

## The Old Paths

By A. W. Tozer in "Alliance Weekly"

Many times over the centuries the Church has become so pre-occupied with certain vital truths that she for a time lost sight of other truths fully as important. For all practical purposes, these neglected truths have been wholly lost to God's people.

Such is the situation in which the Church finds herself today. A movement has long been urgently needed in this country to bring certain neglected truths back into focus and to emphasize them until they again become active and powerful. Only then will we Christians possess all of our blood-won heritage.

"Thus saith the Lord," said the Prophet Jeremiah, "Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls," (Jer. 6:16). I want to mention nine "old paths" in which we must walk again if we are ever to recapture the radiant power which many of our fathers knew. These, then, are the paths to which I would point:

1. There must be in evangelical circles a return to the right divine-human relationship. By that I mean we must put God again where He properly belongs, and man where he belongs.

Over the past fifty years in America there has been a slow dimming of the glory of God among us and a corresponding rise of the importance of mere men. The result is a nightmare of man-worship, a glorification of outstanding individuals, which robs God of the glory that is His.

Now I believe God is the Most High God, high and lifted up, sitting upon the throne. I believe that He is in the heaven and that we are here on earth. To Him belongeth righteousness, and to us, confusion of face; and I believe that we evangelicals will never have upon us again the old glory until we return to the faith that puts God where He belongs, that humbly kneels before Him, that takes the low place and puts God on the throne of His glory. When more Isaiahs see God as "high and lifted up," with His train filling the temple, there will be more seraphims flying with hot coals from off the altar.

2. We must again emphasize the truth that is fallen into disrepute in the day in which we live, that there can be no Saviorhood without Lordship. We must cease to make Jesus Christ a convenience, a way to escape hell, and must preach Him again as Head of His Church, and reverently own Him as Lord over all.

We have a divided Christ in America. We come to Him and ask Him to save us, and He does. Then perhaps years later, we learn He is also the Lord. I do not believe this is healthy Christianity. I believe we should begin again to emphasize the doctrine that Jesus Christ cannot be divided; that He is Lord always before He can or will be Savior; and that He must be made Lord in our lives, Lord in our churches, Lord in our schools, Lord in our advertising, and Lord in our thinking and praying and living.

3. We must get back again to the belief in the spirit as well as the letter of the Word. One of the greatest utterances ever made on this earth was that of our Lord when He said, "God is spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

Here He placed true religion in the spirit of man, and the Spirit of God. He glorified

the inner shrine where God meets with man, deep down in what the old writers called the "penetralia"—far in beyond the outer court in that holy place where only God and the worshipping soul can come. And there is the essence and the dwelling place; there is the fiery bush; there is the holy Shekinah.

Once more we must emphasize the importance of the spirit of the Word as well as the letter. Only thus can we be delivered from the dead textualism which has captured us in the day in which we live, and which is fast reducing us to impotence.

4. We must repudiate the evil liaison between the world and the Church—for the Church is today living in a twilight zone. We are slavishly imitating and following and "kowtowing" to a world which we should repudiate.

The Bible tells us that if we love the world, the love of the Father is not in us; but we seem to have forgotten this. There was a time in history when the Church stood on her feet and took the positive stand, and the world imitated her. Now, things are turned around, and we are imitating the world, so that religious journalism, religious advertising, and even religious singing are often but a poor echo of the world.

My brethren, we need to reverse the trend, and once more preach and believe and stand for the fact that there must be a radical division in spirit as well as in practice between a fallen world and a redeemed Church!

5. We must put the Cross back into the heart of man where it belongs. Now, there are two crosses; or, more properly, there is a cross that belong in two places. The Cross on the Hill redeemed us. In lonely sorrow, Christ died for us on the Cross on the Hill, and that is the foundation of all hope for all men, world without end. But Jesus also taught that the same Cross must be transferred to the hearts of His followers, so that the "old man with his deeds" may be put to death, and instead of excusing and glorifying the flesh, we should repudiate it and crucify it.

You know that the "old man" is supposed to be dead. I understand that when someone reminded Moody that the old man was judicially dead, he replied, "Yes, judicially he is, but actually he ain't." Today we fall back upon a judicial crucifixion of our old ego, and then we go along loving ourselves clear down to the end of our days. God deliver us from it and help us to take the Cross from the Hill and put it into the heart, so that we may be crucified with Christ, **actually** as well as judicially, and day by day bear our cross. Then, there will be no place for the proud, no place for the lustful, no place for the money-loving, no place for the self-loving, no place for the self-confident; but the "old man with his deeds" will be crucified, and we shall be raised to newness of life.

6. We need to return to internalism as opposed to externalism. Every great movement began with internalism. I mean by that: Religion was declared to be of the heart; the inner man was all that mattered—not the beauty of the woman, nor yet the strength of the man, nor the importance of his degrees; but, internally, the man was to serve God in spirit and in truth. And then, slowly, as the movement moved on, it moved out from the center to the outside, and externalism took

over.

The Pharisees are good examples of externalism. They were externalists. Jesus Christ came and cut through all their externalism and went straight to the heart of them, and said that out of the heart cometh man's deeds, his goodness, or his badness. The outside was nothing. He placed religion just where it belongs—inside of a man!

7. We must recapture the holy art of worship. This is so sacred that I feel it can only suffer from being discussed in public; but I must say something about it. God wants worshippers. He calls us to worship Him. In our day we are busy making workers, but God is trying to make worshippers. Let it be remembered that any kind of religious work that does not spring out of a spirit of worship will all be wood, hay, stubble, in the great Day of Christ.

We have sung ourselves into Tin-Pan Alley, and we ought to get out of it again, and get back to the ancient songs with some real quality of worship in them. In our gatherings, we must minister unto the Lord, and not unto individuals. Our ministry must be unto the Lord, and in reverent worship, we must listen for His voice, and hear what God the Lord will speak.

8. Again, there must be a return to New Testament methods. Some people say, "We believe in the Bible message, but we believe in modern methods." My brethren, the Church today (certain sectors of it) is busy preaching a Bible message, and then cancelling out all of the good they do, with the methods they use to promote that message. We must go to the Bible for our methods as well as for our message.

It is entirely possible to be orthodox in our message, and liberal in our methods. Now I know that a great many good fundamentalists will wish I had not said this, but I am saying it nevertheless. I think it is possible to be a liberal in everything but our creed: a liberal in our relation to the world; a liberal in our lack of worship; a liberal in our externalism—yet, when it comes to our nominal creed, be entirely Biblical. My brethren, we must have Biblical methods as well as Bible doctrine.

9. And lastly, we must get free from our strange fear of the Holy Spirit. In America, in the past half-century, there has been a frightful reaction from the Holy Spirit because of the fanaticisms of certain brethren who have gone to extremes. We have become afraid of the Holy Spirit. My brethren, this ought not to be! The Holy Ghost is our Friend, and proceedeth from the Father and the Son. He cometh down from the heart of Jesus to us, and therefore, instead of our fearing Him, we should open wide every window of our soul to His incoming. We should pray,

"Come, Holy Spirit, Heavenly Dove,  
With all Thy quickening powers;  
Come, shed abroad the Saviour's love,  
And that shall kindle ours."

These are, to my mind, the nine paths where we have strayed, without meaning to stray. We have done it inadvertently, slowly, and without noticing it; but it has had its terrible effects! The true Christian faith has all but passed away, and in its place is a circus-like, busy, active, noisy crowd that pushes into the sanctuary and forces the Lord to take a second place.

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