

**Demonstration
of
The Spirit and Power**

**CONFERENCE OF BRETHREN
AT SWANWICK
OCTOBER 1966**

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Addresses given at a
CONFERENCE OF BRETHREN

at
SWANWICK

October 1966

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CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
FOREWORD	5
SYMPOSIUM: OUR AIM: A. J. Atkins	7
Dr. A. Hanton	10
G. C. D. Howley	14
THE SPIRIT HIMSELF: N. Wyatt	17
THE POWER IN THE PAST: A. Pickering	29
BAPTISM AND FULLNESS: (I) A. G. Bamford	38
(II) H. J. Brearey	51
IN THE CHURCH TODAY: Dr. Charles Sims	61
THE PERSONAL CHALLENGE: J. Capper	80
ADDRESS AFTER THE LORD'S SUPPER: W. S. Loynes	87

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100



FOREWORD

SWANWICK 1966

THIS WAS A memorable conference and the power of the Spirit of God was manifest in all the sessions and in many of the informal conversations and discussions. This little book contains the text of the main addresses but unfortunately it is not possible to convey in cold print anything of the atmosphere that pervaded the gatherings nor the spirit that animated the speakers—the deep earnestness, the personal conviction, the constraint of the Spirit. A sense of the presence of God brought reverence as well as a personal challenge into very many hearts. Not that the sessions were a series of devotional meetings; the addresses and the ensuing discussions were the product of deep thought and much study and were largely objective in character although they often produced subjective reactions. Nor, on the other hand was the approach to the subject theoretical and academic merely; it was dealt with in the most pragmatic manner, and related at all points both to the life of the Church and that of the individual.

In view of the contemporary widespread interest in charismatic gifts and “manifestations” there was a possibility of some disharmony but we are thankful to record that although these matters were frankly faced and discussed the unity of the Spirit was manifest in a spirit of mutual love and tolerance.

We commend these addresses to the prayerful perusal of our many friends.

The Conveners



SYMPOSIUM: OUR AIM

A. J. ATKINS

SOMEONE ONCE asked a Christian leader what was the difference between a Conference and a Convention. After a moment's reflection, he is reported to have said "A Conference has a *subject* but a Convention an *object*". Now we call this annual gathering of brethren a Conference (in the mercy of God this is our fifteenth) because we set high regard on the discussions and fellowship we have together; and therefore prayerfully we select a subject. But we do want this gathering also to be a Convention—a gathering with an object, and I and my fellow convener colleagues who follow, have been asked, as you have heard, to explain to you in this opening session just what that object is.

We do trust that it has been by God's guidance that we have chosen to consider the person and work of the Holy Spirit. Some of you will recall that this was the subject of the Conference in 1953, and a blessed time that was. But our object this time is to consider chiefly His place *in Christian experience*, and that is why we have entitled it "The Demonstration of the Spirit and Power". We feel sure, dear brethren, that you will feel with us that our assemblies generally are in great spiritual need. As one of our evangelists put it in his recent circular letter, "there is a dearth of the Spirit". It is only right to say that there is mounting evidence that this lack is felt by a number of earnest evangelical groups. It would seem that we are living in one of those periods of Church history when the tide of vital power is grievously low. This coincides, as you will all recognise, with a time when there are exceptional difficulties and dangers all around. We are living in a world of racial ferment, of economic strain, of general perplexity, a frightened and a frightening world, living on the brink of disaster. As regards the Christian Church, we have to consider the growing power and present subtlety of Rome,

the problems of ecumenism; the phenomenal advance of the false cults, the renewed aggressiveness of unbelief, and the resurgence of ancient religions. In large areas of the world there is, too, deep hostility to the Bible and to the Gospel even where there is not active persecution of Christians; and there are vast areas where communism prevails. And over and above all this there is the dire need of the Christless millions in so-called Christian lands as well as in the regions beyond: and in the midst of all this, by and large, the Churches are so feeble and lacking in spiritual power.

If, for a moment, we look back at the first days, whatever the early Church had not got it *had* spiritual power. The disciples were mostly poor, the majority illiterate; they had no completed scriptures, copies of the Old Testament were rare; they were up against a Jewish world of intolerable and implacable arrogance, and a pagan world hostile and unspeakably foul. They had little organisation and few of the religious amenities which we take for granted. But they had power; and within a generation or more, as we know, they had spread the faith to most parts of the empire, and went on "conquering and to conquer". We have behind us 19 centuries of Church history and all the accumulated wealth of Christian thought and example, along with so many other advantages. Why is there so little power in evidence?—the Divine energy that gets results in human hearts and lives?

Speaking for the moment of our assemblies, notwithstanding the mighty movement of the Spirit that gave them birth, notwithstanding (by God's grace) maintained fidelity to the Word and to the truth of the Gospel; notwithstanding scriptural Church standing (as we believe), is it not plain that, by and large, we are unprogressive, and in so many ways lacking in power, and fall far below the Church of the New Testament? We are obliged to ask "Are we substituting other things for power; Bible learning, dogma, organisation, tradition, and so forth and missing the *essential* thing?" The fundamental principle, as we have read, is that "the Kingdom of God is not in word but in power" or in another

rendering "not in empty words but mighty deeds".

But we may be inclined to ask ourselves, and I expect most of us do sometimes in our moments of discouragement, "Is the original power still available?" Ephesians 1:19-23 tells us that the power "towards us"—and that surely means that it is available to us—is nothing less than the Almighty energy that raised and exalted Christ. There can be no change in that! Campbell Morgan well says:

"There has been no lessening of resources. It is such a common-place thing to say and we all agree, but does the Church really believe it? Have we not some kind of sub-conscious heresy in our minds that Pentecost is past and the pentecostal power has weakened in the process of centuries? It is not so: the resources are as limitless now as they were in the dawning of that great day".

We will all agree that the power of God—the power of the exalted Christ our Saviour—is located on earth in the Holy Spirit, the "Vicar of Christ". Experimentally, it is the power of a spiritual enduement, of a living faith, of prevailing prayer, of sacrificial love; but all these are in and from the Spirit. Brethren, it is possible that even among us the Holy Spirit is in some way the neglected member of the Godhead, and that this goes far to explain the deadness and dearth, in some places the unhappy discord and by and large the lack of conversions and other weaknesses we deplore.

This, dear brethren, is why we are inviting you to consider with us over this weekend the blessed Spirit of God and His ministry in Christian experience. We shall of course have to touch on doctrine; our studies must be based on the Word; but we do want the accent to be on *experience*. We want to consider simply—humbly—seriously—how we, as Christ's servants, and the assemblies we represent, may know the "demonstration of the Spirit and Power in our time".

May our hearts and minds be opened to what the Lord may have to say to us, that this Conference may be to us all a deep spiritual experience, for His praise.

A SYMPOSIUM: OUR AIM

DR. A. HANTON

I WANT TO read just one verse well known to us all, "May God grant according to the riches of his glory that ye may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man" (Ephesians Ch. 3 v. 16). This evening session, as I understand it, had to be a rather informal one. There is no sort of dress-presentation of the subject; rather, an informal presentation, from our experience, that we may be encouraged during our first session, and in our prayers this evening, to prepare our hearts for the blessing that we so long for during this conference. You will agree, I am sure, that the subject before us is vitally important. We cannot leave in the same condition in which we have come. I would think of the electricity power station or generator, outside of which we so often see the words "Danger; Keep Out". Yet experienced people go in and work, and benefit themselves and others. The power that is there is shared and, indeed, without it industrial life and activity would come to a standstill. But while there is danger to the uninitiated, to the inexperienced and to the unwise in regard to an electricity power station, there is great power and blessing to all who rightly use the safeguards; first, if in our *thinking* we limit the demonstration of the Spirit and power to speaking with tongues (that is to say, we take this as the criterion of the demonstration of the Spirit and power) then our *emphasis* is wrong; second, if in our *conduct* we look down on those who have not had such an experience (that is to say spiritual pride attacks us), then our *attitude* is wrong; third, if in our *outlook* we think this blessing is only for personal gain, then our *aim* is wrong.

1. Let us think firstly and mainly of our *emphasis*. The emphasis is that the demonstration of the Spirit and power has a range as wide as all God's dealings with us—operative word "all"—including (1) personal and communal, (2)

social and ecclesiastical, (3) material and spiritual. There is no limit, there are no closed doors, to the demonstration of the Spirit and Power. Here may I quote a phrase that was used at a recent "retreat" where, as many of the speakers at this conference as were able, and practically all of the convenors, were met together for a whole afternoon of waiting upon God concerning this conference. At that "retreat" our chairman, to whom we owe so much in his spiritual leadership throughout our committee meetings and in preparation for this conference, said "Like the incoming surging tide, engulfing every nook and cranny with its fullness: this is the demonstration of the Spirit and Power."

(1) Let us then briefly think of the *Personal and Communal* aspect.

(i) *Personal*. Here I would like to say, by way of testimony, that this conference and the preparatory work of it, has been a great personal blessing to me. Some of you may know that we as convenors, made a pact, now operative for several months, that at seven o'clock, or as near to that as was practicable, every morning we would join together in prayer for this conference. This has been done, and to me personally it has been a great blessing. I have come to recognise in an increasing degree something of the operative power of the Holy Spirit in my own personal life, in the private devotional hour, and, I humbly say with good reason, in public activity.

(ii) *Communal*. We as a body need power. We need revival. We need a vigorous, thriving, pulsating vitality, and this is the objective of this conference. May God grant that, as in the past, though it may not physically happen, there may be the spiritual experience, personally and communally, of a great shaking, that there may be great grace and great power (Acts 4 v. 31-33). May God grant that, during this time of Conference, we may experience personally and communally, the demonstration of the Spirit and Power.

(2) *Social and Ecclesiastical*.

(i) *Social*. The demonstration of the Spirit and power in

our dealings with our neighbours and friends. We must make contact with them on everyday levels, in everyday terms, but yet we should leave on them the impression of a deep-seated motivating power that is not of ourselves. And so into our social life there should come the demonstration of the Spirit and power.

(ii) *Ecclesiastical*—our church life. We must no longer be satisfied with the dead, sterile, pharisaical correctness that heads only to the grave and corruption. And this is another aim of this conference, that in our church life there may be that revitalising that will spell blessing to ourselves and to those around us who are in such desperate need.

(3) Next, let us think of the *Material and Spiritual*, or secular and spiritual.

(i) In regard to the *Secular*, I would like to quote for you from Exodus Ch. 35 v. 30-35, "And Moses said, See, the Lord hath called by name Bazaleel, and He hath filled him with the Spirit of God in wisdom, in understanding and in knowledge, and in silver, and in brass, and in the cutting of stones, and in carving of wood, to make any manner of cunning work. And God hath put in his heart that he may teach, both he, and Aholiab, them hath he filled with wisdom of heart, to work all manner of work of the engraver, and of the cunning workman, and of the embroiderer in blue, in purple, in scarlet, and in fine linen; and of the weaver, even of them that do any work and of those that devise cunning work". God had filled them with his Spirit—and in this passage we have brought to our notice the metalworker, the fine art worker, the carpenter, the engraver, the embroiderer, the weaver, and what you will. History is replete with instances of men in the professions, in industry, and in commerce who, being filled with the Spirit of God, *in their jobs* have honoured and glorified God, and have been made a blessing to those around them.

(ii) In regard to the *spiritual* (though I believe that we ought not to distinguish between the secular and the spiritual—they are one)—"the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace,

longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law" Gal. 5 v. 22, 23. All spiritual activity that is acceptable to God must be generated by the Spirit of God.

2. And now a brief word about our *attitude*.

This should be one of humility and charity; not envy, jealousy or malice. Humility, because as we honestly examine ourselves, we confess we are not experiencing the power and the blessing God has promised, and which others seem to enjoy; charity, because, though others may differ from us in outlook and experience, if they are the Lord's, we love them for Christ's sake.

3. Finally, our *Aim*.

Each one of us, I believe, is honestly, sincerely and earnestly seeking that deeper, richer and fuller experience of God in the Demonstration of the Spirit and Power. But our aim is not for personal gain, but rather that, being blessed ourselves, we may be made a blessing to others, and share with them in all its fulness, the demonstration of the Spirit and power.

Brethren, we meet together in a spirit of expectancy; He says, "Seek ye my face", to which, as one, our hearts respond, "Thy face, O Lord, do I seek".

A SYMPOSIUM: OUR AIM

G. C. D. HOWLEY

I WISH to read one verse; it is found in 1 Thess. ch.5 and verse 19: "Quench not the Spirit". These words occur at the end of the epistle, in the final section where Paul is gathering up the full force of his teaching in a number of short and pointed exhortations, largely to do with the church life of the Thessalonians. Embedded in those exhortations there are these words: "Quench not the Spirit."

There is always a great deal of mystery with regard to the Holy Spirit: it seems much easier to understand things with regard to the Person and the work of our Lord Jesus Christ, because He became incarnate, becoming a historic person. The Spirit of God, however, has never taken humanity. Because of this, God has chosen to condescend to the limits of our understanding by using a number of different symbols and emblems in the Bible with regard to the Holy Spirit: each one of them helps us to understand something more of His Person and His ministry.

One of the emblems used of the Holy Spirit is that of fire, and in this particular verse the background of thought is this very idea, that the Holy Spirit of God is like fire. The word translated "quench" is used in Scripture in the sense of putting a fire out. Sometimes this has a literal meaning, sometimes a metaphorical one; here, of course, it is used in a metaphorical sense.

The nature of the Holy Spirit is the first thing I want to emphasize in my short talk. We may consider His working in many ways, but for my purpose just now, we confine ourselves to His resemblance to fire. What does fire do? Fire gives light, and warmth. It illuminates, lighting up the darkness. It kindles the heart and makes it glow. Surely this is exactly what the Holy Spirit of God does, coming into the life of the people of God at conversion, illuminating us, giving us light, the very wisdom of God from on high. But

light is not the only thing we need: we need vitality, warmth, and the Spirit of God comes and kindles our hearts, that were formerly dead, into life and warmth, and He makes them glow. If the Spirit of God is quenched, in measure the light goes out, and in measure the warmth is eliminated.

How may the Spirit be quenched? I want to suggest some ways in which the Holy Spirit can be quenched. (a) *By neglecting His Person.* By taking no notice of Him, and going on as though the Spirit were not indwelling us, as though we could arrange our own affairs entirely apart from Him; by sheer neglect we may quench the Spirit. (b) *By carnality* we may quench the Spirit. When the Christian life veers from the plane of the spiritual to that of the carnal, when the believer turns from the higher levels of spiritual experience and becomes occupied and perhaps even satisfied with something much less—then we quench Him. (c) *By stifling His directives* we may quench Him. If a fire blazed up, we might take a bucket of water and put it right out; it would then be quenched. But if the fire of God burns, we must not do this. The directives of the Spirit of God come to the believer, for the Spirit is not a passive agent: He comes to indwell us that He may actively operate in our lives. And if we stifle the Spirit's directives, we are quenching the Spirit. (d) *By failing to recognise Him in other people* we can quench the Holy Spirit. We may refuse to acknowledge His operations in other lives, or in other ways than our own. This is a subtle temptation, as we are all so prone to spiritual pride. Not only so, but we are so prone at times—that is in our weaker moments—to thinking that, after all, the most important work is the sort of work that we are doing, or the sort of work that our friends are doing, that we may fail to discern God at work through the lives of others. (e) *By a lack of discernment in our churches* we may quench the Spirit. When He moves to stir the people of God, we are sometimes blind, and fail to see that it is the Holy Spirit Who is at work. We may even put His operation down to some other cause and miss the possible moment of truth and blessing.

When the Spirit is unquenched, what happens? When He is unquenched and free to operate, I suggest first that He will revive the people of God. The Psalmist says, "Wilt Thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in Thee?" (Ps.85.6). None of us lives always on an even level of spiritual experience. We all have our lower moments or moods. The Spirit can come to us and revive us, kindling afresh spiritual desires and spiritual appetites, until He has awakened us again to a holy zeal. That is one of the primary things the unquenched Holy Spirit will do.

Further, He will possess our lives, and for Him to possess us means that He is free to point out the way for us, to lead us into the reality of that wonderful experience the Bible calls the leading of the Spirit. This surely, is not merely something mystical, but linked in Scripture with decision and action, with the use of spiritual judgement and the intelligence of those who are so led. There is thus a blending of the divine and the human, as the believer links hands with the Holy Spirit to respond to His guidance and to co-operate in His purposes. So will the unquenched Spirit possess and direct us onward.

Finally, the Spirit will freely operate in the local churches, because we will not want to stop Him when He begins to do something. We will not want to write it off, as though His working had proceeded from some other source. And when He stirs us up, maybe in an unexpected moment, we will be quick to say, "Surely this is of God".

Mr. Atkins reminded us of the background of the Christian Church, and of our lack of power. Dr. Hanton told us of the wondrous possibilities open as we are strengthened with might by God's Spirit in the inner man. And in closing may I remind you that the sense of the Greek in this verse is, "Stop quenching the Spirit", as though they had been doing that very thing, but must now awaken to realities and to a new attitude. As we see the dangers of quenching the Holy Spirit, and the wonder of an unquenched Spirit among us, God will lead us from this conference with fresh spiritual enducement for the fulfilment of His purpose in our lives.

THE SPIRIT HIMSELF

“ *The Promise and the Reality from the Father and the Son* ”

Address by NORMAN WYATT

John 3: 1-10; 14: 15-18; 15: 26 and 16: 7-16

IN THIS INTRODUCTORY study, dealing first with the promise and then with the reality of the coming of the Holy Spirit, we will confine ourselves in the main to John's Gospel, and particularly to our Lord's discourse with Nicodemus, and his last discourse with the disciples before the cross. Here in these passages we find almost all that our Lord Himself had to say on the subject.

I am glad that the Conveners in choosing the title for this session, named it *The Promise and the Reality from the Father and the Son*, because it is impossible to consider the one without the other. This is true of all the great doctrines of Scripture; promise and precept go hand in hand; doctrine and exhortation come all in the same breath. Even in those great passages where the inspired writers are carried away in absorbing contemplation of the glory of God, and of those things which He has in store for those who love Him, they quickly return to earth to exhort us to *trust Him*, to *wait on Him* and to *seek Him* with all our hearts. I find it slightly disconcerting when attempts are made in the public reading of the Scriptures, particularly at the breaking of bread, to extract the promise, the contemplation or the doctrine from a passage and to omit the precept and the exhortation,—it always seems to me like a child trying to lick the jam out of a sandwich and to leave the bread! No doubt the motives of those who do this are wholly good, they wish us to consider the great things of God in worship without for the present being troubled by the practical implications. This would be acceptable if the implications were expressed later in the meeting, but so often they are not. The result—and

it is a tragedy—is that so many, many of us live in a dual world. Some of our hymns even seem to encourage this attitude. In assembly we are carried away into a blissful world where the Lord reigns supreme, where sin is forgiven and banished, where all is glory and holiness; we then rise up and return to the real world where in life and testimony there is little to distinguish us from other men who know not the Lord.

Maybe, this is why there is such wide-spread fear of too much thought about the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Here is something which cannot be banished into the past, or mentally pushed into a future when the Lord will come, and “we shall be what we should be, and we shall be where we would be. . . .” The doctrine of the Holy Spirit poses the question as to why we are not what we should be and where we would be, NOW. With the Holy Spirit, God comes into NOW. The Lord whom we seek suddenly comes to His temple, and we cannot abide the day of His coming any more than those of old, for He comes as always, like a refiner’s fire and like fuller’s soap. He comes to purify and to purge, as a swift witness against sin, and to proclaim to the soul the unchangeable holiness of God. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit is one which we cannot consider in any Scriptural sense without immediately exposing ourselves to its implications for us. I feel that this is not only what we need to do, but what we want to do with all our hearts. This is to us no academic question, but a vital one, because on the answer to it rests not only the future of our own lives and service for God, but the very future of the assemblies we love, and to which we owe so much.

Let us then turn to this study with these two questions in our minds:

- (1) Why is not the Holy Spirit as evident among us today as He was in the early Church?
- (2) Why is not the Holy Spirit as evident in my life as He was, and is today, in the lives of so many great saints of God?

When we look into the Scriptures, and hear again the *Promise of His coming* from the lips of our Saviour, the words are bracing, disturbing, dynamic.

Think of how he presented Him to Nicodemus, representative as he was of the covenant people of God—the very personification of rectitude and orthodoxy, and no doubt too, utterly sincere. Yet he was a man who had seen that the glory had departed and left only the empty husk of ritual, that the law which was spiritual had lost all its meaning in an endless round of trivial outward observance, and that the promises were unfulfilled. Do we see any slight parallel between him and ourselves? Our Lord causes him to lift his eyes, and speaks to him of a Person without Whom it is all indeed just words, mere ritual and unreality—“Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God”. He is like the wind says our Lord, nay He *is* the wind of God, for the words for “spirit” and “wind” are the same: invisible, bewildering and seemingly unpredictable, testing and searching, blowing away the dead leaves of empty profession, and breathing the very life of God into the soul.

Think, now, of how Christ presented Him to the disciples in very much more detail—this Divine Person, who is to come in all His fullness upon the people of God. Let us for a moment isolate the three descriptive titles He uses in the last discourse before the cross.

THE COMFORTER: As the R.S.V. has it, the Counsellor. Before we dismiss the word Comforter, let us consider what it meant to the translators of 1611: it meant someone who put iron into your soul. There is an old picture of the Duke of York “comforting” his troops on the battle-field; he is doing so with uplifted hand and with the business end of his sword, as he leads them into battle: that is the picture, The Divine Helper (J.B.P.): the Advocate (N.E.B.). We will use the R.S.V.’s strong and clear word—Counsellor.

THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH: Bringing the light of God to the soul.

THE HOLY SPIRIT: Bringing the holiness of God to the

soul. Note briefly what is said about Him under these titles: The Counsellor who abides for ever, teaches His people all things, who reproveth, convicts, convinces or confutes, as the various translations render the Greek word: The Spirit of Truth whom the world cannot receive, who testifies of Christ; who guides into all truth, who glorifies Christ and who brings Christ to His people.

Yet, as we weigh our Saviour's words carefully, we see that He is not merely a Divine emissary, some spiritual person sent to represent the Father and the Son, but that He is Himself Divine. We go in thought immediately to ch. 15: 26. where He is said to "proceed from" the Father—He is the Spirit of God. He is also called in other passages the Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8:9, Gal. 4:6 and 1 Pet. 1:11). Moreover just as the spirit of a man is the very essence of his being, so the Holy Spirit is not—I speak with reverence—someone on the fringe of Deity, but is in Himself of the very Essence of Deity. Consider the intimate and lovely words of ch. 14:10. In what sense, we may ask, is the Father in the Son and the Son in the Father, except by the Holy Spirit? The thought is beautifully expressed in Article 5 of the Church of England: "The Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is of one substance, majesty and glory with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God."

It is pertinent to pause here again, and to ask ourselves, why in view of all this we pay more attention in study, thought and worship to the Father and the Son than to the Holy Spirit? Is it because, as suggested earlier, we would rather consider Christian doctrines in isolation from present reality; because we are prepared to think of God, to love Him and to worship Him, but we hesitate at the suggestion that His redeeming and transforming power should come into our situation? Yet the fact is that it is the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit alone, who makes the redeeming work of Christ real, and communicates the life of Christ to the soul.

I hesitate to tell this little humorous anecdote, but I think I must tell it; it expresses what is in the minds of so

many Christians. We had a very simple and yet very nice charlady at one time who used to express what was in her thoughts very frankly. One day the thought and conversation turned towards God, and a sort of horrified look came over her face and she said "Ah, we don't want Him coming down here and interfering with the likes of us." I feel that there is more than a hint of that in the approach of so many Christians to our God. God is in his heaven, and I am not being irreverent in suggesting that many of us feel "I hope He stays there and doesn't come into my life and situation."

We cannot, like Philip in ch. 14, look physically upon our Lord Jesus; and therefore His words to Philip have no significance for us, except as they are linked with verse 16 of the chapter—" . . . and I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Comforter. . . ." It is the word "another" that has special significance here; i.e. the Holy Spirit is to take Christ's place. If we are in any sense to "see" the Father and the Son it will only be through the work of the Holy Spirit. Again we can readily see that the promise of answered prayer (verse 14), of the power to do greater works, and of being indwelt by both the Father and the Son, are not only closely linked with the promise of the Holy Spirit, but are quite unintelligible and unattainable apart from Him. The same is true of the "abiding in Christ" of chapter 15. In what sense can we abide in Him apart from the Holy Spirit? It is through this "abiding" that fruitfulness comes; and in fact the whole of Christian experience is bound up with this great promise of the Holy Spirit, and cannot be realised without Him.

At this point let us summarize the promise made to this little group of men, and through them to the Church as a whole. They are to be born of the Spirit of God; through Him the life that is from above, the very life of God, is to be generated in their souls. They are to know God, having spiritually "seen" Him. They are to be indwelt by Him, and to enjoy an intimate relationship with Him akin to that which exists between the Father and the Son. They are to do even greater works than those done by the Son Himself,

and they are to prevail in prayer in His Name. This was to be brought about by the coming of the Counsellor, the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Truth, who teaches, convicts, leads into all truth and glorifies Christ.

It is interesting to note that our Lord does not here touch on the gifts of the Spirit, neither the supernatural gifts nor the pastoral gifts (He does, however, mention the supernatural gifts in Mark 16, but without linking them specifically with the Holy Spirit). However, He does speak constantly in these chapters of what Paul later tells us is the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy and peace. I am reminded of a remark by Mr. John Stott at Keswick last year that the fruit of the Spirit is more important than any of the gifts of the Spirit, or even of all of them put together. 1 Cor. 13 surely makes this abundantly clear. The fruit is that which is of the very life and essence of God. The gifts are the “Husbandry techniques”, whereby the life is spread and nurtured. All the techniques of the husbandman, planting, watering, pruning, grafting etc. and the skills behind them have but ONE AIM—the production of FRUIT. What is the ultimate aim of all the gifts?—*FRUIT*. Our Lord is concerned in this great passage with principles not techniques. The disciples, then, were to be a group of people who exhibit the very life and love of God, who are utterly glorifying to Christ, whose spirit is completely different to that of the world about them, and whose works are greater even than those of our Saviour Christ.

Two questions present themselves:

(1) Was the early Church like that? The historic coming of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, accompanied by outward signs and manifestations was followed by the formation of a Church which did in some real degree measure up to our Saviour's promise.

(2) Does this, frankly, describe us? Generalisations are always dangerous, so let us individually ask ourselves the question about the assemblies we know. If it does not describe us, then why not? We know the Spirit's indwelling,

His witness with our spirits that we are the children of God, we know His blessing and His guidance, but why not the fullness of His power? It is to be feared that in some cases our churches are such a pale reflection of what our Lord promised as to be almost a caricature.

Before we leave this question, there is one other matter we need to consider; I refer to the Divine freedom of the Holy Spirit spoken of by our Saviour in John 3:8. "The wind bloweth where it listeth. . ."; and by the Apostle Paul in 1 Cor. 12:11 in connection with the gifts, "The Spirit divideth to every man severally as He will." Now this freedom of the Holy Spirit is a most disconcerting thing to orderly and orthodox minds. As men have sought to discover the principles at work behind the apparently unpredictable wind, so may we, I think, without irreverence, and stopping short when we come to the edge of the mystery of God's sovereignty, legitimately inquire why the Holy Spirit works powerfully here and not there: why some churches and assemblies are full of power and blessing, and some seemingly are passed by. Now the puzzling thing to some of us is that the name of the church, its denomination or lack of denomination, the views held by it regarding Church order, baptism and the ministry, appear to have nothing to do with this granting or withholding of the fullness of the Spirit's power. You may have on one hand an assembly that is sound in doctrine and practice, where outwardly all is well. The ministry is orderly and able; yet no one is ever converted. There is no impact on the locality. Year by year the congregation grows older and older, and the few young people drift away. Where have they gone? They have gone down the road to a church, which though sound on the fundamentals, is, so we would think, sadly mistaken in its teaching and practice about many things. Yet what is happening there? God is blessing. There is joy and power, souls are being saved, and the Church is growing not only in numbers, but in power and grace. Why? Does God deny Himself? Or are there considerations of overriding importance from the Divine standpoint which we have overlooked?

We are not alone in making such an inquiry. Other groups of Christians are seeing this happen in reverse; it is the local assembly which is the fountain of blessing, while others are passed by. Neither is this a new thing. As long ago as 1894 Dr. Handley Moule wrote of the impossibility of restricting even normally, much less universally, the Spirit's action in the vital union of man to Christ to a sacramental ordinance, or even to any ordinance at all. What an admission from such a source! Yet we must in all honesty make a similar admission. In fact, it would appear that there is far more blessing today outside rather than within our own circles. Why should this be so? Does not God honour faithfulness to His Word, or are there other and overriding considerations?

As we look at Church history, this fact surely stands out—every attempt that has ever been made to limit the operation of the Holy Spirit to a system, even though that system be based on the principles of Scripture, has failed miserably. The wind indeed bloweth where it listeth. Let us just develop this point for a moment. The learned Pharisees of the Jewish Church, so zealous for the law and for the testimony, see with amazement and envy the demonstrations of God's power among a crowd of ignorant and unlearned men, and are forced to witness their fantastic success in a world they had regarded as their own special province. The popes and cardinals of the Reformation period are utterly at a loss to understand the spiritual power of men, not only removed from the Church's official ministry, but excommunicated from its very membership. The bishops of the Wesleys' and Whitfield's days are forced to look on and see the very face of England being changed by the preaching of men for whom they could find no place in their system. We nod with approval at all this, but what about when it happens to us, and we see to our growing alarm that the Holy Spirit is not with us as once He was, and that the wind of God is blowing strongly elsewhere?

Yes, the wind is blowing, but not in any particular "church" denomination or movement to the exclusion of

others, but very widely across the whole Church of God today. These Churches thus blessed differ widely about many things but they have one thing in common—a vital, soul-saving ministry, glorifying to Christ. What are we to conclude in the face of these undeniable facts? There has been quite a tendency in the past to ignore them or to play them down, and this may be understandable all the while we ourselves are in the floodtide of God's blessing. But what when the blessing diminishes, and we become more and more of an evangelical backwater, while the main stream of the Holy Spirit's power flows elsewhere in redeeming activity?

We do not find any relief by referring to the doctrine of the freedom of the Holy Spirit. To quote Handley Moule again, "By freedom we do not mean that His work is arbitrary or capricious, as nothing Divine can be, but that it is incalculable as regards conditions and tests which we may apply." The wind indeed bloweth where it listeth. The forces which cause it to blow here or there are not seen and cannot be measured by us; but that does not mean that they do not exist, and that if we had the necessary data and apparatus we could readily understand why it should be so.

Now the same is true in the spiritual realm. One thing is immediately obvious to us, that is, that though matters of Church order and doctrinal interpretation are important, these things, as we have said already, do not appear to affect the Spirit's blessing. These matters would seem to me to be on the technical level, it is in the realm of the spiritual and moral obedience (or resistance) to the Holy Spirit that the crux of the matter lies. We are told again and again in the Word of those things which quench, grieve, and hinder the Holy Ghost, yet like Naaman, turning away from Elisha's simple instruction, we turn away from such obvious explanations. Like Naaman we are looking for some grand and glorious manifestation, something out of the ordinary, and we cannot have the humility to go down and wash ourselves in the Jordan seven times. Sometimes we seek refuge in such fatuous though oft-repeated explanations as that "the times have changed" and "the days are growing

darker", ignoring the fact that possibly the days were never darker, as we were reminded in the opening message, than when the Church was born; and that in the midst of darkness in our own day the Church of God in many places flourishes in blessing.

We have, of course, to be careful here because we have no authority whatever to say that in this Church or that this or that particular sin is quenching the Holy Spirit, but as elders we know the littleness of our own hearts and the prevailing low standards of thought, expectation and behaviour in our own local Church. We have, I am confident, before coming here sought earnestly to confess our sin in these and other respects, yet I fear for myself that there may still be some inner reserve in my heart, some inner self-justification that we are more obedient to the word than others and therefore God ought to bless us in some special way. I feel that for myself I need to cry more and more to God just simply like the publican and with no extenuation "God be merciful to me a sinner".

Now, I am well aware, this is no new insight but I believe with all my heart that herein lies our trouble. Our iniquities have separated between us and our God and our sins have hid his face from us that he will not hear us. Lists of sins are uncomfortable things because as any psychiatrist will tell you, the reciter of these lists merely gives other people an insight deeply into his own heart and if I were to say the many things that indeed God has laid on my heart for myself this morning, it would perhaps merely take away the working of the Holy Spirit in your heart showing you, this or that, which is wrong with you and wrong with your assembly. But the sad thing is this, dear brothers, we avoid facing up to this simple fact of our sin. Dr. Torrey said in one of his memorable Keswick addresses: "People often say to me: 'I've been praying for the fullness of the Holy Spirit', (one man said for five years, one for 10, one even for 20 years) but it does not happen, why not? When people say that to me I generally look them square in the eyes and say, 'My brother, my sister, it is sin.'"

Every great work of the Holy Spirit in scripture and history has been characterised by a deep conviction of sin. Now there is a great deal of misunderstanding as to what conviction of sin is. Those who oppose the idea, project a mental picture of someone rather like Uriah Heep in one of Dickens' famous novels, ever wringing his hands and protesting his humility and unworthiness—someone as we would say today, on the edge of a nervous breakdown. That is not the picture that we see in Scripture or in the historic revivals. Think of some of the great missionaries who went out as a result of Moody's preaching soon after the middle of the last century. Men like Grenfels of Labrador, like C. T. Studd, were not men who were like this. Conviction of sin is *conviction* of sin and the Holy Spirit works through the mind. Mindless emotionalism has nothing whatever to do with the Holy Spirit of God. Listen to how Isaiah describes the Holy Spirit in chapter 11, verse two: "The spirit of the Lord, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord." It is this conviction of sin which leads to confession. These two must be inseparable, and I feel that here, too, is where we fail. We come to God in a vague way and say "O Lord I confess my sins and on the promise of 1 John 1:9 wilt Thou forgive me? "Would to God that sometimes a voice would come from heaven "What sins?" because then we might sit up and say; "I don't know; what sins am I confessing? ". We have to get these things out into the open, and look at them and see what it is that is hindering our blessing, because then, and only then, will we do something about it. The Holy Spirit is the spirit of divine energy, of restitution, He is the Spirit of counsel and of might, of wisdom and understanding, of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. Now if you think of the great men of God who came under the conviction of sin you will immediately see that this is true. Think of Isaiah in the temple "Woe is me", says he, "for I am undone". He didn't stop there: "I am a man of unclean lips." Isaiah, as we know, had been thundering all

over Judah about the sins of others, but in the temple God shows him his own sin he is a man of unclean lips. Think of Job, as God speaks to him. "What was the sin of Job?" you say, "we all thought that Job was a righteous man, suffering in innocence". But this is what Job says: "I have uttered that I understood not; wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." He had questioned the wisdom and the justice of God. It was sin and called for repentance. We may think of Paul on the Damascus road, and in those three days before Ananias came to him, what was going through his mind? I believe that he was under tremendous conviction of sin; writing later in life to his son Timothy, he names it. He says, "I was a blasphemer, I was a persecutor, I was injurious," and Paul in his blindness sits there and faces the facts of what he is. It brings about in him a conviction which leads to confession, which in turn leads to forgiveness and to new life.

So we bring our study this morning to a close with this thought "Why is there this great gap between promise and the reality?" The Spirit Who was to bring the very life of God to us and to all our activity, has been turned aside, quenched, grieved and hindered because we want Him, but not with all our hearts—the price is too high. There is no place in Scripture that I know of where the Spirit came in all His fullness except to prepared, contrite and expectant hearts. That we are indwelt by Him we cannot for a moment doubt—glory be to His name! But we need Him in all His fullness, and for this we must make a way for Him; we must prepare the way of the Lord; and make straight in the desert of our hearts a highway for our God. Every valley must be exalted, every mountain and hill must be made low. The crooked must be made straight and the rough places plain. Then, and only then, will the glory of the Lord be revealed. Amen.

THE POWER IN THE PAST

Pentecost and the Historic Revivals

Address by ARNOLD PICKERING

Mr. Pickering acknowledges the considerable help he had derived from the following books, published by the Paternoster Press:

"The Inextinguishable Blaze" by Dr. A. Skevington Wood, dealing with spiritual renewal and advance in the 18th century.

"The Light of the Nations" by Dr. J. Edwin Orr, dealing with progress and achievement in the 19th century.

EARLY IN THE morning of that memorable day of Pentecost, all Jerusalem was baffled and bewildered. The minds of a multitude of devout men were groping for a satisfying explanation of strange things which they had just seen and heard. Considering, in retrospect, what it was that occasioned their concern, we shall probably find that our reaction is not wholly unlike theirs. Certainly we shall share their sense of wonder: some of us are prepared to admit a measure of their perplexity: and all of us profess the same spirit of inquiry which caused them to say one to another "What meaneth this?"

Peter had no doubt about the meaning of what had happened. "This," he affirmed, categorically, "is that which was spoken by the prophet." He could have added that it had been promised by Jesus our Lord. The promise of the Master made imminent what the Father had predicted centuries before. Nor were the other apostles ignorant of the significance of those strange happenings. Christ's anticipatory description had assured them that, not many days afterwards, they would be baptised with the Holy Ghost. Let us then be content to accept the Lord's description of Pentecost: no other description can claim to be authentic. It may be, and here we do not dogmatise, that the words "baptised

with the Holy Ghost" are best reserved to describe the initial outpouring at Pentecost and its extension to the Samaritans and the Gentiles. Throughout this weekend we shall be well advised constantly to bear in mind that spiritual experience can only be explained satisfactorily in precise scriptural language. Failure to remember this will ill-serve any spirit of humble and reverent inquiry.

It may help us the better to appreciate the significance of what occurred if we distinguish between Pentecost as an event—and an experience, and an evidence. The event was the "shedding forth" or "pouring out" of the Holy Spirit so that the disciples were o'erwhelmed in a divine effusion. In some very mysterious, but very real, manner they became more than a company of individual believers in the Lord Jesus. They were spiritually incorporated: by one Spirit they were all baptised into one Body. In this sense Pentecost was as much an event in history as the incarnation and the cross and the resurrection and ascension. Moreover, in God's eternal purpose of saving blessing for mankind, these events followed a predetermined sequence. The Holy Ghost was not given earlier because that Jesus was not yet glorified. Thus the outpouring took place at one of those times which, scripture tells us, the Father hath appointed by His own authority. Consequently, a sober evaluation of Pentecost requires us to view it in the setting of God's sovereignty.

But Pentecost was very much more than an objective historical event. The disciples were not just amazed onlookers, contemplating a divine intervention in the affairs of men. Pentecost was for them a subjective experience: they were all filled with the gracious Spirit whom the Father outpoured. In that infilling of the outflowing Holy Spirit they received the power which the Saviour had promised them. But it was not some impersonal enabling. Christ is Himself the power of God: it was the power inherent in the resurrection life of the Lord Jesus, communicated to them by the indwelling Holy Ghost. Surpassingly wonderful is the glory of this mystery of the heavenly Guest; but we must not digress to consider the blessedness of Christ

dwelling in the heart by faith. That profitable exercise falls, more appropriately, within the scope of one of the later messages.

Supernatural signs evidenced both the event and the experience. There was the sound of a rushing mighty wind and the sight of tongues like as of fire, distributing and resting upon each of them: and they began to speak as the Spirit Himself gave them utterance. Did they speak in a dialect of a foreign language they had never learned? Or was it that, as the multitude listened spellbound, they caught snatches of their own dialect in a spirit-inspired ecstasy which transcended normal speech? However differently equally sincere christians may answer these questions, they would all, doubtless, concede that the phenomenon of Pentecost was a sign, compelling attention to a message that otherwise might have attracted as much notice as the words of many an open air preacher of the Gospel today. It was the all-important message that God had made the same Jesus, whom they had crucified, both Lord and Christ.

Pentecost transformed Peter: with all boldness he declared the word of God. The indwelling Holy Spirit who, but a short time before, had given utterance to speak in another tongue, now gave him like utterance to speak in a language which was common to all his listeners: they perfectly understood even the rough Galilean tongue which had previously been his undoing. Observe, too, the reaction to these differing manifestations of divine power. As they listened to the "other tongues" they were troubled in mind, but when they heard Peter's preaching, they were pricked in their hearts; they were convicted in conscience. Listening to the tongue-speaking they exclaimed "What meaneth this?" but listening to the Gospel they exclaimed "What shall we do?" Detached inquiry gave place to personal and urgent concern: they were no longer spectators: they were deeply involved. God had done something: Christ had done something: something was required from them, "What must we do?" To what, or to whom, must we attribute this spiritual cataclysm? Not to organisation. Before Pentecost they had

made the church organisation complete by numbering with themselves another, in the place of Judas, to take part in their ministry and apostleship. But this was not enough: Pentecost was far from a masterpiece of organisation. It is not true that organisation never faileth: nor is organisation always and necessarily the way! If we agonised more we could organise less. Nor can we attribute the miracle to the preacher. He was but an unlearned and ignorant fisherman, that is to say, he was a mere layman. Nor yet was the preaching the explanation of their response. There was no oratory, no intellectual or literary display: there were no enticing words of man's wisdom. The conscience-probing gospel, which resulted in the conviction and conversion of about 3,000 men and women, was proclaimed in all simplicity. But it was preached in a God-given power. The power of the Holy Ghost had come upon them. How moving was the appeal at the close of that first message. But the appeal did not come from the preacher. It was the people who listened who made the appeal—"Men and brethren" they cried "What must we do?" Nor was this something exceptional: it had its counterpart in the cry of the Philippian jailer, "What must I do?". Thus it was that, in the beginning of the corporate witness of the church, God accredited His servants in no uncertain manner; their preaching was made effective by God's power. Strangely enough, they never seem to have prayed for power: they prayed for boldness and when they were bold, the power came upon them. The very building in which they were assembled was shaken but, infinitely more important, the stubborn hearts of men were moved with fear, and that without any particular pleading from Peter or the 11. This compelling evidence, of God powerfully applying His word to heart and conscience, so that conviction is wrought without any impassioned appeal from the preacher, is one of the outstanding marks of genuine revival. Quite rightly we associate appeals with evangelism: in evangelism man is working for God but in revival God is working in men. Let us be quite frank with ourselves, and God, it is the

absence of these signs following, rather than their presence, which characterises so much of our preaching today. Why is it? Are there scriptural grounds for asserting that God intended Pentecost to be solitary, isolated, unique? Wishful thinking may propound such a comforting excuse: but history is not on our side. Thinking no more widely than the English-speaking peoples, and no earlier than the 18th century, one of the first outbreaks of revival occurred in America. Preceded by times of refreshing in several scattered places in North America, there came, in 1740, the great awakening with which is linked the name of Jonathan Edwards. The churches, which had become careless and carnal, were quickened by the Holy Spirit Himself. God was indeed working in men: but in Christian men first of all. And when the buildings failed to accommodate the crowds, George Whitefield preached in the open air to 5,000-8,000; even to 15,000, so that the place became like the very gate of heaven. John Wesley had himself been in America from 1735 until early in 1738 but, alas, after his return he must needs write in his journal the well-remembered words, "I went to America to convert the Indians, but, oh, who shall convert me?" The warming of his heart in the Aldersgate Street meeting came in the May of the same year. "He felt he did trust Christ, Christ alone, for his salvation, and received assurance that his sins had been taken away." That was the beginning of power in his own ministry. "It pleased God" he said, "to kindle a fire which, I trust, shall never be extinguished." He embarked upon his first evangelistic tour in 1742 and, in the following years, the world itself became his parish. The impact which God made upon our own country through Wesley is acknowledged by historians who have no spiritual insight whatsoever. Moreover, that these were days of real revival is apparent because often men and women were truly converted before Wesley arrived at a particular place and were there waiting to welcome him when he came along. Well might Wesley exclaim "What hath God wrought!".

A century later, when spiritual life and power in America

had considerably declined, God graciously visited that continent again so that there was a real work of reviving quite without regard to denominational labels. In 1859 this work of the Holy Spirit spread from America to Ireland, and from there to Scotland. A young man, living near Ballymena, and reading of God's dealing with George Müller, especially of the way in which God answered his prayers, encouraged three other young men to pray with him that what was happening in America might be reproduced in Ulster. How wonderfully God answered their praying. We read of folk travelling 100 miles to a prayer meeting and 20,000 others gathering for an Open Air meeting: it has been estimated that about 100,000 persons were truly born again in the Ulster revival. It was prayer, also, that anticipated the spreading of the quickening grace from Ulster to South West Scotland where it overflowed to the Highlands and the whole country. In a typical gathering of 4,000 people we read that more than 50 Pastors and lay preachers addressed from 11 o'clock in the morning until 6 o'clock in the evening. It was that day that the sponsors buried sectarianism and saw no Christian weep over its grave!

When revival came to Wales in 1905 remarkable things began to happen. Men went straight from the mines to the chapels, leaving the public houses empty. Prayer meetings were held on the mountain side and ponies in the Pits could not be persuaded to work, because they were not used to kindness! Evan Roberts, an unknown young man, a miner who became something of a mystic and later seems completely to have withdrawn from public life, was largely used of God in the South Wales quickening. The late Mr. G. H. Lang, in his "History and Diaries of an Indian Christian" describes a conversation he had, with a Presbyterian minister, on a visit to Neath in 1905. Evidently, when the meetings under Evan Roberts, a few miles away, were becoming known, some of the minister's congregation said to him "Could we not invite Evan Roberts over here and have a revival ourselves?". Said the minister to Mr. Lang, "I would have thought it an eternal disgrace to be dependent

on Evan Roberts for a revival, so I said to my people, 'We have the God of Evan Roberts, suppose we try *HIM* first?'" A daily prayer meeting was held and, after 10 days, on the Sunday evening, the minister had just concluded his evening address and was about to add the usual invitation that any who wished to speak with him should come to the school-room, when something quite unexpected occurred. Before he gave his invitation people, in all parts of the building, rose and began streaming down to the room and that night there were over 100 who professed personal faith in Christ as Saviour.

Time fails us to enlarge upon these very brief references to some of the historic Christian revivals; nor can we comment on more recent interventions of God's Spirit such as the quickening in East Anglia in 1922 or the 1948 Revival in the Hebrides. What shall we say to these things? Although these demonstrations of the Spirit and of power were separated in time and different in character, a recognisable pattern begins to emerge, a pattern in which men are burdened to pray: to humble themselves before God, crying to Him to meet their own needs first of all, in forgiveness and cleansing; a pattern in which the conscience of Christian men is quickened till it feels the loathsomeness of sin; a pattern in which there can be discerned a new recognition of the supreme authority and sufficiency of the word of God as the incorruptible seed, through which alone, men can be born again. It is out of this reviving of Christian men and Christian churches that God pours out His blessing upon the unregenerate. Nevertheless, the idea that there is a pattern of Revival must be treated with a measure of caution. God must be allowed to be sovereign in the manner of His reviving as well as in the timing of His reviving. The pattern of the past is not necessarily the pattern of power for the present. Nor yet must we attempt to confine God's power within the limits of our own conception of what would be right and proper. Would we be very cross with God if He commenced a Revival at that other church down the road instead of in our own Hall?! We tend to

make all kinds of rules and regulations for God but He always pleases Himself. Mercifully, the Psalmist assures us, "He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased." It is no more possible for us to predict how the Holy Spirit will manifest Himself in the life of another Christian or another church, than it is for us to predict the behaviour of the wind. Because of this we must continually seek grace from God to avoid quenching the Spirit in the experience of another child of His, in the same way that we cry to Him to be saved from grieving the Spirit in our own life. Some dear children of God seem reluctant to acknowledge that any man can be born again outside a refrigerator. When did we last see a man or woman broken down in conviction as the Gospel was preached in the power of God? After all, it is the power that matters: the pattern will take care of itself. Cynical men contend that Revivals do not last. God may not intend them to last. But the consequences of Revival last, and stand the test of time.

A recent visit to the pumped storage Power Station at Ffestiniog in North Wales proved quite fascinating for a layman. During the peak demand, water flows from an upper reservoir, through vertical turbines, to a lower reservoir, generating power as it falls. During the night, when the demand is low, the water is pumped up again to the higher reservoir so that the generation of power can be maintained the following day. It really means that the power that comes down is the power that is pumped up! Now Revival can be prayed down: but Revival can never be pumped up! What do we know of this divine dynamic? We speak, and rightly so, of the love and the gentleness of the Holy Spirit: but the power of the Spirit which our Saviour promised, is conspicuous by its absence. Why do we lack this power? Is it that Simon-like, we long for the power, and would even pay a price for the power, but with motives that would make it minister to our own imagined reputation? Is the power withheld because our sins so grieve the Spirit of purity and grace that he is necessarily impotent in our lives? Is it that the deceitfulness of comparative riches has made our lives

too comfortable for the Holy Ghost to invade? Is it that lacking true devotion to Christ we lack His compassion for our fellow-men? Is it that we are willing to live for the glory of God, but are reluctant to die for the glory of God? Are we here at Swanwick as those for whom the power of the Spirit in personal experience is but a memory of years gone by? We have known power in the past—but the power, like the glory, has departed? Let us return to the Lord and He will have mercy upon us and to our God for He will abundantly pardon. Let us cry the cry of Habbakkuk, "O Lord, revive Thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy." We shall never need anything less than mercy from our God. O Lord, revive Thy work in the midst of the years: not power in the past only, for those years have gone beyond recall: nor power in the future, for that does not belong to us, but in the midst of the years—at this very present time, O Lord, revive thy work. Revive Thy work in the world, and in the church, but, most of all, in my poor heart.

BAPTISM AND FULLNESS—I

The Power in Commencement and Continuance

Address by A. G. BAMFORD

Isaiah 43 v. 18—ch. 44 v. 5.

ON THE FEW occasions it has been my privilege to speak from this platform I have trembled with a sense of inadequacy and the vast responsibility one has before God. No more have I trembled than on this occasion, faced with such a subject, discussion of which has tended to generate heat of an unholy kind in some whose disposition to the subject is pre-set and inflexible. I therefore ask for your charity and prayerful sympathy. As this subject is so vastly different from the one committed to me at our last conference the treatment must necessarily be different. It is not the intention to engage in an academic analytical exercise nor to provide for any who seek it more as support for the "witch-hunting" or heresy hunting engaged in by some brethren whereby all who show a tendency to, interest in, or sympathy with the manifestations of charismatic gifts are branded, labelled, run to the ground or pronounced unsound. We must humbly and seriously study the Word of God and make our judgements in the light of such a study without attempting to oversimplify merely for the sake of simplicity. Where the terminology of Scripture is varied and precise, we shall not be fair to the text or its message if we ignore the differences in usage. Our only aim in this study is to give God the glory and the honour which is rightly attributable to Him for his marvellous work of grace in our lives and to discover the means whereby we may know experimentally the fullest blessing of this. Our aim then is not to "root out" heresy but to ask ourselves, what do we mean by the Baptism? I have taken time to emphasise that point because I do know a number of brethren in whose heart bitterness is building up towards very loving, sincere Christians who, in

humbleness or heart, have come to have experiences foreign perhaps to our own. I think it is pertinent to quote A. Barnes in his "Notes on the Acts of the Apostles"—"If men wish to root error out of the Church, they should strive by all means to promote everywhere revival of pure and undefiled religion. The Holy Spirit more easily and effectively silences false doctrine, and destroys heresy, than all the denunciations of fierce theologians; all the alarms of professed zeal for truth; and all the anathemas of professed orthodoxy and love for the purity of the Church ever uttered from the icebergs on which such champions usually seek their repose and their home." (1)

Let us then look at representative statements of the two main viewpoints concerning the Baptism. Dr. Torrey in his book, "The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit" says "A man may be regenerated by the Holy Spirit and still not be baptised with the Holy Spirit. In regeneration there is the impartation of power and the one who receives this is fitted for service. . . ." (2) Another representative of that viewpoint is George Ingram (3), who quotes Matthew 1 v. 21, "*He shall save his people from their sins*", and Matthew 3 v. 11, "*He shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost and with fire*". Taking these two statements and keeping them apart in time, Ingram developed the belief that the saving from our sins precedes by some interval the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Further he says, "God's full salvation, I say it reverently, is something like a shilling. It is made up of two sixpences. The first sixpence in that Full Salvation is the forgiveness of sins, usually spoken of as conversion, or being born again; the second sixpence is the baptism of the Holy Ghost; and together they make Full Salvation. In theological language the first six-

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- (1) A. Barnes, "Notes on the Acts of the Apostles". Publ. by Gall and Inglis (Date unknown).
(2) R. A. Torrey, "The person and Work of the Holy Spirit", 1910. pp. 174, 176.
(3) G. S. Ingram, "The Fullness of the Holy Spirit", pp. 4, 5. Christian Literature Crusade.

pence is Justification, and the second sixpence is Sanctification",⁽¹⁾ implying that we could have the one without the other. And then John MacNeil in his little book "The Spirit-Filled Life", said "To know Christ as the Sin Bearer is but HALF salvation; to know Him also as the Great Baptist is FULL salvation".⁽²⁾ Lovingly I submit that this impairs the value of the work of Christ. I do not understand what is meant by "half salvation". From another viewpoint we hear Graham Scroggie in his book, "The Baptism of the Holy Spirit" — "What, then, about the now widely current doctrine that multitudes of Christians have never received the Baptism of the Spirit, and that all should seek it until they experience it? All I can say is, that such teaching is not derived from the New Testament and the spread of it is bringing large numbers into bondage and darkness. The error is due, perhaps, to the confusing of the Fullness of the Spirit with the Baptism; but more especially it is due, I think, to a desire to associate with one another the blessing of the Spirit with the gift of tongues".

And lastly from this other viewpoint rather more strongly, by Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse at Keswick in 1948, "To call the baptism of the Holy Spirit a second work of grace is as false in New Testament language as any statement of doctrine could be For a Christian to ask the Lord to baptise him with the Spirit is exactly the same as a married man asking his wife if she will marry him. 'Tis done, and properly it cannot be twice done".⁽³⁾ So, then, we must look at the Scriptures relevant to this word which is a heartache to so many Christians, the word "Baptism". The references to the Baptism we find in Matthew 3 v. 11, Mark 1 v. 8, Luke 3 v. 16, John 1 v. 33, Acts 1 v. 5, Acts 11 v. 16 and 1 Cor. 12 v. 13. The first group in all the four

(1) Ibid p. 5.

(2) John MacNeill, "The Spirit-Filled Life". Moody Press, 1896.

(3) Donald Grey Barnhouse, "The Keswick Week 1948", p. 59. Marshall, Morgan and Scott.

Gospels are represented by the statement in Mark, "I baptise with water, says John, but He shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost and with fire". Acts 1 v. 5, "Await the promise of the Father, which said, He, ye heard of Me, for John truly baptised with water but ye shall be baptised with the Holy Ghost not many days hence". The three in the Synoptic gospels and the statement in Acts 5 are all concerned with what was then in the future. The statement in John 1 v. 33 is in the present tense—"He Baptiseth", the continuous present. He Baptiseth with the Holy Ghost. Acts 11 v. 16, as we shall see later, records Peter reporting what happened in the house of Cornelius. He reported that Cornelius and others had an experience, the nature of which took him back in mind to that day at Pentecost when the gift came as the baptism of the Spirit. What happened in the house of Cornelius? They heard Peter speak—the Holy Ghost fell, they spoke with tongues, they magnified God and then followed their water baptism. In Acts 8, after the preaching of Philip in Samaria and the coming of the Apostles, Peter and John, this is the sequence—they believed, they had water baptism, then the apostles came and prayed that they might receive the Holy Ghost, the apostles laid hands on them, then they received the Holy Ghost. There is no mention here of tongues, although many commentators suggest that the manifestation must have included that. In the first seven verses of Acts 19 we read of a group of twelve men who, after some faulty preaching by Apollos, had been baptised unto the baptism of John. Paul questioned them, "Did you receive the Holy Ghost when ye believed?" Their answer indicated that they did not know that the Holy Ghost was in being. They had received John's baptism of repentance. Following Paul's teaching they believed on Jesus, received water baptism, Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Ghost came on them, and then they spoke with tongues and prophesied. I find it impossible to detect any standard pattern in those accounts. There is no set sequence related to the giving of the Holy Spirit to the believer. "They were all baptised

with the Spirit", as we see in 1 Cor. 12 v. 13. "By one Spirit we were all baptised", but not in the same way. There is no norm for the Christian here. But there are those to-day who say, "If not conclusive, it is very compelling evidence that in the early church speaking in tongues normally accompanied the receiving of the Holy Spirit." (1) But apart from the four incidents, Pentecost, Samaria, Caesarea, and Ephesus (if you include Samaria), there is no mention of tongues in the book of the Acts.

From these scriptures one may come to some conclusions about, first the NATURE of the Baptism. In the very short time allotted to me I must state briefly that this baptism is simultaneous with regeneration. And what happens then? What happened when we were baptised as the apostle says in 1 Cor. v. 2, into the Body of Christ? That glorious day, when you and I came to know our Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour. Let us not forget that day, brethren. I can remember it clearly, and I thank God from the depths of my heart for what Christ did on that day; I believe that he baptised me with the Holy Spirit and filled me with His new life so that a complete change was effected. Describing this, Campbell Morgan says, "From henceforth my personality was to be a Christian personality; intellectually there was the outlook of Jesus; emotionally the passion of Jesus; volitionally the choices of my life were the choices of Jesus. He in me, would think and love and will. In that moment I was baptised into one Body". (2) At our conversion we were enveloped by Christ. We put on Christ and at that moment there was for us a new centre, a new dimension, a new perspective, our lives became Christocentric, Christ-dominated. We were brought at last into the realm of sanity and God's normality, so that from that day all other life was to be eccentric. We were all baptised into the body of Christ, and so were brought into

(1) Michael Harper, "Power for the Body of Christ. p. 34.

(2) G. Campbell Morgan, "The Acts of the Apostles", Pickering and Inglis, 1946. p. 163.

union with every other member of the Body of Christ. That happened on the day of our salvation. If we recoil from any suggestion that we should have fellowship with certain other believers, then if I may play on words, we have lost the spirit of the Baptism. We must recognise Christ in our Brethren.

The PURPOSE and the CONDITIONS of the Baptism. The Baptism was quite clearly not merely for a privileged few. It is for all, to be received by faith at conversion. Gal. 3 v. 26, "Ye are *all* the sons of God *through faith* in Christ Jesus. For as many of you, (i.e. ALL) as were baptised into Christ have put on Christ". Colossians 2 v. 12, "Having been buried with Him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with Him through faith in the working of God". This is for all, without condition. We are not seeking this, are we? We already have the baptism which is not conditional upon our spiritual state, for those words, "We were all baptised into one Body", were spoken to those whom the apostle severely described as "carnal" and mere "babes in Christ" in 1 Cor. 3. It is not conditional upon our spiritual state. I wish we would give God the glory for the wonder of this Baptism. I wish we would praise Him daily for what He has done, meditating upon this marvellous operation of putting us in Christ, and filling us too. Then we may take upon our hearts and lips the words of Andrew Murray, "I will meditate and be still until something of the overwhelming glory of the truth fall upon me and faith begin to realise it. I am His Temple and in the secret place He sits upon the Throne . . . I do now tremblingly accept the blessed truth; God the Spirit; the Holy Spirit; who is God Almighty dwells in me. O my Father, reveal within me what it means lest I sin against Thee by saying it and not living it." (1)

Regarding the TIMING of the baptism, frequent reference is made to the sequence of events in which the Lord

(1) Andrew Murray, "The Temple of the Holy Spirit" (quoted in Chadwick "The Way to Pentecost", p. 31).

Jesus said, "Wait until you receive power from on high", and in obeying this command they ultimately received the promise. This has been used as a reason for teaching that we must "wait" for the Holy Spirit. But we must remember that these were sequences in a historical process and inevitably the promise had to precede the fulfilment by a time interval. The fulfilment came "when the day of Pentecost was fully come" as the Lord had appointed. If we were to search for a pattern of "waiting for the blessing" in the Scriptures, we should find inconsistencies since, for instance, in the house of Cornelius, *immediately*, in fact in the middle of Peter's sermon, the Holy Spirit fell upon them. Oh, for preaching like that to-day! Powerful preaching! The Holy Spirit interrupted Peter and undertook His own work in baptising them. Acts 19 v. 2, the Authorised version says, "Have you received the Holy Spirit since ye believed?" I would make a plea for the other (R.V.) rendering, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" as being more consistent with the tenor of Scripture. This emphasis on waiting and tarrying has been a source of much anxiety to many students. You may know young people with the experience of groaning, grovelling on the ground, crying, waiting for the baptism. Handley Moule says, "May I say with tenderness and deep spiritual sympathy that a mistake seems to underlie the practice not uncommon now amongst earnest Christians, of "waiting" for a special Baptism of the Spirit in order to more effectual service for the Lord. Surely by one Spirit *we have been* baptised into one Body. And now our part is to open in humblest faith all the avenues and regions of the soul and of the life, that we might be filled with what we already have".⁽¹⁾

Campbell Morgan⁽²⁾ quoted Dr. Erdmann's formula of

(1) H. C. G. Moule, "Veni Creator" (quoted in J. O. Sanders' "The Holy Spirit of Promise", p. 71).

(2) G. Campbell Morgan, "The Spirit of God". Hodder & Stoughton. 1916. p. 189.

the law of the Spirit in the expression, "One Baptism, many fillings." This is a helpful way of describing it, but when we use that expression we should be clear in our own minds about the timing of the baptism of which we are speaking, since some use that formula believing that the baptism occurs subsequent to regeneration.

What about the *MANIFESTATION* of the baptism? Apart from the four times we have mentioned in the book of the Acts there is no other mention of speaking with tongues in that book. As we have emphasised, there is no standardised experience and there is a list I could give you of experiences and examples in the book of the Acts of people filled with the Holy Spirit, with the same quality of filling as experienced on the day of Pentecost, of whom no record is made that they spoke in tongues. (1) Sadly, though in relation to the manifestation of the Spirit in our lives, it is not always characterised by *power*—whatever that word means, for in this Conference I have not yet heard it defined. We may have been baptised with the Spirit, we may have been placed within the reach of the power of the Holy Spirit, and yet we may lack any manifestation of that power. The Corinthians were "carnal babes in Christ", and the Galatians, of whom Paul spoke as being baptised, were enjoined by the Apostle to refrain from returning to the weak and beggarly rudiments of the world. As in our experience, they had received the baptism of the Spirit at conversion, but there was little evidence of the Spirit's dynamic. Many of us are prone to say that having received the Baptism at conversion then this is all we need—everything was completed at conversion. Many of us are also guilty, like Dr. Torrey, of confusing our terms. Dr. Barnhouse, speaking in Keswick in 1948, said, "It was a well-known fact that Dr. Torrey used the terms "baptism" and "filling with the Spirit" very loosely, and he had been widely quoted

(1) Cf. No "tongues" acquainted with the following: Acts 2, 41; 3, 7-9; 4, 4; 4, 8; 4, 31; 5, 14; 6, 3, 5, 7; 7, 55; 8, 36; 9, 17 & 42; 11, 21 & 24; 13, 9, 12, 43, 48, 52; 14, 1, 21; 16, 14, 34; 17, 11, 12, 14, 34; 18, 4 & 8; 28, 24.

by some of the most erratic of the cultists as supporting their position, which led to great excesses in practice. At the Montrose Bible Conference Dr. W. P. White was on the platform as co-speaker with Dr. Torrey. When the latter said, "What we all need tonight is a new baptism of the Holy Spirit!" Dr. White said in a stage whisper, "You mean 'filling', do you not, Dr. Torrey?" The preacher turned on him and replied, "What difference does it make how I say it? These men know what I mean." Dr. Wadsworth continues, "After the meeting they went to Torrey Lodge, and soon Dr. Torrey called Dr. White into his room and thanked him for what he had whispered to him at the meeting, acknowledging that it was best to speak of the things of the Spirit in the right terms. He told Dr. White that he regretted that certain Pentecostal leaders quoted him as they did, since he did not believe their teaching on the person and work of the Holy Spirit. He admitted that he used the terms "baptism" and "filling with the Spirit" synonymously but he did not think it best to call attention publicly to his mistake, and did not see the necessity for correcting the word "baptism" in his books, even though he himself used the scriptural term thereafter.⁽¹⁾"

May I use an illustration which, like all the illustrations we have had throughout this Conference, has its weaknesses. There are many of us who have, as it were, spiritually gone up in our rocket from the earth, but we are hoping that eventually we shall be able to locate an Agina booster rocket to take us into great heights. Until we find this we believe that we are lacking in a source of power; we feel that we are in a fixed orbit, and that we shall know nothing of greater and fuller and wider experience. My view is that we received all the necessary power at the moment we left the ground. We do not need to look for a booster—or a baptism. All the necessary power is available within us from the moment of regeneration in the blessed Holy Spirit. Brethren, we have omnipotence within us. Do you believe

(1) D. Grey Barnhouse. *The Keswick Week* 1948. pp. 59/60.

that? I am not saying this afternoon that we should not look for something subsequent to Salvation because, if I may be allowed to give a personal testimony, I speak as one who has had a subsequent experience. I think many other Christians can testify to a critical experience or experiences since their salvation. At such times the whole course of your life may be changed. I had been converted at the age of 12 and baptised by water at 13. At the age of 19 I went to the north of Scotland and had the fellowship of many of those faithful brethren up there whose tremendous emphasis is the Lordship of Christ. This was what I longed for, the Lordship of Christ. I was not looking for the Holy Spirit. If I may say so, I feel there was faulty preaching on that in my own background. What I wanted was to come close to the Lord Jesus to allow him to become dominant in my own life. In that plastic stage at 19 I longed and hungered and thirsted after righteousness, thirsted after Christ. At that time I was not looking for any baptism of the Spirit or fullness of the Spirit. I was looking for the dominating power of the Lordship of Christ. I longed to be able to surrender to Him. One cannot forget those experiences when He came into one's life in an overwhelming way, when in one's own room a completely new vision was given and a real sense of His Holy Presence was experienced. And those of you who can testify to this know what happens. One is, as it were, on air, as He has become to you supremely attractive and altogether lovely. It was not until I was talking about Bible study with Mr. Harold St. John and he opened his notes saying, "I am studying the Holy Spirit for the next six months" that this new dimension in spiritual life was brought to my notice. He showed me how he had written out all the references to the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament and all in the New, and he said, "I want to know more about Him." Then I went on to read books by Oswald J. Smith⁽¹⁾ and Oswald Sanders,⁽²⁾ and increasingly there

(1) Oswald J. Smith, "The Spirit at Work".

(2) Oswald J. Sanders, "The Holy Spirit of Promise".

came a new understanding about this Third Person of the Trinity. One day I went to preach at a church which I knew was a Brethren assembly, but when I stepped inside I heard people talking about somebody who had "received the baptism" the week before. I was very puzzled. The chairman at the end of the service, (whether it was a slip of the tongue or deliberate, I don't know) said, in reference to my address, "the flesh was willing but the spirit was weak". This struck me like the blow of a hammer. I went away looking for a new understanding about the Holy Spirit.

I had been baptised at conversion, but I did not know Him in fullness in His ministry. I longed to know Him as a Person and to realise His filling. He did make Himself known in His own gracious way. The result of this was a heightened awareness and sensitivity to sin. For example, I remember for days feeling guilty for having gone into a Christian bookshop to read something in one of the books which would have been useful for a sermon being prepared for the following Sunday. I felt guilty before the Lord that I had stolen something, since I did not buy the book. The Holy Spirit brings a greater sensitivity to sin. I must confess that there were times when I tried to reproduce the experience I had had before; times when one lay, on the ground prostrate, crying, "Lord, do it again, bring me nearer," and yet He has taught that this must be the place where we shall find out about ourselves and about Himself. This must be the place, at His feet in confession and repentance, where the Holy Spirit will be unleashed to demonstrate Himself in our lives. As we, by His ministry, come to a realistic understanding of our own true selves, and an acknowledgement and honouring of His Person and place in our lives, we shall begin to show something of that omnipotence which is available within us. "We hold such a glowing and hopeful prospect in our own hands. But to believe that and fail to advance into the relationship with God most likely to realise this prospect, is to be guilty of a grave sin." (Author unknown.)

To realise this prospect we must acknowledge and act

upon the Divine principle of the close relationship between personal obedience and the turning of a wilderness into a fruitful land—a principle clearly stated by Old Testament prophets, e.g. Isaiah 43, 44. A valley in Wales has been flooded but there is a massive wall at one end. There is a barrier with only a trickle of water going out at the other side. An abundance of water on one side, barrenness on the other. Likewise we have been baptised with the Holy Spirit. He is within us also, but we have set up a dam in our hearts. We have built a barrier. He says, "I want you to open that up and allow me to break through that I might flow freely and demonstrate my power; that I might bring rivers of living water into your arid, fruitless lives. But you have not met the conditions for this; you have not brought your burnt offering, nor paid money for sacrifice, nor given me honour (Isaiah Chapter 43). But I *will* pour out upon those who are thirsty." (Isa. 44, v. 3). Is this what we want? Then perhaps we should concern ourselves, this afternoon, with the filling of the Holy Spirit. Let us praise God and rejoice in the baptism, but let us long that we might know in experience what Mr. Brearey is now going to speak about—the Filling, that we might know that steady flowing of the river of God through our lives. I considered this when I stood by Niagara Falls last year and thought of the river of God flowing mightily, bringing power, bringing cleansing, bringing life. A wonderful thing about Niagara is that the waters produce the electricity for the floodlights, which at night are used to create in the Falls many beautiful colours. The source is used to bring back glory to itself. And this is what He wants to do: to come into our lives, that through us He might reflect back glory to His own name, glory through His saints in whom principalities and powers see the variegated wisdom of God (Ephesians 3. v. 10). But to change the metaphor, there is only one thing I know that will stop Niagara and that is extreme coldness. As we have heard already, there is only one thing which will stop the Holy Spirit in his full operation in our lives, and that is the abandonment of our first love. The Love of God has been

shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. He wants to fan the flame of that love and keep it hot as we honour our Lord Jesus Christ and submit to His (the Holy Spirit's) ministry.

To express the deep desire of our hearts, may we take the words of Paul Gerhardt:

Jesus, Thy boundless love to me,
No thought can reach, no tongue declare;
O knit my thankful heart to Thee,
And reign without a rival there.
Thine wholly, Thine alone I am;
Lord, with Thy love my heart inflame.

O grant that nothing in my soul
May dwell, but Thy pure love alone;
O may Thy love possess me whole,
My joy, my treasure, and my crown:
All coldness from my heart remove;
May every act, word, thought, be love.

O Love, how cheering is Thy ray!
All pain before Thy presence flies,
Care, anguish, sorrow, melt away,
Where'er Thy healing beams arise;
O Jesus, nothing may I see,
Nothing desire, or seek, but Thee.

Unwearied may I this pursue,
Dauntless to the high prize aspire;
Hourly within my soul renew
This holy flame, this heavenly fire;
And day and night be all my care
To guard the sacred treasure there.

Paul Gerhardt (1607-76)
tr. John Wesley (1703-91)

BAPTISM AND FULLNESS — II

The Power in Commencement and Continuance

Address by H. J. BREAREY


We are going to read that wonderful prayer in the third chapter of Ephesians, v. 14.

ONE NIGHT A week or two ago I picked up a book that I had looked up in days gone by with enjoyment: I think a spiritual classic really, and referred to Adolph Monod's farewell. Rather fitting perhaps that I should be reading some farewell, but I was deeply moved as I read. You know, many of you I am sure, the touching circumstances in which those messages were given. He was only in middle age, 54 I think, and a severe illness was causing him a tremendous amount of suffering and he had to give up his wonderful ministry, but during the last six months he invited a number to come round his bedside and once a week they would partake of communion together, they would break bread together, and he would pass on a message from the Lord to them, and they are affecting messages too. And sometimes they were given in great suffering, although sometimes wonderfully as an answered prayer, just for the 20 minutes or half an hour, the suffering would be removed but perhaps would return afterwards. Now there were two little messages that I read together. They read like this—there are about three or four pages to each message so it doesn't take long to read, though there is a lot to think over. The one was this: "We have everything by Jesus, we have everything by the Holy Spirit." I thought, "that's interesting; that bears on our subject at Swanwick; "we have everything by the Holy Spirit." This is excellent. Then I saw the next message, and it was this: "We have everything in Jesus Christ." Everything by the Holy Spirit, but everything in Jesus Christ, and that reminded me of Handley Moule's book on the Holy Spirit; years ago I noticed this reference to Adolph

Monod in the preface and he quoted from him the Christian position as Adolph Monod represented it. All in Christ, by the Holy Spirit, to the glory of God; all else is nothing! And that gripped me: I thought, "my word, this is good" . . . and it taught me by the grace of God an understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit that I had never had. I was thinking of Him in quite a different way. I had thought of Him as an influence, I had in a way of my own sought His help to the understanding of the word of God, but I was beginning to learn that He was not only God, He was not only personal, in the sense that He loved and in the sense that He spoke, and in the sense that He could be nigh to. As I began to realise that as the Father loves me, as the Son loves me, so the blessed Holy Spirit loves me and there was open to me in my experience a sense of communion with God that I had never known. I cannot tell you what it means to me personally that I can have fellowship with the Father, fellowship with the Son, and fellowship with the Holy Spirit as well. It may be strange to some who have never thought along these lines how there can be any distinction in these matters, but it is very simple. The Lord our God is one God, but nearly all of us here have a special sense of fellowship with the Son when we meet to break bread on Lord's Day morning.

So you need but look through your scriptures and take the lovely words regarding the Father and you can speak to him, "God commendeth His love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us;" that's the Father, those blessed words speak of the Father and His care for us. "Your heavenly Father knoweth what things you have need of before you ask", and you can say, "thank you, Father;" and you can have a time of communion with the Father. Likewise with the Son, and likewise with the Holy Spirit. And it's a blessed experience—I speak of it not now doctrinally—it's a blessed experience to have this wider fellowship: think of the love which calls the Holy Spirit to come and dwell in a heart like mine with the assurance that I am sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise unto the

day of redemption. He will never leave me, He'll come to a hovel like this and dwell there, reveal Christ to me and impart holiness to me. He is in that sense the sanctifying Spirit Who imparts holiness to the child of God. What I want to do is to look at this subject in two ways: our theme is here the fullness of the Spirit. I think it important that we should speak first of all on life in the Spirit before we speak of that wonderful hallmark of the out and out Christian wholly dedicated to the Lord who is so described in the New Testament like Barnabas the good man "full of the Holy Ghost and of faith"; or take the seven in chapter 6 of the Acts, these seven who were to be chosen because they were men full of the Spirit. I think first of all before we go right up if you like to the top of the scale we can ask ourselves, "Do you know what it means 'life in the Spirit'?" If you turn to the epistle to the Galatians you see this dealt with. May I just turn your eyes to one or two important scriptures: if you will turn to Galatians you will get this striking word in Ch. 3 v. 3, "Having begun in the Spirit"—so the Christian life as viewed in the New Testament is a life in the Spirit. Did we take that in, and do we know what it means? How well it has been brought out to us that this is how the Christian life began. It began in the Spirit, we were born again of the Holy Ghost. Indeed before that the Spirit of God led us to repentance, the Spirit of God led us to trust in Christ and as we cast our all upon the atoning blood the Holy Spirit entered and we had peace with God; it was the Holy Spirit's work. A grand start, and I'm so glad that my friend has been stressing this afternoon what a wonderful start it was. I think we need to stress more than we do the importance of that start: it tends to get overclouded by the concentration on a particular crisis which must come, as some say, at a particular point in the Christian life. We shall soon lose the sense of wonder of what conversion is. We shall think it is a small matter and that the only hope of being a real Christian is to wait until some dramatic spectacular event occurs at some later period. I do not believe that anything is conversion unless it includes



real repentance. No conversion without real repentance, or without a vital faith in the atoning sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, and I would add, and I believe this is part of real conversion, heart submission to the lordship of Christ. We do not preach that you can be saved without acknowledging that Jesus Christ is Lord and therefore by the grace of God we were enabled to make I trust a good start. Of course, we must make allowances for different circumstances; we must not lay down hard and fast rules but we must insist that the beginning of the life of the Christian is a glorious beginning, it is a powerful beginning. Indeed I believe that the first chapter of Ephesians where the apostle prays that they might know the exceeding greatness of the power of God towards them, refers to the fact of the power which was manifested when first they turned to Christ. We tend to soft-pedal on that.

So therefore I want to have a word with you about what is life through the Spirit. Obviously the Galatians did not know. Paul says, "you did begin in the Spirit" and then he goes on in this chapter to tell you how rightly to value the gift of the Spirit, where he tells us, "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us," and if you will go along to verse 14 and the end of it, "in order that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith," that is the teaching of the Lord Himself. "It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come!" And then as we go on through Galatians, just notice these expressions. You can read them in chapter 5, you know of them in verse 16 about walking in the Spirit, in v. 18 about being led of the Spirit, in verse 22 about the fruit of the Spirit, and so forth. So the Christian life is a life in me. Do you know it like that? What does it mean to you? That is the peculiar characteristic of the Christian life, a life in the Spirit. It is fundamental to consider this great and wonderful thing of the fullness of the Spirit. What is life in the Spirit? Well now, just two or three thoughts like this. You can think of the Christian life perhaps as a life of holiness. We can think of the Christian

life certainly as a life of communion with God. We can think of the Christian life as a life which is an ordered life, a directed life. Now life in the Spirit means that in all those respects, there is a controlling, guiding, enabling of the Holy Spirit within which lifts life up to a level which the world knows nothing about. Now we are not the only people who decide to be righteous. There is many a decent man who is unsaved, not born again, who endeavours to live a good life as far as he can. When they are honest, they confess the battle is beyond them. Some of us have seen some Christians too or some rather seeking salvation who have with tears confessed their temptations were beyond them. Now, what does life in the Spirit mean in the matter of holiness? We mentioned several times in the conference there is one thing that stands between us and the power of God through our lives—Sin. Well, we all know a great deal about sin, don't we? What do we do with it? How do you deal with sins in the Spirit. If I may give you a bit of John Owen, I will give you four points here, and as you think them over you will see that the only way to deal with sin in the Spirit is as with weeds in the garden. Think of the garden as the soul. And O dear, the weeds in my garden and the weeds in yours! But you see I will never deal with those weeds, and you will never deal with them, until we are convicted as to their character, their evil and their nature. You can regard some of your sins in quite a nice and pleasant light. You can regard them as merely weaknesses, that is all, and really almost as virtues sometimes. It is the Spirit alone who will take perhaps a proneness to exaggeration and will bring home to my heart that it is lying. And it will check me there (and only the Spirit of God can do this) until I hate the thing. And until we hate these sins we shall never turn from them, neither shall we be delivered from them. We can say a general prayer, "Lord forgive me," but it means nothing and the answer will be nothing. If we are going to live our life in the Spirit and deal with those weeds, first of all there is conviction which can only come from Him. And there is more than that;

there is the tremendous sin-killing power, if I can use that word, in the cross of Christ. But none but the Holy Spirit can so bring the cross and the sufferings of Christ before me as to make me other than down-right ashamed of myself. None but the Holy Spirit can do this, and we are supposed to be living in the Spirit; and it is only as you live in the Spirit that you can really deal with these things. We all need to see and to realise what tremendous riches we have in Christ—blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly realms in Christ; and none but the Spirit of God can do this, none but the Spirit of God can make me realise that there is “a fullness resides in Jesus our Head and ever abides to answer our needs”.

None but the Spirit can bring it home to me powerfully that it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell, and that all that is available for me. It is the Spirit alone who can give it, I can do all things that are in the will of God for me; I can do all things through Christ Who strengthens me. Realising that I am unspeakably rich in grace, God is able to make all grace abound towards me, only the Spirit can do that. And then lastly perhaps there is this. It means that crying to God is the humbling of self and may be it could be with tears too, humbling ourselves in the sight of God and pleading, and that by the aid and the power of the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God is given so that we may live in the Spirit; and the Colossian epistle speaks about those false ways of dealing with these things of the flesh, hard repression which the apostle tells us is of no value against the indulgence of the flesh, and I just bring this as an illustration of what it is to live our lives in the Spirit.

I add one more word, in the matter of prayer—praying in the Spirit, and I mention this with a particular object in my mind just here. We are told in Jude and in the Ephesian epistle we are to make our supplication in the Spirit of God; what is it to do that? Of course, there are friends of ours that we can refer to today who can tell us that praying in the Spirit is speaking with tongues. My dear friends, it is not

only that. What have I read to you this afternoon? That prayer of the apostle's, that I read; have you ever read anything to go beyond it? There is praying in the Spirit and we want to make ourselves acquainted with all these lovely examples that we have in scripture of praying. Over the most practical matters too, like the apostle John, where he prayed for his friends that they might prosper and be helped even as their soul prospered. This is the way to pray in the Spirit—to know your Bibles, to remember these Spirit-inspired prayers, but I do want in my own soul and for all of us to feel that there is something wrong with our lives altogether if, having started and begun in the Spirit, we have forgotten altogether and don't really understand this principle—it is something foreign to us. We do our best, we seek God's guidance, we say our prayers, we go to church. No, life in the Spirit is above that altogether; may God humble us today and if frankly you know nothing about this, one thing is to humble ourselves beneath the mighty hand of God, to teach us to say, "Lord teach me to pray, but teach me to pray in the Spirit, and Lord, teach me how to bear fruit in the Spirit."

Well let us come to this subject about the fullness of the Spirit and say a few words about that. Speaking on the fullness of the Spirit there are three things that I would like to say a word about and the first is this. Consider what it is, the fullness of the Spirit, and then consider why we should seek it, and then consider how we may obtain and maintain it. Because this expression "the fullness of the Spirit" is very interesting and obviously indicates a normal state of life. The apostle said, "Now I want you to pick out seven men." Not seven men who have had a definite experience of being helped of the Lord, he said something more than that—seven men who are full of the Spirit. Evidently they knew what to look for and Barnabas is described as that kind of a man, he was a man who is a good man, full of the Spirit and of faith. Now, quite clearly that applies to the whole current of their Christian life. And that is what we want to think of for a moment or two, but there is some-

thing else very important and it is a kind of experience which we want, well I won't say we want every day, but I want it myself very often. It is one described in Acts 4 where in danger the church fears the opposition that they had to face and where the servants of the Lord know their need and they do not ask for the Holy Spirit but they ask that with all boldness they may speak God's word. That was the danger—quite enough to frighten them; they might have been terrified like in a measure we have been today, but they asked for something quite definite just as we have been reminded of the Lord's word in the Sermon on the Mount. "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled," that is, filled with the Holy Spirit's enabling power and here they prayed that they might speak the word of God with boldness, and their answer is this: They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and they spoke the word of God with boldness. Now that is a passing experience. You have had some of those haven't you? Have you ever engaged in Christian service without praying a prayer like this or something like it? There are all sorts of ways of praying for the Spirit. There is a beautiful one in Romans 15 I often use myself. There the apostle prays for his readers that they might receive the Holy Spirit in his fullness and he prays like this. "Now may the God of hope fill you with the fullness of the Spirit. Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing that you may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost." There is a prayer for the fullness of the Holy Spirit, and he prays definitely for the things that he wants them to experience and enjoy. So we have considered then that that is a passing experience. For myself it is repeated time and time and time again and never in vain unless there is some very serious reason on my side. Never in vain. I feel this, that if you know omnipotence dwells within and that His glorious work is not merely to conform you to the image of Christ but to empower you as well as to cleanse, to empower you in Christian service, you will always be like this. It is my privilege two or three times a

week to speak to a very small company of about eight or nine or 10 elderly people, most of them Christians, but do you know I cannot do that. It's only a question of reading a scripture, of selecting a suitable hymn, of giving a short word, I am just the same there as for a big part. I feel I cannot do it unless the Lord speaks and that the Lord will help me in the choice of the scriptures and of the word to be given. That should be a constant experience of the Christian, and a very happy experience too. In speaking of the power of the Spirit, if you were to ask me do I enjoy the power of the Spirit I should have to tell you very frequently that I do not. Because it is not a matter of feeling at all. The apostle would teach us that when he says "When I am weak, then I am strong". And, my dear friend, you may feel not a spiritual giant but a spiritual dwarf, but you go on leaning on the promise of God—"I will be with thy mouth and teach thee what thou shouldst say," and at the right moment He will come in with his power and He will enable you but do not anticipate that you will always *feel* a giant, so strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Our God does not promise that, and indeed as we humble ourselves before him, we feel more conscious of weakness. I am more conscious of weakness than of His power, but we have His promise and on His promise we lean. I can tell you this, it was His promise which empowered me from the commencement of this preparation for the conference.

You turn to Eph. 5 and you will see that one of the remarkable fruits of the Holy Spirit is that you become a radiant christian. Because whatever your troubles in the world may be you can even make melody in your heart to the Lord, and here is a mighty triumph, you can give thanks always for all things and that one thing over the other things is, you will be subject one to another in the fear of Christ. That may seem very little and very simple to you but the fullness of the Spirit affects all our human relationships and we have rightly faced up to those during this conference. We have seen how there is many a church where

they have a name that they live but they are dead, only happily there are one or two among them that have not soiled their garments. And it is because in some places they knew nothing about being subject one to another, never practised that kind of thing, they knew nothing whatever of the fullness of the Spirit. Let me finish where I started: we have all in Christ by the Holy Spirit for the glory of God. If you are desiring, the fullness of the Spirit for anything less than the glory of God you will not have it, and it is yours for the asking. Only let none go away thinking it is merely a matter of asking. If my asking does not involve a surrendered life there will be no fullness of the Spirit. If my asking does not involve my enjoying and meditating upon and studying the word of God the fullness of the Spirit will neither be obtained nor maintained. So may God give us all grace for the glory of His name, that we might be channels of blessing not only in our churches, but in our ordinary human relations.

IN THE CHURCH TODAY

The Power in Prayer, Worship, Witness and Fellowship

Address by DR. CHARLES SIMS

FOR THE LAST 40 hours I suppose we have been living in an ante-room of heaven, or perhaps we could say, emotionally it has been an ante-room of heaven, spiritually a classroom of heaven, and it is quite inevitable that as we are approaching the end of this conference we should be asking ourselves how we are going to apply the lessons that we have learnt in this classroom of heaven. Shall we read the 37th chapter of Ezekiel. v. 1—10.

Exactly one year ago almost to the minute there was a girl in a worship service in an assembly in Devonshire. She didn't wear a hat and she was a platinum blonde and she hadn't been examined at the door, as to whether she was fit to come in or not, and we didn't know whether she was a Christian or not. After the service she said to somebody, "I shall never be the same again after this morning's service. I have never been to a service like this before but I shall never be the same person again." She came the following Sunday evening when the preacher was a very simple, very godly man who had been invited for a Women's meeting anniversary service, and he was not the sort of preacher you would naturally invite to a Students' service; and this girl who was a student was there. She went up to this man after the service and spoke to him and she came away again a few minutes later and said to one of the sisters of that assembly, "I thought you would like to know I have received the Lord Jesus Christ as my Saviour." Three months later exactly the same thing happened, except that after this morning service, which was a worship service, the girl who was impressed then, went to the President of the Christian Union of her college and said, "I think I shall have to resign, I find, that if what I saw and heard this morning is

true, I am not a Christian at all." The President of the Christian Union had the good sense and the spiritual wisdom to lead her to Christ there and then. Now the Holy Spirit was obviously present in power at both those worship services. But I wonder if we have a sneaking sort of feeling that that particular service, more than any other occasion, is when the Holy Spirit is present, and that he can't, or needn't be expected to be present so much at the ordinary services; and I wonder if we have that sort of feeling because at that service there is no visible president and therefore we rather feel that we will give the Holy Spirit free course then, whereas we don't need to on other occasions. You see we have no monopoly of the Holy Spirit and spontaneity is not necessarily any evidence of the leading of the Holy Spirit. If it were, why in that same church on another occasion should two brethren arrive at the table at the same moment to break bread, neither having noticed that the other was going forward. They couldn't both have been led by the Holy Spirit. One of them was wrong,—or possibly neither of them was wrong; possibly the Holy Spirit had moved a brother 10 minutes before, to break the bread and he had resisted the moving of the Holy Spirit, and so the whole thing broke down and the confusion of two brethren arriving at the table at the same time was caused. The power of the Spirit was in that Church; so too was the strength of the flesh.

Now I want us to think together of the power of the Spirit in the church today in the order that was suggested, In Prayer, in Worship, in Witness and in Fellowship. In his Systematic Theology, Strong writes these words. "The work of the Holy Spirit is in great part an application of scripture truth to present circumstances." The Bible said about unbelievers, "they waited not for His counsel" (Psalm 106). And it says of believers, "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go" (Psalm 32). And this He does, through the Holy Scriptures, by the Holy Spirit.

Let us ask ourselves: "What is the Church today?" Someone has defined it this way, "The Church is the body of

Christ begotten, unified and indwelt by the Holy Spirit;" and without the presence of the Holy Spirit the church is a corpse. Let's face that. Your church, my church, is a corpse, unless God the Holy Spirit is living in it. The church, I suppose, has never talked so much about itself as it is doing today. It never talked about its problems and itself so much as it is doing at the present time. That is always a bad sign. The church has become a spiritual hypochondriac. It is constantly taking its temperature and trying to find out if it is ill or not, and people who do that are perfect nuisances in medicine and churches that do that are not much use to themselves or God or anybody else. It's a healthy exercise to examine ourselves, and to do that fairly frequently but it is an unhealthy exercise always to be looking at ourselves and wondering if we are a sick church or not. We've got the life of the Holy Spirit of God, and the thing for us to do as churches is to take that life and use it and to get on with the work that He has given to us and not introspectively constantly to be looking at ourselves and wondering whether we are a sick church or not. The church's problem of course, is a result of its own failure. The church today is failing to meet modern needs, it is failing to grip the modern mind and it is failing to save the modern soul. I just wonder if that may not be because in so many of our Churches we are trying to substitute organisation, material resources and gimmicks of one sort and another for the power of the Holy Spirit.

Now does your church believe that prayer works today? Let us be quite frank and honest with ourselves—does my church really believe that prayer works today? How those early Christians prayed! Peter was in prison and going to be executed the next day and the whole church gave itself to prayer. And he got up and walked out . . . They really prayed. In the 13th chapter of the Acts, we read of the whole church praying and the Holy Spirit came to them and said, "Set Barnabas and Saul aside for the work that I have entrusted and called them to;" so that praying church was responsible for choosing and calling and send-

ing out those two pioneer missionaries. How they prayed in those early days and how their prayers were answered. Do we get answers like that? Let's examine our private prayer as well as our prayer in public. Private prayer just does not happen at all apart from the work of the Holy Spirit. We had quoted to us just now, "We simply don't know what to pray for as we ought, apart from the Holy Spirit;" we don't even know how to start, apart from the power of God the Holy Spirit. Now there can't be any sham in private prayer. A man does not show off when he is praying privately. The thing has got to be real when we are praying privately. It is rather different in public prayer—if I am leading the church in prayer there is a tremendous possibility of hypocrisy, of showing off. Someone has said that a hypocrite never prays in secret. Prayers that are a pretence require an audience. That should not scare us off praying. We had quoted to us last night the prayer of Andrew Murray after he had dedicated and set himself apart to write his book "The Temple of the Holy Spirit"; after this time of meditation and waiting upon God there came this prayer, "I do now tremblingly accept the blessed truth. God the Spirit the Holy Spirit, who is God almighty dwells in me. O my Father reveal in me what it means lest I sin against Thee by saying and not living it." So true prayer is quite impossible without the Holy Spirit. We don't even know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit helps our infirmities.

But how do we pray? "In that day," says the Lord Jesus, "ye shall ask in my name, and whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it you." And there can't be any foolish or futile praying in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. If I remember that I am praying in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ I shall be exceedingly careful how I pray. And the same goes for praying in the Holy Ghost. If we let him, the Holy Ghost takes possession of the mind and spirit of every believer so that in prayer it is He, the Holy Spirit who prays. This is what Jude calls "praying in the Holy Spirit;" I allow God the Holy Spirit to have complete

control of my whole being. And it is He who prays, it is no longer I. How wonderful it is when that happens. You remember Paul writing to the Galatian church said this, "Because you are the sons of God,—because you are sons,—God has sent forth the spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying 'Abba Father'." And the very same spirit of prayer that dwells in Jesus Christ Himself is imparted to every child who is born of God. Have you thought of that? The same spirit that Jesus had when He prayed is yours and mine. Quite obviously this communion of the Holy Spirit in prayer is not meant for selfish enjoyment. Nor for personal enrichment. We can never be selfish in prayer in the name of the Holy Spirit, in the name of Jesus Christ. You see, knowing God the Holy Spirit in my life will enable me to see the need of the world around me and it will enable me to understand the mind of God who yearns over the world that I live in. Andrew Murray wrote again, I believe it was in the same book, "It is living in the Spirit that fits for praying in the Spirit. It is abiding in Christ that gives the right and power to ask what we will. The extent of the abiding is the exact measure of the power in prayer." It is the Spirit dwelling in us who prays. Praying in the Holy Ghost presumes a willingness to obey the answers. Now let's get hold of that. If I claim to pray in the Holy Ghost, if indeed I do pray in the Holy Ghost, or in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that prayer is vain unless I am willing to obey the answers to my prayers, whatever those answers may be. I think one of the most fatuous and insincere prayers we ever hear is "O Lord send in the unconverted to our gospel service" and the man who prays that prayer, usually hasn't the slightest intention of inconveniencing himself in the least to bring in the unconverted. We have no right to pray that prayer unless we are willing to obey the answer, which is, "Go out and fetch them yourselves." Praying in the Holy Ghost presumes a willingness to obey the answers. Paul assayed to go into Bithynia. And praying about it he found himself in Europe. Livingstone assayed to go to China, but the answer was, "Go to Africa". Carey

assayed to go to the Polynesian Islands and he found himself in India, where he started translating the Scriptures for those millions and millions of people. Rendle Short assayed to go to the mission field and found himself stuck in England, to the blessing of thousands upon thousands of students who would never have been blessed in the same way had he gone to the mission field where he wanted to go. O no, praying in the Spirit presumes that we are willing to obey the answers, and fellowship with the Spirit in prayer produces in me a sensitive spirit and a perceptive mind. Our part in this fellowship in prayer we get in the 10th chapter of Daniel where it says "From the day that thou didst set thy heart to understand and to chasten thyself thy words were heard. . . ."

Prayer isn't just sentiment. It isn't just theory, it is an instrument, it's a weapon which does certain things on behalf of good and against evil, and because of that, because prayer is a weapon, we have got to expect difficulty and obstruction and sabotage when we try to use it. There are all sorts of influences, external and internal that combine to make this prayer in the Spirit a difficult thing for you and me, and for our Church. Quite apart from the external difficulties that every one of us knows about there are all sorts of things in us that we can and should get rid of, if we are really going to pray in the Spirit. There is unwillingness to do God's will to start with. If I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me. If we pray as the hypocrites do, we can't expect an answer. We shall not be heard for our much speaking. It was John Bunyan, I think, who said, "Far better, in prayer, a heart without words, than words without a heart." I think it was at one of the Keswick Conventions that prayer was requested by a widowed mother for a boy who was drifting away and at the prayer meeting that was held later Bishop Taylor Smith just prayed like this, "O God, that boy, tonight"; that was all. A heart without words. "O God, that boy, tonight". Then of course we shall not get answers if we have lack of conviction in our prayers and we may not get answers if we give

up too soon. Prayer has to be a persevering thing, a thing in which we keep on and on, until we know that we have the answer, whether it be "yes" or "no". And we shall get the answer if we are living in constant obedience to the Spirit of God. What is the prayer life of your church like? Some years ago I was asked to go to a church near us, not one of the Assemblies, to minister after their so-called Prayer Meeting. I went along and the prayer meeting consisted of 10 minutes' reading of set prayers by the minister. The whole thing was quite pathetic. But I came away from that and said to myself, "Is your church prayer meeting any more effective? You may have a lot more words there, the thing may be spontaneous and impromptu, but is it really any more effective than that rather pathetic prayer meeting that you have just been to, or has it withered and died because I don't believe in the presence of God, the Holy Spirit; do you really believe that? When you go to the prayer meeting next time, are you really conscious that God the Holy Spirit will be there, ready to do what you ask, and ready to answer your prayers? Or has it become a dry withered useless sort of thing because I don't believe He is there any longer, or because I have forgotten all about Him?" I wonder if we are just still going through the motions and nothing more in our church prayer meetings? Do I really believe that when I ask, in Christ's name, God will give? Am I absolutely convinced of this? Or do I really ask in His name at all? Or is that just the sort of formula that I have got into the habit of tagging on to the end of my prayers—"for Jesus Christ's sake, Amen" or "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen." It comes out so pat that we are apt to forget what it really means. It is, in the name of Jesus Christ the Son of God, that I am praying and I don't pray foolishly in that name. I wonder if in our church we are forgetting prayer altogether, and if we are coming to rely on all sorts of committees and things like that, rather than prayer. Someone has said that the church that multiplies committees and neglects prayer, may be enterprising and noisy and "with-it", but is spending its strength for nought and its labours in

vain. The prayer of the church in the Holy Ghost really does work today. A few weeks ago there died in London a young curate named Patrick Claridge. He married a woman who was a Christian and he was not. His wife used to take him along, whenever she could get him to go, to one of the Assemblies in the West Country; he was a most delightful man but he was not a Christian and all sorts of efforts were made to convince this man of the fact that he needed to become a Christian. Whenever anybody went to that church they were told that Pat Claridge was there and would they "have a go" at him, and time after time there were attempts to get this man to come to know the Lord Jesus Christ. Eventually he fell ill, not very ill, and one of the members of that Church had him in his house because at that time Claridge and his wife were homeless. They took him in and during this illness this Church member went and prayed with him and read with him and in fact Claridge became a Christian. Eventually he went to Edgware where he ran an exceedingly difficult Church for a few years and he was a radiant man of God. His testimony has spread throughout the whole of that district. That church prayed, that was the reason for it. He saw no need of Christ at all; he was a good living, decent, happy, kindly man, who had no conviction of sin until that Church prayed for him. So much for prayer.

Now the church can no more stage-manage its worship than its prayer. But all the same you can and you should prepare yourself for worship. The long blank silence that there sometimes is at the beginning of our worship services is deadly chilling, especially for young men, and all young people; and the usual reason for that silence, if it is a blank and chilling silence, is that the church, and especially the brethren, have not prepared themselves for that service of worship. They have just drifted along, hoping that, by chance, something might happen to keep the meeting alive, and it "will go" because the Spirit is there; and they have not bothered to prepare themselves for that service of worship. Man was created for fellowship with God and worship

is the very highest expression of that fellowship.

If for no other reason, if for that reason alone, you and I should prepare ourselves for worship, and in that worship, if it is true worship in the power of the Spirit we gather up everything we have and everything that we are and present it to God. Our bodies, our souls, our spirits, our possessions, our intellects, our imaginations, everything that we have, we gather it up and we present it to God. "I beseech you therefore by the mercies of God that ye present your body a living sacrifice. This is your reasonable service." This is your spiritual worship. This is, as Phillips says, "An act of intelligent worship;" when we take everything we have and are and present it to God. We have, of course, a great natural instinct for man-made worship. We love to direct it ourselves, to formulate it, to make it, to turn it so that it is the sort of thing that we like, that we feel it ought to be, and that instinct is in most of us I suppose. But this worship in the Spirit is really a two-way traffic. The Spirit fits me for worship and worship fits me for the Spirit. You cannot work up worship on Sunday morning. It's too late then. You cannot just drift along at 11 o'clock or perhaps a minute or two after even, and work it up when you get there. It's far too late. You can't just switch it on then. If the Spirit is to inspire my worship on Sunday morning or whenever the worship service is, He must rule in my daily life right through the week. That shady deal, that shabby trick, that stupid gossip, all these make spiritual worship quite impossible, until they are confessed and forgiven. That's why I personally am quite sure it's not out of place at our worship service to confess our sin and to receive afresh the forgiveness of God before we proceed with the act of worship. Worship is not just restricted to Sunday morning. What we do on Sunday morning is the climax to a week of worship and the beginning of a week of service. It's become fashionable now to organise and to change our rather set form of Sunday morning worship. Nowadays we are thinking afresh as to how that service should go, and there is no harm in that at all. There's not the slightest reason why it should

run as it has done for the last 100 years. There is nothing sacrosanct about that; provided when the change is made, we ourselves are changed by God the Holy Spirit so that it is still worshipping the living God, and so that it isn't just something that we fashion to our own liking because we happen to like it in that particular way. And the way that it goes in your church may not be the way that it goes in my church; the way that worship is conducted in your particular assembly is not necessarily exactly the same way that it is conducted in my assembly. There is no pattern in the New Testament for our morning meeting, if you like to call it that. There is nothing laid down in the New Testament as to how that should go and the particular form that it should take. Let us remember that anything we call worship is idolatry unless it is inspired by God the Holy Spirit. Whatever it is, whatever form of worship we indulge in or engage in, unless it is inspired by God the Holy Spirit, it is nothing but idolatry. Let us remember, too, that God the Holy Spirit does not come upon methods, he comes upon men, and whatever you do to make your service of worship "go", it won't "go", it's not worship, unless God the Holy Spirit is there, guiding and controlling it. He does not anoint machinery, He anoints men. He doesn't work through organisations, He works through men; He doesn't dwell in buildings, He dwells in men. Now let's remember that; all of us men who are responsible in our own churches, that the worship of your church depends on how much God the Holy Spirit possesses you personally.

Some of us are going back to fairly dry places, aren't we? Can these bones live? Yes, thank God, by the Holy Spirit they can, if He breathes in us, life will come and the church will flourish and revive and become anew, a body of Christ that is really fit and ready to do His work. Worship, you see, is the overflowing of a heart that is full of the wonder of what God has done for us in Jesus Christ. That overflowing heart may move men in different ways. Let's not forget that. A man whose heart is overflowing with the wonder of what God has done for him in Christ, may do all

sorts of unexpected things. He may not get up and give out a hymn at the beginning of the service, he may get up and read a Psalm. He may get up and tell you what wonderful things God has done for him during that week. He may testify right at the beginning of the service. And it shakes you, doesn't it, because you had got your hymnbook ready to open and sing No. ... and this chap gets up and does something completely unexpected and so he will, if God the Holy Spirit is really moving him. Why don't we sometimes read a Psalm together, the whole congregation, in our service? Unfortunately we haven't got them set to music. But why shouldn't the whole church read one of these lovely Psalms together, men and women alike. What a lovely thing that would be in some of our worship services. Why don't we sometimes use the model prayer? Either altogether, or some brother using it for us. Don't let's be hide-bound and think that these things have no place in our worship. But don't do any of these just for the sake of being different. Don't think "Yes that's great, I will introduce that in my church next Sunday morning." Don't let's do it in that way. But do let us realise that God the Holy Spirit doesn't impose any set pattern upon our worship.

Now no part of the Christian life is effective apart from the power of the Holy Spirit, but in witnessing failure due to lack of that power is probably more obvious than it is in any other part of the Christian activity. I suppose failure to avail ourselves of the power of the Spirit of God is more obvious in our witnessing than anywhere else. The failure is not any greater, but the failure is more obvious because you cannot fool unconverted people by any spurious fleshly enthusiasm, even if you can impress your fellow Christians by an appearance of piety. You cannot fool an unbeliever. He knows whether you are genuine or not, and he knows whether God the Holy Spirit is moving him or whether this thing is just some sort of superficial excitement of your own. But God the Holy Spirit will use even me if I let him. If I let Him, He will make even me an anointed witness glorifying Christ. He will make me an inspired witness

showing the things of Christ to the people who don't know. He will make me an effective witness, convicting men of sin. Witness, you see, is not a specialist job. So often we put it off on to the evangelist, and we shuffle off the responsibility for witnessing by regarding it as a specialist job, something that I am not expected to do. At Pentecost they all witnessed; they were all filled with the Spirit and they all witnessed, and as was pointed out to us, I think twice yesterday, one of the great characteristics of New Testament witness was their boldness; even Peter; "When they saw the boldness of Peter" that coward, that man who had run away, that man who was frightened by a servant girl, "when they saw the boldness of Peter"; and their prayer was for boldness, and the Holy Spirit gave them boldness. That's my greatest need in witnessing and I don't mind confessing it. As a witness I am timid, but the Holy Spirit will give you and me the same boldness in witness if we ask Him for it and if we allow Him to come into us. Now let's get this straight. Boldness is not rashness; you don't just charge up to the next person you see and say "Are you saved?" And it is not rudeness—you don't butt in to somebody else's conversation. You don't rudely accost people, who haven't the least interest in what you are saying. It is not rashness, is not rudeness and it is not impetuosity. Boldness is brought about by a deep conviction of the fact that God in Christ has saved you, and that that salvation is worth passing on to somebody else. So it is no longer I. with my faulty memory and my feeble tongue and my failure in living, it is no longer I who am witnessing, but God the Holy Spirit in me. There is a wonderful verse in Judges 6, v. 34, the margin of which reads like this: "The Spirit of the Lord clothed himself with Gideon". He lived in Gideon, He put on Gideon as a cloak. And so the Spirit lived in and through Gideon. He thought with Gideon's brains and He looked through Gideon's eyes and He worked with Gideon's hands, and all the time Gideon was Gideon and the Spirit was the Spirit. It did not make a robot of him; Gideon was still the great man he was and

his personality was still usable by God but the Holy Spirit clothed Himself with Gideon. So don't try and ape other witnesses. Don't try and turn yourself into a Billy Graham if you are an evangelist. Don't try and copy other people whom you admire very much and try and make yourself like them in witnessing. You can't do it. God has clothed Himself with them and He is using their personality and He will use your personality. He won't put their personality into you. So don't try and copy other people. You may have read some months ago in the Press the account of a boy who was converted at the Billy Graham Crusade. I tell you this because God may not use you as an evangelist. He may use you as a witness in some completely different way. This boy was converted and the story was written up in the daily press, because this boy, after his conversion told his Counsellor that he had committed several crimes; he was advised by his Counsellor to go and own up to the police, and he was brought to court charged with, I think it was thirty or forty different crimes. He was sent to a detention centre and that was that, as far as he was concerned, so we think. That boy's parents were shattered by what had happened to their boy. The following Sunday morning the father put on his best suit instead of the clothes in which he normally cleaned the car, and his wife said to him "Why have you got your best suit on?" He said, "I don't know," but later on he said, "I think I am going to Church". He went to a place, I think it was Woodford Green, and he was found outside an Assembly and he was taken in. He and his wife sat down, and at the end of that service one of the brethren, not knowing this man was there, took out of his pocket the newspaper cutting reporting this boy's conviction, and this brother said, "This boy comes from our town, we should pray for him," and immediately did so. Those two parents were completely shaken. The father said to someone afterwards, "However you can find it in your heart to pray for a boy you know nothing about at all, I don't know." The parents were going on holiday the

following week in a caravan to Devonshire. There was in that meeting a student who was studying in Devonshire. He wrote to the assembly in Devonshire where he normally worships when he is studying and said, "These people are coming down, would you take care of them". They left home in their caravan; they got part of their way, and pulled in for the night in a layby, and said to themselves, "We won't go to that church tomorrow. We are too tired." When they woke up there was a sign-post outside to Exeter. So they changed their mind and they went along to the church. A brother, who was not happy about meeting complete strangers, and his wife took them home to lunch and had them there for the day. The secretary of that Church the previous Monday changed the preacher for the Sunday from a man who was a very able minister but rather academic. There had come to the district an evangelist, a real preacher. As this real preacher was there, he asked the local brother to stand down and the evangelist to stand in, which he did. This man preached a sermon which was absolutely suited to those two people. They went on their holiday, but before they went another family in the church said to them, "If you would like to come back on your way home from holiday and park your caravan in our large garden you will be very welcome." They came back and parked their caravan and these two friends invited them out of their caravan to go and have a meal with them that night; and they did not say a word about the Lord. After a time they were talking about Ford cars, and this man said, "We have been talking about Ford cars but I would really like to talk about something I am vitally interested in." And they got on to talking about the new life and the new birth, and there and then that man and his wife were converted. Now I tell you that for this reason: Billy Graham was used to convict that boy of sin. His counsellor was used to lead him to Christ. The Elder was used to read that "cutting" and to pray. The student was used to introduce those people to the chapel in the West Country. The secretary was led

to change the preacher. The Holy Spirit Himself led those two people to Exeter. The friends in the church were moved to invite them to lunch, the other friends moved to invite them into their garden, and so the whole team worked together. None more important than any other, the whole team working together was responsible for the conversion of that man and his wife. In that same church there have been conversions Sunday after Sunday in the last year and these conversions have only come to light when the people who have been converted have asked for baptism. Their conversions have been quiet and simple and easy, nothing spectacular, nothing exciting at all. They have just come to know and love the Lord during the course of the ordinary services. I wonder if conversions are few in our churches because we have lost our belief in the fact that the new birth is a creative act of God the Holy Spirit and nothing more. There is no need for special missions in your church or mine. If our church and we as church members are filled with the Spirit of God and doing His work there is not the least need for a special mission. There was not a mission in the Thessalonian Church. Paul himself said in effect, 'There is no need for me to come along and preach; you are doing the work yourself.'

Now finally, Fellowship. "They were all with one accord in one place." The fellowship of the Spirit is in one sense the community of believers who have been reconciled to God by Christ. And the Spirit's chief instrument in revealing Christ is the Bible. I think it is probable that straight reading of Scripture in worship and in witness in our services is of more value than a good many of these "snippets" of exposition that we are sometimes treated to. I think so often if we brethren got up and perhaps read a whole Psalm or a long chapter and read it properly and intelligently, we should achieve far more than if we attempt to give some little snippet of exposition, that people have forgotten in no time. They won't forget the word of Scripture but they will forget those little titbits that you give them. The wonder of the Bible is not so much that I

read it, as that it reads me, and it convicts me. Someone has said that the church is the second body of Christ prepared and indwelt by the Holy Spirit. The work of the Holy Spirit is always linked with the life of the church and the power of the church is always associated with the presence of the Spirit. Now this fellowship of the Spirit can't be manifested by any human devices. You cannot manifest the presence and power of the Holy Spirit by uniforms or constitutions or rallies or lodges or leagues. It does not work in that way at all. It pervades the whole world and it steps over race and colour and creed and language and class. Even today with all its materialism and all its mechanisation, you meet a man in the street in Nazareth, or you meet a man in a plane in Australia, a man you have never met before and you will probably never meet him again, and the fellowship of the Spirit immediately makes you one in Christ Jesus. I had the great joy earlier this year of going to Australia to see our daughter and I was walking across the airport in Rangoon—I did happen to be wearing a crusader badge—and a man came up to me and said "Are you going up?" I wasn't sure quite how far he meant! I then knew immediately that he was a believer, and I told him I was, and straight away we were one. I had never seen him before and I shall never see him again almost for certain, but there we were, one in Christ Jesus. But the more wonderful thing than that is that this fellowship of the Spirit makes me one with people I shall see again. The fellowship of the Spirit makes me one with the people I shall meet in my own church tomorrow and the next day and next Sunday. It makes me one with people with whom I have got absolutely nothing in common, except that once a week we share a common loaf and we drink from a common cup. It makes me one with people I shall meet tomorrow and we shall pray together, and I shall meet some of them on Tuesday and we shall work together for the common good of the church and the district in which we live and for the blessing of the district. By nature our tastes and our

capacities and our ideas are poles apart; we have practically nothing in common, most of us, except that the Holy Spirit lives in us all and works in us all. Now you may say that is much too rosy a picture to paint of an Elders' meeting. But it is not. In my experience that's how it can be and that's how it should be and in my experience that is how it is, much more often than not. In the Acts of the Holy Spirit we see the Holy Spirit at work in the administration of the Church, in chapter 6, and we see the deacons at work. And the essential qualification of deacons is this; the essential qualification for the men who are responsible for the business affairs of the Fellowship was that they were "filled with the Holy Spirit". Worldly men have got no place in the work of the Church, not even in dealing with secular matters. When chosen by the early church, these were men "of honest repute" and "of wisdom" and "full of the Holy Spirit", and you see the results in Acts 6 and 7. "The word of God increased, the number of the disciples multiplied and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith". That's what happens when the deacons of the church are Godly men. For the Holy Spirit is ready to be our co-worker in all that we do in the Church, even in the chores. And we find in the Acts, that the Elders were just as spiritual as the deacons. In Acts 15 we read this: "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us." What a team of Elders. All working together; "good to the Holy Spirit and to us". No wire pulling, no power politics, no expediency; "it was good to the Holy Spirit and to us".

The Acts of the Apostles is perhaps the only book in the New Testament that has not any proper ending. The reason for that is that there is not any. The Acts of the Holy Spirit are still going on. Chapter after chapter has been added right down through the centuries and the Acts of the Holy Spirit are still going on. But they are not necessarily going on in exactly the same way as they were when the book was started. The Spirit is not now concerned mainly or even largely with extraordinary

manifestations of power or of activity. He works as I told you in the Church in the West Country; He is working slowly, quietly and unobtrusively, but nonetheless powerfully, although the growth that is promoted is secret. He still has, too, a great deal more to teach us. You and I have all learnt a lot this weekend but He still has a tremendous amount to teach us. We have not reached the end of what we can learn about Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. That was the fault of the Jews at the time of the Lord—they thought they knew everything. And they thought their expositions were the very last word, and there was nothing else to learn at all; and nothing else to teach. Let us, brethren, beware we don't assume the same spurious ideas of complacency that they had, for our knowledge and teaching. Let us all be willing to listen carefully to men who teach us things we have not known before. Let us subject their teaching to the test of Holy Scripture, not to our own preconceived ideas of what it means; let us be careful in our listening, in our teaching, and in our preaching. You see, closed minds lead to closed churches, and we have had a desperately sad example of that in the last few years. Let us never forget that. Closed minds lead to closed churches.

Now to conclude, I just want to quote to you the much quoted words of John Robinson, not of Woolwich, but a man with equally open mind, I may say, John Robinson bidding farewell to the exiles on the *Mayflower*. He said this: "I charge you that you follow me no further than you have seen me follow Jesus Christ. The Lord has more light to bring forth out of His Holy Word. I cannot sufficiently bewail the condition of the Reformed Churches, which are come to a period in religion, and will go at present, no further than the instruments of their Reformations.

Luther and Calvin were great and shining lights in their time, but they penetrated not into the whole counsel of God. The Lutherans cannot go beyond what Luther saw, and the Calvinists, you see, are stuck fast where they

were left by that great man of God.

I beseech you remember it; it is an article of your church's covenant—that you shall be ready to receive whatever truth shall be made known to you from God's word."

Prayer :

Mercifully grant that Thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and control our hearts;

that we may daily increase in Thy Spirit more and more. Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit,

that we may be daily renewed by Thy Holy Spirit.

Amen.

THE PERSONAL CHALLENGE

The imperatives, negative and positive, the cost

Address by JOHN CAPPER

Judges ch. 6, v. 34

MY TEXT IS found in Judges, Chapter 6, Verse 34. "The Spirit of the Lord Clothed Himself with Gideon."

There are three men in the Old Testament of whom this is said. One, Amasai, whose life is characterised by devoted loyalty to his King, who said, "Thine we are David and on Thy side. Peace to Thee and Peace to Thine Helper, for Thy God Helpeth Thee". Another, Zechariah, the Priest, who was stoned for his loyalty to the Commandments of the Lord, and Gideon, of whom we have been reading—a case history of revival.

We have concentrated our thoughts this weekend on the Holy Spirit; His Mighty power at Pentecost; in this land and America in the 1800s; His working in men's lives; His work in the local Church today, and now we must face the Personal challenge.

Great revivals always seem to begin in one man's heart, and if we are going to experience His working, there is a sense in which we must come to His alone. God has been speaking to our hearts, minds and consciences this weekend—our hearts, as we have learned of a closer walk with God; our minds as we have realised that nothing but a great revival in this land will check the drift to disaster, and awaken the Church to Her tremendous responsibility; our consciences, too, for each of us has realised how little we know of His Power in our lives. We have been Hearers of the Word and not Doers.

Is it not a remarkable fact that everywhere Christians are seeking to know more of His Person and work? It seems to me that God is preparing us for something terrific. I

wonder what? It might be the heralding of a glorious revival. It might be that the Church is being prepared for the fiercest persecution it has known. That mighty revival in the Congo a few years ago was a preparation for the persecution and bloodshed of 1964/65, through which it emerged so triumphantly.

With your help this afternoon, I want to talk about this remarkable character, Gideon. His background is sombre enough. Chapter 6 tells us that the Midianites had dominated the land for seven years. They came up like locusts. The Israelites were forced to live in dens, in the mountains and in caves. In fact, they had gone to ground. They had a sort of Maginot-line complex, and when the enemy came up they fled. In consequence, we read that "there was no sustenance, no sheep, no oxen or ass!" The Midianites took the lot. These Midianites, of course, were the people of whom Moses had written—"they vexed the Children of Israel with their wiles". They used their womenfolk to corrupt Israel in the days of Baalam. It is not difficult to compare that with our day—adultery, immorality in our schools, gambling—this weekend's *Telegraph* tells us that now Britain is the greatest gambling nation on earth; blatant atheism, broken homes, juvenile crime, sin open and unchecked; and the Church is silent. "The Mosts of Midian prowl and prowl around."

Looking at this Chapter, however, we find all the ingredients of revival. In Verse 6 we find the people were praying. Last night, a friend from West Germany, Mr. Koch, told us of praying groups that he had found all over the world, and wherever we go we hear of people getting together to pray—people who are longing for revival. This was the prelude to revival in Wales in 1904.

Dark days; but people praying. The next thing that happened was that God sent a Prophet, Verses 7-10. You will notice that his message was: "Thus saith the Lord." He told them of happenings in days gone by; revivals in the past; power in the past; God delivered them out of Egypt. He drove their enemies out before them, and the Prophet finishes by saying: "But ye have not hearkened unto My

voice."

Revival is coming. The days are dark, but people are praying, and God's Word is speaking in a new way. Now it has the voice of authority and things are going to happen. Does the Word really speak to our hearts? Are we, when we read it, prepared to let it do so?

Dark days, but people are praying; God speaking through His Word and then—a man dissatisfied. Gideon comes on the scene. In Verse 13, we find him talking to the Angel and saying: "Oh, my Lord, why?" A cry from the heart. Oh, the bitter shame of it that the Lord's people should be on the run like this. He, himself, was beating out wheat in the wine-press to hide it from the Midianites. "Oh, my Lord, why?" The probability is that Gideon had been quite satisfied with his lot until the Word of God started to speak to him; and now, with the sound of past deliverances ringing in his ears, he is filled with a divine discontent. "Oh, my Lord, why?"

Revival always seems to start in the same way. A man utterly tired of defeat in his own life, and of the formalism and deadness of his own Church, turning in despair to the Lord. The great prerequisite of revival—I am a failure, I can do nothing, try as much as I like, all my righteousnesses are as filthy rags.

What do we find in our own Churches today? Coldness, legalism, no burden for the lost, few coming to our Gospel Services, and, when they do, failing to find the deliverance of which we speak. Probably you have felt as I have this weekend—a terrible sense of discontent with your own spiritual life. Thank God it is a divine discontent. "To be congratulated," said our Lord, "are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."

You know what our trouble is, of course . . . we are so good, our Church Order is impeccable, we cannot be faulted on our Bible knowledge or Church Truth, and when we meet other Christians we rather like to air this; but our hearts are cold, our Churches backwaters, and nobody seems to care. That great Welsh Divine, Christmas Evans, speaking of the

revival that came to his life, said, "I was weary of a cold heart toward Christ, and I started to pray, and the burden lifted". Are you weary of a cold heart toward Christ? If so, that is a great start. Let us pray together that we might know that 'hunger and thirst after righteousness'.

There have been three men of my acquaintance who have really experienced revival in their lives and been used of God to bring tremendous blessing to others. In each case, when I asked them about it, they told me that it started with a sense of failure. They were utterly tired of talking, preaching and doing, but with nothing happening. They turned to God, confessed their utter inadequacy and need, and the Blessing came.

I was not at your Morning Prayers today, but through my open window come the words of that lovely hymn you sang—"O Wind of God, Come, Bend us, Break us, 'till humbly we confess our need".

There was a Church once without a need. They said, "they were rich—increased with goods and needing nothing", but He was outside.

Dark days; people praying; the Word speaking with authority; a man utterly dissatisfied with his life—and now we are introduced to the next step in revival—a man repenting. In effect, the Angel said to Gideon: "You are going to fight against the enemies of Israel. The reason for Her weakness is idolatry. How can you succeed when there is sin in your own home? If you are going to deliver Israel, then this must be put right." It was a tough job that Gideon had to do. He had to pull down that altar to Baal that his father had set up. He did it at night, but he did it. This was the turning point in Gideon's career.

We come to the next step—a man filled with the Holy Spirit. "The Spirit of the Lord Clothed Himself with Gideon", and immediately there was action. The people knew intuitively that this man had the answer, and that he had been called of God; and they would find too that the Spirit of the Lord would not rest until Gideon had delivered them from bondage.

Our great Text this weekend is "Be not drunk with wine but be filled with the Spirit". John Pollock's biography of Billy Graham tells of a happening which Billy Graham described as the turning point in his life, and this interested me tremendously. At a Conference in Hildenborough in 1946, he heard Stephen Olford speaking on this Text. At that time, Pollock tells us, Billy was "seeking for more of God with all his heart". "Stephen," he said, "had something I wanted to capture. He had a dynamic, a thrill, an exhilaration about him." A little later on, they campaigned together in Pontypridd, a town just a few miles from our own home—and Billy Graham says that those two days together brought the turning point in his life. Billy wanted to know Stephen's secret of victory, and Stephen very wisely spent the first day telling him of the secrets of the Quiet Time, and the second day the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

I realise I am speaking to some very experienced and mature Christians. If you were all youngsters I would ram this point home as hard as I could. The great need of our lives is to have Quiet with God. The inner life must be cared for far more than it is. "I will hear what God the Lord shall say unto me."

George Muller once said: "I reckon it the chief business of the day to have my soul happy in God"—not to see that the orphans were fed (though we know there were days when they went to bed with no food in the Homes), not designing those great buildings that have stood as a testimony for God for so many years, not provision for missionaries and orphanages abroad, but to get his soul happy in God. Is that your priority?

The other morning I was reading Joshua, Chapter 5. Do you remember the story of Joshua standing before Jericho, that City he must destroy before he could possess the land? He sees a man with a drawn sword in his hand, and hears that "as Captain of the Lord's host he had come". Joshua asks "what would the Lord have him to do"—and waits for an answer. Surely there will be some wonderful plan of campaign, but no, "Come, take the shoes from off thy feet,

for the place whereon thou standest is Holy ground." His first lesson was a right understanding of God—"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom."

You will remember, too, the day when Abram met two kings, King Melchizdeck and the King of Sodom. Meeting Melchizdeck was a costly affair. "He gave him tithes of all that he possessed." But when he met the King of Sodom, he was offered all the treasures of Sodom, and Abram said: "I won't take a boot-lace." Why? Because he had first met King Melchizdeck. I do not know what your job is, but I am sure that day by day you will meet the King of Sodom, and he will offer all that your heart could wish; but if you have met King Melchizdeck and looked into His face, you will not even accept a boot-lace.

The Quiet Time—the yardstick of loyalty. You can support the Services of the Church, and everybody will be impressed with your Christianity; but the real test is the Quiet Time, what you do when you are alone with God. It is vital that you and I see the Lord's face, read the Word and listen, worship, give thanks, confess our failure, and then pray for others. If we are going to know the fullness of the Spirit, I am absolutely sure we must start there. It is the disciplined life.

The Japanese are expert at cultivating dwarf trees. They take it when it is a young plant, deny it food and water and it remains tiny. Our Churches are stiff with men and women who are spiritual dwarfs. "I reckon it the chief business of the day to have my soul happy in God."

Stephen's first lesson for Billy was the secret of the Quiet Time, and then the secret of the Spirit-filled life. This was in 1946, and I have a treasured document here which is a New Year's Greeting Card from Stephen bearing that date. It was Stephen's Young People's Christian Fellowship motto for the year, and I have no doubt that he would have told Billy about it. It has meant so much to me that I feel it might help you. "Be filled with the Spirit." "As you leave the whole burden of your sin, and rest upon the atoning work of Christ, so leave the whole burden of your life and

service and rest upon the present inworking of the Holy Spirit. Give yourself up, morning by morning, to be led by the Holy Spirit, and go forward praising and at rest, leaving Him to manage you and your day. Cultivate the habit, all through the day, of joyfully depending upon, and obeying, Him, expecting Him to guide, to enlighten, to reprove, to teach, to use, and to do in and with you what He will. Count upon His working as a fact, altogether apart from slight or feeling."

Have you discovered the secret of the flow of the Spirit in your lives? Let Him take possession of your heart each morning, and count on His indwelling through the day. Above all things, remember that He must not be grieved. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of Promise." We can only grieve those who love us dearly. We can only grieve Him because He is a Person and loves us. Be determined that whatever happens, the precious flow of the Spirit is not stopped by sin unconfessed. Count on the cleansing of the Blood of Christ and go forward praising and at rest.

The other thing about Gideon was that he went *on* with God. How careful he was to keep within His will, to know His guidance. What a difference there would be in our Churches if we knew more of this *Fullness*. The battle would be hard, of course. Our difficulty is that we do not realise the spiritual forces arrayed against us. If Gideon had kept down in the wine-press, he would have known little of the enemy's strength; and if we stick to our hiding places we won't know either, but when we come out of our holes and meet men who are addicts, alcoholics or completely defeated by sin, then we realise how little we know of the Spirit's power in our own lives. God give us Gideon's discontent and the Grace to confess and then to obey.

Address after the LORD's SUPPER

W. S. LOYNES

THE GRACE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, AND
THE LOVE OF GOD, AND THE COMMUNION OF
THE HOLY SPIRIT BE WITH YOU ALL.

2 Cor. 13 v. 14.

A QUESTION TO BE ANSWERED.

“What shall we say then?” (Roms. 6/1). This question does not represent the speaker's dilemma. It brings to us all the requirement of a decision. The same question, arising in Romans chapter 8 and cut down by the added words “these things”, was quoted by Mr. Brearey in his address yesterday. I now call our attention to this challenge, taking as “these things”, apt for our day, the Apostle's invocation of the triple blessing of the Triune God, and the theme and demand of this powerful Conference, set in the context of our most personal, individual and solemn declaration in partaking of the Lord's Supper.

In dealing with such vital matters one feels the limitations of the dull life we nourish within the brain. But this handicap should not obscure the fact that we have the supreme qualification. “We have the mind of Christ.” (1 Cor. 2/16). This is an accomplished condition in the life of every child of God, born of the Spirit of God. We have in principle though not in capacity, the nous, the understanding of Christ. The possession of this birthright is a condition necessarily precedent to a proper acceptance of the challenge that now faces us, and having it, we are prompted to desire a satisfactory response.

THE GRACE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST BE WITH YOU—GRACE TO ENRICH.

The Apostle early in his letter to Corinth thanks God for the grace given by Jesus Christ by which they were enriched in everything. They were wealthy spiritually, plutocrats, to use our word derived from the Greek word translated enriched. May we pause here to consider Him Who so enriches. We often misquote the phrase we are considering, saying "the grace of **OUR** Lord Jesus Christ"—the possessive pronoun for the indefinite article. Do we in any way thus narrow down in our conception His personality and glory to fit our own possessiveness and circumstances? Is **OUR** God too small? He is **THE LORD JESUS CHRIST**, Supreme, King of kings and Lord of lords. A scientific statement of some years' standing declares that there are enough stars in the skies, some of them much more than a million times larger than the planet on which we live, to allocate 200 each to every one of the 3,000 million inhabitants of the earth today. Modern astronomy tends to enlarge this to galaxies of stars, 200 for each of us. And all belong to Him, the Lord Jesus Christ, Creator, Upholder and Possessor, Whose handiwork in the skies we are called to consider that we may read there His eternal power and Godhead. He is rich. "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye, through His poverty might be rich. (2 Cor. 8/9.) Here we quote correctly "*Our* Lord Jesus Christ." In all His availability to us, in all that He is, by our own personal acceptance of Him, He becomes our Lord Jesus Christ.

Two aspects of grace to enrich claim our attention today: *Grace sufficient for service.* (2 Cor. 9/8.) "God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." In John's record of the feeding of the 5,000 we have a beautiful illustration of what it is to *abound*. Philip states the inadequacy of 200 pennyworth of bread,

even could they get so much, to meet the need. Andrew speaks of a lad's five barley loaves and two small fishes and asks "What are they among so many?" But grace and truth came by Jesus Christ, and grace upon grace. In the out-working of that grace and power, and by obedience to His command, "Bring them hither to Me," out of those inadequate human resources, placed in His hands, all the multitude ate and were satisfied and they "filled 12 baskets with the fragments" (the abounding) "of the five barley loaves which remained over and above unto them that had eaten."

Grace sufficient for solace. (2 Cor. 12/9.) It is known that some present today are carrying burdens of sorrow, care and anxiety. To you comes again the promise "My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness." May this grace be with you all.

In the second Epistle Paul introduces a paradox. "As poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things." He was content to sacrifice earthly advantages in order to enrich others in the grace of His Lord and in that sacrifice he could draw some of the dividends from the inheritance he had gained in the kingdom yet to come. In his first letter he had written "All things are yours . . . and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." (1 Cor. 3/22.)

THE LOVE OF GOD BE WITH YOU ALL— LOVE TO ENTHUSE

Could we with ink the ocean fill,
And were the skies of parchment made,
Were every stalk on earth a quill
And every man a scribe by trade,
To write the love of God abroad
Would drain the ocean dry;
Nor could the scroll contain the whole
Though stretched from sky to sky.

O love of God, how rich and pure, How measureless and strong!

It shall for evermore endure, The Saints' and Angels' song.

Love to endure! Yes, but Love to ENTHUSE.

What is our need today? Zeal? Spiritual Heat? Runners? A secular contributor to a recent issue of a popular Digest writes about "The secret of Enthusiasm" declaring "The word enthusiasm comes from entheos—the god within—and means basically to be inspired or possessed by the god, or if you like, by God." Of course we would like, "by God", enthused by the love of God with us. A great deal of enthusiasm for other gods may be seen around us, possessing hearts and minds; it may be for example the four minute mile, the golf handicap, the car out in the street, or the local football team. How the thousands shout and cheer! But when our legions stream into the arenas of Harringay, Earls Court and Wembley to unite in praise and witness and hundreds of inquirers tramp across the floor boards in solemn desire to get right with God in the atmosphere of prayer and appeal we are charged with emotionalism. May we know more of the mind of Him Who said, "The zeal of Thy house hath eaten Me up," more of the singing in our public transport and thoroughfares, more of the preaching of the lone Salvationist, testifying in the Bakerloo train, returning hot from the Wembley Stadium! So we come to the first of three aspects of the love with us to enthuse.

(1) *The love that burns.*

The Apostle Paul knew this love. "To me to live is Christ. The Son of God Who loved me and gave Himself for me. The love of Christ which excels knowledge." In his defence before Agrippa and Festus (Acts 26/22) his burning zeal in his Master's cause is evident. "Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and to great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come:

That Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people and to the Gentiles. And as he thus spake for himself, Festus cried with a loud voice, 'Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad.' His answer to the Corinthians to such charge reveals the fuel for that fire. "Whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober it is for your cause. *For the love of Christ constraineth us.*" Love energising, burning! The beloved physician, Luke, illustrates for us the nature of it. "Simon's wife's mother was taken"—constrained—"with a great fever". (Lk. 4/38.) Every nerve, every muscle, every conception; on fire.

(2) *The love that yearns.*

God is love. "God saw the wickedness of man . . . and it grieved Him at His heart." (Gen. 6/5,6.) Our Lord has revealed the heart of God. "When He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd." (Matt. 9/36.) Journeying toward Jerusalem He said "O Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together . . ., and ye would not." "And when He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace." (Lk. 13/34 & 19/41.) The God within is the God that yearns; the love of God be with you all. And "Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"

The love of God with us will also be

(3) *The love that spurns.*

Do we presume upon the love of God? "These six things doth the Lord hate; yea, seven are an abomination unto

Him." (Prov. 6/16.) What shall we then say to these things? If His love be in us we shall spurn them too. What are these things. The list begins: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood. To the older of us there may be a special message here today. Are there about any of the old prophets of Bethel (see 1 Kings 13.) self satisfied, out of touch with God, repressing, numbing, unwilling to give place to and ending practically in the assembly the spiritual usefulness of our younger brethren? And what is that seventh in the list, that abomination to God? "He that soweth discord among brethren." Wherefore, away with all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings. (1 Pet. 2/1.) Away with backbiting and denigration!

This love will also work in us another deliverance. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." (1 John 2.15/16.)

What we have indicated concerning the enrichment of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the enthusement of the love of God is, I think, a necessary prelude to the realisation of the communion of the Holy Spirit.

THE COMMUNION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT BE WITH YOU ALL—COMMUNION TO ENDUE.

The Spirit of Demonstration and of Power. We have considered spiritual vitamins in a time of under nourishment. We are often spiritually powerless although living in a power age. We fail unless the Spirit of Power fills. The fullness of the Spirit may be a crisis experience but there is always the need for continuous filling.

What is this Communion of the Holy Spirit? "The share which one has in participation, e.g. participation in what is derived from the Holy Spirit." (W. E. Vine.) One is struck by the use of the word, translated "communicated" in

Phil. 4/15. "No church *communicated* with me as concerning *giving* and *receiving*, but ye only." The Philippians communed, fellowshiped, in a two-way channel. In others there was the absence of reciprocal activity. Am I communing, to the limit of what God makes possible for me in the Holy Spirit? There is only one answer; there is no finality, there *is no limit* to what God will provide and do. At this Conference we have established standards and found ourselves sub-normal. In this communion is spiritual power for holy living, intellectual power for understanding and remembrance, emotional power for holy loving; effectiveness for the accomplishment of the whole mission of the church on earth. "The nature of the power is evident. It is the coming of God to man for the accomplishment of a divine purpose in this sacred partnership. Man is helpless apart from this immediate co-operation. God chooses to be helpless apart from co-operation with man." (Dr. Campbell Morgan.) True, but not all the truth, for He worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.

To His own he said "Ye are My witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." (Lk. 24/48, 49.) That power now dwells, in the entirety of His Person, in every child of God. As Mr. Brearey said yesterday, we have omnipotence within. **THERE IS AVAILABILITY, FULLNESS, FOR US JUST NOW. HERE. FREE. DEMANDING. THE SPIRIT OF JUDGEMENT AND OF BURNING.** My *witnesses*, says the Lord. It costs to burn. The word used is *MARTYR*. We reserve its use today to those who suffer for the truth. "A martyr is one convinced of truth, who manifests that truth in life. The fires of persecution never made martyrs, they revealed them." (again Dr. C. M.)

CONCLUSION

The triple blessing of the Triune God be with you *all*. Offered as a gift—in a sense to be won! Won by acceptance, won by compliance. Ye might be!

What shall we say then?
Dare we conclude this meditation, replying each for himself in the words of Amy Wilson Carmichael?

From prayer that asks that I may be
Sheltered from winds that beat on Thee:
From fearing when I should aspire,
From faltering when I should climb higher,
From silken self, O Captain, free
Thy soldier who would follow Thee.

From subtle love of softening things,
From easy choices, weakenings:
Not thus are spirits fortified,
Not this way went the Crucified:
From all that dims Thy Calvary,
O Lamb of God, deliver me.

Give me the love that leads the way,
The faith that nothing can dismay,
The hope no disappointments tire,
The passion that will burn like fire:
Let me not sink to be a clod,
Make me Thy fuel, Flame of God.

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