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GUEST EDITORIAL

THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD

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When so much is being said about the destructive forces that are at work against our civilization, how comforting it is to find sober-minded, God-fearing men and women waging a crusade for the greatest constructive force in the world: **Christianity!** This is more than a voice being lifted as a gesture of defence: it is a crusade; an effort to revitalize the religious life of the members of the Church. It is an effort to enlist the active co-operation and support of all who say they are in sympathy with the principles of the Lord Jesus, into a great, united effort to actively demonstrate in each detail of one's personal life, the spirit of Him Who is the Great Head of the Church. It is a crusade for the triumph of righteousness over unrighteousness, of morality over immorality; of piety over impiety; of reverence over irreverence, of self-sacrifice over self-indulgence. It is a crusade to arouse the members of the Churches into activity, and encourage them to win others to the fellowship of the faith in Christ.

As one visits a city and sees the **homes**, he is made to meditate upon love, affection, and the spirit of helpfulness. As he is shown the **hospitals** he sees the symbols of care for the physical recovery of men's bodies from disease. To him the **court-house** is a symbol of justice. It speaks of rights that are to be protected and cherished without partiality. The **schools** are symbols of man's care for the mind, of man's interest in knowledge, of his desire to develop himself as to be useful. The **banking and business houses** are the symbols of man's interest in material values, of participation in the world's commerce. The **news-papers and radios** are symbols of man's interest in the things which concern his fellow-men.

But what about the churches? They are a vital part of the whole life. They are an indispensable part of man's highest, noblest and best self. It is that institution which serves to keep alive the sense of God in the world. The Church is that institution whose message is Divine, whose message satisfies the inner and highest cravings of man's soul, that desire for fellowship with God! The many, many false "isms" of the day have left man's soul still thirsting for the springs, he has been mocked by them! Is there no place where this longing can be met? Yes! It has been provided for by the message which the Church has for man, as he prosecutes his quest for spiritual satisfaction.

The Church not only declares that there is a God who speaks to man, but that man may approach unto God and make his requests known, and be assured that whatever his personal need, it may be fully met by the provision

of God's grace. Does man need forgiveness, cleansing from sin, comfort and consolation, understanding, and sympathetic helpfulness? Let him take himself to the house of God and there find complete satisfaction.

Why is it that so many today are either indifferent or, what is worse, hostile, toward the Church? There may be a number of reasons given. Some may have fallen under the influence of well-meaning, but misguided teachers who have led them to believe that they may profess love and loyalty to Jesus and His teachings, but that it makes no difference whether they actively identify themselves with the Church. Doubtless there are some true followers of the Lord Jesus who have not seen their folly in failing to identify themselves with the Church. As members of the family of God, we need the fellowship and mutual helpfulness which we receive from the other members of the family circle of the heavenly Father. As members of the household of God we sustain a peculiar relation to the living God; therefore, since the Church is the visible organism through which Christ works, since it is, as one has said, the "chosen instrument for accomplishing his moral purpose," we need to devote ourselves, as Christians, to the work of the Church of the living God.

One of the most disastrous things which could happen to us nationally, would be for those elements which are hostile to the Church to triumph to the extent that the unsuspecting people would not come to the defense of the Church when pressed by her foes. True, the promise of the Master is that "the gates of hell shall not prevail" against His Church. But as it was in the days of our Lord's earthly life, that unbelief prevented His doing many mighty works in some places, so is it true today that as the false, anti-Christian propaganda increases and is accepted, the influence of the Church is weakened over the ones whom she would help.

May it not be that one reason for the organized hostility to the Church arises from those subversive elements that hate her because she stands unitedly as a body of believers against the impurities and injustices that rage today? Let me appeal to all to seriously consider what the Church of the Living God is, and has done, before they allow themselves to be influenced by her enemies.

The Church is of Divine origin and authority. She is actuated by holy motives, and energized by Divine power. "The Church furnishes eyes and lips, hands and feet, for the Spirit of Christ." The attitudes of the true members of the Church to one another and to the world's needs reveal the love of Christ. Its true members labor for the relief of humanity's sufferings. Its record of achievement is a most worthy one: It has humanized the savage, enlightened the ignorant, purified the associations of life, liberated the slaves, elevated womanhood, sanctified childhood, and labored

for the abolition of all unholy businesses that oppose the plan of God for man's happiness and domestic harmony. It is the one institution that declares man's obligation to do God's will in all the relations of common life. It is "the school of Christian character, ready to do its work."

The Church offers those who believe in Christ and associate themselves with her members a family comradeship that is real and precious. Men and women there are who say that they can worship at home, that they do not have to go to some house of worship to be religious. But do they worship at home? Do they spend as much time at home in worship and religious exercise as they would at the house of God? They could also teach their children at home, but they wish them to have the wider associations with others interested in the same ideals and striving for the same attainments. Why not be as consistent in one's attitude toward the Church?

Ponder this thought well, please: In the Church of the living God we have an institution founded by Jesus Christ, into which He wrought the Divine purpose; an institution which has been commended by the most forceful and useful men of the generations since its establishment; an institution into whose services the noblest, the wisest, the best, the most worthy men and women of all ages have invested their lives. It is an institution which, in spite of the weakness, faults, failures and idiosyncrasies of its members, has stood Gibraltar-like through the ages for the highest and best interests of all men of all races and classes.

Are you one of those who, for one reason or another, has never shared in the deeper responsibilities of the Church of the Living God? Do not be "a non-producer in this work of Christian progress." Let me pray you, be ye reconciled to God! Seek His forgiveness for your past sins, seek the renewal and development of your moral life, seek and confess a filial relationship to God, and accept His help to walk and live as a child of God. Theaker sake not the assembling of yourself together, but wait upon the Lord for strength to do His will; and identify your with His Church which is "the pillar and ground of the truth," organized to make effective its expression of the sway of Jesus Christ's life and principles over the hearts of men and women.

While it is true that there are points of difference between the beliefs and practices of some branches of the Church of the Living God, do not be misled thereby into failing to see the great points of fundamental agreement between and among themselves. To quote a well-known teacher, we all believe in "One Lord—who holds sway over the thought, the aspiration, and the obedience of men. One Faith—the moral attitude toward God which is saving in its effect is an attitude of trust,

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