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PARKER MAXEY'S EDITORIALS -- (1979)

Editorials from The Missionary Revivalist
Compiled by Duane V. Maxey

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January, 1979 Editorial
APPROACHING THE ZERO HOUR

Honesty is a rare quality among men. The characteristic of self-deception has plagued man since the Garden of Eden. The Psalmist asked the question, "Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?" The answer follows, "He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart... He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not." Psalm 15: 1, 2, 4c Rarely can a man give a true, unbiased account of incidents or happenings, especially those in which he, himself, is involved. Unconsciously the account he renders will be slanted in his favor. He cannot help coloring it, at least to a degree. There is no doubt that in part this "weakness" comes from his inherited humanity that suffered in the fall, but that inborn trait of self-deception accounts for the major part of it. Akin to self-deception is that tendency to exaggerate, and with that, the tendency to put one's self in advantage. Exaggeration and truthfulness are for the most part at opposite poles. Now God is truth and His word can be relied upon. God identifies Himself with His Word and on the part of man, He "desirest truth in the inward parts." God cannot fellowship with deception nor can He look with favor on anything that is not of truth. Yet that carnal principle within man seeks to set itself in good light even at the expense of absolute truthfulness. Jude mentions those who speak "great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage." v. 16 And Peter in the same vein writes about those who "speak great swelling words of vanity." 2 Peter 2:18

We want to note three things about this leaven of evil that exists in the heart of sinful man: In the first place, no fonder and at the same time more delusive hope ever springs up in the sinner's breast than, having committed sin, he will escape detection and the consequences that are sure to follow. King David's fall into sin began when he remained idle at home when he should have been out with his army. At least this was the apparent beginning which in itself had its roots in an earlier and more subtle weakness of the King to discipline himself in those propensities that are common

to all men. His efforts to escape detection and exposure after he had sinned are a sordid picture in the pages of holy writ. Jacob's efforts to escape detection are notorious. When the Rich Young Ruler turned away sorrowful from Jesus and the way of eternal life he surely did not intend to end in the lake of fire. What a presumption his deceitful heart led him into. He must have read in Proverbs 11:19, "he that pursueth evil pursueth it to his own death." It was the height of all evil to turn from the one that offered eternal life. Judas must surely have thought Jesus would somehow, miraculously escape his captors and he, Judas, would be the richer for his venture. It is hard to believe Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, consciously and deliberately chose spiritual suicide. Their heart surely deceived them into thinking they could get by. "The wicked worketh a deceitful work... Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished."

The Bible is plain in its warnings. "And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same that thou shall escape the judgment of God?" Romans 2: 3' 'But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the Lord; and be sure your sin will find you out." Numbers 32:23 To live apart from right, from the known will of God, to partake of some questionable thing hoping to get by -- what a delusive hope, what a decision, what a presumption, what a tragedy!

In the second place, the perfection of God's nature absolutely precludes all hope of escaping detection, exposure and punishment. God is omnipresent in His being. Every creature is constantly in His sight, and there is nothing that can hide or obscure His vision. He sees the deed. "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." Heb. 4:13

God is also an omniscient being -- He has knowledge of all things and He remembers. "And they consider not in their hearts that I remember all their wickedness: now their own doings have beset them about; they are before my face." Hosea 7: 2

God's attributes include omnipotence. He is able to outwit, out-run, arrest and drag the culprit from his hiding place. "O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me... Thou compassed my path and lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways... Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee." Psalm 139: 1, 3, 7, 8, 11, 12.

"Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him: saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord." Jeremiah 23: 23, 24

"Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down: And though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and find them out thence; and though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea, thence I will command the serpent, and he shall bite them." Amos 9: 2, 3

"He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him." Daniel 2: 22

"There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves." Job 34: 22

But above all God is holy in His being. His command is, "Be ye holy; for I am holy." I Peter 1:16 Isaiah asks the question (33:14-16) "Who among us shall dwell with devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; He shall dwell on high."

The third thing we want to observe is the fact that the interval between the doing of the deed and detection, exposure and punishment may be short or long, but it is absolutely certain. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Gal. 6: 7

King David carried his deception for one year, but listen to what he suffered because of covered sin: "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer." Psalm 32:3, 4 Jacob carried his deception and its consequences for twenty years; the Rich Young Ruler for perhaps a life time; Judas, Ananias and Sapphira were brought to justice in a very short time. None escaped the zero hour of reckoning.

With the judgments of God hanging heavy over our day; with demon activity and power at its highest since Christ was on earth; with tribulation days about to break upon the world and the rapture of the church soon to take place -- with the zero hour at hand -- what manner of persons ought we to be? This is no time to be living behind a false front, pretending to be something we are not (like King Saul of the Old Testament) and too proud to let it be known for what we are!

May God help the holiness people of this day to be free of parading in false masks but take the position of openness and humbleness before God until His glory can be revealed through them to this hell-bound generation.

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February, 1979 Editorial
THE MOUTH SPEAKETH

What did you talk about at lunch today? Or to the service station attendant? Or across the back fence? Or at your place of labor? Money, cars, scandals, politics, the weather, houses, taxes, people, yourself -- how unfair you have been treated, and on and on.

What did you, as a Christian, fail to talk about when your life touched others, especially the unsaved? The Lord? salvation from sin? the joy of being a Christian? the value of the soul? the coming of the Lord? etc.

We read in Matthew 12:34, "for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." and again in verse. 36, "every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment."

When you come to the end of your life here on earth and the words you have spoken during that span of time are all summed up, how will it total out? What will your words have included? The words of our mouth will be conspicuous for what they have included and for what they have not included and for what they have, for one reason or another, 'excluded. Will you be blessed or embarrassed to be identified with your "words"?

In the context of the above Scriptures we read about words that are spoken against the Holy Ghost and the serious consequence of such and in connection with the first verse we quoted above we read, "Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt; for the tree is known by his fruit. O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."

Only one conclusion can be drawn here -- wicked words and sinful actions may be considered as the overflowings of a heart that is more than full of the spirit of wickedness (one meaning of the word "wicked" is depraved); and holy words and righteous deeds may be considered as the overflowings of a heart that is filled with the Holy Spirit, and running over with love to God and man.

In the second verse quoted above, we note this phrase, every idle word. These convey two thoughts: first, an idle word is a word that does nothing, that neither ministers grace nor instruction to them who hear it. How searching this is! How full our lives can be of just idle words. But it also signifies not only vain or empty, but also wicked and injurious. This could include a false testimony against a neighbor -- words spoken just out of idle talk but how injurious! Surely the Spirit of Inspiration must be understood here as condemning all false and injurious words.

Idle words are never, alone, just words that do nothing or fail to administer grace, they are wicked words in that they are empty and vain and legion, for we read in Proverbs 10, 19, "In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin."

The heart is the key to the mouth. The Word of God has a way of pointing up pungent truth by asking a question, "how can ye, being evil, speak good things?" The plain fact of the matter is that our words and our works resemble our heart. Nothing good can proceed from an evil spirit and no good fruit can proceed from a corrupt heart. Before the heart can produce any good, it must be operated on and brought under the influence of the Holy Spirit of God. This will necessitate a confession of all past sins, a forsaking of evil ways and evil speaking and wrong thoughts -- a clean break from the past ways, a radical conversion with all past sins under the blood and a know-so experience of salvation. This is the route that is so humbling and so distasteful to a proud heart but so rewarding in its deliverance and cure of an evil tongue and idle words. New years resolutions, the turning over of a new leaf, will not solve the sin of "idle words" any more than other sins. They must be confessed out and put under the blood of Jesus or rise to condemn us at the end of life. God's design is not only to forgive and blot out the past but to cleanse the vessel

from the very pollution of sin and fill it with His own Blessed Self until that heart is running over with love to God and man.

The incoming of the Holy Spirit will produce the impulse to pray, the impulse to witness, the impulse to save souls. There will be no room for idle words. The lack of a vital prayer life, the lack of witnessing, the lack of soul winning, the lack of a spontaneous speaking forth of the workings of God's grace in the heart -- what would these lacks indicate to you? Would they not evidence a lack in the spiritual life of the individual?

It is not our prerogative to condemn or to judge individuals at this point. It is true that spiritual life brings with it the impulse to pray, to testify, to witness, to live a holy life, and to long for the salvation of the lost. This is intensified and made permanent in the soul in the baptism with the Holy Spirit, but it is also true that man is a free agent and he must exercise this freedom in developing those qualities brought to him with the incoming of the Holy Spirit. "Out of the abundance of the heart!" -- the impulse to pray will be there but it must be developed; the impulse to win souls' will be there but it must be participated in or be lost. God will not do for us what we can do for ourselves. We must be aggressive in these things. Our lives must be filled with purposeful and forced efforts. Praise God for that divine compulsion to help every needy soul and the more that is exercised the greater the compulsion. The Christian life is not automatic, it must be entered into. We must not allow that holy fire within to go out. How our people need to be instructed and encouraged along these lines in order to develop those God-given impulses. Have we as ministers failed our people along these lines? Has our example been deficient here? Our people we minister to will do as we do, not as we say. A Spirit-filled life -- out of this "good treasure of the heart!" -- will bring forth good things that will bless and edify humanity.

The fields are white unto harvest. If we do not reap that harvest, who will? Unless we bolster up our courage and fire up our zeal, not allow Holy Ghost fire to go out, we will be the losers. We must not forget that people are lost for eternity, and the fires of hell are already kindled all about them. The golden rule demands of us to help them like we would want them to help us if we were eternally lost and going on in a way that leads to perdition.

If we let these impulses of the Spirit die within us, our heart will not only be void of the fruits of the Spirit, it will again begin to fill up with "idle words" that condemn the soul and that bring a curse instead of a blessing upon that person and those who come within the range of his influence.

Yes, the mouth speaketh! Will the fruit of your mouth rise up to bless or condemn you when you stand before the Judge of all flesh?

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March, 1979 Editorial
THE DANGERS OF PREMILLENNIALISM

In the Manual statement of the Bible Missionary Church concerning the doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ we have these words, "We believe that the coming of Christ will be

premillennial and that we should distinguish between His coming for His saints (I Thess. 4:4-18) and with His saints (Jude 1:14) ... The one hope of the world is the premillennial coming of Jesus (Acts 15:13-17; Titus 2:13)." 1975 Manual, page 14

In the ritual for the reception of members found on pages 83 and 84 of the 1975 Manual, one of the test questions asked the candidate for membership is, "Do you believe in the personal, premillennial coming of Jesus?" This is one of the implied requirements for membership in the Bible Missionary Church. We are definitely premillennial in our doctrine of the Second Coming of our Lord.

The premillennial view is the view that holds that Christ will return to earth, literally and bodily, before the millennial age begins and that at His coming He will judge the nations, cast the AntiChrist and false prophet into the lake of fire, bind Satan for a thousand years and then, by His presence, a kingdom of righteousness will be instituted over which He will reign. Along with this premillennial view, there are two other prominent views that are held -- amillennialism and postmillennialism.

The amillennial view holds that there will be no literal millennium on the earth following the second advent. All the prophecies concerning the kingdom are being fulfilled in the inter-advent spiritually by the church.

Postmillennialism is the view, which holds that the kingdom of God is now being extended in the world through the preaching of the gospel, and the saving work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of individuals. By this they hold that the world is to be eventually Christianized and that at the end of a long period of righteousness resulting from this, commonly called the millennium, Christ will return, judgment will take place and the eternal order will be set up.

We as premillennialists reject both the amillennial and postmillennial views. The world in its present order will not be finally Christianized by the preaching of the gospel. The Holy Spirit, along with the church, is at work calling out a bride for Christ. God's purpose is not to save this age. As far as the world is concerned, evil conditions are on the increase and will continue until Christ's return. "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." 2 Tim. 3:13 This is in harmony with the teaching of Jesus in the 13th chapter of Matthew, the parable chapter, where He gives a picture of the apostasy of this church age prior to His return. We have another picture of the church age in the second and third chapter of Revelation. Again these are Jesus' own words picturing the decline of this present church age. Many other Scriptures could be brought to bear at this point. We cannot help but wonder how far the trend of evil will lead before His return. The only hope for humanity, and the "blessed hope" of the church, according to premillennial teaching, is the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

There are a number of dangers, however, or weaknesses to which those who hold to the premillennial view are inclined to fall victim.

It is easy, if care is not exercised, to become pre-occupied with the signs of Christ's coming until we are detracted from the service we should be rendering in obedience to His command for this age. Just before Pentecost the attention and interest of that little band of Christ's

followers was headed down the wrong road when "they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. 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." It took Pentecost to get them going on the right road. Acts 1:6-8 Akin to this is Jesus' command to "Occupy till I come." Luke 19:13 And again Jesus said to His followers, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen." Matt. 28:18-20.

If we do not take heed and watch, we will allow the signs of Christ's coming and conditions around us to so circumscribe our vision until we will neglect our present duty. Jesus did not say, "occupy till it looks like I am coming," but "until I come." He left no room for us to curtail our vision of kingdom work here on earth or lessen our pace and plans for the spreading of the gospel. Are we letting up in our zeal and endeavor or labors for the Master thinking it will be futile because Christ's coming is so near? If we are, we are missing it!

Diverted attention has always been one of Satan's most effective tools in getting the church sidetracked from the main issue -- getting our attention on something we cannot do anything about, anyway, to take us away from what we should be occupied in.

Another great danger is to magnify the evils of these last days and minimize the power of the gospel until it will breed a hopelessness and despair in the minds and hearts of the people. Paul lived in a wicked age, but he said "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Romans 1:16 God's power to deliver from sin and to sanctify believers is limited only by our lack of faith, Gospel power is God's power and it can cut through and triumph over every other power, but it needs to be proclaimed and that in the face of every foe and in every age, including our own time, right up until the trumpet sounds for Christ's return. Paul went into the great populated centers of his day where wickedness abounded and with the power of the gospel planted holiness churches.

Another weakness, especially of ministers of the gospel, is to speculate on the spectacular -- to get side tracked from old-fashioned gospel preaching that convicts sinners and brings them to repentance, and to begin emphasizing the sensational events of the day, speculative happenings, that captivate the curiosity of people but do not convict them of the awful consequences of their sins. Many a preacher has gone off into some false teaching or so neutralized his message by emphasizing the spectacular until he has become ineffective in the field of soul winning. Spectacular, second coming preaching of the questionable Johnny Todd type may be ear tingling, but let us stay with the message of heart preparedness in order to be ready for what appears to be an any-minute coming of our Lord.

If we are not careful we can get our attention on the wrath of God soon to be poured out without mixture on a godless, wicked age until we lose sight of the patience and longsuffering of a God that is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. Peter admonishes along these lines when he wrote, "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for

new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found in him in peace, without spot, and blameless. And account that the Longsuffering of our Lord is salvation," 2 Peter 3:13-15

In Luke 21 beginning with verse 25 we are told about the signs of the coming of the Son of man in a cloud with power and great glory and then we are told, "when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." Yes, we are exhorted to "look up," but not to "let up."

When we look around us and observe signs and conditions we wonder how He could linger another day. Truly His coming is THE BLESSED HOPE of the Church. But until that last trumpet sounds let us push out with a purpose to increase our borders, to strengthen the home base, to build a more adequate Bible School -- one that will bring honor to God and meet our growing needs. Let us push home missions with every ounce of strength we have. Let us strengthen our forces on mission fields and by faith launch out into new fields. Then, and only then, will we really be ready for His Return!

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April, 1979 Editorial
TO SERVE THE PRESENT AGE

There is no doubt but that every religious group today, and especially the evangelicals, would claim the title of this editorial as one of the essential purposes, if not the essential one, for their existence. I am sure we would claim it as one of our chief goals as Bible Missionary people.

When Jesus "saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest." I am sure this passage of Scripture epitomizes our feelings toward our duty as Christians.

Jesus did not mean that we were to go out after people to make them members of our particular group. This would seem to be the end purpose of some. He scathingly rebuked the scribes and Pharisees for this -- "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves,"

Neither did he mean that we were to exploit people in order to help build a name for ourselves. Many are endeavoring this today. This is a great day for "bus" ministry (especially here in America). Many churches are running busses along with other means to increase their numbers and swell their attendance - always pushing for a larger and larger enrollment. We could well stop and ask ourselves, why are we after people? Why do we want an increased attendance? Why do we want to build larger churches? If our primary purpose and motive does not center around bringing people into a personal relationship with Christ and helping them live a victorious

Christian life and finally making it to heaven, we had better stop and reevaluate our purpose of existence.

Neither did Jesus mean that we were to minister only to the physical, mental and moral needs of people -- proclaiming a mere social gospel

Neither are we to look upon people as merely mercenary potentials to help us build an earthly kingdom and a large, beautiful physical plant or that the preacher might get an increase in salary. All these things can be of help but -- unless a church is on fire with a vital revival spirit it is ill prepared to carry on its great task and could be more of a curse to humanity than a blessing. To lock people up in an organization that is not vibrant with life -- the life of God -- is tragic. Salvation works cannot be carried on by humanized endeavors and goals. To do the work of God will take the mighty, supernatural power of God working through human channels.

The great revivals of the past that have been instrumental in sweeping souls into the Kingdom of Heaven, have been characterized by a humbling of God's people and the removing of those difficulties that grieve the Spirit of God. In the great Welsh revival the motto was, "bend the Church and save the world." When Evan Roberts experienced the awesome presence of God he saw clearly that the first step and most important one is that the Church must get right with God before unbelievers will be convicted. In the Goforth revivals in China, the same pattern was followed.

The challenge is before us as a body of professed Christian people. The Holy Spirit being infinitely pure, is seeking a clean channel through which to send the mighty rivers of conviction power and salvation. Without equivocation, the Spirit of God is now, today, looking for such a channel. How many in our day, do you suppose, God can see that will qualify?

May God help us! We must not be content with our regular scheduled revival meetings. We are not advocating that these cease or lessen in number. Such are often very good. Backsliders are reclaimed, some are saved and the saints are refreshed. These alone, however, are not meeting the need of this hour. We need a mighty invasion of the Almighty Spirit of sovereign power to sweep through the hearts and consciences of men and women until there will be an abnormal inrush of divine light and power, so profoundly affecting the emotions and changing the lives of men until, like a great hurricane, an earthquake, or a flood, we can witness remarkable results in salvation and in the sending out of Holy Ghost empowered workers into the whitened harvest fields. The manifestations of Pentecost were marked as being abnormal -- yet that was normal Christianity of the kind God proposes we have.

The secret of this kind of divine manifestation is to keep the avenue through which the Holy Spirit seeks to operate clear of any encumbrance. H. Robb French in his book *The Revival Secret*, points up the reason why we do not see the kind of revival we should see and God wants to give us: "Often sinners are not saved because of want of conviction; conviction does not come because the church is not burdened and thus lacks the drawing power; the church is not burdened and is powerless because the Holy Ghost does not come upon her; the Holy Spirit does not come because of something within her that is offensive to Him."

Spiritual pride is perhaps the greatest hindrance to this kind of revival we need to see in our midst if we are to serve this present age as holiness people called out to spread Scriptural holiness throughout the land. We may be soundly converted and entirely sanctified, but it is certainly well to remember that we are not glorified. We are living in a Laodicean age and we can become dull of hearing and lukewarm before we know it. We are human and make mistakes and sometimes these mistakes are grievous to God and man and if not taken care of can become sin and can choke the channel. I am talking about good, sanctified people. We become preoccupied and our burden and vision get dim -- we don't see men on their way to hell as we once did. In our humanity we get into misunderstandings: With all this accumulated encumbrance we slate a regular revival meeting. When it is over, if we would write up a report on it, it would go something like this:

Greatest to date (the last one generally is); evangelist at his best; there was much earnest prayer and expectation; the attendance was from fair to good; some backsliders from the previous meeting were reclaimed; the membership 'in general were blessed and helped. To summarize: after a month has passed -- comparing with what we should have the revival is a disappointment.

What is the reason for all this? It can only be that we have not met the conditions for what God would give us if we paid the price. The answer is to be found in that familiar passage, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." 2 Chron 7:14 It cannot be emphasized too strongly that all hindrance to revival in the Church is due to sin. It is sin in individual church members which grieves and quenches the Holy Spirit -- such sin as pride, jealousy, bad temper, back-biting, greed and all their kindred that are just as heinous in God's sight as the so-called grosser sins and that God will not overlook or send revival over the top of.

Actually the secret to Pentecostal type of outpouring is really no secret. We as people know what it takes -- much fasting and prayer; humble confession and restitution on the part of God's people; the endorsement of such a method of conducting a revival (many down in their heart regret this procedure); removal of the rubbish that clogs the channel. We don't take time or adopt the means to see the kind of revival we really need. We don't plan to. It is no wonder that God said in His word, "judgment must begin at the house of God."

If across our Zion our people can and will endorse such a program and then gather in prayer groups systematically and determinedly, not just at a set revival time, but doggedly and unremittingly until they see an unclogging of the channel and a genuine Pentecostal outpouring where they are, we would -as holy people of God -- begin to serve our present age as God designs we should.

Some may ask, "But will it work?" Let's try it and see!

"O Lord, I heard thy speech, and was afraid: O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of years make known; in wrath remember mercy." Hab. 3:2

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May, 1979 Editorial
SIN AND ITS CURE
(An Easter Meditation)

In the book of Romans we read about "the law of sin," "the law of God," "the law of death," "the law of the Spirit of life."

Consider first the law of sin. We read in Romans 7:20. "Now if I do that I would not it is no more I that do it but sin that dwelleth in me." What do we mean by original sin -- this law that worketh in the heart of man?

"We mean to say that sin is not something which has penetrated into our nature from the outside; that it is not a garment thrown over our shoulders which may therefore be stripped off like a garment; that it is not the mere result of evil example, or of any external influences whatever, that it is not learned like a lesson of evil, nor caught like infectious disease. It is a part of our very selves. It has its springs in the very sources of our being. It mingles its poison with the very first beginnings of our life, whether spiritual or natural. It cannot be cast off. It cannot be torn up by the roots. It cannot be treated by any medicine which discipline, or education or example can supply. Penetrate into a man as deep as you will, and you cannot reach its origin; drill him almost into a machine, and you will not kill the life of this fatal power. Nay, it sometimes seems as if, by long drilling, you might kill everything else: kill affection, and stifle impulse, and dry up the imagination and convert the reason itself into a mere engine for producing arguments at need; and yet you will not kill the inborn spirit evil; some day, by some accident it is roused to unusual violence, and bursts through all fetters, and reasserts its independence as the last, but in this world imperishable, token of humanity." (Author Unknown)

Original sin is a principle embedded in the very warp and woof of a soul and can only be eradicated by a divine operation.

Consider next the law of God and what sin does in opposition to it. "For sin, taking occasion by the commandment deceived me, and by it slew me." (7:1) "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members." (7:22, 23) Sin torments and binds in exact proportion to my knowledge of God's law, "for I was alive without the law once but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." (7:9) The principle of sin the heart (the spirit of enmity) says to God's laws oppose it, persevere against the Almighty, laugh at it all and sin on."

Oh how the carnal heart rationalizes and this to explain away this awful disease of the soul. I am afraid we have fast been drifting into a Calvinistic way of living, thinking we can sin and still be in the grace of God. The secret of true religion is first in knowing ourselves as sinners.

In the third place, consider the law of death, the punishment of sin. This shallow, rebellious, selfish age dares to raise the question, why would God be such a tyrant as to punish me? They do not get serious long enough to stop and consider that sin carries its own punishment

with it just like the sin of uncleanness carries its own sentence of disease, suffering and death. God's commands and curses do not emanate from His sovereignty. They come from His essential holiness. Sin cannot exist in the presence of a Holy God any more than perfect health can disease can dwell together. What terrible, unjust judgments are brought against a holy God when we have Calvary to prove His love for a sin-cursed people, and His immeasurable efforts to save man from the curse of sin that is in him. "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out!" (11:33) "Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!" Ps. 107:8

Consider "the law of the Spirit of life." The Gospel, or the "good, news," is referred to as "The law of the Spirit of life," and this is to be found in Christ Jesus. It is called "the law of the Spirit of life" because the blessed Holy Spirit accompanies His own truth into the human heart and is the enabler to accomplish that which Christ provided by His death on the cross. "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." (7:24, 25a)

What is this law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus? How does it operate? It is an established law and we must bring ourselves into obedience to this law. Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground, and die, it abideth alone." John 12:24 When corn is put into the ground it is brought into the laws of the universe and God begins to operate. It brings death, but also a quickening. Thus we read in Romans 6:5, "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." We bring ourselves into contact with the law of the Spirit, not by counteraction or suppression but by crucifixion. We can get a picture of what this really is when we look at the crucifixion of Christ. Three things are to be noted: (1) The crucifixion of Christ was in the will of the Father and so it is the will of God that the carnal self he put to death. We have great plans for our lives; we have great plans for our children. God's will is for the destruction of this carnal, sinful self that in the end would destroy us. (2) Jesus acquiesced and accepted the will of the Father, and so must we if we would experience complete deliverance from the power and being inbred sin. But here is where the struggle comes in. "Old self" does not want to die; not want to give over the right to itself to God. (3) Christ's death on the cross was actual and so will the crucifixion of that sinful self be when we bring ourselves into the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

Finally we would consider the blessing of freedom from the law of sin death. "If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." We note three things here: (1) Jesus' resurrection was effected by the power of God. We can experience a like resurrection (read Romans 8:11) and it will be God's power operating in conformity to the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Our work is to submit to this and believe Him. (read John 6:29) (2) Jesus, after His resurrection, lived in newness of life -- He was at perfect liberty, and so it will be in a spiritual sense to those who experience freedom from the law of sin and death. There be newness of love, newness of life, newness of liberty, of power, of victory, of fellowship that the unsanctified know nothing of. Israel lived differently in Canaan than in the wilderness. The disciples lived differently after Pentecost than before, and so will they who pay the price to be sanctified wholly. (3) Life after resurrection will be loved completely unto God. People are not living unto God because they have thwarted His plan by not coming into the

law of the Spirit of life. Because of this they are not enjoying the things that God has prepared for them.

God designs that we delight in the power of holiness -- a personal, present, perfect deliverance from sin into "the glorious liberty of the children of God."

As another Easter season comes and goes, are you enjoying the liberty of a resurrected life.

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June, 1979 Editorial

A DAY WITHOUT A NIGHT

(written June 1978 in Kotzebue, Alaska)

I am writing this in a land where the sun never sets. Here, for a period of thirty-six days out of the year, the sun never dips below the horizon. It is the land of the mid-night sun where there is constant daylight. We cannot help but be reminded of that "city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" that our father Abraham looked for. John the revelator tells us concerning this city, "And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light:" Sanford F. Bennett (1836-1898) must have been thinking of that day without a night when he wrote:

There's a land that is fairer than day,
And by faith we can see it afar;
For the Father waits over the way,
To prepare us a dwelling place there.

We are well aware that this land that is above the Arctic Circle, and for the moment is experiencing continual day light, is not that "land that is fairer than day." In this land we are still in physical bodies and are thankful for the "window-darkening" shades we can draw and lay ourselves down to rest. It is a land where weariness of body, mind and spirit takes its toll and where there is need of constant renewal, and even then, we are painfully aware that our physical strength is ebbing away and we soon must needs lay these earthly bodies away. In that land beyond this vale we shall "change our vile body (the body we now have), that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." Phil. 3:21 How wonderful that will be to forever be beyond physical limitations and weariness! "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates of (that) city." Rev. 22:14

How painfully aware we are here of the ravages of sin in this land of no night. Sin that marks humanity the world over is rampant in this far north Eskimo village. Drunkenness, immorality, pornography, cursing -sin of every description -- abound. Living conditions at their best are nothing to be envied or coveted. Although there seems to be an abundance of money, the people as a whole live in very meager and shack-like dwellings with very little of modern conveniences. The village is junky looking with trash strewn everywhere. How different heaven

will be. John the revelator described it as follows: "There came unto me one of the seven angels ... and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates ... And the wall of the city had twelve foundations ... And the city lieth foursquare ... And the building of the wall of it was jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass ... And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones ... And the twelve gates were twelve pearls ... And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it ... And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there ... And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but 'they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.'" Rev. 21:9-27 Thank God for "that city John saw coming down."

Although the sun will not set here today, clouds have obscured its bright shining and there is a dreariness that can be felt. Our lives in this world are often overcast with temporal afflictions, fiery trials, sickness, loss of wealth, times of dire needs. I hear, in this place, stories of heartache and heartbreak. We must look beyond this life and this clime if we expect to see a land of unclouded day.

O they tell me of a home far beyond the skies,
O they tell me of a home far away;
O they tell me of a home where no storm-clouds rise,
O they tell me of an unclouded day.

--Rev. J. K. Atwood

From where I am sitting I can look out the window south to a little knoll where there are grave markers that tell a story of their own. But I am reminded that there are no graves on the hillsides of glory. In that land there will be no sickness or death, no dread cancer, heart attacks, no shocking sudden deaths, no crepe on the door knobs. Here, songs of joy are often turned to dirges, laughter to weeping, rest to sighing, but,

We shall sing on that beautiful shore
The melodious songs of the blest,
And our spirits shall sorrow no more,
Not a sigh for the blessing of rest.

"And 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: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new." Rev. 21:4,5

While we live here on this earth we join with the Apostle Peter in saying, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead', To an inheritance incorruptible, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of

God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein we greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:" I Peter 1:3-6 We sing on:

To our bountiful Father above
We will offer our tribute of praise,
For the glorious gift of His love
And the blessings that hallow our days.

We arrived in this far north country on the wings of the Wien Airline of Alaska. With glorified bodies and in that land of fadeless day we will need no man-made contrivance to transport us but will have absolute freedom of movement throughout God's vast creation. I may not be able to explain it all, but in a moment we will be changed, this mortal will put on immortality and one of these days we will arrive in that country of cloudless day where there is no night and "come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect." Heb. 12:22,23

In the sweet by-and-by,
We shall meet on that beautiful shore.

Our stay in the land of the midnight sun is brief. The few days we will be here, we will never see a sunset. We are aware, however, that this is only temporary. Soon, in this same land, there will come that long, long night when the sun will not be seen, only darkness will prevail. They tell me during these long nights people suffer times of deep depression. "Cabin fever" takes hold of people. Despair often drives people to extremes and even suicide. But heaven will be an eternal, cloudless day of bliss. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." Rev. 21:7,8

Jesus is the true light that lighteth everyone who cometh into the world. To reject that light is to be cast into outer darkness -- an eternal night without hope. The warning is, "Behold, I come quickly" and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be ... Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." Rev. 22:12,14

I long for that day without a night!

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July, 1979 Editorial
LIVING IN THE ATMOSPHERE OF HEAVEN

In a day that is marked with deception, superficiality, compromise and disdain for the Word of God, we must not lose sight of the fact that God still has a faithful remnant. For this group God has special words of encouragement. These are the ones who are not seeking the approval of the world, or of false prophets, or those who are not obedient to truth, but such are the ones who are seeking the approval of the One who has redeemed them from sin and sanctified them wholly. These are they who will hear Him say at the end of life, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant...enter thou into the joy of the Lord." Matt. 25:21

We are living in a day when God's children are passing through an unprecedented time of testing; testings that try men's souls and test their faith to the limit; testings that have their effect upon the physical, mental and spiritual man. This, however, should not cause any great alarm, for God has already told us, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you as though some strange thing happened unto you, But, rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." I Peter 4:12-13

To all God's children who, because of their stand for Christ and the Bible, are suffering financially physically, mentally, emotionally, or at the hands of some false shepherd or some ungodly or unspiritual loved one or acquaintance; those who, like Job, can find no reason for their present distress or suffering, should look to the God of all comfort and to His precious Word for strength and sustenance.

We call attention to the fact, first, that they have the RIGHT to a secure, constant, uninterrupted dwelling place in God. A right no others have. I am talking about that group of believers who through genuine repentance and faith have a saving knowledge of Christ and who have come to the end of self and have a simple but genuine faith in God as their sanctifier and an inner witness that the blessed Holy Spirit dwells in their heart. It is this group, this remnant, who are the peculiar target of the hosts of darkness and who are suffering the onslaughts of the enemy of souls from every conceivable avenue, that we have in mind. All that are endeavoring to live godly these days are engaged in fierce battles, mainly mental. Satan is in an all-out effort to captivate the minds of men and there seems to be no limit to the tactics he uses to accomplish this end. Many times the preachers themselves become unintentionally tools of the devil to discourage young Christians in their effort to live a godly life by projecting a constant negative emphasis from the pulpit without balancing their ministry with encouragements of victory one can hear in the Holy Spirit despite the accusations of the enemy. Those who have gained victory are conscientiously walking with God need to plant their feet firmly on the promises of God, such as 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 we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." and hang on. Our people need to know that they do not backslide just because the devil attacks them, or because they do not feel blessed, or because they are tempted or feel heavy and it gets dark around them. In spite of all this, to them is the promise that they can here and now live in the atmosphere of heaven in their innermost being.

We read in Psalm 91:1, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." Hallelujah!! God's children don't have to wait until they get to heaven - they have a right to a secure, glorious dwelling place here and now in the heart of God.

To dwell in the shelter of the Most High - what a privilege! What does this mean? In the Old Testament typology the High Priest only, and that just once a year, took the blood of sacrifice and entered through the veil into the Holy of Holies, a place not lit by sun, moon or candles, but where dwelt the shekinah glory of God. He could not dwell there. He could only appear there once a year to make atonement for his own sins and for the sins of the people. But at Christ's death that veil was rent in twain and now, every true believer, by the blood of Christ, can enter and dwell in the presence of God. For us who know God, to dwell in His presence does not mean to shut ourselves away in some cloister; oh no, we become walking temples of an indwelt God. This verse is talking about a man's walk and union with God - in the kitchen, on the streets, at our place of labor, wherever we are. Men see the outer court of our being, our bodies, but the Almighty God in His presence is within. It is the life of the Spirit, in the Spirit and flowing out of the spirit - our very inner soul lit, not by the sun, or moon, or some artificial light, but by the presence and glory of God Himself. Most of Christianity is a ghost of what it is meant to be; a shell, a ritual is what most lives are. But the remnant, their right is to dwell in the presence of God's shekinah glory. He, our refuge, our fortress, our God. What a privilege! For this our lips and our heart should be constantly praising and worshipping Him. What joy unspeakable that I, one day a poor lost sinner, am now dwelling with the Most High God without interruption.

There is a RESPONSIBILITY, however/ that goes with this right. Our first and prime responsibility lies in the realm of faith. God expects us to walk by faith, not by sight. The cause of despondency, spiritual depression and gloominess in the ultimate sense is unbelief. It is by faith that we are able to obtain a true and proper perspective of both the present and the future. God says, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." 2 Cor. 3:17,18

A faith that will secure for us a constant dwelling place with God and His glory must be more than a passive faith. Look once more at the first Verse of the 91st Psalm, "He that dwelleth (a present fact) in the secret place of the Most High shall abide (a present tense experience) under the shadow of the Almighty." Such privilege, however, must be followed with a ready proclamation. Note the second verse, "I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge, and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust." Here is an active proclaiming of our position. It is so easy these days to become depressed when we allow temperament, physical conditions or the devil to rob us of our faith in God (and in a faithful God) when we are faced with fiery trials. May God help us to dwell with Him in His glory and proclaim victory despite our outer circumstances and testings. What are you saying about the Lord? What do you have to say about Him? Say it for your good and God's glory and see what will happen.

If we are to live constantly in the atmosphere of heaven we must not only obtain true perspective, but we must retain it. The psalmist had the key to this (read Psalm 37:1-7) when he exhorted us to "Fret not thyself because of evil doers Trust in the Lord, and do good Delight thyself in the Lord Commit thy way unto the Lord Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him."

One other thing we need to consider in the line of responsibility is to recognize our weakness and God's strength. Paul had to learn this lesson. In 2 Cor. 12:8-10 we read: "For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."

Finally, we must not forget the REWARD that comes to those who are faithful and labor for the Master. "Therefore. my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." I Cor. 15:58 People will tell you that you will never amount to anything; you will never get anywhere; you will never really realize your full potential if you hold to "old-fashioned" biblical standards and principles in your life and ministry. But remember that God who cannot lie tells us to be steadfast, unmoveable and always abounding in His work - and that all such labor is not in vain, no matter what men may think or say.

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August, 1979 Editorial

WITHOUT REVIVAL THERE IS NO SURVIVAL

No church can long maintain spiritual life without genuine revival. Many denominations that are in the world today had their origin in a Holy Ghost revival, but failed to keep the revival spirit alive in their midst and their spiritual life fell into decadence. At any cost we must keep the revival spirit alive or miss the mark and fall into the same pattern of those that have been before us. Where there is a revival spirit the presence and leadership of the Holy Spirit is dominant. It is His presence and blessing that gives us reason for existence.

Without the manifest presence and blessing of the Holy Spirit heart-felt salvation will soon turn from freedom and liberty of the Spirit to a burdensome "rule-keeping" effort. About the first sign of the loss of a mighty spirit of revival from our midst, like the Pharisees of old, is the tendency to multiply by legislation, rules upon rules, in an endeavor to hold to the old-fashioned line. Such can only result, as in the case of the Pharisees, in burdening the people on every side by instructions so numerous and trifling that the very heart and freedom of religion is lost sight of. Vital spiritual experience cannot be retained by adding rule upon rule nor long survive apart from revival. There has always been a tendency in the church, considered as an earthly organization, toward backsliding. The churches of Galatia manifested this tendency, even under the ministry of inspired men. The Epistle to the Hebrews was written to safeguard those to whom it was addressed from this universal tendency. Bishop Hogue says, "The tendency to spiritual declension is occasioned by the natural weakness of humanity; by the spiritual sluggishness of even Christian men and women; by the susceptibility of human beings influenced by those worldly excitements which are unfriendly to spiritual religion; by the fact that 'struggle for existence' is the law of the spirit-life as well as the physical; by the law of 'reversion to type,' which operates in the spiritual world as well as in the natural realm." Thus, without maintaining a genuine revival spirit in our midst, vital spirituality will gradually disappear.

Without revival Bible standards of modest, holy living will be laid aside for a more popular way. No individual or church will maintain a level of living above their heart convictions. It will take more than Manual rules to produce modest, holy lives. The rules in our Church Manual are the expressions of the heart convictions of those who set them down - convictions of 'the way' of holy living separate from the world as taught in the Bible. Preacher, read the Manual - its general and special rules. Are these your convictions? If not, you will never preach them. A 'homo' will never preach against homosexuality nor a preacher beyond his convictions. Layman, how about you? You will never live above your convictions for long. Women cut their hair or do it up in worldly fashion; men let theirs grow long and wear beards; television is condoned; people take off on Sunday to begin their vacation traveling; people shun the 'death to self' ministry - why? no real convictions against such. We need revival to bring us back to real heart convictions of the Bible way of living and we need continual revival to maintain our Bible convictions and keep us out of the awful drift and trends that are pressing in on us.

Without revival family life that is blessed and owned of God will soon decay, family altars will be a relic of past days, and our children will be lost to old-fashioned holiness. Holiness of heart and life is the answer to saving the home. It will put into the home the wisdom and discipline needed for the great task of raising children to fear and serve God. We need fathers and mothers who know what it is to walk daily with God and keep the revival fires' burning in their home.

Without revival denominations soon drift from their moorings and cease to function as God intended them to function. Because God's chosen people failed to become the evangelistic instrument He intended them to be, the kingdom of God was taken from them, and given to a nation (the Gentiles) that would bring forth fruit. It is the mighty Spirit of God in the midst of the people of God that brings conviction on the lost (John 16:7-11) and creates in them a cry for deliverance from sin. There is no power to deliver sinners from sin where the Spirit of God is not prevalent. May God wake us up and stir us up to the little foxes that spoil the vine - the "little" trends that grieve the Spirit - the little trickles that seem so insignificant and harmless but can in time develop into a raging torrent of compromise that will sweep a denomination from its original stand.

Without revival individual churches will change from a mighty dynamic evangelistic force to a social organization. This is why churches begin to add kitchens and recreational facilities to their buildings. Having lost the Holy Spirit, they reach out for substitutes. When the crucifixion of the carnal self ceases to be preached and experienced, revivals go out the door and the world enters. Human methods of doing kingdom work are substituted for God's way of Holy Ghost conviction.

Without revival the cause of missions will become a reforming, culture changing ministry rather than a transforming ministry.

Without revival the spiritual life of a church will fade away and in its place church loyalty will be emphasized as the all-important thing. When church loyalty is emphasized out of proportion and above spirit-filled living, entire denominations go down and soon become deceived by comparing themselves with themselves and men become lost souls under the delusion they are fulfilling God's plan in their lives. How sad! People go in an all out effort, and often to

great success, to increase their number and to build their own earthly kingdom. They compass land and sea to make one proselyte, and make him twofold more the child of hell than themselves. These are they who shut up the kingdom of heaven against men. God forbid we should be devoid of life that will bless instead of curse humanity.

Without revival men's opinions will be counted of more value than the Word of God. What a fearful judgment will await the false shepherds who are not true preachers of the Word. "Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the Lord." Jer. 23:1

Without revival the carnal will override the spiritual and open the floodgates to all kinds of aversions and perversions. "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...Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts...Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen." Romans 1:21-25

Without revival the glamour will be substituted for the glory. There has been many a denomination that has started out in the midst of revival fires but failed to pay the price to keep those fires burning. History has revealed the outcome. They have fulfilled the words of Jeremiah where he stated, "My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." Jer. 2:13.

We are now face to face with our eighth general conference. Our hope is not in what we will do or not do at this gathering, important as it is. Our hope as a denomination lies in Holy Ghost revival. No great spiritual awakening or Holy Ghost revival has begun anywhere in the world apart from united prayer - Christians persistently praying for revival. And no awakening has continued long beyond the duration of such praying. May God help us to take the way of survival!

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September, 1979 Editorial
THE FATAL FORK IN THE ROAD

Almost every organized evangelical group that has risen to promote salvation among the lost of earth has come sooner or later to a "fork in the road" that has proven fatal to its spiritual ongoing. Trends are gradually built up as they have approached this "fatal fork" that have led them down the wrong road. I am talking about methods of advancement in outreach and growth.

Broadly speaking, there are one of two methods employed and two interests involved in church advancement. The two methods are the human or carnal vs. the Divine or spiritual. The two interests involved are the building up of the earthly, visible body or organization vs. the building up of the Body or Bride of Christ.

The humanistic method of doing divine work results in the building up of an earthly organization in contrast to a spiritual kingdom. Because Israel, God's chosen people, missed it at this point, Jesus said of them, "The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and given to a

nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." Matt. 21:43 Israel became more interested in their own nation as an earthly kingdom than in the Sovereign reign of God among men. They became more interested in themselves than in the honor and glory of God. When this takes place in church life a shift is made in methodology. Human enthusiasm, organizing for outreach, concentrating on statistics, getting the whole church on the move, contests to gain increased attendance, converting people to an organization or way of church life in the name of Christianity, become of supreme importance. All can be enthused to work in this type of set-up - the unsanctified and even sinners. These methods are appealing and challenging to the carnal and many ways commendable as means to an end, but in and of themselves they have the elements of spiritual self-destruction in them. The carnal can never bring about the Kingdom of God and His sovereign reign, for by nature it is diametrically opposed to it.

A "humanistic" program entered into wholeheartedly can and does bring about visible numerical and financial growth and comments such as: "These are the best days we have seen yet," "We have never had it better," "At last we are really moving ahead," while all the while true spirituality is ebbing away and a shift from the spiritual to the carnal way of operation is taking place. Yes, it is true that the organization as a whole is on the increase as far as statistics are concerned, both in finances and attendance.

There is another method of operation, however, in accomplishing Kingdom work. The emphasis is that of adding to the Bridehood of Christ. It is a wholly spiritual emphasis, and although it works through the medium of human, earthly channels, its power is supernatural and Divine in origin. The emphasis is on Divine leadership. It is the Christian view and way. These two ways (human vs. spiritual) are contrasted in Matt. 7:21-23, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many shall say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then I will profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

Isaiah declared (after setting out the necessary conditions) "And the Lord will guide you continually." Isa. 58:11 According to the Bible, the guidance of God is communicated to the believer by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit not only guides into all truth, he guides step by step. The humblest followers of Jesus may know the Divine will at first hand. This business of Divine guidance as a way of life and a way of Kingdom increase is taught in Scripture. We note in Isaiah 58:11, "And the Lord shall guide thee continually." Turn to Acts 8:29 concerning Philip, "Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot." Look again at Acts 10:19,20, "While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, nothing doubting: for I have sent them." Similar Scriptures can be found in Acts 13:2-4; 16:6,7; 19:21, etc.

When we turn to Romans 8:14 we learn it is the sons of God who are recipients of the Spirit's guidance (the reverse is also true). Because of the indwelling Holy Spirit and because of this Divine leadership in the primitive Church (as revealed in the Acts of the Apostles) every member was an evangelist. A non-propagating Christian was a contradiction, according to Acts 1:8.

The implication of Romans 8:14 ("For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."), with Matthew 28:19,20 (the great commission) cannot be denied. Spirit filled and Spirit led believers WILL pursue the evangelistic commission. We have excused ourselves too long. Are we not in danger of by-passing God's method of Spirit-filled and Spirit-led saints as a means of Kingdom increase and substituting human methods to add to our particular Zion?

This business of Divine guidance as the way of life is demonstrated for us in the life of Christ and He should be our pattern. The Spirit completely possessed Him. Jesus said, "I do nothing of myself." Immediately after His baptism (Matt. 4:1) the Spirit led him into the wilderness - a sense of direction. Luke again (4:1) says he "was led by the Spirit," but here we have a different verb altogether and this verb suggests an overwhelming action of the Spirit energizing Him in the direction of the Divine will. In Mark 1:12 we read where the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness and here the thought is of the exertion of a power of control over the actions of its subject. Thus we gather that there is an internal influence within the heart that "jet-propels" the sanctified individual. It is the method or way of the Divine and it is this Divine power leading the true Children of God into effectively adding to the invisible Church, the true Bride of Christ. Carnal people are strangers to this Divine method of Kingdom increase.

The two methods of Kingdom work have been much in evidence down through history. Many denominations and groups are in existence today that have made the switch, "having begun in the Spirit," they are now pursuing the way of the flesh and what we have termed a "humanistic program." The Spirit has long since departed. They are no longer marked as having Spiritual power. It is now the carnal that is evident rather than the Spiritual. The carnal has outweighed the Spiritual until it is now in predominance and the emphasis is the building up of a visible body or organization in place of the Bridehood of Christ.

When this happens there is always another shift that takes place. Holy Ghost power and leadership are replaced with a Church sponsored entertainment program, contests are entered into in an effort to increase attendance; church kitchens and social halls and sports programs appear. Bible standards of holy living are lowered to make "the way" less offensive to carnal people. Music trends toward the sensual and the things of the world are lusted after. People of great talents and personalities are sought after. They have come to the "fatal fork in the road" and have followed man's way instead of God's. "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." Prov. 16:25

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October, 1979 Editorial
THE DIVINE MOVE FORWARD

When the children of Israel fled Egypt under Divine persuasion they were soon entangled in the land with an enraged Egyptian army behind them and the Red Sea in front of them. God himself engineered them into straits from which no human power nor art could extricate them. In this seemingly hopeless state, "the Lord said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward." But how can you go forward when you can't go forward?

We know from the Word that this was God's way of deliverance, for we read in Isaiah 55:8,9, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." If we are determined to follow God's ways we will find ourselves many times at a seemingly dead end road and in situations that are humanly impossible to solve. If we are to go forward in those times we then must:--

Go forward on our knees. There is no recorded prayer of Moses in this place, only the words of the Lord directed to Moses, "Wherefore criest thou unto me?" This certainly indicates that the heart of Moses was deeply engaged with God. Whether we can articulate words or not, yet know that God is aware of those sighs, tears, and desires, and if our spirit is kept in tune with the great infinite Spirit of God -- and it can be through the avenue of prayer we will be in a position to keep pace with Him who can make a way where there is no way, but we must also

Go forward in faith. We read in Exodus 14:10 that "the children of Israel cried out unto the Lord." Had their prayer been accompanied with faith, we should not have found them in the next verse murmuring against Moses, but which was actually against God. We learn in the New Testament it is according to our faith that we receive from God and that we set limits to what we see accomplished for God. We saw great faith expressed at our recent General Conference in the near half million dollars pledged and a vision of fifty new churches organized in the ensuing quadrennium. All this besides a forward move for our Bible School and foreign missions program. May our faith not waver, in the day by day accomplishment of our vision. But we must also:--

Go forward in obedience. Who could know the divine plan to keep Israel moving ahead when they were blocked by the Red Sea? Is not God saying to us here that He can make a way where there is no way? But Omnipotence has ordained that man of his own volition bring himself, through obedience, into conformity to His will before He will act. God said to Moses, "Lift up thy rod." Neither Moses nor his rod could be any effective instrument in a work which could be accomplished only by the omnipotence of God, yet nothing happened until Moses acted in obedience. Shouldn't this teach us a lesson?

Surely God has opened wide a door of opportunity to Bible Missionary people. God grant that we should be praying, believing, obedient body, through which the great Head can accomplish His purpose.

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November, 1979 Editorial
THANKSGIVING

Thanksgiving in its simplicity is simply the act of giving thanks. This contains in it two basic principles of life, namely, the principle of thankfulness and that of giving.

To be thankful is to be conscious of benefits received or of what one is about to receive and to be expressive of the same. Thanklessness is among the chief sins of mankind. To fail to give

expressions of thanks for benefits received or to fail to acknowledge benefits that have been made available, dwarfs a personality and moves one in the direction of darkness and loneliness. Thanklessness has a tendency to isolate people from the better things in life. This truth is expressed in Romans 1:21 where we read, "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."

Praise is akin to thanksgiving and we read in Psalm 33:1, "praise is comely for the upright." In I Thessalonians 5:18 we are exhorted, "In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." A thankful spirit springs from a heart that has full confidence in God that whatever comes to us comes through the watchful eye of a God that loves us and would shield us from anything that would do us permanent harm or have consequences that would affect our eternal, being. Thus a thankful spirit expresses faith and confidence in God and honors Him. A complaining, critical, faultfinding spirit is an indictment against God Himself, inferring that God does not know what He is doing and that He should be doing something different than He is for us. It charges God with negligence on His part.

We mention the second principle inferred in the word "thanksgiving," that of "giving." We should learn the blessedness of giving, not only of thanks but just plain "giving." The Dead Sea got its name from the fact that nothing can live in or around it. It is dead because it does not give out. It receives waters from the north that flow into it but there are no streams that flow out of it. Because of this it has become dead and stagnant and no life can survive in it. It is a picture of a thankless heart that is all the time receiving but not giving out. God wants to open the channels of our heart until His love can flow not just into us but through us to others. We should learn to be great givers -- give ourselves in every way possible in prayer, in witnessing, in friendliness, giving liberally of our means, etc. In doing this it gives an opportunity for life to flow freely in us and through us. As a result we are not only blessed and enlarged in our own being but many, many others are blessed because of us.

At this Thanksgiving Season let us Give Thanks!

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December, 1979 Editorial
CHRIST AND THE TOWEL

Christmas -- what a glorious season! We will soon again be celebrating the entrance of Christ into the world of humanity. The writer of the Hebrews Epistle put it this way, "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same...For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham." He came and was "made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." But also, in His coming, in His living, in His teaching, in His dying he brought to mankind a new way of life. He came to reconcile us to God by His sacrificial death but also to reveal that kind of life we are to live in the flesh. He expressed it in these words, "a new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." John 13:34 Jesus further said, "By this

shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." Words become powerful when they are demonstrated in real life, and Jesus demonstrated in real life what He taught by word. Furthermore we have an illustration of what He meant by what He enacted in the upper room. The occasion was the Feast of the Passover. The world had been shut out and all the clamor of the voices of His foes were silenced and the curious, questioning crowd hushed. He was alone with His own. In the midst of the ritual of the Passover feast, He interrupted, took a towel and girt Himself with it. The towel girt about the loins in the East was the sign and badge of slavery. In doing this, Jesus was putting into act what He had said in word. The first verse of John thirteen is significant when it says, "having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end" ("Unto the end" means to completion or "to the uttermost") significant because of the fact we are to love one another as He loved.

Peter at first protested this act of Jesus, "Lord dost thou wash my feet?" When Jesus had finished with the foot washing He asked a searching question: "Do you know what I have done? Do you know what this means?" I arose, girt myself with a slave's apron, I have taken the place of a slave, the lowest place of service possible. Then He spoke with dignity and authority, "If I then, Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet."

Some sections of Christendom have taken this very literally and from this have practiced foot washing as an ordinance along with the Lord's supper. We do not share this practice but we must not lose its significance. Jesus was here demonstrating in actual life the essence of this new commandment He had given them that they should love one another as He had loved them.

He had stripped himself of dignity, taken the lowest place of a slave to serve them, in their highest interests. He then concluded with a beautiful beatitude, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

Later on Peter had caught the significance of it all when he wrote, "Likewise ye younger, be subject unto the elder, Yea, all of you gird yourselves with humility." Surely, Peter must have been thinking of that night when Christ girt himself with the towel.

Let's take a moment at this Yuletide to meditate on this "new commandment" of Jesus.

Those in the upper room missed it that night when they ignored the "towel" in their lustful reach for the "throne." They would rather have ruled than served. Since their gathering was a private meal in a borrowed facility there was no household servant. Ordinarily, in an oriental household, since footwear of that day did not protect the feet from the dust and filth of the streets, it was the job of the household slave to wash the feet of the guests. No doubt Jesus had waited for one of the disciples to carry out this role. The basin was there and so was the towel, but no servant. Surely they were all aware of this. But now was Jesus' opportunity - He became the servant. He "made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant." (Phil. 2:5-7)

Does this occasion of Christ with his disciples search us out? It should! Have we overlooked the "towel" part of life. Would we rather be served than to serve? Do we vie for first place instead of last? Do we want more than others, rather than less? Are we seeking to be honored rather than looking for opportunities to honor others? Do we want to be the center of

attention, rather than giving others attention? Are we saying by our actions that I want what I want now, rather than seeing that other's needs are met?

We may say we love others. What does our life style reveal? Does our life demonstrate Christ's new commandment that we love one another as He loved us? If we catch the real significance of Christmas we will gird the "towel" about us.

In commenting on the passage in 1 Peter 5:4, 5, "Yea, all of you gird yourselves with humility," G. Campbell Morgan explains that "being clothed or girded, is being dressed in a knotted garment. The Greek noun for that garment is used in two applications. It was the garment of a slave, but it was also the garment of princes. Whether the garment was a slave's or a prince's depended upon the material of which it was made...Possibly Peter saw the knotted garment of slavery on Jesus, and before he was through, he saw that it was the knotted garment of royalty. He was writing now to young people and to old people; and he gathers us all up, and says, 'All of you, put on humility as a slave's garment,' and so learn to wear the garment of true royalty."

Jesus concludes his teaching in this upper room occasion with these words, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another."

God grant that we will catch the real significance of "Christ and the Towel" at this Christmas season. It is the vision of a selfless life that is spending and being spent in interest of Christ's investment in others!

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THE END