy use in 2 Cor. reflects the fact that Paul was overjoyed that his confidence in the Corinthian Christians had been restored.



## Resisting the Almighty

SCRIPTURE: Ezekiel 38

TEXT: "I am against thee" (v. 3)

INTRODUCTION:

A. Resistance does not always mean a physical power of strength—one against another.

B. Resistance is not always represented by a blunt voice of objection saying no.

C. Resistance can be *failure to respond* to the quiet leadings and impressions given man's heart by God through His Holy Spirit.

I. RESISTANCE AGAINST THE LORD BRINGS DEEPEST SORROW—"Thou shalt come into the land that . . . have always been waste" (v. 8).

A. To resist God means wasted goals of life.

B. To resist God means dissipated energy.

C. To resist God's will for your life brings deepest human sorrows.

II. RESISTANCE AGAINST THE LORD DARKENS THE UNDERSTANDING—"When my people . . . dwelleth safely, shalt thou not know it?" (v. 14).

A. Even man's perception of truth is determined by obedience to Almighty God. "Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled" (Titus 1:15).

B. Satan gives a mind complete imbalance of life's realities. "For some are already turned aside after Satan" (1 Tim. 5:15).

C. Man is bound by ropes of misunderstanding truth when he serves sin. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

III. RESISTANCE AGAINST THE LORD MAKES

ONE TREMBLE IN HIS PRESENCE—"Men . . . shall shake at my presence" (v. 20)

Resistance to God brings:

A. Fear of His judgment

B. Fear of His punishment

C. Fear of eternal destiny

IV. RESISTANCE AGAINST THE LORD BRINGS CERTAIN DEFEAT—"Thus saith the Lord . . . I will turn thee back" (38:2).

A. In resisting God we lose ability to go against the enemy of sin. "I will smite thy bow out of thy left hand, and will cause thine arrows to fall out of thy right hand" (39:3).

B. In resisting, we lose our strength to stand. "Thou shalt fall upon the open field: for I have spoken it" (39:5).

C. We are completely destroyed. "I will give thee unto the ravenous birds of every sort, and to the beasts of the field to be devoured" (39:4).

V. RESISTANCE AGAINST THE LORD PROVES HIS SUPREME POWER—"Thus will I magnify myself . . . and they shall know that I am the Lord" (38:23).

A. God's supreme court of justice is final for man's soul. "I will send fire . . . among them that dwell carelessly" (39:6).

B. All men shall know that He is the Almighty God. "The heathen shall know that I am the Lord" (39:7).

C. Men everywhere shall acknowledge and reverence the "Holy One of Israel." "That at the name of Jesus *every* knee should bow . . . and that *every* tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord" (Phil. 2:10-11).

CONCLUSION: If we *respond in obedience* to the call of Almighty God, rather than resist His call—

A. We may be assured that "God is our refuge" (Deut. 33:27).

B. We may know that we are "workers *together* with God" (2 Cor. 6:1).

C. We are assured that "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31).

—J. WALTER HALL, JR.

\* \* \*

Whatever in the church merely feeds the fancy and does not feed the faith is dead wrong.

## God Controls Inflation

By Carl L. Soliday

SCRIPTURE: 2 Kings 6:25; 7:1-2, 16-18

TEXT: "Thus saith the Lord, To morrow about this time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria" (7:1).

INTRODUCTION: Inflation is a fast-growing concern of all people today. It is no new problem to the human race, however. In our scripture, we see the people of Samaria with a real inflation problem. Our text declares to us that *God controls inflation*. As we look at the story, we see inflation and what God did about it.

### I. INFLATION AT ITS WORST

- A. Caused by war
- B. Seen in food shortages
- C. Seen in food prices

### II. INFLATION UNCONTROLLABLE BY MAN

- A. Men seek help from leaders
- B. Leaders admit no answer

### III. INFLATION PERMITTED BY GOD

- A. Could have stopped inflation from happening
- B. Permitted it to bring people to repentance
- C. Permitted it to cause people to trust Him

### IV. INFLATION CONTROLLED BY GOD

- A. Help promised in God's time
- B. Inflation under control in God's time

CONCLUSION: Inflation could be an increasing problem in the future. But our God controls inflation.

\* \* \*

## God's Plan Even in Inflation

SCRIPTURE: Mal. 3:8-12

TEXT: "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse . . ." (Mal. 3:10).

INTRODUCTION: Inflation is here—and probably to stay awhile. Even with inflation, God has a plan for His people. Our scripture outlines *God's plan even in inflation*.

### I. STOP ROBBING GOD, EVEN IN INFLATION (vv. 7-9)

- A. People accused of rejecting God's ordinances
- B. People accused of robbing God
- C. People cursed because of robbing God

### II. ACCEPT GOD'S CHALLENGE EVEN IN INFLATION (v. 10)

- A. Bring all the tithes to God's house
- B. Provide for the church's material needs

### III. ENJOY GOD'S PROMISES EVEN IN INFLATION (vv. 10-12)

CONCLUSION: Inflation is here, but God has a plan for His people even in inflation. That plan: "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse."

\* \* \*

## Jesus' Answer to Inflation

SCRIPTURE: Matt. 6:25-34

TEXT: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33).

INTRODUCTION: Inflation is one of our major problems. Men everywhere are seeking for an answer. Our scripture gives us *Jesus' answer to inflation*.

### I. STOP WORRYING ABOUT IT (vv. 25, 31, 34)

- A. Inflation brings on worry
- B. Worry does not stop inflation

### II. PUT GOD FIRST IN YOUR LIFE (v. 33)

- A. Inflation no problem if God is first
- B. Inflation no problem if God continues to be first

### III. GOD WILL PROVIDE (vv. 26-30)

- A. Provides food for the birds
- B. Provides clothes for the grass and flowers
- C. Will provide for His children

CONCLUSION: Jesus' answer to inflation can be your personal answer. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."



### The Dollar I Gave to God

Three thousand for my brand-new car,  
 Five thousand for a piece of sod,  
 Ten thousand down to start a house—  
 A dollar I gave to God.  
 A tidy sum to entertain  
 My friends in pointless chatter,  
 And when the world goes crazy mad,  
 I ask, "Lord, what's the matter?"  
 Yet there is one big question;  
 For the answer I still search;  
 With things so bad in this old world,  
 What's holding back the church?

—Selected

### It's Right and Wrong

A young man came for an interview  
 with a bank president.

"Tell me, sir, how did you become so  
 successful?"

"Two words."

"And what are they, sir?"

"Right decisions."

"How do you make right decisions?"

"One word . . . experience."

"And how do you get experience?"

"Two words."

"And what are they?"

"Wrong decisions!"

—Biblical Recorder

### TRUE EVANGELISM—

. . . Insists that the freedom of personal  
 decision be respected.

. . . Insists that the decision be for Jesus  
 Christ himself.

. . . Does not change the gospel into law  
 for the purpose of pressuring decisions.

. . . Exalts the church in its proper rela-  
 tionship with Christ.

. . . Expresses itself by its deeds and  
 inner life as well as by its words.

. . . Does not resort to coercion and  
 threatening in order to obtain results.

. . . Finds its best expression when it  
 develops as the natural witness and re-  
 sponse of the Christian disciple.

\* \* \*

A vacation is a succession of 2s: It  
 consists of 2 weeks, which are 2 short.  
 Afterwards you are 2 tired 2 return 2  
 work, and 2 broke not 2. Therefore,  
 pay the 2 weeks' tithe before you leave  
 —for the Lord's work must go on 2.

\* \* \*

A family altar would alter many a  
 family.

\* \* \*

Lighthouses don't ring bells and fire  
 off guns to call attention to their light  
 —they just SHINE.

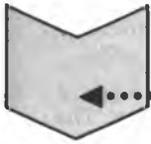
\* \* \*

One thing we can't recycle is wasted  
 time.

Ever notice the change a few decades have made  
 In the awe people hold for their nation;  
 How along with the church, public servants have lost  
 Every whit of their people's ovation?

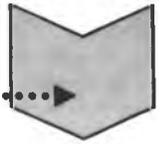
Well, we servants, as well as too much of the church,  
 Are no longer obsessed by the Spirit;  
 Though we claim we're His servants and live in His will,  
 There's but few of us ever get near it.

—Roy E. McCaleb



# HERE AND THERE

## AMONG BOOKS



Conducted by the Editor

All books reviewed may be ordered from  
your Publishing House

### **The Exciting Church, Where They Give Their Money Away**

*By Charlie W. Shedd (Word Books, 1975.  
87 pp., \$3.95.)*

An intriguing case history of a small church who in seven years changed its stance from receiving to giving. Written popularly. A fine little study for both ministry and laity.

OSCAR REED

### **Discovering an Evangelical Heritage**

*By Donald Dayton (Harper & Row, 1976.  
141 pages, \$8.95.)*

This book is a well-researched presentation of the evangelical roots of the 19th-century reform movements of abolitionism, feminism, and social welfare. It raises some hard questions concerning how evangelical denominations and movements can maintain a somewhat aloof position toward social issues when many of them were initially founded as a result of early reformatory action. In a chapter analyzing "Whatever Happened?" to the early attitudes of deep social concern, the author makes this observation: "Discipline and a reordered life-style enable converts to rise in social class and economic level, a process culminating in a middle-class like those against which the movement originally protested. This new church is subtly transformed into a bastion against those

who would threaten its life, especially the lower classes that were once a source of vitality" (p. 123).

Somewhat biographical in nature, the book reviews in separate chapters the influence of individuals directly involved in the beginning days of formulating evangelical traditions and shows their primary concern for social issues.

The book is especially important reading for the holiness movement that finds its roots late in the 19th century. Dayton devotes an entire chapter to showing how the issue of slavery influenced the beginning of the Wesleyan Methodist Connection. Of them he writes: Surely "one of the few churches in Christian history to be founded squarely on a social issue" (p. 73).

The implied question to members of the evangelical family is: Have we been true to our founding traditions, or have we diverted attention to other emphases? Dayton concludes that in Evangelicalism there is "a growing emphasis on 'right doctrine' as the measure of acceptability and a consequent shift away from religious experience and behavior norms" (p. 133).

As the book is read, it should be kept in mind that its scope does not allow for the examining of other aspects of "evangelical heritage" that also played significant roles in the establishing of new denominations and movements. This limitation often gives the impression that our author has stacked the evidence

greatly in the attempt to support the message of his conclusion.

This book will give thoughtful pastors and church leaders a wider perspective.  
DON W. DUNNINGTON

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## Preachers' Exchange



WANTED: For a seminary library in Sao Paulo, Brazil: *Fletcher's Checks to Antinomianism*, abridged by Peter Wiseman. Contact Dr. Dorothea Wolcott, St. Paul's School of Theology, Independence, Mo. 64057.

WANTED: Vols. I and XIII of the 13-vol. edition of *Handfuls on Purpose*. Paul W. Overholt, Box 35, Knowles, Okla. 73847.

WANTED: *John Wesley: The Burning Heart*, by A. Skevington Wood; *The Word and the Doctrine*, Kenneth Geiger,

ed.; *The More Excellent Way*, George Allen Turner. Gary Skagerberg, 213 E. Orcas, Port Angeles, Wash. 98362.

WANTED TO BUY: *Flame of Living Fire*, by Clarence True Wilson; *The Doctrine of Christian Perfection*, by George Peck; *Holiness Pulpit*, Vol. I. S. Ellsworth Nothstine, P.O. Box 100, Lowndesville, S.C. 29659.

FOR SALE: Hand painted on canvas the Tabernacle in the wilderness and furniture, never used, 4 x 12 ft., \$55.00. S. Ellsworth Nothstine (address above).

FOR SALE: 14-vol. set of *Works of John Wesley*, like new. Also many old out-of-print books. Send for list. Edwin Simmons, 13535 W. Beloit Rd., New Berlin, Wis. 53151.

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**COMING**  
next month

● **Whatever Happened to Church Music?**

The wave of interest in the new "mod" style of religious music is examined.

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Understanding his role, whether it be priest or prophet, is important for the pastor.

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A psychologist looks at faith as it is practiced by the Christian, and he likes what he sees.

● **Wesley's Address to the Clergy**

"What manner of men ought we to be?" is answered, and other matters treated, in this piece of Wesleyana.



## AMONG OURSELVES

Christians are to be congratulated for their renewal of efforts to strengthen and preserve the family. Easy divorces, a laxity in moral principles, and the so-called sexual revolution of recent years have all but ruined the home as an institution in our society. So it is that one denomination has expressed in its quadrennial world conference its concerns and outlined a plan of action to meet the crisis. So it is that psychologists like Dr. James Dobson and others are conducting Family Forums which attract large audiences and elicit positive reactions. And so it is that theologians like Dr. C. S. Cowles are looking at the problem from within their professional framework. Dr. Cowles, by the way, has a book soon to be published, under the title *The Festive Family*. His article in this issue is one of the most vital you will read (p. 3). Pastor's wife Betty Robertson thinks reading plays an important part in the wife's career and would, I am sure, recommend this kind of reading for everyone (p. 17). Perhaps as a result of our reading, we will take whatever action possible and stem the tide of opposition that threatens marriages and homes.

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