

THE preacher's magazine

JULY—
AUGUST '78

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PREACHING CHRISTIAN HOLINESS

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If we are suffering from a deficiency in the quantity of holiness preaching throughout our church, there must be some reasons for it other than disloyalty

I Neglected Preaching on Holiness



By Larry Lewis*

AT THE RISK of unfavorably characterizing myself, I volunteer to share a personal insight that may relate to other preachers of my generation—and those younger—in a helpful way.

We have been urged by our leadership during the last two quadrennia to give greater attention to the preaching of the holiness doctrine, experience, and life-style. I have heard occasionally the lament of older generations of laymen that holiness preaching was fading from the pulpit ministry of our church. One of the fine laymen here in Kent commented to me how the “old timers” preached holiness constantly. A light suddenly went on for me mentally as I talked with him.

Though I had not intended to neglect the holiness theme, I think, in all honesty, I actually did neglect it. In the back of my mind was the question, Why is it such an urgent matter? I had no problem believing in it, but there seemed to be so much to preach about, and I had to get it all in.

We are not a very old church. We have a crucial lesson to learn. Not very many churches have mastered it. Maybe none. We are having to learn the art of going from generation to generation while continuing to do the thing first begun.

I am 35 years of age. I belong to a generation which just missed personal contact and acquaintance with some of the personalities who were so significant in formative “adolescent” years of our church. Although I am familiar with their names, I never saw or heard Bud Robinson, J. B. Chapman, R. T. Williams, and other well-known preachers

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evangelists, and church leaders of earlier years. I did grow up in the church they built. Great men whom I love and admire brought to me and to my generation the spirit and vision from those earlier generations. Still I am only remotely in touch with the pioneer era of our church.

Because of the strength and courage of those earlier leaders, and because of the strength and vision of my parents' generation, I grew up in a church in which the pioneering has already been done. Our existence is not threatened. We are not "fighting" for our doctrinal identity. It is established. No longer are we the subject of scorn or ridicule. This is both good and dangerous. It is good that we are strong and secure. It is dangerous if we fail to understand ourselves.

In the church in which I was raised, holiness was normalcy. It was the doctrinal air we breathed. It was the content of the pulpit ministry. Whether all the holiness preaching was accurate and completely free from distortion is beside the point. Whether it was perfectly balanced is irrelevant. It was normal. And none of us feels particularly alarmed about what is normal. Normalcy is not urgent—it's normal. The tendency, therefore, is to miss the urgency of the holiness message because of the complete normalcy of it in our spiritual movement and environment.

I had failed to realize that for normalcy to be maintained, it must be made the prominent factor. Holiness was normal because my father, our fathers, their fathers had made it normal. They made it normal because it is normal in the Bible. It is the doctrinal "bond of perfectness" in which all doctrinal elements exist and hold their perspective.

Unless normalcy is analyzed it is deceptive. It appears that it needs no attention. No individual monitors his normal body temperature as long as it is normal. Only in departure from normalcy does it become urgent. But some system within the body holds normalcy to be urgent and maintains it. When that which is normal becomes exceptional, a state of ill health exists. That the holiness doctrine is contained in our articles of faith does not necessarily make it normal, for our preaching defines the areas of thought in which the minds of our people dwell.

Whether I am a link, hinge, or whatever, at the point my generation "hooks on" mentally, conceptually, and spiritually, change becomes possible whether by purpose or neglect. Such considerations make that which had seemed so normal to become urgent. If holiness is to be normal in my ministry, it will be because it is the nourishment and air of my thought systems and concepts. I must hold it to be a priority. I cannot afford to leave it to a yearly or seasonal series. An annual holiness convention will not do the job. If it is occasional in my preaching, it will be occasional in the living and experience of my people. It must, therefore, be foundational to all my ministry and the frequent theme of my preaching. Its terminology must frequent my speech. It must be in my sermons both by topic and inference. Anything less is unfaithfulness in ministry.

That which is not normal, people do not seek in spiritual experience. So let us preserve the holy normalcy of our great church brought to us by our fathers. The holiness message is positive, aggressive, liberating, unifying, and attractive.



CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGICAL ISSUES

C. S. COWLES, Professor, Northwest Nazarene College

Grotesque or Gracious God?

I LISTENED TRANSFIXED—along with 2,000 others—to a most remarkable woman. Paralyzed from her neck down in a diving accident during her senior year in high school, her testimony was utterly captivating. In spite of her handicap, she had developed into a bestselling author, a vivacious speaker, and an accomplished artist who holds pen and brush between her teeth.

In that her understanding of the problem of human suffering represents a concept of God widely held in evangelical circles, I feel the importance of examining it. Said she:

I thank God daily for causing my accident. Through it God has cleansed me of my sins and delivered me from my own self-centeredness. God knew that this was the only way He could grow in me the spirit of Christ. I have come to believe that we are perfected through suffering.

"I have learned to praise God," she continued, "not only *in* everything but *for* everything!" Her secret of "rejoicing always" is found in Paul's admonition, "in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you [i.e., the accident which caused the paralysis] in Christ Jesus" (1 Thess. 5:18, NASB*). Her radiant countenance gave eloquent testimony to the peace and sense of purpose

wrought in her by such an understanding of God. It gave to her a positive and constructive means of dealing with her misfortune.

In fairness to the great host of devout Christians who hold this concept of divine providence, we must admit that such a position has much to commend it.

The sovereignty of God is praised when everything is attributed to His causative will. This is the foundation stone of John Calvin's doctrine of absolute divine determinism which asserts that "all events are governed by God's secret plan" (*Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Bk. I, Ch. 16, Pt. 2). To accept all things as the handiwork of God's irresistible will—regardless of how we may look upon such events at the time—is to render obeisance and honor to His sovereign greatness.

It is comforting to attribute all things to God. As Calvin noted, "In times of adversity believers comfort themselves with the solace that they suffer nothing except by God's ordinance and command, for they are under his hand" (*Ibid.*, Pt. 3). When our world is falling apart, it is preferable to see in it God's secret plan than to see ourselves tossed about by blind chance.

Alexander Solzhenitsyn offers helpful insight regarding the appeal that a deterministic philosophy holds for the human mind. In describing how Soviet slave labor camp prisoners learn to cope with their hopeless situation, he says:

The most prevalent world outlook among them is *fatalism*. . . . It is to be explained by their dependent situation, their total lack of knowledge of what will happen to them even in the most immediate future, and their actual inability to influence events. Fatalism is even necessary to the zek because it confirms him in his spiritual stability . . . the most tranquil course is to put his faith in fate. . . . Maybe it will be for the better, maybe for the worse, but you are free of self-reproaches; let it be worse for you, but it wasn't done by your own hands (*Gulag Archipelago*, II, p. 522).

There is a fate more untenable than being caught up in an irresistible floodtide of adverse circumstances—and that is to live with regrets because of having to assume responsibility for one's situation.

Man cannot endure a chaotic existence indefinitely. He must find a coherence, a logic, a meaning in his existence. Recognizing this, Calvin asserts, "Without certainty about God's providence life would be unbearable" (*Ibid.*, Pt. 10). He adds: "His solace . . . is to know that his Heavenly Father so . . . rules by his authority and will, so governs by his wisdom, that nothing can befall except he determine it" (*Ibid.*, Pt. 11).

Attributing all things to the direct and determinative sovereignty of God appears to bring order out of chaos, beauty from ashes, and sees good in evil. And it has the practical effect of giving believers an opportunity to praise God *in* and *for* all things, without struggling with the burden of questioning and doubt. It is not surprising then that multi-

tudes gladly embrace divine determinism.

There is much that is praise-worthy in a doctrine of absolute predestination. And there is much that is abhorrent as well. For instance, such a position destroys human freedom. Free will is an illusion. Life is a charade. The possibility of a responsible human existence is destroyed.

If we are perfected through suffering, then Christ's atonement is insufficient for sin. If God must resort to strong-arm tactics in order to effect our obedience, then we must conclude that the strategy of suffering love demonstrated in Christ's sacrificial death was a failure.

The most damning consequence of irresistible determinism is that it unavoidably distorts and corrupts our understanding of God. If God causes all things, then He is responsible for sin, Satan, and death. As Job confessed, "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord" (1:21). Not only is God the giver of life, but the executor of death as well. God and Satan are one.

If that conclusion is unacceptable, the alternative possibility is equally untenable. If we assume that God is holy, just, and good, then—under the doctrine of divine providence—we must assume that all things are in fact holy, just, and good. The presence of evil, sin, and death in the world are mere illusions. At best, they are to be regarded as alternative aspects of the one good.

Either way, we are left with a grotesque concept of God! What kind of a God is it that not only allows the wicked to prosper and the righteous to suffer, but determines the same? What kind of a God is it who afflicts His children with all manner of pain, suffering, and death for their good and His glory? If that is what

God is like, then we will have to readjust our negative judgment about Hitler, Stalin, and all of the other repugnant people that have polluted human history. Perhaps Pope Innocent III was right when he ordered his armies to exterminate all Cathari Christians in southern France during the thirteenth century. Said he, "Kill them all! God will know those that are His."

Victor Frankl relates his story of the "first selection" that occurred upon disembarking from the prisoner transport at Auschwitz. A tall SS officer stood in front of the prisoners as they slowly filed by. Frankl describes it in this way:

His right hand was lifted, and with the forefinger of that hand he pointed very leisurely to the right or to the left. None of us had the slightest idea of the sinister meaning behind that little movement of a man's finger, pointing now to the right and now to the left, but far more frequently to the left. (*Man's Search for Meaning*, p. 10).

Very quickly they learned the meaning in the finger. When it pointed to the left, the victim proceeded straight through the gates into the gas chamber and crematorium. Those directed to the right earned a temporary reprieve in that they would be utilized as slave labor.

To imagine that human destiny is irrevocably determined by a flick of the finger of God—some to everlasting life, and some to eternal damnation—is unthinkable. But such is the unavoidable conclusion of a deterministic concept of God.

The bottom line of such a monstrous concept of God is this: *God is no longer the deliverer, but the one from whom we need to be delivered!*

The God revealed to us fully and finally in Jesus is quite different—yes, radically different. Of Him John bore witness, "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we

beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, *full of grace and truth*" (1:14).

The God of the New Testament is the kind of father who could have a son like Jesus! And Jesus is the kind of person who would rather die than damn—and did. If we believe with Paul that Jesus is "the image of the invisible God" in whom "all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form" (Col. 1:15; 2:9), then it is impossible to see the God refracted through the person of Jesus as being responsible for sin, suffering, or death in any sense whatsoever.

The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is not one who afflicts mankind with death or any of its ghastly antecedents. Rather, He is the God who raises the dead!

Let us be crystal clear about this: sin and death were never part of God's creative plan. God is "not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9). Paul is straightforward about the causative factor in death: "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 6:23). Paul places responsibility for sin and death where it belongs: "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned" (Rom. 5:12). And again, "Through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men . . . that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 5:18, 21). Sin and death have no place in the intention of God, but are the consequences of man's free will misused.

James adds this affirmative word: "Let no one say when he is tempted, I am being tempted by God; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He

Himself does not tempt [test] any one. . . . Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, or shifting shadow" (1:13, 17).

The good news of the gospel is that God is greater than all our sin, suffering, and death. He is the one who saves us from our sin with its inevitable consequences of death, and raises us up to newness of life.

When we see a God who is not in the least measure threatened by the existence of self-consciously free beings, who is not the least panicked by whatever evil those beings may bring down upon themselves, and who always has the last word to say—a word of grace and eternal life—then we are able to authentically praise His loving sovereign power without a shadow of a doubt!

God does not cause all things! Nevertheless, He is greater than all things. We can confidently say with

Paul, "And we know that God causes all things *to work together for good* to those who love God" (Rom. 8:28). Yes, we can even "in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you" (1 Thess. 5:18). Everything that happens to us is not God's will, but it is God's will that "*in everything*" we "give thanks." We can do this because we have the confidence that God is able to utilize every experience of life for our good and His glory. We learn to say with Paul: "But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:37-39).

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Relating Everything to God

"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31).

This is surely the science and art of holy living . . . When I take my common meal and relate it to "the glory of God," the common meal becomes a sacramental feast. When my labor is joined "unto the Lord," the sacred wedding turns my workshop into a church. When I link the country lane to the Saviour, I am walking in the Garden of Eden, and paradise is restored . . . We never see anything truly until we see it in the light of the glory of God.

—John Henry Jowett

When we say that everything that the church does is evangelism, we are close to saying that nothing the church does is evangelism

The Burden of Evangelism

By Ross W. Hayslip*

JAMES STEWART in "A Faith to Proclaim" writes, "Today as never before there is being laid upon the heart and conscience of the church the burden of evangelism."

Just what is this evangelism to which Professor Stewart refers? According to *Newsweek Magazine*, Billy Graham's evangelism is aimed at bringing his listeners to repent, to acknowledge Jesus and to be saved through a decision for Christ. The computers show that an average of 3.5 percent of those who attend each crusade makes such a decision.

At times we smugly assure ourselves that every activity of our church is evangelism. The late W. E. Sangster wisely reminds us that "when we say that everything that the church does is evangelism, we are close to saying that nothing that the church does is evangelism." If we are not careful we can spend so much time going to church that we fail to be the Church in the sinful world in which we live.

Evangelism may be diverse in method and practice, but it must be definite in its motivation and goal! It is a ministry of reconciliation. It is something that the Christian does, yet it is not his doing. It is the Holy Spirit working in and through human instrumentality.

Evangelism in a church is when the membership of the church be-

comes a fellowship of the concerned. Faith becomes a force. Form of worship becomes a recognized Presence in the midst, and the repetition of a creed becomes the reiteration of a personal witness. This is an activity that is more than organized by men. It is supplemented by the Holy Spirit.

Bishop Lesslie Newbigin has said, "It is the church that is living on the frontier that will be ready to advance in strength." The evangelistic church always lives on this frontier where its growing edge is always up against the frontier of man's desperate need of a Savior.

A pertinent fact was pointed out by E. S. Scott when he wrote, "During the great age of expansion which followed the death of Paul, we do not hear the name of a single outstanding missionary. The real work was done by countless obscure men and women who made it their first duty to spread the message in their own circle of friends and neighbors."

Note the words "who made it their first duty." This is the burden of evangelism. Despite the shudder of the modern theologian at the idea of inviting men to decide for Christ, it is still the power of man to choose as to whether he will make the surrender of himself to the call of Jesus. It is the task of the Christian today to do everything within his power to see that every man has the opportunity to make this choice.

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We need to realize the obligation
of the ministry to those parents
who have tried and failed

Concerning the Prodigal Son

IN THE STORY of the prodigal son, with which most of us are familiar, there is the younger of two brothers who takes his inheritance and spends it in riotous self-indulgence. There is the elder brother who is satisfied to remain in his father's house assuming all the responsibilities pertaining thereto. Although acceptable in his behavior, he is resentful of the forgiving welcome extended by the father to the younger son who repents and humbly returns home.

Of course the most important revelation is the forgiveness of the father. However, there are some other truths which our Lord in this parable reveals to us. For example, there is a most evident characteristic which both the prodigal son and his elder brother had in common. They were both self-centered, bent on their own life-styles independent of the father's will. The younger brother rebelled against his father's rule of the household and sought life's fulfillment

through self-indulgence. He lost! The elder brother sought fulfillment through self-righteousness which despised the mercy and grace of the forgiving father. In self-praise he refused to enter the "Welcome Home" festivity for the younger brother. He too lost!

To understand these two brothers as individuals, the recognition of their common selfish nature is important. For we cannot evaluate them in particular without evaluating them in general. Although they went in different directions, their motivating spirit was incompatible with the spirit of their father. It is the holiness of God over against the sinfulness of man. All have sinned because all are sinful in nature. Every minister of the gospel, whether he is ministering from the pulpit or in the counseling role, must appraise man in general before he seeks to identify him in the particular. This is the biblical base where all spiritual restoration begins.

There is another truth which God makes evident in this parable. It is the free will exercised by the prodigal. Although we may run the risk of making this parable applicable to more areas than was intended, there is this clear-cut case where the son throws off all positive influences of his home and goes his own way.

If there was ever a home which



by
Forrest W. Nash

Superintendent
Chicago Central District

offered all the benefits which influenced right decisions in the mind of the younger brother, this household certainly did. If there ever was a home which engendered the right kind of love, this home did. If there ever was a home of exemplary lifestyle, this home was one in a most acceptable sense. Yet with all this, the young man's will could not be penetrated. And likewise, the elder brother's reaction was in contrast to the spirit of the father. There came the heartbreaking moment when the father had to let his younger son go his own self-destructive way—the way of his own choosing. Here is a portrait of God and His human family.

From the greater arena we come to the local contemporary setting of a Christian home. There are parents who have provided their offspring with every sufficient spiritual influence, only to stand with the father of this parable and see their children travel life's road of rebellion against God and home. And when one says No to God's will, he at that moment is in the "far country." We are not implying the unimportance of the home; it is not implied in the parable. Certainly the record of family history favors the home of Christian influence. It is likewise biblical. And

there is no justification of parental neglect.

We need to realize the obligation of the ministry to those parents who with diligence have tried and failed. When we as ministers come to parents whose children have disregarded their heritage, we must with all wisdom and love seek to prevent these parents from punishing themselves and blaming themselves for failure. The human race has made a choice. All have sinned because they chose to sin. And in spite of the church and the family altar, some are still choosing this way. Let us minister to brokenhearted parents who agonize as they seek to be faithful in their loyalty to God. While preaching on the call for Christian homes, we must pour healing oil where the prodigal and the elder brother have gone their own self-sufficient ways.

It is important that we see the difference between our forgiveness and God's forgiveness. When we forgive, we do our best through divine love and strength to accept the forgiven and act as if he has done no wrong. This is our limit. But when God forgives, He transforms the forgiven. He creates the new person. What a change in the repentant prodigal! It is the beautiful portrayal of all who come to Jesus the Savior.

**Ever note how a few of us work the whole week,
And then trek to our churches on Sunday;
Like the bunch who get drunk every Friday at five,
As a means of escape until Monday.**

**Well, the Church is just that for its thousands of folk—
A retreat for escape from the pressure.
But unless it means life seven days of the week,
It's like dope, or an anti-depressor!**

Roy E. McCaleb

The church will relate to the true needs of people within its area of mission, if given a chance

Make Ministry Your Message

By Wayne M. Warner*

MAY I HELP YOU?" She smiled prettily at me and made me feel as if she really wanted to wait on me, without being the least bit flirtatious. She made my noon hour by making me feel their eating establishment really wanted my business. That set me thinking about the church and making it a more serviceable organization.

Forty years of observing the church pursue and reaffirm its biblical relationship to people through Jesus Christ convinces me that the church will relate to the true needs of people within its area of mission, if given a chance.

In order to do so, it must assess its own programs and resources in terms of its ability to meet people's needs in the name of God. It must synthesize, or integrate, those needs with the church's own resources and express them in an appropriate program of ministry or service. The following four suggestions, faithfully followed by pastor and people, will enrich the experience of being a member of the local congregation and will keep the church's ministry relevant to the people with whom it must relate.

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1. *Reaffirm the need for personal conviction.* Personalize faith in the individual and corporate ministries of the church. Biographers report that wherever the preaching of John Wesley took root, a Sunday school sprang up. If Sunday school means the difference of knowing God or living like the devil, let's act like it.

Some years ago I heard Missionary Nathan Smith pleading for prayer support from American churchmen for "a hundred million people of Japan" of whom "less than one percent . . . even called themselves Christian." He recognized an open door for the gospel but saw too little happening. Robert Schuller advocates finding out where people hurt and healing that hurt. Our service, whatever kind, ought to reflect this simple urgency.

2. *Strengthen opportunities for individual involvement.* More than once I've stood on a street corner in a large city, eagerly anticipating the approaching bus, only to have it pass me with this sign up front: "Not in service." Some church members ought to wear a sign for all to see so that both pastor and people will know that they are "not in service."

The prophet Isaiah felt real compulsion for involvement as he wrote,

"Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion" (52:1). Someone protested the speed-read merchants:

Reading is a bit like eating. Reading feeds the mind; eating feeds the body. Anyone knows what eating too fast will do. People who gulp their steak and potatoes, gobble their salad, and guzzle their desserts for a period of time will develop a real case of indigestion. Such procedure, continued for a longer time, can produce an ulcer. When the indigestion takes over or the ulcer acts up, you know what happens. The person becomes sick. Then he is a fit subject for one of those repulsive interior-function commercials. And that is his own fault!

Plan for quality involvement rather than just quantity, discipleship rather than membership. Do you allow church members with a half-dozen jobs performed like a speed-reader, while allowing others to remain "not in service"? Will they relinquish some of their jobs in order to do a better job with those they have left? Do your older church leaders continue to search for the best of contemporary training in order to train younger leaders and provide them with better handles than they started with? Can you challenge the less involved members to peel off their "not in service" signs and join the active force for "Christ's sake"?

3. *Concentrate on the importance of your investment.* In this era of energy crunch and conservation, the church must take the lead by eliminating waste wherever possible. This remains especially true in the realm of human resources. Not all prodigals live in the world outside the church. The far country of the prodigal son may well be in motive or in mind, rather than in miles. Men waste their minds as well as their bodies, and even in church a man may be an exile

from the Father's house.

Some Christians spend most of their substance "not in service"; they live en route—either to their winter vacation or to their summer cabin. Some congregations spend all their substance in "riotous living"—i.e., they spend everything on themselves. The people for whom you cannot weep when they die are those who leave more behind them than they take out of this world.

4. *Prospect all potential possibilities.* Problems arise everywhere, but for every problem there remains at least one possibility for growth. Avoid the tyranny of this grasp-all-you-can generation by using something to measure your success that has more meaning than the world's measuring stick of materialism. There must be greater emphasis upon being rich toward God, the Lord of the universe. He remains above men and different from men. He graciously enters into fellowship with His chosen people, for the redemption of the entire human race.

To accomplish this economy of stewardship, to get the most out of your investment in Christian ministry, follow the advice given by Saint Paul when he said, "Let those of us who are mature be thus minded; and if in anything you are otherwise minded, God will reveal that also to you" (Phil. 3:15, RSV).¹ Paul recognized a great principle of personal faith, a principle of sound church growth: You have yet to behold what service God will perform through your dedicated willingness to personally work for Him, especially when you make ministry your message.

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Wesleyana



Wesley on Maintaining a Catholic Spirit

By R. Larry Shelton*

IN TIMES OF THEOLOGICAL and ecclesiastical ferment, a constant danger is losing perspective of the oneness in Christ that one has with one's adversaries. Particularly relevant in the present atmosphere of theological tension within the evangelical movement is Wesley's sermon "Catholic Spirit." Here he points out that although the royal law is "love thy neighbour as thyself," and "by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another," Christians do not practice it in daily experience. Two primary hindrances lie in the way. He notes:

The two grand, general hinderances (sic) are, first, that they cannot all think alike; and consequence of this, secondly, they cannot all walk alike; but in several smaller points their practice must differ in proportion to the difference of their sentiments (John Emory, ed. "Catholic Spirit," Wesley's Sermons, Vol. I, p. 347).

Wesley points out further that although differences in opinions or modes of worship may prevent an "entire external union," yet they need not prevent a union in affection.

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"Though we cannot think alike, may we not love alike?" he says. "May we not be of one heart, though we are not of one opinion? Without all doubt we may" (*Ibid.*) In the biblical example of Jehu's greeting to Jehonadab, 2 Kings 10:15, Wesley finds support for his thesis. Jehu says, "Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart?" And Jehonadab answers, "It is. If it be, give me thine hand."

First of all, Wesley refers to Jehu's greeting, "Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart?" Even though Jehonadab apparently had a number of opinions and customs which Jehu may have considered strange (see Jer. 35:3-10), Jehu did not concern himself with these. Wesley says in reference to this:

It is very possible, that many good men now also may entertain peculiar opinions; and some of them may be as singular herein, as even Jehonadab was. And it is certain, so long as we know but *in part*, that all men will not see all things alike. It is an unavoidable consequence of the present weakness and shortness of human understanding, that several men will be of several minds in religion as well as in common life (*Ibid.*, p. 348).

Furthermore, since we all are faced

with erroneous judgments because of our humanness, he says:

Every wise man, therefore, will allow others the same liberty of thinking, which he desires they should allow him; and will no more insist on their embracing his opinions, than he would have them to insist on embracing theirs. He bears with those who differ from him, and only asks him, with whom he desires to unite in love, that single question, "Is thy heart right, as my heart is with thy heart?" (*Ibid.*).

This spirit of tolerance applies even to forms of worship. Even though Wesley believes that infants ought to be baptized and that form prayers should be used in public worship, he still loves and accepts those who disagree. And although he believes the episcopal form of church government to be scriptural and apostolical, if others have other beliefs, he accepts their convictions. He does not presume to impose his mode of worship or form of government on another.

What, then, should the Christian understand by Jehu's question? How should he apply it to his brethren? A summary list of the implications Wesley sees is as follows:

1. Is your heart right with God? Do you believe in Him and walk in His guidance?

2. Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? Does He dwell in you and you in Him? Is He formed in your heart by faith?

3. Is your faith filled with the energy of love? Has the love of God cast out your love of the world?

4. Are you zealously doing God's will?

5. Do you serve God with fear and maintain a conscience void of offence toward Him?

6. Is your heart right towards your neighbor? Do you love all mankind without exception?

7. Do you show your love by your works and do good to all men?

If so, then the Christian sees that his brother's heart is right with his own, and the result is the second part of the formula, "If it be, give me thy hand." This does not mean that agreement has been reached on all opinions and differences, but it does mean that a unity of spirit and oneness in Christ has been achieved. Thus, "if thou lovest God and all mankind," says Wesley, "give me thine hand." This means that we love each other as companions in the Kingdom and joint heirs of Christ's glory. It means that we commend each other daily to God in our prayers. It means that we provoke one another to love and good works. As Wesley says in summation:

... whatsoever love, whatsoever offices of love, whatsoever spiritual or temporal assistance, I claim from him whose heart is right, as my heart is with his; the same I am ready, by the grace of God, according to my measure, to give him . . . that I have not made this claim in behalf of myself only, but of all whose heart is right towards God and man, that we may all love one another as Christ hath loved us (*Ibid.*, p. 353).

Thus, although Wesley is wary of indifference to opinions and practices which do not reflect the spirit of Christ, he embraces all those who are fixed on Christ Jesus. His summary definition of a catholic spirit is then:

... A man of catholic spirit is one who . . . gives his hand to all whose hearts are right with his heart" one who knows how to value and praise God for, all the advantages he enjoys, with regard to the knowledge of the things of God . . . at the same times loves,—as friends, as brethren in the Lord, as members of Christ and children of God, as joint partakers now of the present kingdom of God, and fellow heirs of his eternal kingdom (*Ibid.*, p. 354).

As we face this present age with the message of Christ, we should reflect this kind of unity in the face of the differences we have in terminology, opinions, and practices.

Trucemakers, or Peacemakers—Which?

THAT MOTHER who stopped her four boys from fighting was only a trucemaker because one of them said to the others, "Let's go down to the park where we can fight in peace." Trucemakers effect temporary cessation of hostility. Peacemakers remove the basis of the hostility.

Almost anybody can function as a trucemaker. Dale Carnegie knew a great deal about it, and put his insights into a book which millions have read. It is good—trucemaking is. It shows people that the best policy is to be sociable, pleasant, aware of others. It slaps on the back, shakes the hand, musters up an agreeable word.

But only Christians can be peacemakers. Christians know that sin is at the basis of the troubles between people, and as disciples of the Prince of Peace they have a go at getting folks' hearts right with God and with each other. They obtain a cessation of hostilities not simply because it is good policy, better business, a

wiser course professionally. They know that it is out of the heart—out of a person's innermost being—that antagonisms gush forth. "Peace with God" (Rom. 5:1), "the peace of God" (Phil. 4:7), pursuing after peace (Heb. 12:14)—they see that all this figures if peace between people is to be realized.

People who make for peace in this way will be recognized as Christians, for they will be doing their go-betweening in a noticeably different way than a person who has not been transfigured by Christ.

In the seventh beatitude Jesus says that those who make for peace between people are happy persons, and that they will be referred to by their acquaintances as verily the children of God. "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God" (Matt. 5:9).

A little farther in the chapter Jesus discusses the subject further.

By guarding our tongues

He says that we Christians are to make for peace between people by guarding these tongues of ours (vv. 21-22). We are not to be "angry" with a "brother." We are not to say "Raca" to him, which would be calling him a vain person. We are not to say "Thou fool," which would be to call him an empty fellow, thereby disrespecting him. Notice that there is progression here from being angry, to calling a person vain, to calling



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him a fool. In this kind of progression Jesus makes his special point. He says that if one is merely angry, he is in a certain danger and really ought to be brought before the "judgment"—the Jewish court in a given Jewish community. He goes on to say that if a person says "Raca" to his brother he ought to be brought before the "council" meaning the Great Sanhedrin in Jerusalem, the highest Jewish tribunal. Further, He says that when a person calls his brother, in whose heart God dwells, a fool (an empty fellow), it is the kind of outburst which marks him as in danger of utter destruction in hell.

Observe what Jesus is doing here. Whereas the scribes had said a person would be brought before only a lesser local tribunal even for murder (v. 21), Jesus says that a person ought to be judged in that way if he is simply angry with his brother. No namby-pamby talk here.

The phrase "without a cause," in the King James Version—which would imply that one may be angry if there is a cause—is not in the oldest of the Greek manuscripts, and therefore does not appear in any of the other main English versions that I have checked—the *Revised*, *American Standard*, *Revised Standard*, *New English Bible*, *New American Standard*. Nor is the phrase included in such well-known translations as those of Moffatt, Weymouth, Phillips. Neither the Westcott and Hort nor the Nestle Greek texts include the phrase. Even John Wesley two centuries ago, in his translation of the New Testament, omits this phrase. In a note on it Wesley says, "Some copies add, 'without a cause'; but this is utterly foreign to the whole scope and tenor of our Lord's discourse. If He had only forbidden the being angry without a cause, there was no manner of need of that solemn declaration, 'I say unto you';

for the scribes and Pharisees themselves said as much as this." It is interesting that the Berkeley Version, the New Testament of which is a translation of only one person, and therefore not really a version, includes the phrase "without cause."

Jesus goes on to say that if a person as much as calls another "vain," he ought really to be whisked before the Great Sanhedrin. To be unkind in that way is not a light thing. If one calls another a fool, it is the judgment of eternal "hell fire" that he had better watch out for.

So Jesus is here at work spiritualizing, internalizing, intensifying God's expectations for us. He does not even mention murder, but says that one is in danger of hell fire for much less than that—for what some Christians would pass off as simply a breach in the matter of kindness.

Recently I heard Joseph Fletcher, author of the book *Situation Ethics*, which sold to the tune of over half a million, say that in the height of his notoriety over the controversial book, he received over 1300 letters—and that the most vicious attacks upon him, the most unkind ones, came from the most pious of his correspondents. Fletcher indeed gave many of us cause to oppose his teaching, but did not give any of us cause to be unkind or vicious.

By not resisting evil

Yet Jesus does not stop there. He does not say simply that we are to make for peace by not inciting trouble through being angry, or by calling another person vain or a fool. In vv. 38-42 He says that we are to make for peace between people by not resisting evil.

Referring them to the early Old Testament law of extracting an equal hurt from someone who has done badly by us—an "eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth"—He says He is

giving them a new and much more difficult way of acting. Not only should a person not get back at an enemy, he should not even resist the evil. Jesus says, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil" (vv. 38-39). Christ was soon to die and rise again and to send the Holy Spirit to indwell all who would follow Him truly. With an assist of that sort they could observe a teaching of much greater inwardness and spirituality. Besides, they were seeing, and would yet be seeing (as upon His cross) the best Man the world had known resisting not when misused, misjudged, mishandled. The Master's example would be a blazing of the trail, a going before, a proving that His heirs could also take a bit of suffering for His sake and not turn sour.

Many of my readers have found that resisting not evil works beautifully. At our house it worked well some time ago. A three-year-old girl, playing in our yard with our small children, spat angrily and plentifully in our five-year-old's face. Sitting on the steps I saw it and was indignant. I stepped to where they were, meaning to march such a rude, hateful little bit of a girl off our place for good. But by the grace of God I tried what Jesus urged. Why shouldn't I have? The little girl had no home, her parents being newly separated, and was being kept by relatives. I talked with her, walked with her around the yard a bit, then sat on the steps for a time and held her on my knees.

Next day there was a tiny tapping on our front door. I opened it to find that little girl there. She said nothing, but reached out a tiny fist to me and opened it above my hands, presenting me with a wee handful of wildflowers that were mostly individ-

ual petals. Still she said nothing even when I thanked her, and she turned and ran home, her own mission of love completed. Those petals are still in a book at our house, and the memory of them is in my mind. Resisting not evil worked even with one so small and so unpredictable.

Jesus was one to spell out His teachings in ways that make sense to us plain people, of whom the world has always had an abundance. Just what did He mean by "resist not evil"? He illustrates for us in three ways: For one thing, we are not to resist when physical suffering is involved. If a bully slaps our right cheek, we are to "turn to him the other also" (v. 39). Picture what Jesus is saying. If a right-handed person in front of one were to slap one's right cheek, it would be with the back of the hand. Jesus says that if an ill-bred, beastly fellow does that, we are to turn to him the left cheek in case he wishes to slap us with the palm of his hand, which could be a much harder blow. He probably won't strike the second time. But if he does, by letting him have his swings, we will do a hurt to his heart that might well bring him to God.

Not satisfied to go on to another topic, Jesus illustrates in a second way. This time He is saying that we are to be makers of peace by not resisting evil when financial loss is involved. "If any man will sue thee at law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also" (v. 40). If the person has a case against us that is sufficiently just to draw a verdict in his favor, so that by suing at law he is able to "take away [our] coat," we ought to give him our "cloak" as well. Jesus is saying that if someone sues us and receives a certain lawful settlement, and is not happy about it, we should let him have what he thinks is right if at all possible.

It would be possible for a person who had a cloak, an outer garment worn over a coat, to turn it over to a person to whom he owed some sort of legal debt. What was possible to do, Jesus advised. It is one good way of maintaining peace with our fellows. A lost person so treated might soon be yearning for life in Christ.

In yet a third way the Master illustrates what He means by "resist not evil." Not only are we not to resist even if we suffer physically or financially, we are not to resist if for Christ's sake we are called upon to go through social suffering. If anyone compels us to go with him a mile, we are to "go with him twain." That is, if we have an obligation toward another person, we are to do more than merely fulfill it without any margin. We are to fulfill it with our hearts in it, with magnanimity. This will please the other person. It will make for peace.

We would not be required by law to go the other mile. Nor does the person himself expect us to go the greater distance. When we go out of our way to please him, therefore, we do what natural men are not prone to do. Such actions make for peace between men.

By helping our enemies

Jesus works up to the point at which He can talk about how to make for peace between people in the most positive way. It is important to make for peace by not inciting trouble (Matt. 5:21-22). It is more, to do so by not resisting evil (Matt. 5:38-42). It is a most salvific thing to do so by loving one's enemies (Matt. 5:43-48).

God had early taught the Jews to hate enemy nations. They were to hate them, no doubt, because they were God's enemies, oppressors to God's people. And they seemed to be

taught to hate whole nations instead of individuals, as a way of keeping Israel's religion divorced from pagan practices. But for whatever reasons they were to hate their enemies. Edom was one such nation, and the prophet Obadiah spoke against her with a petulance that tends at places to make a sensitive Christian of our times cringe a bit. Several of the psalms also lavish wishes for evil upon enemy peoples.

Jesus says, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you" (Matt. 5:43-44). Jesus goes on to say that we ought to love our enemies because God loves His enemies (v. 45); and because if we love only those congenial to us we are doing no more than "the publicans" (vv. 46-47).

Surely the most positive way for a Christian to be a peacemaker is to love, to do good, to pray for those who make him the target of their evil deeds.

A person such as this is no mere truce-maker, halting for a time the hostilities that estrange people, as that mother of four boys was. He is a peacemaker, inclining people to accept that kind of God-help which for any person will ruin his missions of interpersonal mischief.

In these times of the church's special destiny, when there is so much interest in justice and so little interest in kindness, if we Christians were to guard our tongues, to suffer for Christ's sake without turning sour, to help the guy who thinks he can't stand the sight of us, we might be called names that are nicer than we have sometimes been called. We just might be called "the children of God."

The "problem person" may be the symptom bearer for the sickness of an entire family relationship

Some Rules of Thumb In Pastoral Family Counseling

By David E. Sparks*

IF, AS PASTORS, we would be instrumental in bringing persons to right relationships with God, we must concern ourselves with their relationships with their families. There are pressures that militate against family unity that never existed before. It is my purpose here to underscore some rules of thumb with which the pastor can work as he tries to provide pastoral care in extremely difficult and threatening family situations.

Rule 1: Families will come to the pastor for help only in the measure of their trust.

A pastor is not automatically in a position to provide spiritual counsel simply because he is the pastor of the church. He exudes an atmosphere in every pastoral function. A scolder in the pulpit probably will not have many requests for pastoral counseling. The pastor who always seems hurried will have few occasions for deep relationships among his families.

The pastor who seems to take people and their concerns lightly will

have only limited opportunities as a family shepherd. The pastor who is seldom accessible should not wonder why people rarely come to him for care. The pastor who becomes known as a raconteur of stories of his congregation is looked on with distrust.

Members must see their pastor as completely trustworthy before they will be willing to bare their family problems.

Rule 2: In a poorly functioning family, it is not just the individual who is the problem, but the entire family relationship.

A member, or members of a family, ask for help because they feel one member is a problem that is threatening to the home. The pastor may be fairly certain that no one person is the problem. The named as the problem person is usually the symptom bearer for the sickness of the entire family relationship. An extension of this is that the person asking for help is often very important to the continuance of the problem.

To be of help, the pastor needs a knowledge of the whole problem. An example may be the suffering wife of

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an alcoholic. As godly as she may be, she may unconsciously set up an atmosphere at home that so decreases her husband's already low self-esteem that, from his viewpoint, the only solution is another drink to keep at bay his inner guilt.

Or consider the teenage girl who is a burden to the family and a terror to the school and the church. Applying this rule, the pastor should wonder about the relationship among the whole family. Is she the scapegoat? Is she set up to carry the hostilities of the whole family relationship? The pastor may be able to help both the girl and the family.

Rule 3: Whenever a problem seems to be solved, look for the development of another—perhaps similar to the last.

Such a rule acts as an early warning signal. There may be something about this family that depends for survival on a problem person. Families tend to preserve the present balance, as painful as it may be. The wife of a deceased alcoholic often marries another alcoholic. Why? She depends on the problem to maintain her approach to life. An alert pastor must be ready for the next family anxiety—whether it develops or not.

Rule 4: Pinpointing blame and assigning responsibility for improvement is futile, and alienates one or more family members from the pastor and from each other.

A person may air a whole laundry list of grievances against another family member and then say, "Am I right or am I wrong?" Careful here, for you are in danger. The easiest way to get the person "off your back" is to agree. But it is better to say something like "I know that this must cause you great concern. Perhaps, together with your wife [or husband, daughter, son] we can be-

gin to hear each other more clearly and find some ways to heal the rift that has opened up."

The pastor who is drawn into the battle of designating the blameworthy person is bound to be distrusted by some or all family members. Besides, our job is not to find out who is to blame. Our job is to be helpful in clearing away the debris that has kept the family apart. A court of law may be compelled to assign blame. Pastoral care is not so concerned.

Rule 5: Very probably the pastor is the first person who has ever listened to the family.

Times without number, persons of all ages have said to me, "No one has ever taken the time and trouble to listen to me before." The most difficult of persons has a story to tell. We often want to devise solutions before we know what the problem is. To be willing to hear a person's story without an abundance of advice and false reassurance is not cheap sympathy and is not approving wrong. It is rather the outgrowth of an understanding heart that makes it possible for a person or a family to articulate what until now has been only vague, cloudy, nagging, underlying feelings.

Listening is hard work. It means paying close attention. It means helping the individual to understand himself. It means helping him to say what he really means. We do this when we say something like, "You seem to be saying . . . Is that what you mean? (or feel, or want, or are afraid of)?"

Rules of thumb are not meant to be unchangeable. Rather to be direction signals pointing the way to probabilities. It is my prayer that these will serve as guidelines for which the pastor may be alert as he ministers to the families within the church.

Trials and tests are more easily borne when one realizes that they are the necessary stepping-stones to stability, and not proofs that he has fallen from grace

Holiness Does Not Establish One

VOLUMES HAVE BEEN written on holiness and what it will do for the one obtaining it. A few lines on what it will not do may be in order.

Holiness does not establish one. This truth should be pointed out, for I have often heard it preached that it would do so. It has been called the "establishing grace," but that is not true. The Bible does not teach it, and life does not sustain it.

Holiness is necessary that we may become established, but by the same token, regeneration, or conversion, is necessary for one's establishment. Certainly no sinner can be established in grace, nor can an unholy person. In that sense both regeneration and sanctification are needed as a basis for establishment, but neither establishes one.

The record is, "After that ye have suffered a while [He will] make you

perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you" (1 Pet. 5:10). Suffering awhile, and receiving the sanctifying power of God in a moment of time, are two separate things and are accomplished by different time schedules. Time is necessary for suffering, and suffering must precede establishing.

The same truth is taught in Hebrews where the writer is contrasting the "babe" in Christ with those of "full age." One can become of full age only by having his "senses exercised to discern both good and evil," and it takes time to exercise one's senses.

The time element necessary for perfection is seen in the life of Christ. It was necessary "to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings" (Heb. 2:10). Then there came a time—after His sufferings—that it could be said of Him, "And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation" (Heb. 5:9).

Much harm has been done by claiming for some work of divine grace more than God teaches, and this teaching that holiness establishes is a false doctrine. It contradicts the Word.

Many young Christians, having been thus taught, and finding them-



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selves unsettled after sanctification, begin to doubt their experience and become discouraged and give up the race. It takes a lot of suffering to bring the newborn Christian to strength and stability of Christian character.

It should also be noted that God has promised to establish us. We need not fear and despair at this point. We need to know the method by which this is to be done and not be misled and become disillusioned in the process.

The laws of grace are in many ways like the laws of nature. Why not? God established both. First, we have the seed, then the sprout, the stalk, the ear, and then the ripened grain. We have the helpless babe, the growing child, the maturing youth, then the full-grown.

In all of God's workings, time is required. So in grace. We need not be discouraged if even though saved and sanctified, we find ourselves not established. We are on our way, but times of suffering are needed. That was true of the Christ who "learned . . . obedience by the things which he suffered," so we can learn in no other way.

While holiness does not establish one, it is a necessary prerequisite. So is conversion. So is conviction. Each of these has its place, but all of them together cannot establish one.

This in no way minimizes the value and the necessity of being holy, for "without holiness . . . no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14). It merely puts it in its proper place.

If it is our sincere desire to become grown-up and established, we should not turn to the altar for a crisis experience to accomplish this, but rather rejoice when the means of establishing are being encountered. Perhaps it was this point Peter was making when he wrote, "Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial . . . but rejoice" (1 Pet. 4:12-13).

James was saying the same thing, "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations . . . the trying of your faith worketh patience" (James 1:2-3).

Trials and tests are more easily borne when one realizes that they are the inevitable and necessary stepping-stones to stability, and not proofs that he has fallen from grace or that he has never had the "blessing."

If one can but see that life's tests are gateways to perfection, he can begin to understand why Peter could say "but rejoice" and James enjoin "count it all joy." One may learn to be happy in the process, for the process procures peace.

To understand here is to give zest to the Christian way and find the bow of promise draping life's darkest clouds. There is no place for sadness in the Christian life, for there is this assurance that "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. 4:17).

Let us then become followers of Christ, enter into the way of holiness, and faithfully suffer with Him and gain the stability and strength of the "full-grown."

It all begins in the heart of the pastor. If it is not there, no planning, no prodding, no pressure will cause him to evangelize his community.
—Carl B. Clendenen

"This Is That"

By E. E. Wordsworth*

THE DAY OF PENTECOST ushered in a brand-new dispensation. It is still in force and will continue throughout all "the last days" of this dispensation—that is from the first Pentecost until Jesus comes again. Dr. G. B. Williamson says: "Pentecost supercedes history. (1) Pentecost preserves the glory of the past, (2) Pentecost provides reality in the present, (3) Pentecost promises victory for the future."

When Peter, in his sermon, said, "This is that," he referred only to the prophecy of Joel (2:28-29). The question naturally arises, This is what? Let us see.

This is that which God ordained for man from the very beginning. "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love" (Eph. 1:4). Being the choice of God that we should be "holy and without blame before him in love," it must ever remain His choice—and ours—for time and eternity. What a privilege to have the abiding presence of the blessed Holy Spirit within us!

This is that which recruits a Spirit-filled ministry. Carefully read Acts 2:17-18. Pentecost is not a program; it is a spiritual passion. It sent dis-

ciples everywhere preaching the gospel. And what shall I say about Harmon Schmelenbach, Sidney Knox, David Livingstone, John Wesley, Martin Luther, Billy Graham, and a large host of others fired with a deep compassion for a lost world?

Wesley saw the great need for class leaders to nurture the flock. William Carvosso was also among those making a great contribution to the kingdom of Christ.

This is that which purifies the heart (Acts 15:8-9). Dr. Daniel Steele said, "This is a key passage teaching heart purity with the Spirit's baptism."

When Bishop Asbury received it he cried out, "Oh, purity, it is heaven below to feel all sin gone."

Heart purity must never be separated from the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Heart purity is the main issue. It is also our great need.

This is that which gives us perfect love toward God and man. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart . . . and thy neighbour as thyself." Christ on His cross cried out, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Stephen had the same spirit as his Master when being stoned to death—"And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge" (Acts 7:60).

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This is that which fills us with the Holy Spirit. "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:4). The infilling with the Holy Spirit and heart cleansing are like Siamese twins. They are equated as being simultaneous. You cannot have one without the other.

This is that which empowers. "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you" (Acts 1:8). The disciples lacked political backing, financial strength, social prestige, and were unlearned men, but in the spiritual realm they were at the top because all heaven was back of them, and the Godhead was

within them. They evangelized everywhere they went, and great numbers sought the Savior of men. It was dynamic soul winning—witnessing for Christ. God can use a divinely-called preacher who is filled with the Holy Ghost better than a bishop without it.

Then let the Holy Spirit endue you, and He will be your Helper. Give priority to the presence and mighty power of the Holy Spirit. Dr. Bresee called it "enswathement." Paul said, "And my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (1 Cor. 2:4).

Practical Points

*that make
a difference*

On Allowing the Holy Spirit to Be Himself

Dear Son:

You know, I rather believe that we "straight-jacket" the Holy Spirit—allowing Him to work only as we expect, rather than as He would. I have watched a great many pastors and evangelists in the last 50 years giving altar calls. You would think that the Holy Spirit must come in the manner that they propose, rather than the way that He proposes. The methodology seems set, the hymns selected "properly" and the "magical" words given.

However, a prominent evangelist came to our church last week and allowed the Holy Spirit to work at His good time. The evangelist was "open," winsome in his urgency, and intelli-

gent in his appeal. You could feel the presence of God's love in fellowship. I had the feeling that it was a good time to respond to God's call. As a result, there were a number who responded to the calls who had been negative in their attitudes to revival.

These are good times in which the Holy Spirit is working in many different ways—and we should respond by allowing Him to work as He sees fit rather than what we design. That doesn't mean that there will be disorder. No! Out of planning will come times of great fruitfulness. The Holy Spirit is not the author of disorder. However, in an open way, the Holy Spirit will "take" a service if we will only let Him.

I understand by your last letter that you will be in Indiana holding a revival for a pastor friend. Mother and I will pray that there will be a wonderful spirit of God's presence until you will preach with liberty and Christ's Spirit will hover over each service.

Love,
Dad

"This Ye Ought to Have Done"

By Ken Huffman*

IT WAS PASTORAL RECALL Sunday, and after the service had been turned over to the secretary of the board, my wife and I went home to await the outcome. We had been pastoring this church for five years.

The secretary came to our home and informed me of the vote. I was recalled for four years, but there had been more negative votes than expected.

Suddenly I began experiencing some physical reactions completely unknown to me. There was dizziness, pressure in my neck, extreme headache, spots before my eyes. I went to the hospital where my blood pressure was recorded as 200/120, which the doctor informed me was stroke range, brought on by extreme stress and fatigue. I stayed in the hospital for four days until the situation was controlled. The attending physician also said, "If it were not for your excellent physical condition at age 48, you would have no doubt gone into coronary."

Why did this happen? Three months earlier our youngest son was seriously injured in an auto accident, suffering a broken neck and closed head injury. He was unconscious for five and one-half weeks in the shock trauma unit of University Hospital.

As parents, we suffered untold agony. We were driving 150 miles every day for nine weeks to tell him

we loved him, to pray for him, and to look for some glimmer of hope. During all this time we kept up with pastoral responsibilities in our community and local church. The financial strain added to what was already an unbearable load. God answered, however, and Buddy is recovering and will eventually be a whole person.

For the past eight years I have disciplined myself to an exercise routine. Three or four days a week, beginning at 6:30 a.m., I run from two to three miles each day. I use the YMCA and swim several miles a week. I started this program, thanks to Dr. Kenneth Cooper's book, *Aerobics*. I ran daily, year round, in Maine where snow comes early, and continued to do so in the warm Maryland sunshine. This program saved my life and my ministry.

As pastors, we can't avoid stress, pressure, recalls, and even family tragedy. All around us pastors are terminating their ministries prematurely. Many live overweight, no exercise, stress-filled lives, and the devil is overjoyed to see an effective ministry cut short.

Brothers, we can't avoid some things, but we can be prepared to meet them. When we give an account of our lives before God, and some are shortened due to gross neglect and carelessness, Jesus may well point a finger at a wiser brother and say, "This ye ought to have done."

*Pastor, Church of the Nazarene, Easton, Md.

JULY-AUGUST

NAZARENE FOCUS

FOR
PASTORS
and LOCAL
CHURCH
LEADERS

Compiled by the Department of Stewardship |

LEON DOANE, Executive Director
STEPHEN J. SORENSEN, Office Editor

● General Superintendent Coulter

The Moment of Urgency



BY THE TIME THIS *Preacher's Magazine* reaches your desk, the oppressive summer heat will have arrived.

But I am writing to you on January 25, 1978. The great Mid-Quadrennial Conference on Evangelism in Oklahoma City has closed. The 1978 Leaders' Conference has adjourned. The overseas superintendents have disbanded and returned to their labors across the globe. The Church Growth Seminars have adjourned and all have returned to their fields of labor. All of these events have contributed blessing, inspiration, information, and incentive.

Are we making the present moment one of urgency? Are we utilizing all the plans, programs, and ideas in a concrete way to build God's kingdom and increase His work?

An Old Testament text has intrigued me for a long time. It's found in 2 Samuel 3:17-18a: "Abner had communication with the elders of Israel, saying, Ye sought for David in times past to be king over you: Now then do it..."

The historical background is simply this: Israel had given consideration to putting David on the throne as king. Now Abner seizes the opportunity and challenges them, "Now then do it."

There are times in church life and in our own personal ministries when we must deliberately say to ourselves, "Now, then, do it!"

Through trained and dedicated churchmen we have been receiving an outpouring of knowledge and technique like no other generation of preachers has ever enjoyed.

"Now then do it!"

Department leaders in evangelism, church growth, home missions, and Christian life ministries have shared concepts, ideas, and challenges with us.

"Now then do it!"

The moment of urgency is upon us! We have been trained, coached, organized, and motivated.

"Now then do it!"

With a church membership net growth rate of 1.43 percent last year in the United States, we must begin to put into practice the things which we have seen and heard. Our own integrity as God-called ministers of the gospel requires it! Our commitment to give the gospel to every man in the same measure that we have received it demands it!

"Now then do it."

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BNC	July 24-27, 1979
NNC	August 7-10, 1979
PLC	August 21-24, 1979

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GIRLS AND BOYS LOOK FORWARD TO... PROMOTION DAY AUGUST 27, 1978 AN EXCITING TIME OF RECOGNITION



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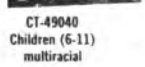
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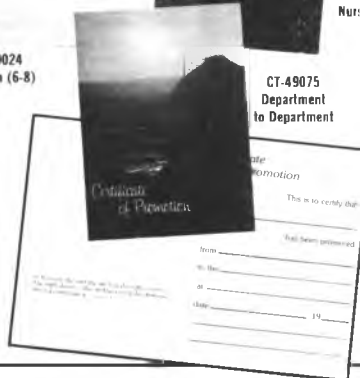
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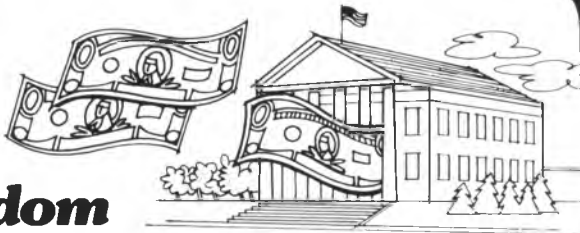
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NEW

An exciting new program on "Playing Hymns Properly" is now ready. If you are interested in using your talents more effectively, contact the Christian Service Training office, the Department of Evangelism, or your pastor and get information on a workshop for hymn-playing or for resources available for self-study.

Unit 178a

"A" credit would be 300 minutes spent in workshop time.

Unit 178b

"B" credit would be 600 minutes spent in workshop time.

Unit 178.1a

Completion of preparatory Book P and exam.

Unit 178.2a

Completion of exam from Book 1.

Unit 178.3a

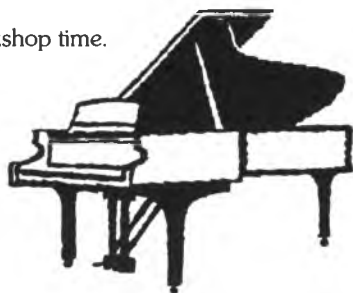
Completion of exam from Book 2.

Unit 178.4a

Completion of exam from Book 3.

Unit 178c

"C" credit and a certificate will be provided on the completion of all four books.



These hymn-playing resources have been developed by Mrs. Evonne Neuenschwander, who is an outstanding teacher, accompanist, church pianist. She is the founder of the Music Department of the Nazarene Bible College in Colorado Springs, Colo., and the author of the resources in this new hymn-playing program.

Mrs. Neuenschwander earned her Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Colorado with a major in piano pedagogy and a Master of Music Education degree from the University of Northern Colorado with a major in music administration and supervision. The title of her master's thesis was "The Training and Supervision of Prospective Pianists for the Church of the Nazarene."

Fall is a good time also to study church growth . . .

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
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If we want our children to be Christians, we must provide special revival services for them on their level where they can have the opportunity of making a commitment to Christ.

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ADVANCE...

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What Are “Work and Witness” Groups?

QUESTION: What exactly are “Work and Witness” groups?

ANSWER: These are mainly small teams of men and women organized under local church or district “Men in Mission” sponsorship to put up a building on a world or home mission field.

QUESTION: Where do these groups go?

ANSWER: Most of their projects are located in Central America and the Caribbean; however, projects are available all around the world.

QUESTION: How long do the teams stay on these projects?

ANSWER: They usually complete their work in a two-week time period.

QUESTION: Where are the home mission projects?

ANSWER: These could be on the team’s own district, or somewhere else in North America.

QUESTION: What are the financial requirements?

ANSWER: Each team provides the cost of the material for their project: around \$500 per team member or a minimum of \$5,000. Then they cover all the travel, food, and lodging costs for the team. The project is undertaken after the church’s General Budget commitment is met.

QUESTION: Why is that?

ANSWER: Because if General Budget receipts drop, mission field staff and activities have to be curtailed. We might not be able to handle a visiting team on a short-staffed field.

QUESTION: But isn’t \$5,000 plus expenses a lot of money? Are many teams able to afford this?

ANSWER: Around 40 teams went in the past year.

QUESTION: Are there other teams than those doing building projects?

ANSWER: Some youth teams are organized for evangelism, and Nazarene Medical Action Fellowship is forming a medical team to go to the Dominican Republic in August.

QUESTION: Where can we get more information about “Work and Witness” projects?

ANSWER: Write Richard Gammill, Department of World Mission, 6401 The Paseo, Kansas City, MO 64131.

QUESTION: One more question: is there really a place on the teams for ladies?

ANSWER: Absolutely. Most teams include some ladies to help with cooking, washing, etc., even to help with the construction.

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SAXOPHONE
BARITONE
(T.C.)

BOOK C for
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FLUTE I, II

BOOK D for
TROMBONE I, II, III
STRING BASS

BOOK E for
HORN (F) I, II
ALTO SAXOPHONE (Eb) I, II

BOOK F for
MELODY (T.C.)
GUITAR (Chord symbols)
TUBA (Bass line) DRUMS

TO GOD BE THE GLORY

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3rd Trpt.
2nd Trpt.
Bass Clar.
BASS

BOOK B
TRUMPET
(Bb) I, II
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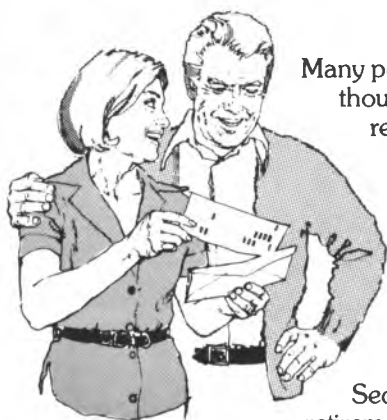
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What Your Church Provides

The retirement plan provided by your church is *actually composed of two programs*. The first of these is the "Basic" Pension. The benefit you receive from this plan is not based on any financial contribution you make as an individual, but on your years of full-time ministerial service in the Church of the Nazarene. It is funded by the Pensions and Benevolence Budget which every Nazarene church pays. A minister with 40 years of service presently receives \$160 per month under the "Basic" Pension plan. This amount is double what it was when the program began in 1971 (the result of four increases over six years). More increases are expected as each church faithfully pays its Pensions Budget.

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Y TO RETIRE? . . .

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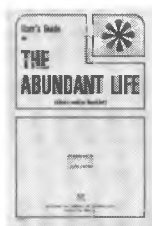
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Appropriate for giving a person after the chart presentation. Miniature pages provide the seeker with the opportunity for review and study at home.

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Important information one should have before making the presentation.

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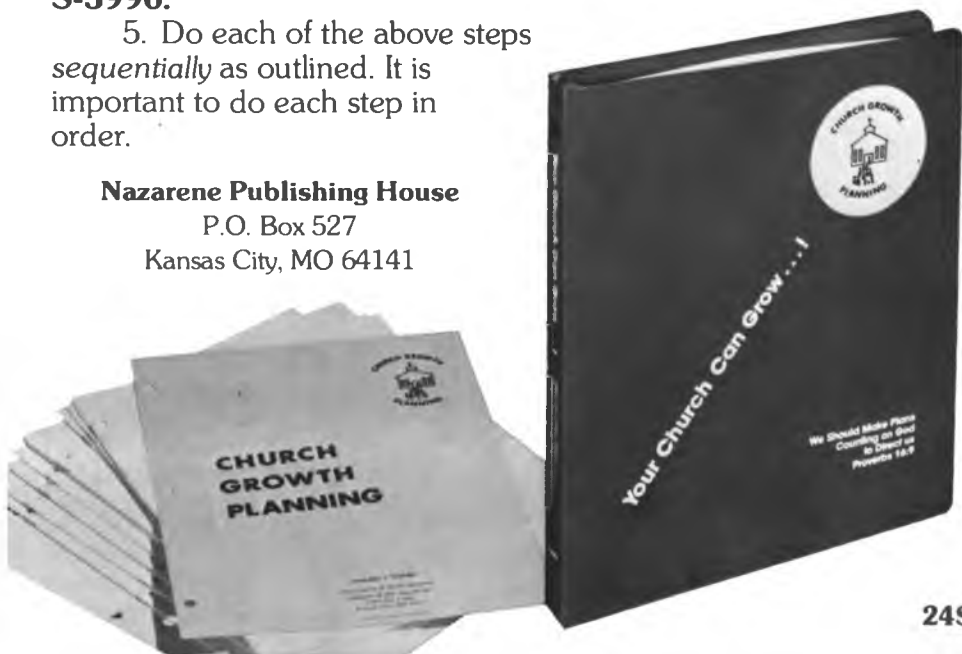
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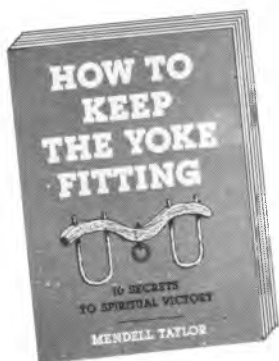
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If tradition stands in the way of positive, necessary change, then it is a yoke

Review Those Traditions

By Ronald S. Combs*

A NEWLY MARRIED young bride was in the kitchen preparing the first meal for her new husband and her mother and father. She had chosen to bake a large ham. Her husband walked into the kitchen just as she took a knife and cut off a chunk from the end. The husband picking up the piece of ham asked, "Why did you cut this piece off?"

With a befuddled look she replied, "Well, I don't know, but Mother always did."

Picking up the chunk of ham, he led his wife into the living room to his mother-in-law and asked, "When you cook a ham, why do you cut this piece off?"

The mother, in turn, looked puzzled and replied, "Well, I don't know. But my mother always did."

Still curious, the young man ushered his wife and her parents and the piece of ham into the family car and proceeded to grandma's house. Leading the procession into the house, he held up the object of his concern and asked his wife's grandmother, "Why do you cut this piece of ham off? My wife says it's because her mom always did. And her mom says it's because you always did. Why?"

With a twinkle in her eye, the wise old woman reached into a pantry, pulled out a well-used cooking pan and answered, "Well, honey, because it wouldn't fit in my pot."

Humorous? Yes. But what about many of the traditions that rule our churches and/or our lives. Are they merely traditions which serve no practical purpose. Do they glorify God or man? The Bible is full of admonitions in regard to the almost worshipful adherence to the traditions to which we have succumbed—Matt. 15:2-3; Gal. 1:14; Col. 2:8; 1 Pet 1:18.

Tradition is fine and valuable, but if it stands in the way of a positive, necessary change, then it is a yoke and not a blessing. This is not a call to dash all traditions, scrap all procedures, and begin with all new forms and systems. Never. But it is a call to review those traditions. If they glorify God, promote love, joy, and liberty, then build on them. If not, maybe they have outlived their purpose.

May we never be guilty as Christians of too much legalism and too little love, too much pride in the results of our own accomplishments and too little dependence on God's desire to use our lives.

*Pastor, Church of the Nazarene, Lexington, Ky.

THE PREACHER'S WIFE



"Mommy, I Want You"

By Betty B. Robertson*

MY DEMANDS and opportunities as a preacher's wife are numerous. I conduct a weekly Ladies' Bible Study which requires in-depth preparation and reading. It also leads into countless hours of individual counseling with women.

Involvement in Sunday school teaching and/or administration takes creative energies. I spend time with my husband, dreaming, planning, and sharing. As often as possible we do evening calling together. And of course, every day is filled with miscellaneous items that any pastor's wife finds herself engaged in.

But the one thing which triggers me into sensitive responsiveness are the words from my daughter, "Mommy, I want YOU." This is an indication for me to stop all the legitimate activities which call for my attention and spend time with her.

I now carefully plan into every day special time with each of my children. The hours I spend with the church people and church-related activities are important and fulfilling. But my first responsibility is to my children and family, seeing to it

that they have quality time with their mother, and many happy memories.

Right now since my children are younger, we play games together, read books, go to the library, make craft projects, spend time at the park, make cookies, go out for a hamburger, and do a number of things which they enjoy.

There are many things parsonage families can do together such as visiting the zoo, taking tours of places of interest, enjoying a wiener roast, having a picnic, window-shopping, and visiting pet shops. Or spending an evening at home together doing such simple things as popping corn, creating banana splits, or playing table games.

I never want my children to feel that my church activities and other people come first and that they are second. This feeling can cause bitterness and a turning away from the church and from God.

God's plan is for happy families. This may mean, at times, putting aside my interests and plans and giving time to my children when I hear the reminder, "Mommy, I want YOU."

*Pastor's wife, Arvada, Colo.

Has Anyone Seen the Cellophane Tape?

By Virginia Curl Benson*

IN THE MINISTRY one gets used to a lot of things, not the least of which is going to all those showers. Now I don't mind buying the gift, but I'll do anything to avoid the ordeal of wrapping it. I'm a pushover at the gift-wrapping counter when they say, "Two dollars, please." Two bucks for some shiny shelf paper and a ribbon about a yard long? Yet I pay with a false smile affixed to my face and happy relief in my heart—now I don't have to track down the cellophane tape.

I buy cellophane tape like an addict. I hide it like one too. We have three children in our house who can sniff out a roll of tape like a hound after a coon. My offspring can find more uses for cellophane tape than the fine print can claim for a giant-size can of disinfectant spray.

I've asked my children if they have seen the cellophane tape and then watched them go to all my hiding places. It's enough to make a grown woman cry. When none of the niches yield up a single roll, it's enough to make you want *them* to take part in the crying—with a little help from the hairbrush.

"Why?" I ask myself as I slink over to the neighbor's house at the eleventh hour to borrow tape. "Why do my children have to have this particular character defect?" Some simple fault like a tendency to pull the stuffing out of the arms of my favorite chair I can deal with. One simply makes them pick up the white stuff, pins hand towels over the offending

arms, and resists the urge to beat the stuffing out of *them*.

How can you argue with the desire to make a model airplane, wrap grandma a ceramic paperweight made in art class, or fix the frame on a picture? To be sure, these are all noble endeavors. They consider the misplacing of Mother's tape a minor occupational oddity—which, of course, causes Mother to momentarily wonder why she ever thought she wanted children.

I have learned to live with the fact that as long as one has children some tricks will have to be learned. I have been known to carry a large handbag to a bridal shower. That way when no one is looking, you can sidle up to the gift table, whisk out your present, and push it under someone's beautiful creation. Meanwhile, you smile and chatter quite happily for the shortest time possible before pleading a pressing engagement. If you're lucky you can get out of there before they pull your appalling misadventure out of the stack. This spares you listening to them exclaim about how quaint it is to fasten everything together with masking tape and pins.

Naturally, if you're going to have to stay, since it's a shower for Mr. Goodbody's daughter (she's 35 and finally getting married), it's simpler to pay the \$2.00 at the gift-wrapping counter. After all, he *did* donate a new piano to the sanctuary, and the amenities of life *do* have to be observed. Anyway, everyone's entitled to a little profit.

*Wichita, Kans.

Our Gas Shortage

THE STORY is told on one of our pastors of a time when he and his district superintendent were going fishing. Some miles in the country his car ran out of gas. He made it to a telephone and called his wife to ask her to bring some gasoline out to them. When she heard of his dilemma she started a lecture on the perils of driving with an almost-empty tank. He said, "Honey, it ain't a sermon I need, it's some gas."

People as well as automobiles run out of gas—or whatever it is that makes them go. All of us have mornings when we sit on the edge of the bed trying to come awake. We rub our eyes, stretch, yawn, and look longingly at the cozy spot we have just been torn from by the heartless alarm clock.

Even more serious is the gas shortage that causes us to lose all enthusiasm for the job in particular—or even our entire career. Some men at 40 wake up one morning and wonder why they chose the drab, humdrum way they did of making a living. Housewives can lose what

enthusiasm they did have about raising a family, with the endless treadmill of meals, housecleaning, and washing. We are all highly susceptible to the perils of the monotony and boredom of our daily lot in life. Even highly successful people with lucrative careers confess they have days when they could not care less about it all.

It is not hard to see why some lives and some marriages come unglued after years of apparent success and happiness.

We hear of Bob and Betty whom everyone thought were so happy and well adjusted, suddenly getting a divorce. What happened to them? Somewhere down the road their marriage ran out of gas. They coasted along for a while but finally came to a stop.

This matter has a deep and meaningful parallel in our spiritual life. People become Christians, join the church, become active, and all goes well for years. But after a while their enthusiasm begins to wane. They slip to the sidelines and finally out a side exit almost unnoticed. Others "hang in there" but become a dreary soul with little or no enthusiasm that characterized their former joy in the Lord.

Motivating church members who have "run out of gas" is the lot of many tired pastors who themselves are dangerously low on the stuff that keeps them going. To say that "if they have what they profess, this



by
Robert E. Maner

Pastor
First Church
of the Nazarene
Valdosta, Ga.

program—important as these are. My biggest job is to love people as Christ loved them, even when they become unlovable.

The minister who threatens to leave every time the church board votes him down, who scolds from the pulpit, who alienates himself from certain of his flock, or stalks out of board meeting in a huff (yes, I've

even heard of that), had better find another place of service. Such childishness has its roots in carnality.

The ministry will never be easy, because we deal with people. But I must never give any of them the impression that they are not loved by their pastor. How can I? For in spite of their faults, demands, and abuse, I do love them!

Staff Infection in the Soul Clinic

There is a beautiful little western city of about 6,000 population located on the banks of the Big Horn River. From a hillside overlooking this city, there once stood a stone masonry hospital that served the community well. But through carelessness it became infected. Patients who had surgery or an injury became infected with what was described as "staph" infection. Once a patient discovered this, he never went back. The Health Department closed the hospital. It was demolished, bulldozed, and leveled.

Today what used to be a beautiful hospital where the sick and infirm found comfort is only a parking spot for sight-seeing and tourist entertainment. Staph infection robbed this little city of its hospital.

Whenever I come across a church that has been closed down and abandoned, the first question that enters my mind is, Why did it happen? Not all who need to hear the message of sanctification have heard it; if there is no holiness church in this city, who will tell them? Could it be that the church became careless and failed to staff its board, Sunday school, and pulpit with sanctified men and women? Or was it staffed with those infected with carnal hearts? The Early Church picked men of honest report and full of the Holy Ghost. These were the kind that headed God's program. Staff infection will sooner or later close the church down spiritually, and it will become a parking area and a laughingstock for sightseers.

Do you have staff infection in your soul clinic?

—Evangelist Ralph B. Round

Gleams of Immortality

By W. B. Walker*

IV. Hope Springs Eternal

THE ANSWER OF HOPE to Job's question of immortality is now before us. Job was tremendously concerned about the future of man's existence, and asked the question: "If a man die, shall he live again?" (14:14). It is not justice only that fails to reach its coronation in this world. There is nothing which man hopes or plans when living at his highest which finds room for full fruition inside the narrow limits of this earthly life.

Man's reach is greater than his grasp. He always aims higher than he can climb, sees farther than he can travel, and begins more than he can finish. The world is marred on every side by imperfections. Man forever hungers for a knowledge he cannot gain, seeks for happiness he cannot find, and strives for beauty he cannot attain.

Man makes wonderful progress, but he pursues a flying goal, and death overtakes him before he reaches his destination. He lays the foundations of a structure which death will not permit him to complete. This is the fate of all generations. No one has reached the consummation of his expectations. In the midst of the disappointments of life, there is the voice of lamentation crying, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity" (Eccles. 1:2).

But above the voices of defeat and despair rises a prophetic voice declaring that somewhere and somehow

the heart will be satisfied and its dreams shall come true. It is a thrilling and noteworthy fact that man keeps on feeling that the world is not large enough for the full exercise of his powers. Time measured by our clocks is not long enough for man to secure the things for which he longs.

No one has yet discovered the full capacities of the human intellect. The shortness of human life, and the innumerable hindrances that the most favored must contend with, have forever precluded the mighty possibilities wrapped up in the human intellect. Is it possible that such lofty and noble powers are destined just to begin to unfold themselves on earth, and then—like a bubble—burst on the bosom of the sea and disappear forever?

The beloved John says, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2-3).

If there is no immortality we shall fail to meet our loved ones in the afterlife. Many of us have dear ones over there. We have cherished the blessed hope of meeting them again. If you rob men of this hope they will sink into despair. The hope of seeing our loved ones again has been the beacon light that has beckoned men onward in every age. This hope takes the sting out of life, and lights the future.

Where are my loved ones? I stand

*Nazarene Evangelist, Bethany, Okla.

by the grave and put them away in this world, and I cherish the hope of seeing them again. One beautiful, moonlight night in May we were awakened from slumber by the cry of our suffering child. There had been no hours of anxiety before this cry. In a few hours the Lord took from us our precious child of eight summers.

We returned from the cemetery with sad hearts. Friends tried in vain to encourage us. Through faith, we had hope within our hearts that we could meet again on the other side of life. Yes, the glorified body of Moses, of Elijah, of Enoch, and our Blessed Lord are somewhere, and my loved ones are also somewhere.

*One by one their chairs were emptied,
One by one they went away.*

There are two contrasting states

in the great hereafter. There is a place of unending punishment for the soul that rejects God. The soul that dies without the Lord will take all the elements of retributive penalty with him. Yonder stands a violator of the laws of God and man. The rain is falling in torrents as he awaits a response. As he looks up, and smites his breast, he says, "All the rain that has ever fallen or ever will fall cannot put out the fires that I feel burning in here."

The other contrasting state is eternal happiness with God. A Christian lady had a portion of heaven in her heart before going there. She began to sing joyfully:

*Once Heaven seemed a far-off place,
Till Jesus showed His smiling face;
Now it's begun within my soul,
'Twill last while endless ages roll.*

Solitary Refinement

I've been robbed! Some of the thieves have been my best friends—even relatives. These are not just the ravings of a paranoid, because all of the charges are proved. What's worse, and it is hard to admit this, but this writer has even been known to steal from himself.

What has been stolen? A commodity that has been valuable from the beginning. Early thinkers such as Socrates, Marcus Aurelius, and even as far back as Adam, prized it. Jesus' followers have always considered this one of their most expensive necessities. Leaders today spend thousands to procure it. A person's life may be broken without it. Let's call it "solitary refinement."

Without this "vitamin" we soon begin to weaken spiritually and in interpersonal relations. Sometimes others around us can sense our supply is low even before we can. Perceptive people can begin to understand signs of deficiency in friends and leaders. Solitary refinement is that inner composure that comes from time alone with God and ourselves. Time to listen to the "still small voice." Time to sort out our jumpy lives. The solitary times, hopefully, bring the refinement that can be mined in no other way. Some who are pressed into painful and lonely circumstances are surprised to find this gem in ugly environs, but most must just grab snatches of it along the way.

Local law enforcement officials have found no weapon to guard or encourage solitary refinement. Persons are urged to depend on common sense, discipline, and the help of God to preserve this endangered essential.

—Stanley Sutter



Try a Grandparents' Day

Each year the elementary school which our children attend sponsors a Grandparents' Day. It is an annual event which receives enthusiastic attention.

This past year I thought, Why not have a Grandparents' Day at the church? Approval was gained through the Board of Christian Life, and we began to organize.

We decided upon a 30-minute program. During this time we had a presentation by our puppeteers, a brief talk by a ventriloquist and her dummy, a pictorial interpretation of grandparents done on overhead transparencies by the children of the church, and a slide presentation on the Psalms by a grandparent.

A set of grandparents and grandchildren ushered for the service. And at the close all grandparents were honored with a small gift.

Following the morning program, coffee and donuts were served, and there was a time for fellowship.

For the evening service we invited a minister who was a grandfather to speak.

The day was extremely successful. We had 19 representative grandparents, several of whom traveled hundreds of miles to be in attendance. Quite a few grandchildren were in the service who usually do not attend. The result was an exciting day with one of our top attendances and ample contacts for followup.

BETTY B. ROBERTSON

THE STARTING POINT

Christ's Care for His Church

Paul's first letter to the Corinthians clarifies, early in the epistle, Christ's care for His called ones.

This is seen, first, in Christ's *interest* for His followers, expressed in 1:3, "Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (NIV).¹ God, through Christ, gives to us His best—"grace" and "peace."

Second, this care is seen through an *inheritance*, expressed in 1:5, "For in him you have been enriched in every way" (see Eph. 1:18-19).

Third, Christ's care is seen through the invitation recorded in 1:9, which reads, "God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord . . ."

The Gifts of the Spirit

In *Pulpit Helps*, August, 1977, I ran across this "starting point" based on 2 Corinthians 3, relating to gifts of the Spirit. They are (1) Life, v. 6; (2) Liberty, v. 17; (3) Likeness, v. 18.

With three words and gifts like these, you could come up with enough for three sermons.

The Thessalonian Church

Here's a "starting point" from 1 Thessalonians 1: (1) The Church won, v. 5; (2) The Church witnessing, v. 8; (3) The Church waiting, v. 10. Take it from there.



by
C. Neil Strait

Pastor, First
Church of the Nazarene
Lansing, Mich.

A Great Prayer

Here are some "starters" from Psalm 51, David's great prayer of confession.

1. *A great plea*, v. 1, "O loving and kind God, have mercy. Have pity upon me and take away the awful stain of my transgressions" (Living Bible).²

2. *A great person*, v. 1, "O loving and kind God." Behind every prayer of confession and repentance is a merciful God, standing ready to forgive.

3. *A great pollution*, v. 1, "... take away the awful stain of my transgressions." V. 2, "Cleanse me from this guilt." Sin is the great pollutant.

4. *A great prisoner*, v. 3, "For I admit my shameful deed—it haunts me day and night." V. 11, "Don't toss me aside, banished forever from your presence." V. 14, "Don't sentence me to death."

5. *A great pardon*, v. 7, "Sprinkle me with the cleansing blood and I shall be clean again. Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow." V. 15, "Then will I sing of your forgiveness."

6. *A great purity*, v. 2, "Cleanse me from this guilt."

7. *A great praise and proclamation*, v. 13, "Then I will teach your ways to other sinners." V. 15, "Oh, how I will praise you!"

8. *A great promise*, v. 17, "A broken and a contrite heart, O God, you will not ignore."

9. *A great peace*, v. 8, "Give me back my joy again." V. 12, "Restore to me again the joy of your salvation."

Spirituality . . . and Preaching

John R. Brokhoff, professor at Candler School of Theology, Emory University, said something worth considering: "The weakness of contemporary preaching may have its source in the poverty of the average minister's spirituality . . . A man cannot speak for God until he is a man of God. When he preaches, he preaches out of faith to win faith in others. But suppose his faith is shallow to the point of nonexistence? A congregation has a right to expect that their minister knows God, has had an experience with God, and spends time with God in prayer. It is right for the people to assume that the minister is closer to God than the person

in the pew" ("What Great Preachers Have in Common," *Pulpit Digest*, May/June, 1977, p. 30).

What Great Preachers Had in Common

John R. Brokhoff, mentioned above, lists these things that the great preachers have had in common: a firsthand relationship with God, a faith in preaching, the Bible as their textbook, hard work of countless hours, and a deep love for people (*Ibid*, p. 34).

Preacher's Use of the Bible

Lowell O. Erdahl, in *Preaching for the People*, has this good advice for preachers: "His chief aim in preaching is therefore not to shed light on the Bible but to shed the light of the Bible on life" (Abingdon, 1976, p. 61).

Preaching That Glorifies God

Here's another good word from Lowell O. Erdahl: "The best compliment is not 'I heard a great sermon,' but 'I met a great God'" (*Ibid*, p. 93).

1. Scriptures from 1 Corinthians are from *The New International Version of the New Testament*, © 1973 by the New York Bible Society International. Used by permission.

2. Scriptures from Psalm 51 are from *The Living Bible*, © 1971 by Tyndale House Publishers, Wheaton, Ill. Used by permission.

The Tither's Surprises—

1. At the deepening of his spiritual life in paying his tithe.

2. At the ease in meeting his own obligations with the nine-tenths.

3. At the ease in going from one-tenth to larger giving.

4. At the preparation this gives to be a faithful and wise servant over the nine-tenths which remain.

5. At himself for not adopting the plan sooner.

—F. C. Spruce

Seeds for Sermons

JULY—LESSONS FROM THE PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS

July 2

I. TWO TYPES OF PEOPLE: THE WISE AND THE FOOLISH

TEXT: "Five of them were wise, and five were foolish" (Matt. 25:2).

When Jesus was classifying people He usually placed them in two categories—namely, wise and foolish. We usually classify them as good or bad, righteous or evil, saved or unsaved. However, Jesus placed such a strong emphasis on right reason, on rational conduct, on intelligent behavior that He always thought of people as being wise or foolish.

In other words, if a person is wise he will make the right choices and follow the way of truth, but if he is foolish he will have a wrong system of values and follow the way of evil.

That is the reason Jesus often referred to himself as the Truth—the Truth for us to trust, the Truth for us to follow, and the Truth for us to treasure. He knew that every step toward Him was in the direction of logical thinking and rational evaluations. By way of contrast, every step away from Him is in the direction of a creeping insanity and gnawing madness.

The wise person looks at all sides of a question and then makes a proper choice. The foolish person will see only one small segment of a question and make his decision according to what fits his prejudices and personal whims. The wise person will look at things in the

light of the long haul, but the foolish person will make his decisions in the light of immediate satisfaction. The wise person will dedicate himself to the way of integrity regardless of the cost, but the foolish person will do his decision-making in the light of what is convenient and desirable at the moment.

One of the most incisive observations of Jesus came from the Cross when He prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." This indicates the wrong action is precipitated by blindness to the truth, irrationality, and improper conclusions. In other words, a person would never let himself in for such a course of action if he were thinking straight.

Jesus saw only two classes of people in our world—the wise and the foolish.

July 9

II. YESTERDAY'S RELIGION IS NOT ENOUGH

TEXT: "... for our lamps are gone out" (Matt. 25:8).

The parable of the ten virgins is a vivid study in contrasts. At one end of the spectrum are five wise virgins, and at the other end five foolish virgins. The lessons which we will concentrate on will be drawn from the latter group.

The foolish virgins presumed that because they had enough oil to last until there was a "rest break" (they all slum-

bered and slept), they would have enough oil to last the whole journey. They took for granted, if they started right they would end up at the right place. But they had the rude awakening that yesterday's supply of oil was no guarantee that there will be sufficient for today.

At the beginning point, the foolish virgins had just as good equipment as the wise virgins. There was no difference in their status as they started to meet the bridegroom. From all surface appearances, one had just as good chance to finish the journey as the other. The difference showed up when the wise virgins made sure they had a supply of oil for each day, whereas the foolish virgins assumed that what they had on hand in the past would assure them of success today. This mistake turned into a tragedy.

This mistake was not only made by the five foolish virgins, it is also being made by foolish people in our day. They are depending on a wonderful religious experience which they received in the past to stand them in good stead for all time to come. They point back to a time and place where they had a transforming experience with the Lord. They keep looking back to this moment as the most important event of their lives. However, the Christian way of life is not a once-for-all encounter with the Lord, but a moment-by-moment walk with the Lord. What has happened in the past is of little value unless we keep our accounts up to date, and maintain a constant fellowship with Him. We can become delinquent in our relationship with Him if we are negligent in our devotion to Him. We must be prayed up and paid up in our daily living if we are ready for His coming.



by
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July 16

III. SOMEONE ELSE'S RELIGION IS NOT ENOUGH

TEXT: "Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out" (Matt. 25:8).

When the five foolish virgins saw that yesterday's oil was not enough, they tried to find a solution to their problem by getting oil from another person. They worked on the idea that they would be safe as long as they were in company with those who were on the safe side. They felt that the other person's supply would be ample for them to get by on also. They concluded that they could borrow enough from the right kind of people to complete the journey. However, to their despair, they discovered that they could not depend on the other person to get them through.

This mistake is also being made by foolish people in our day. Some forms that this idea takes are as follows:

1. "My parents are such wonderful Christians that the Lord always answers their prayers. They have prayed so often for me, He will not let me be lost because He will not disappoint them by failing to answer their prayers."

2. "My parents are faithful members of the church, so I'll join the church to be loyal to the family tradition and to please my parents."

3. "I'll form friendships with the best Christians I know, and then people will judge me to be in their class because of my association with them."

4. "Some people are so good that if I make contact with them, some of their goodness will rub off on me, and that will put me in a safe position for the future."

This list could be extended indefinitely. The crux of the matter is that none of this will provide any measure of security in our relationship with the Lord. We must have a personal, intimate, and dynamic experience of His transforming power if we receive His approval. He has no "grandchildren," each must be a *son* to be in the family. He has no remote control followers; each must be in direct contact with Him. No one can inherit salvation, for the only genuine religion is inherent in the cross of Christ.

IV. TOMORROW'S RELIGION IS NOT ENOUGH

TEXT: "And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut" (Matt. 25:10).

The five foolish virgins decided among themselves that they had plenty of time to secure a fresh supply of oil before the bridegroom came. The bridegroom had already delayed his coming so long that in all probability his coming would be postponed indefinitely. Although they had been warned to expect him at any moment, they could not see any reason for his coming before they were adequately prepared. Their hope that there was plenty of time proved to be a disaster. When they were ready, they found that the door was closed and they were left outside.

This mistake is also being made by foolish people in our day. We know the signs of the times indicate that the coming of the Lord is at hand. The Word of the Lord gives specific instructions as to what will be required of us to have everything in readiness for that event. Nevertheless, many people say, "I plan to be ready when He comes, but there is plenty of time before I get my accounts up to date with Him." The warning signal goes out: "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh" (Matt. 25:13). When that moment comes, we will have to have everything in alignment with His will, or we will be left behind.

Man has developed many instant products—instant coffee, tea, shaving cream, shoeshine, whipping cream. You name it, we have it. But there is an instant product in the spiritual that I am more interested in than anything man has produced—that is *instant readiness*.

We will not be given a little time to write a letter, or make an apology, or pray a prayer. We must have everything in harmony with His will at the moment. Tomorrow's religion will not be enough. We must have a "twinkling of an eye" readiness if we expect to join Him at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

V. A LITTLE RELIGION IS NOT ENOUGH

TEXT: "They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps" (Matt. 25:3-4).

The five foolish virgins tried to figure out the minimum amount of oil it would take for the journey. They took a chance on coming up short rather than having a surplus at the end of the trip. They preferred the convenience of having all their oil in the lamp, and not being bothered with the inconvenience of carrying an extra vessel of oil. They figured out what they considered the exact amount needed and hoped that the bridegroom would honor their wishful thinking by making his appearance before they ran out of oil. They wanted the bridegroom to fit his program to their schedule, instead of their fitting into his schedule. Their miscalculation proved to be their heart-break.

This mistake is also being made by foolish people in our day. The chief characteristic of this type of Christian is to live on the borderline between the spiritual kingdom and the world. They try to hold on to the things that pertain to worldliness with one hand and hold on to the things of Christ with the other. These persons live far enough away from the Lord to be attracted by the things of the world. And they live close enough to the world so that they cannot enjoy the things of the spiritual kingdom with a genuine delight. They are decent in their moral life, but they are not dynamic in the area of spiritual realities. They are respectable in their decorum, but they are not radiant in their enthusiasm for the Lord.

These borderline Christians live in the twilight zone of moral judgments. In the twilight time of the day one cannot tell where the light stops and the darkness starts because everything is a nebulous gray. In the twilight zone spiritually, one cannot tell the difference between right and wrong because no clear-cut moral distinctions can be deduced.

A little religion will not be enough to pass Judgment Day scrutiny.

AUGUST—LESSONS FROM TRAFFIC SIGNS

August 6

I. "YIELD RIGHT OF WAY"

TEXT: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Rom. 6:16).

America is on wheels. The heavy traffic which crowds our highways makes it necessary to have many rules and regulations to keep the traffic flowing with any maximum of safety and a minimum of accidents. Traffic signs, traffic signals, and traffic cops are essential ingredients in maintaining order and efficiency in our mobile society. Thus traffic signs are part and parcel of our everyday experience. As these features are so prominent in our daily life, we should let them teach us some spiritual lessons.

In the spiritual realm, the mainstream of action is to let the Lord's will be done. He has wisdom enough to know what ought to be done. Thus at the point where our will intersects His will, we should erect a YIELD sign. This means that when we know what His will is, there will be no hesitation to let His will have the right of way. In other words, we will not try to veto His known will or do any back-seat driving, or offer any type of objection to the matter. Using the word of the text, we will "yield" ourselves as servants to obey Him.

When we erect a yield sign in this manner, we are saying to Him: "Not my will but thine be done; I will mind God no matter what others do; I will follow where You lead, with no strings attached."

The final conclusion of the whole matter is: "God's ways are the best ways; God's ways are the right ways; God's ways are my ways."

August 13

II. "ONE WAY"

TEXT: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his

servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Rom. 6:16).

One of the most important ways to facilitate the flow pattern of the traffic is to have one-way streets. With all traffic going in the same direction, there is a reduction of accident hazards and a smoother movement of all the vehicles on the roadway. There is no chance for a head-on collision if all drivers are obeying the ONE WAY sign. The simple device of the one-way sign has solved many traffic problems both in congested areas and cross-country highways.

One of the most important ways to bring our lives to the highest level of efficiency in the spiritual realm is to erect a one-way sign. This means that there is only one directional thrust in our lives—and that is to follow God's will, God's design and plan. There is no longer a chance for a collision of wills in which we will one thing and God wills another. Instead, our will is fused with His.

We erect a one-way sign when we "yield ourselves servants to obey." This means that we are under His absolute sway, controlled by Him, captivated by Him. The thoughts of the mind, the volitions of the will, and the affections of the emotions are under His redemptive administration.

We are no longer befuddled by a play of selves never crucified. Instead, there is only one design in our life-style, and that is to express a Christlike self. No longer are we victimized by divided loyalties; instead there is a supreme loyalty to Him. No longer are we plagued by conflicting purposes; instead there is only one purpose and that is to obey Him. No longer are we harrassed by mixed motives, instead we are monopolized by a master motive and that is to exalt Him.

This one-way style of living simplifies life because it leaves the management to Him. It gives life fulfillment because it glorifies Him. It unifies life because it blends all motives into an all-consuming desire to please Him.

III. "NO U TURN"

TEXT: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yeild yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Rom. 6:16).

One of the traffic signs that we see frequently is NO U TURN. This is to make sure that a vehicle traveling in one direction does not pull into the line of traffic going in the opposite direction. The whole idea is that the motorist should keep moving straight ahead.

In the spiritual realm, there should be signs along the highway of holiness that read, "No U Turn." Under no consideration should a person headed in the right direction entertain the idea of going back to the old life he left behind. If one makes a U turn on the way everlasting, the only alternative is to take the way of "sin unto death." The only option we have is to travel the path of "obedience unto righteousness" or the path of "sin unto death."

After being delivered from the way of sin and death, and discovering the grandeur of the way of obedience unto righteousness, one cannot return to the old habits and old haunts of iniquity without wrecking his life. When this type of U turn is made, one must increase the dosage of his ways of finding gratification, and increase the frequency of indulging in these appetites, but they are less satisfying. This leaves one empty, restless, and bankrupt in this business of living.

Life's supreme tragedy is to make a U turn on the way of righteous living, and start squandering our assets in riotous living. This course of action leaves its victim with nothing but frustration, disillusionment, and despair.

The best way to make sure that we obey the sign "No U Turn" is to declare, "My heart is fixed, my heart is fixed!"

IV. "PROCEED WITH CAUTION"

TEXT: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his

servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Rom. 6:16).

Occasionally an emergency will occur on the highway that forms an obstruction. Flares may be set out to warn the driver that he should be on the alert and be prepared to stop at any moment. Or a patrol officer will be stationed in a position to wave the traffic forward, but his presence indicates that the motorist is to proceed with caution. Or when repairs are being made, a flagman will display a sign that says either "Stop" or "Go Slow." All of these signals are designed to let the driver know that he is to be on the alert to make sure that he drives carefully enough to avoid an accident through the emergency area.

As we travel on the way of "obedience unto righteousness," we must never take our security for granted and become careless about being cautious as we move forward. We are to be on the alert to make sure that we keep everything up to date with the Lord. If we decide to coast and take it easy, we should remember that the only direction you can coast

WE DEDICATE THIS BUILDING

At last it's finished. God's building!

We've dreamed, and now
that dream's come true.

Now it stands tall, beautiful, new;
And we who've waited and watched it
grow are near to tears.

We love it so.

Slowly, softly we enter.

The Holy Spirit is in the midst of us.

The pews, the organ, the cross,
the windows, the carpet, the door
are a part of us
forevermore.

What shall our prayer be?

"Father, grant that we who come to
worship here will feel Thee
close and dear.

So as we dedicate this building
We also dedicate our lives—anew,
To Thee, O Lord, to Thee."

Billy W. Johnson

is downhill. Nothing pleases the devil more than to lull us off into a state of false security and keep us in that condition until it is too late to do anything about it.

The only manner for us to get on the way of "obedience unto righteousness" is by the deliberate and volitional choice of *yielding* ourselves to His control. This implies that we must keep ourselves yielded to the Lord day-by-day and moment-by-moment. We PROCEED WITH CAUTION to make sure that something does not enter our lives unconsciously that will throw us off course in our destiny.

We must maintain a constant awareness of the fine tuning of the Holy Spirit and perpetually "walk in the light as he is in the light" to avoid being guilty of negligence in our relationship with the Lord. Our only security is to proceed with caution.

By
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Gleanings
from the Greek

Matthew 5

"Raca" (5:22)

This is an Aramaic word. (As far as we know, Aramaic was the common language of Palestine in the time of Christ.) Thayer defines it thus: "empty, i.e., a *senseless, empty-headed man*, a term of reproach used by Jews in the time of Christ" (*Lexicon*, p. 561).

Rev. A. Carr makes this comment on "Raca": "A word of contempt, said to be from the root meaning to 'spit.'" The distinction between *Raca* and *Thou fool* is lost, and naturally, for they belong to that class of words, the meaning of which

depends entirely on the usage of the day. An expression innocent and unmeaning in one age becomes the watchword of a revolution in another."

He goes on to say: "There is, however, clearly a climax. (1) Feeling of anger without words. (2) Anger venting itself in words. (3) Insulting anger. The gradation of punishment corresponds; liable (1) to the local court, (2) to the Sanhedrin, (3) to Gehenna" (*The Gospel According to St. Matthew*, p. 120).

"Gehenna" (5:22)

"Hell fire" is literally "the Gehenna of fire" or "the burning Gehenna." Carr writes: "*Gehanna* is the Greek form of the Hebrew Ge-Hinnom or 'Valley of Hinnom,' also 'Tophet' (Jer. vii. 31). It was a deep narrow glen southwest of Jerusalem, once the scene of the cruel worship of Moloch; but Josiah, in the course of his reformation, 'defiled Tophet, that no man might make his son or daughter pass through the fire to Moloch' (2 Kings xxiii. 10)" (p. 120).

In his great masterpiece, *Paradise Lost*, John Milton has captured the horror of parents sacrificing their own children to Moloch. He describes it this way:

*First Moloch, horrid king, besmeared
with blood
Of human sacrifice and parents' tears;
Though, for the noise of drums and timbrels loud,
Their children's cries unheard that
passed through fire
To his grim idol.*

Carr makes this further comment: "After that time, pollutions of every kind, among them the bodies of criminals who had been executed, were thrown into the valley. From this defilement and from its former desecration Gehenna was used to express the abode of the wicked after death. The words 'of fire' are added, either because of the ancient rites of Moloch, or, if a Rabbinical tradition is to be credited, because fires were always burning in the valley" (p. 120). In other words, it was used as a city dump. Each morning the refuse of the city (which had no sewage system) was taken out through the Dung Gate in the south wall of the city and dumped into the Valley of Hinnom.

"Farthing" (Matt. 5:26)

The Greek word is *kodrantes* (only here and Mark 12:42). It represents the Latin *quadrans*, which was the smallest Roman coin. It was equal to about one-fourth of a cent in our money. But the nearest we can come to it in English is "cent" (NASB) or "penny" (NIV).*

"Forswear" (Matt. 5:33)

The verb is *epiorkeo* (only here in NT). It means "swear falsely," or "make false vows" (NASB). The reference is probably to Lev. 19:12. But, as the next two verses suggest, the scribes gave a great deal of attention to various kinds of oaths, trying to decide which were binding and which were not. Typically, they were concerned about legalistic trivialities, rather than the all-important issue of speaking the truth.

Jesus cut right through all this legal red tape with a single simple command, "Swear not at all" (v. 34). A. B. Bruce comments: "Again an unqualified statement, to be taken not in the letter as a new law, but in the spirit as inculcating such a love of the truth that so far as we are concerned there shall be no need of oaths." He goes on to say: "In civil life the most truthful man has to take an oath because of the untruth and consequent distrust prevailing in the world, and in so doing he does not sin against Christ's teaching. Christ himself took an oath before the High Priest [Matt. xxvi. 63]" (*The Expositor's Greek Testament*, I. 110-11).

"An Eye for an eye" (Matt. 5:38)

The Greek preposition here is *anti*, which we have taken over as a prefix in the sense of "against." But in the papyri of that period the most common use of *anti* was in the sense of "instead of" or "in place of."

That is the idea here is this Old Testament law (Exod. 21:24; Lev. 24:20; Deut. 19:21). If a person deliberately ruined another's eye, he was to have one of his eyes put out. This seems to be a cruel regulation. But its main intent was to limit the recompense to one eye

for one eye—no more! It was a matter of introducing justice into human relations.

"Coat . . . Cloke" (Matt. 5:40)

For us a "coat" is an outer garment, always worn over something else. But the Greek word is *chiton*, which meant the undergarment, the tunic worn next to the skin. So "coat" is misleading. "Cloke" is *himation*, which was the name for the outer garment.

How are we to translate these two expressions? Following Moffat's lead, the NASB has "shirt . . . coat." This is contemporary language, all right. But the problem is that the *chiton* of that day was not like our shirt, nor was the *himation* like our coat. So perhaps the most accurate translation is "tunic . . . cloak" (NIV).

"Compel . . . to Go" (Matt. 4:41)

The Greek has one word, the verb *angareno*. It is a Persian word, taken over into Greek and Latin. It first meant to press a man into service carrying the royal mail. (The Persians were pioneers in developing a postal system.) Then it was used for a Persian officer requiring a citizen to carry his baggage for him. That is probably the idea here.

There is a good spiritual application to Jesus' command, "go with him two miles." On that second mile one could witness to his faith in God, especially if the owner of the baggage expressed his surprise at the generous offer of added free service.

"Publicans" (Matt. 5:47)

This word occurs so often in the Gospels that it has become very familiar to all Bible readers. But our word "publican" comes from the Latin *publicani*. They were wealthy Romans responsible for the taxes from whole districts. The "publicans" of the Gospels were the local "tax gatherers" (NASB) or "tax collectors" (NIV). They were not "publicans."

* * *

There is only one reason why we are not hearing God speak. It is because we are not listening where He is speaking.

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How to Make New Spiritual Beginning

SCRIPTURE: Phil. 3:7-14

TEXT: Verses 13-14

INTRODUCTION: There are times in the year when the clerk at the store will say, "You'll have to excuse the delay. I'm not sure I can find your article—we are taking inventory." Signs, "Closed for inventory," are common. Paul felt that the spiritual life faced such times. He felt it important to look into heart and life and living to see if he had all he needed to keep his spiritual person well and active and achieving. So for him, and us, spiritual inventory.

I. INVENTORY IN THE AREA OF DEPTH (v. 13, "forgetting")

A. Dangers in introspection—One can think defeat and dislike; can examine, and feel for, and doubt until Christian experience is only darkness, clouds, uncertainty.

B. Nevertheless one needs to:

1. Ask with Peter if he is partaker (2 Pet. 1:4)

2. Determine with him to make election sure (2 Pet. 1:10)

C. So, in the realm of depth,

1. Do you know rightness with God and man?

2. Have you driven stakes; sold out; put all on the altar?

D. As (Heb. 6:1) "not laying again foundation" . . . settled in Christian experience.

II. INVENTORY IN THE AREA OF DEDICATION (v. 13, "this one thing")

A. Paul's one thing: reaching forth

B. We may say "one thing, yes—serving God."

C. We need, however, definite dedication

1. Time. Its proper and productive use.

2. Talent. A place to serve God in a positive manner.

3. Tithe. A meaningful method in things material.

III. INVENTORY IN THE AREA OF DETERMINATION (v. 14, "pressing")

A. Paul's distant goal: "Toward the mark for the prize."

B. Paul felt the end was worth—

1. All the discipline to duty

2. All the implications of dedication.

C. How to examine *our* determination. So determined:

1. That campfire is built in same place no two days

2. We sing, "Determined to hold out."

3. Or again, "Don't look for me in Egypt's sands."

IV. INVENTORY IN THE AREA OF DEVOTION (v. 14, "the high calling of God in Christ Jesus")

A. All things are *of God*: our very life; our daily needs; our great salvation

B. All things of God—in *Christ Jesus*

1. God gave His Son, that is true

2. Christ *was* that Son—and gave himself.

C. The sight of that Cross

1. Seeing how much He cares

2. Has called forth devotion—so we say, "The love of Christ constrains," and we sing, "I serve . . . because I love Him so."

CONCLUSION: Question is, How much do I love the Lord? Our Lord asked Peter, "Lovest thou me more than these?"

J. MELTON THOMAS

Signs of Backsliding

TEXT: 2 Pet. 1:10; 2:15, 17, 20-21

I. LANGUISHING IN RELATIONSHIP TO JESUS

A. Material things supersede spiritual things.

B. My will replaces His will.

C. Mouthing doctrinal terms replaces the reality in the soul.

II. LOSING SPIRITUAL ENTHUSIASM

A. Miserable in spirit

B. Moody in soul

C. Monotonous in living the life of Christ

III. LUKEWARMNESS IN SPIRITUAL COMMITMENT

A. Missing daily prayer

B. Minimizing Bible reading

C. Making excuses for not attending worship faithfully

IV. LOOKING FOR AREAS OF CRITICISM

A. Magnifying weaknesses in others

B. Misinterpreting others

C. Moving away from fellowship with the spiritual brothers and sisters

J. GRANT SWANK, JR.

How to Be Spirit-filled

TEXT: "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matt. 5:6)

I. RECOGNIZE A SPIRITUAL LACK OF POWER, PURITY, AND PEACE

II. REALIZE THAT THE EGO IS IN CONTROL, RATHER THAN GOD

III. RELINQUISH EVERYTHING TO GOD

IV. REACH FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT'S FELLOWSHIP IN HOLINESS

V. REST IN HIS PURE WITNESS

VI. RENEW THAT HOLY FELLOWSHIP DAILY IN TOTAL COMMITMENT

Ps. 107:9—"He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness."

Ps. 42:2—"My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God."

John 7:37—"Jesus . . . cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink."

Eph. 5:18—"Be not drunk with wine . . . but be filled with the Spirit."

J. GRANT SWANK, JR.

Our Stay

TEXT: "Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest" (Josh. 1:9).

I. GOD'S STRENGTH—"Be strong and of a good courage"

We are weak in mind and body; but in throwing our weakness onto God, our limitations, finiteness, and boundary lines become strong in Him.

"The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" (Ps. 27:1).

II. GOD'S SERENITY—"Be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed."

We are surrounded with so much to make us fear: crime, nuclear holocaust potential, etc. Yet the Lord's child knows the peace of God, for he has found Him within his world within the world.

"I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears" (Ps. 34:4).

III. GOD'S STEADINESS—"for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."

We are threatened with imbalance from all sides; so many times we feel near to "the edge." But the Father's offspring experiences the equilibrium of His right arm—the support in making steady.

"Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness" (Isa. 41:10).

J. GRANT SWANK, JR.

A conceited man is like a man up in a balloon. Everybody looks small to him. He looks small to everybody else.

* * *

It is not my ability that God wants, but my availability.

* * *

Truth has to change hands only a few times to become fiction.

The Echo

A small boy who did not know what an echo was, stood on the edge of a meadow dreaming about what was out there. He called a greeting of "Ho!" when to his surprise he heard someone answer with "Ho!"

Puzzled by this response, he called, "Who are you?" The answer came back, "Who are you?" The same voice returned with each call. He tried different calls, always to be answered with the same response.

He decided he would go to the edge of the woods along the meadow and find this boy who answered but would not tell who he was. He searched and called to him, but he could not find him or persuade him to come out.

He returned home to tell his mother about the boy in the woods who mocked him when he called. He thought the boy was poking fun by answering his calls, and was evil to hide when he went to find him.

His mother explained, "You've been hearing your echo. The words you call out come back to you. If you had called greetings of kindness to the little boy, you would have heard the same kind greetings. The echo always returns what is sent out."

You are standing on the edge of a new venture. Your field of service awaits your call, unsullied by time or things. Your opportunity for calling out words of encouragement, positive attitudes, words of kindness, is unsurpassed. This opportunity opens a clear path ahead, and according to your signals the echo will return them.

The success will be measured by you and God. Others will hear the echo returning, see results of your signals, and will look for your achievements. How well you send the message will determine what comes back in the echo.

Just as the conduct of others toward us is generally but an echo of our conduct toward them, so the results of this year will generally reflect your efforts toward the goals you set.

—Ralph W. Mosgrove



HOW TO CONDUCT FAMILY WORSHIP

1. Choose a regular time each day—either in the morning or evening.
2. The father ought to be the leader.
3. Family worship should be a happy gathering, but it must be reverent too.
4. Let the Bible be the center of family worship. The Bible reading should be clear, careful, and brief. You may wish to use a modern translation. If there are small children, you should get a children's edition of the Bible. There are also devotional materials for youngsters.
5. Follow a definite course of Bible reading, either going through one book at a time, or choosing passages which contain great verses or prayers, important events, or prophecies.
6. With young children it is sometimes better to tell a Bible story, or to read from a Bible picture book.
7. Children should be allowed to ask questions if they wish. They can also recite memory verses.
8. Prayers should be short, and the children encouraged to take part.
9. Invite friends to share in your family worship when they are visiting.
10. Remember that grace before meals is part of family worship too.

* * *

We speak of "breaking the laws of God," but actually we cannot break them. If you jump from the Empire State Building, you don't break the law of gravitation—you just break your neck.

The Ten Commandments stand today, unchanged and unchangeable. When we violate them we suffer. What we sow we reap.

God is not mocked. When we crash the pillars of God's eternal principles, we are smashed by the pillars remaining.

SYMPTOMS OF SPIRITUAL CANCER—

*Feelings easily hurt
Humiliation at any failure
Loss of interest when not appreciated
Angry when thwarted in plans
Clever at showing self to advantage
Impatient with others
Irritated when opinion is not accepted
Anxious to defend own position
Compulsion to fight those who think differently
Despising others
Blaming others
Self-pity
Chronically discontented*

* * *

*"Your task—to build a better world,"
God said. I answered, "How?
The world is such a large, vast place,
So complicated now.
And I so small and useless am.
There's nothing I can do."
But God in all His wisdom said,
"Just build a better YOU."*

* * *

*It takes a mighty conscientious man
to tell whether he's tired or just lazy.*

* * *

*An appeaser is one who feeds a crocodile,
hoping it will eat him last.*

* * *

*Use friendship as a drawing account,
if you wish, but don't forget the deposits.*

* * *

*Small deeds done are greater than
great deeds planned.*

* * *

*Even if your credit rating isn't good,
you can still borrow trouble.*

* * *

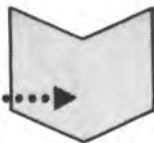
*Gossip has been described as halitosis
of the mind.*

* * *

*A man never gets so confused in his
thinking that he can't see the other
fellow's duty.*



HERE AND THERE AMONG BOOKS



Conducted by the Editor

All books reviewed may be ordered from
your Publishing House

Seven Words of Love

By Herbert Lockyer (Word Books, 1975. 165 pp., \$5.95).

This famous author writes in masterful fashion concerning the seven words of love that puzzled some listeners, perplexed others, but comforted the few around the Cross. They have influenced millions since.

This book would be a great resource book for pre-Easter ministry. The author speaks of the Love that forgives, transforms, provides, questions, suffers, triumphs, and surrenders.

OSCAR F. REED

The Hiding God

By Raymond Scott (Master Press, 1976. 185 pp., paper, \$2.45).

Excellent. Thorough. On a neglected topic. I found this book to be extremely profitable in relation to a Bible class I'm conducting on the Old Testament.

J. GRANT SWANK, JR.

Power in Preaching

By W. E. Sangster (Baker Book House, 1976. 107 pp., \$1.95).

These two classics in preaching have been republished by Baker in the *Notable Books on Preaching* in paperback. They should be in every pastor's library.

OSCAR F. REED

Telling Truth: The Foolishness of Preaching in a Real World

By James Armstrong (Word Publishers, 1977. 114 pp., cloth, \$5.95).

This book grasps the deep meanings of the preacher's task and inspires him to fulfill it as well as anything I have read in recent years. It is personally edifying—the kind of book I will urge my pastor friends to get and read.

MILLARD REED

The Fine Art of Preaching

By Andrew W. Blackwood (Baker, 1976. 165 pp., paperback, \$2.95).

Your Job—

Survival or Satisfaction?

By Jerry and Mary White (Zondervan, 1977. 190 pp., cloth, \$4.95).

Husband and wife coauthor this book. Dr. White holds degrees in electrical engineering and astronautics, serving as a mission controller at Cape Kennedy at the height of America's space activity. He also taught six years at the U.S. Air Force Academy, from which he resigned to become regional director for the Navigators.

The first part of the book deals with the basic issues of the work ethic, adverse circumstances, purpose, changing jobs, etc. The second part applies practical biblical principles to specific kinds of

jobs: hourly employee, salaried employee, homemaker, self-employed, etc.

You can spend your working hours in either frustration or fulfillment.

Learning to Listen, Lord

By Harold Rogers (Word Books, 104 pp., paperback, \$1.95).

Even though prayer may be very much a part of our lives, do we really listen to God? Does listening require a plan? If so, what kind? This book is the author's result of his search for a plan to learn to listen.

Peace with the Restless Me

By Janice W. Hearn (Word Books, 1976. 129 pp., cloth, \$4.95).

The author found herself with feelings of depression when outwardly she had everything a woman could desire. Then she met Jesus Christ and found strength and courage to confront herself and the hidden feelings she'd been repressing for

so long. She describes some of the lessons she has learned about being a fully human as well as a fully committed Christian.

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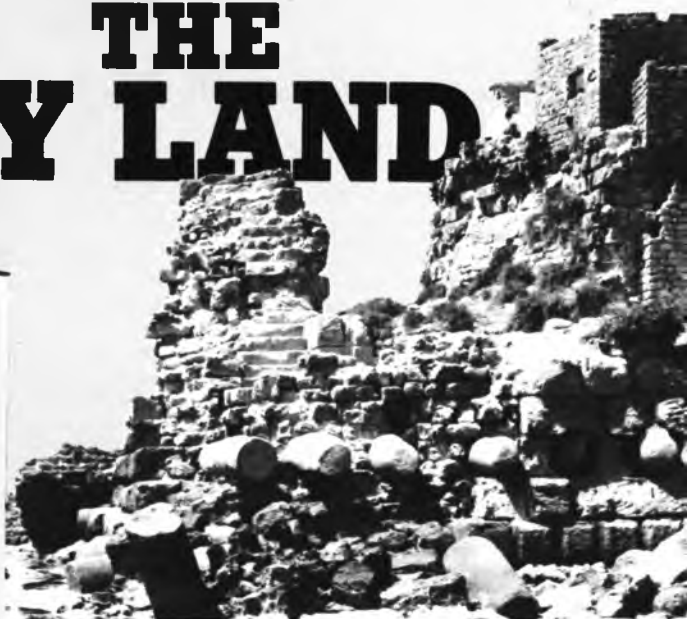
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