

# The King's Highway

An Advocate of Scriptural Holiness

VOL. XXXVIII.

MONCTON, N. B., NOVEMBER 15th, 1945

No. 141

## CHURCH OF CHRIST, TAKE THE OFFENSIVE!

(We print the following timely article from the pen of Dr. Roy S. Nicholson, editor of the "Wesleyan Methodist," official organ of our sister denomination. We say Amen and Amen to this challenging message.—Editor).

One of the lessons World War II. has taught us is that no major victories are won by defensive warfare alone. Again and again defensive stands were made by retreating groups in what was reported as "rear guard action;" but always the result was the same, the ultimate loss became greater. Often the territory lost in days could not be regained in years. While one group majored on defensive strategy the other won by taking the initiative. "Too little, too late" was the pitiful phrase that often explained the tragic losses.

The Church, with her twenty centuries of experience, ought to know better than to settle down to defensive warfare. Indeed, she is to wage an aggressive warfare against all the forces of evil. Her Lord gave her a commission. He sent His Spirit to equip her for this task. But the modern Church seems content with a defensive philosophy of life. She ought to be in the field achieving, and aggressively taking new territory from the enemy. But there are those who adopt a policy of appeasement, expediency, and heartless indifferences to realities as long as outward appearances conceal the inner decay. Such a course is both fatal and treacherous. It defeats the very spirit and purpose of Christ, thwarting heaven's plan for earth's redemption.

### Why be Fearful and Hesitant?

"Go ye into all the world," we are commanded. "Lo, I am with thee," assures us of ample provision. "I will never leave thee," guarantees us the victory; for Christ said: "I have overcome the world." His victory is perfect and perpetual.

Immediately after Pentecost the followers of Christ went everywhere preaching the gospel; and with great power and positiveness they gave witness of the resurrection. Their ministry was so effective that they were charged with "turning the world upside down." They were certain about spiritual things and jeopardized their lives to herald the truth. The decay of the Church began when she settled down, content with her conquests, proud of her achievements, and satisfied with her successes. Her morale deteriorated when she went into spiritual winter quarters when she should have pressed the battle for greater victories.

It was never intended that the Church should quail before any earthly foe. Her Founder and Head declared that "the gates of hell should not prevail" against her. Greater is her indwelling Lord than all the combined forces of Satanic and human opposition. Instead of mourning her lack of things, the

Church should appreciate her privilege of being "filled with the Spirit." It was the Spirit's fullness that transformed that scattered, cowering group of early disciples into a powerful band that undertook a word-encompassing program of evangelism that challenged the strongholds of hell, and wrested the laurels from the devil. The Church must never appease her adversary; she is to attack him whenever and wherever he appears and earnestly contend until victory comes.

### The Situation Demands Aggression

From every quarter goes up a cry for the bread and water of life, the light of hope, and the joy of deliverance. And the very nature of our faith impels it. Unless the Church attacks error with the truth, dispels darkness with the light, and feeds the hungry with the spiritual provisions of Divine grace, she will grieve her God and disappoint the needy multitudes who look to her for help.

If the Church would at once regain the offensive it would electrify the world. Too long has entrenched evil held sway. The "complacent program" of the Church has cheated her of the moral leadership she should have exercised, it has broken down the morale of her members, and has left her powerless. How can the Church boast of what she has done while there yet remains so much that God wills for her to do that goes undone? The millions of perishing ones—some in our own neighborhoods—should move us to compassion. We are complacent when we should be heralds of a compelling passion. Shame on us for lacking the courage to take up the offensive!

### We Need an Earthquake

It is said that a bishop invited his clergymen to meet him in a "retreat," where they could share each other's fellowship and receive fresh inspiration and enthusiasm for their work. One of the men replied, agreeing to the proposal, but suggesting that they did not need a "retreat" as much as they needed an "earthquake!"

World conditions are enough to shake the Church from center to circumference, if she were but alert to the meaning of modern trends. But, alas! too many church members are asleep in the cradle of carnal security, "at ease in Zion," while a lost world plunges into perdition with the steadiness and immensity of a Niagara. Indeed, we do need a stirring out of our lethargy. If conditions which produced two world wars within one generation, and prevented any semblance of a world-wide revival do not arouse the Church to action, what will it take to do so? The truth is that the nations of the world seem on the verge of committing suicide through their godlessness. The Church has a message for them that succeeds when other things have failed.

What must be the feeling in the heart of our God as He looks down upon the Church which He purchased at such terrible cost.

and which He left to perpetuate His Spirit and enlarge His Kingdom—and which is gradually, through her criminal indifference, losing territory won for her by the blood of the martyrs? They gave their all in the conflict to purchase a spiritual heritage for their children. Are those children bartering that heritage for a mess of the devil's pottage? Are they sitting at ease, indulging themselves in questionable and sensual pleasures, unmoved with the cry of perishing humanity, while a few try to build a bulwark against the rising tide of paganism which menaces every heritage which we hold sacred?

### What the Church Must Do

The Church must go to Pentecost. The energizing, purifying baptism with the Spirit will transform her from uselessness to usefulness. The Church is indispensable; but the reason some are wondering whether she has served her day and outlived her usefulness is because she is so very little different from the world. She is so powerless when she should be powerful; worldly when she should be unworldly; poor when she should be rich.

The Church has been confused and inefficient, when God wanted her to be clear in her thinking and definite in her messages. She has been restrained by the fear of giving offense, when God commissioned her to advance His interests in every land for the benefit of every creature. There has been bondage to "red tape" and program, when God expected her to "go out not knowing" the future, concerned only with obeying Him who had set her to do His work.

There has been too much impractical dreaming and trumpet-blowing, when there should have been intercession and self-sacrifice. There has been too much effort to revolutionize the social order, whereas God's program called for the regeneration of the individual. There has been too much emphasis on the masses, and too little personal work to reach the man in the mass. The Church has missed both the masses and the man.

There has been too much attention given to big things (as measured by the world's false standards of greatness) while the small things which God in His infinite wisdom and omnipotence could have used to bless the world have been set aside as useless by the worldly-wise ones whose schemes were not in harmony with the plans of the Spirit. There has been too much self-praise as carnal folk wanted to be told how good and great they and their plans were, while the men with a soul passion were relegated into oblivion. There has been too much feasting and too little fasting. There has been too much praising men, and too little praising God. There has been too much of the fear of man, and too little of the favor of God. There has been more of the love of pleasure than of love for piety. There has been more concern for the

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