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THE GLORY OF WAR

A Challenge Every Christian Ought to Accept

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In a militaristic country, so the story goes, a pet parrot had been taught to say, "Hurrah for the glory of war." Many people thought it quite clever. When war came, the parrot was considered very patriotic. But after a year or two of war the wounded began to fill the country, and the food supply became insufficient. A little baby in the family sickened and died largely through malnutrition. And at awkward intervals the parrot would scream, "Hurrah for the glory of war." Then one day the cook had a bright idea: the parrot disappeared and the family had a meal of good soup.

War is not all glory; there is a great deal of suffering.

But war is not all suffering either. The great majority of soldiers in war spend the great proportion of their time in routine drudgery. Hurry up and wait. There are endless lines. There is K. P. There are drills. Routine and drudgery. This is not glory; it is not exactly suffering; but the war cannot be won without it. Routine and drudgery.

CHRISTIAN WARFARE

The Scriptures compare the Christian life with war and fighting. A hymn says, "Like a mighty army moves the church of God." And the comparison is a good one. When we read the accounts of the early Christian martyrs, and when we think of the exploits of the reformers, we see the glory of the Christian warfare. Polycarp, Justin Martyr, Huss, and Latimer are, as it were, the men who took Iwo Jima, Okinawa, Seoul, and who did not come back. They suffered and died that we might have freedom. But the Christian Church could not have survived by the work of these men only. As we look back into the past, we see the glory of heroic deeds and usually fail to see the great amount of ordinary drudgery.

Luther, for example, was a heroic figure. We see him walking up the stone steps on his knees, interrupting the penance Rome imposed, as the words of Paul grip his mind: "the just shall live by

faith;" But we may forget that he had to gather enough food to keep his ministerial students fed. We easily regard his translation of the Bible as a mighty accomplishment; but we are apt to forget the many hours he spent puzzling over grammatical constructions. His dominant position in the Protestant Reformation, the respect that he could command, and the church that he built so largely by his own efforts are matters of profound admiration; but did he not make many foolish mistakes along the way, was he not compelled to argue and persuade long and patiently with those who did not see clearly, was not ninety per cent of his time occupied with just plain hard work?

And so it is with us today also. We are still fighting the Christian warfare. There is still an element of grandeur and glory. The faithful disciples of Jesus Christ, those who trust for eternal salvation in his shed blood, face a world with devils filled who threaten to undo us. John Dewey and his followers in a book, *Naturalism and the Human Spirit*, have launched a vicious attack on supernaturalism. For them there is no God, no heaven, no immortality. And since this type of thinking prevails so largely in this country, and particularly in the lower levels where Dewey's educational theories have almost complete control, the war is as glorious as the enemy is terrible. Then also there is the modernistic Federal Council of Churches. These churches make a pretense of being Christian. They do not deny God or heaven; rather they talk very piously and use many of the Scriptural phrases. But examination shows that the phrases in their mouths do not mean what such phrases mean in the Bible. They may, for example, speak of revelation, but for them revelation is not a communication of truth. They may speak of inspiration, but for them inspiration characterizes Shakespeare as truly as, even if to a lesser degree, it does the Bible. They believe in Christ as a great man whose example we ought to follow. But their attitude toward a revelation that is the infallible Bible, and toward a Christ who merits heaven for us by propitiating the wrath of God - in other words, their attitude toward Christianity is scarcely less antagonistic than that of John Dewey. A war ending in their defeat would indeed be glorious.

HOW CHRISTIANS CAN FIGHT

But how can we fight this war? Few if any who read this magazine could go and argue with Dewey and his followers. Few if any could come to grips with the Federal Council. And many might with a good show of reason believe that such encounters would do little good. How then can we fight?

The answer is not glorious; it is routine and drudgery. Dewey is affecting the religious views of the children in your Sunday School - children who attend the public schools. They are taught from the

earliest grades to reject God as creator and to think of things as having evolved. They are taught history as if God did not control the destinies of men and nations. If then you and I wish to engage in the glorious war, the local Sunday School is a battleground close at home. Are you willing to teach a class? Are you willing to bring children to the Sunday School? In a town in which I lived for a while, there was a man who throughout the year every Sunday morning collected ten or twelve youngsters and drove them Sunday to School. His name will never appear in the history books of the future as a Christian martyr, but he battles unceasingly for the Lord, and no one who knows him doubts that his name is written down in another and more important Book.

Near to the Sunday School is another battlefield where the enemy may be engaged: it is the Church. If the children are being taught a naturalistic world-view in school, the adults are saturated with naturalism or modernism in the popular literature of the day. Only a few months ago a popular magazine carried an article telling how to circumvent the already loose divorce laws so that people without even the flimsy legal grounds for divorce could separate and go live with someone else. The various periodicals are filled with references to orthodox Christians as bigots, and the impression is cultivated that if a man believes that some people are saved and others lost, he is a menace to society. Religion without definite convictions they are willing to tolerate as a form of aesthetic pleasure; but the gospel of Jesus Christ is as bad as German anti-semitism.

The battleground therefore, is at hand. Who is willing to engage the enemy? Of course, the Church pays the pastor a minimum salary to do the fighting for them. And what if the privates in the army or the marines chipped in a few nickels and dimes and sent in a few officers to take Iwo, Okinawa, Seoul? Officers and pastors are needed in their respective battles; but many more privates are needed. Who is on the Lord's side? Who will face the foe? Then go immediately to your pastor and ask for an assignment suitable to your abilities. And if there be fifty righteous within the church, or if peradventure there be forty righteous found, or twenty, or I will speak yet but this once, peradventure ten shall be found there, the Lord will add his blessing in measures pressed down, heaped up, and running over. The work will be routine; and when strength or spirits lag the work may be drudgery; but the war is a glorious war.