

Re-Fire, or Retire

By Evangelist Leonard Ravenhill

The complete and indefensible inadequacy of the Church of Jesus Christ to meet the moral, spiritual and political perils of this hour is a heartache to the true followers of the Lamb. Our mammoth evangelistic enterprises are but midgets in the light of world need, with its sickening backdrop of miserable millions, perverted and perishing.

A grain of dust in the eye can blot out the view of a whole landscape. Our local grain-of-dust evangelistic effort can likewise mar our vision so that true focus is lost. We rejoice at a handful gathered, but weep not for a multitude of shepherdless sheep.

Many of our masters in Israel have outlawed the supernatural, superannated the blessed Holy Spirit, denied present-day miracles, put fences around some of the precious scriptures, and finally turned the seekers from the green pastures of inspiration and the cool waters of the promises. From such men turn away.

Jesus is coming! We are sure of that! When He is coming, we do not know, and what He is coming for, we do not seem to understand. You reply, "He is coming for His Church." I see—what kind of a church? A recent press photo shows a boxer sprawled insensibly across the canvas—punch-drunk, glassy-eyed, lifeless in form, dulled in brain—a splendid figure of a man, slumped senseless. Is that the picture of the Church Christ is coming for?

Will He come **joyfully** to rescue His Church—bleeding, broken, blind, and bankrupt of power, like that battered boxer? Is that worth His Gethsemane, gory death, and tomb-shattering resurrection? Is it? Will the Lord descend from heaven with a victor's shout to gather a ragged remnant of shining saints? Will He?

Frightened, Frustrated, Fleeced Flock

Is He coming just to gather the fragments which remain, lest by His further delay there be almost nothing to gather? Will He find a church shaking with terror, all torn, and in tears? Will the Great Shepherd come on an emergency errand to free His frightened, frustrated, fleeced flock? Will He?

We talk of bringing back the King, the Captain of our salvation. This is the hour for a **warrior Church!** He may find us tried and torn, bloody and broken—but let it be from our storming the bastions of hell! Let Him find us with lean bodies and fat souls, rather than with fat bodies and lean souls!

It seems to be a virtue in this hour of weakening church witness, to talk of the increase of godlessness and the progressive deterioration in spirituality as the Lord's return nears. Ironically and foolishly enough, many of those who speak loudest of apostasy, degeneracy, and no end-time revival, are the very men who are building new and oversized church houses. What for?

Many theologians today seem more expert in telling us what the Lord cannot do than what He can do. The former requires only unbelief; the latter, a living faith linked to the omnipotent, holy, immutable God! We are victims, this hour, of devitalized teaching, and so our pale Protestantism lies tortured on the rack of twisted dispensationalism,

Right now the Living God must be fashioning His Elijahs to challenge this Baal-worshipping, priest-ridden people. God finds His men in the most unexpected places and at the

most unexpected times. Deity reached down, not into the schools of divinity, nor yet sought a fundamentalist man to be His pillar of fire to lighten the darkened dungeons of European religion, but transformed an Augustinian monk, Martin Luther.

Into the hand of this spiritual trail-blazer went the illuminating torch of Justification by faith. With his back to history, he illuminated posterity. Hail, Luther! We need thee NOW! When the Church hit the doldrums in the Eighteenth Century, then God entered the death-chamber of religious formality with the polished Oxford scholar, John Wesley. He had Luther's torch in one hand (passed on by Peter Bohler), and the flaming light of Sanctification in the other hand, conferred on him by the Holy Ghost. The world is lighter and warmer since that day.

Men to Shatter Sophistries

No wonder some folks settle for chaining the Bible! A free Bible means free men. We need a man right now to shatter the sophistries of scientific humanism, and to remind the Church that **ALL POWER** belongeth unto God!

Many seem to want God these days just to stem the power of a few bad habits in their lives. The purpose of the Cross is to destroy the works of the devil, and so make it possible for the Holy One to invade human personality with His very Self.

The soldier sons from Israel's military academy polished their armor, strapped on their swords, and strutted—until Goliath roared; then they feared, and ran!

An unarmed, untrained, unknown, and (by his brothers) unwanted lad, came in and did what Saul, Jonathan, or some other should have done—just to show that the lame take the prey; just to prove that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal; just to shake our cold intellectualism with the unbending truth that it is "**not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.**"

Many say that the Lord does not put a premium on ignorance. Quite so; but that goes for wisdom, too. Right now, and let me say it softly and **not** with scorn, we have enough D.D. degrees which, if laid side by side, would reach from here to hell—but not enough **POWER** in all of us to stop the last-minute, end-time push which the devil and his hordes are pressing on this unsuspecting world!

Let me affirm and put some emphasis on my affirmation, that the Lord is telling me these days that there is a great difference between knowing the **Word** of God and knowing the **God** of Word. By the same token, while there are many men who trust the Lord, there are few men whom the Lord trusts!

To return to this thorny problem of end-time revival, some statistics may both help and challenge. The last world census reveals the staggering figure of 2,400,000,000 souls in the human family! Say 400,000,000 of those souls are really born again—which I seriously doubt. That leaves the devil an enormous slice of 2,000,000,000 souls to perish eternally. Just think of it!

God Raising Up a Battalion of Soul-Flamed Preachers

Suppose that by a visitation of the Spirit we sleeping believers would throw off our in-

herent laziness and carnal indulgences, and as a result of repentance, quickened faith, and single-eyed intercession (not wanting just to see our wilting denomination or church revived), God would raise up a battalion of soul-enflamed preachers in every land

As an outcome of this, in the next five years we would see a landslide of genuine regeneration and Spirit-filled folk, so that the net result would be 100,000,000 souls added to His glorious Kingdom.

Dragnet Operation of the Holy Ghost

What a victory this would be! It would be the dragnet operation of the Holy Ghost, the greatest spiritual upheaval of all time! What would 10,000,000 saved converts mean to the Church in America! The same in England, Africa, India, Russia, etc.! Our religious periodicals would need double issues to report all the wonderful breaking in, breaking down, and breaking out of the blessed Holy Spirit.

We would all be drunken with delight. Rome would totter; Communism would quake; demons would despair; and angels would stand awed. Our blessed Lord would see, to some extent, the travail of His soul, and be satisfied. Then, after the first thrill, we would sober up, and remember that we had seen the biggest operation of the Spirit ever known—yet, and mark it well: the devil and hell would have **NINETEEN** hundred million souls to damn, against our **ONE** hundred million converts!

Are the Things We are Living for, Worth Christ's Dying for?

"We're marching to Zion," but it's at the dead-march pace. Could we see Protestantism stripped of her perfidy, her pseudo-piety, and her passionlessness, then might these things be. If every fundamentalist church in the world saw one true new birth each week, it would be good—just fifty-two a year; yet, with our heavy budgets and dazzling programs, even this mild average is not ours! The fault is within ourselves. Are the things that we are living for, worth Christ's dying for?

Right now, preachers are "treading where the saints have trod"—to take pictures of where the martyrs died, spending great sums of money in following the very steps where dear St. Paul trod—only this time from the foam-rubber seat of a luxury plane or car.

Deceitful Spirituality

What patience God has with poor, doomed humanity and deceitful spirituality! We wonder that God does not by-pass the church and fulfill His promise to spew it out of His mouth, and find some outcast preacher of the same mud as Abram, and breathe into him the breath of life for this hour, which is spiritually colder than ice, and blacker than blackest midnight! The Church must either **REFIRE**, or **RETIRE!**

In closing, let us together: you, on that lonely mission station; you, pastor, whose language I cannot speak; you, lonely pioneer in the steaming jungle—let us kneel together at this moment and borrow two clips of poetry from the beloved Amy Wilson Carmichael:

"From all that dims Thy Calvary,
O Lamb of God, deliver me!"

"Let me not sink to be a clod . . .

Make me Thy fuel, Flame of God."

This, dear God, is our prayer.

—Herald of His Coming