

Altona M. S.,
February 7, 1948.

Dear Highway Friends:

Greetings to you all in the name of Jesus of Nazareth!

Another Christmas has passed — my first Christmas in Africa—and we have entered a New Year—a year filled with tremendous possibilities. Many have probably made New Year's resolutions which they may or may not keep and about which they have little or no conscience. But, I trust that every one of us who knows Christ as our personal Saviour have prayed earnestly, yea, almost desperately that the year 1948 will be a year of great expansion in the work of the Lord, both in the home fields and the foreign fields. I, for one, have been praying this prayer and too, our young people have been on my heart especially—that their spiritual ears may be unstopped that they may be able to hear the call of God and that there may be a glad response to His call. God has been and is trying to speak to many, but in former years there has been a lack of obedience to His call or a great spiritual deafness—so deaf that they simply could not hear God's call. Why do I write in this manner when this was to be a short letter of greeting from Africa and a letter of thanks for all the Christmas cards, letters and parcels?

You, who are in the homeland surrounded by friends and loved ones, being at least near enough to them that you can reach them in a few days, cannot possibly realize how much your letters and the words "I'm praying for you" mean to us out here. Even if I were a great literary expert, I couldn't begin to find words that would adequately express my thanks and appreciation for all the gifts received as well as for every card and letter. These words also express Gladys's sentiments. We both intend to write personal letters to each individual or class who remembered us in any way but since we are only now receiving parcels sent in October our "Thank You" letters may be rather late coming. This letter will give you the assurance that we are grateful and that sometime you each one will have your letter.

Gladys asked me to include her name in this. As you know, she has recently spent ten days in the hospital. Since coming home she has been very sick and her pen has had a long rest. As soon as she is able, she will be writing. Some may say, "Mary, what is your reason for not writing?" We are in the midst of jams, jellies and preserves. The fruit had to be cared for immediately, else we would lose it. Sister Grace Sanders visited us this week and didn't we fill the bottles! Every night we were all "stuck up" but happy. Gladys is gradually improving in health so next week we should be able to plunge right into the letter writing during our "in-between" times.

At the Christmas Quarterly in Hartland our preachers resolved to put forth very special efforts for the salvation of souls in every one of our outposts. Some have the idea that every contact should be continually followed up.—A good idea it is too. They are putting their resolution into practice and we expect to see great results. God has been blessing, is blessing and will continue to bless us as long as we keep in the centre of His will.

God's richest blessing on you every one, is my prayer. Please keep praying for us.

Yours for souls,

MARY.

TEMPERED TRUTHS

F. A. Dunlop

Jesus speaking of John Baptist said, "He was a burning and a shining light." Here is a recommendation to be proud of. First, because of the One speaking, and secondly, because of what the statement comprehends. Christ knew preachers and preaching. When He made this statement concerning John He pointed out two characteristics in this man's preaching worthy of imitation. He speaks of warmth and illumination. These two factors are essential to any successful ministry. One qualification has to do with the minister, the other with his message. The minister must burn. The message must glow. The minister is the candle. The message is the light.

One of the most difficult things to imitate is fire. Doubtless you have seen store windows camouflaged to present a cheery room with fire-place. The wood was on the grate, the coals were bright and glowing. The imitation was fine, yet one had but to draw near to discover the deception. There was no heat, no life. Fire speaks for itself. Fire is heat or light developed by burning. One cannot get close to a fire without knowing it. John's preaching was characterized by fire.

Fire is dangerous unless we relate ourselves to it in a proper and judicious manner. This is the reason so many people who came to hear John got burned. I have heard that snakes dislike fire above everything else. Maybe this is the reason John called some of the people who came to hear him "vipers". Be that true or false, one thing is certain, unless we keep ourselves properly adjusted to fire we will get burned whether it be pulpit-fire or some other kind.

The Pulpit, generally speaking, (Or should I have made that qualification?) is desperately in need of fire. The coldness in the pew is not so serious as the lack of fire in the modern pulpit. The Baptism that John recommended was the "baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire." The ministers of the first Christian era were warned of Christ to "tarry until they be endued with the Holy Ghost and fire." I am convinced that there is no one need in the church today that supercedes this need—the need of fire.

I realize that when one speaks of fire in the spiritual sense many light and superficial souls will think of naught but some form of demonstration. This may be a by-product, for where there is fire there is quite likely to be some "sparks" flying, but be it understood that the ministry on fire will have better and more far-reaching results than someone walking the isles or waving a handkerchief. Fire, for example, is penetrating. And no kind of fire is more so than the kind we are pleading for. I know ministers who can uncover sin no matter how carefully it may be concealed. They are not the kind either who make false claims to having the "spirit of discernment". Their messages burn deeper into your heart because you know that they are wholly ignorant of the sins their ministry is making manifest. A fire is in it, and no amount of hedging or camouflage can turn it back. There is but one protection—The Lamb of God. Some people will try to cover up like the pharisees, others will seek the preachers head as did the wife of Herod, but all such manoeuvring will not quench the fire.

Fire is also purifying. I have no thought here to confuse the inimitable and imperitive

work of the Holy Spirit with that of the ministry. There is a purity that is a work of the Holy Ghost only. But the ministry too is fruitful in this respect. Sin must be challenged by the ministry as well as by the Holy Spirit. "Cry aloud, and spare not, and shew my people their sins" is still the prophet's business, and where zeal for the holiness of God's house is lacking there is likely to be much soft-pedaling and compromising. It has always been amusing to me to watch some situations clean up, or clean out, when certain pastors take over. These are the men who challenged sin in high places or anywhere. They are more concerned that the standards of righteousness be maintained than that their salaries or the social prestige of the communion be upheld. Truth falls from their sermons like burning torches and one shouldn't be surprised if fire breaks out somewhere. And don't forget that the outcome will depend on how we adjust ourselves to the flame. Remember Isaiah made the proper adjustment and "his iniquity was pardoned and his sin purged", but another pair made a wrong adjustment and the "ground opened", and we haven't heard of either of them since.

Fire is unifying. I have always watched with interest a black-smith making a weld. Two separate pieces of steel heated in the forge to the proper heat where a perfect blending of the pieces were made possible. The same can be said of a fire-baptized ministry. Let the minister be on fire and the unity of the people will be almost phenomenal. I don't mean an external, sectarian, churchanity affair, but a united front for God and truth. A unity, the basis of which is hearts cleansed from all sin and wholly resigned to God. The preacher, whose zeal and earnestness for truth is some times blamed for dividing the flock, more often proves to be a welder of the true people of God. Unity doesn't mean bunch and bulk, but coherence and consistency. The fire-baptized pulpit will labour for a fire-baptized pew, and where these exist there will be unity. John was consumed in the heat of his own spirit—"He must increase, I must decrease". The pulpit has room for some more preachers like him.

STRENGTH OUT OF WEAKNESS

R. B. Warren

There are many incidents in the Bible which illustrate the truth of the statement, "My strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 2:9). The redemption of Israel from Egyptian bondage contains a great series of events where God has shown Himself strong in behalf of the weak. "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence" (I. Cor. 1:26-29). Again, in speaking of the heroes of faith, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of those "who through faith, * * * out of weakness were made strong" (Heb. 11:33, 34).

Let us not lament our weakness but rather give our all to Almighty God. He who fed a multitude with a lad's lunch can perfect His strength through our weakness. Give God a chance. His strength through our weakness can bring honor and glory to His holy name. Let us give all to Him.