

Smith Wigglesworth:

Bible Reading, 2 Corinthians 3

We are told that we are to leave the first principles of the doctrine of Christ and go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and the doctrine of baptisms and other first principles (Hebrews 6). What would you think of a builder who was everlastingly pulling down his house and putting in fresh foundations? Never look back if you want the power of God in your life. You will find out that in the measure you have allowed yourself to look back you have missed that which God has for you.

The Holy Ghost shows us that we must never look back to the law of sin and death from which we have been delivered. God has brought us into a new order of things, a life of love and liberty in Christ Jesus that is beyond all human comprehension. Many are brought into this new life through the power of the Spirit of God, and then, like the Galatians, who ran well at the beginning, they try to perfect themselves on the lines of legalism. They go back from the life in the Spirit to a life on natural lines. God is not pleased with this, for He has no place for the man who has lost the vision. The only thing to do is to repent. Don't try to cover up anything. If you have been tripped up on any line, confess it out, and then look to God to bring you to a place of stability of faith where your whole walk will be in the Spirit.

We all ought to have a clear conviction that salvation is of the Lord. It is more than a human order of things. If the enemy can move you from a place of

faith, he can get you outside the plan of God. The moment a man falls into sin, divine life ceases to flow, and his life becomes one of helplessness. But this is not God's thought for any of His children. Read the third chapter of John's first epistle and take your place as a son of God. Take the place of knowing that you are a son of God, and remember that, as your hope is set in Christ, it should have a purifying effect on your life. The Holy Spirit says, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for His seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." There is life and power in the seed of the Word that is implanted within. God is in that "cannot," and there is more power in that word of His than in any human objections. God's thought for everyone of us is that we shall reign in life by Jesus Christ. You must come to see how wonderful you are in God and how helpless you are in yourself.

God declared Himself more mighty than every opposing power when He cast out the powers of darkness from heaven. I want you to know that the same power that cast Satan out of heaven dwells in every man that is born of God. If you would but realize this, you would reign in life. When you see people laid out under an evil power, when you see the powers of evil manifesting themselves, always put the question, "Did Jesus come in the flesh?" I have never seen an evil power answer in the affirmative. When you know you have an evil spirit to deal with you have power to cast it out. Believe it and act on it, for greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4). God means you to be in a place of overcoming, and has put a force within you whereby you may defeat the devil.

Temptations will come to all. If you are not worth tempting you are not worth powder and shot. Job said: "When He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." In every temptation that comes, the Lord lets you be tempted up to the very hilt, but will never allow you to be defeated if you walk in obedience; for right in the midst of the temptation He will always "make a way of escape."

Tongues and Interpretation: "God comes forth and with His power sweeps away the refuge of lies and all the powers of darkness, and causes you always to triumph in Christ Jesus. The Lord loveth His saints and covereth them with His almighty wings."

May God help us to see it. We cannot be to the praise of His glory until we are ready for trials, and are able to triumph in them. We cannot get away from the fact that sin came in by nature, but God comes into our nature and puts it into the place of death, that the Spirit of God may come into the temple in all His power and liberty, that right here in this present evil world Satan may be dethroned by the believer.

Satan is always endeavoring to bring the saints of God into disrepute, bringing against them railing accusations, but the Holy Ghost never comes with condemnation. He always reveals the blood of Christ. He always brings us help. The Lord Jesus referred to Him as the Comforter who would come. He is always on hand to help in the seasons of trial and test. The Holy Ghost is the lifting power of the church of Christ. And Paul tells us that we "are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, . . . written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the

living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart." The Holy Ghost begins in the heart, right in the depths of human affections. He brings into the heart the riches of the revelation of Christ, implanting purity and holiness there, so that, out of its depths, praises may well up continually.

The Holy Ghost will make us epistles of Christ, ever telling out that Jesus our Lord is our Redeemer and God has never put away that revelation. And because of the perfect atonement of that slain Lamb, there is salvation, healing and deliverance for all. Some people think that they have only to be cleansed once, but as we walk in the light the blood of Jesus Christ is ever cleansing.

The very life of Christ has been put within us, and is moving within us—a perfect life. May the Lord help us to see the power of this life. The years of a man's life are threescore and ten, and so in the natural order of things, my life will be finished in seven years, but I have begun a new life that will never end. "From everlasting to everlasting Thou art God." This is the life I have come into, and there is no end to this life. In me is working a power stronger than every other power; Christ, the power of God, formed within me. I can see why we need to be clothed upon from above, for the life that is in me is a thousand times bigger than I am outside. There must be a tremendous expansion. I see, and cannot help seeing, that this thing cannot be understood on natural lines; no natural reason can comprehend the divine plan.

"We are not sufficient to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God." If you go back, you miss the plan. We leave the old order of things. We can never have confidence in the flesh; we cannot touch that. We are in a new order, a spiritual order. It is a new life of absolute faith in the sufficiency of our God in everything that pertains to life and godliness.

You could never come into this place and be a Seventh-day Adventist. The law has no place in you. You are set free from everything. At the same time, like Paul, you are "bound in the Spirit" so that you would not do anything to grieve the Lord.

Paul further tells us that He has made us "able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." It is one thing to read this, and another to have the revelation of it and to see the spiritual force of it. Any man can live in the letter and become dry and wordy, limited in knowledge of spiritual verities, and spend his time everlastingly in splitting hairs; but as soon as he touches the realm of the Spirit, all the dryness goes, all the spirit of criticism leaves. There can be no divisions in a life in the Spirit. The Spirit of God brings such pliability and such love! There is no love like the love in the Spirit. It is a pure, a holy, a divine love that is shed in our hearts by the Spirit. It loves to serve and to honor the Lord.

I can never estimate what the Baptism of the Holy Ghost has been to me these past fifteen years. It seems that every year has had three years packed into it, so that I have had forty-five years of happy service since 1907. And it is getting better all the time. It is a luxury to be filled with the Spirit, and at the same time it is a divine command for us, not to be filled with wine wherein is excess, but to be filled with the Spirit. No Pentecostal person ought to get out of bed without being lost in the Spirit and speaking in tongues as the Spirit gives utterance. No one should come into the door of an assembly without speaking in tongues or having a psalm, or a note of praise. We emphasize that at the incoming of the Spirit He should so fill us that the last member in the body is yielded to Him, and that no one is baptized in the Spirit without speaking in tongues as the Spirit gives utterance; and I maintain that, with a constant filling, you will speak in tongues morning, noon and night. As you live in the Spirit, when you walk down the steps of the house where you live, the devil will have to go before you. You will be more than a conqueror over the devil.

I see everything a failure except that which is done in the Spirit. But as you live in the Spirit, you move, act, eat, drink, and do everything to the glory of God. Our message is always this, "Be filled with the Spirit. This is God's place for you, and it is as far above the natural life as the heavens are above the earth. Yield yourselves for God to fill.

Moses had a tremendous trial with the people. They were always in trouble. But as he went up into the mount, and God unfolded to him the ten commandments, the glory fell. He rejoiced to bring those two tables of stone down from the mount, and his very countenance shone with the glory. He was bringing to Israel that which, if obeyed, would bring life.

I think of my Lord coming from heaven. I think all heaven was moved by the sight. The law of the letter was brought by Moses and it was made glorious, but all its glory was dimmed before the excelling glory which Jesus brought to us in the Spirit of life. The glory of Sinai paled before the glory of Pentecost. Those tables of

stone with their "Thou shalt not, thou shalt not," are done away; for they never brought life to anyone, and the Lord has brought in a new covenant, putting His law in our minds and writing it in our hearts, this new law of the Spirit of life. As the Holy Ghost comes in, He fills us with such love and liberty that we shout for joy these words of this 11th verse, "Done away! Done away!" Henceforth there is a new cry in our hearts, "I delight to do Thy will, O God." He taketh away the first, the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, that He might establish the second, this ministration of righteousness, this life in the Spirit.

You ask, "Does a man who is filled with the Spirit cease to keep the commandments?" I simply repeat what the Spirit of God has told us here, that this ministration of death, written and engraven in stones (and you know that the ten commandments were written on stones) is "DONE AWAY." The man who becomes a living epistle of Christ, written with the Spirit of the living God, has ceased to be an adulterer, or a murderer or a covetous man; the will of God is his delight. I love to do the will of God; there is no irksomeness to it; it is no trial to pray; no trouble to read the Word of God; it is not a hard thing to go to the place of worship. With the psalmist you say, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord."

How does this new life work out? The thing works out because God works in you to will and to do of His own good pleasure (Phil. 2:13). There is a great difference between a pump and a spring. The law is a pump, the Baptism is a spring. The old pump gets out of order, the parts perish, and the well runs dry. The letter killeth. But the spring is ever bubbling up and there is a ceaseless flow direct from the throne of God. There is life.

It is written of Christ, "Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness." And in this new life in the Spirit, in this new covenant life, you love the things that are right and pure and holy, and shudder at all things that are wrong. Jesus was able to say, "The prince of this world cometh, and bath nothing in Me," and the moment we are filled with the Spirit of God we are brought into like wonderful condition, and, as we continue to be filled with the Spirit, the enemy cannot have an inch of territory in us.

Do you not believe that you can be so filled with the Spirit that a man who is not living right can be judged and convicted by your presence? As we go on in the life of the Spirit, it will be said of us, "in whose eyes a vile person is contemned" (Psalm 15:4). Jesus lived there and moved in this realm, and His life was a constant reproof to the wickedness around. But He was the Son of God, you say. God, through Him has brought us into the place of sonship, and I believe that if He has a chance with the material, the Holy Ghost can make something of us, and bring us to the same place.

I don't want to boast. If I glory in anything, it is only in the Lord who has been so gracious to me. But I remember one time stepping out of a railroad carriage to wash my hands. I had a season of prayer, and the Lord just filled me to overflowing with His love. I was going to a convention in Ireland, and I could not get there fast enough. As I returned, I believe that the Spirit of the Lord was so heavily upon me that my face must have shone. (No man can tell himself when the Spirit transforms his very countenance.) There were two clerical men sitting together, and as I got into the carriage again, one of them cried out, "You convince me of sin." Within three minutes every one in the carriage was crying to God for salvation. This thing has happened many times in my life. It is this ministration of the Spirit that Paul speaks of, this filling of the Spirit, that will make your life effective, so that even the people in the stores where you trade will want to leave your presence because they are brought under conviction.

We must move from everything of the letter. All that we do must be done under the anointing of the Spirit. The trouble has been that we as Pentecostal people have been living in the letter. Believe what the Holy Spirit says through Paul-that all this ministration of condemnation that has hindered your liberty in Christ is done away. The law is DONE AWAY! As far as you are concerned, all that old order of things is forever done away, and the Spirit of God has brought in a new life of purity and love. The Holy Ghost takes it for granted that you are finished with all the things of the old life when you become a new creation in Christ. In the life in the Spirit, the old allurements have lost their power. The devil will meet you at every turn, but the Spirit of God will always lift up a standard against him.

O, if God had His way, we should be like torches, purifying the very atmosphere wherever we go, moving back the forces of wickedness.

Tongues and Interpretation: "The Lord is that Spirit. He moves in your heart. He shows you that the power within you is mightier than all the powers of darkness."

Done away! What do I mean? Will you be disloyal? You will be more than loyal. Will you grumble when you are treated badly? No, you will turn the other cheek. This is what you will always do when God lives in you. Leave

yourselves in God's hands. Enter into rest. "He that is entered into His rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from His" (Hebrews 4). O this is a lovely rest! The whole life is a Sabbath. This is the only life that can glorify God. It is a life of joy, and every day is a day of heaven on earth.

There is a continued transformation in this life. Beholding the Lord and His glory we are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even by the Spirit of the Lord. There is a continued unveiling, a constant revelation, a repeated clothing upon from above. I want you to promise God never to look back, never to go back to that which the Spirit has said is "done away." I made this promise to the Lord that I would never allow myself to doubt His Word.

There is one thing about a baby, it takes all that comes to it. A prudent man lets his reason cheat him out of God's best. But a baby takes all that its mother brings, and tries to swallow the bottle and all. The baby can't walk, but the mother carries it; the baby cannot dress itself, but the mother dresses it. The baby can't even talk. So in the life of the Spirit, God undertakes to do what we cannot do. We are carried along by Him, He clothes us, and HC gives us utterance. Would that we all had the simplicity of the babes.