

"This Thy Day"

"And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes" (Luke 19:41, 42).

By Julian A. Howard
In "Pilgrim Holiness Advocate"

Our Lord was nearing the end of his earthly ministry. His every effort to preach and teach had met with resistance from the scribes and Pharisees. They claimed that Abraham was their father and accused Christ of performing miracles by the power of Beelzebub, the prince of devils. They boasted of the glory of the Temple and dreamed of a restoration which would make Israel a world power, but Christ heard the marching tread of the Roman legions and saw a day when Titus would encompass the city with terrible devastation. They looked for a long future but the Master saw that their sun was fast setting.

This text declares that the Jews had their day. So also, each individual Christian and church has its day. It is "this thy day" which I would have you consider in this message.

UNLIMITED POSSIBILITIES

In the realm of Christian grace the convert is to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. With all diligence he should add to his faith all the virtues of the life hid with Christ in God. It is a sad commentary on the experience of many professing Christians that their initial experience of grace in finding Jesus Christ proved to be the zenith of all experience. From a glorious beginning the light has faded, the glory has declined and the presence of the Lord vanished away until they possess only the shell of the experience of by-gone days.

We should develop the gifts and talents which the Lord has given to us. God cannot condone the burying of treasure entrusted to our care in selfishness or carnal pride. We should strive to be skilled workmen in the service of the Lord. Too many of us are awkward apprentices, when we should be trained technicians in gospel service. We have been commanded to be the best workmen which the grace of God can make us. "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Tim. 2:15).

There is an acceptable ministry which all of us can render for our Lord. Too often the pastor or evangelist is expected to carry the heavy end of the yoke. We almost serve the Lord by proxy, expecting God to be satisfied with the calling of a pastor, the teaching of the instructor, or the preaching of the evangelist. Many people feel if they attend church regularly, keep a church covenant, and pay their tithes, God expects nothing else from them. But ought we not to be in dead earnest about this matter of serving God as laymen in the church of Jesus Christ?

"This thy day" furnishes unparalleled opportunities for personal work and earnest evangelism on the part of the entire church. We need to be as interested in every soul as we are in our personal friends or closest relatives. Some of the great churches of early American Methodism were founded under the earnest exhortings of laymen who loved God and were willing to do their part faithfully in this matter of winning souls to Christ. Many, personally, have never won a soul to Jesus Christ and others have not averaged one soul converted a year! May God stir our hearts with a real passion for the souls of the people!

UNEQUALLED OPPORTUNITY

In many ways this is a great day to be alive. Our fathers and mothers were limited in the modes of travel and often lived and died within a hundred mile radius of

the place of their birth. Today a person can breakfast in New York, fly to London for lunch, and be back to America for supper. This great advance in travel facilities has opened the doors for the rapid advance of the gospel. The evangelist covers the nation instead of a limited area of a part of the state. The pastor may drive eighty miles to preach in an extension service and be back in the parsonage to sleep the same night.

In the field of communications the same marvelous advance is seen. The circuit rider of pioneer days preached at each church once a calendar quarter and held a revival in each church once a year. The missionary of today may be in America the first of the week and be on the field in time for service the next Lord's Day. Now by radio, television, and the printed page the man of God may send out a message which may reach a million people. It is too bad that the devil has been allowed to capitalize almost every invention for his own evil purposes, instead of them being used fully to advance the gospel of Jesus Christ.

May God help us that we may see a revival of real holiness evangelism from coast to coast until our churches shall blaze with the fire of the Spirit of God!

Shall we deny to our children the same heritage which our fathers passed on to us? The example of real piety, the memory of burning family altars, the testimony of real Christian experience, the conviction wrought by answered prayer—all these we steal from the younger generation if we fail God in "this our day"!

If we fail to capture this day for Jesus Christ, we fail to keep the charge given to serve this present age and fulfill our calling as followers of the lowly Nazarene. Communism is the illegitimate child of decadent religion. Only God knows how the course of world history might have been changed had the pre-World War I church in Russia been evangelistic and Christ-centered. We in America need to heed the warning that only one generation separates the genuine Christian from the militant atheist. If, in "this thy day" you are indifferent to the claims of Jesus Christ on your life, then your children in their day may be actively opposed to the church and religion.

To fail in our witness is to disappoint the Master who died to redeem us from our sins. We cannot afford to break anew the heart of the man of Calvary.

Finally, let it be said that to fail in our gospel task is to grow progressively lean in our souls. May God help us to realize that this is not merely a question of doing or not doing, but that eternal consequences may hang upon our decision. If a Christian does not serve the Lord in this his day, God may soon bring that day to a close. If the church does not alert itself to its day the Lord may close the open doors, or raise up another people who will obey him. The challenge rings out to hasten to the altar of prayer and repentance until God hears from heaven and revitalizes our hearts that we may serve him in this our day!

GO!

We have to go — the voice of Him,

The dearest Lover of our soul, commands;

We have to go — His last great word

Though so unheeded, unbeyed, yet stands.

When millions have no smaller chance to know,

How shall we tie to things He counted loss,

The baubles of the earth-life here below:

Yea, if we daily with their dross,

The joyance of the moment they bestow,

How can we dream of glorying in the Cross?

— Opal Leonore Cibbs.