

The Methodist Church May Yet Fulfill Her Calling

by Milton Haney

The Methodist Church must return to its fundamental doctrines and spiritual power to fulfill its calling and be a leading force in God's Kingdom.

Scripture: Isaiah 59:1, John 17:17, Acts 1:8, Acts 2:4, 1 Thessalonians 4:7, 2 Timothy 3:5, Hebrews 12:14, James 4:8, 1 Peter 1:15, 1 John 1:9

Topics: "Church Revival", "Spiritual Holiness"

Description

Milton Haney preaches about the Methodist Church fulfilling its calling by maintaining fundamental doctrines and returning to the practice of holiness. He emphasizes the danger of a complaining spirit and the need to address moral conditions with solutions. Haney highlights the importance of recognizing spiritual decline, standing firm in faith, and seeking the baptism of the Holy Ghost for revival and spiritual power. He urges Methodist preachers and members to pray for each other, prevent ruin among different classes of members, and prioritize holiness over intellectual accomplishments.

Transcript

The Methodist Church may yet full her calling and be the leading spiritual force in God's Kingdom to the end of time, by maintaining her fundamental doctrines, and a speedy return to her primitive teaching and practice of holiness.

It is much easier to point out a diseased moral condition than to prescribe a remedy. It is possible to be a born complainer, and to possess a moral condition, which makes fault-finding a delightful exercise! With such a character, there is a deep, morbid desire to find, and recite wrongdoing! A complaining spirit is usually dreaded like the smallpox in a community, and the man who delights to complain of his neighbor, or the church, is essentially in wrong relations to both God and man. That is pessimism gone to seed. But throughout the whole range of the great recent spiritual decline the "cry of pessimism" has been the chief covert for its soul-destroying, and deceptive work. Love, real and unmixed, has always been compelled to give its verdict against wrong doing, and cannot but lift its voice against impending dangers. The man who files a just complaint against a band of robbers, is the real friend of God and man. A just fire alarm, if given in time, may save a city, and the failure to give it, a crime against society. A murder plot discovered, involves the discoverer in blood, if he fails to make it known. The man who risked his life in dashing down the rocky hillsides of Johnstown, with the wild cry: "The dam is breaking --get to the hills!" was neither a

pessimist, nor a fool, though his doomed neighbors judged him to be both!

Great church declensions are rarely, if ever, recognized or conceded by the official church itself, nor has any church ever been restored through the agency of its own corrupted officials. If ever helped, it must be by some agency not involved in the decline. From the time that Isaiah was sawed in two with a wooden saw, through, to the twentieth century, backsliding churches have never failed to fearfully antagonize God's messengers who have dared to uncover their iniquities, or lift a warning voice against their false teachings, but He will see to it that an unbroken line of faithful witnesses to His truth will stand by its landmarks, and make war on those who would remove them, or corrupt the gospel of Christ.

When thousands of Methodist preachers, who love her doctrines, and a million Methodist people awake to see how the enemy has been sowing tares with the wheat, and is planning to disrobe her of her majestic spiritual power, we will have a revival which will distinguish between the children of darkness and the sons of light. There is a church within this visible body, whose garments are not defiled, and a great body of ministers who will not sell their birthright. These will hold her still as God's great evangelistic force, and shake the world by her agency, if true to her doctrines, and faithful to their vows. God is taking hold of her worldwide missions, in a marvelous way, of late; and there is hope that the mighty upheavals, which have begun in China, India, Africa, the Philippines and elsewhere in the old world through her spiritual missionaries, will react as a tidal wave upon the home church, breaking the chains with which Satan is binding her, and give her a wide share in the conquests of the world!

Why do not our ministers and people study the difficulties, delays and comparative failures of our missionaries till despair drove them to their knees and to a return to the old Wesleyan base, where they met the Pentecostal baptism? Why not see in a single year, in many places, more accomplished by many of these missionaries than in all their lives before? Was that true at Pentecost, with Christ's disciples? Did Jesus Christ hang the world's salvation on His people and ministers being sanctified, and thus made perfect in love? John 17th chapter.

Is it true that Jesus forbade His ministers to undertake to carry the gospel to the world, till they were baptized with the Holy Ghost? If they, after three years of personal teaching from His lips, of communion with His heart, in which time they saw lepers cleansed, devils cast out, and men raised from the dead were still unfitted to carry His gospel to the world: what about us?

If Jesus Christ ordained the baptism with the Holy Ghost, as the endowment necessary to qualify His ministers to preach and His people to live before the world: by what authority do we dare to neglect this baptism? How then can we preach as He bids us, or live the holy life, needed to save the world without this experience?

We suggest to all of this communion, who know your names are still in the book of life, and know your sins are now all forgiven:

1. To incessantly pray for each other, as never before. Upon you rests a fearful responsibility. Nothing can deliver you from this responsibility. Real spiritual religion has not been so in jeopardy in the last hundred years. Your church has led the Protestant world for more than a century, and not one church of them all, who has real life from God, who has not been made more spiritual by contact with her. She has been the nearest a reproduction of the Pentecostal church in history; and the vanguard of God's conquering army. Her transfer from the leading spiritual force in Christendom to a cultured, rich, formalistic, lifeless Unitarian brotherhood, would be the greatest calamity to the general church, and our lost world, that has occurred in

athousand years! That she will continue, as a fearfully organized ecclesiastical power, to do greatgood, or great evil, is without question; and her spiritual people, by doing their best, alone canprevent the latter.

My name has been on her records for sixty-nine years, and I have been one of her earnestministers since 1846. With this long continued vital relation to her, I believe there never has beena period when it was so important for true Methodists, and true Methodist preachers, to stand bytheir colors, and be continuously under the baptism with the Holy Ghost and fire! O, we need moreprolonged meetings at the Throne for each other now!

2. We need profounder attention given to two classes of our membership, to prevent theirruin, and to keep them from ruining others. We refer to those who have had a genuine Christianexperience, and have lost it; and those who are in the church and have never known God. Those ofboth classes, are in pulpit and pews, and it may be some of each class are advanced to places ofpower and authority. The ministry is being more and more exposed to corruption every year.

We have put tremendous emphasis upon intellectual strength and accomplishments, andinstitutions of learning have put a fearful pressure on the culture of the brain, with so feeble astress laid on the culture of the heart. The intellect cannot be highly cultured and the spiritualnature neglected, and the product be a normal manhood. God has everywhere put His emphasis onthe spiritual nature, and that cannot be reversed without damage to the soul.

Then, if we will go back through our school days, we will find, with few exceptions, thatthe great motive to induce study, has been, that the student shall therefore be able to make his markin the world. The main appeal made to selfish motives is thus a mighty builder of worldlyambitions. Thus, any human heart, unchanged, and unrestrained by grace, can hardly avoid beingpuffed with pride over superior learning, or supposed superior talent.

For these, and other reasons, it is much more difficult for an educated man to yield to God,than an ignorant man. His learning, naturally displaces God. His spiritual nature becomes dwarfed,and being morally depraved by his birth, he finds no room for God, nor desire for His fellowship.That condition, too, leaves his spiritual nature in great darkness about God and the things of God. Itis a fact, oftentimes demonstrated, that men of the greatest learning, as to the intellect, whose moralnatures are unregenerated, are much more ignorant of God, than they themselves were inchildhood!

The accompanying painful experience of such an abnormal education, is, a deep, heartaversion to knowing God! Let it be known, that a finely cultured intellect, with a Divinely culturedspirit, is the highest style of man; but a well-filled brain, with a wicked heart, will leave you inmoral bankruptcy, at the judgment day. An over-strain for intellectual greatness, cannot fail toresult in an underestimate of the Christ life. Hence, of recent years, hundreds of brainy young menhave been laid hold of by our teachers and ministers and pressed into the ministry because of theirtalent, and mental culture; who know nothing of the agonies of repentance nor the joy of pardonedsin; much less the call of God to be His minister.

Bishop Waugh saw this coming danger, when I was in youth, and warned the conferencesagainst the ministry as a profession. There is now a premium on talent in the pulpit, where fromtwo to ten thousand dollars may be reached, as a salary, by a splendid young man, of specialoratorical powers; and he chooses the gospel ministry as an avocation. It is a place of honor, andwhere good can be done, and he appears after special training, before God's altar. He does not intend to be wicked, and wishes to do right, and be a good man, but has never known Jesus Christas a personal Saviour. He soon learns his trade,

and can make grander speeches from the gospel than he could have made as a lawyer, so the world is after him, and admiring crowds are at his feet.

What hinders him advancing to the highest places in the gift of the church? Because of his apparent successes, he increasingly fancies that all is right, and perhaps there is not one man to whom he preaches, in greater danger of eternal death than he!

I held a meeting with a pastor of talent, who was my personal friend. A glorious work broke out in his church, and God waked him up to his real condition, and after painful struggles he got back to God. When the light came into his soul he told me personally, if he had died any day in the previous seven years, his soul would have gone to hell!

O, such men need the prayers of those who know God. Tens of thousands of our members who have not found Christ, hope they will be saved because they are in the church. On an average, such men are painfully neglected, by even spiritual people. We encourage their self-deception by treating them as Christians, and if ten, or twenty of such were to appear at God's altar seeking pardon, and one outsider knelt as a seeker, that one will usually get more attention than they all!

The conversion of three of these church members would be of greater value to the church, than the conversion of twice their number from without. The conversion of no other class of people compares, in importance, to the cause of God, with the people who have their names on her records, and are without God. If an evangelistic campaign of a whole year could be devoted solely to the reclaiming of our backsliders, and the real conversion of our unsaved church members (giving only incidental attention to outsiders), it would give to Methodism the greatest revival she ever had!

We repeat, "The dead people in the churches and pulpits are the greatest existing hindrance to the world's salvation." This crowding the church records, and filling the pulpit with cultured sinners, is the great curse of Methodism, and of Protestantism; and is compelling us to mutilate the Scriptures, and adopt "another gospel," which will give rest to the conscience, with guilt uncanceled, and heaven without holiness!

But there were a few names reserved in Sardis who still held their covenant relations to God, and were recognized as the church of Christ, despite the fearful apostasy of their comrades and the Methodist church has yet, her many ten thousands whose garments have not been defiled, whom Christ will gladly make the greatest evangelistic power, to the end of time. But this He cannot do, if they reject the doctrines, which made them what they are, and cease to be God's "Depositum of holiness."

To help make efficient such as are holding their grounds in all these churches, despite the power of unspiritual environments, God has raised up the interdenominational holiness movement, whose special calling has been, and is, to find and furnish His people, as such, with the hidden glory of Christ's baptism, by the Holy Ghost! Spiritual decline is impossible, without drifting from holiness, and there are millions of God's real people, who are largely excluded from its teaching.

Not only so, but the mass of them are constantly hearing antagonistic teaching. Hence, no class of teaching is so needed and so important, as the showing of God's people how to be holy now, by the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

Christ clearly suggested that the world's salvation was impossible without it, yet a great majority of His ministers, ignore Christ's condition of saving the world. John 17th chapter; Acts 1:1-8; Acts 2d chapter. It

must be a marvel to angels, that the one thing which Wesley and Methodist historians declared she was raised up to proclaim and spread, should be now so widely ignored and neglected.

Why not recognize God's hand in the "Holiness Movement," and welcome God's holy messengers into all these needy churches? Why follow in the wake of disobedient millions who have preceded us, in past ages, by refusing deliverance ourselves, and preventing others from being made free? God infinitely hates sin, and loves holiness, how can you plead for sin's continuance, when God demands its destruction? How can you disagree with present holiness, without disagreeing with God?

O, let ten thousand times ten thousand of God's dear children, from all the churches, come to the all cleansing blood, and under the fiery baptism with the Holy Ghost, and in the fullness of God's perfect love, find your brethren of every name, and bring them to this wondrous freedom of the cross. Holy hearts and holy living, on the part of real Methodists, would soon turn backward these carnal tides of death, silence this infidel rattle, and restore "the old thundering legion" to place!

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