

## THE PRESENCE AND THE POWER

By H. E. Jessop, D.D.

"But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you" Acts 1:8.

In these words, spoken by the Risen Lord, two facts are clearly set forth.

1. It is the privilege of His people to experience a "coming upon" of the Holy Ghost.

2. This "coming upon" will always bestow an accompanying endowment of "power."

The word "after" has been a cause of stumbling to some. They have insisted that since the power is to be received "after the Holy Ghost is come upon you," it is of necessity a third blessing. A little closer examination, however, will reveal that a more consistent rendering would be: "Ye shall receive power when the Holy Ghost is come upon you."

The thought of the power has sometimes been exalted above that of the Person. How we need to wait humbly upon God that we may receive His mind on these great truths. In the fall of the race our humanity has received a terrible twist. Our conception of things spiritual seems to be altogether out of gear. We so easily misplace things, and speak of consequences as though they were causes, so concerning ourselves with effects that the source from which they spring is often entirely overlooked. This is so in regard to sins in the life and sin in the heart, the seen being but the product of the unseen. It is no less true when we come to the sanctified life and think of power for service.

There are souls who perpetually crave for power. What they really seek is spectacular demonstration, something thrilling, an experience that will mark them off in the eyes of others as individuals who are more than ordinary. The faith walk has now little attraction for them. They want displays of power.

The desire for power, in itself, is not wrong. It is promised. "Power from on high." Nowhere, however, are we encouraged to become occupied with the power itself. It will ever be an effect of a definite cause. If we may use a modern figure, it is radiation resulting from installation. Only the abiding Presence contributes the so-much-coveted power.

### I. OUR CONCERN MUST EVER BE TO MAINTAIN THE FACT OF THE ABIDING PRESENCE

We must see to it that the Holy Spirit has sole possession and undisputed sway. It is our part to make sure of His abiding presence within the heart, not with the thought of a condescending tolerance, but in the spirit of absolute abandonment. We must see to it that the entire premises of our nature are at His disposal. We are to hand over the deeds of the property, telling Him to make whatever alterations He may desire. We should be as concerned about the fact of the Holy Presence within as was Moses about the fact of the Divine Presence with Israel. Read Exodus 33: 12-23 and notice his great concern. He is talking to God about someone to go with him. Jehovah replies: "My Presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest."

1. It is a Sustaining Presence.

It brings deep inward rest. (Ver. 14). Matchless experience this, the conscious indwelling of the invisible God. Nothing else could be sufficient to up-hold through the trying circumstances which faced him. The Presence was always more than enough.

2. It is a Separating Presence.

It separates the possessor "from all the people that are on the face of the earth." (ver. 16).

The great distinction between the God-possessed soul

and others is the unique and peculiar sense of the mystic Presence which others so readily discern but find difficult to describe. He possesses God and is God possessed, and thus other people recognize that while he is necessarily among them and ever ready to serve them, he is not one of them. He is environed by the presence of God.

Our Lord has something to say about this conscious indwelling.

"I will pray the Father and He shall give you another Comforter . . . the Spirit of Truth . . . At that day ye shall know that . . . I am in you . . . I will manifest myself" (John 14:16-21).

The incoming of the Comforter is essentially and inseparably associated with the inner manifestation of the risen, reigning Lord. Here we see this wonderful Presence as:

(1) A Consciously Possessed Presence.

(2) A Christ Exalting Presence.

The Holy Spirit never talks about Himself. He glorifies the Lord Jesus. (John 16:13,14).

### II. HIS CONCERN WILL EVER BE TO MANIFEST THE FACT OF THE ABUNDANT POWER

"Power," then, is not to be regarded as a blessing to be received subsequent to the Spirit's coming, but as a natural result of His presence within the life. The soul possessing the Person possesses the power. The source of spiritual energy is now within. "Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world" (I John 4:4).

Two things, however, need to be remembered, if this pent-up power is to be freely expressed:

1. It is the prerogative of the Holy Spirit to express Himself in His own way.

2. It is the privilege of the yielded soul to intelligently co-operate with the Holy Spirit, that His expressions may have their fullest value.

The Holy Spirit does not turn a man into a machine but recognizes him as a conscious, intelligent agent, capable of being a co-worker with God.

Thus we live and work, alive to the fact of His indwelling, alert for the indications of His outflowing, God Himself working in us—and flowing through us—to will and to do of His good pleasure.

## THE GRAVE OF THE DISCOURAGED TEACHER

In the city of Washington, many years ago, a teacher had in his class a mischievous boy who not only would not listen, or behave well, but who interfered with the other scholars giving their attention. The teacher became discouraged regarding the boy.

Later on the boy left Washington for the West, and there wasted his life in reckless dissipation. Years afterward he came to Baltimore and spent the night in debauchery, and next morning, while under the weakening spell of his dissipation, he started walking along the streets of Baltimore. He soon found himself in one of the city's cemeteries and suddenly noticed on a tombstone the name of his old Sunday-school teacher. A flood of memories rushed over him. Things that the teacher said came back to him. His heart melted, he pulled himself over the little railing, went to the grave, and there he gave his heart to Christ as he knelt down and kissed the very dirt on the grave of his faithful old teacher.

He entered the ministry and became the pastor of one of the most prominent churches in Virginia, and one of the most greatly beloved of all of the Virginia pastors.

And yet his old teacher had gone to his grave years before, feeling that his work was a failure as far as that boy was concerned. — Eldridge B. Hatcher, in Sunday School Times.