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## THE BACKWARD GLANCE

By E. E. Shelhamer

Jesus said, "Remember Lot's wife," as a warning not to look back. That one backward glance toward the doomed city, with all their belongings, cost her her life and her soul. The looking back at failures and losses has caused many (including millionaires) to go insane and commit suicide. How wicked and absurd that anyone in a fit of despair should plunge into a lake of fire! Will this make bad matters better? Will this restore reputation or a lost fortune? Why be a coward and collapse at the first sight of calamity? "If thou faint in the day of adversity thy strength is small." Why not use a little reason and consider that thousands would at this moment be glad to exchange places with you. Remember, you still have two good hands, eyes and feet and, if need be you can do as many others have done—start anew and make good. Many a ruined man has gone to a new community, away from his old surroundings, and built up for himself a good name.

Some things must be forgotten. Things that produce chagrin and humiliation should not be harbored. We are to "forget those things which are behind and reach forth unto those things which are before." As long as one broods over past failures, he unfits himself for present opportunities. Go to cultivating hopefulness. Yes, it will grow if properly cultivated.

Satan is the author of all despair and rash doings. He magnifies failures out of proportion with facts. He beclouds the heavens, creates doubt, then suggests—"Give it up," "End it all." No one can come to this sad conclusion until he has first rejected light, Christian counsel and the smitings of conscience. If a confession is necessary this is the quickest way to recover confidence and peace.

If a man has lost money, health or friends, he should capitalize the loss by achieving more than he lost. Our losses should become our teachers and trainers for something better. Joseph's dungeon prepared the way for his premiership of Egypt. David's bitter experience gave birth to his Psalms. Job's sorrows produced the most beautiful poem ever written. Paul's sufferings developed the greatest saint that ever walked.

But, on the other hand, how can we profit by the backward glance? Some dispositions are not given to despondency. Their danger is in the other direction—that of independence and self-sufficiency. With such it will be helpful to frequently look back "to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged." If given to self-satisfaction in view of present attainments, just look back and remember how unfair and unlovely you have been; how harsh and severe toward others, especially your inferiors; how many you have hurt, rather than helped. Perhaps your present position is largely due to politics rather than piety. Others would have done as well but are too conscientious. Eternity alone may reveal what you have lost through your gains; to what height of spiritual grandeur you might

(Continued on Page 6)

## OUR "DOING" FOR 1958

By Rev. F. A. Dunlop

In Paul's Colossian epistle, 3:17, emphasis is placed on "doing". "Whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus."

We of the Arminian School are so careful to give "faith" its rightful place that we may overlook the importance of "works". The question in the Gospel, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" provoked quite a program of doing for its answer. "Go" . . . "Sell" . . . "Give" . . . "Come" . . . "Follow", these are all action words, and fit in well with the whole New Testament economy.

Seeing that the "Doing" (in the mind of the apostle) is our business, some pertinent questions are in order: First: What can I do? History affords an answer to this question. The Prodigal Son is a classic example of how disastrously a man can live if his aims are low. Jesus called it a long way from the father's home to the "far country", but the distance was covered quickly. 1958 offers the same hazardous journey for all who desire to travel that way. Many will take it with even more tragic results than the case in hand records. What folly, to even consider such a course! Others, like another case described by Jesus, will live selfishly. Their plans for 1958 will include profit, increase, expansion, security. "I will say to my soul, Soul, take thine ease." They will plan for time and forget eternity. How shocking if God should say, "This night thy soul shall be required of thee." Many will go out into a hopeless eternity this year, not because they live slothfully but selfishly. Paul is another example of what a man can do. Meeting Christ that eventful day he said, "Lord, What wilt Thou have me to do?" From that hour to the close of his earthly career his ambition is expressed in these words: "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." What can we do? We can live in prodigality, we can live selfishly, or we can live savingly.

Another question following hard on the first is: What ought I to do? Someone has said, "It is disastrous when we lose our sense of oughtness." When we think of the prominence given this spirit in the life of Jesus, it ought to disturb us. "Wist thou not that I must be about My Father's business"; "I must work the works of Him that sent Me"; "I must go to Jerusalem"; "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?" Here was the Supreme Life living under an awful sense of obligation, yet not an obligation induced by law but impelled by love. Paul got caught up in its influence, and almost "beside himself" cried, "for the love of Christ CONSTRAINETH me." 1958 should find us swayed by something of this spirit, don't you think? If it requires prescribed rules to induce it, then let it be rules; better

(Continued on Page 4)