

~Other Speakers G-L: Aaron Hills:

So long as the early Christian Church frequented the Pentecostal chamber, her career was one of unbroken triumphs. While her leaders were sanctified, and her preachers spoke their gospel messages with the power of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, the march of her progress was steady and irresistible; nothing could stay her triumphant course. While the early Christians were taught to look forward to a second sanctifying work of grace by the baptism with the Holy Spirit as the normal Christian experience, their zeal was unflagging; their life was pure; their courage was perfect. The cross and the sword could not make them halt, the dungeons were bowers of bliss, and the roar of the hungry lions in the amphitheater was like a bugle-call to glory and honor and immortality. The Church, while it repeated and renewed its Pentecosts, was full of an irresistible energy, and moved to conquest against the powers of darkness, "fair as the moon, glorious as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."

It was not until the Pentecostal chamber was forsaken, and its experiences discounted, and the leaders of the Church began to trust to the natural rather than the supernatural, and substituted oratory, and scholarship, and genius, and Pagan pomp, and governmental friendship for the baptism with the Holy Spirit and the Enduement of Power, that the Church fell.

History repeats itself. As Pentecost was rejected then, so it is being rejected today. Not very long ago the denominations were so widely separated that one of them might possess a great truth, and the leaders and earnest workers of the other never hear of it. It is not so much so today. Great truths overleap denominational bounds, and spread everywhere. Once the Methodists were almost alone in their advocacy of the great truth of holiness or sanctification as the privilege of all believers, a second work of grace subsequent to regeneration, a heart-cleansing wrought by the baptism with the Holy Ghost. John Wesley declared that this was the great truth which the Methodist Church was chiefly raised up to propagate. But this truth has crossed the bounds of that denomination now, and finds its advocates in nearly every great Church in the land. The list of the writers and authors in the various Churches is really too long to give. Hence it has come about that very much light on the subject of holiness has shot through the darkness everywhere, and the leaders of the denominations, and the more intelligent and widely read, know not a little about this great truth of sanctification.

Moreover, holiness bands and holiness campmeetings are becoming so numerous as to be at everybody's door. A goodly number of well-edited holiness papers and magazines also are now being published and well circulated everywhere. Thus a very considerable fraction of Christian people, if they do not have clear and accurate views of the Pentecostal blessing, at least do know that holiness, sanctification, that something discussed so much in the Bible, has also many advocates, and teachers, and witnesses among living men. A subject which God so strenuously pushes to the front in His Revelation challenges attention. God has honored the preaching of the Pentecostal blessing, the gospel of full salvation, with such displays of power, such demonstrations of the Holy Spirit, that all thoughtful people have rational grounds for believing that there is something in this holiness movement besides gush, hypocrisy, and fanaticism. The doctrine of a possible deliverance from sin through the baptism with the Spirit has earned respectful attention rather than contemptuous rejection. Light has come; and its reception in many quarters and by many minds has been scarcely more hospitable than that which was given to Him who was the Light of the world. The Man of Calvary "came to His own, and His own received Him not;" likewise His representative, the Holy Spirit, has come to His own, the Church of our day, offering Pentecostal blessing and power; and He in turn is being frequently and widely rejected. Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." But, in the case of not a few today, they do know what they do. They are intelligently, knowingly, coolly, consciously, deliberately rejecting the Holy Spirit's Pentecost.

The mighty Finney once said something like this: "There was a time when ministers were not enlightened on some great evils of the day, and God used them, notwithstanding their neglect of some great moral reforms; but now light has come, and duty is plain, and God will not greatly use those who refuse to walk in the light and do their duty. Show me, if you can, one minister who neglects the temperance reform, and then is blessed with revivals!" I believe, if Finney were with us today, and were preaching with the old-time fidelity and power, he would say in the same spirit: There was a time when ministers did not know that it was their privilege to receive the baptism with the Spirit in sanctifying power; but now light has come, and God will not greatly use and bless with revivals those who refuse to investigate and walk in the light and seek their Pentecost. Show me a minister who has knowingly rejected this blessing to whom God is giving many souls!

The sad signs of the times in the religious sky are unmistakable. Hon. H. K. Carroll, the Government statistician, says: "It is evident from the statistics that all the Churches are passing through a period of unusual dullness.

As a whole, they are making progress but very slowly. In finances they are thriving with the country; but the results of religious work are discouraging."

Earnest Christians ought to hide their faces in shame, when an able and friendly secular magazine, "The World's Work," begins a grave article as follows in this May, 1902: "We often hear that the day of the Christian Church is fast waning, and that it will cease to exist save as a relic of the past; and during the past two or three years, in representative gatherings of the leading Christian denominations, the questions of waning interest and declining strength have been discussed in all seriousness and sadness over and over again. From all parts of the country, and from other countries, too, come reports of empty pews, a decrease of Sunday School scholars, depleted treasuries, and a waning of religious enthusiasm."

Another magazine headed an article last year as follows: "The times spiritually are in a twist, and knotted -- gotten so by the tremendous force of secularized religion and false philosophy. No wonder that the world for which Christ died is perishing; no wonder that it is hard, perhaps was never so hard before, for any one to 'stand fast in the faith delivered once for all to the saints.' Instead of bravely, but lovingly and with emphasis, proclaiming those "life and death" truths, "Sin and Salvation," which are, in the last analysis, the only essential and fundamental factors in preaching, the American pulpit, in many important centers of population and influence, is seemingly content to deal out to soul-hungry men and women, as sermons, stale but adroit decoctions of unfaith and misfaith in the integrity of the Old Book, mixed with moral platitudes, and glossed with conservatism, which is but another name for compromising surrender of the gospel verities, counterfeiting the truth for popularity and pay."

The bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church have a wide and comprehensive outlook, and continually hold their fingers on the pulse of Church-life. They say: "The gulf between capital and labor threatens the Church on both sides, from that of the rich and that of the poor. The submerged tenth has been allowed to pass out to other agencies, the Church seeming to have gotten above its business. The Church has suffered on its borders from the thin speculations and vagaries of Christian Science. The powerful campmeetings of the olden time have substantially passed away, and the home has been demoralized by light literature and the amusement craze. The heart-searching that once prepared the way for the great work of revival is often avoided as the fanaticism of a past age, and revivals themselves often ridiculed as the ephemeral phenomena of shallow natures. In some sections criticism is extended to everything sacred, until the children are robbed of their respect for the Church, and the Church robbed of their presence. Higher criticism attacks the Bible itself, denying its supernatural character and Divine authority. While this higher criticism is limited to a few centers, yet its influence is filtered down through much of our literature, taking the authority out of the teaching and the power out of the preaching. The Bible loses its Divine authority; sin loses its fatal sting; the law loses its sanction; and God's government is reduced to a few rules concerning aesthetics. These are among the principal symptoms indicating the famine that enervates our Zion. We are retreating when we should advance at double-quick to keep abreast of the rushing events of our time.

"We have one dire disease -- Spiritual famine -- lack of the witness of the Spirit, lack of personal experience, lack of spiritual power; and the symptoms are many and various, but the disease is one ... The moral and spiritual forces, necessary for the building of great and Christlike characters have been sidetracked by the dominant forces of worldliness and selfishness." (The Pentecost Century, September, 1901)

In my reading I have come across the following statements, which, I presume, are correct, and which sadly corroborate the testimony of the bishops. In 1897, in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, there was only one convert to ninety-four members; in the Methodist Episcopal Church, North, but one to one hundred and thirty-one. In 1898, I have read (I hope it is a mistake) that the Methodist Episcopal Churches, North and South, with an aggregate of four million members, sustained an aggregate loss of eight thousand members; and that, in 1899, the Methodist Episcopal Church, North, lost twenty-one thousand, nine hundred and four members. Another authority says there was an actual loss of nearly four thousand. It seems incredible, and does not quite tally with other figures yet to be given. But all statements are sad and alarming. For instance, a paper of last week, (May 22, 1902,) informs us that the eleven thousand preachers of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, for the last four years have not averaged annually one convert apiece.

It almost makes one's heart stop beating to think that ministers, who are the spiritual descendants of Wesley, Coke, Asbury, McKendree, and those fathers of Methodism who swept over the land like cyclones of Holy Spirit power, are now reduced to such appalling barrenness.

But the Methodists are by no means alone in this trouble. Dr. Burrows, of the Regular Baptist Church, South, says: "The year 1899 has not been noted for any great increase in membership of the Churches." Dr. Dunning,

speaking for the Congregational Church, says: "The denomination is making little progress temporarily, and even in some respects is retrograding." "This denomination fell from a gain of nineteen thousand in 1895 to less than two thousand in 1900. Never in its history has there been such a falling off as has occurred since 1894." Dr. Beard, in an address a year ago, said of the Congregational Year-Book for 1900: "There is not a cheerful page in it. In it we learn that through the efforts of six hundred and thirty thousand members, with a cash outlay of \$7,000,000 for home expenses, there was received during the twelve months a net addition of only 1,640. In Massachusetts, with a membership of one hundred and thirteen thousand, and a cash outlay for home expenses of \$1,630,000, there was during that year an actual loss of five hundred and eighty-eight members. At the National Council lately held in Portland, Me., there was reported a net loss for the triennial period of thirty-two thousand one hundred and three members in the Christian Endeavor Societies."

Dr. Roberts says: The progress of the Presbyterian Church is not so rapid as in former years. The real reason appears to be the lack of spiritual vigor in all the Christian denominations."

All denominations, both those that are esteemed liberal and those also that are rigidly orthodox, except those that are re-enforced by immigration, show a steady and alarming decline in the rate of increase, as the following table shows:

Think of those twenty-one branches of the Christian Church, comprising the bulk and power of the Protestantism of the United States, having their net gain decrease from nine hundred and five thousand in 1895 to two hundred and thirty-seven thousand in 1900! What could be more humiliating or more sad? It is enough to cause mourning in earth and heaven, and to wake up a jubilee in hell!

And the saddest of it all is, that this is a needless barrenness! Human hearts are just what they have always been, estranged from God and filled with carnality and sin, no better and no worse than the human hearts of other times. The Gospel of Christ is not outlawed, or antiquated, or obsolete. It is still the power of God, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and can prick to conviction the sinner's innermost soul. The blessed "Third Person of the Trinity," the ever-adorable Holy Spirit, is not dead. He can still cleanse the believer's heart in the Pentecostal Chamber, and endue with a supernatural power the ambassador of Christ, and make his message quick and powerful to break the flinty heart of the foe of God. The resources of prayer are not exhausted, and heaven is as accessible as even God still waits to hear and answer the supplications of His people. He still longs to listen to a ten days' united supplication of His people that He may open the windows of heaven and pour out another Pentecost. No Church needs to hang its harps upon the willows and mourn over the desolations of Zion; for God can still cause His Word to accomplish that which He pleases, and send the early and the latter rain, and cause the desert to blossom as a fertile field, and become the Garden of the Lord. No minister needs to go without sheaves in the Lord's great harvest-field; for the promise still holds: "He that goeth forth with weeping, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him:" "Ye shall reap in due season if ye faint not."

People are pouring like a Niagara-tide through the gates of sin and death into an awful hell. God has set His heart upon turning that stream of life heavenward.

Any child of God who will faithfully fall in with God's wishes and plans and conditions of success will become a winner of souls. I solemnly declare again, to the honor of the old Gospel and the glory of the Holy Ghost, all this barrenness is utterly needless.

The young men who study theology under me are taught to win souls, and to measure their success by their soul-winning. They are also taught to seek the endowment of power as the most essential condition of success in the ministry. They are trained in sermon-making with that end in view. They are taught to expect success; and they have it. Several students that studied under me one and two years ago have, during the last twelve months, led more than a hundred souls each to God. One of my last year's pupils has had a thousand saved or sanctified since he left the school. One of this year's pupils had to leave us two months ago on account of straitness of funds, and he has since seen one hundred and fifteen people come to the altar and bow to God in his meetings. None of these students of whom I have written had education enough to enter our freshmen class in college; yet they have a success in winning men that nine-tenths of the nobly-educated Doctors of Divinity might covet. One of our students has seen more people converted during his three summer vacations than many ministers have in a lifetime. While I am writing these lines we are in the closing week of the third year of our Texas Holiness University. Since the commencement of our last school year, September 24, 1901, two hundred and ninety-four people have knelt at our altar and prayed their way to God; and since the college opened its doors, less than three years ago, four hundred and sixty-five souls have thus found God in our college services. In the face of such facts, and multitudes of similar ones that I might give, is it too much to say

that barrenness on the part of the ministry and the Churches is wholly unnecessary?

The truth is, the theological professors and those who are responsible for the training of the ministry, and the men high up in ecclesiastical power in our denominations, are, almost without exception, magnifying the natural and ignoring the supernatural. They are making a great deal of talent and education and oratory, and in equal measure they are discounting the importance of the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

I know I lay myself liable to criticism by these remarks. A reviewer once reviewed my book, "Holiness and Power," and said that, in the last chapter, I raised an unfortunate conflict between the filling of the Spirit and education, and created a prejudice against the latter. It was an uncalled-for and wholly unfair criticism. My whole life brands it as unjust. I am in the business of giving to young people all the education I can induce them to acquire. I urge a classical education on the young men fitting for the ministry. I spent seven years behind college and university walls myself, and I am a true friend and a hearty advocate of higher education. I will not be misunderstood on this point. But, after thirty years of experience and observation, I declare frankly, if I had to choose between all that the best university can give without the baptism with the Spirit, and an education through the freshman year of an ordinary college with the baptism with the Spirit, I should unhesitatingly choose the latter. The Spirit-filling and the enduement of power from on high will be worth infinitely more for ministerial success than the final six years of college training. If our theological professors and the men at the head of our denominational enterprises would all learn this, and exemplify it, the Churches would be saved from the disgrace of perennial barrenness.

Well does Joseph Parker, the great preacher of London, say: "Culture can not take the place of spirituality. I would make the Lord's house glad with every expression of love; but this done, I would write on the doorposts, on the roof, and on every panel the words of Jesus, 'In this place is One greater than the temple.' I prefer knowledge to ignorance, but I PREFER HOLINESS TO EITHER. Culture, when not a chattering and fussy prig, may be right noble and even majestic; but nothing is so cold as culture, and nothing so mean, when not inflamed and impassioned by the Spirit of Christ. Today the pulpit is in danger of being killed by miscalled culture. Men think that, because they have been to college five years, they ought to be preachers, which is as logical as to say that a man who has driven an omnibus five years ought to be able to take a ship across the Atlantic. The Lord continually dashes these culture-pots to pieces like a potter's vessel, by making preachers of His own, but clothing them with mysterious but most beneficent power."

The greatest soul-winning preachers of the century just closed were not college-bred; yet in the face of this fact, so astonishing and so striking, our theological schools go on turning out dainty, self-sufficient "CULTURE-POTS," and calling them preachers! If this ghastly farce goes on much longer, conversions will almost wholly cease, and the honor of the Church -- the Bride of Christ -- will go down in the dust of humiliating defeat before her enemies.

It is a good thing that it is so -- a positive blessing. The Holy Spirit resents being traded off for culture; and He withdraws Himself, saying by that act: "You seem to think that natural means and agencies are sufficient -- culture and oratory and ecclesiastical machinery. I will leave you to yourselves until you learn your insufficiency and remember again your forgotten God."

I rejoice at the concern of the denominational leaders. It is truly a healthy sign that they are concerned about the desolations of Zion. But they will look everywhere else for an explanation of their leanness first; then, it is to be devoutly hoped, they will think of Pentecost rejected, sanctification despised, and a grieved Holy Spirit!

Just now it is enough to make the devil laugh, and saints and angels listen and look with wondering amazement, while these disappointed Church leaders turn to the Sunday Schools and the Y. M. C. A.'s, and the Y. W. C. A.'s, and Y. P. S. C. E.'s, and B. Y. P. U.'s, and the Epworth Leagues, and W. C. T. U.'s, and Institutional Churches, and Young Men's Clubs, and Women's Auxiliary Societies, and Ladies' Aid Societies, and Boys' Brigades, and fine Churches, and fine choirs, and brilliant preachers, to help them out of their troubles and cure their barrenness. Machinery, machinery! "A multiplication of man's machinery; a diminution of God's power!" And God will drive us by a spiritual famine to honor the Holy Spirit. Amen! let the needed famine come, until men will honor God. Then the windows of heaven will open, Pentecosts will be multiplied, and God will pour out a blessing till there shall not be room enough to receive it.

I am not alone in placing a large estimate on Pentecostal baptism as the most important preparation for the ministry. President Finney was probably the greatest soul-winner of the Christian centuries. But he was humble and honest enough to write: "Unless the Spirit sets home and makes the truth of God effectual, all human eloquence will be in vain; and it is a fact worthy of all attention and consideration that, with very little human

culture, this enduement of power will make a Christian wise and efficient in bringing souls to Christ." I will not quote more from Finney. In my book, "Life of Charles G. Finney," I give one entire chapter to his wise counsel to the ministry. It is the soundest homiletical instruction I have ever found. He held that the baptism with the Holy Spirit was "EVERYTHING in the sense of being wholly indispensable to success."

In a similar vein Rev. F. B. Meyer, of London, writes as follows on "The Relation of the Baptism with the Holy Ghost to Preachers and Preaching:" "How absurd it is for us to send young men to college to equip them with an intellectual store of classic and philosophic learning, and to send them out to teach, without insisting upon it that if Christ waited to be anointed before he went to preach, no young man ought to preach until he, too, has been anointed with the Holy Ghost! Never forget that our Lord's ministry was not in the power of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, but in the power of the Third Person of the Holy Trinity. As St. Peter said: 'God anointed Him with the Holy Ghost, and He went about doing good.' The Church was conceived by the Holy Ghost; but the Church, before attempting her ministry, must also be anointed by the Holy Ghost.

"Pentecost differs from regeneration. In regeneration the Holy Spirit is described as being WITHIN, but in Pentecost and ever after the Holy Ghost is described as being UPON (and as filling them and sanctifying them). He anoints, He falls upon, He equips, and I ask that, before this reading shall close, every one in reading this who has been regenerated by the Holy Ghost, shall become anointed, filled, empowered with the Holy Ghost. It would make the GREATEST DIFFERENCE POSSIBLE IN YOUR LIFE. There is where you have failed, my brother. You have been preaching the CROSS; but you have not been preaching the CROSS in the demonstration and power of the blessed Spirit. (I Pet. 1:12)

"Would God that you, my brother ministers, who have been working with the power of intellect, of energy, of enthusiastic zeal, with but poor effect, may become linked to the power of God, the Holy Ghost stored in Christ; for as soon as you are linked to it, not you, but the power of God through you, will repeat the marvels of Pentecost ... You say to me: 'Sir, tell me how I may get this power myself.' As far as I know there are five conditions.

"FIRST. YOU CAN NOT HAVE THE POWER OF THE HOLY GHOST WITHOUT HAVING THE HOLY GHOST HIMSELF. That is, the Holy Ghost must come to you as a Person before you can enjoy His attributes. In other words, YOU MUST BE A HOLY MAN before you can wield the power of the Holy Ghost. There are plenty of men who think that if they could only get the power of the Holy Ghost they would be able to fill their Churches and sell their books, and get themselves name and fame. They want it (power), but they do not want Him (and His Holiness). You can not have it without having Him. [And you can not have Him, without having the sanctification he brings with Him.] If you want the power of the Holy Ghost, open your heart today and be filled with the Holy Ghost, and then you will have His power.

"SECOND. YOU MUST BE CLEANSED. O, I do want to speak wisely! I do not want needlessly to offend you or denounce you. But I do feel in my heart that if the Holy Spirit is going to work through anybody, HE MUST HAVE A CLEANSED VESSEL.

"THIRD. You must live for the glory of Christ as your supreme end. Jesus Christ came into the world to glorify the Father, and the Holy Spirit came into the world to glorify the Son. If, therefore, you want the Holy Ghost to work with you, you must agree with the Holy Ghost to glorify Jesus.

"FOURTH. Your preaching and teaching must be in harmony with the Word of God. Remember that the Holy Spirit is like a locomotive; the Word of God like the steel rails; and you must have the steel rails of the Bible as well as the steam power of the Holy Ghost. Let the Holy Ghost fill you, but He will work along the lines of that book.

"FIFTH. The Holy Spirit must be received by faith. Gal. 3:14, is the battle-ax. I would not be without that text for anything: 'That we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.' By faith you are regenerated; by faith you are justified; BY FAITH YOU ARE SANCTIFIED; BY FAITH YOU RECEIVE THE HOLY GHOST; by faith you receive Christ as the power of God in your life."

We gladly make this lengthy quotation from this beloved brother. Though we disagree with him in one particular, as the reader will observe later, yet his teaching is blessedly true that the baptism with the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential to true ministerial success; and he admits that this baptism can not be received unless one is "cleansed," "sanctified," made "a holy man." This is the very Pentecostal blessing we are writing about. The Holy Spirit would not dare to fill and empower an unclean, unholy, carnal man; he would be sure to abuse the power by using it in a carnal, selfish, wicked way. He would certainly use it to advance his own fame

and glory instead of the glory of Christ. This is doubtless the reason why hundreds of ministers pray for the baptism of the Holy Spirit for power, for every one who receives it. They reject sanctification; they will not have holiness, and God can not lend His Holy-Spirit power to a carnal, unholy man. This is the explanation of the fact that college-trained preachers who sincerely long for enlarged usefulness, and carry a heavy heart over their lack of success, preach months, and often years, without a convert, or perhaps have but four or five. The Holy Spirit is not with them in Pentecostal power, driving the message home upon the hearts of the people till it pierces like a barbed arrow and accomplishes its work. That preacher is made as a soul-winner who gets and retains this Pentecostal experience; this heavenly illumination; this Divine anointing; this cleansing and empowering of the Holy Ghost.

It matters not where a church is located, among what people, educated or ignorant, high or low, rich or poor, native or foreign, -- if the preacher and the lay members are Spirit-filled and anointed, their enterprise is joined to the dynamo of the skies; their power is adequate to every need and emergency. The Almighty God, with all the resources of heaven, is behind their efforts, AND THEY WILL SUCCEED. They have but to touch the button with the finger of faith, and something will happen that will astonish three worlds.

How ought the Pentecostal chamber to be prized and the Pentecostal blessing to be prayed for and coveted Its transcendent importance can not be overestimated. The coming of the Spirit in power upon our preachers and our Churches is the need of the hour. It would be like a spice-laden breeze visiting the lattice of the sick, or like a strong wind to hopelessly-becalmed mariners, filling their idle sails and speeding them on to their desired havens. It would create again the long-lost spirit of Pentecostal benevolence to fill the coffers of our impoverished Missionary Boards, and it would send out a multitude of missionaries to sow beside all waters. It would bring a blessed stir of Divine life to the stagnant pools of our highly-endowed theological seminaries. The Spirit-filled professors would tell the theological students less about evolution and their monkey ancestors, and show them more how to make a moral revolution in the communities where they go, and how to induce lost sinners to become the sons and daughters of God. They would teach the young preachers less about German rationalism, and more about the baptism with the Holy Ghost. They would show them how to criticize the Bible less, and how more to read it with anointed vision, and see in it the deep things of God.

The race of sickly, sentimental, sycophantic, truth-trimming, gospel-diluting, parlor-ornamenting, dudish, women-worshiped preachers would become extinct. The gushing, perfumed essays, full of the roses and poses of rhetoric, would no longer find their way into our pulpits. We should hear no more of sermonettes and Christianettes on the road to a heavenette. Stalwarts, sons of the old, heroic prophets, would fill the pulpits; mature men and women, rather than carnal babes, would fill the now empty pews. Their sanctuary-revering, religion-respecting children would be with them. The old-time Pauline gospel of righteousness and full-salvation would be preached in its glorious completeness, and be like fire and hammer to break the flinty heart in pieces. It would command the respect of thoughtful men. The Church, the white-robed Bride of Christ, would "arise and shine, her light having come, and the glory of God having risen upon her." Her onward step would be the tread of victory: she would be as terrible to the hosts of hell "as an army with banners."

Who that loves the Lord does not long to see Zion thus clothed with power and glory? What a refreshing chapter of history she would make after the late annals of humiliating defeat! Let us all turn away with one accord from reliance on Church fairs, and festivals, and theatricals, and human learning, and oratory, and fine Churches, and costly choirs, and organizations and machinery, and carnal means and methods, and seek the baptism with the Holy Ghost and His continual indwelling with all our hearts. Pentecost universally welcomed would mean the Church saved and the world evangelized.