

JUNE 1968

OUR TIMES





MANHOOD is a spiritual concept, a moral ideal. The physical shell, the outward structure, can lay no claim to manhood as God looks upon it.

A MAN is one who has discovered by personal experience how much of a man it takes to love. One who has discovered, simultaneously, how little there is within himself that is capable of loving a wretched sinner. One who has been willing to prostrate self before God and let God do the loving through him.

THE MAKINGS OF A MAN



A MAN is one who has come to know God as a personal friend. One who has been through the purging flames of sacrifice and self-effacement so that he might know his God and taste with joy His satisfying friendship.

A MAN is one who is not afraid to unshackle his mind from the bogeys of prejudice, indolence, and fear. One who is willing to study and think and grapple with the mysteries of life until he has unearthed a scintillating gem of truth to share with the world.

A MAN is one who falls to his knees when he falls. One who cries for strength from God when he cries.

A MAN is one who knows the power of gentleness. One who has learnt to be gentle because he knows that he owes his salvation to the fact that God chose to be gentle.

A MAN is one who can see beauty in the simple things of life. One who can look beyond the grime and filth that coats the hardened features of a tired labourer and sees a touch of the Divine in the smile of childish innocence.

A MAN is one who has learnt to forgive. One who cannot but forgive because he knows that he owes his promise of eternal life, his privilege of direct communion with God, and the very existence of his soul to forgiveness.

A MAN is one who with all self-esteem and pride humbled into the dust is given to do great things for God. One whose ambition is sanctified to the very last grain. One who can live above the taunts, sceptic reasonings, and sympathetic nods of the masses because he knows that there is a task to be done, a task in which God Himself is the paymaster.

A MAN is one who is generous in all things. One who is not only willing to give of his means but is willing to give himself unreservedly for the cause of God and truth.

A MAN is one who sees and accepts pure living as a ringing challenge. One who wants to live his life to the limit and drain life's cup to the last drop because he knows that only in godliness is there true happiness. One who would still live a life of purity even though there were not a heaven to gain and a hell to shun.

Such are the makings of a *Man*, a man in the true sense of the word, a *MAN* in God's sense of the word.

—LOUIS SWART

OUR TIMES

only one issue @ All the other numbers are missing

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A SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST PUBLICATION issued monthly by the ORIENTAL WATCHMAN PUBLISHING HOUSE, P. O. Box 35, Poona 1, India.
SUBSCRIPTION RATES: India, Rs. 4:75; Pakistan, Rs. 4:75; Burma, Ks. 4:75; Ceylon, Rs. 4:75.

SUBSCRIPTION PAYMENTS: Our representatives are authorized to receive cash or cheques and to issue official receipts for same. For orders sent to publishers, make cheque or money order payable to Oriental Watchman Publishing House, Salisbury Park, Poona 1.

REGIONAL OFFICES: Andhra, Kerala, Madras and Mysore—13, Cunningham Road, Bangalore 1; Gujarat and Maharashtra—16, Club Road, Bombay 8; Uttar Pradesh, East Punjab, Delhi and Adjacent States—11 Hailey Road, New Delhi; Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal—Morabadi Villa, Ranchi, Bihar; Assam—Nongthymmai, Shillong; East Pakistan—130/C Dhanmandi Road, Dacca; Ceylon—15/2 Alfred House Gardens, Colpetty, Colombo 3; West Pakistan—Oriental Watchman Publishing House, 32 Mozang Road, Lahore; Burma—Book & Bible House, 68 U Wisara Road, Rangoon.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Send new address, with wrapper from magazine, or reference number on wrapper, to indicate old address.

NON-RECEIPT OF MAGAZINES: Inquire at local post office before informing us. If possible, send magazine wrapper when writing regarding non-receipt.

EXPIRY NOTICE: X on wrapper of magazine indicates subscription has expired.

On January 1, for the first time in Spanish history, a Protestant was buried in a Catholic cemetery at Almodena, Madrid. The deceased belonged to a new Baptist congregation. This is the first Protestant church built since the new religious liberty law was passed last June.

*

For the first time the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches have made a common appeal for peace. The appeal was for the immediate cessation of armed hostilities on the part of contesting parties in the Nigerian conflict.

In the common statement anguish was expressed at the appalling loss of life caused by war, the inhumanity and futility of war was pointed to, an appeal for "mercy and compassion" was made, governments and international agencies were appealed to to act effectively to bring about immediate cessation of hostilities, and a call was made for international relief agencies to meet the grave needs occasioned by war.

*

The twenty-five-year-old person who smokes only one to nine cigarettes daily shortens his life by approximately 4.6 years. If he smokes twenty to thirty a day he cuts his life short by an average of 8.3 years.

*

Pope Paul advised Catholics in Italy to vote for candidates who uphold church unity, an apparent reference to church stands against divorce and pornography.

PICTURE CREDITS

Cover transparency by N. Ramakrishna
7—J. S. Moses; 16—G. T. Zachariah.

Owned by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (Southern Asia Division), Salisbury Park, Poona. Printed and published by V. Raju at and for the Oriental Watchman Publishing House, Salisbury Park, Poona 1. 281-68.

MIND AND TONGUE

God created man with a mind that was geared to work faster than his tongue. To prove this, if you read at average speed or above, try reading silently as fast as you can, then endeavour to read aloud at the same rate.

This difference in nimbleness of the mind and tongue is not without significance. To us it suggests that we were meant to have a period in which to weight our words before speaking them. If our words sometimes seem to intimate otherwise it is probably only because our brains are in low gear, or in no gear at all.

Which brings to mind the words in machine operator's jargon, which we once saw on a card on someone's desk: "Make sure brain is running before putting tongue in gear."

God also made man with the means of "braking" his tongue. He can slow his speech to consider his words more carefully, or stop it altogether. But in spite of these built-in controls, we get into more trouble by our tongues than by any other single means or any combination of means.

Most of us are careful about what we put into our mouths. It is at least as important to examine what comes out, although generally we do not observe the same care—unfortunately. What goes into our mouths affects only ourselves. The words that come out affect ourselves and others.

The possible magnitude of the result of unconsidered words is suggested by St. James: "The tongue is a little member and boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire. And the tongue is a fire. The tongue is an unrighteous world among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the cycle of nature . . ." (James 3:5, 6, RSV).

Commenting on the results of weighing one's speech, the writer of Proverbs observes: "The mind of the wise man makes his speech judicious, and adds persuasiveness to his lips" (Proverbs 16:23, RSV). Thus the Scriptures advise, "Don't say anything bad but only what is good, so that you can help where there's a need and benefit those who hear it" (Ephesians 4:29, Beck's Translation).

So, adapting a couplet of Oliver Wendell Holmes, we suggest:

Think clearly, if you speak at all;
Test every word before you let it fall.

—T.A.D.

OUR TIMES

Editorial

Is Conscience Enough?

MANY CONTEND that conscience is a God-given guide which is sufficient to keep one on the "strait and narrow" way. The confident claim of some to be conscience free is not supported by the questionable things they do. "My conscience does not condemn me," they assert; whereas their conduct suggests that it should.

Here is an apt definition of that influence felt in varying degrees in every life. "Conscience is that voice within us that tells us to do right." Isaiah probably refers to this, in chapter 30, verse 21: "And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left." It goes without saying that, if it is God's voice speaking to us the direction given will be right. However, many subtle and misleading voices must be disregarded, if conscience is to be considered a safe guide.

It is important to know the difference between a tender conscience and a pliable conscience. Some are satisfied to regard conscience as so fickle a thing as to need no established standard of right and wrong. What is obviously wrong and condemned by one man's conscience can meet the approval of another man's conscience and be regarded by him as right. "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 16:25). Conscience is a deceptive guide when "every man [doeth] whatsoever is right in his own eyes" (Deuteronomy 12:8). Conscience is a safe guide only "when thou doest that which is good and right in the sight of the Lord thy God" (Verse 28). It is absolutely necessary, then, that a God-directed conscience be one governed always by God's unchanging standard of right.

Perhaps in man's original perfection, when God's law was enshrined within the heart of man by the Creator, conscience would provide a reliable guide to man. But, when man turned aside from the will of God, sin left the will of man weakened and unstable. Conscience, of itself, no longer was safe: "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23).

Human experience serves only to emphasize what God says about the variability of man's conscience. Thirty texts in the New Testament use the word "conscience" (Greek: *suneidesis*, i.e. "a knowing with one self"), and such adjectives as these are used in conjunction with it: "good" (Acts 23:1); "pure" (1 Timothy 3:9); "perfect" (Hebrews 9:9); "void of offence toward God, and toward men" (Acts 24:16); and, by way of contrast, "evil" (Hebrews 10:22); "weak", "defiled" (1 Corinthians 8:7); "seared" as "with a hot iron" (1 Timothy 4:2). Thus God warns that, to some, conscience will be a safe guide; while, to others, it will prove a perilous snare. A closer look at the Bible's two main groupings—the good and the bad—will provide both assurance and warning.

The first step in finding the blessing of a "good conscience" is to find acceptance with God, through the atoning work of the Saviour. "How much more shall the blood of Christ, . . . purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Hebrews 9:14). If we are to have confidence in the voice of conscience, it is essential that the Holy Spirit continue to guide and control the will of the repentant one in his new relationship with God.

When the Holy Spirit has cleansed the conscience, a thorough reformation will be seen. There is a story from the Taxation Department that periodically goes the rounds. It probably is true, and, anyway, it illustrates the "instalment plan" treatment of the conscience some people hopefully undertake. This revealing note accompanied a sum of "conscience money" received by the commissioner, and read, "Dear Sir, Enclosed find the sum of Rs. 200. If I still can't sleep at night I'll send the balance of Rs. 300



due to the Department.—[Signed] Troubled Conscience.”

Such an approach to the problem of wrongdoing leaves the conscience “weak,” “defiled,” and unreliable. This “cover-up” tactic is not the “answer of a good conscience toward God” (1 Peter 3:21). The Bible has much to say about a counterfeit repentance, which sorrows for the result of the sin, but shows a reluctance to give up the sin itself. Such was the grief of Judas Iscariot who, after betraying his Lord, exclaimed, “I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood.” “It [his confession] was forced from his guilty soul by an awful sense of condemnation, and a fearful looking for of judgment. The consequences that were to result to him drew forth this acknowledgment of his great sin. There was no deep, heart-breaking grief in his soul that he had delivered the Son of God to be mocked, scourged, and crucified.”—E. G. White. This is “the sorrow of the world” which “worketh death.” (2 Corinthians 7:10.)

How different is “godly sorrow” which “worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of.” And how convincing will be the zeal and contrition of one utterly frank and open with God, that in all things he should be clear and approved of God. Verse 11. Conviction swept in upon the conscience of the tax collector, Zacchæus, to move him in a mighty way of making full restoration. In gratitude he poured out his heart, “Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold” (Luke 19:8).

When the heart is cleansed and the conscience quickened by the Spirit of God, the repentant sinner will discern a new depth and sacredness in God’s holy law, the foundation of His government in heaven and on earth, and he will acknowledge its claim upon him. He delights to do the will of God, and thus he is guided by a “conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.” In this way only, can one know for sure that amidst all the confusion and conflict of human passions, it is God’s voice saying, “This is the way, walk ye in it.”

A tragic surprise awaits the professing Christian relying on a conscience out of harmony with the will of God. “Even their mind and conscience is defiled. They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate” (Titus 1:15, 16). Obviously these under such strong rebuke had refused to yield to the Holy Spirit’s endeavours to bring their life and their conscience into harmony with God’s standard of righteousness. There is no good conscience to take the helm, and they “have made shipwreck” “concerning faith.” (1 Timothy 1:19.)

And there is a special note of warning for those

To page 18

*Is
there
a God
who plans
and cares
for His children?*

WHILE MANY today are giving themselves over to intemperance and pleasure-seeking and give little thought to the things that belong to their eternal salvation, there are also many who are thinking more seriously than they have ever done before. In their attempt to think things through, they ask, “How can a good God permit events in this world to drift along as they are doing and not take a hand in the matter?”

To many it seems that God does not care for mankind, that He is heedless of the appalling conditions under which men live; that He pays no attention to the cry that goes up to Him from earth’s oppressed millions; that the poverty, sorrow, degradation, cruelty, and sin that reign on the earth are no concern of His; that He makes no attempt to restrain the ambitions of evil men who exercise the power of life and death over millions of human beings and are both willing and anxious to sacrifice them to gratify their lust for power and selfish gratification.

As a result of this state of things the impression prevails among many that God is not interested in the affairs of men, and that success in this life does not depend upon love to God and men, but is reserved for the strong, the cruel, and the lawless.

While a superficial glance may lead to such reasoning, a second and closer view reveals that this

the mind behind the universe



picture is not and cannot be the true one. Despite the conclusions of some men of science, a little reasoning will convince men that a cosmos such as ours could not have developed from dead and unconscious forces by mere chance, but that an overruling Providence watches and guides events to a predestined end, and will eventually accomplish His design.

Let us first discuss the existence of God. Of the many theories that attempt to account for the existence of the things about us, we accept as the true one that which holds that there is a personal God who in the beginning created all things by divine fiat. "He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast" (Psalm 33:9).

We are aware that this statement of belief proves nothing. We are further aware that it raises questions not easily answered, questions beyond the ken of man, chief of which is how God came to be. This we cannot answer any more than our friends who believe in evolution can explain the origin of matter or of life. They, as well as we, must begin with an assumption which rests entirely on faith—though ours rests in a personal God, while theirs rests upon the belief that the elements contained ingredients that in the course of ages developed into a Rembrandt, a Raphael, a Tagore, a Beethoven, an Einstein, a Gandhi.

When our critics assure us that we can present no proof for the existence of God, we readily admit

that we have no proof such as they demand: we cannot put God in a test-tube; we cannot demonstrate His existence to one who refuses to believe. But, consider the old arguments for God's existence. They may not be final proof to an unbeliever; but they contain sufficient evidence to convince an open and unbiased mind.

I examine closely a piece of intricate, beautiful machinery and am charmed with its quiet efficiency and smooth-working parts. To my astonishment I see no motor, and yet I know that the machine cannot operate itself: somewhere there is a motor that supplies the power that operates the machine. Upon closer inspection I find a shaft protruding from behind a brick wall, and rightly I conclude that the revolving shaft is the motive power. While I still see no motor or dynamo, I am convinced that there is something on the other side of the brick wall which accounts for the revolving shaft. I need no profound scientific education to draw this conclusion. Good sense tells me that this is the case.

My scientific friend who has examined the machine with me is equally impressed with the beautiful working of the machine and its efficiency. He marvels at the wonderful precision of its parts and the exquisite work it produces. When we come to the shaft, he explains to me the marvellous property of the shaft which can produce such power as to enable it to drive the machine, and yet is not itself driven

by anything visible. When I timidly suggest that there is probably a motor on the other side of the wall that explains the power of the shaft, he admonishes me not to be easily led astray by assumptions. As a scientist he believes only in demonstrable facts, only in what he can see and what can be proved, and challenges me to produce the motor which I believe is the explanation of the revolving shaft. Unfortunately neither of us can see through the brick wall, and other means of access are barred; and he triumphantly points to my inability to produce the proof he requires. I lose the argument, so he contends, but only according to his way of reasoning. He selected the conditions on which only he would believe, and he goes away satisfied with his conclusions. He thinks he is wise. God through David says he is a fool. Psalm 14:1. Any jury would hold my point well taken. Good sense maintains that there is a power behind the shaft that accounts for its revolving.

It is so with the argument for the existence of God. This world, this star cluster, this universe, is a wonderfully contrived mechanism, in exactitude, in efficiency, far exceeding any work of man. I cannot see the power that contrived it; I cannot see the power that now drives it; I cannot see the hand among the wheels. But I *know* there is a Power there, in the same way that I know that the shaft did not of itself drive the machine. I *know* there is a Power behind the universe, even though I am unable to demonstrate this to one who will not believe.

It is this very argument St. Paul uses when he says, "The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood

by the things that are made; . . . so that *they are without excuse*" (Romans 1:20).

We therefore confidently take our stand in affirming our belief in a Creator: an intelligent, moral Being, of infinite power and life, whose wisdom—while unsearchable—is revealed to us in His works, all of which declare His beneficence and His love, as well as His impartiality and justice.

This demands a few words of clarification. It is clear that a Being of such power as is evidenced in creation holds the power of life and death over every living creature. Were He so minded, He could blot out every vestige of life everywhere. However, this does not appear to be His plan. He seems to nurture and protect, rather than to destroy and kill, so that wherever life appears it is tenderly cared for until maturity, when, after having bequeathed its life to another generation, it dies. There appears to be a plan and design in all.

Accepting the view of God as an all-powerful and all-wise Being, the Bible gives the only rational explanation of His purpose in creation. The theory of organic evolution has no need of a purposeful God. Indeed, it has no need for God at all in the Biblical sense; but the Christian is under obligation to believe not only that God exists, but that "He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6). This means that God is not morally indifferent, but that He will reward those that seek Him and do His will, and, by parity of reasoning, will note those who oppose Him. This argues that God has a definite purpose in view, which is not exhausted by calling men into being, giving them a few years of life, and then letting them die. Such would seem unworthy of God.

The Bible presents God as a moral Being, with moral attributes. While God could create a being in His own image, He could not create a *perfected* moral being; for character is not creatable, but must be acquired through tests. God could and did create a morally *perfect* man, for Adam was that kind of man. But though he was created perfect, he was not *perfected*. That state he could reach only through test and trial. As an apple may be perfect while yet green, and continue to remain perfect all through its growth until it is ripe, so Adam was perfect from the beginning and might have continued so until full and tried maturity had been reached.

If the greatest joy of God is the duplication of Himself in His saints, then it became necessary for God not only to create man in His own image, but to make possible through controlled tests the development of characteristics akin to the attributes of God. This God did in the creation of this world and in the permission of evil. God did not create evil. He was in no way responsible for it; but He foresaw it and made provision to meet the terrible emergency.

HUMAN RELATIONS

Want to improve your ability for getting along with other people? Try some of these:

1. Speak of people. There is nothing as nice as a cheerful word of greeting.
2. Smile at people. It takes seventy-two muscles to frown, and only fourteen muscles to smile.
3. Call people by name. The sweetest music to anyone's ears is the sound of his own name.
4. Be friendly and helpful.
5. Be cordial. Speak and act as if everything you do were a genuine pleasure.
6. Be genuinely interested. You can like everyone if you try.
7. Be generous with praise, cautious with criticism.
8. Be considerate with the feelings of others.
9. Be thoughtful of the opinions of others. There are three sides to a controversy—yours, the other fellow's, and the right one.
10. Be alert to give service. What counts most in life is what we do for others.

—M. L. ANDREASON

OUR TIMES



TEN GREAT PARABLES of Jesus Christ

Part II

THE SOWER AND THE SEED

M. E. CHERIAN, PH.D.

IN AND THROUGH Jesus Christ God reveals Himself to us. Facets of truth, mysteries of the Infinite One, and His attitude toward man, never before clearly comprehended, were made known to humanity in the teaching of the Master during His years on earth.

In order to reveal these divine truths to man Jesus used the simple parable. A parable may be defined as a short story in which one thing is stated or implied to be like something else. The story of the Sower and the Seed, discussed in this article, is a good example of the parable.

It was the intention of our Lord to reveal the truth of God through the medium of the parable. By this method He could bring to His listeners truths that would otherwise be hard for them to understand and, sometimes, to accept. By this method He veiled the "light that were else too bright for the feebleness of a sinner's sight." If the truth can be told by a story men may find something of the depth, wonder, and mystery of God illuminated as it might be in no other way.

In what is now the northern part of Israel, in Palestine, is a lake called the Sea of Galilee. One day a group gathered near the lake to hear the Master speak. It was an eager, expectant, throng made up of all classes of people. Among them were many who were sick. As they lay on their mats Jesus went throughout the crowd and healed them. But soon the multitude became so great and pressed around Him so closely that He could no longer move about.

In the throng were fishermen, whose boats were near-by. At His request some of those men brought their boat. Stepping into it, Jesus asked them to push away from the shore a short distance. Then, with the people crowding to the water's edge, He began to speak to them.

Before His eyes Jesus saw the lovely plain of Gennesaret, reaching from the shore of the lake toward the west. Beyond the plain rose the fertile hills of Galilee. Upon those hills we can imagine that Jesus saw farmers busily casting their seed upon the earth.

Taking His theme from these activities, He began: "Behold, a sower went forth to sow; and when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up; some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: and when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them. But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold" (Matthew 13:3-8).

In this parable Jesus sought to teach the purpose of His mission to this earth. He declared Himself as the one who sowed seed—spiritual seed, seeds of truth, of life, seed that, coming to fruition, would enrich a person's life beyond his highest and fairest dreams. "Christ had come, not as a king," someone has written, "but as a sower; not for the overthrow of kingdoms, but for the scattering of seed; not to point His followers to earthly triumphs and national greatness, but to a harvest to be gathered after patient toil, and through losses and disappointments."

In this parable of the sower the Lord showed that "not by force of arms, not by violent interpositions was the kingdom of God to prevail, but by the implanting of a new principle in the hearts of men."

Just as the farmer went from his protected village daily to the outlying fields with its toil and hardship, so the Lord Jesus Christ left His heavenly courts, its glory, and majesty, and incarnated Himself as a man to bring truth to man. He came to suffer, to sow as it were truth in tears, to bring the seed of life

to a sin-laden humanity.

Christ came to sow God's truth in the world. Just as each seed has in itself a germinating principle and is a potential plant, so the word of God is a seed endowed with spiritual life. Christ said: "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life" (John 6:63). Therefore, "In every command and in every promise of the word of God, is the power, the very life of God, by which the command may be fulfilled and the promise realized. He who by faith receives the word is receiving the very life and character of God."

In this connection Ellen G. White, in her book *Christ's Object Lessons*, makes this very pertinent remark: "Every seed brings forth fruit after its kind. Sow the seed under right conditions, and it will develop its own life in the plant. Receive into the soul by faith the incorruptible seed of the word, and it will bring forth a character and a life after the similitude of the character and the life of God."

In this great parable of the sower and the seed, which represents the planting of truth in the heart of man, the Master presented four types of soil, representing four types of human hearts, where the seed, the truth, is planted. Thus we understand that that with which "the parable of the sower chiefly deals is the effect produced on the growth of the seed by the soil into which it is cast." Let us consider these various kinds of soil:

GOD AT WORK

The parable of the seed reveals that God is at work in nature. The seed has in itself a germinating principle, a principle that God Himself has implanted; yet if left to itself the seed would have no power to spring up. Man has his part to act in promoting the growth of the grain. He must prepare and enrich the soil and cast in the seed. He must till the fields. But there is a point beyond which he can accomplish nothing. No strength or wisdom of man can bring forth from the seed the living plant. The life which the Creator has implanted, He alone can call forth.

—E. G. WHITE.

1. The wayside soil. Jesus said that when the sower broadcast his seed some "fell by the way side and the fowls came and devoured them up" (Matthew 13:4). Interpreting the meaning of this the Master said, "When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side."

This represents the truth as it falls upon the heart of an inattentive hearer. Commenting on this, Ellen G. White observes: "Like the hard-beaten path, trodden down by the feet of men and beasts, is the heart that becomes a highway for the world's traffic, its pleasures and sins. Absorbed in selfish aims and sinful indulgences, the soul is 'hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.' The spiritual faculties are paralyzed. Men hear the word, but understand it not. They do not discern that it applies to themselves. They do not realize their need or their danger."

2. The stony places. "Some [seed] fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth." Explaining this Jesus said, "He that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but [en] dureth for a while; for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended" (Matthew 13:20, 21).

It may be noted that the seed sown upon stony ground finds little depth of soil. So the plant springs up quickly, only to perish soon because the root cannot penetrate the rock to find nutriment to sustain its growth. As one religious commentator has observed: "Many who make a profession of religion are stony-ground hearers. Like the rock underlying the layer of earth, the selfishness of the natural heart underlies the soil of their good desires and aspirations. The love of self is not subdued. They have not seen the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the heart has not been humbled under a sense of its guilt."

The summer sun "that strengthens and ripens the hardy grain, destroys that which has no depth of root." Likewise, he who has no root in himself "dureth for a while" but when suffering or persecution comes he turns away from truth.

Many receive the way of Christ as a means of escape from suffering, or from some confining social situation, rather than as a deliverance from sin. They are happy for a time, because they fancy that Christianity will liberate them from difficulty and trial. While life goes well with them they seem to be good, consistent Christians. But they are seen to be without fortitude and faith when strong temptations and

difficulties overtake them. Likewise, when the Bible points out some cherished sin, or necessitates sacrifice or self-denial, they begin to feel that too much is being asked of them. They decide that too much effort is required to make such a thorough change in their life. They look at the present inconvenience and trial, and fail to consider the eternal realities.

3. The thorns. "And some [seed] fell among thorns, and the thorns sprung up, and choked them." Jesus said: "He . . . that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful" (Matthew 13:22).

The seed of truth often falls upon the soil of hearts and minds that might be said to be full of thorns and harmful weeds. And if those who possess these characteristics do not strive to weed out the evil habits and practices, if the habits of life that are pernicious are not expelled from the soul, good spiritual seed that might have produced a worthy character will be choked. The thorns will come to be the crop, and will kill out the wheat.

We must realize that the purifying power of God can thrive only in the heart that is being constantly prepared for the precious seeds of truth. "The thorns of sin will grow in any soil; they need no cultivation; but grace must be carefully cultivated. The briars and thorns are always ready to spring up, and the work of purification must advance continually."

In interpreting this part of the parable the Lord refers to "the cares of this world" as thorns that threaten the development of a holy character. Few there are indeed that are not burdened with the anxieties of life. Those who are poor have the gnawing worry of want haunting them. Toil and sometimes the lack of life's necessities bring fear to their hearts and furrow their brows. Nor are the rich free from anxiety, for they are frequently fearful of losing what they have, as well as being burdened with many other cares.

There are many among both the rich and poor whose whole energy is absorbed in business enterprises, and they neglect things spiritual. They make things of eternity subordinate to things of a transitory nature.

Christ likens "the deceitfulness of riches" to another kind of weed that threatens spirituality. The love of riches has an infatuating, deceptive power. Instead of regarding wealth as a talent to be employed for the glory of God and the uplifting of humanity many look upon it as a means of serving themselves. This chokes spiritual growth.

Luke, in his account of this parable, records that Jesus also referred to the "pleasures of this life" (Luke 8:14) as "thorns" that hinder the seeds of

spirituality from developing in the life. We are not to understand from this that the Master condemns all simple pleasures as wrong. The following may be regarded as a definition of what He meant: "All habits of indulgence that weaken the physical powers, that becloud the mind, or that benumb the spiritual perceptions, are 'fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.'"

4. The good ground. "But other [seed] fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold." In His application of this climactic part of His parable the Master explained that the good ground represents the one "that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit."

Here we have pictured a sincere seeker after truth. He has his faults and sins, but he wants to know the truth and obey it. It is a heart that believes and trusts in God.

Someone has said: "A knowledge of the truth depends not so much upon strength of intellect as upon pureness of purpose, the simplicity of an earnest, dependent faith. To those who in humility of heart seek for divine guidance, angels of God draw near."

To those who are sincerely seeking after truth, the Lord Jesus Christ promises the revelation of truth and the transformation of character as a result of its acceptance.

The Lord Jesus Christ made it very clear that the perception of truth is not to be a goal in itself,

but the means to lighting the way to a transformed life. He made this plain by the following illustrations: "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it" (Matthew 7:24-27).

To those of us who seek after truth in the words of a poet comes the question.

"Will your anchor hold in the storm of life,
When the clouds unfold their wings of strife?
When the strong tides lift, and the cables strain,
Will your anchor drift, or firm remain?"

Those who accept the truth and live accordingly may respond:

"We have an anchor that keeps the soul
Steadfast and sure while the billows roll;
Fastened to the Rock which cannot move,
Grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love."

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Why Disasters?

Why does God permit earthquakes, storms, tidal waves, and other calamities in nature that bring death to people and destruction to property?

Any explanation must recognize that conditions in this world are not as God made them. When God completed His creation, He "saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good" (Genesis 1:31). If the world had remained in that condition, the elements would always have served man's interests and promoted his welfare. But sin marred God's creation, with the result that both man and his environment suffer under the curse. There remains much of the original beauty and harmony of the creation; but, on the other hand, there is much in the order of nature to remind us that we are living in a sin-cursed world.

God "maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matthew 5:45). Under certain conditions these very blessings bring tragedy and disaster. Sometimes calamities are the results of men's failure to work in harmony with nature's laws. A flood may be the result of his own mismanagement of natural resources. He denudes the mountains and hills of their trees and undergrowth, and the rain and snow, which would be a blessing if released gradually from Nature's reservoir, rush off in disastrous floods. Man ploughs the land and destroys the covering of grass, and the result is ruinous dust storms.

We need to hold fast the conviction that God is good and that He is working out a long-range plan for the redemption of man and the restoration of the earth to its original state of perfection. The apostle Paul recognized this in these words: "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of

our body" (Romans 8:22, 23). See also Revelation 21:5; 22:3. Until that time suffering will be the lot of humanity, good people and bad alike.

The following extract from the Interpreter's Bible contains food for thought: "How many dark pages does the book of life contain! It will not do to say that God deliberately planned and wrote those pages; for while that procedure might help us to explain the fact of suffering, it would make God a problem. Better have suffering a mystery than besmirch the character of God. Though it may be hard to explain the suffering of the world with a good God, would it not, as B. H. Streeter suggested, be harder to account for the goodness of the world with an evil God or no God at all?"— Vol. 6, p. 569.

Abraham's Test

If God is omniscient, why did He say to Abraham, "For now I know that thou fearest God"? (Genesis 22:12).

After Abraham had demonstrated his obedience to God's command in one of the severest tests ever given to a man, God said to him, "Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me."

We do not need to conclude that God obtained information about Abraham's character that He did not already have, but that by the act of placing his son on the altar Abraham had demonstrated his faith and loyalty. God was simply putting into words that Abraham would understand the assurance of His approval of His faithful servant's act of obedience.

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Adventures in Parenthood

with Lucile Joy Small, R.N.

PURE IN HEART

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

Some might take issue with us if we were to state that the world is more corrupt today than at any time in its previous history. Yet two thousand years ago the apostle Paul prophesied of our time: "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse" (2 Timothy 3:13). Few if any will take issue with us in recognizing that modern communication facilities do bring the corruption swirling about us even in the confines of our own homes unless we are constantly on our guard.

The quality of purity is far more often applied to chemicals or fluids or material things than to character, yet the word of God still declares plainly, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

What can be more pure and unspotted than the mind and character of an infant when it is first placed in the arms of its parents? What a responsibility is theirs to guard the avenues of approach to the mind of the little one.

How can they do this?

First by making the prayer of the psalmist their own: "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer." Thus only can the parents make certain that their example will not be a stumbling-block to the little ones.

Some may feel that what they say or do in the presence of very young children is not important because the child is too young to understand anyway. True the child may not understand the words spoken, but his little blotting-paper mind cannot help being affected by the attitudes reflected in the words spoken in his presence. How much better that he hear only pure language and pure thoughts expressed and be protected from the sensuous.

Cyril Philips, M.R.C.S. (Eng.), L.R.C.P., D.P.M. (Lond.) writes: "My experience as a child psychiatrist has convinced me that exposure to parental nudity any time after the first three or four months of infancy is always severely disturbing to children."

If the parent realizes the sacredness of the human body it will be reflected in the kind of care that is given to the infant, the carefulness with which every part of the tiny body is bathed. Special attention should be given to cleansing all the creases and folds of skin and membrane that are exposed. The irritation caused by inadequate cleansing of the private parts, can lead to the unfortunate habit of masturbation. Clothing should be adequate for covering and comfortable.

Careful watching will recognize problems before they develop into major proportions. Training in right habits, not punishment for wrong ones, is ever the objective of the wise parent. If a small child begins to handle his private parts merely for the pleasurable sensation which he experiences in so doing, the parent must be doubly vigilant. One safeguard is to teach the child to go to sleep with his hands outside of the covers. Quiet reasonable instruction is always better than scolding and threatening, as a means of character training.

Allow the child to develop naturally and do not call attention to friends of the opposite sex.

Teaching your child good reading habits will be a protection against introducing wrong habits of thought. The cinema also is better avoided as it seems to thrive best in portraying sin and impurity in varying degrees. Even the types of music with which your child becomes familiar play their part in encouraging good or evil.

A diet of fruits, nuts, grains and vegetables, without grease and hot spice, is the best diet to promote happy, healthy development of young bodies and minds. A careful reading of Scripture will reveal these dietary principles. This subject was discussed at more length early in this series of articles.

Modest attire is important in the care and training of the child who would develop purity of character. When Jesus equated the lustful thought with the accomplished sin, how dare we as parents dress ourselves or our children in a manner which even a few years ago we considered indecent? Do God's standards change because Paris, London, New York or Hollywood make immodest clothing fashionable? Western dress is gaining popularity in India. Each parent will be faced with the choice between following fashion or following the principles enunciated by Christ. Duane Valentry, writing in the U. S. magazine, "Today's Health," on the subject "Don't Be a Crime Victim," states, "Tight or skimpy clothing worn by a woman [might we add by a girl also?] asks for trouble and creates temptation. . . . Women may invite attack by wearing provocative clothing, and by not exercising normal precautions in their actions."

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."



Ready to Help

SCHOOL was finished for the day, and hundreds of children came hurrying out through the gates into the busy main street of a city suburb. They scattered in all directions as they turned homewards. Some waited for their bus; others looked in the shops or stood in groups and talked. Cars sped by and people thronged the footpaths, but no one among the hundreds of people seemed to notice a small boy sitting on the seat at the bus stop. He was just an ordinary boy, not in the least attractive, with glasses on his freckled face, and he was crying as if his heart would break.

After a while a group of boys passed by. "I wonder what that new boy is crying for!" one of them remarked; but none of the others even looked at him. They were too interested in what they were talking about to be bothered with a cry baby. A number of women stood waiting for their bus, but they were used to crying children, and their attention wandered elsewhere.

Presently a little school girl about nine or ten years old came along. She looked at the crying boy, sat down beside him, and talked for a few minutes. As he continued to cry she opened her case, rummaged through her school books, and found a clean handkerchief. She turned to the boy, took off his glasses and cleaned them. Then she folded the hanky smoothly and wiped his wet face and perspiring, sticky freckled neck. Perhaps she was used to washing the faces of smaller brothers and sisters at home, for her hands moved firmly and efficiently. The boy was crying softly now, and after a few comforting pats on his shoulder and a final mopping up of the last of his tears, the little girl replaced his glasses and stood by his side with her hand resting protectively on his shoulder.

Why was he crying? He had missed his bus and didn't seem to understand that another one would soon come along. He was new at the school, and wasn't yet sure of his way home. When he came to a certain shop that was on the corner of the street where he lived he got off the bus and hurried home to his mother. But today the bus had gone without him. It had moved away just as he was running across the road, and now he didn't know when he would get home. He was frightened in the big, noisy

city, and felt strange and lonely among the hundreds of school children he didn't know. And so he sat there crying. The more he cried the more frightened he became. He might never find the way home, and might never see his mother again, and at this thought he cried all the harder. And then the little girl came along and comforted him.

"Do you know him?" a lady on the other end of the seat asked her.

"He's in my class," the girl answered briefly. Although he was a new boy and she hadn't spoken to him before, the fact that he was a classmate made her feel responsible for him.

She continued to stand beside him, her hand still on his shoulder, till another bus came along. With a few encouraging words she helped him onto it and watched for a few moments as it moved away. Then she turned, picked up her school case, and continued on her way home, while the group of women wonderingly watched her go. And the lady sitting on the end of the seat thought: She's just like the good Samaritan.

You know the story of the good Samaritan, don't you? People who lived in the country of Samaria were called Samaritans. Jesus told the story one day to a company of people who were gathered about Him. He said that a man who had been robbed and ill-treated by thieves was left lying on the roadside. After a while a traveller came along, glanced at the wounded man, and continued on his way. Soon another person came along and wondered what had happened. He stopped to look, knew he ought to help the man, but didn't want to be bothered, so he, too, went on. Then the Samaritan came riding on his donkey. As soon as he saw the unfortunate stranger he felt so sorry for him that he stopped, bound up his wounds, lifted him onto his donkey, and walked beside him to the next village. He cared for him all that night, and in the morning gave money to the man with whom they had stayed, and asked him to care for the sick person. If the money was not enough he offered to pay more on his return journey. He did all that for a stranger he might never see again.

Jesus told the people that, like the good Samaritan, we should do for others what we would wish them to do for us if we were in their place. If everyone did that, what a happy place this world would be!



the parent inside the child

IT WAS raining outside, so the children were playing in the living-room. Mother, working in the kitchen, heard quarrelling. The noise became louder and louder.

"Stop quarrelling!" she said as she stepped into the living-room. "You know that never settles anything. Quiet down and quit fussing at each other."

Imagine her surprise when one of the children replied, "But Mother, we aren't mad. We are only playing daddy and mummy." Those parents didn't know what they were teaching.

From earliest moments of life the child is a copy-cat. This is a way of learning. This copying covers every area of life. Play is patterned after the parent's actions. Children imitate body posture, habits, tone of voice, diction, and vocabulary. Much baby talk is merely the result of adults talking baby talk. It is usually just as easy for a child to copy correct words as incorrect ones. Hohman writes in 'As the Twig Is Bent,' "The most potent influence in child culture is imitation."

The atmosphere of the home cannot be touched, but it can be felt.

It is a thing of the spirit. No photographic plate is as sensitive as the spirit of a child. The images which lodge there determine the direction and destiny of life. By numberless little things and unconscious influence, we weave our child's character, thread by thread. As surely as we provide our child's clothes and food, we, by our example, help form his habits and give him what will strengthen or weaken him for life.

Home Moulds Child's Character

As our child grows, he carries in his character the subtle impressions of his home. If the atmosphere is one of love, he absorbs it. If the atmosphere is one of trust and fidelity, he goes forward trusting and to be trusted.

What creates the atmosphere of a home? Our attitudes toward one another and toward others help create it. The basic determining factors in our day-to-day living help determine the atmosphere in our homes and also are the essence of our faith. It is this which we pass on to our children.

By simple means we earn respect and love. If we have time for our children, we find that our children have time for us. If we express love and devotion by the way we speak to our children, by the way we hold them close, and even by the way we exchange smiles, we build love and devotion.

If we prove by our actions that we want our children today, our children will want us tomorrow. If we say kind things about them and express sincere concern for others, our children will learn to respect, love and care for others. The opposite is also true. Our irritations rub off on our children. Our gossip sets their "teeth . . . on edge."

Many times the atmosphere of our homes is determined more by our reactions than by our actions. The calm response of one father to the cursing and accusations of an angry neighbour left an indelible impression upon a young man who today serves with confidence and calmness in a most difficult and critical position.

How do we react to catastrophe? Have you noticed how some children react when they fall out of a swing or get hurt while playing? Some jump up, brush off the dust, and go back to play without blaming anyone else. Others cry angrily, fix the blame on someone else, and run off to pout. We, as parents, by our reactions often determine how our child responds in these situations. Our children react the way they see us react.

Children Register Reactions

Emotional reactions attract children quickly. F. H. Richardson, in *Parenthood and Newer Psychology*, writes, "We know that [the child] can and does unconsciously register parental tricks and habits and mannerisms at an age which seems impossible that

The most potent influence in child culture is imitation.

he should be taking conscious note of his surroundings."

Attitudes are as catching as the whooping cough and much more lasting. Here is where we as parents give ourselves away most often. We can teach disrespect for the law by our attitudes as does the father who deplores juvenile delinquency yet disregards speed limits and stop signs. He brags in front of his children of the time he was caught speeding but cleverly escaped from paying a fine. Should such a father be surprised when his son is a lawbreaker in the home, school, or community?

One father, on learning that his son stole several pencils from a store, scolded him severely and said, "You ought to know better than to steal. I can pick up all the pencils you need at the office."

What lessons in honesty do our children learn when parents bring home pencils, stationery, tools, and other items belonging to employers? What can we expect to result from the devious business deal or sly income tax deduction discussed over the dinner table? Is it surprising that in a recent survey many college students said that cheating is standard practice, and some saw nothing wrong as long as one didn't get caught?

"The other evening," a youth leader wrote, "I attended a boys' club meeting. The son of my friend was to be advanced a rank. One of the pledges exacted of the boy was that he should not smoke tobacco. No one in the group even smiled when the lad took the oath with upraised hand, and twelve mothers and fathers in the group smoked either cigarettes, cigars, or pipes."

I know a father who practises keeping his promises, no matter how small the child or the promise. Confidence, honesty, and integrity are being built into his son. I also know a father who pushes his child off with promises, only to forget them. This father destroys the very structure of character which is hard to rebuild.

A small child carefully constructed a building with blocks. He was intensely interested in his project. Suddenly it was time for bed. His father called for him to come. Furthermore, it was time to put the blocks away—now! In spite of the cries or feelings of his child, with one sweep and without further explanation, he crumbled the child's creation.

Some time later this child, impulsively and seemingly without concern of conscience, destroyed a prized possession of his parents. Was there any resemblance to the father's action?

My small daughter and I were waiting our turn in the doctor's office. A family entered with two small

boys. The smaller son would not allow his parents to remove his coat or cap out of fear of the doctor.

Soon, however, he was playing happily but too noisily for a doctor's office. To keep him from breaking the lamp, tearing the magazines, and annoying others, the parents tried to scare him into obedience a dozen times by telling him the doctor was coming, the bogeyman would get him, or that he would get a spanking when he got home. The little fellow, after a warning or two, paid no attention. Why should he? Such parents were teaching their child not only to fear a friend, but also to mistrust their own words.

Children usually live up to the reputation parents give them. Some time ago I was in a home where the parents were continually commenting on the awful behaviour of their three-year-old. Repeatedly the parents said, "He's a bad one," "He's a little rascal," or "He doesn't know how to behave."

And the three-year-old demonstrated before us that he was doing all in his power to live up to his reputation. Think of the influence positive comments could well have had.

Child Echoed Parents

Here are parents who find their son expelled from school because he spoke disrespectfully to a teacher. Not only did they find him unrepentant, but he rebelled against making any admission that he did wrong. The parents were horrified. However, they did not reflect on the times when they, in their son's presence, had spoken disparagingly of the school administrators and the school faculty.

Seemingly they did not think they were teaching when they made such statements as, "Teaching used to be a respected profession. Today it's a job for misfits and those who can't do anything else."

As parents we are teachers without a holiday. Since the actions of our children which disturb us most are usually reflections of our own performance, we should look honestly at ourselves. We must seek to be real persons—void of hypocrisy. We must put more emphasis on being the right kind of example.

We must be alert to teaching opportunities in direct teaching situations. But more, since we are indirectly teaching all the time, we must be on guard exercising self-control and constantly depending on divine help.

A mother once wrote, "Do you ask what will educate your son? Your example will educate him; your conversation with your friends; the business he sees you transact, the likings and dislikings he sees you express—these will educate him . . . Your . . . station in life, your home, your table will educate him. . . . Education goes on every instant of time; you neither stop it nor turn its course. What these have a tendency to make your child, that he will be all of his life."

—JOHN M. DRESCHER

IS CONSCIENCE ENOUGH?

From page 6

living "in the latter times." The Holy "Spirit speaketh expressly, that . . . some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron" (1 Timothy 4:1, 2.) Nothing but a stubborn, persistent repulsing of the Holy Spirit's pleading could result in such callous, hardened, unresponsive conscience. Such people are in the gravest possible peril. Unable to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit, and giving heed to lying voices which are leading them on to destruction, they yet hold on to the illusion that conscience is their safeguard.

God warns, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." Man's only safety lies in an immediate response to the Holy Spirit's call. The tendency to delay is like ignoring the awakening ring of an alarm clock. One can persist in "turning a deaf ear," until the peremptory summons is not even heard by the sleeper. Delay in heeding the Spirit's call is dangerous. It will result in a hardening of the conscience and progressively it will become less susceptible to the impressions of the Spirit of God. "Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts" (Hebrews 4:7). "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." (Ephesians 4:30).

Friends, if, as someone has suggested, "Conscience is your 'SOUL' companion," be absolutely sure you have a companion you can trust.

—RALPH TUDOR

GO, GO, GO

Go shout to the housetops,
Go sing to the hills,
Speak to each river,
Chat with the rills.

Go dance with the butterflies,
Go hum with the bees.
Kiss softly the flowers,
Laugh with the trees.

Go wash in the dewdrops,
Go dry in the sun.
Keep moving among nature,
Have heaps of fun.

Go count your blessings,
Go live your life.
Keep it sweet and simple,
Leave no room for strife.

—Elizabeth Stroude

THEMES FOR THOUGHT



They are never alone that are accompanied with noble thoughts.

—Philip Sidney

He that falls into sin is a man; that grieves at it, is a saint; that boasteth of it, is a devil.

—Thomas Fuller

Work and love—these are the basics. Without them there is neurosis.

—Dr. Theodir Reik

Let a man overcome anger by love, let him overcome evil by good; let him overcome the greedy by liberality, the liar by truth!

—Dhammapada

So good a thing is virtue that even its enemies applaud and admire it.

—John Chrysostom

A good portion of the evils that afflict mankind is due to the erroneous belief that life can be made secure by violence.

—Leo Tolstoy

THE BEST IS YET TO BE



THE FIRST half of our lives is a school in which we learn the fine art of living in the other half. It is an apprenticeship in living. It takes half a life to learn how to live the other half. Your first half-life may have been very good, but your latter half can be even better. The American painter, Grandma Moses, for instance, began to paint at 80 and left 1,200 world-famous art panels when she laid down her brush at the age of 101. Edwin Markham's book *80 Poems at 80* was his best-seller—except, of course, for his poem "The Man with the Hoe."

So don't be an elderly youth at 35 or 40 or 50. The senior half of life may be much finer, fuller, and freer.

Some may say flippantly, "Oh, he is in his second childhood." Perhaps so, but the second childhood may be far happier, more hopeful, and heaven-conscious than the first. One's hair may be touched with grey, one's eyesight may begin to blur, one's hearing may need an electronic booster, but grey hairs are life crests of foam that cover the sea after the tempests of life have subsided.

It is not a question of how long one lives, but how. Life should have breadth as well as length. By avoiding excess in eating, drinking, and other habits, one has the promise of a longer, happier life. Eat right, drink right, and be truly happy today, and tomorrow you will live more abundantly. Happiness and health *after* 50 depend largely on healthful living *before* 50. Those who have learned this lesson are living monuments to peace of mind and buoyancy of body.

The apostle Paul advocated balance in living. "Be moderate in all things," he wrote. His counsel

applies to every phase of life, but it has a double application in the second half of our lives. It calls for moderation in work, in play, in diet—in fact, in all things.

Real living is not so much a time of life as it is a temper of the mind. Worry, fear, hate, and despair wrinkle the soul at any stage of life. When the mind becomes covered with the snow of pessimism and the ice of cynicism one has grown old.

As a man "thinketh . . . so is he" (Proverbs 23:7). To think love, joy, and peace, and to be long-suffering is to be young, regardless of chronological age. On the other hand, thoughts of distrust, discontent, grief, and guilt are sure signs of old age. Thoughts may bear the fruit of death when the mind dwells on evil.

As the life of one saint of God was closing she is said to have whispered, with a smile on her lips, "I wish to tell you it is bright inside." The body temple in which we live may need repairs now and then, but keeping it bright inside is all that really matters. The body may be a humble house by the side of the road, but a happy, hopeful, heaven-bent personality living inside that body will soon bring others to its door.

Among the students at a well-known college was a young man who used crutches. A homely sort of fellow, he had a talent for friendliness and optimism. He won many scholastic honours, and the respect of his classmates. One day a classmate asked the cause of his deformity. "Infantile paralysis," was the brief reply.

"But tell me," said the friend, "with a misfortune like that, how can you face the world so confidently?"

"Oh," he replied, smiling, "the disease never touched my heart."

Pain may come during the senior half of life. Pain is a part of life's plan. When we understand its purpose, we can then rejoice in the tribulations, shadows, showers, and sufferings we encounter. The fellowship of suffering with our brethren brings with it a rich, warm current of human understanding, sympathy, and brotherhood. Compassion and human kindness will reign as twin queens on the throne of the inner life of one who has gone down by the river and walked where people walk and wept where they weep. On the way down the bleak chasm of suffering, one discovers that antipathies, antagonisms, and arrogance all fade away. Through the fellowship of suffering we gain a better understanding of God's way.

So be of good cheer—"the best is yet to be."

—B. M. HEALD