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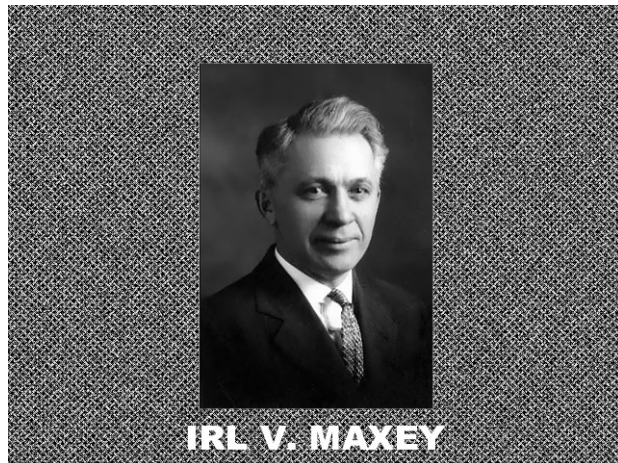
**PURE RELIGION AND UNDEFINED
A Sermon By Irl V. Maxey**

**Digitized and Edited
By Duane V. Maxey**

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INTRODUCTION TO THIS FILE

In his sketch of papa's life, my brother Parker says:-- "From 1911 to near the end of 1913 Father pastored in Glenns Ferry, Idaho. Here their first child (a daughter, Veneta) was born on October 8, 1911. In his early ministry Father was a Methodist circuit rider. It was while he was on one of these circuits in the northeast corner of the state of Oregon in the beautiful Blue Mountains where he lived then that my brother, John and I were born. John, the second child, was born on December 29, 1913 at Imbler, Oregon about twenty miles north of the city of LaGrande."

Papa dated this sermon as written on October 11, 1913, and notes that it was written in Imbler, Oregon. Parker says that our father's ministry continued in Glenns

Ferry, Idaho till "near the end of 1913." But, this shows that they moved to Imbler some time in the early part of October, a little more that two months before the birth of our brother John.

Imbler was no doubt another very small town. Even in the year 2000 the population was only 284. It is located 15 miles northeast of LaGrande, Oregon -- between the Blue Mountains and the Wallowa Whitman National Forest.

In this sermon papa refers to "That mountain stream up yonder " and says "Up yonder on the hillside I see two springs bubbling forth." It could be that these references were suggested, in part, by his very location with forested mountains in view. My wife and I have driven a number of times through the Blue Mountains area around LaGrande, Oregon -- not far from Imbler.

This sermon is an impassioned plea, not simply to "have" pure and undefiled religion, but also to "give forth" from a loving heart to a needy world. -- Duane V. Maxey, (Ahwatukee) Phoenix, Arizona, January 23, 2006.

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You will find our text this morning in the 27th verse of the first chapter of James.

SERMON TEXT: -- James 1:27 -- "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

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PURE RELIGION AND UNDEFILED

A Sermon By Irl V. Maxey

You would very naturally conclude from the text that there were impure religions in the world, and surely there are many. The word "religion" comes from the Latin root "ligo" which means "to bind". The prefix "re" means "again". The whole word "re-ligo" or "religion" means "bound again."

It does not necessarily follow that religion has to do with Jehovah, nor the gods, but "pure religion" has to do with Jehovah and means "bound back to Jehovah again."

There is also a distinction in the text as well to notice. Religion here spoken about is "undefiled before God.. the Father." It is that religion that binds men back to God with the strong power of the Holy Spirit, and gives the grasp of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man.

Now this pure and undefiled religion consists of giving and keeping -- giving on God's and Man's part -- keeping on God's and Man's part.

That mountain stream up yonder is dependent entirely on the spring that bubbles neath the hill. 'Tis all hidden to the gaze of the world, but the stream will never flow unless it gives forth water. The source of this mighty stream of salvation is hidden to the world, but man must have this gift ere he has pure religion. God gives His mighty love to flow through the hearts of men. Then a man, conscious of sin, falls at the Cross, and looking through real tears of grief, he sees Mt. Calvary. From that eminence he beholds a mighty stream of grace -- unmerited favor. It flows through his soul and washes away his every sin. Oh, Calvary's stream is flowing -- flowing so full and so free.

Now, his sins washed away in the floodtide of the blood of Calvary, the light of God's love brightens every part of his being and makes him, not only a recipient of God's gracious gift, but like the ganglia partaking of the sense of the brain, so man partakes of God's nature, and gives forth.

Consequently, there is giving on Man's part. A soul so filled with the radiant love of God must give forth love. God created the moon to receive the rays of the sun and reflect them back to earth. So, He expects us to reflect His love to our fellow creatures -- to love one another.

Oh, listen beloved, there is nothing more penetrating than the love of God given out by the hearts of men! The Scripture tells us that Jesus constantly had compassion on men while here on earth.

The word "compassion" means the same as "sympathy". It comes from the Greek "sunpathos" and means "to suffer with." Now notice:-- we must "suffer with" the widows and fatherless in their affliction. What affliction? -- one of the greatest of earth: their father and husband has been taken away. The bread-winner is gone, and their lover and adviser has fled. God has promised to be a Father to the fatherless and a husband to the widow, but He must work through us to do this. He will do His part in taking the part of the man with His great Spirit, breathing love and advice through Christ, but temporal help must come through us.

Oh, beloved, let us reach out with our love and kindness to this needy world. The spirit of the world found in all Lodges is to help those who pay dues. You notice the scales in the depot will not weigh till you drop in the penny or nickel, but you and I will give, expecting nothing in return on earth. God will take care of that when the angels reap the world. Jesus said, This do, expecting nothing in return -- call in the poor and feed them, for they can't give back a dinner.* All of this takes time.

[*Here papa obviously states in different words the truth set forth in Luke 14:12-14 -- "When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy

brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just."]

I once knew a Christian lawyer who left his office every day for two hours to spend in the slum district helping the needy. Ah, take time to read your Bible, take time to live holy, speak oft with thy Lord. Besides other time to do God's business and work, surely we can spend all day on the Sabbath for Him without letting business or mail bother us.

I once heard of a Prime Minister of England who felt it his duty to spend a tenth of every day in prayer and devotion, and so spent 2 hours and 24 minutes every morning ere going to Parliament -- and, he was never known to become ruffled over any bill.

I heard of another manufacturing establishment stopping for chapel services. Oh, give your time to the cause!

When this lawyer I spoke about went out to help the needy, he spent money in buying food and clothing and books for the needy. Oh, I will tell you, we must give our money to God's cause! I think everyone should give a tithe as the very least to give.

Now listen to God speak in Proverbs 11:24 -- "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty." Oh, scatter!

Again, in Luke 6:38 -- "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom." The more you give, the more you have and can give.

To keep ourselves unspotted from this world we must first trust God to keep us and labor to help God keep us. Oh, He will keep us and He will never forget to keep us. Listen to the Psalmist: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is thy keeper: the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore" (Psalm 121:1-8).

It is true that in giving forth our love, sympathy, time, and money, we are helping God to keep us, but let Jude tell us more perfectly how to keep ourselves untouched from the world: "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most

holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost.." (Jude 20). Get the Holy Ghost! Keep yourselves in the love of God. Build up your faith. Seek and obtain the baptism of the Holy Ghost and keep yourself in this perfect love.

Let me illustrate:-- Up yonder on the hillside I see two springs bubbling forth. One stream courses down the hillside, gathering mud and passes us muddy. The other stream, from the start, pushes back the mud and passes us a clear stream in the center. You know the difference:-- one has more power than the other. We need the power of the Holy Ghost to keep unspotted from the world.

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

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THE END OF THIS SERMON