

# COVET EARNESTLY. By C. L. PARKER.

*Written for the Encouragement of All Pentecostal People.  
This Booklet is a reprint of articles published in REDEMPTION TIDINGS.*

## Foreword.

WHAT! Another book on spiritual gifts! Yes; and the more the better, for if anyone can shed more light on this vital topic, we are truly his debtors. It was to this purpose that I invited Mr. Parker to write a series of studies for *Redemption Tidings*. I felt that as Pentecostals we must keep this theme ever before our minds. And so there came the studies that here appear in book form.

The Pentecostal Movement is unique in its attitude to those supernatural manifestations of the Spirit we call "Spiritual Gifts". It is not so much that we experience them more than others, but that we have embodied the truth revealed in the Bible on this topic in *doctrine*. This has had a two-fold effect. First, the experiences of the Spirit came not to be regarded as isolated or temporary, but as part of God's provision for the Church. Thus these manifestations have not been sporadic, disconnected outbursts, but their regular ministry has been expected and maintained in our assemblies. Secondly, because they have become part of our adopted Statement of Beliefs, we have been able, and indeed obliged, to make these things known beyond the pale of our own fellowships. Thus, *preservation* and *propaganda* has gone hand in hand.

Mr. Parker's book is not exhaustive, but it is provocative. In its small compass, however, it covers much ground, drawing examples from both Old and New Testaments of the exhibitions of these divinely-bestowed gifts. The book is doctrinal, but not dogmatic: the author would be the last man to claim finality for his opinions. He would, doubtless, rather say with Paul: "Consider what I say, and the Lord give thee understanding in all things." His chief aim is to stir up a desire for these gifts, and if through these pages believers come into a fuller understanding and enjoyment of Spiritual Gifts, this book will have achieved its purpose.

May I commend these chapters to you? They are a distinct contribution to a subject so precious to all Pentecostals, and so necessary to all Christians. AARON LINFORD, Editor, *Redemption Tidings*

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## CHAPTER ONE. Introducing a Great Theme.

THE LORD JESUS came down from Heaven to save the whole world : but as long as He was in the flesh He felt Himself "straitened" or "hemmed in" (Luke 12:50). He had to spend the few years of His earthly ministry in a small country, preaching to an unappreciative nation. Even the fact that at Jordan He was baptized in the Holy Ghost, and after that could move in His power (Luke 4:14) did not satisfy Him. All His life He was looking forward to that prolongation of His ministry which should be His after the Resurrection (Isaiah 53:10). No longer then would He be confined to two feet and one tongue, but would be able to use a million tongues and

feet, freely offered to Him by His Brethren, and so penetrate all over the earth and send the good news of His Atonement to every creature.

Yet it was not enough that the message of Salvation should be universally proclaimed. Messiah though He was, and fully prepared by His Father during the hidden years of Isaiah 49:1,2, yet by Himself He could not meet the needs of His people, but required the power of the Spirit to back home His words and satisfy His compassion. Love without the ability to help those we love is a grievous burden, enough to break the heart! Luke 11:5-13 is a picture of Our Lord's heart,

faced as He was with a groaning nation, the malice of selfish rulers, and the cruel tyranny of Satan their oppressor. For eighteen years He knocked, and knocked, and knocked; until at length the door was opened and the Spirit descended upon Him with all the mighty power of God, and He went forth in the power of the Spirit (Luke 4:14) to do His Father's will.

To those who, like John Baptist (Matt. 11:2-6), or the leaders of the Jews (John 5), doubted His message, He appealed to the miraculous works which accompanied it. And He told His disciples that they too would need the same attestation in their world-wide ministry, and warned them not to move till they had received it. God's words need the witness of His acts (Mark 16:15-20; Acts 1:4-8), and Our Lord spoke of His followers doing even greater works than He had done Himself (John 14:12). To put it another way Our Lord looked forward to doing even greater things in His new Body, His Church, than He had done in His Galilean body of flesh and blood. The Church as a whole is now Christ's Universal Body, and each local Church is a local Body to meet local needs (Eph. 5:22-32; 1 Cor. 12:12-31).

### **The Gifts of the Spirit.**

It is against this background that we turn to the consideration of the Gifts of the Spirit. They are the essential means whereby Our Lord can prolong His earthly ministry, cut short by His crucifixion, in His new and splendid Body of countless members. It cannot be too strongly emphasised that the only real reason for seeking the Baptism in the Holy Ghost is to enable Our Lord to continue His life of power upon the earth. Any other motive for seeking the gifts of the Spirit is mistaken, and will lead to disappointment and even disaster, for power always leads to temptation and great power to great temptation. Secular history is full of illustrations of this truth, and the history of the Church of Christ tells of many men who began well, but were not able to finish. A man of power has temptations to face of which the little man knows nothing. Pride, covetousness, jealousy, popularity, all knock at his heart incessantly; and, as the Acts and the Epistles show, the pathway of the Church has been from the beginning strewn with splits and divisions and personal antagonisms which have crippled it, and at times brought it to a standstill. It is only when power is used to enable the Lord to do what He wants that the user is safe. It is the marvel of the Lord's life that with all His Power He never enriched or profited Himself. He saved others; Himself He could, but would not, save! Men who "turn the world upside down" invariably taste its retaliation. A powerless Christ might have died in His bed: it was the raising of Lazarus that sealed His doom (John 11:45-53).

At this point we may perhaps for a moment consider the two Scriptural descriptions of the Pentecostal experience. We may ask either, have you had your Baptism? or, have you received the Spirit? (Acts 19:2). The former draws attention to the first incoming of the Spirit, the latter to His continued manifestation of His presence. It was this latter that Paul missed at Ephesus. A true Pentecostal Church is not one whose members have "had their Baptism", but one in which the Spirit is able to manifest Himself in the nine ways mentioned in 1 Cor. 12:7-10. To draw an earthly parallel, we do not have a wedding day just for its own delights, but because it is the beginning of a life-long intimacy. The Mighty One who entered our bodies at the Baptism, does not desire to sit shackled and dumb, but to use His power constantly to do the things which Our Lord desires. A Pentecostal life is one in which, while we do what we can, the Spirit supplements our efforts by doing what He alone can. The words which we utter are to be constantly confirmed by the miraculous acts which He performs. A Pentecostal Church which lacks the Gifts of the Spirit is like any other godly Church, powerless though sanctified, limited though energetic. For the best efforts of men fall far short of the Power of God. Where God is inactive men are forced back upon themselves and their own abilities. An Israel, which could no longer look to God for the miraculous, fell back upon the standing army begun by an unbelieving Saul (1 Sam. 8:20 and 13:2). Yet the great armies possessed by Asa and Jehoshaphat were too weak to give victories over their more powerful enemies, and both Kings had to pray to God for the miraculous!

The last chapter in Israel's history sees them unable any longer to believe for the miraculous, and led away into a disgraceful captivity in Babylon. Such has been the sad fate of the Christian Churches, until today, the mere mention of the miraculous has brought ostracism and contempt. Let us, who know better, cling to the glorious heritage provided by the Spirit, and resist every effort of the enemy to make us more acceptable as members of an **un**supernatural Denomination!

### **The Church is the Unit.**

Here then is the place to emphasise two points which are so clearly put by Paul in 1 Cor. 12:

(a) It is to the Church that the powers of the Spirit are given through the individual, and not to the individual for himself. It is the Church which under its appointed leaders is the unit. The possession of a great gift from the Lord does not entitle, though it may tempt, its owner to go off on his own, or stand out from

others as if he were above them, or to expect because he has this gift to take a leading part in the Government of the Church. His gift, once he has received it, belongs to the Church, and the use to be made of it lies at the wisdom of its leaders. The Church is one body, knit together by love to do the Lord's will, and it does not matter through which member the gifts come: it is the whole body which is enriched and empowered.

(b) It is the Lord's will to give the greatest gifts to that part which lacks. Pastors are to encourage those members, who seem to have little of their own to give to the Church's work, whether through shyness, or age, or lack of self-confidence or ability, to look for the greater gifts (1 Cor. 12:22-25). It is bad for anyone to feel that they are not of much use, and can easily be done without. The Lord therefore desires to combat this by giving to any such a compensating gift, which will make them realise that they are needed and highly valued.

The Church then is to gather together when any particular manifestation of God's power is needed, and to expect the Lord to give it to whom He will. The Lord for His part has told every

member to "desire earnestly the greater gifts" (GK). "Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it" says Scripture. The reason for this is that it is not possible to get anything into a shut mouth! It is the open beak which receives the worm! Even God cannot enter the unwilling heart, or bless the lukewarm or fearful spirit. So Timothy was told by Paul to put away his fears and rekindle the gift which he had received (2 Tim. 1:6), instead of neglecting it (1 Tim. 4:14). It is only too easy to quench the Spirit (1 Thess. 5:19-20). Where this is done Churches that once were spiritually powerful soon become as powerless as Churches which have never heard of Pentecost.

#### **CHAPTER TWO. Tongues: Sign and Gift.**

The Pentecostal movement is known throughout the world as "The Tongues Movement". This is because from the beginning of the century ever-increasing numbers of Christians have received an experience of God, which has included uttering His praises in a language hitherto unknown to them.

Many Christians both before and after this outpouring have preached a Baptism in the Holy Ghost as a Scriptural and desirable enablement which they had themselves received, but of which they had no tangible evidence to give to others. This blessing was normally connected by them with sanctification or a clean heart. Such experiences are undoubtedly true and scriptural; e.g. Isaiah 6:1-8; but the Pentecostal Baptism in the Spirit was connected in Scripture not with sanctification but with supernatural power, not with a clean heart but with a miraculous enablement.

Pentecostals did not deny the need for sanctification and a clean heart, but they stressed that these blessings were not enough. Our Lord was always sanctified and the possessor of a clean heart, but He needed His experience at Jordan before He possessed power (Luke 4:14). The Apostles had clean hearts and sanctified souls before Pentecost (John 15:3 and 17:19) but they too lacked supernatural power till the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:8). The Baptism in the Holy Ghost in the teaching of the Scriptures, and of the Pentecostal Movement, pointed, not to holiness but to miraculous power. Our Lord had said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father", and then will send to them the same Holy Spirit who came and empowered Him at Jordan (John 14:16).

#### **Tongues: Initial Evidence.**

Sanctification is the work of the Spirit on the soul through the word of Truth (John 17:17-19). The evidence of this is the devoted life of the Believer. But the Baptism in the Holy Ghost was to impart supernatural power to the spirit, and the initial evidence of this was the ability to speak in an unknown language. Here was the proof that there were now two persons living in one body, the one speaking as before his own language, the other using the same tongue to speak a new language known to Himself.

Here, as Paul pointed out to the Ephesians (Eph. 1:13-14), was the seal upon the Sons of God of the new birth and its accompanying inheritance, though they still had to live for a moment in the old body of their humiliation. It is a clear sign that God, The Holy Ghost, has entered His Temple and is speaking from it (1 Cor. 6:19). It is not the sign, the speaking in an unknown tongue, that is the important thing about the Baptism in The Spirit. It is the amazing, almost incredible, fact of which it is the sign, that God is now in residence in His new Temple. He does not enter because we are especially virtuous, or successful. He enters because we have been bought by the Father through the costly sacrifice of His Son, and belong to Him for ever as His own Family. We may only be babes of an hour old, but we are Sons nevertheless, and The Holy Spirit witnesses to this overwhelming fact without delay (Acts 10:44-47). It is, as it were, God's Heavenly acknowledgment that a Son has been born (Rom. 8:16; Gal. 4:6; Acts 2:38; Eph. 2:22).

#### **Kinds of Tongues : Gift of the Spirit.**

This ability to speak in one unknown tongue is then the initial sign that The Holy Ghost is now in His Temple: but it is only the initial sign, and is meant to be followed by other gifts of more practical importance. The first of these to be considered is "kinds of tongues", i.e. the ability to speak in more than one new language. The initial sign of the Baptism is not "speaking in tongues", but "speaking in a tongue". "Speaking in tongues" i.e. more than one tongue, is one of the nine Gifts of The Spirit.

The value of speaking in one tongue is that we speak words, which we do not ourselves understand, to God, and so edify ourselves by pouring out our heart to Him in praise. So far however as our neighbour is concerned it will only mystify him, and he will say we are mad or drunk, and not be edified (1 Cor. 14:23) unless he may happen to understand the language we are speaking, in which case of course he will be forced to think, and ask what it is and what it means, as happened on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:7-13).

When however we are enabled to speak in more than one language by The Spirit, it is clear that much greater possibilities of usefulness are opened out to us. Some years ago this Magazine contained an account of a lady visitor, who in the course of her work came across a Chinaman dying in an attic. He could not understand her English and paid no attention to her, until she was able to speak to him in Chinese, a miracle which resulted in his salvation. The lady on leaving him was directed by the Spirit to talk to two Japanese, who were standing on the street, in their own language, and one of them was thus led to the Lord.

It is stated that quite recently a Pentecostal Evangelist preaching in Russia, whose interpreter spat at him and refused to continue interpreting, was enabled by the Spirit to finish his sermon in Russian. But wherever Missionaries have thought that this gift would spare them the trouble of learning the language of those to whom they went, they seem to have been disappointed: doubtless because a knowledge of the language was necessary if the Scriptures were to be translated, and also the gift was not meant to enable us to carry on the ordinary conversation of life, but to convey the thoughts and needs, not of the Missionary but of the Holy Spirit. It must always be kept in mind that the Gifts of The Spirit are to express the desires of The Spirit, not of the possessor of the Gift.

It would seem however that, when it is the will of the Holy Ghost, the possession of this gift can counteract the curse of the confusion of tongues, and enable the Gospel Message to be made known, to the salvation of souls. Of this there are modern examples. As I write my attention is drawn to an instance of this given in the C.E.M. magazine (Page 7) for March, 1960 in which a young native boy, speaking in a native language that neither he nor the others around understood, was yet speaking to a native woman who did happen to come from where that language was spoken. She understood him and found that through him God was answering all the arguments she had used against Christianity! As a consequence she gave her heart to the Lord.

### **Tongues in the Assembly.**

The ability to speak in a foreign language however is of no profit in an Assembly unless:

(a) there happens to be a stranger present who knows the language spoken: in this case of course he will be astounded at the miracle and acknowledge that God is in the midst and so he may be converted; or

(b) there is someone in the Assembly to whom the Spirit gives the interpretation of the tongue in the language of the listeners. In which case it may be linked with prophecy, as a presentation of the mind of the Spirit. The Greek word translated "interpretation" does not primarily mean "translation". It is used for example in Luke 24:27 of Our Lord "expounding" the Old Testament Scriptures (cf. verses 32 and 45) and it is normally translated "expound", "explain", "give the meaning of". The interpretation may then be longer or shorter than the tongue of which it may give a shorter or longer exposition. The interpreter may receive his gift before, during, or after, the tongue: he may launch out upon a single sentence, and receive the rest thought by thought as he is speaking. In any case he recognises the reception of the gift, whenever or however it is given, by the unction which is coming upon him: and this unction abides also upon those listeners who are filled with the Spirit. As Peter says, 2 Peter 1:21, "Holy men of God spake as they were carried along by The Spirit". There is no effort in such speaking: no searching for words, no wondering what to say next. As long as the unction is upon you you speak with ease and delight. When it lifts you have no more to say and come to a stop. This is a beautiful gift since it brings two members of an Assembly into a combined ministry of love and edification for the rest of the Church.

The one member may not have the faith to speak in his own language words which can be understood, and yet be free to speak in a tongue words of which he does not know the meaning. For, as soon as one utters words which one understands, one is responsible for what one says: but when one speaks in a tongue the responsibility for the meaning of the words rests upon the interpreter. And it is indeed a very responsible thing to utter words which purport to come from the Almighty.

There seems therefore to be as it were an increase of responsibility in the use of the gifts of the Spirit; and, as the Scriptures say, he that has faith to speak in a tongue should pray for the faith to interpret his tongue, and so edify the Church, and not only himself. We see here then the first steps in the ascending scale of usefulness in the gifts: "greater is he that prophesies than he that speaks in tongues, except he interpret" (1 Cor. 14:5). And so we are to covet earnestly "the greater gifts" (1 Cor. 12:31). It is clear from Our Lord's ministry that His power too increased, for example from the raising of a little girl just dead on her bed, through the raising of a young man being carried out to his burial, to the amazing raising of a stinking corpse, which caused, in the words of his enemies, "the world to go after Him". In the same way Moses' power advanced from turning a rod into a serpent, through the various plagues in Egypt, up to the drowning of the armies of Egypt in the Red Sea. There is in the Bible no limit to the gifts which the Lord is willing to give to His brethren,

except the plain statement of 1 Cor. 12:23-25, that the greater gifts are especially for those that lack any other useful endowment.

### **CHAPTER THREE. Prophecy.**

WE ARE NOW entering upon the study of "the greater gifts", and it may be well to begin by the consideration of a misapprehension, which is responsible for a great deal of spiritual poverty. We are inclined to think that the real prophets of Israel were far superior to us, and much nearer to God than we are, and that we cannot expect, e.g., to prophesy as they did. This is a false humility which directly contradicts the words of Our Lord. When the disciples of John Baptist came to question Him, he stated that John was a prophet and more than a prophet, and indeed that of men born of women there had not arisen a greater than he; but He immediately went on to assert that the least in the Kingdom of God was greater than John Baptist, because born of God, and therefore as a Son of God he was more privileged than any son of man, or even any angel. And He warned the disciples to call no man on earth father, for God in Heaven was now their Father; and to forget this would be to shut their minds to the glory of what had happened to them.

It is right to think as poorly as we will of our past selves, but not to minimise the exceeding grace of Our Lord, who is not ashamed to call us brethren. If God then used His servants as prophets, for Moses was faithful in all his house as a servant, should we think it strange that He should so use His Sons? Every Son of God who is baptized in the Spirit is not only one of Our Lord's Brethren, but is also indwelt by the Third Person of The Trinity. Why should he therefore think it extraordinary to prophesy? It is indeed only too easy to become shortsighted and live as men, as Paul says, so that we only see Mr. or Mrs. "So-and-So", and overlook the marvellous truth that they are members of The Royal Family, and Heirs of God, and that the Spirit of Prophecy is resident in their bodies.

But whatever our doctrine may have been, in practice we have found it tremendously difficult to believe that God The Spirit is within us. If we were fully to believe this, we should expect Him continually to manifest Himself in our Assemblies in all the Nine Gifts when needed. The Baptism in The Spirit was not offered to every believing Israelite; they were but servants, and it was their Lord who chose whom He would, often against their will, as Moses or Ezekiel, to do His Work. But from His own Family God will withhold no good thing but will freely give us all; and it depends upon us, not Him, whether we accept the Spirit and His gifts or not. Therefore we are exhorted to covet them.

#### **What is a Prophet?**

We may now return to the subject of this article, Prophecy. The word "prophet" simply means one who is the mouthpiece of another, who for some reason or another is not able to speak for himself. Thus God said to Moses, who pleaded his inability to speak to Pharaoh, that his brother

Aaron should be his "prophet" (Exod. 7:1). Moses was to put the words which he had from God into Aaron's mouth. A prophet then is the mouthpiece of another; and Christian prophets are the mouthpieces of the Holy Spirit who entered them at their baptism in The Holy Spirit. As Paul points out in 1 Cor. 14:25, an unbeliever to whom God speaks through a prophet will report, not how wonderful the prophet is, but that "*God is in you of a truth*", since the prophet has revealed to him secrets that only God could know. This gift of prophecy is then one which we are all to covet.

There can be no greater blessing than to be a prophet and thus enable God to speak whatever He may want to say at any particular moment. All the Children of God are, of course, able to speak for God, if they only repeat the words which He has caused to be written in the Bible. But this is not prophecy, and does not make a man a prophet. A prophet is not a preacher of revealed truth, but is a man through whom God can speak words which He wants said at any particular moment to any particular person or persons. It is an utterance of words which the Holy Ghost wishes to say at that time and place, and will, of course, have a definite aim in the mind of God, which may or may not be known to the prophet. For no prophecy ever comes by the will of man, but of God. When these words have been uttered the prophet's work is done. It remains for those in authority in the Assembly to sift what has been said and take notice of it. For since prophecy is the words of God in the mouth of a prophet it is worthy of the greatest attention, as are all the words of God. If the Bible is the staple food of all Christians throughout the whole age, then prophecy is the day-to-day conversation of the Spirit to any individual or Church to which He wishes to speak. As Our Lord said, "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name there am I in the midst."

#### **The Uses of Prophecy.**

It may then be helpful here to look at some of the uses of prophecy given in the New Testament after Pentecost.

1. *For evangelization* (1 Cor. 14:24, 25). The Holy Spirit can use a prophet to enter the secrets of the heart and convince a man that God is speaking to him. What limitless possibilities lie here for the local Assembly! There is no need to ask an Evangelist to come; he will be better employed amongst those for whom no Church is available. But every Church in which there are prophets can expect The Spirit to speak directly to the sinner in a way that cannot be mistaken.

2. *For building up, exhorting and comforting the Assembly* (1 Cor. 14:3). There will from time to time come into any Assembly members with hidden conflicts, fears and needs, which not even the best Pastor can, or ought, to know. But again through a prophet, the Holy Spirit can reach where man cannot, and can say the very thing that needs saying. The letters to the seven Churches supply many examples of this use of prophecy. The messengers of the seven Churches, sent no doubt to convey the love of the Churches to John in his prison—for there was no public postal system in those days—took back with them what the Lord wished to say to each Church in its own peculiar situation at the time. Thus the Churches were built up or exhorted or comforted as the need might be. So too Timothy was told not to allow the spiritual gift he had received through prophecy and the laying on of Paul's hands to lie dormant, but to rekindle it and go forward bravely (1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6).

3. *Prophecies are also given us to enable us to fight a good fight against the Devil* (1 Tim. 1:18). They come either to warn us of great opposition or to encourage us with great promises, or both. Our Lord pointed out on the way to Emmaus the Old Testament predictions which had shown Him a plain but fearful path, in the light of which He spoke of what He would do after death with as much certainty as if He were already alive again. It was through their ignorance and unbelief that the apostles were so much in the dark and therefore defeated. It was through the prophecies which continually met him on His way to Jerusalem that Paul was not overwhelmed. Unfortunately, Paul had bound himself by an oath (Acts 20:22) against the Scripture of James 5:12, and found himself obliged (Deut. 23:21) not only to disregard the prophecies which would have restrained him, but also to play the hypocrite at James' suggestion (Acts 21:20-26) and enter into the deserted Temple at Jerusalem, as if the Lord were still there, and the Law of Moses was still in operation. This obliged the Lord to take him prisoner and lead him out of Jerusalem, never to return there, so that he described himself as "The prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles" (Eph. 3:1). It is a dangerous thing to disregard prophecy, and Paul had left the Gentiles, as at Ephesus, to hurry back to an obsolete Jewish Festival. Yet his sufferings in Jerusalem did not come as an unexpected shock, but as a trial of which he had had full warning, and against which he was fully armed, the reason for which he fully understood. Never again would he visit the infidel Temple at Jerusalem, of which Our Lord had foretold the destruction.

4. *Finally our Lord uses His prophets to foretell future events*, as Agabus foretold the famine that was to come, and thus enabled the Church to make preparation for it. So also Paul was able to foretell the happy conclusion of the shipwreck upon an island, and his trial before Caesar (Acts 27:23-26) and thus save the desperate situation. So the Camden Town Assembly, threatened with the requisition of their Hall by the Local Council, for which they paid rent, were told through prophecy that they could either have their own Hall or another. They chose to retain their own, and then were told that the Lord would give it to them. They laid hold upon these promises as the Word of God through a prophet, and both promises were, against all likelihood humanly speaking, wonderfully performed. Their Hall was at the very last moment derequisitioned, and then was freely given to them by the owners! I can myself testify that every major event in my Pentecostal life has been clearly foretold in prophecy long before it occurred, so that even in the worst trials I have had, as Peter says (2 Pet. 1:19), "a light shining in a dark place." Mr. Howard Carter used to tell us at the Bible School that The Lord had said to him in prophecy that he should have heaps upon heaps of money for the School, some of which should come upon camels! And, indeed, much came through the generosity of an Eastern merchant! The Lord is not less present in His Church than He was in His Nation! As there were many prophets in Israel, and Moses said, "Would to God all the Lord's People were prophets" (Num. 11:24-29), so Paul took it for granted that even in Corinth there would be more prophets than could all speak in the same meeting!

#### **CHAPTER FOUR. Some Problems of Prophecy.**

SO FAR WE have been considering prophecy from the positive angle: but there are many questions that arise in practice that need an answer. Since prophecy is such a powerful weapon in our spiritual warfare it is obvious that Satan will use every means to blunt it, or discredit it, or turn it in some way against its possessor. This he has indeed done with much success, until today it is treated with scant respect.

It is clear from the Scriptures that there are many false prophets gone out into the world, and that therefore we are not to believe any spirit without testing it. 1 John 4:1-3 shows us one of the tests which is to be applied. But this is nothing new. God's people have always had to discriminate between true and false prophets. The Israelites had at times many more false prophets than true ones in their midst; but they were nevertheless expected to be able to recognise the true ones, and follow them. From Elijah who faced hundreds of false prophets in Israel, (1 Kings 18) and Micaiah fighting a lone battle before Ahab, (2 Chron. 18), to Jeremiah in the last fatal days of Jerusalem, (Jer. Chapters 28 and 29), the conflict between the true and false continued: but God's people were equipped to recognise which was which, and to obey the true. Moses in Deut. 13:1-5 and 18:17-22 laid down the rules for safety. Any prophet, such as in our times a Spiritist or Mormon, who seeks to lead away from the truth which God has revealed in His Word is not to be accepted, even if he backs up his error with a sign which comes to pass; and any prophet who gives a sign which fails to come to pass is likewise to be rejected. At this particular point in history there is about to be staged in Jerusalem the last gigantic fight between false and true prophets (Rev. 11 and 13): the former will even bring down fire from heaven: but in this great conflict the two witnesses will be recognisable by the fact that they stand for the Word of God in contrast to the false prophets who seek to deny it.

In 1933 a student at the Hampstead Bible School prophesied of the tapers which were burning so brightly at that time and in whose light we were all rejoicing, that they would all go out, and that the Lord would send a wind to blow away the ashes, after which He would light lamps. In a short time those lovely tapers were no longer burning and have had no successors; and today we are to look forward to the raising up, not of more tapers, but of Churches ablaze with the Gifts of the Spirit to the blessing of all around. At the beginning there were no Churches; they sprang from the light of the tapers; but today there are many Churches, which could burst into flames at the touch of the Holy Ghost. Lamps are brighter than tapers, and we are to look forward to even more blessed things in the future than we enjoyed in the past.

### **Deadly Scepticism and its Answer.**

We are warned however in the Scriptures that there is a very real danger of quenching the Spirit and making nothing of prophesying (1 Thess 5:20), so that either, as is very common, there is no prophesying at all in the Assembly nor any desire for it; or, if there is, it is passed by, as were Ezekiel's prophecies, as a pleasant song without any practical value. We hear, but do nothing about it. (Ezek. 33:30-33). This spirit unfortunately leads to a general undervaluing of the prophetic gift. Apparently even Timothy had fallen into this error, and needed to stir up his gift instead of neglecting it. (2 Tim. 1:6; 1 Tim. 4:14).

When The Spirit speaks it is important that His words should be correctly received. In the Old Testament we are given examples of Baruch (Jer. 36, and Isaiah 30:8, and Habakkuk 2:2) being told to write down prophetic words, and the existence of the Old Testament prophecies in the Bible is the evidence that they were so written. Since prophecy should be "judged" by "the others" it is difficult to see how this could take place unless the words had in some way or other been correctly reported. A shorthand writer, if there should be one in the Assembly, could be a great help in this way. In ordinary practice however, no attempt is made either to capture or judge what is said. It is taken almost for granted that no real attention need be paid to it, and certainly nothing to be done because of it. There lies behind this practice a profound spirit of scepticism, which robs all prophetic ministry of its power, and yet is by its nature illogical. Either prophecy is God speaking through a man or it isn't. If it isn't, then it is a dangerous fraud and ought to be forbidden: if it is, it is worthy of the greatest attention. Are the words of The Lord ever to be lightly regarded, does He ever say things which may safely be ignored? It is clear from the Bible that prophecy needs to be considered by those to whom The Lord is speaking, and this cannot be done unless we are sure what has been said.

This scepticism, which today is bearing such deadly fruit, arises from our failure to judge prophecy scripturally and give it its proper place. It is true that there are difficulties connected with the prophetic gift, but there always were, and there is an answer for each of them.

(A) *The prophet may be prophesying out of an evil heart.* This is not a great difficulty, except in a large Meeting where the prophet is unknown. But there are two infallible signs whereby such a one can be detected:

1. All Spirit-filled believers are immediately jarred by the prophecy and find themselves uneasy and unable to accept it. The Holy Spirit has borne witness to the deception.

2. The false prophet, whether in or out of an Assembly, always has a harsh and overbearing spirit and insists on being accepted. Whereas the true prophet has a meek and gentle spirit as has His Lord, and in his prophecy has no axe of his own to grind, as the false prophet always has.

(B) *The meaning of the words may be misunderstood or misapplied.* This is especially possible where no record of them is taken. An example of such a misunderstanding of the Lord's words is given in John 21:21-23 for our warning: and the whole Jewish Nation has misunderstood their own prophetic Scriptures, and fulfilled Isaiah 53 without realising it! The words of the Lord to Jacob in Gen. 28:10-22 said nothing about Laban or Leah, neither did Joseph envisage an Egyptian prison after his dreams! It must have seemed as if the predictions were false! God often speaks to try us! (Ps. 105:19).

Again when the prophecy is given in the Assembly it is possible to apply to oneself words which are for someone else. If the prophecy is simply a statement of general truth all may apply it to themselves if they are helped by it. But if it seems to go further than this, and to be speaking to some individual in some detailed way, then the judging of it will make this clear, and the others will not apply it to themselves. Great care should be taken not to get into the habit of applying all prophecy to oneself without even judging it. We are not meant to govern our lives by words uttered to the whole Assembly, unless there is overwhelming evidence that the Lord is speaking to us alone, and in that case there will be confirmation in other ways.

(C) *The time factor may also easily mislead us,* if we jump to conclusions. Where prophecy is received under a great anointing it is so vivid that one expects its fulfilment immediately. The Old Testament prophets were perplexed by this, (1 Pet. 1:10-12), and needed a further revelation to make matters plain (cf. Dan. 12:4-9). My own experience is that The Lord gives warning or promise, not days, but years before the actual fulfilment, and as the years pass by it is very possible to forget His words or doubt them. So I was warned through the mouths of two Missionary Students in 1932 that I was to go through a period of the thickest, blackest darkness; but it was not till 1936 that that fearful darkness suddenly overwhelmed me in a train on my way to a Convention, and never lifted till 1943, when equally suddenly I saw the small light which

had been promised in the prophecies, and again spoke in tongues and magnified God, and slowly emerged into full light again. The time lapse had caused me to forget and misunderstand.

(D) *Finally, at times blessings promised through a prophet do not come to pass*, because sin or unbelief have come in, as in the case of Israel's passage into Canaan, which was put off until the unbelievers had perished in the wilderness, or the tragic defeat at Ai in spite of God's promise that none should withstand them, a defeat which mightily upset Joshua, and caused him to reproach God! At that time The Lord made it plain that where there was sin He would not perform His word. One sinful family is enough to bring a whole nation or an entire Assembly to disaster!

Some have drawn a distinction between the prophets mentioned in Eph. 4, and those of 1 Cor. 12-14, as if the former were a special class of greater dignity. But there is nothing in the original language to uphold this distinction. On the contrary it is the so-called lesser prophets of 1 Cor. who are placed directly after Apostles, as in 1 Cor. 12:28 and Eph. 4:11. There are of course differences between prophets both in Old and New Testaments, but that is not a difference of essence but of degree. Some prophets have the faith to utter words from God from which the others would shrink. A few years ago a sister from U.S.A. was the speaker at a Kingsway morning Convention Service. The Meeting was very hard and dry; but the sister prophesied that The Lord would pour out His Spirit upon us that morning. Anyone would have prophesied that The Lord would pour out His Spirit: a smaller number would have been willing to say "that day". But who would venture to say "that morning" when the Meeting was extremely dry? The sister preached, the Chairman was closing the Meeting, when all of a sudden down came the Spirit of God upon us and the Platform found themselves upon their knees, praising God with full hearts, and all the congregation was moved. That daring prophecy had come to pass! Let everyone prophesy according to the proportion of his faith (Roms. 12:6). All are mouthpieces of The Spirit, but all need equally to be "judged" by "the others".

#### **CHAPTER FIVE. The Greater Gifts.**

WE HAVE now to consider the remaining six "greater gifts" (Gk.) of 1 Cor. 12:31. But before doing so we may repeat that whatever difficulties may arise in the use of the Gifts of the Spirit, the solution is not to be found in jettisoning the gifts but in searching the Scriptures for guidance in the matter. It is folly in throwing away the bath water to lose the baby also! The theme of the addresses of the late John Wallace was that our beloved Assemblies of God are in grave danger of being unable to press through what he called the spiritual "sound barrier", which has hitherto prevented all Revival Movements from being used a second time for Revival.

This is a problem of the first importance, for we shall, of course, find that those Assemblies which have no faith in, nor desire for, prophecy, which we are expressly told to covet, will find it impossible to expect to receive or manifest those greater gifts of the Spirit which we are about to consider. Yet all Pastors should scripturally (1 Cor. 12:31) be encouraging their members earnestly to covet just these greater manifestations of the Holy Spirit, and to be able to rely implicitly upon Our Lord's astonishing words in John 14:12, "He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also: and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto My Father." For having so gone back to Heaven, the Lord was to receive the Holy Spirit and send Him to His Church. Even the Corinthian Church, which was so lacking in goodness that Paul hesitated to pay them a second visit, yet came behind in no Gift (1 Cor. 1:7), for it is faith not merit, which is the basis of our standing with God: if we can believe, all things are possible to him that believeth (Mark 11:20-24). The difference between Pentecostal Assemblies and other Christian bodies lies, not in superior consecration—no one could hope to be more consecrated than the C.I.M. or W.E.C.—but in our ability to believe for the miraculous gifts of the Spirit; where this is lacking our advantages are gone and we may be, and often are, less successful in God's service than our brethren. But where these gifts are being manifested, as in the ministries of Branham, Osborn, Bhengu and many others, and in the Churches of the C.E.M., there the Gospel, being miraculously attested is far more readily received, and the powers of darkness more decisively defeated.

Returning now to our consideration of the six remaining Gifts of the Spirit, we shall find that in all but one, i.e. Faith, there is a question of translation to be considered first. The R.V. corrects the A.V. in three instances, giving us Gifts of Healings, workings of miracles, and discernings of spirits. In other words, there is no such thing as the ability to heal or work miracles or discern spirits at will, but each healing, miracle, or discerning of a spirit is a separate gift according to the will of the Spirit. Then also the Greek says, not *The Word of Wisdom* or *The Word of Knowledge* but *A Word of Wisdom* and *A Word of Knowledge*. There is then, I think, no such spiritual gift as the ability to speak with wisdom or knowledge, when one will. This ability can come to any Christian, whether baptized in the Holy Ghost or not, and is the result of Bible Study and maturity in the Christian life. But "a word of wisdom" and "a word of knowledge", as mentioned in 1 Cor. 12, can only come to one who is baptized in the Holy Ghost, and does not spring from any natural ability, however developed, nor any exertion of the human will. They are expressions of the wisdom and knowledge of the Holy Ghost, not of the recipient, and are, like all the gifts, miraculous interpositions of the Lord to meet the needs of the moment.

There lies behind the immediate advantages given by these Acts of the Spirit the great aim that those amongst whom these gifts are used may be led to say that "God is in you of a truth" and so accept the salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 14:25). It is in itself a difficult thing to believe that someone of whom you know nothing at all is indeed the messenger of the Living God, with a message of eternal Life or Death in his mouth! God has, in fact, never desired this to take place, but has always wished to accredit His messenger's



words by His own actions (Mark 16:15-20). Indeed, even His own Beloved Son (Luke 4:14) and His disciples (Matt. 10:8), as well as His apostolic Church (Acts 1:4-8) did not begin their ministry until their words could be accompanied by the Spirit's acts. From Moses (Exod. 4) to Paul (Acts 28:7-10) there is a continuous work of the Holy Spirit to enable men to receive the words of His messengers as the Words of the Living God, and this Age will end with the last struggle in Jerusalem between the lie spoken by the man of Sin, backed up by the power of Satan, and the Truth spoken by the two Witnesses and backed up by the power of God. The modern conception of a non-miraculous Christianity is simply a hangover from the unbelief of the Middle Ages. There is no such thing in either Old or New Testament. In both, God is "the Living God" who "hath done whatsoever He hath pleased" in contrast to the idols of the heathen who "neither speak nor see nor hear."

#### **CHAPTER SIX. Words of Wisdom and Knowledge.**

"A WORD OF WISDOM" then is given by God to His people when they are faced with a problem beyond their power to solve by themselves. There is a good example of it in Joshua 8, where a defeated and humbled Israel is shown by the Lord what tactics to use against Ai, or in 2 Kings 3, when Elisha is enabled to tell the godly King Jehoshaphat what to do when the armies had no water to drink. So, too, in John 8, when Our Lord was cornered by the Pharisees over the woman taken in adultery He received a word of wisdom which put them to flight, even as Solomon had been enabled to solve the riddle of the two harlots by the wisdom of God (1 Kings 3:16-28). In the same way Paul, when he was perplexed about his next step, was directed by the Lord to go, not to Asia, which he was to visit later, but to Europe, which was ready for his message (Acts 16:6-10). Again, in Acts 15 when the Church was faced with a particularly grave problem, after all their disputing and coming to a decision, the Holy Ghost intervened (v. 28) and corroborated their findings with His own word of wisdom. It was this divine corroboration, "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us", which the Apostles put first in their message to the Gentiles. So also it was the Holy Ghost who showed Philip to contact the Eunuch of Ethiopia (Acts 8) and so to found a Christian Church which has lasted till today; who showed the praying leaders at Antioch the next step to take in world Evangelization (Acts 13); who equipped Peter to meet the new situation at Caesarea (Acts 10), and showed Our Lord whom to choose as His Apostles after a night of prayer (Luke 6:12-13).

A quite modern example of this gift is of a sister in one of our Assemblies, who had prayed for a certain old lady for over two years without seeing her or having any idea how to deal with her. One day, however, as she was praying the Lord told her to go and visit her. So, having asked her pastor to accompany her, she knocked at the old lady's door. When the old lady came and saw her she asked what she wanted, and, on being told that the Lord had sent her, related to this sister how she had asked God to send her someone to tell her how to be saved from Hell. She had given God a month in which to do this, after which she would trouble no more; and this was the last day of the month! As a consequence of this word of wisdom not only was the old lady saved herself, but also some old men who lodged in her house! The Lord knew how to solve our sister's problem and give her the guidance she needed; and the old lady was brought to a saving faith by the dramatic message from God at what He, and He alone, knew was the very last moment!

There has, however, arisen amongst us a prejudice against seeking for, or accepting a word of wisdom from God in our deliberations, and a preference for depending upon the vote of the majority. So strong is this feeling that when from time to time the Holy Spirit has attempted to intervene He has been completely disregarded, as if there were something out of order in the matter! Yet Joshua was blamed for not seeking counsel of the Lord (Joshua 9:14; cf. Num. 27:21), and the Early Church was not content with their own decision but required it to be ratified by the agreement of the Holy Spirit (Acts 15:28, cf. 13.2). There can be no question that in the history of Israel and of the Early Church the Holy Ghost came at the beginning as Leader (Joshua 5:14; John 16:7-13) with all the manifestations of His Presence to ensure the victory of God's people. And in both cases the history of God's people was a progressive unwillingness, and then inability, to believe or trust in the supernatural manifestations of the Holy Ghost, which led in the one case to the defeat and captivity of Israel, and in the other to the impotence and unbelief of the Middle Ages. This has been the downfall of every Revival which has begun with an outpouring of the Spirit and ended in the formation of an unspiritual Denomination. It is natural to men to prefer to rely upon their own abilities rather than trust in an unseen God who gives aid but also demands obedience (1 Sam. 8:19, 20). A denomination tends to desire no master but itself: God's Church is meant to be under obedience to the Spirit, who has plans of His own, and the ability to bring them to a successful conclusion. History has shown that even a Pentecostal Church can desire the power of God to bring its own plans to pass, instead of asking the Spirit to reveal His plans; and so those who have begun in blessing have ended up in failure. God does indeed desire shafts, but they must be polished shafts (Isa. 49:2), whose aim is to find and do the will of the Heavenly Bowman, who shot Elijah into Mt. Carmel not Mt. Horeb, (1 Kings 19:9), and Jehu against Baal, but then found him worshipping Jeroboam's calves, not Himself, (2 Kings 10:31).

#### **CHAPTER SEVEN. More about the Greater Gifts.**

##### **A Word of Knowledge.**

THE BIBLE is full of instances where a man of God was likely to be deceived, and needed to be told the facts of the case by the Spirit of God. Thus Ahijah was warned about the visit of Jeroboam's wife (1 Kings 14:5), and Elisha was shown Gehazi's treachery and dismissed him, who then took up service in the King's court (2 Kings 5:20-27; 8:4). And in Acts 5:1-9, God saved the early Church from the hypocrisy of Ananias and Sapphira which was calculated to destroy the beautiful atmosphere of sincerity in which it began. The awful

effect of such deception is exposed in the next chapter, when the Grecians were suspicious of the financial integrity even of those who managed the Church affairs!

By such gifts the King of Israel was saved from the attacks of the King of Syria, when Elisha was able to tell him about the disposition of the Syrian armies (2 Kings 6:9), and Noah and his family were saved from destruction by the Flood (Genesis 6:17), combined with the accompanying Word of Wisdom, which enabled them to build an Ark which would be able to survive the catastrophe. Again, it was a word of knowledge which enabled Daniel to tell King Nebuchadnezzar his dream, and thus laid the foundation of his subsequent conversion (Daniel 2:29, 30, 47; 4:1-3) and saved the lives of Daniel and his companions.

Then again the Lord used this gift to convince Nathanael that He was the Son of God (John 1:49) and the Samaritan woman that He was Messiah, thus bringing the men of her city to a like faith (John 4:29, 39). Our Lord also was shown what was in the minds of His enemies and was thus enabled to deal with them (Mark 2:6-8). So, too, he knew from the beginning who it was that should betray Him, and so was forearmed against the shock when it came.

On the other hand, through lack of seeking counsel from God and so receiving a Word of Knowledge from him, Joshua saddled Israel with the Gibeonites for hundreds of years against God's will (Joshua 9:14), and a rebellious Isaac was deceived by a lying Jacob (Genesis 27).

In our own day this gift has been widely distributed to Evangelists such as Wigglesworth, Branham, Valdez, Nunn, Barratt and Williams and a host of others, to convince those who hear that God is indeed in the midst, and thus quicken their faith for salvation and healing. It is indeed most arresting to hear, for instance, Branham asking people if they will believe for healing if God will show him what is the matter with them and how it arose! So powerful is this gift that some who have never seen it in operation have not been afraid to accuse those who have it of trickery! But honest hearts believe and receive their healing. Branham has frequently been shown the exact situation which he would find when he arrived to pray for a sick person. Betty Baxter and her mother were told by the Lord the very day and hour at which he would heal her; and Valdez when in England, was shown what a pastor who came in late was thinking about the meeting.

A Word of Wisdom and a Word of Knowledge, then, differ from Prophecy, in that while Prophecy is undated and anonymous, and may deal with a present or far distant situation, they are to meet situations which are present and pressing. Prophecy again is to be spoken by the prophet to his hearers: these gifts need not be spoken at all, but may simply be used by the recipient to meet the present need, or may warn him of a hidden danger. Prophets may or may not have these gifts also, and those who possess these gifts may or may not be prophets also. It may be as well to stress again that these two gifts do not endow their possessor with the ability to speak with wisdom or knowledge of spiritual truths: they do not impart anything which is of continuous value in preaching or teaching, but are given when the recipients are in need of some special wisdom or knowledge to meet temporary situations such as have been outlined. The recipients are not wiser or more knowledgeable in spiritual truth than their neighbours in a general way—indeed like Holy Ann they may be very ignorant—but they are equipped by the Spirit from time to time with such wisdom or knowledge as is necessary to meet their difficulty or danger. The instances given in the Bible will suffice to show how very powerful these gifts are in the life of their possessor. Elisha, for instance, was surprised that the Lord had not told him of the death of the son of the Shunamite woman! (2 Kings 4:27). He was accustomed to live so close to God that he was never taken by surprise, but walked on earth in the light of Heaven! (John 11:9-10).

#### **CHAPTER EIGHT. Discernings of Spirits.**

THE BIBLE tells us that we who live upon this earth are surrounded by spiritual beings of many kinds, of whose presence we are unaware by our physical senses. There are the Holy Angels, whose abode is in the third heaven (2 Cor. 12:2; Rev. 12:7-9; Ps. 148:4), and the unholy angels under their leader Satan in the first or lower heaven (Eph. 6:12; 2:2). In addition there are earth-bound demons or disembodied spirits, who are therefore to some extent impotent unless they can gain entrance into either human (Luke 9:39) or animal (Luke 8:33) bodies, which is their great desire.

There is no spiritual gift which enables its owner to become aware of the whole spiritual situation all the time, so that all spiritual beings are within his ken—that would be an insupportable burden—but there are occasions when it is necessary to a believer to be made aware of spirits, whether good or bad, with which he happens to have come into contact. Then for a moment the veil is temporarily lifted by these gifts, and their possessor is blessed and helped by his experience.

Both Old and New Testaments are full of instances of these gifts. Holy Angels, for example, were seen in the O.T. by Hagar (Genesis 16:7-13), Abraham (Genesis 18:1-2), David (2 Samuel 24:17), Elijah (1 Kings 19:5-7), Elisha and his servant (2 Kings 6:17) and Daniel (Daniel 10:5-6); and in the N.T. by Zacharias (Luke 1:11), Mary (Luke 1:28), Joseph (Matthew 2:13), the Shepherds (Luke 2:9, 13), Our Lord (Luke 22:43), Cornelius (Acts 10:3), Peter (Acts 10:15; 12:7) and Paul (Acts 27:23). God gave a vision of Himself in the O.T. to Isaiah (6:1-8) and Ezekiel (1:26-28; cf. Daniel 7:9-14), and the N.T. to John (Rev. 4:3), and the whole book of the Revelation is a continuous account of the working of these gifts in John, so that the spiritual world was open to his eyes, and he saw and conversed with the Lord and angels throughout. On the other side, Satan appeared and spoke to Eve (Genesis 3) and Our Lord (Matthew 4:1-11), and demons spoke

to Our Lord (Matthew 8:28-31; Mark 3:11; 5:6-12) and about Paul (Acts 16:16-18). Doubtless there were many other instances of these gifts which are not recorded, especially when demons were being cast out, but enough have been quoted to show that these gifts were quite normal both in Old and New Testament times.

It remains to consider what is the value of these gifts. It is clear that they are of the greatest importance since they occur so frequently. Perhaps the first blessing that comes from all such experiences to believer and unbeliever alike is to draw their attention to, and convince them of, the reality of the unseen world on both its sides. We are told in Eph. 6:12 that our wrestling is not with flesh and blood but with wicked spirits in heavenly places. It is, however, difficult to realise this without any experience of such beings. In the same way, we are told that the good angels are sent forth to minister to the sons of God, and again it is difficult to realise this if we have no such experience to help us. These gifts are then given to us to make the unseen world real and vivid to us and to quicken our faith in the Bible accounts of such encounters, which to many non-Pentecostal believers seem strange and frightening. Unbelievers, too, like Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 3:24-30) and Belshazzar (Daniel 5:5-7) were convinced of the truth of the witness of God's servants in their kingdom by what they saw.

There are also cases where the gift was given to enable some unwilling person to do the will of God; e.g. Hagar to return to Sarai (Genesis 16:7-13) and Gideon to fight the Midianites (Judges 6:11-24). So, too, the three children and Daniel were enabled to survive their fearful ordeals by the presence of heavenly beings with them. Again the discernment of wicked spirits by Our Lord (Luke 8:26-36) and Paul (Acts 16:16-18) enabled them to deliver those who were possessed.

I remember Mr. T. D. Dorling telling me of an occasion when in the great Sunderland revival a spirit successfully resisted the efforts of five believers to cast him out, and asserted that he was stronger than they were. Our Lord said that there were those who could not be defeated except with prayer and fasting (Mark 9:29). It is then of no avail to try to cast out a spirit from a sick person, unless (a) you have discerned that there is such a spirit inside, and (b) you are stronger than the spirit.

It is impossible to exaggerate the blessing which such gifts impart to the recipient by creating a cast-iron faith in impossible situations, e.g. Paul's angel in the most dangerous shipwreck (Acts 27:23), Our Lord's angel in Gethsemane (Luke 22:43), Elisha when surrounded by a hostile army (2 Kings 6:13-16), Our Lord's visit from Moses and Elijah, who talked with him of his death, when no man on earth was willing to do so. Moses was able to testify to resurrection after death, and Elijah to Rapture from the earth. Between them they could take the Lord from the grave to glory! The most striking modern example of such gifts is that of Mr. Baker's Adullam Orphanage in Yunnan Fu, where his boys were given wonderful visions of heaven, angels and Our Lord, presumably to strengthen them for the fearful trials that would befall them in manhood under the Communists. Let us pray that we, too, who are entering into the last conflicts of this Age, may be similarly strengthened and enabled to overcome all attacks of Satan.

## **CHAPTER NINE. Gifts of Healings.**

IT IS CLEAR from Genesis 2:9; 3:22-24, Ezekiel 47:7-12, and Revelation 22:2 that bodily sickness is not natural for humanity, which was to be, and again will be, kept in health through eating of the Tree of Life. Had Adam been allowed to continue eating of this Tree he would in spite of his sin have lived for ever. Death and sickness then are not the inevitable results of sin, but spring from the loss of the Tree of Life, which was the necessary food of men. The loss of this Tree has resulted in the slow but steady deterioration of the human body until the present expectation of life is about 70 years, and sickness from time to time is almost universal. Hence the problem of Divine Healing is urgent, since the best efforts of doctors and surgeons are so often fruitless: and the Bible is full of instances of this Divine Healing from Exodus 15:25-26 to Acts 28:8-9.

In the actual practice of Divine Healing however many difficulties arise, and much disappointment is met, so that it is fair to say that as a whole our Pentecostal Movement is greatly perplexed to find an explanation for the situation, and it is increasingly normal for us to go to doctors and surgeons when we are ill, simply because our prayers are apparently not answered, and we are forced to do something about it. Before then coming to consider the spiritual Gifts of Healings, it may be wise to attempt to understand the whole subject.

### **Is Healing In The Atonement?**

This question is often asked and opinions about it differ. In attempting to find an answer it is necessary first to consider a matter of translation. The word for "atonement" in Romans 5:11 is in every other case translated "reconciliation", Romans 11:15, 2 Cor. 5:18-21, and that was the meaning of the word, at-one-ment, when the 1611 translation (A.V.) was made. Later on the word "atonement" took on instead the totally different meaning of expiation or reparation, which it still has, cf. English Dictionary. Now sin does need expiation and the Lord's death was to make reparation for the sin of the world and make the law honourable and establish it by the death of those who broke it, Romans 3:31, Isaiah 42:21. On the other hand sickness is not an offence against the Law of God, and does not therefore need any expiation, but is simply a human misfortune due to the loss of the Tree of Life in Eden, and it falls upon men without any regard to their character. Cf. Psalm 73:1-15, Job 2:1-8, 1 Timothy 5:23, James 5:15.

In the At-one-ment then, or reconciliation, is included not only healing but all the myriad blessings that come to men through our Lord's sacrifice for sin. "He that spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us **all** things?" (Romans 8:32). But the "atonement" in its later meaning of expiation for sin did not include men's sicknesses, for they were not sinful nor abhorrent to God's

righteousness, and did not call for the death of a Saviour. Christ had to suffer for sin, but not for sickness. Yet, having purged our sins and so reconciled us to God, he also brought us physical healing as one of the "all things" of Romans 8:32.

Furthermore it seems clear from the Hebrew of Isaiah 53:2-4 where the mistranslated "sorrow and grief" of the Authorised Version were correctly translated in Matt. 8:17 by "infirmities and sicknesses", (c.f. R.V.), that our Lord Himself not only had no comeliness, nor any beauty, but also was a "man of infirmity and acquainted with sickness". "For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our *infirmities* (the same word as in Matt. 8:17), but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin." (Hebrews 4:15). This part of His experience we are told brought upon Him the rejection of His contemporaries who longed for a warrior Prince such as David to lead them against the Romans, and had no time for one who lacked beauty and strength and tasted the sickness common to man. It is sin and sin alone which requires an atonement; sickness does not.

Finally in Isaiah 53:5 and 1 Peter 2:24 the Hebrew and Greek words mistranslated "stripes" are in both cases singular and not plural, and the Revised Version and margin render "bruise", which refers to His death on the Cross, not to His scourging by the soldiers. The Greek and Hebrew words for "healing" are also often translated "salvation" so that Isaiah 53:5 and 1 Peter 2:24 can quite rightly be translated "by whose bruise we were saved", and in 1 Peter 2:24 there is no reference to healing but only to Calvary.

In conclusion, then, in my opinion, physical healing like every other blessing from God is in the At-one-ment or reconciliation, but not in the Atonement or expiation for sin. For sickness is not morally wrong and does not call for the sentence of death as sin does, nor did it need any kind of expiation by Christ.

### **Three Methods of Healing.**

To continue then in our consideration of Divine Healing, it would seem that in the Bible it falls under three heads:

(1) The healing of unbelievers through evangelists in order to confirm the Divine nature of their message, and convince their hearers that God is a God of love (Mark 16:15-20).

(2) The routine healing of members of the Church of God through the prayer of the elders and the anointing with oil. This is a matter of corporate Church Life, when the determined prayers of the whole church may be needed, and where sins, if any, may need to be confessed (James 5:14-18).

(3) "The Gifts of Healings" given by the Lord to one of His servants to hand on to anyone whom He may desire to heal for some purpose of His own. Each separate healing is a separate gift and there is no such thing as a "gift" of being able to heal everybody at will. It is not a "gift of healing", but "gifts of healings".

Typical cases of these gifts are to be found: -

(a) in the Old Testament, 2 Kings 5:8, where Elisha had Naaman's healing in his hand, though there were many lepers in Israel for whom he could do nothing! (Luke 4:27), and Isaiah received the gift of Hezekiah's healing just after he had told him that he was going to die! (2 Kings 20:4-5),

and

(b) in the New Testament when Ananias was sent to Saul, much against his will, to heal one whom he regarded as an enemy, as Elisha did Naaman (Acts 9:12-17). And Peter had in his hand the healing of the cripple whom Jesus must have passed by hundreds of times without healing him! "Such as I *have*, give I thee," he said (Acts 3:6).

In modern times too there are many instances of these gifts in the ministries of God's people. In my own church in Clerkenwell in a small prayer meeting of sisters, after the leader had spoken to encourage faith, one of the sisters rose from her knees and said to another "Here is your healing" as she laid hands upon her. This sister was due to have a very serious operation on her eyes in a short time, but having been told by a leading Evangelist that Pentecost was of the devil, had become unable to receive the gift of her healing through doubt and perplexity, and was asking the Lord to cause her again to speak in tongues if it was from Him. A few days after, when hands were laid upon her, she spoke again in a flood of tongues, and received this "gift of healing", which has lasted for years.

Like any other gift, these gifts have not only to be given, but also received! Hezekiah after being told by God that he was to die was unable to receive Isaiah's "gift of a healing" until his faith had been raised by the wonderful miracle of 2 Kings 20:8-11. Naaman had a similar difficulty in receiving Elisha's gift (2 Kings 5:10-14). Saul had been warned by the Lord that a man called Ananias was coming with his healing (Acts 9:12), and Ananias left his house with Saul's healing in his hand but without any desire to help Saul, the enemy of God's people!

There is then a double act of faith in the operation of these particular gifts. The one has to receive the gift from God, and the sick person has to receive it from the one sent to hand it on. The marvellous case of Betty Baxter seems to have run on these same lines. For the Lord appeared to her and to her mother, and told them the exact day and hour upon which He would heal her. She believed and made herself ready: had she not prepared herself in faith by buying the articles of dress which she would require she would not perhaps have been able to receive the blessing! It is possible then in this way to receive a gift of a healing either for oneself or somebody else. In either case faith is the channel of reception as in all God's dealings with man.

Finally then whereas the healings which follow the preaching of the Gospel, or which come to church members through the prayer of the elders, do not require those who pray the prayer of faith to be baptized in the Holy Ghost—simple faith in the word of God is sufficient—these "gifts of healings" can only come to those in whom the Holy Spirit dwells and so is able to communicate His special will. The Spirit is of course "with" all believers but is only "in" those who have received Him into their bodies in the Baptism of the Spirit.

To sum up then, the Lord has made His will clear for universal healing of the body as He has for universal salvation of the soul; for those as yet unsaved, the preaching of the Gospel accompanied by the healing of the body (He healed them *all*, Matt. 12:15); for those who are members of His Church, the prayer of the elders accompanied by anointing with oil; for special cases, e.g. those who have never heard the Gospel, or those who like Saul of Tarsus could not call for the elders of the Church, Gifts of Healings taken by a son of God filled with the Holy Ghost. Salvation of the soul and healing of the body are freely given to all upon one condition only, Faith. "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." There is no instance in the Bible of our Lord refusing either salvation or healing to anyone who was able to accept: and delay is not denial.

## **CHAPTER TEN. Faith and Miracles. The Gift of Faith.**

THE BIBLE speaks twice about Faith as something which is a mark of a Christian. In Gal. 5:22, it is the faith which is the result of the New Birth, a natural growth from the spirit which has been quickened by the Spirit of God. This New Birth opens up the spiritual world to the child of God, and enables him to believe whatever the Bible says about the world, so that the wonderful stories of Old and New Testaments alike are easily accepted as facts.

In 1 Cor. 12:9, however, the Word speaks of a faith which is only possible to one who is not only quickened but also baptized in the Holy Spirit. There is the same contrast between the healing of James 5:15 and that of 1 Cor. 12:9. The former is open to any Christian, the latter only to one who has been baptized in the Holy Spirit. In the same way knowledge of all Christian truth, and wisdom to apply it, is open to all those who are born again, but "words" of knowledge or wisdom as mentioned in 1 Cor. 12, are only possible to one who has received the Spirit after his regeneration (Acts 19:6). In the same way, every Christian is enabled by his living spirit to believe all that is in the Revealed Word of God, but only one to whom the Spirit can impart a gift of Faith can believe what is not stated in the Bible. To illustrate: Moses was enabled by a gift of faith to believe that the Red Sea would part asunder, and Joshua to believe that the walls of Jericho would fall down. In both cases there was nothing in the Book of Genesis to enable them to believe what He said at the time. So in the New Testament there was nothing in the Old Testament to state (a), that water could be turned into wine; but Our Lord was enabled by the Spirit to believe that this particular water would be turned into wine, and (b), that He could walk across the Lake of Galilee at that particular time. At other times He went by boat, but on this occasion He believed, what Peter failed to believe fully, that the sea would sustain His weight.

The fruit of faith is then the God-given ability through the New Birth to believe all that is in the Bible. The unregenerate find this to be impossible. The Gift of Faith is, however, the God-given ability to believe something which the Spirit has said to you, which is not in the written word; for instance, when Paul believed what the Angel of God said to him about the shipwreck, in spite of the fact that all human hope was gone. As he said, "I believe God that it shall be even as it was told me."

There are then those universal Truths which all Christians are enabled to believe by their own living spirit. To these revealed Truths, there is to be no addition or subtraction. The doctrine of the New Testament was laid down once for all by the Lord and His Apostles and Prophets (Eph. 2:20 - 3:10; 4:11-16). Our Lord was the Truth, and nothing is to be added to or subtracted from what He said. The gift of Faith has nothing to do with Christian doctrine.

But in the course of the Christian life, circumstances may arise which necessitate the revelation of God's will. Was it not a gift of Faith which enabled Peter to sleep soundly in prison the night before his intended execution? Had not the Lord told him that he would die an old man, and enabled him to believe it in spite of such threatening circumstances? This God-given ability to believe for the humanly speaking impossible runs right through the Bible from Noah's Flood and Elijah's fire from Heaven to Our Lord's coin in the fish's mouth and Peter's sheet from Heaven, which alone enabled him to preach the Gospel to the uncircumcised centurion (Acts 10:28-29). So in modern days Holy Ann took her bucket to the dry well, while those around were mocking her, and pulled it up full of water; and Hudson Taylor took some hundreds of missionaries to China, which had only just been locked against all foreigners by the Dowager Empress, in full faith, against all the

reasonings of his friends, that when he would arrive there it would be re-opened—as indeed it was! God is able to speak to the Spirit-filled Christian and enable him to believe what He has said and act upon it.

The fruit of faith is then the ability through the new Birth to believe what is in the Bible. The Gift of Faith is the ability to believe what the Spirit has said to one in whose body He is resident.

### **Workings of Miracles.**

The word translated "miracles" literally means acts of Power: and it seems to speak of Power to overcome natural Laws. While, with a Gift of Faith, you only believe what is said by the Spirit, with a gift of a miracle you act and bring Divine power to bear upon the situation. Thus for Elijah to believe that fire would fall from Heaven was faith, but for Samson to carry off the gates of Gaza or pull down the Temple of Dagon was an act of supernatural power, as was the calling forth of Lazarus from the Tomb by Our Lord. A miracle is really an act of Divine Power which supersedes the natural laws upon which our world depends. Of themselves the milch kine of the Philistines would never have left their calves behind and taken the road to Bethshemesh; nor would the ravens of Cherith have dropped their daily meal for Elijah! God is able to have His own way with all natural laws and countermand them by His own desires, and, if it seems good to him, enable His servants to do the impossible. So for Elijah to believe that ravens would behave in such a manner, or that the oil and flour would not diminish, was a gift of Faith; while on the other hand for him to raise the dead by lying upon him was a miracle or act of power; yet in both cases natural laws were set aside and the impossible took place. We might think that the Lord's ability to ride an unbroken colt to Jerusalem in the midst of shouting crowds was an outstanding example either of unmiraculous Faith in Zech. 9:9, or of a miraculous Gift of Power. It is at times difficult to decide into which category a gift of the Spirit may fall. But we are exhorted to desire earnestly the greater gifts, since these have the greatest influence upon the unbeliever, and enable him to cast away his doubts as did Naaman, or the crowd at the Gate Beautiful. It is not an absolutely correct definition of each gift that is of first importance; it is its possession and use that is vital. It does not matter whether Lazarus came out of the tomb by a gift of a healing, or a miracle, or a word of Faith. What does matter is that he came out! The mourners did not try to place the miracle in its exact category; they believed on Jesus, and their lives were changed by the companion miracle of Jesus leaving **His** tomb.

These papers have been written not simply as an addition to the Theology of Spiritual Gifts, but as a spur to us all not to rest until we possess the actual Gifts themselves, and set the Holy Spirit at liberty to play His part in His Churches. To have an absolutely accurate definition of every Gift, to be able to quote chapter and verse, to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men who deny their possibility, are all equally useless, unless the gifts themselves are in operation! "The Kingdom of God is not in word, but in power." It was the actual possession and use of these gifts which cut Pentecostals off from their fellow-believers in the beginning of our movement. Theologians could and did argue about the speaking in tongues in their commentaries without rebuke from their fellows: it was those who actually spoke in tongues that were ostracised and forced to begin their own churches!

So today, different ways of looking at the Gifts will be of no importance, but the Gifts themselves in operation are moving men in great masses. It was not theories, however correct, about demon possession that moved the Philippines, but the actual freeing of Clarita Villanueva from the two demons, who tormented and bit her, through God's gift to His minister, Leslie Sumrall. That changed the whole atmosphere and was part of that work of the Holy Spirit which has led to the great Pentecostal Revival there now. It was not theology, however correct, that moved Holland lately, but the Holy Spirit adding His powers to the words of His minister, T. L. Osborn.

It is a good thing to study the Bible to see therein the great works of the Spirit through the ages, but no degree of accuracy of exposition will avail unless the actual Gifts are in operation.

## **CHAPTER ELEVEN. The Pentecostal Church.**

### **The Decline of the Church.**

A CHURCH is a local Body of Christ to enable Him to continue His former earthly ministry. That ministry was miraculous by the power of the Spirit: and so, in order that He might still do His same works, He sent the Holy Spirit into His brethren, that in every place He might be free to confirm their words by His works. After a few years, however, the Church had backslidden and become the tool of the Roman Empire without any supernatural power. This decay increased into the profound gloom of the Middle Ages. Then through Martin Luther and many others the Lord revealed truth after truth to His Church, from justification by faith and sanctification to His return to earth and divine healing. Last of all the baptism in the Spirit was re-discovered. In the beginning it was largely an individual matter: then churches were formed, and finally denominations. Today the danger is that, as with the Early Church, the natural side of Christianity may grow at the expense of the supernatural. It was this danger of creeping death to which our late chairman, John Wallace, drew such urgent notice, even to the point of ending up "Repent, or else;" and our Executive Council has printed his addresses lest these last words should be forgotten.

### **The Danger of Substitutes.**

These articles on Spiritual Gifts have been written not so much to present correct definitions—that is a matter of opinion—as to place before the readers the glorious possibilities offered to them in the word, and to

set brethren and sisters seeking for them. It cannot be questioned that today our movement has brought in many things that the fathers of it would never have countenanced. There has been a steady drift to the natural; choirs, soloists, musical instruments, etc., which, however delightful, give only harmless pleasure and not spiritual power; and in our homes, radio, television and the like, which inject worldly poison into our minds, and turn us away from the continuous daily life in the Spirit, such as the pioneers of our experience enjoyed. It cannot, I think, be questioned that those who habitually use such pleasures are never those who "covet earnestly the greater gifts". The statement is sometimes made that youth requires such things to hold them: but nothing holds youth like the supernatural in action in their lives. The difficulty is to hold youth without it. Where it is present they don't need holding, they cling on with both hands! Fresh young minds are more able to appreciate the possibilities of the Spirit than those which are more sophisticated and critical.

Here it is good to remind ourselves that the future of our movement does not depend upon our efforts or desires, but upon our Lord's will. If He is not pleased with our ways we may do what we will, but we shall fail. If the Spirit is grieved by our neglect or unbelief, He will move to more congenial quarters, where His will and powers are eagerly sought. We are dealing not with theology but with living persons! However correct our definitions of the gifts may be, the Spirit will have no pleasure in them unless we are also in active possession of the gifts. Otherwise He is fretted by continuous frustration and inability to do what He wants, and will turn to seek others who will be more usable.

### **The Dynamic of the Spirit.**

We have already mentioned the case of Clara Villanueva, the demon-attacked girl in Manila, whose remarkable case was in all the newspapers throughout the Philippines, and that for weeks. Everybody from ministers to psychologists, from spiritists to doctors, tried to deal with her condition or explain it: everyone was absorbed or frightened by its strangeness: but no one could understand or help, till the Lord sent His servant Lester Sumrall to pray for her with the utmost publicity. Then her complete deliverance laid the foundation throughout the whole country for the campaigns of Valdez and Ericson, with the result that today the Pentecostals in the Philippines very far outnumber those in Great Britain. Again, when Brother Scothern began his campaign in West Africa, his claims were challenged by the Mohammedan leaders, who wrote to leading persons, pastors and editors of newspapers stating that Christianity must stand the test of the supernatural before it could be accepted. This challenge was taken up, and there followed a scene reminiscent of that on Mount Carmel, when Elijah faced the prophets of Baal. Brother Scothern prayed for the sick in the name of Mohammed, and then asked for those who had been healed to come forward. None came! He then prayed in the name of Christ, and God witnessed from Heaven by wholesale healings and testimonies, thus proving that though Mohammed was dead, His Son was alive! As a result a leader of the Moslems was converted and thousands were saved. Yet neither Brother Sumrall nor Brother Scothern had had any idea of staging such a scene or facing such an ordeal, nor any ability to carry it through. In both cases, the whole thing sprang from the mind of the Holy Spirit, who knew the best way to get into the hearts of those particular people. In just such a way the Holy Spirit picked out Saul of Tarsus in mid-career and changed the face of the early worldwide church, and, again, sent Philip to convert the Ethiopian eunuch in the desert, and thus turned his queen and country to the Christian way of life.

In all real works of God the initiative and its consequences are planned by God and not by man: for the Spirit is acquainted with all the possibilities of the situation and knows just how to turn them into actualities: it is, in other words, the difference between working **for** God or **with** God. There is no guarantee of the success of the former: the latter can never fail. The rot has set in in the Christian Church whenever human planning, however wise, has taken command. For men do not think like God and cannot command the miraculous. But what men cannot do with their limited resources and outlook the Holy Spirit can achieve in ways unthought of by us, and at the correct moment. The modern leaders of great missions such as Burton, Studd, or Hudson Taylor have found the ideas of men to be a hindrance to their efforts, and have preferred to throw themselves wholeheartedly upon a Living God, and see His miraculous guidance, provision and powers at their head. As the Scripture saith, "Cursed is the man that trusteth in man and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord" (Jer. 17:5). Too often the clash arises between the votes of a limited committee and the desires of an unlimited God!

### **The Desire of the Lord for His Church.**

It is just at this point that we may turn to that which is most dear to the heart of God, a Pentecostal Church in which the Spirit can plant all His powers without the danger of exalting individuals. There can be no more beautiful sight than a company of people knit together in love and wisdom and depending upon the powers of God to bring to pass His purpose to which He has called them. This is His aim in all His Churches, but how difficult of accomplishment it has proved to be! The first requisite is, of course, love, the absence of personal ambition, and a desire to satisfy the longing of our Lord even at our own expense: next to that comes wisdom, which can only be found in the Bible, a thorough knowledge of the ways of divine life. Only then will the Spirit be at rest in adding His Divine Power, in the knowledge that it will not be used to forward personal aims. Power, when divided amongst the members of a body, is far less liable to misuse than when it is concentrated in a single individual. It is this which is the desire of the Spirit, to replace the tapers which once shone so brightly, but must always go out, by lamps which can continually be renewed.

This book has been written with the one great desire to set every Pentecostal church turning away from the harmless and powerless toys of the flesh and seeking for the gifts of the Spirit as outlined in 1 Cor. 12, and illustrated from Genesis to Revelation. It would then be unnecessary for people to take long journeys to find a special servant of God: the nearest Pentecostal church would be able to meet their need! And, as T. L. Osborn says, the Evangelists would find themselves more free to devote themselves to the service of the dying multitudes in all the continents of the world.

Without these gifts a depressing sense of inadequacy settles down upon an Assembly, they become accustomed to the impotent ordinary, and their minds turn away from the great hopes of divine intervention to the far smaller ambitions of men and women. Yet the finest things that the greatest men can do fall far short of the power of God, and prove to be of little avail in reaching the unbelieving masses outside. Years ago one man with the power of God moved the Potteries to such an extent that Brother Squire drove away a 1-ton lorry of leg-irons, etc., from his meetings. Today in the same place good preaching and very fine singing have proved helpless to attract a new generation. But let every Pentecostal church give itself to knocking at the door of Heaven, even at midnight, till its hands are full of divine loaves for the starving, and the whole situation would soon be changed. The Holy Spirit knows just what to do to attract the men of today. He knew how to put God's men at the head of the heathen empires of Egypt, Babylon and Persia, and that although they were captives! There is a book, lately published, with an arresting title, "Your God is too small!" Let us measure our hopes for a Pentecostal revival not by our own size, but by the omnipotence of God.

**NOTE:**

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