

PURSUIT OF PEACE

"Seek Peace and Pursue it" - Psalm 34:14

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

HOW I FOUND PEACE

ALL OF US who have spiritual or emotional problems believe that we desperately want help. However, it is only fair to warn you that when the time actually comes to face the problems squarely and do something constructive about them, you might find yourself wanting to turn back to the old familiar ways. To make you go through the proper correcting process your problems may have to become so intolerable that turning back is out of the question.

When you have been brought to a deep understanding of the real you, no good will come of it unless you act upon that knowledge. I recall one special matter that was shown me that had to be changed. Realizing how this might affect my family and friends, I didn't want to do it. I even asked if I couldn't bypass that change rather than run the risk of upsetting my family.

I felt that sudden pull and tug to go back to the same old ways because that was the easy way out. It doesn't take as much fortitude to continue in the old ways and endure the unpleasant feelings that accompany them, as it does to make some radical changes in habits.

By the Lord's grace I got the courage to change and have found that I am better in many other areas of my life for just correcting this one thing. Likewise, you may be faced with the question of whether it is worth the price of emotional health to correct some of your old emotional patterns.

This same principle also operates in the spiritual realm.

When GOD has shown His will to you through a spiritual counselor or through a personal study of His Word, there is a temptation to wonder if the price of making a change is worth it. We say, and think we are being honest, that we want to do GOD's will and be pleasing to Him above all else, but when we are actually faced with making a change, we often balk.

Even with the wonderful promises that all will be right between you and the Lord and that the result will be peace and contentment, it is hard to leave the old familiar ways and pleasures. Will you change according to His leading or stay where you are spiritually? There is no standing still in the spiritual life. Either we are growing in the Lord or we will be going backward.

Before you embark on any new adventure, you usually start by counting the cost, whether it is

building a house or planning a trip. CHRIST reminded us of that fact in the parable of the man who started to build a tower (Luke 14:28-30). If you have been reading this book because you know or suspect that you have some emotional and/or spiritual problem, check through it again. See if you are counting the cost of what it will mean to change your way of life. It is pathetic to have the help of a doctor or a psychiatrist and not profit by that help. You will be worse emotionally to have seen your need and then refuse to meet it.

It is even more tragic to be convicted by the Lord that there are spiritual lacks in your life and not to do something about it.

The more knowledge we have, the more GOD requires. If you have come far enough to see your need and then refuse to correct it, you will be far worse off than before finding your need. There will never be a way out for you other than the road GOD has laid down.

If there has been any conviction of sins or bad spiritual habits from this reading or the related Scripture, but you haven't done a thing about it, I am sorry that you read the book. It hasn't done you one bit of good and it may make your later adjustment to the Lord that much harder. You have opened yourself to the chastening hand of the Lord. Please don't make it necessary for Him to discipline you further. Come to Him now for whatever your need may be. Confess those sins that are so precious to you. Those pleasures are just trashy substitutes for a personal, intimate walk with our loving heavenly Father. You will be amazed and thrilled when you see what GOD can do for a person who will wholeheartedly give himself to GOD in complete surrender of body, mind, soul, and every earthly possession that is so dear.

GOD will give peace, calmness and add blessing to blessing even in the material realm. Your family will be more precious, your home life will be easier and happier, your work will be more interesting and satisfying. There will be real rest of heart and peace of mind, no matter what circumstances come and go.

Why did you read this book? Were you secretly hoping that I had found some new, easy way of having peace and contentment? Did you think it was worth the price of this book to find a quick, sure-fire formula for peace? I am sorry that you are disappointed and I am glad also. Let's face it right now. Stop looking for easy ways of finding peace! There aren't any! If there were, don't you think that some psychiatrist, doctor, minister or businessman would have found it long ago and become fabulously wealthy selling the secret? There is no shortcut to peace!

There is no true peace apart from GOD. He has laid down the rules that we must follow to find that peace. The way I have found peace is here outlined for you step by step so if you are in earnest in your search and need help, you can't miss the way.

The first step in finding the desire of your heart for peace is to come to the Prince of Peace, the Lord JESUS CHRIST.

You can be GOD's child only by receiving life through CHRIST; there is no other way of belonging to His family. You are GOD's by creation; but you come into the new relationship of Father and child when CHRIST is taken as your Saviour. Peace is only promised to members of GOD's family.

Sometimes this first step is easier than the second. Joining GOD's family does not automatically change self-centered lives into GOD-centered ones. As long as we live on earth, we will continually have to struggle with the problem of whether we will please GOD or please ourselves.

Anything that falls short of the glory of GOD is sin in His sight. GOD glories more in His holiness than in His other attributes. Sin breaks our fellowship with GOD and takes away the inner rest and serenity that is our desire. Ample provision has been made to rid the Christian of sin. **"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"** (I John 1:9).

Confession means to name, hate and forsake sin. David's prayer should also be ours constantly. **"Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting"** (Psalm 139:23, 24). Listen carefully to any conviction of sin by the HOLY SPIRIT. Try to be very honest in recognizing and confessing those sins.

When GOD does not show you any sin, believe Him and rest in the fact that nothing stands between you and GOD. Many emotionally disturbed people live in doubt because they cannot believe that GOD has forgiven their sins. Accept by faith GOD's promise to forgive. Forget your sins when you have confessed them. GOD says that they are removed as far as the east is from the west; they are buried in the depths of the sea; are hidden behind His back (Psalm 103:12; Micah 7:19; Isaiah 38:17).

By an act of His will GOD can forget the sins that He has forgiven. If GOD is satisfied that they are gone, can't you, too, be contented?

Guard yourself against the return of sins. It may be that some have had full sway in your life over a period of time. It will be difficult to break the hold they have over you. Satan does not want to see you find victory over these things. He will do all in his power to fool you into believing that they are all right, but there can be no victory without a battle. Recognizing that you are apt to slip again in spite of all good intentions and bitter tears is the first step to overcoming them.

GOD knows and understands the hold that habits have over us, and He is willing to keep forgiving as long as it is not our purpose and pleasure to sin. When a sin enters your thoughts or actions, confess it and have done with it immediately. Don't spend any time toying with it, lamenting the pleasure it used to bring. You can no more toy with sin and win than you can play with fire and not be burned. Decide now that sin will not have dominion over you. With GOD's help that can become a reality.

To stay on this pathway of peace, another step must be taken. The newly found way of life has to be maintained.

Just as the body has to have food, rest, air and exercise for health. For the Christian, maintaining the spiritual life is just as important as maintaining the physical life. His food is GOD's Word. Prayer is the Christian's breath and lifeline into GOD's presence. Without these two necessities,

you are living without GOD's power. The Christian life then becomes merely a physical struggle to gain spiritual power.

The result is always the same - certain failure.

Reading a chapter of the Bible a day is often little better than not reading at all. Many times we read the Bible and can't remember a word. It is difficult to find help from opening the Bible at random and reading just any Scripture that happens to appear. Instead of reading a certain amount each day, try to read until you find a verse that speaks to you. Read it over several times. Think about it until it has become a verse for you to carry through the day. Plan your reading to include chapters and verses that meet special needs. Read the same verses day after day if they are the answer to some problem you face. Let the Word of GOD be a living help in your life and not a dull routine to follow.

Prayer is talking to God as a Father. It should not be high-sounding theological words or a repeated ritual. Talk to GOD in the way you would express your innermost feelings to your closest, most trusted friend. GOD already knows what is in your heart, so why not speak with honesty? Planned periods of prayer are essential for spiritual growth.

Times of prayer through the day and night are important.

As soon as your mind is freed from necessary work, let it habitually turn to GOD in prayer. That is what is meant in the Bible when it says that we are to "**pray without ceasing**" (I Thessalonians 5:17). Make prayer a thread of communion with GOD that runs through every activity of every day. When the heart is full of the Word and of prayer, the life is full of the sweetness of the Lord and victory over sin. The natural result will be peace and joy.

Now that your relationship with GOD has been rightly settled both for your salvation and for your daily walk with GOD, you have His peace. We are ready to take the next step to reap the benefits of His provided peace and serenity. Our trust in GOD to keep His promises is shown by committing everything to Him. "**Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass**" (Psalm 37:5). "**Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you**" (I Peter 5:7). "**Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator**" (I Peter 4:19).

Other recommended Scriptures are:

Psalms 23, 34, 37, 46, 62, 139

Proverbs 2

Isaiah 40

John 14, 15, 16

Romans 8

II Corinthians 4, 12

Philippians 4

Hebrews 4, 12

James 1, 4

I Peter 1, 4, 5

I John 4

Turn all your troubles over to GOD trusting Him to do what you cannot do for yourself. This kind of life is not a struggle to make or hold on to peace. It is a letting go and giving GOD a chance to work in all His power. As our striving ceases and we see GOD working, peace that passeth understanding will take over our hearts and minds.

It may be necessary for us to commit things to the Lord many times, especially at first, if we have been in the habit of carrying burdens. There are times when we pray and cast our cares on Him only to pick them up again when we rise from our knees. The minute we realize that we have shouldered our problems again, we must commit them all over again to the Lord. GOD understands the struggle and will help when He sees that we are in earnest about it.

Resolve that from now on, GOD is to carry your load. It is His plan and intention to do it. When we insist on trying to carry it, we are usually candidates for emotional difficulties. Many of our bodies and nervous systems are not able to take the full force of the stresses and strains of life. We may be able to take it for years, then when some extra hard pressure comes the body and nervous system rebel and break down.

Another important step in this pathway of maintaining the feeling of calmness is to keep a constant check on thought life. If you are subject to morbid introspection and dwell on feelings of what might go wrong, it is difficult to experience peace. When you tend to think that the worst will happen in your life, and you face the fears of things that seldom come, it is almost impossible to have a sense of serenity although you trust GOD and His promises.

Someone has said: "If you want to make yourself miserable, think about yourself, what you want, what you like, what respect people ought to pay you; then you will spoil everything you touch and will make misery for yourself out of everything GOD sends you. You will be as wretched as you choose."

Don't let thoughts of pride, worry, fear, anxiety, bitterness, envy, rebellion, self-pity and sexual pleasures, which the Word so strongly forbids, have their way in your mind. "**Keep thy heart [mind] with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.**"

If GOD has ever spoken to you about anything in your thought-life that is wrong, put it out. Even though you may not be sure that it was a conviction, you can never go wrong in making your choice for GOD (Romans 14:23). Your life will be blessed for your action. GOD's pattern for our thoughts is found in Philippians 4:8.

Years and even months of worry, fear, wrong kinds of thoughts and sin of any kind will bear bitter fruit. Now that your life has been straightened out and aligned with the Lord, there is still no promise that even the emotional and physical disorders that may have been caused or aggravated by these things will go away. We cannot get away from the Biblical principle that "**Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap**" (Galatians 6:7).

GOD does not usually see fit to heal the body and nerves the minute the spiritual life is made right even if sin was the cause. If we have torn ourselves down over a period of years, it may

take another long time to restore us.

Making spiritual things right is often the first step toward healing. In some cases, GOD may have seen fit to completely physically heal at the same time the spiritual is made right, but I have never seen that done. Some whose word I trust have testified to the fact that they have. Usually there is gradual healing under GOD's direction. There are some cases where those who have wasted themselves in sin have never again been given complete strength.

We have visited the American Keswick Bible Conference often. There is a colony for alcoholics in connection with the Bible conference ministry. Most of the men show in their faces and broken bodies what lives of dissipation and sin have been theirs. Although they generally come to know CHRIST as Saviour while they are there, their bodies are seldom completely restored to health and strength. Some of them are not able to support themselves and some may never be well on earth.

Sometimes it is GOD's sovereign plan and permissive will that even His own dear servants are so completely physically and emotionally broken they are never restored to full strength. We have missionary friends who spent three years in prison camps during the last world war. That was fifteen years ago but their health has never improved sufficiently for them to return to the mission field. The doctors say that their bodies and nerves were so completely deprived of necessary ingredients that they will never be normal again.

We know of a minister who was a chaplain during World War II. He was in Normandy on D Day and for four months saw men dying all around him. No bullet ever came near him, but doctors say that he lived an emotional lifetime in those four months. Though he returned to his pastorate, he is only able to preach once a Sunday and must spend most of the week in bed or in some way quietly resting and relaxing.

The fact that we are not given our health and strength again is no proof that there is still something wrong with us spiritually. Some would have us believe that; in so doing they have taken the confidence that is rightfully ours. When GOD brings no conviction of wrong, then rest assured that He is satisfied with your spiritual life. You can have the joy of knowing that you are suffering for His glory, not as discipline for some sin. There is one great comfort for all. Suffering for any reason can be a blessing in our lives if we will only receive it, for GOD uses it to teach and train us, bringing us closer to Himself.

Even though GOD does not always promise emotional and physical healing, it is best to get medical help when it is necessary.

First, ask the Lord what He wants you to do. Get His direction to the right doctor and the right kind of medication; if possible a Christian doctor who can help with spiritual problems which relate to the physical. You can know that he is led of the Lord and is probably praying for GOD's healing. You can be sure that he will not advise anything that will lead you away from the Lord. Do what he tells you unless it is directly forbidden in the Word of GOD. Take the medicine he prescribes. Don't let a Christian friend tell you that sedatives and tranquilizers are wrong for Christians.

Some say that if we trust the Lord as we should, there would be no need for such things. That is

false, as testified to by every Christian doctor I know. But, do avoid taking other people's medicine; that may lead to real danger. GOD heals in answer to prayer, but He usually works through doctors and medicines. These are God-given remedies for our use in recovery and comfort. Talk freely to your doctor about your troubles; he is paid to listen. The more he knows about you, the easier it will be to diagnose and relieve your trouble. He will never betray a confidence.

Too often in seeking medical advice, we overlook the fact that there might be need for spiritual help also. Choose a spiritual adviser that you are sure knows the Word and belongs to the Lord. There is just as much danger in choosing the wrong spiritual help as the wrong medical help. You must be sure that this person will be leading you on in GOD's will and not away from it.

After listening to a minister's sermons and hearing of how he has advised others, you can usually determine whether he is the type of person who will help. Yet no matter how sympathetic, understanding and helpful that one may be, don't get into the habit of leaning on him for strength. True spiritual strength comes only from depending on the Lord.

If you have failed to look for help because you are afraid that someone will think you are strange or living in secret sin, delay no longer. There are many who do understand and will give help and sympathy in dealing with your problems. It may be that only a little advice or medical help will bring the healing you need. No matter how serious the problem, delay will only make it worse and call for a much longer healing period. Swallow your pride and fear of another's judgment; get the help you need!

If you don't find it in the first person you approach, keep looking for another. When you earnestly begin looking, GOD will see that you find the one you need. It will amaze you to find how many people who appear calm and well have suffered some of the same things that you are experiencing. They are always more than happy to help you, for they understand so well the nature of your trouble.

Many times a sense of calmness and quietness may still evade you until you learn to live within your limitations.

This was the hardest lesson that I had to learn. If GOD has limited your activities by not giving you complete health, He intends that you live accordingly whether or not your family and friends understand. There is no use to pray for strength when you deliberately and knowingly overwork your body and nerves. GOD promises strength for what He plans for us to do - not for everything that we want to do.

The real secret of a peaceful feeling is to willingly and cheerfully accept your limitations without chafing. The very thing we hate is probably what keeps us from scattering energies in useless or even harmful things. Learning to channel our actions into the best and most useful things in life will usually leave the strength to live normally in spite of bodily and emotional afflictions.

The Apostle Paul had several great limitations imposed on him, yet he did what is probably the greatest work ever done for the Lord. He always bore a "**thorn in the flesh**" (II Corinthians 12:7) which GOD never saw fit to remove. Instead He gave Paul the grace to live above that

difficulty. The frequent presence of Dr. Luke on Paul's missionary trips may have been because of need for medical care. Certainly if it were GOD's will to heal all Christians who live in fellowship with Him, He would have healed Paul.

Perhaps Paul's greatest and most lasting ministry was accomplished in prison. It was there that he wrote many of the books of the Bible. GOD closed his traveling ministry in order that he might have a greater one in writing.

Hudson Taylor, founder of the China Inland Mission, is a more modern missionary who used his limitations as stepping stones to a wonderful ministry for the Lord. He was frail physically and suffered nervously. Because of these difficulties he soon learned the secret of resting in the Lord and committing everything to Him. He found that he couldn't carry the burdens of a mission board. He not only did a miraculous work in China, but the secret of his life of trust and rest has been an inspiration down through the years to others. The story of his life has been written and rewritten many times that others may know the power of his life.

GOD may have had to slow you down in some way so that you can have a greater ministry. It may be in praying, writing, comforting, taking better care of your own family, or just in a closer walk with Him. Many of GOD's choicest saints spent years in bed but accomplished more in their suffering than they might have done if GOD had allowed them to be active. Many of our favorite hymns would be missing if it had not been for those who suffered blindness or were bedridden for years. Some of the best books of encouragement and the sweetest poems of praise and comfort have come from beds of pain.

One of my husband's seminary classmates started out hopefully and successfully in a pastorate. Then seeming tragedy struck. His wife had to have a mastoid operation. The result left her bedridden. Churches take a dim view of calling a pastor with a chronically sick wife, so he had to divide his time between caring for his wife and trying to make a living. People said, "What a pity!" but GOD makes no mistakes.

This was GOD's way of taking him out of a pastorate, putting him into boys' conference work and using him as one of the most spiritual conference speakers in this country. As his wife lies on her bed, she prays for his ministry. He is not a powerful, forceful speaker but one never listens to him without feeling the presence and power of GOD. His wife was laid aside that she might have a prayer ministry for Him. I am happy to add that since Dramamine was perfected, it is now possible for her to be up most of the time and often to travel with her husband.

The greatest comfort Christians can have through any problem, sickness, sorrow, or trial is knowing that nothing comes into our lives by chance or mistake. GOD is sovereign!

Nothing - absolutely nothing - comes into our lives without coming through GOD's plan and will. GOD plans things not for our pleasure but for our benefit to conform us to be image of Christ. **"The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord."** In Romans 12:1, 2, GOD's will is described as **"good, and acceptable, and perfect."** Believing these verses, we will have the strength and patience to withstand the most trying circumstances.

Christians are not promised wealth, fame or health. GOD knows what is best for each and many

times these things are not best. This is a training school for the future. This life is not our aim and goal. Our goal is to be with the Lord and stand perfected in Him. Often we misunderstand GOD's purpose in sending us trials. We think that success and pleasure in life are a mark of GOD's blessing, more often just the reverse is true. It usually takes some suffering to make **"perfect, stablish, strengthen, [and] settle"** (I Peter 5:10).

There is another verse that has brought much comfort to Christians who are forced to bear some infirmity. **"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but GOD is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it"** (I Corinthians 10:13).

There is always a consolation in knowing that what we suffer is not something new, different. It helps to know that there are others going through the same experiences. "Misery loves company," not because we are selfish but because we need the feeling that others understand and sympathize. Even greater comfort in this verse is the promise that GOD will not send anything either in temptation to sin, or of afflictions and troubles, without making a way of escape for us.

Many of us have had experiences where we have told GOD, "I just can't stand this another minute." Perhaps it was pain, nervousness, loneliness, or fear. GOD's answer comes to bring relief, perhaps through a friend, a chance to rest, a telephone call, the necessity of doing something for your family. Whatever it is, GOD provides ways to take the pressure off for a little while, sometimes permanently. This is the Word of One who cannot lie! Take it for your promise, claim it often, remembering that it is possible to bear anything sent from the hand of GOD and followed with His grace sufficient to endure it.

It may be GOD's will for one to suffer financially, another to suffer physically, yet another mentally or emotionally.

GOD chooses just what each Christian needs to mature him. Perhaps many find it easy to believe that GOD sends other troubles, but nervous and mental disorders are of our own making, never GOD's perfect will. This is one of the greatest problems that faced me; I find that it is usually the same with others who suffer with nerves. Unless we believe that all things that happen to us are GOD's will, we are denying that GOD is sovereign. That leads to serious doubts that we are completely governed by GOD's plan.

Some very popular writers and ministers feel that difficulties in the emotional realm are always the result of spiritual lack or of unconfessed sin. Often quoted to prove this theory is II Timothy 1:7: **"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."**

"Sound mind" here refers to sensible-mindedness or sobermindedness. This has absolutely no reference to mental illness at all. From the context, we see that Paul is encouraging Timothy to preach the Word in power and love with a serious-mindedness in spite of the persecutions falling on Christians and also of Paul's imprisonment for the Gospel's sake.

If all mental and emotional problems were brought on by sin then all Christians should experience these afflictions at least to some degree. Unbelievers should fill the psychiatrists'

offices and mental institutions. It is not logical to say that some people are nervous because their relationship to GOD is wrong unless we also say that a broken leg is a sign of sin. Why do some strongly affirm that operations, TB and cancer are GOD's will, yet say that mental illness is never GOD's will, but only comes as the result of sin? There is no Biblical basis for drawing a line between physical and emotional suffering.

Perhaps some believe this because a layman lacks understanding of the causes of suffering that come from the mind.

This can only be adequately explained by a physician, so it will not be discussed in this book. I would refer you to *Why Christians Crack Up* by Dr. Marion H. Nelson. He discusses the causes of emotional troubles in Christians. He gives ten reasons why Christians have breakdowns, only a few of them having anything to do with spiritual causes.

Several times I have heard Dr. Nelson and Dr. Montgomery, both Christian psychiatrists, say that it is possible for a Christian to have troubles with his nerves, have a breakdown, either mentally or emotionally without having any spiritual problems. It is because there are so many other factors involved - such as heredity, environment, physical conditions, strokes, and change of life, to mention a few.

That emotional troubles are a result of sin stems from the age-old belief that we suffer because we sin. We do suffer because Adam and Eve gave in to temptation and sinned and we are all a part of the Adamic race. Sin is the source and reason for suffering in general, but it is not in all individual cases.

The problem was so prevalent in Biblical days that the disciples believed it. When they saw the man born blind, they asked, "**Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him**" (John 9:2, 3). CHRIST's answer shows that all suffering is not the result of sin. This man had suffered blindness from birth so that his healing would bring glory to GOD and prove that CHRIST was the Son of GOD.

You remember that Job's friends had the same idea about suffering coming from sin. They kept insisting that Job was hiding his sins, although he told them repeatedly that he had not sinned.

Perhaps the hardest habit to break, especially for those of us whose work does not require keen mental alertness is to avoid morbid introspection. We keep slipping back to questions that plague our minds. What would have happened if things had been different in the past? We wonder if things would have been better if we had been saved sooner. What if we had lived closer to the Lord through the years, if we had been given medical care sooner, or had gotten help with our problems when first they started? Going over and over these things is in order to get some clue as to what has caused the troubles and to get some insight into what can help in the future sometimes helps but only if correctly applied.

It never helps to go over and over the past day by day. We are only impressing our brains with unpleasantness. They make it harder to forget and control later. Reliving experiences repeatedly will just keep nerves and minds upset and hinder possible healing. A friend and I were taking

one time about nervous symptoms. Her nerves had become so bad that her legs and arms were paralyzed for a number of months. I told her I couldn't find out what was causing my chronic nervousness (I really didn't know then). Then I asked her if she knew what had caused her trouble.

"Yes, but I was told never to talk about it or even let it return to my mind again," she answered. "It is done now and has been corrected, and I will never face it again." That course had worked for her because at the time she was a very active and attractive member of the staff of a well-known Christian college and spent her summers traveling with the students.

The past is over, done and gone and the sooner it can be dealt with and put out of your life the better. Instead of asking what might have happened if you had lived closer to the Lord in the past, why not take that much time and energy finding out what it would mean to live in close fellowship with Him now?

Recognize your inherited tendencies and learn to live with them or in spite of them. Change anything you can in your environment that might cause trouble, secure the best medical care and then live for the future, not in the past of what might have been.

Console yourself with this fact. Whatever your past - no matter how unpleasant and wrong it might have been, it was not chance or mistake. GOD intended that you be the way you are, so don't blame the doctors, yourself, or the circumstances. From now on walk in GOD's will. He can bring about a marvelous change in your health, if that is His will for you.

Nervous people know that they are miserable and need help. They watch so-called "normal" people with envy, they wonder how they can be so well and happy. Those who can take everything calmly in stride often have little or no patience with nervous people. They say that there is nothing wrong, "It is all in your mind."

In one sense there never was a truer statement. The pain is severe and hard to take even though it can't be explained or blamed on a part of the body. The cure is much harder because it is much easier to cure true physical troubles than troubles that are started by the wrong suggestions in the mind. For that reason there should be more sympathy for those who suffer from nervous problems and disorders. Doctors say that there is really only a fine line between "normal" and "nervous folk."

Who is to say which is normal? Strong-minded people often look at relatives and friends who are nervous and suddenly discover that they are looking in a mirror. Their type of nervousness (high blood pressure, indigestion, ulcers, colitis, insomnia) might be more socially acceptable and considered normal by others. It is nervousness just the same. It behooves all of us to be careful not to throw stones because most of us live in glass houses at least to some extent.

When there is an operation or a person has been physically ill, there are many who send flowers, pay calls, help the family and give constant attention to the sick. There is abundance of sympathy, well-wishing and prayers. When you suffer with chronic nerves that make you drag along from one day to the next, and wish you might trade for something perhaps more dangerous but temporary, you are often criticized and reprimanded for not "snapping out of it."

This is hard to take, but it must be taken! Once we accept, it is easier to bear infirmity without self-pity. When someone does sympathize and understand he is a real morale booster.

Even closest friends and dearest relatives cannot understand problems unless they have been through similar experiences. The ones who love us most must get tired of hearing about how we feel. They think they help by minimizing our troubles or attempting to jolly us out of them.

They sometimes go so far as to try to make us believe that what we are saying just can't be that bad. Don't succumb to self-pity because of the attitude of loved ones and think that you are unloved or forsaken. It is not lack of love, but simply that they cannot understand the nature of what you suffer. Aren't you really glad they can't, for if they could, it would mean that they were suffering in the way you are.

It is best not to talk about the way you feel or try to explain to others what it is like to suffer nervously. They will not understand and may think only that you are complaining. You can make a nuisance of yourself and people may avoid you.

If you tell your troubles o'er and o'er, The world will think you like them and proceed to tell you more.

LOOKING FOR PEACE AND COMFORT

Every doctor I have had has given one bit of consolation that I would like to pass on. It is usually nervous people who accomplish the most in life. The characteristics of the personality that often cause nervousness also belong to the nature that makes a person conscientious, loyal, responsible, and intensely interested in doing everything in the best way.

Pages could be written about some of our greatest composers, artists, and ministers who have had nervous breakdowns after some masterpiece which they have done and which has made its mark on the world for better. Sometimes there is a heavy price that has to be paid for accomplishing something of value.

Keep telling the Lord about your troubles over and over.

He never tires of hearing; He completely understands your feelings and suffers with you. He is the only one who can do anything for you anyway. Remember He is all love, all power, and all wisdom. He will meet every need as He has promised.

"Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means (II Thessalonians 3:16).

THE END - PERHAPS A BEGINNING