

PIERCING THE IRON CURTAIN

History has a way of adding words, phrases and expressions to our vocabularies through situations. During the recent war we found ourselves speaking of BLITZKREIGS, RADAR, and referring to those persons who would betray you as "QUISLINGS". Following the war we began referring to the BERLIN BLOCKADE and speaking of COLD WARS. Now, recently we have begun to talk of POLICE ACTION and the IRON CURTAIN.

The iron curtain is a term known to all who listen to the radio, conversations, and read contemporary newspapers and periodicals. The term has become of great significance to those in government positions who deal in foreign policy. The situation represented by the term has left a great impact upon the lives of all men and it was greatly felt before we had hardly understood the real meaning.

Have you ever thought of how it would be to find yourself behind the Iron Curtain--imprisoned by GREED, HATE, and TYRANNY. Can you imagine the feeling of futility which you might experience knowing that only death or time could free you from its tenacles. Can you imagine the longing for the freedoms which those living in a democracy take for granted, and which you achieve only by dreams resulting from propoganda which might fall into your hands. We are prone to feel removed from such possibilities because of our cherished heritage. But what if you were to awaken to the realization that you were imprisoned behind the Iron Curtain...

LET US LOOK MORE CLOSELY

We are born into a life surrounded by an Iron Curtain. A curtain imprisoning us with GREED, TYRANNY, and HATE. We are born into this prison BECAUSE of our heritage--a heritage resulting from man's inability to overcome temptation. We are born into a life surrounded by the invisible walls of SIN.

For centuries mankind has sought a means of scaling the walls. Since man's first expulsion from the Garden of Eden it has been man's primary aim to gain his freedom. There have been many efforts in many different ways----and then a Man arose. Born into the life of the imprisoned--both spiritual and physical; born into a society imprisoned by the Roman Empire and a society imprisoned by the wiles of sin. He arose from the task of a carpenter and became a teacher of love and life. His purpose in life was to tear down the Iron Curtain---and as He hung upon that symbol of torture He cried out to His father and the curtain was rent from top to bottom.....

BUT DARKNESS REMAINED UPON THE LAND.....

The walls no longer stand, but we are born into that darkness. The darkness engulfs our lives and makes us prisoners. But the radiance of that Face as it hung upon the cross sends a piercing light into the blackness to lead us into the light. We are found prisoners of sin, but we find a way open leading to our freedom. For such a privilege of escape the world's millionaires would ransom their treasures if there were no other way..but there is a way--a way open to all and the way is simple.

The way is narrow, the pathway is bounded by pitfalls, but we have a companion to lead us, an arm to lead upon. But our responsibility

does not stop. We must make our own footsteps.

As we travel from the darkness unto the light we reach into the unknown and take hold of the arm of faith. Once we have taken hold we must put our entire trust in our leader. We must get our instructions and adhere to them wholly; we must follow as we are led. The faith upon which we lean is of two distinct natures. We must have faith in Christ and His disciples--we must believe that He did live and that He went about doing good. We must believe that He was God made man, that He did taste death and arose from the depths of the grave, and that He was taken away unto His father to await our joining Him. We must have faith in the physical truth of Christ before we can go any further.

Once we have accepted the physical truth of our religion, we are then ready to accept the second phase. We must then accept the promises of Christ -- the promise of our redemption, we must then accept the authority of His word. When we have accepted Christ and His teachings we have a firm hold upon the arm of faith.

We must not depend on our being led to freedom without exerting effort of our own. We cannot follow in the footsteps of others but we must make our own footprints.

We must keep ourselves assured that we are being led. We must talk with our leader. We must present Him our problems for His advice, When we stumble we must hold tighter. We keep in contact through PRAYER. We pay tribute to Him for His guidance and care. There can be no secrets separating us, there must be no forces pulling us from Him. We must become as one unit pulling together.

As we conform to His rules and desires, the pathway becomes clearer, the obstacles and pitfalls become visible and we find ourselves bathed in the light of His LOVE and MERCY.

But we cannot rest on our laurels. We have our own work to do. We must be forever watchful to see that the lurking walls of sin do not imprison us. Our safeguard against this is FAITH, WATCHFUL PRAYER and WORKS.

We must let the light emanating from our own relationship with the Holy Spirit shine forth as a beacon and help guide others into the light of freedom. Our own light may help others take hold of the arm of Christ. We must show love as we are loved by Christ. We must study His written word so that we may become more perfect. But our responsibilities fall into a pattern of joyful labor when we have Christ as our companion.

AS WE GROW IN GRACE WE ENCOUNTER BARRIERS

We are turned from the way when we grow lax in enthusiasm. We must be enthusiastic toward others. We must be ready and eager to lead others and offer a helping hand. We must testify of LOVE and GOODNESS that others might seek that which we have. CHRISTIAN LIVING MUST BE A FULL-TIME JOB. No matter what occupations we are engaged in there is a place for a spiritual partner. We cannot receive the full benefits afforded our lives without enthusiasm.

We are retarded by COMPLACENCY. We stop being concerned for others, we become stagnant in our spiritual endeavor and become satisfied with things as there are. We stop ministering to those who need us. We stop seeking a higher plane on which to stand and

become satisfied to give our minimum to God. We cannot grow this way, for the most we can do does not meet the standards Christ sets for us.

We have had our Iron Curtain torn away, we have been freed from our bonds. We have been given a new life. Now, we must work and work diligently that others may taste our freedom. We are bathed in the light of His grace and this light must engulf others that we may continue on the climb to brotherhood in Christ.