

THE CHURCH OF GOD

Eph. 5:27

When we speak about the Church many things come to our minds. We immediately think of a church building. The church building is a vital part of the Church of God. It gives a place for the coming together of people who have joined the Kingdom. One of the first buildings I look for in entering a town or city is the church building. Pretty soon you see a spire pointing toward heaven...a beautiful sight to behold. No spire is more beautiful than the one to this building. It is seen clearly for miles in most every direction.

We have the associations that cluster around the building. In and around this church house there are memorials to loyal persons who helped to erect or who had something to do with the early history of the building. Babies are baptized at this altar, people are received in the Kingdom at this altar, others are married here, and still others are brought here for the last rites before their bodies are carried to the silent city.

I want to say to you that God in person comes to this altar. If I did not believe that He did then I would not desire to use this altar or this church for any of the sacred services I have mentioned. God is here now, right this moment. He is indeed hearing what I say and he reads the thoughts in my mind. He sees you of this audience in the same fashion. At the same time He sits by your radio and sees your reaction to the sermon and hears your comments, knows your resolutions, and strives to get you to accept the truth of the gospel. It would be interesting for a minister to hear all the comments about one radio broadcast. If one could hear it all for one time as God does it might be that he would have to become like one preacher said of the Presiding Eldership...He said that a Presiding Elder had to be a man with a thick hide and a short memory. So let us conclude about the church house and God's presence here with this observation that God does exist out side of us as well as in our hearts. He is an object external toward whom we can look

But in a special way to night we want to think of the Church of God as something also apart from and distinct from the building...sacred as the building is. It is a combination of human hearts that make up the Bride of Jesus. Our text is Ephesians five twenty seven and reads as follows: "That He might present the Church to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; But that it might be holy and without blemish."

This institution, this combination of human spirits must have an appeal to modern life. There are things that have an appeal to modern life. The horse race, the foot ball games, the picture shows, gambling halls, golf links, broad stretches in the scenes of nature, and a thousand other things. Does the church appeal to life in general today? There are many to whom it appeals strongly but the appeal is not wide enough, it is not for reaching enough. But it can make a universal appeal IF it will show up without spot, without wrinkle, or any such thing. Whether or not the church does present such a front or whether or not she is going to do ~~some~~ out yonder somewhere we do know that she is passing through a testing time, through scorching flames such as she never experienced on such a scale before. Out the test, out of the flame, out of the persecution there should rise something fine very fine.

Stanley Frazer in his book, "Christianity and the man of today" has this to say..."While every age has witnessed influences that have been hostile to the church, perhaps never before has organized Christianity had to contend with forces so ~~stub~~ stubbornly aggressive as today. Under the constant fire of criticism that has been directed against the Church, a vast literature of complaint has accumulated. It has been alleged that the Church is afraid to test its faith in the light of reason, and that she dare not face the intellect of the age." Yet I want to add my little word that the real Kingdom of God is the only thing that does appeal to real reason or to real intellect.

Baron Van Hugel pictures the masses in full flight from the Church. He says that there is a reason for this and the reason he names is that the people have been trying to keep the Church great instead of holy and useful. Some would be church leaders have tried to carry the seekers along in a sort of appeal to sex emotins up to point where they get their attention and they say we glide off into teaching religion...others would be leaders will compromise by engaging in the sinners game of the world...all this produces a type of religion that ties on to a person and not on God and places in the heart of the seekers something that will not stand when the storm comes. Conseqently a church built on religion like that can not say, "Silver and gold have I none." Neither can it say, "Arise take up thy bed and walk." Thus we find the pathfinder crushed by the machine, spirituality degenerating into political color, and agitation supplanting evangelization.

