

wouldn't want the utter satisfaction down here, and the unspeakable joy up there, of having obeyed literally the Master's last command: "Go ye"?

In short, even if they do seem peculiar, who wouldn't want to be a missionary?

—The Sudan Witness

## — Guest Editorial —

### THE THEOLOGY OF RENEWAL

by W. T. Purkiser

Editor, "Herald of Holiness"

A Minister friend in reporting at a recent district assembly spoke of an experience which drew his attention to what he called "the theology of renewal." He did not explain all that he had in mind, but I think I know what he meant.

There is a large place in our holiness heritage for a theology of renewal. Without blurring the fact that conversion and entire sanctification are crisis experiences, we may yet find place for the "present tenses of the blessed life."

A good place to begin a study of the "theology of renewal" is the great passage in Acts 4 which reaches its high point in verse 31: "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness."

Undoubtedly this group included many who were being filled with the Spirit for the first time, converts since the Day of Pentecost. But there must have been many there to whom this experience was a new anointing, for they were all filled.

Dr. Daniel Steele used to illustrate this point with a homely little analogy he borrowed from William Arthur. At evening you may fill two vessels with milk—a pitcher and a baby. In the morning you will find that the pitcher is quite full, but the baby is empty and ready to be filled again.

There are various ways of expressing the theology of renewal. "Fresh anointing," "breaking up," "melting time" are terms we sometimes use. "Revival" is another way of speaking of the same need. There is "an anointing that abides"; and there is the special anointing for special crises.

Let no one think for a moment that this Apostolic Church had backslidden, or that those who had been at Pentecost had lost the Spirit. The truth is, the apostles were faced with a new situation. A crisis had arisen which put new and great demands upon them. All the weight of civil authority was being thrown against the Infant Church.

In such an hour the Church met for a great prayer meeting. Humbly they acknowledged the sovereignty of God (vv. 24-26). They reviewed the way in which their Lord had been treated (vv. 27, 28). They prayed, not that God would smash their opposition by a mighty act of supernatural power, but that He would grant to His servants "that with all boldness they may speak thy word" (v. 29), and that signs and wonders might be done in His name. "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together" (v. 31).

The renewal which came in this great meeting welded the Church into a strong unity: "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul" (v. 32). It was not a unity of judgment, seeing eye to eye at all points. It was a unity of love and faith.

It is not hard to see that divisions come in the visible church when the spiritual tides run low. Walking along the beach at low tide, you can see many isolated pools of water, separated by sandy stretches between. But

when the tide begins to rise, the little elevations and uneven places are covered in the fulness of the ocean.

Renewal brought a heightened sense of stewardship: "Neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own" (v. 32). Possessions, yes; ownership, no—this is the essence of stewardship. That it found expression in a manner of sharing which soon disappeared from the life of the Church does not change the underlying principle. What I possess I hold as a steward of God, in trustee-ship for the advancement of His cause in this world.

For us today, the paying of the tithes is the first recognition of our stewardship. After that, the giving of offerings expresses the gratitude and the love of a Spirit-filled heart. It is not hard for spiritual people to give to the cause of Christ.

Renewal meant new power for witnessing: "And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus" (v. 33). This is inseparable from the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church.

The apostles bore witness to the most startling fact in history. Jesus Christ, taken by wicked hands and slain, was raised by the power of God to become the ever-living Contemporary working with His Church (Mark 16:20) in its task of evangelizing the world.

This was no debate over fine points of doctrine, no theological hair-splitting, no comparison of the excellences or liabilities of human organization. This was a ringing testimony of the vital presence of Christ made real by the Holy Spirit.

Then, renewal brought new resources of grace: "and great grace was upon them all" (v. 33). Grace in this sense is the "staying power" of the Christian life. It is God's active, sustaining help in every need and emergency of life.

The theology of renewal will be of little value unless it leads us to the fact of renewal. A true theory is always better than a false one, but all the theory in the world will not lead one soul to Christ, sanctify one believer, or enrich the surrendered life.

Dr. Paul Culbertson has suggested an illustration of renewal from a well-known fact in the geography of the ancient world. The "bread-basket of the Mediterranean" was the rich and fruitful delta of the Nile. But the source of the fruitfulness of the delta was the fact that each year the flood-waters of the Nile spread out over the lowlands with an enriching layer of topsoil.

For the Nile is the coming together of two kinds of rivers: the lake-fed White and Blue Niles which flow evenly the year around, sustained by the unfailing snows in the mountains of north central Africa; and the Black Nile, which rises in the mountainous valleys of Ethiopia, where during the rainy seasons vast quantities of silt are swept down into the delta by the floodwaters which inundate the broad fields.

The even flow of the upper Nile is vitally important. But the harvests come from the floods which surge out over the banks. God's ancient prophet in the urgency of his hour gives us a clue for the need of ours: "Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon you" (Hos. 10:12).

### A SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIP

An unusual woman was being interviewed by a reporter. Although a widow for years, she had reared six children of her own and twelve adopted children. In spite of her busy and useful life, she was noted for her poise and charm.

The reporter asked how she had managed.

"You see, I'm in partnership."

"What kind of partnership?"

She replied, "One day, a long time ago, I said, 'Lord I'll do the work, and you do the worrying,' and I haven't had a worry since."

—War Cry