

## NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

By W. Edmund Smith

I recently heard a Methodist bishop preach in a service in which he confirmed a class of seventeen. He gave to the new members some most excellent advice to insure their spiritual progress. He quoted Mrs. Susannah Wesley's advice to her son John, a student at Oxford University. "My son, whatever increases the power of your body over your soul, whatever dims your vision of God, whatever diminishes your relish for spiritual things, whatever dulls the sensitiveness of your conscience, no matter how innocent it may be in itself, yet to you it is sin."

The bishop also said: "You must say **no** to the good if you are to say **yes** to the better and the best."

Was not all that good advice? If we are to say **no** to the good we must say a doubly emphatic **no** to the doubtful.

I was speaking recently to a holiness group, and had the temerity to say that worldliness, which takes in the professional sports, is a greater menace to the spirituality of holiness churches, than is the whiskey traffic. A brother spoke right out in protest. He cried, "Brother Smith, I don't believe that." I explained that we in holiness churches are not much troubled with whiskey, but all kinds of worldliness are crowding in upon us, drawing away the young people." He had to agree to the truthfulness of my statement. I am broad enough to say that sports are worldly amusements, filling up the empty place in the hearts of carnal people. Base ball, hockey, football, icecapades, etc., give them entertainment. They would be doing far worse things unless they had these recreations. But has not God given us something far better? We simply say **no** to what some call good that we may receive the better and the best.

When a popular evangelist tells us of his yelling at a great football game of 9,000 fans, I think that he may be a converted man, but I know that he has not learned to say no to the good that he might lay hold of the better and the best.

And when he told hundreds of those who came forward in a great meeting that they must pray, and that they could pray going to a football game or a hockey match, I ask, when can we draw the line between the world and the Spirit?

Here I think is the logic of his advice. Kid Chocolate, a great colored boxer, and a church member, said he always prayed long and earnestly before he entered the ring to fight. He prayed when he was swinging rights and lefts at his opponent, hoping that an effective blow would hit him on the chin and knock him out. Brigands have been known to pray that God would help them in their robberies. A great prize fight was on in Jersey City between Jack Dempsey and Gene Tunney for the world's championship, on the night that Lindburg made his memorable flight across the Atlantic. Before the fight began, the ring master stepped forward and said: "Ladies and gentlemen, at this moment Lindburg is zooming over the Atlantic. I think we ought all to bow our heads and offer a word of prayer for his safety." And so they did. A villain confessed that he prayed for God to enable him to seduce a beautiful girl on whom he had his lustful eyes.

The television is with us. It is in every rum hole and brothel. 90 per cent of its broadcasts belong to the sports, the movies and

the prize-fight, brought right into your parlor; and if that evangelist's advice is good, you can have your testament in your lap and between the rounds you may read and have a word of prayer and thus sanctify the bout. But please don't read where Jesus said: "They are not of the world even as I am not of the world. If they were of the world, the world would love its own, but because they are not of the world, therefore the world hateth them."

Needless to say the revivals conducted by Luther, the Wesleys, Whitefield, Jonathan Edwards and his people, were not run on such superficial lines. The Lord would as soon hear the devil pray, and he does pray when he trembles in believing, as to hear those who call themselves Christians pray when they are going with the world and are saying yes to the doubtful and the bad, refusing to seek the better and the best. If this is old fogieism, make the most of it.

I praise God for the great revival reported in Hartland, N. B. If it be genuine the movies and hockey will be hard hit in what some travellers called the "Holy City."

We say that we pray, but does praying bring grace and glory to the soul? Does praying take you out in the morning to your work with a song, and when things go wrong can you praise the Lord. If old carnality springs up and you keep it down, there's something in you that longs for inner cleansing and victory. If you really get God in your heart the old world has lost a devoutal and Christ has won a true worshipper. So I rejoice that every truly converted person is headed for holiness and need not wander in the wilderness long.

But before they seek holiness they must be truly justified. Many have joined the church when they were only convicted. They felt bad and in a popular excitement felt a little better, joined the church, but they had no real fellowship with God. They hear holiness preached and said "that is what I need," went forward and were converted. But they thought they were wholly sanctified. They stood up on the tests, were either in or joined a holiness church. But they soon were defeated and thought, "this is not what I expected." But they pray, get back to God and are blessed and call that sanctification. It is just an up and down experience. After a while they may have real enmity to holiness. If anyone is on fire and happy in the Lord, old carnality will stay either inside or without." He thinks he has all the religion. I've got all the salvation I want or am looking for." This is why there are so many dead ones in holiness churches. When these get in the majority, the doubtful things must be brought in to entertain those who are still in the cradle and on the nursing bottle.

But one may never go to sports, and not even drink tea or coffee. They may never wear long skirts and a long face; they may tithe and be regular in church attendance and still be empty as a gun barrel, while just as straight and as plain as a broomstick and just as dry. The main thing is to have the abiding of the Holy Ghost in a sanctified heart. That will make you better than a bitter whining Phari-As you walk towards it the picture begins to shape; it proves to be a mass of exquisite little cherub faces, like those at the head of the canvas in Raphael's "Madonna San Sisto." If you come close to the picture, you see only an innumerable company of little angels and cherubim! How often the soul that is frightened by trial sees nothing but a confused and repulsive mass of broken expectations and

crushed hopes! But if the soul, instead of fleeing away into unbelief and despair, would only draw up near to God, it would soon discover that the cloud was full of angels of mercy. In one cherub-face it would see "Whom I love I chasten." Another angel would say, "All things work together for good to them that love God." In still another sweet face the heavenly words are coming forth, "Let not your heart be troubled; believe also in Me. In my Father's house are many mansions. Where I am there shall ye be also."

Today my lonely room is vocal with such heavenly utterances. God's ways are not my ways, but they are infinitely better. The cloud is not so dense but love-rays shine through. In time the revealing "winds shall clear" away the dark and dreadful mystery. Kind words of sympathy steal into the shadowed room of suffering. If Christ does not come in visible form to our Bethanys, He sends His faithful servants and handmaidens with words of warm, tender condolence. The fourteenth chapter of John never gleams with such a celestial brightness as when we read it under the cloud. No cloud can be big enough to shut out heaven if we keep the eye towards the Throne. And when we reach heaven and see the cloud from God's side, it will be blazing and beaming with the illuminations of His love. The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall be our Shepherd, and shall guide us to the fountains of waters of life, and God shall wipe away every tear from our eyes.

## THE NECESSITY OF HOLINESS

Clifton Titus Matthews

Text: Hebrews 12:14. "Follow peace with all men, and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord."

It is the duty of all believers to live in peace one with another; as well as their obligation to live peaceably with their fellowmen. The Psalmist declares, "Seek peace, and pursue it." As a beast pursues its prey, likewise each trusting child of God should strive with utmost diligence to travel the peace highway that leads to the highway of holiness. Always seek unanimity and not division among those of like precious faith. Carefully avoid all matters of discussion that would bring needless contention. Yes, learn to see your neighbor's viewpoint, and still retain your own interpretation. Be slow to condemn until you have weighed all the evidence. As a world citizen respect each other's national traits of character as well as one's theological trend of thought. Do not be biased toward any who accept Christ as Saviour, yet are not in your denominational group. I would urge each child of God to live their God-given convictions among all classes of folk, yet ever retain the child-like simplicity in daily living. Meticulously avoid all petty strifes and traditional dogmas.

It would be well for us to follow the rules of conduct of George Washington copied from a manuscript when he was a boy.

"If two contend together, take not the part of either unconstrained, and be not obstinate in your own opinion; in things indifferent be of the major side."

"Reprehend not the imperfections of others; for that belongs to parents, masters and superiors."

"Speak not evil of the absent, for it is unjust."

"In your apparel be modest and endeavor

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