

~Other Speakers S-Z: David Smithers:

What is the secret of the anointing of the Holy Spirit? Does God endue men in a sort of haphazard way? Has He favorites? Certainly not! God's difficulty is to find men who are willing to pay the price." Mordecai Ham was a man who was willing to pay the price and as a result was powerfully anointed by the Holy Spirit. Early on in his ministry he had some striking experiences with the Holy Spirit that helped prepare him for the prophet-revivalist role he would later operate in. Mr. Ham writes, "I had an overwhelming experience of the Lord's presence. I felt so powerfully overcome by the nearness of the Holy Spirit that I had to ask the Lord to draw back lest He kill me. It was so glorious that I couldn't stand more than a small portion of it." As his spiritual life deepened, his success as a revivalist increasingly spread. An early example of the fruitfulness of Mordecai Ham's ministry is seen in a Jackson, Tenn. newspaper report dated April 1905. The report reads, "Has the spiritual fire of the great Wales revival reached across the ocean and ignited the hearts of the people of Jackson? It begins to look as if it has at the big tent revival conducted by Rev. M.F. Ham."

Mr. Ham's success was not the result of traditional evangelistic methods, but the fruit of Apostolic power. Often he would seek out the worst of sinners in the community and then proceed to pray and plead with them until they were surrendered to Christ, resulting in a great in-gathering of the lost. At other times he faced down stubborn opposers of the gospel, declaring he would pray to God to either convert them or kill them. In Mr. Ham's biography there are several incidents recorded where those who resisted and opposed the Holy Spirit were brought to swift judgment. "The evangelist recalls with great reluctance that deaths took place during many of his great campaigns. Ambulances would have to come and carry bodies away from our services." "Many persons that openly fought a Ham meeting met with some form of violent death soon after." (Acts 5:1-11). So, as the Holy Spirit was being poured out, some were visited with judgment while others were saved and even physically healed.

Charles Spurgeon rightly said "that a church in the land without the Spirit is rather a curse than a blessing. If you have not the Spirit of God, Christian worker, remember that you stand in somebody else's way; you are a fruitless tree standing where a fruitful tree might grow." Mordecai Ham's clear understanding of this spiritual principle helped him develop an effective strategy for reaching the lost. On this point he writes, "There are a lot of Christians who are halfway fellows. They stand in the door, holding on to the Church with one hand while they play with the toys of the world with the other. They are in the doorway and we can't bring sinners in. And, until we get some of God's people right, we cannot hope to get sinners regenerated. Now they always accuse me of carrying around a sledge hammer with which to pound the church members. Yes sir, I do pound them, every time I come down, I knock one of the halfway fellows out of the doorway, and every time I knock one out I get a sinner in." It was this kind of bold Biblical preaching that brought a young 16 year old boy to Christ by the name of Billy Graham. It should be emphasized now that Mr. Ham was always a man of zealous prayer. "Sometimes he spent hours in his room wrestling with God." He often encouraged all night prayer meetings to be attended for several consecutive nights in order to lay the proper ground work for the moving of the Spirit. He learned early on that human wisdom could not do the work of the Holy Spirit.

In closing let us consider some of Mr. Ham's thoughts on the hindrances of true revival. "One of our troubles is we are not willing to humble ourselves. We are not willing to give up our opinions as to how things should be done. We want a revival to come just in our way. You never saw two revivals come just alike. We must let them come in God's way. People are ashamed to admit they need a revival. If you are not willing to take the shame on yourself, you then let it remain on Jesus Christ. You must bear the reproach of your sinful state of indifference, or the cause of our Master must bear it."