

## **We Must Stay by the Majors**

From: *The Next Chapter After the Last*  
by A.W. Tozer

In life there will be found certain great fundamentals, like pillars bearing up the weight of some mighty building. These fortunately are kept at a minimum in the total scheme of things. They are not hard to discover: love, loyalty, integrity, faith; these with very few others constitute the pillars upon which rests all the highly complex superstructure.

The wise man will simplify his life by going to the center of it. He will look well to the foundations and, having done that, he will not worry about the rest.

Life as we know it in our painfully intricate civilization can be deadly unless we learn to distinguish the things that matter from those that do not. It is never the major things that destroy us, but invariably the multitude of trifling things which are mistakenly thought to be of major importance. These are so many that, unless we get out from under them, they will crush us body and soul. This is becoming more and more evident as many of our physical ills are being traced back to other than physical causes. Doctors are becoming increasingly aware of the deadly effects of the burden of the imponderables; they are learning that if they would do the patient any permanent good they must minister to the mind as well as to the body.

In the Christian life also we find this pattern repeated: a few important things and a world of burdensome but unimportant ones. The Spirit-taught Christian must look past the multiplicity of incidental things and find the few that really matter. And let it be repeated for our encouragement, they are few in number and surprisingly easy to identify. The Scriptures make perfectly clear what they are: the fact of God, the Person and work of Christ, faith and obedience, hope and love. These along with a few more constitute the essence of the truth which we must know and love. Christ summed up the moral law as love to God and man. Salvation He made to rest upon faith in God and in the One whom He had sent. Paul simplified the wonders of the spiritual life in the words, "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

The temptation to forget the few spiritual essentials and to go wandering off after unimportant things is very strong, especially to Christians of a certain curious type of mind. Such persons find the great majors of the faith of our fathers altogether too tame for them. Their souls loathe that light bread; their appetites crave the gamy tang of fresh-killed meat. They take great pride in their reputation as being mighty hunters before the Lord, and any time we look out we may see them returning from the chase with some new mystery hanging limply over their shoulder.

Usually the game they bring down is something on which there is a biblical closed season. Some vague hint in the Scriptures, some obscure verse about which the translators disagree, some marginal note for which there is not much scholarly authority: these are their favorite meat. They are especially skillful at propounding notions which have never been a part of the Christian heritage of truth. Their enthusiasm mounts with the uncertainty of their position and their dogmatism grows firmer in proportion to the mystery which surrounds their subject.

Dr. Samuel Johnson, the famous English sage, once said that one of the surest evidences of intellectual immaturity is the desire to startle people. Yet there are Christians who have been fed upon the odd, the strange and the curious so long and so exclusively that they have become wholly unfitted spiritually to receive or to appreciate sound doctrine. They live to be startled by something new or thrilled by something wonderful. They will believe anything so long as it is just a little away from the time-honored beliefs of sober Christian men. A serious discourse calling for repentance, humbleness of mind and holiness of life is impatiently dismissed as old-fashioned, dull and lacking in "audience appeal." Yet these things are just the ones that rank highest on the list of things we need to hear, and by them we shall all be judged in that great day of Christ.

A church fed on excitement is no New Testament church at all. The desire for surface stimulation is a sure mark of the fallen nature, the very thing Christ died to deliver us from. A curious crowd of baptized worldlings waiting each Sunday for the quasi-religious needle to give them a lift bears no relation whatsoever to a true assembly of Christian believers. And that its members protest their undying faith in the Bible does not change things any. "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).

Every believer as well as every minister of Christ must decide whether he will put his emphasis upon the majors or the minors. He must decide whether he will stay by the sober truths which constitute the beating heart of the Scriptures or turn his attention to those marginal doctrines which always bring division and which, at their best, could not help us much on our way to the Celestial City.

No man has any moral right to propound any teaching about which there is not full agreement among Bible Christians until he has made himself familiar with church history and with the development of Christian doctrine through the centuries. The historic approach is best. After we have discovered what holy men believed, what great reformers and saints taught, what the purest souls and mightiest workers held to be important for holy living and dying – then we are in a fair position to appraise our own teaching.

Humility is the only state of mind in which to approach the Scriptures. The Spirit will teach the humble soul those things that make for his salvation and for a holy walk and fruitful service here below. And little else matters.