

## Have all the Gifts of Healing?

By Maynard G. James

Many years ago I first read about George Bowen of Bombay. When in Colombia in 1951 I came across a digest of Robert Speer's memoir of "the saint of India." It so stirred my soul that I felt I must pass it on to readers of "The Flame."

George Bowen, a brilliant and accomplished young American student, was at one time a confirmed agnostic. It was the serious illness of his fiancée that led to an awakening in his life. A former teacher of Bowen's lover, when she heard that the young woman was dying, literally forced herself into the sick room and led the poor patient to Jesus Christ. The transformation in the dying girl was such as to turn her into a joyful, radiant Christian, to whom the prospect of death no longer had any terrors. Her longing to be with her new-found Saviour convinced George Bowen that there was a life beyond the grave and that Christ was a risen and triumphant Lord.

Another factor in Bowen's conversion was the reading of Paley's "Evidences of Christianity"—a book given to him by mistake at a public library. Eventually the young American surrendered his whole life to Jesus Christ and became an ardent follower of the lowly Nazarene.

Then came the call to India. After a year in Bombay, pressing all the time to an even fuller life in Christ, he felt constrained to depend solely upon the Lord for the means of his livelihood, and to live in absolute simplicity, as near to his native brethren as possible. He wrote:—

"I want to have Jesus Christ walking about the streets of Bombay, as He did about those of Jerusalem, and living among his people as He did among the Jews. He was emphatically the Friend of the People. They were His family, His home . . . When in the streets—home is my goal . . . The street is something to be got out of. I want to have Jesus, the missionary, in my mind's eye continually. By the grace of God, I may at length learn to love. Love overcometh everything. It will be a blessed day when I feel at home in these streets, and can linger in them without any desire save to continue preaching the Word."

Bowen moved to the "bazaar," a very poor quarter of the city, ate the simplest of food, and preached daily to the people around him. His activities were many. Apart from preaching and discussing, he edited the "Bombay Guardian" and later on acted as Secretary of the R. T. S.

Also he wrote such works as "The Amens of Christ," "Love Revealed?" and "Daily Meditations."

But the great harvest of souls for which he ceaselessly prayed and ardently longed, was denied him during his lifetime.

In his early missionary days he had a conviction that, as a servant of Jesus Christ, he should be able to perform miracles as did the Master.

Bishop Robinson wrote concerning him:—

"It was strongly borne in upon his soul that it was his duty and privilege to authenticate his divine commission to the ignorant people among whom he toiled with so little success, by 'signs following.' The references in his journal are scanty and somewhat vague, but

it seems that after days and nights of prayer and study of the Word, he on one occasion essayed the healing of a sick or disabled person by a command of faith, and was signally unsuccessful. He was greatly humbled and confounded, but God held him in the hollow of His hand, and he suffered no eclipse of faith. "He never, however, abandoned the conviction that the

miracle-working power was recoverable  
by the Church

and ought to be an adjunct for missionary labours among idolatrous people, but we do not find any further attempts on his part to manifest or exert this power, though he appears to have sought it with prayer and fasting and many tears."

The fact that George Bowen, although denied the miraculous power he sought to heal the sick, persisted in his belief that signs and wonders ought to follow the preaching of the Gospel in the power of the Holy Ghost, finds its explanation in I Corinthians XII. In that important chapter on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, the Apostle makes it clear that the various outward manifestations are distributed according to the will and wisdom of God Himself. No single Christian, no matter how Spirit-anointed he may be, can demand from the Lord any particular gift of the Holy Spirit.

He is exhorted to covet earnestly the best gifts, and to desire prophecy; but these statements do not constitute a guarantee that any particular gift must of necessity be given to the seeker. The choice must be left to the sovereign will of the Holy Ghost. Hence the question asked by Paul at the close of the twelfth chapter:

"Are all prophets? Have all the gifts of healing?" The obvious answer is "No."

The greatest thing in George Bowen's life was his conformity to the image of Jesus Christ his Lord. Writing in his journal, he uncovers the deep aspirations of a truly sanctified saint:

"February 15: Considering Luke 9:22 and 23, the question arises, 'Can I be happy with Christ alone?' My heart answers, take away all the comforts I now enjoy, and I can be happy. I do not value these things and would rather be without them. Let me suffer from hunger and thirst and temporal calamities generally, and I feel I can still be happy. Let me be unnoticed by all men, abandoned, isolated, I can still be happy. Let me be treated with contempt and scorn and cruelty, let my pride be warred upon utterly, I believe—I don't know—I should need more of Christ than I have now. Let my labours be in vain, let fruit be wanting, and I feel in this I could not be happy. I would be miserable. But if it be God's will I am willing that it be so."

"God gave him this last test also. He never, himself, saw the fruit of his labours. Men did not come to him seeking baptism; there was no great turning to the Lord. But this also he learned to take from God's hands. He could say from his heart, 'I was not rebellious. My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me'."

It is not generally known that Queen Victoria was so richly blessed and comforted through his books, that when her son, the Prince of Wales (afterwards King Edward VII), visited India in 1875-6, he called to see George Bowen at his royal mother's command. The Prince said that he bore a message from the Queen thanking him for the inspiration his books had been to her.

## A GUARD DOWN, A LIGHT OUT

By A. Lenn Hartwig

The other night as I was driving at a fast rate of speed, I came upon a road block. The guard rail had been smashed, and on the ground lay the instrument that was intended to be my only guide. The lantern had been lit and placed there to guide me through the danger zone, but it was lying on the ground, its light out.

I got out of the car and walked over to the lantern. I picked it up. Nothing seemed to be wrong with it. It looked the same as any other lantern of its kind. I lit a match and held it to the wick; it would not light. My eyes fell then to the spot where I had picked the lantern up, and then I saw why it had gone out. It had spilled its light-sustaining power.

Life at its longest is short, and most of us are spending this short interval we call life in an accelerated manner. But in this short existence we are making plans for all eternity. God has placed you and me here for a purpose—on a guard rail, so to speak, with our red light flashing danger to those who would become entangled in sin. Our life will be the only life some will have to guide them through the danger zone. When we get out of place, we no longer keep the danger zone marked for ourselves, and how can we expect to show others the way?

Are we carelessly going to lose out of our lives the light-sustaining power, the only means of showing others the way to Christ?—Gospel Trumpet.

## BE STILL AND KNOW

How can God give us visions when life is hurrying at a precipitate rate? I have stood in the national gallery and seen people gallop round the chamber and glance at Turner's picture in the space of five minutes. Surely we might say to such trippers, "Be still and know Turner!" Gaze quietly at one little bit of cloud, one branch, or one wave of the sea or at one ray of the drifting moon. "Be still and know Turner!" But God has difficulty in getting us still. That is perhaps why He has sometimes employed the ministry of dreams. Men have had "visions in the night." In the daytime I have a Divine visitor in the shape of some worthy thought or noble impulse or hallowed suggestion, but I am in such feverish haste that I do not heed it and pass along. I do not "turn aside to see this great thing," and so I lose Heavenly vision. If I would know more of God, I must relax the strain and moderate the pace. I must be "still".—J. H. Jowett.

## FAITH IN ACTION

Faith in God not only means trustful confidence in a living, loving, known Person. It also means obedience to that Person's will. Faith accepts the fact of God. Faith rests in the joyous confidence which such acceptance brings. But faith is also active in response to all the revealed will of God concerning us in this life.—Colin C. Kerr.

Thus it was that one of God's choicest saints, whose ministry has been a blessing to multiplied thousands of people, learned to pray from his heart.

"Make me little and unknown,

Loved and prized by God alone."

—The Flame