



MATTIE E. PERRY AND THE FIRST GBS BUS

by Kevin M. Moser

Edwin Messerschmidt was named valedictorian of his class in 1940 when he received his Christian

Worker's Course certificate from God's Bible School. It is with obvious respect that he remembers one of his most influential teachers, Miss Mattie E. Perry. In fact, Edwin asserts that he learned more about the Bible from Miss Perry's classes and evening volunteer Bible studies than he did from all other teachers throughout all of his years of education!

Before coming to GBS, Miss Perry had been in charge of an orphanage in South Carolina. (One of her orphan boys, R.A. Forrest, became the founder and president of Toccoa Bible College, Toccoa Falls, Georgia.) Once a wheelchair-bound invalid, Mattie had received God's healing in her body through the prayer of faith—and what a woman of faith she was! As an act of trust in her Savior, she emptied her purse of any money she had at the end of each month and gave it to the Lord's work, trusting in God to meet all her needs for the coming month. Furthermore, she accepted no salary from GBS.

It was in 1939 that President Standley asked the campus family to pray that God would provide the school with a much-needed bus for use by the Ten Weeks Course students and faculty in personal witnessing endeavors and other ministry activities. Miss Perry herself was to be an integral part of the answer to those prayers.

Mattie E. Perry had a friend in Fort Valley, Georgia, with whom she had made a prayer covenant. (p19)➡



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But didn't John Wesley preach that entire sanctification brought perfect cleansing?

Certainly, Wesley taught that in entire sanctification believers are cleansed of all sin and made perfect in love. But he also insisted that they still "dwell in a shattered body, and are so pressed down thereby, that they cannot always exert themselves as they would, by thinking, speaking, and acting precisely right. For want of better bodily organs, they must at times, think, speak, or act wrong; not indeed through a defect of love, but through a defect of knowledge. And while this is the case, notwithstanding that defect, and its consequences, they fulfill the law of love."

For this reason, the "holiest men still need Christ, as their Prophet, as 'the light of the world.' For he does not give them light, but from moment to moment: The instant he withdraws, all is darkness. They still need Christ as their King; for God does not give them a stock of holiness. But unless they receive a supply every moment, nothing but unholiness would remain. They still need Christ as their Priest, to make atonement for their holy things. Even perfect holiness is acceptable to God only through Jesus Christ."

In conclusion, remember that entire sanctification is not a perfection of performance. But rather it deals with your motives, your attitudes, and your purposes for living. You will endeavor to be as Christlike as you can be in your performance, but you will also be aware that improvement in Christlikeness is a life-long process. Entire sanctification occurs in a moment of faith, but attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ is not the act of a moment, but the passionate pursuit of a lifetime (2 Cor. 7:1). ■

➡(p16) Mattie and Mr. A. L. Luce regularly and consistently prayed for each other, their respective families, and the business that Mr. Luce owned and operated. It was no wonder, then, that Mattie contacted her friend about Brother Standley's prayer request; Mr. Luce, you see, was the owner of the Bluebird Bus Company.

And so it was that Miss Perry's prayer partner, A. L. Luce, provided an answer to prayer by donating a 1938 blue and white Bluebird bus to Mattie for the use of God's Bible School and College. Although not brand new, it had been a demo model and was in excellent condition. Student Edwin Messerschmidt was given the responsibility of traveling to Fort Valley, Georgia, claiming the bus, and driving it back to its new home on the Hilltop. It was November of 1939.

Mr. Messerschmidt, who now resides at Skyland Oaks Retirement Center, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, still clearly remembers that return trip to Cincinnati sixty-four years ago.

Somewhere along the way he picked up a hitchhiker, talked to him about the Lord, and won him to Christ! Such was the zeal and passion for winning lost souls that so thoroughly permeated the students and faculty of God's Bible School. Such is the zeal and passion which does not allow Edwin to retire from Kingdom work even in his advanced years. Still preaching twice a month, he regularly involves himself in hospital and nursing home visitations and jail ministries. He also daily visits his wife, Ruth (Bergert), in a nearby nursing home and takes her to church services with him on Sunday.

As we celebrate the purchase of a new GBS bus (see cover photo and article in "News From The Hilltop"), and as we walk down Memory Lane with Edwin Messerschmidt to the acquisition of GBS's first bus, let us also consider the power of personal influence. Let us reflect on a life of faith in God and faithfulness to God's cause as demonstrated by such an unassuming individual as Miss Mattie E. Perry. ■

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