



Mathematische Strömungslehre (in German, 1928)

With two boxes of dust-laden books removed from the shelves and ready for delivery to the local landfill; with titles reordered and better organized; with shelves freshly vacuumed and polished, and space now allocated for new arrivals—with the chaff removed and the remaining wheat neatly organized, I was ready for a new year.

And it dawns on me that the same process needs to be applied not just to the library, to the room in which I work, but to my life in general. What in my life is cluttering up the place, and is no longer needed? What is there that has been misplaced, and should be moved? What is there that should be allocated more room? And what is there that should be summarily removed to the county dump?



IT WAS TIME TO CLEAN OUT, REARRANGE, REALLOCATE and reorganize the library shelves. World History required more room, and War History needed to be moved. A few Political Biographies had been erroneously shelved in American History, and my immediate Reference books needed to be moved across the room. Meanwhile a large number of books needed to be summarily discarded. These included such noteworthy titles as

Business Executive's Handbook (1939)

California, Oregon & Washington

Country Inns, Lodges & Historic Hotels
(1988)

Advanced Golf (1908)

Caesar's Gallic War (in Latin)

*Social Policies for America in the
Seventies: Nine Divergent Views* (1968)

Reflections
by the Pond

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Repentance is no fun at all. It is something harder than merely eating humble pie. It means un-learning the self-conceit and self-will that we have been training ourselves into for thousands of years.

C. S. Lewis

"Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord God, "It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for My holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you went. I will vindicate the holiness of My great name which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord," declares the Lord God, "when I prove Myself holy among you in their sight. For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land. Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances. You will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God.'"

Ezekiel 36:22-28

While everyone else around this time of year vows to lose weight, go jogging every morning, make more money, finally whip that storage closet into shape, or just be a better person in general, the believer should be taking stock of his or her spiritual life—which is, in fact, the *entirety* of life. For followers of Christ, there is no bright line demarcating the spiritual from the temporal. We are now spiritual beings; our relationship with God, through Christ, by means of the Holy Spirit is a 24/7, minute-by-minute thing that does not cease on Sunday morning when the preacher closes with "Amen."

And, of course, we need not wait for the calendar page to turn from December to January. We need not wait for a new year to take stock of the condition of our end of this relationship. There is never a bad time to winnow the chaff from our life.



There are books on my shelves that were acquired decades ago, for reasons since lost in the fog of time, that now are an ill fit. Perhaps they represent philosophies that were at home in my more rebellious youth. Perhaps they contain thoughts and positions that I

rejected, or grew out of, years ago. Old books can be like rediscovered love notes from old girlfriends; once they were precious, but now only embarrassing—and harmful to one's marital well-being.

Just so the thoughts and philosophies that once populated the shelves of our minds. We long ago forgot about them, but on odd occasions they reveal themselves, pushing belligerently to the front of our thoughts. Through disuse we thought we were rid of them, but had never really packaged them up and removed them to the county dump.

O You who hear prayer,
To You all men come.
Iniquities prevail against me;
As for our transgressions, You forgive them.
How blessed is the one whom You choose
and bring near to You
To dwell in Your courts.
We will be satisfied with the goodness of
Your house,
Your holy temple.

Psalms 65:2-4

These obsolete philosophies now have no place in a life containing Jesus. They are more than a distraction: they carry the seed of cancer, the germ of corruption.

No matter the calendar page, it is always a good time to root out and discard anything that might entice us off the righteous path. And when we do, we make new room for that which builds up and sustains what we are now.

Behold, You desire truth in the innermost being,
And in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom.
Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
Make me to hear joy and gladness,
Let the bones which You have broken rejoice.
Hide Your face from my sins
And blot out all my iniquities.
Create in me a clean heart, O God,
And renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Psalms 51:6-10

