

"SLEEPING GIANT" by Leonard Ravenhill

Solemnly and slowly, with his index finger extended, Napoleon Bonaparte outlined a great stretch of country on a map of the world.

"There," he growled, "is a sleeping giant. Let him sleep! If he wakes, he will shake the world." That sleeping giant was China.

Today, Bonaparte's prophecy of some one hundred and fifty years ago makes sense.

Today Lucifer is probably surveying the church just as Bonaparte did China. One can almost behold the fear in his eyes as he thinks of the Church's unmeasured potential and growls, "Let the Church sleep! If she wakes, she will shake the world." Is not the Church the sleeping giant of today?

Consider Samson's fall. He didn't get drunk; he didn't commit murder; he didn't steal. Samson fell simply because he succumbed to the natural, and fell asleep.

That one small act put him into captivity, made a false god popular, and scattered the forces of the true and living God.

Alas that today there is more evidence of religious sensation before our eyes than evidence of spiritual regeneration and supernatural phenomenon! Not many Christians today can forget the fact that the devil goeth about as a roaring lion, but we seem to have lost sight of the fact that the Lion of the tribe of Judah has defeated the roaring lion of hell, and therefore every anointed Samson or Gideon or church can also slay the lion of hell. Though wicked men are doing wickedly, God's promise to us is that "the people that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits" (Daniel 11:32).

This much is sure:

If we could merit revival by fasting, there would be many martyred by starving.

If we could organize revival, we would pool our thinking to outwit the powers of darkness.

If we could buy this elusive revival with the mammon of unrighteousness, we could get a score of what we call Christian millionaires to underwrite the thing for us.

If we could blast the devil from this present world, we would pledge the politicians for an atom bomb.

God pity us that after years of writing, using mountains of paper and rivers of ink, exhausting flashy terminology about the biggest revival meetings in history, we are still

faced with gross corruption in every nation, as well as with the most prayerless church age since Pentecost.

We need the miraculous but we also need Christ-centered teaching. Our crucified, exalted Christ must have preeminence over all other slants of truth, for while the Church is languishing, the world is perishing. "Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord..." (Isaiah 51:9)

Let us remember, too, that Samson, who began in the Spirit, fell into the flesh, and so had a prison term to bring him to his senses.

Finally, by one last mighty miracle, he finished in the Spirit.

Backslider, this is a word for your recovery, for God can restore the years that the cankerworm and the caterpillar have eaten. He who is able delights in mercy.

Is this the dying hour of this dispensation? Many say it is. Some Christians have already hung their harps on the willows, and yet others seem to delight in speaking of the Church's present lapse as a proof of divine inspiration. But I myself believe that if the Church will only obey the conditions, she can have a revival any time she wants it. The problem of the Church is the problem in the garden of Gethsemane - sleep! For while men sleep, the enemy, sows his seed through his cults. Lest men sleep the sleep of eternal death, Oh arm of the Lord, Oh Church of the living God, awake!

"The heights by great men reached and kept were not attained by sudden flight, But they, while their companions slept, were toiling upward through the night!"

In a brilliant sermon called "Discipleship," G. Cambell Morgan says, "Jesus Christ could speak to the sorrow-burdened heart of humanity words so full of mother-love and father-love as to make men crowd and press round Him. On the other hand, He could suddenly speak words that flashed and scorched and burned until men drew back in astonishment." Bracketed in the last group would be these two commands: "Take my yoke upon you" and "My disciple, take up your cross and follow me." Both of these words imply discipline.

After I spoke at a session in the Bible School of Wales, Mrs. Rees Howells called me for a private talk. We stood on the veranda of her home overlooking beautiful Swansea Bay I can see her finger upheld as she said, "Many talk of my husband's buying this place with a shilling (fourteen cents) in his pocket. What they forget is that he prayed twelve hours a day for eleven months to know the mind of God." Brethren, that's discipline!

The storm of the ages is about to break. Let the church call its crew to a new dedication. Remembering that Christ is at the helm, and with Christ's Crest as our ensign, let us run into the storm. After the storm, we, too, shall return-to see upon the shores of time the battered, piled, wrecked, hell-inspired ideologies of the hour.