

SPIRIT'S ENDUEMENT

There never had been any question about Peter's faith. He confessed early in his association with Jesus, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God!" Neither was there any doubt about the measure of his devotion. He forsook all to follow the Master. He was ready to go with Him to prison and to death. He would have died for Him in the garden. In resolve and purpose, Peter's love and loyalty were total.

But, alas, Peter lacked the inner resources, the spiritual stamina to maintain in all situations his earnest resolution. There were crevices in his armour. There were moments when his courage drained from his heart and left him helpless and contemptible.

But how often have you and I, having made our bold affirmation of loyalty to Christ, found ourselves with Peter around a fire in an outer court, not only silent before those who mock our faith, but denying Him in craven conformity to the godless world.

Gospel Preached with the Holy Ghost Sent Down from Heaven

But behold Peter garbed with the mantle of God, standing before those who murdered the Son of glory and without fear or self-consciousness confronting them with their awful sin, and preaching Jesus as Messiah and Lord. Behold the power, the bold, penetrating, convincing power, that surges out from him to overwhelm his hearers with the truth until the hardest heart cried aloud, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

There was fire that day, holy fire falling from heaven, and Peter continued to blaze with the fire of God until he was stretched upon his cross and rode it as a chariot of fire to glory. His testimony is simple. We preach "the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven" (I Pet. 1:12).

If the apostle Paul were to add his word, it would be exactly the same. "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (I Cor. 2:1-5).

If the greatest intellect of his generation deliberately discredited his own wisdom; if the masterful logician forsook his own logic; if the most ardent and persuasive spirit had no confidence in his own eloquence, but rather with ruthless determination stripped the gospel of all human adornment that faith might stand in the power of God, and crucified self that the Saviour might be seen in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power, then surely we who are of lesser breed must cast away our old garments of the flesh and be clothed with a mantle of heaven.

Receive Ye The Holy Ghost

The mighty acts of the Holy Spirit continue.

Again and again, servants of the living God have come to a Jordan of redemptive urgency and have cried, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" Then casting aside their own human abilities they have appropriated by living

faith the spirit and power of an Elijah.

It was the mantle of God falling upon Savonarola that shook the wicked city of Florence with a thunderclap of divine judgment. The words of the preacher burned like fire until strong men fell upon their faces on the stone flagging of the cathedral, crying out to God for forgiveness.

It was this mantle of God clothing an earnest monk in Wurttemberg that picked him up and used him like a hammer in the hand of God to break the shackles of superstition and darkness from the millions of Europe.

It was this Holy Spirit strangely warming the heart of John Wesley that broke out in the spiritual conflagration of the Wesleyan revival.

It was the definite and decisive endowment of power falling upon Moody that prepared him for his outstanding ministry in Britain and America.

Indeed, turn through the pages of Church history or the contemporary record, find any man standing like an Elijah among the prophets, and you will discover one who sought and received power from on high.

Oh, that I myself might speak of these things with such a mantle resting upon me! Oh, that together we might this day receive a heavenly baptism, a chrism of truth, an endowment of power, opening up within us rivers of living water! Why should we fear anything promised and given of God? Why should we delay to seek anything so indispensable?

What are the prerequisites for power?

Four are suggested in the passage.

Perseverance Born of Desperate Need

First, perseverance born of a desperate need. Nothing would turn back this determined disciple of Elijah. He followed him to Gilgal, and heard his master say, "Tarry here, I pray thee; for the Lord hath sent me to Bethel. And Elisha said unto him, As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they went down to Bethel" (II Kings 2:2). At Bethel, at Jericho, at Jordan, the same persistency is manifest. No ridicule or argument could dissuade him.

The sons of the prophets at Bethel came forth to Elisha and said unto him, "Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head today? And he said, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace." This is the attitude God wants, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me!" Gen. 32:26. This is the determination of one who says, Whatever the distance to be traveled, whatever the discouragements to be surmounted, my heart is fixed, my face is set, my will is determined. I will seek, and I will know POWER adequate for the task.

Pray for Things That Bring Victory to the Cause of Christ

Second, prayer that dares to ask for wonderful things. There must be a heart reaching up through the human frailties and inner corruption to divine grace, willing to stand in naked faith upon the promises, and calling day and night to the Saviour, "Give me of thy Spirit."

Third, preparation that casts away the old self-life and all its garments. One of the strange customs in the Bible is that of tearing up garments. Sometimes it was done out of anger, or humiliation, shame or sorrow. Sometimes, I suppose, the old garments were

torn up simply because they were worn and had no further purpose.

In this case Elisha was given a glimpse of the glory of God—chariots and horsemen of fire! One long look at the glory, magnificence and power of heaven, and he saw his own garments as filthy rags. One glimpse of the infinite holiness and power of God and he was forever dissatisfied and discontented with himself and his own things.

Even so, one long look at the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ and we are ready to tear up as worthless our pitifully inadequate spirituality, our so-called consecration, and whatever else we may have had of confidence in the flesh. It is in the light of God's holy presence that we see sin and self, and desire to discard both.

Finally, an appropriation of faith that lifts up and exercises the promised provision of the Spirit of God.

Enabled and Endued

As we think of the mighty enablement and endowment with which the Spirit of God has visited men in the past, as we think of the tremendous world needs confronting us today, we place ourselves and all that we have before the Saviour and pray, "O Lord, do it again!"—Moody Monthly.

GOD . . . BY THE HOLY GHOST

2 Cor. 6:4-6

Paul speaks of being "more than conquerors." After having conquered the world, the flesh and the devil, he infers that we can have enough joy, faith and victory left to conquer another world. To be more specific, he mentions a number of things we are to conquer, such as "Principalities," "Powers," "Things present," "Things to come," and then for lack of words, concludes by saying, "Nor any other creature shall be able" to withstand us. Think of it!

How few Christians are so possessed of God, so endued by the Spirit, that they have more victory than they need for themselves! —E. E. Shelhamer.

We are troubled on every side . . . persecuted . . . always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus."—2 Cor. 4:8-18.

How sweet to go on singing about God's love when the cross is calling to sacrifice and suffering and a bleeding ministry on behalf of dying souls—and how devilish! If there were not so many Christians being rocked in the cradle of the infancy of the faith, content with their own personal salvation, cooing to the sweet lullaby of spiritual babyhood, the world would not be reeling like a drunkard toward another international deluge.

John 14 is your favorite chapter! Have you ever wondered if the devil would not have it so? Why not shake off the swaddling clothes and move on to Romans 6, Matthew 18-20, Colossians 1:24 and a host of similar passages that cut like a knife into our self-satisfaction? —Huegel.

Fasting is often a great element of success in intercession. It lays up no merit but is an act of obedience with which our Lord is well pleased. Self-denial is usually calculated to please the Lord. It is our Lord who says, "This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." Prayer and fasting go together as day and night.—Sel.