

The Bible has the Answer

By Laurence K. Mullen

An outstanding Christian writer has made the surprising observation that two of the greatest evils which confront modern civilization are *hysteria* and *complacency*. The casual observer might well not agree with this conclusion for it appears that much greater evils than these exist—evils which seem to be far more dangerous and destructive to the causes of freedom and truth.

But let us take a moment to examine the so-called evils of hysteria and complacency. It is undeniably true that many in these days react hysterically to the very mention of atomic bombs, flying saucers and Communism. Their attitude is one of fear and apprehension, dread and despair. Forgetting their sanity in the moment of crises, these unfortunate souls react impulsively, haphazardly. They are like the man who when upset out of a boat became so frightened and irrational that he swam toward the open sea rather than toward the shore. In his haste to save himself, he drowned. In the hour of peril, he failed to take the time to plot a right course of action.

When we allow ourselves to become hysterical, it is quite likely that the following will happen:

1. The danger will appear greater than it really is.
2. Our loss of presence of mind will tend to affect others on the same way.
3. Our chance of escape will be greatly lessened.

While some are hysterical, others are complacent. Of the two evils, I will venture the guess that complacency is the more deadly.

We show complacency by our indifference toward profanity—the disregard of holy things. We show complacency by our lack of concern over the widespread defiance of law and authority. Complacent describes our general attitude toward the cancers of society—crime, immorality, and liquor.

It is surprising to note that often the very people who become hysterical in thinking of the far removed and speculative evils are most complacent about the near-at-hand and shocking evils of profanity and intemperance.

Note that both hysteria and complacency are extreme attitudes. Either attitude can be fatal to the individual as well as to the nation.

The Bible offers alternative positions to both these attitudes. Let us examine what the Bible has to say.

First, the Bible exhorts us to be quiet—never hysterical! Isaiah 7:4 says, "Be quiet; fear not." This was the message of the Lord's prophet Isaiah to King Ahaz when his kingdom was threatened by the kings of Syria and Israel. Read Proverbs 1:33: "But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil." The call of scripture here is a call to quietness.

Again, the Bible exhorts us to be peaceful and serene. God promises peace to those who trust in Him. Psalms 29:11. "The Lord will give strength unto his people: the Lord will bless his people with peace."

Finally, we are promised security when our faith is centered in God. The writer of Hebrews speaks of a hope "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast." Here is security that does not vanish when the stock market falls and when depression strikes.

The biblical alternative to hysteria is quietness, peace, and security. What then is the

The King's Highway

biblical alternative to complacency?

Note St. Paul's exhortation in his first letter to the Thessalonian church, chapter 5:6. "Therefore let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober. To watch and to be sober suggest spiritual alertness—alertness to the monsters of evil which seek to overthrow and engulf the true church of Jesus Christ. There can be no time and place for complacency when the existence of Christian virtues and values is endangered. We must watch! We must be sober!

Read Romans 12:12. "Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer." Paul's wise spiritual counsel to be instant in prayer provides a second alternative to complacency. At another time, Paul says, "Pray without ceasing." The forces of evil cannot be checked by human effort alone. If the enemy of man's soul is to be defeated, God must come on the scene of battle. And God has promised to come when his people are willing to meet certain conditions. One of those conditions is Prayer. Read II Chron. 7:14: "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land."

Jesus was not hysterical. Neither was he complacent. He lived in the midst of peril, wars, and rumours of wars, yet his entire life is a challenging example of poise and quiet assurance. On the other hand, he was not unaware of the true evils which existed. He denounced evil and wrongdoing wherever he found them. Let us find in Jesus the pattern for our attitude and action today.

** Devotional message over CJLS, Dec. 13, 1954.

IF YE ABIDE

"Abide in Me." Abiding is continual, not just now and then, but now and all the time. The Christian takes no vacation from this abiding. Eating, sleeping, working, playing, if one is a Christian he is abiding in Christ.

"As a branch cannot bear fruit except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in Me." We may be endlessly busy, we may hustle about, we may have our hands full of church work, but unless we abide in Him it will not count eternally.

"He that abideth, the same bringeth forth much fruit." There is a great difference among people as to natural ability. Some are easily leaders, and some are not. Some naturally attract, and some do not. But spiritual fruit comes by operation of the Holy Spirit through us. Obedience and faithfulness to the Holy Spirit go vastly farther in Christian work than any natural ability. We do not decry this—nay, rather we thank God for every bit of natural ability, if only it is under the sway of the Holy Spirit. We are saying that without the Holy Spirit's touch and power and operation, it is as wood and hay and stubble.

"Much fruit." We believe our fruit for God is measured by our faithfulness to the Holy Spirit. Are we faithful? Is that one of our characteristics? Our faithfulness to His teaching and leading will be the measure of our success and our reward.—Heart and Life.

"Nothing will show what we are more accurately than the way we meet trials and difficulties."

"WHEN THOU PASSETH THROUGH THE WATERS"

By Oliver G. Wilson

Sooner or later every Christian must pass through the deep waters of trial, sorrow, misunderstanding, affliction, and loss. Then it is that Satan comes with all his deceptive arts to poison the love fountain which flows from the Christian's heart. Satan's supreme effort is to cause the believer to question the love and goodness of God, or to sow bitterness in the Christian's garden of graces.

When thou passeth through the waters you will be alone. Human sympathy and words of comfort seem so empty, so distant, so inadequate for the pain in the heart. Words seem like empty froth, meaningless noise. You will travel this valley alone—but you will not be alone, for the promise is clear: "I will be with thee." He is master of ocean, of sea, and sky. He will not suffer the waters to overflow thee. At the right moment you will hear a voice "behind thee saying" to the raging waters, "Peace be still."

When thou passeth through the waters they will be cold, dark, threatening. The last prop on which you have leaned will be swept away. Familiar landmarks will all disappear. But in that dismal hour of utter loss and failure of all things temporal you will discover "underneath the everlasting arms." There will be a warmth of love from the heart of God to your heart which will bring a song at midnight.

When thou passeth through the waters swift currents will pull at your feet; frightening eddies will swirl all about you. The wreckage of fair-weather structures builded on the sand will be seen everywhere. The night winds of hopelessness will add to the confusion, while the false teachers and would-be comforters swarm about like buzzards of despair, but—God will be near.

"The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose, I will not, I will not desert to his foes: That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,

I'll never, no never, no never forsake!"

On the darkest day that the soul ever saw and in the midst of the worst storm Satan ever brewed, the trusting child of God is secure in God's keeping. Men, nor devils, nor winds, nor storms, nor persecution, nor losses are able "to pluck them out of my Father's hand. My Father is greater than all."

Trust on, then, afflicted, harrassed soul. The waters shall not overflow thee. God will bear thee up with the arms which support the universe.—Wesleyan Methodist.

SUFFICIENT STRENGTH

Remember that your work comes only moment by moment, and as surely as God calls you to work He gives the strength to do it. Do not think in the morning: "How shall I go through this day? I have such and such work to do, and persons to see, and I have not the strength for it." No, you have not, for you do not need it. Each moment, as you need it, the strength will come, only do not look forward an hour; circumstances may be very different from what you expect. At any rate, you will be borne through each needful and right thing "on eagles' wings." Do not worry yourself with misgivings; take each thing quietly.—Dr. Maurice.