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PARKER MAXEY'S EDITORIALS -- (1985)

Editorials from The Missionary Revivalist
Compiled by Duane V. Maxey

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Digital Edition 09/04/2000
By Holiness Data Ministry

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January, 1985 Editorial
FACING 1985 WITH CONFIDENCE

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the antidote to all of earth's troubles. A genuine Christian does not look into the future with fear, but with anticipation. He is "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." However, he does not sit with folded arms waiting in indolence and inactivity a deliverance from this present evil world, but recognizes a responsibility, while Jesus tarries His coming, to actively press the cause of salvation upon the lost. He will take a firm stand against all wickedness and sinful corruption and will do his best to turn aside all subtle schemes and plans that oppose righteousness and true holiness. He will follow Paul's admonition in 2 Timothy 2:1, 2, "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplication, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."

A child of God stands upon an immovable foundation. Jesus made this clear, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." (Matt. 5:17, 18) God's Word is a rock upon which we stand.

The children of a saintly woman were standing around her bed as she lay dying. Anxious to catch her last words they asked, "Mother, do you feel yourself sinking? Children, how can one sink through a rock?" was her calm reply. "I am reclining on the 'rock of ages'."

The world is not getting better and better. God's WORD tells us of a world sinking deeper and deeper into apostasy as the end approaches, but promises glorious victory to those who overcome. George Keith expressed it well when he penned the following lines:

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!
What more can He say than to you He hath said,
To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

A child of God has nothing to fear concerning the past, present or future. For him the past is under the precious blood of Jesus, the future is in the hands of the One who controls the destiny of men and the present is a simple walking in the light as He is in the light. We are exhorted in Matthew 10:28, "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Again in I John 3:18, "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." There is a natural fear and consists in a prayerful caution to avoid dangers and evils; a carnal and sinful fear when persons fear men more than God (Prov. 29:25; Matt. 10:28); a slavish fear when persons are more afraid of death and hell than sin (I Sam. 12:18; Dan. 5:6; Acts 24:26); a diabolical fear. "The devils also believe and tremble." (James 2:19); a filial fear of God, or holy affection in the soul, whereby it is inclined to reverence God and approve of all His commandments (Gen. 22:12) and abhor all evil (Neh. 5:15; Ps. 119:128; Prov. 8:13). Whatever may be experienced in this life by a saint of God, he need not fear, but can sing in confidence:

Fear not; I am with thee. Oh, be not dismayed,
For I am thy God, I will still give thee aid.
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
Upheld by My gracious, omnipotent hand.

A child of God is not overcome by the sorrows of life. Sorrow is a part of this life and is inescapable in a world where sin and death reign, but God's children are to "sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him . . . wherefore comfort one another with these words." (I Thess. 4:13, 14, 18) No doubt there are some and maybe many ere this year becomes history, who will be called upon to pass through the deep waters of sorrow, but they will not have to pass that way alone.

When thro' the deep waters I call thee to go,
The rivers of sorrow shall not overflow;
For I will be with thee thy trials to bless,
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

There is an interesting verse found in I Peter 3:15 which reads, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." The word sanctify here means to "enthroned (God) in your hearts for life and for death; and in alarm and danger He shall keep you in quietness and rest." (Whedon's Commentary)

For a child of God fiery trials are stepping stones to help him on to be more like God and to final victory. For the saint of God there comes with every trial the sufficient grace of God.

God's grace has been defined as "God's Riches At Christ's Expense." The grace of God can also be defined as God's strength and power dispatched to His own. An outstanding verse depicting this is found in I Cor. 15:10 where Paul testified, "But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; But I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." In I Peter 5:10 we read about "the God of all grace." There is no trial that comes to a child of God but that there is grace enough to keep him, nor can there be any trial that will last long enough to exhaust the grace of God.

When thro' fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
My grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply.
The flames shall not hurt thee; I only design
Thy dross to consume and thy gold to refine.

A child of God need not fear growing old in this life. Growing older year by year is unavoidable. This need not bring despondency to a saint of God. In Proverbs 4:18, 19 we read, "But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." But, "The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble." It is true that the devil has no happy old people, but as a true saint of God grows older he has God's enabling grace to become richer and more mature. David said, "But I will hope continually, and will yet praise thee more and more." (Ps. 71:14) Again we have these words of David, "Now also when I am old and gray-headed, O God, forsake me not until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come." (Ps. 71:18) We must recognize that as the physical body ages one will experience the waning of strength and even, for some, total disability. Even then God's promises affirm His constant presence and love.

E'en down to old age all My people shall prove
My sov'reign, eternal, unchangeable love;
And when hoary hairs shall their temples adorn,
Like lambs they shall still in My bosom be borne.

A child of God need not be overcome by his foes. God intends for His own to be overcomers. The means of overcoming is set forth 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."

The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose
I will not, I will not desert to his foes;
That soul, tho' all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never forsake.

What will a new year bring to our lives? Sorrow may come. Fiery trials may be our lot. The enemy of our soul may be allowed to press us hard. Sickness could possibly lay us low or even death may come ere another year rolls around. Best of all for the Christian, he may see the "glorious appearing of the Great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13).

Regardless of what may or may not be our lot, we are exhorted to occupy for the Master--live one day at a time in the center of God's will as we daily commit ourselves to Him who doeth all things well!

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February, 1985 Editorial
THE PITFALLS OF SOUL WINNING

In sending forth His disciples Jesus admonished them "Be ye therefore as wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." The art of soulwinning is wrapped up in this admonition. Two emblems of contrasted character are used here to describe true Christian wisdom in the business of winning souls to Christ. A soul-winner needs to be innocently artful; simple yet sharp, sighted; contriving to accomplish schemes of good. Added to this there is that ministry of being an instrument of conviction in the hands of the Holy Spirit.

To be effective in soul-winning two things need to be guarded against--the compromising of convictions and the putting of emphasis in the wrong place.

If an individual compromises his own God-given convictions he will grieve the Holy Spirit and the convicting power of the Spirit will be lost. The Spirit's office work is to convict sinners of their lost condition. We as Christians do not convict souls. It is the Spirit that brings conviction and God has chosen to work through men to convict men. We do not use the Spirit but He uses our lives as instruments of conviction. In speaking to His disciples concerning the coming of the Holy Spirit Jesus spoke these words, "And when he is come, he shall reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness and of judgment." Jesus was speaking to the disciples here about Pentecost, when they would receive the Holy Spirit in His fulness. The implication is clear --when a soul has been emptied of all the self-life and has abandoned himself completely to the will and operation of the Holy Spirit, then the fulness of God dwells in him and it is the presence of the Holy Spirit in that individual that is the convicting power that grips others.

Have you ever noticed how the presence of Godly people brings conviction on those around them? They are marked by less Godly ones as "a little peculiar," "simple minded," "too straight laced," "odd," etc. Their "peculiarity" lies in the fact of their total separation unto God even in little things. Their lives expose others to the all-seeing eye of God. They are selfless in their living and are not taken up with materiality. They are marked with God-consciousness and are careful about the scruples of life, always giving God the benefit of the doubt. They avoid careless conduct and are careful in their conversation not to grieve God. They pull away from the crowd and from peers at the beck and call of the Spirit. They continually practice the presence of God. They are careful to maintain their God-given convictions. Sinners and nominal Christians who have become careless about their God-given convictions are uncomfortable in their presence.

Oh, to be one of that number. Is this not the deep hunger of your heart? The great bane to living a holy, selfless life is the carnal nature. This is why the writer of the Hebrews letter warns to "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." It is so important that the Spirit be given preeminence in our life if we are to be

effective for Him. The life of a brand new Christian who doesn't know any different than to totally obey the voice of God in his new found life of joy and freedom becomes a convicting power to others who are unsaved or to those who have lost their freedom and who are not obeying God. They may not have all the Bible standards of holy living. The secret of power is not in the outward standards nor the lack of outward standards, but in the unhindered flow of the Holy Spirit in and through them.

A person may have in evidence all outward conformity to a devoted life without the presence of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Such carry no convicting power in their life. They have either compromised a God-given conviction, or been overcome by the carnal nature or taken on the form of Godliness without the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus, knowing the nature of the unsanctified human heart, that within man even in a regenerate condition was a nature contrary to God's will, commanded the disciples to tarry "until." All hindrances to the operation of the Holy Spirit within the heart must be removed for Him to do His work of convicting the world of sin and righteousness and judgment.

There are outward standards of holy living set down in God's word. Light and conviction on these come along in the life of new Christians as they walk daily with God, receive new light from the Word and incorporate it willingly and joyfully into their own life. The secret is not in all of a sudden becoming a mature Christian with all the holy standards of God's word in effect, but in that daily walk in unquestioned obedience to the blessed Holy Spirit. The work of entire sanctification assures a spirit of submission to the will of God whatever that may be. The blessed Holy Spirit becomes the great instructor of the heart, as we read in John 16:13, "Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth is come (speaking here of the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost), he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come."

The unhindered, the uncompromising attitude of the heart to the leadership of the Holy Spirit in the individual heart is the great channel of convicting power to a world steeped in sin and to a nominal church void of the life of the Spirit.

The second thing to be guarded against in soul-winning effort is a misplaced emphasis. A sinner will not be convicted and won to the Lord by telling him what he can do and what he cannot do if he gets saved. We are sent of the Holy Spirit as instruments into the world "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith" A sinner needs to know the awfulness of sin and what it will lead to. He needs to know that without Christ he is forever lost and on his way to a devil's hell and the greatest sin he can be guilty of is the rejection of Jesus Christ as his only hope of escaping damnation. Too often we have a tendency as Christians, because of the awfulness of people's sins, to line them up before they have a change of heart, telling them they will have to quit their smoking, their drinking, their immoral living, their use of drugs, their awful immodesty, their lying, stealing (on and on we go) before they can ever get saved. God help us and have mercy on us! This is a wrong emphasis.

What a sinner needs to know is that God for Christ's sake will forgive every sin he has ever committed and break every evil habit of sin if he will but repent and in his heart turn away

from every known sin, put his trust in Christ to do what he in his own power is helpless to do and believe God for Christ's sake to forgive him.

Jesus' method was to first open the eyes of the blind to the truth of the gospel and then point them to the Scriptures that reveal the way of salvation, until their understanding grasped the great truths of the gospel.

God help us to be as wise as serpents and harmless as doves, to keep the emphasis where it belongs, and deliver us from the pitfalls of soul-winning!

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March, 1985 Editorial

"INCLINE YOUR EAR., HEAR AND LIVE"

Isaiah 55:3

"As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia," and from thence they sailed to Cyprus." Acts 13:2-4.

At Pentecost it was the Holy Spirit who took over the leadership and direction of the Church. The Church became subject to His leadings. The Spirit was both prominent and pre-eminent. The Holy Spirit, the third person of the triune God, is the executive of the Godhead. It is His prerogative to put into effect God's purposes for man. The Holy Spirit in God. It is God the Holy Spirit with whom we have to deal and who deals with us. He is the Spirit of grace to dispense to us the benefits of Calvary--to convict the sinner and regenerate him; to sanctify the believer and indwell him; to direct the affairs of the church and lead them from victory to victory. Apart from Him, Kingdom work cannot be accomplished. It is not man's reasonings, ingenuity or wisdom that promotes God's cause on earth, but Holy Spirit directed and inspired activity. James tells us, "The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy." The Spirit is very jealous over that place He should rightfully have in our hearts and lives. Human reasonings and plannings too often take the place of fasting and prayer and waiting before God to seek His direction and blessing. Oh, that God might awake us to what it really means to be totally subject to Him and His purposes! God help us not to get too big or too proud to get low at His feet!

The early Church not only became subject to Holy Ghost leadership, but they earnestly sought to keep Him pre-eminent and to know His mind. They waited to hear what He had to say. The Scriptures reveal how this was done. It was "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted." The implication in this Scripture is clear. Those early church leaders were not grappling mentally in their own wisdom to try to figure out what course to take. They were earnestly seeking wisdom from above, God's plan and way of advancement. They did this by communing with God in prayer, praise and fasting. It was when they had placed themselves in that posture and that mood that "the Holy Ghost said" something to them. He gave them His direction for them to take. Before God can say something to us it takes attentive ears to hear what He wants to say. No true prophet of God nor church leader or leaders can speak God's words or give God's plan for advancement until he or

they first hear God speak. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that ... speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord." Jer. 23:16 The difference between a true and a false prophet is that one stands before God, hears His word and delivers it, while the other does not stand before God, does not hear His word, and delivers visions of his own concoction. This can be true both of preachers who endeavor to preach God's Word and those officials who endeavor to lead a church on. A preacher may be guilty of developing a carefully planned, homiletical discourse, borrowing the other man's "appealing" material and preaching it even with zest and enthusiasm, but having not himself been moved upon with truth imparted to him from the heart of God. He may have preached a great sermon, but failed to deliver God's message. A church will die under that kind of program.

It is possible for church leaders to be caught up in the pressure of the day and a self-imposed time frame until their decisions are concoctions of their own ingenuity. No matter how well meaning we may be in our deliberations, unless we "minister to the Lord" until we hear His voice, we are not promoting a Holy Ghost program.

The early church not only was subject to Holy Spirit leadership and sought to keep Him pre-eminent, but as they did so they were swept on from victory to victory in the promotion of Kingdom work. Pentecost produced in them visions and dreams that carried them out and beyond their own borders and into a world lost in the darkness of night. From them the word was sounded throughout the land and churches sprung up and grew. May God grant that it will be increasingly so in our own Zion!

What is the secret? "Incline your ear." God wants to say something to us. Let's purpose to "hear" what He wants to say and then obey that voice. In doing this we shall "live"!

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April, 1985 Editorial
UNEMPLOYMENT

Unemployment for the laboring man can be financially devastating, but for the man of God idleness concerning the work of the kingdom of God is spiritually fatal. Nonetheless, this matter of secular unemployment is widespread today and soul winning unemployment is robbing professed Christians of spiritual vitality and their place in the body of Christ.

For the most part, we as holiness people, are not "programmed" to soul winning. We have become a "pew-sitting" body of people. We are "unemployed" in the matter of evangelizing the lost around us. We have become practical worshippers, but not active participants in the spiritual upbuilding of the body of Christ. The mass of Christians are sitting in the bleachers while the few are down in the arena of life spending themselves in the cause of redemption. We are locked in within our own body and are evangelizing ourselves over and over without regard to the perishing around us.

Some years ago this writer preached a revival meeting in one of our churches. Ten years later we were called back to this same church for another "revival effort." It was exactly the same

group, only now they were smaller due to the fact a family or two had moved away. This has been our history across the years in the majority of cases.

Down through the ages of the church this condition has been repeating itself. In the fourth century during the days of Constantine-following Pentecost when the church had a marked beginning and a period of phenomenal growth-clericalism became predominant and the church became legalized. The laymen's access to God was through the church and through the clergy. The church became sacramentarian in practice in place of evangelistic. It became ingrown in place of outgoing.

The Jerusalem Church, established through the memorable outpouring of the Spirit, in many ways is a model for all other congregations. Among many characteristics it possessed, it was a Spirit-filled, Spirit-baptized, evangelistic church. There was a consistency of the church's growth under the Lord's tutelage, based on an evangelistic outreach but motivated by the Spirit's presence in dedicated church members. The gifts of the Spirit, the divinely ordained means and powers with which Christ endows His church in order to enable it to properly perform its task on earth, were sovereignly bestowed upon the church members individually. The secret of the growth of the Jerusalem church is really no secret. We know what happened and why it happened. They tarried (Luke 24:49-53). They prayed (Acts 1:14). Their hearts were made pure (Acts 15:8, 9). They received the promise of the Father which was the mighty baptism with the Holy Spirit. They obeyed the voice of the Spirit (Acts 13:2, 3). The Spirit became the vice-regent of God on earth. The Spirit bestowed gifts upon each member of the body of Christ. "Gifts are the divinely ordained means and powers with which Christ endows His church in order to enable it to properly perform its task on earth" (Wiley). They are given for service. They are given to each believer "according to his own ability."

To be a member of the body of Christ and to be unemployed in kingdom work is contradictory to the provisions of grace. We read in I Cor. 12:4, 7, "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit... But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal" (read also Eph. 4:7; 1 Peter 4:10) (Emphasis ours). While there are "varieties of gifts" and gifts "that differ (Rom. 12:6) they are given in a sovereign fashion to every believer. This is illustrated by Paul in likening the church to the human body, with various members that are quite distinct in appearance and function, but all necessary. The gifts of the Spirit are given to the individual believer, but they are given for the healthy growth of the church.

Any church that ignores the gifts of the Spirit is in trouble. Gifts are bestowed upon individuals not to be enjoyed or used in a selfish purpose but "for the common good; ... for the equipping of the Saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:10). When any church or body of believers becomes "ingrown" or inactive in spiritual endeavors it becomes a "dead" body as far as God is concerned. This happened to Israel, God's chosen people, and as a result we read in Matthew 21:43, "Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." When any church, local or general, becomes stalemated and growth ceases, that church is in serious trouble. It may continue on as an organization, but will be like salt that "has lost his savor. It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of man."

There is hope for a church that may have failed. "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 sins, and will heal their land" (2 Chron. 7:14). Upon a church that will pay the price for a Holy Spirit outpoured revival will come the bestowment of gifts. Gifts are received, not achieved. These gifts must be discovered. Every Christian should take an inventory to discover his gift or gifts and then, with the aid of the Spirit he should develop his gift. In the parable of the talents each possessor was responsible for enlarging his possession. "Burying" the gifts by idle possession will not prove fruitful but fatal in the end to the possessor. Gifts may be neglected just as truly as they may be improved. Timothy was warned, "Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you" (1 Tim. 4:14). Neglect of spiritual gifts may be caused by ignorance of God's provisions, lethargy concerning God's working in our lives, unwillingness to respond to some aspect of God's call to service and ministry. The neglect of spiritual gifts will stifle personal growth and cripple the ministry of the church.

May we join hands and hearts today as Bible Missionary people for a mighty spiritual awakening. May the "unemployed" in kingdom work move out of those ranks, discover the gift or gifts that God the Holy Spirit has sovereignly bestowed upon them and employ them for the increase of God's kingdom on earth!

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May, 1985 Editorial
THE CHRISTIAN "ID"

We are a marked people. Uncle Sam has our number. So do the national and world computers. God has it perfectly. Our ancestry, our religion, our education, our nationality all mark us one way or another. Our speech identifies us. Personality traits tell their own story.

As Christians we also carry a mark. Paul expressed it in these words, "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus" (Gal. 6:17). In Acts 11:26 we read, "And the disciples were called Christians in Antioch." Why was this? "It is evident," says Adam Clarke, "they had the name Christians from CHRIST their master." They had become so invested with that invisible Divine presence of Christ and so identified with His teaching and doctrine and were following the rule of life laid down by Him so closely they were tagged, and rightfully so, with the name Christian, the Christed ones.

The one thing above all else that should identify holiness people of today is "the glory of the Lord." And I am convinced that this will be so of God's holy people. By "the glory of the Lord" we mean that peculiar divine seal of God's approval and the sign of His presence. It is the one outstanding supernatural fact that sets the religion of the true and living God apart from false religions. It is that which differentiates between a truly spiritual and vital Christianity and that which is formal, stilted and powerless. The presence of God is sure to be accompanied by His glory. The glory of the Lord, His presence, cannot be counterfeited. His manifest presence among His people is that which humbles, convinces and convicts.

"The glory of the Lord" is not accidentally revealed. It is a life giving power. Neither is it arbitrarily revealed. "And the Lord appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for an house of sacrifice. If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locust to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people; If my people, which are called by 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. 7:12-14).

When God's chosen people sinned in the matter of Aaron's "molten calf," "the Lord plagued the people ... and said unto Moses, Depart, and go up hence ... unto the land ... and I will send an angel before thee ... And he (Moses) said unto him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence" (Ex. 33:1-2, 15).

Moses was not willing to go on without that presence of the Lord. His reason: "For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? Is it not in that thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth" (Ex. 33:16).

God's glory in our midst is the ONE evidence that we are a separated people. We must have His glory at any cost!

Moses learned the secret of obtaining this glory and it comes only when human beings meet the divine conditions. Moses sought to know God's will. Many, I am afraid, fear to seek His will. The revelation of God's will came through communion with God. Far above mere activity and orthodoxy, God values communion. It was when he was alone on the Mount that God spoke and said to Moses, "Let them make me a sanctuary (that I may dwell among them) according to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle" (Ex. 25:8, 9). This pattern included the brazen altar, the place of blood shedding--blood to cover our sins, blood to cleanse our heart, blood that brings the Spirit's witness, blood that keeps us clean. It also included the laver of washing, signifying (emblematically) the need of the continual process of cleansing which calls for a continual spirit of brokenness and contriteness. Then there was the golden candlestick representing our purpose to walk in the light (men are not lost because of sins, but light, John 3:19, 20); the table of shewbread representing a consistent prayer life. Beyond the inner veil was the Holy of Holies which contained the Ark of the Covenant with its mercy seat above which the glory of the Lord was manifest.

Moses received the pattern on the mount of communion and never lost the pattern, but persevered to the completion of those instructions God gave him. We read in Exodus 40:33, 34, "So Moses finished the work. Then... the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle." From then on the glory of the Lord abode over the tabernacle in the visible form of a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. When the cloud moved the people broke camp and went with it until it came to rest. They kept pace with the glory. Holiness is a movement. We must move with God or lose the glory.

There came a day in Israel when the glory departed from them. Ezekiel records this in chapters 8-11. The glory did not depart suddenly. It visibly left the place of the cherub to the

threshold of the house--the place of exit. But everyone was caught up in their own worship and never cried out because of the departing glory. The visible appearance of the glory next, after an interval of time, left the temple area, a little later the city and then leaving the city stood over Mount Olivet. Tradition has it that the cloud over Mount Olivet visibly lingered three years in the sight of all the people, but no one cried out, "come back, come back!" The cloud of glory finally left Israel and has not been back to this day. Why? they got caught up in their own idolatrous way of worship.

How about the holiness movements of this day? Do we have the one identifying mark that marks God's holy people? Or are we contending for the secondary in place of the primary? Long uncut hair on women, short hair on men, modest dress with three-quarter length sleeves, women not wearing that which pertaineth to man nor men wearing that which pertaineth to woman, tithing, giving, attending church, inviting people to church. We can do all these and not have a bit of God or His glory. All these things will be in place and more when the glory is on His people. However, if we are not careful we can miss God, His glory, His approving by contending for the outer evidences, the standards of holy living, until these things that accompany a holy, separated life become idolatrous and a stench in the nostrils of God.

What this poor lost world needs is a revelation of the glory of the Lord. This sordid, sinful, hopeless, cynical world needs to see the manifestation of the supernatural. This will only come through God's people who are willing to pay the price and travel the path to Glory. "Tarry ye . . . until." We must be willing to persevere until our own hearts individually are completely conformed to the will of God. This is the work of the Holy Spirit. There is no substitute for the "Glory of the Lord."

Zeal, activity, numbers, Bible standards of holy living (and we must have these and will have them if we have the glory)--none of these can compensate for the lack of the indefinable, supernatural seal of God's approval.

Oh, God! We must have your presence in our midst! At any cost we will not go on without your mark on us!

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June, 1985 Editorial
FACING UP TO REALITY

In an article entitled "Men Shall Be Traitors," written by Thurman Wisdom in the April 1985 "Faith" magazine, the author writes, "We should not be surprised when we witness shocking incidents of disloyalty among professed Christians. In his farewell letter to Timothy, Paul warns, 'This know also, that in the last days., men shall be traitors' (II Timothy 3:1-2, 4)." Paul's concern was that traitors would increase, not in society in general, but among professing Christians. Let us take heed!

The author goes on to state, "essentially, loyalty is unwavering allegiance--aUegiance that is not easily broken, even in the face of strong temptation or pressure." The English word "loyalty"

does not appear in the Bible, but its equivalent "faithfulness" is a common Bible term and a preeminent Christian virtue. "Ultimately no one can be regarded as genuinely loyal who is in a state of rebellion toward the King of the universe."

It is not always easy to detect a traitor. All would certainly recognize Satan as the master of disloyalty. It is extremely significant that the devil, the first traitor, is introduced as characteristically subtle and suggests that, typically, the work of fomenting disloyalty is a subtle work. A traitor often presents himself as a man of noble intentions and virtuous qualities. Characteristically a traitor presents himself as being humble, concerned, spiritual and of noble character. Oh, how subtle is such an one who can waylay the unsuspecting, innocent, trusting child of God and undermine the cause of Christ.

Disloyalty, the basic characteristic of a traitor, can be detected in at least three aspects or functions (borrowing again from Thurman Wisdom).

First there is the obscuring of true character. "In the Garden, for example, Satan convinced Eve that the restriction against eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil indicated that God did not have their best interests at heart, 'For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.' "

"Another obscuring of true character was that produced by the rebellion of Israel at Kadesh-barnea. When the spies returned with their report of the great obstacles to the conquest of Canaan, the children of Israel murmured, "Because the Lord hated us, he hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt" (Deut. 1:27). How many times has the cause of God been arrested, or aborted by carnal people, traitors to the kingdom of heaven who through unbelief or carnal jealousy and envy have obscured the true character and purposes of God among men. By the subtlety of obscuring the true character of God, unbelief has been fostered within the body of Christ and only eternity will be able to reveal the horrors of such a sin!

Another function of a traitor is that of obscuring God's purposes. Paul laid down a principle that applies to all, and especially the Christian, when he stated, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers." God, the supreme Power of the universe, established governmental authorities, marriage relationships, local churches, Christian organizations to fulfill His sovereign purposes (Rom. 13:1-7). The great sin of mankind is to obliterate God's purpose in interest of self. "The Apostle Paul himself had experienced injustice at the hand of 'the powers that be'; nevertheless, he could say that on the whole, 'rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil.' " No one has a right to violate governmental regulations that may curtail his own personal liberties except it be for conscience' sake. Where would we be except for this God ordained means of holding sin in check?

God established all these institutions (governments, churches, marriages) in full knowledge of the fact that each was susceptible to human imperfections. The Christian's guideline for his relationship to the church must be, "is the organization, in spite of human imperfections, fulfilling God's purposes as revealed in His Word?" If the unadulterated gospel is being preached, if the church is reaching out to evangelize the lost, it calls for the loyalty of all its members. How many

fusses, splits, tensions, questionings could be avoided if the purposes of God could be kept in right perspective!

"On the same basis, no Christian has the right to divorce his wife because his love is "dead," or because he is "in love" with another. He is commanded to love his wife; God ordained that marriage be a permanent relationship." While we as a church hold to the "mercy" position when it comes to the matter of divorce and remarriage, in far too many cases, I am persuaded, this has been taken advantage of on the basis of personal carnal reasonings and desires rather than the purposes of God as set forth in His Word. Far too many couples, I fear, are in deep trouble at this point.

In the third place there is the substituting of other sovereigns. Thurman Wisdom in his article continues, "By the same token (referring to the obscuring of God's purposes), the Christian does not have the right to sever his relationship with his church or Christian organization simply because the leadership does not consistently suit his tastes. He must ask himself, 'Would my severing this relationship fulfill God's purposes for me?' Disloyalty develops in marriages, in churches, and in Christian organizations when men begin substituting other 'sovereigns' for the sovereign God and His purposes."

The sovereign self. "Self-interest lies at the heart of all disloyalty. It was self-interest that led man into his first act of disloyalty. 'Your eyes shall, be opened, and ye shall be as gods (Gen. 3:5). And in the last days traitors shall multiply because 'men shall be lovers of their own selves' (2 Tim. 3:2)."

Sovereign conditions. Some people would rather settle for what is peaceful for the moment than for what is right. Standing up for what is right can be very costly at times. When moral and spiritual issues are at stake and the cost could involve reputation or even life very, very few will stand. Loyalty in crisis times for the most part goes down the drain.

Sovereign doctrines. "Many a traitor has been nurtured by the thought that his pet doctrine must reign supreme. In Corinth as in many churches today, the gifts of the Spirit became sovereign and the purposes of God became secondary. Controversies and divisions stemming from this very thing within the body of any existing fellowship prove devastating to the sovereign plan of God. Holiness out of balance will miss the mark every time. Perfect love should be the hub around which all that accompanies true holiness of heart and life revolves.

The sovereign covey. "There is a certain "covey comfort" that traitors tend to seek. They gravitate naturally into little cliques and comfort one another by their consensus that they are right. In these cases the covey becomes a sovereign oligarchy ruling over the purposes of God." Divisions among God's people stem from these little cliques that meet and stir up questionings, fault findings, backbitings and unrest. The sad result is that the evangelizing of a lost world goes unattended while the souls made restless become obsessed with the need for change. The great commission Jesus gave His followers is forgotten or laid aside while factions arise as new movements to promote their own pet doctrine. The great sovereign purposes of God remain unfulfilled.

I can already hear the reader ask, "Is loyalty to be so rigid and demanding that it allows no room for independent thinking or even questioning organizational policy?" The Bible does not demand this kind of loyalty. There are two options open to a Christian when questions of loyalty arise. If there arises in the mind of a Christian a question concerning policy or the matter of procedure, he has a perfect right to appeal to his leader for a change. A case in hand is Daniel's appeal to the prince of the eunuchs--though his concern was much more serious than a mere question of policy. When he was able to demonstrate that the over all purposes of the king would be better served if he were granted his request, the policy was changed. However, if after the appeal is made and the issues are clear but no change is forthcoming, the individual should resort to prayer to be sure his own spirit manifests the Spirit of Christ and full loyalty should be the order of the day, not grudgingly, for grudging loyalty is not true loyalty. Wholehearted dedication to the cause of Christ should mark every Christian.

Questions however, that arise concerning matters of integrity are infinitely more serious. If a Christian has questions about the integrity of an organization and solid evidence that the organization is no longer sound in its relationship to God and His purposes, he must sever his relationship. "Loyalty to an organization that has become unsound would be disloyalty to the Lord."

If one cannot be faithful to God and remain in an organization "he must realign his secondary loyalties. He is not free to be a maverick or a 'fifth columnist' within the organization. He is not free to consider personal desires or personal sacrifice. If he is genuinely loyal, he will not wait until his retirement benefits are assured, or until he has secured another position, or until he has secured a favorable recommendation. He will take his stand regardless of personal sacrifice."

God help us to be the men of God!

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July, 1985 Editorial

WHEN SILENCE IS GOLDEN

The sixty-second psalm has been called the "only" psalm from the six-fold use of the word found in verses one, two, four, five, six and nine.

We note the word "only" in verse one. "Truly (or only) my soul waiteth upon God; from him cometh my salvation." Unadulterated faith is that which rests on God alone. Confidence which relies partly on God and partly on self or some other person or thing is vain confidence.

We have pictured here in this first verse a surrendered soul--"My soul waiteth upon God." The posture here is that of a soul whose inmost self draws near in reverent obedience to God, not in a formal hypocritical manner but in an attitude of humbled awe, submission and acquiescence.

Not only is there pictured here a surrendered soul but a silent soul. The original is "only to God is my soul silence." Not a rebellious word or thought is allowed to break in to disrupt the peaceful silence. "No eloquence in the world is half so full of meaning as the patient silence of a child of God. It is an eminent work of grace to bring down the will and subdue the affections to such a degree, that the whole mind lies before the Lord like the sea beneath the wind, ready to be moved by every breath of his mouth, but free from all inward and self-caused emotion, as also from all power to be moved by anything other than the divine will. We should be wax to the Lord, but adamant to every other force If to wait on God be worship, to wait on the creature is idolatry; if to wait on God alone be true faith, to associate an arm of flesh with Him is audacious unbelief." (C. H. Spurgeon)

A soul in silence before God! No fretting to have one's way. No carnal reasoning to obscure God's perfect will. No other voice allowed to turn the soul away from God's Sovereign plan. A silence that takes the soul away from the rush and bustle of a materialistic way of life. A silence before omnipotence that allows a soul a right perspective of time in relationship to eternity.

There are several reasons for a silent, resting, expecting, reflecting, solicitous and observing posture. In the first place we ought to be subject to God as silent disciples before a master. Whatever God allows to happen to me, I need to be silent before Him, enduring whatever pain He designs to come my way, learning the lessons He would have me learn admiring His ways with my soul. In the next place, we ought to be subject to God as creatures keeping quiet before their Creator. In Isaiah 45:9 we read, "Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work He hath no hands?" In the third place we ought to be subject to God as clay in the hands of the potter, ready for the form into which He wisheth to fashion us. "As clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel." Jer. 18:6

Fourthly, we ought to be subject to God, as a servant to a master, observing His wish, even in the most menial affairs. George Muller comments on this first verse in Psalm sixty-two: "The natural mind is ever prone to reason, when we ought to believe; to be at work, when we ought to be quiet; to go our own way, when we ought steadily to walk on in God's ways, however trying to nature How different if one is enabled to wait God's own time, after many seasons of prayer it may be, and after much exercise of faith and patience it may be, how sweet it is, and what a present recompense does the soul at once receive for trusting in God, and waiting patiently for his deliverance."

This Psalm gives us a third glimpse and that is of a steadfast soul In verse two we read, "He only is my rock and my salvation, he is my defence; I shall not be greatly moved." Here we run across that word "only" again. David had often lain concealed in rocky caverns, and here he compares his God to such a secure refuge, and declaring Him to be his only real protection, all-sufficient in Himself and never failing. The metaphor, however, changes with the words, "I shall not be greatly moved." A ship at anchor swings with the tide but is not swept away by the tempest. Personal weaknesses will cause one to be somewhat moved, but his faith in God will prevent him from being much tossed about. "Moved," as one says, "but not removed." When a person is sure of his salvation circumstances of life nor devils in hell can greatly alarm him.

There is a fourth picture we can glean from this Psalm, and that is of a secure soul. We look now to the sixth and seventh verses. The sixth verse is a repetition of the second verse with the exception of the last phrase. Here it is not "I shall not be greatly moved." The word "greatly" is left out here and we simply read, "I shall not be moved." God "only is my rock and my salvation." Here is perfect security. God alone, without other help, is the foundation and completion of our safety. When a soul fully realizes this he will not be moved in the least degree. In the words of Robert Hawker, "If God is my "refuge," what enemy can pursue me? If my "defense" what temptation shall wound me? If my "rock," what storm shall shake me? If my "salvation," what melancholy shall deject me? If my "glory, "what calumny shall defame me?"

When we turn to a comparison of this sixty-second psalm with the sixty-third psalm we gain a full-orbed picture of the value of practicing silence in the presence of God. In the words of Charles Mackintosh, "The heart is ever prone to divide its confidence between God and the creature. This will never do. We must "wait only upon God." "He only" must be our "rock," our "salvation," and our "defense." Then, we are frequently tempted to look to an arm of flesh first, and when that fails us, we look to God. This will never do either. He must be our first as well as our only resource. "O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee." This is the way in which the heart should ever treat the blessed God. This is the lesson of Psalm 63. When we have learned the blessedness of seeking God "only," we shall be sure to seek Him "early."

We virtually leave God out when we do not seek Him first and "only." What is most prominent in our lives, God or self? May God help us to practice silence before Him!

(Gleanings from The Treasury of David, Vol. 11)

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August, 1985 Editorial
OUR DIVINE MANDATE

A number of vital issues face the Christians of this day, and by "Christian" I am referring to those who have been made alive by the Spirit and not by name only. Such a one or ones must face the challenge of keeping alive spiritually along with maintaining personal Bible standards of holy living. These are Christians who are actively supporting local churches with their means, attendance and energies; who are keeping alive the vision of world evangelization; who are helping to build day schools, Bible Colleges, camp meetings, keeping foreign and home missionary endeavors on the move; who are helping provide proper literature for local Sunday schools and world-wide outreach programs.

The New Testament lays down general guidelines for church government; details are left to the demands of a particular situation. As long as a church maintains a ministry geared to building up the saints in the most holy faith and is participating in world evangelization she is moving within the bounds of New Testament demands. But in the light of these things, every individual and every church must build around a single purpose or goal for its existence, the evangelization of the world--obedience to the great commission.

There were "musts" in the life of Jesus while He was here on earth. Dr. Dale Yocum points these out in his book, *This Present World*. Jesus spoke of the "must" of a great conviction when He was but twelve years old, "I must be about my Father's business," fully dedicated to the will of His Father. In His early ministry there was the "must" of a great compassion: "He must needs go through Samaria." His task was to break down barriers of prejudice that keep so many from receiving the gospel message. Then there was the "must" of a great commission in the life of Jesus: "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." Finally, there was the "must" of a great cost: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up." All these "musts" have to do with the great redemptive purposes of God through His Son Jesus Christ for a race of people lost in the darkness of sin's dread night.

There were also "musts" in the Apostle Paul's life. At the time of his conversion he received two major "musts." The first one was the "must" of commission. "And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." Acts 9:6. This is spelled out later in Acts 26:16-19, "I have appeared unto thee..., to make thee a minister and a witness Delivering thee from the people and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me." Paul testified, "I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision."

The second "must" in Paul's life was the "must" of cost. "For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake" (Acts 9:16). Paul's suffering followed in the train of his obedience in carrying out the great commission.

I say without equivocation that the chief priority of the church is that of the evangelization of the world. It is a divine mandate. The "must" of Jesus and of Paul must grip us as it did, first Jesus, and then Paul as he was struck down by the Holy Spirit on the road to Damascus. There are so many things or Scriptural demands that must be fitted into this ONE supreme demand or priority. And herein lies the chief danger of the church of today--the misunderstanding of priorities. There can be no strength apart from unity. Unity in the body (the church) was Christ's chief burden. "I pray... that they all may be one; as thou, Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou has sent me." Jesus' "musts" must be ours--the must of conviction of purpose (to be about the Father's business); the must of compassion (to save the lost and to remove prejudice); the must of compassion (the evangelization of the world); the must of cost (the laying down of our life if need be for the great redemptive purposes of God in the world.)

Divisions come in the body of Christ where carnality, either passively through ignorance from the lack of a Spirit guided life, or actively from a vicious and selfish motive which throws the whole program of God out of balance. When the chief aim or emphasis of a church or congregation is to be different, even if it means total isolation from the world, its priorities are wrong. We must not be misunderstood, this is not a plea for worldly conformity. We remain adamant that there must be purity of heart, purity of motives, purity when it comes to separation from worldly living and worldly mindedness, but purity of separation does not include isolation

from the world. There must be a recognition of our divine mandate and go afresh "into the world," to fulfill our great and chief task--the Great Commission.

All the vital issues that involve victorious Christian living must be viewed and held in the right relationship to the one supreme mandate, which is the great redemptive purpose of God in Christ Jesus. Why is it so essential that I have and maintain a vital life with God? That I may exalt my superiority over others who do not? Indeed not, but it is that I may glorify God in His purposes for mankind. Why should I maintain Bible standards of holy living? Is this to be an end in itself. As important as this is, if "standards" become the end or goal of my ministry I have stopped short of the mandate that was handed me--the evangelization of the world.

When deep spirituality, standards of holy living, denominationalism, Bible Colleges, missionary endeavors and all that has to do with Christianity are not kept in right perspective to the great purposes of God for mankind, individuals, churches, denominations, religious sects fall into the awful traps of legalism, bigotry and light rejection. When this becomes the case Holy Ghost revival is the only way out.

Conservative Christianity of this day is in dire danger and has not altogether escaped these infamous traps that Satan has set for the true church of God in these latter days. God help us as holy people of God to maintain all that is vital to Godly living and to keep all essentials in right perspective to the ONE mandate to us in the great commission!

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September, 1985 Editorial
HATRED WITHOUT A CAUSE

"They hated me without a cause" (John 15:25)

The word "hate" that appears here is used especially of malicious and unjustifiable feelings toward others, whether towards the innocent or by mutual animosity. It carries the implication of active ill will, desire to harm others, evil intent. It is a state of mind with intention to do evil.

Why did those who called for the crucifixion of Jesus hate Him? He came to save, not to condemn (John 3:16-17). How important it is that we take close heed to this for we, as His followers, are identified with Him in that purpose!

Who was this One they hated? He never committed one sin. There was no guile, no deceit, no subtlety found in Him. He did not retaliate. He had no "get back" spirit in Him. He suffered in silence with no threat. He prayed for His tormentors, "Father forgive them." He sought us who were lost hopelessly in order to save us (read I Peter 2:21-25).

Without a cause? Yes! but not without a reason. They had to have a reason. When the Jews took up stones to stone Jesus on one occasion, Jesus asked them, "many good works have I showed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?" Their answer, "For a good work,

we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God" (John 10:31-33). What were those Jews doing? They were endeavoring to shift the blame of their hatred over on Jesus. Jesus had preached to them truth and they, deep in their hearts, knew it. He was a faithful witness to truth. And herein lay the cause of their hatred. Jesus brought light to this world --He was the light. Light, if accepted and followed, brings redemption and release, but when rejected brings condemnation. "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil, For everyone that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved" (John 3:20-21). There is no neutral ground here. The light of Christ exposes the blackness of sin and a sinner will be forced to either hate his sin or hate the light that exposes him. Light brings with it a two-fold revelation, first the wrongness of the sin that he loves, and then the perversity of his own nature in the willingness to do what he knows is inexcusable. God has placed within man a conscience and when his own conscience condemns him because of what he knows to be right, he is in misery. But he loves his sin and so hates the light that has made him miserable.

But why hate Jesus? Jesus Christ is light personalized, incarnate. It was He who exposed the blackness of their sins and their sin and so they hated Him with viciousness and malicious animosity! But it was not the Romans (they performed the act of crucifixion) who hated Him most violently, but the Jewish religious leaders--the church of that day. Pilate would have liked to let Christ go, but it was the religious professors of that day that subjected Jesus to the beastly form of torture and crucifixion.

No one hates religion. The world doesn't hate religion. The "god of this world" will go hand in hand with those religious ones who estimate their success according to the standards of this world. The Jewish people of Christ's day so hated the "light" that Christ was and represented that they joined in with the world, the Romans, to gain a sentence against Jesus.

There is no escaping the hatred of those who reject light if one purposes to walk in the light with Jesus. Jesus warned His followers, "Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake" (Matt. 19:22). Again, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12). Again, "What communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial?" There is an unavoidable antagonism between light and darkness, between the spirit of Christ and the spirit of the world. There is no way to remove this enmity by softening down the truth or by a compromise position. The "worldly Christian" (?) is always troubled with the light of God's Word, and with that individual who insists on walking in all the light. The tithe question, hair question, dress question, Sabbath keeping question, worldly entertainment question (viewing home movies, etc.), whatever God's standard of living in this present world may demand, is never a problem to one who is walking in the light. Press these issues on one who has not sold out lock-stock-and-barrel to Christ and there arises in the heart a "hatred" of the way and of those who insist in walking in that way.

This "hatred without a cause" is identifiable. Men may loathe it, wish it wasn't there, hate himself for what he is, but regardless of all this, there is in all unregenerate souls an inward disposition, tendency, inclination to be like the devil and unlike Christ; to agree with the devil and

disagree with God; to please the devil and displease God; go with the devil and not go with God; choose the devil for a friend instead of Jesus Christ the Saviour.

Furthermore, this "hatred without a cause" can be identified as an inborn love of self; self first, all for self. It breeds pride, conceit, vanity, arrogance. It is an apart-from-God-ness, a hold-God-off attitude. Just keep God out. No time or place for God. A get-along-without-God disposition. It is an "against-hess" toward holiness, an aversion to, defiance of holiness. It is an inward incitement to sin, to lie, steal, be hateful. It is a spirit of self-preservation, independency--even of God; a selfcenteredness--"don't want anyone to tell me." A "hang on to what I want" spirit. Like the old setting hen who is going to "set" regardless, even if all she is "setting" on is a glass egg and a door knob. It is a "blame others" spirit that accuses the preacher who dares to preach the truth. They say of him, "you've torn our church apart. We were getting along fine until you came."

In Christians who have been saved but not entirely sanctified, it is a disposition to let down, ease off, not be loyal to Christ, the Church, Bible doctrines and standards. It is an evil tendency to neglect the Bible, prayer, testimony, Christian duty; to avoid Christian association, obligation and responsibility. It manifests itself as from a love for to a passion for worldliness--worldly pleasures, practices and standards that are contrary to God's Word. It is a strong inward tendency to fail God. It weakens devotion and saps the vitality out of devoutness; weakens resolution and deteriorates determination to keep true. Its whole tendency is to start and hasten backsliding. It is an inward moral drag on the soul.

Is there a cure for this soul disease? Thank God there is! "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate" (Heb. 13:12).

"Christ... loved the church (the born-again ones), 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" (Eph. 5:25-27).

"The oath which he sware to our father Abraham, That he would grant unto us, that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life" (Luke 1:73-75).

"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. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it" (I Thess. 5:23, 24).

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October, 1985 Editorial
SERVING OUR GENERATION

While the religion of humanism is sweeping Europe and North America, Christianity is fast being accepted throughout the African continent. We quote here from an address given by Gary S.

Maxey, principal of Calvary College of Theology, Nigeria Africa, at their first and recent graduation exercises, "For over one hundred years now, the most massive influx into churches in history has been taking place on the African continent. In the year 1900 barely three percent of the continent professed Christianity; but today one-half are followers of Jesus Christ... Every single day there is a net gain of 16,000 practicing Christians on this continent--at the same time that Europe and North America are experiencing a daily net loss of 7,600 practicing Christians."

This does not mean, however, that the multitudes in Africa who are adopting Christianity as their religion are coming to the knowledge of a spiritual "new birth" experience. As Akobunda Onwuegbulam, general superintendent of the Bible Missionary Church in Nigeria, stated, "Our task is to Christianize Christianity." Calvary College of Theology (our own Bible College in Nigeria) has been raised up by God to accomplish this great task.

The military Governor of Rivers State, Oyakhilome, in his written address to the first graduating class of Calvary College of Theology, praised the Bible Missionary Church in America for their financial contribution and for sending to Nigeria missionaries dedicated to this task.

In the three short years the school has existed it has now graduated its first class of thirty-one saved, sanctified, Spirit-filled, zealous preachers, dedicated to the Christianizing of Christianity on their continent. Revival is already on the move across the country of Nigeria and reaching into surrounding countries. The need is overwhelming, the task is great.

But is this not the need everywhere--to bring men to the fulfillment of the purpose God had in mind in creating mankind--to be conformed to the Image of His Son? We read in Acts 13:36, "For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep." And is this not our obligation and responsibility, to serve our own generations as King David did his?

Whether people are to be rescued from a lifeless profession of Christianity, saved out of a humanistic religion or resurrected from dead paganism, the task is the same the world over. The Bible Missionary Church is at this task around the world. Everywhere we turn, souls are perishing without hope. Our mission fields in Japan, Okinawa, the Philippines, New Guinea, Mexico, the Caribbean area, Guyana, South America, Africa, are understaffed and in great financial need.

We challenge our people everywhere to the continued ministry of intercessory prayer, fasting and sacrificial giving. This is our day. We must not fail. May God help us that as God's great judgment day comes upon humanity we will be able to render up a good accounting of the responsibility that now rests upon us all.

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November, 1985 Editorial
FIELDS "WHITE UNTO HARVEST"
(John 4:35)

"Fields . . . white already to harvest" are words spoken by Jesus. Immediately they bring to mind a number of things:

The condition of souls. We read Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 7:13, 14), "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

The multitude of souls alive today are on their way to hell! But the word "harvest" also suggests that there can be a reaping if there are laborers who will go into the harvest.

The commission of saints. Every born-again Christian is a saint. We are either a saint (a word always in the plural in the New Testament), or a sinner. There is no middle ground.

The word "harvest" brings to mind something that should occupy our immediate attention, our all-out energies, and an urgency that cannot be put off. When harvest time comes it cannot be put off without unrecoverable loss! In the work of winning souls it is always harvest time--"Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest."

Every saint is under a mandate by the Spirit of God to be occupied in the harvest. We are responsible for "our generation." No one is exempt. When Jesus gave the great commission He left no one "off the hook," young or old. King David "served his own generation by the will of God" (Acts 13:36). He continued serving his generation down to the end of his life. We read in Psalm 71:18, "Now also when I am old and gray-headed, O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come." Can we do less and get by? Never!

Christianity has always been on the go in this business of "harvesting" as long as the Spirit of God has been kept alive within. While on earth Jesus sent His followers out into the harvest. His command was to "go."

"Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city" (Luke 14:21).

"Go... into the highways" (Matt. 22:9). "Go into the village" (Matt. 21:2). "Go into the city" (Matt. 26:18). "Go ye... and teach all nations" (Matt. 28:19).

"Go ye into all the world" (Mark 16:15).

Vital Christianity has always been busy harvesting. Florence Nightingale went from her beautiful home to the bedside of dying soldiers. Billy Bray, the miner, went into the villages around about and taught and witnessed for "his father." Elizabeth Fry, although a busy mother, went into the prisons. Whenever Christianity has flourished people have gone across back yards to neighbors, gone to factory workers, a work-mate, a fellow student. Christianity at its best is religion on the march. It is mobile. In John Wesley's day, it was known as a "saddle-bags religion." It was born on the highway in the heart of One who called the twelve to follow Him up and down the trails and caravan routes of Palestine. It has been a world factor whenever it has been true to its genesis. It has failed when it has settled down.

The conflict of substitutes. Along with a born-again experience comes a passion for souls. The immediate impulse of a saved experience is the urge to tell it out, to help that friend get saved. Jesus "was moved with compassion" when He beheld the multitudes. The Christ spirit within one's heart will produce a compassion for the lost. When one is saved the most natural thing is to want others to be saved. This God given impulse must be exercised or it will be lost.

In our text Jesus is exhorting, "lift up your eyes, and look." Eyes that need to be lifted up suggest lost vision, lost compassion, eyes not single to the glory of God. Something has happened, Darkness has come, light has gone out (read Luke 11:34-36). There has been a diverting of attention and energies. Something, has taken the place of soulwinning. Church activities have been substituted. This is the very thing that caused God to turn away from His chosen people Israel to the Gentiles. This is what Jesus referred to when he said, "Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Matt. 21:43). Jesus is saying, "Look up, get your eyes open., be aware and alert to your responsibility."

The New Testament pattern is evangelism (harvesting of souls) done by everybody everywhere, all the time. It appears that our churches today are organized for everything but the one most essential thing--soul winning. We are organized for worship, for music, for Bible study, for missions, for finance--all good and part of the program--but when it comes to the central project of the church, that for which it may be said the church primarily exists, we are almost completely minus any organization, as bare of organization as though evangelism never entered our thoughts.

We are doing a wonderful job of running our churches, spending our energies in legitimate but secondary matters, while a world lying at our doors rocks on their way to the judgment of God unprepared.

The culmination of spiritual slumber. Jesus said, "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work." We read in Jeremiah 8:20, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." Sleeping while harvest time is on can only result in loss of the harvest. Where there is no harvest, starvation and death follow.

The "Cop-Out" Syndrome. Churches become stalemated at the altar. There would appear to be a vicious cycle of running people-church people--through the altar again and again. Those who pray through are not "programmed" into soul-winning efforts. Pastors are kept busy reviving their own members in place of developing them into disciples. Jesus sent His followers out with a commission and they went out. They were made conscious of a lost world and their responsibility to take the gospel to them. When Jesus gave them the command to "tarry... in Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high," they had already been commissioned to evangelize a lost world and they understood that the tarrying in Jerusalem was for the purpose of equipping them for that task--"ye shall receive power., and ye shall be witnesses. The necessity of receiving a pure heart has been faithfully preached, but has that been balanced with the commission to be witnesses to a lost world?

There is absolutely no room for an excuse that will remove our responsibility to carry the message of full salvation to a lost world!

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December, 1985 Editorial
"TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY"
Luke 2:10

Christ Jesus the Lord is come! His coming into the world is the tidings of great joy the angel announced on that first Christmas night. What kind of a world would it be if Christ had not come? The God-haters and Christ-rejecters little realize the blessings and benefits they have and enjoy because Christ came into this world.

A little book has been published with the title "If Christ Had Not Come." It was inspired by the words of Jesus, "If I had not come" (John 15:22). Think a moment with me-what if Christ had not come incarnate into this world?

What would the month of December be like if Christ had not come? Christmas comes in December. There would be no Christmas. There would be no celebration of the birth of the Christ Child. There would be no gift giving, no holly, mistletoe or brightly lighted Christmas tree, nor stockings hung in the corner of the fireplace. There would be no "Song in the Air." "Silent Night," "Away in a Manger," "Hark The Herald Angels Sing," "Joy to the World," and many, many other Christmas songs and carols that fill the air with their jubilant melody through the month of December would never have been written for us to enjoy and to sing!

What would church be like had Christ not come? There would be no church spires pointing heavenward. Man is an incurably religious, worshipping being. He would be worshipping some idol that could bring him no joy, satisfaction or hope but that would only debase and corrupt him. History has proved this.

What would Sunday be like if Christ had not come?" We would not know Sunday as a day of worship and rest. To a Christian Sunday is the highlight of the week. Thank God for Sunday. It was Christ who gave us Sunday!

What would our bookshelves be like if Christ had not come? Pull every book off your shelves that has anything about Christ in it and what would you have left?

How would we mark time if Christ had not come?

If Christ had not come life would be a bewildering riddle. Man was created and brought into existence predestined to be conformed to the Image of the Son of God. Christ came, not to show man a better way--He is the WAY. Christ did not come to teach man great truths--He is TRUTH. He did not come to share with mankind the great philosophies of life--He is that LIFE. Without there would be no real going for He is the way. Man is lost and needs a guide. Without Christ there would be no knowing for man is in error and needs a teacher. Without Christ there is no living for man is dead and needs the impartation of life.

Our Bibles would end with Malachi if Christ had not come, and the book of Malachi ends with a curse--"I will come and smite the earth with a curse." Where would we be in sickness and death if Christ had not come? If Christ had not come, lived, died, rose from the dead, ascended into heaven and is presently seated at the right hand of the Father as our intercessor we would have no New Testament, no precious promises to rest upon, no hope beyond this life. We would still be in our sins, faith would be vain. There would be no comfort at the death of loved ones. There would be no hope for those who come to the river of death! Funeral services at the best are times of deep sorrow and "the parting at the river" is painful enough even where there is hope of a reunion. But death, so final in its earthly separation, would be so awfully dark, dismal and fearful if Christ had not come!

If Christ had not come man would be forever a hopeless, lonely orphan. Christ came to bring man back to God. O, the insufferable, eternal loneliness of a soul forever separated from its creator--alone in this world with no hope in the world to come. Mankind is suffering because of loneliness. How true it is that a soul is restless until it finds its rest in God.

There is a science-fiction story in which an astronaut was marooned on a barren chunk of rock lost in outer space. He had with him two vials: one containing poison and the other a potion that would make him live forever. Realizing his predicament, he gulped down the poison. But then to his horror, he discovered he had swallowed the wrong vial--he had drunk the potion for immortality. And that meant that he would be cursed to exist forever--alone--a meaningless, unending life. Now, if Christ had not come our lives would be just like that!

But thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift--Christ is come! Hallelujah!

"There was no arm to save, there was no eye to pity:
Until Jesus, our Saviour, from glory came down.
He was mighty to save; He was strong to deliver.
He has bro't us salvation, a robe and a crown.
Hallelujah, hallelujah! Sing the triumphant strain.
Hallelujah for the Blood and the Lamb that was slain!"

But we cannot, we dare not end our meditation at this point. While we, who have been brought into the great family of God through the coming of Christ into this world rejoice because of the hope we have not only in His coming incarnate but through His death on the cross, there are the multitudes of earth living now that do not have this hope. For them it is as if Christ has not come unless we take them the glad story. For them there is no happy Christmas time, there is no true, satisfying worship of the true God. Sunday is no different than any other day. They live in darkness, they suffer in darkness, they die in darkness and in sin.

We have a responsibility and an obligation to do all we can to get the "tidings of great joy" to all who have not heard!

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THE END