

Throw Away Old Junk--Guilts, Fears

By JAMIE BUCKINGHAM

The saddest day of the year was always the day that Daddy threw away the Christmas tree. All five of the children would fall in line behind him (much like a funeral procession) as he carried the tree out to the back yard and burned it.

Then back to the house for the yearly ritual of putting the decorations back in their boxes and into the attic.

Mother always used this time for her annual housecleaning. The children were home from school so we washed windows, waxed floors, and sorted through all our junk to decide what

to keep and what to throw away.

NEW YEAR'S is a good time to do some spiritual house cleaning also. A short while ago the story appeared of a man who made a life-long practice of collecting junk and putting it in his attic.

Everyplace he went he picked up assorted odds and ends and put them in his attic. Then, the day he died, guess what happened. His house caved in. Too much junk in the attic.

The same thing is true of the spiritual houses we live in. If we never take time for a spiritual housecleaning then we are due for an

emotional or physical breakdown. If all we do is fill our attic with junk and never clean it out — then watch out.

THE BODY and mind simply cannot stand up under the weight of too much junk. The walls of our bodies, made up of the muscular system, and the walls of our mind, made up of the nervous system, will grow weak under the weight of accumulated junk and suddenly we'll find ourselves flat on our back. Or climbing the walls. And our hospital chart will state — "Fatigue."

I remember visiting a

man in the hospital who was lying on his back. He was so tense that it seemed that only his heels and back of his head were touching the mattress. He had too much junk in his attic and had collapsed.

My neighbor in South Carolina called in an old junk man to clean out his attic. He told the man he could have everything he could haul away in his hand cart. After an hour or so of sorting through the stuff the junk man started to leave — empty handed. Opening the door my neighbor shouted, "Hey, how come you're going away empty handed?" The old man answered, "Mistur, thar ain't no thing thar

worth totin' off."

THERE ARE some things just not worth saving. My grandmother was a Lowden before she married. Her father has been a Scottish minister. She inherited many of his traits. She saved everything. When she died the family sorted through her belongings in the big house in Morristown, Ind.

It was obvious that she never threw anything away. My dad still talks about finding a small brown envelope with a short piece of string in it. The envelope was labeled, "String — too short to use." Year's end is a good time to take spiritual inventory. It's a good time to look into

your spiritual attic and throw away all the old junk — fears, guilts, anxieties and sins that have accumulated over the past year.

A grudge will destroy you a thousand times faster than it will hurt the one that you hold the grudge against. It's not worth it to harbor resentment, or bitterness, or hatred. This is the kind of junk that kills. Not someone else — but you.

The Apostle Paul has some good advice for the year's end. He said, 'but I am bringing all my energies to bear on this one thing' forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead . . . ' That's pretty good psychological advice. So before you break down — let's have a spiritual housecleaning.