

Nothing in life so brings forth feelings of weariness than does monotony. When life lacks variety and change, when it is tiresome and uniform, we react as we do to a long speech given by one whose voice lacks inflection or change of timbre.

Boredom is generally accompanied by fatigue and psychosomatic ailments, which have become a major curse of the twentieth century. It has been estimated that most are bored for at least one third of their waking hours; what a waste of time! The antithesis of monotony is what we might call change of pace, variety, diversity; and in order to make life interesting and effective we must devise ways of breaking out of our repetitive existence and develop a healthy change of pace.

In meeting life, many must develop a versatility so that he can adapt his pace to the changing circumstances of life. Edwin Markham so aptly puts it, "When you are the anvil, bear; when you are the hammer, strike." We must always keep in mind the conflicts that exist between men, and between the human and the divine. The human in us tends toward sameness and conformity, while the divine in us tends toward originality and diversity, so that there is always tension between the two. In this lesson, let us examine the three areas in which change of pace is all-important.

First it is important in the physical man, and this calls to mind leisure or relaxation or time spent away from work, recreation. In the long range view, which many cannot envision because of their short range problems, we are told that in the future the correct use of leisure will be one of the most important goals in the world. Once men were unprepared for the factory, for the Industrial Revolution; now it may be that we are just as unprepared for the Life of Riley. Most are not ready to make good use of significant chunks of unsupervised, unchecked time. They have not really learned to use leisure intelligently and appropriately as an ultimate test of civilization, and without this ability, many a great civilization has collapsed.

In our time, through automation, the shorter work week, and so forth, everyone's leisure time has increased tremendously, and so has our restlessness, our nervous tension, our alcoholism, and our emotional instability. Too much wealth and leisure time, too little work, debauched the rulers of the Roman Empire and brought about its downfall. Leisure should not be regarded as passive, a vacuum, to be filled any old way or other; it is a time released to our choosing; it should certainly be used for rest and relaxation, but it should also be used to give expression to our creative capacities in new and interesting and productive ways. If gadgets and technical advances and automatic appliances are substituting speed for serenity, then we must recapture it in the time given to us. Whatever leisure time is allotted to us should be spent in cultivating the resources of the mind and the heart; this is its function at its best.

Some relaxation or other is so necessary to people of every description; the head that thinks and the hand that labors must each recover their powers. In a notebook of Leonardo da Vinci was found this advice, "Every now and then, go away. Have a little relaxation, for when you come back to your work, your judgement will be surer, since to remain constantly at work will cause you to lose the power of judgement. Go some distance away, because then the work appears smaller and more of it can be taken in at a glance, and a lack of harmony or proportion is more readily seen." Will Durant, the philosopher, explained why he does his writing in a rocking chair, saying that for him rocking releases tension. Perhaps with a return of the rocking chair, we wouldn't need so much psychoanalysis.

Second, change of pace is important to the mental man. One of the truly great statements of Jesus is, "Cast thy burden on the Lord." The real burdens of life are those of the mind, and if we can develop proficiency in the art of laying aside these burdens from time to time, we will hold the secret of happy living. There is a law of mind-action, and if we can just turn our problems over to this law, much of the

work of solving them will be done for us. A well know author passes on this advice to anyone who would live life successfully and accomplish his purpose in any line of work, "Roughly outline your book by section or chapter, then turn it over to your subconscious mind. Now go out and play golf or weed your garden, and you will be surprised at the way that inner helper will take over and do your work for you."

Actually, I personally follow this same guidance a great deal. If I worried about the radio talks, the Sunday services, the lectures at the Center I give, and the articles I write, I would be unable to do them when the time came. So, I usually outline all these endeavors; then I lay them aside and let the power of the superconscious mind flow into the subconscious and evolve the final results. To an old, experienced teacher came many with their problems, and to them upon receiving them he would say, "You are in no condition to reach a solution..." Then he would have them walk in his garden, stretch out on his hammock, enjoy his flowers. When it came time to get down to the problem, generally it had already disappeared. Rarely is our real need an answer to this or that specific dilemma; the important thing is a new contact within ourselves, a new sense of release, a change of pace.

The third point is in regard to the change of pace in the spiritual man, which comes about through prayer. "Come unto me, and I will give you rest," said Jesus. In the Protestant cathedral in Copenhagen stands one of the world's most impressive pieces of statuary, Thorvaldsen's Christ. It is a magnificent figure, and one of my favorites. The intention of the sculptor was to create the greatest figure ever of Christ. He started by modeling in clay a commanding figure, showing great physical strength, with a fine shaped head thrown back imperiously and the arms raised in a gesture of domination and command. This seemed to be a proper representation of Jesus, the leader of millions throughout so many generations. Left in the studio, the ever-present mist from the sea entered and worked a strange change--the head fell slightly causing it to look down as if with compassion, and the arms lowered to express an attitude of entreaty and welcome. At first the sculptor was dismayed; then as he regarded it his brooding turned to meditation, and it came to him that this was a far greater conception, so he completed it that way, carving beneath it "Come to me."

This is the great, all-time call to prayer. The original conception of the statue had shown the typical attitude of one who prays with an aggressive, determined intention to evoke the divine will, and relecting one of the greatest maladies of modern times, the tension at the control center of human life, taking away the peaceful direction of life which God intends us to enjoy. Much praying is tense and strained, and this simply continues and amplifies the attitudes and actions of life. It is life's monotony carried over into prayer life. The final rendition of Thorvaldsen's statue shows the act of prayer as not will but rather willingness; prayer as a change of pace, the antithesis of tension, wilful action, worry, and fear. It becomes a quiet, confident, humble and loving entering into a quiet place of inward repose.

You can make your life interesting and effective by a change of pace, through the right use of your leisure time, through laying aside your thoughts of worry and fear, through the right approach to prayer, creating pools of silence within you, in a prayer time which invokes power and peace.