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“A Study of the Life and Theology of Martin Wells Knapp”
The Founder of the International Holiness Union(& Church)
with Regard to the Motherhood Background for
the Theology of the Korea Holiness Church

Abstract:

On March 27, 1853, Martin Wells Knapp (1853-1901) was born in a log cabin in Calhoun county of southern Michigan. His parents were Jared, class leader, and Octavia Wells, consistent Christian. He had one elder half-brother L, lawyer and two half-sisters in the western frontiers. Martin enrolled at 17 at Albion College, Michigan with fifty dollars received from selling his calf yet he was not a devoted Christian. His father was frequently ill, so Martin did the farm work in the summer, studying Greek and Latin at night, and attending classes at Albion during the winter. At Albion College he met his first wife, Lucy J. Glenn. When he began corresponding with her, she felt checked by the Holy Spirit and began praying for him. Martin was born again at 19 through Lucy's prayers and Bible-teaching letters. Soon he received his call to preach. When Knapp was 23, he and Lucy were married. His first pastorate was a circuit assigned to him in 1877 by the Methodist Michigan Conference. He was only five feet four inches in height and 120 pounds in weight. His body was weak, He had always been extremely shy, and his first impression upon strangers was unfavorable. The Lord overruled human's outward reactions on that first Pottersville pastorate, and Knapp revealed the congregation that he was a man of God with the power of the Holy Spirit. After finishing his post college and seminary course and being ordained in 1881, he started his second pastorate at Duplin November 1882. He felt his carnal sinning and yearned for his deeper spirituality from heaven. Under the leading revival of William Taylor, he received the baptism of the Holy Spirit in a revival at his church. He applied for missionary to India but Taylor denied him due to his weak body. Knapp choose Spirit-fired missionary-sending ministries. He built couple churches during his Duplin pastorate.

In 1882, Knapp published his first book *Pentecostal Dynamite*. In 1883, at Duplin church office, he started *The Revivalist*, a periodical devoted to the promotion of holiness and then published evangelistic tracts at Lions and Montegro pastorates. In 1885, he published his first bestseller *Christ Crowned Within*, being forced to auction off his furniture to finance this venture. In 1887 the Michigan Conference permitted him to step out of the pastorate so he could follow the calling of an evangelist and national holiness leader. In 1888, he published *Out of Egypt Into Canaan*. During 1889-90, Martin W. Knapp went through a two-year valley of ill health, financial crises, and family illnesses and published *Revival Tonadoes*. September 5, 1890,

when Lucy died after an extended illness, leaving him with two small children. In this period Knapp developed Spirit-filling and healing ministries and published his *Impression* in 1892. He was married again, this time to Minnie C. Ferle, and transferred his base of operations to Cincinnati. Being Spirit-filling and zeal for God and holiness, Knapp set up his Revivalist publishing house for holiness pentecostal literature in the YMCA building. He overcame severe personal disadvantages and the stubborn opposition of Methodist and other leaders to do his pentecostal work for God. He developed his dynamic institutions perpetuating his message. In 1892 Knapp published his *Impressions* and founded the Rescue Holiness Mission and Central Holiness League in Cincinnati and also in 1893 Pentecostal Revival and Prayer League. He founded Holiness school, care center for seniors and children, and the annual national camp meeting at the Beular Heights in southern Kentucky. In 1894 he published his gospel song book with L. Pickett. In 1895 he published his *Double Cure*. He established holiness meetings and Bible school as well as publishing and distributing 100 holiness-pentecostal series. In September 1897, he published his second gospel song and merged all his holiness-pentecostal institutions into the International Holiness Union and Prayer League and its organ Revivalist was organized in his home. He established the Constitution and By-laws including the four-fold gospel in his *Lightning Bolts* and congregational polity. Under the opposition of the political Methodist leaders, Knapp retreated himself and appointed Seth C. Rees president and himself vice president. It was the compounding vision of semi-denomination to promote holiness-pentecostal revivals and global missions. It was to grow into the International Holiness Church and her daughter Korea Holiness Church.

After Establishing the annual national Salvation Park Camp Meeting since 1895, Knapp led global holiness groups and full-gospel literatures, circulating half million. In 1900 he purchased a two-acre tract, containing two large buildings, and there Revivalist, IHU and God's Bible School compound, spreading the four-fold gospel, training 190 students with 10 sent missionaries. in 1901 he built a new tabernacle on the campus for his annual national camp meeting. He sounded loudly and clearly the call for holiness missionary work. He enlisted missionaries and through his papers and camp meeting raised funds to send them to the globe. He ordained and sent Charles and Lettie Cowman and the Kilbournes missionaries to the Orient (Korea) as well as others to Africa and America. By early 1901, he fell victim to typhoid fever due to his mal-nutrition and overwork and his tired body had no resources with which to defend itself. He circulated 25,000 copies of Revivalist and wrote 30 holiness books and distributed 10 kinds and 130 holiness books to the globe. His global holiness pentecostal ministries continued even on his sickbed. He died December 7, 1901, at the age of 48, leaving behind him various thriving home and aboard holiness institutions, each in its own way perpetuating his influence and his message or a full gospel (Regeneration Spirit-baptism, healing, and His return).

From the insider's perspective, Knapp was not only a Bible-believing and praying

hero, a maker of a full gospel or the four-fold gospel motto, a holiness advocate, a devoted pastor, a healing evangelist, an inspirational gospel song writer, a significant pentecostal publisher, a journalist, a founder rescue mission, an educator but also the founder of six churches, the Revivalist and Revivalist Publishing House, the Pentecostal Revival and Prayer League, the Central Holiness League, holiness school, social care center (Hope Cottage), the International Holiness Union (Church) and its Missionary Training Home and Worldwide Missionary Board (including Korea Holiness Church), and God's Bible School and College in Cincinnati, Ohio and Tokyo God's Bible School for the Koreans. From the outsider's perspective, he was a pentecostal reformer, shifter and ecumenist, a for-runner of Bible schools and colleges, a dynamic spirituality mentor through the annual national camp meeting, a pop gospel song writer, and an organizer of global holiness-pentecostal publishers and institutions. He was a role model for the sound ministry, missions, and theology of the Korea Holiness Church.