

THE NEEDED POWER

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Notice three kinds of power in the world: physical, intellectual and spiritual. If a man's work is of a physical nature, then he needs physical power. If he aspires to be a champion wrestler, he may be low-browed, half-witted and unable to read or write, but if he is broad-shouldered, weighs about two hundred and fifty pounds and is very powerful, he will probably succeed.

But if a man aspires to be a statesman, an inventor or college president, then he needs intellectual power. No half-wit can succeed here, no matter how strong he may be physically. On the contrary, a man may be weak physically and not able to lift a sack of potatoes, but if he has intellectual power he can qualify.

But if a man's work is to be of a spiritual nature, if he yearns to be a soul-winner, a witness for Christ, then he needs spiritual power. Intellectual power will not equip him in this field. Physical power falls short. Though he posses both, without the spiritual he will fail. But lacking the two former, if he tarries and obtains the third, he is promised success. Now we would not underrate the physical. A strong body is to be coveted. Nor should we lightly esteem intellectual power, whether natural or acquired. A finished education is a great inheritance. But spiritual power is the all-essential. Therefore Jesus said, "Tarry ye in the City of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." The Christian world has, to a large extent, lost sight of the spiritual and has concentrated on the intellectual. As a result, the church is failing in her mission to save souls; for "the world by wisdom know not God," and the slough of doubt that modernists and evolutionists are in is proof of this. But though one may be weak physically, and lame intellectually, he may be strong spiritually and be a soul-winner. "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus." What made the early Methodist preachers such a host for God? There is only one answer: Holy Ghost power.

"The circuit riders of those days were not so fine and grand;
They took degrees in hauling logs and clearing up the land;
But when one of them rose to preach, I'll tell you we could smell
The fragrant flowers of heaven and the stifling smoke of hell."

There is nothing that can successfully take the place of the baptism of the Holy Ghost, "for ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." The raising of educational bars to those entering the ministry may shut out truly God-called men, and the church so doing will lose by it.

"When Jonah to Nineveh, mission-appointed,
A runaway preacher to Tarshish set sail,
The Lord took in hand His own prophet anointed,

And sent him to college inside of a whale.
Three days did the business, and more than contented,

The graduate promptly was spouted to shore;
He went to his work, the whole city repented,
The greatest revival ere heard of before."

St. Paul says, "But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood, and of earth, and some to honor, and some to dishonor. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the masters' use, and prepared unto every good work." This enduement will prepare him by giving him power.

I. TO LIVE A HOLY LIFE. "For I perceive that this is an holy man of God that passeth by us continually." "Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believed."

II. TO PREACH. See the effect of Peter's preaching after Pentecost. "Now when they heard this they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter, and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" And it says the "same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." We used to sing

"Three thousand were converted and were soldiers right away;
For 'twas the power, 'twas the power, 'twas the power Jesus promised should come down."

* * *

"The preaching? Well, I just can't tell all that the preacher said;

I know it wasn't written, I know it wasn't read.

He hadn't time to read it, for the lightning from his eye

Went flashing down from pew to pew, nor passed the sinner by.

The sermon wasn't flowery; 'twas simple gospel truth;

It suited poor old men like me, it fitted hopeful youth.

The preacher made sin hideous in Gentiles and in Jews,

He shot the golden sentences down to the finest pews,

And though my eyes are dim with age, I saw the falling tear

That told me hell was some ways off, and heaven very near."

III. TO PRAY. "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word with boldness." Praying "in the Holy Ghost" brings fire down from heaven and causes people to cry out, "The Lord, he is God."

If people were endued with power from on high they would not sit in their seats and look idly on while a few who "seem to be pillars" wrestle in prayer with seekers at the altar. A lack of Holy Ghost power makes it easier to attempt to "sing seekers through" rather than to "pray them through;" but such converts lack the "witness," the "glory" and the shout of triumph.

IV. TO SING. We do not imply that every one who is baptized with the Holy Ghost will be able to sing, but we do affirm that those who can sing will never be fully "prepared unto every good work" until they are endued.

In a meeting years ago, during the altar call a sister started to sing, "God Calling Yet." A rough shanty-man, Highland Scotchman, was there, and that song, sung in the power of the Holy Ghost, pierced his heart. As the sister sang, conviction deepened; and when she sang:

"God calling yet, shall I not rise?
Shall I His loving voice despise?
And basely His kind care repay?
He calls me; why do I delay?"

that man threw off his coat and started for the altar. His wife trembled. She thought, Uriah is going to give some one a thrashing; but to her surprise, he fell on his knees at the altar and began to pray. And he prayed through and stayed through and is still on the way, convert of that Holy Ghost-filled woman. No musical instrument can bring forth such fruit; for

"Worship by artificial means is worship by the half;

'Tis like the dance of Aaron's squad around the golden calf."

V. TO EXHORT. "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit" (I. Cor. 12:4). When a church has the Spirit in His fulness, the gifts of the Spirit will be in evidence. Some seem to have a gift to prophesy (preach), some in prayer, some in singing, others in exhortation; but rarely, if ever, are they all combined in one person. But when a church has the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon it, how these gifts blend together and make one harmonious whole! What great exhorters God has called to His work! Many times the spirit of exhortation has come on some one, often a layman, at the close of a sermon, and he has exhorted with such effect that the altar has been filled with seekers. We know of a meeting where things seemed tied up; but after the preaching a young woman who had been sanctified the night before stood up and commenced to exhort. God came. The spell was broken. Several came to the altar. Among them was one young man who literally screamed to God for mercy. He had been seeking before, but seemed possessed with a dumb devil. But this night he broke through. He was gloriously saved and is today a preacher in the Free Methodist Church.

It is not "with excellency of speech," or "with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power."

Dr. Redfield tells of a young convert who exhorted in one of his meetings; he says, "Such another exhortation I never heard." It ran something like this: "Now, sinners, I tell you, look a'here; I tell you, you don't know how good this good 'eligion is. Oh, I wish you would come up here and kneel down and get it! You know, I used to drink rum like anything, and swear, and play cards. But, oh! how good this good religion is! Oh, do come, and kneel down and get it." Stout-hearted men, as well as others, flocked to the altar of prayer.

The next day, when out calling, an elderly woman who was at the meeting the night before sat weeping, and she said with deep emotion, "Oh, that sarment Jacob preached last night made me detarment to get this good 'eligion."

"Remember, Lord, the ancient days;
Renew Thy work; Thy grace restore;
And while to Thee our hearts we raise,
On us Thy Holy Spirit pour."

—The Free Methodist

RICHER BLESSINGS

No shattered box of ointment

We ever can regret,

For out of disappointment

Flow sweetest odors yet.

The discord that involveth

Some startling change of key,

The master's hand resolveth

In richest harmony.

—F. R. Havergal