

But whatever may be necessary, one man with a glowing experience of the Lord is worth a library full of arguments.

We are God's witnesses, not His lawyers, and we have been apologetic when we should be apostolic! People do not usually find God at the end of an argument. Simon Peter usually comes to Jesus because Andrew went after him with heavenly compassion and holy compulsion.

Call it what you will, we need a brand-new meeting with God!

—Herald of His Coming

## Facing the Future — With God

By Dr. H. K. Sheets

Number the Soldiers and count the cash but don't try to limit God to mere arithmetic. This is the lesson from the Old Testament story of King Amaziah against the Edomites—II Chronicles 25:9.

The king had trained 300,000 choice men of Judah and Benjamin. Then, he hired an additional 100,000 picked soldiers from the Northern Kingdom. He paid 100 talents in silver (at least \$200,000) for these additional men. Go without them and trust God said the prophet. "But what shall I do about the \$200,000," queried the King. The significant answer struck home. Don't stand back on arithmetic. "The Lord is able to give thee much more than this". (II Chron. 25:9).

The lesson is more than historic; it is a parable. If we are to get anywhere with God, with ourselves, or with our Christian tasks, we must have a faith that ventures, a spirit that dares. Only then can we ever know that God's arms are underneath us. Plainly we err when we count money and men and leave God out. Lost battles and stalemates result.

What is our mood and temper as a church at this point? Suppose we examine several areas in which the worthy spirit of Christian daring may operate. Take the sphere of material resources. God said to Amaziah "Go without the additional soldiers." Amaziah answered: "I have paid hard cash for them and need them." The dollar sign hung so close to the King's eyes that he couldn't see beyond it. It is for us to make the balance sheet carefully; keep the records accurate, and be good stewards. Integrity can do no less. But may we never try to limit God to the balance sheet or the figures at the end of the column, because God is bigger than any financial statement. It's the balance sheet plus God that makes one church forge ahead and another stalemate.

This same mood that helps the church to move out with God can apply to precedents or patterns of the past as contrasted with God's best for the future. The line of least effort and least resistance lies along these precedents. They are always easiest to follow. Shall we, however, live in the past with stale and musty minds? Shall we extol the sacrifices of the fathers while we betray their intensity of devotion? Are we to be so fettered as to leave no room for imagination, originality and progressiveness? If so, the Gospel which we know to be unchanging will fail to connect with teeming life and the terrific needs of today's world.

The Christian gospel faced this same issue at the beginning. The charter members of the first church insisted on encumbering the gospel with heavy restrictions of the ceremonial law. St. Paul begged for a free gospel. The apostolic church moved out with God. It was a daring venture to cut loose from circumstances as an ordinance of long and significant religious standing, but the ordinance

had served its purpose in its day. If the decision of the early church was risky, it was certainly right. Time and history proved that.

Cold correctness can be the force that restricts all that the warm heart ventures. A lavish heart breaks the alabaster box upon the Christ. A shrewd mind would never have done it. Logic stays with the ninety-nine sheep. Love goes after the lost one. Reason untouched by grace vies for greatness. The loving heart becomes reckless with seniority. It catches up the Master's spirit reflected in the words, "Not to be ministered unto, but to minister" (Matt. 20:28).

This temporizing spirit has not the power to move off dead center. How different was the courage of the Hebrew children in the words, "Our God is able to deliver us, but if not, we will not serve thy gods or worship the image." See it again in the ultimatum of Queen Esther, "If I perish, I perish." Those who bore the message of the Jerusalem council to Antioch were described as "men that had hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 15:26).

What will we let the man of God in this Old Testament setting say to us as a body of Christian believers now well into our second century? Will it be a mere correctness that is cold and icy or a compassion that melts the hardest hearts? Will we clamor for a restrictive conservatism or an aggressive evangelism? Will it be theological exactitude only or lives set on fire of the Holy Ghost? Will it be the logic of limitations or the love that makes a place for the limitless God? Will we be a people that are satisfied to talk about revival or will we pay the price to taste heaven-sent revival? Will our gospel be in word only or in word and deed?

What is the lesson? The limitations of the dollar sign, or of mere correctness, or of cold logic, or of abstract theological orthodoxy, no right words and beautiful prayer phrases; these are not enough to live by or to die by. These are not enough to govern Christian living and Christian tasks. For us, as for King Amaziah, "The Lord is able to give thee much more than this."

—The Wesleyan Methodist

### ABANDONED

Utterly abandoned to the Holy Ghost!  
Seeking all His fullness at whatever cost;  
Cutting all the shore lines, launching in the deep  
Of His mighty power—strong to save and keep!

Utterly abandoned! 'tis so sweet to be  
Seeking for no other path than my Master trod;  
Leaving ease and pleasure, making Him my choice,  
Waiting for His guidance, listening for His voice.

Utterly abandoned! 'this so sweet to be  
Captive in His bonds of love, yet so wondrous free:  
Free from sin's entanglements, free from doubt  
and fear,  
Free from every worry, burden, grief, or care.

Utterly abandoned! oh, the rest is sweet,  
As I tarry, waiting, at His blessed feet;  
Waiting for the coming of the Guest divine,  
Who my inmost being shall perfectly refine.

Lo! He comes and fills me, Holy Spirit sweet!  
I, in Him, am satisfied! I, in Him, complete!  
And the light within my soul shall nevermore grow  
dim,

While I keep my covenant—abandoned unto Him!

Author Unknown.