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SIGNPOSTS ON THE
ROAD TO REASON

By

GENEVIEVE BURNELL

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ROAD TO REASON

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(Introduction)

From a course of
Private Lectures
given for a youth
named David.

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THE
GIFT
BOOK

THE
GIFT
BOOK

Merry Christmas
From
Marion Douet

THIS INSTRUCTION
IS NOT A METHOD,
BUT A MESSAGE.

SIGNPOSTS ON THE
ROAD TO REASON

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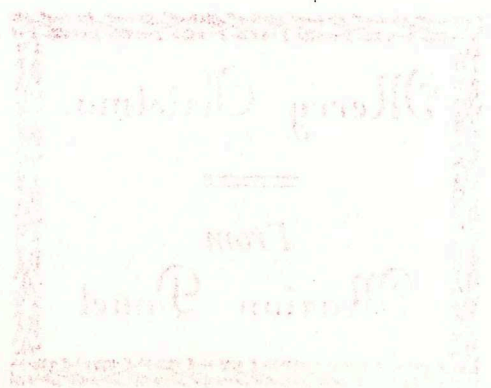
One of the greatest of wise men, Solomon, said, "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth."

It is a wonderful thing when a person as young as you are, has brought to his attention the importance of keeping his Creator in mind.

Later on you will find yourself involved in a great many activities--the increasing demands of your school work, your part in the family life, your Scouting activities, and any number of other things, such as getting married and raising a family. You will become involved in all the responsibilities that go to make a grown-up life. In all that, if you are not alert, you are very apt to become heedless of this most important thing in all your life.

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When you are young, you seem to be especially close to your Creator; and if, then, you become aware of His Presence with you, you have a good chance of keeping Him in mind and carrying the awareness of His Presence with you as you grow older and get out into the very attractive and engaging experiences in the world about you.

If you can become firmly aware of this constant Presence of your Creator, it will save you a lot of problems that you might otherwise find difficult when you get along--within even a very few years now.

A boy becomes a man before he is aware of it; and if he is not alert, he becomes so occupied that he seems to lose track of his Creator.

In every life it is certain that there comes a time when a person needs and wants to find his contact with his Creator again. When life begins to put on its pressures, a person begins to think about the vital things--such

as, what he is in this world for, and who he is, and many other questions that come up in life that have no answers in the world of experience.

If he is fortunate enough to have carried with him the recollection of the days of his youth when he was so close to his Creator, he finds that these questions that the world cannot answer, are answered for him. All he has to do is to turn his mind, or re-turn to his Creator. It is a very wonderful gift that he has of remembering his Creator in the days of his youth; for, as Jesus said, you have to get back to having a childlike mind before you can enter the heavenly kingdom.

This is the key to let you out of the mind of the world and the thoughts of the world that are so distracting and so distressing; and, also, the same key lets you into the world as the Creator made it, and called it "good."

A person can't, of course, really ever get away from his Creator. His Creator is always right with him; but the person loses track of Him because of the domineering of his world of sense, and because of heedlessness.

So, you have to be reminded. The wise man said, Remember your Creator. He didn't tell you to go out and try to put some things together to make a Creator, but he told you to remember Him; because He is really always with you.

That is one of the wonderful things we find out about what we call creation--it has in it endless reminders of the Creator. By creation we mean everything we have about us--ourselves and everything that belongs to our visible world and to the invisible world too. He really has expressed Himself in everything.

It is just like an author writing a story--he really writes himself into the characters, and every event and every person

in the story is really nothing but the author. He can't be left out of the story, although the characters in the story are heedless and don't seem to know anything about the author who wrote them. And yet they couldn't be in the story at all if it were not for this author who has written them into his story.

So, if a person knew how to look at things and see them as they really are, he would find that there isn't anything anywhere that wouldn't be a reminder of the Creator; because He is there in everything. For instance, He is backing up your life and preserving you in His creation. You couldn't exist a moment if He didn't back you up.

People don't usually think anything about this. It is just natural in life. As you go about your daily living, going to school, and in all the rest of your activities, He is always there with you; and you may have the joy of knowing about His Presence.

When you begin to look into things, to think seriously about yourself and the world you live in, and you question your Creator, you will find that He is helping you at every turn to recollect Him. He is making Himself apparent. In endless ways He is expressing Himself in your life.

Actually, the Creator is the only thing there is to express. It is just like the author in the story--the only thing that he can express is himself. He is the whole thing to the story.

Some of the great people, the holy people of the world, have a special way of looking at things. They are said to have what is called "the gift of knowledge." This is not just the ordinary everyday kind of knowledge that you get by learning things in school or in the world, but this is a special gift. These people not only know the things in the world that everybody knows about, but

they know more than that. One of these great ones was Saint Francis of Assissi. He was a great and holy man; and because everything he looked at reminded him of the Creator, he was said to have this gift of knowledge.

He would see exactly the same things that you or I or anyone else would see, but he saw more than just the things as they looked on the surface; he saw the Creator backing them up. And so when he would look at the mountains, he would see the strength and the power of God, and the magnificence of God. He would see the mountains all right, but he would see more than that; he would realize that these mountains were an example of a greater strength and permanence than any mere mountain could have. He would see the flowers, and he would think of the sweetness and the goodness of God.

When he heard a bird sing, he would think of the Love of God. Instead of just stopping at the objects that he saw with his eyes or that he heard with his ears or that he touched with his fingers--instead of just stopping at the sense observations, he carried them right on through to the Creator. That is what it means to remember your Creator.

The Creator has made it almost necessary for us to remember Him if we are to let Him do all that He wants to do for us. When He made us, He made us right. The Bible tells us that when God created us, He created us right; and He equipped us with all we need in order to find out about Him.

We sometimes think that we are not just right. But what He made is right; and He made us, and we really are right. It is up to us to remember who and what we are, and how He made us.

He made us far more wonderful than any machine could ever be made, because He made us and equipped us with conscious life. He gave us the ability to know things and to know ourselves. One of the great gifts that He gave to us is our memory, our ability to remember things. The memory is called the storehouse of divine things; a storehouse that you carry in your mind--your memory.

You know how much you use your memory. You are using it all the time; you are storing up the things you hear. Your memory is even more than that; it is even a storehouse of all the treasures of God.

God gives us the ability to remember. Also, He gives us all things in creation to stimulate our memory, to remind us of Him at every turn. The things in the world are like signposts along the road; they point the way to Him. If we follow the direction given on the signposts, if

we don't get diverted by them and forget to notice that they are pointing the way for us to travel, if we really follow the direction on the signposts, there is only one place they can lead us; and that is to God. They always lead us back to a knowledge of the Creator.

The Creator has provided for the stimulation of our memory, by means of examples, so that we can become aware of His Presence. By means of examples, our minds can lay hold of the real meaning of things. Instead of just stopping with the thing or with the example, the mind can leap on beyond the literal example to the meaning. Just as the signpost directs us--we do not stop with the signpost but go on to the destination to which it points.

We have the example of the author and his story, and we have another example that points to the same meaning--the example of the dreamer and his dream. You have had

dreams--it is said that everybody has dreams--and, at the time you are dreaming, they seem so very real.

What are those dreams? They are really yourself, aren't they? You haven't had to make your head bigger because you have dreamed mountains and valleys and hills and seas in that dream; you haven't really done anything to your head at all, have you? And yet a whole world full of things may be in that dream. You couldn't have had that dream if it wasn't for you, dreaming a dream. Isn't that right? So, really, you have put yourself in the dream just as the author puts himself in the story. You are the mountains and the hills and all the characters regardless of how many there are and what names they may be called by. Very often you put yourself into a dream as your own personal character; you'll be dreaming about yourself. Do you see?

Sometimes your dreams are abstract; sometimes they are about concrete, substantial things. Then again, maybe you, as an individual, are not in the dream at all. But very often you, as yourself, take part in the dream; you are there, and you're walking around and doing all kinds of things. You have a very special way of being in that dream.

But during the dream, because you have built up around yourself a dream, you forget all about your real self lying on the bed, asleep. While you are dreaming, you think that's all there is to you and to your world of experience. But actually, all that experience is only you, lying on the bed, asleep.

But the creator of the dream has provided a way for you to follow back out of the dream. If you look through the signposts in the dream experience--if, in the dream, you could remember the dreamer, it

would be like remembering the Creator.

Actually, the character you are in the dream is never separated from the you that is lying on the bed. If you (the you lying on the bed) were ever separated from the dream that you are having, you would cease to have any dream at all, wouldn't you? The dream would just disappear because your relationship to you lying on the bed is all there is really to the dream.

What I am trying to bring out is that at every point in your life there are opportunities to remember your Creator if you have spiritual eyes and ears open to Him, and are not heedless of Him. Heedlessness comes from being diverted by surface things--being too much concerned with what is going on today and tomorrow--by sports events and other things that are happening all around you.

This doesn't mean that you should not

have an interest in the things of your world. You should. But you have a greater interest and satisfaction in all these things if you find that the Creator is backing them up and giving them added value that is not in the things themselves.

He has given you the proper equipment to know Him with, to tune in to Him. Let's use an example: just imagine that you are a television set; you are properly constructed so that you can pick up things that would otherwise be invisible. The pictures and sound produced through the television set, are in the air all about us but are invisible and inaudible unless we are equipped to receive the pictures and sound and bring them into the visible world. It is all there, but unless you have a proper apparatus and have it turned on and in working order, you don't receive it.

The Creator made you right. He has made you to be a rational human being. In fact, man is called His "master-piece." The creation He has given us to live in, is wonderful. He has placed His masterpiece--humanity, made in His Image and Likeness--in that creation as its crowning glory. And He has equipped us, every one of us, to know Him, to remember Him.

Even if a person thinks that he has missed his opportunity when he was in his youth, he can find God at any moment that he really has the heart to search, when he really has the desire to find Him. God has made Himself available everywhere at all times. This availability is called the omnipresence of Truth.

There are two particular ways in which the Creator has made it easy for us to know Him. He has given you, and

everybody, two outstanding characteristics that are essentially human. These faculties are within you whether you use them or not.

One of these faculties is called "reason." It is the ability to exercise rationality. We often speak of it as "standard equipment." You know, when you buy an automobile, you buy one that has all its machinery just right to do the things it is intended to do. It has an engine and gears and brakes, so that it can move or stop; and it has the ability to go forward or in reverse. These essential abilities are called the car's "standard equipment."

We human beings are equipped with certain standard abilities that are essential to our doing all the things we are intended to do and to our doing them right. Among the items of standard equipment that a human being has, there

is the ability to reason. A human being is called a "rational being" because he has the ability, which nothing else in creation has, to exercise reason. He has all things in common with everything else in creation, but man alone has reason. You are using reason all the time; right now you are using your faculty of reason in following the things I am saying. When you are in school, you are reasoning; in fact, reasoning is going on in you all the time in everything you do; but you may not be directing it as you are now.

In addition to the gift of reason, you have another great gift that is your standard equipment, and that is called "faith."

No person can get very far in the world if he doesn't have and make use of faith and of reason, both of which you have been using unconsciously; but from

now on, you are going to be aware of what you are doing.

We will take as an example, something that you have done in which you exercised these faculties but did not know that you were using reason and faith when you did it. At some time you have walked, or bicycled, or, let us say that you were riding with your father in an automobile, and approaching a tunnel. You were aware of the size of your automobile, of yourself, and of your father; and when you saw that little hole in the mountainside, it looked to you as though you never could get through that little tunnel.

If you were just going by what your eyes told you, you would say, "Well, that tunnel is much too small for the car," wouldn't you? You would see it that way if you were just going by what your eyes told you--

by what appeared to be so; or, in other words, by what is called "sense evidence."

Sense evidence is all right as far as it goes; it helps you to understand things, but it is not to be trusted until it is corrected by reason. You can not put your faith in appearances without first consulting your reason.

At your age, you have already become used to correcting, automatically, these appearances, by consulting your reason. By now, you know that when you get to the tunnel, you are going to be able to go through it with the car. You have learned by experience that the tunnel looks small to you because of the distance between you and it; that the tunnel itself isn't small, but just looks that way. You are using reason all of the time, and yet you don't stop to think about it.

You couldn't live in the world and

get the advantages of the world if you couldn't reason. It is said that it is the gift of reason that raises us above the animals. Animals have, in place of reason, what is called "instinct." A human being has the ability to reason things and to figure things out and know the answers to the problems that come up in his life. The power of reasoning is one of our greatest gifts from God.

We don't always use this gift to its best advantage, but we couldn't get along without it. Everybody uses reason in one way or another, and everybody can use it a great deal more than he does; and it is always to his advantage to use reason to the utmost of his capacity. We are going to see how you are able to use it to better advantage than you have ever realized before.

We said that there are two ways, in particular, that we have of remembering

our Creator. So far we have considered only the gift of reason. Now let us consider the other great gift He has equipped us with so that we can remember Him, so that we won't have to go around being heedless of Him--not enjoying the awareness of His Presence--and that is the gift of faith.

Perhaps you don't realize how much faith you are using all the time. Every minute of the day you are accepting things that you really don't understand. That's living by faith, you see. It is not required of you that you build up something of your own, made out of your own belief. That would not be faith; because faith is a gift direct from God, and it is not your particular faith, but His faith that He is giving you; and He is waiting for you to awaken to it and accept it. Now it is time for you to become aware that you are using faith constantly.

Let us consider some examples that will point out and emphasize the manner in which you use faith every day without thinking about it. You exercise faith every time you get into an automobile; by getting into that automobile, you show that you have faith in the way it is constructed and equipped, faith that it will run and stop and carry you around safely.

It is not required that you know all about the working machinery of the automobile; you might not know all that an automobile mechanic would know about the intricate workings of the machinery that makes the car move. Unless you were an expert at that particular thing, you would have to accept it on faith that it would get you around.

Another example is your faith in your body and its wonderful operation. You may not know a single thing about the digestion of food; but you eat several times a day

having faith in the intelligence of your body, and faith that your digestive equipment will know what to do even though you may not.

We are surrounded by things that we know very little about and really don't understand. Even the greatest scientists find that there comes a point in every investigation where they have to bridge over with faith what they are not able to know certainly, because they have no explanation for what they discover. Faith is a wonderful faculty.

The two ways for us to know God-- reason and faith-- are not really two separate things, but they are inseparable companions. Your faith will often take you farther than your reason, but you have got to have your reason to back it up. As we go on, we are going to see how faith and reason go hand in hand; they are seen to be really a single twofold gift that enables

you to remember your Creator in the midst of everything.

Not only has He made it possible for you to reason that He is, to reason that there is a God, but your faith will carry you even farther. As we go on, you will see how we can reason that He is; and you can take step after step with this reasoning faculty and mount higher and higher in your understanding. Finally there comes a place where even your reason cannot go, and then it turns to faith; and your faith can reach out to greater horizons. But as you reach out by faith, you draw yourself up through reason. Did you ever watch a measuring worm? It reaches out as far as it can go, and then brings its other end up to that point and then reaches out again from there.

We are trying to take common, everyday experiences as our examples, so that we may be sure of the place we stand before we

reach out to a new step. In reaching out for this recollection of the reality that is back of all the things that we see around us, we reach out with our faith and then we draw up our reason and our understanding. We wouldn't want to have faith in anything that wasn't reasonable, and we won't have to if we take these steps in order.

I think perhaps one of the best examples of reason and faith, and of how they can't be separated because both belong to the standard equipment that God has provided for you so that you can know Him, is the illustration of an astronomer. You know how astronomers study the stars. They look up at the stars and see them with their eyes, but if they want to have a better understanding of them, they look through a telescope--a piece of equipment that increases the power of the eye to see. When they look through the telescope, what they see looks like something entirely different from what they are able to see with their unaided

eyes. Their reason tells them that it is exactly the same thing they are seeing, but that the telescope is enabling them to see much farther. What they see with their naked eyes and what they see through the telescope is not different, but through the telescope they have a more comprehensive view.

So that's the way reason and faith go together. You use your rational faculty because you are a rational human being and are equipped with rationality. You use your faith to get a larger understanding, but you back it up with your rationality.

The equipment you have within you and are using every day, is much more wonderful than the telescope of the astronomer. He has to have something separate from himself--the telescope--to increase his vision. But you have within you this double equipment; you have not only the ability to reason, but you also have the ability to have faith--all in the same twofold faculty. Both are in your

mind--reason and faith. You don't have to move over to some external machinery, because you have everything you need right in yourself.

But, suppose you were to go around believing everything you hear? Then you would not be using your equipment, because you would not be using reason.

Do you look at television programs? There is one--I think it is called "Racket Squad"--where the confidence people make a practice of deceiving the other people. They make people believe that they have a great fortune to share, or something of the sort, and get away with a person's money by trickery. Well, these victims are just gullible; they just fall for things; they believe everything that anybody tells them. But they are not using their reason, and so they lose their valuables.

We don't want to be that way. We don't want to go along believing everything just because it sounds good. We want to have faith in truth, and we want to have it rational and

secure and well founded. And that's where reason comes in. It's in just the same way that the telescope operates to let you see more than you could otherwise--the telescope would do you no good unless you had eyes to look with.

Well, you are a rational human being, with the gift of practising rationality. Therefore you have this ability to look through your greater gift of faith, with your rationality. And because you cannot **actually** separate the two, they become wonderful companions, always aiding you to remember your Creator while you are young.

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...and well founded. And that's where
...in just the same way
...that the telephone operators in New York are
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through your greater gift of faculty with
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actually separate the two, they become words
of responsibility always aiding you to remember
your greater gifts you are better.

