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PARKER MAXEY'S EDITORIALS -- (1976)

Editorials from The Missionary Revivalist
Compiled by Duane V. Maxey

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January, 1976 Editorial
IF ANY MAN SIN

"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

"And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world." I John 2:1,2

There is a group of people of the Calvinistic persuasion who "believe that one grand and holy moment of decision ushers one into an irrevocable state of grace in which he is unconditionally secure." (Shank) They have been convinced in their minds that it is the teaching of the Scripture that, once a person truly experiences saving grace, his status as a child of God is irrevocable --once in grace, always in grace despite any and all eventualities. They reason that if eternal life can be terminated, then how could it be eternal life? These are the ones who teach that you cannot live above sin in this life and not only do they teach this, but they practice what they teach by sinning in word, thought and deed every day. The Devil himself can do no worse than this. They use the scripture we quoted above, among many others, to prove their point. Their claim is that once you become a son of God by the new birth you forever remain a son of God, for how can a person once born be unborn. A Christian may sin, so they say, and thus break fellowship with God, but they do not or cannot break that relationship.

I quote from one of the able exponents of those who believe in a "sinning religion." My dear children,' wrote the aged John, 'these things write I unto you that you sin not.' But Christians do sin... Many sincere men believe that, while sin in the life of the Christian will mar his fellowship with Christ, it cannot affect his salvation in any way... It would be an error, of course, to suppose that the moment a Christian sins he is immediately severed from the Saviour and

deprived of His saving grace.

"My Little children, these things write I unto you, that you sin not. But if any man sin...' Despite our best intentions and holiest aspirations, we do sin. But thank God, 'we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins.' There is a remedy for the sins of the saints." (emphasis ours)

Now, there is another group in the Arminian school of theology that will not go along with this "sinning religion" group. They believe that after one has been gloriously saved he can backslide from this experience and once again become a child of the devil. And, sad to say, this group also are continuously practicing what they believe and teach.

There is a third group, however (these are also of the Wesley Arminian persuasion), who believe that you can get saved so well that you need never sin, but can live a victorious life above sin and enjoy an unbroken life of fellowship with their blessed Redeemer without having to be all the time backsliding. They hold that it is possible to commit sin after one has been saved and when he does he ceases to be a child of God but becomes once again a child of the devil, and those who are thus so unfortunate, God does extend mercy to them upon repentance and the forsaking of their backslidings and will restore them back to a relationship with Him.

The question has been asked, "If a saint can sin and remain a saint, then what does one have to do to be a sinner?" Any one with an honest open heart and a thimble full of brains knows that there is no such a thing as a "sinning Christian" in the whole economy of God any more than there can be a truthful liar, an honest thief or an innocent guilty person. If sin turned a holy angel into a devil, if for only one sin Adam and Eve lost the favor of God, the fellowship of God and the nature of God, and were driven from Eden, how could any soul sin even one sin and still remain a child of God? It is an impossibility!

The advocates of "once in grace, always in grace," lay claim to eternal security on the grounds of "once a son, always a son." Sheep are typical of God's children and if a sheep cannot become a goat (a type of a child of the devil), then how did any one become a sheep in the first place, for we were all one time sinners (goats) and children of the devil. But this is the snare that the advocates of "once a son, always a son" fall into. If we are to interpret scripture properly we must realize that "no verse or passage of Scripture may possess a meaning contrary to the total revelation of all of Holy Writ. Overlooking the implications of the fact that all the Bible is 'context,' many capable scholars have erred in their interpretation of important passages." (Shank)

Now Jesus did say, "ye must be born again," but this second birth, which is a spiritual birth, is not analogous to physical birth in all points. This new birth relationship whereby one is made "a new creation in Christ," is not irrevocable, according to the many solemn warnings against apostatizing and the New Testament record of actual instances of apostasy. "The relationship of men and God, as their Creator, cannot be annulled; but the truly sublime and holy relationship which God desires to enjoy with men is of the spirit, rather than the flesh, and is voluntary and not indissoluble during man's probationary sojourn on earth in God's moral universe." (Shank)

When we go to the plain and simple word of God there can be no mistake about the impossibility of any one committing even one sin and still remaining a child of God or in a saved relationship. No Christian can sin in word, or thought, or deed and remain a Christian. "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not." I John 5:18 Again, "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not... He that committeth sin is of the devil." I John 3:6-8 Again, "whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." I John 3:9. The life which God bestows in regeneration is a holy life and one who is saved is empowered by this holy life born within him, which is nothing less than having Christ born within, so that he is able not to sin. Nowhere in the economy of God does He divest a man of his free agency. God can save a soul so well that he will not want to sin and then will empower him so that he need never sin. Read John 1:12.

Now look at I John 3:10, "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." Adam Clarke says about this, "here is a fearful text. Who is a child of the devil? He that commits sin. Who is a child of God? He that works righteousness. By this text we shall stand or fall before God, whatever our particular creed may be."

I say, away with this sinning religion. That one can sin and still be a child of God is the most damning heresy perpetrated from the pit of hell!

Now let's take a further look at I John 2:1,2. We repeat, God makes no allowance whatever for sinning in the hearts of HIS children. "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not." We quote from Dr. Godbey. " 'Little children' are young converts, the weakest of all Christians. Even they have grace to keep them from committing any known or willing sin (and pre-eminently true of all other Christians)."

God has made provision, however, for the recovery of the individual when and if he does commit sin. "And if any man sin." We quote again from Adam Clarke, "If, through ignorance, inexperience, the violence of temptation, unwatchfulness, etc., ye have fallen into sin, and grieved the Spirit of God, do not despair of being restored to the favor of God; your case, it is true, is deeply deplorable, but not desperate; there is still hope, for 'We have an advocate with the Father.' We still have him before the throne who died for our offenses, and rose again for our justification . . . Do not, therefore, despair, but have immediate recourse to God through him. 'And he is the propitiation for our sins,' the atoning sacrifice for sins." Christ is our mercy seat (propitiation), the place where he who has sinned must return in order to be restored back to fellowship and relationship with God.

"And not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world." This verse, although it brings hope to the backslider, does classify him, not as a member of the household of God, but with the world of sinners, but at the same time holds out hope for him through his Advocate, Jesus Christ, along with all other sinners. And now for another statement from Adam Clarke, "From these verses (I John 2:1,2) we learn that a poor backslider need not despair of again finding mercy; this passage holds out sufficient encouragement for his hope. There is scarcely another such in the Bible; and why? That sinners might not presume on the mercy of God. And why this one? That no backslider

might utterly despair. Here, then, is a guard against presumption on the one hand, and despondency on the other."

One final word needs to be said. There is an awful carelessness these days that herders on a presumption that endeavors the impossible. It presumes to go beyond the provisions of a merciful God. Beware, reader, of the awful presumption at this point. You can presume your way into hell. God never made provision for a soul to sin and still remain in His household. These "easy on-again, off-again" Christians who claim to receive so much, and lose it so soon are a reproach to Christ and His saving grace. Regeneration is holiness begun in the heart. Although there is still the need for entire sanctification -- the cleansing of the heart from original sin -- we must never lose sight of the fact that this initial experience of regeneration is related to the enabling power of the Holy Spirit. He not only produces the life of Christ in the heart, but becomes the agent of enabling grace to bestow the power to live above sin.

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February, 1976 Editorial
WHO IS A CHRISTIAN?

Among the most sobering words in the Bible are those of the risen Lord to John on Patmos concerning the Church in Sardis: "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." Rev. 3:1

How tragic and sad! A name, but a name without reality or concrete evidence to back it up. And yet, what difference is there in this and a Christian who is one by profession but whose life gives his claim the lie?

To be Christian is to be Christ-like. Christ came to this world not only to make atonement for sin but to teach us by example how we should live in this present world (I Peter 2: 21). Primarily, a Christian is one who has had a change of heart and this change of heart should make him Christ-like within and without. To be a Christian, then, is to be Christ-like in our living. How can men judge that we are Christian except by our lives, for it is the outward life that man looketh upon and by which he judges another. Would anyone by observing your life suspect that you are a Christian? To the degree that we exemplify the life of Christ, to that degree and in that respect we can be called Christian. Let us examine ourselves in this light and see if we are Christ-like.

1. Christ was taken up with the interests of others. Do you ever go out of your way to help others? It is said of Jesus that "he must needs go through Samaria." In the story of the Good Samaritan Jesus answered the question "Who is my neighbor?" The "priest" in the story (we are "priests" unto God), and the "Levite" were too busy being "Christians" to truly be one. How many all around us can be put in the class of the poor man in this story who "fell among thieves, was stripped," wounded and left half dead?" Sin has robbed man, stripped him of his character and manhood and left him wounded and dead in trespasses and sin, and we are too busy being Christians to be "neighbor unto him that fell among thieves." Are we really Christian? Would anyone suspect us to be like Christ in this respect? How much more like Christ are we than the priest and Levite?

2. Christ was guileless. "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously," I Peter 2:21-23

Guile carries with it the thought of deceit. "It is very likely," says Adam Clarke, "that the apostle mentions guile, because those who do wrong generally strive to screen themselves by prevarication and lies." But how do we account for our barrenness and fruitlessness in the kingdom of God unless it is that we screen ourselves with "excuses," and "explanations." We would not be so bold as to call them prevarications and lies. How far are we from guile -- the craftiness of deceit -at this point? Jesus did always the will of the Father and so what He said of Himself was true. There was no need of a cover-up by guile. In this respect, also, Christ came to be our example.

3. Christ associated with sinners. By this we mean that Jesus did not isolate himself from sinners. He was called "a friend of publicans and sinners;" he "sat at meat in the Pharisee's house." There is great meaning in Christ's prayer when He said, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." Have we become so "locked in" to our church organization that we have only beaten paths to walk in "within the body of the church" and there are no paths leading out to a lost world? How many have you gone out of your way to witness to this past week? Or, how long has it been since you have witnessed at all to a lost soul? Have you dined with sinners or invited them to dine with you in an effort to get them to God? Are you a real Christian or a make-believe one?

4. Christ was human. He knew what it was to live in a human body and not be a slave to its appetites. He sought nothing for Himself but a cross to die on and a tomb in which to dress for Easter Sunday morning. To be Christian means to be properly related to our body. Christ is our example here and Paul rang the bell when he said, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." I Cor. 9:27 The "body is the temple of the Holy Ghost," not an instrument of lust or gluttony. Are you a Christian in regards to your body?

5. Christ kept constantly in touch with the Father. In this He taught us the value and the necessity of prayer. The chief sin of man, the number one sin, is independence, an independence that says to God, "I am big enough and know enough to run my own affairs and all I need you for is the big emergencies of life." This independency is revealed in Christians when they do not take time to wait on God, to seek His way and will in their lives. Christ did always and only the will of His Father, but His life was one of consistent and constant prayerfulness. He never was at any moment of His life on earth outside the will of His Father. In our finiteness and fallen state we might not always be able to know the perfect will of God in every detail of our life, but we miss it when we do not take time to diligently seek His will and we sin when we do not desire to do so. Prayerlessness reveals the awful spirit of independency and keeps us needlessly outside the will of God. No doubt the chief "sin" of Christians is lack of prayer. If your prayer life were made public would you be thought of as a Christian?

6. Christ suffered for the cause of righteousness. It was totally foreign to the mind or purpose of Christ to regard Himself apart from righteousness and holiness. To think and act in this manner in the kind of world we are living in is to invite suffering. Stronger still, it is to make suffering unavoidable. Yet Christ drew not back in the least but became obedient even unto the suffering of death for righteousness' sake. How Christian are we if we shun the world's reproaches, compromise our stand, follow the world in its styles and trends to avoid suffering? Charles Finney wrote, "They who have overcome the world are no longer careful either to secure its favor or avert its frown... 'To me,' said Paul, 'it is a small thing to be judged of man's judgment.' So of every real Christian; his care is to secure the approbation of God; this is his chief concern, to commend himself to God and to his own conscience. No man has overcome the world unless he has attained to this state of mind. Almost no feature of Christian character is more striking or more decisive than this indifference to the opinions of the world." But this is bound to invite suffering. Are you Christian (Christlike) in this respect?

7. To sum it all up, Christ came not to do His will but the will of the Father. Jesus subordinated his life gladly, freely, voluntarily, and continuously to the Father in obedience. In His obedience He moved so harmoniously along the lines of the divine will until God could always approve of Him and manifest His power through Him. In this, Christ is our example and to this end He prayed for us, "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, are in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." Are we Christlike in this respect, or are we like those of Sardis that have a name that "thou livest but are dead"?

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March, 1976 Editorial

THE COMFORT OF CONVENIENCE OR THE CONQUEST OF CONVICTION

Our subject suggests two alternate ways people are living under the profession of Christianity. Genuine Christianity, and we could more specifically say, spirituality, is revealed at that particular point, place and time of the Spirit's promptings or leadership. How many are there in the ranks of professed Christendom today who are not actually meeting the challenge of the Spirit's leadership moment by moment? Putting it a little differently, how many are actually living Spirit filled and Spirit directed lives? The Spirit often apprehends us on our journey through life. A conviction grips us -- we see where we need to drop something off or strive for a higher level of spirituality or obey the revelation of new light. It is at this point we either go on to the conquest of this new conviction or settle down to the comfort of convenience and miss the opportunity of that moment.

The secret of spiritual life is to obey the Spirit -- move when He directs, speak when He prompts, witness when He urges, obey when He warns.

Wars cannot be fought and won if soldiers remain in the fox holes and trenches. It would probably be possible, theoretically, that a soldier could follow the progress of a war and in a sense be a part of the army, have on a soldier's uniform, live on a soldier's rations, inhabit the fox holes and trenches of an army and never go "over the top" and confront the enemy in actual combat. He could in this sense enjoy the "comforts" of a "no-combat" life. On the other hand, to be a real

combat soldier, he must respond to the command of his superior, go over the top and confront the enemy in real conflict. Soldiers are not really soldiers unless they do so.

In the realm of the spiritual, how many do you suppose are in the category of the comfort of convenience and are not waging an active warfare? Professors of religion, oh yes, dressed like real soldiers, to be sure, but inactive in the battle!

Martin Luther said, "If I profess with the loudest voice and clearest exposition every portion of the truth of God except precisely that little point which the world and the devil are at the moment attacking, I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I may be professing Christ. Where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proved, and to be steady on all the battlefield besides, is merely flight and disgrace if he flinches at that point."

Now to be real specific -- the Bible commands to "seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness." This is in the imperative mood, i. e., it is a command. We are to obey God first and foremost. He is to have first place in our thoughts, in our affections, in our conduct. It is God the Holy Ghost that we have to deal with. He, the Spirit, convicts us. He apprehends us at some particular point or over some particular thing in our life, say the matter of our devotional life. The battle rages, the devil opposes. The Spirit has prompted; the moment to obey is at hand. Will the individual come out of his "fox-hole," obey the Spirit at that moment of urging, develop a vital devotional life, a life of ready and happy response to the Spirit's wooings or remain in the fox-hole -- keep his soldier's uniform on (his religious profession and outward standards), of course, but never really arise to confront the enemy of laziness and indifference and come forth as victor? How many, do you suppose, settle back to the comfort of convenience at this point and fail to rise to the conquest of conviction?

Again, let us look at Acts 1:8. "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Here is a plain statement of fact. When the Holy Ghost comes to a heart in sanctifying fulness He brings the power and zeal to witness; yea, He Himself is that power and that One who witnesses, but He does so through and by the cooperation of the human agent. But this power and zeal to witness must find expression at a particular time, to a particular person or persons, at a particular place if it is to have any meaning at all. Here the Spirit is faithful on His part to prompt ---witness here, now, to this person. At the Spirit's urging the moment of action has arrived: Satan opposes; the conquest of conviction is on. Will the soul go "over the top," obey the Spirit's call to duty, become an active witness for God to lost humanity in cooperation with the Holy Ghost, or stay back in the trench of a comfortable church pew in spiritual slothfulness, repeat his parrot like "saved and sanctified" testimony, .having avoided the precise point of obedience to the call of the' Spirit when he said "ye shall be witnesses unto me"? If this be the case, then a soul once again has settled into the comfort of convenience and failed to rise to the conquest of conviction,

Likewise, reader, is it with the matter of a genuine, Holy Ghost prayer life. Multitudes are in the grip, of indolence at this point and can be classed with the Laodiceans, who thinking they are "rich, and increased with goods," do not realize that Christ is no longer in them but has departed and is standing at the heart's door seeking admittance.

Bible illustrations can be produced one after another that deal with this great truth. Would the Children of Israel obey God at Kadesh Barnea at that particular time and place? They failed. They missed the precise point, that strategic moment of the Spirit's leading. Where the battle raged, their loyalty failed. They tried to make out in their own strength and at their own time to recapture that moment but it had fled from them never to return.

King Saul obeyed God except at that one particular place and moment and over that one issue, "slay utterly." That was the crux of the matter. Where loyalty was tested he failed.

The Rich Young Ruler faced a moment and a determining factor in his life. He failed at that strategic point -that place where humanity faces deity. He chose the comfort of convenience and failed in the conquest of conviction.

Conformity to the Christian ideals and standards is not the issue. It lies in our response to the promptings of the Spirit of God. I am dealing with that moment in time and those issues that we face that determine whether we will give preeminence to the physical or the spiritual; whether we will let the interests of this perishing world gain ascendancy over the interests of that eternal world to come. This, reader, is the determining point between salvation or damnation.

The eleventh chapter of Hebrews presents a roll of those who timed with the Spirit's leadings, kept the faith and are now awaiting their final reward in heaven. God help us to enter the arena and fight like true soldiers of Jesus Christ.

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April, 1976 Editorial

HOLINESS THE ANTIDOTE OF FEAR

The Bible speaks of "Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." (Luke 21: 26) It speaks of a fear that "hath torment."

Men fear, They fear the future; they fear old age; they fear calamity; they fear what men may do to them; they flee when no one pursueth them; they fear poverty and want; they fear sickness and disease; they fear death; they fear judgment. In fact, men fear everything except the things they should fear. Men should fear sin and men should fear God. Sin will put men in hell, but the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom.

Men try to drown their fears. They do so by shutting themselves away from truth; by pre-occupation; by searing their conscience.

Why do men fear? They fear because of unbelief; because of sin. David said, "My sin is ever before me." Men fear because of unpreparedness to face the future; because of unavoidable judgment; because of eternal punishment. It was never God's plan that men should be plagued with fear. It is sin that has brought this awful epidemic of fear upon the human race.

How does holiness rid one of fear? Holiness makes one an heir of God and joint-heir with Christ. If you belong to God then "all things are yours.., the world, life, death, things present, things to come.., and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." (I Cor. 3:21-23) There is absolutely no reason to fear when you become God's property.

Adolph Monod, great saint, teacher, sufferer, lying on a premature couch of anguish and death at Paris, spoke often to a congregation of his friends on the theme "all in Jesus Christ." Here are a few of his sentences: "Having Christ, we have all things; bereft of Christ, we have absolutely nothing. All things are yours, and you are Christ's and Christ is God's. Well, then, what is the result for me? I am poor, it may be, yet all the fortunes of this world are mine, for they are Christ's who Himself is God's and who could easily give them all to me, with Himself, if they would serve my interests. The whole world, with all its glories, with all its power, belongs to me; for it belongs to my Father, who will give it me tomorrow and could, give it me today, if that were good for me. I am very ill, it may be. Yet health is mine, strength is mine, comfort is mine, a perfect enjoyment of all these blessings of life is mine; for all this belongs to Christ, who belongs to God, and who disposes of it as He will. If He withholds these things from me today, for a fleeting moment, swift as the shuttle in the loom, it is for reasons wholly His own, it is because this pain, this bitterness conceal a benediction worth more to me than all the health so precious, than the comfort so delightful... I challenge you to find a thing of which I cannot say, 'This is my Father's.' Therefore it is mine; if He withholds it today, He will give it me tomorrow. I trust myself to His love. All is mine if I am His."

Holiness rids a person of fear, then, by bringing to his soul a personal faith in God and a knowledge accompanied with the witness of the Spirit that he belongs to God. Putting it in a different way, holiness rids the soul of its cause of fear by removing the tap-root of unbelief. Oswald Chambers says, "All our fears are wicked, and we fear because we will not nourish ourselves in our faith. How can anyone who is identified with Jesus Christ suffer from doubt or fear! It ought to be an absolute paean of perfectly irrepressible triumphant belief."

Holiness removes fear by planting perfect love in the soul. In His prayer in John 17 Jesus said (verse 26), "I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou has loved me may be in them, and I in them." It is God's desire to plant His love in our heart. In I John 4:18 we read, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear; because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love."

Holiness rids one of fear by bringing to the soul the assurance of the divine presence and care. "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that ye may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." (Heb. 13:5, 6)

But some may ask, what about the future? There is something about the uncertainty of the future that strikes fear to the soul. "I don't know what's in the future," said a Salvation Army lassie, "but I know the Lord is in the future, and I know I am in the Lord." Samuel Brengle put it this way: "In the strongest, plainest possible language (God) has spoken to our fainting, fearful hearts and assured us of His unfailing care; and the only reason why we do not have perfect peace respecting the future is because we do not have perfect faith in Him just now."

Holiness removes this awful gangrene of unbelief and plants perfect faith in the soul. To add to this we have the promise found in Hebrews 13:5, 6, "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."

A final word needs to be said concerning the danger of allowing a perfect trust to slip from us and again to become possessed with a blighting fear. When people become careless and lose their trust in God they become anxious and fearful about the tomorrows. When especially those who should be spiritual leaders cease to live moment by moment in God, it brings the spirit of unbelief and fear upon the work of God. Samuel Brengle in his book, Resurrection Life arm Power, gives the following incident that should be a warning to all: "Some years ago two or three divisional officers became suspicious about their future in the Army, and lost their joy and power. The miserable spiritual gangrene spread to the corps officers, and they lost their joy and gladness and sweet, simple trust in straining their poor eyes to look into the future that God had hidden from them, and for which He commanded them to trust Him without an anxious thought. Since the officers had lost the joy and power, the poor, starved soldiers lost heart and interest, and then the light and glory fled from the meetings, the public lost interest and ceased to come, the finances shrank, and the whole work languished, withered and almost died. Those poor, foolish, fearful doubters could not see that their anxiety about the future was producing the conditions that would bring all their fears upon them like an Alpine avalanche; and not until men full of faith and joy and the Holy Ghost rejoiced and prayed and shouted and rallied the doubting, fearing ones, did the work recover from the blighting effect of their fear and unbelief.

"The man who doubts and fears and murmurs is walking right into the jaws of trouble; but to the man who keeps glad in God, who rejoices and prays and trusts in the teeth of Hell, the path grows brighter unto the perfect day. God has pledged Himself to stand by that man. ' ' "

May God help us all to keep a holy heart full of faith and zeal for the glory of God and the advancement of His kingdom on earth.

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May, 1976 Editorial
THE TEMPLE OF GOD

It is plain in the Scriptures that the physical body we live in here on this earth is intended to be the temple of the Holy Spirit and that we are to live in our body in a way that will bring honor and glory to a Holy God. Who could conceive of anything more wonderful than to have the Spirit of God Himself indwell him! We were created for this purpose, that we might reflect the glory of God.

People today are in bondage to sins that are connected with the physical body because they have left God out of their lives. It is Christ's purpose to set men free from these sins and keep them from being entangled again with this yoke of bondage. (Read John 8:36 and Galatians 5: 1) We, as

Christians living in a physical body, become susceptible to the gratification of physical desires which, though lawful in themselves, can become the occasion of sin. Thus there is the necessity of constant vigilance at this point. Two things aid man in maintaining Christian liberty and integrity in relationship to his body and they are self-discipline and the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Strong language is used in the Bible concerning the body as the temple of the Holy Ghost. "What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit which are God's." I Cor. 6:19, 20 Even stronger language is used against those who defile the body. "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are... What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. Flee fornication . . . he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body." I Cor. 3:17; 6:16-18

We do not hold, as some have in the past history of the church, that the body is evil and that by abusing the body or by denying the body we are made more spiritual. We do hold with the scriptures that the body is meant to be the temple of the Holy Spirit and that He wants to dwell with us in our bodies, empowering us to keep them holy as we yield them over to Him to work through as He chooses (Rom. 12:1). There is nothing evil or sinful about the physical body. It was created with all its normal appetites by a Holy God. He wants to sanctify and indwell the body and help us to live in every way pleasing to Him.

We need to realize that it is the Holy Spirit that will assist us in keeping blameless as we live in these bodies of ours. We need to acknowledge Him and our reliance on His help to preserve us blameless in regards to our physical bodies as well as our spirit and soul. "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." I Thess. 5:23 God has never failed in His promises to man. But man is free in his will and must cooperate with God if there is to be real victory and the complete fulfillment of God's will at this point.

On man's part it takes cooperation with the Holy Spirit and self-discipline. God grants every obedient, Spirit-filled soul power of realization in self-discipline. The Scripture instructs us how we are to treat our bodies. First, it instructs us in regard to its appetites. As sanctified saints we have an obligation to God concerning our relationship to our bodies. "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." This scripture certainly suggests that the body is not to be the master of the man, but the man of the body. Every appetite of the body is provided, in the plan of God, a legitimate means of satisfaction. Sin perverts and accentuates these body appetites until men become slaves to them to the point where God is forced to give them over to uncleanness, to all kinds of lusts, to vile affections and to a reprobate mind. They dishonor their bodies that were meant to be the temple of the Holy Spirit. There is no way the Holy Spirit can dwell in a body where sin is allowed. (Read Romans 1: 22-32)

The Apostle Paul recognized the awful danger his body could be to him if he failed to keep it under and bring it into subjection to the plan and program of God. His body could be the instrument of damning his soul.

Secondly, the scriptures instruct us in regard to the care of our bodies. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." I Cor. 10:31

We are to eat and drink in a way that will glorify God. We are living in a tensed-up age and the tendency is to eat too fast, too much, too often and at wrong times for the good of our bodies' health -- these bodies that are the Temple of the Holy Ghost. Most people are overweight today because of the lack of self-discipline. This lack of self-discipline endangers our effectiveness in kingdom work, say nothing about real soul victory. We are a feasting people instead of a fasting people. Eating and drinking characterizes these days of lukewarmness and carnal, fleshly living. Who would deny that this militates against the spirit of prayer, fasting and soul concern? Prayerlessness and lack of soul burden on the part of God's people are fruits of overeating and indulging the flesh. God help us that we be not castaways for lack of self-discipline over our bodies. When the stomach is stuffed it is hard to pray or get under a burden for the lost.

Whatsoever we do is to be done to the glory of God. This would include the way we dress our bodies. We are to dress our bodies as the temple of the Holy Spirit. If the Holy Spirit had His way would you have to change your wardrobe? We have it in our manual that "our people are to dress with the Christian simplicity and modesty that becometh holiness.., not with gold or pearls or costly array." Men are not to wear long hair and women are not to cut theirs (I Cor. 11). We are God's property and the owner of a house certainly has something to say about its appearance. Too many "bodies" are reflecting the "mod" appearance instead of the look of simplicity and modesty that becometh holiness. Do you suppose the Holy Spirit would indwell a body that does not outwardly reflect His holiness and presence?

This would include the way in which we expend our strength. We are commanded to "love the Lord thy God with all thy... strength." Indulging the body whether by overeating, oversleeping or needlessly overtaking our strength -becoming slaves to body appetites -militates against spirituality and could cancel it out altogether. God help us! There is far too much carelessness here.

We are to present our bodies "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God." It is the most reasonable thing we can do -our bodies, the total property of God, ready to be used or sacrificed at His behest. We read in Revelation 12:11, "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death." They were willing to lay down their lives if necessary to preserve their souls.

One of the greatest romances of the Christian life is to live in a materialistic world, in a physical body, in a way that will glorify God. We read again in Romans 8:11, "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by the Spirit that dwelleth in you." If the blessed Holy Spirit of God is permitted to dwell with us in our bodies now, He will claim them at the resurrection of the just. Sad if He is forced to say in that hour, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."

Has your body become the instrument of sin or is it the Temple of the Holy Spirit?

* * * * *

June, 1976 Editorial

ABORTION IS THE TAKING OF HUMAN LIFE

We have not said a whole lot in *The Missionary Revivalist* on the issue of abortion. This is not because we felt it was of little consequence. Much has been written these days exposing this awful evil; nevertheless, we as a Church in our official periodical must not remain silent on so grave an issue. The authors of *Life Magazine*, in a special issue some years ago entitled "Life Before Birth," stated, "The birth of a human life really occurs at the moment the mother's egg cell is fertilized by one of the father's sperm cells."

We believe this statement to be true and in harmony with the Bible. Consequently we must hold that abortion is the taking of human life, not just the removal of an embryo from a womb or, what is known in the 8th week of pregnancy as a fetus. Legalized abortion is nothing less than legalized murder of unborn human beings. Besides this, abortion is the overtone of a moral decadence that has swept this generation. We are not dealing here with whatever is necessary to save the life of a mother.

In the first place we want to emphasize the fact that this awful plague of abortion that has swept in on us is a moral tragedy that has overrun humanity in our day. We read in Romans 1:21, "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." The sins of lust and vile affections have brought on unwanted pregnancies. Legalized abortion is a sin-blinded effort of depraved humanity to remove the undesired consequences of their sinful act. The effort of humanity to legalize a moral wrong is the cover up of an effort to sin without penalty. To say the least, it is a graphic illustration of the awful darkness and degradation that comes on men "who hold the truth of God in unrighteousness."

Another serious moral overtone of this age that has brought on legalized abortion is the changing attitude of the world to the true role of womanhood even the attitude of women themselves to their role in life. The expression "right to her own body" is another term that has arisen out of this legalized murder of unborn human beings in an endeavor to soothe the guilty consciences of women that insist on "abortion on demand."

Unisex, long haired men, women dressing like men and smoking cigarettes, drinking beer, indulging in dope, working along side men in shops and factories, seeking public office, the cohabiting of both sexes in college dormitories are all fruits of this moral decadence and related to the murder of unborn babies. Without a doubt the mini-skirt, hot pants, and such immodest dress of this day has been the cause of robbing many a young woman of her virtue and sent her on her way to the abortion clinic.

"Younger women are to marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully." Furthermore, the Bible states that women are to be subject to their own husbands in everything and this Bible order is diametrically opposed to the modern "women's lib" movement.

The sex craze of this age brought on by satanically inspired sex education in the public schools; the X-rated movies that bar nothing of nudeness and lewdness and sexual perversion; the television that pipes the "midnight" movies right into the front room of American homes; the pornographic literature that places pictures of totally nude women at the disposal of every boy and girl and young person in America in our stores across the country; the adult book rooms with their \$.25 movie picture where raw sex "for adults only" can be seen all this has had its part in sending our young women to legalized abortion clinics to rid themselves of an unwanted pregnancy and thus become party to the act of murdering a human being. "The "pill" has also entered the picture as a means of allowing unmarried women as well as infidel wives the freedom of sex without the penalty of a shameful pregnancy. Beware of the "pill"! A dangerous device, in my opinion, with tragic results already chalked up against it.

Another fearful moral overtone that America faces in this business of abortion is the threat of euthanasia. There is very little difference in the killing of unwanted babies before they are born and the "putting to sleep" of unwanted adults that have passed the age of usefulness. This is certainly no new thought and the great danger here lies in the fact that those who are hardened to permit abortion no longer think in terms of moral principles so, consequently, legalized abortion opens the door to euthanasia. If Jesus tarries and unless fearful trends downward are checked we will doubtless be facing "mercy killing" in the not too distant future.

A graphic illustration of this awful sin of abortion and its consequences is brought out in an article in the March issue of Good Housekeeping magazine. The article, written by Charles and Bonnie Remsberg, gives the experience of Dr. Bernard Nathanson, head of New York's first and busiest abortion clinic. In the beginning he was a militant crusader for abortion on demand and director of a pioneer clinic where upwards of 100 pregnancies were terminated each day. To start with, Dr. Nathanson took the position that abortion was not the taking of life. What was in the womb was a "blueprint," a model for what would be, but not the real thing.

You who have followed the history of this awful "abortion on demand" movement know that in 1970 the New York Legislature passed the nation's first law allowing this and New York at once became the abortion Mecca of the country. Pregnant women poured into the state from all over America and Nathanson took over as director of the clinic. More than 3,000 women a month passed through this clinic. Nathanson himself was not in direct contact with these women but he began to observe "the gradual psychological disintegration of much of his staff. The pressures, external as well as internal, on everyone were just enormous". The article further observes that "it wasn't just a matter of overwork" even though doctors regularly worked 12-hour shifts. "Psychological factors, stemming perhaps from subconscious guilt and inner misgivings," must also have been playing a part. Doctors began "losing their nerve in the operating room," Nathanson says. "I remember one sweating profusely, shaking badly, nipping drinks between procedures." Heavy drinking became a problem with several. Some doctors and nurses complained of deep depressions, and some were plagued by terrifying, recurring nightmares. One doctor's wife anxiously reported that "her husband was dreaming continually of blood."

"I was seeing personality structures dissolve in front of me on a scale I had never seen before in a medical situation," said Nathanson. He further stated that after he had read through

questionnaires that had been filled out by 26,000 patients, most of them young women, he could not help but be disturbed by the fact that the only emotion they seemed to express about their abortions was relief. No remorse, no regret, no sense of loss.

After 18 months, during which 60,000 abortions were performed at the clinic, Nathanson resigned and we quote here some of his remarks at that time: "I said to myself: 'All that propaganda you've been spewing out about abortion not involving the taking of human life is nonsense'... I became convinced that as director of the clinic I had in fact presided over 60,000 deaths... The product of conception is a human being in a special time of its development, part of a continuum that begins in the uterus, passes through childhood, adolescence and adulthood, and ends in death. The fact that a fetus depends on the placenta for life and can't survive independently doesn't nullify its existence as a human being. A diabetic is wholly dependent on insulin, but that doesn't make him less human... I had to face the fact that in an abortion human life of a special order is being taken." Nathanson publicly announced his philosophical change in what he calls his "good-bye" to the abortion movement.

Another overtone in the abortion tragedy is the fact that the moment of the NOW leaves its mark on the rolling years to come. For the sinner who seeks only selfish pleasure, the act of a moment can never be segregated from the whole of life and if memories of sin-laden moments haunt our todays what will they mean to a lost soul in eternity? Add to the memory of that moment of sinful pleasure the act of aborting a life from a womb and keep on adding to the memory those moments of sin upon sin. It is no wonder the Bible describes hell as a place where "their worm dieth not." Every moment of a person's life goes to hell with him in his memory. How dreadful! We will have to conclude, neighbor, that this awful plague of abortion is nothing less than wholesale slaughter of the innocent. That great, numberless host of human beings that were never allowed to live beyond the womb will rise up in the day of judgment to condemn this awful sin of mankind.

In concluding this article I want you to read the following Ballad of the Unborn by Fay Clayton and remember this -- human life begins before birth.

* * *

[In the printed edition of The Missionary Revivalist, the words of Fay Clayton's "Ballad of the Unborn" below were so aligned as to form the picture of an unborn fetus. No attempt will be made to recreate that in this digital text. Nevertheless, the ballad itself is moving, and is a sad indictment against those who murder the unborn.

One of the tragic ironies of our day is: millions who cry out against the execution of the death penalty upon heinous murderers, at the same time loudly proclaim the so-called "right" (via abortion) to execute the unborn, whose only "crime" is that they are unwanted! This is where our nation is: standing defiantly, but directly, beneath the fast plummeting and eternally crushing fall of God's weightiest JUDGMENT, Who has thrice declared: "Shall I not visit them for these things? saith the LORD: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?" (Jeremiah 5:9; Jeremiah 5:29; and Jeremiah 9:9)

Joseph warned Pharaoh: "And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass." If when God TWICE repeats a thing it will surely and swiftly come to pass, how much more certainly and swiftly shall His wrath fall when His warning is repeated THRICE! -- DVM]

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BALLAD OF THE UNBORN

By Fay Clayton

My shining feet will never run on early morning lawn;
My feet were crushed before they had a chance to greet the dawn.
My fingers now will never stretch to touch the winning tape;
My race was done before I learned the smallest steps to take.

My growing height will never be recorded on the wall;
My growth was stopped when I was still, unseen, and very small.
My lips and tongue will never taste the good fruits of the earth;
For I myself was judged to be a fruit of little worth.

My eyes will never scan the sky for my high-flying kite;
For when still blind, destroyed were they in the black womb of night.
I'll never stand upon a hill Spring's winds in my hair,
Aborted winds of thought closed in on motherhood's despair.

I'll never walk the shores of life or know the tides of time;
For I was coming but unloved, and that my only crime.
Nameless am I, a grain of sand, one of the countless dead,
But the deed that made me ashen gray floats on seas of red.

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July, 1976 Editorial
THIS GENERATION

Matt. 24:34

Matthew talks about the "fig tree" sign of Christ's Second Coming, and then states that "this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled." This has been interpreted by many to mean that the generation that is alive when these signs appear- the budding of the fig tree, or Israel becoming a nation again -- will witness the second coming of our Lord.

If this is so -- and we have no reason to doubt it -- then it will be this generation that will usher in the AntiChrist. St. Paul's description is classic: "The day of Christ shall not come," he writes, "except there come a falling away first, and that man of Sin be revealed, the son of

perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God shewing himself that he is God." II Thess. 2: 3-4.

There are two alternatives open to man -- man who normally is in a state of sin. In the first place, if a man wishes to survive spiritually, in the power of Christ there must be a conscious turning back to God. The other course or movement possible to man as shown in the Bible is a conscious turning away from God back to the anti-Christ. That movement is called apostasy.

God's law must be honored and obeyed if mankind would avoid chaos and eternal ruin. The alternative to God's law must be the apocalyptic horror of untrammelled human will insanely sitting in the temple of God where God ought to be.

This falling away, spoken of in the Word of God, is the outstanding characteristic of this age and it now has reached the stage where anti-Christ can take control. "Everywhere in the Christian World," states Rev. T. Robert Ingram in his book *The World Under God's Law*, "there is underway a powerful, highly organized movement to abolish the power of governments to punish men for violations of the Ten Commandments and to substitute therefor the power of the state to uphold arbitrary decrees, because, say the socialists, when the government speaks it must be obeyed." It is the difference between a world under God's law and a world solely under human law. The shift from being governed by the will of God as expressed in the Ten Commandments to being governed by godless human will as expressed in the laws of the State is now at the point of realization.

If the anti-Christ -- a human being given over totally to the will of Satan -- is to reign supremely in the world, then the laws of God must be set aside. God has expressed His will for man in the Ten Commandments. The recognition of these as the basis of law in the United States and all Christian nations in the bastion of defense of Christian freedom. The undermining of these commandments is the "falling away" process that will finally make way for the anti-Christ. This generation has already witnessed this falling away. It is sad but true that our beloved nation is no longer ruled by the laws of God but solely by the laws of man drawn up in our legislative bodies and interpreted by our courts.

A case in point is the action of our Supreme Court in regards to capital punishment. In recent years this court outlawed capital punishment as it then stood as unconstitutional. However, in ratifying this decision, the states ran into serious problems and now the Supreme Court is reviewing this matter to decide in what cases it will uphold capital punishment and in what cases it will not. It seems very apparent there will be no capital punishment for crimes against God's laws. At best, there will only be death for crimes against law enforcement agencies, or the state, or for political offenses. It is a sad fact that the law of God has been almost completely ignored in the official debates now going on in our Supreme Court concerning capital punishment. This is nothing less than the setting aside of the First Commandment -- the disregard of God as Supreme Ruler.

Likewise the second commandment is largely ignored in our nation -- "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them, " This law is against idolatry. Students of the history of Israel readily note that

whenever that nation succumbed to idolatry they were easily led into the companion evils of adultery and lasciviousness. There has always been a close connection between idolatry and immorality. The spirit of idolatry is fornication, and its hierarchy today is the dark underworld of vice -panderers, prostitutes, and peddlers of pornography. The connection of idolatry with sexual lewdness is unquestionable. The great cry today is to preserve what some like to call civil liberties, One of these supposed "civil liberties" to be defended against a threatening social order is the liberty to indulge in pornography. That is also bound up with a liberty called freedom of the press which often means freedom to be an idolater, as the occasion demands. In other words, by the simple technique of invoking freedom of the press or freedom of religion or freedom of speech, our liberal people lead the forces to guarantee freedom to indulge in vice with impunity. Freedom of speech guarantees our right of speaking our mind about the government. Properly understood it should have nothing to do with granting permission to spread debauchery, lewdness, and evil. The granting of this under laws upholding so-called freedom of the press and social liberties is nothing less than the setting aside of the Second Commandment that forbids such and designed by God to protect mankind against this form of sin.

The Third Commandment forbids the taking of God's Name in vain. It is utterly impossible to administer justice, either in the punishment of wickedness and vice or the adjudication of civil disputes, unless men can be required to tell the truth on pain of heavy penalty. To swear in God's Name is to appeal to God that one is telling the truth. To take God's Name in vain (swear falsely) is to break the Third Commandment, and yet there has been instance after instance in the courts of our land where there has been a refusal to establish legal recognition of God. Every President, every congressman and senator and most other officials must swear by God. To do so is to acknowledge the Creator and that He is God. It is a sad fact that God's name is taken in vain again and again as dishonesty floods our nation. In our communistic infiltrated government we have been witnessing the setting aside of this third commandment.

Space will not allow a review of each of the Ten Commandments. If so, it could easily be shown that man's rule has been substituted for God's rule in each one of these. The Sixth Commandment where God says, "Thou shalt do no murder," is completely overrun by the awful abortion laws of our day.

These laws of God are given to mankind to preserve him in his existence and to protect the society of human beings as a whole and are man's one bastion of defense against every tyrant. The alternative to God's law is not no law, but godless human law. Governments who do not jealously guard the majesty of God have no choice but to uphold the majesty of their own human authority. When this happens the way is paved for anti-Christ to assume his role.

"If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" Saints of God, this is no time for morbidness or despondency or hopelessness. Let us not be blind to the fact that his "falling away" spoken of in God's Word is an accomplished fact in this day, but let us keep occupied in prayer and the ministry of God's Word and keep that upward look for "our redemption draweth nigh!"

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August, 1976 Editorial
"ANY SUCH THINGS"

Christ is preparing a church for Himself and He is building it on the foundation of His unchanging Word of which He, Himself, is the living reality. The written Word is but a revelation of the Living Word.

Martin Luther expressed the place the Word should be given in our lives by the following lines:

Feelings come and feelings go,
And feelings are deceiving.
My warrant is the Word of God;
Naught else is worth believing.

Though all my heart should feel condemned
For want of some sweet token,
There is One greater than my heart
Whose Word cannot be broken.

I'll trust in God's unchanging Word
Till soul and body sever;
For though all things shall pass away,
His WORD SHALL STAND FOREVER!

Praise the Lord, reader, God identifies Himself with His Word "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." John 1:1 We read in Ephesians 5: 25-27, "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Christ is preparing for Himself a glorious Church and he has made provision through His sacrifice on Calvary for it to be so. He wants it to be glorious so that He might present it to Himself. "It was usual to bring the royal bride to the king in the most sumptuous apparel; and is there not here an allusion to Psalm 14:13,14: "The king's daughter is all glorious, her clothing is of wrought gold; she shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needle work." (Adam Clark) Surely the time of that presentation is drawing nigh. In order for His Church to be glorious:

It must be without spot or wrinkle. "There must be no blemish on the face; no spots on the garment in every way it will be pure and honorable because pure and holy." The idea presented here to the mind is that of a body perfectly free from blemish and this is meant to typify a soul perfectly delivered from sin and of a character perfected in all grace and goodness.

Wrinkles are marks of sickness, decrepitude, superannuation or decay. In a spiritual sense they would be symbolic of the outbreaks and outward expressions of that disease of the soul known as inbred sin. The only cure for this is the blood of Jesus Christ.

It must be free of "any such thing," This refers to that great list of "things" that if allowed would infect the church to make it sickly and eventually kill it; that which would mar its beauty and glory and disqualify it from being presented to Christ a glorious church; those things which if written down and detailed out for the church down through the ages would be too voluminous to cope with, but which the Spirit makes plain to those who love the truth and who desire to walk therein; those things that shallow people allow because they say the Bible says nothing specifically against them on this basis people defend the .wedding band, the television, pant-suits for women,, etc.; and even tobacco and a "little intoxicating wine for the stomach's sake, and we could go on and on; those things that holy people shun as not being consistent with purity or a deeply spiritual life and walk, but which holiness professors allow because of the blindness of their unsanctified hearts; those things which are discerned by a holy heart as not being proper as consistent or in harmony with a holy God.

Christ means for His church to be holy and without blemish -- purified from both outward and inward sin -- the removal, the eradication of inbred sin. There is an initial cleansing and a continuous washing by the Word. The initial cleansing puts the soul in harmony with the holy nature of God and with His unchanging, eternal Word. The heart is forever settled in its purposes to live in the Word but the head is in a continual process of growth and enlightenment. In commenting on this portion of this verse Adam Clark states, "In every sense holy, pure and perfect. Now it was for this purpose that Christ gave himself for the Church; and for this purpose he continues the different ordinances which he has appointed, and particularly, the preaching of the word the doctrine of reconciliation through faith in the blood. And it is in this life that all this purification is to take place; for none shall be presented at the day of judgment to him who has not here been sanctified, cleansed, washed, made glorious, having neither spot, wrinkle, blemish nor any such thing. How vain is the pretension of multitudes to be members of the true Church while full of spots, wrinkles, blemishes, and MANY such things; fondly supposing that their holiness is in their surety, because not in themselves! Reader, lay thy hand on thy conscience and say, Dost thou believe that this is St. Paul's meaning?"

"To be the bride of Christ is a high destiny in point of condition; but it would be miserable if character did not tally with condition." Reader, this agreement that Christ's true bride is to be holy and without blemish or any such thing -- has wonderfully been secured to the Church by a divine impartation. Have you been a recipient of this marvelous grace?

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September, 1976 Editorial
BEWARE!

II Peter 3:17, 18

The Apostle Peter concludes his writings in the New Testament with 'these words: "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.

"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

We are reminded in this passage that growth in grace is directly related to our growth in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Therefore if we want an increase of grace we should be careful and zealous students of the Word of God and of the leadership of the Holy Spirit. But there is also a warning in the above words -- BEWARE! Of all people, the inquirer after truth needs to be on guard against the wiles of the devil. We read in John 8:32, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." But partial truth, or half truths, or truth unrelated to the whole body of truth can be dangerous and even fatal to the spiritual life. I was preaching one time from that passage over in the fifth chapter of Mark where Jairus besought Jesus to come and heal his daughter who was lying at the point of death. The Scripture said "And Jesus went with him." However, there was an interruption -- the woman with the issue of blood interrupted Jesus as He was on His way to heal Jairus' daughter. In the meantime the daughter died and from the human standpoint all hope of healing was forever gone. I was emphasizing the truth in this message that if Jesus starts with you He will go with you all the way, for He did go on to Jairus' home and raised his daughter from the dead. We had a wonderful time preaching this truth, with much help and blessing from above. At the conclusion one man said to me, "Why didn't you preach the whole truth? You only preached half of the truth. You said, 'Jesus will go with us all the way, He will not forsake us.' The other half of the truth is, IF WE WILL NOT FORSAKE HIM," The man was right. Many people start out with God, but they run out on Him and do not reap the blessings and final rewards of a Christian life.

We read an article sometime back in The Prairie Overcomer concerning the evolution of error. How subtle the enemy is to capitalize on unenlightened zeal or green enthusiasm -- characteristics of new converts and people who fail to be ardent students of the Word. "First, there is enlightenment concerning some Biblical truth. The seeking spirit finds some fresh truth in the pages of Scripture. He rejoices as one that finds spoil. He feeds upon the milk and honey of Scripture truth.

"But what begins as enlightenment he now turns into an emphasis. The seeker claims to find the same truth in every part of Scripture, no matter how diverse in subject, scope, and spirit the passages may be. He reduces the multi-stringed harp of Scripture to one solitary string, from which he feverishly attempts to draw out music that is pleasing to God,

"In time what was an emphasis becomes an extreme. He traces the stream of his solitary truth to the place where he stands on the border between truth and error. His whole ministry is now taken up in the preservation and propagation of what to him has become a gospel. He peddles his line of truth wherever he goes.

"Unrelated to other Biblical truths, the extreme eventually becomes error. The Bible Student stares so long into the sun of his own chosen doctrine that he loses the power to see any other truths. The Word preserves, but if one truth -as in the case of chlorine which combines with sodium to make salt -- is separated from the rest of Scripture teaching, that truth may become deadly in its influence.

"Enlightenment, emphasis, extreme, error -- that is an evolution of which all who are engaged in the search after truth must be afraid."

One of the great truths in the Bible is the Sovereignty of God. To overemphasize this leads to the error of the predestination of souls by the Sovereign act of God alone. But alongside of this great truth runs also the great truth of the freedom of the human will. In my message concerning Jairus I had emphasized only the former. To emphasize the Sovereignty of God, His faithfulness, His mercy, etc., apart from the cooperation and freedom of the human will would lead to rank error -- a sinning religion.

The balance of truth is preserved when we consider the main stream that flows throughout the entire Bible from beginning to end -- HOLINESS! All other truths must harmonize and blend in with this main stream of truth. God is a Holy God. The Bible is holiness from 'over to cover and -- as has been said -has spilled out and gotten on the outside cover -- Holy Bible. God designs that His children be Holy in heart and life and not alone by imputation!

Bishop Foster says of holiness in the Bible, "it breathes in the prophecy, thunders in the law, murmurs in the narrative, whispers in the promises, supplicates in the prayers, sparkles in the poetry, resounds in the songs, speaks in the types, glows in the imagery, voices in the language, and burns in the spirit of the whole scheme, from alpha to omega, from its beginning to its end. Holiness! Holiness needed, holiness required! holiness offered! holiness attainable! holiness a present duty, a present privilege, a present enjoyment, is the progress of completeness of its wondrous theme! It is the truth glowing all over, webbing all through revelation; the glorious truth which sparkles and whispers, and sings and shouts in all its history, and biography, and poetry, and prophecy, and precept, and promise, and prayer; the great central truth of the system. The wonder is that all do not see, that any rise up to question, a truth so conspicuous, so glorious, so wonderful, so full of comfort."

The mighty Mississippi river drains the entire mid-continent of these United States. There are other great rivers in this section of the nation, but they all eventually feed into this one mighty river. There are many wonderful truths in the pages of Holy Writ but the one mighty truth that underlies them all and brings them into perfect harmony is Holiness, holiness unto the Lord holiness of heart, holiness in our thought life, holiness in our speech, holiness in our acts. We can best avoid the pitfall of error by keeping to the mainstream of truth -- holiness. All the great truths of the Bible must harmonize with the doctrine of holiness, the spirit Of holiness, the being of holiness, and above all, with a Holy God.

"Beware," says the Apostle Peter, "lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness." Beware of truth that becomes unrelated to HOLINESS!

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October, 1976 Editorial
PROSPERITY THE BIBLE WAY

"Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." III John 2

Two identifying characteristics of this Laodecian age are materiality and prosperity. Most people, despite the devaluation of the dollar, are immersed in materialism and prosperity. Many seem not to be aware of the grave dangers that accompany such affluence. We have, however, in the above Scripture, the only real measurement of safety in regards to material possessions in this life.

It is not improper, according to this prayer, to pray for temporal prosperity if we desire it in proportion to the measure of our spirituality. Material prosperity in and of itself is not evil. We could well pray for a temporal prosperity that would preserve us from the oppressive cares of poverty on the one hand and the burdensome cares of inordinate wealth on the other. A good man could safely pray for a secular prosperity that would free him from great difficulties, great successes or great reverses in regards to the material aspect of life.

Neither is it improper for us to pray for our health or for the healing of a sick body. Bodily health is one of the greatest blessings of life. In a great respect health is wealth. Without it one is greatly handicapped in carrying out the great ministries of the gospel. The state of health often precludes people from doing so. It is reasonable and proper that we should pray to God that hath all nature under His control that we may prosper and be in health. And if we hope for His interposition it should be our care to avoid everything that would injure the health, and to take proper methods to restore and confirm it when it is impaired. To care for the health of the body is a duty. God has not made so fine a piece of workmanship to be carelessly destroyed.

But there are those who, in the providence of God, have been denied a healthy or unimpaired body. Gaius, for whom St. John prayed that he might be granted bodily health, was one of these. Though he was denied the privilege of assisting in many phases of the active ministry because of his poor health, yet there was one important thing he could do -- he could endure affliction patiently. That is no little matter. To suffer affliction, showing an example of submission, of meekness and sweetness of temper, is one of the highest and noblest services God has given His truest children to do.

First and foremost, however, we are urged to pray for health of soul -- "I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." The measure of physical health desired for Gaius was the measure of spiritual health which he then enjoyed. If this were the rule of prayer, how poor, and frail, and sickly would the great majority of mankind be and how void they would be of material blessings. And I often wonder if this -- the lack of real spiritual health -- is not the reason why we do not see more definite healing of bodies in our healing services about our altars. Why would God heal a body to be used in a selfish or sinful manner?

When we pray for someone's prosperity and health, the limit "as thy soul prospereth" is necessary for their own good. And this should be our sincere prayer when we consider that there are two worlds in which every man lives and spends the days and hours of his life -the outward world and the inward world. You have but to close the eye or abstract the thoughts from outer things and instantly you pass into another region in an inner world of thoughts, feelings, desires, attitudes, memories, conscience and will -- a real world within every human breast, the world of

man's inner being we call his soul. Thus there are two lives we may be said to live -- the external and the internal; the outer life of sense and the inner hidden life and history of the soul.

With respect to each of us, there has been, from the dawn of our existence, an inner mental as well as a material history a life of the soul, a course of inward progress or retrogression more momentous far than the fortunes and vicissitudes of our outward career. In the passage before us the apostle makes reference to these two courses of human experience -- the outward and the inward.

But why would the apostle pray for one who was dear to him to prosper outwardly and that only in proportion to his inward prosperity?

First, because prosperity in the eyes of most people consists of wealth and power. But money, property, worldly goods, are no more real possessions than thought, knowledge, wisdom, affections and above all, a heart full of God's grace. Take two men, one in comparatively straitened circumstances yet possessed of inner character and the love and grace of God -- the other, overflowing with money, yet narrow-souled and ignorant and void of God's grace; you would not hesitate to say which is the richer of the two. For money, property, and every worldly possession is outside of the man -- and can be separated from him. It is not an essential property of his being. But faith, spiritual mindedness, love of Christ are the only lasting wealth, and are the real measure of the man.

Prosperity is power, but again the inner outweighs the outer. There is a real subjection, degradation, slavery of spirit to which one may be reduced, but in Christ there is a real power, freedom, emancipation to which we may attain.

The reason soul-prosperity should be regarded as the standard or measure of outward prosperity is threefold:

In the first place, wealth, power, prosperity are no real blessings where the grace of God has not come before them. In fact, they are a liability to the soul. It is not good to be happy if first we are not holy. It is not good, it is not seemly, it is the most sorrowful thing under heaven to possess outward prosperity where there is every other reason to be sad. It is like the mirth of men in a sinking ship. When the soul is perishing, what real joy could there be in possessing material wealth that, too, will pass away?

Furthermore, outward prosperity is not desirable for a man's own sake, if unaccompanied by inward character or soul prosperity because of the bad moral influence which it has on his own character. For in irreligious man, nothing is more to be discountenanced than an uninterrupted flow of worldly goods. Jesus struck this note when he said, "how hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God."

In the third place it is not only for a man's own good, but also for the good of others, that he should prosper outwardly only in the measure in which his soul prospereth. Wealth, power, influence, all outward advantages, are just so many means of doing good or evil put into a man's hands. Whether such advantages shall be for the benefit or injury of mankind depends on the

inward character of him to whom they are entrusted. Mankind are losers when a selfish man prospers; they are gainers by the prosperity of the godly.

It is no wonder the beloved Apostle John prayed, "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as they soul prospereth."

(Thoughts herein presented were gleaned from the Biblical Illustrator)

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November, 1976 Editorial
IS DEATH A MYSTERY?

This month's issue of The Revivalist carries the death notice of five people who were members of the Bible Missionary Church. Sister Jessie Dodd was without doubt the most widely known of the five. Brother Carl Kinzler, an elder in our church, held a place of high esteem in the hearts and minds of many across our movement. The others were loved, and their memory will be cherished within the circle of their acquaintance. I had the privilege of attending Sister Dodd's funeral and it was less like a funeral service and more like a coronation day than any funeral I have attended in recent years. Always, however, death, when it comes to our home and in our midst brings with it bereavement and sadness. For we who have never passed its portals there still remains a certain mystery. Commissioner S. L. Brengle in his book Resurrection Life and Power asks, and, then answers the question "Is Death a Mystery?" We feel it appropriate in this issue to give the editorial space to this article:

"A man Mind from his birth said he thought the sun must look like the sound of a bass drum! We smile wisely at this, forgetting that we probably miss the mark quite as far in matters more important, because we approach them with the wrong faculty.

"The beauties of a landscape and the glories of the vaulted heavens are not made known to us through the sense of hearing. The harmony of a song is not made known to us by the sense of sight. If we would know the flavor of some fruit we must not seek to discover it by the sense of touch or sight or smell, but by the nerves of taste.

"We cannot dispose of a question of conscience by an exercise of memory, or solve a problem in mathematics by the conscience.

"Everything we can know is revealed to us through some one corresponding sense or faculty, and every other sense and faculty must stand back in utter helplessness while this revelation is made.

"Is death a mystery? Yes! No! To every faculty and sense but one it is an awful and unfathomable mystery. We look into the coffin where lies our precious dead; we peer into the yawning grave with our poor little reason and understanding, and it is like looking out of our lighted rooms into the impenetrable blackness of a dark and stormy night. It is all heart-breaking

amazement, desolation, mystery, Our understanding is helpless and dumb in the presence of a problem it was not made to solve, and our stricken hearts break under a burden of sorrow that reason cannot lift.

"But are we left without any sense or faculty that can lift this burden, soothe this sorrow, or solve this mystery? No, thank God, no! Faith is the faculty with which we must approach this problem, and to faith there is no mystery in death. 'To our sainted dead the coffin is not a narrow and locked prison, but an easy couch of sleep; the grave is not a bottomless abyss, but an open door through which the dear one has passed into the presence of the King, into the unveiled vision of Jesus and the unbroken joys and fellowships of the saints made perfect; a door of escape from the limitations and tears and toils and temptations and tortures of time into the ageless blessedness of eternity where 'God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain' (Rev. 21:4). To faith death simply means that the appointed task in this world's harvest-field is done, and the dear one has gone home; the day's lessons have been learned, and the Father has come to take His child home from school; or some evil was coming which God in His wisdom did not see it best to turn aside, but from before which He saw fit to snatch His loved one (Isa. 57:1).

"Faith accepts death as God's appointment. This is a fact to be believed, not to be reasoned over; and if we simply believe it the sting of death is drawn.

"But may we not ask why? May we not seek to understand? Yes, but we must do it with great caution, as a blind man feels his way along crowded streets and unknown thoroughfares; and we must do it under the constant leadership of faith, if we do not wish every step to be one of peril and possibly ruin.

"Philosophy may enable us to endure the agony following the death of our loved ones, but only faith nourished and made strong by constant feeding upon the promises and examples of God's word can enable us to triumph in that hour.

"A woman, recently bereft of her mother who was all that she had left of her family and dear ones, wrote that she read and re-read and read again the fifteenth chapter of 1st Corinthians, and to that word of God she anchored her faith, and" through that word God comforted her with great comfort. The pain may pierce like a sword and ache like a carbuncle; the sorrow may be inexpressibly bitter and the desolation unutterable, but faith finds its firm footing on God's word; it grasps the promises and fixes its eyes upon His unchangeable character of wisdom and love, and emerges from the flood and storm chastened, but strengthened; still 'sorrowing, but triumphant and serene.

"And we shall be wise if, while still surrounded by our loved ones, we fill our minds and hearts with those precious truths God has revealed, so that when the storm overtakes us, as it some day surely will, we shall be prepared."

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December, 1976 Editorial

"JOINT-HEIRS"

As we approach the Christmas season once again, our minds naturally turn to the nativity of our Lord. We never cease to wonder at the mercies of God in the incarnation of His Son. Let us pause for a few minutes and meditate on some of the great truths concerning Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is alpha and omega, i.e., He is the alphabet of life. Of the multiplied hundreds of thousands of books that have been authored, of the billions of love letters that have been written, of all the words that have been penned, and of all the words that have been spoken by the human race -- words of love, wisdom, of counsel, in business transactions, in court rooms, in legislative halls, behind pulpits -- all have been written or spoken within the bounds of the alphabet. The alphabet has been sufficient as the vehicle of communication for all transactions of man. No one has had need to go beyond the alphabet to adequately express himself.

Jesus Christ being the alphabet of life, there is to be found in Him all the human heart could ever desire or express. No one need go outside of Christ to find complete fulfillment and satisfaction. There is nothing outside of Him worth the having. Truly He is the alpha and omega of life. He is the Alpha and Omega for all from childhood to old age, for all of every age and for all time.

Jesus Christ unlocks the mystery of the Godhead. He is the Eternal Word. If we want to know what God is like we have the answer in Christ. Did He not say to Philip, "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father?" Whatever fuller revelation we may have of God in the eternity to come, it cannot go beyond Christ, for He is God.

Jesus Christ is the key to purposeful living. What else is there that can occupy, satisfy, and fulfill even deep hunger and longing of the human soul, except "Christ in you"? Paul reached the zenith of purposeful living when he stated, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God." Gal. 2:20 To possess Christ as an abiding One, to let Christ live His holy life within one's being, to let Christ live His life through us -what purpose could surpass this! There is only one route to purposeful living and that is death to self.

"Let me lose myself and find it, Lord, in Thee;
Let all self be slain; my friends see only Thee.
Though it cost me grief and pain,
I will find my life again.
Let me lose my life but find it Lord in Thee."

God help us to get "self" out of the way!

Not only does Christ furnish the only satisfactory purpose for living, but He furnishes the energy that makes it a reality. He is love, for He is God and love is the expressed nature of God. Holy love is a powerful thing. It is the expression of the energy of God. To be filled with the love of God is to be filled with the energy of God. The Apostle Paul expressed this when he stated, "the love of Christ constraineth us." This presence of Christ within energizes us, sets us ablaze or

aflame with holy zeal and purpose to live holy and to share this wealth of an indwelling Christ with others. To have Christ dwelling within will, without exception, be manifest outwardly in a compassion to see this life become a reality in others.

Jesus Christ is the Head who unites all the redeemed through the generations past, present, and future -- the uniting principle of the church. The ever-available power of the omnipresent Christ, which never grows old, is at hand for all times and all people. We read in Hebrews 13: v. 8 "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today and forever." In the context of this scripture the heroes of faith of past ages were listed -- they had come and gone from this earthly scene -and now Christ is proclaimed as the ever-living, mighty, Divine Lord of all times and all history. "This means that in spite of all individual changes in detail, the spiritual essence of the life of the church remains in Christ unchanged throughout all generations. The death of the heroes of faith, those forerunners, leaders, and examples (Heb. 13: 7, 17, 24), does not cause the slightest loss in the essence of life and faith of the people of God." (Eric Sauer) This thought is embodied in the brief quotation found on John Wesley's tomb in Westminster Abbey, "God buries His labourers but His labour and work goes on." But if this is true, and it is, then it puts a responsibility on each of us to appropriate to ourselves this energy of an ever-abiding, energized divine life and this is administered by the Spirit. Therefore, let us not grow weary or faint in our day -the LORD is ever present! It is SIN -both committed and inherited -- that will short circuit this force of divine love and thwart the purpose of God through us.

Jesus Christ is the ever available one. Did He not say, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." Our task is to continuously appropriate His life to ourselves -- a living union dependent on our active obedience.

Jesus Christ is the inheritor of all things and we through Him. God hath' appointed Christ as heir of ALL THINGS and He did this even prior to creation. In the final settlement at the great judgment bar of God the "all things" of creation will be assigned to the appointed heir. We read in Psalm 24:

v. 1 "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. Again we read in Hebrews 1:

v. 2 "God hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds."

In the counsel chambers of the Omnipotent, Triune Godhead, ere creation ever took place the question of heirship was settled -- i.e., who would be the inheritor of it all "-- and Christ was appointed sole heir. Many have amassed riches in this life only to suddenly become paupers at death and to remain paupers forever because they were not in on the inheritance. But now, through divine grace and the process of the new birth -- for it is by birth that we become sons of God -- we are made children of God, "and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." Children have on them the stamp of the family into which they are born. Do you, reader, have the marks of a child of God? Are you in on the inheritance? Are you a joint-heir with Christ? Our hearts should cry out in the words of Wm. J. Kirkpatrick:

"Oh, to be like Thee! Oh, to be like Thee,
Blessed Redeemer, pure as Thou art!
Come in Thy sweetness, come in Thy fullness,
Stamp Thine own image deep on my heart."

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THE END