

Goodbye to Glory -- Ichabod
by R.G. Lee

"And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that he fell from off the seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died: for he was an old man, and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years. And his daughter in law, Phinehas' wife, was with child, near to be delivered: and when she heard the tidings that the ark of God was taken, and that her father in law and her husband were dead, she bowed herself and travailed; for her pains came upon her. And about the time of her death the women that stood by her said unto her, Fear not; for thou hast born a son. But she answered not neither did she regard it. And she named the child Ichabod, saying, the glory is departed from Israel because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father in law and her husband. And she said, The glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of God is taken. "- I Samuel 4:18-22.

Here we see swaddling clothes for the baby - and a shroud for the mother. Here we see a baby's cradle connected tragically with a woman's coffin. Here we hear a birth cry and a death gurgle at one and the same time.

The dying mother's last act was to name her child. "And she named the child Ichabod." And her last testimony was - as she thought upon the ark of God being taken by the Philistines - "The glory is departed from Israel.

"It was goodbye to glory!"

Let us make some applications of that statement, even though we may appear as those who carve epitaphs on tombstones, or as those who write obituaries, or as those who wailingly and discordantly participate in funeral dirges. Though we may be asking you to look through old windows upon scenes which others have described, though we may travel some well-worn and familiar trails, though we may serve the same food in somewhat different platters, still we make bold to ask you to remember that 'tis true'.

A NATION MAY LOSE ITS GLORY

The wife of Phinehas, passing through the swirling waters of the river of death, said: "The glory is departed from Israel "Thoughtfully scanning the pages of history, rubbing the dust of centuries off the tombs of some nations that underwent the frightful processes of self-burial, we can give the same testimonies concerning other nations. For 'tis true that, warmed by the sun which never loses its glory, a nation's sun may set in night. Under the stars - stars which never lose their splendor a nation's starry crown may lose its brightness, being displaced by a withered wreath of poison ivy or a circle of undesirable cactus, or by the brow becoming an eyeless, earless, tongueless, brainless skull.

Beneath the heavens which declare the glory of God, even as the firmament

showeth His handiwork, a nation that circled the clouds as a strong-winged eagle, can flutter among the clouds as a broken-winged vulture or squawking parrot. Among the flowery continents of God a nation can become a place of foul odours that make the righteous stop their noses.

[Ancient Babylon] Great was the glory of Babylon of old; but Babylon became a vermin-infested, animal-prowling jungle - Babylon, "the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency," became "as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah." Something of the tragic departure of its glory is told in these words:

"It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses and dragons in their pleasant palaces: and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged." - Isaiah 13:20-22.

[Ancient Carthage] Great was the glory of Carthage centuries ago. But her commanders became as impotent as skeletons of cattle scattered on desert sands. Her swift feet became as a cripple's walk - her clenched fist as the fumbling fingers of a paralytic.

[Ancient Syria] Wondrous the glory of Syria at a time when Eleanor's troubadours at Antioch bewitched the Syrian air with ballads of the South - and lightened the horrors of the second crusade. But Syria's glory departed when the following was said. "But this people hath a revolting and a rebellious heart; They are revolted and gone." - Jeremiah 5:23.

[Ancient Greece] Great was the glory of ancient Greece - especially from 450 B.C. to 350 B.C. - under Pericles. But Greece became a moulded crust in history's garbage heap. Greece had her Athens -- civilization's queen. Plato was hers. Socrates was hers. A vast multitude of seers was hers. Phidias, raising beautiful children unto Athens from the sterile womb of stone, marbled many places with sculptured wonders. The Muses tented in her gates and plumed the arts with eagle's wings. At many shrines the human brain bowed in reverence. But with all these persons, with all these things of beauty, Greece became a moulded crust in history's garbage can.

[Ancient Rome] Great the glory of the Rome of centuries far back and forever gone - especially from 50 B.C. to 60 A.D. - with her astute statesmen, with her close-meshed code of laws, with her sword-woven mantle, coin-embroidered, that fell on cities where merchants congregated and fattened on the spoils of trade, with her armies that feasted and fattened on blood.

Rome was mighty among the kingdoms - mighty wherever ships and swords and thrones and lust of gold and sovereignty constituted the boasted heritage of the

Goodbye to Glory -- Ichabod by R.G. Lee

age. But Rome and her glory became as a mouth full of pyorrhoeic gums holding rotten teeth, all loose and foul.

[Ancient Nineveh] Great the glory of the nation-like realm of Nineveh - with her winged lions symbolic of strength and speed. But Nineveh became as a vari-colored butterfly enmeshed and perishing in the net of a relentless spider.

[Ancient Egypt] Great the glory of old ancient Egypt - the land of the Pharaohs -the land of wealth and wonders. But it became a shabby sexton of splendid tombs - her torch of far-reaching splendor became a pot of smoke without one spark of remaining radiance.

[Ancient Spain] Great was the glory of ancient Spain - back there in the glorious years beyond recall. Wide and strong was the sway of her scepter. Her piratical ships harassed all the seas and filled her coffers with gold. But this nation, with climate and conquests and caches of coin, with thrones and crowns and scepters, with laughter and love and lure, with men and money and might, with fervor and force and fruit, became as a drowsy and lousy and frowsy beggar watching a broken clock.

[Ancient Jerusalem] And let us ask you to think of Jerusalem - "beautiful for situation" - as representative of the nation Israel. Triumphant were her temples. Her past "shines glorious as doth the moon on midnight seas." For favoured Jerusalem, kings kneeled down and prayed. For glorious Jerusalem, prophets, in tears and love, served. For beautiful Jerusalem, martyrs shriveled into flame. In Jerusalem's virgin face were eyes in which, deep-folded, lay prophecies of the Son of God.

But because within her sacred courts evil was girt with diadem, Jerusalem hardened her heart. Jerusalem bloodied her hands. Jerusalem deafened her ears. Jerusalem played the harlot. And Jesus described her then departing and afterward utterly departed glory in these words, "Thy house is left unto thee desolate."

Covered this blood-soaked earth with the wreck of once-glorious cities. Scarred the face of this war-blighted earth with the ruin of once-glorious nations. Marred the fair face of this world with the wreck of once-glorious civilizations - civilizations which have left behind them nothing but the smoke of the brilliant torch, nothing more than an empty name, nothing more than the shadow of a shadow.

What the Bible says about some nations and some cities - representatives in large measure of once- proud, once-strong, once-influential civilizations - is true of other nations and cities of the past and the present:

"For I have sworn by myself, saith the Lord, That Bozrah shall become a desolation, a reproach, a waste, and a curse; and all the cities thereof shall be perpetual wastes..."

Goodbye to Glory -- Ichabod by R.G. Lee

"Also Edom shall be a desolation. every one that goeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss at all the plagues thereof...

"And Hazor shall be a dwelling for dragons, and a desolation for ever; there shall no man abide there, nor any son of man dwell in it. " - Jeremiah 49:13,17,33.

"This is the rejoicing city that dwelt carelessly, That said in her heart, I am, and there is none beside me: how is she become a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down in! every one That passeth by her shall hiss, and wag his hand." - Zephaniah 2:15.

In America we must remember that the glory of a nation is righteousness and faith in God - and going the way God points - and in such is our security against all foes, our immunity against the ravages of time.

"For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish, yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted." - Isaiah 60:12. This sober truth that only righteousness exalteth a nation -- that if ever America loses her faith in God she will have to come off her pedestal, that pallbearers that carried other nations to their graves will do work for us if we forsake God and refuse to go the way He points -- was put upon our hearts once by the editor of the Watchman-Examiner in these words:

"We should remember that one hundred years ago Germany was regarded as the most Christian nation in Europe. Germany's evangelicalism was once so pronounced that Martin Luther gave us the marvelous translation of the Scriptures and directed the world to the Bible. The Scriptures so influenced the Home, the School, and the Church of Germany that the national life saw a phenomenal progress. Germany was now making terrific strides in science, art, and culture. Then came a day when innate conceit got to work. Christianity was emasculated. Christ was rationalized to be nothing more than a good man. The Holy Scriptures were reduced to a crazy quilt. Religion came to be built on negatives. God was dwarfed and man was deified. 'Let the strong survive,' became the new religion. Germany was decivilized and Hitler had no trouble getting his followers to arm to the hilt to conquer the world."

Let us ask the help of Almighty God in these days when men "loose wild tongues that hold not God in awe," when there are evils that would lead our greatest graces to the grave and leave the world no copy. When the atheistic deformities of our times would coerce us into substituting for Christianity's vital bread a chunk of froth scattered by miasmatic winds - lest our country become a despised Ichabod among the nations of earth.

A CHURCH MAY LOSE HER GLORY

"Thy glory hath departed "Too bad and too sad when that is spoken of a church about which glorious things once were spoken. 'Tis tragic, 'tis true that of some churches such is the epitaphic description of their decay, their inverted torch, their oil-less lamps, their turning back in the day of battle - though

[Goodbye to Glory -- Ichabod](#) by R.G. Lee

armed and carrying bows. That is grief for angels. That is laughter for devils. That is gloating for Satan. That is groaning for Christ's followers. A church can "leave its first love "The church at Ephesus did - and needed to "repent and do the first works "Revelation 2:4,5. A church can change from an army into an ecclesiastical nursery wherein the preacher is looked upon as a head nurse who has more to do with milk bottles for sickly saints than with mighty battles against seductive Satan. Then does its glory depart. A church can change from a church of compassionate concern into a church of callisthenic conventionality utterly devoid of devotional vitality - censorious of spiritual and far-sighted leadership, worldly, wayward, and peevishly puny. Then can Ichabod be written over its portals, its pews, its pulpit. A church can change from a cataract of activity into a scum-covered pond of stagnation.

Thus, forgetting that "she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth," she hastens the departure of her glory.

A church can change from a church of aggressive conquest into a church possessive of a slothful timidity, a passive acquiescence in small attainments, a criminal spineless in the face of evils that arrogantly challenge, a careless indifference to great stretches of the unattained.

Thus is Ichabod an appropriate adjective for its activities and aimlessness. A church can be a roller of marbles when it should be a remover of mountains. Thus does its spiritual muscle become flabby, its fingers fumbling, its feet halt - as the glory departs.

A church can put its headlight on the rear and think only of the glory that was. Then and thus does its light grow dim, its voice faltering, its spiritual ambitions anemic, its worship boresomely lacking in life, its glory one of the past. Pathetic the words that fell from the Master's lips. "And as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here!

And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? There shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down" Mark 13:1,2. They were great buildings. They were magnificent stones. But to his eyes they were nothing more than ruins, for the glory of the temple's worship and service had departed.

"But the Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart"- I Sam. 16:7.

Outwardly that beautiful and stately temple seemed destined to "defy the tooth of time." Inwardly it was hollow and empty and tottering to its fall. Write "Ichabod" upon it.

Is it possible for a church, when God calls it to "launch out into the deep "in the matter of soul-winning, to become "a drifting sepulcher manned by a frozen crew?"

Well, when academic luster takes the place of spiritual passion, when refrigeration is valued above conflagration, such is the danger. I once heard Dr. Perry Webb say: "The atmosphere in some churches is so cold, you can skate down the aisles."

Is it true that a church may be noted for the gorgeous architecture of its building, the lovely music of its choir, the stateliness of its ritual, the fine-functioning of all its organizations, the largeness of numbers as to its congregation, the influence in many circles of business and social and educational life - and yet be, in the eyes of Him who marks the sparrow's fall, as a corpse wrapped in an ornate shroud?

Of the church at Sardis, Jesus, risen and enthroned, said: "And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write, These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead."- Revelation 3:1.

Somebody described another church like unto the church at Sardis in these words:

Outwardly splendid as of old -
Inwardly sparkless, void and cold -
Her force and fire all spent and gone -
Like the dead moon she still shines on.

R.T. Ketcham once said:

"Attend church, but do not attend a church which prefers science to Scripture, reason for revelation, theories for truth, culture for conversion, benevolence for blood, goodness for grace, sociability for spirituality, play for praise, pep for prayer, profession for possession, progress for power, reformation for regeneration, good for God, speculation for salvation, jubilation for justification, feelings for faith, paralysis for peace, politics for precepts."

To this I make additional comment saying that a church deserves to have Ichabod written from its lowest cellar step to the sky-touching point of its steeple which prefers the adulation of saints to ardent anxieties concerning lost sinners as well as abhorrence of that which is evil.

Glory yields up its scepter - when the fancies of literary notables have place along with the facts of the gospel, when there is the frivolity of the flesh instead of the fervor of the spiritual in serving the Lord - godliness in form only instead of glorying in the cross of Christ - a groping after eternal verities - and a guessing that only borders on godliness as to the certainties of God's promises instead of a guidance of others into paths of righteousness. Glory "packs its baggage for a one-way trip" when in the church people are noted for faultfinding instead of being notable for forgiveness - when offense is quickly taken and there is overlordism instead of the offering of self for lowly service - when the making of money means more than the mastery of money. How can the glory of the church be as a sunlit mountain whose position never changes when in the church there is playing at the job and little praying on the job - when peevishness and petulance predominate over praise - when there is

quarrelsomeness instead of quietness - when there is frequent rumpus-raising and riotous revelry instead of restfulness, sinfulness instead of saintliness, selfishness instead of service, tattling instead of testimony, tampering with temptation instead of triumph over temptation.

"Thy glory hath departed "will be written on earth and known in Heaven of the church where there is more yawning over watches than yearning over wanderers-where there is mere zest and not zealously in good works. Let us so live and give, so love and serve, so watch and pray, that, if the individual's conduct were universalized, it would never be as a hand that writes of a church,

"Thy glory hath departed."

The true glory of a church consists: "in the purity of its members; in its spiritual progress; in the unity of its fellowship; in the spiritual children born into its household of faith; in its self-sacrificing spirit toward others; and in the prayer life of the whole group. When a church is in a healthy condition hypocrisy will be limited; progress in purity will be constant; strife and discord will disappear; sympathy for the lost will seek means for their rescue; recruits will outnumber the losses from backsliding, removal, and death; private devotion will be a pleasure, family religion a joy, and public worship a sought delight."

Along with this let us remember that any church will undergo the frightful processes of dishonorable self-burial where there is a lax theology that advocates a mutilated Bible, a minimized sin, a deified man, a humanized Christ-substituting human opinions and speculations for the revealed pronouncements of God concerning the Bible, concerning the nature of men, concerning the terrors of sin, concerning the deity of Christ, concerning the meaning of Christ's death on the cross, concerning the plan of salvation, concerning Hell, concerning Heaven.

A HOME MAY LOSE ITS GLORY

Yet, glorious as the glory of a real home is, the glory can depart - sometimes does depart - assuredly will depart - if the things "down under" Christian ideals, sordidly below Christian standards for a home - get the upper hand and put their oppressive heels upon the virtues which would weave wedding garments instead of shrouds on the home loom.

Answer these questions: Are there not many homes that are polluted reservoirs from which muddy streams that carry deadly contamination flow? Are there not many homes that are grindstones on which the Devil sharpens his weapons of wickedness?

The glory of a home departs when parents walk on the edges of mental abysses - talking nonsense. The glory of a home will assuredly leave a home as a flower wilts under heavy frost - when parents, by neglect or omission in spiritual matters, send children out to sea in paper boats, as though seas did not drown,

- when parents, in matters momentous as to issue in stainlessness of morals, permit children, in daring defiance of Christian conduct, to walk bare-footed on live coals, as though fire did not burn.

Today so many homes die in houses. Today many who know better, living for things that matter least, neglecting things that matter most, are content with houses in which there are no homes.

In pioneer days, wolves often attacked children. In remote mountain districts eagles did the same. Out West Indians attempted to destroy the home of settlers. On battlefields vultures have eaten the sons of women. Now vultures of evil literature attack our children. Now poisonous serpents are in every pathway they tread. Now the jackals of sex familiarity are fed by precept and example. Now the leaping leopards of lust; Now the vultures of infidelity in ministry and press; Now barnyard morality; Now demagogues who ravage the land; Now the buzzards of liquor traffic on every corner - permitted there by the United States Government; Now the theory of evolution in most schools - evolution, the antithesis of Christianity; Now modernism choosing the livery of Heaven to serve the Devil in; Now godless scholarship summoning the Bible to appear at the bar of human reason; Now all these infest our land.

All of which is to say that - no explorer amid the wilds of the North, no adventurer amid unexplored jungles, no doctor amid deadly contagions of disease - ever had to face as many dangers as our children of today face: their morals, their spiritual welfare, their mental wealth, their soul's salvation considered.

Parental delinquency makes glory depart from a home. Are we unfair to say that behind every delinquent child is a delinquent parent? Are we ceasing to tell the truth when we say that behind every broken youth is a broken home? Do we not speak words of truth when we say that behind every broken home is a neglect of God in that home?

When a fifteen-year-old unmarried girl, pregnant with child, stands before the court and states that she does not consider she has done wrong - no more than thousands of other young girls are doing - where are the mothers?

When a fourteen-year-old boy, apprehended for roaming the streets of a city at early morning hours, stands before the court with tears in his eyes and asks to be sent to the state school - because he knows he would be happier there than in his own home - where is the father?

When young girls smoke a pack of cigarettes a day and dress so skimpily they attract the attention of every goggle-eyed man and boy - do not their mothers the same?

When boys argue over the relative "values" and "quick-stirring" powers of advertised brands of liquor - do not their fathers drink booze and vote for legalizing it, forgetting that you can control a powder can in a fire as easily as you can control booze?

Is there not too much laxness on the part of parents toward spiritual values? Often children are allowed to stay out of Sunday School and to miss church

Goodbye to Glory -- Ichabod by R.G. Lee

services - to remain in almost complete ignorance of the spiritual values. Is it not perilous to children, this easy-come, easy-go attitude of parents? Is not the use of intoxicating beverages one of the greatest evils responsible for juvenile delinquency?

Are not children from homes where indiscriminate drinking is done sent out to "play the game" with two strikes against them? Do not thinking people believe that youth delinquency would be negligible if it were not for delinquent adults, especially delinquent parents? Can one pass judgment on these young people without indictment of ourselves for failure somewhere down the line?

Do not boys and girls get into trouble when too much leisure time is theirs?

Are not city governments extremely unwise to say they have no money for further improvement of playgrounds while they allot large sums of taxpayers' money for the cost of punishing the youth for committing crimes?

Is it not shortsightedness bordering on imbecility to pay so much for the cost of juvenile delinquency and so little for its prevention?

Some months ago Judge Edmond P. Mahoney, Municipal Court, Portland, Maine, said: "Any law should be so framed to penalize the delinquent parent as well as the delinquent child . . . We must first give God his rightful place in the American home ... Until the cardinal principles of God are implanted in the hearts of the youth of our nation...until there is instilled in the hearts of the parents of these youth a God-like sense of responsibility in that home, we shall continue to experience wave upon wave of crime, mounting and growing steadily day by day, until it reaches a magnitude beyond the scope of the law-enforcement agencies and the American people to control."

But if parents distinguish themselves by the profession of truth, the worship of God, the practice of virtue, they will be sure to draw others after them; whereas if they are irreligious and un-Christian, they are infested fountains that poison. Parents can no more dispense with personal piety without malicious influence on children than a tree can dispense with sap and bear fruit. Adam and Eve sinned! And Cain became a murderer. Had they not sinned, Abel would have lived. If a rock is a quotation from the quarry, if a flower is a quotation from the garden, if a tree is a quotation from the forest, if a bird is a quotation from the flock, if every child is a quotation of his parents - what sort do the children make you?

Today the situation is desperate. Character is at a premium in the land.

Criminality of all kinds is rampant. The daily prints are filled with record of deeds almost too revolting for public consumption.

An ever-rising wave of lawlessness is hurling its weight against the bulwarks of the nation. Much of this is because of godless homes-because too many fathers and mothers have abdicated.

How parents ought to rejoice for the opportunity of living close to God, of hearing the motion of angel's wings in the patter of little children, and of being Christlike in the home.

Goodbye to Glory -- Ichabod by R.G. Lee

Glory in a home is made secure when Christian conduct is evident. Unless you serve God yourselves as parents you will plant vines on which will grow grapes of bitterness. "What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge?" Ezekiel 18:2

Nothing is so infectious as example: "We can do more good by being good than in any other way "(Kingsley). "A father who whipped his son for swearing and swore while he whipped him, did more harm by his example than good by his correction "(Fuller). "Noble examples stir us up to noble actions"(Burke). "Live with wolves and you will learn to howl."

A drinking or drunken father is a poor preacher of sobriety to sons. A proud father is a miserable recommender of humility to sons. They will do as you do rather than as you say. Your example will counteract all the effect of your counsel - and all the convictions you would fix in the mind will fall like arrows from an impenetrable shield. You should therefore begin "both to do and to teach."

You should be able, in a humble measure, at least, to say to those under your care: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ..." "Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?" Romans 2:21-23

If parents suffered their children to go naked, to beg their bread, to lie unattended in sickness, to perish with hunger in a ditch, they would be shunned as monsters. But parents act a far more criminal and a far more infamous part by disregarding their spiritual and everlasting welfare.

Doubtless Herod, after killing the infants in Bethlehem, was viewed and shunned with horror. But he was far less cruel than some modern parents. He only destroyed the body.

"But it any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, be hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel. "I Timothy 5:8.

Let us remember and teach others to remember - lest glory depart from our dwellings - that there is a difference in a house and a home: that a house is built by human hands but a home is built by human hearts, that a house is built of visible materials but a home is built of the invisible things of the Spirit; that a house may be destroyed, but fire and flood and earthquake and storm can not destroy a real home; that there is only one calamity can ruin a home, the death of love; that the real food of a home is not meat and bread but thoughtfulness and unselfishness.

The basis for Christianity in the home, the preventative of departed glory, is Jesus and the church.

Can there be a real Christian home without union with the church?

Goodbye to Glory -- Ichabod by R.G. Lee

Can there be Christian homes without churchgoing as a habit as well as a duty and a privilege?

Jesus had the habit of churchgoing, for 'tis written: "He was in the synagogue as was his custom on the Sabbath day."

When I was a boy it was as natural to go to church on Sunday as it was to work on Monday or to play games on Saturday afternoon, but the present idea is that it is a terrible thing, a species of mental and physical punishment.

Dr. Macartney tells how when Grover Cleveland lay dying at Princeton, his mind reverted, not to any of the fierce political battles through which he had passed, nor to the presidential honors and burdens which he had borne, but to the old home in the Presbyterian manse, where his minister father at family worship prayed for the eternal salvation of his children.

The dying man asked that a copy of the hymnbook out of which they used to sing be procured, so that with its music and its memories he might face the eternal world. And then this great preacher says:

"All kinds of doctors are abroad today with all kinds of remedies for our national and social diseases. But a filled family pew in God's house on the Lord's day is the best thing that can ever happen to a family, a city, or a nation."

AN INDIVIDUAL MAY LOSE THE GLORY

It is possible for an individual so to live that it can be said in earth and declared in Heaven: "Thy glory has departed "- as light departs from a lamp in which there is no oil, as fruitfulness departs from a tree wherein is no sap.

The old poet must have had some experience of this truth when he wrote:

I remember, I remember,
But now 'tis little joy
To know I'm farther off from Heaven
Than when I was a boy.

What tragedy when "Ichabod"- "Thy glory hath departed "- is written above and over a once- believing heart! What sorrow sufficient to make angels weep - when "thy-glory-hath-departed "is the autobiography of a life once faithful, once loyal, once devoted. What cause for grief when the life once a life of unselfish service becomes a life of stagnant selfishness - a life that centers in self.

What tragedy for earth and man and God when the life once possessed of the fruit of the Spirit - "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, meekness, goodness, faith, self-control "- is now a life in which is manifest the works of the flesh - "adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envying, murders, drunkenness, reveling, and such like."

Yet that you see, that you find, in the lives of some individuals who have gone from us - and in the lives of some who now live in our midst. So many who call themselves Christians have lost the old-time glow. With them the sacred fervor

Goodbye to Glory -- Ichabod by R.G. Lee

of other years is lacking.

Men and women there are who once believed in prayer and believed that we forfeit peace and bear needless pain because we do not carry everything to God in prayer; but now they are prayerless altogether or are weak in prayer and look upon it as a useless exercise.

People I know who, when they were young, believed the Bible to be the Word of God - infinite in scope, infallible in authority, regenerative in power, personal in application - who now say that it is a book of myths and allegories. Of them 'tis tragically true they have hewn themselves cisterns where no water is and have forsaken the fountain of living waters.

I know young people who have attended schools that once, in the days of our forefathers, were bulwarks for the most holy faith. Entering these schools they were believers in the miraculous and the supernatural, but now, deceived by the evil seducers who wooed and won them with strange and fantastic myths, they are adrift - without chart or compass.

From them the glory hath departed, even as it had departed from schools which serve the Devil in the livery of Heaven. Instead of believing the certainties of God's Word, they put their trust in the unscriptural surmises of men. Instead of feeding on God's Word, they have grown lean on the diet of quips given them by those who, calling themselves scholarly teachers, plant "probabilities" and "perhapes" and "maybes" or "not-at-alls" in the minds of youth.

Thus has glory departed from the teachers and from the taught. Thus has glory departed from the schools in which these teachers teach. The students so taught and the teachers who, like vandals, break into the house of their faith should realize that man's wisdom is to be laughed at.

How glory departs from an individual, or a multitude of individuals when they depart from the teaching of the supernaturalistic school, championed by orthodox Christians contending that Christ is the God-man - to line up with the materialistic school, championed by evolutionists.

Think of Judas - the incarnation of infamy today! Shakespeare called him "the base Judean who sold a pearl richer than all his tribe." Judas, given a great opportunity by Christ Himself, had part of "the ministry and apostleship on which angels longed to serve." Did not this position place its participant on a level with Moses and Elijah?

But the glory of this individual began to grow dim when he began to wonder about the course that Jesus chose in refusing the kingship and in antagonizing the rulers. The glory grew even dimmer when he began to worry about the future - and dimmer still when he began to pilfer the bag. And his glory departed completely when he went out into the night to bargain to betray Jesus for the price of a hog! Truly over it all you can write: "Thy glory hath departed."

And think of Lot - called just and righteous. "And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked (for that righteous man dwelling

Goodbye to Glory -- Ichabod by R.G. Lee

among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day, with their unlawful deeds.) "He was driven to Egypt when famine came, yet his soul in many ways became a famished soul. A businessman, an opportunist, maker of a bad choice that he thought was a good choice. He certainly added no brightness to manhood's torch by marrying a woman of Sodom - the wickedest city mentioned in man's literature, hopelessly corrupt. Lot escaped with only his family when God burned Sodom to the ground. Lot's last act was one of incest. From his daughters came the nations of Ammon and Moab.

And think of Saul - first king of Israel. His glory, which was as a burning bush of splendor, faded into lusterless cold ashes. Let us see what the Scriptures tell us: "And the Philistines followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons; and the Philistines slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Melchishua, Saul's sons. And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers hit him; and he was sore wounded of the archers. Then said Saul unto his Armour bearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith; lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through and abuse me. But his Armour bearer would not; for he was sore afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword, and fell upon it "I Samuel 31:2-4.

Again and again, with tragic repetition, do the pages of history testify that individuals who once gave light as steady stars came to the time and place where their light was the flame of a fluttering candle. In our churches we see people who once served faithfully who proved their kinship with Demas - to the hurt of some and to the sorrow of many. In some homes we have those who once held as sacred the marital vow who have gone as wild as the winds which know no barriers in making these vows perjury. 'Tis true that many know not, or, if knowing, give no heed to the truth that to leave Jesus out of life is to say good-by to glory. Against all things and against all evils that bring people to the place and time where they say good-by to glory,

I would that all men would take an unwavering stand remembering God's promise: "And they shall fight against thee; but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee." Jeremiah 1:19

Placed online in accordance with the U.S. "Fair Use "clause. This material is exclusively "...for nonprofit educational purposes..."Taken from the book Bread from Bellevue Oven by Robert G. Lee. ©1947, by Sword of the Lord Publishers