



“You will know them by their fruits.” Mt. 7:16

JAMES BLAINE (J. B.) CHAPMAN

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(Nazarene General Superintendent 1928-1947)

The incidents surrounding and including the conversion and entire sanctification of Jimmy Chapman, as he was affectionately called, are graphically described in his own words:

I sat in the back of the Fairview schoolhouse one Sunday morning listening to Rev. Albright. His attitude and the content of his preaching arrested me. I asked a man by my side, “What kind of a preacher is this?”

The man replied, “He is a holiness preacher.”

“How does a holiness preacher differ from others – Methodists, Christian and the like?” I asked.

But the man did not want to talk so much during the service, so he closed the matter by saying, “If you listen to him perhaps you can tell.”

I listened, but I could not tell. There was just this about it: What he said sounded good to me. In substance he said, “We are all lost and sinful. Jesus died to redeem us and save us. He can fully do what He came to do. He can save us from all sin now and forevermore.” That sounded to me like it was either true or ought to be true, and I was glad to hear it.

If one were choosing a place to send a fourteen-year-old boy that he might become a Christian and a preacher, it does not seem to me he would be likely to choose the blackjack sand hills of Oklahoma County as they were in the spring of 1899. The people were neighborly, but there was a rough element that tried to dominate the community life. It was a favorite pastime for the boys and young men to mount their horses at the close of a night religious meeting, and empty their pistols into the air as they rode away from the place. Often the noise was like that of a sham battle, and to a newcomer there went along with it a sort of sense of abandon and wildness. But these young men were friendly, generous to a fault, and ready to accept a new recruit without asking any questions. The chances were nine out of ten that a young boy of fourteen would find his crowd in such a company as this.

I believe it was the “prevenient grace of God” that kept me out of the whirlpool of worldliness in the community and caused me to find companions and enjoyment among the religious elements of the new country.

This section of the state was known as “Old Oklahoma.” It was opened to settlement in 1889, and was therefore just “ten years old” when we came there. The “claims” in the blackjacks were not the most desirable, and so were not taken by the first to enter the state; but finally someone filed on every quarter section. Many of the claimants were young men, just barely of legal age, when they came there. And now, after ten years, there were still many single men (old bachelors by this time) living on the land they had obtained from the government on condition that they make it their home and establish certain “improvements” on it.

One of these bachelor men on a neighboring claim was John Miller, whose acquaintance we soon made, and who was a devoted “holiness man.” I used to go to other communities to meetings with John, and found him a very interesting man to talk with. One day John sat under the cottonwood tree down by our well and talked for an hour about God and religion and his own Christian experience. As

he arose to leave, he urgently invited me to attend the camp meeting at “the Conley Place,” six and one-half miles away, beginning on the first day of September.

Many people said John was “queer,” and he was never more so than that day when he sat and talked to me for so long. I say, talked to me, for I think I did not say anything at all for the whole time. John had a “faraway look” in his eyes, and I could tell that when he left he felt he had fulfilled a mission that had been laid upon him – and I felt that he had, too.

Well, the first service of the camp meeting found me on hand; but the evangelist was not there, and the service was not impressive. I was not so interested as I had thought I would be, and so missed the second day and night altogether. But on Sunday I was there, and R. L. Averill, the evangelist, preached to my full satisfaction, and on from day to day and night to night, it seemed to me that he regularly chose subjects I had been wanting to hear explained, and often it seemed to me that he was just “preaching to me.” Averill is an old man now, but I still think of him as the pattern preacher, and judge other preachers by how much they re like or unlike him. I was not converted until after Averill left the meeting, but I have always accounted him my spiritual father.

One of the big factors in the meeting was the singing. There were no special singers, and no experts at all; but the worshipers sang like they meant what they sang, and the music sounded good to me. They used the old Tears and Triumphs, Number Two, and that has continued to be the pattern songbook to me. A favorite with the people was Number 100, in that old book. The title was “Wash Me Thoroughly.” The theme was from the fifty-first psalm, and the lines went like this:

Wash me thoroughly, blessed Saviour;
Cleanse me from indwelling sin.
Bathe me in the sacred fountain;
Now complete Thy work within.

Purge me with the branch of healing;
Wash me whiter than the snow.
Cleanse, O cleanse my inmost being;
Through and through, let Thy blood flow.

Wash me thoroughly, wash me thoroughly!
For the Master’s use made meet.
Purify and make me holy,
Now, just now, Thy work complete.

It was particularly the last stanza that impressed me. I had heard of people’s longing for the highest and best in the things of God. This last stanza was an announcement of attainment, which was to my ears something new:

Now I yield my all to Jesus;
Now I trust the cleansing blood.
Now the work is done within me:
Glory, glory be to God!

After singing this last stanza they changed the chorus, and sang it:

Hallelujah, hallelujah,
For the Masters use made meet!
Now He sanctifies me wholly;
Now I am in Him complete.

The language was of course not discriminate to me, but its sentiments were intriguing, and I found myself hoping that I might sometime come to where I could rejoice in an inheritance as complete as this one seemed to be to those who sang with the Spirit and with the understanding.

Having no basis for opposition and prejudice in any former contacts or training, it seemed to me just the logical thing that there should be in the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ complete deliverance and satisfaction for those who put their full trust in Him.

There was not in my mind and heart any tendency to dub these people extremists or to argue that what they believed was fanaticism. They impressed me as good, sincere, happy people, and what they taught seemed to me to be just about what one should expect from a God who is infinite in power, wisdom, and goodness.

The evangelist had another engagement for which he had to leave on Monday. But the brethren who were responsible decided to continue the meeting for a few days in the hope that the revival which they had prayed for and which had come only in meager measure might fall upon them.

The preaching was done by volunteer ministers who chanced to be on hand when the need arose. I do not remember much of what was preached during that week, but I do know the Spirit of God was among the people, and that among about forty I was one to whom the call came. One night I went forward and gave my hand – but was only partly in earnest, and nothing came of that.

God uses strange providences to accomplish His purpose. As a result of my conviction, I had become something of a champion of the holiness people, and felt that it devolved upon me to resent any evil done to them. One night I stopped to talk with a friendly boy of my own age outside the tent, and then went in and sat with him on the back seat. The seats were wooden frames over which canvas was tacked to make the place for the people to sit, and also to provide for folding the seats when the time came to move the equipment. My new friend was one who thought he should do despite to the people who ran the meeting; so when there was considerable noise of singing and praising at the front, he took out a large, hawk-billed knife, stuck the blade down through the canvas of the seat, and drew it toward him, making a rent a foot and one-half long in the new, strong cloth. He had expected my commendation. Instead I turned on him in strong resentment, called him a coward, and said he would not do that to anyone who was willing to take his own part, but would pick on a crowd who had already publicly announced that they would not resist evil; that if he were really brave he would go to a dance and pick a fuss with the crowd there. I told him that he knew he would get his head skinned there, so he came here and picked on good, unoffending people, and that I had a good mind to take him outside and beat him up for their sakes.

The boy was dumfounded. Finally, he said, “Well, if you think so much of these people, you had better go down to the front and show yourself to be one of them.”

I accepted his challenge, and moved down two-thirds of the way to the front; and I account that boy one of the great benefactors (although unwittingly) of my life.

My place well up toward the front was good for the purpose. And that night, on what seemed to be the final proposition, I went up and gave my hand on the promise that I would not be asked to stay at the altar, but that someone would be sent to my seat to pray for me.

One of the very first to come to me was my mother. Mother began by saying, “This boy has never heard me pray for him. O Lord, have mercy on me and on him.”

A Christian worker encouraged me to “Come on up to the front where it will be more convenient to kneel and to pray,” and I was glad to go.

The plan for altar work in those days was to alternate praying and singing and exhortation, leaving it to the seeker himself to join in the praying and to make his own profession, if one was to be made at all. The service continued until a late hour, and until there were no seekers left except me.

It seemed to me that at last I came up, as it were, to the edge of a precipice, and was being urged to step off that edge. I thought of the ground behind me, and knew there was no peace there; but to step off upon the unknown, with what seemed to be no support for my feet, was indeed a trying requirement.

Then the little group of helpers stood about me and sang:

I came to Him, my heart was sad:
They're all taken away, away.
He saved my soul, and now I'm glad;
My sins are all taken away.

Suddenly, like a revelation, came the realization that my sins would all be taken away if I would but step off the edge of that precipice upon the promise of God. Immediately, and without further delay, I stepped off. There was no perceptible fall at all. For there, immediately under my feet, were the unfailing promises of God. As I stood upon them, there came to my heart a sense of pardon and peace such as I had never known before, and without the slightest hesitation, I arose and said, "My sins are all taken away. I am a Christian." There filled my heart in that moment a joy that was truly unspeakable and full of glory.

I went to the individuals still left in the audience, including the boy with whom I had had the trouble at the beginning of the service, and told them how great things the Lord had done for me and had had mercy upon me; I testified and exhorted with great liberty and blessing. It seemed to me that surely many would come.

They did not come that night, but the next night and the nights following, some did come, and I had the joy of feeling that so soon as that I was beginning to know the joy of helping a soul find God. That first night, while I was in the bliss of the first ecstasy, one friend of the former life, a boy we all called Bill, shook me violently, and said, "Jim, this won't do. You will have to sober up. This will drive you crazy."

In those days it was common to express fear that people would "go crazy over religion," and Bill thought he saw in me indications that I was about to become unbalanced. You don't hear much about that going crazy over religion any more. But not everybody knows that the reason for the disappearance of this word is that the statistics show that the number of people who become unbalanced because of excessive religion is so small as to be negligible in the whole. Honesty now compels men to leave religion out of the list, and give the higher rating in the matter of causes of insanity to alcohol, venereal diseases, maladjustment because of anger and hate, and other such things standing in a category quite apart from religion.

Immediately upon being saved, I felt that my great joy would be to be good and to do good and to help others find God. Brother Averill had preached a sermon on restitution in the course of which he had told about a rich man who found it necessary to dispose of all his property that he might return to people what he had taken from them dishonestly. He also told about a judge who was converted late in life, and lived ever afterward to regret that he was not converted early, because all his worldly honor had netted him was a worldly family which he was now powerless to win for Christ. These things had affected me, and I had determined to live my life in such a way that at its end I would have no remorse, even though I might still have regret, for my regret must be free from the sense of guilt in that it was based upon weakness and not on wickedness.

Having been converted in a meeting where the preachers all preached that Christians are sanctified after they are justified, and where the people who had helped me most all testified that they had been sanctified after they were converted, I naturally expected that I would, as some of them said, "cross into Canaan at Kadesh-Barnea," and not wait for the waters of the Jordan to arise before the plains of Moab. I have often said that I got converted so I could get sanctified, and I have held steadfastly to the doctrine that even a sinner can long to be made "every whit whole," and can make holiness his goal from the time he begins to seek God at all.

I gave my brief testimony at the meeting on the next evening after my conversion. Then at the time of the altar service, Bill Cummings, in whose buggy I had come to church, handed me his hat, and made for the mourner's bench. A little later a man came and said, "Now do not allow your new-found love to grow cold. Go on and get that love perfected by getting sanctified. Go right away. Go even tonight."

And I did go, and down there by the side of Bill and the others who were seeking to be saved, I went to make my full consecration, and to trust God to sanctify and cleanse me from all sin.

I was not really conscious of holding anything back from God. I did answer yes to every suggestion that God might want to use me in His service or might want to set me aside and leave me without any apparent calling except to wait on Him. After an hour of prayer and searching of the heart, I was able to trust for the sanctifying fullness of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was His own witness, and I was so definitely aware that He had taken full possession of my heart, and had cleansed it from all sin and made it His home, that I asked for no external token at all.

Candles are useful to point one to the hilltop from which to view the sunrise; but when the sun comes up, candles are of no further consequence – the sun is his own evidence. And that is the way I found it when I was baptized with the Holy Ghost and Fire on that night following my conversion.

I know there are those to whom human conditions are so essential that they have a tendency to doubt one can be so concerned to get sanctified so soon after conversion. But, based upon my own experience, I am inclined toward the other view, and believe that as soon as one is clearly justified, he should set in with all his heart and soul to get sanctified. If there is any time in the Christian life when one needs all the help that is promised in divine grace, it must be in those beginning days when the way is new, and when knowledge is so limited. Also, let us not forget that sanctification is purity, not maturity, and that the time element is not important in it. If we are ever sanctified, it must be the grace of God that does it, and if it is grace at last, it might as well be grace at the first. Sanctification is subsequent to justification, not because there is any limitation in God that would require Him to justify and then sanctify, but because the conditions for sanctification are such that no one can meet them until first he is justified and regenerated.

And now, in this year of 1946, almost forty-seven years after I gave my first testimony to the saving and sanctifying power of God, I feel constrained to affirm once more that He did forgive my sins and make me His child on a certain evening in September, 1899, and that on the very next evening He sanctified me wholly. And, to this I add, that He saves and sanctifies me now.

I cannot gather my story about a few epochal incidents, except that my conversion to Christ was such an epoch-marking incident. And it has been pretty much the habit of my life as accounting that for me, “life begins at conversion.” I was not a great sinner, as the world praises sinners, and I am not a saint, as the world and the church appraise saints. But I was a sinner, lost and undone, and I became a Christian in heart and life. The beginning was a crisis, but that which has followed has been simply a “going on.” And I am happy also to say, “The end is not yet, praise the Lord!”

Source: “Spirit-Filled –

The Life of Rev. James Blaine Chapman D. D.”

by D. Shelby Corlett

My father had removed his family into a new country community. By special appointment, Rev. Albright was preaching at the neighborhood schoolhouse. During the second service I became interested in the man and the message he seemed to have for the people. Addressing my neighbor in the seat beside me, I asked in a low whisper, “What kind of a preacher is Mr. Albright?” The reply, “A holiness preacher.” “Wherein do holiness preachers differ from other preachers?” “I cannot answer that. Perhaps you will be able to see the difference if you listen to this man.” I listened, but I could see nothing objectionable in what this man said, so I set him up as the standard and reasoned that those who differed from him must be just that much aside from the center. So, although not yet a Christian, I came soon to think of myself as somewhat “bent” toward the holiness people.

It was early spring when I heard Mr. Albright. In September the holiness camp meeting came on. The

distance from our house was about six miles, and in those “horse and buggy days,” this was an hour’s travel. I went the first night, only to be disappointed by the failure of the evangelist to arrive for that first service. I missed a night, and then came again to find the meeting in good swing. The evangelist was R. L. Averill from Texas. Night after night he chose the plainest texts and expounded the doctrine of holiness. He held up holiness as the demand of God’s law, the provision of Christ’s atonement, and the special work of the Holy Spirit in the present dispensation. He showed that men must be holy to get to heaven, and that they must obtain this blessing in the world. He showed from the Bible, the hymns of the Church, and the testimony of men that men are sanctified after they are justified, and that we are made holy by being sanctified wholly after we are justified, and that on this account it is, as John Wesley said, “a second blessing, properly so-called.”

But it was not the preaching alone that interested me. There was a small but happy band of people ever ready to stand and testify to the marvelous manner in which God had forgiven their sins and subsequently sanctified them wholly. They sang joyfully, gave liberally, and worked incessantly. Their religion was manifestly a great boon to them, and I could not resist wishing I had what they said they had, and what they really seemed to possess.

One of the favorite songs was number one hundred in old Tears and Triumph Number Two. It was based on the fifty-first psalm, and the first stanza went as follows:

Wash me thoroughly, blessed Saviour;
Cleanse me from indwelling sin.
Bathe me in the sacred fountain;
Now complete Thy work within.

Every time this song was repeated it seemed to increase in its meaning for me until at last I found myself saying, “If I ever get religion, I want the kind this song represents.”

At the end of ten days the evangelist had to pass on to his next engagement. But the people felt they had not yet had the results they desired, so they decided to run the meeting for a few nights more, such preachers as chanced to come along taking the meetings for them from night to night. And how thankful I am that they had that extra week! For it was during that week that I was brought under conviction for sin and came to the public altar to pray and seek the Lord. That first time at the altar marked the crisis, and Christ came and forgave my sins and gave me a new heart. But I had seen the Land of Canaan before I ever left Egypt, and so pressed right on to get sanctification. So when the camp meeting closed I was clear in the experience of Bible holiness and was already giving clear and definite testimony to the fact that I had found what the preachers had preached and what the Christians had declared.

That was in September, 1899. But today, after these passing years, I am happy in the full grace of heart holiness, and have come to say a few things about this blessed experience to the young people of this day. The majority who read these words will no doubt be older in years than I was when I found this blessed grace, so I feel that I am not imposing upon them the words of an elder who passed his youth in a manner he is unwilling to recommend to others. Rather, I come to say that God has been so real and so satisfying to me from that night when as a lad of fifteen He came into my heart in full sanctifying grace that I can wish for all that they may find Him early, as I did, and that I am assured they will have no regrets with the passing years.

I have called holiness the heart of Christian experience because it is, by way of the full realization of what God had promised to us in the way of crises. Regeneration and entire sanctification are the two crises in which God deals with the sin problem in us and by which He takes us out of sin and then takes sin out of us. After that the Christian life is a way of process and progress, but there are no more crises until glorification comes at the return of Jesus to this world. There is all room for growth after sanctification, but there is no more place for crises. There is no state of grace beyond a pure heart filled with the Holy Spirit. But from such a heart flows forth the passive and the active phases of Christian

life as water flows forth from a spring. Holiness is purity – not maturity. Holiness is the goal only in that it prepares one for whatever there is of Christian life – it is the “enabling blessing” which every Christian needs.

Source: “Holiness, The Heart of Christian Experience” by J. B. Chapman, D.D.

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