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FIFTY MAXIMS FROM MAXEY
A Foray into Aphorisms Compiled by Duane V. Maxey

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Digital Edition 11/01/05
By Holiness Data Ministry

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INTRODUCTION

This is an heterogeneous conglomeration of fifty quite unrelated maxims, aphorisms, adages, axioms, and proverbs. These sayings have originated from a number of different individuals, and you may agree with some of them and disagree with others. None of them come from the Bible, but after each of them I have added my own remarks of varying lengths, often using Biblical quotations. Included in the collection is some wry humor. The aphorisms were gathered at random, and I decided to leave them in that unsorted state. Thus, you will find some of this humor right before, or right after, a more serious item. Please consider that this is a result of the potpourri manner in which the material was gathered and written. Nevertheless, taken as a whole, it is my hope that this compilation will be a blessing and helpful to all who read it. Also, I cannot speak regarding the character of most of those quoted, and the use of an individual's saying is not a tacit endorsement of all that the person was or said. Please just consider the statements alone on their own merit or demerit. Now, the Last thing I have completed is the First part of this writing. If you wish to see the reason why I mention this here, skip immediately down to, and read item 50.

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01 -- "A TRUTH THAT'S TOLD WITH BAD INTENT, BEATS ALL THE LIES YOU CAN INVENT" (William Blake). Perhaps it was such harmful telling of truth that Solomon had in mind when he wrote: "He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends" (Prov. 17:9).

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02 -- "IT IS EASIER TO FIGHT FOR PRINCIPLES THAN TO LIVE UP TO THEM" (Alfred Adler). Liver trouble is often the problem -- concerning a principle: it's easier to preach-'er than to live-'er.

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03 -- "THERE IS NOT ANY MEMORY WITH LESS SATISFACTION THAN THE MEMORY OF SOME TEMPTATION WE RESISTED" (James Branch Cabell). Hebrews 12:4 says: -- "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin." The memory of all of the just is blessed (Prov. 10:7). But, no doubt the memory of all those mentioned in Revelation 12:11 shall be very greatly blessed, for they DID "RESIST UNTO BLOOD"! -- "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death."

* * *

04 -- "VIRTUE, THOUGH IN RAGS, WILL KEEP ME WARM" (John Dryden). And, "Vice, though in Royal Garb, is cold and cruel"! -- At this very time, we have some "Royalty" visiting our nation whom probably many consider more cold and cruel than warm, and more vicious than virtuous. They come from England. Nuff said.

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05 -- "LOVE THY NEIGHBOR AS THYSELF, BUT CHOOSE YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD" (Louise Beal). Good advice! One translation of 1 Cor. 15:33 has it thus: "Be not deceived: Evil companionships corrupt good morals" (ASV). Reminds me of the converted alcoholic in the horse-riding days. After his conversion, as by habit, when he rode into town he hitched his horse to the hitching-post outside the tavern -- and a wise, older Christian advised him to "Change His Hitching-Post"! "Evil companionships DO corrupt good morals. And, after Christ makes "all things new" inwardly, He expects that new Christian to outwardly create for himself (or herself) new environments and new companionships. Such must, on their own, "choose their neighborhood" and avoid evil company as much as is possible.

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06 -- "BIGOT: ONE WHO IS OBSTINATELY AND ZEALOUSLY ATTACHED TO AN OPINION THAT YOU DO NOT ENTERTAIN" (Ambrose Bierce). And, of course, all who agree with us are very unbiased and wise! How could it possibly be otherwise! ;o)

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07 -- "EGOISTS: PEOPLE OF LOW TASTE, MORE INTERESTED IN THEMSELVES THAN IN ME" (Ambrose Bierce). And, of course, I myself, could not possibly be narcissistic or conceited when enjoying the companionship of those flattering, kow-towing sycophants and apple-polishers who make over me, lavishing praise upon my deeds and hanging upon my every word!

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08 -- "MY OPINIONS MAY HAVE CHANGED, BUT NOT THE FACT THAT I AM RIGHT" (Ashleigh Brilliant). -- which is to say: -- "I was right when I believed differently, and I am right even though I now believe quite the opposite"! Such could never be the case -- but, one can be right at heart when and whether wrong in opinion or right in opinion. If that does not sound too flaky, I hope you get my drift.

* * *

09 -- "NO GOOD DEED GOES UNPUNISHED" (Clare Boothe Luce). Isn't this a satire on another saying: "No good deed goes unnoticed"? Regardless, Proverbs 17:26 says: -- "Also to punish the just is not good, nor to strike princes for equity" (KJV). "Also to punish the righteous is not good, Nor to smite the noble for their uprightness" (ASV). Oh! How much of such unjust punishment has been meted out on this earth. But Jesus warned: -- "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again" (Matt. 7:2).

* * *

10 -- "THE COVERS OF THIS BOOK ARE TOO FAR APART" (Ambrose Bierce). And such is the case when there is even one page with one word within the covers of that book that is unclean, unkind, or unnecessary! Then too, many study-books can appear to the mid-night-oil-burning student as having "covers too far apart"! Solomon wrote in the Ecclesiastes 12:12 -- "Of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh." My wife, Dorothea, is even now immersed in study from books, hoping to pass an upcoming exam, which if passed, will help her career. From her sounds and sighs while studying, I take it that "the covers are too far apart" on some of those books! ;o)

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11 -- "THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FICTION AND REALITY IS THAT FICTION HAS TO MAKE SENSE" (Tom Clancy). And that explains why so much that really happens seems "unreal" -- it just doesn't make sense! -- It IS, but it hadn't ought to be! -- But then, many folks are more interested these days in "Making Dollars" than they are in "Making Sense"!

* * *

12 -- "A MAN IS A CRITIC WHEN HE CANNOT BE AN ARTIST, IN THE SAME WAY THAT A MAN BECOMES AN INFORMER WHEN HE CANNOT BE A SOLDIER" (Gustave Flaubert). There may be many "Spectators" who can't "Speck Taters" -- but they can sure see the "speck" in the "tater" you missed! All of this is quite related to the subject of Luke 6:42 -- "Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye."

* * *

13 -- "LET'S HAVE SOME NEW CLICHES" (Samuel Goldwyn). All right -- How about this: "Old Hash" is better than "New Trash"! -- maybe that could become a "tired, old adage." If millions of entertainment-hungry Americans expressed their desire truthfully, it could be expressed thus: -- "Let's have some New Trash"!

* * *

14 -- "ALL WHO WOULD WIN JOY, MUST SHARE IT; HAPPINESS WAS BORN A TWIN" (Lord Byron). But, one must not be jealous of the joy brought to others. The first mention of joy in our KJV Bible is in 1 Samuel 18:6 -- "And it came to pass as they came, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women came out of all cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of musick." Saul COULD have shared in that JOY, but instead it made him JEALOUS. Too many today find joy in the misery of others! Proverbs 24:17 instructs: -- "Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth." David wept over the fall of Saul, but Saul's spirit was one that could have rejoiced over the fall of David!

* * *

15 -- "EXPECT EVERYTHING, AND ANYTHING SEEMS NOTHING. EXPECT NOTHING, AND ANYTHING SEEMS EVERYTHING" (Samuel Hazo). This aphorism fits with Psalm 37:16 -- "A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked." -- and with Proverbs 16:8 -- "Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues without right."

* * *

16 -- "BUREAUCRACY IS A GIANT MECHANISM OPERATED BY PYGMIES" (Honore de Balzac). And, I might add, the greater the bureaucracy grows, the smaller become the pigmies! Reminds me of the joke about why one should never loan money to a leprechaun (a dwarf): -- They're always a little short! Seems like the Bureaucratic Democrats are "always a little short" of taxpayer money and need more; and the Bureaucratic Republicans are "always a little short" of getting done what they promised their constituency they would do when elected!

Yup! There's pigmies running the bureaucratic mechanism, like a bunch of Santa's Elves fixing to take all you've got to give all they want to the freeloaders in our country!

* * *

17 -- "ACCUSE: TO AFFIRM ANOTHER'S GUILT OR UNWORTH; MOST COMMONLY AS A JUSTIFICATION OF OURSELVES FOR HAVING WRONGED THEM" (Ambrose Bierce). My! My! How this sounds like what's going on in Washington D.C. today, November 1, 2005! In Romans 2:21, the apostle Paul had a message relative to this maxim: -- "Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?" There is one whale of a lot of "finger-pointing" going on in D.C.! -- and, probably many of those accusing others the loudest are the most guilty of the very thing with which they charge others!

* * *

18 -- "AN HONEST POLITICIAN IS ONE WHO, WHEN HE IS BOUGHT, WILL STAY BOUGHT" (Simon Cameron). Sadly, this may be about as much honesty as can be expected now-a-days from politicians -- when they promise their money-backing, interest groups that they will lie, distort the facts, prevaricate and equivocate in order to push through their agenda, they will "honestly" keep their word to do such! Quite different from the attitude of Abe Lincoln, who when he was a lawyer, would not take the case of a man whom he believed to be guilty!

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19 -- "THE PROBLEM WITH POLITICAL JOKES IS THEY GET ELECTED" (Henry Cate). Indeed! increasingly so in America -- but 'tain't funny, McGee, what they are doing to our nation! THAT is no joking matter! Reminds me of the story I heard Barry Goldwater tell at a political rally in the Quad-Cities (Davenport, Iowa -- Rock Island, Moline, E. Moline, Illinois) years ago when he was running for President. When grandpa and grandma left the visiting grandchildren at home one day and went to town, the grandchildren tore the "Grandfather Clock" apart and put it back together wrong. When they came home and went to bed, the clock began to strike -- and after it struck 12, it struck 13, 14, 15, etc. Grandma turned to Grandpa and said, "What time is it, Pa?" He replied, "I don't know, Ma -- but it's never been THIS LATE BEFORE!" Well, Goldwater didn't get elected, but since then a lot of "Political Jokes" HAVE BEEN elected, and re-elected -- and "IT'S NEVER BEEN THIS LATE BEFORE!"

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20 -- "LIFE IS NOT LOST BY DYING; LIFE IS LOST MINUTE BY MINUTE, DAY BY DRAGGING DAY, IN ALL THE THOUSAND SMALL UNCARING WAYS" (Stephen Vincent Benet).

The Songwriter put it thus:

"Work, for the night is coming,

Work through the sunny noon.
Fill brightest hours with labor;
Rest comes sure and soon.
GIVE EVERY FLYING MINUTE
SOMETHING TO HOLD IN STORE.
Work, for the night is coming,
When man works no more."

The Poet put it thus:

"When as a child I laughed and wept, time crept.
When as a youth I dreamed and talked, time walked.
When I became a full-grown man, time ran.
And later as I older grew, time flew.
Soon I shall find while traveling on, time gone."

The Scripture-writer put it: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest" (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

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21 -- "A FANATIC IS ONE WHO CANNOT CHANGE HIS MIND AND WHO WILL NOT CHANGE THE SUBJECT" (Winston Churchill). Well, there certainly ARE millions of sports fan(atic)s in America today who cannot change their minds about who's best a what, and who will not change the subject to anything serious! The air-waves are filled with sport-shows that talk, talk, talk, 24-7-365 about nothing else! Talk about fanatics! Never on earth, were Christians any more fanatic about Jesus than today's sports fanatics! Many of them know little or nothing about the Bible, and have no desire to know, but they can quote statistics about sports better than many professed Christians can quote from that Bible! They think Christians should "change the subject" when, in fact, it is THEY who should do so -- but who will not!

* * *

22 -- "TO BE PREPARED AGAINST SURPRISE IS TO BE TRAINED. TO BE PREPARED FOR SURPRISE IS TO BE EDUCATED" (James Carse). Well, I think this would be better put to say: -- "To be prepared for surprise is to be experienced" -- not simply educated. Most of life's surprises come AFTER one is "educated" in some school. Then it is, that we are surprised to learn that some of what we learned when getting "educated" in school just does not work in the real world!

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23 -- "ANYTHING WE DO IN LIFE MAY BE PRAISED BY A FEW, CRITICIZED BY MORE, AND IGNORED BY MOST" (Duane V. Maxey). Here in Phoenix, much has been written and said about one Pat Tillman -- a professional football player who turned down a very

lucrative contract, and left the sport to serve in the Armed Forces -- and who was killed in Afghanistan a year or so ago. Since then, he has been "the talk of the town" -- it's "Pat Tillman this, Pat Tillman that, Pat Tillman, something else" -- over and over again. While I have no desire to denigrate any real sacrifice the man made, I confess that I have felt that too much has been made of this man Tillman. But there is another Tillman I would mention here. Most in the world have probably ignored what he did for Jesus, or have never heard about him. Probably even most Christians who sing the song he wrote don't know his name: -- Charles Tillman. The chorus of his song reads thus:

"Ready to go, ready to stay,
Ready my place to fill;
Ready for service, lowly or great,
Ready to do His will."

Ignored or unknown by most -- he probably never was the "talk of the town" -- but I dare say that it is likely that Charles Tillman's service -- though more "lowly" -- was far greater in God's eyes than that of "the talk of THIS town" -- and THAT'S WHAT MATTERS MOST!

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24 -- "INCOMPATIBILITY: IN MATRIMONY A SIMILARITY OF TASTES, PARTICULARLY THE TASTE FOR DOMINATION" (Ambrose Bierce). When both partners in a marriage have a "taste for domination" -- and the Irresistible Force meets the Immovable Object, there is bound to be an "IMMEASURABLE EXPLOSION"! -- sometimes ending in divorce on the grounds of "Incompatibility"!

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25 -- "WOMEN LIKE SILENT MEN. THEY THINK THEY'RE LISTENING" (Marcel Archard). Aw, c'mon now, Marcel, "Fess-Up"! That's precisely why many men like silent women -- that they think are listening to them! After being praised and having a College or University dormitory named after him at a special ceremony, a proud and portly man was riding home in their car with his wife, and he patted his bulging stomach and said, "You know dear, there aren't many great men left in the world these days." -- to which she replied, "You are right -- in fact there is one less than you think!"

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26 -- "A DIPLOMAT IS A MAN WHO ALWAYS REMEMBERS A WOMAN'S BIRTHDAY BUT NEVER HER AGE" (Robert Frost). A "floor-mat" is a man who always remembers his wife's age, but never her birthday! -- and a Laundromat is where he goes to get his clothes washed after she leaves him! ;o)

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27 -- "SOME GIVERS ARE LIKE GEESE: THEY ONLY GIVE "DOWN" -- TO EARTHLY CAUSES -- AND NEVER GIVE UPWARDLY TO THE CAUSE OF GOD" (Duane V. Maxey). But, someday, "all the gold in California, that's in a bank in the middle of Beverly Hills in somebody else's name" -- along with all of earth's wealth, IS going to fly away, back into the exclusive possession of its REAL OWNER -- GOD! Proverbs 23:5 says: -- "Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven."

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28 -- "INTERESTINGLY, ACCORDING TO MODERN ASTRONOMERS, SPACE IS FINITE. THIS IS A VERY COMFORTING THOUGHT -- PARTICULARLY FOR PEOPLE WHO CAN NEVER REMEMBER WHERE THEY HAVE LEFT THINGS" (W. A.). "They've GOT to be here somewhere! They COULDN'T have just gotten up and walked away!" "What, dear?" "My glasses!" "YOU'RE WEARING THEM, DEAR!" Reminds me of the deaf fellow to whom the delivery-man said, "Your order's here." "How's that? son?" "I said your order's here!" "WELL SURE, MY GARTERS ARE NEAR! -- I'M A WEARIN' 'EM!" ;o)

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29 -- "GIVE ME A LEVER LONG ENOUGH, AND A PROP STRONG ENOUGH, AND I CAN SINGLE-HANDEDLY MOVE THE WORLD" (Archimedes). Give me a composition long enough, and a computer dictionary vast enough, and I can single-mindedly, with a limited vocabulary, tell you what I think! -- And all the people said, "Please Don't!" ;o)

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30 -- "TRUTH COMES OUT OF ERROR MORE EASILY THAN OUT OF CONFUSION" (Francis Bacon). So THAT'S WHY the devil's great city is called "Babylon the Great"! -- CONFUSION has been, and still is, what Satan is building. Babylon = The City of Confusion! But Christ is going to forever flatten that city when He Returns: -- and then it shall be seen by all that "The City Of Confusion is BROKEN DOWN" (Isaiah 24:10) -- never to be rebuilt!

* * *

31 -- "IT IS NOT NECESSARY TO UNDERSTAND THINGS IN ORDER TO ARGUE ABOUT THEM" (Pierre Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais). So THAT'S WHY so many folks are anxious to debate! You don't HAVE TO KNOW WHAT YOUR TALKING ABOUT! Thus, anyone can argue about anything! Yes, that's right, if they can speak a word. Nevertheless, "How forcible are right words! but what doth your arguing reprove?" (Job 6:25).

* * *

32 -- "THE OPPOSITE OF A PROFOUND TRUTH MAY WELL BE ANOTHER PROFOUND TRUTH" (Niels Bohr). An example of such by the Biblical writer of aphorisms, Solomon:

"ANSWER NOT A FOOL according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him" (Prov. 26:4).

"ANSWER A FOOL according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit" (Prov. 26:5).

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33 -- "RESEARCH IS WHAT I'M DOING WHEN I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'M DOING" (Werner von Braun). However, "Refusing Advice" is what many folks "are doing when they don't know what they're doing"! The Book of Proverbs has a couplet, the first of which is related to this: "Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him" (Prov. 26:12).

"Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? there is more hope of a fool than of him" (Prov. 29:20). -- Solomon

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34 -- "TO SAVE YOUR WORLD YOU ASKED THIS MAN TO DIE; WOULD THIS MAN, COULD HE SEE YOU NOW, ASK WHY?" (W. H. Auden: "Epitaph for an Unknown Soldier"). I have long published the following story on the HDM discs in the 2700-plus Illustrations collection:

During the Vietnam War, a young West Point graduate was sent to lead a company of new recruits. One night he and his men were overrun by the Viet Cong. During the ensuing battle, the young lieutenant was able to get all his men to safety -- except one. The soldier who was left behind was badly wounded. From their trenches, the rest of the company could hear their comrade moaning and calling for help. To climb out of the trench to attempt a rescue would have meant almost certain death. Eventually the young lieutenant could endure the wounded man's crying no longer. He crawled out and stealthily made his way toward the wounded soldier. Finally reaching him, he pulled him back to the trench. But just as he pushed the wounded man over the side of the trench, a bullet ripped through the lieutenant's back, killing him instantly.

Several months later, the rescued man returned to the States. When the dead hero's parents learned this man was in the vicinity, they planned to have him to dinner. They wanted to know this young man whose life was spared at such a great cost to them. On the evening of their dinner party, the honored guest arrived late. He was drunk. He was loud and obnoxious. He told off-color jokes, seasoned his language with profanity, and showed no concern for his hosts' feelings. The lieutenant's parents did what they could to redeem the evening, but to no avail. At the end of the ordeal, the husband ushered the obscene visitor to the door. As he bid the guest goodnight and closed the door, his wife collapsed in tears, crying, "To think that our precious son had to die for somebody like that!" -- Anthony Campolo

Paul's prayer, recorded in Colossians 1:10 speaks to the subject here: "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God."

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35 -- "ALLIANCE: IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS, THE UNION OF TWO THIEVES WHO HAVE THEIR HANDS SO DEEPLY INSERTED INTO EACH OTHERS' POCKETS THAT THEY CANNOT SEPARATELY PLUNDER A THIRD" (Ambrose Bierce). This sounds very much like the recent past "Oil-For-Food Scandal" involving the United Nations and France -- both determined that Saddam Hussein's wealth in Iraq would not be "plundered" through His overthrow by U.S. invasion! -- an example of International Politics AT ITS WORST!

* * *

36 -- "IT ISN'T WHAT PEOPLE DON'T KNOW THAT'S THE PROBLEM -- IT'S WHAT THEY KNOW FOR SURE THAT JUST ISN'T SO!" (Will Rogers). One of the pit-falls of those who truly come "to know the Lord" is: -- gradually to begin to think they also know more about how things ought to be run in the Church than others! They begin to "know for sure" that the Lord told them that THIS was the way things ought to go and THAT which is suggested by others is all wrong! I verily believe that this happens to some very good, and very sanctified leaders! It is one thing to grow wiser as one grows older -- it's quite another to become rigidly fixed in the notion that your opinions are the only right ones. Ecclesiastes 4:13 says: -- "Better is a poor and a wise child than an old and foolish king, who will no more be admonished." Someone very close to a revered Church Leader once told me: -- "You can't (or couldn't) tell him anything." It is possible for even a sanctified leader to "Think that he doeth God service" (John 16:2), but to actually do God a disservice by his rigid insistence upon the things that "he knows for sure that just aren't SO."

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37 -- "WE ARE GOING TO HAVE PEACE EVEN IF WE HAVE TO FIGHT FOR IT" (Dwight D. Eisenhower). In one sense, peace, even spiritual peace, must be fought for -- but in another sense, carnally fighting to have peace by the surrender of all others to your own will is the ultimate contradiction of God's Word on the matter. I read an humorous story about a man who said he was "running to break up a fight." "Who's the fight between?" asked an observer. "Me and another fellow," answered the man as he ran away from that fight. Ecclesiastes 3:8 says that there is "A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace." Too many run from fights they should fight, and fight fights from which they should run away.

* * *

38 -- "ALL VIOLENCE, ALL THAT IS DREARY AND REPELS, IS NOT POWER, BUT THE ABSENCE OF POWER" (Ralph Waldo Emerson). Yes, violence, dreariness, and

repulsiveness are sometimes the result of "the absence of power" -- particularly, we might say, "THE ABSENCE OF GOD'S HOLY POWER"! Too often the Church is sniveling about the awful state of things, when, in fact, it is not the LACK OF HOLY POWER in Heaven to change things for the better, but the ABSENCE of that power from the midst of those who should be leading the charge forward into the ranks of the enemy. The devil is emboldened by "the absence of Holy Power" in the Church, but flees when he is attacked by those who are filled with power "after that the Holy Ghost has come upon them."

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39 -- "THEY THAT CAN GIVE UP ESSENTIAL LIBERTY TO OBTAIN A LITTLE TEMPORARY SAFETY DESERVE NEITHER LIBERTY NOR SAFETY" (Benjamin Franklin). Oh, how much those who want to appease the Islamic Terrorists in the world need to take this to heart. One noble, American Statesman of by-gone days said: -- "Millions for defense! but not one cent for tribute!" And, Patrick Henry, in his eloquent speech said: -- Is life so dear, or peace so sweet as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take, but as for me -- GIVE ME LIBERTY, OR GIVE ME DEATH!" This same aphorism applies in the spiritual realm.

* * *

40 -- "A PEOPLE THAT VALUES ITS PRIVILEGES ABOVE ITS PRINCIPLES SOON LOSES BOTH" (President Dwight David Eisenhower). I think this may have been in one of Eisenhower's Inaugural Addresses or perhaps in his Farewell Address. I think also that his words may have been an ominous prophecy of what may soon happen to this nation.

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41 -- "THE WISE LEARN MANY THINGS FROM THEIR ENEMIES" (Aristophanes). Proverbs 27:6 declares: "Faithful are the wounds of a friend." It is seldom that men will learn from the wounds of a friend, and even more seldom that men will learn from the criticisms and attacks of their enemies. But, many wise Pastors or Church Leaders have become the better by considering, and learning from even the bitter attacks of their enemies. I wonder -- how much wiser might every Christian be if this aphorism was taken to heart and put into practice.

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42 -- "IT IS UNBECOMING FOR YOUNG MEN TO UTTER MAXIMS" (Aristotle). Boy-wonder preachers who utter wise sayings beyond their years may impress the easily impressed -- but, unlike the boy Jesus, these Pulpit-Prodigies are generally only parroting and emulating what they have heard older, and wiser preachers say. There is a weightiness and freightiness in preaching and teaching that comes only through "The School of Hard Knocks" and the trials and tests of decades. One of my lingering regrets involves a time when, as a green, young pastor, I "piped up" to a dear old couple in my Church, when I should have "piped down" and remained silent. I parroted what I was taught in Bible School, but Time soon taught me a lesson about how wrong I was! One should listen more closely to the most tongue-tied old saint

of God who has "been down the road" for long years, than to the most gifted Child-Prodigy-Pulpiteer or Green-Horn Graduate out of a Bible School, College, or Seminary.

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43 -- "I CANNOT SPEAK WELL ENOUGH TO BE UNINTELLIGIBLE" (Jane Austen). Ah! too bad politicians don't have the same inability! Ah! too bad some long-winded, would-be expositors of the Scriptures aren't blessed by this same inability -- whose expository droning is unintelligible, not because it is deep-water spiritually, but merely because it is "muddy" and "murky" water that leaves the whole congregation wondering what was said! The great apostle Paul wrote in 1 Cor. 14:9 -- "So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air." Yet, even Peter had a hard time understanding Paul: -- "... even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood." (2 Peter 3:15-16). One reason why the writings of Samuel Logan Brengle are so much loved and appreciated is that he studied to be easily understood by the words he used in his books.

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44 -- "IT'S BETTER TO KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT AND GIVE THE IMPRESSION THAT YOU'RE STUPID THAN TO OPEN IT AND REMOVE ALL DOUBT" (Rami Belson). Ecclesiastes 3:7 says that there is "A time to keep silence, and a time to speak." I have read that "Silence is not always golden -- sometimes it is just plain yellow!" There IS a time to speak, even if you do feel like a fumbling, bumbling stutterer instead of an eloquent utterer! And, there is a time when some who think they know it all, but don't, remove all doubt about their ignorance by their loquacious and loud-mouthed utterances. Too often, those on both sides of this equation fail to do what should be done -- by their speaking, or by their silence.

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45 -- "THERE IS NOTHING SO EASY BUT THAT IT BECOMES DIFFICULT WHEN YOU DO IT RELUCTANTLY" (Publius Terentius Afer). This principle applies to Christian giving. 2 Cor. 9:7 instructs: -- "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver." It's hard to give to God's cause when you do not want to do so, and when you feel forced to give out of necessity. God loves those who do it easily, and cheerfully, because they want to do it!

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46 -- "THE MORE I WANT TO GET SOMETHING DONE, THE LESS I CALL IT WORK" (Richard Bach). This aphorism is similar in nature to the one above. About Boaz, Naomi told Ruth: -- "Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall: for THE MAN WILL NOT BE IN REST, UNTIL HE HAVE FINISHED THE THING this day" (Ruth

3:18). Give a man something that he wants to do, and something that he wants to get done, and its hard to drag him FROM work, not TO work" -- and it is his pleasure, not merely a job.

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47 -- "HE THAT WOULD PERFECT HIS WORK MUST FIRST SHARPEN HIS TOOLS" (Confucius). I would in no way lend credence to Confucius as a genuine bearer of God's light, but there IS truth in this maxim. And, it does correspond with what Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes 10:10 -- "If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength: but wisdom is profitable to direct." God's "Whetstone" is God-given, God directed "Wisdom". And, the first ways in which this sharpening wisdom comes are by the New Birth and Baptism of the Holy Ghost. Additional sharpening DOES come also through the reading and study of God's Word, but often the final "Edge" can only be placed on God's Instrument by the Grindstone of rough experience turning round and round for years.

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48 -- "WHO BEGINS TOO MUCH ACCOMPLISHES LITTLE" (German proverb). Ecclesiastes 7:8 says: -- "Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof: and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit." Some people begin many things that they never finish. When a person has too many projects begun at the same time, it is easy to lose focus or become discouraged with the heap of unfinished tasks at hand. In such a case, probably most of the time it is better to begin less, but finish all -- in due time. Jesus stressed the importance of planning ahead and being sure that you can finish before you start a thing when He said in Luke 14:28-30 -- "For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish."

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49 -- "TO KNOW THE ROAD AHEAD, ASK THOSE COMING BACK" (Chinese proverb). In the spiritual realm, this proverb is completely backward! For the Christian, when it is necessary to know the road ahead, it is never wise to ask those who are coming back! Luke 9:51 tells us of Jesus: "And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem." He is, as it were, "the forerunner" who has finished the road from earth into the New Jerusalem. "To know the road ahead," when necessary -- ASK HIM WHO STEADFASTLY WENT DOWN THE ENTIRE ROAD, NEVER TURNING BACK. He knows every step of the way. He will always answer the following prayer by a faithful traveler to the City: -- "Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies" (Psalm 27:11).

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50 -- "THE LAST THING ONE DISCOVERS IN WRITING A BOOK IS WHAT TO PUT FIRST" (Blaise Pascal; Penses). How often this is true! Some hours ago, shortly after I

began putting together and writing this compilation of maxims and aphorisms, I wrote a tentative Introduction at the first of it. Now that I have reached the end, I must go back and rewrite the beginning, for it has taken on a somewhat different character. This has often been the case in my writings -- "the last thing," or one of the last things written being a revised Introduction. Have you had the same experience?

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THE END