

The Presbyterian Outlook

JUN 2 1948

10c.

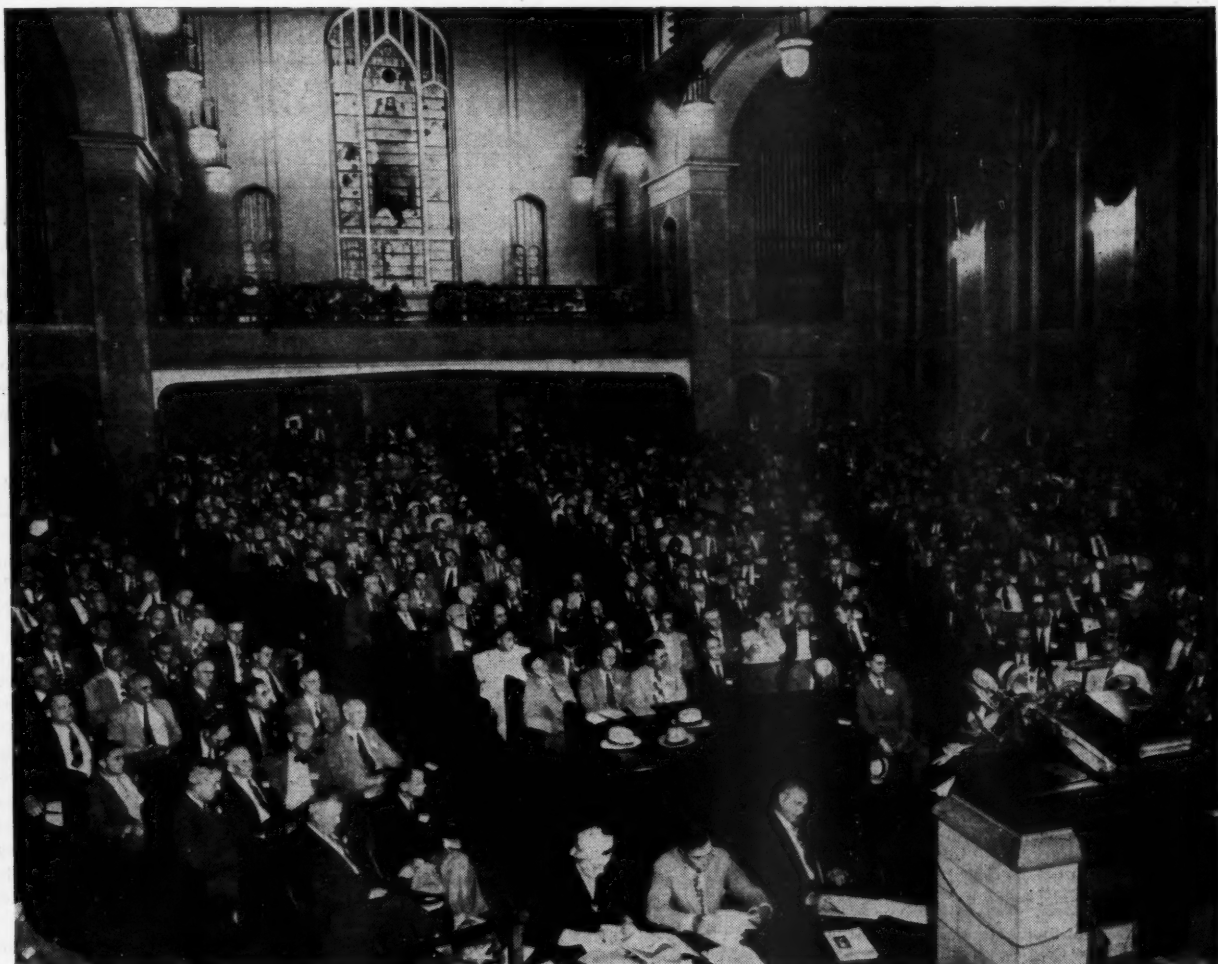
Durham, N. C.


 DUKU
UNIVERSITY LIB-
RARY
NOV 19 1948

Vol. 130

RICHMOND 19, VA., JUNE 7, 1948

No 23



88th ASSEMBLY—Here is shown the opening session of the General Assembly in the First church, Atlanta. When this picture was taken the election of a moderator was in progress.—

RNS Photo.

Assembly Highlights

Through Saturday Afternoon

FULTON elected moderator. . . . Ad interim committees' reports on Montreat and study of agencies adopted unanimously. . . . Country church department now under home missions. . . . John McMullen to lead young people's work. . . . 26,129 added on profession of faith last year; church's membership now is 638,650. . . . Program of Progress is continuing theme. . . . Opponents of Presbyterian Reunion seek to defeat plan now. . . . Scott re-elected stated clerk. . . . Next Assembly to meet at Montreat.

The Presbyterian Outlook

OLD IN SERVICE

Established 1819

NEW IN SPIRIT

Vol. 130. No. 23. June 7, 1948

403 East Franklin St., Richmond 19, Virginia

Executive Secretary Of Foreign Missions Elected Moderator

Second Such Official to

Win Church's Highest Honor

Elected on the second ballot by a vote of 189 to 183, Executive Secretary of Foreign Missions, C. Darby Fulton, Nashville, Tenn., was made the Moderator of the 88th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, US, at its opening session in the First church, Atlanta. Dr. Fulton was elected over Professor W. Talliaferro Thompson of Union Seminary and President J. R. McCain of Agnes Scott College. The Assembly opened Thursday evening, May 27.

On the first ballot the vote was: Fulton, 135; Thompson, 133; McCain, 103.

Upon his induction into office, Dr. Fulton spoke of the moderatorship as an honor he had never expected to receive. "I have never aspired to it," he said. "Yet I pledge you the best efforts of which I am capable and I pray that I may be found worthy of this high office." Dr. Fulton is the second executive secretary of the church ever to be accorded this honor. (Dr. Henry H. Sweets was the other.)

Dr. Fulton was nominated by J. P. McCallie of Chattanooga and L. Nelson Bell of Montreat. Dr. McCallie, in his nominating speech, said that while many other phases of church service had been represented in the moderatorship, the Assembly had never elected an executive secretary of foreign missions. Dr. Fulton, he said, is a man of unusual courage, citing instances of bold policy in missionary undertakings. "He is loyal to the word of God. . . . He has not taken sides in the conflicting opinions of our church." With the great emphasis upon foreign missions in the Program of Progress, he insisted that Dr. Fulton would give strong leadership to the entire program. Dr. Bell, in seconding the nomination, said the Program of Progress is a great unifying force in the church. "Nothing would do as much to unify our church as to elect Dr. Fulton to this position to give us inspiring leadership," he said.

Dr. Thompson was nominated by two former moderators, Frank C. Brown of Dallas and P. Frank Price of Florence, S. C. Dr. Brown said Dr. Thompson has been outstanding not in one phase of leadership in the church but in all



NEW MODERATOR—Dr. Cunningham, the retiring moderator (left) presents the gavel to the new moderator, C. Darby Fulton. Dr. J. P. McCallie, who nominated Dr. Fulton, is shown at the right.—RNS Photo.

He is an Assembly-wide man, an all-around man, not controversial, well-informed, statesmanlike in all he does, safe and sane, uninfluenced, unpledged, a Christian gentleman. Dr. Price said Dr. Thompson would bring to the office a maturity that "ought to hold our imagination." He is a great scholar, yet a man of spirituality and deep humility, a prince among ministers, a hero of boys, the embodiment of the best among us.

President McCain was nominated by Marshall C. Dendy of Orlando, Fla., and Col. C. R. Endsley of Sweetwater, Tenn. Dr. Dendy referred to him as an elder "who richly deserves the honor which we can confer upon him." Perhaps no man in the General Assembly has served on more committees for a longer period of time. He is the retiring chairman of the stewardship committee, which committee has given to our church the greatest program in its history. He spoke of his service to his state, to educational efforts throughout the nation, and he told of his far-reaching achievements in many fields. Col. Endsley said no other educator in the Presbyterian group of colleges or in any other group has made so great a contribution at the

top level to the Southern Association of Schools and Colleges. He described Dr. McCain's deep interest in and large responsibility for the Program of Progress.

Early in the Friday morning session E. C. Scott, Dallas, Texas, was re-elected stated clerk by a rising vote for a three-year term.

Friday Morning

The fraternal representative from the USA Presbyterian Assembly was Stuart Nye Hutchison, pastor emeritus of the East Liberty church, Pittsburgh. Dr. Hutchison told of his Southern Presbyterian ancestry and of his long ministry in both denominations. Said he:

"So often I have wished that every Presbyterian on this continent, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and from the Great Lakes to the Gulf, could have what I've had. That everyone in the North could know the South as I know it and that everyone in the South could know the North as I know it. We'd be one church today.

"Never since Christ ascended have the forces of darkness been so menacing as they are today. The world is waiting for a real manifestation of the sons of God. The day is growing late. Is it

(Continued on page 5)

Concerning Christ and the Church

By JOHN ROOD CUNNINGHAM

Sermon Preached by the Retiring Moderator at the Opening of the
88th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, U. S.

"I speak concerning Christ and the church."—Ephesians 5:32.

A FRIEND of Dr. Robert E. Speer, writing of him after his recent death, had this to say: "He was a great man and a great churchman. One can be a Christian without being a churchman, and one can be a churchman without being a Christian; but Robert E. Speer was a great Christian and a great churchman." In him was incarnate the principle that Christ and his church are inseparably linked in the redemption of mankind. It is no use speculating about whether one who is not a church member



JOHN R. CUNNINGHAM

. . . It is now or never. . . .

men and women apart from the church.

Someone has said: "The church is the organization of God's people that is attempting in God's power to bring about his purpose in the world. Where the church has gone, there Christianity has gone; where the church has not gone, there Christianity has not been found." There have been those who have paid high tribute to the person and character of Christ but who have looked condescendingly upon the church as "organized Christianity." Christianity cannot be detached from the Christian church.

The Church Is Christ's Body

The Apostle in his great letter to the Ephesians deals profoundly with the church. In the fifth chapter he draws a well-balanced picture of the beauty and mystery of a happy marriage. He suggests the mutuality, the interdependence, the bond of love in which the relationship is cemented. He says:

"For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church." . . . "Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything." . . . "Husbands love your wives even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it." . . . "So ought men to love their own wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself." . . . "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh."

Then it is that the writer comes to his point: "This is a great mystery but I speak concerning Christ and the church." The church is the body of Christ. It is much more than a local unit of believers. It is more than a pulpit. It is more than a denomination. Indeed, it is more than a world organization. It is all that and much more. It is a spiritual organism which bears the imprimatur of Christ and which can never know defeat. There is a providence at work in the church which transcends man's feeble wisdom and skill. Christ called it "my church" and promised to it sure and ultimate victory over those who would overthrow and thwart her in her divine mission.

Now, the function of the church is timeless and universal. "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever." That thought sweeps the gamut of all time. Christ himself said once for all, "The field is the world." There we see the extent of its program. With these universal principles before us, we know, however, that with the varying conditions which confront mankind from age to age there are timely emphases which must be recognized. We are in one of those crucial periods of history which demand of us re-assessment of our emphases and methods. The times demand the intelligent and courageous appraisal of our crisis and the application of the healing ministry of the Christian church at every turn. The world awaits a common ideal, a bond of unity and understanding, a personality around which strong men and women who have faith and purpose can rally and know that they are devoting themselves to a cause which will not fail. People must have assurance and security which produce confidence instead of fear, optimism instead of defeat, and life instead of death. Before such a bewildered world the church cannot be complacent. The past is no adequate measure of our responsibility, or of the methods by which the church will function in the days to come. Precedent and tradition will not suffice. Christ is saying to us, "Lift up your eyes and look on the fields." Archbishop Temple, certainly one of the greatest and most intelligent Christians of this century, said shortly before his death: "The church which comes out of this war without being radically changed will not be worthy of the name of a church." The appalling conditions of the world, the cry of hungry, helpless, bewildered hearts, compels us to turn anew to him who is our only resource for such a day.

I shall attempt to set forth some principles which demand special emphasis in our church as we meet together in this 88th General Assembly. I am speaking of the church in our times. I have in mind particularly our own branch of the church.

I. Proclaiming God's Love

In the first place, the church must be unfailingly true to her primary responsibility—to proclaim God's redemptive love for sinful and suffering men. These are desperate times. Fortunately for us, God's plan of redemption was based upon desperate measures. That redemption rests upon nothing less than Christ on the cross. God's plan of redemption is his appraisal of the power and pollution of sin. The cross is God's word to us that sin is not trivial, it is not cheap, it is not a fling for a night. Goethe once said: "If I were God, sin would break my heart." That is exactly what sin did to the heart of God. The cross of Christ is to be seen as the extreme expression of the amazing love of God for broken, burdened sinners.

Our times are singularly characterized by the loss of our grip on God and on spiritual values. Following naturally upon that premise is a lowered moral life which threatens the vitality of our democracy. The church faces today the threat of the breakdown of the home, a deplorable divorce record, appalling juvenile delinquency, crime, sexual

immorality in high and low places, appalling drunkenness, extravagance beyond measure, and a general secular attitude toward life. These conditions threaten the integrity of our nation and, indeed, the ability of the church to perform her task. Nothing less than heroic measures coupled with the power of the Christian gospel will save us from further decay. Let me quote from Chancellor W. A. Demant, of St. Paul's Cathedral in London—an author, sociologist, and historian:

"I interpret the crisis of our time as the breakdown of a civilization. If we go on thinking and acting as if this civilization of ours is assured of its survival, or as if its strains could be cured by better political systems or economic methods, or even more heroic morals, then I contend the breakdown will deepen into complete dissolution. On the other hand, if we frankly recognize that our Western civilization is showing on the largest scale ever known all the signs which have marked the disintegration of cultures in the past, we may be able to plant the seed of renewal, which will not have to wait until after a long period of decay."

Perhaps there has never been a meeting of our General Assembly when the Christian Church was faced with more suffering, distress, and bewilderment, and, at the same time, challenged to higher and nobler adventure for Christ.

In the proclamation of God's redemptive love for mankind, the church is working at the foundations. Here is the emphasis without which the church ceases to be the church. Here is her *sine qua non*. Here is her commission *par excellence*. Quite apart from any results she may be able to obtain, here is her duty. Here is the heart of the gospel. Here is the function of the church of the living God. Here, indeed, is the word made flesh. "And a voice said, 'Cry,' and he said, 'What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field.' . . . 'The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of our God shall stand forever.'"

This, my friends, is the word of God. No obligation rests upon the church, upon us as ministers and elders, and, indeed, upon Christians generally, more essential and more productive, than the vital, consistent proclamation of God's redeeming love for all mankind. We must rediscover the depths. We will not need to do other things less well but to invest all that we do with a spiritual power and content which will guarantee the presence of God's spirit in our lives and characters. The church must be geared to the spiritual needs and hungers of our day else the measures she adopts will be far short of the cures for our ills. Let us gird ourselves anew with the spirit of the Apostle when he said to the Corinthians: "I am determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified." Let us, then, with all the freshness we can command, with every profound insight as to what the redeeming love of God through Christ can mean to our sinful, weary world, set ourselves with new devotion, with new purpose and new faith to the living and proclaiming of this redemptive Word of God.

II. Ministering to Human Needs

In the second place, I speak concerning the obligation of the church of Christ to minister to the needs of all people. While the mission of the church is a spiritual one, the methods and channels for the performance of her mission will need to be as inclusive as those used by Christ himself. He was always mindful of the physical, social and moral needs of people. He spent much of his time feeding hungry people. Even after his resurrection he provided a morning's breakfast with his own hands for some hungry fishermen who were his friends. He gave much attention to the healing of the sick. He was ready to step across the barriers of race and color to manifest the loving concern of our Heavenly Father for men of all descriptions. The church will regain a great deal of her lost power, when out of a sincere recognition of the sanctity of human personality, she gives herself anew to all that touches the welfare of human beings, rich and poor, white and black, the wise and unwise. Beware lest we be too limited in our thinking and in our praying as a church. Whatever elevates the

sanctity of human personality, whatever makes for a spirit of mutual understanding and good will, whatever reveals the loving kindness of the Lord Jesus to a human heart, is a part of the function and opportunity and challenge of the Christian church.

We have taken some pride in what, as a denomination and as Protestants, we have given in recent years to the suffering peoples of Europe and Asia. It has helped tremendously. It has been a testimony far beyond its material value. It has brought cheer and comfort to those who could not otherwise know of the Christian interest and prayers of their friends across the waters. And, yet before we can be content with our expression even in this field, it will perhaps erase any complacency to remind ourselves that while we as Christians and Protestants have been very busy giving what likely does not exceed \$100,000,000 to this appalling need, *The New York Times* reports: "A minimum goal of \$250,000,000 has been set by the United Jewish Appeal for the resettlement and reconstruction of Palestine, overseas relief and rehabilitation and aid for refugees in the United States during the coming year."

We little dreamed twenty-five years ago that we should ever witness the elemental needs of men and nations as we have seen them in these last years. We continue to witness these conditions. It is an appalling expression on every level of life, physical and spiritual, extending itself around the world. What the poet has called "the still sad music of humanity" sounds itself in our ears and hearts day in and day out. We are in danger of becoming used to it. People are hungry, homeless, displaced, bitter, hopeless. Hate is rampant. Racism is on the march. The majority of the people of the world are in need of the essentials of life. The time is here when we cannot afford to be limited in our thinking and in our praying as a church. If the Christian church is to perform heroically in these days, it will have to see farther and move with more vision and dispatch than she has ever done before.

The Eradication of War

While I am speaking of the ministry of the church to all peoples, I must refer to her obligation to exercise herself in the eradication of the threat of war. We have now come to the point in time and experience when war simply cannot be contemplated with rationality. War holds now the possibility of suicide on a world scale. The survival not only of civilization but also of humanity is brought into serious question. The church cannot tolerate complacency about war. Moods of hysteria and blind hate must be resisted. If war should come it would be because of conditions which man could have changed. The evil forces at work in the world are man-made and they can be man-changed. While recognizing the need of reasonable military defenses at this critical time, beware lest we depend primarily upon such defenses. Such reliance is more apt to bring war than to prevent it. Now is the time for the church to be reminded and to remind the people that it is "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." The stars in their courses fight against war.

Equally, when we think of the ministry to all peoples we must note the rising consciousness of all races and all nations. The peoples of the world are manifesting a new self-consciousness and a new desire for their rightful place in the parliament of man, and, indeed, in the Kingdom of God. We must start with a deepened understanding and appreciation of our Negro brethren in our own homes, our communities, and throughout the area of our church. Our consciences should know no peace and our hearts should hurt until we have accorded the Negro freely his opportunities for freedom, justice, citizenship, health, decent homes, education, and, in short, a chance to be somebody.

The fact that we in the South do not agree with the methods suggested by the President's Commission on Civil Rights for healing the wounds which we know to exist does not relieve us but rather obligates us to do unofficially, freely, in voluntary Christian spirit what we do not believe can be or should be accomplished by the enactment of law. But our problem is only a small segment of

the whole. The most of the people of the world belong to races other than our own. In the urgency and practical necessity for "one world" they become a part of our world. We must find how to draw the circle of love and take them in. . . .

Our Program of Progress is our church's answer to the tensions of the world. It is a goal easily within our reach. It will not be done as a chore if our people can be fired with the enthusiasm and the inspiration which it deserves. My information is that this program has taken fire in approximately one-third of our churches. This is encouraging when we remember that only six or eight months' work has been possible on it. Wherever it has captured the imagination of the people and the churches a Pentecostal blessing has followed. Thousands and tens of thousands of dollars have been given; lives have been reconsecrated; and people have been won to an acceptance of Christ as their Saviour. Here is a program which is inclusive of the needs of all people. It encompasses the services of us all. It is my fervent hope and prayer that this Assembly will center its attention upon this program which was conceived in prayer and begun in great devotion, and fire our church with a great determination for Christ's sake to see it through to a glorious fruition.

III. Manifesting the World Mission of the Church

In the third place, the time is here when we must manifest the world mission of the Church of Christ. If economic and political isolationism are gone—and they are—then by the same token and the same logic, and with the same deep urgency, ecclesiastical isolationism has passed under the ban of the Holy Spirit. We are seeking, in the Providence of God, order in our world. Understanding and good will must replace suspicion and hatred. The church cannot be convincing until she has given evidence that is crystal clear that she is more than a parochial body with only lip service to Christian harmony and unity with the great Christian bodies of the world. "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" is more than a missionary text. It is that, but it speaks to us of the heart of God for the gathering of his people into a world fellowship. We are being forced on practical levels to recognize the urgency of a cooperative, united Christendom in these days. We say with considerable unction and with real conviction that the only way out is the way of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, the Prince of Peace.

Let me remind this Assembly that the church does not present to our own leaders and statesmen, much less to the world at large, an impressive challenge to harmony, understanding and peace so long as she herself is broken into innumerable contending bodies with disunity and controversy within the individual body. It has been said—and, I think, correctly—that there is no evidence in the New Testament of the outpouring of God's Holy Spirit upon any church where there was not evidence of unity and accord among the brethren. It is too late in time, and let us not mistake the evidence, for any denomination, great or small, to suppose that it can live and prosper, much less render a significant service to the Kingdom of Christ, isolated from and at controversy with the other great Christian bodies.

History has some clear lessons to teach us at this point. I am not referring primarily, in this statement, to organic union among any groups. I fear it is too late to wait upon that eventually. I am referring especially to a spirit of brotherly love, mutual confidence and willing cooperation with those who in sincerity name the Name of Christ as their Lord and Saviour. When the church historian sits down to write the history of the Protestant church in the first half of the twentieth century, he will, in all likelihood, name the ecumenical movement, the coming together of the churches in a spirit of understanding and cooperation as the most valid evidence of the leadership of the Holy Spirit in this period.

The most providential things I have ever witnessed beyond personal considerations are what took place in Oxford and Edinburgh in 1937. We were there without being

aware that we stood almost on the brink of the worst holocaust the world has ever seen. God was there moving in the hearts of men from around the world to share the varieties of their faith in Christ and to think and plan for the effectiveness of the Christian Church across national and racial boundary lines. We took actions affecting the life and the work, the faith and order of the church, which were far more prophetic and far more useful to Christian brethren when they were divided of necessity by war than we could possibly have known. This summer some of us will go as your representatives to Amsterdam, there to complete the organization of the World Council of Churches. One hundred and thirty-six denominations will be represented at that gathering to perform what we believe will be one of the most historic missions in the history of the Protestant church.

Presbyterians Are Cooperative

The Presbyterian Church has been known for her spirit of breadth and fellowship with other Christians. Fortunate for us, we have stood in our local communities and in our inter-denominational relationships on ground where Christians of more diverse groups could find common meeting places with us. It has been one of the tests of the greatness of the Presbyterian faith and form of government. We are at the time for the exercise of that spirit on a grand scale. We must be aware, first, that we are a part not only of a denomination of some 600,000 people, to which denomination we are fully loyal, but also that we are geared with our fellow-Christians in all nations, races and colors around the world in our common task for Christ and humanity. Unless we can thus relate ourselves, we may expect the leadership of the Christian movement in the world to pass from the hands of the older denominational bodies to the newer churches which are rising with great spiritual vigor in the mission fields and elsewhere. They behold, as we cannot, the necessity of a church united in spirit and moving forward like a mighty army to the glory of God.

Martin Niemoeller, great Christian leader of Germany, who was for seven years a special prisoner of Hitler, spoke last year at Davidson. He described to us a communion service which he was permitted to conduct in the Dachau concentration camp for a small body of other special prisoners gathered from England, Holland, Norway, and elsewhere. He was the only German. They belonged to different churches. He was a Lutheran. He was troubled in spirit for a while as to whether as a Lutheran he could conduct a communion service for those who were non-Lutherans. Finally his duty was clear. He went forward with the service. The men were tremendously moved in their own spirits by it; and, then, said Niemoeller: "Since that night, dear friends, I am a Lutheran. I repeat that. I shall go on being a Lutheran, but now foremost and above all, my heart belongs to the great universal Christian church of Almighty God and to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

Let me conclude with the reminder that we labor in this Assembly and in these precious days under the neces-

It Is Now—or Never

Marshal Joffre, of France, showed an American visitor a letter which he carries with him constantly. It is from a French mother to her youngest son in Canada. It reads: "My dear boy: You will be grieved to learn that your two brothers have been killed in the defense of France. Their country needed them. They gave everything they had for her. Your country needs you. I am not suggesting that you come now and fight for France, but I am saying if you do not come now, you need never come." In a different sense and on a much higher level of obligation and opportunity, Christ would seem to be saying to us and to his church that unless we arise now to defend the cause for which the church stands at this time, we need not come at all. This is our own great moment of opportunity, but a moment does not last forever.