

IF ANY MAN SIN

(H. C. Mullen)

God has made provision for emergencies. Our Heavenly Father is not a hard, arbitrary, tyrannical being, but love is His very nature, and He is infinite in justice and His mercy endureth forever.

Perhaps in our zeal in demanding an overcoming life, we may have held up the standard of victory to the neglect of another precious truth, that of God's pity and willingness to forgive the unfortunate offender.

No doubt many honest and sincere souls have backslidden and given up just because of some little inadvertency that has wounded their spirit and caused them grief, when instead of repenting at once, and mending the breach, they have demolished the whole dyke and let the devil overwhelm their life. There is not enough clear teaching, possibly among the holiness people along this very important phase of truth. I believe this accounts for at least some of the backslidings among new converts. So many times the very first break they make they are so shocked and ashamed, that they cease professing at once and drift back into unbelief and sin. So many try to live the standard of a sanctified life with a heart yet unsanctified, which is sure to bring disappointment. Perhaps we have feared that if we said too much about forgiveness that some bolder individuals may take advantage, and would be less careful in their deportment, and thus the standard of holiness be lowered. There is no need of erring on either side, but may we not as well err on the side of God's forgiving mercy as on the side of His demand for a holy life.

How many have ever lived very long without in some way or degree grieving the Spirit of God, which called for readjustment and pardon? This does not necessarily mean what we term wilful sin and backsliding, but some unfortunate misstep, or over-indulgence in some folly or pleasure to the detriment of our highest spiritual interest, which occasions a gentle reproof from the Spirit and needs the pardoning grace of God. This temporary fluctuation may not have disturbed the deep flowing undercurrent of loyalty and obedience in the surrendered heart, and if confessed and blotted out immediately would not break the steady onward flow of salvation deep down in the soul. This may be likened to a stone thrown into a current; there is a sudden splash and a temporary ripple, but this soon vanishes and the current resumes its normal flow with not a trace of the rift upon its surface. That which underlies every other element in our salvation, so far as the human is concerned, is a sincere and loyal heart of obedience. Unintentional, accidental breaks may occur, that do not reflect nor disturb the fixed, motivating and ruling principle of the life. First John 2:1 has been called God's emergency text. If any man sin he can fall back upon this text. It needs no argument to prove that God's standard of living is expressed in the fore part of the verse which says, "These things write I unto you that ye sin not." This is not only the standard of the Bible, but also is the aim and desire, and intention, of every true believer. But God has wisely considered our liability to sin, and has made this gracious provision to cover such emergency. Like the spare tire, it is only to be used in cases of emergency. No one but a half-wit would purposely run on tacks, for the sake of taking

advantage of the emergency provision. No sensible driver would be any less careful because he carried a spare. He may feel the comfort and assurance of another chance, should something happen, but he is not taking risks for the sake of using spare tires. Just so no true Christian will be any less careful because he knows clearly that there is a kind and precious provision made to take care of accidents that may happen along the King's Highway.

There is a danger line and a middle ground in this vital question under consideration. We may strongly condemn the advocate of a sinning and repenting religion but we can err as badly by putting up a too rigid standard that admits of no defeats, and by throwing out the impression that God is unrelenting and unforgiving. While one teaching may foster looseness and license the other may favor discouragement and fear and hinder unstable and conscientious souls from finding that gracious pardon and soul healing touch that is so near and available for the asking. A fear of making honest confessions for fear of bringing reproach upon the cause, and because of personal feelings of shame, will certainly lead to a legalistic holiness which is one of the perils of this glorious life and doctrine of full salvation. There is far less danger of injury to the cause of God by humble confessions of shortcomings and temporary breaks than there is in stiffening the neck and making excuses in self-defence. Unwillingness to confess to God and His people even small trespasses, is not only the sure way to legalism and Phariseeism, but to that ugly thing, hypocrisy. Once I heard a dear humble brother say concerning his own brother in the flesh, as well as in the church, "Oh, he never comes back," meaning that he was a man who never made apologies. I found this out to be very true. We may well suspicion people who never apologize either to God or their fellowman. The poet uttered a great and everlasting truth when he said, "To err is human, to forgive divine," then what a debt of gratitude we owe to our Father in Heaven for His wise and gracious provision through which we may find mercy and forgiveness at His royal throne of grace where Jesus ever stands as our Advocate and Intercessor.

INCREASE IN CIGARETTE SMOKING

Canada Week By Week: Cigarette smokers in Canada spent more than \$48,000,000 for their "ready-mades" during 1934, according to excise tax returns, which show that 4,822,405,065 cigarettes were placed on the market, an increase of approximately 12 per cent. over 1933.

Cigars were also smoked in greater number, consumption increasing approximately 5 per cent. from 114,352,000 in 1933 to 119,671,000 last year, and the use of smoking tobacco increased by 4 per cent. to 17,983,000 pounds.

Chewing tobacco showed a decrease in popularity, the quantity entered for consumption dropping from 4,225,000 pounds in 1933 to 4,170,000 pounds in 1934. In addition to domestic consumption Canada exported 8,769,979 pounds of unmanufactured tobacco valued at \$2,026,802 to twenty-five different countries in 1934, and also exported manufactured tobacco in different forms to the value of \$65,802.—Moncton Times.

If thou do ill, the joy fades, not the pains;
If well, the pain doth flee, the joy remains.

—George Herbert

THE PRESENCE OF GOD

Joseph H. Smith

Light is no more manifest to us than the presence of God may be. While "in him we live, and move, and have our being," the worldly mind is as insensible to this fact as the animals beneath us are unaware of their dependence upon the atmosphere for their physical existence. Unregenerate men have neither sight, hearing, nor a feeling sense of God. They are dead to Him. The new-born child has a loving sense of the person of a mother, but at first this is very inarticulate. It is without understanding of mother's name or relationship or her services, her sacrifices, her responsibilities or her authority. It simply knows it has a friend in her and knows how to nestle in and trust.

The Christian's initial knowledge of the fact and presence of God is much like this. It is not theological, but simply filial. "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your heart, crying, Abba, Father." The first thing the baby ever knows of mother is mother love. And the first thing the child of God ever knows of Him is the love of God. Carrying the analogy a step farther we will remark that a child's first acquaintance with the presence of mother is a negative acquaintance—it knows, it feels and laments the withdrawal of mother's care and caresses, as the babe in Christ realizes the cessation of God's more sensible manifestations, and yet it scarcely recognizes fully enough to appreciate His abiding presence. Hence the song some may sing:

"How tedious and tasteless the hours,
When Jesus no longer I see;
Sweet prospects, sweet birds and sweet
flowers,

Have all lost their sweetness to me."

But as spiritual intelligence awakens, there is a promotion as from the kindergarten to the grades and the child of God comes gently and steadily to "know as it is known." Spiritual facts become demonstrations like the problems of arithmetic. Childish things are held now as plaything memories, or as modes of illustrating realities of the life of faith. And as the manifestations of God still recurrently assume the sensible exhilaration of the emotions, these are the overflows from the realm of light through the avenues of mind and the processes of faith. Now the soul is craving sensible delights, is apt to cry out:

"Present I know Thou art;

But, oh! Thyself reveal:

Now let my waiting heart,

Thy comforting presence feel."

A somewhat abnormal stage of prolonged childhood is to be noted in them who must feel to believe that God is near. They are like that disciple Thomas to whom the Lord said, "Because thou hast seen thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed."

This brings us to distinguish between the presence and the manifestations of our Beloved. To illustrate: A dear friend of ours, who was an evangelist and had been delayed in his expected home-coming by a belated train, did at length arrive in the quiet of the midnight hours. All had retired and were in the solid slumbers of the silent night and he, not wishing to disturb them and hoping to plan for them a glad surprise with the morning, found a quiet way to stealthily enter the house and slip into a bedroom on the first floor that was proximate to the dining room.