

The FULLNESS and the FLOW

H. E. Jessop, D. D.

"Be filled with the Spirit." Eph. 5:18. "From within him shall flow . . . This spake He of the Spirit." John 7:37-39.

It is the purpose of God that the believing soul should enjoy a constant fullness and from that fullness there should be a continual flow.

The outward lives of God's people should be indicative of the possession of inner spiritual wealth. Tokens of beggarliness and bankruptcy ill become a Christian soul. If I do not have "Bread enough and to spare" it is entirely my own fault. Even the "hired servants" of my Father's house are declared to have that. The famine area is the "far country." It is therefore far from fitting that one who claims to be a son, and who declares that he is on good terms with his Father should "be in want."

For every son God has an embarrassment of spiritual riches. Provision has been made that the Christian's life might be a permanent embodiment of blessing which is intended to become the source of a never failing stream of help and hope to those around, even though other brooks may fail and other streams become dry.

I. The God possessed life enjoys a continual fullness.

When we say "fullness" we do not of necessity think of feeling full. Good feelings, thrills, emotions, and the like all have their undisputed place in Christian experience, and will doubtless be given as the Lord shall wisely decree, yet spiritual fullness is far deeper than any of these.

Billy Sunday declared that "a man's religion is not in his handkerchief but in his will," meaning of course emotions bringing tears to the eyes will quickly pass, but a Divine work within the nature producing a determination to do the will of God is more lasting and sure.

Fullness is not emotion. It is not brawling. It is not froth. It is rather a deep spiritual fact—a conscious possessing of the resources of God. Nowhere are we told to feel full but we are commanded to be filled.

Fullness is the conscious possession of God, and the inward knowledge that the entire personality is under His immediate control. Whatever emotional manifestation may be given is to be regarded as incidental to the experience and not an essential part of it. Feelings come and go, but the soul wholly yielded to God rejoices in an unbroken union maintained by the fact of the indwelling God.

II. The God possessed life maintains a continual flow.

Let none be tempted to regard this life in the Holy Ghost as something in the nature of a standing reservoir filled once for all. Our best figures of human thought fail to express a full idea, but for want of a better way of putting it we would think rather of a channel with a Godward and a worldward end. In other words, the blessing of full salvation is never independent of its Godward source. It is a fullness which is ever being filled and is ever on the flow.

Stillness breeds stagnation. Manna gathered for the purpose of hoarding, "bred worms and stank" after one day. (Ex. 16:20). The life that ceases to be a flowing stream will soon become a stagnant pool.

The forty-seventh chapter of Ezekiel's prophecy is an apt word picture of the flowing life. There is described a stream of living water flowing from the Temple of God.

Prophetically this chapter has doubtless a distinct dispensational meaning, but it comes to us also with a direct spiritual tone. "Ye are the temple" (I Cor. 3:17; 6:19). This ever-widening and constantly deepening stream has its source in the altar, the place of sacrifice (ver. 1), and to complete the thought the mind goes back to a farther source, the Throne of God itself. (Rev. 22:1). Ever fresh, it comes gushing and sparkling from the very heart of God and flows with spontaneous movement into a needy world.

These two things, then, are perfectly clear. The world is dependent upon our lives for its spiritual refreshment and we are dependent upon God. Therefore:

1. The inflow must be uninterrupted. Someone has coined the expression: "One baptism but many fillings." May we suggest by way of amendment, "One baptism, then a constant fullness maintained by a continual filling."

2. The outflow will then be unchecked. The outflow is really an overflow. It begins only when the level of our own need has been passed. Yet this overflow may be of such abundance as to be described in terms of "rivers." (John 7:37-39).

The need of the world today is the Christian with the overflow. You may be such an one. God has more blessing than you will ever need, and stands waiting to send the floods.

Somebody once prayed, "O Lord, we can't hold much but Thou can't overflow much."

Lord grant to the members of the blood-bought Church this super-abundant life!—Heart and Life.

A PRAYER

I would begin the day with Thee, dear Lord,
When I am fresh from last night's sleep,
With open mind and vision clear
To glean some message
From Thy Book, so old yet ever new—
Some message that would guide me
Through the day;
And I would pause awhile to pray,
And talk with Thee,
That I might better take my place
Among my fellow men.

—Mary Mohnkern

BUILT FOR STORMS

George W. Ridout

"The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force" Matt. 11:12.

Men and women who have brought things to pass for God and the Kingdom have been violent in this spiritual sense. Moses was violent as an intercessor (Ex. 32:32). Elijah on Mount Carmel before Ahab, and Daniel in the lion's den were violent men. Paul before Agrippa was violent when his intensity made the lawyer cry out, "Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad."

After the apostles came Luther, lifting up the torch of truth, lightening up the darkness of almost a thousand years. Luther said of himself, "I was built for storms and to be boisterous for the truth."

Faith is volcanic; faith is revolutionary. Faith has three elements: Vision, Venture, Victory. We must have the vision of faith to bring things to pass. It was the vision of faith that made the prophets and apostles pathfinders for us that follow. Hudson Taylor had the vision of Inland China that led to opening up that country for the Gospel.

Vision leads to venture. The men and women who have wrought righteousness, obtained promises and moved things for God in the midst of insuperable difficulties are those who have launched out into the deep with God. We cannot have victory unless with the daring and courage of reckless faith that takes no denial we venture out for God.

It is desperate, violent prayer that brings definite, positive answers. Praying Hyde spent days and nights prostrate before God in impassioned supplication for India. With streaming eyes he would reply to his fellow missionaries who begged him to restrain himself in his fasting and prayer: "Oh, God, save India!" As a result, Indian souls pressed through into the Kingdom by the thousands.

The apostles and preachers who have stirred the multitudes—Paul, Luther, Wesley, Booth—awakened their age with truth that was violent—and they were violent in preaching it. Verily, we need truth preached today in a way to shake and shock our nation and the world.

We need the kind of dedication to God that has sacrifice in it. That is the kind of dedication Paul and the martyrs had—they sacrificed their lives and their blood. We are too devoted to the easy and comfortable. What we need today is the devotion and dedication of ourselves to Jesus Christ which has the element of sacrifice in it.

Many who were once on fire for God are now extinct volcanoes. Too many of us have to give our testimonies in the past tense. We need a new, fresh baptism of fire that will fill us with the kind of enthusiasm the disciples had at Pentecost!—Herald of His Coming.

PRAY FOR REVIVAL

From the Day of Pentecost, there has not been one spiritual awakening in any land which has not begun in a union of prayer, though only among two or three; no such outward, upward movement has continued after such prayer meetings have declined; and it is in exact proportion to the maintenance of such joint and believing supplication and intercession that the Word of the Lord in any land or locality has had free course and been glorified.

—The late Arthur T. Pierson, D.D.

HOW DO YOU LOVE GOD?

How do you love God? Does all your being go out to Him? Is your heart, your soul, your strength, your mind, given up to loving God? Does your desire, your hope, your affection move out to Him? Does the spirit side of your nature thrill at the thought of Him? Do you devote your powers of bone and muscle and sinew to His cause? Do you exercise your mind and stretch your understanding that you may grasp the things of God? Is that how you love Him? You would not like God to love you partially. Do not give Him partial love.—Selected.