

## CLOSING CHURCHES TO OVERCOME EPIDEMICS

To the Editor of The Living Church:

**B**EHOLD, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear."

Yet the board of health of Philadelphia would lead us to believe that these words are not true.

Tis proclamation of God's prophet Isaiah has sounded in my ears over and over again as I have lived during these days of the closing of the churches by order of the board of health. It has amazed and brought terror to me as a Christian that no protest has been made by the Christian Church in this community against such an unwise, unnecessary, and unchristian order.

*Unwise*, because on account of it, by being shut out from the House of God, the people have been more ready to fall into panic fear about their physical condition and to encourage in themselves the disease now raging. *Unnecessary*, because those who might have been likely to carry the infection would not be attending services. *Unchristian*, because it forbids the public seeking of God in a time of general sickness and distress, which has always been, until now, the custom and privilege of Christians.

Christian people have thus been called, if not forced, to make an act of apostacy by closing the houses of God in the city, silencing the voice of prayer to Him who alone is "the Lord of Life and death, of sickness and health", and ceasing to join in the Sacrifice appointed by Christ our Lord, which is to bring men health and strength in soul and body.

The board of health, whether wittingly or not, has perpetrated an outrage upon God, and the religion of His Son our Lord Jesus Christ, more flagrant and complete than has been known in the history of the Church for many centuries, if ever before.

At the front, our brave boys are giving their lives in sacrifice that the cause of God and His righteousness may be established and made safe forever among men. They are finding God everywhere on the battlefield. What will they think of us at home, who have acquiesced in an order which prevents the public acknowledgment of God and His authority over men, and makes prayer to Him something which can be superseded and suspended until men somehow have been saved from physical danger, not by the power of Him who made us, and watches over us in health, and sickness, but by some board of health with its spectacular order for the closing of churches lest they spread infection

And this at the time when department stores are wide open day after day, and advertising their wares, and encouraging their congregations without let or hindrance!

I can only see in this present order of the board of health the insidious and successful attempt of the power that opposes the righteousness of God to score a victory, and to dishonor the power of God among men.

FREDERICK D. WARD.

Philadelphia, October 10th.