

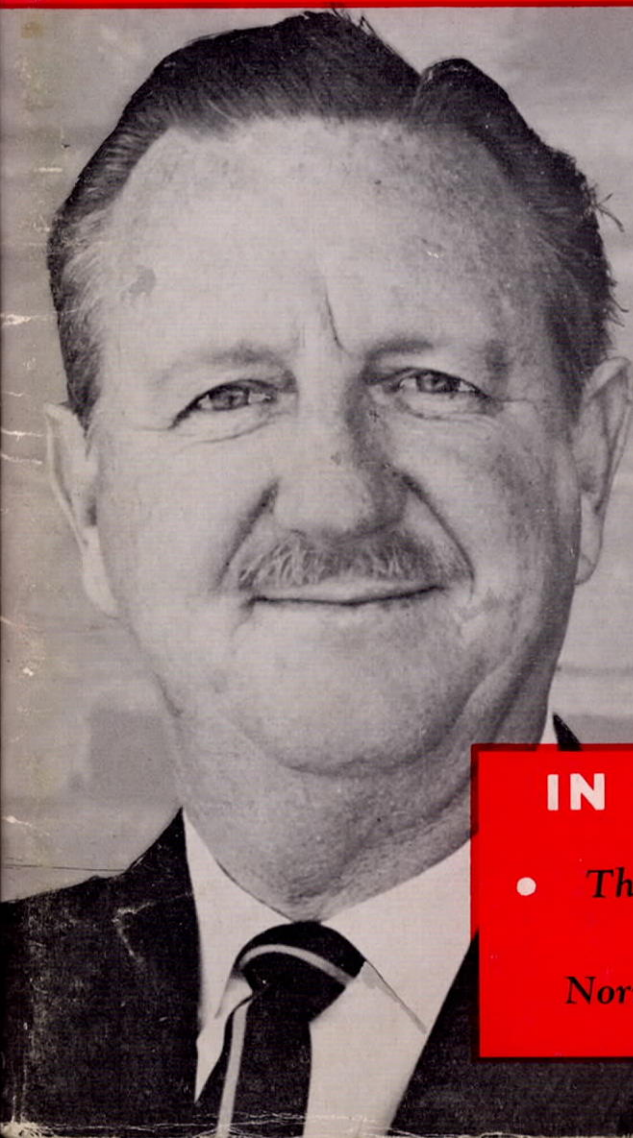
Winter 1958-59

Clear Horizons

Personal Experiences In Christian Living

72

50¢



GEORGE
A.
HALES
*Oilman &
Christian
Leader*

IN THIS ISSUE

- *The Heart of Prayer*
by
Norman Vincent Peale

● EDITOR

NORMAN K. ELLIOTT

● ASSOCIATE EDITOR

RUBY ROSKILLY

● CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

MARGUERITTE HARMON BRO
RALPH SPAULDING CUSHMAN
STARR DAILY
ALLAN A. HUNTER
FRANK C. LAUBACH
STELLA TERRILL MANN
KERMIT OLSEN
AUSTIN PARDUE
NORMAN VINCENT PEALE
WINFRED RHOADES
AGNES SANFORD

● EDITORIAL AND BUSINESS OFFICES

1571 GRAND AVENUE
SAINT PAUL 5, MINNESOTA

● SUBSCRIPTION RATES

\$2.00 for one year
\$5.00 for three years
\$.50 a copy

● MANUSCRIPTS

Manuscripts should be double spaced, typed, and should always carry return postage. We cannot assume responsibility for unsolicited manuscripts. We welcome such manuscripts however. Manuscripts that we cannot use will be returned to the writer when accompanied by return postage.

- Entered as second class matter September 19, 1940, at the Post Office at St. Paul, Minn., under the Act of March 3, 1879. Additional entry at Waseca, Minn. Published quarterly at 1571 Grand Avenue, St. Paul 5, Minn.

THE COVER

George A. Hales might come under the title of, "What God can do." Seven or eight years ago George was prepared to end his life as there seemed to be nothing to live for. He had been an alcoholic, suffered from blinding migraine headaches, and was crippled from back trouble of many years duration. After a miraculous healing and conversion it was not long before he was speaking and witnessing in churches and conferences across the country. Today he is much in demand as a speaker from coast to coast. In his seven or eight years of dynamic Christian service he has done more to help people and witness for his Lord than most Christians do in a life time. If you get a chance to hear him, don't miss the opportunity.

The Wonderful Season

DUANE VALENTY

Christmas is a time of wonder. It is a time when almost anything good can be expected to happen and often does. A time when friends remember friends and hard hearts soften as did Dickens' old Scrooge when he heard Tiny Tim cry:

"God bless everybody!"

Typical of this Christmas wonder are the three things that take place at the little town of Santa Monica, California, each year starting December 1st,—three things which have caused this dot on the map to be called "The Nativity City."

"It would take a real miracle for the churches to unite," it is often said. But unite they do, all denominations, to help put over this city's unique yuletide celebration. This might be called miracle number one.

Walk in Santa Monica's Municipal Park in the month of December and you will delight in shrine after shrine of vivid and colorful Biblical pageantry. These are the displays of twenty churches including the Methodist, Baptist, Lutheran, Catholic, Presbyterian, Episcopal, and others.

Strikingly beautiful and authentic as these impressive displays are, the churches do not attempt to outdo one another. Each simply

presents the best effort it is capable of each year, with the result that visitors (and the town now gets tens of thousands annually,) are enthralled at the spectacle. The series of tableaux, lighted by giant shadow boxes, is supervised by the local Federation of Churches.

To restore Christ to Christmas, Santa Monica has made a sincere try at decommercializing the holy season. Everywhere the visitor goes his attention is called, not to Santa Claus-shopping themes, but to the Scripture and the true meaning of December 25th.

The second "miracle" emphasizes this. Voluntarily the town's merchants give over their precious window space at the yearly peak of business, to Biblical scenes that will inspire the window-shopper and keep him in the spirit of the occasion.

These scenes, incidentally, attract more lookers than could any commercial displays. They include imitation stained glass windows, manger scenes, well-loved poses showing the Shepherds, a Mexican Madonna and Child and, in another window, an Eskimo Madonna and Child.

"What's the gimmick?" is sometimes asked. The answer is, there isn't any. Which leads to the third "miracle." In Santa Monica almost everybody gets behind the "Nativity Play" and the various

events of the month. Nobody gets paid, nobody gets personal credit, yet men, women, and children, spend long hours in preparation and in actual participation in the event.

It began in 1951, when Joan Wilcoxon, wife of Henry Wilcoxon, actor, and Cecil B. De Mille, associate, discovered authentic notes on a 13th Century Nativity Play. Although the Play required painstaking research to work out, Mrs. Wilcoxon put it into shape, gathered a group of professional players and obtained use of the city-owned Miles Playhouse. The result was success and widespread appreciation of one of the most unusual and beautiful Christmas plays ever produced anywhere.

No admission was charged except a toy for an underprivileged child; no seats were reserved. From the first performance, the demand for seats could not be satisfied, and hundreds stood in long lines before the opening. Six performances were given but the demand for seats increased.

Today, although three times as many performances are given, the play is so famed it yearly must turn away more people than the total number who see it. A special Children's Matinee is given for children, with the tiny theater jammed with excited youngsters who afterward are invited onstage

to meet the cast.

So many parents wanted their children to play the role of the Infant Jesus that the producers decided to use a different child each performance. Mothers of the babies attend a "swaddling" class to learn to wrap them in the manner of a bygone day.

"If our Nativity Play has implanted into the hearts of our audiences a deeper reverence for the feast of Christmas, if it has been a source of inspiration or help of any kind, then our humble efforts are accomplished," say the producers.

Art students, printers, musicians, businessmen, housewives and many, many others give willingly of time, talents, and facilities. Santa Monica police, for instance, give up free time to voluntarily patrol the church shrines in the park, although these have never been damaged or pillaged.

No one seems to miss Santa Claus, his reindeer or the tinsel and trees of more commercial Christmas celebrations. All who come, and they come now from many other states and countries, are too fascinated with the dignity and beauty of the proceedings.

Three hundred singers from the local churches consummate long hours of rehearsal with wonderful song that precedes the staging of the Play. The procession of choristers, holding candles high, is part

of a parade put on by the Chamber of Commerce which, like everything else, is authentic down to oxen to draw the wagons—a departure from the usual Christmas parade of toys and fantasy.

"A cynical observer," a newspaper editorialized, "might note that this in itself is a form of advertising for Santa Monica, whose citizens hope to make the city a nationwide Christmas-time shrine. But it might be truer to see the scheme as one in which genuine religious feeling parallels commercial interest. Certainly one welcomes warmly anything that turns thought in any degree toward the spiritual significance of Christmas."

Store owners have found, to their surprise, that instead of losing business as many at first feared with windows featuring religious scenes instead of gifts, there has been an increase in business over former years.

There's a genuine feeling of the real meaning of "On Earth Peace, Goodwill Toward Men" which is an inspiring example to other communities. To those who have long believed there is a definite need for taking the emphasis of commerce from the season, Santa Monica supplies the answer, at least in part, and in so doing has joyously rediscovered the Christ in Christmas!

Your Faith Has Power

by Don Gross

The man who does not believe in miracles is the man who will see none. Faith is the doorway to God. It is the eyesight that reveals the vistas of the supernatural. It is the hand that reaches out to receive pardon from sin, the lifeline that rescues from death. Faith brings the impossible to pass. Through faith the Word of God is heard and His new creation springs into being.

Faith is a magnet that draws its object to itself. William James has illustrated the power of faith by the example of a mountain-climber. The climber has come to the edge of a chasm which he must cross in order to save his life. With all the powers at his command, he can barely jump to the other side. If he does not believe he can make it, he will be fearful and hesitant. His muscles will not summon their full coordinated strength. He will fall, and thus prove his fear that he cannot succeed. On the other hand, if he believes without flinching that he can cross the chasm,

all his powers will be summoned in perfect skill and strength, and he will land unhurt on the other side. By his faith he will prove his faith.

Doctors are well-acquainted with the effect of morale upon the sick. If the patient is discouraged and filled with negative thoughts, his faith in the power of the illness tends to reinforce the illness. "I can't. Nothing can be done. It is incurable. I won't live. How sick I am! How miserable I feel!" Thoughts such as these speak to the unconscious mind in the only language it understands: suggestion, repetition, imagination. It informs the body's cells and they share in the panic. If the cause is lost, why fight? Any army would react the same way, and so does the army of cells that make up the body.

But the effect of faith can be just as strong—indeed, stronger. Is not God's power greater than that of sickness? Why not say, "I can. I will. God is healing. His loving power is reaching into every

From *The Case for Spiritual Healing*, by Don H. Gross, by permission of the publishers, Thomas Nelson & Sons, \$3.95

cell of my being, restoring, renewing. He made me. He is now re-creating me anew. Thank you, God, for bringing this to pass." By repetition, by suggestion, by exercise of the imagination, picturing health and strength as restored, the unconscious mind responds and the cells of the body respond. Even if at first you don't believe what you say, by working at it you come to believe it. Then faith proves itself by its results. "Your faith has made you well."

In order to pray for healing, we must first of all believe that God *can* heal. What right have we to go around setting limits to God's power? Has His universe somehow gotten beyond Him? We are fond of imagining that God's experience is no bigger than ours. We take our limited experience, call it "the laws of nature," and decide that God must not transgress it! We dress it up a bit so it won't sound so crude, saying, "Of course, God *could* perform miracles. But He *doesn't*." How are we so *sure* He doesn't? Only because we have such faith in His limitations!

How much better to follow the example of Jesus and have faith in God's love and in His power to bring victory! The God of Israel is *Lord* of His creation. Who are we to decide that God can't heal physical diseases, or that He can't heal cancer, or that He finds cer-

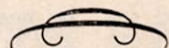
tain illnesses to be "difficult"? Just because I may find difficulties in dealing with a certain ailment, I am not justified in passing my limitations on by planting the suggestion in someone else's unconscious that such-and-such cannot be healed. Perhaps that someone else is the very one that God can use to bring about the healing.

Speculation about Jesus' use of "psychosomatic healing" is a nice exercise. But Jesus never heard of the term. His insight and His method were not due to His study of psychology, but to His closeness to God, His love of men, and His inspired insight. "He knew all men and needed no one to bear witness of man; for he himself knew what was in man." (John 2:25)

Jesus did not say, "Believe that you can be healed of those illnesses that are influenced by your mind, and no more." He had faith enough to multiply loaves and fishes and to raise the dead to life! Enough of deciding that Jesus did not multiply loaves and fishes or raise the dead because we cannot understand how He did it! Why do we fail to understand? Do we not see that God did it? Will we not believe that God can create or annihilate matter at His will?

Faith comes from the inside, too. With what faith you have, pray for more. It is God's gift. If you think you have no faith

at all, act as though you did, and soon it will come. The important thing is to *act*. By doing, you demonstrate the faith you have, and from that sprout the tree begins to grow.



THE GENTLE PEOPLE

Rowena Cheney

It is the gentle people whom we love—
 Who say so much with silence and a smile,
 Whose quiet eyes remind us that above
 The clouds, the sun is waiting, even while
 The storm is raging. Gentle people know
 The wonder of imperishable things:
 The hush of sunrise and of afterglow,
 The gray of rain, the sudden sound of wings.
 The gentle people choose the wiser way:
 Undaunted by the clamour from without,
 They hear the song of peace, and day by day
 Are led by light within. No fear, no doubt
 Dismays them. Gentle people seem to be
 Always in tune with faith . . . and harmony.

Life Exists After Death — I Know

Allison Shaver Fisk

I often dream, as most people do, and forget it completely as I waken. But once in a great while I have what I call a "vision of the night" which upon waking is still a part of my memory and I never forget it. Even years later it is still a part of my consciousness in every detail, as when it was first given to me.

This was one of these. It was in the spring of 1913. I was living at the time in Colby, Kansas. It was my first year out of college and I was teaching in the high school there, my first year's experience as a teacher.

One night, I had retired as usual. In my sleep I seemed to be standing in a wooded area in the midst of a severe thunder storm, drenching rain, and furious lightning. Two things took my attention. Ahead of me and a little to the left was a dark object on the ground and a woman with her

back to me, kneeling over it and weeping. That was in total darkness except when flashes of lightning made it visible. Then to the right in light seemingly of his own making sat a man on a stump of a tree, watching the dark object and the woman. He showed deep sadness as he watched. I recognized him definitely as an old friend of the family. We will call him Mr. Wright. In every particular he looked as natural as when I had last seen him years before.

Suddenly, he seemed to sense that another had entered the scene, and he turned and saw me. There was an instant look of recognition and he spoke with a voice of command: "Wake up, get up and write every detail of what you have seen to your father."

I opened my eyes in my room in Colby, his voice still ringing in my ears. I reached over, lit my light. It was just one o'clock in the

morning. I got up, put on a warm robe and sat at my desk and wrote every detail to Father, who lived in Topeka, Kansas. I mailed it on my way to school in the morning.

Two or three days later I received a postcard from Father. In it he said: "I am writing this from the Rock Island depot. I am on my way to Omaha to attend Mr. Wright's funeral. Your letter is in my pocket. More later."

I might stop to explain a little about Mr. Wright. He and my father had been Masonic friends for years. They had been our neighbors too. In fact, Mr. Wright was the principal of the school I had attended for the first five grades of my grammar school. Later, because of the ill health of his son, they had moved to a ranch in Nebraska to give the boy a chance to have an outdoor life to build his strength.

In later letters from Father, I gained the information that explained things in my dream that even I had not understood. On this ranch where they lived, a fierce electric storm had risen and some cows were missing. Mr. Wright and the son had jumped on horses in order to hunt for them. In one place they had to jump a fence. The boy's horse made it all right, but the other stumbled and threw Mr. Wright to the ground, breaking his neck, and he died soon afterward. The son

rode back to the farmhouse and brought his mother, riding with him on the same horse. Leaving her with his father, he went for help. This is about the time I entered the picture.

Some fifteen years later, I saw Mrs. Wright in the Union Station at Denver. As soon as she knew who I was, she said: "You will never know what your letter did for me. I still have it, for your father gave it to me. Both at the time of my husband's death and since, it has been a source of peace and knowing that nothing else could ever have given me. The afternoon of the funeral your father and I walked out to the woods and I showed him the place Mr. Wright had died. And in the exact spot you described, there was the stump he had been sitting on."

I might add too, that many years before, my father and Mr. Wright, in a deep talk about death, had promised each other that whichever one went first would make a desperate effort to let the other one know that he was still alive. Needless to say I knew nothing of this promise at the time of my "vision of the night."

This is how I know! When anyone asks me whether I believe life exists after so-called death, I always answer: "I not only believe it, I know it!"

The Best Birthday Present of All!

L. K. Twitty

Little Miss Sue Razor sat in her chair by the window and watched the busy people of Linwood hurrying to their daily tasks. Once she too had been a part of that busy throng. For forty years she had gone daily, on school mornings, to her sixth grade class at Linwood Grammar School, and to her Sunday school class of Juniors on Sundays. The inexorable retirement rules of the school board had had their way, plus a long battle with virus pneumonia the previous winter.

Tomorrow would be her sixty-sixth birthday. She wondered if

anyone would remember—anyone except her married sister Margaret and her family who lived on the floor above her. Once her birthday had been quite an occasion each year. Away back in the dim past she had told some class that her birthday was the next day. She had asked that they give her the gift of a perfect spelling and arithmetic lesson the next morning. The spelling and arithmetic of the next day were very good indeed, and the children had also each brought an apple or orange, accompanied by a short note wishing her many happy returns. She

had always thought this pleasant surprise had been instigated by little Mary Johnson, but she never knew. Other classes in subsequent years had kept up the custom and it had become a fixture.

How easy it is to slip out of the pool of life, she mused, her thoughts returning to her present situation. It is like stepping out of a pool of water—the space closes in, and it is as if you were never there. And she wondered for the hundredth time what she would do with her days, now that she felt strong and rested again. During her long illnesses she had given up her Sunday school classes too. No doubt she had been replaced by someone younger and more competent.

Margaret came into the room and brought the morning paper. "Don't forget your appointment with Dr. Horton this afternoon," she remarked. "He will be expecting you."

"I remember, dear," said Sue, "though I feel quite all right again."

"Well, you know how Dr. Horton is about his patients," said Margaret smiling.

Yes, she knew. She had taught Dr. Horton a good many years ago. He had been a serious, determined boy, but quick with his fists if he thought a classmate was being bullied or teased. But after it was all over he was the first to

offer to help bandage the skinned knees and hurt knuckles. He had acquired a national reputation for his work in blood research, but he preferred the warm rewards of his hometown practice. And along with his vitamins and tonics he bullied, cajoled, and argued his patients out of their depressions and fears, and gave them new life. They loved him, of course.

"You're good for a long time yet, Miss Sue," said Dr. Horton that afternoon, as they sat in the comfortable office. "Just take your tablets daily, as outlined, and I think you will soon feel quite well."

Sue Razor smiled. "Now that you have me all shipshape again, Henry," she remarked, "I'm sure I will be in good shape for an exciting life of knitting and chimney corner sitting."

"I can't imagine you knitting or sitting in a chimney corner," said Dr. Horton, wrinkling his nose at her. "You'll find plenty to do. Don't start fretting about that quite yet."

As she left the air-conditioned, carpeted quiet of the office and stepped into the fall sunshine, she glanced at her watch. She still had time for a little walk down by the school. Maybe she would see old George, the janitor, on the grounds and could caution him to look after the perennials she had so carefully coddled and petted

through the years. These blossoms, planted along the streets bordering the school, were known universally as "Miss Sue's flowers."

Her footsteps slowed as she approached the school and walked past the neat borders. Yes, George was caring for the rows of flaming red and bronze chrysanthemums and brilliant yellow fall daisies. She must send him a message of appreciation.

Miss Sue's eyes traveled over the familiar objects on the playground: the seesaws, the jungle gym, the swings, and the baseball diamond where her exuberant sixth graders had slugged it out at countless play periods. Yonder were the shade trees where the less athletically inclined girls had gathered to exchange lunchbox sandwiches and secrets. As she turned to go a tear coursed down her cheek, and she wondered what possible use she could be to her small world in the years remaining of her life.

Her footsteps had taken her around the corner to the familiar entrance to her own church. She opened the door, entered, and found her accustomed seat. The organist was practicing, seated high in the organ loft, and the vibrant tones of the pipes soothed and rested her troubled spirit. She closed her eyes and prayed, "God, give me some tasks for these idle hands."

When she left a few minutes later her step was lighter and she held her head higher. She even thought that Bach's melodies sounded much gayer, and that the fall sunshine shone with a new effulgence. For somehow an answer had come to her through the ministrations of the ageless music and the soothing twilight interior, "There is still work for you to do."

The next morning she awoke to a typical fall day of Indian summer. She hurried through her breakfast, eager to be at her own long-neglected flower garden. The morning passed more rapidly than she would have believed possible, and when noon came she realized that her birthday was already half over.

Her sister had inveigled her into a downtown shopping trip for three o'clock, so she was dressed and waiting when it happened. There was a vibrant ring of the front door bell, a dozen cries of "Happy birthday," and the room seemed to be filled with people. Miss Sue's hands, her chair, and the table were quickly filled with apples and oranges, complete with notes.

"Did you think we would forget, dear Miss Sue," cried Mary Johnson (now quite grown) as she clung to the astonished woman and laughed at the expression on her face.

"Oh dear, come in, I was so

surprised I forgot my manners I am afraid. Do sit down everyone."

The fruit was hastily deposited in a pile on the library table and the merry company found seats on chairs, stools, the piano bench and the generous sized settee.

Miss Sue looked around her. Why every one of them was an old student of hers. There were Sidney Kent, head of the school board; Dr. Henry Horton; Louis Wilson, her pastor; Donald Evans, the school principal; Mary Johnson, the church organist and other familiar and dear faces.

"Miss Sue," began Sidney Kent, "no one regretted more than we did that the regulations of our school board prescribe retirement at sixty-five and that you left us. However, we are not letting you leave without a struggle, and since Henry here tells us you are in fine fettle again after your bout with the virus bugs, we have a proposition to make to you.

"We would like for you to become our long term substitute, that is, a substitute who will go in and take over a class when a teacher must be out for several months, or perhaps the remainder of a year.

"Your employment would be quite steady I assure you, and you are at liberty to keep this up as long as you wish."

Miss Sue's eyes sparkled and her chin lifted, "And I can really go back to Linwood Grammar?"

she asked, hardly believing the miracle.

"Tomorrow if you wish," said Mr. Kent. "Mrs. Holt must go with her soldier husband who is being transferred, and that leaves us without a teacher for your old grade."

"And to think that I thought everyone had forgotten," said Miss Sue. "Oh thank you, each one of you, for making my birthday such a happy one."

"And your class of Juniors is clamoring for you every Sunday, Miss Sue, if you're strong enough," said Louis Wilson, taking her hand in his. "We don't want to overload your strength but the world still needs you badly."

"Don't worry about my strength, Louis," said Miss Sue, "what you people have done for me today has *given* me strength. God bless each of you."

In a little while they had all gone, and Miss Sue was alone with her pile of fruit. She opened the notes one by one and read them, thinking of the school days when the writers had written notes on other birthdays.

When she had finished she closed her eyes and said, "Forgive me, Lord, for doubting your wisdom, and thank you for the happiness you have brought. Amen."

Then she opened her Bible to read the twenty-third psalm.

Ye are my witnesses, says the Lord.
Isa. 43:10

We Are Perpetual Witnesses

Grace Noll Crowell

As Christians we are on the witness stand every hour of every day. We must know what is the truth and bear witness to that truth.

We must know intimately our risen Lord, and this it is possible to do, for has he not called us friends? We must hide his Word in our hearts that we may not sin against him. We must offer our praise clearly and convincingly, so that others may know of the divine companionship we have with our Lord. We must speak out so sincerely, so truthfully, that the jury of the world before which we stand may know we are faithful witnesses for our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

How often we should praise him with words so warm and loving, and so positive that they will become an impelling, drawing power to others!

From *Proofs of His Presence*, by Grace Noll Crowell. Abingdon Press, by permission of publishers.

Christ himself still stands before the tribunals of the world—a world ready to condemn him today as it did long ago. We must be his staunch advocates and his followers.

We stand as his witnesses, and, with his help, many an onlooker, faltering between two opinions, may be led to favor the Lord through our activities and the words we speak in his behalf.

Since we are thus important in his eternal scheme, is it not strange that we are so often alert, so active on our feet, as we go about our business of living, and that we are so seldom upon our knees in order that we may know more about the Lord and his vast eternal affairs?

He tells us to "be still, and know." He wants us to stay close to him until he can teach us the intricacies of the work of his king-

dom. Only through tarrying before him can we testify gloriously to his grace, his mercy, and his power to save. Only then can our words ring true to our fellow men, and we will forget to glorify ourselves and will glorify him—our Father who is in heaven.

We are his witnesses. No greater honor, no greater responsibility, was ever bestowed upon mankind than this—to be Christ's own devoted followers. May we strive earnestly to be faithful to that trust.

Not only should individuals be staunch witnesses for our Lord, but never before has our nation so needed to walk uprightly, and to be a true example of Christianity to the other nations of the world, as it does today.

We should set our faces toward the high goal of righteousness and not waver in the journey. This should be a day of strict obedience to the law, and the will, of God. We should inquire earnestly the way, and walk therein, never faltering. There is a perilous journey ahead, and we as a people should not attempt to travel it alone.

"Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten." The word "perpetual" is a vital, a strong word. It is good to think of it in connection with

the Lord, his will, and his work. It is blessed to think of his perpetual care, his perpetual saving power, his perpetual love that will not let us go if we but trust him.

Why should we not be perpetual in our faith, our obedience, and our devotion to him? When we make that covenant, then, and then only, shall we be marching forward to victory and peace. "Ye are my witnesses." That goal is not impossible of attainment! The Guide awaits. Let us move forward with hope in our hearts, sustained by the knowledge of a covenant between us and our never-failing Lord, a covenant not to be forgotten.

In closing may we pray the prayer of Francis of Assisi:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace; where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood, as to understand; to be loved, as to love; for it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. AMEN.

William Hordern

What's Right with CHRISTMAS

Each year as Christmas approaches two predominant notes are sounded. On the one hand, the agents of modern advertising move into high gear to push Christmas sales to a record high. On the other, clergymen and a growing number of laymen raise the cry that Christmas has become paganized, that we must join forces to fight the trend and "put Christ back into Christmas." Church circles have heard so much in recent years about what's wrong with Christmas that there is serious need to raise the question, "What's right with Christmas?"

Christmas has developed into the most joyous of our holidays, almost synonymous with the idea

of fun and pleasure. It has indeed become commercialized, but the commercialism is intimately related to the fun of the season, its gift-giving and its celebrating. Does this justify the charge that the "real meaning" of Christmas has been lost? Does this mean that it is paganized?

There is nothing new about Christian criticism of Christmas celebration. Many of our American forefathers, holding to a puritanical tradition that looked with suspicion on pleasure and fun, condemned the observance of Christmas as an invention of the devil. But I cannot help wondering if the many charges against the paganization of Christmas are as

Reprinted by permission of *The Christian Century* from the issue of December 19, 1956.

relevant to God as they seem to be. I am not trying to justify all aspects of the modern Christmas, nor am I simply deploring attempts to reform our present practices. There certainly is room for improvement. But I am arguing that the church's attitude to the modern Christmas should not be purely negative. There is much of Christ that has never been missing from Christmas.

Part of the negative reaction to Christmas arises from a tendency that is still strong in our culture to look with disfavor upon frivolity, fun, and pleasure. About the only times when the lighter pleasures are treated in religious circles are when they are treated negatively. Pietist groups condemn the common pleasures and call upon their followers to refrain from dancing, card playing, movies, smoking, drinking, and the other "sins" on the roster. Less strict clergymen often point to the shame we should feel because we spend much larger sums on such pleasures than we give to religion. We hear much about how Christianity is to be applied to politics, to social problems and so on. But we hear little about how Christianity is to be applied to the World Series, to golf matches, or to the movies. We have many brilliant analyses of the place of religious values in "serious literature," but we hear little about the relation of

Christianity to detective stories or musical comedies. Yet if Christianity is to be relevant to the whole of life, how can we leave out the important realm of pleasure?

The failure to wrestle positively with the question of how pleasure can fit into the life of the Christian is at all times a serious shortcoming. But as we stand on the threshold of the age of automation and the prospect of more leisure for all, the failure to come to terms with pleasure may be catastrophic. As man spends less and less time in his work and more in relaxation and recreation, it will be tragic if the church finds itself unable to relate Christianity to pleasure as well as to work. The Christmas season offers the perfect opening for a Christian interpretation of pleasure.

It is significant that many of the major heresies that have threatened the life of Christianity have been heresies that attacked the goodness of creation. Christianity has always been haunted by a Manichaeist dualism that finds the material world evil and the spiritual world good. Early Gnostics went so far as to repudiate the God of the Old Testament; only an evil power, they believed, could be responsible for a world like ours. Naturally such a belief had to deny the reality of the incarnation. God did not really become

man, they said; he only appeared to do so. Certainly Jesus was divine, but he was not really human: he did not really eat and drink, suffer and die. Such beliefs resulted inevitably in an ascetic repudiation of the pleasures of the flesh. Wherever pleasure or fun is looked upon with suspicion or disapproval, something of this old Gnosticism lives on in the life of the church.

If the heresies of Manichaeism and Gnosticism have ever been near the church, the Christmas season is the continual refutation of such views. The Christmas message is that the God who created the world came into his own creation to redeem and save it.

Ye who sang creation's story
Now proclaim Messiah's birth.

The Word that was active in creation became flesh in Christ to live, die, and rise again in order that man might be reunited with God. Is this not indeed "Good News"? Can we celebrate such a gospel without being joyous?

Furthermore, if we ask what kind of man God became when he came to earth we find nothing to justify the ascetic approach to Christianity. Jesus was criticized for not being more ascetic by those who called him "gluttonous and a wine-bibber." He was the kind of man who, when at a wedding where the drinks had given out, did not insist that everyone cease fri-

volity and go home to meditate on important matters. On the contrary, he supplied more wine for the celebration. He enjoyed the beauty of nature, the play of children. When God created the world he saw that it was good, and when he became man he showed us how to enjoy the goodness of his creation. Suspicion of pleasure comes from pagan philosophy, not from the Christian gospel.

Because creation's Lord is also the God who is incarnate in Christ, pleasure must hold a place in the worship of God. We cannot worship God completely if we leave out the fact that pleasure is one of God's gifts to man. Many men come to God through their sorrow, anxiety, and pain. We ought not to forget that fact, and we are not likely to do so. But in his autobiographical account of how he became a Christian, C. S. Lewis reminds us in his title, *Surprised By Joy*, that joy can also be a means of bringing us to God. And even the man who comes to God through his sorrows must sing with joy when he arrives. Of course, if the pursuit of pleasure monopolizes a man's life, it can cause him to forget God. But it is equally true that pain, dedication to one's work, even service to others can crowd God out of a life.

Protestantism in particular should be able to reinterpret the importance of pleasure and take a

more positive view of the joyous Christmas season. Protestantism repudiated monasticism and turned man again to the common life as the proper place to serve God. But more important still, the Protestant doctrine of salvation by grace ought to enable us to see the importance and necessity of pleasure for the Christian.

Salvation by grace is the doctrine that confesses man's complete dependence upon God. Neither my salvation nor the salvation of the world depends ultimately upon what I can do, but upon God's grace. Martin Heineken* has revealed how deeply Kierkegaard understood the relationship between salvation by grace and the acceptance of pleasure in life: "For though one may quickly say that a man is nothing before God, it is so difficult existentially to express it." And so the Christian turns in humility from the feverish attempt to do God's work and takes his relaxation. Kierkegaard says: "And why does he enjoy himself? Because it is the humblest expression for his God-relationship to admit his humanity, and because it is human to enjoy himself." That is, we can dedicate our pleasure to God not only because we wish to glorify the goodness of the Creator,

*In *The Moment Before God*. (Muhlenberg, 1956.)

but also as a means of confessing our humble dependence upon God alone.

We have been told recently in a national magazine that there is an alarming number of nervous breakdowns among American ministers. I do not know to what degree this is actually true. But as one watches a man—minister or otherwise—destroying his physical and mental health in service to others, one wonders: Is this the selfless love of a man so afire with the love of God that he cannot cease for a moment's rest from his good works? Or is this man perhaps intoxicated with a sense of his own importance? Does he believe himself to be indispensable? If he is so important in his own eyes that he cannot allow himself time for relaxation or fun, such a man needs the healing spirit of Christmas to remind him that we depend upon God's act in Christ. Because we depend upon God it is appropriate that we should "let down our hair" and confess our dependence by having a good time.

Of course, such advice could be used as rationalization. A minister might refuse to work on his sermon all week to show his reliance upon God. But any truth may be used for rationalization. This is rationalization because such a man is not really showing faith in God; he is making his own

pleasure and ease the all-important factor in his life. Pleasure must be a part of the Christian's life, but it is not meant to be the whole. Only the man who has dedicated his best work to God can honestly worship God by humbly offering also his time of pleasure. Both pleasure and work should be dedicated to God.

In the light of the importance of pleasure in the Christian life, what is right with the modern Christmas? Granted all the cheap commercialization, is there any point at which a family comes closer to the God of creation and incarnation than when the expectant children run breathlessly to the Christmas tree to find their presents? The child cannot understand the full implications of the incarnation, but the festival of Christmas clearly implants in his mind and in his subconscious the connection between the birth of Christ and the reality of joy. Later he can be led to see the reason for this intimate connection. What is right with Christmas is that men

instinctively recognize that the appropriate response to the Christmas message is to enjoy themselves. This is not paganization; this is the real meaning of Christmas.

Perhaps our problem is not to put Christ back into Christmas. He was always there. Our problem is to get Christ into the other 364 days of the year. Perhaps the real danger of the commercialized Christmas is not that the name of Jesus needs to be mentioned more often. Jesus was not impressed by the people who persisted in calling him "Lord, Lord." The real danger may be that in the hectic rush of preparing for the modern Christmas so much of the fun goes out of the season. The emphasis upon pleasure and a good time does not make Christmas pagan. How better can we celebrate the fact that God became a man who ate and drank and was called a glutton and a wine-bibber than by having a boisterously good time? That much, at least, is right with Christmas.



Donald Coons Didn't Quit With Polio . . .

by Beth Brown

You will find his name in the society columns. He belongs to the very best clubs in New York. As a boy, he attended the most exclusive of private schools. And why not?

He was born with the proverbial silver spoon in his mouth.

But life can use that silver spoon to serve some very bitter medicine. And you either take it, and go on—or refuse it, and give up.

This is the story of a stoic who went on.

Donald Steven Coons was born exactly thirty-two years ago in a thirty-room mansion at Wyncote, Pa. The place is now being used as a home for old folks. But in

those days it rang with the young laughter of a boy who was strong and happy and full of the zest for life.

He grew up in a privileged world, sheltered from care and problems. He was a rich man's son. He had everything money could buy for him. He attended famous St. Bernard, joined the fashionable Knickerbocker Greys, and spent four years at Taft where he made a brilliant record on the soccer team.

Then he went to Yale. Play as well as work of one sort or another was on his program. He registered as a counselor at a summer camp. He spent two years as a staff sergeant with the

A man may be
born with a
silver spoon
which he may
allow to tarnish.
Or he can de-
termine to change
his fate and
keep it bright.

Field Artillery, a rocket unit in the army during World War II. He moved with swift dispatch from an active boyhood to an even more active manhood.

Then it happened.

He never forgot that day. He didn't feel well that morning and decided to consult a doctor. A friend offered to come along. He left him in the reception room of the Mary Hitchcock Memorial Hospital while he went inside by himself.

A receptionist nurse was seated at the desk, busy over her records. She looked up with a smile. But her smile soon faded when he said to her: "Here I am. I think I've got polio."

"Sit down," she ordered. She took out a card and began asking questions.

He remembered his name but, for the life of him, he just couldn't recall his address. A lot of things faded out after that. They wheeled him into a room. It was very hot. He complained to the nurse that he couldn't breathe. He asked for a fan. Instead, they brought in an iron lung.

Of course, this annoyed him and he made no bones about it. They made no bones about his condition either. He was very sick and they knew it.

His temperature kept climbing steadily—higher and higher. His flight was becoming more and

more dangerous. The temperature finally reached 106°. The doctors were grave. Another nth of a degree and he would be dead. His life would be finished. They would wheel him out as they had wheeled him in and another body would take over his bed.

In the midst of the crisis, the telephone rang.

The call came from the camp director where he had worked as counselor. They told him Donald was very ill. There was no hope, they reported. How could there be hope for a man with a temperature of 106°?

"Well, you've heard the old saying," retorted the camp director, "where there's life there's hope!" And with that, he hung up. But he did not give up.

He raced out to the field and began to ring away at the big iron camp bell. This bell was used in emergency or to call the whole camp to attention. There was an emergency now. One of their own was in the hands of death. What could be done to give him back to life?

The camp director rang and rang that noisy, iron bell so that everyone—everywhere—heard it. And everyone came. They poured from the tennis courts. They climbed out of the swimming pool. They dropped whatever it was they were doing and joined the sea of uplifted faces.

The camp director told them about Donald Steven Coons. What could they do? There was one thing that always worked. Maybe a hundred boys could pray together. A prayer like that had power. It might even perform a miracle.

And so, one by one and two by two, at exactly ten minutes to three o'clock, the campers and their counselors filed solemnly into the Chapel. They joined in prayer for Donald Steven Coons.

Later that evening, the camp director called the hospital, the doctor again came to the phone. He said he couldn't understand what had happened but just as he had given up all hope for Donald—at 3 P.M. sharp, the patient's temperature began going down—down—down. It went down at a dizzy pace until it was practically normal.

Donald lived. With the passing days, he grew a little better. Of course they told him that he would never get out of the iron lung. But he made up his mind to either be free or die in the attempt.

As you probably know, an iron lung does your breathing for you. Anyone trying to break its iron hold finds himself climbing a vertical mountain. But Donald decided to climb it. He asked to be free for one minute every two hours, then two minutes every three

hours, in this way getting his own breathing muscles to act.

A relapse set in. He started turning blue. But he continued trying. He finally lasted a day and a half. A total relapse followed this excursion into the world of free air and freedom. True, it set him back, but it also proved to him that he could last a day and a half. This gave him the courage to get out again. He decided to get out altogether—and in the end, he made it.

What was his program after that? Well, he spent two and a half years in a rehabilitation hospital. He chalked up thirteen months at the New York State rehabilitation hospital, eager to give walking one more try. But he failed. Today, he must use a wheel chair to get around in his world.

But it's not a small world, nor a dark one. He drives a car. He holds down a job with Smith, Barney & Company, investment brokers. He has a great and rewarding life work in the George Junior Republic, a self-governing community situated in Freeville, New York, for boys and girls who are victims of parental delinquency.

Yes, a man may be born with a silver spoon which he permits to tarnish. Or—like Donald Stevens Coons—he can determine to change his fate—and keep it bright and shining!

We have many months and years ahead of working to claim the minds and hearts of men for God.

They Increase Church Attendance Through Television

Alfred K. Allan

In New York City, a determined group of Protestant faithful labor to further an old idea with a new method. The old idea—church-going: the new method—television. Their group is called the Broadcasting and Film Commission, a section of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A. The Commission's members represent some twenty denominations.

Bishop Donald H. Tippett of the San Francisco area recently stated, "Television is the greatest

medium the church has yet found to reach into the homes of countless families who have no church connection." The Commission has taken up the vital challenge implicit in Bishop Tippett's statement and they are fulfilling it with significant and noteworthy success.

In 1958 the Commission will invest close to two million dollars to promote the distribution of more than 55,000 religious broadcasts and telecasts to be produced by several major Protestant church bodies. This is indeed a far cry

from the modest budget and plans upon which the Commission was founded, back in 1950.

At that time there were about six Protestant radio commissions in existence who worked independently and with some individual success. These groups decided that much more could be gained if they joined forces, although the work would still be done on a local level. Through the National Council this historic merger was effected. In their use of the most influential communications mediums of all time—radio, television, and the motion picture—combined with the experience of the ministry through the centuries in drawing people to religion, they would now be working together to build the Kingdom of God.

Ronald Bridges, the Commission's Executive Director during these formative years, describes their early struggles in this way: "To call this a trying period is to use gentle language. We missed some deadlines, painful to remember, and we did some makeshift programming that we aren't proud of. But, speaking for myself, I am proud of the diligence and loyalty of the staff and the committees that enabled us under difficulties to keep in business and to grow in the confidence and esteem of our constituents."

It is probably in the field of television that the Commission's

achievements can best be mirrored and appraised.

The Commission's first major cooperative television program was "Frontiers of Faith" which began in 1951 on thirty-five stations. This program is a prestige type of religious variety show which is operated on an alternating week's basis with non-Protestant faiths. Today the program is representative of the Commission's overall growth, for it is now carried on ninety-two stations throughout the country and its listening audience is estimated at a highly satisfying two and a half millions.

In February, 1952, the Commission first put on the air a television program later slated to become its most successful endeavor. In time it would garner an audience of over six million listeners and be broadcast by more than two hundred stations. The program is called "What's your Trouble?" In an unelaborate but highly effective manner the program, employing the services of beloved Dr. and Mrs. Norman Vincent Peale, attempts to answer the personal problems of listeners by suggesting practical and workable techniques which combine the teachings of both religion and psychology.

This program has been instrumental in solving many a listener's "troubles." In fact, several times Dr. Peale's kindly words of advice have even deterred would-be sui-

cides and given them hope for the future.

Dr. Peale, in speaking of the program's many accomplishments, says, "Many listeners are going to church for the first time. More important, they are putting into practice the spiritual living techniques suggested on television."

Probably no better example of this could be found than in this incident in the life of one listener, a traveling salesman. Because he was on the road at the time the program was regularly televised in his home town he developed a clever method to make sure he would still be able to hear the program. He tape-recorded the program by using an automatic clock which he set up beside his television set at home and which started the recording machine moving as soon as the program went on the air. Then he could listen to the program, from his tape recorder, during free moments at any time. Before this the man hadn't given much thought to spiritual values. He hadn't been to church in twenty-five years, but through the influence of this program he soon became active again in religious matters.

Missouri Synod officials had previously made an exhaustive two-year study to determine what would be the most proper and effective format they could use for their contemplated program. As

Pastor Herman W. Gockel, the program's religious director, explains it, "I and those who agreed with me cited the precedent of the Saviour. He told dramatic stories, and they were so effective that the whole world knows them. We call them parables."

Events since have substantiated the Pastor's viewpoint. Hundreds of thousands of letters from listeners, at the rate of about a hundred a day, flood the program's headquarters at the Lutheran Building in St. Louis. They all attest to the spiritual happiness their writers have found through viewing the true-to-life experiences of the program's symbolic American family, called the Fisher family, as each week they learn, in different ways, the gospel of personal forgiveness through the redemption of Jesus Christ.

One listener's letter is representative. A woman wrote that her husband had become a chronic alcoholic because he was dissatisfied with his job. The program's staff immediately referred the woman to a minister in her locality. A short while later, a second letter was received from the woman. In it she reported that the minister and her husband had had a long, serious discussion and that the minister had helped her husband find a better job, with the result that the husband, his attitude completely changed for the better, had

been appointed to a post of trust in the parish.

At the Illinois State Prison at Menard, another important use of the "This is the Life" programs has been established. The prison's chaplain, Pastor Henry F. Gerecke, has the programs shown regularly to the prison's inmates. Each program's showing invariably prompts some prisoners to visit the chaplain, to discuss seriously their personal problems and to seek the Chaplain's counsel. Other prisons have followed Pastor Gerecke's example with similar success.

Missouri Synod officials aptly state: "We believe the series benefits Christians of all denominations as well as those families in the TV audience who have no church affiliations."

Today, the Commission continues to blaze new frontiers in religious television. Their programs are uplifting the spiritual attitudes of millions of people across the country. "The Pastor," a religious discussion series featuring Dr. Robert E. Goodrich Jr., of Dallas, Texas, is broadcast over 180 stations. "Look Up and Live," a religious variety show for un-

churched teenagers has an audience of one and a half million. A more recent addition to religious television is "Here I Stand," which utilizes the services of many prominent Protestant clergymen.

To keep Protestants in step with their rapidly advancing programs, the Commission recently added a new variant to its schedule, the Radio and Television Workshop. Here ministers, youth leaders, church leaders, and any other interested persons are gathered together where, under expert guidance, they are taught the varied and intricate techniques that go into radio and television programming. Registration fees for the courses are moderate, between \$15 and \$35, and workshops have been held in New York, St. Louis, Denver, Atlanta, and Albuquerque.

In seven years of feverish activity the Commission has accomplished much but of course there is always more yet to be done. In the resolute words of Ronald Bridges, "We have great months and years ahead—months and years of working to claim the hearts and minds of men for the Lord God."

This cellar of our mind needs regular cleaning.

CLEAN UP YOUR SUBCONSCIOUS MIND

Katherine Bevis

Modern psychology has done one thing, if not many more. It has made us aware of a hidden self—this hidden self composed of memories and impressions that seem to never be forgotten.

We know that in a dream there will sometimes rise into the stream of thought a memory that you may not have thought about for years. Perhaps there have been times when you could not remember a name; yet if you will just let the matter rest a little while, it will come back to you.

The psychologists have given a name to this abiding place of bits of information, this storage room which contains conflicts that destroy as well as energies that make one great—the name, the subconscious.

It might help us to think of this region as a kind of cellar—for it is truly the "cellar of the human personality."

Some cellars are musty and damp, some infested with vermin, whole other cellars are kept fresh and clean by throwing open the windows and doors and letting in light and fresh air so that they

are kept dry and the entire region is freshened up.

This cellar of our mind needs regular cleaning—and it is much more important to clean the rubbish and the dirt from this cellar than it is to keep the cellar of our homes fresh and clean. And how can we do this?

This cellar is a kind of engine room where the real energies of life are generated, and we need to be careful of the "fuel" we use. Our thoughts that we have in our conscious mind have a way of trickling down into this cellar—they are the fuel that generates this engine—and in order to keep the walls of this cellar whitewashed, the air fresh and clean, and not allow rubbish and dirt to collect, we must keep fear, and hate, and negative thoughts out of it.

When we keep this cellar in a good, fresh, clean condition, it is as much a help to our everyday living, to our health and happiness as is a complete filing system in the business world.

A direct approach to this cellar—an approach which makes a great deal of difference in whether

we are sick and unhappy, or healthy and happy—is through prayer. Have you ever felt a power stealing over you that seemed to agitate you, to put fear into your very being? The power of prayer can make such an entrance into this cellar that all fear and frustration are driven out, just as the open window and door drive out the mold and dampness from the cellar in our home.

Not only does prayer make an entrance into our own “cellar” in such a way as to clean out all the negative thinking, but we can help our fellowman clean out his cellar and whitewash its walls.

A great Christian whom I call my friend, and in whom I have confidence, told me that sometimes he will stand alone in an empty room, turn in the direction of a person for whom he is praying, call his name three times, and then ask God for the blessing he wants for that person.

Such praying seems to make it possible not only to help the other fellow with his positive thinking and keeping his cellar clean, but also to help us.

We can by no means ever exhaust what Christ can mean to us in regard to keeping this cellar clean and healthy. It is not a matter of some secret formula; it is the matter of putting our heart, our mind, our entire life completely in the hands of a loving Saviour.

When we do this, we shall know more health, and happiness, less strain, less fatigue, less frustration, more peace, more joy, more energy.

Let's decide today, beginning this very moment, to have a cleaning time for the cellar of our soul. Then let's be careful of the kind of fuel we keep in the engine room. It is amazing what a fresh, clean cellar can do for us and for those about us.

★

★

NOTE

★

★

Have you shared your CLEAR HORIZONS with a friend? And have you wished still others could read it? We wish we could answer all the needs of those who write to us for gift subscriptions. These are missionaries, retired ministers, “shut-ins,” and those in foreign lands who cannot send money out of their country. We do what we can, but cannot fill all the requests. If you would like to add a love gift to this fund send your contribution to: Gift Fund, Clear Horizons Magazine, 1571 Grand Ave., St. Paul 5, Minn.

by Robert B. Doing

The Practice of “Listening” In Prayer

We have asked God for good health, adequate supply, and protection from harm. We have praised and thanked Him for His many blessings. We have become willing to surrender our lives to Him. Now, in order that the surrender may bear fruit, *we ask Him to let us know what He wants us to do.*

The practice of two-way prayer, of listening as well as speaking to God, ultimately becomes a constant factor in the Christian's daily life.

Many of us have found that it begins with a *regular* time of quiet and disciplined attention to God in the morning.

A willingness to sacrifice a half-hour, or an hour, of sleep in order to meet God in the morning quiet, calls for some gumption to begin with. At first it is a matter of sheer discipline. But if we prepare for it the night before, both in the matter of the hour of retiring and in our thoughts on going to sleep, we soon find our morning communion with God to be a joy.

To read something from the Bible as the last thing before disposing ourselves for sleep tends to set the course our subconscious minds will take during the hours of rest, and also conditions us so that we will better hear His voice in the morning. For this is our need, to become sensitive to the still small voice of God who seeks always to initiate in us His purposes which we alone can carry out—as each of us is distinct from every other, with a special task that is ours alone.

For many years, while in business in New York City, I spent the greater part of my first hour awake in reading from the Bible and prayed certain set prayers, including PSALM 23 and a prayer of St. Francis of Assisi, praying for my loved ones and for and about special persons, projects, and problems. Then I used to spend a good third of the time in simple attention to God, willing to let my thoughts take His course.

During that period of listening I heard no actual voices, but certain

From *Faith at Work*, May-June 1958, by permission of the publishers at 8 West Fortieth St., N. Y.

thoughts would come which, if later followed out in action, produced good results. I learned that no task is too small for God's interest, nor any work too great for His capability, and with the extension of this practice I found my horizons broadening, my goals becoming greater, and their accomplishment more certain. I am sure that God has given me guidance in this way.

I feel that there is no adequate substitute for this practice of starting the day with God. As time goes on, we live more and more "in the Kingdom," maintaining a working relationship with Him all the day, a habitual divine orientation. But this relationship still starts each day, at the time we first tune in, and happy are those who awake with the cry in their hearts, "Blessed be the Lord!"

A little verse that a clergyman friend taught us has been a blessing on many a gray morning:

*Every morning, lean thine arms
awhile*

*Upon the window-sill of Heaven,
And gaze upon the Lord . . . ,
Then, with that vision in thy
heart,*

Turn strong to meet thy day.

Vivid in my memory are times, early in the new life, when during the preoccupation of my busy worldly activities I would forget God for an hour or two and then awoken with a shock to the reali-

zation that I had left His presence completely.

These times of separation no longer happen because long communion with Him has cemented a bond that keeps the tie between us firm, even when attention is focussed on the affairs of living. After periods of such concentration when attention directly to God is renewed, it is taken up as if it had never been left off. There is no shock or sense of separation to be bridged.

Alternation of attention has given way to "simultaneity," as Thomas Kelly describes it in his "Testament of Devotion." God's Presence has always been operative, guiding, strengthening, informing these other activities with meaning.

Such a relationship has been described as being akin to the awareness a new mother has of her baby, whether she is awake or asleep. She is in "the baby kingdom," and will respond to the slightest sound from the crib.

Let us cultivate that kind of awareness to the heavenly voice so that our mornings may be bright with expectation, our noontdays alive with hope, and our evenings full of "the peace that passes understanding."

"This then is the message which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.

Love, the great modifier, is the alchemist of the soul.

Love — the Universal Solvent

ENOLA CHAMBERLIN

For years man has tried to find a universal solvent, not realizing that he had it all the time in the God-given beaker of love within his heart. He has hunted for perpetual motion when no motion can ever be more perpetual than the turning of the wheel of love rolling down all time and across all space. He has sought the philosopher's stone that he might turn base metals into gold. While always, since life began, this stone has been his. Love, the great modifier, is the alchemist of the soul.

I remember when I was a child two men who, bitter enemies, had sworn to kill each other on sight. Then one of them fell in love and married a beautiful woman. His love for her became so powerful a force within him that it dissolved the hard core of hatred in his heart. He could no longer be enemy to anyone. Shortly thereafter the two met in my father's yard, the one still cankered with hate.

"If you were not on my friend's property I would kill you," he said.

"No, you wouldn't, Tom," the other man said. "You couldn't kill a man who loves you."

Tom's mouth fell open. "You mean—" he began.

"Yes," the other man said. "Christ said Love your enemies, but you can't do that. When you love a man he is no longer your enemy."

Tom's mouth fell open a bit farther. "And I wronged you in the beginning," he faltered.

"No matter now. It is forgotten."

Tears stood in Tom's eyes. He strode over, holding out both hands to his friend. Love, the universal solvent, had dissolved everything except love itself.

Someone once said, "Love is not a garment to be put on and taken off; it is a way of life." And that is true. Love must come from the inside. It must be the

warp on which we weave the woof of our days and years. Just to love is not enough, however. We must be love. We must have the fountain of it bubbling within us at all times; a fountain which has its beginning in the source of all love—God.

A child loves as naturally as it breathes. A baby cooing in the dark of night is the age-old sound of love. What does the baby love? Who knows? And what does it matter? It loves, that is enough. Put your face near it and a little rose leaf hand comes up and touches your cheek with fairy gentleness—the expression of love.

Laugh and the world laughs with you may not always be so because a lot of people do not have a sense of humor. But love and the world loves with you is as true and sure as the sunrise. Did you ever see a person filled to overflowing with love who did not infect all with whom he came in contact? John Muir loved the woods and the little creatures in them. Thousands of other people now have an approximation of that love because of him. Audubon loved the birds, and societies have been founded on that love. Doorways have been opened into thousands of hearts where birds are safe in love. God so loved the world, and Christ so loved men—and that was two thousand years ago and yet the perpetual motion

of the wheel of love goes on and on.

When we are at cross purposes with the world, when it seems as if life has made little circles and shut us out, we should each one of us examine his heart. Is it running along smoothly on the ball bearings of love? Is it making wider circles? Or are rough edges of non-love, of discord hampering its function?

Love must be expansive, never restrictive. It must be inclusive, never exclusive, or it is not the love that is filled with power. Love the rose that grows in your neighbor's garden. Love the bird that nests above your door. Love the children who race along your street. Love the people of other cities, other countries. Love them regardless of race, creed, or color. Love, just love, and you will find that you have tapped the greatest power known to man. You will have tapped the power God used when he made the world. You will have tapped the power of Christ. And you will have found happiness, contentment, and peace. You will have found the universal solvent, which will break down the core of every adverse emotion into the fluid of love. You will have found the philosopher's stone that turns every base metal into the gold of love. You will have found life as God meant for us to live it on the earth.

THOUGHTS ON THE APPLICATION OF SPIRITUAL TRUTH AND PRINCIPLES TO GREATER LIVING

by Norman K. Elliott

Thoughts Farthest Out

GET UP, AND WALK!

"Rise, take up thy bed, and walk." (John 5:8) . . . A disability is no excuse for disinterest, frustration and self-pity. There is likely no one on the earth who does not wish they were made just a little differently. Maybe there is an inner fear, and though it may not show on the surface it is a constant reminder to the one afflicted that something is wrong. He wishes he had been made differently. Others have more obvious handicaps — blindness, lameness, speech defects, scars, seizures — and their wish to be different is perhaps more understandable. The main thing to remember, however, is that the disability in itself is not as important as your reaction to it.

The man at the pool associated with those who were sick, and after thirty-eight years, it would be inevitable that he should acquire a "sick consciousness." Instead, associate with those you want to be like. Don't handicap your consciousness! Associate with the things that are strong, radiant and overcoming because associations are contagious. Associate with those who are striving to overcome and improve themselves. If you do not then it will not be long before you acquire a defeatist attitude and expect others to do for you what you ought to be doing for yourself.

Make up your mind that you want to overcome whatever your weakness happens to be. Time after time Jesus asked those who came to him for healing, "Do you *want* to be well?" The man at the pool had been there for thirty-eight years, but he never ceased *striving* to enter the pool. I am sure that it was this continual striving that drew Jesus' attention to him. He never made friends with his disability. The hunger and yearning of his nature pulled its answer out of the universe.

The end of the story is where Jesus said, "Take up your bed and walk." Unspoken, but implied, is the word, "you". "You take up your bed etc." The power resides *within you*, just like the Kingdom of Heaven resides within you. Begin where you are. "Your bed," whatever your particular bed might be, will still be there. Your handicap will still be

there at the beginning, and you will have to make up your mind not "to lie in it," "not to make friends with it." Start walking with it. Begin today. Pick up the thing that has you anchored, and *walk* with it. That effort and determination, with God's help, will turn the weakness into wings of strength.

Read: **Faith, Hope and Love** by Starr Daily. \$3.00

WHERE ARE THE NINE?

"Then said Jesus: *Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine?*" (Luke 17:18) . . . Most people hold the problems of their lives so close to the eyes of their minds that they fail to see anything but problems. One of the more efficient ways to get power and the realization of God's power in your life is to pay attention to the problems that have been solved. What did you pray for a month ago? Do you know? Most of us do not have any idea what it was that troubled us enough to pray a month ago. The reason we do not remember (most of the time) is that those problems have faded away. They have been taken care of and lost their power to command our attention. But we hardly ever think of these "answered" prayers. We have given attention to other things we would like to be rid of.

Get into the habit of giving thanks for what has been accomplished. Hold a daily tryst of gratitude. Some prayer groups begin their meeting by, first of all, going over the list of prayer projects they had the last time and seeing what has taken place. They "check up" on their prayers. The result is that their faith in prayer has increased by immense strides. Most people seem to think it is lack of faith to follow up on their prayers. On the contrary, it can be an indication of great faith.

When Jesus healed he often told the individual to go and show himself to the priest, the medical authority of his day. There was no doubt in his mind that healing had taken place. In this way he had a verified report on the power of his prayers. Do not be afraid to check up on your prayers. If you make a habit of it you will find, as your investigations continue, that your faith will leap, and your prayer power will be increased.

As you check up on your prayers and prayer projects you will find it necessary to get into the habit of thanksgiving. Gratitude will flow spontaneously and you will find your mind concentrating on the wonder, the power and the nearness of God. This in itself will bless you and change you from a passive, unsure Christian to one who is active, confident and joyful.

The ancient Hebrews had a prayer that was chanted in the temple, "For he is good, for His mercy endureth forever." This is one of the great affirmations of faith that ought to be repeated by everyone every day. God

is *good*. His mercy, the goodness of His nature that cannot be paid for and which flows freely to everyone, is eternal. Remind yourself of this daily, and many times a day, until gratitude invades every corner of your mind; and you will naturally overflow with praise and thanksgiving.

Read: **All Things Are Possible Through Prayer** by Charles Allen.

GOD WITH US

"Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel which means, *God with us.*" (Matthew 1:23) . . . The real story of Christmas, and of the entire Christian message, is that God is with us, right here, closer than hands and feet, and that His kingdom and reign and rule is within us, close at hand, in the very midst of us. Man's search for that which will make life good, since the first records of history, has been a search for the God who brought all of life into existence and the conviction that if once man could come into harmony with the Creator he would automatically come into harmony with all of life. God, to most people, has always been a distant Being, separated from humanity, a sort of a distant landlord. Jesus' message was that it was the Father *within* him Who did the works; and his desire (as stated in the High Priestly prayer) was that all mankind should know the same relationship with the Father that he himself enjoyed.

According to the Biblical account, the beginning of mankind knew God as a close reality; God walking in the Garden of Eden with Adam. Then came separation when man and God strove to bridge the gap. With Jesus came the message that God was *with* man, the Logos (the Creative Force or Principle or Spirit that was before all manifested creation) was made flesh and dwelt among us, right in us, closer than hands or feet or breath. God with us is the central message of the Christian revelation.

A genuine experience of the closeness of God will drive away all fear. Treat your self to the joy of reminding yourself that in whatever you do, wherever you are, God is there. Think it. Say it. Use your imagination to make it more real to you and to picture it for yourself. Simply say, "God is here. Thank you, Father." Repeat it in word and in thought as often as you can. It will not be long before the aloneness and the loneliness of life will fade, and with that will come a greater feeling of ease within you. Sureness and security will gradually creep into your life as this awareness takes over and becomes sure.

For all humanity the message is, "God with us." For each individual the message is, "God is with *me.*" This is the real meaning of Christmas, and in this way you will find that Christmas is everyday of the year, every moment of every breath you breathe.

Read: **Christmas Is Always** by Dale Evans. \$1.00

We Need
Men To Match
Our Missiles

Ralph W. Sockman

Back when I was a boy in my father's home in Ohio, we used to have an expression: "I could no more do that than I could fly to Egypt!" And, if a thing was even more improbable, we'd say: "I could no more do that than fly to the moon!"

But now, not too many years later, we fly to Egypt in less than 24 hours—and a leader in the aeronautical industry says trips to the moon will be practical within 10 years if the expense can be brought down.

Yes, we are opening a vast new vista. We need to think in new dimensions. We are a generation which may truly have "A Date With Destiny."

Why do I say that? Two or three years ago Joseph Wood Krutch wrote *The Measure of Man*. In it he said: "The present generation is less sure of what is ahead than any previous genera-

tion." And the reason was that now, for the first time in human history, man could commit race suicide. No matter how bad people were in the past, they had neither the power nor the nearness to their neighbors to kill them off. Now we have both. With our nuclear energy we have the power and with our jet planes we have the proximity to our neighbors. We could commit race suicide.

But Krutch said further: "I don't believe that we will commit suicide for this reason, that when man gets his back to the wall, he realizes that there are values which he puts ahead of his inventions." He said he thought our human race now is reaching that point of desperate thinking.

We are realizing that there are values we must put ahead of our inventions. The problem that confronts us in this date with destiny is this: Can we develop the values

that can control these new inventions? Can we produce the men to match our missiles?

I don't think you can check the inventive skill of man. He will go on developing faster and more powerful machines. But can we do what Edison is reported to have said: "What man's genius can create, man's character can control"? If we are to make any serious attempt to achieve this end, we have got first of all to develop those values that control our inventions.

We will not do that by just trying to kill off dictators or inventors abroad. We tried that in two World Wars. Back in 1914 we said if we could just get rid of the Huns, we would have a world free from war and free for democracy. We won that war. Twenty years later we faced the Nazis. We said if we could get rid of this enemy we will survive. We won that war. Now 10 years afterward, we face what looks like a more pressing—and ominous—threat from the Soviet union.

Back when motion pictures were new there was a serial called *The Perils of Pauline*. Each week it brought the heroine to the jaws of death. Then, just as she was about to be liquidated, the picture would stop and the crowd would be held in suspense until the next week and the next episode.

Well, when those movies were

shown to the cowboys out West, they often grew so excited that they pulled out their pistols and shot at the villain on the screen. As Bishop Pardue once said to me, "If they had really understood motion pictures, they wouldn't have shot the shadow on the screen. They would have shot the projector."

That is the basic truth. We get aroused with villains—but we do not make ourselves safe or good merely by trying to kill off dictators and sinners abroad—the "villains"—nor do we make ourselves able to handle this age merely by passing laws and piling up burdensome social overhead. We have got to develop inner sanctions which move or restrain us in the right course of action even when our law requires that we do a certain thing. This is where we have an advantage over Russia. Russia has channeled her force into the creation of instruments. We can't deny this is great—but think of what we are doing!

When they sent Zhukov off, we thought he was at the top of the ladder. When he came back, they undermined him. How secure is life and leadership in Russia? We have something, if we are true to our traditions, that Russia doesn't have. I am reminded of what Chesterton said once: "It's important for a landlady to know her boarder's financial standing, but

it's more important for a landlady to know her boarder's philosophy of life." Then he stepped it up. He said, "It's important for a general in a campaign to know his enemy's numbers and equipment, but it's more important for a general in a campaign to know his enemy's philosophy of life for the most basic and most practical question we all have to face is this: What is my philosophy of life? What is my relation to the universe? Who am I? Where am I going?"

That's the thing America has that Russia does not have. Russia's philosophy is based on reactions from an old autocratic church under the czars into brash communistic formulas. We have traditions that come down from the great Judean teaching. We have a philosophy of life that says man is endowed by his Creator with certain inalienable rights, such as life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. We have a way of life where the youth can choose careers without being dictated to, and men of all faiths can meet in a gathering and talk about their common problems. That is something we must cultivate. We must develop values to match our inventions.

Secondly, we must develop those values in ways that are consonant with our own freedom. Russia has developed Sputniks because a dictator can suppress other

avenues and say: "Put all your effort in that one thing." We do not want any crash program that would suppress the other areas of education. Educators realize that we must have more scientists, but we mustn't let that be our sole objective.

I was sent to Russia in 1946 by the Red Cross to see what had happened to the relief supplies we gave to Russia during the war. I met there the leaders of various churches. I asked those men, "Are you free?" They replied: "Oh, yes. We can print our Bibles. We can hold our services." The churches were crowded. But these men could not get up on Sunday and say anything critical of the social situation. They couldn't join with laymen in gatherings. In fact, you couldn't hold a gathering in Russia to consider phases of economic life. We don't want freedom put down on us like that. There is no such thing as a dictated freedom.

Education recognizes that. And in religion we can't be as dogmatic as our grandfathers. We must teach these great traditions in which we believe. We must teach our youth why this way we call the American way of life is better than the Russian way of life. We can't expect alert young people just to take our word for it. If there ever was a time when we needed to teach our historical background in America and in our

religious realms, that time is now.

Thirdly, we must not only develop these values in ways that are consonant with freedom, we must develop them in ways that transform our ideals that we preach into the standards that we practice.

This summer I was talking with an English gentleman who now lives in New Zealand, and he said: "I wish America would declare a moratorium on preaching to the world. You are always preaching to us."

Maybe that is a fault of ours. I sometimes think we are going through a kind of awkward stage in our culture in this way. We have the impulse to do a thing, but we haven't disciplined it.

With all the baffling problems that confront us, the most pertinent place of need is right here, on the local "drill ground," and in personal guidance. We must bring these ideals down to the realm of standards that we practice.

I am quite sure with Sputnik whirling over our heads that nobody now says we can go it alone. We know that this is truly one world.

I know the UN isn't perfect. But if we wait for perfect instruments we will be paralyzed by perfectionism. I don't think America is rich enough to be the perennial Santa Claus of the world or powerful enough to be the peren-

nial policeman. But I hope and pray she is good enough to be a partner in the world.

We have to work with one world, and we have to do it with information. We must have more speakers that bring you authentic word from around the world. But cold facts still make cold wars. We need something more than information. We need a kind of Christlike imagination to confront our world.

Somebody has to think behind the microphones and the headlines, trying to personalize situations, trying to see the human factors. I think women sometimes are doing a better job of this than men. Because of their missionary societies and their women's clubs they give more thought to it.

I think, too, that one of the great hopes of a better, peaceful world tomorrow lies in womanhood; the rise of women throughout the world. Maybe if we let them control our theology as well as our politics, we will be safe.

Another thing I think is hopeful and a challenge to us in this day when we are planning new missile programs is to think how we can plan together, as nations, the helpful things.

Here is a significant report from the Rockefeller Foundation, written in 1941, the same year as Pearl Harbor when bitterness

was all around:

"An American soldier wounded on a battlefield in the Far East owes his life to the Japanese scientist, Kiasoto, who isolated the bacillus of tetanus. A Russian soldier saved by a blood transfusion is indebted to Landsteiner, an Austrian. A German is shielded from typhoid fever with the help of a Russian, Metchnikoff. A Dutch marine in the East Indies is protected from malaria because of the experiments of an Italian, Grassi, while a British aviator in North Africa escapes death from a surgical infection because of a Frenchman, Pasteur, and a German, Koch, elaborated a new technique.

"Our children are guarded from diphtheria by what a Japanese and a German did; they are protected from smallpox by an Englishman's work; they are saved from rabies because of a Frenchman; they are cured of pellagra through the researches of an Austrian. From birth to death they are surrounded by an invisible host—the spirits of men who never thought in terms of flags or boundary lines and who never served a lesser loyalty than the welfare of mankind."

That was an eloquent statement to be made by a great foundation in that bitter time. While we are talking about outdistancing the Russians with missiles, maybe we

ought to have a summit conference of scientists, men who look at the healing possibilities of this new era of science. And I want to stress, too, the fact that religion, despite all its seeming divisive aspects, is the greatest hope of this world for brotherhood.

Suppose you drew a curtain across a room. I couldn't see you on that other side. But there is one way I could see you. If there were a mirror on the ceiling, I could look into that mirror—and that would enable me to look down into your place. That is a parable. The world is curtained off, too. We can't see through on the sidewalk level, but when we go into our houses of God and pray to God, the father of all men, it is like looking into a mirror of understanding on the ceiling.

It helps us to look down to the places of people whose culture and color and creed may differ from ours. If we do this often enough and sincerely enough, we sensitize our imaginations upward toward Him who would say: "Who-soever hath done it unto the least, hath done it unto me."

There are values within us which can be made stronger than our inventions and this is our challenge. Will we instill these values so that we have men to match our missiles?

MUCH NEEDED WISDOM FROM

SIMEON STYLITES

A FEW OLD LESSONS ARE STILL NEEDED

EDITOR THE CHRISTIAN CENTURY:

Sir: Today I wish to report on a major trend in American cultural life. Discovering a trend is the last best hope of a hard-pressed columnist. A "trend" is a generalization erected on the basis of one and one-half instances of something or other. And a very present help in time of trouble it is, too.

The trend I want to report on is the one represented by the "No Lessons Needed" advertisement that bobs up in nearly every newspaper. With the help of the advertising wizards, we seem to be rapidly approaching the celestial bliss of having all the effort taken out of life. Music? Nothing to it! You can do it with one finger and two minutes. If you want any proof, cast a glad eye over this advertisement by a company manufacturing the most difficult

musical instrument made since the days of Tubal Cain. The heading says: "So easy to play that you can enjoy it without lessons." Here is the promise of paradise: "You start having fun the first time you try the _____! No waiting to learn how! No tedious scales and finger exercises before you can play real music. You sit down and play! One finger of your right hand plays any melody. Special _____ Picture Music shows which keys to play if you cannot read music."

In our excitement we give a little twist to Shakespeare and say, dreamily, "If music is such a cinch, play on!"

There is more: "One finger of your left hand presses a button to play a full rich chord." All with two fingers! With the other three you can light up a Cornsilk (King Size) and do a bit of

Copyright, 1957, Christian Century Foundation. Reprinted by permission from *The Christian Century*

crocheting while batting out a Hungarian Rhapsody. Think of the wasted lives of Beethoven, Brahms and Handel, fiddling around taking useless lessons. We have made progress since those dark days. All the old superstitions about the need to practice five-finger exercises are obsolete. Two fingers are plenty.

And how our eyes and hearts are assaulted by invitations to the dance, with practically no lessons. Such miracle workers as Arthur Murray and Fred Astaire can make a Pavlova or a Nijinsky out of an elephant as awkward as you, dear reader. How the unenlightened flock used to struggle. "One, two, three, four"! Now we have a much more alluring invitation to the dance (practically without lessons) than the whiting gave to the snail in the Mock Turtle's song in *Alice*: "Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, will you join the dance?"

Painting makes the same happy promise. Some oldtimers, of course, still squint to get the right proportions. But that is a terrible waste. For now, without lessons, you can follow a rash of little numbers up to one hundred, and

by filling in with the indicated colors you can do a Mona Lisa in five minutes flat. Very flat.

In short, we have a new freedom from the tyranny of old slogans such as "Practice makes perfect." This all adds up to a fearsome thing: taking the discipline out of life. What follows that is juvenile and adult delinquency. Life without discipline collapses like a jelly fish—which it resembles.

This trend—to give it such a lofty name—is operating in religion as well as in other realms. The impression is often given that no lessons in religion are needed; no obligations, no compulsions, nothing resembling work is needed in the moral world. The end of this "No Lessons Needed" illusion is death by flabbiness. You can hear the death rattle in the police court any day.

A few old lessons are still needed, even in this pushbutton, "no-work" world. Tough ones like this: "Precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little."

Yours,
SIMEON STYLITES

I start my prayer by thanking God for all His gifts to me.

The Heart of Prayer

Norman Vincent Peale

How should I pray?

Day after day the letters come in asking this question—which is, after all, the very heart of religion. Should I kneel? Are there set words I ought to use? Should I have my eyes closed or open?

Actually, I don't think people mean it when they ask these questions. It isn't important whether you kneel, or whether your eyes are open—and people know this in their hearts. What they're really saying is that their prayers have been disappointing. And what they're really asking is: What's wrong with the way I'm praying?

I can remember a scene that occurred during my boyhood which illustrates one of the problems we all face in trying to make prayer an effective experience. One summer day, when I was a youngster growing up in a small Ohio town,

I walked into a drug store and bought a large and very black cigar.

Out on the street I took off the band and lit the cigar. I found a quiet side street where no one would see me, and puffed my way along. The cigar tasted awful, but I was feeling so bold I didn't mind. Until I saw my father half a block away.

Quickly I pulled the cigar from my lips and hid it behind my back.

"Hello," I said, trying to be casual as I walked up to him.

"Hello, Norman."

I looked up, and I looked down, and I looked around: anywhere but toward my father's eyes. I searched desperately for something to say. And then I saw a bright poster, pasted on the side of a building. "Circus." I remembered how badly I'd been wanting to go to that circus.

Copyright 1956 Guideposts Associates, Inc. *Guideposts* is an inspirational monthly magazine for all faiths published at Carmel, New York. \$2.00 per year.

"Can I go, *please*? Can I go to the circus, Dad?"

My father's voice wasn't harsh when he answered; it was simply firm. "Norman," he said, "one of the first lessons you should learn is this: never make a petition and at the same time try to hide a smoldering disobedience behind your back."

What a wonderful lesson this is. I've had many occasions to remember it, even when the "smoldering disobediences" have become the more subtle ones of an adult.

The other day a good friend of mine, who is a surgeon, came into the office wanting to know how he could establish a better contact with God in his prayers.

"I can't get over the feeling that my prayers are being blocked, Norman," he said.

The doctor and I tried to analyze his life, to see if we could find what was standing between him and God. His personal life was unusually clean—except for one thing: he was jealous of another doctor, and his jealousy made him angry. Once he started talking, my friend let loose a tirade of abuse about this man.

"Feel better?" I asked when he had talked himself out. The doctor smiled and nodded. "Well, at least we don't need to wonder what's blocking your prayers, or what to do about it, either. Suppose you

go back to your office and this very afternoon start *helping* the other doctor's career. Find ways to compliment him behind his back. Speak to other doctors about him, favorably. Start praying for his happiness and for his success. Keep this up for a month and then let me know if your prayers are still blocked."

The results, I'm happy to say, were very successful. Once the "smoldering disobedience" of jealousy had been removed, my friend was able to re-establish contact with God in his prayers.

One of the first principles of effective prayer then, is this: before you can fully communicate with God, you must cleanse your spirit. It isn't God who stops your prayers, the blocks are in your own spirit. How can they be removed? By talking them out, by confessions before your fellowman or God. This is one of the most important methods I have ever seen and one which really will work.

Many of our prayers are requests that we make of God. But knowing what we really want is not easy. All too often we pray for one thing with our lips, and for another with our hearts. I know a woman who is 45 years old and still unmarried.

"I often pray for a husband, Dr. Peale," she told me once with a shrug and a laugh, "but you'll

notice I'm still an old maid." Not long ago I met this woman's parents. They commiserated with their daughter's lot in one short breath, and in a long breath they praised her effusively for "keeping us company in our old age."

Many people thought this woman's prayers weren't answered, but I think they were. In her heart this poor woman was afraid of disappointing her parents, and destroying the comfortable life the three of them led together; by the same token she had asked to be kept from the dangers of marriage. And this is exactly what came about.

How often have you really thought about the words, *We ask it in Thy Name, Amen*? What does the sentence mean? That you are offering your prayer in the name of God. What a powerful idea! You are saying that you want your prayer to be "sponsored" by God, as it were. You are putting the prayer in God's hands, acknowledging that you may have desires you don't know about, wishes that aren't good for you, hopes that would be your downfall. "But please, God, hear only that part of my prayer that is in harmony with your name."

This is surrender. This is saying, "They will, not mine, be done." I think this is such a key to effective prayer that I like to say it not at the end, but at the

beginning of my prayers. I want all that I say, all that I ask, to be in harmony with the will of God.

So these are some of the things I talk about when someone asks me—"How should I pray?" But there is one more point that I like to make. It is not about prayer-of-asking, but about prayer-of-experiencing. To my way of thinking this is the highest order of prayer.

How can you experience the presence of God?

Across the street from my office in New York City is the Metropolitan Museum of Art. One day not long ago, I went over there during my lunch hour, and there I was taught a great lesson in How to Pray. The first mistake I made was to visit the museum when I was pushed for time. I walked quickly from room to room, glancing at the pictures and thinking, "I'm certainly not much of a highbrow. These just don't say anything to me."

Then, suddenly, I came upon one of the museum guards, standing before the El Greco *View of Toledo*. He was absorbed by it, yet to me the picture was little more than a dramatic painting of some buildings sitting on a green hill under a wild blue sky.

The guard turned and saw me looking at him. "Never has there been such a landscape," he said.

"And to think when I first came here, it didn't speak to me at all."

I asked him what he meant.

"Well," he said, "at that time I didn't know how to experience a picture. But as I saw it day after day, I began to brood over it and wait for it. And after a while, it began to speak. Try it yourself. Wait for it. It's worth the time."

This was the finest lesson in art appreciation I have ever had. But it was also a lesson in prayer. Wait. Waiting is not one of the fine arts of this century, but if you want to learn how to experience the presence of God, you must first learn how to wait.

And you can't wait comfortably if you're under the pressure of time. That's why it's so important to choose a prayer-hour which you can guarantee. I personally prefer the late night hours, because I know they won't be disturbed.

I get all ready for bed; then, for a while, I read. My reading may include some inspirational pamphlet, or book; but it always includes the Bible. I read until I sense that

I have slowed down from the rapid pace of the day. And then . . . I wait.

I simply relax and am quiet. I begin to thank God for all that has come my way. Even when I have worries that weigh me down, I start my prayers by thanking God, one by one, for His gifts to me this day. I pay no attention to time, but I pray prayers of thanksgiving until I get a wonderful feeling of well-being. I feel that after all, this world is governed by divine plan . . .

And again I wait. If I sense that there is something blocking my contact with God, I try to discover what it is, and ask for forgiveness. Then I wait again.

What am I waiting for? I am hoping to experience the presence of God. And sometimes if I wait long enough, there comes a wonderful moment when I *know* that God is close.

"It's worth your time to wait," the museum guard said.

Indeed it is! For when we let Him come, we receive joy, peace, and life in great abundance.

I became aware of the heart-warming truth — that I was rich in God's blessings.

Thank God I Could Say "No"

ANNE M. LEFEL

I awoke that dreary December morning, heavy hearted and depressed. "What is so sad?" I asked myself, in the words of a friend who had wakened to many worrisome days. I remember our laughing over that phrase when she aired her various troubles, attempting to gain a better perspective.

"What is so sad?" My mind conveniently furnished the reasons. No job. Dipping into my savings. Making endless calls, and receiving one answer: "Sorry, we are not hiring now. No—we are not accepting applications at present." Or it might vary a little: "Of course, you may fill out an application. But we do not have any immediate openings."

My first impulse was to go back to sleep, to escape the looming disappointments of this day. However, I forced myself to get out of bed and get dressed.

After a half dozen calls to various concerns, I was "invited" to come down and place an application with a large manufacturing company, although I was simul-

taneously informed there was nothing definite in view.

As I walked to the employment office, the chill, raw wind only helped in depressing me more. Even the genuinely warm welcome accorded me when I entered the office could not lift me out of the doldrums.

I scanned the lengthy application form handed me and sighed a little. Just another application, I thought. I felt I could close my eyes and find each routine question:

Name
Address Age
Social Security Number
I could now write my social security number without looking at the card. "Previous Employers (last one first)"

On and on I wrote. Mechanically, I skimmed over the next five questions, and as mechanically, entered the answers in the allotted spaces.

I was about to sign my name at the bottom of the application form, when something rather

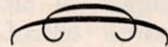
startling happened. I felt myself magnetically, compellingly drawn to the five questions and answers I had so hastily entered a moment ago. I sat forward a little as I slowly, wonderingly read them over again:

"Have you any physical handicap to Sight? No. Hearing? No. Speech? No. Hands? No. Feet? No."

With each "no," I was filled with a warm, glowing surge of gratitude. For the third time, I

reread each question and answer, and with each "no," gave a silent prayer of thanks. Here, in this small anteroom, with the aid of "just another application," I became aware of the heart warming truth—that I was rich in God's blessings.

I now knew that the doldrums and I would part company—that, regardless of what the future held, the five "noes" would help me retain a peacefulness and faith I had never known before.



Christmas Is Always

Christmas, my child, is always.

It was always in the heart of God. It was born there. Only He could have thought of it.

Like God, Christmas is timeless and eternal, from everlasting to everlasting.

It is something even more than what happened that night in starlit little Bethlehem; it has been behind the stars forever.

There was Christmas in the heart of God before the world was formed. He gave Jesus to us, the night the angels sang, yes—but the Bible tells us that Jesus shared a great glory with the Father long before the world was made. Jesus was always, too!

Dale Evans Rogers in
Christmas Is Always, \$1.00
(Fleming H. Revell Company).

Deep tenderness of Spirit is the very soul and marrow of the Christ-life.

Tenderness of Spirit

by

George D. Watson

It is much easier to convince a human soul of its natural impurity than to convince it of its natural hardness, and utter destitution of heavenly and divine tenderness of Spirit. The very essence of the gospel is a divinely imparted tenderness and sweetness of Spirit. Without this, even the strongest religious life is a misrepresentation of the true Christ-life. Even among intensely religious people, nothing is more rare to find than a continuous, all-pervading spirit of tenderness.

1. Tenderness of spirit is pre-eminently divine. It is not the delicacy and soft sensibility of a mere gentle make-up of body and mind, which some persons naturally possess in a high degree. Neither is it the tenderness of mind and manner, which results from

high culture and beautiful social training, though these are very valuable in life. But it is a supernatural work throughout the whole spiritual being. It is an exquisite interior fountain of God's own sweetness and tenderness of nature, opened up in the inner spirit to such a degree that it completely inundates the soul, overflowing all the mental faculties, and saturating with its sweet waters the manners, expressions, words, and tones of the voice; mellowing the will, softening the judgments, melting the affections, refining the manners, and moulding the whole being after the image of him who was infinitely meek and lowly in heart. It cannot be borrowed, or put on for special occasions; it is emphatically supernatural, and must flow out inces-

From the book, *Pure Gold*, by George D. Watson, Published by A. H. Hall, Syracuse, N. Y. — 1898

santly from the inner fountains of the life, and resembles having every atom of our being soaked in sweet oil.

2. Deep tenderness of spirit is the very soul and marrow of the Christ-life. Without it, the most vigorous life of righteousness, and zeal, and good works, and rigid purity of morals, and missionary reform, and profuse liberality, and ascetic self-denial, and the most blameless conduct, utterly fail to measure up to the Christ-life unveiled in the New Testament. It is impossible to see the infinite excellence and necessity of real heavenly tenderness of spirit unless it is specially revealed to us by the Holy Ghost. It takes a direct revelation from God to enable us to discern what is the very marrow and fatness of Christ's character, the inexpressible tenderness and gentleness of his nature which is always the heart inside of the heart, the soul within the soul, of the Christ-life. What specific gravity is to the planet, what beauty is to the rainbow, what perfume is to the rose, what marrow is to the bone, what rhythm is to poetry, what sublimity is to the ocean, what the pulse is to the heart, what harmony is to music, what heat is to a human body, all this and much more is what tenderness of spirit is to religion. Without tenderness of spirit the most intensely righteous,

religious life is like the image of God without his beauty and attractiveness. It is possible to be very religious, and stanch, and persevering in all Christian duties, even to be sanctified, and be a brave defender and preacher of holiness, to be mathematically orthodox, and blameless in outward life, and very zealous in good works, and yet to be greatly lacking in tenderness of spirit, that all-subduing, all melting love, which is the very cream and quintessence of Heaven, and which incessantly streamed out from the eyes and voice of the blessed Jesus.

Many religious people seem loaded with good fruits, but the fruit tastes green; it lacks flavor and October mellowness. There is a touch of vinegar in their sanctity. Their very purity has an icy coldness to it. They seem to have a baptism on them, but it is not composed of those sweet spices of cinnamon, and calamus, and cassia, which God told Moses to compound, as a fragrant type of the real sweetness of the Holy Spirit. Their testimonies are straight and definite, but they lack the melting quality. Their prayers are intelligent, and strong and pointed, but they lack the heart-piercing pathos of the dying Jesus. The summer heat in them is lacking. They preach eloquently and explain with utmost nicety what

is actual and original sin, and what is pardon and purity, but they lack the burning flame, that interior furnace of throbbing love, that sighs and weeps and breaks down under the shivering heat of all-consuming love.

3. This all-prevading tenderness of spirit is not a novitiate grace. It is not a product of April but of October. It is not the sap that flows up in the grape vine in early spring, but it is the sweet wine, the pure, unfermented juice of the grape, which is crushed out under the mighty squeeze of the wine-press. Real tenderness of spirit can never be known except through great suffering. Nothing but the wine-press of sorrow can yield it, and it matters not what shape the trial may be, whether an unutterable sorrow for sin, or extreme poverty, or great physical pain, or relentless persecution, or the wear and tear of a thousand daily annoyances, or the agony of unrequited love, or life-long loneliness, or heart breaking disappointment, these or any other forms of sorrow, only constitute the shape of the wine-press, but the result may be the same, and that is the sweetness of heavenly wine from the grapes of crushed red hearts. There is no saintly character recorded in the Bible or outside of it who did not pass through the wine-press to reach universal tenderness and sweetness of spirit.

It is in connection with Job's manifold and strange sufferings, that he says "God had made his heart soft." It is said that the illustrious Jenny Lind never could melt the hearts of her hearers with her inimitable singing, until her own heart had been crushed with sorrow. Madame Guyon says that while we are purified from sin by the blood of Jesus, yet the attributes and constitution of our nature must be utterly broken under the manifold cross of suffering, to render us divine-like in our feelings and sympathies. And Paul says the weight of glory that will weigh us down, depends on the afflictions through which we pass to work out that result. We often come across Christians who are bright and clever, and strong, and righteous: in fact a little too bright, and a little too clever, like the preternatural brilliance in a black eye, which precedes insanity, and there seems so much of self in their strength, and their very righteousness is severe and critical. They have everything to make them saints, except the crushing weight of an unspeakable crucifixion, which would grind them into a supernatural tenderness and limitless charity for others. But if they are of the real elect, God has a wine-press prepared for them, through which they will some day pass, which will turn the metallic hardness of their nature into gentle

love which Christ always brings forth at the last of the feast.

4. Divine tenderness of spirit has a behavior to it which is superhuman and heavenly.

It instinctively avoids wounding the feelings of others by talking on unpleasant things, wrangling in an argumentative way, by referring to painful and mortifying subjects. It carries its point by ceasing to contend, and wins its opponent by seeming to let him have his way. It cannot scold, or scowl, or threaten: it has lost the power of quarreling. It instinctively buries and forgets all bad things. People who live in hot climates bury their dead very soon after death; in like manner tenderness of spirit lives in the torrid zone of God's love, and quickly buries all putrid things out of its sight. No scene in the Bible opens up a greater vista into the tenderness of the spirit of Jesus, than where he stooped and wrote on the ground, as if his modest and loving heart did not want to hear the horrible account of evil. As we gaze on the soul of Jesus at that time, we see infinite politeness, both toward the accused and accusers; not a trace of unkindness, or severity to either party. His whole manner and speech and disposition filled the whole air, as with a very sea of refinement, gentleness and inexpressible sweetness of spirit. This and similar

acts of Jesus are like an opening between mountains, through which we look far off on an outspreading silver sea of love, whose every undulation presents a new phase of unspeakable tenderness toward the poor sinner he came to save. Tenderness of spirit makes its home in the bosom of Jesus, and from that holy castle looks out upon all other creatures, good and bad, through the hopeful, pleading medium of the heart that was pierced on the cross. Tenderness of spirit is in divine sympathy with the poor and downtrodden and unfortunate and hated classes of mankind.

It feels for the poor Chinaman and the Negro, or any that are the common butt of worldly scorn. Whenever it hears any of these spoken of in a harsh and bitter way, it feels a dagger pierce its own heart and a tear of sympathy comes to its eye, and a piercing silent prayer ascends from it, to that God who hears the sighing of the prisoner, and the cries of the unfortunate. It feels all things from God's standpoint, and lives but to receive and transmit the spotless sympathies and affections of Jesus. It understands the words of the Holy Ghost, "Be ye tender hearted forgiving one another." Tenderness must be in the very nature, and forgiveness is but the behavior of that nature.

It pays in health, to be able to laugh. Tension breeds sickness. Laughter is relaxing. Good humor begins at home—with ourselves. It's a measure of maturity.

LAUGHTER MAKES US HUMAN

WESLEY N. HAINES

The English essayist Hazlitt once commented that of all creatures, only human beings laugh and weep, because they alone can perceive the difference between things as they are and things as they ought to be or turn out to be.

The chairman of a meeting (six-feet-four—296 pounds) once introduced me (five-feet-four—145 pounds) to a group of 500. He wound up saying, "Stand up!" I replied, "I am standing!" The audience saw the incongruity and laughed. They laughed more when I verbalized it: "Never before was so little introduced to so many by so much!"

To weep at the profound incongruities in life and to laugh at the superficial ones is to be human. The weeping (actual or symbolic) makes us responsive to ideals and motivates us to service. The laughing enables us to keep ourselves in perspective, relaxes us, and helps us to get along better with one another. The "conviction of humor" is

From *The Rotarian*, March-April, 1958, by permission of the publishers.

no less vital to our humanity than the "conviction of sin."

In fact, the two blend in the mature man who takes his work or service seriously because he wants to "improve things," yet does not take himself too seriously. Men who swell with pride when good fortune befalls them need to put themselves in perspective, appreciate the help of others in their success, and get a laugh out of themselves. The same perspective of humor about oneself is called for to realize that misfortune befalls all of us like rain falling on the just and on the unjust. A laugh at oneself forestalls self-pity. Good humor begins at home—with ourselves. It's a measure of our maturity.

The best advice I ever got in my college days came from a philosophy professor who suggested one morning when I must have looked especially heavy laden: "It pays to be able to laugh, especially at yourself." Most men could keep themselves in hysterics if that advice were taken "seriously."

It pays—in health—to be able to laugh. Tension breeds sickness. Laughter is relaxing. Someone could do a convincing medical-research job on the therapeutic value of service clubs when high (blood) pressured businessmen gather in good fellowship and enjoy good humor mixed with their food and plans for service. They are health-

ier than the man in this pathetic cartoon: He is seated at a dining table, alone. He looks tense. He is reading the stock-market report. The waitress is serving his noon "meal"—a glass of milk and a single cracker. The caption has her saying to him, "Will that be ulcer?"

No human being before or since carried heavier responsibilities than President Lincoln, yet I don't recall reading about his being sick. He was *shot* to death. He did not die of tension-born ailments. Lincoln often began his Cabinet meetings with stories or readings from Artemus Ward. On a dark and somber day he looked up from Ward to see a ring of set and unsmiling faces about him: "Gentlemen, why don't you laugh? If I didn't laugh under the strain that is upon me day and night, I should go mad. And you need that medicine as well as I." Perhaps as much as anything, Lincoln's humor enabled him to make his difficult decisions "with malice toward none." No one ever achieved a higher degree of humanness under similar stress and strain.

The world of mid-20th Century is an Age of Anxiety. Stuart Chase describes it as a "figurative skyscraper of disagreements . . . with a fight on every floor"—from tension between two people up to tension among 2 billion. On all levels good human relations break

down under the tension and *in-human* relations take their place. Malicious gossip, actions of spite, feuds, ostracism, character assassination, violent strikes, war (tension takes a multitude of forms)—all are acts of men toward one another, but not *human* acts. Not a one which might not be humanized in goodwill and good humor!

Lord Dunsany, of Great Britain, once suggested that within the United Nations there should be a "Ministry of Mirth." What a boon that would be in international relations in a "sick" world—as sick from its tensions as the individual becomes sick from hypertension!

I wish you could get the kind of laughter in the United Nations that must have prevailed in the hypothetical conference on the elephant. Nationals came and read papers characteristic of the peoples they represented. The Russian delegate read a paper on "The Elephant As an Exploited Beast of Burden." The Englishman's contribution was called "The Elephant As He Has Affected the Cause of Empire." The German did a scholarly work on "Prolegomena to the Study of the Elephant." The Frenchman entitled his "The Love Life of the Elephant." The American's opus was on "How to Breed Bigger and Better Elephants"! Whatever the

conference decided about the elephant, the conferees' relations were probably pretty good as they laughed at one another's foibles, including their own.

It's hard to oppose someone with whom you have just laughed. You can't do it simultaneously anyway: it's psychologically impossible.

Humor makes common cause with human freedom. People are free as long as they can laugh at whomsoever, wheresoever, and howsoever they will, subject only to their own sense of propriety. A dictatorship is often inhuman because it is humorless. People can't safely poke a little good-natured fun at a Fuhrer, a Duce, or an "indispensable man." Free people can laugh an issue to death and can rib a pretender out of office. The buffo is as potent as the bullet and a lot more human.

One of the finest prayers I know to keep a man human asks:

Give me a mind that is not bored—

That does not whimper, whine or sigh;

And don't let me worry overmuch About this fussy thing called "I."

Give me a sense of humor, Lord: Give me the grace to see a joke, To get some happiness from life, And pass it on to other folk.

God Loves Us

Abbe de Tourville

Excerpts from the writings of the great Abbe de Tourville is a treat to anyone with spiritual questions. He was one of the greatest spiritual counsellors of all time. His insight, his compassion, his understanding of human nature and of God, seem so refreshing and vitalizing. His Letters of Direction are excerpts from his complete letters, and ought to be in everyone's library. — The Editor.

How happy God is in loving us! Like parents who adore their children. It is really just like that and it is *grand*, and just what we should expect of God. It is also necessary for us, poor little creatures that we are. Praise God!

Be bold enough always to believe that God is on your side and wholly yours, whatever you may think of yourself.

As for that which is beyond your strength, be absolutely certain that our Lord loves you, devotedly and individually: loves you just as you are. How often that conviction is lacking even in those souls who are most devoted to God! They make repeated efforts to love Him, they experience the joy of loving, and yet how little they know, how little

they realize, that God loves them incomparably more than they will ever know how to love Him. Think only of this and say to yourself, "I am loved by God more than I can either conceive or understand." Let this fill all your soul and all your prayer and never leave you. You will soon see that this is the way to find God. It contains the whole of St. John's teaching: "As for us, we have believed in the love which God has for us." I have asked God to teach me this and now I understand it. I know that it is the true way, the best way and the way which is so often lacking in souls. Find it without delay.

Accustom yourself to the wonderful thought that God loves you with a tenderness, a generosity,

From *Letters of Direction* by Abbe de Tourville. Dacre Press, London, England. \$.75.

and an intimacy which surpasses all your dreams. Give yourself up with joy to a loving confidence in God and have courage to believe firmly that God's action towards you is a masterpiece of partiality and love. Rest tranquilly in this abiding conviction.

* * * *

The thing which may for long prevent the soul from thus accepting our Lord, is that it forgets to think of Him always and above all as compassionate. Yet in everything, that is the first idea we must try to have about Him. We shall be quite differently affected by His great splendour if we first realize that He to whom it belongs and who offers it to us, is compassionate beyond all words. How gladly shall we then rejoice in His Divine splendours! For they are the splendours of the All-Compassionate, the Intimate, and the Familiar God!

* * * *

We must think of our Lord as loving us more than any one else, upholding us even when we are ready mercilessly to condemn ourselves; think of Him as being our other self, bolder in approval and more ready to rejoice over us that we are ourselves. That is the ideal of fatherhood, of friendship and of love. When we know our Lord thus, we know Him well and everything is easy. The terrible God, the angry, exacting, nar-

row God has completely disappeared. We are attracted to our Lord and profoundly reassured. And so we love with confidence and joy.

Rejoice that you are what you are; for our Lord loves you very dearly. He loves the whole of you, just as you are. In spite, therefore, of all your troubles, troubles about people and things, remain at peace. Drop all your spiritual anxieties and do not goad yourself to efforts which will only overburden and overstrain you. Such efforts are not only useless but even harmful, for they war against that peace which the Christ-God demands: the peace which, in this world, must always exist in the midst of our imperfections: the imperfections of things, the imperfections of people. Imitate the calm of the sailor standing on the deck of his ship, which is in itself never still: or that of the man who walks quietly through the city, indifferent to the noise and the winding of the streets, picking his way through the people and the traffic . . .

Be reassured and comforted. Rejoice from the bottom of your heart at this assurance I am giving you, as if it came from our Lord Himself. For it is only in this blessed certitude that you will find that freedom of spirit which is absolutely necessary. I implore you in God's name, not to think of

Him as hard to please, but rather as generous beyond all that you can ask or think. Get rid, once and for all, of the idea that God is displeased or intolerant towards our weakness. The truth is exactly the opposite. Accept that fact and act upon it.

* * * *

You have not grasped the right idea of God and of His service. You always come back to the thought that God must be dissatisfied, which is not so. Remember that it is our souls, yes! our own souls! which are God's joy: not on account of what they do for Him, but on account of what He does for them. All that He asks of them is gladly to accept His kindness, His generosity, His tolerance, His fatherly love. Let your adoration of God, therefore, take this form and do not worry any more about what you are or are not. You are the object of His mercy. Be satisfied with that and think only of that.

* * * *

The essence of the matter is that our Lord loves you dearly. The more keenly, therefore, you realize that the weakness is of your own nature, even of your own will, the more you must adore him. For in spite of everything, we *are* the weak creatures whom our Lord loves, and loves deeply, with a love worthy of that name, which to Him is no idle word.

You want to compete with His affection before you have understood it; that is your mistake. You are like a child who wants to help his mother before allowing himself to be trained by her. You are like St. Peter: he wanted to wash his Master's feet, but refused to allow his Master to wash his feet. He did not understand. Our Lord showed him his mistake with the clear and decisive sharpness of a friend: "Peter! if I do not do this, and if you will not let me do it, you have no part of me!" And St. John, who knew all the depth and tenderness of God's love, was contently ravished by the thought, "He loved us first!"

Come then! show a little deference to our Lord and allow Him to go first. Let Him love you a great deal, a very great deal, long before you have succeeded in loving Him, even a little, as you would wish to love Him.

That is all I ask of you, and all that our Lord asks of you.

* * * *

Say to yourself very often about everything that happens, "God loves me! What joy!" And reply boldly, "And I truly love Him too!" Then go quite simply about all that you have to do and do not philosophize any more. For these two phrases are beyond all thought and do more for us than any thought could do: they are all-sufficing.

WE ARE PASSING ALONG TO OUR CHILDREN, AS BEST WE CAN, THE TRUE MEANING OF PRAYER.

*"Everything's Going
to be All Right"*

RONNIE DEAUVILLE

What passes through a human's mind when he returns to troubled consciousness to find himself helplessly paralyzed, deprived even of his God-given power to breathe without artificial help?

When I awoke to just such a seemingly hopeless circumstance back in 1956, my first overwhelming need was for the comfort of prayer. Dwelling on my affliction, I prayed. But I received neither comfort nor guidance . . .

It had been a week since the automobile accident. Through a pain-punctuated haze I heard the doctor's diagnosis: clinical polio, resulting from injuries to spinal nerves. Prognosis: doubtful.

Not until full awakening to the monotonous chugging of the iron lung—with the world confined to the tiny mirror, inches from my eyes—did I fully realize what had befallen me. I was without natural breath; and I was a singer. Dependent on my profession were my wife, Patricia, and our four small children. And, somehow, I had failed them—my family, that depended on me.

Moreover, this was the second accident which had befallen me at a crucial time in my life. A plane crackup rated me a medical discharge instead of the "wings" I so strongly desired, in the Naval Air Corps during World War II. Now I found myself "grounded" again—two weeks after recording my first big album, "Smoke Dreams," which climaxed years of preparatory singing with dance bands and such.

These catastrophic events were in my mind, then, as I prayed—and at the same time bitterly sought the reason for my having been singled out for tragedy by some unkind fate.

As I silently wept for myself, with closed eyes, I felt a hand on my head. I opened my eyes to see my wife's face reflected in my little mirror. She was smiling!

"Thank God," she said. "You're alive and everything's going to be all right."

I repeated her words silently a thousand times during the following difficult days and nights, giving thanks for my family and my

survival. I asked for nothing. Yet, deep within myself, I gained from the All-Powerful Source the sure confidence that I would sing again—and that, as Pat had said, everything would be all right.

The road back was certainly not easy. There followed long months of therapy and prescribed exercise. It wasn't until a year later, in mid-1957, that I dared try to use my newly-trained breathing muscles to sing.

Larry Finley, a Los Angeles TV producer whom I now count among my truest friends, gave me my first come-back chance on one of his programs. When I faced the cameras and microphone, I was at first just plain scared; then I remembered Pat's prayerful words at my bedside, and my own renewal of faith. And everything indeed, was all right . . .

Shortly after the Larry Finley show, I was signed for Art Linkletter's TV network "House Party." Ralph Edwards then spotted me and as a result of my appearance on his nationally tele-

vised "This is Your Life" program, Era Records was able to revive successfully the "Smoke Dreams" album. The Era company immediately had me record "Laura" and "It Wasn't Much of a Town," and I have recently made a recording of "Hong Kong Affair", title song from Allied Artist picture.

Fully confident in my renewed strength, I have without a qualm accepted night club engagements at the Hollywood Mocambo and Palm Springs Mirador. More importantly, I have accepted as many benefit engagements as humanly possible—in the belief that it must always remain my heart-warming duty to bring what inspiration I can to fellow polio victims and others stricken down, but never out. While I am still confined to a wheelchair, I consider it no handicap to a full, rewarding life.

Pat and I have been married thirteen years now, and we are passing along to our four children, as best we can, the true meaning of prayer—in praise of the Lord's blessings, rather than in self-pity!

The Boston Retreat will be Jan. 15, 16, 17, in the Copley Methodist Church. Genevieve Parkhurst and Norman Elliott, leaders. Secy. Mrs. Anthony Brayton, 101 Ash St., Weston 93, Mass.

The Washington D. C. Retreat will have as their leaders Norman Elliott and Genevieve Parkhurst, and will meet Jan. 26, 27, and 28. Secy. Mrs. E. Paul Sechrist, 2002 Jackson St. N. E., Washington, D. C.



Prayer Works

by Alma Fisher

DIRECTOR, THE UNITED PRAYER TOWER

The following is quoted from a letter just received from a Prayer Tower member of long standing:

"I do want to urge that a subscription price be placed on the *Manual of Prayer*. If we are members of one family, as I like to believe, I see no reason why each should not bear some small measure of responsibility for the expense of printing and distributing the *Manual* which performs such an important mission in our lives." . . . *New Jersey*

This letter came during the time the Board of Trustees were earnestly praying about making a change in the policy of the Prayer Tower activities. In seeking ways to operate most efficiently, we found that we could cut the cost of mailing greatly if we had second class mailing privileges instead of third class as we are now using for the *Manual*. But in order to secure the second class mailing privileges the Postal authorities informed us that we must have the *Manual* on a voluntary subscription basis with a stated yearly price. We have placed this at \$1.25 per year, the lowest price possible to conform with regulations.

Although the subscription basis for the *Manual* will make a definite separation in the handling of funds, in order for us to comply with the law, the Prayer Ministry will continue as usual

through the love which comes from your hearts. We will continue to answer all letters and to pray daily for all needs regardless of any remuneration. But beginning January 1, 1959, you must send in a designated subscription for the *Manual of Prayer*. Even though this change is contrary to our former policy, we feel that it is a step in the right direction for the whole of the Prayer Tower ministry and it has been taken after many hours of prayer. Please pray with us as we go into this new era and help us in every way possible by cooperating with us in setting up this new change in procedure. Since we have never been endowed financially we feel that God IS leading us into new and wider fields of service, and we rejoice that we are blessed daily with His abundance of love through each member of our beloved family.

It always takes a period of adjustment to become accustomed to a new regime but we feel that our wonderful, understanding family will know that we are doing this because we feel it is necessary. We covet your continued prayers for guidance during the coming months.

We are always so glad to receive letters from those having requested prayer and we rejoice and give thanks with them for their deeper awareness of God's almighty power in their lives. Here are excerpts from two such letters.

"Last fall and again this spring I wrote to you and sent in a prayer request for my husband's salvation and also for definite leading to the right job for him. I would like you to know that the Lord has been answering these prayers in a wonderful way . . . He has been closing the wrong doors and opening the right ones at just the right time. My husband has become a changed man and we certainly thank the Lord." — *Wyoming*

"In the September issue of the Manual of Prayer I was thrilled to read a part of a poem written by my dear daughter who passed away ten years ago. I felt as though Madeline was still alive and speaking to me. Her son was also much moved. Ted Malone had all of her poems and was to have them printed but there was a paper shortage at the time so he returned them to us."

Dear God, you seem so near, so close to me

I find it hard to call you "Thee" and "Thou"

As though the greatness of your majesty

Had placed you far beyond my reach somehow!

It is enough for me to know you stand in readiness to give me strength in need,

In willingness to take my silly hand And let me love you by my personal creed . . .

I know you'll understand if I discard the formal "Thou," the reverential "Thee."

With you I find formality so hard

Dear God, you seem so near, so close to me!

Madeline Slade — Ted Malone's
Album of Poetry

THE UNITED PRAYER TOWER

The Prayer Tower is a group of praying people, in touch with prayer cells in this and in foreign countries. They *know* that with the prayer of faith *nothing is impossible*; that with God *all things are possible*. The Prayer Tower will gladly pray for your needs at any time.

This work is supported entirely by freewill offerings. We wish to thank those whose contributions make this work possible. Free booklet about the Prayer Tower on request.

Address: The United Prayer Tower, 5829 27th Avenue South, Minneapolis 17, Minnesota, Telephone PARKway 2-2766; after 5 P.M., Saturday afternoon and Sunday, call Mrs. Fisher at TAYlor 2-7396, Minneapolis, Minn., or Mrs. Ecoff, MIDway 8-7365, St. Paul, Minn.

THE CHRISTIANS DAILY GUIDE, William S. Deal. 100 pages. Baker Book House, \$1.00. A beautiful little book of gems of spiritual perception. Here are little readings and a scripture verse for each of the days of the year. The book is bound in flexible leatherette, gold stamped, and small enough to fit in the pocket or handbag. The readings are small and short enough so that one good point is made for each day.

KNOCKING AT GOD'S DOOR, Oswald Chambers. 87 pages. Christian Literature Crusade. A little book of prayers, one for each day of the entire year. Each prayer runs from three to six lines and is pointed, helpful and evidences a genuine spiritual approach to daily life. Some of the prayers are good enough to be used as affirmations for daily strength, and all should be used a number of times a day.

BREAD FOR HER DAY, Eleanor Bockelman. 70 pages. Wartburg. \$1.25. Reflections and meditations for "Mrs. Average Housewife" by a housewife who writes with deep sensitivity and Christian insight about the common things that fill our days. Some of the chapters are "Bread . . . as Exotic as Shrimp," "The Grace in Laughter," "Never Done," and "Taking a Break." The one on "bread" reminds us that we have never gone hungry, what a miracle it is, how we have taken it for granted like the Israelites did with the Manna after getting it for forty years, and how much we really have to be thankful for. The book is well written, and it will draw one out of the "humdrum" of a life that is really blessed with the miracles of God.

AROUND THE YEAR WITH EMMET FOX. 376 pages. Harpers. \$2.95. Meditations for every day of the year from the published and unpublished writings of the famous author of *The Sermon on the Mount*. Here is the cream of the insights and perceptions and affirmations of a man who became world famous because he could put spiritual insights and laws into language that average person could understand and use

books of interest

comments, summaries
reviews & opinions
on religious books

NORMAN K. ELLIOTT

in his life. Some of the daily headings are: Triumph Over Danger, Our Assurance, Step by Step, An Inexhaustible Supply, Seeking and Finding, and A Time to Fast. It's a book well worth owning and putting to work in your life. There is a limited, leather-bound edition with a facsimile of his signature and numbered for \$5.00.

TEEN-AGERS PRAY, edited by William Kramer. 82 pages. Concordia. \$1.00. It is not as easy for teen-agers to express themselves in prayer as it is for adults. This book was written with the help of teen-agers. The language and thoughts will appeal to them. Here is a partial example concerning wanting to do God's will, ". . . When I have disappointments, help me to bear them. When I have sorrow, make me strong. When I am confused or lost, take my hand in Yours, bid the waves be still, and let me rest. Your will be done in me. Your will be done now and evermore, on earth as it is done in heaven. Take my life, fill it brimful with Your will, and hold me secure . . ."

PRAYERS OF THE REFORMERS, compiled by Clyde Manschreck. 183 pages. Muhlenberg. \$2.50. The content of

a man's prayer life is a picture of his soul and a statement of his conception of God, man and history. This book takes the prayers of the reformers, on the continent and on the British Isles, and shows these men (on whom history turned) as they must have known themselves. These are the ideas and loyalties that turned kings and nations and churches up-side-down. Some of the reformers are: Luther, Coverdale, Calvin, Melancthon, Knox, Cranmer, Wermullerus, Becon, Jewell, Ridley and Eber. The book is divided into sections of prayers for different occasions such as prayer for Thanksgiving and Praise, Confession and Penitence, Aspiration, Petition and Supplication, Forgiveness, Newness of Life, Obedience, Truth and Purity, Spiritual Growth, Courage and Strength, Table Graces, Baptism, Marriage, Death and Benedictions. There is a good closing chapter on the meaning of prayer for the reformers.

SEEKING AND FINDING GOD, Roy Pearson. 112 pages. Abingdon, \$2.00. Each of the forty devotions has a scripture passage to read, applications of that scripture to our own social and personal questions, and is followed by a prayer. The thing I like about the book is that it does not give a series of pat and neat answers to the problems of life, but it does give you a series of questions that will force you to think about God, man, society, etc. For example, what is "normal"? Is it safe to have men speak good of you when that implies that your morals, ideals and standards are dictated by what the majority of people do? If this were true then it would be normal in some places of the world to burn widows, leave girl

babies to die of exposure, hold slaves, and so on. These devotions will sharpen your view of God and man.

PRAYERS FOR CHRISTIAN HEALING, compiled by Albert E. Campion. 96 pages. Morehouse-Gorham, \$2.00. This book will prove an aid to the sick and also to those who visit the sick. Each prayer is written by a different man of note in the ministry, and as would be expected they are very good not only in the phrasing but in the content of thought. The first part of the book has chapters such as General Prayers, Prayers for a Specific Person, Personal Prayers, of Thanks for Health Restored and for The Ministry of Healing. Then there are sections of a more specific sort such as prayers For the Gift of Healing, For Physicians, For a Hospital, For Dedication of a Hospital, Bidding Prayers, For the Blind, For the Church, For the Mentally Ill, For Cancer Sufferers, A Patient's Prayer, A Commendatory Prayer, and A Form of Prayer Used in Interceding for Those Who Are Sick. A few of the authors are: Patriarch Alexei, Ethel Tulloch Banks, Gerald Kennedy, Arthur B. Kingsolving, John Maillard, John Ellis Large, G. Bromley Oxnam, Austin Pardue, Geoffrey Francis Fisher, Henry Knox Sherrill, and Harold E. Wynn. The one who is sick is often so preoccupied with his condition that it is well nigh impossible to raise to the heights of great prayer. These prayers will help him raise above himself and perhaps touch something greater than he is capable of alone. The one who visits the sick will find a lot of suggestive material for thought and prayers that will likely express his prayer desires better than he is able to himself.



Starr Daily's NEW BOOK!

Faith, Hope & Love

Faith, hope and love are the three spiritual and effective channels of powerful living. They have the means of making a man strong, wise and secure in facing up to life. The author, a man who has proved the methods and means examined in this book, shows the reader how to put these striking forces to work in everyday living. He likens these three spiritual levers of successful living to a river in which faith is the channel, hope the banks of the river of life, and love the water destined by God to find union with the harmonious laws of life.

Faith, Hope and Love is a practical book of spiritual guidance and counselling by a wise counsellor of spiritual depth and wise discretion. It is for those who want to find the spiritual basis of all life. \$3.00

LEARN — ● *of the woman who with faith and three small children refound a happy home* ● *the art of positive meditation* ● *the laws of successful prayer* ● *a formula for unfoldment* ● *how hopes come true* ● *divine expectancy* ● *the good medicine of love* ● *the practice of mental kindness* ● *the daily disciplines of love* ● *the author's Love Bible*

● Order from (add 15 cents for postage and handling)

Macalester Park Pub. Co. Bookstore
1571 Grand Avenue St. Paul 5, Minnesota

REV & MRS. R. A. ANDERSON
7044 JONES ST. N. W.
SEATTLE 7 WASH.

CONTENTS

The Wonderful Season	<i>Duane Valentry</i>	1
Your Faith Has Power	<i>Don H. Gross</i>	4
Life Exists After Death — I Know!	<i>Allison Shaver Fisk</i>	7
The Best Birthday Present of All	<i>L. K. Twitty</i>	9
We Are Perpetual Witnesses	<i>Grace Noll Crowell</i>	13
What's Right With Christmas?	<i>William Hordern</i>	15
Donald Coons Didn't Quit With Polio	<i>Beth Brown</i>	20
They Increased Church Attendance Through Television	<i>Alfred K. Allan</i>	23
Clean Up Your Subconscious Mind	<i>Katherine Bevis</i>	27
The Practice of "Listening" in Prayer	<i>Robert B. Doing</i>	29
Love, the Universal Solvent	<i>Enola Chamberlin</i>	31
Thoughts Farthest Out	<i>Norman K. Elliott</i>	33
We Need Men to Match our Missiles	<i>Ralph W. Sockman</i>	36
A Few Old Lessons Are Still Needed	<i>Simeon Stylites</i>	41
The Heart of Prayer	<i>Norman Vincent Peale</i>	43
Thank God I Could Say, "No."	<i>Anne M. Lefel</i>	47
Tenderness of Spirit	<i>George D. Watson</i>	49
Laughter Makes Us Human	<i>Wesley N. Haines</i>	53
God Loves Us	<i>Abbe de Tourville</i>	56
"Everything's Going to be All Right"	<i>Ronnie Deauville</i>	59
Prayer Works	<i>The United Prayer Tower</i>	61
Books of Interest	<i>Norman K. Elliott</i>	63