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PARKER MAXEY'S EDITORIALS -- (1986)

Editorials from The Missionary Revivalist
Compiled by Duane V. Maxey

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January, 1986 Editorial
THINGS GOD CANNOT DO

Although it can rightfully be said that one is not eternally secure until he is secure in eternity, it is also true that one is eternally secure as long as he abides in God and God in him. In Deuteronomy 4:35 we read, "The Lord he is God; there is none else beside him." Again in Psalm 90:1, 2 we read, "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God." There are many false or pretended gods in the world but there is only ONE true and living God-omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent. However, there are some things He cannot do and the reason for this is that HE IS GOD!

God cannot die. God is from everlasting to everlasting. Our finite minds cannot grasp "everlasting." In fact the finite cannot comprehend the infinite. If we could fully grasp God He would not be God. Concerning God Isaiah tells us, "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 higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. 55:8, 9).

From everlasting to everlasting means that God has always been God, and He will always continue to be God. We will die, our loved ones will die. Death is certain for all mankind. As long as Jesus tarries His coming, death is sure to take away our close friends and loved ones from us. But death cannot rob us of God, for He has power over death, hell and the grave. All who are born of God are born of an everlasting Father and thereby have become His everlasting children. Earthly life will pass away. Those who are born from above will live with God forever. Those who are not born again from above will spend an eternity in the torments of hell.

Far better it is to maintain the smile of God in this life whatever that may involve--suffering, misunderstanding, heartache, heartbreak, persecution, ostracism--than to fight for an earthly organization, a temporary cause, an expediency only of time, and thereby forfeit everlasting life with God. Denominations will become corrupt, -- human ways of doing things will vanish. Far better to keep the smile of God than to get involved in something that would separate a soul from everlasting life. No matter how disillusioned, disappointed or downhearted we may become of human programs we can still sing, "When all around my souls gives way, He then is all my hope and stay."

When Dr. W. B. Hanson knew his life on earth was soon to end he went from his pulpit into the country and stood by the river watching its ceaseless flow on its course to the ocean. Night was approaching. Lifting his eyes first to the trees and then to the sky where God was lighting His great lamps, he spoke, first to the river, "River, when your waters cease their flow, I shall still be alive," and then as he gazed skyward, "Stars, I shall be alive when you fall from your sockets, for I shall enter into and dwell in the house of the Lord forever." Did not Jesus say, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (John 11:25, 26).

God cannot lie. We read in Hebrews 6:17, 18, "... God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." Again in Titus 1:2 we read these words, "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." Paul says (Romans 3:4) "Let God be true but every man a liar."

We can safely trust God's WORD. "Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away" (Luke 21:33). For thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name" (Ps. 138:2). This being so, a Christian need not be tossed about with every wind of doctrine but lay hold of the Word of God and rest on the fact that "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever" (Heb. 13:8). God will keep His Word. When conditions are met the promises are sure.

If we need forgiveness we have God's Word that He will forgive. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9).

If we need a pure heart He has promised cleansing. "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7). "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:25-27).

If our need is for strength and fortitude He has promised it. "That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with „might by his Spirit in the inner man (Eph. 3:16). "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you (I Pet. 5:10).

Read the Word of God. Many times you will run across a promise that will just fit your need at that particular time. Confidently stand upon that promise as your very own. God cannot lie. His promises are true. God requires of us no condition that we cannot meet and when we do, His Word never fails!

God cannot deny what He has provided for us in the cross of His Son, Jesus Christ. He cannot because He will not. In Romans 8:31 the question is raised, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" The writer here is saying in effect, if you doubt that God is for you, then answer this further question (verse 32), "He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

What God has purposed in eternity He has provided for in time in the incarnation and atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ. Shall He not forgive us our sins? The answer comes clear, "Whom he called, them he also justified." "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1).

Shall He not confer upon us, who are by nature aliens and by choice rebels, the title of sons of God? Again the answer comes clear, "Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of

Shall He not deliver us from our carnal-mindedness, from the subtle enmity of self-will and self-love? Surely: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Space here will not allow to relate all those divine ministries and human benefits that flow down to us in an endless stream from that crimson fountainhead at Calvary. God went the limit. He gave us His best. That best is the confidence we have that "no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly."

God cannot supply what He has conditionally made available to humanity apart from faith. There are unconditional benefits that flow freely to mankind from the great heart of God because of the atonement of Jesus Christ. It is reasonably certain that, but for the atonement, Adam and Eve would have been cut off at once, on the commission of sin, and the race would have become extinct. Because of the atonement all men are brought under the influences of the Holy Spirit; provisional salvation from all sin is available to all; the gracious providences of God are measured out to all; salvation for all who die in infancy is another unconditional benefit of atonement. These and others are unconditional benefits that God bestows upon all without respect of person.

However, as wonderful as these unconditional benefits are, God withholds those great redemptive provisions that are accessible to mankind except on the condition of faith. Why is this? For the simple fact that God has created man a free agent and man must take upon himself the responsibility of the destiny of his own soul.

"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6).

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36).

Then Jesus answered and said unto her (a woman of Canaan), O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt" (Matt. 15:28).

The importance of faith is seen in that:

You cannot be saved without faith--John 3:36.

You cannot live victoriously over the world without faith--I John 5:4.

You cannot please God without faith--Heb. 11:6.

You cannot have peace with God without faith--Romans 5:1.

You cannot have joy without faith--I Peter 1:8.

You are justified by faith and not by works--Gal. 2:16.

You are to live by faith--Gal. 2:20.

Christ dwells in your heart by faith--Eph. 3:17.

The Holy Spirit is received by faith--Gal. 3:2.

Faith is important because it honors God, and God always honors faith. Unbelief insults God's integrity and leaves the soul empty and void of blessing.

"Oh for a faith that will not shrink,
Though press'd by every foe;
That will not tremble on the brink
Of any earthly woe;

That will not murmur or complain
Beneath the chastening rod,
But in the hour of grief and pain
Will lean upon its God!

Lord, give us such a faith as this,
And then, whate'er may come,
We'll taste e'en here the hallow'd bliss
Of an eternal home!"

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February, 1986 Editorial
WITNESSING --CHURCHES MISS THE MARK

There was an article published recently in a large daily newspaper with the above title. It was written by a Catholic Priest. What he wrote is very enlightening and embarrassingly condemning, especially to us Protestant evangelicals. We quote here: "Introducing Christianity to outsiders is among its touchiest jobs, and surveys show most mainline church people warily avoid it. It takes initiative, grace and nerve. Some critics would say gall.

"It's a difficult task, going out on the highways and byways to present the case for Christianity . . . Even some clergy shun the work. This is in contrast to such groups as Jehovah's Witnesses, who make personal evangelism a tenet of their faith and who are expected to share in the witnessing work.

"Yet it's termed 'Christ's great commission'--to go and 'make disciples' of others. The churches consider it an imperative in an age of ballooning secularism overshadowing religion, but admit the common hesitations... In a society of rampant consumerism and materialism, many people 'couldn't care less' about faith, that 90 million Americans are unaffiliated with any organized religion, often called the 'unchurched.'

"Among those circumstances troubling signals have come to the churches, including membership decline in most mainline Protestant denominations, and recently, a peculiar drop in converts to Roman Catholicism."

The Catholic Priest who wrote the above goes ahead in the article to say concerning the Catholic Church, "Their numbers had been growing slowly but steadily for a decade, and then last year, they abruptly fell about 4 percent, Shortly beforehand, in late 1982, Catholic bishops had reduced their evangelism push. They cut off further budget, staff or program for their committee on evangelization, in effect immobilizing it. But after last year's downturn in converts, steps were begun last June to revive the effort. They've begun to fire it up again. It was put on ice, but thank God they've begun a turn-around.

"Our job is to go out there beating the bushes, inviting people to come but many church, people shy away from it, They don't like to get their hands dirty with the hard work of evangelism, rapping on doors, phone-calls, mail campaigns. It involves a lot of rejection, of being ignored and brushed off."

The author of the above article further points out the drop in membership in the old line Protestant churches, including 15 million lapsed Catholics, and then suggests the following reasons why Christendom may not be doing its job:

He estimates that less than 2 percent of the active Catholics these days witness to their faith outside their immediate families--a fraction similar in Protestantism. (I wonder about the Bible Missionary Church.)

The ratio of priests to the number of unchurched people is smaller now than ever. (We also as Bible Missionaries are faced with a shortage of preachers and plagued with far too many preachers dropping out of the ministry for one reason or another.)

Churches have become increasingly absorbed in social issues leaving less time and energy for the tedious task of evangelizing--a problem often raised in Protestantism.

"On the other hand, such groups as Jehovah's Witnesses are booming. At last count there were nearly 700,000 Witnesses in the United States--and that figure represents only those who report involvement in personal evangelism. It does not count those who merely profess belief in the Witnesses' teachings."

Actually, what the Catholic Priest was advocating in the above article, is a return to the New Testament pattern of evangelism--evangelism done by everybody (not just pastor and evangelist); done everywhere (not just at the church building); done all the time (not just a few weeks out of the year while a special revival effort is put on). While the Catholic Priest's motive would be to bring people into the Catholic Church, our motive and drive should be the salvation of the lost, bringing them into the Kingdom of God through the new birth.

Nikolai Lenin, founder of the Soviet Union, memorized all four gospels word perfect and mastered the life of Christ. He claimed that Jesus Christ was the most profound leader ever to step on the human scene, from the educational point of view. Communism has used the methods of Christ in spreading communism and thus is more Biblical in methodology than evangelical organizations.

J. E. Conant makes this statement, "Satan works into church life and activity a multitude of things that need badly enough to be done, but which it is not the business of the Church to do, and thus steals away both consecrated time and service from the most earnest members, who are the very ones who would be first to take the Gospel to the lost if they were not entangled in these multiplied forms of "church work."

Jesus gave the church a mandate when He gave them the great commission and He also gave the church a plan to carry out His mandate. This is found in Luke 24:47, "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." Also in Acts 1:8, "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you..., ye shall be witnesses. ' But for one reason or another we have been switched off the main line. We are organized for worship, music, missions, finance, 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.

The gospel spread to the known world during the first century without radio, the printing press and all the other forms of news media that now are available, all because those who had been won to Christianity were out winning others. But today we have a lot of pew-sitters--people who think that if they are faithful in church attendance, put good-sized gifts into the offering plate, and get people to come, they have done their best. What is the answer? The pastor is the key man in this great responsibility. It is his duty to lead the people into the New Testament plan of

evangelism. Christ and Calvary is the foundation to build upon and this must be followed up with a twofold mission: (1) taking the gospel to the unreached; (2) discipling those that respond to the gospel to the place of maturity until they in turn become soul-winners.

The pastor must himself have a passion for the lost; he must be a traveler for lost souls; he must be a personal soul winner and he must realize the necessity of evangelizing and leading the church into the New Testament ministry of evangelism.

Are we going to continue to flit from one program to another, be occupied with the task of "baby-sitting" a congregation from year to year without seeing any substantial increase in "new births" or are we determined to be a soul-winning church?

Witnessing--churches are missing the mark!

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March, 1986 Editorial

PRAYING--CHURCHES MISS THE MARK

"God wondered." A wondering God? Why? It will stagger us when we seriously stop to consider the cause of God's wonder. We shall discover it to be of the greatest possible importance to every believer and the most momentous thing in our spiritual warfare.

God "wondered that there was no intercessor" (Isa. 59:16)--"none to interpose." But this was in the days under the Old Covenant, before the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ "full of grace and truth"--before the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, full of grace, and power, "helping our infirmity, "himself making intercession for us" and in us.

With everyday headlines testifying that our world is out of control, how great must be God's wonder today. There is no doubt that prayer is where the action is, and if we are not spending an impressionable period of time daily in prayer our effectiveness in God's Kingdom is not what it could be or should be as revealed in God's Word and in the annals of church history.

If we are to be a successful pray-er we must understand the importance of prayer, the hindrances to prayer, and be constantly challenged by examples of prayer-lives which changed the world around them.

Few there are these days who know anything about a daily multi-hour prayer session. It is this "brand" of pray-ers -- not Mayors, Presidents, Kings or Princes -- who are the molders of events. If we could only realize the dynamics of prayer! When the records are finally unveiled for all to behold it will be revealed that history was not really made in halls of Congress, chambers of Parliament or offices of armies or navies, but in prayer closets of intercessors, for the fate of the world is in the hands of nameless saints.

Why are so many Christians so often defeated? Because they pray so little. Why are many church-workers so often discouraged and disheartened? Because they pray so little. Why do most

men See so few brought "out of darkness to light" by their ministry? Because they pray so little. Why are not our churches on fire for God? Because there is so little prayer.

God's power is available today as ever before. His arm is not shortened that it cannot save.

We may be assured of this--the secret of all failure is our failure in secret prayer. If God "wondered" in the days of Isaiah, we need not be surprised to find that in the days of His flesh our Lord "marveled." He marveled at the unbelief of some-unbelief which actually prevented His doing any mighty work in their cities. What then must His "marvel" be today, when He sees amongst us who do truly love and adore Him, so few who really "stir themselves up to take hold of God"? Surely there is nothing so absolutely astonishing as a practically prayerless Christian.

It has been observed that there are few places in America where Christians really know how to pray and mainly because churches don't have a real prayer ministry. There are places on our earth where there are thousands turning to Christ, but in those countries people are praying--all nights of prayer are entered into on a regular weekly basis.

Satan is out in full force in these closing days of this age to hinder the church in this all important ministry of prayer. His great principal activity is that of deception. Revelation 20:3, 8. Tragically, the highest echelon of his deceit is concentrated on deluding Believers into feeling other activities are more important than prayer. Like one man put it, "How many times have I started a day of ministry with a brief season of prayer ended with the laconic plea 'Lord, help me today to do Your will in Your way!' then rushed off to attack my mental list of 'must do' items with a resolution to spend more time with the Lord 'later.' "

Public endeavors appeal to the carnal. What is seen of men appeals stronger to the "ego." The exercise of pouring ourselves out in prayer requires greater energy than work which can be seen and appreciated by others. Weakness for the praise of men motivates us to continue "public" endeavors. Thus it is far easier to get people to lead a project, stag, preach, etc., than to pray. Satan and a carnal heart foster prayerlessness.

The work of prayer is the most Christlike of all Christian exercises. It is the most unselfish. It is neither seen nor appreciated by mankind. It slays the ego.

How many times have your intentions been to spend a season in prayer, but a dozen things seemed to interfere at that moment? How many other times have you felt a plain disinclination or aversion to prayer? You say that you love God with all your heart, yet you choose to spend an hour talking on the phone with a friend in preference to an hour with the Lord. You have failed to come to grips with Satan's priorities of targeting your prayer time. Satan's subtlety is to first lessen prayer time of Believers, then eventually eliminate it. This is his primary tool in stealing our inner strength without our noticing it. Satan desires above all things to provide himself with servants who think they are God's children, and who are even looked upon as children of God by others. This is the deception of Satan. Beware!

There is another reason for prayerlessness. There are far too many these days who have never discovered the true worth of prayer, and therefore have never related it to effecting a change

in themselves and the world around them. But there is no reason or excuse for this ignorance of the value of prayer. History records too many examples of prayer's effectiveness.

The paramount value of prayer and its effectiveness in accomplishing success in the salvation of souls and the working out of God's Sovereign purposes can be traced in the prayer lives of the Saints of God recorded throughout God's holy Word from Genesis to Revelation and from Bible times down to this present age. How revealing and soul-searching it would be to take out time to study the lives of those who have accomplished great things for God through their ministry of prayer. Space here would forbid that, but I would direct your mind to a brief glimpse of the prayerful Jesus. A look at Jesus' prayer life and you can never again be comfortable with prayerlessness. On the surface it would appear that He had no need for prayer. Was He not God in the flesh? For what reason then, did He pray? Being man as well as God, He prayed that He might live out His life in order to fulfill the Father's will, which was to offer Himself on the cross. He prayed at His baptism; He prayed alone; He prayed and was transfigured; He prayed when joyful; He prayed before day; He prayed to escape perils of popularity; He prayed before great decisions; He prayed habitually; He prayed in a graveyard; He prayed on a mountain; He prayed for a backslider; He prayed in the Garden; He prayed on the Cross.

Surely Jesus in His life on earth left us with the right example and perspective and importance of prayer. Thus it is imperative that, "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk as he walked" (I John 2:6).

PRAYING--Churches miss the mark!

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April, 1986 Editorial
CHURCH WHEELS

I was impressed recently by a chapter entitled "Church On Wheels" in the book Good Enough For The Preacher by W. L. Boone. In speaking of "church wheels" the author was not alluding to those within a church who are ironically referred to as the "big-wheels" the officers and leaders. Rather, he was thinking about "automobile wheels, camper wheels, motorcycle wheels, 4-wheel drive wheels, and trailer wheels for horses, boats and snow machines." The question was asked, "What are these church wheels doing and where are they going?"

In their proper place and usage all these wheels could be justified but the question is, are they always kept in their proper place and usage in the light of living a sanctified, Spirit-filled, Spirit-controlled life in the present day and age?

God rightfully claims us as His own. Has He not created us? Has He not redeemed us from sin by His sacrifice on the cross? Does He not freely give us all things? Yet He has left us with our own free will. But this does not remove the fact that we are debtors to carry the news of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the billions of this day that have not heard the gospel story. Neither does it leave us without obligation to God and man to intercede for those who have lost their way. God's voice is calling today, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" He has given us the great

commission, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." He has called us to cross bearing, "Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple." He has commanded us to tarry for enduement of power to carry out His great commission. "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me." We are not our own. We cannot escape this responsibility. "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." In the light of these facts there will come a day of judgment in which we will be called upon to render up an account of our time, talents and money.

"Wheels" can be a blessing to aid in spreading abroad the gospel, or "wheels" can be a means of diverting us away from our moral responsibility and privilege of serving this present age. "Wheels" if not kept in their proper place can carry us away from God's will and work.

It is far easier to get on wheels than to get on our knees. "God saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor." God "sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before (Him) for the land, that (He) should not destroy it: but (He) found none." Where would God have to go to find intercessors today, people who carry a Holy Ghost burden for lost men and women? Far too many professed Christians today know far more about the pleasures of "wheels" than they know about crushing burdens for the lost. Give them a little break from the routine and they are out on car wheels going, going, going. Or maybe on camper wheels, motorcycle wheels (it's quite a fad today for men to spend time on motorcycle wheels with others or trying out 4-wheel drive vehicles on surrounding hills).

The most condemning thing about it all is not the "wheels" that get into the picture, but the lack of a real Holy Ghost implanted burden for a generation on their way to hell. When people professing entire sanctification cannot find time to intercede in prayer for the lost even their own lost loved ones but spend time on "wheels," where is the blessed Holy Ghost, the Spirit of God who yearns over the lost? How can He live in a heart and that heart not sense an awful burden for this poor, lost generation?

It is far easier for a preacher to get on "wheels" than to get in his study and dig out messages from God's Word that will feed and grip and enlighten and burden those under his care! It is the preaching of the Word under the anointing of the Spirit that God uses to make effective in the hearts of Christians His cause in the world. How the devil likes to divert a preacher from his study of the Word and his preparation time for preaching! He no more gets into his study until Satan will suggest a call he just must make. How much easier it is to get into his car and "wheel" across town to make a call, than to buckle down to hard, sweaty, prayerful study of the Word in preparation to preach effectively. Or the suggestion comes to do some chore that has been needing attention. All these and more, until the preaching of that man has no attraction in it--he has allowed "wheels" to carry him away from the most important duty and obligation he has.

It is far easier to get on "wheels" than to be faithful to regular church attendance. God's cause has been kept alive and made to progress by people of rugged character, dogged determination, faithfulness to duty, deep, burdened intercessory praying, faithfulness in attending the means of grace. "Wheels" have carried far too many away from their spiritual obligations to

visiting loved ones "across the way" when they should be in church. We have a shallow holiness today that is stranger to "death to loved ones," "death to peer pressure" but seemingly has no qualms about joy-riding on Sunday, visiting Grandma or some loved one on Sunday that takes them out of town and away from their place in church.

It is far easier to get on "wheels" for self than for lost souls! "Wheels" keep people on the go, rushing here and rushing there. "Wheels" carry us to the grocery store, to work, to church, to the mountains or some pleasure resort, on fishing and hunting trips, to a friend's house to spend an entire evening in chit-chat, to joy-ride on the Lord's day. When it is all summed up, we have made the wheels turn for the most part in selfish interests. Where is the burning urgency to ride our wheels to some lost soul with a burden to pray with him or to show concern that leaves out of our going that indebtedness we have to God as a redeemed soul? Paul said, "I am debtor." He suffered for lack of necessities. He went through "distresses, stripes, imprisonments, tumults, labours, watchings, and fastings." Why? He didn't have to, yet he did. His heart drove him to carry the gospel to the lost--he was a debtor, he had an obligation under God that drove him on to give his all to take the gospel to others in the measure he had received it. Sum up all your goings in life. What does it reveal? A concern for others or an activity mainly centered in self?

It is far easier to justify money for "wheels" than to sacrifice for the cause of the gospel. It all sums up to self, self, self! Giving goes down, not because wages have decreased, but buying to satisfy some selfish desire has increased until it has taken away ability to give as one should. When a person ceases to wait before God until his heart beats with the heart of God he loses his sense of values and priorities; he fails by failing to wait on God, to keep eternity's values in view; he becomes earthbound in his vision and materialistic values and desires build up within his being. It is then that more "wheels," purchased on time, begin to stack up on his property. Not only "wheels," but the whole ball of wax of materiality takes central place and there is less and less money left for the cause of Christ. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

What would happen if professed holiness people would begin to spend nights in prayer and waiting on God, daily seeking God to live in them and work His will through them in all things; would actually go all out to keep in perfect step with the blessed Holy Ghost? Would our missions department be thousands of dollars in the red? Would our churches remain small and struggling, barely able to keep their doors open? What would happen if we lived as dying men conscious that we may be called to meet the Master before the day we live in ended before sunset? Would it make a difference in the way we spend our money, our time and our energy?

It is far easier to ride around from one camp meeting to another throughout the summer months than spend and be spent to build strong local centers of holy fire! Camp meetings are wonderful times of spiritual refreshing and upbuilding and certainly have their place in the over-all program of any church and group of churches. Loyalty to one's own camp meeting both in attendance and in support is a duty and a privilege that should not be ignored or laid aside. However, strong local churches filled with Holy Ghost filled saints are the backbone that holds God's cause together. "Wheeling" from one camp to another to the neglect of one's obligation and responsibility to his own local congregation is to undermine the very foundation of the program of God in the world!

It is far easier to get on "wheels" and pursue our own selfish desires and appetites than live a life wholly dedicated to God! Quoting from E. M. Bounds' book, *Power Through Prayer*, a statement by Richard Baxter is a fitting close to this article: "Recreation to a minister must be as whetting is with the mower that is, to be used only so far as is necessary for his work. May a physician in plague-time take any more relaxation or recreation than is necessary for his life, when so many are expecting his help in a case of life and death? Will you stand by and see sinners gasping under the pangs of death, and say: 'God doth not require me to make myself a drudge and save them'? Is this the voice of ministerial or Christian compassion or rather of sensual laziness and diabolical cruelty?"

May God help us all to keep priorities in their proper place!

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May, 1986 Editorial
"FOR ME TO LIVE"

What will I do now? This is the question that young people face every spring when they come to the close of another school year. To many it is a baffling question. They have been occupied up to a point and suddenly the school year ends. A choice has to be made and thus the question, what next? There is an answer to this question.

There is a purpose that runs through life. We were created for a purpose. This purpose is stated briefly in Romans 8:29, "... he (God) did predestinate (us) to be conformed to the image of his son." "To be like Jesus!" Wherever we are, whatever we are doing, our goal is to be like Jesus. Frances Willard, the founder of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, lived an aimless life until she was nineteen years of age. She just lived--no particular purpose in life, it was just an existence. There was no driving motive to do or be anything in particular. Then she found Jesus. When she found Jesus she made a statement that is both profound and meaningful--"At last I have found real purpose in life and to which I can give myself without reservation." Life for Frances Willard took on new and full meaning. Every generation faces the questions of origin, duty and destiny--What am I? Whence came I? Whither go I? What is the purpose of my presence here? Jesus is the answer to the riddle of life--to be like Him here and to live with Him forever.

The secret of life is to give ourselves to Jesus without reservation. Ninety-nine percent for Christ and one percent for self will not work. It must be 100% for Christ all the time and everywhere (I Timothy 4:12-16).

There is a principle to live by. This principle is wrapped up in the matter of choice. The power to choose is a divine privilege that God has given to all men. It is the most powerful thing God ever gave man--it is an awesome responsibility and as free agents it is inescapable. We are the result of our own choices. God will hold us responsible for the choices we make. Why did God make us this way? He wanted someone He could fellowship with and that would love Him for what He is. Only a being of free choice could fulfill this. To choose to live by the principles of godliness and righteousness is to choose wisely.

A person can fumble the ball here if he is not careful. One can choose to run away from life. He can refuse to acknowledge true ownership and purpose. He can pattern after Jonah who "rose up to flee . . . from the presence of the Lord." It didn't work for Jonah and it won't work for anyone else.

On the other hand, a person can run along with life, live by the "I owe it to myself" philosophy of life, "do your own thing" when you want to and where you want to. Living by this principle soon runs into a dead-end road, disillusionment, heartache and hell.

It is possible for a person to run his life with a firm hand, maintain a rigid discipline in life and make something out of himself as far as this present life on earth is concerned. He may be a successful doctor, lawyer, educator, etc. in the eyes of others, but do it all for self and the here and now, ignoring life after death and his responsibility to his own never dying soul.

There is a Christian alternative. That alternative is to take your life and turn it over to God without reservation until God's perfect will becomes your only will and way in life. The will of God becomes the rule of life. It is the will of God that makes all men equally great. The highest service a person can render is a moment by moment life in the will of God. The greatest need of humanity is to have a heart preparation to do the will of God.

There is a practical outworking of this purpose and principle. This is well stated in Proverbs 3:5, 6, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart: and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." After saying all that has been said in this article I can hear that young person say, "But you still have not answered my question, school will soon be out and what am I going to do next?" The answer is found in the Scripture just given. God has promised to direct our paths if we trust in Him with all our heart, acknowledge Him in all our ways and "lean not to our own Understanding," i.e., trying to figure out life with our own limitations and reasonings. There are five things that God uses to help us determine the steps we should take in life:

He has given us His own Word. How we need to know His Word. His "Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." God never leads contrary to His Word. God also talks to us in our inner being. We say that He impresses us--brings to our mind thoughts--He leads us through impressions. These are never safe to follow alone. Impressions could be the voice of God or the voice of Satan. If it is the voice of God other things will fall in line--the Word of God, providential openings, etc.

A third means that God employs to guide us is through providential openings. The human tendency is to get in too big a hurry. God is never late. It may seem that He is. One of the greatest lessons in life is to learn to time with God. So many miss it here. "Be still and know that I am God," is the admonition of Scripture. We are to "rest in the Lord" and trust Him to reveal the steps we are to take in life. The right door will open if we will but follow His leadership and not get impatient with the seeming "slowness" of God.

If we are bent on following God and not our own preconceived ideas or ways there will be that inner assurance that He is leading and having His way and that will be seen to be the most reasonable way. In the long run God's ways are the ways that harmonize with reason.

There are times when it is advisable to counsel with others who are godly. The final decision, however, is the individual's own responsibility.

So what is the conclusion of this whole matter?

Trust in the Lord with all thy heart! You must believe God that He will guide you.

Watch for the open door. If God is in it you will not have to knock a door down to go through it. Closed doors and open doors are of God's making. Believe the promise--"He shall direct thy path.

Move in harmony with the Word of God. The blessed Holy Spirit inspired the Word and He never leads contrary to it.

God will never lead you to do anything foolish or out of harmony with good reason and common sense.

Pay heed to good, sanctified counsel, but make your own decisions in the Lord!

The Apostle Paul summed it all up when he wrote, "For me to live is Christ," living out the Christ life, "who did not sin, neither was guile found in his mouth, who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; When he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously" (I Peter 2:22-23).

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June, 1986 Editorial
A SLAP ON THE FACE

"It is the command of Jesus (Matt. 5:39), that 'If anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also. For many this is a kind of one-sentence summary of Christianity. But what does it mean? To strike a man on the cheek is to slap him across the face. A slap, if it is given with force, is given with the palm of the hand. It is possible and natural to slap a man on the left cheek in that way; but if you are to slap him on the right cheek, you must either contort the hand in such a way that no force can be exerted, or you must flick him on the cheek with the back of the hand. Now, in Jewish codified law a flick with the back of the hand is a far worse insult than an honest blow, and is punishable with double damages: What this therefore means is: No matter how bitterly and contemptuously and deliberately a man insults you, you must never resent it and grow bitter about it. NOW if Christianity meant turning the other cheek when we are slapped, we would get very little opportunity to practice it; but if Christianity means refusing to resent insults and slights, we get the opportunity to practice it every day" (William Barclay in FISHERS OF MEN, page 78). But who is sufficient for these things?

This portion of scripture that is here dealt with is found in the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus is laying down in this sermon the laws that govern the kingdom of heaven. He is describing the kind of life His disciples are to live. It is a message on holiness. He did not preach till to the multitudes, but to a small group of His disciples.

The Sermon on the Mount sets forth the laws of holy living. The way of entrance into a holy life is depicted in the beatitudes found at the very beginning of the sermon. It is those individuals who through absolute honesty concerning their own spiritual poverty, who are heart broken over their poverty, who are gripped with a spirit of humility and a holy heart, It is then, and only then, that these are equipped to become peacemakers; to withstand persecutions and all manner of evil and false accusations designed against them. These are the ones that are enabled through the power of the indwelling Spirit to live out the laws of the kingdom as set forth in this Sermon on the Mount.

It is those who have been made holy by a supernatural work of grace that are the salt of the earth. These are the ones who are the light of the world, whose righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees, who have been delivered from that murderous spirit of capital anger.

These are the ones who have been cleansed from the moral impurity of a sex crazed world -- cleansed in thought, word, and deed.

These are the ones whose speech and communications are dependable and upright, who do not backbite with their tongue nor do evil to their neighbor, who can be smitten on the right cheek and bear the insult in the Spirit of Christ.

It is this holy man of God that is given power to love his enemies and to return good for evil. His heart has been made perfect in love like unto that of His heavenly Father.

But why did Jesus withdraw from the multitudes to bring this message to just His few followers? Did he not intend this enunciation of the laws of His kingdom for the multitudes? Did Jesus abandon the multitude, have no care for the multitude and present His teaching to just a small handful? Yes, that is so! But why? He left the multitude in order that He might get back to the multitude. Oh, no. Jesus did not forget the multitude. They were constantly in His vision and in His heart. Later on in the book of Matthew we read these words, "But when he (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."

God is concerned about a lost and dying world. This present age groans and travails to be delivered from the curse of sin. God's method of healing its wounds and assuaging its griefs is the planting of the sons of God-holy men and women who have the principles of the Kingdom of God wrought within them--in the midst of dying, hell bound men and women.

In the sixth chapter of this sermon on the mount Jesus taught us that we should pray and how to pray. He taught us that we should not only pray, but fast and pray. He taught us that we should not be concerned about material things, but seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. In the seventh chapter He taught us how to distinguish between the false and the true. He ended his teaching with the parable of the two builders. Many are building on false foundations today. God help us that we may build on the proper foundation and that we may become channels through which God can work to reach the multitudes.

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July, 1986 Editorial

INHERITING THE PROMISE

Between the time when God gave to Abraham the promise, "I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing," and his receiving its fulfillment lay a time period of years. We can learn from Abraham's life during that interim those elements that are necessary in the life of a man in order for the complete fulfillment of God's promises. Those primary elements consist of boldness, patience and an active participation in doing the will of God. A study of Abraham's life will certainly reveal these three basic elements. The element of boldness was an outstanding characteristic of Abraham's life and should be of every sanctified individual.

Boldness toward God is one of the strongest roots of the Christian life. It is a quality that is sorely needed in this day when all hell is let loose with a determination to destroy Christianity from the earth; Under the pressure of persecution the disciples prayed for boldness--' 'And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness" (Acts 4:29, 31). If mankind ever needed to pray a prayer like that it is today!

Webster defines boldness as being fearless, confident, daring, brave, dauntless, indomitable, stouthearted, unshrinking. All of these traits Abraham manifested in his walk with God. The opposite of boldness is to be cowardly, fainthearted, fearful, shrinking, flinching.

Christian boldness is the product of the grace of God. In order to possess this boldness one must be clear before God. All guilt must be removed from the soul. One's heart must be made pure by the blood of the Lamb and he must be in perfect fellowship with God. Only then can that soul possess a fearlessness to stand before a gainsaying and God-hating world to proclaim the full counsel of God and that even unto death.

In Hebrews 3:6 we read, "But Christ as son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence (same word here that is translated "boldness" in other places) and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." Again in Hebrews 10:35, 36, "Cast not away therefore your confidence (boldness), which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise" (10:35, 36).

In I John 4:17 we read, "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world."

Without boldness there is no strength to persevere, no power to draw nigh to the throne of grace in prayer, no liberty to enter into the full fellowship of God in the holiest. Thus the Hebrews are urged not to cast away their boldness because "it has great recompense of reward."

To possess this boldness there are qualifications to be met. Boldness is not indiscriminately bestowed. Because of Christ's death for both pardon and purity and because of His perpetual priesthood, which is an assurance of ever-available help and mercy, the writer of Hebrews makes a compelling appeal: "let us draw near" (10:22). What are the qualifications in order to permit one to possess this "boldness to enter into the holiest"? There must be a true heart. This is simple and sincere dedication to the perfect and complete will of God as revealed in His Word and wrought out in His providential leadings. A divided, unyielded, or lukewarm heart will be repelled. There must be a giving over of all legal rights to another. There must be a recognition of ownership by another. It means that there will no longer be a free will of one's own but the fulfilling of another's will; life under another's control. It is the acceptance of Christ as Lord and Master.

There must also be the full assurance of faith in the provision God has made through His Son in His death on the cross. These are the conditions, the elements that give one "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus," and a boldness to live a victorious life in the midst of a wicked and perverse age--a boldness that comes from the assurance of God's promises and the witness of the spirit to our acceptance.

Boldness once gained can be lost. The committing of known and willful sin will sever the relationship of a soul with God and bring condemnation in the place of boldness. Many other things can, if allowed to, rob one of boldness: the neglecting to do right and good, the terrible wickedness of the world around, the carnal heart within, disobedience in so-called little things, failure to mind the checks of the Spirit, neglect of prayer and meditation, neglect of Bible reading, study and research. All disobedience and worldliness will clip the wings of the soul and if continued, will fling the soul into the slough of despond, thus making that soul ineffective for God in this world. On the other hand, it may be something lawful in itself but allowed too large a place in our interests or affections until communications are weakened or cut off between the soul and God, robbing that soul of its confidence and boldness. When one has his hands filled, and something more tempting is offered, he may either directly cast away what he has or, by trying to take the new object into hands already full, gradually lose hold of what he first held fast.

The cares of life stand high in the list of those things that choke out the life of the spirit within. One may give way to fear. When pressure comes on, when disease takes over the body, when financial reverses come, when human relationships are strained because one has taken the narrow way--these and a multitude of other distractions enter in until one loses sight of the Sovereignty of God and the divine assurance of final victory. Boldness to stand up and be counted wavers, weakness takes over and a soul loses his effectiveness in being a positive influence for God and righteousness. Reader, have you maintained your boldness?

One of the great pitfalls that so many fall into in this day is the failure to maintain a balanced holiness. Overemphasis in some areas of Christian life or under-emphasis leaves one unbalanced and thus ineffective. Purity of heart, consistency of outward standards of holy living, witnessing effectively to a lost world are all involved in God's purposes and must be kept in proper balance. There must be a boldness to proclaim the entire counsel of God in proper balance if we are to maintain God's smile of approval and be effective in winning the lost.

Boldness must be maintained at any cost if we are to reap the reward of an endless life of victory! "Cast not away your boldness which hath great recompence of reward." Your boldness you must never dispense with for a single moment from now to the end of your life. It is your strength. In the vigor and joy of the Christian life, in the bright and joyous fellowship with God, in the courage for meeting the battle with the world and sin, the reward is great.

Paul said, "this one thing I do." He had a singleness of heart and mind to do the will of God. Sectarianism, divisions among God's people, isolationism, side issues and pet theories and theologies abound in this our day. People are moving within the narrow bounds of preconceived ideas while the great program of God for a lost and dying world is set aside. God grant that His people will maintain a boldness of heart and life to do the will of God!

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August, 1986 Editorial
INHERITING THE PROMISE

In a previous editorial we suggested that there are three elements necessary in the life of a Christian in order for the complete fulfillment of God's promises. Those primary elements consist of boldness, patience and an active participation in doing the will of God. They are all illustrated in the life of Abraham in that time period after God had given him promises and until those promises were fulfilled. We want to consider now that element of patience.

We read in Hebrews 10:35, 36, "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise." Between the faith that accepts a promise, and the experience that fully inherits or receives it, there often lie years of discipline and training needed to fit and perfect us for the inward possession of what God has to give. Whether it be a promise to be realized in this world or the coming, we have need of patience. Therefore cast not away, never for a moment lose hold of, hold fast firm to the end, your boldness--ye have need of patience. In chapter six of the book of Hebrews we are exhorted to "be imitators of them who through faith and longsuffering inherited the promise." This is one of the great practical lessons of the Epistle. Without perseverance, endurance, steadfastness, faith is vain; the only proof that it is a living, saving faith is that it holds fast its boldness firm unto the end. It takes patience to make this actual in one's life.

Many who started out in this Christian life began well, but stood still and then turned back. The Christian life is a race. To begin profits nothing unless we run to the end and reach the goal. Faith may accept; only longsuffering and patience inherit the promise. Day by day, without intermission, rather with ever growing zeal and diligence, our allegiance to Jesus our Leader must

be maintained, or backsliding must inevitably ensue. The Church of Christ in far too many cases is a very hospital of backsliding Christians who meant honestly, in the joy of their first love, to live wholly for God, and who yet gradually sank down into a life of formality and feebleness. There is nothing the church needs more than the preaching of daily diligence and perseverance as the indispensable condition of growth and strength--a day by day patient living for God.

The Scripture warns here, "be not slothful," not for a single day. We may lose in an hour of unwatchfulness what we have gained in a year. Christ and His service asks of us our undivided, unceasing attention. We must not let God's way appear too slow or too difficult, but let patience have its perfect work. As the husbandman has long patience with the seed, God is patient with you. Be patient with Him. Just remember this simple lesson. Day by day renew our surrender to Jesus, and your faith in Him. Faith and patience must inherit the promises.

God does not intend that we fail in our Christian walk. James writes, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (1:2-4). God designs that all things work for the good of His children. Do not the Scriptures say "that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose"? Knowing this, the Christian is persuaded that trials are assured of being antecedents to triumph, and so are a source of joy. It is the trying of our faith through divers trials that worketh patience--a persistent firmness.

The resisting of temptation and conquering the tempter beget hardihood and solidity and thus work for our good. Divers temptations no doubt are those various forms of external things which become internal temptations. They may be hostile forms, as persecutions and assaults (as in Luke 8:13), and these tempt to yield through cowardice: or they may seducing forms, to which we yield by compliance. Through patience, a moral firmness, the soul wards off these divers temptations and retains its moral integrity. The calling of our moral powers through temptations into successful action increases the power, just as the muscle is hardened through exercise. Thus the perfectness of our Christian life is to a large extent the result of time, trial and experience. Thus through the virtue of patience we come at last to inherit the promise of an everlasting life.

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September, 1986 Editorial
INHERITING THE PROMISE

There are three elements necessary in the life of a Christian in order for the complete fulfillment of God's promises. We have dealt with two of them in previous editorials--boldness and patience. We come now to deal with the third, namely, the active participation in doing the will of God.

The purpose of life is to do the will of God. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is

of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" I John 2:15-17.

The very core, or heart, or essence of sin involves the will of a free, moral agent. No one can sin any more than doing only his own will, totally his own will and continually his own will. In the final analysis "willfulness" made Lucifer the devil. God created mankind a free moral agent of self-will but with the design that, 'for his own good and happiness and for God's glory and by his own free choice he was to yield his will totally to the will of God. If man wants to be a success, if he does not want to end up a failure and loaded with regrets, then let him yield his will to the Sovereign will of God. We note seven things about the yielding of the will to God:

The will of God makes all men equally great. It puts them all on the same level. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." But at the cross the ground is level. At the cross mankind is brought back into the favor and fellowship of God. The way of the cross leads home. It is the will of God to save us. To live outside the will of God is to be lost. The Apostle Paul found the center of God's will for himself and lived in it. He could do no more than the total will of God. Neither can you, and to do that is success in this life and in the life to come.

He that doeth the will of God abideth forever. The Bible does not say, he that is a missionary, or he that goeth about doing good, or he that winneth souls, shall abide forever. BUT "he that doeth the will of God." God has a plan for every individual. For some it may be on a mission field. We are all called upon to witness for Him and get others saved. For a woman whom God has given children, it is God's will for her to be a faithful wife and mother and to raise her children for God and heaven and not the devil and hell'. This will take long hours of tedious cooking, house keeping, praying and training and teaching those children God gave her and she, if she fulfills her duty, will be just as much in the center of God's will as a man called to preach or a person called to the mission field.

We hear it said by people, "I'm striving to make Heaven my home." We strive for so many things, but we must adhere to the ONE thing of doing the will of God that He has mapped out for us.

Doing the will of God is to be the one thing that is to occupy us while we patiently wait. With every Christian who puts his trust in the living Christ and enters the Holiest of All of a sanctified life to live there, doing the will of God must be the link that unites the end to the beginning. We have been so little accustomed in our Christian life to give the doing of God's will its right place, and there is so much misconception about it, as if it is not actually expected of us, that it will take time and trouble to get the heart under the complete mastery of the thought--I am every moment to be doing nothing but the will of God. Jesus Christ lived so. He, our leader, will teach it us. He, our life, will live it in us. He, our High Priest, will by His Spirit, in this new and living way, bring us in very deed nigh to God.

The highest service man is capable of is a moment by moment living in the will of God. Whatever God's will may involve for an individual, whether to stand still, suffer, be loaded with more duties than he can seem to handle, be set aside; whatever man's lot may be in the providence and leadership of God, his lot is to accept it willingly, rejoice in it and moment by moment give

glory and praise to God. It is fatal to endeavor to take one's life in his own hands and try to work out what he thinks is the will and plan of God. Abraham tried this but it did not work. Moses also tried his own hand at working out God's will. Both men failed in their own endeavors but were finally used mightily of God when God was able to work His will in their lives without human interference. In the Scriptures God gives us many instances where individuals tried in their own human ways to work out the will of God, but in every instance they failed. In many cases God was gracious and longsuffering and was able, through human cooperation, to bring them back into His will.

The way to become heir to all of God's promises is to center in His will. Between God's giving the promise to Abraham and his receiving its fulfillment there lay years of obedient faith. If we see to the doing of God's will, He will see to our inheriting the promise. The sure mark of true faith, the blessed exercise of life within the veil, the proof of the power of Christ, the obedient One within us, the blessedness of fellowship with God will all come with this--doing His will. To do the will of God is the only way to God and His presence. Therefore, day by day, hour by hour, let this be our motto: Patience, that having done the will, ye may inherit the promise.

Doing the will of God is proof of a genuine faith. James tells us that faith without works is dead. Active obedience to the will of God reveals a heart of yieldedness. Abraham proved his genuineness to the will of God by offering Isaac his son upon the altar. Rahab the harlot justified her genuine faith by receiving the spies. It is impossible to have a genuine faith in God unless we enter into a life of active obedience to His will for us.

The greatest need of humanity is to have a heart preparation to do the will of God. What is it that makes a missionary, a preacher, an intercessor, a soul winner?--it is a heart that has been baptized and made pure by the blood of Christ until from its depth there is a cry, "What wouldst thou have me to do?"

But you may ask, how can I be sure that I have a heart that is prepared to do only the will of God? There must be a death to sinful self, a ceasing from one's own works, a resting in simple

says Isaac M. See, "than that we do the living." It is not we who live; it is Christ living in us, and the life that we now live in the flesh we live by the faith of the Son of God.

Oh, that Christ may become incarnate within us through the administration of the Holy Spirit until God's perfect will can be lived out in our lives moment by moment!

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October, 1986 Editorial
IS THAT SO?

Generalized truth is often misleading and can be injurious, especially to a new Christian. To say the least, general statements and incomplete thoughts many times have left people hanging in mid-air. For example, "a preacher once preached on the parable of the two builders and then concluded his message with the sentence, "If you build your life on Christ you are safe." The

message and the conclusion was moving and gripping, but when the emotional tide subsided and those who were moved upon allowed themselves to stop feeling and begin thinking the questions started coming, What did the preacher mean? Safe from what?

What this statement does not mean.

It does not mean that one is safe from temptation. James, in speaking to My brethren," exhorts them to "count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations," and then adds in a later verse, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." Temptations, or testings, come to all. The provinces of testing are manifold. They are come to us through the avenues of the physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual. God allows testings to come in order to strengthen us. He will have a tried people. There is no other way to build sterling character in a moral being. The devil tempts us in an effort to destroy us. The power to withstand temptation and come out victorious depends on one's grip on the Word of God (see James 1:22) and his innermost being where either God or self rules. There is a possibility of failure if one is wavering in his purpose, wavering in his faith or wavering because of a faulty spiritual foundation (James 1:4-6). The product of testing--God is working for us in this matter to develop, in us patience and fortitude that will secure for us the "crown of life."

It does not mean that one is safe from death. It is appointed unto man once to die. Death comes to sinner and saint alike. There is a difference, however, The sting of death is sin and the strength of sin is the law. Christ takes the sting out of death for those who are His and strength out of the law to harm if through repentance one has put his trust in Christ and is living an obedient life to God. Christ has made of death for a child of God an entrance into the state of bliss. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints" (Psa. 116:15). Again, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them" (Rev. 16:13).

It does not mean that one is safe from sorrow. Sorrow is one of the biggest facts in life. It is pointless to say sorrow ought not to be. Sin and sorrow and suffering are. It is not for us to say that God has made a mistake in allowing them. Our attitude as a saint toward sorrow and difficulty is not to ask that they may be prevented, but to ask for the grace of God to help us be what He intends us to be through every fire of sorrow. A sure way to find one's true self is in the fires of sorrow. A man who has never been through the fires of sorrow tends to be harsh, unsympathetic and contemptuous in his dealings with others. Sorrow does not always make a man better. Suffering will either build or destroy, make an individual better or bitter. Nevertheless, sorrow is inescapable.

It does not mean that one is safe from ill fortune or all the other ills to which humanity is heir. God has made this world to operate on rigid laws and He does not set these laws aside. "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matt. 5:45). God does give grace to His own to bear ill fortune with fortitude, patience and submissiveness, but not without a sure hope of final blessedness.

What does the statement mean, "If you build your life on Christ you are safe"? In His High Priestly Prayer Jesus prayed for those who would receive His sanctifying grace. He prayed that they might be kept. Some have termed this keeping as Jesus' "security" promise. God can fix us up so good that it will not be necessary to bill the devil to get us to Heaven.

He can keep us from evil habits! He breaks the power of canceled sin and sets the prisoner free from those sins and evils that he could not free himself from.

He can keep us from the evils of a carnal heart. Before Pentecost the religious leaders had to choose between stagnant formalism and the death of Christ; Judas had to choose between his Lord and thirty pieces of silver; the disciples had to choose between the danger of loyalty and the safety of flight; Peter had to choose between confessing Christ and denying Christ; Pilate had to choose between Christ and Barabbas.

He can keep us from false doctrine. Those who fail to get sanctified wholly will do one of three things: backslide and go back into sin; backslide and go off into some false religion or cult; or backslide and become a dead weight within the body of Christ, spewing forth an atmosphere of unbelief and deadness.

He can keep us from worldliness. The unsanctified have a secret love of the world (most times not so secret) and at the same time a fear of the world--fear of the scoffings and reproaches.

He can keep us from instability. Oh, the many who are carried about by every wind of doctrine, unstable, in one day and out the next, up one day and down the next. Peter before Pentecost was one moment confidently walking on the water and the next moment sinking and calling for help; he was one moment making a remarkable confession of Christ and the next moment protesting Christ's announcing His impending passion; on the way to the cross he was boasting of his readiness to die for Christ and in the Garden he couldn't keep awake.

He can keep us in the hour of temptation! He did Joseph.

He can keep us in the hour of death!

Yes, we can assuredly say that "if you build your life on Christ you are safe!" F. H. Rowley had it right when he penned the following:

"Days of darkness still come o'er me;
Sorrow's path I often tread.
But the Saviour still is with me;
By His hand I'm safely led.

"He will keep me till the river
Rolls its waters at my feet;
Then He'll bear me safely over,
Where the loved ones I shall meet."

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November, 1986 Editorial
WHEN HE IS COME!

We have often heard it said, "What we need is the Holy Spirit to come into our midst. If we can just get the Holy Spirit to come He can do more in a few minutes than we could ever accomplish without Him, no matter how long we tried."

Jesus promised us the gift of the Holy Spirit. "If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth" (John 14:15-17a). In another place Jesus said, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you" (John 16:7). In another place the Holy Spirit is called "the promise of the Father." The Holy Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son. He is the "God with us" in this dispensation and when He comes to abide in us He brings the Father and the Son. "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14:23).

It is certainly God's design and desire that His Holy Spirit dwell in every individual heart. It is also His purpose that every church be under the control and leadership of the blessed Holy Spirit.

But what does it take? What is the secret of His coming into our midst? What hinders His coming? Marvelous things take place when He does come. "... When he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John 16:8). Jesus was having last words with His disciples before going to the cross when He spoke these words. The implication here is unmistakable -- "when he is come to you!" When the Spirit is enabled to move freely among His people; when He comes to indwell His own there is a convicting presence felt by those around. Oh, how we need the mighty convicting power of the Holy Spirit! The great need in the world today is Holy Ghost conviction. We have about everything else. We have singing, praying, giving. We are well organized. We have good Bible preaching. Our preachers know how to preach the Word. We believe in Bible standards of holy living but where is there to be found deep pungent Holy Ghost conviction that causes sinners to cry aloud for mercy?

We turn to the second chapter of Acts and there we find a report of the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place." And then, after unity among the one-hundred-and-twenty was accomplished, suddenly they were all filled with the Holy Ghost. It is futile to pray for an outpouring of the Holy Ghost in order to bring the church together. It was after those in the upper room had gained a spirit of unity among themselves that the Holy Spirit was poured out on them. I am convinced it will work the same today. There is a tendency of polarization among God's professed people --personal opinions creep in and rule --until lines of communication are shut off and unity is destroyed. We become isolated into separate groups while professing to love everyone. This does not mean that there needs to be agreement on everything, but it does mean that there needs to be one accord in spirit and love and open communication. Until unity of spirit is

accomplished the Spirit will be withheld from that group. Unity will never be accomplished where time is not taken to first achieve a oneness of spirit. The whole body will suffer and disintegrate where unity is broken down.

Let's bring it down to the individual. No one can get help from God, whatever his need may be, until he is willing to take his right character before God. No one can make a change for the better until that happens. David went under cover with his sin and guilt for a year until the Prophet Nathan faced him with it. Read the fifty-first Psalm. Fourteen times in five verses David used the personal pronouns that identified his own personal responsibility, "I acknowledge my transgressions." There is no soul cure, no Holy Spirit to come to him in comfort in forgiveness or cleansing until there is a personal acknowledgment of responsibility for sin. He never blamed Bathsheba, or said "everybody is doing it," or "I couldn't help myself."

God will come when conditions are met. If the Holy Spirit is not resident in the church or in the individual soul there is something that is offensive to Him.

"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 Ghost does not come because of something within her that is offensive to Him."
--Author Unknown

Daniel prophesied it and we are seeing it take place-- "and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished" (Daniel 12:7). The only answer is a revival of unity that will bring the presence and power of the Holy Spirit into our midst.

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December, 1986 Editorial
THE GREATEST MYSTERY

"Let's talk about religion!" The conversation had lagged at the dinner party in Boston, despite the presence of America's most distinguished orator, Daniel Webster. They considered it a subject sure to prove interesting.

"With Webster on the occasion were a number of America's most widely read authors, and most of those at the table denied the deity of Christ. That skeptical viewpoint was prominently expressed around.

"Suddenly one of the guests realized that Webster had made no comment. 'Daniel, you have been silent throughout this discussion. Don't you have any opinion?'

"The famed lawyer, Senator, and Secretary of State replied, 'Indeed I do!'

" 'Then express yourself, by all means!' encouraged his companions.

" 'I believe,' replied Webster, 'fully in the divinity of Jesus Christ and on man's absolute dependence upon the Saviour's atonement!'

"Several gasped. They had no idea that Webster had such unpopular beliefs.

" 'But, Mr. Webster,' objected one, 'can you comprehend how Christ could be both God and man?'

" 'No, sir, I cannot comprehend it,' replied the orator.

" 'Then how can you believe it?' demanded a prominent author.

" 'Because I cannot comprehend it,' explained Webster, 'I can believe it. If I could with this mind of mine fully understand Jesus Christ, He would be no greater than myself. But He is greater, too great for anyone to comprehend. What men need is a supernatural Saviour!'

" 'No man knoweth the Son, but the Father' (Matt. 11:27)." --From "Grace and Truth," 1976

The greatest mystery known to mankind is the miracle involved in the Incarnation--that God the Son could take upon himself the full nature of man and yet retain the full nature of God. The Bible declares that He was as much God as if He had never been man, and as much man as if He had never been God. This is known as the hypostatic union. There is no earthly analogy that can be used even to remotely illustrate this.

It has been estimated that over forty billion individuals have lived upon this earth since Adam. A great contrast can be seen in this vast multitude of humanity. It includes black men, white men, brown men, and yellow men. These men have explored and settled every corner of the earth. They speak a multitude of different languages, practice religions of all kinds amidst various and numerous cultures. But every human being without exception shares one vital thing--his purpose of life on this earth and his eternal destiny beyond this life depends completely upon his attitude and relationship to this Incarnate One, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let's notice briefly Jesus' conception and birth. Ordinarily, conception takes place when a male sperm unites with a female ovum. This union results in the beginning and development of human life. The unique feature of Christ's birth is that it was a virgin birth; that is, His conception was not the result of human generation. Mary did not conceive by the agency of a man (Matt. 1:18, 25; Lk. 1:34-35). Mary conceived by the agency of God the Holy Spirit (Matt. 1:20; Lk. 1:35). It is this fact that makes Jesus' birth a virgin one. While the prenatal development of the holy child within Mary and the subsequent birth event were natural processes, Jesus' conception was

uniquely and radically different from all others. It was wholly of the Holy spirit, who created of Mary's substance a complete human nature, consisting of body, soul, and spirit (Matt. 26:12, 38; 27:50).

The work of the Holy Spirit did not include the creation of Jesus' personhood, for this, together with His divine nature, existed from eternity (Mic. 5:2; Gal. 4:4; Jn. 8:42; 1:1). With His incarnation God the Son did not acquire another personhood, so that He was a combination of two persons, one divine and the other human. Rather, He acquired another nature (a human nature), so that there were united in Him (the one Person) the nature of God and the nature of man. Can we not, from what has been said thus far, understand why the angel described that which was conceived in Mary as being a holy "thing" (Lk. 1:35; also Matt. 1:20, "that" is a neuter demonstrative pronoun)? The neuter gender indicates that Mary was only the mother of Jesus' human nature. She was not the mother of His Person; she was not the mother of God.

But why the virgin birth incarnation? God does not leave us without a reason--and in the case at hand, many reasons:

To reveal the invisible God. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (Jn. 1:18; read also 14:9).

To fulfill prophecy. Read Genesis 3:15.

To guarantee the Davidic covenant. The Davidic covenant assured David that some day an heir from his own seed would rule over Israel on his throne forever. (Read 2 Sam. 7:8-17).

To make a sacrifice for our sins. "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb. 2:9; read also Heb. 10:4, 5, 10, 12; Jn. 3:5; Mk. 10:45).

To reconcile man to God. "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:19; read also Heb. 2:17; I Tim. 2:5, 6).

To provide an example for believers. "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow in his steps" (I Pet. 2:21; also I Jn. 2:6).

To provide the believer with a high priest. "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be 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" (Heb. 2:17). "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus" (Heb. 3:1).

To destroy the devil and his works. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil" (Heb. 2:14).

To heal the brokenhearted, etc. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised" (Lk. 4:18).

To give life--abundant life. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (Jn. 3:36).

To glorify the Father/ Read Jn. 13:31; 14:13; 17:4.

Since December is the month in which we celebrate Christ's birth into this world this editorial would not be complete without a postscript. Soon air terminals will bustle with throngs of people, highways will be loaded with cars. Why? People will be hurrying home for Christmas. How forsaken and lonely one feels when he cannot make it "home for Christmas." In a far deeper vein there is an indescribability in the "loneliness" of a heart that is void of the presence of God--an aloneness that seems unbearable, for man was created to be indwelt by God. This heart loneliness is the result of sin, sin that has shut Christ out. But, thanks be to God, Christ came into the world that we might not be alone.

"Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." Matt. 1:23

The Father desired to abolish the loneliness of the sinful heart and gave at Bethlehem His only begotten Son. There is no loneliness in Christ! Holman Hunt's picture shows Christ standing at a weed-blocked door--a door representing the heart of man--waiting to be admitted. There is no latch on the outside. The door must be opened from within!

Reader, have you let Christ in?

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THE END