The Pilgrim's Quest

"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and ***confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims*** *on the earth. For they that say such things* ***declare plainly that they seek a country.***" (Heb. 11:13,14)

Pilgrim's Quest Bible Church
Pastor Garry E. Huff

The Call to a Christ-Like Love

(The Urgent Need and Present Distress)

"And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you ... And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, ***the love of many shall wax cold.***" (Mt. 24:3-4; 11-12)

A number of years ago I attended the funeral of a Christian brother who I greatly respected, appreciated, and admired for his Christian life. Apparently a number of others thought the same, as some 250 people had gathered to pay their final respects. I knew the majority of the people from the days of my youth. Many of us had journeyed together in our youthful Christian lives. I was seated in a place where I could see the congregation, and began to be grieved in my heart for I saw division and separation as churches had split to begin new churches. There were at least seven different split-churches represented among this gathering. There were others who had failed God and had backslidden that at one time made me ashamed of my lack of spirituality, little hunger for God, and a weak dedication to God. Some were divorced and remarried. Some refused to recognize or speak to others they knew very well. And yet, most could sing and present themselves as "spiritual Christians." How could this divided, separated group with such animosity towards

each other attend this funeral of such a fine Christian brother who had exhibited true Christian love?

My mind raced to about fifteen years earlier as I witnessed a time of revival among many of these same people. It was a revival not for the saving of souls who were dead in trespasses and sins, but a "quickening for those dying" kind of revival. The revival lasted two weeks. The first few nights the evangelist labored hard and long with some difficulty among God's people who had hardened their hearts and stiffened their necks. It seems that towards the end of the first week or the beginning of the second, hearts began to melt, stubborn wills began to break, and repentance began to flow. *(And yes, I was among this humbled group as well.)* It was then that the reviving of slumbering souls began to awaken to a ***renewed living*** life. And oh, what wonderful, blissful services emerged. The singing was uplifting. The prayers were elevated to the very presence of God. The preaching seemed doubly anointed of God. Countenances beamed with the light of Christ. Testimonies concerning God's work in the heart were a blessing. And yes, souls were being saved. It took a revival among dying Christians to stir those who were dead in sin.

There was a key characteristic that manifested itself, and that was a ***Christ-like love***. There was a deep love for God and His word. There was a great love for God's appointed Pastor. There was an abounding love for each other in the body of Christ. A love for lost souls became also evident. There was a desire to show the love of Christ even to enemies. ***"Heart Theology"*** was alive, well, and working among God's people.

But now among these funeral attendees, there was backsliding, coldness, pride, and the refusal to acknowledge one another as Christians. I left this assembly burdened for my own heart that God would keep me in His love no matter what happens. I desired to maintain by God's grace a truly working, living ***Heart Theology***.

The Lord Jesus gives some very soul searching words for the endtime. The Discourse on the Mount of Olives was for his disciples' ears and for them to lay its truth to their hearts. Deception and falseness would become the norm of the day. False Christs and false prophets with great signs and wonders would be so deceptive that it would ***almost*** make the very elect stumble, trip, and fall. The Lord makes this

statement, "because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." This rampant abounding iniquity, or shall we say "lawlessness," will be so prevalent that it will be like a cold wind blowing across the heart causing a Christ-like love to grow colder and colder. This affects the heart towards God, His word, His ministers, the beloved Christians, the lost, and the world.

John the Beloved, who was the last living apostle near the end of the first century, would write much in his First Epistle about love. The Christian was not to love the world, neither the things in the world *(I Jn. 2:15).* But, he also stressed the need in this early church period to love one another *(I Jn. 4:7).* He added in the Book of Revelation concerning the Church of Ephesus that with all its work and labor that it had left its "first love." It needed to "repent and do the first works." Also, regarding the Church of Laodicea, it was lukewarm and Christ was standing on the outside knocking on the church door to get in. It had displaced Christ for a materialistic love of the world and thought that it needed nothing.

The Apostle Paul in his last letter to Timothy writes, "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come." He proceeds to give Timothy nineteen characteristics of those days. The first characteristic is "men shall be lovers of their own selves." and near the last he adds, "lovers of pleasure more that lovers of God." A Christ-like love is missing, although there existed "a form of godliness."

. It is evident the Bible is clearly indicating that in the last days before the coming of the Lord, there will be coldness of heart and a lack of a Christ-like love. It would be a characteristic of the last day apostasy among "Christian believers."

Some forty years have now passed since the funeral of that Christian brother. Most of those I viewed that day, I have never seen again. I wonder how it is with them today? Also, having witnessed so much among Christian believers through the years, I wonder, where is the love for God and a thriving Christ-like love for each other?

My father spoke of words by a bishop of the denomination he belonged to back in the 1940's. The bishop said if God's people who called themselves Christians would repent and get right with God, the Devil would have to curtail three-fourths of his dirty work that was go-

ing on in the world. The majority of what was wrong in the world was perpetrated by "Christian claiming" church members.

We live in dangerous, perilous, troublous times. The Lord is coming soon. We need to seek God in fervent prayer that He will give His people who are called by His name a reviving fire that will produce a ***Christ-like love*** for God, His word, and His people - a truly working, living, and practicing ***Heart Theology.***

Cleanse Me

Search me, O God, and know my heart today;
Try me, O Saviour, know my thoughts, I pray.
See if there be some wicked way in me;
Cleanse me from ev-'ry sin and set me free.

I praise Thee, Lord for cleansing me from sin;
Fulfill Thy Word and make me pure within.
Fill me with fire where once I burned with shame
Grant my desire to magnify Thy name.

Lord, take my life and make it wholly Thine;
Fill my poor heart with Thy great love divine.
Take all my will, my passion, self, and pride;
I now surrender, Lord - in me abide.

O Holy Ghost, revival comes from Thee,
Send a revival - start the work in me.
Thy Word declares Thou wilt supply our need;
For blessings now, O Lord, I humbly plead.

J. Edwin Orr

Verses for Thought of Heart:

"O LORD, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid: O LORD, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy." (Hab. 3:2)

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." (II Chr. 7:14)

"And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." (Dt. 6:5)