

CRISIS TIMES FOR SERVICE...

A. B. Simpson

There are crisis times in connection with our opportunities of service for God. Fifty years ago Christian work was largely confined to a few official members of the Church of Christ. One man stood in the pulpit and did the work. Others sat in the pews and let themselves be worked upon. Service was largely a professional occupation, and even the ministry of the Gospel required a long, expensive, and difficult process of education and preparation. I can remember the struggle of my early life in securing an education for the ministry. Today, all the doors of usefulness are opened to any earnest heart.

Well do I remember, as a single example, a Scottish lad who worked in a stoneyard in New York less than thirty years ago, earning his daily wages, going to sleep at night without a single inspiring thought, and plodding through his obscure life as thousands of others are doing today. But God one day put a spark of fire within his soul, and he became a Christian. A little later, a more consuming flame took possession of his being, and the Holy Ghost baptized him with an intense love for Christ and souls. One day he came to me and asked me if he could not become a missionary. He was examined, advised, and directed, and in a little while he was a student in our Missionary Training Institute. After a simple and inexpensive course, easily within his reach as a workingman, he was a candidate for missionary service in Tibet. He went to China and learned the language, by the help of God, in a very short time. He pushed on to Peking, and there learned the Tibetan language in an equally short time. A few months later he was crossing the distant mountains and pressing on to the borders of that land which has been so long recognized as the last citadel of heathenism. Today, that humble Scottish lad is standing on the border of Tibet as the representative of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. There is, perhaps, not an angel in glory today who would not gladly exchange his seat for the signal honor of being a pioneer of the Gospel in Tibet.

That which God has done for him, He can do for any true heart who is reading these lines today. It is a time of extraordinary possibilities. O brother, redeem the time! Do not waste your life. Do not throw away the only life you have. Ask God to make the most of it, not only for **you**, but for the world and for the age in which we live. "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil."

Yours may not be so high a place of distinguished service. You may simply be called in some quiet home to stand for Christ and watch for opportunities to get near to souls whom you may win to Him. I know a man who helped a humble colored girl in his kitchen to pump the water, until he won her gratitude and confidence by the first kindness she had ever received. Today she is one of the jewels in his crown.

I heard of a missionary in the West Indies going down to work among the coolie slaves, that he might win their confidence, and lead them to Christ. I have known a lady of culture and refinement, with no necessity for such an act of condescension, in a crowded household, to go and help the girls in the kitchen to wash the dishes that she might win their confidence and reach their hearts for Christ. The neighbor who lives next door to you, the conductor that

collects your fare on the street car, the countless instances where you touch human lives and hearts are all opportunities that may decide immortal issues and win for you unfading crowns. May God help us to redeem the time!

We have to refer only briefly to the momentous significance of the times in which we live, and the crisis age in which God has cast our lot. No intelligent Christian can fail to see how God is working today to prepare for the coming of Christ, and to open the world for the Gospel of His grace. It is as when Deborah called to Barak, her brave and faithful helper in the conflict with the Canaanites, "Up," she cried, "Barak, this is the day of which the Lord hath spoken; hath not God gone before thee to deliver the Canaanites into thy hand?" She recognized that there were other forces than Barak's legions, and that it was God's time for the advance, and therefore, supremely important that they move when God himself was marching on before them.

This is peculiarly true of our day. The Holy Ghost is saying to us as never before, "Up, for this is the day of which the Lord spake. Is not the Lord gone out before thee, to deliver the enemy into thy hand?"

It needs but moderate insight into the events of current history to be impressed with holy awe at the mighty providences of God which today are cooperating with His Church and people in preparing the way of the Lord. The history of the present century might also be written in the language of the prophecies of the Holy Scriptures.

The times are full of inspiration. God is going forth before His people. Let us redeem the time! Let us be alert to meet the opportunity! Let us serve our generation! Let us catch our Master's thought, and be the first to meet Him at His coming!

WANTED

Wanted! young feet to follow

Where Jesus leads the way,

Into the fields where harvest

Is ripening day by day;

Now, while the breath of morning

Scents all the dewy air;

Now, in the fresh, sweet dawning,

O, follow Jesus there.

Wanted! young hands to labor;

The fields are broad and wide,

The harvest waits the reaper

Around on every side.

None are too poor and lowly,

None are too weak or small,

For in his service holy

The Master needs them all.

—Selected.

CATHOLIC PRESS

The Roman Catholic Church, always alert to the value of the press, plans a campaign to put a Catholic newspaper into every non-Catholic home in America. An anticipated weekly circulation of 100,000,000 among non-Roman Catholic readers will be paid for by Roman Catholics. The Roman Catholic press in the United States has increased its circulation fourteen per cent during the past three years. What a challenge to evangelical forces in our land to make wise and immediate use of the powerful propaganda effect of the printing press in spreading the message of salvation by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ!—The Evangel.

TURNING PAIN TO GAIN

J. B. Chapman

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us (Romans 8:18).

When a grain of sand or some other irritating particle intrudes itself into the shell of the oyster, and refuses to be cast out, the oyster covers its enemy with a protective excretion. In time this excretion hardens and the pearl is formed. Seekers after costly pearls receive the product of the oyster's pain with thankfulness, and wear the pearl as an ornament and a badge of comfort and ease, and seldom, if ever, do they turn back to remember at what great cost their fancy was served. But the oyster that is without pain is also without pearl.

And how many irritating and disagreeable and painful things come into the narrow confines of our lives! Uninvited come the rough sand grains of bodily sickness, mental anxiety, deep bereavement and sorrow which refuses to be assuaged. Things can never be with us as they were once. Our affliction is incurable. The joys of the past can never come again. The intruding irritant has come to stay. What shall we do? Shall we not take lessons from the humble oyster and throw about the things of pain an extra covering of prayer and faith in God? and shall we not find, in grace, as in nature, that our pain may be changed to gain?

In the process of transforming the sand into pearl, the oyster helps itself. The pearl is valuable to others—that, perhaps, is the main thing. But the oyster found relief from its pain while transforming it into gain. Perhaps it shall be thus with us. Perhaps we have wondered why pain is our portion. It may help us to remember that where there is no pain there is no pearl. Or perhaps there is something even more consoling than that. Now we think we would like to go back to the time when we had no pain. But that is but a negative escape; for then there was neither pain nor pearl. The better choice for us is to go on ahead to where there will be no pain, and still the pearl will be ours. Once we had neither pain nor pearl: now have both pain and pearl: then we shall have pearl and no pain. May God speed that blessed day!

And what is that about the gates of heaven being composed of pearl? Does not that suggest that "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God"? Does it not intimate that the way to the throne leads through the valley en route? Does it not make clear that the way of ease and self-complacency which the many prefer is not really the pathway to glory, after all? If we are to "enter through the gates into the city," we certainly must learn how to change our pain into pearl, for the gates of the City are pearl, and pearl is transmuted pain.

Last year there was \$9,640,000,000 spent for liquor. This would have built 192,800 churches or school houses, each costing \$50,000. The tobacco and liquor interests spend in excess of \$100,000,000 annually for advertising. Last year there were three hundred billion cigarettes consumed at the cost of \$4,000 a minute.

—Selected.