

*How is my soul troubled, and what shall I say?
Father, save me from this hour! But this came to pass
to this hour!* "THE BEST THINGS IN THE WORSE TIMES."
JOHN 12:27.

*On the walls of a 17th Century English church were found
these words*
"In the year 1653 when all things sacred, throughout the
nation were either demolished or profaned, Sir Robert Shir-
ley Barronet founded this church; whose singular praise it
is to have done the best things in the worse times and
hoped them in the most calamitous."

Amazing (The above inscription is to be found on the walls of a 17th
century English church. This was, indeed, a great tribute
to man had he not done anything but built a church in those
times. But he is said to have done many other worthwhile
things.

He was a man undaunted by:

- a. Depression.
- b. By the presence of evil and sin in the world.

It was his singular praise that he had done the best things
in the worse times. His example can well be a challenge to
us or any generation when the darkness of evil descends up-
on our world.

History tells of many instances where men, lead by God, did
great and good things in bad times. Down in Egypt there was
a people living the life of slavery, held down by the hand
of a cruel tyrant, forced to obey his extremest demands. The
day was dark for them. What chance had they as slaves against
a tyrant with a great army? But out of that darkness there
came a man blest with the help of God...Moses by name...and
accomplished the best things in those worse times in leading
his people out of Egyptian bondage. Lead them to the Land
of promise.

Some
Some of the greatest steps mankind has ever taken have come
in the most unfavorable times and in spite of the most dis-
couraging conditions.

- a. The EARLY CHURCH rose up from the mire of a pagan Roman Em-
pire. In spite of the great persecutions the inner power of

the FEW Christians overcame the great armed might of the Romans. (Again in the 16th century, the Reformation came as God's answer to the corruptness of the Roman Church in that day. Those were dark days...worse times if you please but in those worse times Protestantism arose to save the world. OUR OWN METHODISM arose out of the period described in the inscription I read to you awhile ago.)

Historians are agreed that England owes much of her wealth and power to John Wesley and his followers who carried the gospel up and down the British Isles.

Our Pilgrim Fathers landed on the bleak rock bound shores of New England to suffer some of the most trying ordeals ever experienced by any group of pioneers. They made the best of difficult times and by faith and courage in worse times helped to permanently settle America.

To day we need to hearken to our heritage and take hope in the midst of calamity howling. It would indeed be a pollyanna who would say that "All is well with the world" And yet as Christians we should accept the challenge to do the best things in the worse times. They have been done before and they may be done again and continuously.

There are at least three things that we as Christians can do in the worse times to accomplish the best things:

I. In the worse times we can believe that God is active in the world.

We have to admit that lots of things go on in the world that make it appear to some that the world is out of control of a higher power. Some are asking, "If there is a God where is He that all this evil, suffering, and war goes on?" These are reasonable questions for those whose faith has not gone far enough to realize that we are given freedom of choice to choose what things we will do. Now that we have made a mess of things we want to blame God with and expect Him to come in and make things right. It is not going to work out that way. We who have mismanaged things are the ones through whom God will have to work to make things right and we will have to change in to people willing to go His way before He can do that.

The evidence for belief in God has not disappeared.
 As one has said, "From the heart of the daisy to the farthest rim of the horizon we can see the evidence of God."

IN EVERY FLOWER THAT BREAKS THE SOIL
 IN EVERY BUSH AND TREE
 I SEE THE HANDIWORK OF GOD
 DESIGNED FOR YOU AND ME
 IN SUNRISE GLORIOUS AND BRIGHT
 IN SUNSET CALM AND CLEAR
 I DRINK THE BEAUTY OF THE SIGHT
 AND FEEL THAT GOD IS HERE.

*water level -
 Nov. 1958.*

What about the rain?

The forces of evil do not have any power over nature. All the war lords, bandits, and Communist can not change the coming of the seasons. Last spring the trees and flowers awoke from their sleep and clothed themselves in green finery. To day they are rapidly preparing for another winter of sleep. But as we see the leaves fall leaving the limbs bare we know of a certainty that next spring they will be clothed again. So long as life goes on and so long as nature speaks of God that long can we have evidence for our belief in Him and that is forever and ever.

God has outlived all crises in history. The worse times have come before and have faded away but the best things and God have gone on. He will outlive this one. As Christians we are called upon to witness to His existence and the supremacy of His laws by noble living and pure lives.

2. In the worst times we can believe that eternal values still remain.

It is so easy for us in these days to look at the best things as they are destroyed and assume that they are eternally destroyed. Yet history speaks again in clear perspective to tell us that the best things have always lasted.

Read of Caesar and his conquests. Yet the things that remain from the days of his conquests are not military trophies but the Christian religion, and architecture.

What are the virtues which outlast all others? Well material power is not one of them. Hear one who said, "Those who have fastened their grip on earthly power have gone down when the dust of the ages has gathered to itself the crumbling ruins

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of once mighty armies and great empires. History has judged and the material powers of the earth have been found wanting!"

What are the outlasting virtues?

a. Love. It will be here when all evil doers have been forgotten. It is one of the laws of our world that a loveless life does not reproduce itself.

b. TRUTH. Hear Bryant:

"Truth crushed to earth shall rise again
The eternal years of God are hers."

c. GOODNESS. To day if we would seek the best things in the bad times we must have the virtue of goodness.

3. In the worst times we can believe that out of chaos will come a NEW DAY.

Sir Robert Shirley not only did the best things in the worst times but it says that "Hoped them in the most calamitous. He had hope. We must maintain Hope. Fredrich Von Schiller said,

"Have hope though clouds environ around
And gladness hides her face in scorn
Put off the shadow from thy brow
No night but hath its morn."

We need the faith and hope that sees beyond the darkness of our day, a stab of light in the sky which is evidence of the light of God that will bring in a new day.

The example of all this we have been saying is Jesus. Here we hear Him say, "Now is my soul troubled and what shall I say? Father save me from this hour: but for this cause came I to this hour. Father glorify thy name?" Then came there a voice from heaven saying I have both glorified it and will glorify it again." God has always been where He could hear us. Here was One who brought the best things into worst times. The empty Cross and the empty grave symbols of the "BEST THINGS IN THE WORST TIMES" And to with our sails unfurled to the breeze of God's word we can believe that we can achieve the best things in these bad times.

76 Shall we pray? our Father help us
To face this day and every day with faith
rather than doubt - with hope rather than
despair - knowing that I have out with us - and