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MISSIONARY REVIVALIST SELECTIONS

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THE TASK AWAITS US
J. E. Cook

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor devise, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." Ecclesiastes 9:10

The old year is passed. The watch-night service was a time of heart searching. Gratitude and praise filled our hearts because of God's wonderful grace, yet a tinge of remorse remained because we had done so little for Jesus and I-Its cause. Taking inventory of the year just passed, why were our accomplishments for the Lord so few?

Deferring to a more opportune time has left many short-handed. Intentions were good but they never became realities because the time was not right. Many remain in sin by continually "putting it off." Offerings were never given because we were waiting until we could do something really big for the Lord. Another church might have been organized if we had just begun to do something about it. The pledge was never paid; we were planning to pay it all at once later. "Now is the accepted time; today is the day of salvation." "Say not ye, there are four months and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. Don't put it off; do it now; do it with thy might.

Disappointments in life are factors in diminishing zeal. These lead to discouragement and this to defeat, with the resulting decision not to try again. Elijah's juniper tree experience in part, at least, was the result of his solitary stand on Mt. Carmel. Sure there were seven thousand who had not bowed their knee to Baal but none of them came out to stand with the old Prophet. What an opportunity to show their colors and what a disappointment because they didn't. With such unappreciation for one's noble efforts the natural sequence is to indulge in self-pity. And then the

temptation is to feel that even the Lord has let us down. Next comes the martyr's complex and the justification of failures because no one ever faced what we faced or carried what we carry.

I recall the story of the man who felt his need was a lighter load to carry. All the people brought their burdens and laid them on the altar. He placed his sack along side the others then after looking over all the other sacks and measuring their size, he decided to pick up his own again and carry it back home. "Grow not weary in well doing for in due season ye shall reap if ye faint not."

Devaluation of one's own opportunities and an over-emphasis of the opportunities of others can be a definite hindrance to progress. The feeling that "the grass is greener on the other side of the fence," usually turns out to be a mental mirage. How many churches have been hindered and sometimes defeated because the pastor thought he saw an easier field; only to find when he arrived there that the problems were as great or even greater. This can become a chain reaction until a minister can spend his life looking for the utopia and leave behind him a string of discouraged and disillusioned people. I once knew some good singers who seldom sang for the home church because they said they could sing better for outside groups even though many times they were worldly groups. But they made no contribution to the home church. Laymen sometime find it hard to settle down and be faithful because they are looking for a place that doesn't require much of them or because the opportunities are greater elsewhere. McGuffey's Reader records the story of one Peter Johnson who started out to trade his boots because they hurt his feet. He found a fellow who had the very shoes he thought he needed. He made the trade and went on his way rejoicing only to find the shoes he traded for began to pinch his feet. But he found a second fellow who had on a pair of shoes that he just knew was what he was looking for. After some bartering he made the trade by paying extra but felt it was worth it because he had at last found what he had been looking for. But after he had walked some distance he discovered they were too short and hurt his feet.

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EDITORIAL

By Spencer Johnson

THE URGENCY OF HOLINESS

"So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." (Psalm 90:12)

The last golden rim of the sun pulls the blanket of earth over its head, while high over head the fleecy clouds glow as the crimson rays leave their parting "Good night " there. Slowly the red of the skies fades into pink and then purple until the faint afterglow that wreathes the horizon sinks into night. Thomas Gray expressed it: "The curfew tolls the knell of parting day, the lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea. The plowman homeward plods his weary way, and leaves the world to darkness and to me." Thus closes another day of our lives and another year with its tears and triumphs, battles and victories, opportunities, responsibilities, successes and failures has come and gone. The record of the past is indelibly written in the annals of heaven to be opened and read at the final judgment day.

What we do in this world we must do quickly, for we are but creatures of a day. Too many are planning as if life were to last forever here. Oblivious are they to the fact that the black blade of death, each day, mows his swath of humanity, and of the mute testimony of the rain washed tombstones in countless cemeteries. The Bible is replete with evidence that life is passing more swiftly than most people realize. Job declared, "My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle." (Job 7:6), "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble." (Job 14:1); "Our days upon earth are a shadow." (Job 8:9); "My days are swifter than a post: they are passed away as the swift ships: as the eagle that hasteth to the prey." (Job 9:25-26) "As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more." (Psalms 103:15-16).

Life is so short it is said to be only a hand breadth. (Psalms 39:5) Life is as brief as the color in the autumn leaves, the crimson of the sunset, the farewell of loved ones. Life is swifter than the flight of wild birds before the winter's chilling blast, none can bid it stay.

All who are away from Christ should make no delay but flee to Him as desperately as ever did the slayer to the city of refuge; fly to Him more quickly than sparrows fly to the eaves of the roof in hours of storm. All who have not been sanctified, made complete in Christ, should follow holiness without which no man shall see the Lord, more determinedly than ever hound did chase a fox, until they lay hold of it and win the prize of a clean heart, through Jesus' blood. Thomas Scott expressed it: "Hasten, sinner, to return! Stay not for tomorrow's sun, lest thy lamp should cease to burn ere salvation's work is done. Hasten, sinner, to be blest! Stay not for tomorrow's sun lest perdition thee arrest ere tomorrow is begun."

Our hearts are saddened by the mistakes and failures of the past. There is also a sorrow felt over the departing years as we contemplate the losses that we have sustained during that time. They are many and vary from mere disappointment in plan and labor to the going out from us and our lives of those whom we would gladly have bound to us with changeless ties of friendship, affection and association forever. These experiences not only refer to bereavement, the empty room, the vacant chair in our midst, the gap in the home circle, to which it seems we can never grow accustomed; but to the loss of those who were once warm friends and loved us, and then grew cold, fell away and became either indifferent or open enemies.

David suffered this pang in connection with Ahithophel. Samuel appeared to bear a lifetime affliction over the heart defection and life and character fall of Saul. The Lord had to question him once, as if to arouse him from his grief, "How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him?"

It matters not how we lose our friends, whether they or their own will leave us; or are stolen from us by lying lips; or go back to the world and into sin and forsake us; or because of our loyalty to Christ they give up our company and walk no more with us. Yet the pain of the loss is felt, and memory abides, and the old love will not die.

So the ending of the year to the thoughtful mind, and to the soul possessed with any measure of sensibility is a time and experience not to be taken lightly, but as a very precious, sacred and

solemn thing. It is as if one stood beside a ship which was about to sail away with his treasures and friends and loved ones whom he would likely never see again.

The old year is gone and its books are closed but, please God, the next one shall be far better in every respect than its predecessors. The Saviour being our helper, the New Year shall find us enduring patiently, suffering joyously, praying more, working harder, and living closer to Heaven than any other time we have ever known. How diligently we who are sanctified should serve Him! Let no opportunity pass to witness for Him, for the time draws ever nearer when the voice shall be silenced in death. We must ever urge upon those who are unsanctified the blessed privileges and responsibility to secure a clean heart through the merits of the blood of Jesus Christ. Hands and feet should ever be quick to do His bidding, for soon they shall move no more until the resurrection morn. The Apostle Paul wisely admonished, "Redeeming the time because the days are evil." May God deliver us from the curse of wasted years while facing life's setting sun. We dare not slack because of the rush of the day or fear the destruction that wasteth at noon day. We must account for all the day and not for just a part of it. No task will seem tedious or great; no travail of soul will seem terrific or tiresome, when He says, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

The ship is about to sail away, but by the grace of God, we will come at last to the Heavenly country to which the vessel is going. As we have said farewell to friends and loved ones on this shore, and watched them fade away into eternity: even so one of these days, it may be this very year, they over there will greet us with waving hands and shining faces and happy hearts, as leaving this world of sorrow and death, we drop anchor and land in that world where the King loves us, and where many have longed for our coming, and from which happy, blissful, blessed shore we shall part no more forever.

"Oh how sweet it will be in that beautiful land,
So free from all sorrow and pain,
With songs on our lips and with harps in our hands,
To meet one another again."

"O, that beautiful land:
The far away home of the soul!
Where no storms ever beat
On that glittering strand,
While the years of eternity roll."

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SCATTERING OF THE HOLY

". . . and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished." Daniel 12:7

The power of Thy people scattered?
O Lord, how can it be?

But that the love of Jesus,
Revealed at Calvary,
Should bind us to each other
As we are bound to Thee?

The power of Thy people scattered,
While all about us lie
Souls going down to darkness,
No one to heed their cry;
No one to warn of coming doom,
Of wrath that draweth nigh.

The power of Thy people scattered,
While time flies on apace;
We see God's plan for man unfold,
As troubles sore in every place,
The budding fig tree, all foretell
The closing days of grace.

The power of Thy people scattered?
O Lord, it shall not be;
Unite our hearts to do Thy will,
That all the world may see
The bonds of love that bind us close
To others and to Thee.

-- Mrs. Parker Maxey

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"MY PRESENCE--WITH THEE"

By Mrs. Paul E. King

What wonderful words of promise and consolation! How they thrill the soul, erase all anxiety and care and afford a place of hiding and refuge when sorely tested and tried! His presence! Ah! What balm for the Christian! Like an oasis in the desert or a shade from the hot, blistering rays of the sun in some shadeless place! But let us read the entire verse then drink from it; absorb it--every word--slowly, prayerfully, thoughtfully. "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." Exodus 33:14.

The entire chapter must be read to realize the fullest import of this verse. Moses, in leading the Israelites on into the promised land of Canaan, spake unto the Lord saying; "See, Thou sayest unto me, bring up this people: and Thou hast not let me know whom Thou wilt send with me. Yet Thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in My sight.

Now therefore, I pray Thee, if I have found grace in Thy sight, shew me now Thy way, that I may know Thee, that I may find grace in Thy sight: and consider that this nation is Thy people." Verse 12:13. Then followed the above wonderful verse which I have proven, in countless ways and times, to be a reality.

Isaiah 43:2-3 declares "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour:"

His presence! With me: Through the waters, rivers and fire! One could go on writing, page after page, book upon book, of testimonials of His presence being with them in countless ways, however, I shall mention, but one occasion.

It was April 1961; the day after our blessed revival in Lima with Bros. Cook and Schultz, when I discovered a large lump and three to four smaller ones in a part of my body. After a thorough examination by two specialists I received the diagnosis and verdict--sistuous tumors (possibly malignant), and surgery. Needless to say, it was a tremendous shock momentarily, but only momentarily, for the true child of God who is yielded unreservedly to God in body, soul and spirit has an Anchor that holds him steadfast, sure, firm and unmoveable. I looked into the faces of my doctors and told them I'd like to pray about it and have others do likewise, but that I was ready for whatever God had outlined for my life, for whether I lived or died I belonged to the Lord.

Words fail me in describing the wonderful consciousness of His presence all during my period of waiting and careful observation. How my entire being felt the unspeakably great and strengthening support for the prayers of God's children across this land of ours! I had no fear; my hope has been for years, and still is, built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness.

The night before surgery the nurse entered my room with a tiny cup containing my sedative for the night. I informed her I didn't mean to be stubborn, but I had no need whatsoever of sedation as I was as calm and relaxed as an infant. That was one of the most blessed nights of my life. I fell asleep with the sweet strains of Fanny Crosby's hymn wafted from Heaven through my blest soul. "Blessed assurance! Jesus is mine! Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine."

My sleep was most restful, relaxed and sweet and, when the white capped nurse awaked me early the next morning to finish preparations for surgery, the same Heavenly choir was by my side to open my day and again reassure my heart of His presence! This time they seemed to be singing that beautiful verse "Perfect submission! All is at rest: I in my Saviour am happy and blest. Angels descending, bring from above echoes of mercy, whisper of love." My heart was overwhelmed with joy and an inexpressible calm and peace. Quite naturally I began softly singing "I would like to tell you what I think of Jesus, since I found in Him a friend so strong and true!"

"Hog, can you sing when your surgery's only an hour away?" asked some. Others, quite puzzled, commented "Singing? Why it may even be cancer! How can you do it? Aren't you seared?"

With a heart full of rest and peace, I told those poor, frightened souls how, that twenty-eight years ago at the age of nine I confessed my sins and God for Christ's sake saved and forgave me all my sins, then between twelve and thirteen years of age He took out the carnal nature and sweetly sanctified my soul, making me clean and pure within, and He could do the same for them. Some wept and after surgery, came repeatedly to my room for more Bread of Life, others looked at me with a quizzical, unbelievable expression.

The day before the surgery, between 9:30 and 10:00 A.M. I felt the Great Physician of the Skies perform a Divine operation on all the smaller tumors. I called the main specialist and informed him of the miracle, requesting another thorough examination before surgery. I knew I wasn't going to need as large and serious an operation as they had anticipated all through the month and a half of observation, so I told him the Lord, whom we served and worshipped had undertaken and while the large tumor remained the others were completely and entirely gone. He came to the hospital that night and examined me carefully; immediately noticing the marvelous change and again I told him, and all who inquired, when the Lord did the work for the smaller masses of tumors. I told him he'd have to remove the large growth, but no more. I had had the assurance from God and the first words that were softly told me upon rallying from the anesthetic were, "They only took the tumor. No more."

"I've known that since yesterday morning." I answered sleepily, "The Lord whispered it to me when He took care of the other condition." And I fell into a soft, sweet sleep.

His presence! Ah! I know of nothing nor anyone who can provide a balm for the soul nor a rest from life's tempests as He. Surely, as David, I can say, "The Lord is my refuge and strength; my fortress and hightower...therefore will I not fear."

Cast all your cares upon Him and, as Sis. Bessie Hatcher, a beloved song writer and friend of mine wrote some year ago: "He stilled the storm and calmed my fears. Forgave my sins and dried my tears. He is the same through endless years: He will not fail me now."

I've proven Him faithful and true in every test and circumstance. "My presence shall go with thee; and I will give thee rest."

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THE END