

The Lord's Day Evening

January 7, 1945

"I Believe in the Church"
Scripture Lesson – Ephesians 4:1-16
Text – Ephesians 4:15

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Introduction

1. These are troublesome trying days
 - a. Many things are being shaken
 - b. Many things superseded
2. Church no exception
 - a. Are in a storm
 1. Winds of doubt
 - b. Are in a flood
 1. Waves of humanism
 2. Swirling current of nationalism
 - c. We are not spectators
 1. Are in the storm
 2. Are out in the stream
 - d. Church has lost its influence and power in many countries
 1. Others fear the results
3. But many say it cannot happen here
 - a. It happened in Russia
 1. Church forgot its mission
 2. Soon outlawed
 - b. It happened in Germany
 1. Storm of humanism which lead to people believing God was unnecessary
 2. Wave of nationalism which submerged the Church and made it secondary to the nation
 - c. We need to be awakened lest it happen to our Church, too
 1. National
 2. Our own
 3. Great doctrinal movements would rob Church of vitality
 4. Social movements make Church a society
4. Time to think anew of what the Church is

I. It is the Body of Christ

1. Some external things
 - a. Building with spire reaching to heaven
 - b. Local group doing things
 1. Playing games

- 2. Praying together
- c. A society of people
 - 1. Young and old
 - 2. Rich and poor
 - 3. Some good and some bad
- d. An organization
 - 1. All over world
 - 2. Millions belong
- e. These are all external things
- 2. Church is group of true believers in Christ
 - a. We believe in Church because we believe in former things of Creed
 - 1. It inevitably follows
 - b. Believe in God
 - c. Believe Christ is Son of God
 - d. Believe He died for our sins
 - e. Believe in resurrection
 - f. Believe in His ascension and return
 - g. Believe in indwelling power of Holy Spirit
 - h. So because we believe this, we believe in Church
 - 1. All bound together by this belief
- 3. Church is body of Christ
 - a. We become a part of body and He is the Head
 - b. We are to be His earthly body
 - 1. Do His will and work His works
- 4. Light of World
 - a. Are to show world Christ
 - b. Here is great danger of Church
 - 1. Not show Christ
 - c. Here is grave danger of Church
 - 1. Should fail to be manifestation of Christ
 - d. Christ's not dwelling in Church is all that can defeat it
 - 1. Not criticism of world
 - 2. Not storms of doubt
 - 3. Not flood of humanism or nationalism
 - 4. But failure to let Christ be Head and use His body, the Church
- 5. We must be critical of Church
 - a. Only as we watch here can we be a real undefeatable Church

II. Church is Catholic

- 1. Meaning of Catholic
 - a. Not Roman Catholic
 - b. Universal
 - 1. People of all races
 - 2. People of all nations
 - 3. People of all walks of life – poor do not belong to one church and rich to another

- c. People bound together by a belief and a Christ-given mission
- 2. Men can have this unity without having many external forms or unity
 - a. Twins do not have to be Siamese to be twins
 - b. Two friends do not have to live in same house to be united
 - 1. Horace's house and our house
 - c. Neither do we have to belong to same denomination to be united
 - 1. Mere organization does not unite
 - 2. They tell us we are losing influence and power because of denominational division
 - d. Belief in what unites
 - 1. I am afraid Christ will depart from Church because we cease to make Him the Head
- 3. When men have same faith in Christ they are bound by cords of fellowship
 - a. Mr. Stokes Robertson telling me that he had been in touch with most all of the families of the twenty-seven men who are missing on the mission George was on and how he had had some fine letters from some of them, especially at Christmas time, from California and from Vermont; and how it was an illustration that when people who believed in Christ could have a fellowship regardless of where they might live.
 - b. We can have a fellowship with people of another denomination if they believe like us and we can work together.
 - c. But do not see how there can be any unity or any fellowship in service if we are not all directed by same Head and striving to do His will.
 - d. The real unity of the Church is to be found in fact that it is indwelt by Christ and ruled by Him.

III. Church is a Mission

- 1. One cannot be a member of the body and not be directed by the Head.
- 2. Surely Christ would direct His body to actions which He desired.
 - a. Serve fellow man
 - 1. Poor
 - 2. Needy
 - 3. Suffering
- 3. Foreign missions
 - a. If any one person needs Christ, then all need Him
 - b. Christ is Hope of world
 - 1. Must take knowledge of Him to all people
- 4. Evangelism
 - a. Are we a light to show others way to Christ?
 - 1. Parents
 - 2. Sunday School teachers
 - 3. Elders and Deacons
 - 4. All of us

Conclusion

- 1. Are you a member of Body of Christ?

- a. Then unite with some Church and help it to do will of Christ.
- b. If not a Christian, then unite with the Church.