

The Sin Of Indifference

By H. S. Dow

"And the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have pity: slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary" (Ezekiel 9:4-6).

In Ezekiel's vision, of which the foregoing is a part, we get some idea of God's attitude toward an indifferent people, especially those who profess to belong to God but are backslidden in heart. Note, please, the evidence of a backslidden people, in verse 3: the glory of the God of Israel was gone; the glory had departed. And the people had lost their concern for the spiritual welfare of Jerusalem. Most of them were like many people today: some belonging to churches and many outside. They seem to be totally indifferent to spiritual things; no sighing or crying, and very little, if any, praying for lost souls. There is no soul burden. The Lord told the man with the ink-horn by his side (the man of mercy), to go through the midst of the people and put a mark upon the foreheads of those who sighed and cried. He also told those with the slaughter weapons, to follow after and slay all the people, old and young, men and women, who had not the mark, and to begin at his sanctuary, the place of worship.

Those people who were visited by the judgment of the Almighty and were slain were not charged with committing any crime, but were just indifferent to the needs of other sinners, and did not sigh or cry about them. Indifference is the sin of omission which many professing Christians are guilty of.

According to the Word of God, we are forced to admit that multitudes of our fellow creatures are on their way to hell, and many of our own children and near relatives among them. How can we be indifferent if we believe that the Bible is true? Jesus said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

We cannot understand how professing Christians and church members who have growing children in their homes can feel justified before God, while they omit reading their Bibles and having family prayers with them.

Many homes have radios which bring in worldly trash, theatricals and jazz, all of which are not conducive to high ideals or the building of Christian character; yet the children listen to them morning, noon, and night; older folk seem to enjoy them also. Is it any wonder that so many professing Christians have lost their relish for spiritual things? Their minds are filled with worldly things. Paul said, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Do you think Jesus would listen to, or tolerate, what you permit to come into your homes on the radio?

This writer does not profess to be a bit better than he ought to be; perhaps not as good. But he is often shocked and grieved at, not only the indifference on the part of many people, but also the frivolity, the trifling conversation, funny stories, cracking jokes, etc., by some otherwise good people. We recognize

The King's Highway

the truth of the old rhyme, which goes: "A little humour, now and then, is relished by the best of men." Yes, a little humour, but not too much, brother, lest we might grieve the Spirit.

We don't know what God will have to do, what judgment He may be compelled to bring upon this country, as well as upon many others to awaken us to a sense of our need. We read in a recent copy of The Family Herald that in 1928 forty per cent of the people of England were church members, and that in 1940 only ten per cent were affiliated with church life.

How our heavenly Father must be grieved at the indifference of His people! The following little poem by Studdert Kennedy seems to express the feelings of Jesus as the consequence of our modern indifference.

When Jesus came to Golgotha, they hanged Him on a tree;

They drove great nails through hands and feet, and made a Calvary:

They crowned Him with a crown of thorns, red were His wounds and deep,

For those were crude and cruel days, and human flesh was cheap.

When Jesus came to Birmingham, they simply passed Him by;

They never hurt a hair of Him, they only let Him die;

For men had grown more tender, and they would not give Him pain;

They only just passed down the street, and left Him in the rain.

Still Jesus cried, "Forgive them, for they know not what they do,"

And still it rained the winter rain that drenched Him through and through;

The crowds went home and left the streets without a soul to see,

And Jesus crouched against the wall, and cried for Calvary.

PROPHETS ARE NEEDED

The prophet of old cried out: "O Lord, revive Thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy."

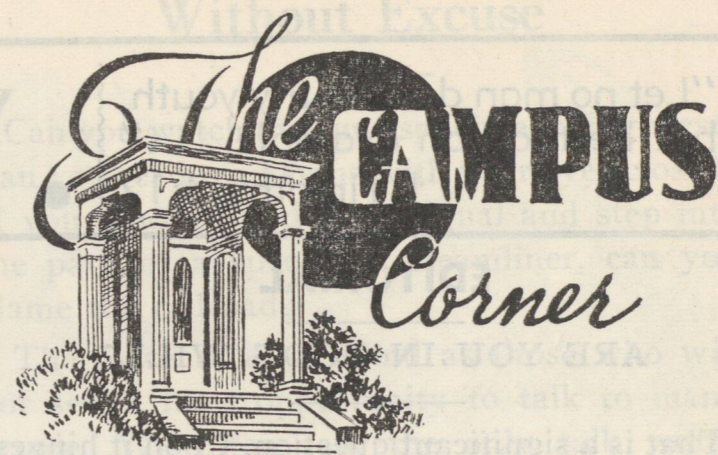
A thousand clergymen will go into their pulpits next Sunday but not as prophets of God. There will be no burning fire shut up in their bones. Hungry souls will look up but will not be fed. They go to Gilead but there is no balm. They go to the fountain of waters but they find there a broken cistern. They cry for bread, and behold, a stone!

Our times are crying out for the prophet and revivalist!

Our cry must be to God. What shall we cry? "O Lord, revive Thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy" (Habakkuk 3:2). —Selected.

A PRAYER

I wrestled for the ingathering of souls, for multitudes of poor souls, personally, in many distant places. I was in such agony, from sun half-an-hour high till near dark, that I was wet all over with sweat, but oh, my dear Lord did sweat blood for such poor souls. I longed for more compassion.—David Brainerd in His Journal.



REMEMBER THE COLLEGE AT CHRISTMAS

Christmas should be the happiest time of the whole year. Our hearts thrill to the strains of the familiar carols, and we stand amazed in the presence of such condescending love. Like the wise men of old we recapture the wondrous scene, the babe lying in a manger, the restrained happiness of Mary and Joseph, and the holy stillness of that eventful night. A king is born whose reign shall never cease, "Hark the herald angels sing, glory to the new born king."

Christmas is a time of remembrance, when men's hearts are full of kind thoughts, and hands are outstretched with gifts that gladden and brighten the day. In many corners of the world, in tiny hovels of existence, Christmas is just another day, with nothing to lift the ceaseless burden or rekindle hope in the broken spirit. We do well to share with the poor and needy by supporting agencies created for this purpose.

Coming nearer home, an urgent need faces us at "Bethany." There are many bills unpaid, and unless help comes from our churches in the next month, our financial condition may work a hardship on our faculty, who deserve a joyous Christmas free from unnecessary strain. You can help by sending in your budget allotment, or making payments on student accounts. WE need your assistance NOW. When you prepare your Christmas gift list, remember Bethany Bible College.

YOUR TROUBLES

Not long ago I read in a paper a bit of personal experience from a precious child of God, and it made such an impression upon me that I record it here. She wrote: "I found myself one midnight wholly sleepless as the surges of a cruel injustice swept over me, and the love which covers seemed to have crept out of my heart. Then I cried to God in an agony for the powers to obey His injunction, "Love covers." Immediately the Spirit began to work in me the power that brought about the forgetfulness. Mentally I dug a grave. Deliberately I threw up the earth until the excavation was deep. Sorrowfully I lowered into it the thing which had wounded me! Quickly I shoveled in the clods! Over the mound I carefully laid the green sods. Then I covered it with white roses and forget-me-nots, and quickly walked away. Sweet sleep came. The wound which had been so nearly deadly was healed without a scar, and I know not today what caused my grief."—S. S. Illustrator.