

Beliefs That Matter

By Maurice L. Draper

In the complex world in which we live today, there are a great many decisions to make, problems to solve, and difficulties to be overcome. Usually, while faced with the intricacies of modern life, we are called upon to make a choice as to the ideals, goals, and ambitions upon which we are going to build our future happiness. And yet, how few of us realize that all of these matters depend upon—desire? Yes, perhaps, but more fundamentally upon what we believe; upon what we believe politically, socially, scientifically, and religiously.

How many times in the author's experiences at college has he heard, "If I only knew what was worth while; if I only had something to work for, to believe in, and to guide my future life." Have you ever heard such thoughts expressed? Have you ever given utterance to such thoughts yourself?

A short time ago the writer became intensely interested in answering, in a measure at least, these questions. Immediately we are impressed with the life of Saul of Tarsus as we seek to find a concrete example of the solution of our problems. It furnishes us with a basis with which to begin to solve the riddle of setting a goal for ourselves. Of course, Saul was a learned man, a powerful man, who had the courage of his convictions. And after all, isn't that what we lack—the convictions of some definite belief? Saul knew in his own mind what he believed. He therefore expressed his beliefs in the actions of his life. Imagine the self-satisfaction which he must have enjoyed when he felt that he was accomplishing his task!

However, it is not the actions that were important; it was the self-imposed driving force which kept him at his work that we wish to consider. This particular characteristic was the all-important part of his make-up that made him become, eventually, one of the greatest, if not the greatest, of the early day apostles. Could he have endured the hardships and torture that he did unless his beliefs meant something to him? Could he have undergone the physical stress and strain of stoning, imprisonment, shipwreck, beatings, and hunger without the driving power of the convictions of his heart? Saul, the persecutor, could never have become Paul the Apostle unless his beliefs had mattered to him.

Then again, we not only find a splendid example of a *Christian man* in Paul, but also in one who is dearer to us because he is so near to us today. Joseph, the prophet, seer, and revelator was a mighty man, and has been placed by some as second to Christ alone in historical importance. Let us read

in the *Church History*, volume 2, page 16, where he says, "The heavens were opened upon us, and I beheld the celestial kingdom of God and the glory thereof, whether in the body or out I cannot tell. I saw the transcendent beauty of the gate through which the heirs of that kingdom will enter, which was like unto circling flames of fire; also the blazing throne of God, whereon were seated the Father and the Son. . . ." Why was it that Joseph Smith was such a mighty personality; why was he able to look into the glories of heaven itself?

Saints of God, the same opportunities await us now; the same way is open to us as was to Paul, Joseph, and others. The same driving force is available to us. These stalwarts among men cherished their beliefs. They became so enrapt in their spiritual ideals that they would not be denied. My brother and my sister, do *you* cling to beliefs that matter to you? If you do, then for the sake of the Kingdom and the church let us show that they matter not only to us but to the world; and then we, too, shall receive that driving power that never fails; the Spirit of God. And we, too, shall not be denied.

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ties in all history. We did. And now, a few years afterward, Germany, armed to the teeth again, is on the march. That is just how efficient war is. It cannot do even this first, simple, obvious thing it is supposed to do—really conquer a powerful modern nation. Do you say that Hitler makes war? I say war made Hitler.

The world can have peace whenever the world wants it enough to fulfill this condition. The major precondition of war, that makes it almost inevitable, is sixty-odd national states refusing to surrender to a central court and administration one item of their sovereignty.—Harry Emerson Fosdick, reported in the Congressional Record.

Almost the beginning of wisdom is to give up the idea and surrender the expectation that life will be just to you.—Harry Emerson Fosdick.

Perfect valor consists in doing without witnesses all we should be capable of doing before the world.—Rochefoucauld.