

# The King's Highway

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### *Come Back, O Church, Come Back*

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Elevate the pulpit in the church once more, in its zeal and its assault against hell. Station a Bible on that pulpit, an open Bible, and assert that whatever is heard elsewhere, in God's house hearing shall be accorded the preached Word. Let this preaching be a curiosity and a persistent exposition of the Word: make it valuable, vociferous and violent.

#### THE CHURCH AGGRESSIVE

Inform the world that heralds are in it with clear words to call a people back from the abyss' edge. Forget the sales pitch, abandon the soft sell, discard the grey flannels, pigeon-hole the pushed programs and incinerate the sure-fire charts. Let the minister confess it: soft talk is ridiculous in a hard world, meek answers do not fit ominous questions, dilettante dialogue does not guide bewildered souls, and entertaining wit generates no conviction. Ground the ecclesiastical ad men, the promotional experts, the organizational conformists and the itinerant executives: ground them to pulpits and pews. Pull the firing pad from under their mercurial feet before they have us all in orbit, dizzily wheeling in circles, reaching for goals no one wants and landing on moons nobody needs. Challenge men with the Word's either or, enthrone eternity's message on the consciousness of all, raise the call to repent across the luxury-laden land, and lay comfort on the line where the knees bend, the fears coalesce and the tears fall.

Let preaching command the life of the Church, rock persons free from sin, uproot them from false securities and drive them to pursue conformity to Christ: Make the articulated impact of pin-pointed preaching block fallacy's roads, blow the bridges on pride's highway, close all self-saving bypasses, and leave no avenue traversable except the way to Him who is the Way.

Electrify peoples and pastors into dialectical societies reasoning around the Word: the weather can wait, the Word won't. Companion with the men of courage who come with the Word, and wise thought, strong comfort and counsel deep. Force the world to know that liberty's voices are rising and faith's thoughts are flowing from the gushing up of the Gospel interpreted, heard, exchanged and applied. Command the pulpit voice to preach on, to sustain the weary with words, to provide reason's medicine for the mind, and to give hope's balm for the heart. And, let the peoples' Amen punctuate the words from the Word.

When the voice from the sacred desk ceases and the Amens from the pews fade, remember: they have returned to Him who sent them, never void, but with long lines of the redeemed leagued in love to Lord Jesus Christ. Come Back, O Church, Come Back to the Preached Word!

#### THE CHURCH IN UNITY

Recall the Church to knowledge of itself as the body of Christ: summon persons to join Christ's body. Tell it

abroad that no one who belongs to Christ is alone but is member of all who are his; and, illustrate the fact through fellowship's acts. Admit that he has imposed unity but we are reluctant to receive it. Declare that our one Head prays still for the cooperative efforts of his body, its oneness of heart and singleness of love.

Let response to the Word gain momentum. Stay it not for fear or favour. Dare the proponents of aloneness before God to repeat the Lord's prayer in the first person singular. Provide people their one, last opportunity to quit majoring in minor distinctions and become the one mind and heart of Christ before a macerated world. While we are a spiritual unity before God, striving to serve him however varied the means, the world will note well that God's encounter with man redeems from self-concern and builds the community of his will where none has been before.

Fire the technicians of togetherness and throw open the roof to the floods of grace requiring everything said to be WE, and everything done US. Outlaw all audiences and actors before God. Put a people of God before him and affirm that he is the only auditor of our worship, ever mindful of our response to his Word and our brother's need. Make Christ's Church, now, earth's grandest joy and this life's nearest touch on the things of eternity: a window on truth, an aperture to love and a bit of heaven on earth: Thy kingdom come!

#### THE CHURCH AFLAME

This is the Church militant, allied to the cross and companioned to the resurrected Christ. Command it to march on, thrusting united praise to the ramparts of heaven, thrilling all with a rhapsody of trust, and hoisting a harmonic paean to Christ above the din of this world's jarring noises. Oh for a singing Church, a knee-bent Church, a hallelujah Church, a Church orchestrated to the unity of the Holy Spirit!

Trumpet the call to regroup to Christ, and acknowledge that His is the glory that binds us in the circle of unrelenting effort and love unalloyed. Pray for a chill to set on us from Calvary, a blaze from the Upper Room and a thrill from Easter Morn. Magnify the worship of Christ's Church: assemble the Church around the Lord's Board and proclaim: This is the family of God, nourished by Christ, sustained by grace and vitalized by the Spirit. Come back, O Church, Come back to the worship of God, through the Saviour and by aid of the Holy Spirit!

#### THE CHURCH ALERT

Give nerve and muscle to the decisions and convictions of a worshipping people. Let new knowledge grip us. Cease trivializing the loyalties of the redeemed by merely adding their names to committees, putting them to odd jobs and

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