

I was not cast down ; but, if I ever was, I never told anyone about it. It does not do to tell people if you are cast down, for if you do, you are likely to discourage somebody else. We must be full of hope and courage ; we must expect to succeed. Another thing is, there is liberty, "where the Spirit of God is." We need it in our churches as much as anything. Go into the pulpit, and you do not have freedom ! You feel like Lazarus when brought from the tomb, bound hands and feet, and with a bandage around his mouth. Christ's word needs to be repeated, "Loose him and let him go." What we want is to get loose. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty." I don't think the fault is with ministers alone. The fault is often as much in the pew as in the pulpit. We are living in an age of criticism. People now go to the house of God just in the spirit as they go to an opera or concert. The critics sit there to hear what the minister is saying. If he says a hundred good things and one poor one, they will forget the hundred and remember the poor one, and they will talk it over when they get home, before the children and all. I have seen the critics in church, and can tell them. The minister can tell them. They sit there looking so cross, and bye and bye they will take their glasses out and look at you as much as to say, they are sorry to hear you preach so badly. It is pretty hard to preach when you have an audience like that. How many people would have been converted at Pentecost if they had gone there to criticize Peter. Suppose John had turned to Thomas and said, "Peter is not preaching as well as usual to-day. I have heard him a good deal more logical." Suppose Andrew had said to Phillip, "He is bearing down hard on the Jews, saying they had crucified Christ, and I am afraid their influence will be cast against us." No ; there was one united prayer going up to heaven, and right there down came the answer. They had great liberty. What we want is liberty ; and, if we have it in the church, it is easy to preach. It is not hard to preach when you have the Spirit of God in you ; and, if the people will pray for you, you are more likely to have it, for the people have the power to call it down on you as well as on themselves. If we had less criticism and more prayer there would be a great many more conversions. Then the Holy Spirit will testify to God. That is His work. When Peter was preaching on the day of Pentecost and telling them of Christ, whom with wicked hands they had crucified and slain, and whom God had raised up, the Holy Ghost said, "Amen," to it. He was in heaven when Christ came up and took his seat at the right hand of the Father, and He came down to bear witness. So we must have the Spirit of God accompanying our word if we expect results. Our work is to testify of Christ, not to speak of ourselves but of Christ and if we do this the Holy Ghost will make our words words of power. The Spirit will guide us into all truth. Remember it is into all truth. There is no truth I need to know but He will guide me into it, if I let Him. But He does not guide me independent of the Word. I am always suspicious of a man who goes aside from the Scriptures, and says he has got a fresh revelation. I have never known one of that kind but he was led off into some heresy. The Holy Spirit will guide us into all truth ; but it will be through the Word. Another promise is, "He will show you things to come." People seem to think the Bible is worn out ; they look upon it as some old dry book that has had its day. But it is as fresh to-day as it was a thousand years ago. The breath of heaven is upon it ; the Word of God is in it. These news reporters here claim to be able to give us the news. But they can tell us only of what has taken place. This book

does better. It tells us what is going to take place. Again it says, "He shall bring to your remembrance what I have said." Many things slipped their minds. They forgot that Christ was going to rise. It seems wonderful that they should have been surprised when they found he had risen, after he had told them that He would rise from the dead. There was no power, earthly or infernal, that could keep Him in the grave. They might as well try to keep the Sun from getting up. He said He was going to rise, and He did. The Disciples forgot what he had said. After the Spirit came, the words of Jesus were brought to their minds. When a man is full of the Spirit he cannot help thinking of what Christ has said. People are in the habit of saying, "I have a treacherous memory." Your memory will be long enough ; bible truths will bubble up in your soul, when the Spirit is on you. I want to draw your attention this afternoon to a distinction between the Spirit dwelling in us, making us sons and daughters of God, and the Spirit of God on us for service. Perhaps some of you will not see it, and perhaps some of you will say I am wrong. There are many people in our churches who are really Disciples of Christ, but they have no power. What is the trouble ? Nineteen-twentieths of them are so ; their testimony is not good for anything in the world. It is one of the saddest things I know of in the Christian life of to-day how few men and women have this power and are ready for service. Ask the ministers, and they will tell you there is only, as I have said, but one in twenty whom they would set to work to visit the sick or go to the home of the drunkard to point him to the way of salvation. Christ asked the leper who had returned, "Where are the nine ?" You never hear of them afterwards. I suppose they had joined some church, and that was the last of them. There are ever so many men who think they have done all that is necessary if they take up the cross once and then lay it down. If there was a way of getting into the church by the back door they would do so. I remember a minister once who said that any one who wanted to join his church privately could do so, that he would never betray them. You may laugh but that is true. What the people want, what we want this afternoon is power. If we have not got power it is not because God is not willing to give it to us. You will find three classes of Christians in almost every church. The first is like Nicodemus coming to Christ by night, mentioned in the chapter of John. He probably got life that night, but not life in its fulness. If he had he would not have remained a member of the Sanhedrim for three years. No doubt he reasoned in this way : I hold a high office, and I would lose my influence over the cultured and wealthy people of Jerusalem if I allied myself with that despised Nazarene. You remember that Dr. Andrew Bonar said he could imagine Nicodemus walking down the streets of Jerusalem and meeting John, and the following conversation taking place : "What do you think of Him ?" John would ask. "I never heard a finer speaker. He told me one thing which made me sleepless. It was that God so loved the world that He gave His own begotten son. John, does your Master often talk like that." "Yes," John would reply, "he generally talks in that way." But Nicodemus never heard another sermon that we know of. He had not got the light in its fulness. If he had he would have become a disciple like the unlettered men of Gallilee, and he would have followed Christ over hill and dale. Think how much Nicodemus lost, how John and James were exalted to power during those three years while Nicodemus remained in the Sanhedrim. Would you not have