

THE Watchword

*"On your walls, O Jerusalem, I have appointed watchmen;
All day and night they will never keep silent
You who remind the Lord, take no rest for yourselves,
And give Him no rest until He establishes and makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth."*

Isaiah 62:6-7

XXXVII

The purpose of this newsletter is to encourage prayer and passion for a true revival of Apostolic Christianity. The following material is offered in the hopes of provoking zeal and providing a vision of what the Church could be if we would fervently pray.

PRAYER MAKES HISTORY

A call for revival presupposes the decline and failure of the Church. The rise of the Primitive Methodists in the 19th century was the result of the decline of England's early Methodism. The Primitive Methodist movement, striving to return to the Christianity as taught and practiced by John Wesley. Only sixteen years after John Wesley's death, the English Methodist Conference found itself in conflict with some of its most zealous ministers. These ministers were eventually expelled from the Conference for holding camp meetings and open-air services. Many in the Conference considered such meetings out of order and void of proper supervision. What had been esteemed by Wesley had become despised by his successors. Like the Wesleys, the Primitive Methodists followed the pillar of fire, rather than traditions of men which make void the commandments of God. This pillar of revival fire is most clearly seen from the heights of bent knees.

Chief among the Primitive Methodists' praying men was John Oxtoby, affectionately known as "Praying Johnny". Praying Johnny was not known for his culture or great intellect, he possessed neither. What he possessed was the faith that moves mountains. He was of average height, sharp features, light brown hair and brown eyes. His speech and words were not considered eloquent to the ears of men, yet they were always sweet to the Father's ear. "Six hours each day he usually spent on his knees, pleading with God, in behalf of himself, the Church and sinners." The Primitive Methodists loved to preach, pray, sing and shout. John Oxtoby was certainly



John Oxtoby

no exception to this rule. "When travelling in anguish for a revival in the neighborhood in which he was laboring and when deeply anxious to see the glory of the Lord revealed, he spent many hours in secluded retirement; and has sometimes in this manner devoted whole days and nights to God."

Praying Johnny not only exercised the power of prayer in the closet, but also in the public assembly. Often in answer to his public prayers whole assemblies were slain by the power of the Holy Spirit. Strong men struck with conviction fell to their knees and cried for mercy. Through the testimony of John Oxtoby's prayer life, Jesus Christ was seen not only as a God who hears, but also as a God who speaks. On behalf of despairing saints, Praying Johnny touched the heart of Jesus and brought back precise words of direction and encouragement.

The legendary story of Oxtoby's intercession for Filey illustrates his persistence in prayer. The town of Filey had resisted

the efforts of many preachers and each one had been driven out until all efforts were abandoned. "Oxtoby himself undertook the mission, and when he came within sight of Filey, he fell on his knees in agony of soul. Under a hedge he wrestled in prayer and wept and interceded for the success of his mission. A passing miller heard his voice and stopped in astonishment. The miller heard Johnny Oxtoby say, 'Will thou make a fool of me, God? I told them at Bridlington that thou was going to revive thy work, and thou must, or I shall never be able to show my face among them again, and then what will the people say about praying and believing?' He continued to plead for several hours. The struggle was long and heavy but he would not give in. At last he rose exclaiming, 'It is done, Lord, it is done! Filey is taken!' And it was. Fresh from the presence of God, Oxtoby entered Filey and began singing in the streets. 'Turn to the Lord and seek salvation' was his theme and soon a crowd of rough fishermen flocked to listen." The fire of God fell as he began to preach. Men trembled, hardened sinners wept and while he prayed many fell on their knees crying for mercy.

If our churches and communities are not radically transformed in the same way our Christian liberties will very soon be swept away by a tidal-wave of oppression and sin. Our nation is on the verge of self-destruction, and our only alternative is REVIVAL! **As a nation we have continued to stray because the Church has failed to pray!**

References Used -

The Romance of Primitive Methodism
by Joseph Ritson

Great Revivals
by Colin C. Whittaker

Touching Incidents and Remarkable Answers to Prayer
by S. B. Shaw

THE GREAT FALLING AWAY!

Many Christians believe we are living in a time of one of the greatest revivals in the history of the Church. Evangelism reports from around the world seem to substantiate this claim. Manifestations of supernatural gifts, signs and wonders are commonplace in a large percentage of churches. They are widely proclaimed as being from the Lord and proof that God is well pleased with the Church today. Ministries are expanding into mass media evangelism which spans the globe. Evangelistic and charismatic groups are experiencing tremendous numerical growth as new buildings can be seen springing up and spreading out in almost every direction. All of these things would seem to refute the remote possibility that we are now living in the time of the great falling away of the Church: a falling away from true faith and the life-style which God demands of His people and which is taught in scripture. Instead, multitudes of church members say they are eagerly anticipating the return of Christ through a secret rapture which will whisk them out of every trial and tribulation which is obviously coming upon the world. **However, when close investigation is made of the personal lives of the church members, we find little difference between most of their life-styles and those of the people in the world. Divorce, adultery, homosexuality, gossip, unforgiveness, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, and factions are as prevalent in the churches today as they are in the world.**

Almost any pastor or church leader you talk to privately will admit that down inside he knows something is desperately wrong. Many people wander from church to church looking for something they know they are missing. The message of "*peace and safety*" being preached cannot put an end to their inner turmoil. They discern the spiritual emptiness in religious traditions and often fall prey to cults and sects that draw them away from Jesus Christ and the Word of God altogether. Others are looking for the true body of Christ which they know is supposed to be "*holy and blameless.*" **People easily become disillusioned when they see in the Church what they see in the world.** Churches have turned to recreation and entertainment in an attempt to hold the people, becoming more and more like the world. Rather than select a pastor on the basis of his spiritual maturity and understanding, they choose a man based on his fund-raising ability and his charismatic personality to attract people in order to increase the size of the congregation and "*build the church.*" Counseling ministries flourish as the message proclaimed by the churches is not sufficient to meet the needs of the spiritually hungry and desperate people. Many pastors, looking for answers, have investigated other denominations and groups (sometimes secretly for fear of being labeled disloyal to their denomination), only to be disappointed to find the other groups have similar spiritual problems. In the midst of this day of people searching for answers, we should recognize that we are now experiencing what the Lord promised would come. "*'Behold, days are coming,' declares the Lord God, 'when I will send a famine on the land, not a famine for bread or a thirst for water, but rather for hearing the words of the Lord. And people will stagger (in spiritual darkness) from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east; they will go to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, but they will not find it.'*" Amos 8:11, 12. While this famine continues, the Lord has begun to awaken His sheep and reveal to them the essential truths from His Word that have been overlooked and ignored. God did not find it necessary to cooperate with the requirements of religious systems in order to reveal His truths in the time of Jesus. That has not changed. God has begun restoring the power and truth of the gospel today. This is the day that will see the glory and power of God coming to earth into His Church which will be "*holy and blameless.*"

by Milton Green

"The Great Falling Away Today"

The Great COMMANDMENT

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with ALL thy heart." God will have the whole heart. We must not divide our love between Him and sin. The true mother would not have the child divided, nor will God have the heart divided; it must be the whole heart. **We must love God for Himself,** for His own intrinsic excellencies. We must love Him for His loveliness. **It is a harlot's love to love the portion more than the person.** Hypocrites love God because He gives them corn and wine: we must love God for Himself; for those shining perfections which are in Him.

Love to God must be active in its sphere. Love is an industrious affection; it sets the head studying for God, hands working, feet running in the ways of His commandments. It is called the labor of love. 1 Thess. 1:1-3 Mary Magdalene loved Christ, and poured her ointments on Him. We think we never do enough for the person whom we love. **If we love God, our desire will be after Him.** "*The desire of our soul is to thy name.*" Isa. 26:8. **He who loves God, breathes after communion with Him.** "*My soul thirsts for the living God.*" Psalms 42:2. Persons in love desire to be often conferring together. He who loves God, desires to be much in His presence. **He who loves God cannot find contentment in any thing without**

Him. Lovers faint away if they have not a sight of the object loved. A gracious soul can do without health, but cannot do without God, who is the health of His countenance. Psalms 43:5. If God should say to a soul that entirely loves Him, "*Take thy ease, swim in pleasure, solace thyself in the delights of the world; but thou shalt not enjoy My presence.*" this would not content it. Nay, if God should say, "*I will let thee be taken up to heaven, but I will retire into another room, and thou shalt not see my face;*" it would not content the soul. **It is hell to be without God.** The philosopher says there can be no golden joy in the soul without God's sweet presence and influence.

He who loves God, weeps bitterly for His absence. Mary comes weeping, "*They have taken away my Lord.*" John 20:13. One cries, "*My health is gone*" another, "*My estate is gone*" but he who is a lover of God, cries out, "*My God is gone! I cannot enjoy Him whom I love.*" If Rachel mourned greatly for the loss of her children, what can shadow out the sorrow of that Christian who has lost God's sweet presence? Let us be persuaded to love God with all our heart and might. O let us take our love off from other things, and place it upon God. Love is the heart of Christianity, the fat of the offering; it is the grace which Christ inquires most after. "*Simon lovest thou me?*" John 21:15.

by Thomas Watson

"The Ten Commandments"

The Alabaster Box

by C. H. Mackintosh

It is very needful to bear in mind, in this day of busy doing and restless activity, that God looks at everything from one stand point, measures everything by one rule, tries everything by one touchstone, and that touchstone, that rule, that standpoint is Christ. He values things just so far as they stand connected with the Son of His love, and no farther. **Whatever is done to Christ, whatever is done for Him, is precious to God.** All beside is valueless. A large amount of work may be done, and a great deal of praise drawn forth thereby, from human lips; but when God comes to examine it, He will simply look for one thing, and that is, the measure in which it stands connected with Christ. His great question will be, Has it been done in, and to the Name of Jesus? If it has, it will stand approved, and be rewarded; if not, it will be rejected and burnt up.

It does not matter in the least what men's thoughts may be about any particular piece of work. They may laud a person to the skies, for something he is doing; they may parade his name in the public journals of the day; they may make him the subject of discourse in their drawing room circle; he may have a great name as a preacher, a teacher, a writer, a moral reformer; but, if he cannot connect his work with the name of Jesus - if it is not done to Him and to His glory - **if it is not the fruit of the constraining love of Christ, it will all be blown away like the chaff of the summer threshing floor, and sunk into eternal oblivion.**

On the contrary, a man may pursue a quiet, humble, lowly path of service, unknown and unnoticed. His name may never be heard, his work may never be thought of; but what has been done, has been done in simple love to Christ. He has wrought, in obscurity, with his eye on his Master. The smile of his Lord has been quite enough for him. He has never thought, for one moment, of seeking man's approval; he has never sought to catch his smile or shun his frown; he has pursued the even tenor of his way, simply looking to Christ, and acting for Him. His work will stand. It will be remembered and rewarded, though he did not do it for remem-

brance or reward, but from simple love to Jesus. It is work of the right stamp - genuine coin which will abide the fire of the day of the Lord.

It is an unspeakable mercy to be delivered from the time-serving, men-pleasing spirit of the present day; and to be enabled to walk, ever and only before the Lord - to have *"all our works begun, continued, and ended in Him."* Let us look, for a few

moments, at the lovely and most touching illustration of this, presented to us in *"the house of Simon the leper, there came unto Him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on His head, as He sat at meat."* Now, if we enquire as to this woman's object, as she bent her steps to Simon's house, what was it? Was it to display the exquisite perfume of her ointment, or the material and form of her alabaster box? Was it to obtain the praise of men for her act? Was it to get a name for extraordinary devotedness to Christ, in the midst of a little knot of personal friends of the Saviour? No, reader, it was none of these things. How do we know?

Because, the Most High God, the Creator of all things, who knows the deepest secrets of all hearts, and the true motive spring of every action - He was there in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

His holy and all-penetrating eye went right down into the very depths of this woman's soul. He knew, not only what she had done, but, how and why she had done it; and He declared, *"She hath wrought a good work upon me."* In a word, then, Christ Himself was the immediate object of this woman's soul; and it was this which gave value to her act, and sent the odor of her ointment straight up to the throne of God.

He not only vindicated her at the moment, but handed it down into the future. This was quite enough for the heart of this woman. Having the approval of her Lord, she could well afford to bear the *"indignation"* even of *"the disciples,"* and to hear her act pronounced *"waste."* It was sufficient for her that His heart



(continued on next page)

had been refreshed. All the rest might go for what it was worth. She had never thought of securing man's praise, or of avoiding his scorn. Her one undivided object, from first to last, was Christ. From the moment she laid her hand upon that alabaster box, until she broke it, and poured its contents upon His sacred Person, it was of Himself alone she thought. She had a kind of intuitive perception of what would be suitable and grateful to her Lord, in the solemn circumstances in which He was placed at the moment, and, with exquisite tact, she did that thing. She had never thought of what the ointment might fetch; or, if she had, she felt that He was worth ten thousand times as much. As to "the poor," they had their place, no doubt, and their claims also; but she felt that Jesus was more to her than all the poor in the world.

In short, the woman's heart was filled with Christ, and it was this that gave character to her action. Others might pronounce it "waste;" but we may rest assured that nothing is wasted which is spent for Christ. So the woman judged: and she was right. To put honor upon Him, at the very moment when earth and hell were rising up against Him, was the very highest act of service that man or angel could perform. He was going to be offered up. The shadows were lengthening, the gloom was deepening, the darkness thickening. The cross - with all its horrors - was at hand; and this woman anticipated it all, and came, beforehand, to anoint the body of her adorable Lord. And mark the result. See how immediately the blessed Lord enters upon her defence, and shields her from the indignation and scorn of those who ought to have known better. "When Jesus understood it, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? For she hath wrought a good work upon me. For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always. For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for

my burial. Verily, I say unto you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her."

See that you keep your eye directly upon the Master, in all you do. Make Jesus the immediate object of every little act of service, no matter what. Seek to do your every work so He may be able to say, "It is a good work upon me." Do not be occupied with the thoughts of men as to your path or as to your work. Do not mind

their indignation or their misunderstanding, but pour your alabaster box of ointment upon the person of your Lord. See that your every act of service is the fruit of your heart's appreciation of Him; and be assured He will appreciate your work and vindicate you before assembled myriads.

Thus it was with the woman of whom we have been reading. She took her alabaster box, and made her way to the house of Simon the leper, with one goal in her heart, namely, Jesus and what was before Him. She was absorbed in Him. She thought of none beside, but poured her precious ointment on His head. And note the

blessed issue. Her act has come down to us, in the gospel record, coupled with His blessed Name. No one can read the gospel without reading also the memorial of her personal devotedness.

Empires have risen, flourished, and passed away into the region of silence and oblivion. Monuments have been erected to commemorate human genius, greatness, - and these monuments have crumbled into dust; but the act of this woman still lives, and shall live forever. May we have grace to imitate her.

C. H. Mackintosh
from "Things New and Old"

"From the moment she laid her hand upon that alabaster box, until she broke it, and poured its contents upon His sacred Person, it was of Himself alone she thought."

The Watchword is a free monthly publication designed to awaken the Church to her need for humility, repentance and revival. We gratefully welcome your prayers and financial support as the Holy Spirit leads. Please feel free to make copies of the Watchword for your family, friends and ministry use.

Prayer Times at Western Hills Church
Friday; 6 to 7am (auditorium) · Saturday; 8-11am (prayer room)

ALWAYS REMEMBER

A truly prayerful and consecrated life unto God can only be established by faith. It is by trusting in the finished work of Christ that we are empowered to produce the fruit of love and righteousness.

"For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world; our faith." (1 John 5:4)