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## Power From on High: What is it?

(By Pres. C. G. Finney.)

The apostles and brethren, on the Day of Pentecost, received it. What did they receive? What power did they exercise after that event?

They received a powerful baptism of the Holy Ghost, a vast increase of divine illumination. This baptism imparted a great diversity of gifts, that were used for the accomplishment of their work. It manifestly included the following things: The power of a holy life. The power of a self-sacrificing life. (The manifestation of these must have had great influence with those to whom they proclaimed the gospel.) The power of a cross-bearing life. The power of great meekness, which this baptism enabled them everywhere to exhibit. The power of a loving enthusiasm in proclaiming the gospel. The power of teaching. The power of a living faith. The gift of tongues. An increase of power to work miracles. The gift of inspiration, or the revelation of many truths before unrecognized by them. The power of moral courage, to proclaim the gospel and do the bidding of Christ, whatever it cost them.

In their circumstances, all these endowments were essential to their success; but neither separately nor all together did they constitute a power from on high which Christ promised, and which they manifestly received. That which they manifestly received as the supreme, crowning, and all-important means of success was the power to prevail with both God and man, the power to fasten saving impressions upon the minds of men. This last was doubtless the thing which they understood Christ to promise. He had commissioned the Church to convert the world to Him. All that I have named above were only means, which could never secure the end unless they were vitalized and made effectual by the power of God. The apostles, doubtless, understood this; and, laying themselves and their all upon the altar, they besieged a Throne of Grace in the spirit of entire consecration to their work.

They did, in fact, receive the gifts before mentioned; but supremely and principally, this power to savingly impress men. It was manifested right upon the spot. They began to address the multitude; and, wonderful to tell, three thousand were converted the same hour. But, observe, here was no new power manifested by them upon this occasion, save the gift of tongues. They wrought no miracle at that time, and used these tongues simply as the means of making themselves understood. Let it be noted that they had not had time to exhibit any other gifts of the Spirit which have been above named. They had not at that time the advantage of exhibiting a holy life, or any of the powerful graces and gifts of the Spirit. What was said on the occasion, as recorded in the gospel, could not have made the impression that it did, had it not been uttered by them with a new power to make a saving impression upon the people. This power was not the power



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of inspiration, for they only declared certain facts of their own knowledge. It was not the power of human learning and culture, for they had but little. It was not the power of human eloquence, for there appears to have been but little of it. It was God speaking in and through them. It was a power from on high—God in them making a saving impression upon those to whom they spoke. This power to savingly impress abode with and upon them. It was, doubtless, the great and main thing promised by Christ, and received by the apostles and primitive Christians. It has existed, to a greater or less extent, in the Church ever since. It is a mysterious fact often manifested in a most surprising manner. Sometimes a single sentence, a word, a gesture, or even a look, will convey this power in an overcoming manner.

To the honor of God alone I will say a little of my own experience in this matter. I was powerfully converted on the morning of the 10th of October. In the evening of the same day, and on the morning of the following day, I received overwhelming baptisms of the Holy Ghost, that went through me, as it seemed to me, body and soul. I immediately found myself endued with such power from on high that a few words dropped here and there to individuals were the means of their immediate conversion. My words seemed to fasten like barbed arrows in the souls of men. They cut like a sword. They broke the heart like a hammer. Multitudes can attest to this. Oftentimes a word dropped, without my remembering it, would fasten conviction, and often result in almost immediate conversion. Sometimes I would find myself, in a great measure, empty of this power. I would go out and visit, and find that I made no saving impression. I would exhort and pray, with the same result. I would then set apart a day for private fasting and prayer, fearing that this power had de-

parted from me, and would inquire anxiously after the reason of this apparent emptiness. (After humbling myself, and crying out for help, the power would return upon me with all its freshness. This has been the experience of my life.

I could fill a volume with the history of my own experience and observation with respect to this power from on high. It is a fact of consciousness and of observation, but a great mystery. I have said that sometimes a look has in it the power of God. I have often witnessed this. Let the following fact illustrate it. I once preached, for the first time, in a manufacturing village. The next morning I went into a manufacturing establishment, to view its operations. As I passed into the weaving department, I beheld a great company of young women, some of whom, I observed, were looking at me, and then at each other, in a manner that indicated a trifling spirit, and that they knew me. I, however, knew none of them. As I approached nearer to those who had recognized me, they seemed to increase in their manifestations of lightness of mind. Their levity made a peculiar impression upon me; I felt it to my very heart. I stopped short and looked at them; I know not how, as my whole mind was absorbed with the sense of their guilt and danger. As I settled my countenance upon them, I observed that one of them became very much agitated. A thread broke. She attempted to mend it; but her hands trembled in such a manner that she could not do it. I immediately observed that the sensation was spreading, and had become universal among that class of triflers, I looked steadily at them, until one after another gave up, and paid no more attention to their looms. They fell on their knees, and the influence spread throughout the whole room. I had not spoken a word; and the noise of the looms would have prevented my being heard, if I had. In a few minutes all work was