

The King's Highway

An Advocate of Scriptural Holiness

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EDITORIAL

THE CHURCH SHOULD GROW

The Church of Christ in its early history was a glowing, going, growing movement. Aflame with love, active and mobile, the Spirit-filled heralds of the Gospel went everywhere proclaiming the message of salvation. And God bear them witness "with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost according to His own will".

Three thousand were converted on the day of Pentecost and "the Lord added to the church daily." The story continues: "And the Word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith".

Sometimes we speak as though deep spirituality and great increase should never be expected in the church. Our way is not popular, therefore only a few will be willing to follow it. The devil is turning his heavy artillery on those who are standing for the truth, therefore we cannot expect to make great gains. The world and organized Christendom have the crowd and the wealth on their side, consequently we work against tremendous odds. And so it goes. We explain our lack of progress and growth on these and other reasons and accept the idea that to be true to the Lord we must be content to belong to "the Lord's despised few".

It is true that the way of the Cross is not popular, yet multitudes walked in it in New Testament times. The devil does indeed marshal his strong forces to oppose those who would promote the work or righteousness in the earth. He did so against Peter and John, Stephen and Paul, but the cause of Christ flourished under the heat and pressure of conflict. The spirit of the world and organized religion was hostile to Christ and His followers, and wealth and power politics were used in determined resistance to the early church, but the more they persecuted, opposed, and afflicted those early believers, the more their followers and the greater their victories.

The church should grow. Even in this twentieth century with strong competitive and opposing forces lined up against her, the church should grow. There is no virtue in being small. We have no scriptural right to pride our-

selves because we are few in number. If we stand with the minority, let us be faithful if we stand for the right. But let us pray God for strength and power for victory and increase. The hearts of men are fundamentally the same, the Holy Ghost is the same, the possibilities of success in the work of God are as great today, if not greater, than at any time in the history of the church. We are still living in that glorious day of promised blessing which began with the advent of the Holy Spirit. The mighty effusion and endowment of Pentecost will work wonders today as it did in the days of apostolic achievement.

ARDOR WILL OUT

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A few elementary facts about emotion in general and religious emotion in particular ought to be clear to each of us.

We ought to be clear, for example, on the fact that emotion is part of the stuff of living, and as such is normal rather than abnormal.

"Case of Jealousy"

It should be clear to us that our emotions are capable of deceiving us. They frequently go into cahoots with the mind and misrepresent themselves. Thus the emotion of jealousy will disguise itself and lead a man to make an impassioned speech against another man on the alleged ground that the man is incompetent, the real reason for the opposition being a well-nursed case of jealousy. The psychologist calls it rationalizing.

It should be clear, also, that emotion is power calling for control. While it has no business at the steering wheel of our lives, it has an absolutely necessary place among the pistons and cylinders under the hood.

It should be equally clear that emotion, including religious emotion, for its own sake is not generally useful. That is like racing the engine of your car—you merely heat it up needlessly and perhaps harmfully, but you get nowhere. Emotion is power, but it must be "in gear" and moving the vehicle toward a worthwhile goal.

In the life of the spirit, for instance, it is not too much emotion that makes a fanatic. Fanaticism comes in when the emotion is worked up for its own sake and is unharnessed to any practical end or perhaps harnessed to some unworthy end. Thus the wild emotions of a lynching mob cannot be said to be without a goal, but they are evil because they are focused upon a vicious goal.

And then it should be clear to us Christians that our emotions ought to be at once the most intense and the most useful because they are stimulated by the pure love of God in Christ and because they are linked up with the noblest of all ends, namely, the winning of our fellows to life with Christ in the kingdom of God.

"Army of Crusaders"

Yet it is at this very point that we stumble on a startling weakness in today's Christianity; it has little emotional richness and contagiousness about it. It has plenty of cool heads; it has a few hot hearts. It has an abundance of poise; it has a poverty of passion. It has the respectability of a convention of bankers; it has none of the recklessness of an army of crusaders. It has been robbed of what someone has called the "inflammatory touch."

Small wonder, then, that the Communists are making faster headway than the Christians. They have stolen our fire and are using it in the devil's stove.

"While I was musing the fire burned." Can we say that?