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The GAY Lectures
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THE HOLY SPIRIT
IN
CHRISTIAN PROCLAMATION

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LECTURE I.

Perhaps the first thing I should do is to seek to remove a slight ambiguity in the wording of the subject.

It occurs to me that the title could be interpreted as meaning the place of the Holy Spirit in the kerygma. What place does the Holy Spirit occupy in the message which constitutes the good news? Where does it fit in the doctrine? Just as we might say, "The Resurrection in Christian proclamation".

This is not the aspect I intend to deal with. What I want to do is deal with the place of the Holy Spirit in the activity of Christian proclamation.

Let us take a simple analogy. In speaking of revelation, theologians customarily distinguish between the act of revealing (revelatio) and the reality revealed (revelatum). The same distinction may be made in reference to the term 'proclamation'. There is the act of proclaiming (proclamatio?) and that which is proclaimed (proclamatum). Both ideas, of course, are covered by the English term proclamation. In these lectures I am using

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the term in the first sense (proclamatio). Not 'What place does the Holy Spirit occupy in the doctrine proclaimed', but 'What part does He play in the act of Christian preaching'.

And let me go on to confess right away to not a little uneasiness in dealing with this subject. One wishes that one knew far more at first hand of the power of the Holy Spirit in one's own preaching before undertaking to expound a theme of this kind. My only justification is that the topic has been dogging my steps tantalizingly for something like four years now.

I am not a little surprised to find that comparatively little has been written on this theme, at least of a thorough and intensive nature. Some reference is made, of course, to the relationship between the Holy Spirit and preaching in practically every book on Preaching. But truths are more frequently hinted at than developed. As though others also feel that it were presumption to talk in any authoritative way on this angle of the subject.

But is there not some kind of hesitation on another account? Let me put it this way. How pleased is the Holy Spirit Himself when we seek to focus our lens, as it were, upon Him in order to see what precisely He does in this business of unfolding before men the 'unsearchable

riches of Christ'?

Let me not be misunderstood in putting the question thus. Indeed ^{let} ~~that~~ me hasten to say that I have a great deal of sympathy with, and am duly rebuked by, those who say that our tendency in these days is not to pay sufficient attention to the truth of the Holy Spirit. So much of the activism of our churches today is grossly Pelagian. All this I would sadly, but readily concede. Moreover, we should pay due heed to the unbroken insistence of the Church in the centuries during which the doctrines of our faith were being formulated, that we recognise the distinctly personal character and true deity of the Holy Spirit; "omniscient", as one writer has put it, "to know all our needs; omnipresent so that we do not need to search for Him or wait for Him; omnipotent, so that nothing is beyond His power to bestow on us, or work in us or for us, or in those to whom we preach, so that what is impossible with men is easy with Him".¹ This, I hope, goes almost without saying.

But when we have recognised all this, we have to note, too, that one of the things that loom large in New Testament teaching (and especially in the Johannine writings) upon the Holy Spirit is that He points always to Someone else and never to Himself. "He shall not speak of Himself He shall glorify me".²

Moreover, we have to recognise that vivid as was their experience of the Holy Spirit, New Testament Christians knew, as A. Lewis Humphries has it, "only of a Spirit who wrought with the full Christ as His material".³

And so, in all our discussions we must bear in mind what J.E. Fison has aptly called, this "fundamental self-effacement of the Spirit who is Holy".⁴

We shall return later in these lectures to discuss this point of the material with which the Holy Spirit works. The important thing at the moment is to be sensible of this dilemma with which we are confronted when we seek to make the Holy Spirit's operation an object of enquiry and discussion. To be constantly aware of this dilemma is to be saved from slipping into the error of extravagant sects of the School of the Spirit. Canon Fison refers to "that other blasphemy against the Holy Spirit which may not be the unforgivable sin, but certainly is fatal in its consequences to those who utter it. I refer to the blasphemy of speaking of the Holy Spirit as if he were a self-advertising agent and not the self-effacing Paraclete who points always and only to Jesus Christ".⁵

All this is only emphasised by the Pauline near-identification of the functions of the Spirit with those of the risen and indwelling Christ. While Paul does technically distinguish between the Spirit and Christ,

he seems quite unable to keep the conceptions entirely separate.

In all our enquiry, then, concerning the work of the Holy Spirit in Christian proclamation and in any other activity for that matter we have to bear in mind the self-effacing character of the Holy Spirit. While He is called "another Paraclete" He is also the 'alter ego' of Jesus, the Christ.

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The Fourth Gospel insists that the activity of the Holy Spirit in the sense we have considered is something quite new. Indeed this particular phase of His working is by very definition new. This insistence leads the Fourth Evangelist to use quite odd expressions concerning the Spirit. In John 7.39, for example, after the saying of our Lord, "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water", the writer adds this parenthetical note - "But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive, for . . .", and note the Greek - οὐπω γὰρ ἦν πνεῦμα - "for the Holy Spirit was not yet". This C.K. Barrett contends, is the simplest and probably the correct text. It is interesting to note that the Latin and old Syriac versions add δεδομένον to give the reading, "for the Holy Spirit was not yet given"; and

this undoubtedly correctly conveys the sense of the passage. But that John could omit *δεδομένον* from the expression he used only emphasises the completely new character of this dispensation of spiritual activity to which he looked forward. The remarkable work of the Spirit is to follow the completion of the redemptive work and glorification of the Son.

We will not fall into the anachronism, or, indeed the error of charging the writer of the Fourth Gospel with Sabellianism. The Spirit of whom he speaks had already descended upon the Son at the very commencement of His ministry (John 1.32).

And when we turn from John to the Synoptic Gospels to hear our Lord's own comment on this descent of the Spirit upon him we reach right back into the Old Testament and find that the Spirit comes upon the servants of God that they may preach! "And he came (i.e. after the baptism and wilderness experience) to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor . . ." (Luke 4.16ff).

Here, then is the taking up of the expression generally used in the Old Testament. The Spirit of God comes 'upon' a man. At a service I attended recently the preacher, in invoking the Holy Spirit referred to Him as the One "who in the beginning moved upon the face of the waters, bringing order out of chaos", and then, "who came upon Thy servants the prophets and made them to speak the word of the Lord".

Few, here, I think, would quarrel with that expression, "came upon Thy servants the prophets" particularly in view of our Lord 's appropriating Isaiah's word containing this very expression. The רוּחַ of Yahweh falls or 'alights' upon a person, usually as a special power at a particular time enabling him to accomplish unusual things, sometimes in the physical, sometimes in the spiritual realm. Saul's prophetic ecstasy and Balaam's second sight are much-quoted and typical examples.

Wheeler Robinson in the work already quoted claims that this "original idea of ruach as an invasive energy, used to explain the abnormal in man's conduct, was so far naturalized as to allow the use of the term for the more marked energies of life, even when there was no suggestion of an invasion from supernatural realm⁴". The idea here appears to be that the figure which originally indicated

the bestowing of the abnormal later came to signify the heightening of the normal.

It is interesting to find Professor A.R. Johnson joining issue with Wheeler Robinson on this point. Dr. Johnson claims that Robinson's statement goes beyond the evidence; that the passages Robinson quotes of the second type, "although comparatively few, are as early as those which treat of the activity of the in terms of 'an invasion from the supernatural realm', so that there appears to be no justification for the view that the one conception was ever earlier than the other".⁹

So that while the more psychical powers are sometimes attributed to the of Yahweh with the accompanying phenomenon of ecstasy, Johnson points out that "an experience of this kind is by no means the only or necessary consequence of being subject to possession by the of Yahweh. It may issue, rather, in those temperate qualities which characterize the ideal servant of Yahweh . . ."¹⁰ and here he quotes:

There shall rest upon him the of Yahweh

A of wisdom and understanding . . .

Here, then, running side by side, we find these two types of manifestation of the activity of the of Yahweh.

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One does not need to strain unduly to perceive two somewhat similar strands in the thinking of the church of New Testament times concerning the activity of the Holy Spirit. For lack of more precise terms we might call them the charismatic and the spiritual. The second of these terms is not entirely satisfactory; it is too general and all-inclusive a term specifically to indicate our meaning. It is, however, comforting to find so theologically precise a writer as A.B. Bruce being driven to use this pair of terms. Let them serve for the moment.

There is always a tendency to regard remarkable phenomena as pre-eminently the work of the spirit. This was particularly the case in connection with glossolalia in the Corinthian church. What we glean from Paul's account is that this 'speaking with tongues' was an ecstatic utterance, incoherent and unintelligible even to the speaker. It was not a speaking with understanding and it did not instruct. The short, broken snatches of praise and prayer which constituted 'speaking with tongues' arose probably from a profound disturbance of the personality and were thus felt to be the supreme product of inspiration.

We know from 1 Corinthians 14 Paul's estimate of the relative value of speaking with tongues. "For he

that speaketh in an unknown tongues speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him . . . But he that prophesieth (and here we have a different category altogether) . . . speaketh unto men for edification and exhortation and comfort . . . In the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue".

It would seem, then, that as far as a study of the work of the Holy Spirit in what we can justifiably call Christian proclamation ^{is concerned} we have apostolic authority for discounting this strange phenomenon of speaking with tongues. As A.L.Humphries has put it, "Not ecstasies, but graces are the truest fruit of the Spirit". "

This, I would think, is borne out by the manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the public ministry of our Lord himself. He goes from His baptism equipped with the Holy Spirit for His Messianic mission. That there is a charismatic aspect to that ministry cannot be denied. But what stands out is not ecstatic abnormality. Rather it is the description of Dentero-Isaiah: "I have put my spirit upon him," the immediate sequel of which is that "he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry not lift up, not cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break and the smoking flax shall he not quench; he shall bring forth judgement in truth".

This, J.E. Fison calls "an evangelistic technique far removed from the strident apparatus of modern propaganda".

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This surely is the pattern for inspired proclamation in the post-Pentecost era also. When we strip the accounts of elements arising from over-emphasis on the charismatic and abnormal what do we find to be the contribution of the Holy Spirit to Christian proclamation? In view of the fact that there is no Christian proclamation without the Holy Spirit, perhaps our question is unfortunately worded. Let us re-frame the question thus : What are the features of Christian Proclamation in the Holy Spirit as we find it in the New Testament in promise and in fulfilment?

There are many, but I think they may fairly be summed up under two headings.

(1) INSIGHT.

The Spirit is the Spirit of truth. He will lead the disciples into all truth. ~~When~~ When they are in straits, He will show them both what to say and how to say it. When the Apostles preach they speak as the Spirit gives them utterance. Things which eye hath not seen nor ear

heard and which have not entered into the heart of man has God revealed by His Spirit. For this Spirit is the one who searches the deep things of God.

Here is the unmistakable promise of enlightenment, illumination. The Holy Spirit is our teacher.

How fervently the early Fathers testified to this fact! In that fascinating Dialogue with Trypho in which he recounts the conversation which led him to give heed to the claims of Christ, Justin Martyr quotes Plato to the effect that God can be apprehended only by the mind. Trypho replies: "Will the human intellect ever see God unless it is furnished with the Holy Spirit?"^{13.} And much more pointedly later, when Justin enquires after a teacher who can direct him to the truth, he is referred to the Hebrew prophets who "spoke by the Holy Spirit only the things which they saw and heard when they were filled with the Holy Spirit".^{14.} Here is clear indication that the ministry of the Spirit is to lead men of God in their thinking in a way and along lines unknown to what we have come in the post-Pauline era to refer to as 'the natural man'.

Irenaeus again speaks of the Spirit as the one "through whom the fathers learnt the things of God".

Origen whose writing on the Holy Spirit deals mainly with the position of the Holy Spirit within the

Godhead speaks at one point of "the Spirit of God resting on our imagination and enabling us to imagine the things of God".¹⁵ The use of the term 'imagination' here is interesting (τῷ φανταστικῷ). Is this celebrated Christian Gnostic suggesting that the organ which the Holy Spirit uses to make known the things of God is not discursive or analytical reason but that part of us by which as young men we see visions and as old men we dream dreams? Be that as it may it is clearly implied that it is the Holy Spirit who enables us to - let me beg the question and use the non-committal expression - grasp the things of God.

"Knock at the door", writes Origen later, "and it shall be opened to thee by the Porter, of whom Jesus spoke . . .". This some 1600 years earlier than Charles Wesley who used a not wholly unrelated metaphor:

"Unlock the truth, Thyself the key
Unseal the sacred book".

One could go on quoting along this line almost ad lib. Cyril of Jerusalem, for example, regards the Holy Spirit as the one who "enlightens the soul and makes it see what is beyond human sight".

And it may be appropriate here to quote one who was preacher rather than systematic theologian. John Chrysostum is able to boast: "We are far wiser than the heathen philosophers as the Holy Spirit is wiser than Plato; the superiority of our Teacher is the measure of our superiority".¹⁶

"As soon as He touches the mind, He teaches it. The mind of man is changed immediately as it falls under his enlightenment"¹⁷. So Leo the Great.

And if Philo is not completely anathema in this company, let us hear from him the truth we are seeking to get across, expressed as clearly and explicitly as anywhere. "Sometimes", he writes, "having come empty . . . I suddenly became full, ideas being visibly showered upon me and planted from above, so that by a divine possession I was filled with enthusiasm I had a stream of interpretation, and enjoyment of light, a most keen-sighted vision, a most distinct view of the subjects treated . . ."¹⁸.

The point, I hope, is made. Not all these sayings I have quoted refer exclusively or even specifically to the preacher (potential or otherwise) busy with the preparation of that which he is to proclaim. But the implication of all this for our subject is unmistakable.

A Rhondda coal-miner who had been swept into the Kingdom of God during the 1904 Welsh Revival told me something of the sordid back-ground of his life. He was not only loose-living but, so he insisted, completely illiterate and almost mentally retarded. By the time I knew him he was a man of keen spiritual perception and had quite remarkable insights. But what struck me was

that in describing the way ~~the~~ the change took place the man should say, "The Holy Spirit taught me to read".

I think I know what he was trying to get across to me.

I am, of course, using an a fortiori argument. How much more should we who are burdened with bringing the word of God to our congregations, with all our academic training and expertly prepared equipment, reckon and, indeed, completely depend upon this same illumination. All this, of course, so long as we do not regard the technical equipment and the illumination of the Spirit as standing over against each other. This Holy Spirit whose quickening of the spiritual understanding we claim is the same Spirit who quickened A.T. Robertson and C.H. Dodd and all the rest. There must be no dichotomy in our thinking between intensive preparation and direct illumination. It is the same Spirit that worketh all in all. To one there comes the unfolding of the meaning of the language in which the Scriptures were written - by the same Spirit; to another the brilliant co-ordinating of the doctrines of Scripture - by the same Spirit; and to us all who use this equipment there comes not simply the cumulative effect of knowledge upon knowledge but insight at a stage beyond this - by the same Spirit; even as the musician suggests in Browning's Abt Vogler:

"And I know not if, save in this, such gift be allowed to man
That out of three sounds he frame, not a fourth sound,
but a star..."

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But while we are assured thus of illumination, it must be carefully noted that what is vouchsafed, especially in the Johannine writings, is the guidance of the Spirit along a certain line or at least within a certain field.

If I may indulge in the luxury of quoting what I have written elsewhere: "One of the Spirit's chief functions was to lead the disciples into all truth. That does not mean that if we would know the nature of the physical universe, what we have to do is not to study hard but to get down on our knees (Though let it be said that, other things being equal, the man possessed of the Holy Spirit knows a humility and a quickening of his being that should result in an unusual degree of illumination!) But the specific "truth" into which the believer is led by the Spirit is truth concerning Christ and our life in Him. 'He shall receive of mine and shall show it unto you'. 'He shall testify of me'. These are the promises".¹⁹

This Christo-centric nature of the testimony of the Spirit is emphasised in the early writers. Marino Victorinus has a striking passage in which he describes the relationship of the three Persons in the Blessed Trinity in terms of 'voice'. "All three are One"; he says, "the Father a silence which is not silent, but a voice in silence; the Son the same Voice's Voice Therefore the Spirit is said to receive from Christ, and Christ himself from the Father".^{20.}

Likewise Eusebius of Caesaria speaks of the Logos imparting "flashes of his own light in rich abundance to all, but especially to the Holy Spirit, seeing that the Spirit is more closely connected with Him than any and nearest to Him".^{21.}

The purport of all this is that the Spirit does not impart His illumination in a vacuum. He takes of the things of Christ and makes them known. In practical terms this means that it is when we are proclaiming the kerygma that we are guaranteed the insight which the Spirit brings. And what the Church has done in her finest hours of preaching is to proclaim the facts concerning Jesus and the cardinal beliefs which rest upon them.

The first post-Pentecost sermon of which we have record is most illuminating here. We can even beg the question as to whether the sermon recorded in Acts 2 contains the

ipsissima verba of Peter. It is sufficient for our purpose at this point to regard it as a typical statement of the preaching of the Apostolic Church. One thing we can, I think, say with confidence, it would not get by in the weekly sermon-class of an average Baptist Seminary! It is so obviously lacking in so many of the elements by which we lay great store today. What is in it of personal testimony? Not a word! How far does it relate Christ to the broader social and national problems which confronted the age? It just doesn't! (Let me say here in parenthesis that I am sure there is a place for testimony in the ministry of the Church. I am pretty certain, too, that an anaemic pietism which seeks to say that the word of God is not concerned with the way men's lives are run in the world - which is what politics and economics are about - is unfaithful to the prophetic tradition of the Bible.

But this sermon preached on the day of Pentecost seems as if it were designed almost to exaggerate in indicating that the preaching which the Holy Spirit will bless to the saving of many is essentially a relating of the kerygma, and that all else is derivative. For this is precisely what Peter is represented as doing. He simply placards the facts concerning Christ - His death, His resurrection, His exaltation. He hints at the meaning

of those facts and calls on his congregation to react to these facts in an attitude of belief.

Does it give us pause when we realise that this is the message and these the tactics which are used of the Holy Spirit to sweep three thousand into the Kingdom of God?

But in the 1960's the matter cannot be left just there. Restricted as the promise of the Spirit's guidance is to the truth which is in Christ, there is, surely, an interpretative work in which we are engaged and in the prosecution of which we can confidently seek the Spirit's illumination.

Charles Wesley, in the well known hymn of his already quoted, refers, in an altogether Biblical figure, to the sacred book as needing to be 'unsealed'. In what sense is the record concerning Christ sealed? J. E. Fison has put it most tellingly. I should only blunt the edge of his thought if I attempted a paraphrase. "The Jesus of history, who lived in the first century, has to be reproduced not with the slavish echo of a literal imitation but with the authentic voice of an original in every generation. This is the creative work of the Holy Spirit, who alone in P.T. Forsyth's oft-quoted phrase can make Jesus our contemporary".²²

How very important this work is will be seen on a moment's reflection. Our Lord appeared in Palestine some two millenia ago with its different culture and world-setting. All this makes Him appear remote from the tensions and problems of this twentieth century. How to present what Jesus has said and done so that it, or rather He becomes our contemporary so that we are really confronted with Him. This is the work of the Holy Spirit.

It is true that the preachers of the Apostolic age were not faced with quite the same problem. Jesus was of their age. But we must not minimise the difference his very departure from this world had made. There was a sense in which even in ~~the~~ day a gulf had to be bridged. He was crucified, dead and buried. And we cannot add here that on the third day He had risen again. For this was not a publicly acknowledged truth. It was something witnessed only by the faithful. Even here, then, He was a figure of the past, although a very recent past. And we see the work of the Holy Spirit in enabling these preachers, with so little 'equipment' in our sense, to relate Christ to the needs of men and so to present ~~He~~ Him that hearts were opened to His living presence.

How inexcusable we are, then, when we so often fail in this task. It is not for lack of equipment, so called;

It is not for lack of a variety of techniques.

It is more often than not for lack of this other dimension in our exposition. The light that falls upon the page is horizontal rather than vertical, and of such small wattage! It is God the Holy Spirit who alone can give light on the Word, for it is His; and on the world, for He still moves over the chaos and can show us the path which leads from one to the other. Using a different approach and, indeed, vastly different figures, our contemporary Paul Tillich would call this 'correlation'. Let us not argue about terms. This is unquestionably our current task and we acknowledge that of ourselves alone we cannot see to perform it.

Among our Western liturgies there appears in the Gelasian Sacrementary a prayer we might well make our own: "Let the Paraclete who proceeds from Thee, O Lord, illuminate our minds, and lead us, as Thy Son has promised, into all the truth".

But it is well for us to bear in mind that the figure of Holy Spirit light is frequently and inevitably coupled with the figure of fire. In an ancient 9th century hymn, for example, we invoke the Holy ~~Spirit~~ Ghost and call upon Him our souls to inspire and "lighten with Celestial fire". Bianco da Siena the Venetian 15th century hymn writer cries,

"O Comforter draw near
Within my heart appear
And kindle it, Thy holy flame bestowing".

So that in our preaching we may look to the Holy Spirit
to give us intensity as well as illumination,
fire in addition to light.

And to this and to kindred matters we shall turn
in the next lecture.

LECTURE II.

The point we had reached in our thinking at the close of the last lecture was that the Holy Spirit not only grants us light, illumination as far as the content and means of application of our message are concerned, but that He is also the source of fire, of true warmth in the proclamation of the message. We found that when He inspires our souls, He lightens with celestial fire.

And so, alongside the word illumination I suggested we put the word 'intensity'. I am tantalized by the feeling that there is a much better word if only I could find it. But whatever the ideal word may be let us pause for a moment to look at the idea; nay, indeed, the fact.

I am tempted at this point to recall my old teacher, T. H. Robinson's description of the 'ג' in his ecstasy. Having only one-third of his histrionic powers, perhaps I had better desist. It will be known that the technical phrase for the access of the ecstasy

was "the breath of God rushed upon him". None of us would be over-anxious to hold up the 'אִלְהִים as the pattern of the Christian preacher. For even translated into New Testament terms, ecstasy would tend to belong to what we have called the charismatic side, which we have ^{Fried} ~~ended~~ to soft-pedal.

But let us not throw out the baby with the bath water. Let us face the fact that the ecstatic element is there. And the fact that such ecstasy also appears in Mediterranean cults, ^{23.} as witness Apuleius' descriptions of the wandering priests of Isis does not in any way absolve us from looking squarely at this element of elation amounting almost to intoxication which is associated with the proclamation of the most exciting news ever to break upon the world.

To describe this I wanted a word which included such ideas as power, fire, wind and all the rest. That is why I chose the word 'intensity'. You may think of a better one. The point is that the manifestation of power which came on the day of Pentecost consisted of wind which blew upon them and the tongue of fire to equip them for enthusiastic witness.

This element of power (might we even call it abandon?) is noted in the works of the Fathers. The epistle of

Clement, for example, speaks of the Apostles being "confirmed in the word of God with full assurance of the Holy Ghost" as they went out "with the glad tidings that the Kingdom of God should come". Here, be it noted, the assurance is concerning the message entrusted to them and this emboldening assurance is a work of the Holy Spirit.

Again, the Shepherd of Hermas enjoins its readers to "trust the Spirit that comes from God and that has power". "Place no trust", it goes on, "in the earthly, empty spirit, for there is no power in it . . .". Here is an echo of the description of the Spirit in 2 Timothy, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love and of a sound mind".

Gregory of Nyssa, again, speaking of the Divine Word being accompanied by the Divine Breath claims that "the breath of God which goes forth with the Word must be held to be a living Power"

This all simply confirms the promise of our Lord that his disciples should receive 'power' after that the Holy Ghost was come upon them. This is the element emphasised in the difference which the Holy Spirit was to make in their witnessing in Jerusalem and in Judaea and in Samaria and unto the uttermost parts of the earth.

And this was symbolized in the "cloven tongues like as of fire".

Fire and power. These are the figures. And they typify the enthusiasm and release which came with the descent of the Spirit. As F.A. Cockin has put it, "A spring is loosed".

This, perhaps, is the element we miss most in current preaching. We do not give the impression of being in touch with what Charles Wesley referred to as "Source of the old prophetic fire". There may be a perfectly straightforward and mundane reason for this. In our justifiable reaction against the pulpit histrionics of two or three generations ago we have encouraged the cultivation of a more calculated, conversational approach in the pulpit. We will not seek to play on men's emotions. Nay, we will seek not to do so. And the result is that not by the wildest stretch of the imagination could we be called "men aflame".

I think we need to look hard and long at this tendency to magnify the conversational style and approach when declaring the gospel of the ever-blessed God. I would not for anything in the world identify self-conscious histrionics with the fire and power of the Holy Spirit. But, I think, on the other hand, one has the right to ask whether, if this gospel we proclaim is true,

if in actual fact One who was in the form of God took upon Him the form of a servant and was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, and that He did this for us men and for our salvation; if this unthinkable thing is true, I say, is it something that can be told in cold, calculated, conversational tones? Is it conceivable that this news should be declared except by a soul aglow, and with an excitement akin to ecstasy? I wonder sometimes whether we do not stupidly put a stop to the release which the Holy Spirit can bring. For it is not enough for the preacher to have the light of truth. He must have also the glow and power that will enable him to get the truth 'across'. This has ever been the mark of great preaching, preaching that has moved men to do exploits.

Henry Ward Beecher has made this point perfectly, using a different figure.

"You know how beautifully some men write, and how poorly they deliver; how well they prepare their materials, and yet their materials when prepared are of no force whatsoever. They are beautiful arrows - arrows of silver; golden-tipped are they, and winged with the feathers of the very bird of paradise. But there is no bow to draw the arrows to the head

and shoot them strongly home, and so they fall out of the sheath down in front of the pulpit or platform". ^{25.}

This, it may be argued, is a matter of temperament, or lack of know-how. Not simply. For the Holy Spirit can set a temperament on fire and this is frequently half-way to what we are pleased to call the know-how.

This certainly happened in the case of the Spirit-filled Apostles. It is not necessary to posit in their case a 'change' of temperament, though it must be admitted that some quite considerable modifications were effected. But our finding would be, I think, that whatever else happens, natural powers are raised above their normal condition; penetration of mind is strengthened and the truth comes glowingly alive.

All this makes for power in preaching. And in this sense the Holy Spirit 'makes' the proclamation.

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I may well have given the impression in these lectures that I make 'proclamation' mean simply the activity of the preacher, albeit inspired from on high. Let the closing section, then, correct this impression.

Preaching, of course, is a two-way business. And any consideration of the place of the Holy Spirit in Christian proclamation which stops short with what the Spirit does in and to the preacher by way of giving illumination and intensity, is completely inadequate.

On the other hand it would be outside the precise scope of this subject for us to attempt to deal in any general way with the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the believer. And yet something must be said of the work of the Spirit in 'winging home' the word of the preacher at the time of its proclamation. For this is surely the other side of the coin at which we have been looking.

John Calvin is, perhaps, the most prolific writer among classic theologians on this theme. We would all agree with him when he speaks of the Spirit as "the internal teacher, by whose agency the promise of salvation, which would otherwise only strike the air on our ears, penetrates into our minds". And again, "teachers would cry aloud to no purpose, did not Christ, the internal teacher, by means of his Spirit, draw to himself those who are given him of the Father"²⁶. Similarly, Calvin speaks of the Spirit as "that internal teacher" who "by his enlightening power" makes an entrance for the word.²⁷

With this emphasis we are familiar and, I should imagine, in this tradition, in complete agreement.

Of course, controversy has raged from time to time on what actually happens when the proclaimed word is made effectual in the heart of the hearer. There have been those, for example, who claimed that it is the word itself which produces the change in the human heart by moral suasion.

This was one of the tenets of Pajonism. The man who gave his name to this school claimed that all that is needed is that the understanding should be "struck by the light of external revelation, as the eye is struck by the rays of light coming from a luminous object".

Junckh~~es~~^{ism} in the latter half of the eighteenth century held a similar view. The operations of the Spirit are thus mediate and are produced by the word in a manner conformable to our moral nature. It is the moral power of the word which effects everything.

(cont. on p. 31)

That the word is powerful we would not wish to deny. Is it not "sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit . . ." ^{28.} That the word is used in the conversion of the sinner would be readily acceded on all hands. The issue before us now is whether the action of God is simply mediated through His word or whether it is direct action upon the soul of the hearer also.

The answer of Scripture seems unequivocal. "Incline my heart unto thy testimonies", prays the Psalmist; ²⁹ and when the book of the Acts relates the story of Lydia's conversion, she is referred to as one "whose heart the Lord opened, to give heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul". ^{30.}

As A.H. Strong has put it convincingly: "No mere increase of light can enable a blind man to see Over and above all influence of the ~~Holy Spirit~~ truth, there must be a direct influence of the Holy Spirit upon the heart. Although wrought in conjunction with the presentation of truth to the intellect, regeneration differs from moral suasion in being an immediate act of God". ^{31.}

This kind of statement will immediately ring a bell in the minds of those who have sought to follow the thinking of that most eminent of contemporary theologians,

Karl Barth. In the first volume of his encyclopaedic
Church Dogmatics^{32.} he expounds with characteristic thoroughness
his doctrine of the Word of God. The Word, he tells us,
appears in three forms: the Word preached, the Word written
and the Word revealed. The question we are particularly
concerned with is how, in each case, the Word becomes the
convincing Word of God to the hearer. Elusive as Barth's
language is to those who have become accustomed to the use
of conventional categories, what he has to say cannot fail
to be of immense interest. While he claims that the Church's
proclamation and, indeed, the Bible itself, are in a sense
the result of human activity with all the limitations
peculiar to our poor humanity, nevertheless both these can
become the Word of God as and when God pleases. Moreover,
this event of the Bible ~~or~~^{or} Christian proclamation becoming
the Word of God is a specific act of God.

A specific act of God on the word itself or on the
believer? one may ask. Barth's answer is 'on both'.
"The Word of God becomes knowable by making itself knowable",^{33.}
he writes. And here he might at first sight appear to be
coming down on the side of those who claim that the Word is
effective through its own power of moral suasion or at
least through a heightened power conferred upon it by the
Spirit. But, as it were with the next breath, he corrects
this impression by asserting categorically, "The possibility

of knowing the Word of God is God's miracle on and in us, just as much as are the Word itself and the utterance of it".^{34.} Indeed, integral to all that Barth has to say about revelation is the fact that it is the Holy Spirit who brings revelation to fulfilment by making man open and ready for it so that he not only becomes capable of receiving it but actually does receive it.^{35.}

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Equally important in discussing the activity of the Holy Spirit in man as the latter receives the proclamation is to note the role played by the fellowship as a whole in becoming a vehicle through which the Spirit functions as the opener of hearts.

One of our celebrated English preachers made a declaration in my hearing some forty years ago which I have never forgotten and which has assumed an increasing importance for me as I have pursued this study. He said quite simply, "We shall never be able fully to measure the evangelizing power of the community gathered for worship".

This sentence embodies a truth of the most profound significance for our topic. Where are the presence and power of the Holy Spirit for the opening of men's hearts known at their height?

Those familiar with the theology of Schleiermacher will recall his identification of the Holy Spirit with the corporate spirit of the Church. The Holy Spirit is the same saving principle in the community that primarily appeared in the person of Jesus in the form of an individual life. "This common spontaneous activity", he writes, "which indwells all and in each is kept right by the influence of all, and prolongs the personal action of Christ - in its unity and identity we have full right to call the common spirit of the Christian Church; it corresponds to all that Christ promised by the Holy Spirit and to everything that is represented as the Spirit's working"³⁶.

The immediate reaction of defenders of the faith, I have no doubt, is to object to Schleiermacher's identifying the Holy Spirit with the common spirit of the Christian Church. Here, we think, the pantheistic tendencies of this thinker have led him into error. Certainly the Holy Spirit must not be identified with one of His fruits. The Spirit has a transcendent existence and must not be identified with what Wheeler Robinson calls 'group-personality' or 'group-mind'.

But it is well to remember that heresy is frequently only truth off-centre, or periphery - truth brought to the centre where it does not belong. And while we must reject Schleiermacher's statement, the truth which is seeking to

push through is of the utmost importance for this study. The presence of the risen Christ mediated by the Holy Spirit is surely the differential of the Church. Exact theologians may protest that we draw a distinction between the presence of the risen Christ and that of the Holy Spirit. But surely this is a case where it is better to err, if err we must, on the Sabellian rather than on the Nestorian side. The fact is that the Holy Spirit brought into being a fellowship where - let us beg the question and call it - 'the divine presence' is pre-eminently known. Remarkable as this is, nevertheless it should not take us by surprise in view of the dominical promise, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them". Where this promise is believed and abundantly fulfilled, who can measure or even prophesy what will happen when the Word is proclaimed in such a setting? The 'Koinonia' created by and ^{re}verberating with the Holy Spirit, identifying itself with the preacher in the proclamation of the word constitutes an evangelizing power which could come nigh to being irresistible.

We have all of us, I believe, at various times and in varying measure, sensed this. We look at it sometimes from a different angle and describe it in a different way. J.E. Fison, for example, whom I quoted earlier in these lectures, has written:

"In preaching there comes at times that sense of the preacher being so en rapport with his audience that between him and them there arises a new Spirit, who can only be described as Holy. This is what makes the true sermon, in Forsyth's graphic phrase, the 'ordered hallelujah of the congregation' No sermon preparation, whether in study or in prayer, can by itself produce this, for, as every preacher knows, it is something that can never be conjured by any technique of eloquence or rhetoric or of devotional preparation, but is always 'given' ".³⁷

This description is perhaps halfway between Schleiermacher and a strictly orthodox view. But of the aptness of the description no experienced preacher here can be in any doubt. I feel it would be futile to seek to elaborate this. Let me leave it then by quoting simply one paragraph from H. Wheeler Robinson which takes us even further than Fison. Robinson claims that nothing but a living fellowship can really preach effectively. "The Holy Spirit", he writes, "convicts the world of sin and of righteousness and judgment, not by any direct operation on the hearts of those without, but by His presence in the fellowship of the Church"³⁸. An overstatement? An undue canalizing of an activity which is reputedly as free and unpredictable as a breeze? Suffice it to say that the statement has done its work if it calls our attention to something we tend so often to forget; the incomparably effective power of the real gathered community as an evangelizing agency. The bringing of an unbeliever within the sound of the proclamation in the company of a

believing spirit-filled koinonia has possibilities for eternity.

Of course the psychologist can step in at this point, if, indeed, he has not already stepped in at several points and seek to upset this whole thesis of ours with terms like suggestion, auto-suggestion, mass-suggestion, gregariousness and all the rest.

Now, let us agree readily that there is a sense in which all that takes place both on the side of the preacher and on the side of the congregation can be described from this angle. Indeed, I was interested to take down from our library shelves the other day a volume written by a former professor of Homiletics at this very Seminary. The book is called "Psychology and Preaching" and is by one Charles S. Gardiner. The Professor writes at some length on such topics as Suggestion, The Psychology of Assemblies, Mental Epidemics etc. It is quite unashamedly a study of the psychological mechanics involved in those processes of which we have been thinking in these lectures. And ~~this~~ is perfectly legitimate.

Others, of course, of a critical and inimical viewpoint would so re-interpret all that is claimed to happen as to rob it of all transcendent significance and of validity in any meaningful sense.

It would be outside the scope of this short series of lectures to seek to deal thoroughly with this aspect of the

subject. But one comment may be made in this connection. It may well be that the processes described by the 'New Psychology', as we should stop calling it, are those by which religious experience works. The question of the validity of this experience and its transcendent reference ~~are~~^{is} by no means determined by this description. Do you recall that telling piece of dialogue in George Bernard Shaw's Saint Joan (of Arc)?

Joan: "I hear voices telling me what to do
They come from God".

Robert: "They come from your imagination".

Joan: "Of course. That is how the messages
of God come to us".

Precisely. As one writer has put it, "Truth or falsity must be decided by reference to extra-psychological criteria on which psychology as such has neither the right nor the ability to pronounce judgment".

* * *

Here, then, is the assurance of the Scriptures and, let us be bold to testify, of our own experience, that he who gives himself to the preaching of the gospel of Christ is vouchsafed both illumination and the burning heart. He knows, too, that this proclamation is carried out

in the context of the 'communio sanctorum' in which the quickening of the Spirit is operative; and that this being so the proclamation can call on unlimited resources of power.

Why, oh why, then, we must ask, is our preaching so ineffective? Why is it so difficult, sometimes seemingly impossible, to know and exploit these resources?

The reason is not far to seek. We know that His submission to conditions of earthly human existence involved the Eternal Son of God in limitation and confinement; "he emptied himself" I still remember the excitement I experienced in my far-off student days when I first came across H. Wheeler Robinson's application of this 'kenosis' idea to the indwelling of the Church by His Spirit, although I have since come across a hint of this in Smeaton's book on the Holy Spirit written way back in 1889. "His new earthly body," writes Wheeler Robinson, referring, of course, to the church, "is never commensurate with ~~his~~ his personality, never fully adequate to the performance of His purpose".³⁹

This is abundantly true of both preacher and congregation. Does this kenosis mean, then, that the effects of the Holy Spirit's ministry will be determined in part by the quality of character and thought which are His tool? We should, I think, hesitate to give an unqualified affirmative answer

to that question. It might sound dangerously synergistic. More is it determined, as we know to our cost, by the degree of openness of the door by which He seeks to enter.

This would appear never to depend upon a great accession of human genius (although let not the obscurantist seek to prove too much from this). But there seems to take place every time a breaking down of the barrier of self-sufficiency. The preaching^{er} then experiences a flowing through him, and the congregation^g into it, of new and remarkable currents of power.

We here are preparing for the preaching and pastoral ministry - and this goes for every one of us, even for the lecturer himself who has been preaching now for 36 years, for every time the most experienced of us faces the task afresh he realises more and more how much a learner he is - preparing, I say, as we are, we know at the top of our minds and we need to know in the bottom of our hearts that if we would have this Spirit in our preaching, we must have it in our life. No man can live an unfaithful life and receive, to order, the Holy Spirit from Sunday to Sunday. Even the Didache 1800 years ago issued a warning that the only one who really speaks as a prophet is he who "has the ways of the Lord".^{40.}

We are longing for a revival of religion in our time. As teachers and students we are concerned, I hope, with sound doctrine, a more aggressive evangelism, a better medium of communication, full use of modern techniques, more life in our services, a better equipped ministry, more sense of responsibility on the part of our church memberships and so on. True, all true.

But one thing above all. And who can put this better than it was put by a British visitor to this country nearly 90 years ago as he addressed a company assembled in the Yale Divinity School upon the subject of preaching :

"It is not truth merely - no matter how sacred; it is not spiritual motive merely - no matter how urgent, how pathetic, how glorious, how appalling; it is not our own earnestness - no matter how deep and how impassioned; that will move men to penitence, draw them to God, enable them to keep the Divine law. We have to rely ultimately on the power of the Spirit, and the power of the Spirit is the revelation of the presence of Christ. The presence of Christ is assured to us by his own words. To disregard it, to think only of how we ourselves can stir the hearts of our hearers and instruct their understandings, is to be guilty of an atheistic presumption which will utterly destroy the effectiveness of our ministry".

So wrote the great Robert William Dale. If anyone could have relied on the cogent reasoning of a massive

intellect and the mesmeric effect of a popular city
ministry in the halcyon Victorian age in England, when
pulpit giants were the idols of the people, it was he.

But this man had learnt in sublime humility the
secret of effective ministering, that it is "not by
might not by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord".

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