

Working Together

Herman Ostry's barn floor was under 29 inches of water because of a rising creek. The Bruno, Nebraska, farmer invited all his friends and neighbors to a barn raising. He needed to move his entire 17,000 pound barn to a new foundation more than 143 feet away. His son Mike devised a lattice work of steel tubing, and nailed, bolted, and welded it on the inside and the outside of the barn. Hundreds of handles were attached. After one practice lift, 344 volunteers slowly walked the barn up a slight incline, each supporting less than fifty pounds. In just three minutes, the barn was on its new foundation.

Likewise, local congregations, when all the members work together, can accomplish great good in leading many souls to Christ. "For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything" (1Thes. 1:8).

The Frigid Zone

There was a ship discovered many years ago among the icebergs of the Arctic Ocean, with the captain frozen as he was making his last entry in the logbook. The crew was found, some in their hammocks and some in the cabin, all frozen to death. The last date in the logbook showed that for thirteen years that vessel had been moving among the icebergs, "a drifting sepulcher, manned by a frozen crew."

Are there not churches in a like condition? Chilled by formality, worldliness, and sin, they have sailed away from the sunny region of blessing and prosperity, and floated into the icy waters and deadly slumbers of the frigid zone. "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I would wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth" (Rev. 3:15-16).

Protective Restraints

In the winter of 1976, John Jordan, together with three of his friends, decided to photograph Niagara Falls. They went to Goat Island to enjoy the icy beauty. While there, Jordan and two others climbed over the protective railings, and then fell into the ice along the shore about 200 feet upstream from the falls. The other two scrambled back to land, but Jordan was swept down to within fifteen feet of the brink of the Horseshoe Falls. There, somehow, he was able to grasp and cling to a chunk of ice. Patrolman James MacNeill was able to rescue the young man.

Whenever we become silent about God's protective railings, the moral laws of God, we endanger the lives of those under our care...The wages of sin is still death. Let us rescue the perishing and care for the dying. Let us preach, too, the function of God's moral law. "I have restrained my feet from every evil way, that I may keep Your word" (Psalm 119:101).

Sin Is Not a Disease

It is a large matter and too much to one side of the road to be discussed adequately here; but this is the real objection to that torrent of modern talk about treating crime as disease, about making a prison merely a hygienic environment like a hospital, of healing sin by slow scientific methods. The fallacy of the whole thing is that evil is a matter of active choice whereas disease is not. If you say that you are going to cure a profligate as you cure an asthmatic, my cheap and obvious answer is, "Produce the people who want to be asthmatics as many people want to be profligates."

A man may lie still and be cured of a malady. But he must not lie still if he wants to be cured of a sin; on the contrary, he must get up and jump about violently. The whole point indeed is perfectly expressed in the very word which we use for a man in hospital; "patient" is in the passive mood; "sinner" is in the active. If a man is to be saved from influenza, he must be a patient. But if he is to be saved from forging, he must be not a patient but an impatient. He must be personally impatient with forgery. All moral reform must start in the active not the passive will. (G.K. Chesterton in Orthodoxy, 1908)

Ten Things Which You As A Parent Will Never Regret

1. For doing your level best even when discouraged.
2. For hearing before judging in family quarrels.
3. For thinking before speaking when emotionally upset.
4. For not harboring the unkind thoughts of a talebearer.
5. For being generous to an enemy, perhaps the next-door neighbor.
6. For stopping your ears to gossip over the fence.
7. For standing by your principles in dealing with your teenagers.
8. For asking pardon, when in error, even of your child.
9. For being square in business dealings with the newsboy.
10. For accepting the stewardship of "another" child.

"Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth. Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them; they shall not be ashamed, but shall speak with their enemies in the gate. Blessed is every one who fears the LORD, who walks in His ways" (Psalm 127:3, 128:1).

Traditions and Ham

"And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt. 15:9). "Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ" (Col. 2:8).

A young married lady was fixing a fancy ham dinner for her husband. As she was about to place the ham into the oven she took a knife and cut off the end of the ham. Her husband asked, "Why did you cut the end off of the ham?" She replied, "I don't know; that's the way mamma always did it." Later, at the family reunion the young couple asked mother why she always cut off the end of the ham. She answered, "That's the way mamma always did it." They went to grandmother and asked her why she cut off the end of her hams. She likewise replied, "That's the way mother always did it." They then found great-grandmother who was still living at the time, and asked her why she always cut the ham's end off, and she said, "I cut the end of the ham off because my pan was too small!"

Similarly, many today worship God according to the traditions of men, and it has far more serious consequence than losing the end of hams.

Three Gates

If you are tempted to reveal
A tale to you someone has told;
About another, make it pass,
Before you speak, three gates of gold.

These narrow gates: First, "Is it true?"

Then, "Is it needful?" In your mind
Give truthful answer. And the next
Is last and narrowest, "Is it kind?"

And if to reach your lips at last
It passes through these gateways three,
Then you may tell the tale, nor fear
What the results of speech may be.