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THREE LOAVES OF BREAD
By Joseph Grant Morrison

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TO THE READER

In the early part of the year 1955 while busy at research materials preparatory to writing a
biography of Dr. J. G. Morrison, it occurred to me that it would be a real blessing as well as a
stimulant to holiness people far and wide to be able to read some of his great FAITH messages
again. Dr. Morrison enthusiastically preached on "Three Loaves of Bread" and "Faith for
Achievement," and with great appreciation people on four continents received this truth. The
messages are still aglow with anointing. May we read and profit.

Incidents concerning "Uncle Bud" Robinson and camp meetings are always interesting.
"Uncle Bud's" ministry at Jamestown Holiness Camp was a proving ground for "Faith in Action."

C. T. Corbett

June, 1956
Kankakee, Illinois

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01 -- THREE LOAVES OF BREAD

"And shall not God avenge his own elect, who cry day and night unto him. though he bear long with them?" Luke 18:7

"Yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth." Luke 11:8

"But let us ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven by the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord." James 1:6-7

"Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven." Matt. 18:19

Let us take the parable of the "Three Loaves," in Luke, eleventh chapter, and give it a modern setting so that we can get a little more of the force of it.

A man and his family are living, let us say, on a "claim" near one of the pioneer towns of the far West. He has migrated there from his former home in the East. On the occasion of which we speak, he has neglected to go to the distant store for an additional supply of food, and, though warned by his wife that all supplies are running very low, comes in to supper to find that the last bit of bread and other provisions in the house, are waiting on the table. He laments the fact that he has let the matter go in this unfortunate manner, but assures his wife that he will go before breakfast to the town and buy more. They were late in retiring on account of the restlessness of one of the children, and it is almost midnight, and they are still up, when there is the sound of an auto in the yard, and finally a knock at the door. On opening it, the head of the house finds to his astonishment that the late caller is an old acquaintance from the distant East.

"Why, Jones," he exclaims, "what are you doing here?"

"Can this be John Smith?" answers the man at the door. "I little realized that you were in this region. But I am thankful that we have found your home. The fact of the matter is, we are motoring across the country, and getting into the desert region of your wonderful state, here, we have lost our way. Since dawn we have been following 'by and forbidden paths.' We are just about out of gasoline, and mortally weary from having been lost all day, and have had nothing to eat since breakfast. If you could give the children a little bread and milk, I will never forget your kindness to us."

"Bring the family right in," exclaims John Smith in his heartiest fashion. And while the newcomer is assisting the wife and children to alight, Smith turns with a grimace to Mrs. Smith,

and says in an excited undertone: "Now, we are surely in a pretty fix. A family of hungry children on our hands, and not a bite in the house. How very unfortunate. Wife, what are we to do? About all that we can do, is to explain the unhappy circumstances to Mr. and Mrs. Jones and tell them that we will hurry to town before breakfast and stock up.

"But, husband," answers his wife in an earnest tone, "That will never do. They have had nothing since morning. I simply cannot allow little children to go to bed hungry in my house. You go over to the neighbor's house and borrow three loaves of bread, and I will go to the barn, and see whether I cannot secure a little fresh milk from that cow, and we can at least give them bread and milk before they retire."

The husband demurred. "Why, wife," he said, "I cannot ask Browns for bread, especially at this time of the night. It is midnight now. They are all in bed. Besides, he and I are not on the best of terms. I set our dog on one of his animals that had gotten into our patch of corn, and he has not liked me since. I just will not go there!"

"Husband, you go right on!" exclaimed his wife in decisive tones. "It is better to rouse Browns up, no matter how they feel and get some bread than to let these people who have traveled all day with nothing to eat, go hungry till morning. Now, You go!" And John Smith went.

At Brown's he found the house dark and forbidding. He boldly approached the door and rapped loudly. No answer. Still more rapping. Still no answer. Another spell of thundering on the door, and at last a faint, gruff voice from the upstairs chamber called, "Who's there?"

John Smith made the explanation. He set forth the unfortunate situation at his house; the dearth of provision; the friend from the East; the hungry children. Would he please lend him three loaves?

The answer came back: "Nothing doing! We have Just got the baby to sleep, and will under no circumstances get up. Sorry for your friends and their children, but I cannot accommodate you tonight. Please move on."

Now, the record goes on to say that John Smith did something that not only got that neighbor out of bed, but brought him down stairs, and finally induced him to open the door, and to hand out, not the three loaves only for which Smith had asked, but "as many as he needed." What was the move that he made? What was the trick that he played? What diplomacy did he introduce? What maneuver executed?

It is all comprehended in that word "importunity!" What does it mean? What moves does it imply? What did Smith do, that could be designated as "importunate?" The answer is, that he just kept right on knocking. Though refused, he resumed his thundering attack on the door. Though turned down cold, he applied his fists with censorious effect on the panels. He would not quit. He kept right on. He was there for three loaves, and he was bound to have them despite the unhappy temper of Brown. The only effect that refusal had on his asking, was to induce him to redouble his attacks on the door.

"Will you stop that?" shouts Brown. "Yes." comes back the answer, "when you give me three loaves!" "I will not do that," replies Brown. "I am in bed. The lights are out. It is midnight. You go away. There's nothing forthcoming in the bread line tonight, I tell you!"

The only answer is another roaring attack on the door. Brown waits. The knocking continues. Still in hope that Smith's patience would wear out, he lingers in bed. More and louder attacks on the door. Smith's knuckles are now getting sore, he picks up a billet of wood, and with renewed energy assails the panels. He begins shouting as he beats the wood, "three loaves of bread, three loaves of bread, three loaves of bread!" With each exclamation, he beats a tremendous tattoo on the door.

Mrs. Brown intervenes. "Oh, husband," she pleads, "do get up and give him the bread. He will break the door down. He must be insane. Certainly he is desperate. Go on, husband, if you do not, then I will!"

Assailed on two sides, Brown yields. "I am coming," he yells. "Stop your noise, and I will get you some. You are the most insane neighbor that I have ever had." Grumbling, complaining, maladicting, expostulating, wishing he knew how to refuse, and yet get rid of Smith, he, nevertheless, gets up, gropes his way to the room below, searches out the bread container, stored under the stairs, mad, angry, disgusted, outraged, he carries the whole container to the door, jerks the entrance to the house open, dumps the bread at the feet of the apologizing, thanks uttering, grateful Smith, refuses to listen to his voluminous expressions of regret and gratefulness, slams the door in Smith's face, and grumbles his peeved way back to his disturbed bed. But Smith got the bread!

Turn quickly, now to the Scripture, and study them for a moment. Who told this parable? Jesus, the blessed Son of God! Why did He tell it? To encourage us to ask, and believe, and keep on, and never quit, and not get discouraged, and refuse to be denied, and get desperate, and the longer the answer is delayed, to redouble our attack on the divine door, with the assurance from His own sacred lips that we shall receive.

For, instead of asking at the door of a reluctant, and ugly and peevish neighbor, we are asking of a loving heavenly Father, who has told us to come, and urged us to ask, and begged us to believe. If then, these methods would bring an angry, disgusted, outraged neighbor across, with the answer, what will not faithful persistency at the door of loving divine mercy' and compassion do?

And immediately following this most amazing and remarkable parable Jesus says, "And I say unto you, ask, and it shall be given you: seek and ye shall find: knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For (O reader, listen to this revolutionary utterance!) every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened!" Luke 11:9-10

There can be no doubt that the Master intended this mighty statement about the certainty of securing from God the things that we ask for in faith, to be coupled together with this parable that He had just related. Then, we must not separate them, but must read the one in the light of the other.

Then, the statement of Jesus should read like this: "And I say unto you, that if you will ask in the same importunate, persistent, never ceasing manner that this man asked for bread, that you will receive. That if you will seek as this man did, at midnight, with refusal ringing in your ears, but with desperate faith, that will not cease till the matter asked for is possessed, ye too, will find. That if you will knock at the door of Almighty God. and knock and knock, and KNOCK! Never ceasing, never letting up, never quitting, never despairing. it shall be opened unto you! For every one who asks, in this desperate, continuous manner, always receives. That everyone who seeks importunately, ceaselessly, with a faith so perfect that it says, with glistening eyes, "It's coming," always finds, That to him that knocketh with thundering tattoo of agonizing intercession, which refuses to end till the thing desired is possessed, it shall be opened!"

It is almost needless to inquire: Is this the way we ask? Is this the way we seek? Is this the way we knock? Most of us, will, maybe, pull and lift, and agonize with a genuine faith, for a while and then our ease-loving age reasserts its hold on us, and we lapse back into the lines of least resistance, and the work of the kingdom, that had just begun to move, stops, largely speaking. Who is to blame that millions who are reachable, are not reached? Who is to blame that sons and daughters are plunging headlong into perdition? Who is to blame that the mission fields are only spotted here and there with any effort whatsoever for the salvation of the millions, and even these are moving very slowly? God surely is not to blame. He has caused His mighty cloud of infinite resources to swell manward, with untold revivals, with unmentioned Pentecosts, with superabundant powers. and that cloud is waiting, waiting, waiting -- for what? For someone to pierce it with his faith, and release the abilities of the great God of the skies onto the needs of humanity. Oh, why is it not released? No faith! For He says that if we had faith as a grain of mustard seed, we could remove mountains, pluck up sycamore trees, and "nothing shall be impossible unto you." Matt. 17:20

God lays His mighty thunderbolts at our feet, and says: "Seize them, and hurl them into the hearts of the King's enemies. 'The work of my hands, command ye me!'" And we falter, and gasp, and wish, and long, and (almost completely) fail!

We beg the reader to think of this parable, also, in the light of the contention of this book, namely, that faith is a literal, though unseen cord, cable, or medium that connects us with God, and to note how, when we believe, He releases His power upon us for salvation, or releases it upon the propositions that we are laboring at, for their consummation, but in order to do this, He needs time and desperate intercession.

If this be true, then there is an amazing significance in the parable we have just been considering. Why, does God want us to hang on? Why does He desire that we shall admit a time element into the matter of the answer of faith? The answer is, that not only is time needed to prepare us for the reception of the thing, or things, for which we pray, but God needs the time in order to accomplish the thing for which we believe!

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"If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth" (Mark 9:23). Uttered in connection with the healing of a demoniac.

"Be not afraid, only believe" (Mark 5:36) For the resurrection of the dead child.

"Where is your faith?" (Luke 8:25). For the stilling of a tempest.

"If ye have faith, as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you" (Matt. 17:20). For moving mountains and anything else desired.

"Again, I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 18:19). For just anything.

"He that believeth on me, the works that I do, shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father" (John 14:12). For casting out demons, turning water to wine, healing sick, raising the dead, stilling tempests, multiplying loaves and fishes, etc., and then greater things.

We desire that our readers shall hold carefully in mind the contentions of this book, namely, that faith is a law, and that if its conditions are fulfilled, it will always produce the same results under the same circumstances. Also that it is a literal connection between man and God, over which medium the divine power operates. In the case of regeneration, we have seen that though confession, and repentance, and restitution may be needed to bring the seeker up onto believing ground, or into the atmosphere where the faith faculty can perfect itself, yet there is no forgiveness of sin, nor regeneration of the heart, till the faith connection is made, and then immediately and automatically there is released from the divine storehouse the necessary power to forgive, justify and regenerate that soul.

In the case of the salvation of one's own soul, the faith-cable is lifted to God, for the release of His power upon the seeker himself. But after the soul is converted and sanctified wholly, then it is possible to take a further step, and begin believing for the release of God upon other souls, or upon various projects around us. This is what we call "salvation faith." Now we desire to consider the matter of accomplishing things by faith.

Let the reader remember that one of the characteristics of faith is that you receive just what you believe for. "According to your faith, be it unto you," said the Master, enunciating the law of faith. Again He repeats it, when He said: "Go thy way, as thou has believed, so be it done unto thee." Referring to the same law, He said one time: "If his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?" Intimating that if an earthly father would give the thing that was asked, and not something else, then the heavenly Father would do the same. He reiterates this, when He says: "And shall believe in his heart that those things which he saith, shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he saith;" not something else, but the thing that he had asked for.

This goes to show that one can believe for justification, and not have any faith for sanctification. And, until he gets light on the latter, he can stay beautifully justified, but not have any faith for the second work of grace. It also throws light on the fact that one can be both converted and sanctified, and not have any faith for the second coming of Jesus. Later on, when he gets light on the wonderful advent of our Lord, and begins to believe it, he gets another illumination from the skies, and rejoices in another great vision that faith has brought to him from God. In the very same manner a person can be genuinely converted, and gloriously sanctified, and yet fail to believe God for the accomplishing of very much. That is, he can have a fine faith for his own salvation and yet have little or no faith for the salvation of others.

In a thousand communities, in this land of ours, there are little bands of devoted people who have gotten the light on salvation, and are rejoicing in the possession of both works of grace that is, are both converted and sanctified, and yet when it comes to believing for a genuine awakening in their own village, or town, they have no faith at all, or at least comparatively little. Put it to the test. Ask people whom you know are converted and sanctified wholly, and who will testify with shining faces that they are living the holy life, as to the prospects of a revival campaign in their home town, and there will be, in literally hundreds of cases a reply something like this: "A revival in this town? Oh, brother, this is the worst town in the state. You do not realize how dead and sodden in sin and rejection this town is. We have tried here, and tried again. We do not believe that you can have a meeting here. Oh, you can no doubt, secure a soul or two, but as for any real sweeping work of grace, it is an impossibility here!" In this very statement they have given the reason why no awakening can be had. "I don't believe!" That is the reason. They have a real faith for their own salvation, but they have no faith for achievement. Consequently they are, themselves, well saved, but when it comes to getting things done for God, there is no faith there.

Inasmuch as we are contending here that faith is a literal cord or cable that connects the soul with God, over which He operates to deliver His power upon the believer, for the very thing for which his faith stands, the reader can see in an instant, how the situation stands, in such a community as we have just now been considering. The person speaking above, had a channel up and open between his heart and God, over which the life of salvation and holiness was streaming, constantly keeping him a sanctified child of God. But he had no faith channel up for the salvation of others, and consequently was not releasing any of God's power and conviction on anyone else. But suppose that he had gone to believing -- faithfully, patiently -- asking, seeking, knocking at the door of heaven, and had agreed with one or two others to do this, and had persistently believed "in his heart that those things which he said should come to pass," he either would have received, and precipitated an awakening, or else, there is no truth in the Book of God. Either God would have to respond over such a faith, or else Christianity is a "cunningly devised fable." It is a faith like this, releasing God upon objects and projects outside of one's own salvation, that we term "achieving faith."

To release God in sufficient power so that He can convict another person, is, we believe, a greater exercise of faith than to believe Him for one's own salvation. Then, to believe Him for the release of His power upon nature, so that He can readjust her laws in harmony with the petition and faith of the believing petitioner, is still a greater exercise of faith. At least, the believer has reached the realm of "achieving faith."

The reader can thus readily see why it is that so little is being achieved in spiritual lines in this age. It is because there is such a dearth of that degree of faith that can release God onto any given proposition, so that He can bring it to pass. With few exceptions, none of us were converted until we became desperate about the matter, and thus perfected our faith to that degree that God could be released in regenerating power. This is also true, with few exceptions, in regard to our being entirely sanctified. By careful observation, it will be found to be strikingly true with regard to securing the salvation of other people. Not many of us have ever gotten desperate about that lost son, or daughter, or husband, or neighbor, or Sunday School class, and consequently we have not perfected our faith to any degree, and while we have released God's power upon them for a degree of conviction, still we have failed to hold our faith channel through with a desperation, and the conviction that was upon these persons has subsided. Who cannot recall numberless instances where souls were "almost persuaded," and yet failed to be brought in; and can we not see, now, that it was because of the lack of one more exercise of desperate faith; if that had been offered they would have been reached. Perhaps to this, can also be traced, the speedy lapse of many souls. Who, among us has continued to believe for their walk with God, after they were led into salvation? Have not most of us let down in our faith for him, as soon as the convert was landed? With the let down of our faith concerning him, has come a lapse of his own faith for himself, and the life and salvation of God was automatically cut off from him.

In the meanwhile, the hordes of sinful humanity swirl in awful currents and eddies about the church, their hearts "like muffled drums are beating funeral marches" to the pit! They are needy, but we are helpless to feed them. They are lost, but we are helpless to reach them. All the time the Infinite Dynamo is throbbing with spiritual ohms and amperes, more than sufficient to redeem, -- regenerate and sanctify wholly, the lost millions of human kind, and yet it is not released because there is no "power wire" of faith stretched skyward to connect with the resources of Almighty Compassion, over which the divine current can be precipitated upon a damned and death struck world! In the meanwhile the holiness people circle around and shout: "Saved, sanctified and kept," the truth of which we do not deny, but nevertheless do we insist that the blame for the lost condition of the race, rests with us! We do not have to be wise, nor cultured, nor gifted, nor smart, nor in possession of office or position! No, all that the Bible declares to be needful is that we be pure-hearted believers! The more childlike and humble, the better. The more simple and unaffected, the more efficient! We have exercised faith for our own salvation, and obtained it. Why not then exercise faith for achievement, and release God upon the community, the town, the city, the state, the nation!

It is the profound conviction of this writer that there is a thousand times more in the atonement of Jesus Christ than any of us are getting out of it. Does not the blessed volume say that: "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and He shall give him life for them that sin not unto death" (I John 5:16). Does this not, in the light of the law of faith, that we have been discussing, open up significances to which most of us have hitherto been blind? Does this not lay the salvation of at least our circle of acquaintances upon us? Are we not then responsible? Perhaps not to the degree that would exclude us from the kingdom in case we were derelict to this duty, but at least in the degree that will make a very uncomfortable judgment day for us? To a degree also that will tremendously effect the distribution of rewards, when our names are called? If a member of our family, a neighbor, or well known acquaintance dies in sin, and we have not done our best to pray the prayer of faith for his salvation, is it not recorded in the books

of God as a demerit on our part, not, perhaps, as we have said, sufficient to exclude us from heaven, but sufficient at least to effect our rewards, and to become a matter of grievous regret on our part, when the "books are opened!"

Oh, church of God, awake, awake! Thou hast believed for thine own salvation, now put on the beautiful garments of achieving faith! The outside world is offering defiance to the God of holiness. They are challenging us to show that our God has power. They are saying: "Where is the Lord God of Elijah? You claim that He is all powerful, that He can deal mighty convincing blows upon us. We do not believe it. We defy Him. We fear Him not. Show us what He can do, and we will believe! We hold that He is impotent! We allege that He is nothing but an impersonal force! Some fire-mist! A bit of protoplasm! If He is what you holiness people claim He is, turn Him loose on us! We are not afraid!" And in the face of this challenge, we are helpless! God has laid His thunderbolts at our feet, and bidden us hurl them into the hearts of the King's enemies. He has said: "And nothing shall be impossible unto you!" "He shall have whatsoever he saith!" "The works of my hands command ye me!" "It shall be done for them of my heavenly Father!" But we lift and pine, and sigh, and agonize, and wonder, and away down deep in our hearts, ourselves, echo the challenge of the enemy. "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" and we fail to hurl the thunderbolts! The challenge of the enemy goes unaccepted! The enemy walks proudly! He talks boastfully! And God's people, with faces in the dust, wonder why!

It is because we have no faith! We do not mean for our own salvation, but for achievement! If we did but put genuine faith through to God, He would release Himself upon that graceless, godless company, and precipitate among them such a revival as the world has never seen! Either this is true, or the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ is an imposture! He always did it in Old Testament days. He has done it time and again through church history. God's answer to every age of infidelity has been a revival! But everywhere that one has been found, there was found first a company of believing souls, over whose faith God was operating to bring to pass the thing for which they were believing! That is exactly the trouble today! No faith for achievement! If Luther and his co-adjutors could release God over their faith and precipitate a reformation that struck the proud enemy a fearful blow in the very face, and if Wesley and his Holy Club could release Omnipotence upon the world over their faith so as to usher in the greatest revival that the world has seen since apostolic days, then what is the matter with us? Are we one whit less able than were the fathers to give God the faith over which He can change this age? We don't have to change it ourselves. All that we need to do, is to give God a perfect faith, and He will do it!

"And now there breathes that haunted air,
The sons of sires who conquered there;
With arms to strike and souls to dare,
As quick, as far as they!"

Oh, church of God! Oh, people, called the holy people! Shall we blanch in the midst of the greatest tempest that hell has ever brewed, and see the cause of God labor, wallowing in the waves of the awfulest sea of unbelief that has ever lifted its slimy waves to swallow the church, when all it needs is faith? He doesn't ask merely for labor, or gifts, or toil, or tears, but for FAITH! To be sure, real faith will bring all these others, but they are not alone what is needed now, it is the faith that we lack! Let us venture to believe! Let us dare really to trust! Let us put through a

genuine faith to God and see what happens! His mighty cloud of resources is swelling, swelling, swelling, just over our heads! In it is the greatest revival that earth has ever seen! Imprisoned there is the greatest Pentecost since the first one flooded the world! Not a dribble, not a sprinkle, not a gentle shower, but a deluge of grace. Already one can hear the mutterings of the restrained lightning! Already the preliminary peltings of the rain can be distantly heard! But the storm does not break, its floods are not released, its fury against sin is not poured forth, why, why? It requires faith! Achieving Faith! Unwavering faith! Faith that asks without a doubt! That knocks and knocks and knocks with tear-wet eyes. That calls frantically before the midnight house for the bread of revivals! That refuse to let down, or cease, or hesitate, or abandon the divine door, till the storm of salvation is released! Oh, where is our faith?

If, at some general gathering of the church, there had been much prayer offered to God for a great revival, and while men and women were on their faces calling on God, there should suddenly appear a real, bona fide angel from heaven in their midst, and clothed with flowing garments of light, should walk majestically to the platform, while general officers and secretaries gave eager room, and an astounded audience lifted their heads and looked with amazed eyes on the visitor, or leaped to their feet and, spell-bound, beheld him with wondering glance, and he should lift dignified hand for silence, and, with face shining with heavenly beauty, and words touched with the resonance of golden bells ringing vesper chimes in the world beyond the sky, should speak and say: "Children, I am Gabriel! From the presence of God, I come! A message to the praying, believing church, I bear! Your prayers and alms have come up before God, as a sweet memorial! Your labors have all been noted in His book. Your petition for a nation-wide revival is heard, the answer is at hand. Just outside are a myriad of angels like me. They are waiting only till I have delivered unto you this message, and then they will scatter to place under holy conviction for sin, a hundred and sixty millions of people! Rejoice, for the desire of your hearts, is accorded you! Give praise to the Eternal Son of God!" And should then ascend straight through the ceiling, disappearing from the amazed vision of an astounded church, **WOULD WE NOT BELIEVE HIM?** Would we not exclaim, with ecstasy of joy? Would we not embrace one another, with tears and hallowed laughter? Would we not march in solemn procession and sing with believing hearts, "A Mighty Revival is Sweeping This Way?" Would we not send telegrams all over the church, and broadcast the fact on every radio obtainable that the revival for which the fathers desired and believed, and for which all our labors had for years tended, was on hand? Did not the angel say so? Have we not the changeless word of Gabriel himself? Would we not launch campaigns by the thousands, and meetings by the tens of thousands, in full faith that amazing results would follow. There can be no manner of doubt but what we would, and also lay our last cent on the altar of such a sacrifice, and expend our last energy for its consummation!

But, you say, why all this recital? No angel has appeared in two thousand years, nor are we expecting any. Hence we have no angel's word on which to launch out. Very true, friend, but we have something vastly better. In the New Testament we have the words of Jesus Christ, God's eternal Son, and He says: "Whatsoever things ye desire" (what does that include?) "when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them!" And again, "If two of you shall agree on earth, as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven!" And again, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth!" And again, "Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God!"

Believest thou this?

* * * * *

03 -- THE MOSQUITO SCOURGE

The holiness movement in the Dakotas and western Minnesota began in the closing days of the last century. When the sands of the eighteen hundreds were slipping away Dr. S. A. Danford, then a pastor at Jamestown, North Dakota, got sanctified under his own preaching during a revival. With an energy characteristic of the work of the Spirit he began to spread the holy fire. Soon after this he was made a district superintendent in the Methodist Episcopal Church, and began sponsoring holiness revivals in all the churches on his district. He also gathered around him all the fire-baptized preachers that he could contact.

Among other worthy activities he started the Jamestown Holiness Campmeeting. It had been in existence a few years when I transferred to North Dakota and united with the holiness workers in that thrilling movement. It was in the early days of the nineteen hundreds when I first met and fellowshipped with the glowing group of workers on the prairies of the vast Dakota region.

Everything was exceedingly primitive. The camp tabernacle was an old, hastily constructed shed. The eating house was composed of part boards and part tentage. Not an automobile was in sight, that was "the horse and buggy days," with a stern reality. Wagons, carts and bicycles brought the campers to the meeting. And there they camped, for the most part, during the entire ten days.

The camp was situated under the stunted trees along the James River. This small stream was euphoniously nicknamed "the Jim River," by the natives and this, altered to "Brother Jim," was the title to an interesting article that Dr. Beverly Carradine, then in his prime and glory, wrote for the Christian Witness. The good doctor made poor old "Brother Jim," with his sluggish current, out to be too slow and meandering, and twisting and wobbling, even to get the "blessing," despite the fact that he attended a roaring, red-hot campmeeting every year.

The grass in and around the campmeeting was tall and heavy. The dew and rain, back in those days, fell copiously. Even the lethargic river "Jim" perked up and ran with something like a decent current. And the mosquitoes -- they were a terrible scourge! Great, wide-winged, long-legged, sharp stinging, loud humming creatures of the "galnipper" variety, were in evidence during those trying days. Great swarms of them would even come up from the woods, as welcoming committees to the campmeeting folks as they arrived. These solicitous clouds of insects would follow one from the city limits to the camp, pointedly pressing their interested inquiries into the physical condition of the attendants.

Every year they were bad, but during several campmeeting sessions they were far worse than bad. This was peculiarly the case the first year that "Uncle Bud" Robinson was our chief campmeeting preacher. Though far out of the path of many flaming holiness workers of that period, nevertheless we had heard of this Spirit-filled, odd, unique and altogether interesting young Texas

evangelist. In due time we made a date with him, and it fell on this session when the detestable little blood-suckers were ten times worse than bad.

I met "Uncle Bud" at the station. He maintained his widespread reputation for eccentricity, even in his appearance. He then wore a full, pointed, sorrel-colored beard which marked him with a doubtful appearance of distinction. His alpaca coat was of extra "clerical" length, and had been badly discolored under the arms and across the back. We loaded him and his baggage into the campmeeting bus and started for the grounds. At the edge of town a great swarm of mosquitoes bade us a cordial welcome. "Uncle Bud" slapped at them right and left, remarking that they were so big that "a good many of them would weigh a pound."

That night they filled the campmeeting shed like swarms of bees. In vain we detailed men and boys to start smudges on all sides of the tabernacle. The audience looked like Palm Sunday. Every attendant had a branch with leaves on it, waving it frantically about him to discourage the swarms of insects. Brother J. M. and Sister N. J. Harris, of Miami, Florida, were the singers. They were so tormented with the mosquitoes that finally I detailed a couple of young men to stand up with them as they sang, and wave fluttering leaves about them in order to enable them to sing at all.

When "Uncle Bud" arose to preach and opened his mouth, the pests were so numerous that he actually breathed one into his mouth, and had to expectorate vigorously. He was so disturbed by their biting that after a bit we asked the two young men who had waved them off the singers, to stand one on each side of him and keep them off while he delivered his message.

I was then new in the holiness movement. Naturally the presence of so disturbing and persistent a handicap to our great annual meeting filled me with dismay. I prayed desperately that God would intervene. I told Him with agonized pleas that we had spent our money in preparation, had widely advertised the gathering, and were at considerable pains and expense to make it a success. We desired only His glory in spreading the wonderful doctrine and experience of holiness! "O blessed heavenly Father, wilt Thou not, in the interest of the salvation of souls, and the extension of Thy kingdom, intervene and drive these terrible pests away?"

Thus fervently, desperately did all of us who had the leadership of that campmeeting at heart pray. God came, the Spirit took charge, the Triune God answered our prayers in a perfectly marvelous manner -- but not in the way we asked Him to do. The mosquitoes instead of being swept away by some strong wind sent from heaven, seemed, as that first service progressed, to increase rather than to diminish. "Can anything be done to precipitate God in conviction and full salvation upon an audience that is fighting desperately with great swarms of biting, buzzing insects?" We literally fought them ourselves and groaned in prayer with keenest anguish.

"But God --!"

Yes, yes, "But God --!" He is able to dominate any and every situation, if we can only give Him the medium of desperation, faith and utter devotion. First, amid the stinging, buzzing insects, the whirling, slapping leaves, and the swinging of hats, handkerchiefs and light garments, and amid the clouds of smoke that drifted through the tabernacle from the smudges outside, the Holy Ghost fell on "Uncle Bud." How he did preach! A thousand times I have heard him, but never did he do

better than under those awful mosquito smitten circumstances. Conviction fell on the great audience in spite of the buzzing, stinging pests and the choking smoke. Hardly a soul left the tabernacle during the first service. When the altar call was made fully a hundred people literally ran to the place of prayer. We called on the saints to gather with their branches and keep the mosquitoes off the seekers. What a scene it was -- amid the smoke that drifted through in clouds; amid the buzzing, stinging insects, people prayed, agonized, leaped up from the altar with spiritualized faces and shouted. "Uncle Bud" danced about the platform desperately waving a branch about his face, and shouting praises of God. It was a notable and glorious victory.

And so, throughout the whole camp, it was one constant and desperate fight with our winged and stinging enemies, and a glorious manifestation of God's power and ability in spite of them. Salvation seemed to flow over the treetops. The whole session was a frantic fight with swarms added to swarms of insects, but one marvelous display of spiritual victories. Over five hundred people sought holiness, and every one seemed to find what he sought. It was one of the greatest sessions of that wonderful old camp.

Ah, yes, let us not forget it -- "But God --!"

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THE END