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SURVIVAL AT STAKE

By Remiss Rehfeldt

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CONTENTS

- 01 -- The Survival Of Conservative Holiness Is At Stake
- 02 -- Heart Holiness And Personal Adornment
- 03 -- Heart Holiness And Our Conduct
- 04 -- A Source Of Strength In The Baptism With The Holy Spirit
- 05 -- Why Seek Entire Sanctification If The Justified Are Safe?
- 06 -- Is One Saved And Sanctified Simultaneously?
- 07 -- Must Self Be Crucified?
- 08 -- What Is Meant By The Dying Out Process?
- 09 -- Is Entire Sanctification Instantaneous, Or Progressive?
- 10 -- Is There A Definite Witness To Entire Sanctification?
- 11 -- Is Heart Purity Necessary To Do God's Work In The World?

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01 -- THE SURVIVAL OF CONSERVATIVE HOLINESS IS AT STAKE

In a delicate situation silence is often golden; speech sometimes premature. But, when faced with a crisis that threatens the destruction of all he holds most dear, the most tactful of men in the most delicate of situations finds that he dare not remain silent. It becomes his moral obligation to speak the truth, no matter how fraught with complications and perils.

It might have been in our power to keep silent and say nothing, in order to be easy on ourselves, and we might indeed have succumbed to a kind of cheap popularity, but it took on such proportions that to succumb would have been to us a compromise of our convictions and a sin against the truth.

In the face of all this we would feel guilty, in the eyes of true people, if we did not utter these words as a warning or by way of guidance to sincere people with a desire to promote heart holiness with standards.

We feel compelled to do this; in order to help preserve our beloved doctrine with standards of godly conduct and attire. As we see axes being sharpened to destroy it, in order to defend our doctrines and standards which clever individuals are conspiring to smother, we must take our stand.

When have you heard of true Christians slumbering over situations which threaten spiritual life? For this we address the wise men of our Church and the sincere people, hoping that they will give us a sympathetic hearing. Because we are convinced that destructive influences have evolved to the point of injuring the church, its future, and its mission, we now speak.

The crisis is very much in evidence, sharper than ever. While molders of public opinion confer and ponder over the sorry aftermath of recent events and trends, other observers are voicing their comments on the abysmal blunders committed against the cause of conservative holiness.

Following so-called united decisions, many innocent people have become the unwitting associates of a liberal type of holiness. As a result, the preaching of holiness with standards has almost been brought to a standstill and the increase of worldliness in the church has become appalling.

The positive results of liberalism's smashing victories have been to some a warning signal. What next? We should be well aware now of the questions confronting us, and consider the ways and means best suited to answer them. Some people are reconsidering the methods which have brought us to this low point. But one should not become over-optimistic. There are few signs, if any, that there is any move on the horizon except the fearful idea of appeasement.

However it may be, we all know that three of the chief issues are the following ones:

- (1) The lack of preaching on heart holiness with high standards;
- (2) The need for an evangelistic program which will ensure the reopening of the channel of faith for a Divine outpouring of the Holy Spirit;
- (3) Most important of all, bringing about a tide of intercessory praying which is today our greatest single need.

There is however a fourth issue, of which one seldom hears, but which should always remain the first and last one. We mean the survival of conservative holiness in the church.

Indeed, this issue should be of paramount importance to all members of the church, but especially to those who are fond of a conservative position.

What is happening right now to the conservative holiness people? Remarkably little information on this topic has been given to the church, and the people are hardly aware of the ominous situation.

The church does not officially deny the right of private judgment, but in practice it is approaching the position of stressing "group thinking" and the "collective mind."

Pronouncements purporting to represent the "group mind" of the church are used to compel the individual Christian to conform.

The difficulty with these pronouncements is that they are not necessarily the voice of the church people. The decisions are usually made by committees or boards influenced by a few individuals.

It is very difficult to piece together a detailed picture of what is going on. But this much is clear: a program of liquidation is in process. It is so clever that it does not appear on the surface. The aim is not merely to get rid of certain people, but to stamp out what is considered to be "super-radical holiness." Christians look on, not comprehending what is at stake.

The holiness rank-and-file in the church would respond to a counter-move. However, there are certain strong influences in favor of more effective measures, in order to deal with the deeper problem. Men are no longer going to remain silent.

The subtle liquidation move is on. There is no neutrality. There is no alternative. It is a time of decision, about an issue more crucial than any other. Truly, an issue of spiritual life and death.

There is a scene in Luther's life which no liberty loving Christian should ever forget. Alone man, isolated and seemingly forsaken, stood before the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire and representatives of the Roman Church. On a table before them were the man's writings. Had he written them? He had. The writings had been condemned. Did he still believe what he had written? He did. He knew the penalty for non-conformity? He did. Would he retract and recant? The man paused before he answered and then spoke in measured words. "I cannot submit my faith either to the Pope or to the Councils because they have frequently erred and contradicted each other... I cannot and will not retract: for it is injurious to act against one's conscience. Here I stand. I can do no other. May God help me. Amen!"

Yes, the survival of conservative holiness is at stake. What this cause needs, right now, and very badly, is earnest prayer for those who share this ideal of holiness with high standards of separation from the sinful world.

Only thus can the cause of conservative holiness, like all other "minorities" in the history of the Christian church, hope to survive. May God inspire us to be grateful for our heritage, and mindful of our duty to preserve it.

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02 -- HEART HOLINESS AND PERSONAL ADORNMENT

In answering this question, let us study the opening chapters of the book of Isaiah. This prophet was very sure of God. He saw Him with remarkable distinctness. He saw Him to be Infinite Holiness, and because he saw Him as Holiness, he saw the heinousness of sin. No man has ever dealt with sin more vigorously. Read the third chapter and see how he lashes the women of Jerusalem.

Isaiah, then, began in his thinking with the conviction that God is Infinite Holiness. He is Everlasting Righteousness. He is Eternal Purity. Since He is all this? He is against all unholiness and impurity.

The worldliness of the people in Isaiah's day was reflected in the luxury of the women, and the costly variety of their robes and ornaments. We are given in chapter three the most complete description of the Oriental female attire to be found in the Bible. Here we are given a satire upon the fashions of the day -- things useless, ridiculous, all costly, all condemned. There is here also an exposure of the secret principles of fashions -- pride, wantonness, vanity. God's wrath against fashion and an application of all this to the "daughters of Zion" is to be found in these verses. Here we have a most melancholy picture of the fallen state of the women of Jerusalem.

Isaiah, that fervent intercessor and flaming evangelist, was eager for the day when Jerusalem's "salvation" should be "as a lamp that burneth" (Isaiah 62:1). No lamp burns so gloriously and allures so irresistibly as full salvation or heart holiness. We will not quibble as to terminology. Say "Holiness," or "Full Salvation," or "Perfect Love," or "Higher Life," or "Second Blessing." Call it what you will, but possess the experience.

Oh that a revival of entire sanctification were in our midst! When we are radiant with inward and outward holiness then, indeed, shall we be "the light of the world."

Let it ever be remembered that the characteristics of God's people give Him a name. Our lives are the only theology most men will read. Let us be jealous to give the world an adequate and true impression of God. Let us be "to the Lord for a name." [Here Remiss Rehfeldt quotes a portion of Isaiah 55:13: "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off."]

God's reputation in a great degree rests with us. God help us to guard well the inestimable deposit -- this is a task heaven's brightest angels might covet most.

Perish all mean, selfish ambitions in the sublime service of the world's salvation. To give God a name let us be willing to live and die. Isaiah said, "Here am I, send me." Hence, the matter of separation is not for women alone.

John Mantle says, "The idea of the unmixed life is a Biblical concept. God forbade an Israelite to plow with an ox and an ass under the same yoke (Deut. 22:10). The sowing of a field with mingled seed, -- and the wearing of a garment mingled of linen and woolen were also strictly forbidden (Lev. 19:19). These prohibitions were intended to cultivate in the mind of the people the sentiment of reverence for an unmixed life." God was whispering in their ear, "Be ye separate." "Be pure in heart and life." There is, then, a very vital relationship between holiness and personal adornment.

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03 -- HEART HOLINESS AND OUR CONDUCT

We are told in John 10:13 that "the hireling fleeth because he is an hireling." The principle of these words is that a man does what he does because he is what he is. There is ever a rigid consistency between character and conduct.

A hero does heroically because he is a hero. That is the open secret of every man's doings. Heroism is within -- "because he is." Character and conduct correspond.

Become and you will do. Christianity is in the inward nature. If we are Christlike in nature, we will act as a Christian. The stream attests the fount. A man does what he does because he is what he is.

Conduct is the revelation of character. It was the flight that demonstrated the hireling. What I do reveals what I am. There is no infallible test of character except conduct. That is the teaching of Jesus. Christian profession is not an adequate test. It does not prove personal godliness. A man may have a lovely creed, and an unlovely life. The great truism is -- a man shows what he really is by what he does.

Character is revealed by our conduct in the crisis of life. When is it that the hireling fleeth? We have the answer in verse twelve, "the hireling seeth the wolf coming." It is the crisis that produces the conduct which proves the character.

Holiness secures noble deeds by creating noble souls. The individual nature must undergo a distinct and radical spiritual change. Transform the heart by the power of the Holy Spirit, and inevitably you transform the deed.

We live in an age of shallowness and superficiality, and we possess a marvelous capacity for self-deception. Nothing is easier than self-deception; few things are so difficult as real self-disclosure. No branch of knowledge is so neglected as knowledge of ourselves. In other sciences knowledge flatters the vanity of the unsanctified heart; it exalts men in the eyes of others, it increases their influence in the world. But true self-discovery wounds our pride, and spoils the

good opinion we had formed and cherished of ourselves. We may be skilled in every other science and ignorant in this. We may be able to calculate the motions of the heavenly bodies, and know nothing of the movements of our own sinful nature. We may be able to plant our foot on a mountain summit where no human foot has ever before trod, and yet be ignorant of the dimensions of the black mountain of evil in our heart. We may be able by chemical analysis to detect and decompose the material substances around us, and yet never analyze the motives by which we are influenced, and which color and stain all our conduct.

The idea that separation from the world is inward and not outward is pure foolishness. Separation is both inward and outward, for there is a definite connection between heart holiness and our conduct.

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04 -- A SOURCE OF STRENGTH IN THE BAPTISM WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

Notice the explanation of Samson's strength. "The Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him." And that is spiritually true in our day. The only hope for a clean heart and a pure life in these days is the Holy Spirit coming mightily upon us.

The true soldier of the cross, whose armor is complete and whose heart is nerved by sanctifying faith and unconquerable love, stands with a faith undaunted, and a courage unfaltering, amidst the terribleness of the battle's roar. The day of trouble develops the perfection, the vigor, and the manhood of his graces. So close is his union with Christ by a true and living faith, that the very spiritual life-current of the Redeemer sends its mighty pulsations through all the channels of his being. He lives, yet not he, but Christ lives in him.

What are our souls without His grace? As dead as the branch in which the sap does not circulate. What is our church without Him? As parched and barren as the fields without Heaven's dew and rain.

But with the Holy Spirit, what a difference there is in our lives! Here indeed is shown the highest triumph of grace, in making its strength perfect in human weakness; keeping the moral feelings harmonized within, amidst the confused derangement about us. Here is a wonder in our disordered world: a house of forbidding aspect and shattered material, with an angel tenant; inwardly rejoicing while there is turmoil without. Here we have the true balance power of the soul, "in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes. . ." Here we are counted "as dying, and behold we live, as chastened, and not killed, as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing, as poor, yet making many rich, as having nothing, yet possessing all things."

This is the true sunshine of grace. This is the Crystal Well within, springing up into everlasting life. Here the Gospel achieves its mightiest conquest; here grace is most fully magnified, and here the atonement is exalted above all height. Here mercy shouts the triumph of her redeemed trophies, and her swelling testimony bids human wrath to praise her. Here is a basis for faith that need not waver in the sorest adversities, but may glory, even in infirmities. Such is the

victory which poor, frail humanity may gain by the rich provisions of grace, and to all this should every redeemed spirit aspire.

It is important to know that the baptism with the Holy Ghost is a cleansing power; for there is a teaching quite current just now which disclaims any purifying efficacy in the gift of the Holy Ghost, and regards it exclusively as a spiritually empowering presence. Hence, we hear much of the "baptism of power" and "the baptism for work," "power for service," and the like. The gift of the Holy Ghost is all this, but first of all it is a cleansing of the heart. In this sense, purity is power.

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05 -- WHY SEEK ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION IF THE JUSTIFIED ARE SAFE?

It should be noted that those cases in which justified persons die -- safe are those in which there has not been time to advance to this higher state. Those who have had time granted to them will not retain their justification, unless, according to their ability, they walk in the light that is given to them.

Here is a point of immense importance. If any one having the evidence of justification, and yet is convinced of his inward corruption and the Divine claim upon him to love God with all the heart, should refuse to meet that claim, with the provisions and promises of the Gospel set before him, he would forfeit his justification, by grieving the Holy Spirit, and by neglecting this "great salvation."

And yet it is to be feared, this is the condition of multitudes who have received light on heart holiness. They have declined the cross-bearing way in favor of an easy religion. But they have relapsed into a state of fearful insecurity, though flattering themselves that they are still safe. There is a disrelish for holiness sermons and spiritual things. These cases are alarming; and the delusion is likely to go on, until it ends in final ruin, unless these persons can be prevailed on to press toward the mark for the prize of their high calling.

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06 -- IS ONE SAVED AND SANCTIFIED SIMULTANEOUSLY?

After pardon is obtained, every Christian should go on to Christian perfection -- to an entire cleansing of the heart and a full reception of this Christian grace. It would be impossible for each case to ripen with equal advancement. Some have imbibed sentiments that are adverse to it, having been taught that the work was complete at justification.

At the point of clear conversion, we are not complete in Christ; the controlling power of sin is broken indeed, and we have the victory over it through Christ; but much of its presence yet remains, and often struggles with amazing force to regain its lost dominion.

If sanctification is complete at justification, then ministers have no right to urge Christians to "go on to perfection," or to "cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

John Wesley did not hold that the sin nature was cleansed away in regeneration; he did claim, however, that it could be done away with in entire sanctification. He once said, "I never knew of one to get rid of this troublesome thing (the carnal nature) at conversion." Just prior to his death, this great Christian leader said, "We must be justified by faith, and then go on to full sanctification."

It was Adam Clark who said, "I have been twenty-three years a traveling preacher, and I have been acquainted with some thousands of Christians during that time, who were in different states of grace; and I never, to my knowledge, met with a single instance where God both justified and sanctified at the same time."

The multitudes at Pentecost cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter said unto them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost," which was to say, in effect: "Become believers, and this gift, which has come unto us, ye also shall receive."

The gift of the Holy Ghost is an experience, distinctive, subsequent to conversion, and is instantaneously received by faith.

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07 -- MUST SELF BE CRUCIFIED?

In the palace of Wurtzling there hangs a hall of glass. It is called the Hall of a Thousand Mirrors. You enter -- a thousand pairs of hands are stretched out to meet yours, a thousand smiles greet your smile, a thousand pairs of eyes will weep when you weep; but they are all your hands, your smiles, your tears. What a picture of the selfish man! Self all around, self multiplied, and he is deceived. What an awakening when all the mirrors are smashed!

No wonder Luther said: "I am more afraid of my own heart than of the Pope and all his cardinals. I have within me that great Pope, Self."

Self is a great idol. This hateful idol will spend years in intriguing to escape from the hand of God. Not in listening to its pleadings, however, but in delivering the idol to utter destruction, shall we find true wealth and real victory, for treasures of priceless worth await those who learn the secret of losing their life for Christ's sake that they may find it.

Utter abandonment to God is the only way of blessing. The alabaster vase must be broken that the ointment may flow out to fill the house.

If you do not crucify Self, Self will crucify Christ. He must vanquish it, subdue it, destroy it, cast it out, or we can never get the victory.

The fruit of the Spirit will not be seen until, in union with our Lord's sacrifice, we have gone down with Him into the dark grave, and heard Him say: "I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth on Me though he were dead, yet shall he live."

Referring to Christ, one writer said,

"He had no rights, and I?

[Do I have] A right to the 'comforts' of life?

No, but [I have] A right to the love of God for my pillow.

[Do I have] A right to physical safety?

No, but [I have] a right to the security of being in His will.

[Do I have] A right to love and sympathy from those around me?

No, but [I have] a right to the friendship of the one who understands me better than I know myself.

[Do I have] a right to be a leader among men?

No, but [I have] the right to be lead by the One to whom I have given my all...

[Do I have] a right to a home, and dear ones?

No, not necessarily, but [I have] a right to dwell in the heart of God.

[Do I have] a right to myself?

No, but, oh, I have a right to Christ.

All that He takes I give;

All that He gives I take;

He, my only right,

He, the one right before which all other rights fade into nothingness.

I have full right to Him; Oh, may He have full right to me."

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08 -- WHAT IS MEANT BY THE DYING OUT PROCESS?

Perfect love is indeed the grace that will live and sing, whether the day is sunny or dark. It glows and shines because a steady, celestial fire creates its beams, and its very light has a fusing power, emitted from the vast furnace within.

Let this, then, be the object of most diligent pursuit. For this, let us be willing to "lay aside every weight..." and let us count no price too dear, no effort too painful, to secure this inestimable pearl. Search and surrender, and re-search and surrender again, till every vestige of self and sin shall have been laid upon the altar, and consumed by the sin-destroying flame.

When the evils of our fallen nature are fully revealed by a strong and heavenly light, and the eye of faith discovers the spotlessness of the Lord of hosts, strong emotions will be awakened. With Isaiah, the soul cries out, "Woe is me!"

Do not withdraw from the process of dying out; do not say of Christ's commands, "these are hard sayings, who can hear them?" Marvel not if Satan rend you. A Stronger than he shall bind him and cast him out.

The sorrows and fears which preceded pardon were such as to make you cry out in great bitterness, but the throes and anguish of one awakened to the repulsive aspect of his hideous moral deformity, in contrast with God's holiness, are often more exquisite and heart rending. But, submit to this process: cast yourself into the crucible, and suffer the refining fire to be found to such intensity as shall fully separate all the dross of sin.

Bound on the altar of Thy cross,
My old, offending nature dies;
Now, for the honor of Thy cause,
Come and consume the sacrifice.

"Do not expect to glide into the sea of holiness on the unruffled stream of stoical prayer; and through the channel of an idle, speculative faith." Prevailing prayer must wrestle, and sanctifying faith must seize all the interests of the soul and body with a grasp that knows no relinquishment, and tear them away, utterly away, from every other repose, and bind them with its invincible might to the cross -- solely and eternally to the cross -- Here and here alone is heart purity possible.

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09 -- IS ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION INSTANTANEOUS, OR PROGRESSIVE?

The matter being settled that sanctification is not completed at the moment of conversion, we should begin to seek the experience of heart holiness. As to its completion, it is certain there must be some specific moment in which it is reached, but the approaches to that point will be more or less rapid, according to the circumstances of the case.

It is an epochal experience; it is a post-conversion experience; and it is a conscious experience. Rational belief becomes realization. It is perfect rest, boundless love, and wonderful purity. Such love! Such peace! Such joy! There is the assurance of His presence. There is conscious fellowship which the Holy Spirit imparts. When He is come, a precious sense of spiritual completeness is given. He destroys sin in the soul. It is consummated by two epochs of grace. The first cancels the guilt of sin; the second cleanses its defilement. Sanctification is that second work of God's grace, which consummates the work of salvation in the destruction of the body of sin.

It is just when the consecrated soul consents to receive the Holy Spirit "now" that it is filled. The soul must say, "now" to the Holy Ghost. If the soul is abandoned fully to God, the experience of entire sanctification may be obtained in a moment.

"Thou canst fill me, gracious Spirit,
Though I can not tell Thee how;
But I need Thee, greatly need Thee:
Come, O come, and fill me now!"

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10 -- IS THERE A DEFINITE WITNESS TO ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION?

If every inward evil which the truth discloses to us, whether in temper, thought, or desire, shall be instantly and resolutely opposed; if every unfavorable habit be at once broken up, and every association unfriendly to entire purity abandoned; -- nearest friends, wealth, honor, reputation, all sacrificed for the sake of a clean heart, then we are ready for the witnessing Spirit.

If we are sick of our inward plague -- if we are weary of the strife and contention of our stormy nature -- if we sigh from the longing depths of our burdened hearts to be cleansed from every stain, why may we not believe and receive the Divine witness? If it is not so, to what do we cling? Is there yet a long-cherished habit? Any indulgence of this life which is out of harmony with the Holy Spirit? Away with all -- strike the fatal, final blow, that severs the last tie. Seek no other help.

It is leaning there, singly, exclusively, resolutely there, that brings the cleansing power and the Divine assurance. Is this your state? Have you [so] renounced the world, its pomp and show, its honor, wealth, and pleasure, that you feel yourself really cut loose? Is there anything in earth or heaven you prize so much as this perfect love? This deep, strong, enrapturing, flaming love?

But, having consecrated yourself, is it safe to conclude that you are purified, without any direct consciousness of it, or any witness of the Spirit? Not at all. You may have been honest in your endeavor to surrender all and to practice self-denial, yet you are not so infallible as to be incapable of mistake in the matter. When God's omniscient eye sees that we have reached the specific point of renunciation, consecration, and trust, the Holy Spirit is instantly sent to exterminate all depravity, and to bear testimony to His own work in His own way.

Infinite wisdom does not leave a matter of such moment to depend on the uncertain deductions of poor fallible humanity. Never consider the work of purification complete until the witness of the Spirit is given.

But do not mistake, and suppose that sanctifying faith is a belief that the work is done. The faith that sanctifies is a belief that God will do just as He has promised. When heart holiness is obtained, faith ceases in regard to that crisis experience,* and testimony utters its voice. When one ends, the other begins. Beware and not substitute presumption for real experience, nor dream that assuming a thing to be done brings the thing itself.

[*This, of course, could not be accurately interpreted to mean that one's faith in the sanctifying blood ceases when the crisis experience is obtained, for that faith must continue if sanctification continues beyond the crisis. Indeed, in many cases faith, -- not that the work "will be done," -- but faith that the work "is now done" precedes the witness of the Spirit to heart-cleansing. However such faith is widely different from a shallow, emotional, or rational "easy-believe-ism". True faith that the work "is done" before the witness is given is not a shallow presumption, and can only be exercised by one who is in "dead earnest," by one who has "died the death" and who is totally dead to self. Further, such sanctifying faith always perseveres, -- its urgent expectancy not diminishing or wavering until the witness is given. A faith that one "is now" sanctified, but which never obtains the witness of the Spirit, though long exercised, is not true, sanctifying faith. -- DVM]

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11 -- IS HEART PURITY NECESSARY TO DO GOD'S WORK IN THE WORLD?

It is admitted that the early Christians were thus made usable to the Master; but there is an impression abroad today that this qualification can be dispensed with. The result is failure, disheartenment, and disappointment. The Cross of Christ is the pathway of complete deliverance from the guilt and power of sin. A lower view than this will permit the devil to win a victory over the Christian and the Church.

These "low views" of sin and of privilege explain the pride, the passion, the selfishness, the envy, the jealousy, the resentment, the barrenness, the worldliness, [and] the secret sympathy with sin from, which people who do not believe in heart holiness think there is no deliverance.

However, God is raising up, all over the land, witnesses to His power to effect a "double cure," not only to save from wrath and to pardon actual transgressions, but to deal with that moral depravity which lies further back and deeper down in our nature, and is the fountain-head of all character and activity.

There may be apparent success in Church work, but time will test the quality of our achievement. A prominent minister wrote as follows: [during] "Thirty odd years in pastoral work... I received into church membership perhaps 1,200 individuals. I see plainly now that I welcomed into church membership people who had not yet been born into the spiritual plane of life. To receive them was deception on my part, however blindly I acted. I did them grievous

spiritual harm. My failure to help guide those children of God into the New Testament experience of spiritual maturity can be an area where my Lord can say to me, "In this area of soul need, I never knew you..." There are many activities in my church that no one would label harmful, save for the fact... they had nothing whatsoever to do with my Lord's command, 'Go make disciples.' As one who can see his failure, I know I cannot dodge my Lord's solemn judgment."

To carry on God's work is no easy assignment. We must blaze highways where paths have never run. We must produce a type of Christianity to which difficulties are an incentive and danger and sacrifice are challenges. Such work demands heart holiness.

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THE END