

## Thought for the Week

### *Midnight Meditations in ICU*

*IT STARTED BY* my shoveling snow. I knew I shouldn't be doing it. Because of my heart disease, a kind and dutiful doctor friend had warned me. Nevertheless, it seems as though those laws that are given for our own best good are the ones we transgress far too easily. In spiritual terms we call it sin.

Halfway through my snow-shoveling task I felt as though giant hands were grabbing hold of my chest with unbelievable force. Gasping for breath, I barely managed to get inside the house before everything went black. A doctor gave me injections. The ambulance took me away. Before I knew it, I was lying in the Intensive Care Unit. Here definite laws governed. Efficiency and cleanliness prevailed. Personal attention, thoughtful care, and love were given priority. These life-savers, these marvelous servants of mercy, moved quietly and efficiently. I felt a hand on my shoulder; I got a comforting word. Fear was banished and replaced by knowing that I was in safe hands.

Here I was in an ICU bed, decidedly a physical "sinner". I had been shoveling snow contrary to my doctor's orders, and now I was reaping the full consequence of my disobedience. It would have been quite natural to expect words of condemnation. But I didn't experience a single negative syllable from those who were doing their best to save my life.

In the hospital the primary concern is to save life. Isn't that also what ought to be the all-prevailing interest of the church? Why do so many sinners in the church—those who in one way or another have gone contrary to the will of God—feel condemned, even rejected? What makes it so hard to come back if one has failed? Could it be we are lacking in love?

Now I am home, trying to apply the lessons gained from this experience. Every church member is in need of a private intensive care unit. I like to remember that Jesus calls us to give time, sympathy, and understanding care in service to others. Saving lives is still the primary thing.

The words that were left with me as I left the hospital were uttered firmly and decidedly, but with a sympathetic smile by the doctor in charge. In their practical simplicity, they reminded me of the words of Jesus to the sinner: "Now, go home, but shovel snow no more."

*Do you hear the Savior saying something similar to you? Isn't it about time to go home?*

Taken from the book, *Fit For Ever*