

FAITH, HOPE, AND LOVE

By John F. Hall

I am certainly not a poet, as I lack that specific creativity. I try to make my nonfiction life stories, interesting, by using what I call a mix. I enjoy putting down in words, a mix of scriptures, hymn



lyrics, song lyrics, poems by other, short pieces, and things that I have experienced and observed. I'm on the downward slide of 80, with health issues, that give me pause to ponder about some things before I pass away. Nearly everyone dies without any warning. My dad, Charles J. Hall, died of a heart attack in his sleep. He was in Fish Hospital in Daytona Beach, Florida. His treating physician called me at 5:30 in the morning. I still remember what his doctor told me. He said, "John, we lost your dad

this morning. We had planned to send him to Gainesville for more tests. But he died in his sleep." I was 772 miles away, at that time. I did not get to tell my dad, "Goodbye." I was still a Kentucky State Trooper at that time. I was also the Commander of the 614th Military Police Company, Kentucky Army National Guard, in Murray, Kentucky. I had 169 soldiers under my command. I was also taking military police officer basic and advance correspondence courses. I was burned out, and my dad's death, hit me hard. So, if I die unexpectedly, let this be my "Goodbye," to one and all.

Linda Ori wrote a poem called, "When All is Said And Done." These are her words: "Is this what life is all about? All there is to know... I can't believe I've come this far and still so far to go; I haven't scratched the surface, barely scribbled on the page, and here I am about to end — it puts me in a rage! We need an expiration date to keep us to the task of reaching goals significant to answer what we ask; it's all so very puzzling this living that we do; I need my own identity but also, I need you. So what's the actual purpose of my life experience? To keep my thoughts in motion while sitting on the fence? I wish I had the energy to finish up with flair, when all is said and done I guess... you wager what you dare." Linda Ori did not mention Christ, or faith, or hope, or love in her poem. Living a life with these four things gives a meaningful purpose to life's experience.

Many decades ago, I was an Army Reserve Major. My nephew, Joe D'Headoville, asked me to read scripture at his military wedding. It was held in the chapel at the Valley Forge Military College (VFMC). He left it up to me, to use a scripture of my choice. So I selected Corinthians, Chapter 13, Verses 1-13: "If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing..."

“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight on evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fears. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when completeness comes, what is part disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child. But when I became a man, I put the ways of a child behind me. For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. And now these three remain: faith, hope, and love, But the greatest of these is love.”

After the marriage ceremony, those in attendance waited outside the chapel. Then the married couple came down the chapel steps. Eight of Joe’s former cadets, in dress uniforms, held up swords; four to the left, and four to the right on the steps. The tips of the swords touched, and made a saber arch. The married couple walked under that honorary arch. After the reception, I drove over to the Valley Forge Encampment. I was still in my formal Army uniform. I parked my car and walked over to that field. In 1777, General George Washington’s 12,000 soldiers were encamped in that field. A stranger came up and reported to General Washington. He was a former Prussian officer named Friedrich von Steuben. He was called Baron von Steuben. He was just a captain, but a letter to Congress, from Benjamin Franklin, an ambassador to France at that time, made it seem like he was a general. Steuben did not speak a word of English, and he used an interpreter.

Baron von Steuben became General Washington’s Inspector General. He trained the Continental Army soldiers in that encampment. He put them through proper military maneuvers. He taught them to use their long knives for more than just cutting their food. He taught them sanitation. He designed the governance of the Army from basic drill to the specific duties of each officer rank. He shaped the Continental Army into a professional fighting force. As I was walking on that field, I realized, that the success of our nation, at that time, depended on these two men. I turned and looked at a stature near where I had parked my car. It was a stature of Baron von Steuben. He was the right man, in the right place, at the right time. I have one major connection to Baron von Steuben. I was an assistant Inspector General, for six years, in the 100" Training Division, Army Reserve. I later became, for three years, The Inspector General in the 85" Division, Army Reserve. Had it not been for General Washington and Barron von Steuben, we might be saying, “God save the Queen; rather than saying God bless America.”

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