

THE SECOND BLESSING

Rev. W. Edmund Smith

The Apostle Paul gloried in the grace of God that had become operative in his heart and life. Cut out of Paul's epistles his personal testimony to the saving and sanctifying power of grace and you have tattered pages: you eliminate the most convincing factor in his writings. In this testimony Paul set a good example for Gospel preachers of all times.

Undoubtedly, a rich personal experience of grace is the preacher's most valuable asset. He may have broad classical learning, deep knowledge of philosophy and theology; he may be endowed with a natural eloquence that has been cultivated to a high degree, but if he lacks a personal experience of an uttermost salvation he must come far short of being a great Gospel preacher, even though his fame as a pulpit orator be spread far and wide. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." "It needs the overflow of the heart to give the lips full speech." So-called great preaching is often as brilliant as the "Northern Lights" and just as cold. It may be Biblically true and theologically sound and still be lifeless unless the preacher can humbly say:

What I have felt and seen with confidence I tell
And publish to the sons of men the signs in-
fallible.

Dr. D. F. Brooks often told his experience of holiness and how he was led into the blessing. He had received a splendid classical education in one of the best universities, knew that he was a child of God, had joined a great Methodist conference and felt that he was loyal to the doctrinal standards of his church, which he had promised to preach and defend. He believed in holiness as a second work of grace and had preached a good deal on the subject and was ever ready to defend John Wesley's interpretation to the limit. This he often did with a spirit that was more argumentative than persuasive. He said that he got blessed preaching about the experience and about the doctrine, but he went to a camp meeting where he heard men preach with such unction and sweetness and power that his heart became hungry and he made his way to the altar as a definite seeker of the blessing of entire sanctification.

He said, "As it were I had to unscrew the head of D. F. Brooks and throw it in the front seat and say: 'Now, heart, you go in and get what Brooks has been preaching about so much.' My knowledge of Greek roots and tenses did not help me much, nor did any of the knowledge in which I had a secret pride carry me through. I had to cry aloud to God as a poor, needy soul, counting as loss that which had been gain, that I might receive holiness as a free gift. The blessing soon came upon my soul. I went home to preach with new life and love and power. The people began to say, 'We guess Brother Brooks has got something of that he has been preaching about so much.'" Yes, souls began seeking and finding the blessing of holiness under his preaching and he became a great exponent of the doctrine and experience to the close of a long ministry. His testimony ever was, "I have the blessing still but not the still blessing."

I heard Bishop Oldham tell his experience in an afternoon meeting in which he was the preacher, held in connection with the Troy Methodist conference in Saratoga Springs, New York, some twenty-five years ago. He was born the son of a missionary, and come

to this country for his education, and had joined a Methodist conference in the Middle West. He knew he had been graciously saved. He loved his work; he held revivals every year, was his own evangelist, and saw many seek the Lord, but he said, "I did not preach a second experience of grace nor had I much sympathy with those who did preach it and testify to it. I thought it savored of spiritual pride.

"But in the providence of God, I was called to go as pastor of a great English speaking church in Calcutta, India. My predecessor had gone down in shame and things were in a bad way. When I began my work I became conscious that only a great revival could save the situation, and began to feel the need of a revival in my own heart and life. A deep sense of personal need came upon me, not that I was under condemnation, but, oh, I needed a fullness of blessing, and my heart was hungry for it. I hunted out all the books I had on the subject of holiness and began reading them anew. I became convinced in reading those books and my Bible that there was a second epoch in Christian experience. I made announcement that I would begin a series of meetings in the church preaching especially on the subject of holiness of heart and life. I prepared my messages in prayer and preached every night to growing congregations and with considerable liberty. I showed sanctification in its various phases the best I could till I came to the Sunday morning service when I preached the way to receive the blessing. I emphasized the fact that it is not by growth nor by death but by faith here and now. This is the only way entire sanctification can be received. I came to the close of my messages and then said, 'Beloved, I have been preaching to you for a week on the subject of heart holiness, and now I want to make the frank confession that while I believe that all I have preached is true, yet I have not the blessing myself, but I believe that it is for me, and by the grace of God I am going to have it now, for it is by faith and that means it may be received now.' I left the pulpit and came down and knelt at the outside of the altar as a seeker. The Spirit of God came upon the people and from all parts of the house they came to the altar weeping and crying. God soon came to my heart in His sweet cleansing and sanctifying power and the Holy Ghost, as I had never known Him before, came in to baptize my soul. There was a marvelous revival because the preacher was sanctified wholly."

How my soul was blessed, as a young preacher, in reading the personal experiences of Dr. Levy, a great Baptist preacher in Philadelphia! He had preached in that big church for a number of years with blessing on his ministry, but a holiness revival was held in a nearby Methodist church. The evangelist was a sanctified lawyer, and great blessing came upon the people. He said, "I attended quite timidly at first some of the afternoon meetings that were given a good deal to testimony. I heard those in whom I had confidence tell with great joy and unction of the new-found joy and victory that had come to their hearts. I could criticize their theology and some of their expressions, but I could not get away from the reality of their experience. I was so impressed that finally I advised my church board to have the evangelist come to our church, and, almost to my surprise, they assented. Mr. Morgan came and at once opened on the

experience of holiness. I had secretly hoped that he would preach on the 'higher life' or a 'deeper work of grace,' but he preached on definite sanctification as an experience that kills sin in the heart and is receivable here and now by faith. Deep conviction of my need settled upon me, and although I could not see the 'second blessing' in my theology or in my Bible, yet when he made the altar call, I was the first to kneel as a seeker. I began to pray, and as I prayed God began to show me my heart. More and more, as I yielded to the movings of the Spirit, I felt myself sinking down, down, away from wife and family that I love dearly, away from the church and my brethren in the ministry whom I loved; I sank away from all earthly ambition and earthly good, and, oh, it seemed so dark! But my soul kept saying, 'Yes,' to God. I was dying out to sin and self. Finally I came to the bottom, and marvelously the glory of God came flooding my soul. Instantly the theology of the second blessing was made plain. I wept and cried aloud for joy. The Holy Ghost had come to my heart." Some sixteen years later Dr. Levy testified to the reality of the blessing that he had long before received and that had stood through all the years.

I know of nothing that may be much drier than the preaching of holiness and the testifying to holiness without the abiding of the Holy Ghost; but how sweet and glorious it is to be able to preach this grace under the anointing, clearly and definitely. I thank God I had the privilege Sunday night in the Somerville Nazarene Church. The glory holds and the fire burns. Hallelujah!

"GO YE!"

By Annie Johnson Flint

Hear your Commission, O Church of the
Master!

Friends and disciples of Jesus, take heed.
How are you doing the work of the Father?
How are you caring for hunger and need?

Useless to stay in your door-way, and beckon
Those who most need you will never come
in;

Fighting the devil with art and with culture,
How he must laugh at his stronghold of sin!
Go—to the sheep that are scattered and faint-
ing,

Having no shepherd, and tell them to come;
Go—to the highways, and tell every creature
Still the feast waiteth, and yet there is
room.

Go—the time shortens, the night is approach-
ing—

Harvests are whit'ning and reapers are few;
Somewhere, perhaps, in the darkness are dying
Souls that might enter the Kingdom with
you.

Go—for the Foe goeth, tireless, cunning;
Body and soul he is holding in fee.

Go—lift his gauge in the might of the Strong-
er,

And in that Power declares the slaves free!

Go—our Lord goeth to man's petty judgment,
Bearing His cross in the midst of His foes;
Let us go forth to Him, mocked and derided,
Bear His reproaches, and share in His woes.

Go—Church of Christ, for He goeth before
you,

And all the way that ye take He doth know,
On the bright morrow He'll say, "Come ye
blessed,"

But till the dawning the message is "GO!"