

Dante's highly praised but seldom read DIVINE COMEDY begins with the words, "In the middle of the journey of this life, I came to myself in a dark wood, where the direct way was lost." A lost world isfloundering in a darker wood today.

LOSTNESS IN THE SIXTIES

Jeremiah 31:21 "Set thee up waymarks, make thee high heaps; set thine heart toward the highway, even the way which thou wentest: turn again, O virgin of Israel, turn again to these thy cities."

2 Cor. 4:3,4 To them that are lost.

1. 1. The tribes of northern Israel are passing into cruel captivity.
 1. "Set waymarks...Make yourself guideposts."
 1. The importance of road-signs to road-safety is evidently no modern discovery.
 2. The desert was perilous to strangers if these waymarks or guideposts were removed.
 3. God wanted Israel to return and through his prophet Jeremiah warned them to put signs by which they might return.
2. Removal of landmarks and guideposts has been a characteristic of the twentieth century and especially in this last ten years.
 1. Moral road-warnings of all kinds have been obscured or even destroyed with cheerful zeal.
 2. The result:
 1. We see man unaided by guideposts will completely miss his way.
 1. Man seems to revel in the dangerous delight of getting lost.
3. A host of influences have contributed to man's lost condition. Some of them are:
 1. The rise of the idea that all opinions are equally valid and that truth can be known only by its popularity.
 2. All authority is out
 3. The educational field has done much to destroy parental authority and undermine home restraints.
 4. The moral shattering of two world wars along with a number of minor conflicts, in which the most serious casualties were:
 1. Truth. John 8:31, 32
 2. Justice.
 1. Just dealing among men is almost a thing of the past. The world needs to return to the principle of rectitude and just dealing among men.
 2. Psalms 89:14; "Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face."
3. KINDNESS.
 1. Proverbs 31:26 I read of the good woman of whom it is said, "She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness."
 2. In 2 Peter 1:7 I read that "Kindness" is one of the great Christian virtues that Peter said one should supply in one's faith.
4. COMPASSION. May be sympathy, mercy or pity. Sorrow or pity excited by the distress or misfortunes of another.
 1. The Samaritan had compassion. Luke 10:33
 2. The father had compassion and ran. Luke 15:20
5. FAITH. Many examples: Noah, Abraham, Moses. The abandonment of these things left behind an intense confusion at every point with many.

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4. With the shattering of these basic necessary things to the Christian life such as: TRUTH, JUSTICE, KINDNESS, COMPASSION and FAITH:
 1. The theory of evolution gained a stronger hold to become a greater challenge to long accepted principles of Human dignity and conduct. Examples:
 1. Behaviourist accounts of thought and conscience have destroyed confidence in both truth and goodness.
 1. Behaviorism: The doctrine that all generalizations should be based on observation of muscular and glandular behavior.
 2. The attack of science and liberalism upon biblical doctrine.
 2. All combined these have produced:
 1. Rebelliousness and experimentation in conduct.
 2. A distrust of all authority and law.
 3. A contempt for all conventions, until no absolute truth remains.
 4. And finally the ultimate error:
 1. That nothing is good or bad but thinking makes it so.
 5. Under such thinking:
 1. The ancient landmarks that insured man's safety have gone.
 2. The guideposts are buried beneath the barren sand of denials and scepticism.
 3. The new generations flounders, undirected and unled, because they will not be led.
 4. Men are lost in the babble of contradictory voices, in a wilderness of uncharted but enticing paths.
 5. That my friend is being lost: and none is so lost as the one who does not know that he is lost.
 6. In contrast to all of this "lostness" there stands the unshakeable conviction of the Christian concerning the things he surely believes.
 1. The Christian knows that God is and that he is a rewarded of them that diligently seek Him, for he has found it so. Heb. 11:6
 2. The Christian knows that Christ holds the key to all ultimate questions such as:
 1. The origin of man. Gen. 1:26, 27
 2. Man's duty and man's destiny.
 1. The duty of man in Ecclesiastes 11:13, 14:
 2. The destiny of man in Ecclesiastes 11:7 - Heb. 9:27
 3. The Christian knows that God's truth endures and that the faith as exhibited in the lives of many great men of God cannot be basically wrong.
 4. The Christian's faith has not left him pathless and lost but opens the vista where he may clearly behold the waymarks of that path paved with the love, mercy and goodness of God.