

allegory: If you love Jesus why don't you read His word?

He wrote to the church at Ephesus. I have somewhat against thee because thou hast left (lost) thy first love. Remember therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and repent, etc. Thank God, there is mercy with the Lord, and we may become reconciled. If we will confess the truth and humble ourselves and repent of our lost love, He has promised to abundantly pardon, but He wants our love, and when we love Him, we will read His Word—His letters to us. Let us pray.

H. S. DOW

A VERY PERTINENT QUESTION

By Norman C. Schlichter

From every part of the world come reports of our soldiers and sailors who regret that they lost their interest in and grip on religion before they entered the armed forces of their country.

Nearly the whole world knows now that the young man, John J. De Angelis, of the seven Rickenbacker raft survivors, a Roman Catholic, was the only one who knew anything of even Christian ritualism. He alone could say a few appropriate words for the burial of the young ill-fated Polish lad who died.

The comforting and saving words of the New Testament came to all those men on the raft as really new messages. What a sad, sad fact indeed when we reflect that four of the seven men were officers of our armed forces, and three of these quite mature men!

Army Air Force Chaplain William E. Taggart, recently back from the Java and other South Pacific War Areas, is telling audiences everywhere how our soldiers are turning to God for help and comfort.

He tells of many instances in which pilots and crews read the Scriptures before they begin their perilous missions in air. The flying chaplain reads this part of a letter to his hearers from Vern Haughland, an Associated Press correspondent, who was lost in a New Guinea jungle for more than a month: "I was lost in New Guinea for a month and would have starved but for the help of natives and the kindness of the Almighty. Not being as religious as I should have been I was ignorant of the things I needed most, but I learned a lot—lessons I pray never to forget. The Twenty-third Psalm helped me as much as anything through the worst part."

What spiritual tragedy is in those simple words of honest confession: "I was ignorant of the things I needed most!"

If ever Christians needed to face a pertinent question it is this one: "Who is responsible that well nigh millions of our finest youth were called to the colors of our supposedly Christian country with so little sense of God, of His church and of His Holy Word as the reports from all battlefronts prove so sadly true?"

Honest answers to this question by many of us must lead to the clear straightout confession, "I failed them myself as an adult, or elder Christian."

This being true, surely then we should all be helping to bring about a re-awakening of interest in the spiritual life, the deeper spiritual life of high school age groups, many of whom will be called to military service whether the war lasts long or not.

Corporal Barney Ross, famous as a prize

boxer before he became a soldier, recently returned from hard fighting in the Pacific conflict, is saying everywhere, "Nobody is ashamed to pray out there."

Then surely nobody, young or old, should be ashamed to pray here any longer, and all lovers of prayer should be busily teaching our youth how to pray as well as the Book of Prayer, the Holy Bible.

A nation-wide prayer revival in all Sunday schools and Christian churches was never more badly needed in our nation's history than now, now, now!

Let each of us, right where we are, resolve to do all in our power to bring about such a revival in our own Sunday school and church.—Selected.

THE OVERCOMER IN CHRIST

By J. F. Knapp

It seems to me that of all the words that may be applied to a follower of Jesus, "overcomer" is the most heartening. This term, unlike some others, stands out untarnished to the present. There has been much misuse of the terms "Christian," "disciple," "brethren," and "saints." Scripture terms such as "Presbyter" or elder; "baptism;" "Episcopas," or bishop, all have given rise to the names of special groups, some of them large and influential among the churches. But no great denomination yet has appropriated the term "overcomer."

Practically all professing Christians hold membership in some organization or other, and it is our conviction that we cannot do our best work for the advancement of the Kingdom on earth apart from such union of fellowship and service. And, we say, with justifiable appreciation and a worthy pride, "I belong to the Church of the Nazarene," for we feel that here we can meet in association with those who both by experience and faith desire to prosecute like purposes. But in "belonging" to this or that society of believers, we do not even imply that we "belong to the overcomers," for the weakness of our common humanity and the warning of close observation teach us how far short is the whole visible "congregation of faithful men" from the characteristics of a New Testament overcomer.

The distinguishing mark of the overcomer in Christ is that his allegiance is to no group, organization or individual, but to Jesus Christ alone. He "belongs" to Him, who first testified while here on earth, "I have overcome," and who later repeated, as He surveyed His whole earth-borne experience, "I also overcame."

Perhaps the chief reason for the growth of several denominations that are classed as "the holiness churches" is this fact, that multitudes both of ministers and laymen have felt an increasing friction between the denominational pressures to which they were subjected and the conscious urge of the "within Overcomer" to whom their allegiance had been unreservedly yielded. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" emphatically excluded the god of a formal ecclesiasticism. Denominational, institutional, individual loyalties, even of the very highest class, must be subservient to the overcomer's one supreme allegiance to the Head of the Church, Christ alone!

Now just as there is no subject or medita-

tion so laden with heavenly fragrance as the Lord Himself, so there is no earthly character of so utterly a heavenly nature as that of the overcomer. The writer to the Hebrews reached the climax of biblical inspiration as he described the honor roll of Old Testament overcomers in his eleventh chapter, including representatives from before the flood to the days of prophecy and, by implication, the greater group of New Testament saints, "that they without us should not be made perfect."

God's Word is candidly clear in showing that because an individual is once an overcomer he is not necessarily always an overcomer. Indeed, from Noah onward to the present hour, there is little evidence of any human being who overcame at every point and under all circumstances. Even Job confessed, "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes," while Paul justly accused Peter (in Galatians) that on one occasion he "walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel." Neither because an overcomer is sometimes overcome is it a sufficient reason that he should surrender to the enemy or give up his commission and lay down his arms; rather in the words of the old warrior who was grievously wounded:

I'll lay me down and bleed a while,
And then get up and fight again.

But the overcomer is certainly of a different character from the average person known as a Christian. He may be described as an habitual saint. We have too many incidental saints, Sunday Christians, campmeeting Christians, prayer meeting Christians, and Christians who in business, politics, ecclesiastical and domestic affairs, get their direction from the world around them. Whatever their oral professions, they are distinctly living below the plane of the overcomer. Every born-again individual is a potential overcomer. In the baptism with the Holy Ghost the carnal hindrances to overcoming are removed and the incentives to victorious living are tremendously increased. With the development that then goes on, it remains for the sanctified believer to co-operate with the Holy Ghost in the formation of an overcoming character in Christ.

In the person of Christ's overcomer there is met the need of the world for an individual who shows forth Jesus in his daily life. The more nearly the overcomer follows in the footsteps of his Lord, the more certain he will be of the same treatment that was accorded Him. He was, by turns, obscure, popular to the point of acclamation and then rejected, despised and finally executed. The overcomer in the twentieth century need expect no better treatment than was accorded the Master. To him the alternating smiles and frowns of the world is strong evidence that he is like the Master.

The overcomer's principal prize is by no means entirely in the future. He is not serving for celestial gain only. To the greatest of patriarchal overcomers—Abraham—God said, "I am . . . thy exceeding great reward." In this Reward the overcomer is sharing here and now with the prospect of a continuing increase in wonder and joy forever. No ecstasies of heavenly bliss, no freedom from earthly conflict and pain, no visions of rapture culminating in the Golden Age to come can equal in his estimation the simple consciousness, "I do always those things that please him," and "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."—Selected.