

ages. There was nothing that little band of disciples needed so much as the presence of their Lord in Spirit, now that he had departed from them in body. They need him as a Comforter, a Guide, a Helper, an Inspirer. These disciples were few in number, and without social standing, learning, or wealth—the things the world regards as paths of success. But in spite of the unfavorable present, and the forbidding future, judging from human standards, the Lord declared, "But ye shall receive power when the Holy Ghost is come upon you." And this gift graciously given, and eagerly received, was the source of apostolic success, and all subsequent spiritual achievement and progress. Let us look back at this pentecostal power, and learn its meaning, and pray that such power may be granted to us in the discharge of the duties God has given us.

1. PENTECOSTAL POWER IS THE POWER OF RELIGIOUS EARNESTNESS.—"Half hearted religion is no religion at all." God wants the whole heart or none. Earnestness is *working* at religion, not *playing* at it. It makes religion one's chief business. It goes at it as men dig for gold in the mountains, without mind to have it if it is there. That was the way with these first disciples. They knew the power existed and was meant for them. So they were going to have it. They would meet God's conditions in order to attain it." Thus, tersely remarks Berry on this subject, and we shall use some of the good things he has said.

2. PENTECOSTAL POWER IS THE POWER OF UNION.—In union there is strength. In division there is weakness. We are told more than once that those one hundred and twenty disciples were *all* in that upper room, not one hundred and nineteen, but one hundred and twenty. All there, and all with one accord. The spiritual heat generated, fused all hearts into one. Did you ever see the hard cold pieces of ice, when they are melted in the fire? Then the moulder can make what he pleases out of the molten mass. So with the Church and the League when united by the Holy Spirit. The lack of union destroys the power of the human body or of the Christian Church. Think how a number of League workers, or church members who never unite in prayer and effort rob the church of its strength!

3. THIS POWER IS THE POWER TO WITNESS FOR CHRIST.—Christianity is a religion that advances by means of testimony; and *only so*. Where no one speaks for it, it dies. Imagine Peter spending a week or a month without mentioning the name of Jesus. Imagine groups of the disciples meeting and talking about the weather, the crops, politics, or business, not saying a solitary word about the ascended Lord. Truly, holy living is good testimony for Christ, and in the long run and in most cases, the most effective testimony. Without it, talk is mere hypocrisy. But true, also, that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh, and when the heart is as full of the Spirit of Jesus, and the truth of Jesus as were the hearts of the first disciples, the tongue reveals the fact, and witnesses to the fact at the proper season. How many Christians are tongue-tied!

4. THIS POWER IS THE POWER OF THE WORD OF GOD.—Have you noticed at Pentecost what a reasoner, what an expositor, what an orator Peter became? Have you observed how his eloquence burned its way into the hearts of his auditors? What gave him that power to move men? Read over his address and you will find nothing that you can explain by the ordinary rules of rhetoric. It is the plainest kind of speech, but made mighty as the Word of God by the power of the Spirit by which Peter was filled. Did you ever notice an earnest student of the Bible who not a grow in piety? Did you ever know a church or a league fed on God's Word, that did not have something like Pentecostal power? Did you ever know

the power of the Spirit to come where the Word of God is not honored?

5. OTHER CHARACTERISTICS OF PENTECOSTAL POWER.—It is the power of prayer, the power of a complete consecration, the power of an indomitable courage, the power of spiritual concentration, the power of winning souls for Christ. It was a power to live like Christ, to suffer patiently for Christ, and to speak convincingly of Christ. But all these characteristics are summed up in this: it is the power of the Holy Spirit—the power of human hearts when taken possession of by the divine Spirit. Will there be any minkering this power? Will there be any doubt what has happened to us when we are filled with the Holy Spirit?

THE TRUTH APPLIED.

We have waited six thousand years for steam and electricity; but these forces existed in Eden, and might have been used if the process had only been known. We have waited two thousand years since Christ for the promised conversion of the world. The power to bring it about exists. It is centred in the Holy Spirit. It is pentecostal power. Shall we have it? Shall we possess it speedily? Or shall we wait another two thousand years while the world rolls on in iniquity, and generation after generation passes on without the hope or power of the gospel? Let the Epworth Leagues of Canadian Methodism answer the heart-searching question.

A HELPFUL OUTLINE.

Subject—"Power for Service."

1. *In What it Consists*.—The indwelling of the Holy Spirit. When the power is (a) supernatural in its character. (b) Natural in its operations, employing man's ordinary faculties. (c) Adequate in its measure, meeting all the necessities of those who serve.

2. *From Whom it Comes*.—From the Father as its source, and from Christ as its dispenser. Hence it is to be sought from these alone by (a) Obedient waiting (verse 4), (b) Earnest praying (verse 14, 11-14). (c) Humble self-renunciation.

3. *To Whom it is Given*.—(a) To believers in Christ, as the apostles were. (b) To those who surrender themselves unreservedly for Christ's service. (c) To those who believably wait for the heavenly gift.

4. *For What it is Granted*.—To enable its recipients to witness for Christ. This the Holy Spirit does by witnessing for Christ in them. Without the Spirit's help, no words of apostle, prophet, evangelist, preacher, or leaguer could efficiently testify for Christ, that is, testify in such a way as to save souls reach the hearts and consciences of hearers.—*Whitlaw*.

POINTS FOR THE PRESIDENT.

Keep the topic thought before the meeting throughout. Carefully select hymns bearing on the Holy Spirit. Spend more time than usual in prayer for the gift of power, the descent of the Spirit as the essential equipment for service. Let the meeting be reverent, devout, yet cheerful. Select the most spiritually minded, capable member of the League to give a heart to heart talk on "Power for Service." Cause every member to feel that this week's Scripture study presents the *essential element* in individual and church life and work. Without it our leagues are helpless.

MAY 28.—"ESTABLISHED IN HEART."

Rom. 1: 11, 12; Ps. 112: 1-9.

HOME READINGS.

Mon., May 22. Established by God. . . . 1 Peter 5: 1-11
Tues., May 23. Established in Christ. . . . 2 Cor. 1: 21-24
Wed., May 24. Established through faith. . . . 1 Ths. 1: 3-8
Thurs., May 25. Established with grace. . . . Heb. 12: 9-19
Fri., May 26. Established in the faith. . . . Col. 1: 2-9
Sat., May 27. Established in the truth. . . . 2 Peter 1: 12-21

The way people think, and feel, and do in this world has a tendency to become permanent. Physiology, the science of body, psychology, the science of mind, and theo-

logy, the science of divine things, all declare it. If, therefore, people think right, and feel right, and do right, as the habit of life, it will come about in time that all their activity will be right. They will become established in goodness and righteousness. The opposite is equally true—that thinking wrong, and feeling wrong, and doing wrong, as the habit of life, will in time produce a character fixed in evil, utterly at enmity with God. There is great encouragement in this law for the Christian man; and great honor in it for the unbeliever. The law of immaturity becomes stamped on human lives, and it is a thought of overwhelming solemnity, that this earthly fixity, what we are and what we do, determines our condition in the coming life. So that both time and eternity appeal to us to live in harmony with God so that celestial music may charm our being here and hereafter. To be established in heart is the greatest moral achievement possible to man.

1. WHAT DOES IT MEAN?—By an established heart is meant, says one, the character that is in process of being transformed wholly into the likeness of Christ. It does not mean that the Christian can ever reach a point beyond which there will not be progress. But it *does mean* that we have passed beyond the point of wavering between serving God and serving sin—that he has settled forever the question of the soul's destiny, and is beyond the point of turning back into the world.

We have become established: (a) *In faith*.—We believe in Christ with an assurance and tenacity that nothing can shake. We believe in him in his offices as *prophet, priest and King*—our Teacher, our Saviour, our Sovereign. We are instructed, saved, and ruled by him, and we desire no other. We are satisfied, abundantly satisfied, and nothing in the world considered apart from God can allure us. (b) *In knowledge*.—Knowledge of divine things is so real, so true, so applied with unwavering and unremittent attention. The gospel of Christ is received so completely that we see its adaptation to all our wants. It becomes its own evidence. It proves by experience its divine origin—that the divine Being, who revealed the truth, knew also what was in man. Doubt vanishes; the heart and the mind are both at rest. (c) *In holiness*.—We become so established in doing right that we get a fixed abhorrence of evil, and love good for its own sake. We become enthusiastic over simple goodness, and glow into a white heat of spiritual zeal over pure morality. We now instinctively abhor that which is evil and cleave to that which is good. And nothing can change us. We are fixed in our belief and practice. (d) *In conduct*.—We are established in all those external acts that flow from holiness. Heart-holiness is manifested in daily conduct and habits, in every good word and work. We are epistles read and known of all men. We are letting our light shine before men that they may see our good works. The profession of our lips and the confession of our lives in word and deed exactly correspond, and continue to correspond without variation. Some people believe the profession solemnly made before God, when they are away from home, or among their worldly companions, or in the dark hours of the night, or in the inner chamber of their own thoughts, where no human eye can penetrate. They have not become established in consistent godly conduct. They vary so. They cannot say "my heart is fixed trusting in the Lord." Now, candidly, if we do not trust and obey God as the habit of our lives, do we really trust him at all? Is it not a question of surroundings, more than of change of heart? We are, with good people we conform to their way, but if we are with people indifferent as to their morality, we drift with the tide. Don't deceive yourself! There is no Christianity in that. You are an unprofitable servant unworthy of your great divine Master.