

A LOT OF EMPTY YESTERDAYS

by Tom Wacaster

An incident from the American Revolution illustrates what tragedy can result from procrastination. It is reported that Colonel Rahl, commander of the British troops in Trenton, New Jersey, was playing cards when a courier brought an urgent message stating that General George Washington was crossing the Delaware River. Rahl put the letter in his pocket and didn't bother to read it until the game was finished. Then, realizing the seriousness of the situation, he hurriedly tried to rally his men to meet the coming attack, but his procrastination was his undoing. He and many of his men were killed and the rest of the regiment were captured. Nolbert Quayle said, "Only a few minutes' delay cost him his life, his honor, and the liberty of his soldiers. Earth's history is strewn with the wrecks of half-finished plans and unexecuted resolutions. 'Tomorrow' is the excuse of the lazy and refuge of the incompetent."

Unfortunately the above scenario could be repeated dozens, if not hundreds of times throughout the history of mankind. Battles have been lost, business opportunities squandered, and personal relationships neglected for the simple reason that someone thought they had plenty of time. The most tragic consequence of procrastination, however, is the loss of one's soul. Perhaps the one parable that so illustrates the tragedy of procrastination is that of the foolish virgins as set forth in Matthew 25:1-13. In contrast to the five wise virgins who kept their wicks trimmed and their flasks filled with oil, the five foolish virgins evidently thought they could, at the last moment, borrow from others in preparation for the coming of the bridegroom. Their negligence forever barred them from the wedding feast. So serious was their neglect that the bridegroom confessed, "Verity I say unto you, I know you not."

Can you imagine the regret that will be ours should we find ourselves on that last day being turned away from that eternal home, not because of some immoral character, or because we were vile or horrible; rather because we simply neglected the opportunities that came our way.

The Holy Spirit reminds us in the Sacred Record that "Today" is the day of salvation. "Tomorrow" is not on heaven's calendar, and "yesterday" is a page in every man's spiritual log book that reflects how he treated "today."

In Meredith Wilson's *Music Man*, Robert Preston plays the part of a con-artist who comes to River City, Iowa to form a "boys band" for his own financial gain. As the story develops Harold Hill (played by Preston) unexpectedly falls in love with the local librarian Marian Paroo (played by Shirley Jones) and asks her to go out with him. He invites her to meet him at the footbridge that crosses the stream running through the park. She responds, "Please, some other time. Maybe tomorrow." He continues to press her to meet with him; she continues to refuse. Finally, in exasperation Professor Hill says, "Pile up enough tomorrows and you'll find that you've collected nothing but a lot of empty yesterdays."