

The King's Highway

An Advocate of Scriptural Holiness

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— Editorials —

"THE CHURCH BEHIND CLOSED DOORS"

Some time ago Dr. E. Stanley Jones wrote: "The church is living between Easter and Pentecost. It stands hesitant between the two. Hesitant, hence comparatively impotent. Something big has dawned on its thinking—Christ has lived, taught, died and risen again, and has commissioned the Church with the amazing Good News. But something big has yet to dawn in the very structure, make-up, and temper of the life of the Church—Pentecost. Easter has dawned; Pentecost has not. If the Church would move up from that between-state to Pentecost, nothing could stop it—nothing!!"

There is a sobering and searching suggestion presented here. At this particular time of year it would be well to ponder it.

In too many places and with too many people Christianity as an impressive and meaningful thing is becoming seasonal and historical. We have the wonder of Christmas, the glory of Easter, and then—The miracle of the Bethlehem birth continues to fascinate us, and the incidents related to the death and resurrection of Jesus invariably move and thrill us. And the seasonal emphases on these major events of historical Christianity arouse new interest in the Church and its message. But sad to say, the Church makes little impact on the masses from May to November, and it must await the time of special celebrations for a resurgence of interest in its services.

What is the cause of this unhappy state of affairs? What can be done to make the Church an effective organization so that she may be making history rather than living in the afterglow of a glory that belongs to the past? Dr. Jones gives a very apt description of this condition, with subsequent challenge, by referring to the followers of Christ gathered together on the evening of the resurrection day:

"...the doors were shut where the disciples were gathered assembled for fear of the Jews." A Church living behind closed doors! A Church living between Easter and Pentecost is always behind closed doors.

"They had ringing in their ears the most gracious word that ever broke into human life—the gospel; they had seen the most perfect exhibition of living that this planet has known—His life; they had witnessed earth's most

terrific and decisive moral struggle—His death; they had found their sadness turned into joy over the most transforming and astonishing fact in history—His resurrection; they had looked into that Face, so tender, so triumphant, and had heard Him commission them to go share this with the world. With all this back of them, what had they done? They had shut themselves up behind closed doors for fear. They had the message the world needed and awaited, the one message was shut up behind closed doors.

"The only power that could and did get them out from behind those closed doors and loose them and their message upon the world was Pentecost...Only Pentecost got them out."

We conclude this thought-provoking statement from the pen of a great preacher, writer, and world missionary with this charge:

"The Church to-day is behind closed doors for fear. Pentecost has not closed the gap between its message and what it is, so with resources too inadequate to face life, it closes the doors for fear".*

We would do well to examine with care and candour the spiritual state and position of the Church, our Church. Are we living in the afterglow of history's great spiritual conquests, or are we living in the glory of contemporary Spirit-given victories? Are we "behind closed doors", assembled for spiritual fellowship and inspiration, or has Pentecost power thrust us out to meet the challenge of the world's need?

We are between Easter and Pentecost in the annual celebrations of these great historical events, but where are we in spiritual life and service? Perhaps we may deliberate prayerfully on this question and pursue this line of thought in our next writing.

*From "The Christ of Every Road", by E. Stanley Jones

* * * ENEMIES OF THE CROSS * * *

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Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." The true friend of the cross is one who is "pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Since their eyes were fixed on Jesus, they've lost sight of all beside, so enchained their spirit's vision, looking at the Crucified.

The great heart of the Apostle was so burdened over the sad condition of these "enemies of the cross" that when he thought on their sad end, he could not restrain the tears. The end of those who assume hostility to the cross is destruction. After life is over and the record is forever made, they will be faced with the destruction of all their hopes, aspirations, prospects and will face an eternity of untold torment. It is a terrible thing to resist the cross of Christ either by word or deed.

Those who have experienced the crucifixion to the world by the cross have their fruit unto holiness and the end everlasting life. After the enemies of the cross have been thrust out into everlasting night with no eye to pity nor hand to save, those who have truly embraced the Crucified will shine with unceasing and increasing splendor unto the ages of the ages. "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." Amen!

Don't be over-anxious about over-head expenses if your life is underneath the promises of God.

Without question—he who pitches his tent toward the world sets his soul at a wrong angle.

—Dewey O. Miller