

Harmony of Life Possible

by Lewis T. Corlett

The Christian way of life, centered on Christ, offers a solution to the problems of modern society, including self-indulgence, expediency, and the lack of values and sense of authority.

Scripture: Psalm 139:23, John 14:27, Romans 12:2, 2 Corinthians 10:5, Philippians 4:7, James 4:8, 1 Peter 5:7, 1 John 1:9, 1 John 4:18, Revelation 3:20

Topics: "Inner Harmony", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

Lewis T. Corlett preaches about the importance of finding harmony in a world filled with strife and discord, both internally and externally. He emphasizes that God's method of developing character and personality works in harmony, never in discord, leading to inner soul harmony through contemplation of God's ideal of perfection. Corlett compares God's superior plan to the advancements in mental and spiritual healing of today, highlighting the need for a fundamental view of God and the Bible in the midst of societal crises.

Transcript

Life is action. Action does not always imply or include harmony. The world has far too much strife and discord. With the individual this discord is both internal and external. The tensions and pressures of this present generation have increased the conflicts in and about man. There is a way whereby man can be freed from the internal motive tension and be confronted only with the battle from without. This provision is God's method of developing character and personality. He always works in harmony, never in discord. As God's harmony is the natural result of His perfection, then man can find inner soul harmony only by the contemplation of God's ideal of perfection.

God's plan is superior to the best of man's development in each generation. Since this generation has gone further in understanding and measuring the immaterial part of man, and since time would forbid an extensive discussion of the many ages, this discussion will be limited to the present generation. It will show the superiority of God's program to the most advanced mental and spiritual healing of today.

Succeeding generations desire and demand a change in most things. This is the spirit which produces inventions and forces progress. In most fields it is a very desirable factor. Many have carried it over into the realm of moral values and have made mistakes. They have thought that they must adapt the old standards and remedies to new customs instead of interpreting present customs and conditions in the light of enduring qualities. This is a partial explanation of the new theories that arise in each age. Some have even gone so far as to question the authority and genuineness of the Bible. In fact, it was quite a fad for

several years for pseudo-scientists to speak of theology and the Bible as being obsolete and antiquated.

But a number of liberal thinkers have had to change their viewpoint during recent years. They found that their standards of values would not meet the crises of the day. The depression, the strain and stress of economic problems, and the present world crisis all revealed a marked deficiency in their process of thinking. In these conditions the people and nations demanded something more than doubts and questions. Many of these liberal leaders sensed the situation and swung, in both their thinking and practice, to a more fundamental view of God and the Bible. Henry C. Link says: "In advising such people as a result of my studies of their problems, I found myself more and more frequently using some Biblical expression, or summing up certain recommendations in terms of an accepted religious doctrine. This growing tendency was forced upon me by the realization that my professional and scientific vocabulary was not always adequate. It was neither sufficiently clear nor sufficiently definite for the needs of many who came to me for advice." [1]

Link continues this thought: "My return to religion, as an individual, is not important; but the discoveries of scientific psychology which influenced me are. In spite of the great benefits which the physical sciences have bestowed on mankind -- a longer life, a more comfortable life, a life more free from physical pains, and a life filled with an infinite variety of interesting objects and educational experiences, there is no evidence that individuals are happier, that families are more united, that governments or political bodies are wiser, or that nations are less likely to go to war.

"Indeed, there is much evidence to the contrary. The net annual increase in mental patients in hospitals in the United States has risen to four and one-half per cent and the rate is still rising. In 1933 the total number of patient days in all hospitals in the United States for mental cases was 173,000,000 against 123,000,000 patient days for all other diseases. In New York State it has been authoritatively estimated that hereafter one in every twenty-two persons born in the state will go to an institution for mental illness. Such cases represent the extremes of individual failure, but we see their intermediate symptoms in the feverish pursuit of panaceas for happiness which characterizes the whole fabric of our current national life." [2]

"The realization of this fact accounts, in large part, for my return to the church. I go to church, to repeat, because it has meant giving up things I like to do for things I did not like, at first, so well. I believe in God because I have found that without the belief in some one more important than themselves, people fail to achieve their own potential importance." [3]

These leaders were hunting for something they could stand on as well as a basis for a substantial message to give to their people. Holiness people did not find themselves in such a dilemma. They had kept their ears open, not only to the demand for change, but also to the will and word of God. They had held to the standard of values which was based on God and His revelation to man. They had built a ministry on faith in God and His Book and did not need to change their basic message. They found themselves on the Rock to which the liberal thinkers were turning in the time of storm. Instead of being outdated in their viewpoints and standards, holiness leaders discovered that they were ahead of these others, and now the liberals were catching up to what they had termed "old -- fashioned" and "old fogey" religion. Holiness is adaptable to the problems of every age and will meet the needs of this present one.

A speaker in a recent educational conference declared that the main problem of this age was that the young people were being educated without a proper scale of values. The conclusion was that this was

brought about by the neglect of the proper training of the moral and spiritual part of the man. Liberal philosophy has tended to make every man an authority in himself. Quoting Henry C. Link again: "Liberalism, as I have seen it in so many cases, is the result of an indiscriminate releasing of a person from the traditions and restraints of the past without substituting an adequate set of restraints or ideals for the future. It manifests itself clinically among younger people, as follows: In the tendency to regard parents as old-fashioned and the older generation, at large, behind the times. In the tendency of students to be liberal with their parents' money, automobile, and other property without assuming any corresponding obligations or responsibilities. In the intellectual scorn which students often show for the religious, political, and moral creeds of their parents and of their own early childhood. In the repugnance which so many students from humble homes develop toward the occupations of their fathers, and toward the more manual types of vocations. In the frequent tendency to depreciate business as a career and to idealize an intellectual or more cultural type of occupation, regardless of fitness for such pursuits. Seldom do these young people realize that only the surplus of production and wealth makes education and intellectual occupations at all possible." [4] This has left the race without a definite objective and sense of ultimate authority. Dr. E. Stanley Jones says: "But it is just this devotion to a cause which I find youth in East and West to lack. The youth of America I found to be the finest generation of youth we have ever had: they were two inches taller on the average than the previous generation, they were better educated, more frank and honest, with greater instruments of power in their hands, they had everything except one thing -- A Cause. They were all dressed up and ready, but standing dead in their boots, because they had nothing to which to give themselves. They had no Cause. And without that, life was going to pieces on their hands." [5]

The natural result of this attitude has been that people have begun to cater to self-indulgence. The ideal of many has become, "Give me what I want when I want it." They have thrown self-discipline to the winds and some have added, "Give me what I want when I want it, or I will have a spell." In a few cases the spell has gone so far as to mean gun play and shooting down in cold blood those who tried to hinder them from obtaining what they wanted when they wanted it. Expediency became the basis of thought and action rather than principle. But "What is right?" But "What will be the easiest or bring me the greatest benefit or gain now?"

There has been a gradual decline in the value of the individual. Both the production line with its limited outline work for each person and the general idea of mass psychology tend to cause the individual person to be lost in the group. War, with its high pressures for production as well as the sacrifice of life on the battlefield, has increased this viewpoint of the individual as insignificant. The war psychology diverted attention from this, for the demands and desires to win the war unified the people in a strong emotion of desire to end the war.

Hazen G. Werner describes this condition: "We were caught in the interim between the decline of social codes and a morality yet to come. Young people can live as they choose; the fences are down. Laws and conventions have been swept away; moral irresponsibility is prevalent. But this is not the way out; it has no prize to offer except a broken ideal. We have been floundering about, victimized by the carelessness of our day. We must grow new moral guidances for life, new standards lifted out of the divine sense of right within us. This is the Christian way. That inner law is the voice of God." [6]

These and other conditions tend to produce an uneasiness and strain in the lives of people today. Men and women are unsettled and uneasy and cannot understand what is causing their discontent. The result is a great increase in physical and mental sickness. Some are breaking under this pressure and have had

to be committed to state and private institutions. Quoting again from Mr. Link: "In the professional capacity of a psychologist, I have examined and advised, or assisted in advising, some four thousand individuals during the past fifteen years. These individuals were of all kinds, young and old, men and women, poor and rich. However, with few exceptions, they were normal people with normal problems such as most of us at some time or other have. They were dissatisfied with their present mode of living, had gotten into a rut, or wanted to change their vocations. Some were unhappy in their married life, or were considering a divorce. Some had difficulty in getting along with other people, were unable to make friends, suffered from an excess of timidity. Many had children whose education or discipline and habits presented difficulties. Some suffered from a conflict between their religious belief and practices, or from a conflict between their obligations to parents and to themselves. Some had undesirable habits which they were trying to correct. In short, their difficulties were those of normal people to be dealt with from the standpoint of normal psychology." [7] The majority of this type are laboring or wondering when and how they will be able to find relief and deliverance.

These conditions are baffling the medical profession to a great extent. They are having to doctor so many sick people who, upon examination, show no organic disorder or sickness. There are two general trends of remedies which have been proposed and in some measure have been accepted and adopted as possible solutions to these conditions.

The first of these is the type classified under "psychoanalysis." The basic principle of this type is that the pressure causing the uneasiness and mental sickness is produced by hidden fears or desires. The remedy is an endeavor on the part of a psychoanalyst to probe into the past life of the patient until these blocks can be uncovered and cleared up, thus removing the pressure. Some good has been accomplished by this process. Two grave problems arise to hinder it: First, it is a battle of the wit and knowledge of the patient to keep the analyst from discovering his secret; second, is the danger that some analysts may have the tendency to encourage the patient to give way to the satisfaction of appetites, passions, and desires in order to try to relieve the hidden pressures.

Henry C. Link describes this tendency in these words: "The fallacy underlying the progressive education movement is that it has not codified the forms of expression which are desirable and those which are not. It has assumed, too uncritically, that what a child wanted to express was worth encouraging. It has made a god of the principle of expression at the expense of the manner of self-expression. Consequently it has often confused self-expression with self-indulgence, dawdling, and a set of adult notions about the framework -- art, dramatics, pageants, etc. -- in which children should self-express themselves. It has failed to recognize sufficiently that mature self-expression and creativeness rest on the acquisition of the basic techniques of self-expression, much as the mastery of a piece of music rests on the mastery of the scales." [8]

The second type of remedy is that offered by and through psychiatry. This is a more scientific method of mental healing and has helped many to find the proper balance of life. The armed services are employing prominent psychiatrists to assist soldiers who came back from the battle front in an unbalanced mental condition. Some marvelous healings have been accomplished in this field. The psychiatrists have discovered that the more a man lives within himself the more easily he is subject to this mental pressure. Also they have learned that if man centers his thoughts and emotions on himself he soon becomes sick of himself. Man must have an objective outside of himself which requires him to forget himself before he can enjoy health and be useful to society. In endeavoring to guide patients to look outside themselves psychiatrists have found a limitation which handicapped them or completely baffled them: the attempt to

discover an objective great and powerful enough for their patients to lose themselves in it.

Leading pastors of the United States are recognizing that it takes more than a knowledge of psychiatry to pull a personality together. They see that some of the prominent psychiatrists and counselors are lacking in the integration of their own personalities. It takes an inner stability deeper than the mind to give poise, peace, and happiness. For this reason many psychiatrists have unconsciously found themselves directing their patients to religion and the Church to find the highest and best objectives to aid in rehabilitation. Link emphasized this: "From a psychological as well as from a commonsense point of view, the greatest source of help is religion. The religious belief in God, the Ten Commandments, and the teachings of Jesus, gives parents a certainty and an authority with their children which they otherwise lack. Those parents who wondered how, in the absence of the religious influences which had molded them, they could mold the moral habits of their children, were facing an unanswerable problem. There is no rational substitute for the supernatural power which the unquestioned belief in a Divine Being and a Divine moral order confers." [9]

Dale Carnegie says: "I can remember the days when people talked about the conflict between science and religion. But no more. The newest of all sciences -- psychiatry -- is teaching what Jesus taught. Why? Because psychiatrists realize that prayer and a strong religious faith will banish the worries and anxieties, the strains and the fears, that cause more than half of all our ills

"I have gone back -- or I should say forward -- to a new concept of religion. I no longer have the faintest interest in the differences in creeds that divide the churches. But I am tremendously interested in what religion does for me, just as I am interested in what electricity and good food and water do for me. They help me to lead a richer, fuller, happier life.

"But religion does far more than that. It brings me spiritual values. It gives me, as William James put it, 'a new zest for life . . . more life, a larger, richer, more satisfying life.' It gives me faith, hope, and courage. It banishes tensions, anxieties, fears, and worries. It gives purpose and

direction to my life. It gives me abounding health. It helps me to create for myself "an oasis of peace amidst the whirling sands of time." [10]

Dr. Carl Jung, distinguished psychiatrist, says in his book, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*: "During the past thirty years people from all civilized countries of the earth have consulted me. I have treated many hundreds of patients. Among all my patients in the second half of life -that is to say, over thirty-five -- there has not been one whose problem in the last resort was not that of finding a religious outlook on life. It is safe to say that every one of them fell ill because he had lost that which the living religions of every age have given to their followers, and none of them have been really healed who did not regain his religious outlook." [11]

God's standard of Christian perfection, which is heart holiness, meets the present problems of mankind better than either one of these remedies. Both psycho-analysts and psychiatrists have helped many; yet they find themselves limited either in reaching the depths of man's being to uncover the pressure or in urging man to forget himself sufficiently to fasten his attention and interests on some external objective. The self-knowledge gained through the analysis of man's personality is helpful to the individual, but it cannot redeem man. Knowledge must go beyond the self and include the knowledge of God to find the proper objective. Redemption from sin comes only through Christ the Saviour. Through His death on the cross the plan of salvation was provided for man's redemption. When man puts the risen Lord as the true

objective of life, self-knowledge bows in obedience to divine knowledge and divine redemption.

Holiness offers and provides man with the highest, the greatest, and the best objective in the world, God himself. Holiness is the name applied to the moral character of God; so from the beginning the person's thoughts and purposes are directed to God as being above and over all. He is the most worthy objective an individual could have; for God is not only outside of man, but He is also so great and mighty in His being as to challenge man to forget self and be lost in the contemplation and enjoyment of His immensity. "What does the Christian experience propose to do about this need? It provides from out of its resources a certain unique center or ideal. It proposes reintegration around that spiritual center which is Christ. You can call the consequent experience the Christian way of life, remembering that He said, 'I am the real and living way.' When Christ is at the center, your life becomes a directed life. You live and you act in relationships on the basis not of your desire but of His... We can come into the experiences of reality only through the presence of a real center. It will take the Christ to bring us to a place where we live completely, unifiedly. 'In Him all things cohere.' Anyone who will try living vividly and realistically out of that constant reference to Christ as a center will find life vastly different. From that center issues poise for trouble and pain, courage that enables one to meet life. This center yields an overcoming strength. 'I live; and yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.' What a relief to be able to get through with acting as though one had the most precious thing at the heart of life all the while one has only been pretending to have it! From this center, which is Christ, comes the genius of success in living and the Christian life. The reintegration around this new and higher center is conversion." [12] So, from the first step, God's plan does meet the need of man and in a better way than these other remedies. Instead of being out of date, holiness is ahead; and the closer modern leaders come to a solution of man's problems, the more nearly they come to the harmony of holiness and God's standard of perfection.

Holiness reveals a worth of the individual which is necessary for the basis of man's redemption. Again quoting Werner, he says: "The modern man must be redeemed from the experience of a meaningless existence, and that can be done only when he has been challenged to accept a divine purpose that will restore his sense of worth. Here is precisely the task of the gospel. All of that inner urge for meaning and accomplishment must be given expression in a spiritual and moral adventure. Something must come into a man's life to give him release, something that will take him by the hand and lead him to the realm of his kingship and tell him that he matters." [13] Holiness requires that a man face himself, confess his sins, straighten up his back life, and purpose to live righteously if he would enjoy the favor and aid of God. This is better than the method of the psychoanalyst in that the person has the aid of the Holy Spirit, who is far more thorough in the uncovering of hidden sin than any mortal possibly could be. He is faithful and uncovers everything of wrongdoing in the past life; and, being all-wise, He directs the seeker in the correct way to find deliverance. This has been called "conviction" by the Church of all ages. It is what the psychoanalysts have been groping to discover and in a measure have discovered. Practically all the work of psychoanalysis is related to isolated instances in the individual life, not with the selfish direction or criterion by which all of his choices are made. Holiness through the Spirit makes this latter emphasis, which is fundamental. Holiness demands that the person follow the direction of the Spirit in this process. Consequently a more thorough job is done, and God's program is ahead again and the others are struggling to catch up.

One of the big problems of the psychiatrist is to find the proper motivation to aid his patient in taking an objective outside himself. Werner describes this and points to the Christian method when he says: "Having accepted the fact that in the experience of successful reintegration Christ is the perfect center, we yet face

the question of what empowers the individual to that reintegration. Here again the Christian method goes far beyond the humanistic or merely psychological. In the latter, the one seeking must rely upon self-realization, that is, on a person's understanding of what in his inner life brought about the maladjustment and what must take place in that inner life if he is to be reintegrated. Applied psychology without religion depends wholly on the power of self-knowledge.

But in the Christian conception knowledge is not enough. Self-realization, while an essential part of the whole process of reintegration, is not sufficient for empowerment to that reintegration." [14]

Holiness does this in the best possible manner; for if a person co-operates with the Holy Spirit in repentance he not only has his past cleared up in forgiveness and restitution, but also he receives new life from above. He becomes a "partaker of the divine nature." [15] He is made a "new creature in Christ Jesus" with strong desires and emotions to do what God requires and go the way He directs. "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts [his heart] by the Holy Ghost," and the believer enjoys doing what he is supposed to do because it is a life of love. Thus, holiness leads the way both in transformation of character and in providing a proper dynamic motivation.

Holiness meets the need of the individual in a more complete sense than psychiatry ever can. Psychiatry says a person must forget himself to have good health. God's standard demands that the believer, after he has received divine life, face himself and the disposition and bent to selfishness in his nature, that he die out to self with all of its claims and yield all his ransomed powers to God. This is not merely a passive attitude but rather an active operation of placing all in the hands of the Lord. It is complete devotement to God for sacrifice or service at His guidance and direction. The believer acknowledges his need for a stronger, purer, and more unified motivation and declares his purpose to attain to it. This is the goal of the psychiatrist and, while he is partially successful in a number of cases, he cannot succeed fully without bringing God in as the objective. God is the only objective great and large enough in which man can lose himself and be satisfied in his state. Man finds such a limitless boundary in God that it is comparatively easy to forget self-interests and die to self and be lost in Christ in God. Again holiness is in the lead and pointing the true way of deliverance to the modern theorists.

Holiness is a living relation between the believer and his God. To be enjoyed it must be cultivated and sustained. This calls for a continual, progressive walk as God directs. This stimulates and strengthens faith. Faith is both an action and a reaction. It grows spontaneously out of confidence in God. It thrives best in the cultivation of the love life of the believer and his God. Faith produces assurance; assurance gives joy and satisfaction; these in turn produce zeal and enthusiasm; and all together produce a character capable of facing and meeting the problems of the day. In this challenge for a progressive walk holiness meets the basic need of man for progressive development and service.

The desire of the average person today is to have an experience which will create a thrill, to help him forget his problems and cares. This is not evil in itself but may involve evil and sin in the way it is met or carried out. People of all walks of life desire a release from the pressure of the problem at hand. The smoker finds it in the good feeling while smoking a cigarette. The drinker loses himself in the stupefying touch on his faculties which makes him forget the disagreeable and brings a sense of temporary release. A person goes to the theater to laugh and feel with the actors and lose himself for a time in empathic response to the actions of others. The dope user starts this habit with a desire to be stimulated to forget the dreariness and weariness of the present. All of these things do give a temporary thrill but at the same time put an unnatural pressure on the emotions involved. Thus the smoker, under pressure and tension,

smokes almost continuously; the drinker goes beyond his powers of control and becomes drunk; the dope user finds his whole being crying out for more, and he finds himself bound in the clutches of a destructive habit. The regular attendant at the movies calls for more thrilling scenes, either in reckless daring, physical adventure, or in more immoral suggestions by word or act. He wants to be freed from reality. The thrill of the moment is followed by weakened powers. An insatiate craving for greater and stronger stimuli arouses the emotions to a more exciting thrill.

In this phase of the problem of humanity God's ideal of perfection can meet the need better than any thrill of the world. God in His plan of salvation works with and in the emotions. It calls for more than the emotions, yet it proves to be a stabilizer for emotional cravings. In the beginning of the process of salvation the pressure of unconfessed sin is removed and the emotion of fear is replaced by that of faith and joy. The love of God implanted in the heart by the Holy Spirit brings ecstasy in the surprising discovery of the power of a new emotion.

This emotional reaction is not caused by some external force or relationship but by the indwelling Personality of the Holy Spirit. In His operations He does not lift the believer to an abnormal place of temporary pleasant reactions which weaken and destroy. Rather He transforms the inner life by the impartation of divine love. This gives the recipient a new sense and standard of values and at the same time stabilizes his emotional cravings. A personal Christian experience is more than emotion, yet it works in and through the emotions.

The reactions of the new life do occasionally give momentary pleasant ecstasy. The glory of this is that it is constructive instead of debilitating. The believer is left with a greater sense of the constancy of joy in the inner life; he is more conscious of both God's interest and His presence; and he looks at life with a greater conviction of the value of the enduring and eternal. He responds empathetically to the sense of God's presence and walks in deeper devotion and more intimate fellowship.

He is not conscious of losing or missing anything in his separation from the world, for he has "found a deeper treasure, one which fadeth not away." Duty becomes a pleasure; worship, delightful communion with His Saviour; attendance at church, a stimulating association with people of like faith. God is love; the basic nature of His relation to man in Christian experience is His "love . . . shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." [16] Love is more than an emotion; it is a combination of nature, sentiment, and emotion.

The nature and sentiment are constant and abiding, while the emotional state may vary in reaction according to either the mental and physical state of man or the external situation. Thus after the ecstasy of the momentary emotional reaction passes, the believer finds himself in a deeper river of love instead of in the grip of an empty craving left by a sensual thrill. Love as a human element, centered in self, calls for the exhausting thrills of the world; but anchored in God, it finds both its satisfaction and enjoyment in devotion to the One who is the source of love.

Thus God's program has a stabilizing power and effect upon each and every part of man's nature; his motive life is unified, his emotional life is centered in the abiding and enduring, his mental viewpoints are set on things above, and his physical powers are regulated in normal functions.

The benefits are not only personal. Others profit, for coupled with this other-world mindedness is a deep desire for service to mankind. His desires, thoughts, and ambitions are centered in helping others and advancing the kingdom of God. His life is integrated in God and focalized in doing His will while continuing

as a citizen of earth. Holiness provides the best remedy for man's ailments today; and the closer modern man comes to solving man's problems, the nearer he comes to the standards and experience of second blessing holiness. God's ideal for man is a personality integrated in Him as the ideal of perfection. The closer the individual comes to this ideal, the more he finds himself in harmony with himself and the eternal laws of the universe both physically and morally. God's program is superior to the best remedies for man's personality ailments given today, and at the same time it really satisfies the basic needs of each person.

1 Link, H. C., Return to Religion, Printed Book Copyright 1936, Macmillan Co., p. 5

2 Ibid., pp. 14, 15

3 Ibid., p. 34

4 Ibid., pp. 16, 161

5 Jones, E. Stanley, Is the Kingdom of God Realism? Printed Book Copyright 1940 by Whitmore & Stone. Abingdon-Cokesbury Press

6 Werner, Hazen G., And We Are Whole Again, Printed Book Copyright 1945 by Whitmore & Stone, Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, p. 29

7 Link, H. C., Return to Religion, pp. 4, 5

8 Ibid., p. 107

9 Ibid., p. 104

10 Carnegie, Dale, Your Life (Magazine), Feb., 1948, p. 18

11 Jung, C. G., Modern Man in Search of a Soul, p. 264

12 Werner, op. cit., pp. 141, 142

13 Ibid., p. 28

14 Ibid., p. 145

15 II Peter 1:4

16 Romans 5:5

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