

## GUEST EDITORIAL

## GET THE FIRE! GUARD THE FLAME!

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"The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar, it shall never go out" (Leviticus 6:13).

Here is one of the divine regulations in the old Hebrew economy and a forecast of Jehovah's purpose for the day in which we are privileged to live.

The altar was never to be without fire; the flame must never be allowed to die. Its origin was divine. No other fire, no matter how it was kindled, could ever be the same.

Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire before the Lord, but suffered the penalty of death (Leviticus 10:1-2). Consequently the holy flame was scrupulously guarded and constantly fed.

The priests, it is said, sat up by turns the whole night through to tend and feed the flame.

It was no doubt upon the thought here suggested that Charles Wesley based the now well-known hymn:

"O Thou who camest from above  
The pure celestial fire to impart,  
Kindle a flame of sacred love  
On the mean altar of my heart.

"There let it for Thy glory burn,  
With inextinguishable blaze,  
And trembling to its source return  
In humble prayer and fervent praise."

Taking up this spiritual aspect, two thoughts suggest themselves for all who desire to live the holy life. They may be put into simple language for all to understand: First, we must get the fire; and further, we must guard the flame.

## I. We Must Get the Fire

The holy life is distinguished from every other by the presence of the heavenly flame.

1. Above all else, the fire must be there. Is not this the great need of the present day—a day of so much religion that is regular, orderly and icily formal, and so little warmth, pungency and power.

The altar is there. The consecration liturgy is repeated again and again, but that altar lacks the heaven-sent fire. Heaven-sent fire! What is it? It is something coming upon the heart direct from heaven to crown a complete consecration.

Illustrations of this are not far to those seeking in the Sacred Book, where there are records again and again of a liberal falling from heaven of a burning flame.

It came down upon the altar which Elijah had reared on Carmel's Mount (I Kings 18). It descended upon the altar in Solomon's newly dedicated temple (2 Chronicles 7:1). It was manifested upon waiting, consecrated brows, in that Jerusalem Upper Room (Acts 2). Whether visible or invisible, wherever there is a fully furnished altar the fire falls.

2. This fire must be of a peculiar kind. It is not a fire, merely; God calls it the fire. It comes from the skies, originating in the very heart of God. This fire is not without its counterfeits even in this our day. There are three distinct flames anyone of which may burn within the hearts of men, yet they are as widely different as it is possible to be.

(1) There is a flame of enthusiasm—an

energy purely human. This may be manifested in a revival service, a football game, a political rally, or whatever else may make the momentary appeal. However, this is not the fire of our text.

(2) There is a flame of fanaticism—a force mainly Satanic. It may be, in the first place, the over-reaching of human enthusiasm, and that by a perfectly honest soul. Soon, however, the powers of darkness begin to fasten themselves upon the unguarded mind, deluding, and driving it to excess. It is amazing to what extremes such a soul will go, "having a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge" (Romans 10:2).

(3) There is a flame of holy love—a potency wholly divine. It is heaven's own altar fire, falling in sacred fullness upon the ready soul. "Our God" and the Hebrew writer, "is a consuming fire"—a purifying flame (Hebrews 12:29). "The Lord whom ye seek," said Malachi, "shall come suddenly to his temple . . . for he is like a refiner's fire" (Malachi 3:1-3). "He," declared the Baptist, of the coming Christ, "shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire" (Matthew 3:11).

The Holy Flame has a twofold function: (a) It is destructive—destroying all that God in His holiness condemns. "He shall burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Matthew 3:12). Whatever within the soul is foreign to the nature of a holy God, that the fire will destroy. (b) It is distinctive—illuminating and making to glow the place wherein it dwells.

If it is a common desert bush, that bush burns with fire and yet it is not consumed (Ex. 3). The fire on the altar indicated God's abiding presence within the Sanctuary. If it was not there, no amount of energetic service could compensate for it. The same may be said of the heart.

That fire, however, did more. It was applied to the offerings and to the incense to bring out sweet smelling savor, and in the believing heart it produces a fragrant life.

## II. We Must Guard the Flame

The holy life does not casually take care of itself. The flame is maintained only as it is continually fed.

We are warned that the fire must not be put out (Leviticus 6:12). We are further warned that it must not be allowed to go out (Leviticus 6:13). It must be watched and carefully tended, thus being kept in. "Every morning the priest shall put on wood" (Leviticus 6:12). Spiritually, you are the priest (I Peter 2:9). To carry out the thought therefore, your life given each day in consecrated service is to be regarded as the wood.

Your body is called for as the presentation of a living sacrifice. This is declared to be your reasonable service. What an honor to be allowed to burn out for God!

"Ready for all Thy perfect will,  
My acts of faith and love repeat,  
Till death Thy endless mercies seal  
And make the sacrifice complete!"

## INEXHAUSTIBLE FULLNESS

The riches of grace are inexhaustible. All who have gone before us have not made them less, and we shall make them no less to those who follow us. When they have supplied the wants of unborn millions, the last of Adam's race, that lonely man over whose head the sun is dying, beneath whose feet the earth is reeling, shall stand by as full a fountain as invites

you to drink and live, to wash and be clean.

I have found it an interesting thing to stand on the edge of a river and to think that, though it has been flowing on for six thousand years, watering the fields and slaking the thirst of a hundred generations, it shows no sign of waste or want. And when I have watched the rise of the sun as he shot above the crest of the mountain; or, in a sky draped with golden curtains, spring from his ocean bed, I have wondered, just to think that he has melted the snows of so many winters, and renewed the verdure of many a plain, and painted the flowers of so many summers, and ripened the golden harvest of so many autumns—and yet he shines as brilliantly as ever; his eye is not dim, his natural strength is not abated, nor his floods of light less full, for centuries of boundless profusion!

Yet what are these but images of the fullness that is in Christ? Let it feed your hopes, cheer your heart, brighten your faith, and send you on this day, happy and rejoicing. For when the flames of judgment have licked up that flowing stream, and the light of that glowing sun shall have been quenched in darkness, the fullness that is in Christ shall flow on throughout eternity in the bliss of the redeemed.

Blessed Saviour! Image of God! Divine Redeemer! "In thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures forever more." What Thou hast gone to heaven to prepare, may we be called up at death to enjoy.—United Evangelical.

## WHAT IS BIBLE HOLINESS?

Isaiah describes it as a way within a way, "and it shall be called, The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it. David calls it "the beauty of holiness."

Sin is ugly; holiness is beautiful.

Sin is disease; holiness is health.

Sin is darkness; holiness is light.

Sin is filthy; holiness is clean.

The Apostle John called it being "made perfect" in love. Christ called it being made "pure in heart." Paul called it the destruction of the body of sin, the crucifixion of the old man; being made free from sin—a condition in which God imputes not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.

This is the kind of holiness commanded by God when He said, "Be ye holy; for I am holy." This is the holiness provided by Jesus Christ, through His shed Blood; an experience wrought by the Holy Ghost, purifying the heart and shedding abroad the love of God, so that "We being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life."

—Author Unknown.

## OUT OF THE MOUTHS OF BABES

The inimitable Mr. Linkletter of national radio fame was questioning a group of small fry the other day, as is his wont on most of his programs. The questioning got around to apples, and Mr. Linkletter asked who could tell him what a "winesap" was. The astonishing but perfectly logical reply, when you stop to think about it, was this one from a small boy: "A 'winesap' is a guy that's drunk."—Christian Crusader.