

The President's Report to

The National Holiness Association's Eighty-eighth Annual Convention

Cleveland, Ohio - April 3-6 1956

GREETINGS IN THE NAME OF JESUS THE CHRIST, the Propitiation for our sins, the Mediator of our reconciliation, our Savior, Sanctifier, Lord and eternal King. "Unto Him be glory in the church (and the N. H. A. which is a part of that church), ... throughout all ages, world without end." "I, therefore," the president of N. H. A., "beseech you," to so plan the work, program and future of this great organization, "that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called. With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is (but) one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism. One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all...." And God gave to the N. H. A. "some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers for the perfecting of the saints, ... for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man (and, collectively, unto a far more perfect N. H. A.), unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children (for, remember, we are now 88 years old organizationally), tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;" but, rather, let us speak "the truth in love, (and) grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth (Methodist, Wesleyan Methodist, Free Methodist, Primitive Methodist, Evangelical Methodist, Holiness Methodist, Nazarene, Pilgrim Holiness, United Missionary, Missionary Church, Friends, Evangelical United Brethren, Christian and Missionary Alliance, Church of God, Holiness Baptist, Holiness Movement, Standard Church, Churches of Christ in Christian Union, Brethren in Christ, Lower Lights Mission, Holiness Christian, Salvation Army, etc., etc.), according to the effectual working in the measure of every part (what a responsibility each of us had!), maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

I, for these reasons, exhort, urge, plead that in this 88th convention we go in for God until we are "renewed in the spirit of our mind," until we put off all carnal traits and manifest only the fruit of the Spirit, until we "grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption," until we become "followers of God," knowing how to "fight the good fight of faith," and being "more than conquerors through Him that loved us." (Quotations are from Ephesians and Romans.) My report, therefore, is more in the nature of a message revealing the passion of my heart concerning this great experience, doctrine and life known as entire sanctification, a work of the Holy Spirit.

The Associated Press carried a dispatch telling of a man who struggled in vain to start his car. Finally, in desperation, he lifted the hood. Lo, and behold, someone had stolen the motor! We can think of various reasons why a car does not run; being without a motor certainly tops the list.

Churches, Christians need a "power-producer." Without a dynamic, superpower, they are just so much cold machinery unable to make progress. That missing motor is the Holy Spirit. He is the force that produces equilibrium and motion in the individual and the church.

The purpose of being filled with the Holy Spirit and living the sanctified life is not self-extinction, but in the truest sense self-realization. Only that person who yields absolute devotion and loyalty to something or Someone greater than himself knows what it is to come into his own best self.

Some people have the idea that if a person is wholly submitted to God's will, he will be passive in his attitudes, naive in his nature, and more or less a nonentity in society. On the contrary: such an individual is more active than ever before in spiritual things. His personality becomes more unified, his witness more effectual, his spirit and conduct more influential, and he is spiritually and psychologically freer from bondage.

The foundation for an integrated and poised personality is complete surrender to God and His will such as is expressed in Frances Havergal's Hymn: "Take my life and let it be consecrated, Lord, to Thee; take my moments ... take my hands ... take my feet ... take my voice ... take my will ... take my heart ... take myself!" It is the church or organization that is fighting against God, against society, and against itself that is unpoised, disintegrated, and disquieted. James said: "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways" (James 1:8). Here is the cure for such a condition: "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded" (James 4:8). This same thought is taught by Jesus in Matthew, Mark and Luke:

"... if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand" (Matthew 12:25 - Mark 3:24, 25 - Luke 11:17). I believe Jesus was saying the same thing in Matthew 6:21 to 24 when He said, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also, The light of the body is the eye; if, therefore, thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If, therefore, the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! No man can serve two masters ..." Holiness people may never see eye to eye on every matter, but they ought to come nearer to doing so, and cooperate more whole-heartedly to promote God's Kingdom on earth than any other body of people in the world.

Medical doctors claim that as many as 75 percent of their patients suffer emotional disorders. This is the reason for the popularity of psychiatrists today. Men are now yielding to science in the fields of physical and mental hygiene hoping to obtain the results which have been promised in the Bible, provided by Christ, and which may be experienced in the Spirit-filled, Spirit-taught, and Spirit-led life.

We so often confuse the issue of spiritual things by thinking in terms of what the Spirit can give us or do for us instead of thinking of and receiving the Spirit Himself. The Greek word for promise which appears in the New Testament simply means "a free promise given without solicitation." Note three verses: "And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith He, ye have heard of me" (Acts 1:4). "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" (Acts 2:39). "Ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise" (Ephesians 1:13). My friend, Rev. Walter S. Kendall of Newberg, Oregon, says: "It seems in the light of Scripture that somewhere and somehow the church has bogged down on the matter of teaching the way of a Spirit-filled life. The tears and strivings and groans which are prominent in the aspirations of those desiring the gift, the Promise of the Father, seem clear out of harmony with the plainest teachings of the Word of God. There is no question but that wrong thinking will disrupt proper adjustment and keep one in a state of agitation, unrest and perpetual doubt. How often has the anxious soul been exhorted to lay itself out and agonize for the enduement of power, when the Word says: 'They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength' (Isaiah 40:31), and 'wait for the promise of the Father' (Acts 1:4). Agonize before the Father who is more willing to give us the Holy Spirit than we are to give gifts to our own chil-

dren? What a monstrous contradiction! If agonizing we need, let it be over our sin and unbelief, that we may with a whole heart, repellant to deceit and stupid misgivings, turn to God in faith. Striving and doubt are bedfellows, and so are waiting and faith."

The sanctified life is one fully yielded to, filled with, and led by the Holy Spirit. When He fills a heart, He proceeds to build the sanctified life. The experience is instantaneous, but the life that follows is a continuous process of bearing more, riper, and sweeter fruit.

If God has promised the Holy Spirit, then simple, complete obedience and faith will bring Him to any heart. This experience undergirds us for the perplexities of life. The longer we walk with God, the less likely we are to grieve Him, wilfully sin and fall from grace. It is possible to be pure in motive and desire, and yet actually err or even sin for lack of clear teaching, mature reasoning, or sufficient self-control. Let us distinguish the difference between maturity and purity. B. S. Taylor in *FULL SALVATION* says: "Purity is instantaneous; growth is gradual. Purity is a problem in subtraction; growth is a problem in addition. Purity does not admit of increase; growth in spiritual things is never completed. Purity is a divine creation; growth is a human attainment. Purity is by grace; growth is by works. You can grow in grace, but you cannot grow into grace."

By purity, we in the holiness movement mean Christian Perfection as John Wesley termed it: Christian perfection is "loving God with all the heart, mind, soul, and strength. This implies that no wrong temper, none contrary to love, remains in the soul; and that all the thoughts, words, and actions are governed by pure love." President Asa Mahan, in writing about Christian perfection, said: "By the state under consideration I do not understand mere separation from actual sin, and full and actual obedience. I understand more than this, namely: A renewal of the Spirit, and temper, and dispositions of the mind, and of the tendencies and habits which impel to sin, and prompt to disobedience to the divine will. A fully sanctified believer is not only voluntarily separate from sin, and in the will of God, but is in this state with full assent of every department of his moral and spiritual nature. He not only 'feareth God and escheweth evil' but loves righteousness and hates iniquity."

What actually happens when the Holy Spirit enters the soul of man in sanctifying power? Sanctification is not a strange, peculiar, psychic vision. Yet, to the mind and heart of the sanctified, the Holy Spirit brings the clearest possible vision of God, God's Word, spiritual realities and eternal verities. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would guide us into all truth (John 16:13). The experience is not hilarious feelings. Yet, no experience will stir

noble emotions like the consciousness of complete surrender to God, the consciousness of being cleansed by the blood of Jesus, the consciousness of the indwelling and abiding presence of the greatest personality in all the universe. "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin" (First John 1:7). Sanctification is not to be confused with any of the gifts of the Spirit, but it prepares us to handle adequately any gift the Spirit may bestow upon us to the glory of God, to the edification of the church and to the conviction of non-Christians. In I Cor. 12:31 Paul, after speaking a great deal about the gifts of the Spirit, said: "Yet show I unto you a more excellent way." He then proceeds to show us the way of love -- singleness and purity of motive and affection. Sanctification is not a power which enables us to get every one saved, and yet the Holy Spirit does make us effective soul winners. Acts 1:8 tells us: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Sanctification does not destroy our own distinct personality nor make us eccentric. Through the process of cleansing and with a baptism of His own personality, the Holy Spirit lifts our personality to its highest potentiality in usefulness and influence. Sanctification does not remove our natural human appetites or passions, but it so purifies our hearts that we would rather please God and do His will than anything else in the world. By the help of God we are enabled to bring our senses and faculties into subjection to the will of God as we know it. Sanctification does not automatically heal us of physical or mental infirmities which we may have inherited or which we may have brought on ourselves by a life of sin, but it does furnish sufficient grace to live victoriously above them. Sanctification does not necessarily deliver us from minor errors in doctrine or practical standards of righteousness. The Holy Spirit does deliver us from bigotry, sectarianism and carnal pride and enables us to cooperate with God's people endeavoring under all circumstances to keep the unity of the Spirit. The experience so establishes us in grace that we find ourselves united in the fundamentals of the faith. The experience does not free us from the possibility of rejecting Christ, going wilfully into sin, and becoming apostate. For this reason, nine-tenths of the New Testament is devoted to warnings, exhortations, pleadings and instructions. The sanctified life is not merely a moral life lived above reproach by sheer willpower and restraints because of environment and teaching, but it is a life of God-consciousness where we "live and move and have our being in God" (Acts 17:28). It is a life in which "Christ is all and in all" (Col.

3:11). Paul testified thus: "I count (consider) all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord" (Phil. 3:8).

Dr. Russell V. DeLong said: "Holiness is theologically sound; theoretically reasonable; philosophically the highest good; psychologically desirable; ethically imperative; sociologically necessary; biblically commanded; and experientially, gloriously possible." Yes, the doctrine of entire sanctification is sound, reasonable, and good. It is desirable and imperative because it is taught throughout the Word of God. This extraordinary experience and life is for ordinary people. Let us in the N. H. A. never be satisfied with anything less than being sanctified by the blood of Christ "who suffered without the gate" for us.

I am deeply concerned about the N. H. A. and the people and denominations it represents. I believe there are reasons for our slow growth and failure to make the impact on the world which we should have made during the past 88 years. I do not believe we can blame such failures on the doctrine, experience, and life of holiness. Perhaps the following weaknesses are to blame:

1) We have been altogether too satisfied with the phenomena often accompanying the Holy Spirit and with emotional stir and release instead of carrying a deep burden and passion for the lost. How much more effective if our release came through fervent praying and enthusiastic witnessing!

In discussing something comparable to this with the Corinthians, Paul said: "Yet show I unto you a more excellent way" (I Cor. 12:31). He then shows them the way of faith, hope and love -- the abiding qualities -- but then ends up by saying: "The greatest of these is love." When we make sanctification to be any thing different from or less than love, we have drifted from the Wesleyan message and from the Word of God.

2) We have made too slight an impression on the ethical and moral standards of the church and the world. If Spirit-filled, sanctified people are to be the "salt of the earth" as Christ declared, then we have had either too little salt or there is something wrong with our salt. The whole teaching of the Word of God is that this purity, love, and power which we have through Christ is to serve as a leaven. Christianity, including all of Protestantism and Roman Catholicism, has been able to influence in some way about 1 out of every 4 people in the world. Only 1 out of every 20, however, have united with a church. Only 1 out of every 100 attend church regularly. But, listen, the holiness movement has been able to get only 1 out of every 325 people interested in its message, and many of those do not enjoy the experience nor live the life.

3) We have argued altogether too much for insignificant points

of doctrine and have disagreed too strenuously over controversial matters concerning which we have not had sufficient Scriptural proof to be dogmatic. We have allowed such attitudes to keep us from manifesting a spirit of victory in enthusiasm for Christ.

4) We have groaned over, bewailed, and magnified the things we have given up to become followers of Christ. If Christ were as real to us as He was to Paul, we would be radiating joy, contentment, satisfaction, peace and love in such a way that it would become contagious and result in great interest in such a gospel.

5) We have been altogether too complacent and indifferent, shutting ourselves in behind closed doors, thankful that we are not as other men are, allowing Satan and hell to create political disorganization, social chaos and religious apostasy.

For these and other reasons I come to you today exhorting, beseeching, and earnestly urging you to give careful consideration to the following recommendations.

1) I recommend a prayer program be set up in harmony with the suggestions outlined by Dr. J. C. McPheeters of Asbury Seminary. If there is a people in the world today who ought to be able to move the arm of God and bring about a great spiritual awakening, it is the people who are filled with the Holy Spirit and completely sold out to God.

2) I recommend we set up a definite program of personal evangelism comparable to Dr. Otto G. Hahn's program known as "Club Seventeens," an urgent seventeen year personal soul-winning program utilizing local groups. Our program would have to be adapted to fit our needs. Perhaps we wouldn't want the seventeen years featured. This is something we could all unite in. Materials should be furnished churches and workers.

3) I recommend a very careful study be made of our organization, purpose, goals, name, finances, and future. I consider this so important that I would suggest a special meeting of the board of administration during the year when sufficient time can be devoted to such a study, out of which should come definite recommendations for this body at our next convention.

4) I recommend a more intensive program of cooperative evangelism be set up in the nature of indoor camps and spiritual life crusades. There is tremendous need for more thorough work in this field than is being done by city ministerial associations and even some evangelical groups. To do the job effectively, however, guidance and leadership are essential. I, therefore, suggest the preparation of a brochure in which a complete outline is set up for organizing, promoting, advertising, conducting and following up such campaigns.

5) I recommend our budget be limited to what we are relative-

ly sure of being able to raise. I further recommend that the board of administration be asked to work out a systematic and workable plan for financing the N. H. A. and that such recommendations be brought to our next convention.

6) I recommend that our next two conventions, the 89th and the 90th, to be held in 1957 and 1958 respectively, be planned for the purpose of clarifying and positively pronouncing our position as a body of holiness people. To this end I recommend that all messages and doctrinal study be centered in the doctrine of entire sanctification. I would urge that all messages at both conventions be recorded and transcribed, and that the board of administration be asked to give consideration to the publishing of a book containing messages delivered at our conventions.

7) My final recommendation is that we go in for a great revival within and among our holiness churches and people, showing more respect for and confidence in each other rather than magnifying the faults and differences which may exist. If we cannot do this, I see no great future for the N. H. A. I am sure this was the passion that consumed Jesus when He uttered His great High Priestly prayer as recorded in the 17th chapter of John.

Let us in the N. H. A. never minimize God's power nor forget to honor and praise Him for His grace which has made us what we are. Let us so live and manifest the Christ-like spirit that it can never be said that His grace was given in vain. My final word to you in this report is: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58).

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