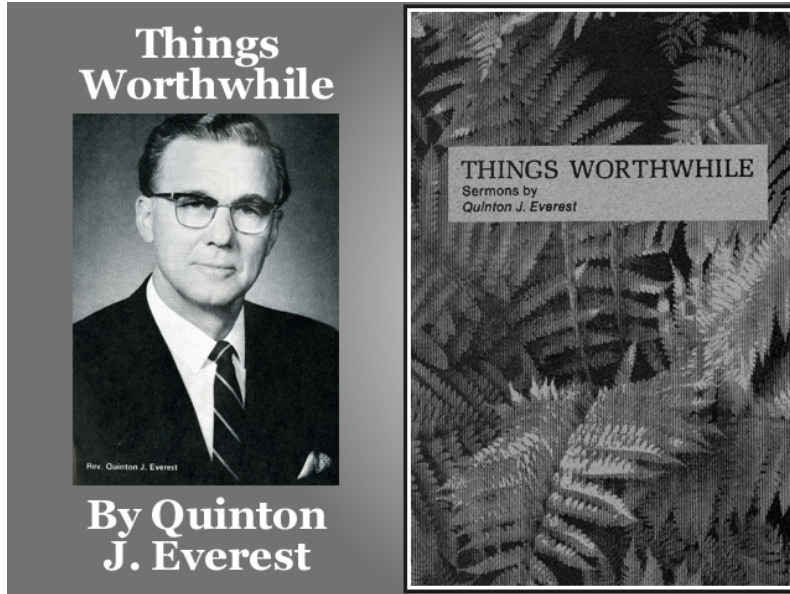


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THINGS WORTHWHILE
By Quinton J. Everest



Sermons By Quinton J. Everest
July 1976

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A MESSAGE TO YOU

"Things Worthwhile" is the subject of the first message. The original message was preached by Doctor James DeWeerd, chaplain in World War II. I have preached it in condensed and re-arranged form. I delivered the other three sermons with the emphasis on our times, designed as appropriate for the United States Bicentennial month of July. My prayer is that the truths herein will be used of the Holy Spirit to help in appreciation of the principles of freedom and encourage repentance and dependence upon God.

**Your Worship Hour pastor,
Quinton J. Everest**

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01 -- THINGS WORTHWHILE

"What is worthwhile?" Certainly that is a question all of us raise. We are living in troubled days. We hear the statement which is somewhat common, "The world has come unglued." It reminds me of the young fellow who wrote:

"I wish that my room had a floor, I'd even be glad for a door; This floating around without touching the ground "Is getting to be quite a boor."

We are living in a world where many of our values are questioned, and unfortunately, we are reaping the whirlwind of having taught that there are no absolutes. Many don't know where to cast anchor. They wonder, amid the things which are so ephemeral, what is eternal, and amid the temporal, what is timeless? I hope I can answer that question, "What is worthwhile?"

What are the values that are worth conserving? What are the things for which we would be willing to live and, if need be, willing to die?

As a background for what I am going to say, I am not going to take a text of Scripture, even though I shall be quoting Scripture at the conclusion of the

message. Rather, I am going to borrow from a favorite painting of mine that hangs in my home and which, I think, pretty well communicates all these things I consider worthwhile. Immediately when I state what that painting happens to be, I shall mark myself as a conservative. In this day and age there is a lot of stuff that passes for art which, as far as I am concerned, is junk.

I don't see how they can take bicycle chains, weld them with rusty cogwheels, slap on some paint, and call that a work of art. Personally, I have never been able to figure out how one can call a thing art when he doesn't know where or how to hang it when he puts it on the wall.

Some of us are just trying to conserve great values. It is what we might call a philosophy of progressive preservation. Very frankly, I do not want to go back. I don't see anything to go back to. I know and you know that it is impossible to do that. When I hear people talking about the "good old days," I wonder whether they are referring, for instance, to the days of World War II, which were certainly bloody; or whether they were referring to the years of the depression. I wonder just what they consider the "good old days." Any young person with whom one talks today about the "good old days" would think of nothing more than the history of the last 24 hours. He has no frame of reference. That's about the extent of his knowledge of history. We should not be guilty of neophobia; that is, the fear of new things. On the other hand, I am not what we would call a neophyte, or somebody who just wants to be an innovator. There is a way we can conserve that which is good and yet make progress. We should like to think of some things that are worthy of preservation.

This picture to which I am referring happened to be painted by a French peasant by the name of Jean Francois Millet. I speak of "The Angelus." It is representative to me of everything in life which is worthwhile and worth conserving.

* * *

Worship Is Worthwhile

First, the very first thing which we see in the picture is a man and woman with their heads bowed in prayer. In the distance in the chapel there is the ringing of the bell at noontime. Worship is one thing that will outlast this present life. When I am speaking of worship, there are some who have misconstrued the idea of freedom of worship to mean freedom from worship. We have a group of people who are a rather noisy minority who are trying to get across the idea that some way, somehow we have in this nation of ours a basic concept of non-religion. That loud segment of society has been heard to the extent that we have been trying to get rid of a lot of the things which have to do with our religious education, things which make our country what it is -- faith in the Word of God, prayer, and the elements of spiritual life. These are the enduring things. If we deny out of existence man's need of God, then we are going to have a life that will topple. Belief in God turns life into a song; unbelief turns life sour. One will end in a dirge; the other will end in a doxology.

When it comes to this matter of worship, there are those who accuse us of worshipping our ancestors. This is a big misunderstanding. On the other hand, we have reverence for our past and respect our ancestors. We owe a great debt to the past, and we all are living monuments to the struggles of the dead.

There are those who call us flag-wavers. That is something else I want to state as part of our belief. We do respect the flag of the United States of America. Any of us who have shed blood for that beautiful flag certainly are going to rise in defense of the symbol of what it represents. Sure, it is symbolism. It is up to each of us to give it meaning. All of us hold it dear in our memory, and we also hold it dear in our hopes for the future.

When we look at the red of our flag, we think of the blood that was sacrificed and the struggles which have made our nation great. When we look at the white, we think of the purity of intentions of this country. I will say to its everlasting credit that we annexed no territory after World War I or World War II; and, on the other hand, we have been in the business of giving freedom to nations that we once controlled. We need to recognize the purity of intentions of our country. A student who is flunking courses on some campus has no right to go to Washington to try to dictate foreign policy. If we would get teachers to teach the essentials of good citizenship, foreign policy would take care of itself. Some of the tragedy of these dangerous days can be traced to those who doubt the good intentions of men who are in places of public responsibility. They do not understand authority; therefore, there is no respect for an office if one does not like the man who is in it at a given time.

I like to think of the blue in the flag as representing loyalty. I am certainly not going to be party to anything that makes me look like a fellow-traveler with anybody who is pink, much less red. I want to be known by my enemies. I look at that flag with its stars, and I am reminded that this is not a stagnant nation. It started with 13, and now we have 50 stars which means that we are still a growing nation. Every one of those stars bespeak our faith in the Jehovah Who has brought us to this place in our national history.

I like Old Glory. I like the word "glory" in connection with it. In case you have not heard the tradition, it is worthy of repetition. The reason we call it "glory" is that on our early ships whenever the seamen folded that flag -- and it is still the custom when folded in a funeral ceremony for any of our fallen veterans -- it was always done in a triangle. Originally one sailor said, "Glory to the Father," another one "Glory to the Son," and the third one, "Glory to the Holy Ghost." Finally, it was just shortened to where each one of them, more or less under his breath, said "Glory." Now there is nothing audible, but the symbol is still there, which testifies to the faith which we have in this nation in the Christian doctrine of the Holy Trinity.

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Work Is Worthwhile

The second main element I want to speak about is work. With all the four-letter words of the filthy speech movement that is rampant, I should like to say a few words about the little four-letter word "work." I think it has been overlooked. Another one, by the way, happens to be "soap." Those are two four-letter words that I should like to see in use and once again loved and revered as far as our American tradition is concerned. I don't necessarily mean to be humorous, for the simple reason that cleanliness is next to godliness. They have already tried to put God out of His universe; so when they do that, the next thing that is going to go by the board happens to be cleanliness. Don't think that this present day ad-lib look is unplanned. It is still part of the whole decline of a great civilization.

Work has been so time-honored in our history, that I think we need to look at our painting, "The Angelus," and see this man and woman wooing their living out of the clods and remember that there has been a massive amount of work which has gone into our past. Everyone who has the privilege of not having to work with his hands or do some kind of a job with his brain is sustained by somebody else who is having to work. Wealth is the crystallization of human energy. We all are the beneficiaries of the toil of those who labor with their hands or with their heads.

I have a little pet peeve. Because everybody else is asking for reparation, I think I am entitled to some. I was a product of a home where my father died when he was 41 and I was a lad of 6. My mother was left with 7 of us. That was before we had ADC, so my mother had to determine how she could get back to school to obtain a teaching certificate. She kept plugging away and finally got her Bachelor of Science degree when she was 60 years old. Nobody subsidized her; nobody underwrote us.

I didn't have the opportunity of thinking I was so smart that I could occupy the dean's and president's office. I was just tickled to death to think I was able to go to college, even though I had to work to stay there. I am glad for that because of three things which I remember. One was that we learned to worship and love God. The second was that my mother and father had been missionaries to Africa -- and I think everybody needs to get out of this country, if for no other reason than to appreciate this land when they get back. My mother said every night -- for we were old fashioned enough to have family devotions -- "You get down on your knees and thank God you are a citizen of the United States of America." I rejoice in that kind of background. I wouldn't take a million dollars for it! The third thing she said was, "You ask God to give you gumption and you won't ever have to ask anybody else to give you anything." I'd just like to shout that from the housetops.

May I say a word about the Constitution, because I think it is in keeping with what I am saying with regard to work. This country does not guarantee any of us equality of achievement or results. It does afford us equality of opportunity. I want to see everybody -- irrespective of religion, racial background, or national origin --

have that opportunity to rise on the "ladder." It is still up! You can still get on the lower rung and climb. You have that opportunity.

Those men who got together and drew up that Constitution were not wild-eyed fanatics. They were men of education. They were men of fortune. May I also say that they were men who had not only a great deal to lose, but these men who formed the Constitution of the United States were not fighting against their own government. They were fighting against domination by a foreign power. That's the difference between them and the rabble rousers. They said, "Give us liberty or give us death." They don't belong to this modern ilk who say, "Gimme."

Those men had three options: liberty, death, or compromise. They didn't compromise their principles. They didn't negotiate. They didn't say, "We're going to work out a simple, easy truce and for a time forestall the final day of reckoning." They made the hard choice.

In the early days of the Church there was an old Roman by the name of Tertullian. A lot of Christians who, by putting just a little pinch of incense on the altar to Caesar, were able to save their own hides. It seemed like such a little concession to make. When asked about it, Tertullian answered with a question: "Must you live? That is the spirit which has made churches great, and it is the thing that has made this country great -- individuals who were people of purpose and people of conviction.

* * *

Love Is Worthwhile

The third element is love. That which we see in the picture is physical love, which is indeed the foundation of the family. It is the mutual concern for the welfare of another. That is the basis of the home and the family. This enters not only into the home, but reaches out into the community and on into the nation. It has to start somewhere. The place for it to begin is right in the home where we express mutual concern for others. In fact, the family is a nation within a nation; it is a republic within a republic, a school within a school, a church within a church. When things go right at home, then things go right everywhere. This is a meaning which we see in "The Angelus" -- this human element -- a man, a woman, a family, a home.

There are some things which are beyond the physical that are more important. You can love with the eyes and the thoughts of life. That is why we are taught to love God with the mind. We arrive at truth intuitively. Our early forebears in that Declaration said, "We hold these truths to be self-evident," meaning that we know this knowledge which we have of God to be something that we arrive at intuitively. The only way we can understand the rights of man is to know the nature of God.

There is also what we call the love of conscience, the love of pity. None of us should ever lose pity or compassion. That is always a great, vital emotion that we must keep alive in our minds and hearts, even in a world like ours. We don't want to become hard, cold, and perverse to human need.

Then there is even a higher form of love, and that is what I call cosmic love. That is man's love for his world, man's love for his universe. A man, even to make a good farmer needs to love the soil, and wants to put more into it. Unless one learns to do that, he will certainly squander the resources of this wonderful planet on which we are given the privilege of living. With cosmic love we can say with the poet: "Jungle or town or surf or sea; I loved God's earth, and God's earth loved me."

The highest of all forms of love is expressed in the language of the Bible, especially the great example of our Christ Who laid down His life that we might have life eternal. It reaches its highest peak in terms of divine love as expressed by a person in military duty for his country. Jesus complimented the centurion and said He had never seen such faith in all Israel. He also made it very clear and very plain that to follow Him did not necessarily mean that we should forsake the governments of men. He taught us to "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's." But on the other hand He said, "Render unto God the things that are God's." He recognized the great, underlying principle of what we all desire, and that is peace.

I personally believe that our best defense is freedom "under God." Other nations in the world besides ours are world powers. The difference between them and us is that phrase, "under God." It is only when we lose His blessing that we have anything to fear. As long as we are willing to take God as our defense and exalt Him in our arms and in our forces, then I believe there is hope, always hope.

Against this background that I have described -- the pressures and tensions in the world, the conflict about us in the struggle between races and nations and between age groups and individuals -- I want to remind you of the words of our Lord as recorded in the Gospel of John 16:33 -- "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation." but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

I am happy we can have trust in the strong arm of the Son of God, Who, I believe, will honor our nation as long as we honor Him, but Who will blast us once we decide to allow ourselves to take sides with the enemies of Christ and His Church and blaspheme Him.

Nothing can stand in the way of those who are willing to worship, work, and love -- to love God, to love one's country, and to love one's fellowmen. This is best summed up in a poem called "The Survivor" written by Fredric Lawrence Knowles:

When the last day is ended,
And the nights are through,
When the last sun is buried
In its grave of blue;
When the stars are snuffed like candles,
And the seas no longer fret,
When the winds unlearn their cunning,
And the storms forget,
When the last lip is palsied,
And the last prayer said,
Love shall reign immortal
While the worlds lie dead.

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02 -- THE NEEDS OF THE NATIONS

"When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn," Proverbs 29:2.

"Woe to thee Oh land, when thy king is a child, and thy princes eat in the morning," Ecclesiastes 10:16.

The general theme of this present series is: Things That Are Worthwhile. We are thinking especially of the nations -- yours and mine. History declares that the morals of a nation seldom rise higher than the virtue of the rulers. One can make impurity popular and national; another can give moral tone to a whole empire. Sin in the lives of individuals who are in prominent, responsible places make sin, as it were, respectable and many times acceptable. The slums accept most people with the bestiality of crime, but it is amazing how the corruptness of politicians and men in other high places can put a premium upon iniquity. We are being shocked that sin in high places so quickly comes down to be entertained by the ordinary and even the insignificant individual.

It is with thankfulness to God that we still have many moral men in places of authority. I have rejoiced to meet, to listen to, and be told of, many who are thoroughly Christian, whose hands hate a bribe, whose brains never experience the fever of intoxication, and whose tongues have never been smitten with blasphemy or defiled with a lie. Thank God, we still have those in places of responsibility who remind us of the defiant challenge of a Martin Luther and the burning lightning of Micah and Habakkuk. I say, we need to thank God that we still have men and women who are the salt of the earth and the light of the world, working in our government and in various governments of the world. While this is true, we need to recognize that on the other hand Satan with his iniquitous and poisoned arrows is penetrating high places through the destruction of righteous and godly

foundations. I pray that God will help us to be forthright in our living lives of purity and holiness and denouncing and uprooting wickedness to the nth degree.

King David must be made to feel the reproof of Nathan. Felix needs to tremble before Paul. If we keep back the truth, what will we do in the day when the Lord rises up in judgment and we are tried, not only for what we have said, but for what we have failed to say?

*** * ***

Competency

One of the great needs of the nations of this hour is competency. Almost daily we are being shocked by those who are in office that are unqualified. A person who struggles for official position for which he has no qualification and then wins that position commits a crime against God and against society. It is no sin for me to be ignorant of medical science. But if I set myself up as one who has an absolute cure for cancer and trifle with the lives of people, then I am guilty -not only of incompetency, but deception and outright lying. Those who suffer at my hands can hold me accountable.

What shall I say about those who are in places of responsibility -- in areas of national life who are without qualification to direct the affairs of men and nations? What a sad commentary on the population of a community or nation that will elect and then reelect incompetent, immoral, dishonest individuals. From top to bottom we need to give new emphasis to competency, in national and state capitols, in judgeships, in the schoolroom, in every area of life.

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Temperance

Another crying, screaming need is temperance. How sad when we have legislators who are more celebrated for their drunkenness than for their statesmanship. We hang our heads in shame when men who have been placed in high places are known to be living in the gutters of intemperance. Oh! for a revival that will cause men to become conspicuous for their integrity and uprightness and help us all -- young people and older people -- to admire them for the same. We've had enough of men in public places who have disgraced the nations. Occasionally a mysterious death takes place. The doctor has fixed up the case so that it looks like, and perhaps in part was, a disease of the liver, or exhaustion from patriotic services, but God knew, and the rest of us could read between the lines, that it was multiplied intemperances. The pomp of the land may have raised the flags of respect. Leaders may have walked with uncovered heads beside the casket and the grave side -- beautifully adorned -- but all the while, the inflexible, unchangeable Word of God declares, "Sin is a reproach" (Proverbs 14:34).

One of the things that has shocked me to the depths in the last few years is that dissipation to a great extent is no longer a hindrance to office. Even though it is revealed that a man can be repeatedly dead drunk and given to adultery of the worst kind, yet, as I said a few moments ago, he is still reelected to office. In the daytime, in the halls of national buildings he makes pleas in behalf of the interest of the country, and then in the night-time he illustrates what Solomon said, "He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks," Till a dart strike through his liver... Proverbs 7:22-23.

What was it that actually brought devastation and death to Pearl Harbor: it was drunkenness in the saddle. We find something in cranberries that causes cancer and we dump tons of them into the sea. At the same time, expert medical research reveals something a thousand-fold worse in producing cancer as well as other diseases. It wrecks lives, divides homes, and slaughters people on the highways, but because of the love of money, the liquor flows and the tobacco grows! Iniquity is permitted to run unchallenged simply because it approves a certain affluency. We stand back and let the libertine, the drunkard, and the pervert ride by in his fifteen-thousand-dollar limousine, but clutch the neck of the poor man who transgresses in the ordinary walk of life. And be assured, I'm not excusing his sin! I am denouncing that principle which takes into account sin in the common ordinary walks of life but shouts, "Hurrah" to the grand iniquities in high places. I pray that throughout our entire land and around the world, in every nation, the cry will go out against iniquity. Don't forget it, my friend, God's indignation is gathering like the flakings in the threatening clouds just before the swoop of the tornado.

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Honesty

The third need of the nations, is honesty. No tragedy and sin are greater the world around than dishonesty. The phase of dishonesty known as bribery blocks good legislation. Again and again, newscasters, newspapers, and magazines are blowing the trumpet, revealing devilish bribery. It is rotting the fiber of politics. Our unions, business and educational institutions -- and God help us, even in some instances, in the realm of religions -- there is a bill which is known to be very difficult to get through the legislature. Friends are called together. A dinner is provided, intoxicating liquors are served, and bribes are offered to accomplish the purposes of Satan. We are being told again and again that some of the finest homes and mansions are built on bribes. Automobiles and airplanes are built or chartered from ill-gotten gains of bribery. Contracts are accepted on the basis of bribery. In multiplied ways Satan is putting his hand on the steering wheel of the vehicle of industry which is giving transportation to dishonesty. This deadly termite is seriously eating away the structure of civilization. The time has come when we need to put in public position men who cannot be bought. I say, O God help us in the professing church to be honest, clean, upright, and able to present to this world

men who lead us on in high, holy, and godly principles. If this doesn't happen and Jesus tarries much longer in His second return, He may have to make another trip to the beach and choose twelve plain, honest fisherman who will come up into the leadership of the church with their righteousness that is both Godward and manward.

Coming through the things that we have in the last number of years, I say, thank God for a republican form of government. Apart from this, some of our nations would have been consumed long ago. Right here in this United States of America there have been swindles, deceptions, and revelations that would have completely engulfed, swamped, and destroyed dictatorships.

* * *

Sincerity

In the fourth and final place I declare to you that the need of my nation, your nation, the nations of the world is sincerity. If there wasn't anything you and I could do about this matter of which I have been speaking, I wouldn't waste time in presenting this subject, Listener, there are things we can do!

First of all there are some people who need to quit thinking about political office and about certain other key, strategic positions unless they get their moral principles in line with those of the Holy Spirit. I would say to you who are seeking places of responsibility where you are going to have great influence over other individuals, that you better not get into an area where you are going to be greatly tempted unless you're fireproof!

Hundreds and thousands of even respectable men have been destroyed for this life and the life to come because they lacked moral principle to bear up under temptations, allurements, and pressures. To be placed in certain positions and offices without moral principle means that before very long you'll become a known liar, gambling with public funds and with people themselves. You will become little more than an impure, immoral devil. We who are in the ordinary walks of life -- who make our way through the streets of daily responsibilities, who have an influence, even though it may not be as great as those in high places -- need to have our moral natures sharpened in the areas of competency, temperance, and honesty. We need this in our everyday living; we need it at the ballot box and in our homes. The fact is that here is where all of this starts; it is the incubator of either disintegration or of a solid foundation which builds a solid, God-honored structure.

None of us, neither you nor I, can say that we have nothing to do with these matters. If we do, then we insult the graves of our forefathers who have given to us what we enjoy today. We will also insult the graves of our children who may live to feel the results of our negligence.

Finally, let me say we need to be sincere in evangelizing people, getting the hearts of men right with God. When this happens there will be a change of influence, character, and fragrance in our capitols, in our halls of legislature, in our business, in our educational institutions, in the fiber of our unions, -- our homes, and in our churches. Get the hearts of people right and they will live right. That Sunday school teacher who teaches a half dozen boys the truth that they need to be born of the Spirit, live in the Spirit, and walk holy, righteous lives will do more for the future of any country than the man who writes the finest essay on the Constitution.

Oh, that God will give us the kind of revival that will place deity in the hearts of humanity. What we want is a mighty revival of the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ that reaches from sea to sea, and from nation to nation. When someone asked one of our great men what he thought of revival, he said, "I think so much of it that I cannot put my faith in anything else." When men turn to God, their lives are changed and transformed under the influences of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. This will uproot the evils that I have been talking about and that we now deplore so much in our land and around the world.

And now remember, my listener, that we are at last to be judged -- not as nations, but as individuals. When empires and republics have all gone down, you and I shall have to give an account for ourselves, for what we have done, or for what we have neglected to do. Remember, "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment," Hebrews 9:27.

May God help us to become more and more sensitive to the needs of our nation and the nations of the world. May God help us to serve Him and to live for Him.

One of these days Jesus Christ is going to be on the throne of this world and this universe, and if we are faithful to Him, He will say to us, "... Well done, thou good and faithful servant enter thou into the joy of thy Lord," Matthew 25:21.

God bless you.

* * * * *

03 -- THE TRIUMPHANT DAY

"... who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" Esther 4:14.

There are times when speech is useless and words are a mockery because the soul is filled with woe. In such an experience a cry is more eloquent than a speech. Mordecai, realizing that his people, his nation are in danger of annihilation,

rends his clothes, puts on sackcloth with ashes, goes out into the midst of the city, and cries with a loud and bitter cry.

Often circumstances arise which test character, faith, and confidence, though darkness may prevail. The winds of adversity and perverseness may be loud and cold and friends may seem to be few; yet with faith, trust, and confidence in God, deliverance can come and men and nations be snatched from the clutches of the devil. God in His infinite knowledge for the preservation of Israel had permitted Esther, the beautiful, to become the wife of Ahasuerus, the abominable king. The crisis moment had come! It was up to Esther to present a petition to her infamous husband in behalf of the Jewish nation of which she was a part. She became fearful, lest she would lose her own life. Her uncle, with faith in God, encouraged her with the thought that she had been raised up of God for a peculiar mission to save his people.

His message to her was: "... who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" Esther 4:14.

Mordecai was praying, and others whom Esther had called to pray trusted God, until finally she said, "... if I perish, I perish," 4:16.

She was willing to obey, even though it meant death. As a result, the book of Esther records one of the most unique triumphs of all time. Israel was saved. Once again at this very moment we are living in the history of the world when all the forces of light and darkness, heaven and hell are plunged into the fight of right and wrong. The future will depend on the degree in which we find and fulfill the mighty purposes of God.

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The Triumph Over Timidness

First of all, there must be triumph over timidness. We must be unmistakably aggressive Christians in order to meet the demand of this hour. There is no place for "half and half" or so-called mediocre Christians. Such have always been the chief obstacle to the advancement of the cause of Christ and the cause of right.

No civilization ever fell while its people were sincerely and wholeheartedly right with God and aggressively serving Him. The prophets of Israel repeatedly warned the people and the nations about impending doom if they continued to be at ease in Zion and failed to rid themselves of wickedness and idolatry. The ruins of Samaria preach a powerful message on how Israel fell before Syria, because she had fallen away from God. Secular history down through the centuries shouts the same warning.

Arnold J. Toynbee, world-renowned philosopher and historian, lists 19 great civilizations that have collapsed. He declares that only 3 of them have been conquered by enemies from without. It was timidity, tepidness, idleness, drunkenness, and physical immorality that produced weakness and finally destruction.

In his monumental history, The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Edward Gibbon stated the reasons for the catastrophic collapse of mighty Rome. The rapid increase of divorce, belittling the sanctity of the home; higher and higher taxes, while the public money was being wasted; a mad craze for pleasure which became increasingly exciting and brutal; gigantic armaments for war, while the nation decayed internally; and the decline of religion with faith fading into mere form. I declare to you, that if these are the signs of coming national collapse, surely the termites of destruction are eating into the timbers of our boasted civilization. Listener friend, it's high time that you be an aggressive Christian and not one who just sits around spending time hugging the Christian graces and lamenting the badness of the hour.

My dear listener, God is calling you to be a stalwart Christian, one who is the salt of the earth and the light of the world in this corrupt and dark day in which we live. God has no place for "flowerpot Christians," who merely spend time sheltering themselves. He wants to plant you in the great garden of this world so the whole atmosphere in which you live can become fragrant and beautiful with your Christian usefulness. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself was willing to leave heaven's throne and enter this world through the door of Bethlehem's stable. With the crushed hand of the crucifixion He made possible the forgiveness and the defeat of the iron gate of sin. Liberation from the tomb of stone declared Him to be conqueror over death, Satan, and hell.

Christian friend, this is no time for timidity when all the forces of darkness seem to be in full blast, when printing presses are pouring forth the literature of hell, and when transportation systems are carrying the messengers of sin. Indescribable iniquity is polluting society. The sneering laughter of demons is destroying never-dying, immortal souls. The fires of the second death are already kindled in the spirits of multitudes. Never since the curse came upon this earth has there been a time when it was so unwise, when it was absolutely cruel and awful for the Christian and the so-called Christian church to be timid and sleepy. The greatest audiences are not gathered in our Christian churches, but rather in temples of sin. Their tears of unutterable woe are their baptism, where the blood of crushed hearts is the awful whine of their sacrament. Blasphemies are their form of worship. The groans, moans and sighs of this lost world are the organ music in their edifice of worship. To all Christians who have become timid, tepid, mediocre and lost the first love, God is saying,

"Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works," or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent," Rev. 2:5.

I say unto you, with an aroused, devoted, determined Christian faith on the part of each one of us, this can be the triumphant day!

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The Triumph Of Adaptability

In the second place I call your attention to the triumph of adaptability. If we are going to make this the triumphant day, we must avoid, on one hand the attacking and destroying of cherished, worthwhile, well proven beliefs. Too many take the position that anything in the past is a sham; on the contrary, we need to give caution not to stick too much to things simply because they are old. I have lived long enough to see and realize that many things of the past are supremely worthwhile. To abandon them means that we abandon ourselves to destruction. The last decade or two has brought on an unprecedented multiplication of new plans, projects, theories of government, and in some respects, so-called new theologies. It is amazing to see how many so-called Christians want only novelty in order to recommend a thing to be worthwhile. They vacillate, swing to and fro, and become useless and unhappy. In every area, the secular, ethical, philosophical religious people are talking, dialoguing, and existentializing on things which make a line long enough to reach around the world. My friend, do not take a hold of a thing merely because it seems to be new. The fact is that many things which people feel are new are just the old cliches, activities, and philosophies of Satan presented in a new garb. Test things by the eternal, unchanging, inerrant Word of God. Bring new innovations and those things of which you are not sure in the presence of God and ask the Holy Spirit to guide you. Be sure to try all these things by the realities of a final judgment day.

On the other hand, do not adhere to things merely because they are old. Go back just a brief time in the history of the church and you will find that men derided even Bible societies. When a few young men met near a haystack in Massachusetts and organized the first missionary society in this country, there were laughter and ridicule throughout the Christian church. They declared the thing to be preposterous. All of you who read your New Testament know that the work of Jesus was assailed. Here came a man from Capernaum and Gennesaret drawing His illustrations from the lakes, the sand, ravines, lilies, and cornstalks. The Pharisees scoffed, Herod derided, and people hissed at Him. The crescendo of antagonism, cynicism, and persecution increased until they plucked His beard, spat on His face, and called Him "this fellow."

Church history reveals that most all the great enterprises which we consider really worthwhile and indispensable at this moment were scoffed at. Church leaders

and organizations declared that the chariot of God's truth would fall to pieces if it once got out of the old rut. And so there are those who have no patience with anything that's a bit different. God help us to pray, seek the mind of the Spirit, follow the directions of the Word of God, and wake up to an adaptability of ministry that will move men for Christ.

Two-hundred-thousand people are being born into this world every day. The church of Jesus Christ is lagging way behind in its ministry to keep up with this growing population. There are millions who do not have a Bible to read, a church to attend, and a Bible class where they can receive instruction. More than ever before, we Christians need to be living epistles, read and known of all men, instead of a dead letter post office. In an unprecedented manner we are witnessing the invasions of Satan and sin into every area of society. It is time for us to marshal the infantry of heaven and confront the enemy with a forward charge. There is work for everyone of us to do -- in our homes, in our daily activities, business, education, in the pulpit, before this microphone -- and other multiplied ways. I pray that both you and I will feel anew and afresh the Lord Almighty putting His hand upon us in an effective ordination. I tell you, in order for this to be a triumphant day the Gospel must go forth; it must penetrate, change, and transform lives. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I say to you, be sure to be a witness for Him, for his cause, and for the sake of the salvation of mankind.

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The Triumph Of Truth

Thirdly, I call your attention to the triumph of truth. If this is to be a triumphant day we must have an unbounded, unquestioned faith in the triumph of God's holy truth. I'm discovering many people who find it hard not to give up hope. We need to renew an historic declaration of dependence upon divine providence. This nation is utterly dependent upon divine providence for preservation from convulsions within and catastrophe without. Both the present perils and the future potentialities are so staggering that they demand extraordinary faith in our great God.

Several years ago an atheistic director holding in his hands the power to bring death to multiplied millions in a matter of minutes, strutted across the stage of human history and boasted of his power to destroy and to bury free nations. Hear me, my friend, as long as we have a vital faith in God, will trust Him and aggressively serve Him, we can be sure that such a thing cannot happen. Nothing but the reality and the recognition that God reigns can give us peace of mind and a triumphant day. Hear me, hear me, my friends, we need to make our declaration of dependence on the providence and the grace of Almighty God and pledge Him our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor. If we fail to do this, we stand in the peril of being salt that's lost its savor and a candle that is no longer lighted.

I say unto you, God is truth! Jesus declared Himself to be the truth, and as one of His children, we can be sure of triumph. It didn't take God long to slay the hosts of Sennacherib or burn Sodom and Gomorrah and shake down Jericho. Peter in his second epistle reveals to us that when God arises in His strength to overthrow all the forces of iniquity, that their resistance will be completely futile. You may feel that the chariot wheels of God's gospel are moving slowly, but I say unto you, look to the Word of God -- it has never failed! It never will fail! It's the sure promise and yonder is the throne. Despots plan, armies march, politicians of nations are struggling to adjust the affairs of this world, but the true, genuine triumph is given to us in the Bible.

Out of the starry flags and the blazing insignias of this world, God is making a path for His Own triumph. Very soon He is going to appear in the Person of His Son and will become the grandest, strongest, most glorious and completely righteous ruler of mankind.

Listener friend, be faithful! Just a few more steps, a few more battle cries, and the crown which God has provided will be eternally yours. God bless you.

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04 -- GOD'S REMEDY

"So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them... But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands," Jonah 3:5, 8.

All of us recognize we are living in serious days. Nationally and internationally it appears as if there is nothing but darkness and destruction ahead. No man or group of men is able to successfully and adequately solve our problems. However, there is a solution. There is a remedy. It is not man's but God's. His remedy is bitter, but it will do the work. It is just plain, simple, rugged, old fashioned repentance. Some of you consider this type of message outdated. My friend, it isn't that -- it is rather the attitude of sinful self-sufficiency. God is not wanted. Men do not feel that they need Him. They are unwilling to acknowledge their sins and needs. This is our trouble nationally. There will never be peace and security until men get back to God. They must repent, confess their sins, and turn from the error of their way. Apart from this, it is certain and terrible destruction.

Robert Peel, one of England's greatest statesmen, and at one time prime minister, arose in the House of Commons, in the presence of an indignant party and an astounded country, and said, "I have been wrong. I now ask Parliament to repeal the law for which I myself have stood. Where there was contentment, I see discontent; where there was peace, I see turbulence; where there was loyalty, I see

disloyalty." Then the fury of party anger burst upon him, and bowing to the storm, Robert Peel went forth, while men hissed after him such words as "traitor, coward, and recreant leader." Through that decision, he lost an office, but he gained the love of a country. It cost him something to acknowledge that he was wrong, change his mind, and make a right decision.

The book of Jonah reveals that the city of Nineveh was characterized by violence and extreme wickedness. God had decided that the only thing which was left for this city was destruction, but in His love and mercy, He also decided that He would give them time and opportunity to repent. To Jonah He said, "Go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me," Jonah 1:2.

Jonah failed God at first, but finally in mercy, he was brought back where he was ready to preach. I can imagine that when Jonah first came to town, people thought he was a rather "crummy, half-witted" preacher, but it wasn't long until they learned that this "shy" preacher had a "whale" of a message.

After Jonah preached his scathing message, for three days the king of Nineveh got down from his throne, laid off his royal robes, and sent a decree all over Nineveh for every man and beast to humble themselves in sackcloth and ashes. He demanded that "... neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything: let them not feed, nor drink water. But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands," Jonah 3:7, 8.

This is a type of genuine repentance that is needed today. To so repent -- to acknowledge our wrongs and sins may not be an easy thing to do and may puncture pride, but if we are honest with ourselves, our fellowmen, and with God, this is the thing we will do. It is God's cure and the only cure for our sick nation and world.

Nineveh was not a city of Israelites; neither were they a God-fearing people, but pagans. Because they humbled themselves, however, and repented, God spared them. Forty is the number of probation, and they were on trial for the last time. God in granting this period of time reveals that He was not hasty in His judgment, but gave them ample season in which to escape His wrath. At the end of the forty days, their probation was to be forever past, if they refused to repent.

I declare to you that if God could have justly and righteously sent that pagan city to hell, in which there were 120,000 people who didn't know their right hands from their left, what will He do with nations today if they fail, and there is refusal to repent? These people had no Bible and no revival meetings. There were not churches on every corner; they didn't know anything about altar calls or inquiry rooms, and all the means of salvation as we know it today; yet all of them would have been damned if they had turned away from this final warning.

My friend, can you tell me what God will do with nations today some of which are called Christian nations, if they continue to turn down the flood of light which God gives and if they continue to reject the mercy, righteousness, and holiness of the Lord Jesus Christ? We need to call to mind the words of Holy Writ which state that

"Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people," Proverbs 14:34.

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Believed God

Without a doubt, repentance is an individual experience of heart; yet when the people of a community or nation are moved by the truth of God, repentance should become a national exercise. Such seems to have been the case with the population of Nineveh; Jonah's witness was believed by one and by another until belief became general. Penitence, fear, and supplication spread from man to man. The city was moved by one common impulse which led the whole population to the feet of God.

No doubt Jonah was strangely impressed as he entered this heathen city. At the gate of entrance, he saw the figures of winged, colossal bulls that kept silent, symbolic guard. In every prominent place, he saw a palace, monument, or an idol temple, guarded by a monstrous god of stone. The markets were filled; merchants were carrying on their crooked business; soldiers and war chariots paraded the streets; evidences of cruel power and heathenish worship abounded on every hand. There was also the abounding of luxury, corruption, violence, and sensuality. This preacher of judgment and destruction was strangely and deeply moved. His surprise gave place to horror; then horror warmed him into righteous indignation, and with the voice of a trumpet, and an eye of fire, he uttered the words of doom, "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown," Jonah 3:4.

Through the business places, the streets, the parks, the dens of licentiousness, this piercing message rang. At first Jonah's message was ridiculed and rejected, but when he related his recent experiences, he became a sign unto them, and the people believed the message of God. The highway of history in all the nations of the world is piled high with the debris of men who failed to believe God.

What about the general attitude of men toward God's Word today? God has given us laws and directions to preserve the sanctity of the home and marriage. He denounces vice, immorality, drunkenness, and sinful revelings, and yet we see these things abounding more and more. He warns us not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, but more and more men are neglecting God's Word and God's house. Thievery, trickery, and deception are all too prevalent. The religion of indifference, powerlessness, and hypocrisy is rising as a mighty stench in the nostrils of Almighty God. In spite of the fact that God says,

"The wages of sin is death," and "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," (Romans 6:23 and Galatians 6:7), men continue on in their indifference and unbelief. The words of our text which state that the people believed God certainly have great significance. The foundation of all true repentance is a whole-hearted acceptance of God's threatening, realizing the danger as well as the disobedience of our sin.

Some might have said in Jonah's day, and we know many are saying today, "Oh, that is just another preacher." We will be wise if we pass by the human instrument and hear God speaking through the prophet and the preacher. My friends, never mind about Jonah; never mind about this preacher, but be sure you believe God! You will never lose anything by believing and trusting in God, but if you fail to believe Him and His Word, you will not only lose things, but you will lose your soul in a devil's hell.

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Proclaimed A Fast

In the next place, we note that these people not only believed God with their heads, but they really believed God with their hearts. Immediately they began to do something about that which they were told. They proclaimed a fast, put on sackcloth from the greatest even to the least of them. I don't suppose there was ever a preacher who realized better and speedier fruit from his ministry than did Jonah at this time. By a single sermon, which was just a few sentences in length, an entire city repented in sackcloth and ashes. Very few times did the prophets in their utterances so move the Jews. Instead, they were beaten, stoned, and killed. Finally, a greater than Jonah, the Son of God Himself, came into this world, spoke to men, but in vain; Him they crucified. Unbelieving and lengthened contact with God's truth had produced an exceptional hardness of the Jewish nature. It is always the case that frequent contact with the truth, if it does not regenerate, only thickens the spiritual skin, hardens the heart, and men blatantly and defiantly reject God.

The greatest lesson which the prophets found Israel so slow to learn was learned by these heathens; namely, that a broken and contrite heart, God will not despise. We today can learn a great lesson from these Ninevites as to what is true repentance. They didn't bring sacrifices, offerings, and so on, but first of all sorrow, self-abasement, and amendment. If we want God to continue to smile upon us as He has in the past, we must have more than religious forms and ceremony, more than circumference piety. All of this will have to be preceded and superseded by repentance and confession before days of prayer will really bring the results that they should.

We shall have to ask God to forgive us for intemperance; we shall have to ask God to forgive us for spending money for that which is not bread. We shall have to

ask God to forgive us for our immodesty and immorality, and for seeking first, wealth, property, the applause of men, and giving Him a secondary place. We shall have to confess to Him our religious shallowness, hypocrisy, and indifference. If this very day would be characterized by the spirit of humiliation and penitence as characterized the people of Nineveh, we would begin to see a great change in this nation, even before tomorrow morning.

The present situation is not new, save in the increased intensity. It has been foretold from the beginning of the Christian dispensation that the only remedy is repentance in sackcloth and ashes. In Isaiah's day, Israel was in trouble. Some men suggested an increase of military strength; others suggested certain types of diplomacy. The priestly party suggested prayer, but Isaiah surprised them by saying that their praying wouldn't do them any good. He said, "First of all you have to clean house. You will have to get rid of your sins and your iniquities; ask God to forgive you for your transgressions, and then you can begin to pray and ask God to protect you from your enemies." When Josiah came to the throne, the land was reeking with sin and iniquity. He put down the idolatrous priests; he took the idols out of the house of the Lord, and ground them to powder. He demolished the houses of ill fame; he opened the sepulchres of false prophets, took out their bones and burned them. He brought Israel back orthodoxy. There was no king before him that turned to the Lord with all his heart, soul, and all his might, as did Josiah. With such a housecleaning, desirable results are inevitable.

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Cried Mightily

Note, finally, that these Ninevites not only believed God, in humility proclaimed a fast and put on sackcloth, but they cried mightily and unitedly to God. The words of the preacher were like a mighty earthquake to this vast city. From king to beggar, there were consternation and dismay; the destroying armies of heaven were at hand; the only alternative was destruction or submission to God and begging for mercy. A stricken, universal cry for help and forgiveness ascended into the ears of the God of heaven. Their true sense of sin, together with their realization that God was still extending mercy, led them to prayer. In the face of such universal and genuine repentance, God spared the city; there was nothing else He could do.

It is a reminder to us that all of God's promises and threatenings are conditional, but we also need to remember that God's Spirit will not always strive with men and nations. God has blessed. Knowledge has increased; wealth has accumulated; material blessings abound, but it is only as men and nations turn to God that they will find lasting satisfaction and security. We need most of all to repent of our sins and turn back to God. We have not only gone off the gold standard, but we have gone off the God standard.

Oh, that God would give us such an awakening as we experienced in 1856. Prior to that, corruption was abounding; there was a tremendous gulf between rich and poor; crimes of violence were increasing; false religions were flooding the land; the marriage relation was seriously assailed, and men were openly espousing the doctrine of free love. Corruption stalked through the land unashamed in political and commercial life. Atheism lifted its head boldly, and the mass of men seemed thrice-hardened and indifferent. Finally, there came a great commercial crisis; and the church then united its forces at the throne of grace.

That year, 200 ministers met in Pittsburgh, and after fervent prayer, an address was issued to be read at various churches on the first of January, 1858, recommending practical measures for the revival of true religion. The greatest measure which was preeminently blessed in bringing about the revival was united prayer. In one place in New York, 4,000 met daily to wait upon God. From every class, they massed together in a great stillness, broken only for a while by the sobs of penitents. White-haired sinners knelt with little children at the throne of grace. Whole families, multitudes of them, were brought to the Lord Jesus Christ. When the American church awoke to the full consciousness of the miracle, it extended from east to west and from north to south. The whole land was alive with daily prayer meetings, and it was in these daily, united prayer meetings that the great majority of conversions took place.

This revival was not only confined to the land, but the Spirit of God moved upon men as they were out at sea, and ship after ship arrived with the news that many were convicted and converted. Men who scoffed and mocked were gripped with conviction, and their mocking was changed into the cry of penitent sinners. Giants in sin were literally smitten and knelt down humbly at an altar of prayer as little children, confessing their sins, and receiving forgiveness. Oh, that God would give us another awakening such as that, and, my friends, He can and will do it, if we as a nation will pay the price.

My prayer is that God will help us to see our need and that we shall kneel in humility and penitence before Him, crying for mercy, forgiveness, and deliverance from sin and Satan.

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THE END