

Serious Humor

by Robert F. Turner

Hard times are marvelous times — after they are over. They provide such a rich source of material for “back when” stories. They also give us a feeling of superiority — “In our day it took a real man to survive. So, the hard times stories survive, and grow, and grow.”

There was this fellow who broke his arm getting breakfast. Go ahead and bite — I did. How did he break his arm getting breakfast? He fell out of a persimmon tree. And when one man earned a little money and bought a piece of fat-back, that meat circulated through the neighborhood for two weeks. One family used it to cook beans, another to season turnips, and so on. Then some smart-aleck tried to use it in a blackberry pie, and just ruined it.

Status symbols are completely reversed when looking back to depression days. Instead of trying to prove our success and affluence, as in current times; most folk take pride in telling how poor they were. The bankers family shot jack-rabbits for food — but the rest of us had to run them down and catch them in our hands. I suppose it is good that we can laugh about what was once so very serious.

Humor is a sort of “release” for me, making my hurried “up-tight” life bearable, and helping me through my ulcer periods. I use it as “breaks” to “rest” the audience or reader when I want to drive in serious thoughts. Of course it is possible that my judgment is not always good. Some may think me irreverent at times — and that would really hurt me, for there is nothing light or frivolous about the purpose and intended end of my life’s work. I want to go to heaven, and to lead others there.

But innocent, clean humor can put life in its proper focus, and we can see ourselves for the blundering oafs we often are. Aye, here is the crux of the matter. If we can learn to laugh at ourselves, to see our own absurdities, and not be so pride-filled as to try and justify them, we have come a long way toward being objective. Pity the fellow who takes himself too seriously. There is little chance for self-improvement here.

It is the things of God we must take seriously, for God is no fool. We may act foolishly in our clumsy efforts to serve Him — and even deserve ridicule (1 Kings. 18:27). But our God remains holy and reverend.

-- via *Plain Talk* (vol. 8; #3)

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