

THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT FOR WITNESSING.

BY REV. JOHN BENJAMIN ANDERSON,
Hamilton Theological Seminary, Hamilton, N. Y.

I.

WHAT is witnessing? Consider first what it is not. Witnessing is not the result of witnessing. For example, witnessing to men is not winning men. When put in this way, all might assent. Nevertheless many unconsciously identify these two different things; and because witnessing is thus confounded with winning many devoted servants of God have been perplexed and discouraged. Following certain spiritual leaders they tried to scrutinize their hearts with a view to cleansing; they made a new definite surrender of the whole being unto God. They then claimed in exultant hope the stupendous promise of power recorded in the first chapter of Acts; power for witnessing the Scripture implies, but power for winning it was virtually interpreted to them. They return to their work. In the case of some of them large numbers turn to Christ soon; but in the case of many others, just as devoted to Jesus, just as careful in fulfilling all the conditions their spiritual guides laid down, few, if any, more souls come to Christ than aforesaid. They are bewildered. They were told that if a man passed through certain specified experiences, he would surely be filled with the "Holy Spirit of power," and that if a man were filled with the Holy Spirit of power, he could not help winning men to Christ constantly, and probably, if not certainly, in large numbers; and they were told that if a man does not thus win men to Christ, he is not filled with the Holy Spirit of power. And now these men know

not what to make of it; they are disheartened, and the warm lambent flame of a living enthusiasm is being quenched, and men of real power are in danger of becoming useless because more or less broken-spirited. And largely because witnessing was not distinguished from winning, and the promise of power for witnessing was interpreted, though not in so many words yet virtually, as the promise of power for winning, and the statement made and emphasized that if a man did not have the power for winning, he did not have the Holy Spirit of power at all.

But that witnessing is not winning and that a man may be gloriously endued with power from on high for witnessing and yet have his witness rejected by most of the people to whom he offers it, is evident from the facts connected with the biblical history of witnessing. The work of Isaiah was to preach repentance, forgiveness, the compassion of God, and also his vengeance. And for this work he was mightily empowered. It was Isaiah (40:29) who records the promise, "He giveth power to the faint; and to him that hath no might he increaseth strength. . . . they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint." It was Isaiah who had his lips touched with a live coal from off the altar, was cleansed, and commissioned to witness for the LORD of hosts. Yet the immediate result of his witnessing was to increase the guilt and doom of the nation (6:9-13). Micah said of himself, "But I truly am full of power by the spirit of the LORD," but the people did not turn to God under his preaching of "judgment" and "transgression" and "sin" (3:8). When Jeremiah heard the word, "I have appointed thee a prophet unto the nations," he replied, "Ah, Lord GOD! behold, I cannot speak; for I am a child." But the LORD put forth his hand and touched his mouth, and said, "Be-

hold, I have put my words in thy mouth," and then under much vivid imagery, he promises and describes the power that Jeremiah should possess as Jehovah's witness. Yet is not Jeremiah to this day called "the weeping prophet?" His countrymen refused to obey the truth, and the nation fell in a crash of ruin.

Turning now to the New Testament we find the same story writ large across its pages. John the Baptist foreshadowed in history, predicted by a prophet, and announced by an angel, John the Baptist filled with the Holy Spirit from his birth, witnessed unto moral and religious truth and unto the Coming One. For a season the people rejoiced in his light and always revered him as a prophet, but the same people as a whole actually murdered the King whom John had passionately heralded. Again, the tragedy of the life of Jesus is compressed into one short sentence, "He came unto his own and his own received him not" (Jn. 1:11). Now Jesus' work is described as a witnessing. And he witnessed in the power of the Spirit. He said that the Spirit of the Lord was upon him for his work (Lu. 4:18). Peter said that God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power (Ac. 10:38). Luke said that in the power of the Spirit Jesus returned to Galilee to carry on his ministry there (Lu. 4:14). Jesus indeed is said to have received the Spirit absolutely without measure (Jn. 3:34). Jesus Christ was God incarnate. Yet is it recorded, "No man receiveth his witness" (Jn. 3:32). So far as his relation to the people to whom he witnessed in the days of his flesh is concerned, the career of Jesus is the saddest one in history of a man witnessing to the truth in the power of the Holy Spirit, and having men reject his witness even to the extreme of cruelly murdering him. Hear the One who had the Spirit of power without limit, breaking his heart over the doom of his people, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killeth the prophets,

and stoneth them that are sent unto her! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"

The apostolic history is confidently appealed to as the reverse of such a state of things. We are constantly referred to the day of Pentecost. The work of the Spirit at that time was indeed marvelous, and the progress of Christianity in the apostolic age is one of the great wonders in the spiritual history of mankind. Many, however, in their enthusiasm over what was accomplished forget what was not accomplished. Three thousand converts on the day of Pentecost and a large number a short time later under the same general conditions . . . that was wonderful indeed. But it never occurred again; not in all the history of the world has that Pentecostal season ever been paralleled. Yet some people make Pentecost the standard for the Spirit's use of all preachers. They point to Pentecost and say, "Behold, what the Holy Spirit can do through one sermon if the preacher is only filled with the Spirit." One saintly preacher says to his brethren in the ministry, "Would God that you . . . may become linked to the power of God the Holy Ghost stored in Christ; for as soon as you shall link to it, not you, but the power of God through you, will repeat the marvels of Pentecost." But not even through that brother has the Holy Spirit ever repeated the marvels of Pentecost; not through the mighty Paul, so far as we know, did the Spirit ever repeat the marvels of Pentecost; not through Peter himself did the Spirit ever repeat the marvels of Pentecost. Pentecost stands by itself, a solitary mountain peak of unrivalled altitude in the history of evangelization. And as the Holy Spirit did not produce a second Pentecost, so there were other things that he did not bring to pass in the apostolic age through the men who were clothed with power from on high to witness for

Christ. For example, the Jewish nation did not yield to its Messiah, and the destruction of Jerusalem and of the nation ensued. Again, while many thousands of the Gentiles were won by the gospel, tens of thousands rejected Christ. Consider also some particular instances of witnessing.

Not many days after Pentecost Peter himself witnessed another good confession, and for that purpose was filled anew with the Holy Spirit; but his hearers only threatened him in return, and if they had dared would have beaten him (Ac. 4:8-22). Sometime thereafter Peter and the other apostles witnessed again for Jesus before the same assembly, and this time they were beaten, and charged not to speak again in the name of Jesus (Ac. 5:29-40).

Though Stephen full of the Holy Spirit witnessed with great power, yet the Spirit did not thereby win the opponents of Christ. On the contrary by Stephen's witnessing so zealously in the power of the Holy Spirit, an extensive opposition was aroused, so that at last his enemies literally stopped their ears with their fingers, rushed upon him, and stoned him to death; and then proceeded to scatter the infant Church.

Somewhat later Jesus appeared to Paul in a trance and said, "Make haste and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: because they will not receive of thee testimony concerning me" (Ac. 22:18). Again, at a certain Pentecost, mark the name! in that same city of Jerusalem in which the first thousands turned to the Lord, a man sent to preach by the glorified Jesus speaking from the open heavens, a man full of the Holy Spirit, witnessed to an immense concourse of people, and instead of three thousand yielding to the truth, the multitude was filled with ungovernable fury, and cried, "Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live," and the soldiers had to save Paul's life (Ac. 22:1-24).

If power for witnessing is power to win men to Christ, power to repeat the marvels of Pentecost, then Paul on this and on many other occasions was singularly lacking in power. But if power for witnessing is power to witness for Christ to a mob thirsting for one's blood, then the promise of Christ to his witnesses was gloriously fulfilled.

The truth is that while multitudes in Jerusalem, and Judaea, and Samaria, and Antioch, and Ephesus, and Corinth, and in other places, turned to the Lord, yet the word of the cross was "to the Jews a stumbling-block and to the Gentiles foolishness," a "savor of death unto death" as well as of life unto life. Everywhere, just as Jesus himself expected and expressly predicted (Mt. 24:9-10; Mk. 13:9-13; Jn. 15:18-21; 16:1-4), his witnesses met with determined and often bloody persecution; the story of a Saviour's love, though told by apostles full of the Holy Spirit and of power, hardened as well as melted, added a deeper guilt as well as being a means of salvation. Read the New Testament with this in mind, and throughout you will find the story written with the tears and heart's blood of Jesus and his apostles; while in the Apocalypse there thunders and crashes again and again the awful organ-tones of doom upon the great multitudes that fight with the Lamb and persecute and slay his followers.

Surely witnessing is not winning, mighty witnessing is not winning, mighty witnessing is not necessarily used by the Spirit in his winning of souls, and power for witnessing cannot be measured in terms of winning.

Let us now inquire what witnessing is. In the New Testament God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Scriptures, the truth, the apostles and other disciples of Jesus are said to bear witness. Witnessing is making the truth known respecting the evil of the world; and especially respecting Christ, his person, his life, death, resurrection,

ascension, his relation to the Father and to the outpouring of the Spirit and to the kingdom of God, and also making known the manifold phases of the significance of Christ in relation to the salvation of men.

Some of the facts and truths connected with the Greek words for witnesser, testimony, and to bear witness (words occurring in the New Testament about 180 times) are as follows: Concerning Christ in general (Jn. 15:26, 27, et. al.), the deeds of Christ's earthly ministry (Ac. 10:39), the sufferings of Christ (Lu. 24:46; 1 Pet. 5:1, et. al.), the fact, cause, and manner of his death (Ac. 10:39), his resurrection (Ac. 1:22 et. al.), that the Father sent Christ (Jn. 5:36), the Incarnation (1 Jn. 1:2), Christ's Messiahship (Ac. 18:5 et. al.), the necessity of the sufferings of Christ (Ac. 26:23a), the blessed results of his resurrection (Ac. 26:23b), the exaltation of Christ to be "Prince" (Ac. 5:31), his exaltation to be "Saviour" (Ac. 5:31), that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world (1 Jn. 4:14), that Jesus "gave himself a ransom for all" (1 Tim. 2:6), that repentance and remission of sins are to be preached in his name (Lu.24:47), and are God's gifts through him (Ac. 5:31 et. al.), "the righteousness of God through faith unto all them that believe" (Ro. 3:2), the Priesthood of Christ (Heb. 7:17), Christ the light of the world (Jn. 1:7), Christ the eternal life (1 Jn. 1:2), the spiritual nature and blessings of the new covenant (Heb. 10:15), "the word of his grace" (Ac. 14:3). Paul sums up his whole Christian service in the words to "testify the gospel of the grace of God," (Ac. 20:24), Christ is appointed by God to be Judge of living and dead (Ac. 10:42), Jesus baptizes in the Holy Spirit (Jn. 1:33), the kingdom of God (Ac. 28:23), the truth (Jn. 5:33; 18:37), the evil of men (Mk. 6:11; Jn. 7:7), the divine vengeance (1 Tim. 4:6; Rev. 22:18, 19), the future (Heb. 3:5; 10:15; Rev. 1:2 et. al.).

The more prominent witnessing is that given by Christ

and his eyewitnesses. The witnessing is by word, by deed, (including symbolic action), by sufferings, by death, by a man's spiritual life. In five other passages witnessing is closely connected with tribulation though not identical with it, and in at least four other passages witnessing results in death.

In reading the New Testament we need to rid our minds of the natural association of witnessing with the testimony given in courts of law. Legal witness is referred to in the New Testament several times, yet this signification is comparatively rare, and both the substance and especially the manner of the witnessing abundantly show that witnessing unto Christ is not conceived as being under the peculiar limitations and obligations of testimony in the legal sense, but that it is thought of in a very broad and comprehensive way.

We may add that the interpretation of Mt. 24:14 which makes it mean that Christians are to go through the world hurriedly proclaiming the gospel, and that the work will be done when the good tidings have been superficially sounded in every human ear, is not borne out by the evidence. In Acts 28:23 "testifying" is connected with "persuading;" in 20:20, 21 with profiting the hearers; in 26:16-18 with the salvation of the hearers. In Rev. 12:11 (cf. 1 Jn. 5:4-12) it is a means of overcoming the devil. In 1 Jn. 1:1-4 it is for the spiritual blessing of the hearers. And it is not without significance that one of the Greek words for witnessing sometimes means to exhort earnestly (Eph. 4:17; 1 Th. 2:12; 1 Ti. 5:21; 2 Ti. 4:1, and especially Ac. 2:40).

II.

WHAT IS THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT FOR WITNESSING.

No one knows what the power is. All we can say is that the Holy Spirit acts upon the witnesser, and acts

upon him effectively so as to obtain from him the witnessing that God desires. The nature of the power is as indefinable as the nature of life. The working of this power, moreover, is not an element in the consciousness of the witnesser; no man, therefore, can measure the energizing of the Holy Spirit within him by his feelings. The Spirit may sometimes act upon us and through us most mightily when we least suspect his working. Again, when the witnessing has been done, we cannot by an examination of the witnessing or its influence measure the amount of the power which the Spirit used upon the witnesser (if we may speak thus mathematically of what is spiritual). For aught we know the Spirit may sometimes exert a greater power upon an obscure, illiterate man, or upon a timid woman, or upon a shy, shrinking child, to produce witnessing than he exercised upon Luther at the Diet of Worms to cause him to give a witness to the truth which thrilled and shook all Christendom.

III.

HOW IS THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT FOR WITNESSING CONDITIONED?

This inquiry involves two questions. To illustrate: The power of electricity for illumination depends upon the measure of the power and upon the condition and characteristics of the lamp. In like manner the power of the Spirit for witnessing depends upon the measure of the power and upon the condition and characteristics of the witnesser . . . the human lamp through which he causes the truth to shine. The two questions therefore are, How is the power of the Spirit conditioned as to the fact and extent of its exercise? and, How is the power of the Spirit conditioned as to the witnessing that it can accomplish?

As to the first question, there is only one primary con-

dition of the fact and extent of the exercise of the Spirit's power, and that is the will of the Spirit. Whether he exercises his power to cause Christian witnessing and the extent to which he wields that power depends upon his own will. The Holy Spirit said, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them" (Ac. 13:2). Paul and Silas were "forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia, and . . . they attempted to go unto Bithynia; and the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them" (Ac. 16:6, 7). The apostle Paul, referring to the gifts of the Spirit for service, said, "But all these works the . . . Spirit, dividing to each one severally, even as he will" (1 Cor. 12:11). But though the Holy Spirit thus reserves to himself the prerogative of exercising or not exercising his power to cause witnessing, yet there are conditions with which we must comply or the Holy Spirit will not empower us for witnessing to the full extent of our capacity at any given time to receive his power. Thus fully to receive his power for witnessing we must receive the Holy Spirit himself (Ac. 1:5, 8). And thus to receive the Holy Spirit our relations to Christ must be right. Wholehearted repentance and faith, in the amplest meaning of those words, are the conditions of receiving the Holy Spirit (Ac. 2:38 et. al. Consider also the whole New Testament teaching concerning the relations between God the giver and man the receiver). The question as to the baptism in the Spirit emerges here, but it would require separate and lengthy treatment.

If a man, however, fulfils these conditions, the Holy Spirit is not therefore under obligation to empower him to witness just when and where and how the man desires. The Holy Spirit retains absolute disposal of his own power, and his reasons for his actions are inscrutable. By studying any particular set of circumstances we can never know whether the Holy Spirit will empower any

given man to witness under those circumstances or not. The will of the Spirit is made known to the witnesser when the fit time arrives. We may well believe that there are circumstances, both beyond our ken and within the range of our observation, in view of which the Spirit wills to wield his power for witnessing. These facts include all that we are to take account of respecting the witnesser in our answer to the second question and other facts also. Such facts may therefore be regarded as secondary conditions of the exercise and extent of the power of the Spirit for witnessing.

Considering now the second question, How is the power of the Spirit conditioned as to the witnessing it can or cannot accomplish? We note that the conditions are of three kinds: (1) Within the Holy Spirit himself, (2) Within or connected with the witnesser, (3) Within or connected with the one to whom the witness is offered.

1. Within the Holy Spirit. Not only does the Holy Spirit determine whether he will at all exert his power to cause witnessing and the extent to which he will wield that power, but upon his will also depends in part the precise character of the witnessing. If therefore a man does not witness when and where and how he desires, the reason may lie in the will of the Holy Spirit.

2. Conditions within the witnesser. The power of the Spirit achieves different results in different persons: in Barnabas and in Mark; in James, the Lord's brother, and in Timothy; in Matthew and in Stephen; in John and in Peter. The inspired writings of these last two men, while harmonious, differ, differ as diamonds from rubies. And the writings of Paul, inspired by the same Spirit, present a striking contrast to all other products of Divine inspiration. Now one reason why the Spirit achieved such different results in different persons is that the persons themselves are not alike. Throughout all the working of the Spirit in their minds and hearts,

Peter remained Peter, John remained John, Paul was always Paul. The results of the Spirit's power, then, is conditioned within the witnesses. The conditions fall into several groups, conditions of constitution, of education, of religion, and of environment. These groups are not altogether mutually exclusive, but they may serve as an approximate and convenient classification.

In the first place, the constitutional conditions. The brain, the eye, the features, the voice, the whole body in every respect, these are at once the means and the limit of the soul's existence and activity in this world. A man's body, therefore, partly determines what witnessing the power of the Spirit can and cannot accomplish through him. To take just one example, Did Spurgeon's marvellous voice have nothing to do with the marvellous character of Spurgeon's witnessing?

Again, a sturdy, virile man does not witness in just the same way as a gentle, motherly woman. The Holy Spirit does not accomplish the same witnessing in a fiery Celt as he does in a phlegmatic Teuton or in a stolid American Indian. The power of the Spirit achieves one witnessing in an Oriental and not quite the same in an Occidental.

One man is constitutionally timid or reticent, another man is fearless and aggressive; one man is naturally hopeful and buoyant, another is despondent or melancholic; one man is conservative, another man is constitutionally radical; one man is logical and prosaic, another is imaginative and poetical, while still a third is both logical and poetical; one man's memory is tenacious, another's memory is a sieve; and so on through an extensive list of contrasted qualities and powers that differentiate men from one another.

One constitutional factor conditioning the result of the power of the Spirit for witnessing that is especially noteworthy is a man's inborn capacity for emotion and its

expression. Some men in respect of emotion are naturally shallow, others are like the great deep. The feeling of some men is impetuous, hot, coming quickly and going as quickly; the feeling of other men is not soon stirred, but when once aroused is massive, mighty, enduring. Men also are contrasted by their respective capacities for the expression of emotion. Some men of tender feeling and deep sympathy are constitutionally unable to blossom forth in winsome geniality, while other men whose feeling is far inferior both in quantity and in quality are visibly radiant. Now, since manifested emotion profoundly affects a man's witnessing, the character of the witnessing achieved by the power of the Spirit is in an important degree determined by this constitutional endowment.

To sum up, physique, sex, temperament, race, nationality, inherited idiosyncracies, endowment in the sphere of intellect, of feeling, and of will; in short all that is native and constitutional to any given man, conditions the witnessing that the Holy Spirit accomplishes through him.

If, therefore, a man does not witness for Christ when and where and how he desires to witness, the reason may lie in the will of the Holy Spirit, or in the man's constitution, or in both.

In the second place, the educational conditions within the witnesser. Some deny the existence of such conditions. For example, there are those who attack all ministerial education on the ground of the promise, "Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it." Others who believe in training for Christian work nevertheless make statements concerning the relation of the Holy Spirit to the witnesser which leave no room for these educational conditions. Still others who also believe in the educational conditions practically ignore them. For instance, a man speaks as if he had pebbles in his mouth, and does not

realize that he is lowering the quality of his witnessing. Again, a preacher neglects to store his memory with Scripture, with high thoughts, with important moral and religious facts, with material for illustration, and yet expects that the Holy Spirit will accomplish a satisfactory witnessing through his empty discourses.

Of course it is true that the quickening of a man's spiritual life may have a great influence upon his natural powers. Sometimes a new intellectual life thereby begins, or the social life that had been as persistently blossomless as the century plant may suddenly bloom into Christian geniality, or in an hour of unusual spiritual exaltation a man may be so charged with the energy of the Holy Spirit that his being becomes for the time almost incandescent. Nevertheless, even in such rare moments all previous training and acquisition of knowledge counts, and any lack of training or knowledge detracts from the witnessing.

If there are no educational conditions within the witnesser, then theological seminaries and training schools for Christian workers ought to be closed, and normal classes have no rightful place in our Bible Schools, and new missionaries in foreign lands should not consume the time and strength of those who now teach them the language and initiate them into the work.

We find the educational conditions fully recognized in the Scriptures. The twelve apostles were trained for witnessing. Paul was prepared: heathen environment as a child in Tarsus; later being trained in all the wisdom of the rabbis at the feet of Gamaliel in Jerusalem, and after his conversion, God gave him a witnessing apprenticeship of twelve years before he was sent to do the main work of his life. The same apostle wrote to Timothy concerning training for Christian service, "Meditate on these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy progress may be manifest unto all." In the life of

Mr. Moody written by his son it is more than once pointed out how Mr. Moody's varied experiences as a Christian worker in the early part of his career were an important providential preparation for the colossal evangelism into which the Spirit later led him. God as Creator gives us our faculties with their need of growth and training, and he does not repudiate his own work.

If, therefore, a man does not witness when and where and how he desires to witness, the reason may lie in the will of the Holy Spirit, or in the man's constitution, or in his education (including experience), or in two or more of these conditions.

In the third place, the religious conditions within the witnesser. A person's past moral and religious career, both before and after conversion, partly determines the witnessing the Spirit uses him to accomplish. A Jerry McAuley or a sister Delia could do a witnessing for Christ that many others cannot possibly do. Again, there are different types of religious experience, types suggested by such names as Origen, Francis of Assisi, Luther, Phillips Brooks, Moody; and there are different types of witnessing corresponding to the different types of experience respectively.

Further, account must be taken of a man's stage of spiritual maturity. The witnessing of the young disciple whom Jesus loved is hardly comparable with that of the venerable apostle at Ephesus in the latter part of the century who as an eyewitness of Christ anchored the restless churches to the original faith and who gave as his habitual and tender message to his fellow-believers, "Little children, love one another." His writings, moreover, are clearly the product of the power of the Spirit working in a mature Christian man. Likewise with others. No matter how great spiritual experiences they may have undergone as boys or young men, we should not and do not expect witnessing of just the same character

from the boys, Wesley, Whitefield, Spurgeon, Moody, Gordon, or any others, as from these same persons in later life.

The last group of conditions connected with the witnesser are the environing conditions of time and place. The conditions already noted are also time and place conditions. Under this head may be placed the circumstances of a man's life, such as health, sickness, riches, poverty, joys and sorrows, social position, family, and many others. These circumstances help to give its individuality to a man's witnessing. For instance, the witnessing of a burdened and sorrowful life full of stress and difficulty and perhaps defeat has a very different coloring from that of a joyous life of almost unbroken prosperity. Again, Francis of Assisi would have given a very different witnessing if he had lived in the nineteenth century instead of in the thirteenth. If the sixteenth century reformers could change places with the nineteenth century missionaries they would also exchange their witnessing for that of the latter. If Spurgeon had remained in Waterbeach all his life, he could not have given the witness which he did give. If Dr. Chalmers had been a converted black man on the Congo, the character of his witnessing would have been extremely different from that of a leader of the Free Church of Scotland and one of Britian's greatest preachers.

In addition to the conditions within the Holy Spirit and those within and connected with the witnesser there are the conditions within the man to whom the witness is given. We do not of course refer to the conditions within the unsaved man of the power of the Spirit for saving him, but only to the conditions within the unsaved man which help to determine the character of the Christian man's witnessing to him. Who the unsaved man is, what are his antecedents, character, intelligence, education, ideas, past relations to the

Church, attitude toward religion and toward Christians, his personal relation to the witnesser, and many other conditions, will determine the means and method of approach on the part of the witnesser, the Scripture used, the truths emphasized, in a word the precise character of the witnessing.

IV.

WHAT DOES THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT FOR WITNESSING ACCOMPLISH?

The answer usually given is, the salvation of souls. And if we on the one hand use the language figuratively or on the other hand with intention use it loosely we may say that the answer is correct. But if we are using the language both literally and strictly, then the answer is not correct. For witnessing does not save. The witnesser does not save. No man ever saved a soul. God never promised any man power to save souls. "No man can come to me, except the Father which sent me draw him." There is only one soul-winner. If there is any New Testament teaching that is abundant and clear, it is that God himself saves the soul, and any expressions in the New Testament that seem inharmonious with this teaching (Lu. 1:16; Ac. 26:18; 1 Cor. 4:15; Phile. 10; Jas. 5: 19, 20) are merely cases of metonymy, the human instrument being mentioned instead of the Divine Person who uses the instrument. The power of the Spirit for witnessing is power exercised not upon the man to whom the witness is offered but upon the witnesser to produce his witnessing. The power of the Spirit to save is the power of the Spirit exerted upon the unsaved man by immediate contact with him. All the witnessing in the world, even though produced by the power of the Spirit, would not save a single soul, if the Spirit did not also work in the hearts of the unsaved themselves. Therefore

the power of the Spirit for witnessing, taken by itself, does not accomplish the salvation of souls. And even taken with the power of the Spirit working in the unsaved heart, it is only indirectly that the power of the Spirit for witnessing saves. The power of the Spirit for witnessing is power exercised directly only upon the witnesser with the purpose of accomplishing the witnessing.

Some people would at once exclaim: The power of the Spirit striving with the unsaved man may well be mighty, but power to enable a Christian to witness for Christ . . . why he could do that, at least he could do that passably well, without any energizing of the Holy Spirit within him! And one chief defect in witnessing to-day is that hosts of Christians practically conform to that idea. But witnessing is more than speaking; it is doing, it is suffering, it is dying daily for Jesus' sake, it is living the gospel. And the power that accomplishes such witnessing, which is the only complete witnessing, for Christ is immeasurably great.

Paul said, "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God, and not from ourselves." He then shows how the power is manifested: "Pressed on every side, yet not straightened; perplexed, yet not unto despair; pursued, yet not forsaken; smitten down, yet not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body (2 Cor. 4:7-10). And later on in the same epistle the apostle says of his own evangelizing career: "In labors more abundantly, in prisons more abundantly, in stripes above measure, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers, in perils from my countrymen, in perils from the Gentiles, in per-

ils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in labor and travail, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness" (2 Cor. 11: 23c-27). That is what witnessing meant to the apostle Paul. No wonder he needed, and no wonder that our Lord needed, and that the ancient prophets needed, what Paul calls "the exceeding greatness of the power of God," "being strengthened," as he says, "with all power, according to the might of his glory" (for what purpose?) "unto all patience and longsuffering with joy" (Col. 1:11; See also Ac. 4:29 and Eph. 6:19).

And observe that this power for witnessing wrought as mightily in Paul rousing the rage of the Jerusalem mob at Pentecost as it did in Peter at the earlier Pentecost when the multitude were pricked in heart and cried, "Brethren, what shall we do?"

In accomplishing the witnessing, the power of the Spirit was manifested in a strong impulse to testify for Christ: "We cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard;" it was manifested in the love and sacrifice of the witnesses; in their boldness and courage; in their patience and longsuffering and faith and hope; and in the joy and peace given them amidst the tribulations that arose from the witnessing. The Spirit enabled many to support the verbal witness by the witness of miracles. The Spirit took of the things of Christ and gave the witnesses a fresh, living realization of the truth they were to proclaim and incarnate. The Spirit conspicuously and sometimes miraculously guided the witnesses in the critical, foundation work of inaugurating and extending the evangelizing movements of the Church throughout the world.

One of the greatest needs of the Church to-day is the power of the Spirit for witnessing. What a signal manifestation of the power of the Spirit we should behold,

if the rank and file of our Churches, if all the Christian people were to become possessed with a resistless impulse to bear witness unto Christ, to bear witness by word and deed and character, to bear witness with love and courage, with hope and patience, and in face of persecution with longsuffering and even with peace and joy. Would not even the ministry be in no small measure changed, if all ministers were thus witnessing in the power of the Holy Spirit?

V.

In conclusion, WHAT WOULD GOD DO WITH SUCH SPIRIT-PRODUCED WITNESSING ON THE PART OF ALL THE CHRISTIAN PEOPLE? Witnessing as an instrument of the Holy Spirit is related to the conversion of men, to the edification of believers, and to the permeating of society with Christian thought, feeling and practice. In respect to the conversion of men, the majority in each generation of those who have heard the gospel have rejected Christ. Yet in spite of nineteen hundred years of such experience, it would be unsafe to affirm that this will be true of all future generations. Christians themselves have never given the gospel a fighting chance. Should they do so, should all the Christian people witness in the power of the Holy Spirit, countless multitudes would be saved. If in the early period the Spirit used comparatively few witnesses in his saving of large numbers of men, how many souls he would save to-day, if he could use the witness of faithful millions instead of that of thousands! Further, "when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness;" and who can tell by what great judgments God may indirectly bring myriads to the cross? Moreover, who knows that God will not some day pour out his Spirit upon all flesh in an unparalleled measure? Our attitude should be one of prayerful hope, always ourselves witnessing to

Christ as if upon our witnessing depended the dawning of this brighter day.

In respect to permeating society with Christian thought, feeling, and practice, it has always been true that God's use of Christian witnessing is vastly out of proportion to the number of conversions. One important use God makes of Christian witnessing is to employ it in moulding public opinion in order that the world in all its affairs may become dominated by the Christian principles and become informed throughout with the Christian spirit. This is a militant process. If all the Christian people were witnessing faithfully to the truth, positively asserting the Christian principles, and making Christ's demands upon themselves and upon all men on all sides of manifold human life, then all the evil that is in the world would be stirred up to the pitch of fury and would be roused to the mightiest possible organized opposition. But as in the past so again God would make the wrath of men to praise him, and in some way the King of the Ages would make the rage, the malice, and the craftiness of men work out his sovereign will. Constantine's vision of the cross with the inscription, *In Hoc Signo Vincas*, *In this Sign you shall conquer*, remains the true symbol for the Church of God on earth.

The results which God achieves through Christian witnessing may also be classed as immediate and ultimate, and the ultimate results are enormously greater than the immediate. From the witnessing of the apostolic Church mighty rivers of moral and spiritual influence have by the power of God flowed down the centuries the influence of the New Testament, of Christian sentiment and literature, of Christian institutions, and of Christian living. Further, be it especially observed that the hostility of the men who hardened their hearts, rejected the witness, and bitterly opposed the gospel, has been divinely overruled so as to become one of the chief instruments

of the later and larger success. For, the courage and joy and hope and love with which the witnesses endured persecution was a part of their witness, and a part with which God has worked mightily toward the Christianizing of the world. The blood of the martyrs has always been the seed of the church. Take the sufferings out of the story of Paul's life, and most of its charm and power would be gone. Men rejected the Saviour's witness and nailed him to the tree, but Christ on the cross has become the magnet of the world. "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself."

The results which God achieves through the Saviour's own witnessing and through the witnessing of those first followers of the Crucified One are not all attained even yet. The victory already won has been inconceivably great; what it shall be before the angel proclaims that time shall be no more can be measured only by the mind of the Infinite One; while taking eternity into view the divinely produced results of that earliest witnessing and of all subsequent witnessing shall be an ocean whose waves break on no shore however distant, but whose sunlit tides sweep on forever and forever.