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An Advocate of Scriptural Holiness

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EDITORIAL

A PROMISE FOR TODAY

There is widespread belief among God's people that we are in the last days. The social degeneracy, political upheaval, and religious apostasy of the times, signs which were to appear just previous to our Lord's return, prophesy that the King is near, even at the door.

The Word of God indicates that at the time of the second advent of Christ, a state of moral and spiritual decline will prevail. "Evil men and seducers will wax worse and worse," "because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold," "that day shall not come except there first come a falling away," are scripture statements describing the spiritual state of the world and the church in the times just preceding our Lord's appearing.

But for the pastor, evangelist, and church with spiritual vision and zeal for God's glory a brighter prospect is given. "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, that I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy; and I will show wonders in the heavens above, and signs in the earth beneath . . . before that great and notable day of the Lord come; and it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

We readily admit that this promise is primarily dispensational. The phrase, "in the last days," as used here is one that refers to the closing era of divine revelation and the fullness of the promise of the outpoured Spirit was to occur at the beginning of the last great dispensational division of human history. And so it has come to pass. The dispensation of the Father was completed some nineteen hundred years ago when the birth of Jesus ushered in the dispensation of the Son. This brief but momentous period was followed by the dispensation of the Spirit, the last great division of Divine revelation, which began with the day of Pentecost. On that memorable day the Holy Ghost was outpoured and the promise of the prophet Joel was fulfilled.

But the spiritual benefits and potentialities of the inspired promise were offered as a perennial challenge to the Church of Christ. In his post Pentecostal sermon Peter declared: "For the promise is unto you, and to your

children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." And so the echo reverberates through the centuries and its sound has inspired faith in the hearts of the believing of many generations. The claiming of this promise has been the beginning of great spiritual awakenings at various times and in various places since the Spirit was first outpoured upon the men and women who tarried in the upper room. And the challenge of that promise is as real for today as for any period of the past.

The skies are full of Pentecost. God waits to pour out His Spirit upon all flesh. Signs and wonders may yet be witnessed by those who will believe. If we claim the promise as ours, and realize its fulfillment, we may yet wrest victory from the enemy's hand and turn the tide of victory toward Zion.

Why should we watch the spiritual resources of the church waste away when God will open the windows of heaven and pour us out blessings that we cannot contain? Why should we be embarrassed with sparsely attended church services and barren altars when the Lord desires and designs that we should see the waste places inhabited and the barren made fruitful? Why should we be shut up to insignificant and impotent efforts to evangelize when the Word has promised that we shall break forth on the right hand and on the left?

"The promise is to you . . ." Will you claim it?

WILLIAM BRAMWELL—REVIVALIST

By E. W. Lawrence

To the end of his life, wherever he went his first inquiry was about those who 'experienced sanctification,' and it would be to miss entirely the lesson of Bramwell's life if we did not thoroughly examine his teaching and testimony on this part of Christian doctrine." So says Rev. C. W. Andrews in his short biography of William Bramwell.

Born in the Fylde district of Lancashire, of godly Church of England parents, William Bramwell, although at first prejudiced against the Methodists, came eventually under their influence, and, as a result of a personal meeting with John Wesley, became a class leader and local preacher. God called him into the ministry, and for many years he faithfully served in many circuits of Methodism as an ardent soul-winner. He was, first and foremost, a revivalist, but that does not mean he was one-sided in his appeal. Telling how he insisted on justification and sanctification and faith, his friend, Henry Longdon, of Sheffield, said, "He did not exalt these doctrines and depreciate others: he published every doctrine of the gospel."

The church—meaning, of course, the organized denominations as we know them—is very rarely the friend of revival. Those who hindered the work of Christ Himself were the rulers of the Jewish assembly; and ever since it has been the way of established and organized religion to suspect the irregularities of the revivalist and reformer. The same coldness, dullness and suspicion had crept into the Methodist Church within ten years of the death of Wesley. Nevertheless, as a revivalist and apostle of the higher life, William Bramwell served the church of his choice.

Revival and Holiness Go Hand In Hand

Wesley himself always insisted that where holiness was faithfully preached and lived out by the church members, there revival would come. Holiness was the secret of the eigh-

teenth-century evangelical revival. In the "Long Minutes" John Wesley said that the object of Methodism was to "reform the nation, particularly the church, and to spread holiness over the land." In 1760, in the town of Otley, Yorkshire, there began a glorious work of sanctification (or holiness) and which was the secret of Wesley's revival. But we will let Wesley himself speak: "It spread first through various parts of Yorkshire, afterwards in London, then through most parts of England, next through Dublin and Limerick, and all the south and west of Ireland. And wherever the work of sanctification is increased, the whole work of God increased, in all its branches."

Writing to another of his preachers in 1791 Wesley said: "Let me reaffirm, your church is for holiness or for nothing. Take it out of your preaching and it is emasculated. Take it out of your living and you have nothing left worth your time and effort. Outside of heart purity received and enjoyed here and now, you hold to no tenet that is not held and taught by some other church, and in many instances can be better urged by them."

In all this William Bramwell was true to his high calling. The walk along the highway of holiness is that to which every child of grace is called in the plan and purpose of God. Bramwell was faithful in preaching the doctrine. But what use all this if the life is out of harmony with the doctrine proclaimed? No such complaint could be lodged against William Bramwell. Speaking of him, one intimately acquainted with all his comings and goings forth said:

"I knew him intimately for twenty years; I lived in the same house with him in his seasons of relaxation as well as occupation, but never saw him in such a temper that I could reprove. His soul was like a spring, continually overflowing with the most benevolent emotion."

William Bramwell trod consistently the way of holiness. Like Enoch before him, he "walked with God," and in death had the testimony that his life "pleased God." He could wish for no other epitaph.

Holiness is a life to be lived. The prophet Isaiah speaks of it as a "highway of holiness," as though there were "ways," a higher and lower way, to the city Celestial. While there is but "one way" to heaven—the other being the broad way to destruction—and that by the wicket gate and the Cross of Calvary, yet the Word of God and human experience declare that on this one way there is a lower and upper pathway, the carnal and the spiritual. If we remain on the lower pathway we shall, we believe, find mercy at the end through the Blood of the Covenant; nevertheless to this life on the top floor—to coin an expression of Henry Drummond's—are we called. "This is the will of God, * * * your sanctification." "God hath called us into holiness" (1 Thess. 4: 3, 7).

There are three things to notice about the pathway of the holy. There is the commencement, the way itself, and the consummation of the journey.

To "walk (continually) in the Spirit, that we might not fulfill the lusts of the flesh," is our privilege. But how can one enter on to the way? How is the crisis of purity received, this crisis which develops into the process of maturity? The way is by faith. Salvation, first and last and all the way along, is by faith. Like many another, William Bramwell re-

(Continued on Page 8)