

century, and has made so little progress, has won so few battles, has sustained so many defeats. He, too, has been singing "Onward Christian Soldiers" for the tune of it, and the swing of it, but without putting one foot before the other to keep within sight of the onward moving Captain. How can we go from watch night service to watch night service, from Good Friday and Easter to Good Friday and Easter, from Feast of Pentecost to Feast of Pentecost and find we have made no progress, won no soul for Christ—and sing "Onward Christian soldiers" like soldiers on parade, if we are not acting the song?

We are too ready to blame the Ministers. Are they not representative of their people who in the last analysis are "the church" and responsible for their selection. And what would be thought of a shepherd who went so far ahead of his flock that they neither heard his voice nor saw his face? The shepherd must suit his pace to the flock, even to the weaker ones. So must the pastor. But is there not too much circling in the wilderness, too little direction, and the putting of one foot beyond the other in that direction?

As to that, if the flock are going wilfully in a wrong direction, must the shepherd not yet keep near them, doing his best to turn them in the right direction? That seems to be the case of churches which find more zest in movies and theatricals and carpet bowling and treasure hunts than they do in soul saving. Yes, but we forget that these attractions are necessary to keep the people in touch with the church and away from worse places. But are we not using too much of our powers to act in play acting, and our skill of aim in directions which win praise but not souls?

And still—and still we believe the ministry find their highest joy in the most spiritual adventures and are ever trying to turn their flock toward the living Saviour. But so conventional is our idea of religion—so conventional our idea of Christian service that we can sing "Onward Christian soldiers" without one member of the congregation daring to step out lest he become conspicuous and excite talk.

#### And Now For The Jolt

INTO this picture steps a small "group" of men and women of culture and refinement, ministers and laymen, but all on the same footing in the fellowship known as the Oxford Group Movement.

They take up their position in the great ball room of the Ritz-Carlton, Montreal's hotel of distinction, and they invite all to come and hear their story. Night after night the place is packed with a thousand people, and overflow meetings fill one of Montreal's larger churches. If people listen to Christians talking for three hours at a stretch, night after night and without any appeal to the emotional, there must be some strong attraction. So there was, and it was a simple story, simply told of their personal experience of the saving power of Christ for all who will practise His Gospel of absolute love to God and to his fellows, and, therefore, of absolute purity, of absolute honesty and of absolute unselfishness; and who, on being converted—changed is the present day word—will bear witness—share is the new word—to the change that has been wrought in them, and seek to win others, change others, for the Master in whose practical service is to be found such abundant life.

The story was so simply told by Vice Admiral Sydney Robert Drury-Lowe of His Majesty's Navy, by Miss Olive Jones, of New York, President of the National Teacher's Association of the U.S.A., and an international authority on the teaching of delinquent youth. Dr. S. Shoemaker, Rector of Calvary Episcopal Church, New York, James Watt, who, before he was "changed", was a coal miner and communist organizer for Fifeshire,

## "Stand at Ease."—for Jesus

A Personal Confession. By F. E. Dougal.

EARTHQUAKES are terrifying things. We prefer the earth crust to be as rigid as our creeds. We surely do want firm foundations, for our feet and for our faith. Besides, a quaking earth might bring our homes and factories crashing down, just as our churches might collapse if there was any wobbling of the creed or customs. Stability, solidity, these are the qualities of a reliable world, just as stolidity and conventionality are today the graces of religion. Sitting on cushioned pews we want no shivers down our spine.

It was ever so. No wonder Cain hated Abel; no wonder the priesthood in the day of Ahab and Jezebel hated the simple, direct challenging Elijah; no wonder the chief priests and sanhedrin, the scribes and pharisees hated Jesus, the world's greatest revolutionary, so very upsetting to the time honored social and religious standards of his time. And space would fail us to speak of such as Luther and Wycliffe, Knox, Fox, Wesley and Booth, all of them so upsetting to the conventional creeds and customs of their times.

Would we, too, have opposed them, persecuted them, or betrayed them?

Yet, who in the history of the world, as well as in the history of faith can stand beside them for their contribution to the life not only of their generation but of all time? Yet each one came at the time of greatest need—though the times when they were least wanted by the mass of men and least of all by those in positions of authority. Who at any time welcomes rebuke? How many desire instruction that scraps established theories—theories upon which the customs of the time are based. How many dare face their convictions with a question mark? Question anything, and where will questioning end? Away with the questioner!

Away with the adventurer of a new religious idea or a re-emphasis of an old one. Away with the fellow who would hustle us a little faster or more directly along the way of life. It is said that, after the first uncomfortable nip, death by freezing is like a pleasant dream from which one hates to be aroused. Has the church so far chilled from the gospel of salvation, of life changing, that it actually enjoys its frozen assets? If so, the world of commerce is more alive than the church. That world is not dreaming pleasantly about its depressed stocks and bonds. It hates depression that freezes assets. But it has learned the lesson that collapse follows an era of oversecurity and false emphasis. And though not too ready to question its old time formulas it is seeking, and feverishly seeking, some way of salvation. Is the world of commerce setting the pace for the church, or the church for the world of affairs?

#### "Marching" Orders!

AS for pace, why was the following hymn not in our hymn books? It could be more honestly sung by many, and would prove more stimulating to others than "Onward Christian Soldiers." But let us say it as prose, lest as a poem it catch the eye and be read without the context:—

Backward chary soldiers, foes are strong and near. "Safety first" our banner, points our duty clear. Let's "mark time" for Jesus, "Stand at ease" with him, the world may go to blazes if we but save our skin.

Backward chary soldiers, foes are strong and near; "safety first" our banner, points our duty clear.

Very sacrilegious? Very cynical? Oh no—just very earnest, by a church member more than averagely to blame for the inertia of the church, and very penitent. One who has gone in and out of church for half a