

The Pastor's Message

WANING FIRES

Rev. F. A. Watson*

One of the most serious facts which confront the Christian worker is the tendency to coolness, the lack of Holy fire, the fact of waning fires upon our altars.

The text I have chosen in this connection is found in Lev. 6-13: "The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out." It is an expression of God's will for His people of all ages, and it is also a Divine promise of unflinching, glowing, heart-warming fire upon the altars of our churches and the altar of our own soul.

There are four things suggested in the text. The altars, the sacrifice, the fire and the promise of continued blessing.

Let us think first of the Altar. Now the Altar is part of man's part in a Holy transaction. We read again and again of man erecting his altar in order that he might worship God acceptably. So Abel erected his altar early in the history of the human race. So Abraham built his altar on Mount Moriah and prepared to offer his son Isaac. So Elijah erected his altar before a hostile idolatrous multitude and prayed till the fire came down. So every man or woman who has ever received spiritual blessing from God has had his altar his meeting place with God.

Have you such an altar?

Is your family altar intact?

Have you a secret place of prayer?

If not is it any wonder that your home is not blessed, or that your heart is cold?

Again there is suggested the thought of SACRIFICE.

The ancient altars erected of stone were always a place of sacrifice, and the heart that is blessed of God and knows the kindling flame of Holy Ghost fire in this our day, knows too that an acceptable sacrifice must be offered and kept intact if our fire is not to wane and leave our altar cold and desolate.

A word regarding our sacrifice.

Brother, sister, just anything won't do. If we are to know the continual blazing of the Holy Ghost fire upon our souls and in our churches we must present an acceptable sacrifice to God.

Oh, how many examples we have in God's word of men who went through all the forms of worship, who brought sacrifices to God and yet had no flame upon their altar.

There was Cain with his sacrifice of the fruits of the field. He recognized the necessity of sacrifice, built his altar, brought his gift. But God had not respect unto his sacrifice because it was not in divine order, and so was not acceptable to Him.

There was Saul with his disobedient heart and his sacrifice of the fat of rams. And there is the New Testament teaching. Hear the great Apostle Paul in Romans 12. I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, Holy, acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service.

You see that God will not bargain with us. He still demands our best, yea our all.

Now the sacrifice too is a part of man's part in this Holy Order.

That brings us to the third element of our text namely: Fire! Holy Fire! Now the fire

TEMPERED TRUTHS

Rev. F. A. Dunlop

"For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth." II. Corinthians 13:8.

What a spirit! Christianity might long since have redeemed the world had more of its disciples been thus minded. "Perish everything but Truth" could well be adopted as our slogan. And if it were, what advances the Church would make everywhere.

Some say that this statement of the Apostle's is not a testimony of his spirit, but rather, a declaration of a principle. Truth is truth, they say, and man is powerless to prevent or effect it. This may be a comforting position to take, but I fear it is not wise. Jesus said, "He that is not for Me is against Me, and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth abroad." The Old Testament prophet said, "We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes; and judgment is turned away backwards, and justice standeth afar off, for Truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. Yea, truth faileth, and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey." Here are scriptures that definitely show that man's doings can and do effect truth. Doubtless, Truth, because it is truth, will abide forever, but its blessed-

is God; part of the covenant, and if we fulfill our part He will never fail in His.

In Leviticus 9:24 we read that when the altar had been erected and the sacrifice laid that "The fire came out from before the Lord."

When Elijah prayed on Mount Carmel the fire fell. And if you have brought an acceptable sacrifice to God, one that includes **you** with **your all**, you too know the glad experience of falling fire upon your soul. Hallelujah.

Now man's altar and man's sacrifice are acceptable to God, but man's fire is never acceptable to Him. Early in the dealings of God with ancient Israel, we read that Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, offered strange fire before the Lord, and we read also that God's fire consumed them. There can be no substitute for Holy Fire. Human zeal if "according to knowledge" is good and perhaps necessary but it won't meet the need or move the load. Human emotions and human endeavor all have their part in God's great plan, but if we are to know God's best in our own souls and accomplish anything for Him we must have Heaven-sent Holy Ghost Fire upon our souls and around our altars. I am not pleading for the wild-fire of fanaticism, but praying that there may descend upon us as a people, genuine Holy Ghost fire, sin-consuming, energizing, life-giving fire to warm our own souls and prove to a gainsaying world that "the Lord He is the God."

Just one more thought in connection with the text and as briefly as possible:

Holy Fire is **not spasmodic**.

Is yours my brother?

The fire shall **ever** be burning upon the altar. Oh, the waning fires that go out and leave the heart so cold. It need not be so. God has pledged that if we will keep our altar erected and our sacrifice complete that He will see to it that fire will burn continuously. May it be so.

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ness to this world will be enhanced or hindered by the attitudes of men. "Pray for us," said the apostle, "that the Word of God may have free course, and be glorified." I think it must be quite clear that our text has reference to a noble spirit, influencing with rigor, the attitude and actions of this great man.

To what extent Paul was influenced by this spirit, the context makes known. Corinth had been a "problem" church. To Paul, they owed more than to any other living man. He had reached them with the Gospel. He had showed to them the way of Salvation. He had nursed them through the tender years of spiritual baby-hood. He had watched over them like a loving parent, saying: "I am jealous over you with godly jealousy, for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." This strong devotion ought to have been rewarded with mutual love and gratitude, but it was returned with criticism and ridicule. They proved themselves unworthy of his love. They questioned his claims to apostolic authority; they made uncomplimentary remarks regarding his person and preaching. And now Paul, what is your answer? You don't have to take it; you can live without them. Why don't you tell them so? But wait, says Paul, Truth has been planted in Corinth. The Foundation of All Truth, Jesus Christ, has been laid there. The labors of such men as Cephas and Apolos have borne fruit there. "I have planted, Apolos watered, but God gave the increase," and whatever be my answer, I must avoid doing or saying anything that will injure the work of God.

Firstly, the work must not be injured by Compromise. "I write to them which heretofore have sinned, and to all others, that if I come again I will not spare." Paul never blinded his eyes to open sin. The unfaithful and unholy must be disciplined for the sake of truth. When the Church becomes too weak-kneed to enforce her standards of righteousness, she is doomed spiritually. When certain members of our communion live in such a manner that their questionable doings are the common talk of the neighborhood, it is high time that something be done for the sake of truth. Paul's attitude was, "I will not spare." Better to put the offending member on the carpet, than to lose the respect of the community, or suffer the displeasure of God.

Secondly, the Truth would not be injured by his taking an unkind attitude toward those who disagreed with him on matters merely personal. To those who questioned his apostleship he would have them to behold the genuineness of their own experience. In the fruits of their own lives he would show them the proofs of his ministry. Magnanimous spirit! Most of us would have set about to, "taking them apart," not so Paul. "Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which to you-ward is not weak, but mighty in you. Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves how that Jesus Christ is in you." After they had questioned the genuineness of his claims, he holds up their own experiences as a proof that Christ was speaking through him. How could they know Christ as they did know Him, is the reasonings of the great apostle, if his ministry was spurious, since he had been the means of leading them to Christ? Here, was an opportunity for "mud-slinging." Here was an

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