

SUPERNATURAL POWER FOR A SUPERNATURAL RELIGION

Bishop Warren A. Chandler

"Ye shall receive power." Acts 1:8.

Just before our Lord ascended he emphasized how indispensable it was to the disciples' life and work that they receive power from on high, saying: "Ye shall receive power, after the Holy Ghost has come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:8). And he commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem until this empowerment had come upon them.

It would seem that they, having accompanied him daily for several years and given attention to his teaching would not have needed anything else to qualify them for their work; but he taught them to the contrary, and insisted that they should not depart from Jerusalem until this empowerment from on high had come upon them.

It was not to be any natural power of intellect, or any other power, but to be "power from on high," and when Peter preached on the day of Pentecost, a little while afterward, he claimed that he spoke under this supernatural power. The wonders of the Pentecost could not have been achieved with any force other than this power from on high.

Nevertheless, the Church of today seems to have forgotten that supreme necessity for its work. Even so good a man as Mr. Moody did not understand or possess it for some years. Two women continued praying for him, because they sensed something lacking in his preaching. They told him, "We are praying that you may receive power." Of this Moody said, "There came a great hunger into my soul. I really felt I did not want to live longer if I could not have spiritual power for service." Later Moody was leading a Bible reading, and called on Mr. Douglas Russell to speak. Mr. Russell gave an exposition of Galatians 4. At one point he said that all believers have the Holy Spirit and are God's children, but many have not received the Holy Spirit in fullness for service.

"At this point," Mr. Russell said afterwards, "Mr. Moody, standing by my side, struck the desk with his fist and exclaimed with vehemence, 'I never saw it before! I have been troubled about that for years. I never saw it before!' It was the following day on the streets of New York that Mr. Moody became conscious of a power coming upon him and flooding his whole being with an overwhelming sense of the love of God in Christ."

If Dwight L. Moody overlooked this supreme necessity, and in his ministry was without this power for years, it is not strange that the church and preachers of today lack this heavenly anointing. But Christianity cannot be enforced and propagated with anything less than this. Supernatural religion calls for supernatural power to spread it throughout the world. When the Master gave his last command to his disciples he rested their authority and obligations on the fact that all power was given unto him in heaven and in earth; and they did not proceed until the Pentecostal empowerment came upon them.

The Christian enterprise has been impoverished by the failure to realize the supreme necessity of this supernatural power. The

fact of the resurrection of Christ; and their Lord has disappeared from the earth and ascended into heaven. It was impossible, therefore, for them to be witnesses to the unearthly fact of his resurrection without the unearthly power descending upon them from their ascended Lord. They were unlettered men, and could not by any philosophical process, or logical argument, convince the world of the continued existence of their Lord.

St. Peter says: "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." (Acts 2:32-33).

This supernatural empowerment of the servants of God in the work of propagating the gospel is the only reasonable explanation of their amazing success. They did not triumph by any earthly force, but by a power from above. Such power is as necessary today as it was in the first century. The obstinate opposition of human depravity is so antagonistic to the Spirit of Christ that it cannot be overcome except by this unearthly force.

The reason that much of the supposed Christianity of today makes little or no progress is it is utterly impotent in its reliance upon natural forces. What is needed is the supernatural empowerment. Concerning this matter Spurgeon puts the case well when he says: "It is as if you saw a locomotive engine upon a railway, and it would not go; and they put up a driver, and they said, 'Now, that driver will just do.' They try another and another. One proposes that such and such a wheel should be altered; but still it will not go. Someone then bursts in amongst those who are conversing, and says: 'No, friends; but the reason why it will not go is because there is no steam; that's why it will not go. There may be some faults about it; it may want a bit of paint here and there; but it will go well enough with all those faults if you do but get the steam up.' But now people are saying, 'This must be altered, and that must be altered.' But it would go no better unless God the Spirit should come to bless us. That is the Church's great want; and, until that want be supplied, we may reform and reform, and still be just the same. We want the Holy Spirit."

The Church of today cannot, and ought not, to expect supernatural language such as was needed and supplied by the Holy Spirit at Pentecost; but it does need language filled with the energy of the Divine Spirit. This is needed in our own as well as in foreign lands; and since Christianity is a regenerative force it needs a life-giving power. The supreme work of the Church is witnessing to the resurrection of Christ, and whether this testimony is borne in one land or another, it must be enforced by the convincing of the Divine Spirit.

Modern culture is in many respects admirable; but when the effort is made to substitute it for the supernatural power of the Holy Ghost, it is misplaced and becomes utterly impotent to accomplish spiritual results. In thus teaching no excessive claim is made. Mathematical science cannot be imparted except by the force governing that science, and every department of truth has its own method by which it is to be acquired and imparted.

In this matter of supernatural power there

necessity no special pleading is made. If Christianity were a mere philosophy it is quite possible it might be imparted by rationalistic forces and processes.—Pentecostal Herald.

THE DANGER OF EARTHLY POSSESSION

Walter E. Isenhour

"But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" (Luke 12:20).

Our text is taken from the parable of the rich fool. Jesus spoke of a certain rich man whose ground brought forth plentifully until he did not have room enough for his fruits and goods. The rich man said, "What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

The part of the text to which I wish to call your attention especially is the question that Jesus asked, "Whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?"

Perhaps the hardest thing that God has to save the average man from is earthly possessions. You don't have to be rich to let material things come between your soul and God and heaven. No doubt many a man who owns a few acres of land thinks far more of it than he thinks of God. He fairly worships his land. It is his god; he sets his affection upon it, loves it, and it is the idol of his heart. And as he looks about he begins to covet the land that surrounds him. He wants to add more acres to his farm, and the more he gets the more he wants. He thinks far more of his land than he thinks of his soul, the souls of his family, and the souls of his children. He hungers and thirsts for land, land and more land. His very life and soul is engrossed in land. He wants more land to raise greater crops to raise more sheep, horses, hogs, cattle, and to get more money, and still more money. He is never satisfied. But some day he is going to leave his land, his houses, his goods, his earthly possessions, "then whose shall those things be?" His life and soul is wrapped up in them; he has made no preparation to meet God; he has treated God and His blessed cause with absolute indifference, and now he must go out to give an account of himself, his life, his stewardship, and his soul. How awful! God will say to him, "Thou fool, . . . whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?"

When a man lives for land, houses, crops, horses, cattle, hogs, mules, poultry, money, stocks, bonds, earthly possessions, neglects his precious, immortal soul, then dies in spiritual poverty, unprepared to meet God, "Whose shall those things be?" While he is reaping an awful harvest in the eternal world without God and salvation, perhaps his sons and daughters he leaves behind will be fussing and quarrelling, going to law, and hating each other over his possessions. Perhaps his wife will be dressing out his money, his land, and possessions, and may be gadding about to every shindig of the devil, committing adult-