

God Won't Go Away

Gaily the Troubadour (1936)
By Arthur Guiterman

First dentistry was painless;
Then bicycles were chainless
And carriages were horseless
And many laws, enforceless.
Next, cookery was fireless,
Telegraphy was wireless,
Cigars were nicotineless
And coffee, caffeineless.
Soon oranges were seedless,
The putting green was weedless,
The college boy hatless,
The proper diet, fatless,
Now highways are dustless,
The latest steel is rustless,
Our tennis courts are sodless,
Our new religions, godless.

Blaise Pascal said there is within every person a "God-shaped vacuum." It cannot be filled with science or pleasure or money, only God. Like the little boy who scoffs at ghosts yet whistles while passing a graveyard, some atheists would seem to protest too much; and, their diligent efforts to purge the public conversation of all things spiritual show that they clearly feel threatened.

George Bernard Shaw is perhaps most renowned as a free thinker and liberal philosopher. In his last writings we read, "The science to which I pinned my faith is bankrupt. Its counsels, which should have established the millennium, led, instead, directly to the suicide of Europe. I believed them once. In their name I helped to destroy the faith of millions of worshippers in the temples of a thousand creeds. And now they look at me and witness the great tragedy of an atheist who has lost his faith." Nobody talks so constantly about God as those who insist that there is no God.

The word of God asserts that unbelief is both wicked and foolish. It will never be otherwise. Psalm 10:4 - "The wicked in his proud countenance does not seek God; God is in none of his thoughts." Psalm 14:1 - "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God.'"

Blessed are the Peacemakers

A wise old gentleman retired and purchased a modest home near a junior high school. He spent the first few weeks of his retirement in peace and contentment; then, a new school year began. The very next afternoon three young boys, full of youthful, after-school enthusiasm, came down his street, beating loudly on every trash can they encountered. The crashing percussion continued day after day, until finally the wise old man decided it was time to take some action.

The next afternoon, he walked out to meet the young percussionists as they banged their way down the street. Stopping them, he said, "You kids are a lot of fun. I like to see you express your exuberance like that. Used to do the same thing when I was your age. Will you do me a favor? I'll give you each a dollar if you'll promise to come around every day and beat on these cans."

The kids were elated and continued to do a bang-up job on the trash cans. After a few days, the old-timer greeted the kids again, but this time he had a sad smile on his face. "This recession's really putting a big dent in my income," he told them. "From now on, I'll only be able to pay you 50 cents to beat on the cans." The noisemakers were obviously displeased, but they did accept his offer and continued their afternoon ruckus.

A few days later, the wily retiree approached them again as they drummed their way down the street. "Look," he said, "I haven't received my Social Security check yet, so I'm not going to be able to give you more than 25 cents. Will that be okay?"

"A lousy quarter?" the drum leader exclaimed. "If you think we're going to waste our time, beating these cans around for a quarter, you're crazy! No way, mister. We quit!" And the old man enjoyed peace and serenity for the rest of his days.

A wise man indeed! He discovered something that most of us spend our whole lives searching for -- a way to make peace. Granted, his peace was a "peace and quiet," while we seek to bring about a spiritual level of peace, but the principle is the same. In the Beatitudes (Matt. 5:9), Jesus included peacemakers among those who would be blessed. We stand in awe of those who have the ability to reconcile people who have been fussing and fighting.

"If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men... Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another" (Rom. 12:18, 14:19).

Burned Alive

"I made haste, and did not delay to keep Your commandments" (Psalm 119:60). Early one morning fire broke out in a house on a narrow street. The alarm was sounded by a policeman on duty. Before the fire engines could get to the scene, however, flames were leaping high into the air. Suddenly a young man appeared at an upper window in his pajamas. Firemen quickly placed a ladder against the burning building. But to the dismay of all, he refused to come down, shouting back that he had to get dressed first. The firemen pleaded, "Come as you are! Come as you are!" but to no avail. Suddenly the stairs gave way and the roof fell in. The man had waited too long and was buried beneath the ruins. How much greater tragedy awaits all who refuse to "flee from the wrath to come." Let us not delay, but make haste to keep the commandments of God.

Frozen to Death

"For many are called, but few are chosen" (Matt. 22:14). "Then one said to Him, 'Lord, are there few who are saved?' And He said to them, 'Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able'" (Luke 13:23-24). A little girl went to church one Sunday morning, but her parents stayed at home because they felt tired. When the little one returned the father asked, "What did the preacher preach on this morning, dear?" "I don't remember all of it," said the child, "but I think his text was: 'Many are cold and a few are frozen.'" That about sums it up for some members of the church.

A Moments Wisdom

--The greatest mistake you can make in life is to be continually fearing you will make one.
--Man cannot discover new oceans unless he has the courage to lose sight of the shore.
--You miss 100 percent of the shots you never take.
--If work were so pleasant, the rich would keep it for themselves.
--Use what talents you possess, the woods will be very silent if no birds sang there except those that sang best.

- One day your life will flash before your eyes. Make sure it's worth watching.
- Dripping water hollows out stone, not through force but through persistence.
- Incredible change happens in your life when you decide to take control of what you do have power over instead of craving control over what you don't.
- A year from now you will wish you had started today.
- Yesterday I was clever, so I wanted to change the world. Today I am wise, so I am changing myself.
- "We are taught you must blame your father, your sisters, your brothers, the school, the teachers; but, never blame yourself. It's never your fault. But it's always your fault, because if you wanted to change, you're the one who has got to change." -- Katharine Hepburn, *Me: Stories of My Life*
- "Getting over a painful experience is much like crossing monkey bars. You have to let go at some point in order to move forward." – C.S. Lewis
- "Lay a firm foundation with the bricks that others throw at you." – David Brinkley
- The sermon you enjoy the most is not likely to be the one that will do you the most good.