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LAW AND MORALS

Occasionally some person is thrust into the limelight as a controversial figure and his very name becomes a symbol of all that is good or evil in a certain area of thought. When this is the case, men who have never met him or read a single paragraph that he has written, will react with almost violent emotion when his name is mentioned in their presence. Such a person, I think, is Joseph Fletcher who is Robert Treat Paine Professor of Social Ethics at the Episcopal Theological School in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Dr. Fletcher has been a rather prolific writer in his special field but it was not until he launched his volume *Situation Ethics* on the stormy sea of modern polemics in 1966 that he became generally known. Many students were excited by its affirmations, and many were offended. Using the ten commandments as an example, Fletcher said of the last six, that situation ethics has good reason to hold it as a duty in some situations to break them, any or all of them. He propounded some questions with which even the most highly incensed find it difficult to wrestle.

The basis of the book is that there are, in the final analysis, only three approaches possible in reaching moral decisions. These are designated as the legalistic, the antinomian, and the situational. The latter affirms that there is only one absolute, love, and that each encounter in life must be approached in the light of love, and not with an apparatus of pre-

fabricated regulations designed in advance to cover every emergency.

It is not necessary to my purpose that I review meticulously the book by Dr. Fletcher. After all, the question with which I am particularly concerned deals with God's will as I conceive it, and I shall write from that standpoint. The current controversy over morals provides an excuse (if I need one) to have my say about the question. It is not really a question of what Fletcher, or my own brethren say, but of what God says, as I understand His will.

The brethren with whom I have been more closely associated have been legalistic in their approach, I think, although they, like all other legalists, have been forced to resort to a great deal of casuistry. Recently they have been driven to deny their legalism, sometimes in a quite legalistic fashion. When William Banowsky met Joseph Fletcher in debate in Indiana he occupied a considerable amount of his time in denying that he was a legalist. The fact that he labored so diligently in trying to prove he was not, created a little suspicion in the minds of some who heard him.

Obviously, the antinomian position, which is lawlessness, can have no place in the Christian life, so we may dismiss it from consideration. But legalism is always a genuine temptation since it frees from the responsibility of making decisions. It is my contention that the

covenantal relationship which we now enjoy in and through the Lord Jesus Christ, is not a legal system at all. Prior to the advent of the Son, God placed man under a written code, the purpose of which was to keep him confined until faith came. With the coming of faith, he was released from this bondage, set free from the demands of law.

It is distinctly affirmed that "the Law was given by Moses, but undeserved favor and reality came through Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). This does not mean that Moses gave one law, and Jesus gave us another. It does not mean that Moses provided the old law, and Jesus furnished a new law, another written code. Law is one thing, grace and reality create a wholly different set of values. That is why we are told that, "Sin shall no longer be your master, because you are no longer under law, but under the grace of God" (Romans 6:14).

ABOLITION OF LAW

Jesus came to fulfill the law, and by doing so, he abolished law as a basis of justification for all time. Many careless students assume that because it was the Mosaic law which he fulfilled, that he simply substituted another of his own. This is not true. He forever set aside a legalistic code as an approach unto God, and provided himself as the means of our justification. "By following legalistic regulations, no person can be acquitted in God's sight . . . but now, independent of law, the righteousness of God has been made available . . . that righteousness of God which is by faith in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:20-22).

All law constitutes a stockade, a prison in which men are kept penned up. Because of immaturity and carnality God thus confined men before Jesus came. "Before this faith came, we were close prisoners in the custody of law, pending the revelation of faith. Thus the law was a kind of tutor in charge of us until Christ should come, when we should be justified through faith; and now that faith has come, the tutor's charge is at an end" (Galatians 3:23-25).

Here is another version of the same passage. "Before the coming of faith we were all imprisoned under the power of the Law, with our only hope of deliverance the faith that was to be shown unto us. Or, to change the metaphor, the Law was like a strict governess in charge of us until we went to the school of Christ and learned to be justified by faith in him. Once we had that faith we were completely free from the governess's authority."

Jesus removed the stockade fence. He did not build another. He battered down the prison walls with the cross. He dismissed the governess. He set us free. "Christ set us free, to be free men. Stand firm, then, and refuse to be tied to the yoke of slavery again . . . When you seek to be justified by way of law, your relation with Christ is completely severed; you have fallen out of the domain of God's grace" (Galatians 5:1-4).

Let us not compromise at this point, for if we do we create a hangman's noose for our own necks. If we convert the Sermon on the Mount, or the apostolic letters to individuals and communities into a written code of which we then become the high sheriffs and enforcers, we doom ourselves. We reverse God's purpose and deny the efficacy of the cross. We build up that which he broke down by his death. "We are not to look upon ourselves as the son of the slave woman but of the free, not sons of slavery under the Law but sons of freedom under grace."

Law, by its very nature, cannot meet our needs. "We are unspiritual, the purchased slaves of sin." We need life and no law can give life. "If a law had been given which had power to bestow life, then indeed righteousness would have come from keeping the law" (Galatians 3:21). Remember that when you attempt to be justified by law, you must either keep every jot and tittle of that law, or you must die. You cannot have your cake and eat it too. You cannot be justified by faith and by law at the same time, for if you are under law faith cannot save you. Only absolute and perfect obedience in every minute detail will do.

This is clearly brought out by the apostle Paul. "All those who follow regulations are under a curse, for it is stated, 'Cursed is everyone who does not adhere to and observe all the precepts set down in the Code of Law'" (Galatians 3:10). "Now law is not at all a matter of having faith: we read, 'he who does this shall gain life by what he does'" (verse 12).

THE NATURE OF LEGALISM

Let me now define what I mean by legalism. A great many brethren have a mistaken view of it. They think of a legalist as a sort of nit-picking individual constantly insisting upon conformity with every microscopic point of obedience. What they overlook is the fact that if we are under law we had better all be involved in such minutiae, for if we overlook even the shadow of a shade we are in for it. If we are under law as a hope of justification this kind of "legalist" is the highest type of example to follow, although none of us will make it anyhow!

But I mean something else by my use of "legalism." I refer to the concept that we will be saved by works through strict adherence to a written code. To be quite specific, I mean simply that a legalist is one who holds that God has handed over to us a law, and that our hope of acquittal or justification lies in our perfect understanding of that body of statutes and judgments, and in our undeviating adherence to all of its regulations and specifications. I reject that theory of righteousness by law, for if it were true, Jesus would never have needed to come, but since he did, he died in vain. "Christ is the end of the law for justification," says the inspired record.

This disturbs some of my good brethren no end. Like all adolescents and immature persons they prefer to be under law. They are afraid of freedom and liberty. So, in spite of the fact that we are specifically told that we are not under law but under grace, they busy themselves in an attempt to systematize grace and turn it into a legal written code. It is astonishing how many people actually think of grace and the collection

of new covenant scriptures as being synonymous. If you doubt this watch how such scriptural scrap-doctors twist and manhandle Titus 2:11.

It seems never to occur to such brethren that the earliest saints would have been without "grace" if the grace of God is identical with the apostolic letters. And since these letters were not all compiled into a single collection for many years, the best any of them would have had was a "partial grace." If grace is a system, and if the writings of John are a part of "grace" every one of the other apostles died without knowing the fullness of grace. This is a wee bit ridiculous when you analyze it, but most proof-texts in sermon outlines should not be examined too closely, if you love the outline.

Of course the brethren who scrutinize the love letters of God to his children rejoice every time they find a passage which makes it appear that we are under law. They jump on such a passage like a duck on a June bug! And they quote them all to me with an air of triumph as if happy to find the apostles and myself mistaken and inconsistent.

For instance, Paul wrote about his adaptability to various classes in an endeavor to win some, and said, "To them that are without law, as without law (being not without law of God, but under the law to Christ)." It is obvious that whatever Paul meant by the law to Christ, he was not talking about a written code, because he said to the very same congregation, "God has qualified us to dispense his new covenant, a covenant expressed not in a written document, but in a spiritual bond; for the written law condemns to death, but the Spirit gives life."

MOTIVATING PRINCIPLES

What the legalistic seekers overlook is that the word for law is not limited to a single meaning. True, it always refers to a governing or motivating principle, but it may differ in manner a great deal. This was recognized by Paul, who wrote, "Where is boasting then? It is excluded.

By what law? of works? Nay, but by the law of faith." W. E. Vine renders the second question thus: "By what manner of law?" and says it means, "by what sort of principle (has the glorying been excluded)?" The New English Version catches the meaning, "What room is left for human pride? It is excluded. And on what principle? The keeping of the law would not exclude it, but faith does."

There is a great gulf between a written code trusted in for justification and the motivating principle of the life of Jesus. Paul expresses it clearly in Romans 8:1, "No condemnation now hangs over the head of those who are in Christ Jesus. For the new spiritual principle of life in Christ Jesus lifts me out of the old vicious circle of sin and death." Another version reads, "The conclusion of the matter is this: there is no condemnation for those who are united with Christ Jesus, because in Christ Jesus the life-giving law of the Spirit has set you free from the law of sin and death."

The principle of life is the indwelling Spirit who transforms us from within so that "we have the spiritual outlook, and that is life and peace" (Romans 8:6). The Spirit within enables us to put to death all the base pursuits of the body (verse 13), and "joins with our spirit in testifying that we are God's children" (verse 16). If we are under a written code as a basis of righteousness we cannot be in Christ.

When all else has been taken from the legalist, he resorts to James 1:22, 25, and reads, "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only . . . But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein . . ." He assumes that the word is the new covenant scriptures as we have them, and that this constitutes the "perfect law of liberty" and since the new covenant scriptures have

been written, we are under a written code of law. This sounds good in a sermon outline, but unfortunately, it is wrong on all counts.

In the first place the twelve tribes in the Dispersion to whom James wrote had no new covenant scriptures into which to look. They didn't even have the epistle of James prior to this time. They had only the old covenant scriptures, but few indeed would affirm that these constituted a "perfect law of liberty." What was "the word of truth" which they had, and to which reference is made? The answer is quite simple.

In verse 18 it is identified as the message by which we are begotten, and Peter distinctly says, "And this is the word which by the gospel was proclaimed unto you" (1 Peter 1:25). The Authentic Version translates James 1:18, "Of set purpose he begot us by the Message of Truth, so as to be in the nature of firstfruits of its creative activities." The New English Version reads, "Of his set purpose by declaring the truth, he gave us birth to be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures."

In verse 21 it is identified as "the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls." The Greek *emphutos* means implanted, and this word had already been implanted in their hearts, whereas the new testament scriptures had not yet been written or made accessible. Paul points out that it is the gospel which is able to save (1 Corinthians 15:2), and declares that "it is the power of God unto salvation to all that believe" (Romans 1:16). The apostolic letters are not the gospel, for everyone of them was written to those who had already obeyed the gospel.

It is clear then that when James speaks of the word, he is not talking about the epistle he was then writing, even though

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it was probably the only apostolic epistle most of his addressees would ever see. He was talking about a Message by which they were begotten of God and thus introduced into the new humanity. It was a Message which demanded personal purification and renunciation of evil and firm reception of the saving pronouncement.

"Away then with all that is sordid, and the malice that hurts to excess, and quietly accept the message planted in your hearts, which can bring you salvation" (New English Version).

"Have done, then, with impurity and every other evil which touches the lives of others, and humbly accept the message that God has sown in your hearts, and which can save your souls" (The New Testament in Modern English).

"So clearing away every foul weed and rank growth in our moral nature, let us gently receive the implanted word that is able to save our lives" (The Authentic Version).

The Good News makes demands upon men. It requires the killing out of foul weeds and rank growth, but it does not permit the heart to lie fallow. It is a dynamic which must be allowed to fill and transform.

THE LAW OF LIBERTY

"Act on the Message and do not merely listen to it, deluding yourselves. Whoever hears the Message and does not act on it is like a man who observes his natural appearance in a mirror. He takes stock of himself, but when he goes away he immediately forgets what he is like. But he who has looked into the untarnished law of liberty, and stayed to gaze, being no forgetful listener but an active doer, will be blessed in what he does."

One must never forget that although James acknowledged the Messiahship of Jesus, he remained an orthodox Jew, zealous for the law as long as he lived. Hugh J. Schonfield points out that every time James refers to "the law of liberty" he is talking about "the law of the gospel" as enunciated in the Sermon on the Mount, interpreting the Law of Release

in Deuteronomy 15:1-15. This would make sense to the recipients of this letter, as does the usage of *synagogue*, instead of *ekklesia*, translated "assembly" in James 2:2.

James declares that love is the royal law according to the scripture (2:8). And he affirms that we must speak and act as those who are amenable to the principles of liberty (2:12). Love and liberty make it possible to judge each individual case on its own merits, and to extend mercy in every case where possible. All decisions are to be made in the light of love, therefore, one will be judged on the basis which he sets up by which to judge others. "For he who acts without demonstrating mercy will receive judgment-without mercy being shown to him. Mercy will actually triumph over judgment." This means that in the day of judgment the man who has been merciful will find that the mercy he has shown will blot out or cover his own shortcomings and sin.

In conclusion I would like to summarize briefly the concepts which I have reached from my study of the word of God.

1. The Christian is not subject to a written code containing a list of regulations imposed upon him from without. Instead, the law of God is internalized, being written in the heart and mind, so that one is self-governed and disciplined by the love of God which is a fruit of the Spirit.

2. The new covenant scriptures were never intended to be compiled into a code of statutes and judgments to be enforced by minions of "the law" but they are a collection of love letters addressed to individuals and communities of the saints to serve as guidelines of behavior for those in the precious Lord Jesus Christ.

3. In interpreting the new covenant scriptures I must recognize that any application must be made under an umbrella of love, and with mercy shown for the unfortunate brother who has succumbed to temptation. I must resist the impulse to show myself as an "enforcer of the law" or God's policeman.

4. If I postulate that the new covenant scriptures are a legal code I must either live up perfectly to every implication and demand, or die, for the slightest infraction or deviation will spell my doom. Legalism requires absolute obedience based upon complete knowledge. I cannot claim law as a basis of divine favor and grace as a means of justification. I cannot have law for what I am able to do and grace for my failures. It is not law and grace, it is law or grace!

5. The absolute in our relationship to God is love—*agape!* It is the motivation for our moral and spiritual relationship. It is the royal law, and just as all subjects of a king are in subservience to his rule, so all principles and rules of action are subject to the kingly law.

We sacrifice no truth of heaven when we admit that love, rightly understood, properly defined, and correctly applied,

is the foundation of Christian ethics. It is a divine universal, deep as the heart of God and wide as the universe which he made. We must not take a legalistic approach under grace, for to be under law is to fall from grace. We dare not be antinomians for then we will become our own God.

Why should we retreat from encounter on the field of love, and seek to discover another area upon which to meet the advocates of "the new morality"? Love is of God. God is love. Let us defend the love of God—its source, its demands, its sacrifices and its rewards.

It will be our own purpose, God willing, to discuss in our next issue love in contrast with legalism. We trust that you will read carefully what we say at that time and we pray that all of us may love one another in deed and in truth, and not just in word or in speech.

MINISTRY AND MINISTERS

"A Christian layman is one who discharges his God-given vocation in the secular calling of life. That is his vocation. He is called a 'priest unto God' in the life of 'the world outside.' A realization and actualization of such a priesthood is one of the greatest needs of our time. If this fact was firmly grasped by the whole People of God, it would undoubtedly lead to a Christian Revolution, a new Reformation that would transform the life of the contemporary church."—Cyril Eastwood in *The Priesthood of All Believers*, page 256.

Not long ago a brother in Christ came to see me while passing through our city. He was greatly disturbed in mind and heart. A few years ago, while a student in a Christian College, he was present at a missionary rally, and was moved to go forward at a special call for "full-time workers" and pledge his life to the mission field. After having graduated and gone up and down the land visiting congregations in an attempt to arrange sup-

port, he and his young wife went to a foreign country and began the difficult task of learning the language and of making friends.

After laboring there for almost six years, his ideas began to change. He found himself distressed by the fact that those who supported him back home wanted him to reproduce in another culture the American-type religious community which they had constructed in a wholly different background and environment. The brethren who visited him from the homeland brought pressures upon him to conform even though they knew nothing about the lives of the natives whom they regarded as mere statistics justifying the expenditure of money required to convert them.

The missionary wrestled with his soul and finally came to the conclusion that he was not a free man in Christ, but the front man of a system, and that the hands which controlled the purse strings would also control his life. It seemed

to him to be ever more apparent that to be really free he would need to become a "tent-maker" and support himself and family. Accordingly, he made up his mind to return to school and secure a degree which would enable him to teach, with a view to returning to the mission field as a fellow-laborer, rather than as a professional missionary.

When this intent became known he was deluged with letters protesting against his decision. A member of the faculty in his alma mater wrote him a highly emotional letter, reminding him of the night he walked forward to dedicate his life to taking the message to a foreign field. He tearfully implored him not to "give up the ministry." Former classmates wrote him begging him to reconsider and not give up the vocation to which he had been called.

It became necessary for him to mimeograph a lengthy letter of explanation. In it he insisted that he was not deserting the Lord or the body of Christ. He expected to be as much of a child of God as he had always been, and to serve the Master "acceptably and with godly fear." He even pointed out that he thought he might be more effective because there were certain feelings against a missionary whose very presence tended to make native peoples appear inferior. As a teacher in college he would be working directly with younger minds and might influence more thinkers than he could reach by any other means.

This explanation was rejected by some who had been his closest associates. Some intimated that he was motivated by a love of money and others accused him of betraying the church and the school which had trained him. His wife became nervous and upset because all their former friends were regarding them as covenant-breakers and traitors. As I listened to him talk, and sensed the agony of his soul, I came to understand more fully than ever how ignorance and the party spirit have blinded our eyes.

It is altogether possible that you will grow tired of my recurrent emphasis upon the theme of this article, but I am like

the man who kept sawing away on his fiddle which had but one string. His exasperated wife exclaimed, "Why don't you get a violin with four strings and run your fingers up and down them like other men do when they play?" He replied, "Those fellows are just hunting for the right place and I have already found it."

Our brethren are sure that they are "a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, a corrector of the foolish, and a teacher of children," but they have no adequate concept of ministry as set forth by the Holy Spirit. Until they get straightened out on this matter they will confuse sinners and confound the saints. Most of them think of ministry as preaching, but these are not necessarily the same at all. Preaching is but one facet of ministry, and in our culture it may be a very insignificant part. It may be indulged in as a substitute for real ministry and frequently serves as an escape hatch to keep from really ministering. Many of God's best ministers could not say three sentences in public to save their lives if they were threatened with hanging. I have known some excellent ones who couldn't sign their own names or read "Little Miss Muffet."

Every child of God on this earth is a minister, and the same act which makes him a child of God makes him a minister. Ministers of God are made by God and not by men. One does not "go away to become a minister," and if he was not one before he left he will not likely be one when he returns. We are not ministers because we go away to study, although we may well go away to study because we are ministers. Study does not make us ministers although it will certainly improve our ability to minister.

We do not become ministers of God because other men lay hands upon us but because we place our lives in the hands of Christ. Nor can one be made a minister by handing him a diploma or granting him a degree. A diploma signifies that we have listened intently to what men have said and given the answers

they wanted to the questions which they asked, but a diploma can no more make you a minister than a birth certificate can make you a baby.

It is downright silly to talk of one "leaving the ministry" so long as he is in Christ Jesus. We enter the ministry by accepting Jesus and we leave it by rejecting him. One no more leaves the ministry when he quits pulpit proclamation and starts teaching history in Junior High School, than he forsakes the family of his physical father when he stops plowing corn and starts painting houses.

There certainly is nothing wrong with one answering a call in college to step forth and declare his desire to serve God in some other nation. Neither is there anything wrong with one keeping his seat when the pressure is on and resolving to continue serving God in this nation. I knew a brother who had a good job and a big salary, and who went out to a little rural congregation in Arkansas, and blistered the brethren because they did not support a missionary with their cotton money. When he finished one of the brethren arose and said that their hearts had been mightily touched by the plea, and he proposed that they send the speaker to Africa. He did not bother that congregation any more. His motto was, "There he is, Lord, send him!"

But suppose a man volunteers to go to South America or to Asia Minor and then becomes convinced that he is not cut out for the work. What should he do? Must he hang on and wear himself out, breaking his health and causing his wife to have a nervous crackup, because of a sense of loyalty to his "commitment"? Of course not! His commitment to go may have been made to his brethren in a time of emotional stress, but his original commitment (and the one that matters) was made to Jesus at the time of his baptism. That commitment was to serve wherever he could best do so. Baptism is not intended to destroy one's judgment or to warp his mind.

If one becomes involved in an effort for which he is not qualified, or in which he experiences no genuine joy or satis-

faction, he ought to get out of it, and get into a work for which he is better adapted. In doing so he is not "abandoning the ministry." God needs sociology teachers, bakers, policemen, automobile mechanics and laundromat operators. His world would be in a real mess very soon if the only thing anybody could do was to mount a pulpit and hold forth on a sermon outline. The man whose drive is created by his "gift of gab," would get nowhere if someone did not have the gift to drive a cab.

Our problem stems from the fact that we pay lipservice to the ministry of all the saints but never put it into practice. It is a little bit dishonest to pretend that we do not have a clergy-laity system. There is not one bit of difference in the *functioning* of the average "minister" in the Church of Christ and that of the Baptist pastor down the street. The clever dodge that "the elders are the pastors" is another illustration of the semantic chicanery in which our brethren often engage. It consists of giving a scriptural designation to an unscriptural practice, or of denying the applicability of a term to an unscriptural practice in the hope that such practice may be hallowed or sanctified, or that an ignorant world may not know the difference.

Once in awhile some artless soul lets the cat out of the sack. I recall a debate in Indianapolis where two gladiators were hacking away at each other nightly before a packed arena over the cataclysmic and world-shaking problem of whether it was right to send money to a town in Texas to help pay the tariff on a television program designed for propaganda purposes. In the daytime sessions opportunity was provided for various ones in the audience to address the brethren. One affluent elder from the Lone Star State began his remarks by saying, "I may be out of place in speaking today, because I am not a minister, and must appear before you merely as a layman."

It was this kind of casuistry which got next to a good brother whom I know. He came out of a Christian College with a noble ambition and high ideals for ser-

vice to humanity. He tried out for a position in a congregation and "won the toss" because he was hired over more than a half-dozen other disappointed rivals and competitors. For three years he tried to preach peace to a group of people who preferred to "take the low road." The elders were jealous of one another and were touchy and sensitive. They were dominated by a self-appointed "bishop" who used his wealth to throw his weight around and control the situation.

It soon became apparent to the preacher that he was a stooge, and that the members had no intention of changing their unlovely attitudes. They were married to their beautiful building and basked in the prestige which it gave them in the community. They gloried in their real estate instead of in the reality of Christ. Their "services" were rendered to their ego instead of to God. They made no impact on life. They wanted to remain aloof from the world and its problems, and resented reference to the racial question, population explosion, birth control, and the other things which trouble many sober minds in our day. Upon three occasions the preacher was called into session by the elders, and "the leading elder" warned him that the members were complaining that he was bordering on the social gospel in his insistence that Jesus wanted men who would share with others in every aspect of the human predicament.

Finally it became obvious that he could not stay, and he decided that he would not seek for another "pastoral" position. He entered the employ of an insurance company and almost from the very first began to make a success as a salesman. Doors for personal witness to the faith opened on every hand. On weekends he was free to assist small and struggling bands of believers, and he did so, always refusing to take a cent from them for his labors. With more time to spend with his own children his family life improved and tensions fell away.

The strange thing about this case is that some of the very ones who were re-

sponsible for his decision to serve God in another capacity criticized him for "leaving the ministry." Yet he was actually touching more lives in a meaningful fashion than while seeking to placate those who manifested hostility at every attempt to get them to overcome unreasonable prejudice. And he was helping congregations of saints who were really in need. Perhaps Satan has never hoodwinked us more effectively than in causing us to equate "ministry" with regularly trying to pamper groups whose chief concern is to maintain the status quo.

Sometimes men have had to completely re-orient their thought patterns in order to maintain their personal integrity. I think this is what happened to a fine young Christian in one of our northern states. He came out of college with a dream of the kingdom of heaven and with a real prayer life. From the first night of their marriage, he and his lovely young wife had kneeled together and talked to God so unashamedly and free from inhibition, that Jesus had become the most vital and realistic factor in their lives. When they began work with a suburban congregation they did so with a fervent expectation of sharing their dream.

It was not to be so. The congregation was legalistic and anxious to convey an image of success in the community. They talked of "expansion" but limited it only to the thought of a new building with all of the latest gadgetry. Their concern was for indirect lighting rather than for letting their light shine directly in the community. In vain the preacher strove to get them to erect a modest structure and use their means to touch real life needs. But they became more engrossed with planning the parking lot, landscaping the plot and designing the edifice of brick and stone. As the only congregation of the restoration movement in the area they felt called upon to uphold the traditions.

With sad heart the preacher announced that he was resigning while his love for all of them remained unabated. He secured a job which now pays him much

more than the congregation gave him. His present position is unique. He is part of a "church in thy house" group. There are some two dozen people, including children, who gather every Lord's Day in the family room of one of the members. The coffee table is the "Lord's table." The order of the meetings is not static. No two meetings are ever alike.

Anyone may start a song, anyone may read a scriptural portion, any one may make a comment. There is always a season of prayer in which the names of the needy are borne up to the throne of mercy. Those who are present kneel for the prayers and petition God with fervency. When a contribution is taken up, mention is made in advance of the purpose for which the collection is made. That very afternoon it is taken and given to the needy.

Most of the time the members eat together, with each family bringing food which is spread out upon the table at noon. In the afternoon they visit hospitals or go to the homes of shut-ins or widows. There are no Sunday evening meetings but most of the family groups have a prayer session in their own homes to close the Lord's Day. Here is active ministry but the brother is referred to, almost with sadness, as "a former minister."

Please understand that we are not

herein criticizing those saints who have held "try-outs" and hired someone to "minister" to them for so much per week or month. Recently we have seen some elaborate contracts which spell out like legal documents all that is expected of the "minister" even to the point of telling how many meetings he may hold elsewhere, and of what length, and specifying the length of his "vacation from the pulpit" and in what month such vacation must be taken. Our brethren are developing a rare degree of sophistication when they can plan the work of the Spirit in their community that far in advance.

But our point does not deal with the right or wrong of such contractual matters. What we are saying very simply is that one who follows his conscience and chooses to minister for Jesus in another way does not thereby forsake the ministry. Actually, he may minister more effectively, and where human need is the greatest. In many places there are two strikes against one who must identify as a professional minister and people may turn him off automatically. One does not need to give up his service station or store in order to minister, and one does not necessarily cease to minister when he relinquishes the pulpit to work as a plumber, painter or policeman. He that ministers should wait on his ministering regardless of where he may be!

DEMOTED SAINTS

By Lee Carter Maynard

I have just read in the papers that a number of the venerated saints of many years past have been removed from the roster. If those dear ones are in heaven it must have been a terrible blow to learn that they are under question after all the years they have enjoyed as a go-between for the folks still on earth. I reckon though that if men can make them saints, the same men can unsaint them.

Being a saint with some folks is like

getting your name on a postage stamp. No picture appears on our stamps until after the patriot has died. It is about four hundred years after their demise that some become saints. Now it seems that either the roster is getting too clustered or else a lot of mistakes are being discovered. Some of the sainted ones never even existed. That is a big blow to those who have relied so much upon them. One party told me that even though "the

church" left Christopher off the list, he would always be on her private roster.

I suspect that more of the saints who have gone on will live in jeopardy every hour for fear they too may be dropped from the holy roll. Things are changing rapidly in our day in colleges, schools, politics, war, sex, morals and also in the churches. I see where Protestant preachers are conducting weddings in Catholic churches, and now I have just read of a Protestant preacher conducting a funeral in a Catholic church, and being assisted by the local priest. That's ecumenicity! They would not have allowed a Protestant preacher in their building a few years ago, and if they had wanted one, he could not have been dragged in with a team of mules.

It could be that this is a good thing. Maybe folks are getting ready to lay down some of their written or unwritten creeds and have fellowship in Christ with other believers. I have known little congregations that were just as exclusive as the Catholics ever were. Of course they would deny this when pinned down, but being one of them, we did believe that we were the true and exact replica of the church which was born on the great Pentecost nearly two millenniums ago. We did not exactly claim to be a duplicate of the Jerusalem church, because it was Jewish and Gentiles were not admitted unless they were circumcised. Besides they forbade certain meats and they also met on Saturdays.

We were not sure we were exact duplicates of the Corinthian church either, for they had trouble with adultery, misbehavior at the Lord's table, the members were engaging in lawsuits with one another, they were speaking in tongues, and the church was divided four ways at the same time. I am not sure which congregation of the long ago we were using as a pattern, but we knew we had the pattern and all who did not subscribe to our unwritten rules were out. We had our own brotherhood, literature, schools, orphanages, etc., and knew all of the loyal preachers. We were definitely not a denomination, and called no one

brother unless he was a member of our loyal brotherhood. We were a neighborly and friendly group except when in the meetinghouse. I am happy to see that things are changing.

We have voices among us of those who know that no assembly can erect a building and hold captive the Lord, the Holy Spirit, or the gospel, to the exclusion of others who worship the same God through the same Christ, and preach the same gospel of salvation. We denied that our church building was a special sanctuary but we thought the things done there were more sacred than those done in another building. I remember once when a visiting evangelist ate dinner with us on Sunday. After the meal my wife played the piano and we sang the same three songs we had sung at services two hours previously. I read the same scripture he read before preaching, and I prayed similar to the benediction which he offered at the morning service. I am still waiting for him to explain why it was all right to do this in my home but wrong and sinful to do it in the meetinghouse. We were indeed a peculiar people, and a little queer along with it.

I remember one time while teaching the adult class that I referred to Saint Stephen. One of the keepers of the records asked, "Where do you get this saint Stephen stuff?" I said I was only being respectful to this great martyr. He said, "We don't go for this saint stuff. That belongs to the denominations." I recall that we had quite a few off limit words, never to be used by the true brotherhood. We never spoke of sacrament, pastor, solo, choir or sanctuary. When we heard them we knew at once that we were in the presence of a denominational person who was ignorant of the true church.

It came as a surprise to me that every born again, saved, redeemed and justified soul was a saint. Only Jesus can make one a saint. When one is justified by the Lord he is set apart by the Spirit, and thus becomes a saint of God. His name will be listed on the pages of God's great book. No other man or group can remove it. He will have a new name written

which "no man knoweth save he that receiveth it" (Rev. 2:17). These over-coming saints of God will not be black-balled but will receive a white stone with the new name written. It is truly exciting to await the new name. Someone has said, "Justification makes saints, and sanctification makes the saints saintly."

Maybe it would be good to start calling each other Saint Harry, Saint Susan, or

Saint George, instead of "brother" or "sister." It would be a bit confusing to see in the society column where the saints had a prom, or where the saints won a ball game. Dear Father, please hasten the day when thy children love Thee and one another, and stop saying, "Of course I am no saint myself."

(Editor's Note: Lee Carter Maynard can be addressed at 523 Forty-first Avenue, North, St. Petersburg, Florida 33703).

DOING GOD'S THING

BY RAYMOND A. BOCK

Many people who are not with it have never heard the expression "doing your thing," or if they have they do not dig its connotation. Doing your thing signifies to do whatever makes you happy regardless of the hurt it brings to others. If smoking grass, popping speed, or dropping acid brings individual exhilaration to yourself do not be bugged by what anyone else says. The fallacy with such thinking is that God does not look at things this way. Those people who are supposedly steering clear of hangups create others by their attitude. Jesus said, "Not my will, but thine be done." Therefore, what brings happiness to God is of supreme importance. It will outlast all others. Here is what doing God's thing entails.

1. *Tuning Him in!*

Switch to His frequency; find His channel. In the modern vernacular, to tune in refers to heeding what is going on. For instance, teenagers are tuned in to pop artists such as The Beatles, Steppenwolfe, The Ventures, etc., because they have something going which stirs them, the emotional rock music. They are tuned in to anyone who speaks on parents in respect to the generation gap, or the modern expressions as found on psychedelic posters, or on buttons containing such slogans as "Your mother wears combat boots to church." Tune in to God. He digs you. "Faith comes from tuning in,

and tuning in by the Word of God" (Romans 10:17, my paraphrase).

2. *Turning Him on!*

Whenever young people become turned on to a particular thing they emerge from their solid and complacent mould. They become vibrant, alive, ecstatic. Their entire emotional outlet is centered on that one item. Where does this leave Christian young people? Jesus said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto me." Let's make this a little more contemporary. "If I split the scene from this orb through the big Roman wipeout, I'll turn on and make people come to me." Talk about belonging!

Let Him stimulate you. Don't allow the "top forty" to take precedence over the Word of God. Dig into it. Get something into your gourds besides the John 3:16 pabulum bit. The early Christians dug into the Word. They did something about it. They went where the people were. Where are we today? The long-haired dropout from society and the angry young switchblade carrier have a soul. They will respond to a genuine message. Give Jesus a chance to energize you. His Holy Spirit can send spiritual ions pulsating through your heart.

3. *Telling it like it is!*

Don't mince words. The kids want it. They are tired of the theological haranguing. That is why they are not present in institutional churches. Sock it to 'em. Hit

them between the eyes with love and the message of salvation. Be for real. If your only bag for coming to associate with believers is a style show or badmouthing someone to other members, forget it. Shape up or ship out! The kids are rejecting the phony cellulose people. A plastic person is one who is an animated marionette, one who goes through the same routine actions day in and day out.

Unconcern is the real gap. These young people want someone who is himself, a person who really cares about them, who is hep to their manner of thinking and will give them some answers rather than sloughing them off. They are tired of being put down or ignored. It is not only the young who are affected, but alienation is the cancer eating away at our country.

How much do you love Jesus? It is time that we of the restoration movement turn our thinking from the internal feuds to what is really happening and what needs to be done. Our Lord may come at any time. Millions are groping in darkness. Are we helping kids to kick drugs so they can go on the eternal trip? What about the teenage girl who becomes pregnant in high school? Do you know her? What are you doing about her guilt complex and sin? Have you spoken to someone after he has been arguing Vietnam

to show him that peace comes from within? When someone tells me why kids tie tin cans to a dog's tail, or dip a cat in turpentine, or bash \$700 worth of birds on the skull with rocks at the Como Park Zoo in Saint Paul, Minnesota, you will know why there are wars.

I don't know about you, but I spend all of my extra minutes in bluejeans wherever the teenage and college age people spend their time. I listen to them intently and invariably they ask, "What do you do?" This is my opportunity to rap to them, to let them know how real Jesus should be.

This fall some committed people here are going to open a Youth Fellowship Center. If it is successful we then intend to begin a telephone service. Business cards will be passed out which read: "Something bugging you? Call. . . . 24 hours a day and we'll hash it out!" The third step will be a home for teenage run-aways, unwed mothers, addicts and gang members.

The youth hold the future of the church and the nation. Let's not be satisfied with the clean-cut ones from balanced families, but think also of those with the aching lonely hearts crying out for help and love.

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INSIDE THE CIRCLE

"But now through the blood of Christ, you who were once outside the pale are with us inside the circle of God's love in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2: 13).

What a thrill should surge through us as we read these comforting words. The writer is actually talking about us, for we are Gentiles. He has just pointed out that those who were not of the seed of Abraham were without Christ, utter strangers to God's chosen community of Israel, with nothing to look forward to and no God to whom they could turn. No other scripture paints so graphically the lost and undone condition of those

who were "strangers to the covenants of promise."

There is a world of meaning in that little expression "But now!" It is in startling contrast with another expression, "At that time." What happened between the two periods represented in those words? Something occurred which transformed the divided world with its ethnic prejudices and racial bitterness. The outcasts became part of the in-group. The hated ones suddenly became "accepted in the beloved." Hostility was slain. Animosity was banished. Read the passage again and savor its majestic

truth. "But now through the blood of Christ."

That is the secret. There's power in the blood. Nothing else can cleanse the heart of sin and purge the conscience of guilt. It is sin and guilt which make us hate those of another race, to despise those whose only "crime" is that by the accident of birth, by a combination of genes and chromosomes which they did not choose, they are in another strain of the family of man than ourselves.

Guilt makes us uneasy. We are driven to sham and hypocrisy, as if outward pretence of love can atone for the buried cancer of hatred which eats away within. It is only the blood of Christ which can make us real by making us whole. That blood reduces all of us to a common level. In the crimson stream which flowed from Calvary, none of us can stand tall while others grovel. Here we are all proclaimed to be sinners with no advantage accruing from circumstances of birth, race or social standing.

The blood reaches to all, even to those who were "once outside the pale." That is an interesting expression. It literally means "outside the fence, or across the barrier." When I was a youngster we called a fence made of upright slats, or pickets, a "paling fence." We did not know the origin of the term, nor did we realize that in history certain restricted areas had been called The Pale, because foreigners were not admitted.

Jesus removed the fence. He battered down the barrier. Those who were once outside are now "inside the circle." It was not our goodness which eliminated the fence. We did not suddenly become kind and forgiving. It was the action of God in allowing the Son to die which suddenly showed us that actually all of us were "outside the pale" and therefore, we could all be "inside the circle" which is no longer limited because the circumference is the boundless love of God as manifested in Christ Jesus.

This is the divine answer to racial problems. They can never be settled by legislating new laws for the statute-books, nor by the decisions of courts and

juries. True, those who are hostile can be kept apart by a wall of steel, by glistening bayonets and shiny rifle barrels, but these are powerless to stop the green bile of hate emptying into human hearts. The circle of police and militia must always enclose some and leave others out.

But what cold steel cannot do, the warmth of love can accomplish. It can free us from our own prejudice and littleness. No one can be "with us in the circle" who is not first with us within our hearts. When I cease to see red men, black men, yellow men or white men, and see only men for whom Christ died, I am on my way to the removal of the pale from my heart so it will no longer be a part of my world. No external wall was ever built that was not first laid, stone upon stone, in the hearts of men.

If I would follow my precious Lord I must dedicate my life to removing the pale, to bringing men within the circle. Being human, there is the tug of the flesh to erect walls and to build fences. Fear causes us to seek for protection behind our own barriers, and to hold men aloof. But the perfect love which casts out fear causes us to draw men unto Him so that we can say, "you are with us inside the circle."

We need to have our hearts gently touched and strangely warmed by Jesus until the glow of a transformed life acts as a magnet to draw those inside who are still without the pale. The ministry of reconciliation is the great and abiding need of the alienated and frustrated ones in our day. Once we tune them into Jesus and they become committed unto him unreservedly, their fruitless existence will become meaningful and hopeful. There must be in us a passion for souls which transcends all other interests and which drives us relentlessly into the wilderness of life to rescue the sheep who have gone astray. We should not be able to rest until we have helped these restless ones find peace inside the circle of God's love. It is for this we have been called in this day!

MESSENGER SERVICE

If you are a licensed amateur radio operator and a member of the Christian Church or Church of Christ, why not join the Christian Amateur Radio Fellowship, and be a part of a communications ministry? Write Kyle R. Simplot, WA4LLZ, 309 South Main Street, Erwin, Tennessee 37650. . . . The Fellowship of Concerned Individuals published and mailed out the speech of Hubert Locke, as made at the North American Christian Convention, on the theme, "New Life Through Social Understanding." If you are interested in combating racism, write FOCL, Box 7203, Lexington, Kentucky 40502. . . . There were about 300 men enrolled for the meeting of the Men's Roundup at Como, Colorado, where Don DeWalt, James DeForest Murch, and myself were the speakers. Don had just returned from nine weeks in Australia, and his slides were a real contribution to the meeting. . . . We congratulate Bob Thompson, at Erie, Illinois, on the opportunity afforded him to speak at the local Baptist Church. . . . Darrell Bolin, Lock Haven, Pennsylvania, has spoken three times recently to the inmates of Rock View Prison. Of the 600 who are there, about 150 attend the services to hear Darrell. . . . John Fulford, who is working in Cape Province, South Africa, was thoughtful enough to send a first day cover of the Heart Transplant Commemorative Stamp, and we thank our brother sincerely. . . . J. W. Roberts, professor of Bible at Abilene Christian College, conducted a three-week leadership training class in Hong Kong, during August. . . . We salute the brethren at Bonne Terre, Missouri, for their activated program, which includes a new meetinghouse, now in the process of erection. . . . More than 100 persons were immersed in Monrovia, Liberia, as the result of a combined effort of white and

black brethren from the United States. Roosevelt Wells and John Allen Chalk were the speakers, with Andrew J. Hairston as master of ceremonies. . . . There were 37 persons immersed in Nazareth, the boyhood hometown of Jesus, during a series of meetings conducted by George Bailey, of Abilene, Texas. Other congregations in Israel meet at Der Hanna, El Abun, and Jerusalem. . . . Chung Hi Gun, immersed 68 people in six weeks in Seoul, Korea. Last year he and his assistants, Lee Gong Hyo and Kim Song Cha, baptized 379 persons. . . . The congregation of saints in Lisbon, Portugal, met for the first time in a new building at Rua Carvalho Araujo, No. 35, on July 20, with 30 present. . . . There are now eight brethren working full time as evangelists in Spain, with the latest, Jesus Ordenez, laboring in Sama de Langreo. . . . Carl Brecheen has been named to succeed J. D. Thomas as director of the annual Abilene Christian College Lectureship. . . . The June issue of *Restoration Review*, contained an article on Alexander Campbell and the Declaration and Address, by Louis Cochran. . . . We commend the brethren who produce *The Christian Appeal*, for their timely July issue, which was devoted to the theme "When Brethren Disagree." Gene Shelburne is editor. . . . The exhibit of the Church of Christ at the Kentucky State Fair featured free samples of the issue of *20th Century Christian*, containing the debate between Bill Banowsky and Bishop James A. Pike, on "Sex and Morality." . . . Our good brother, J. James Albert, is moving from Ohio to Corcoran, California, where he will be the high school guidance counsellor. . . . Congratulations to Jim and Phyllis Smith, Corpus Christi, Texas, who just adopted Michella Renee, a sweet little charmer. . . . It will be my privilege to be with brethren at Flint,

Michigan, November 3-7, in a special series of studies. Write to Frank Rester, P. O. Box 1205, Flint, Michigan 48501, or call him at (313) 653-5951. Let's all meet at Flint! . . . Charles Owens who works with Training Center for Service in the ghetto area of St. Louis, was on WANE-TV, August 25. Walter Short was on the program of the Institute on Religion at the University of Missouri where he spoke on "Working in the Inner City." . . . If you have not secured a copy of "Voices of Concern," the most controversial book among Churches of Christ in this decade, send for one at once. It will soon be out of print. The cost is \$3.50 per copy. . . . The July issue of *Integrity* reveals that opposition has been directed against the editors and writers, but the brethren who produce the paper have been more than fair in handling it. Write for a sample copy to P. O. Box 1205, Flint, Michigan 48501. . . . John Allen Chalk will remain in Abilene, Texas, where he will labor with Highland congregation. . . . Our good brother, Art Morris, is back in India, working with Southern Asia Christian College, and with the leprosy hospital and famine program. . . . We commend the Don Summers family for their work with Indians in migrant camps as well as with the two congregations in the Seattle, Washington, area. . . . Our brother in the Lord, Dr Burton B. Thurston, chairman of the religious studies department in the American University at Beirut, Lebanon, has just returned to his position after a year as director of the Institute for the Study of Church Origins, in Tuebingen, Germany. . . . Our Commendation of the article "Is Assurance Really Possible?" as written by our good brother, Walter E. Burch, and published in the August issue of *Mission*. The September issue of the journal contained an interview with G. R. Beasley-Murray, former president of the Baptist Union

of Great Britain. The interview was conducted by Everett Ferguson. . . . A lot of folk do not see anything very funny about Gary Freeman's new book which is titled, "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to Heaven." It is being treated as if it did not exist in some circles, but is being read just the same. We will mail you one for \$3.95. . . . While talking about books, have you read "A Place to Stand" by Elton Trueblood? We think you should read it, and the price is only \$2.95 per copy. . . . Buff Scott, Jr., has two folders entitled "The Tempest is Raging" and "So You're Going to Face Society Again?" The last is a note of encouragement to former patients who have lived a part of their lives in a psychiatric hospital. If you'll write Buff and enclose a 6c stamp he will send you both pamphlets. His address is Box 83, Clarinda, Iowa 51632. . . . Our brother, Fred I. Gardner, 905-D Sevier Street, Johnson City, Tennessee 37601, has produced an attractive booklet on the theme "The Lord's Supper as a Channel of Blessing." . . . Brother Wesley S. Hawley, 1414 11th Avenue South, Escanaba, Michigan 49829, has prepared an interesting booklet called "Preacher's Purposeful Planning." The price is 50c each. Brother Hawley has spent 54 years in teaching and preaching. . . . *Christian Mission Today*, a quarterly journal, published my article on "Christian Education." . . . Harold Spurlock, P. O. Box 1717, Kilgore, Texas 75662, continues to edit a stimulating journal *Sentinel of Truth*. . . . We regret to chronicle the departure of a friend and brother of long standing, Harry Houser, Sullivan, Illinois. . . . Brother Jesse P. Sewell, president emeritus of Abilene Christian College, departed this life on July 4. . . . Dean Clutter, who has been working in Otawa, Ontario, has moved to Tulsa, Oklahoma, to work with the Brookside congregation.