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PARKER MAXEY'S EDITORIALS -- (1987)

Editorials from The Missionary Revivalist
Compiled by Duane V. Maxey

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January, 1987 Editorial
HAVE YOU READ YOUR BIBLE TODAY?

God has written a book! Men seldom, if ever, think of God as an author. We think of God as Creator, Redeemer, Shepherd, Judge, Sovereign, Eternal King, but He is also an author.

About the nicest compliment you can pay an author is to tell him, "I have read and profited by your book." Very few comparatively, however, have read the Bible from cover to cover. Would it not be an embarrassing time to stand before God some day with the confession, "I never took the time to read your wonderful book from beginning to end"?

Within the Bible itself there is an oft-repeated command to read it: "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success" (Joshua 1:8). "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). "But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4).

We need to read the Bible with reverence. As you read remember that you are immediately translated into God's presence, for God speaks in this Book to you. Let the "before him" fill your soul with awe and worship.

Pray as you read for the enlightenment of God's Spirit that you may understand what you read. The Spirit is always present to open the Book to those who have not closed their ears and their hearts. The Psalmist prayed, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."

We need to read the Bible attentively. Pay close attention to every word and every phrase. There are no empty, meaningless words in Scripture. Every word has its definite significance. Every word is there for a purpose. It is a wonderful plan to read the Bible consecutively, clear through from cover to cover every year. Much can be gained this way that would otherwise be missed. However, the Bible should not be read just for quantity reading. D. L. Moody once made a practice of quantity reading and soon discovered that he could remember little or nothing of what he had read. He then began reading for content, for the message and the meaning of the message, and the Bible became the Book of Life to him.

We need to read the Bible with understanding that it is God's letter to us! When we receive letters from our absent loved ones we pore over every word and we read it and re-read it. The Bible is God's message to me. I sit before Him as I read, and every word is His word spoken to my heart. Therefore I need to read it in solitude and in quietness of soul. I cannot receive the profit and benefit desired when I am in a crowd. This needs to be practiced daily. Have a certain time each day when the Bible is read without hurry. It is the consistent daily reading and study that makes the Bible dear to one's heart--makes it your daffy companion and guide. By spending an average of twelve minutes a day the Bible can be read through in one year's time.

We need to read the Bible with perspective. Abraham stood at the midpoint between Christ and Adam and yet appears in Genesis.

Be studious and methodical in your reading. Use a plan, a definite plan of Bible study. Read a book in its proper setting and connection. Get the plan and purpose of each book. Try to discover its setting in the over-all plan of God's Book. Remember that the book, the Bible, is ONE book, a connected book whose sixty-six books are all closely related to the whole purpose and plan of the one Book. Make an outline or follow some good outline. Find the key verse. Use Bible helps.

Mark your Bible. Underscore favorite passages. You will discover to your pleasant surprise how much more interesting the Bible becomes as you follow an underscoring method.

Sometime in your Bible reading you will profit by the character study method. Read in their connection the stories about such epochal characters as Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Deborah, Moses, Ruth, Hannah, David, Isaiah, Daniel, Peter, Paul, Timothy, John, etc. The Bible is a wonderful picture gallery and no Christian will ever tire of looking at these character masterpieces portrayed for us by the very hand of God Himself.

Use the Subject Method. Take for your separate topic studies the subjects of sin, salvation, redemption, atonement, justification, sanctification, faith, hope, love, peace, joy, etc. Look up the Bible references and the Bible proofs. God's message will become more wonderful every day. Prove scripture by scripture. Find the key verse for a doctrine and prove it by other passages covering the same subject matter and see how God's truth will shine forth with the blazing light of the sun.

Search the comfort passages against the day of trouble--Psalms 32, 23, 46, 51,103, 121, etc. Find the faith passages, the joy passages, the conviction passages, the hope passages, etc. Read the Bible in faith. Take God's word to yourself. Look upon the promises as yours.

Read the Bible with a will to obey its truths and commands. Your feelings, your sentiments, your good intentions will all clamor for attention. One word of God is more to be relied upon than all feelings combined no matter how good they may seem. Let your faith be directed by the Word of God. Believe God's Word because it is God's Word.

If you are in spiritual trouble read the Bible to discover your sin and what God says about it. Face the issue frankly. The Bible will lead you to true repentance, sorrow and conviction for sin and faith in Jesus Christ as the Saviour from sin and the Purifier of the heart.

Read the Bible to find Jesus Christ. He is "the way, the truth, and the life." He dwells in the Word. He is the heart and center of all God's Word, its beginning and its end, its light and its life. He is the One who was, is and shall be. Finding Him you have found all. The message of the Bible finds its climax in Him. Possessing Him, you possess all. The supreme gift of the Bible is Jesus Christ to all who will believe. Read the Bible so you may know the most priceless book in the world, the Book of Books, the Pearl of Great Price.

Study the Bible so you may know how to tell its wonderful story to others. The world is hungry for Christ. Live Christ yourself, become a soul winner. The "old-timers" knew the Bible. In dealing with sinners, if they were confronted with a question they could not answer, they admitted it, and promised the inquirer they would find the answer. They then went to God's word and searched until they found the answer. Thus they came to know the Book of Books.

Memorize as many passages of God's Word as possible.

David Burrell suggests that the Bible may be lost by neglect; by reading it without studying it; by studying it without reading it; by reading and studying it without putting it into practice; by substitution; by renunciation; by mutilation.

Reader, have you ever read the Bible clear through?

"A sacred glory gilds its page
Majestic like the sun,
It has a light for every age,
It gives but borrows none."

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February, 1987 Editorial
THE COSTLINESS OF OBEDIENCE

If one is to realize life on its highest plane there must be an individual, intelligent obedience to God's will. It is the most rewarding thing in life but it has a costly side to it as far as

the "flesh" is concerned. Complete obedience to Jesus Christ as our Lord and Master has a greater and deeper commitment, and is of far greater importance than most Christians seem to recognize. It is the difference between failure and success from the standpoint of the immortality of the soul. Samuel said to King Saul, "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (I Sam. 15:22). Mary's words to those servants at the wedding in Cana of Galilee should be indelibly fastened in the resolve of every individual who intends to fulfill the purpose for which he was created, "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it" (John 2:5).

This business of obedience to the will of God is costly for three reasons. To fulfill the will of God will involve one in a deep and constant communion with Christ. This will take time and a purposeful withdrawing to be alone with God. The will of God on a day by day basis can be known, but it will have to be sought after. Christ will have to be put in first place. To maintain a purpose that puts one in intimate communion and fellowship with Christ until His will can be clearly discerned is a rare thing among professed Christians. The following of the day-by-day providences of God with no depth of communion with the Spirit of God is taken for granted as the will of God for many who profess to be led by God. It is out of deep communion with God, however, that His perfect will is discerned. How many, do you suppose, are either unwilling or too careless and lazy to pay the price it requires?

This leads to a second reason for the costliness of obedience and that is an unreserved yieldedness to Christ. There must not be a turning aside when the known will of God becomes costly; when it will involve suffering; when others will not understand; when false accusations are leveled at one. There must be no flinching when self-sacrifice gets involved. There must be a holding steady by faith and a confidence that obedience is the only way through to final and total victory whatever the cost. Often times public testimonies are concluded with "I mean to go all the way through with God whatever the cost." More times than not a person is not aware of what that cost might involve when he fully yields himself to a life of obedience to God. There must be absolutely no controversy between the soul and the Saviour. This yieldedness, this saying NO to self in preference to Christ must be lived out on a day-by-day basis. The life of death to self, yieldedness to the perfect will of God, must not only be sought and known but lived out in these earthly bodies we live in. Nowhere else can this life be lived while we dwell here on earth. Paul reminds us that "we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us" (2 Cor. 4:7). Thank God we are not left alone in our effort, but there must be a continual setting aside of the "essential self" in order to let God's perfect will come to fruition in us. The Christ of the Bible must be allowed to live in us and not our conception of a self-imagined Christ.

The third thing that makes obedience costly is the fact that there must be an acceptance of the responsibilities that are involved in obedience. The responsibility that will come by teaming up with God will cost faithfulness to the soul burden that is sure to accompany the indwelt Spirit. It will cost all nights of prayer; it will cost fastings along with weeping and praying. Much weeping has always characterized God's people. Moses wept over the sins of his people. King David testified of weeping and fasting for God's people. Isaiah wept for the need of his people; Nehemiah sat down and wept for Jerusalem; Jeremiah was known as the weeping prophet; Paul, the great missionary, was known for his ministry of tears; Jesus, while on earth, wept. God calls us to a ministry with tears--"Turn to me with all your heart, and with fasting and weeping and

mourning" (Joel 2:12). If we fulfill the responsibilities that go along with "filling up the sufferings of Christ" (Col. 1:24) it will cost us loneliness, suffering and rejection.

God reveals His will directly to the individuals whose hearts are open to Him. Often times when that revelation comes it leads to a departure of the established way of doing things. When the patriarchs of old heard from God, that was the bottom line. They never stopped to question-Isaiah, Jeremiah, with the others-but moved out not considering the cost. Where the Holy Spirit is still in business moving on individuals and leading them out to do exploits for Him they need not measure their decisions by the conscience of the church. Such innovations are frowned upon by "the establishment" but they have been the means of carrying God's work forward and have preserved it from fruitlessness. The Bible Missionary Church is an innovation that received the frown of "the established order," but it was made up of individuals who responded personally and individually to God's call. They felt their responsibility under God and dared move out. These individuals were not called out primarily to build an earthly institution, but to spread Scriptural holiness throughout the world. The vision of spreading the gospel at home and abroad is successful only as individuals are gripped with a responsibility of a do-or-die spirit and often times by innovations unplanned by human organizations, but Spirit directed. Wherever the cause of God has prospered the most it has done so more often than not by personal and individual innovations. This does not add up to a rebellion against established human authority but personal responsibility before a Divine Creator. Church boards have their part in lending support to those individuals that God has called out to a special work.

It costs to obey God! Will we recognize this costliness and keep pace with it?

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March, 1987 Editorial

THE LOOK THAT WILL SAVE US

Dr. J. B. Chapman tells of learning to ride a bicycle. There was a footpath that had a bend in it and at that bend, just off to the side, stood a tree. He just knew that if he tried to ride his bicycle down that path he would run into the tree and sure enough, he did. His mind was on the tree rather than the pathway. When he got the tree out of his mind and concentrated on the pathway he had no more trouble keeping on the path.

There is a discipline in life that maintains the right look--a heart that looks to Jesus. Mary D. James expressed it rightly when she wrote:

Since my eyes were fixed on Jesus,
I've lost sight of all beside,
So enchained my spirit's vision,
Looking at the Crucified,
All for Jesus! All for Jesus!
Looking at the Crucified.

We read in 2 Cor. 11:3 where "the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty." He beguiled her. The meaning here is that he deceived her completely. He did this by getting her to rivet her attention on the forbidden. The subtle Serpent is still at work today and using his same diabolical method successfully.

It is not God's fault if the Serpent beguiles us. All through His Word God instructs, exhorts, warns that our safety is in "looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith." It is His teachings, His holy principles, His promises, His proffered strength and guidance that should be our constant guide, and these are the things that should occupy the concerns of our hearts. Our "look" should be continually on Him. We are exhorted in Hebrews 3:1 to "consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." That word "consider" is an astronomical term and means to set our spiritual telescopes on Christ and study Him as carefully and concentratedly and consistently as the astronomers search the heavens with their powerful telescopes to learn the secrets of the universe. How wonderful it would all be if every professed Christian did just that.

However, that is not the way it is among men and the sad fact is that it is not that way so often among God's professed saints. The human weakness too often is to look ahead, look around us, look at problems, look at ourselves and worst of all, look at others. When this happens we become dismayed, discouraged, disillusioned, unbelieving. When this happens we become opinionated and those opinions have a tendency to be expressed and, worst of all, contended for. When that happens divisions appear among God's people.

Jesus saved Peter from falling into a fatal trap when Peter got his eyes on John and asked concerning him, "And what shall this man do?" Jesus answered him head-on with "What is that to thee? follow thou me." In other words, "Peter, you keep your eyes on me, not on John."

There are traps that people fall into when they fail to look to Jesus. The most common one is that of rationalism-trying to figure it all out in their own heads. Too often opinions are expressed, heads get bumped and hurtful divisions arise.

Another common trap that so many fall into when they fail to keep their eyes on Jesus is that of legalism. A legalist is a person who measures the other fellow by the standard of externalism, i.e., his own standard of law. In place of observing an individual's devotion to Christ, eyes are searching to see if the letter of "the law" is being upheld. This was the attitude of those church leaders concerning Christ. Their words, "We have a law, and by our law He must be crucified," reveal the awful extent of a legalistic spirit.

Many other traps could be mentioned that men fall into that breed divisions among God's people, all originating from a lack of keeping our eyes and attention riveted on Jesus. While we are in a twenty-four hour a day chain of prayer from now until our General Conference, God help us to pray a prayer that will produce a unity among us that will defy Satan and all the forces of wickedness and division that he is endeavoring to promote. This will not happen unless it happens on an individual basis. Individual obedience, whether anyone else is praying the price, will be the key to a united victory. May God help us every one as individuals to do our part under God to see once more a mighty conflagration of Holy Fire poured out in our midst.

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April, 1987 Editorial
CHURCH GROWTH

John the Baptist came preaching and saying, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Jesus came preaching the same message of repentance. the "kingdom of heaven" is meant the sovereign reign of God. When the "kingdom of heaven" comes to an individual it means that that person has opened his heart to allow God to reign sovereignly in his heart and life. It is God's eternal plan for man, created in the image of God and created a being of free choice, to be conformed to the image of His Son through and by His own Sovereign indwelling. Through Adam the human race lost the image of God out of their hearts but God through Christ has made possible the restoration of that lost estate. It is imperative that this message of salvation, restoring man to the purpose of his existence, be preached throughout the world.

Most all if not all would agree that the task of the church is to publish the glad tidings of the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world. Jesus proclaimed a truth when He said, "I will build my church." Man does not build the church of Jesus Christ. He, Christ, builds His own church through the instrumentality of the church indwelt and thrust out by the mighty impulse of the Holy Spirit.

We read in Acts 1:1-2, The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen." "Commandments" here refers to the great commission Christ gave to His apostles found in Matthew 28:19, 20 and Mark 16:15. This term "commandments" is in the imperative mood and it is of the nature of a military order. The Holy Spirit of God was placing His church under an order to evangelize a lost world. In the fourth verse of this first chapter of Acts we read, "And being assembled together with them commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father." Here again the word "commanded," is in the imperative mood and partakes of a military command. It is a command to "wait" until they were equipped to fulfill the commission given them which is expressed in that familiar eighth verse, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (emphasis mine). Later on in chapter 8:4 we read, "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word." They had experienced a mighty Pentecost in their own hearts and now under a heavy persecution, no doubt allowed by God Himself, were thrust out to bring to pass the kingdom of God in the hearts of men. What do you suppose it will take today to move the church of this day out to evangelize the lost?

After the crucifixion, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit descended upon the 120 in the upper room as the Gift from the Father, having been sent down by the ascended Son. Under the mighty impulse of the indwelt Holy Spirit the church moved out to evangelize the unsaved masses. Christ was fulfilling His promise to build His church. The early church following Pentecost was marked by a movement initiated by the power of God through the indwelt Holy Spirit. This is certainly the secret of advancing the cause of Jesus Christ among the lost of the earth. It will work the same today.

History reveals that churches that started out in a blaze of fire made great advancements under the mighty moving of the Holy Spirit but, nevertheless, eventually lost that zeal and glory that marked them at the beginning of their history. At this point history has repeated itself over and over again. We would do well to stop and consider some of those things and some of the pitfalls that befell those churches and organizations that have gone before us and the reasons they did not maintain that original zeal and fire that aided them in bringing to pass the "kingdom of God" in the hearts of men and women.

Biblically there are two imperatives that God lays down when it comes to advancing His cause on earth: the building up of the body of Christ and evangelizing the lost. When this is done the Bible way the Sovereign rule of God becomes the prominent thing in the hearts of individuals and is honored in those organizations used of God in building His kingdom. When men become sidetracked from this main purpose into building "their" own particular fellowship they become bigoted and ingrown and cease to reach out in interest of building the Kingdom of God and become more interested in their own desire for growth as a group. They substitute self interest in place of kingdom interest. This is what happened to God's chosen people that brought from Christ's lips those condemning words found 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." Primary in the work of God is the bringing to pass His Kingdom in the hearts of men and not the building up of an earthly denomination that can breed pride in the hearts of those involved.

The Holy Spirit must be kept prominent and in the ascendancy. The church that was at Antioch is an example in hand. "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..." (Acts 13:2-4). We can detect in this account the Sovereign rule of the Holy Spirit using and working through a church organization for the advancement of the Kingdom of God on earth.

We must be careful that church loyalty is not placed above loyalty to the Holy Spirit's leadership.

Church growth, reaching out for souls, personal evangelism, and like challenges are being sounded out in this our day. We are standing at the cross roads in this matter. Will we take the way that will permit the Holy Spirit to work through us in the bringing to pass the Kingdom of God in our day or will we become more interested in our own selves rather than reaching out with a gospel message that will deliver men from sin? In other words will we contend for a mighty Holy Ghost program or a humanistic building up of our own separate group? It is possible to organize a program in the interest of church growth and actually get the job done in doubling, tripling or even going beyond this and yet not really be building the Kingdom of God. It can all be done in the human through careful organization and clever administrative ways and under a form of godliness, but be devoid of Holy Ghost power and life. On the other hand it is also possible to experience a mighty moving of Holy Ghost power until men and women will be delivered from the being of sin and transformed into a mighty instrument of power in the hands of the Holy Spirit, themselves to help build the Kingdom of God on earth.

The pastor is the key man in this entire program. Through his own concern, in fastings and prayer and anointed preaching he can contend for a Holy Ghost program in his own church until he can witness the power of the Holy Spirit as He works among his people to thrust them out by a mighty inner impulse into a whitened harvest field.. With this desire, however, there is a price to pay that few are willing to undertake. I often heard the cry as a young man entering the ministry, "Either a revival in the church or a death in the parsonage."

We can see a mighty revival in these days and a mighty ingathering of souls if we are willing to take the way that leads to that end! God help us to remember that there is "only one life that will soon be past, and only what's done for Christ will last."

One final word needs to be said. The desire for church growth and to see something done in this our day is commendable. The methods in bringing it to pass must be Biblical and God-honoring!

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May, 1987 Editorial

HOLINESS, THE KEY FOR REVIVAL

"But rise, and stand upon thy feet; for I have appeared unto thee for a purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;

"Delivering thee 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" Acts 26:16-18.

All signs and current events point to the imminent coming of the Lord. Surely His coming is not far off. Whether that be tomorrow, next week, next year or later, the command still stands, "Occupy till I come." Our business is to preach, pray and contend for Holy Ghost revival. If we are to occupy as we should then holiness is a must. Revival began to spread when the hundred and twenty in the upper room prayed, when their hearts were purified and when they moved out in obedience under the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

1. What is holiness, or entire sanctification?

A simple definition: Entire sanctification is that act of God's grace wrought in the heart of the believer by which he is made free from original sin or the carnal heart, and brought into a state of complete consecration, or devotement to God. Sanctification is wrought by the baptism with the Holy Ghost and by this the heart is cleansed from all sin and the Holy Spirit takes up His abode in the heart of the believer. Entire sanctification is provided by the blood of Christ, is wrought instantaneously by faith, preceded by consecration; and to all this the Holy Ghost bears witness.

Some scripture definitions are:

Jude 1:1, "Sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ."

I Thess. 5:23-24, "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly: and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless."

Heb. 12:14, "Follow peace with all men and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord."

Heb. 13:12, "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate."

Holiness is a must if we are to have a revival in our day and among our people. If we are not careful we are in danger of generalizing on the theory of holiness and fail to press our people until they obtain the experience. Generalized preaching, though it be orthodox and doctrinally sound will, if it has not already, fill our churches with a complacent, self-satisfied, fireless, powerless, burdenless people, cushioned with compromise. This type of people sitting in our churches will act like a millstone around the necks of spiritual people, drawing them into compromise also unless revival comes or they scatter to find spiritual food elsewhere. Shallow holiness people are more interested in entertainments than in prayer meetings, in social gatherings than in old time revivals and if a preacher is not careful his mouth will be closed to preaching the real experience of holiness.

True holiness will fire the soul and give a real burden for the lost and dying. Holiness will deliver one from the spirit of the age, give him a holy standard to live by and push him out in interest of lost humanity.

2. What are the results of holiness? In the resurrection ministry of Christ He told the disciples that they should remain at Jerusalem and wait the promise of the Father which was the Comforter, the Holy Ghost. He points back to John and tells them that John the Baptist baptized with water, but they were to be baptized with the Holy Ghost. He went on to tell them that they would receive power after that the Holy Ghost would come upon them. They were to be witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth. After ten days of waiting and praying and being in one accord the Holy Ghost came and filled all. Before Pentecost they were all huddled in a dark secluded room, but after being filled with the Holy Ghost they began to preach to the multitudes the doctrine of holiness. "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

The result of holiness is revival, revival in our soul, revival in our church, revival wherever God's people meet the condition that produces holiness of heart and life. A sanctified people can meet the needs of this age. A people sanctified wholly can move heaven and earth together and God will come in the midst and bless.

God works with individuals in this business of entire-sanctification. Wherever you find a church of sanctified saints you find a group of shouting, aisle running, shining group of people who live above sin in word, thought and deed; a people who will not run to the world for entertainment nor have the world piped into their homes. They will be a modestly dressed people; a people who find their joy in the Lord and in attending church prayer meetings and revivals, visiting jails, hospitals, from house to house witnessing for the Lord and to encouraging people to turn from their sins to an experience of deliverance and joy in the Lord.

Reader, has a Holy Ghost revival come to your heart?

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June, 1987 Editorial

QUALIFIED HARVESTERS

In Proverbs 30:12 we read, "There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness."

There has always been a problem to keep the church pure and in line with Bible standards of holy living and at the same time evangelize the lost. Much energy and many efforts have been put forth to line the church up to Bible standards of holy living. It seems that our message as a whole has been either to line the church up or to keep the church in line. We never, as a body of people, seem to get around to an all out concerted effort to evangelize a lost world around us. The message in most holiness churches seems to be inward toward ourselves--keeping the church revived. And yet our people still sit on church pews unmoved concerning the lost world. In the face of all this--preaching on standards and the "death route" message--worldliness still is creeping gradually into our midst.

It is very apparent that the mere preaching of standards is not stemming the tide of an ever increasing worldliness that continues to invade our ranks. Spirituality cannot be legislated. The ground of holy living cannot be sustained by the mere preaching line upon line of Bible standards. There is only one answer--Holy Ghost revival. When I started out in the ministry as a young man we were told that survival as an evangelistic force in the world would depend on a continual spirit of revival in the church. It was indelibly imprinted on our mind that the holy hope for our day was either a revival in the church or a death in the parsonage. Any pastor who would be willing to fast and pray and pay the price in self-denial, whatever that meant, and not be willing to just "baby sit" a church or maintain just a status quo, even if it cost him his life--a preacher who would rather die than to go on fruitless and void of the mighty presence and power of a Sovereign God--could and would witness just that in his church. I believe it is the same today. Holy Ghost revivals are costly. They are not impossible. Thank God! We are serving a Sovereign God. We need not be swept off our feet by the lengths to which anti-God powers may be permitted to go during the closing days of this present age. If God is Sovereign, and He is, we can still have revivals. We can still claim His promises in 2 Chronicles 7:14; John 14:13; Ephesians 3:20, 21.

Pentecost is the answer to all our problems. It is the answer to the "standards" problem. It is the answer to the "evangelistic" thrust of any church. It is the answer to our financial needs. It is

the answer to the problem of threatened divisions. It is costly, but if the revival spirit will begin in the parsonages of our churches--if every preacher would determine that there will either be a revival in his church or a death in the parsonage--we can witness a new day in our Zion. Telephone lines have been kept hot while intercessory prayer lines and travail of soul for a lost world have been in little or no use. Worldliness is creeping in on us because the fire of Holy Ghost revival has burnt low. Too many problems have endeavored to be solved in committee meetings, board meetings and secret sessions while the prayer closet has been abandoned. The evidence of what is happening is too apparent to be denied.

Where there is a revival spirit there is the presence and leadership of the Holy Spirit, the power of intercessory prayer is present and along with that the convicting power of the Holy Spirit. Things do not pass under the table but are out in the open. The atmosphere is charged with the power and freedom of the Spirit. Where the fire burns "snakes" are run off and honesty prevails. When revival fires burn the problem of "entertainment" will be solved. The church will turn into a mighty evangelistic force.

There is something awesome about a great river at floodtide. There is something wonderful about a great river even when it is not at floodtide. I live on the banks of the Mississippi. I have seen it at floodtide. It is somewhat frightening in its uncontrollable flow to the gulf and men pay it great respect. I have watched the millions of tons of freight being carried on its bosom both northward and southward in its ordinary flow. A river is made up of a bed and banks. As important as a river bed is and as necessary as it is to have river banks, they alone do not make a river. Without the mighty flow of the water there would be no river. Jesus, in John 7:37, 38, prophesied of Pentecost when he said, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. St. John went ahead in verse 39 to explain, "(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)"

Likewise with us as Christians and with the Church of Jesus Christ on earth. As necessary as a river bed is to a river, it is just as necessary that we should bear a testimony, a witness of the mighty works of God in our hearts, and as necessary as banks are to a river, it is just as necessary that we bear the marks and the standards of holy living in our outward lives. But like a river that is really no river if it has only a bed and banks and no flow of water, we can have a testimony and we can have all the standards that go with being a Christian, but unless there is the constant flow and overflow of the Person of the Holy Spirit in and through us we are not the kind of a Christian God designs that we should be.

Personal Pentecost is the answer. Revivals in our churches is an imperative if we are going to carry out the great commission given us by our Lord to carry this message around the world.

We cannot escape the responsibility of the great commission. God can only use those who are qualified to work with Him in building His kingdom and fighting the warfare against our common enemy. Pentecost qualifies us to be what God requires us to be and do. May it not be said of us, "There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet are not washed from their filthiness." In the ultimate it boils down to the individual. Will you be that one?

The crisis is on. God's way to victory and a mighty outpouring of His Spirit is clearly set forth in the Scriptures. Will we take that way?

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July, 1987 Editorial
FACING THE ISSUE

Where do you stand on "the issue"? Does that sound familiar? We hear a great deal regarding the "issues" of the day. Much time and space are given in various forms of media including articles, editorials, the telephone and private conversation on the "issues" of the day.

In the church world there appears to be a deep concern expressed as to whether the people are really apprised of the issues and their great dangers. Religious periodicals contain article after article on such subjects as abortion, homosexuality, women's lib, racism; and now much is being published and said about the video and its place or whether it should even have a place in our lives; then there is the fear produced by the uncontrollable epidemic of AIDS, and on and on we could go in mentioning the "issues" of this day. These publications are an effort to keep us up-to-date on the trends of our time and it goes without saying that we should be aware of all these issues.

In the face of all this, however, I have been wondering if in all the efforts to expose the awfulness of each issue, the church has not forgotten the main purpose, the only purpose of her existence and the only cure for the disease with which we are faced? There is no argument as to the awfulness of some of the "issues" we face today but our knowledge alone of them and all the reforming efforts that could be set forth will have little or no effect on them. The problem is deeper seated than reform can solve.

All of these issues can be traced back to one source, one root, and that is SIN. We cannot organize or legislate sufficiently to stop the outcroppings of a sinful heart. The task of the church is to deal with the root, the source of the problem; not the fever, but the infection causing the fever.

How subtle the enemy that causes us to spend all our energies on our efforts dealing with the symptoms while the patient is dying and allowing the real cure to go unproclaimed!

The evils we face today are terrible and coming at us from every quarter and we must do our best to stop them to the best of our ability. But our ability alone is of very limited value and effect. The real issue and the real cure is found in the blood of Jesus Christ. No individual will cease from the awful sins of this day (not diseases) until he has a changed heart-a heart washed and made pure in the blood of the Lamb.

Jesus gave us a promise that holds the secret of how to deal with the ISSUES of our day. It is none other than that found in the first chapter of Acts. Jesus gave commandment to His followers to "wait" for the promise of the Father. They were not given to know the times or the seasons which the Father put in His own power, but they were to receive the power of the Holy Ghost

coming on them and they were to be witnesses (the word for martyrs). The promise, so familiar to all, is the answer to all the questions concerning the future and all the issues we have to face.

The Holy Ghost baptism on His people is the secret of interesting history. Men who have not gotten past the third grade or the eighth grade at the most have started and run schools, sat on college boards, have been the instigators of mighty Holy Ghost revivals, have built churches, spread Scriptural holiness around the world. What was their secret? They were baptized with the Holy Ghost. How do you explain an Uncle Bud Robinson or a Charles Stalker--uneducated in the standards held by the world--but mighty in moving men Godward, other than that they were Holy Ghost Baptized.

If we want to write an interesting history from now until Jesus comes then let us contend for another Pentecost. Men and women who are filled with the Holy Ghost have a future and men and women who are not filled do not have a future. This is true for any denomination or movement. The baptism with the Holy Ghost is essential for the propagation of the Gospel and it is the only thing that makes interesting history. Whatever the problems concerning the future, the answer--be filled with the Holy Ghost.

People fear today--they fear the legalists are going to take over--but they need not fear for their local church or even their denomination if they are diligent and will pay the price to keep filled with the Holy Ghost.

How about the liberals? Are they not about to engulf us? Not if we stay filled with the Holy Ghost. There is no future unless filled with the Holy Ghost. Daniel Steele started a school and the liberals took over. He wrote a book answering the question, how can we maintain orthodoxy? He answered: not by structure; not by monuments; not by discipline; not by manuals or creeds or commandments or a hundred and one other methods that have been tried. The Holy Ghost and He alone is the conservator of holiness. If we lose the fullness of the Holy Ghost we are in trouble immediately.

There comes a time when a movement must die! When anything dies, the scene of its death becomes the place of a resurrection. (Except a corn of wheat die it abides alone.) When great men of past days died to the world, the spirit of the world, to materialism, to reputation, their age gave birth to a mighty awakening and revival.

We have come to a crisis moment in our church and denomination and that means there must be a new death. Fighting "issues" is not the answer. We must preserve a place in our program where people die. We are long on contending for externals and short on funerals. We will never have a future unless we have a death. A baptism with the Holy Ghost and fire is an imperative. We are not hearing much about "death" anymore.

Take a look at our preaching. We have great preachers. The sermons are alliterated to perfection, homiletically in order, delivered in a pleasing fashion. What great preachers we are! We have that reputation. Nothing wrong with all this. We pattern after the great pulpiteers of the day. The tape ministry that is available in this day is so helpful along this line. The "preaching" models of this day are the best. BUT are we producing models that are dead to the world, dead to

reputation, dead to the future, dead to denominationalism, dead to their schooling, dead to people's opinions?

"Let me die, let me die, let me burn out for Thee!" How often do we hear this in our day? What is the real issue. It is the baptism with the Holy Ghost. The future belongs, is open to, men who are filled with the Holy Ghost. The issue is not "be sure the mind is full" (this has its rightful place), rather our priority must be the baptism with the Holy Ghost.

Maybe there is a time in the past when you did "die," when you went the route of "death to self" and were filled with the Holy Ghost. Have you maintained that fullness? Are you still "dead," or do you need to find a place and "die" again? Are we on an endless merry-go-round of non-productivity? We need to move off the glorious "go-around" and get on with a Holy Ghost, fire baptized program of world-wide evangelism. The future belongs to a people who have had a "death" experience and are presently filled with the Holy Spirit. Who will rise to the occasion? GOD WILL HAVE A PEOPLE!

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August, 1987 Editorial
LOVE, COURTSHIP, AND MARRIAGE
(The Divine Perspective)

Love and courtship are now in progress. Marriage is pending. The date has not yet been announced. Much preparation has already taken place and is presently going on in anticipation of this great event. We read in Revelation 19:7-8, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. "

Not many in comparison are aware of what is going on--even among so-called evangelicals. All over the world there is a mighty movement in progress. The Holy Spirit, called "the Spirit of Grace," is working through the Church on foreign mission fields, in the homeland, through every born again Christian to call out and prepare a bride for Christ.

Without a doubt we are fast approaching the end of this dispensation of grace and looking into the face of the Second Coming of Christ. There is one signal of the time of Christ's coming in rapture that we need especially be aware of and that is the preaching of the gospel to all the world. If scripture is to be our guide--which it must--then this is the clearest possible indication of the timing of Christ's return. Some people wonder whether there is an absolute set time in God's calendar for Christ's return or whether that time is somewhat elastic. The answer seems to be that it is somewhat elastic depending on the church's response to the Great Commission.

In Matthew 24:3 the disciples had asked Christ, "What shall be the sign (singular, not signs) of thy coming. Much confusion has surrounded the understanding of this verse. Strictly understood within the context of the passage, the answer to this question is given in verses 29 and 30. There will be some kind of heavenly sign at the returning of the Son of Man. All of the woeful

events mentioned in verses 4 through 28 are not designated as signs of Christ's coming, but are rather the tumultuous: events of the ordinary course of human history. And of course Jesus was trying thereby to warn His unsuspecting disciples--who were still expecting Him imminently to set up His earthly reign--that there would be a lot of negative things the Church would go through before His coming.

It is verse 14, however, which stands out in this passage as the single clearest light on the timing of Christ's return: And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." George Eldon Ladd has called this the most important single verse in the Word of God for God's people today. Only when the gospel has been preached to ALL the world will Christ come in the rapture to catch away His bride.

There are two things we need to note in connection with this great Bible truth. One is the preaching of the gospel. There are two interesting expressions found in the gospels--"The end is not yet" and "then shall the end come." A close study of the Word will reveal that the preaching of the gospel to all nations will mark the end of the dispensation of grace. Many events may lead up to this, but this is the final signal that the end is at hand. This dispensation began with a great revival at Pentecost; it will end with a greater revival. This is made clear in the prophecy of Joel found in chapter 2:28-32 and verified in the book of Revelation 7:9-10: "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands, And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb."

What is all this telling us? What is it that will bring on this final great revival of the harvest of souls? The passage in Revelation is describing a multitude of people who have been raptured and are around the throne of God worshipping God--Christians that have been won to Christ during these-last-days from every nation, kindred, people and tongue. This is very significant, for it has never happened in the history of mankind but is reserved for our day and generation, that the gospel must be preached in a determined and planned effort until at least some out of every nation, kindred, people and tongue are brought to a saving experience in Jesus Christ ready to be raptured and to join that great multitude in the day Christ comes to catch away His Bride. When this happens "then shall the end come.

The second thing we want to notice concerning this great truth of the soon coming of Christ in the Rapture is the fact that the Rapture is a judgment for the church, for judgment must begin at the house of God. For the world at large, the Rapture is not a judgment. There is no real separation because those who are left were never a part of the church, and the disappearance of a few "fanatics" will not upset the tranquillity of the world at large. The reaction will probably be "good riddance."

When we come to the church, the situation is entirely different. Here there is genuine separation and even a severe judgment, causing, in some cases, weeping and gnashing of teeth. This is a definite picture of the unsaved church member, those who thought they were saved and were not. This is all clearly brought out in the parable of the unfaithful servant found in Matthew 24:45-51. Arthur E. Bloomfield puts it this way: "The men of this parable were both servants, but

they were not both faithful servants. They both belonged to the church, but only one belonged to Christ. Many churches are full of people like this evil servant. The separation at the Rapture will be keenly felt because the servants had been so closely associated in the church. They were doing the same work, attending the same meetings, working on the same committees, worshipping together. They had the same friends, the same likes and dislikes, and were respected stewards in the Lord's house.

"But there was a difference. That difference was a matter of faith; it was a heart condition.... The genuineness of each servant's faith was demonstrated by his attitude toward the return of Christ." Read the passage in Matthew referred to above. "My Lord delayeth his coming" is a dangerous attitude. This evil servant was not concerned about the one signal of the approaching coming of Christ, the preaching of the gospel to all the world, but began to smite his fellow servants.

We are now standing in perhaps the most strategic and critical time of the history of our Zion. Already there is a concentrated world-wide effort to fulfill Jesus' words in verse 14, which will determine the end of our age and the Rapture of the Church.

Ralph D. Winter, who is noted for his work in missions, has stated that we are in the final era of Protestant missions. He says, "I don't think this way because of general turmoil in our world. Many times in history there have been wars, rumors of wars, persecution, famine, and distress on all sides. I believe that the most determinative arena of events in the world today is what is happening in missions. Jesus said (Matt. 24:14) that before He would return the gospel would first be preached to every tribe, tongue, and people. For the first time in history it is physically possible for this to be true. For the first time in history it is possible for there to be a church within the language and social structure of every people group on earth, and it can literally be done by the year 2000."

Do you love the Lord's appearing? Then you will bend every effort to take the Gospel into all the world. We dare not allow ourselves to become locked into a system that will not allow a free flow of our energies to the evangelization of the lost. The Divine perspective is "The Harvest." Do you say it's holiness of heart and life? Holiness? Yes! but a holiness of heart and life that will thrust us out into the harvest fields of the earth. May God unite us as a people to this end! It is by far the greatest task we can perform. And may God grant that our tenth General Conference will be a time of regrouping our forces and a uniting of our energies to join others of like faith in an all out effort to hasten the coming of our Lord by entering more fully and more determinedly into a world wide evangelistic effort that reaches beyond ourselves to a hell bound generation!

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September, 1987 Editorial
"NEITHER DO I CONDEMN THEE"
John 8:11

In St. John's gospel, chapter eight, verses two through eleven, we have the account of the woman taken in the act of adultery. "This incident is one of the most fascinating and beautiful... in all the account of the ministry of our Lord. It is very startling. It is very revealing also, of the attitude of His enemies towards Him, and principally of Himself. The thing occurred... in the early morning: 'And early in the morning he came again into the temple.'... He had spent the night in the mount of Olives. Every man had gone to his own house; Jesus had gone to the mount of Olives; and early in the morning He came, the day after the feast (Chapter seven). The dispersing crowds would characterize that morning; with many still lingering. He spake (verse twenty) 'in the treasury.' That refers to the courts of the women, where the treasury was situated.

"... The crowds gathered round Him. As they listened to Him, there was a stir, a movement in the crowd, and there came into the midst certain scribes and Pharisees, bringing a woman. It is impossible to read the story without realizing the brutal indelicacy of their action. Whatever this woman had done, and however guilty she was, legally they had no right to drag her into the public gaze. The Sanhedrin had its sittings in the very next part of the temple to where Jesus was teaching. Probably they intended to take her there, but they had no right to drag her into publicity. With the same brutal indelicacy they told her story; as they said, she had been 'taken in the very act.' It was brutal, but I shall always be glad they said it, because it leaves no doubt whatever about this woman's guilt. It was not a question of hearsay.

"We can visualize that scene in the early morning. Jesus sitting as a Teacher, the people gathered round about Him, and this interruption of rulers, religious and moral rulers, custodians of morality, hounding in a woman, and laying bare her sin to the crowd.

"Then they raised their questions. Moses commanded that she should be stoned. What sayest Thou? John is careful to tell us their motive in saying this. 'This they said, tempting him, that they might have whereof to accuse him.' They were trying to put Him in an awkward place, on the horns of a dilemma. Roman law said that life must not be taken except with Roman authority. Moses said she was to be stoned. What would He say about this? If He said she was to go free, He would be contradicting the Mosaic law. If He said she was to be stoned, He would be involving Himself with the Roman authorities.

"Then follows the matchless story. What did He do? He stooped down and wrote What He wrote we do not know, but the attitude was everything. It was the attitude of attention to something else, and refusal to satisfy His questioners. It was the attitude of dismissal.

"But they would not let Him alone. They were determined to have an answer; and so John says that 'He lifted up himself, and said, Whosoever among you is sinless.' This is the only place in the New Testament that this particular word occurs. It is not merely, Whosoever among you never sinned. It is far more than that. It means literally, sinless. 'Let him first cast a stone at her.' I am not discussing Moses with you.

"In these words He did not answer their inquiry in the realm of comparison between Moses and His own opinion. It is as though He had said, I am not discussing Moses with you. If that is the law of Moses, let it stand as a law; but if I do not discuss the law or the sentence, I am here to appoint the executioners. In that saying our Lord revealed for all time this principle, that

sinlessness is the only qualification for punishing 'He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.'

"Then He stooped down and wrote again. Look at that crowd going out. That is one of the most glorious humorous things on record. Every last man of them went, and it is interesting that John says they went out one by one, from the eldest to the youngest... He cleared them all out. Exit the executioners.

"Then we came to the supreme wonder and glory of the story. Jesus was left alone, with the woman in the midst. Now what do we see? Incarnate Purity standing confronting the saddest thing in all human life, convicted impurity. There is no mistake about the sin. What then do we see? According to His own declared principle, He was the only One Who had any right to cast a stone at that woman; He was without sin. If we did not know the story so well, and were hearing it for the first time, we should almost stop with bated breath, and say, what did He do?

"First of all He called her by the same name which He used for His Mother, at Cana, and on His Cross, 'Woman.' Whenever that word fell from the lips of Jesus, it was a word of infinite tenderness. Oh marvel of marvels, Woman! That crowd that had gone would have described her by a harsher word; they would have used the term harlot, or prostitute, or something worse. He said, 'Woman!' Then He said, 'Where are they? did no man condemn thee? Then, the only word recorded as falling from her lips, was uttered. We do not know her name The only thing she is reported as saying is, 'No man, Lord.'

"If we had looked at the woman when she was being brought in, and then if we had looked at her when she said, 'No man, Lord,' we should have seen a great change in her face. I know how she looked when they took her in. She was rebellious, she was defiant, she was angry. That method of handling that sort of woman always produces that result. But when she looked into the eyes for a moment of another kind of Man, a Man Who dismissed her accusers, I tell you her eyes were losing the defiant look, and becoming tear-dimmed; and I think there was a quiver in her voice as she said, 'No man, Lord.'

"Then came the amazing and astounding words, 'Neither do I condemn thee.'

"I do not think that the full meaning of what He said is found in what I now suggest, but I feel sure it was involved in it. I think we may, put the emphasis on the last word, Neither do I condemn thee. He was not condoning her sin; but among other things, He meant this: These men say you were caught in the act, woman; if so, where is the man? Yes, Mr. Kipling, 'the sins we do by two and two, we must answer for one by one'; but we have no right to put all the blame on the one. 'Neither do I condemn thee.'

"But he meant more than that. If we turn to Romans eight, we find out what He meant. 'There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.' He put Himself and His redeeming and atoning love and compassion between her and her sin. The Lamb was 'slain from the foundation of the world.' 'Neither do I condemn thee; go thy way; from henceforth sin no more,' or rather, continue no longer in sin.

"The incident was over."

(The above account was taken from The Gospel According to John by G. Campbell Morgan, pp. 146-150.)

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October, 1987 Editorial
REVIVAL IS OUR NEED

Revival is the recapturing of the presence and power of God. Our essential problem-any church's problem-is the loss of much of the presence and power of the Holy Ghost out of our churches and out of our lives. Holy Ghost presence is null and void in many places. Where there is a revival spirit there will be the power of intercessory praying. Where there is the presence and leadership of the Spirit, fasting and all night praying are not an uncommon thing. Intercessory prayer with fastings and all night praying create a moral atmosphere in which sin is uncomfortable and conviction seizes the hearts of the ungodly. Without revival denominations will drift from their moorings and cease to function as God intended them to function. They will change from a mighty dynamic evangelistic force to a mutual admiration society. Their focus will change. Our focus should be "on fields . . . already to harvest."

God gave to His Church the Great Commission as the only method that would save the Church and the only method that would save the lost sinner. Pentecost was the great preparation, the great equipment that made possible the carrying out of the Great Commission. The Biblical focus is "the harvest." The Holy Spirit came on the Church at Pentecost in order to thrust it out into the harvest. In that great fourth chapter of St. John's Gospel, Jesus admonished His disciples, "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest." Get your eyes focused right--how significant, how revealing, how searching are those words, that thought-uplifted eyes! Why? To see what?

When any denomination or group of organized churches find themselves threatened with divisions and lack of unity; when they grow suspicious of one another; when worldliness creeps in and the Lord's day is habitually desecrated; the problem has never been solved with the ballot nor with increased legislation; not by the church or any individual becoming the conscience of the people. Neither is dividing into separate camps God's answer or His way. God's way is revival. God holds out to His people the promise of revival. Man's problem--misfocused eyes! Holy Ghost revival brings cleansing to the Church and a vision and compassion for lost humanity. J. A. Wood in Perfect Love, in the chapter on "How To Keep Sanctified," states, "It is the nature of perfect love to long to go with God for the salvation of souls, and if you do not go with God for the salvation of men, your love will cool into apathy and indifference, and you will lose the evidence of entire sanctification all together."

When Judah was in trouble during King Jehoshaphat's reign, Jehoshaphat was the first one to humble himself before God. He put self in the right place and God in the right place. He recognized God as Sovereign and his only source of help. His prayer revealed his humbleness of heart--"O our God... we know not what to do: but our eyes are upon thee." The twentieth chapter of

2 Chronicles gives us the story of what Jehoshaphat and Judah did: "And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout Judah. And Judah gathered themselves together, to ask help of the Lord." They didn't divide off into factions or begin to cast suspicions on each other. When Jehoshaphat and Judah took this route a great victory was won.

God extends to His people a revival promise. Revivals are costly. It will cost a humbling, praying with fastings, sincere and earnest seeking God's way through, a turning from everything that is offensive to the Holy Spirit, an "ungrieving" of the great Spirit of God. When and if this route is taken God promises to hear from heaven, to forgive our sins and to heal our differences (2 Chron. 7:14).

The secret lies with those who are in leadership. Will they lead the way of humbleness, fastings and praying? "Let the priests [the elders], the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar." Between the porch and the altar was that place where confessions were made with the laying on of the hands on the head of the victim that was to be slain--the place of blood letting. It is that place we must all come to if we are to be saved, the place of acknowledgment of transgressions. It's the way of the cross. It is the only way that leads to our eternal home. It is the only way that leads to unity, revival and victory. It is the place of humbleness and helplessness. It is that place that gets God's attention --the place and time when He will hear us and heal us.

Unless our leaders will lead us in this way--the leaders of our church and pastors of our local congregations-divisions are bound to come. Multitudes will lose their soul when this happens. Satan gains the victory and God's name is blasphemed before the world.

God is extending to us the promise of revival. The challenge is before us. May God help us to arise to the opportunity that is before us!

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November, 1987 Editorial
SANCTIFY THEM

The sanctification of God's people is for a twofold purpose spiritual unity and effective witnessing. It is for this that Jesus prayed in the seventeenth chapter of John's Gospel.

The central purpose of Jesus' coming into the world and dying on the cross was for the sanctification of the church. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word" Eph. 5:25, 26. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate" Heb. 13:12. All other elements in redemption, such as confession, restitution, forgiveness, regeneration, adoption, etc., are incidental and but steps to this one thing--the sanctification of the church. It is for this one thing that Jesus prayed, "sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" John 17:17.

Let us notice briefly the two inseparable elements in sanctification as taught in the Bible and especially as revealed in this prayer of Jesus. These are, as we have already mentioned,

spiritual unity and effective witnessing; the negative and the positive aspects of God's grace; the cleansing, purging, unifying, empowering on the one hand and, on the other hand, the outward expression or the outflow of this to others; purity issuing in holiness on one hand and perfect love expressed in fellowship on the other. For further Bible study along this line read also the 12th chapter of Romans, the 12th chapter of I Corinthians and Ephesians chapter 5.

Sanctification involves spiritual unity. Jesus' concern and prayer was for the unity of the church and it was for this purpose He gave Himself (John 17). But unity involves fellowship and fellowship involves cleansing, for God cannot wink at sin. The Holy Ghost does not fellowship sin. Sin in the heart of man must be done away with. Thus all scripture finds its proper place in teaching death to sin, to the end one might have fellowship with a holy God. The doctrine of imputation alone is inadequate to satisfy either the heart of God or man or answer the prayer of Jesus for His church. If there is no holy man there can be no fellowship with a Holy God. This is the reason God gave His Only Begotten Son. He has made a sacrifice sufficient to cleanse man from all sin and make him a holy man fit for divine fellowship in this unholy world, But these passages mentioned also involve a corporate oneness with all the members (Romans 12; I Cor. 12). In the recorded prayer of Jesus in John 17, as far as this passage alone reads, Jesus had no complaint to register in regard to His disciples. His commendation of them was unqualified. His prayer and concern was in respect to the tremendous responsibility which He left with them, the evangelization of the world. But the disciples did possess elements within themselves that were barriers to unity and fellowship and an effective witness. Their self-centeredness in place of God-centeredness had surfaced so many times--place seeking, fear, unbelief, spiritual lethargy, pride, bigotry. Inbred sin with all its traits was rendering unity and fellowship impossible. They were yet carnal.

We need to understand that man in his fallen, sinful condition is utterly helpless to gain fellowship with God or unity of spirit unless God would come to his rescue, and this He did in giving His Son and in Jesus' willingness to "suffer outside the camp that he might sanctify the people with his own blood. Fellowship can only exist in the atmosphere of holiness, for God is holy, and it depends upon a proper relationship between God and man, but if God is unwilling to accept us, our advances would be fruitless; but just as truly, if God finds man unresponsive or willful, no situation can exist where fellowship and unity could abound in holiness.

I repeat, Jesus' death on the cross gained us this glorious privilege and His prayer was for the sanctification of His followers. To stop short in our seeking for oneness with God and the corporate body, the church, is to miss the very thing Christ prayed for and died for. This will take nothing less than the new birth experience and the cleansing of the soul from the carnal mind--a death-to-self experience. It can be had by a simple faith in the merits of Christ's shed blood (Heb. 13:12) only when the carnal self is confessed and subjected to death and the essential self entirely abandoned to God and His will. Christ provided sanctification for the church to the end it might be made one in holy fellowship. Unless an experience of sanctification has gained this for you, you do not yet possess the sanctification Jesus prayed for.

Sanctification also involves effective witnessing. "Sanctify them through thy word..., that the world may believe." "That they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one..., that the world may know that thou hast sent me."

Involved in the prayer of Jesus for the sanctification of His disciples was the ministry of carrying the gospel to the world. Before the crucifixion the disciples had been converted but had received no commission or enduement of power to fulfill the commission. It was after the resurrection when Jesus dispelled the wonderment of the disciples at the crucifixion that He gave to them their great commission and admonished them to tarry until they had received the enduement of power in the Baptism with the Holy Ghost. They accepted the commission, tarried, prayed and consecrated themselves to the task of witnessing to the world as their life work. They renounced the idea of living to themselves in any form--a death to the self-life. They tarried and believed for this baptism of the Spirit. They understood this baptism was to be given for their cleansing and empowering to fulfill the commission. They tarried to the end of personal cleansing and effective witnessing. Pentecost was the answer to Jesus' prayer in John 17. This baptism with the Holy Ghost united "the Upper Room 120" in heart and purpose. They became obsessed with one consuming passion, they went everywhere (as The Spirit directed) in effective witnessing. To have left the world without "an effective witness" would have meant oblivion to the great redemptive plan. No wonder Jesus prayed as He did! Now we, as followers of Christ, are involved in this same prayer and concern of our Lord: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word" John 17:20. We as Christians have the same commission, the same admonition and the same promise. Everyone has the great responsibility to win as many souls as possible to Christ whether we preach, pray, write, print, teach, farm, travel, or take care of children.

The great lack of the church today is the realizing conviction that this commission to evangelize the world is given to each born-again Christian as his life-work and the conviction of the necessity of this enduement of power upon every individual and a persistent waiting upon God for it. I fear lest many satisfy themselves with a hope of eternal life for themselves apart from a witnessing ministry. I fear lest it become an accepted belief and practice among us that we can possess and cultivate holiness apart from an effective witness. When we separate the one from the other we lose both. How many never get beyond themselves to the striving for salvation in others? But is not this involved in the sanctification Jesus prayed for us to receive?

Before you lay this article aside, reader, ask yourself--is this prayer of Jesus being fulfilled in me? This past semester I conducted a class in personal evangelism in our Bible School. The class was asked to keep a diary of their "personal witnessing" record for the semester and submit it as part of the course requirement. Very few reported any real witnessing at all and fewer yet reported a witnessing ministry of any consistency. But now wait a minute--how would the membership of the church where you attend rate at this point? How do you rate?

For the lack of cleansing and power, the ministry and laity are weak. The ministry is weak because the church is weak and the church is weak because the ministry is weak.

"Sanctify them" to the end they may get beyond self, out to a lost world. To comprehend what Jesus meant when He prayed "sanctify them" will take a mighty awakening Holy Ghost revival. God grant it to us!

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December, 1987 Editorial
"... WEIGHTIER MATTERS..."
Matthew 23:23

In the context of the scripture passage found in Matthew 23:23, Jesus was pleading for something better than whitewashed Christianity, nice appearing on the surface but full of sinful attitudes. The Pharisees were externalists (Luke 11:39-44). Jesus' chief indictment against them was their lack of inward sincerity. Their righteousness was entirely on the surface, therefore it was a sham. It was further condemned for its exaggerated piety in comparative trifles as a facade for the neglect of the primary principles, judgment, mercy, and faith.

If we are to escape the same scathing condemnation, our ethics must be thoroughly sound and hearts must be genuinely holy. We must, first of all, be beautiful within in God's sight, even if we do not always achieve perfect beauty of conduct without. Nothing short of a sanctifying Saviour and an indwelling Holy Spirit will suffice.

It is nothing less than Christ in you, the hope of glory! How wonderful--this Christ life! How attractive! How refreshing! How exciting! How revolutionizing! How challenging! How convincing real life is amidst the debauchery and degrading sins of this day! How convincing! How exposing! Oh, the wonder of wonders of the Christ life!

When Christ was born into this world, life, divine life, divine light wrapped in human flesh, a new hope dispelling darkness, a new center, the center of all history came into view. Christ came to impart life.

"Once I was bound by sin's galling fetters;
Chained like a slave, I struggled in vain.
But I received a glorious freedom
When Jesus broke my fetters in twain."

"Glorious freedom! Wonderful freedom!
No more in chains of sin I repine!
Jesus, the glorious Emancipator!
Now and forever He shall be mine."

In the New Testament teaching holiness is neither a natural goodness in man nor a personal attainment, but a goodness available solely through Christ.

"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained

that we should walk in them But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ" Ephesians 2:1-13.

The Pharisees, who in their beginning were determined to be loyal to God and His law at any cost, were in the end enslaved by their own meticulous rules and regulations and found themselves bound by a self-imposed law that led them to murder the Son of God--the very Giver of life. In their extreme externalism they had missed the very life God in Christ came to impart to them.

Christ came to impart light. He came, the Light of the world. The world at its best hour in history under Socrates and Plato could not cross over from darkness to light, from death to life; from putrefaction to purity; from debauchery to deliverance. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" John 8:12.

There is a Phariseeism in our day; externalists that put their whole stress on the outward such as tithing, church attendance, etc., and Bible standards of living, but do not have the life of Christ within. On the other hand, to have the life of Christ within will manifest itself in the outward life. Jesus is the standard bearer, He is the light of life. That life that is born within the heart of man is a holy life. It does not oppose the Word of God and by nature conforms to the light of God's Word as it is revealed. One of the sure evidences of spiritual life within is the willing conformity to the outward demands of the gospel and to the standards of holy living written in the Word as the light is gradually revealed to the heart.

Christ came to purify the heart. He came to cleanse the fountain of life, to take out that antagonistic element within that opposes that holy life born within and to enable us to stand before Him blameless.

Our text talks about the weightier matters of the law--judgment. We will finally be judged in the light of life. Do I have the life of God within me? Christ's life within, if I possess it, will manifest itself in the full range of my being.

The text also speaks of mercy. God's mercy is extended to those of a broken and contrite heart as revealed in the light of justice.

Faith is one of those weightier matters--the avenue that brings to one's heart the life of God!

God will have a people after His own likeness!

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THE END