

PILGRIMS, SING ON!

"The redeemed of the Lord shall return . . . with singing." Isaiah 51:11.

As the "mercy ship" Gripsholm neared the New York harbor at daybreak on December 1st, echoes of songs were heard by the watchers on shore, songs vibrant with victorious notes for the long, long night of the prisoners of the Lord had ended and the morning of joy had come at last. His bond slaves were free—free—and they were singing praises unto Him. "He had triumphed gloriously." "Who is like unto thee, our God, fearful in praises, doing wonders." The enemy said, "I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil." "Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them, they sank as lead in the mighty waters" "Praise ye the Lord."

It is a precious experience to be encompassed about with songs of deliverance, but methinks the best loved songs of our gracious Lord are those arising from the lips of pilgrims of the night. Songs of faith and trust when all earth lights have gone out and the walk is that of naked faith. Our fathers, chained in prisons dark, sang their songs of faith and the echo rings down the centuries and will never end. When all was dark they never doubted. They sang "A Mighty Fortress is our God." Today millions are singing those words. If God is to give us songs in the night, He must first make it night.

Recently we listened to the victorious testimony of one of our fellow missionaries who had been imprisoned, tested to the breaking point. He said, "To the glory of God, I can say that throughout the months of my imprisonment I had never one single hour of depression." May his testimony reach some sorely tried heart, someone ready to give way to despair.

"I heard a bird at break of day
Sing from the autumn trees
A song so musical and calm
So full of certainties.
No man, I think could listen long
Except upon his knees.
Yet this was but a simple bird
Alone among dead leaves."

Darkness has enveloped the earth but God is giving new songs to His own. He hath not forsaken His people and the sheep of His pasture. When faith has been fully tested, the lessons all learned, day will break and the glorious morning of deliverance will come again with its special songs. Around the earth where there is naught but cries of pain there will be songs once more and the whole earth will break forth into singing. Let us not fail our loving Lord through this testing time and may we allow no doubt to enter our hearts. "To trust in spite of the look of being forsaken, to keep crying out into the vastness whence comes no returning voice and where seems no hearing, to see the machinery of the world pauselessly grinding on as if self-moved, caring for no life nor shifting a hair's breadth for all entreaty, and yet believe that God is working and utterly loving; to desire nothing but what comes meant for us from His hand; to wait patiently ready to die of hunger, fearing only lest faith should fail—such is the victory that overcometh the world, **such is faith indeed.**"

In the early days of the China "incident" an old Chinese Christian was dragged through

the streets of one of the northern cities to the place of execution. For many years he had been the gate keeper of a mission compound. His duty from day to day was to sit at the gateway and admit those who went in and out. For many long years he had occupied this position of trust and was known as OLD FAITHFUL. He loved the Lord Jesus Christ, his Saviour, but now he was in the hands of the enemy. Did his faith fail?

He was led to the execution block for he was to be beheaded. This dear old man, grown gray in the service of the Lord, had faithfully done his duty. He had never wronged anyone, his life was simply lived, and now would God forsake him?

The officer taunted him about his religion and his faith and said to him, "Where is now your God? Let him come and save you." But the old man denied Him not but received the taunts in silence. They said to him, "If you have faith in your God, let us hear you sing like you Christians sing. Can you sing now?"

"Old Faithful" remembered a song he had been taught years before by the missionaries and in a quavering tone he started singing, "There is a fountain filled with blood, drawn from Immanuel's veins, and sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains."

A crowd had now assembled, for in the Orient it is not difficult on such occasions to draw crowds. The officer, to show his authority, struck the old man a blow with his bayonet and shouted roughly, "Sing again." And "Old Faithful" sang:

I'm going home to die no more.

I'm going home to die no more.

These were the last words of his song ere the sword severed his head from his body. "Old Faithful" had reached Home, he entered through the gates singing. May God give to each of us fortitude, courage, a fresh vision of Calvary, and may we have at the close of earth's journey this testimony, "I have fought a good fight; I have kept the faith."

Fellow pilgrims, faint not! Fight on! Tomorrow comes the song.

"JOY COMETH IN THE MORNING."

—Oriental Missionary Standard

BEING WELL BALANCED

By E. E. Shelhamer

Recently a large rock, because of a jar, too much rain, or something inexplicable, came crashing down a Pennsylvania mountain side, killing twenty people in a large bus. It may have been called "Balanced Rock," but in some way it lost its center of gravity and became a dangerous thing. In like manner some men get off the center and thus an apparent little thing, not only cripples their usefulness, but also renders their presence and preaching dangerous.

Let us notice how we can become unbalanced.

1. Severity. We, like God must not wink at sin or irreverence. But it is easy to become unbalanced and let the human element get in. Then we become harsh and driving in voice and manner and thus fail to reach some. This may seem to be a little thing, but friend, it is a serious thing to send a soul to hell who might have been reached had there been more tenderness manifested. God forbid that I should get out of the Spirit and rebuke even a scoffer in such a way that he would never return. Saul of Tarsus might not have been saved had

Stephen turned and pronounced a stinging rebuke upon him.

2. Meekness. Here is just the opposite, but lovely as it is, can it not be over-emphasized? Yes, occasionally it would be carnal and cowardly not to deal faithfully with sin and sinners. A surgeon on the battlefield must not only be sympathetic, but have the courage to probe in deeply after a hidden bullet. It was said that during the Civil War two surgeons were busily dressing the wounded and dying. Presently the older man dropped upon his knees and began searching for the deadly bullet. The wounded soldier groaned and shuddered as the old doctor seemed unnecessarily severe.

"Why," said the other surgeon, "are you so severe with this young man? I have not seen you thus with any other!"

The old doctor looking up with streaming eyes replied, "This is my only son, and I am trying to save him." Yes, we read, "Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully [negligently], and cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood" (Jer. 47:10).

3. Legality. In this loose age it is refreshing to occasionally find a conscientious soul who dares to go against the crowd in such things as Family Government, Plainness of Dress, and Sabbath Observance. But good as this may be, it is sad to behold one who is very strict and yet void of holy joy. Friend, if you lack holy fire, you may do more harm than good. It is all right to be a rebuke to worldlings and compromisers, but at the same time you should be so winsome that you will be a constant invitation to come to Jesus.

4. Emotionalism. Here is another opposite which needs balancing. Some people are more emotional than others. It is easy for them to weep and shout, but at the same time they can be cranky and careless on practical lines, such as paying debts, evil speaking, undue familiarity and other phases of holy living.

Years ago a physician and a minister stood outside a large tent where a number of seekers were at an altar of prayer. Some were weeping and some rejoicing. We ventured to step up and ask these gentlemen what they thought of the scene. Whereupon the preacher quickly replied: "I take no stock in it!" But the doctor quietly answered, "I am not a Christian, but I could wish I had the happy combination I see here. Those people have a seriousness without sadness, and a joy without levity." This was a beautiful statement, and the doctor was right. O, friends, let us ask God to help us to be well balanced and able to say with the great apostle, "To the weak became I weak, that I might gain the weak; I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (1 Cor. 9:22).

Discernment is God's call to intercession, never to fault-finding.—Oswald Chambers.

Christian fruitfulness is not the root of character, but Christ is the root of Christian character and of fruitfulness.—Thomas D. Bernard.

It is foolish to offer God the husks of life instead of giving Him the heart.—Charles M. Sheldon.

The stingy soul is the soul that shrinks; the generous soul is the soul that enlarges.—Earle V. Pierce.