

50 Articles of War

GEORGE SCOTT RAILTON

AN EXPERIENCE OF THE OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Christian Mission Magazine, July 1873

I was converted when ten years of age, and some months afterwards I was sent to a boarding school, where some 180 boys, all the children of God-fearing parents, were brought up under the most careful religious teaching. But, alas, the clear light in which we walked only made our moral darkness most conspicuous. Under strict discipline, nearly all outward wickedness was suppressed, or at any rate, kept in the background: but this only made those who were most resolute in sin delight privately to indulge in profane and obscene conversation, and caused lying and deceit to be in constant use to cover everything else.

Most of the teachers were converted men, and attempts had been made to hold genuine religious services amongst us. But these praise-worthy efforts failed, through the attendance of the curious and the mocking, who would stare about them, laugh, and talk, or repeat long and carefully prepared prayers.

At length three of us who loved the Savior determined to hold a prayer-meeting by ourselves, excluding everyone else; and we spent some hours together, one half-holiday, in sweet intercourse with God. Then an unconverted boy, with whom I had been only too intimate, expressed to me his wish to join us, and "be religious" – the common school phrase for real Christian life. We admitted him, and he sought and found the forgiveness of his sins. His example was speedily followed by others, and ere long, the desire to turn to God became great and general throughout the school. Then one and another found Jesus, and aided in the work, till almost the whole school was set on fire of Divine love. Great power attended the frequent prayer meetings which we held in our play hours, and the souls of many were filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory.



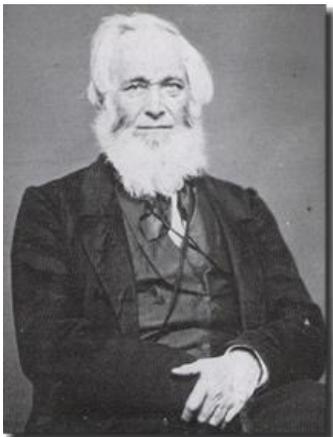
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As I thought of the sweetness of the Savior's love, which was then shed abroad so abundantly in my heart, and in those of many others, the horror of ever leaving or grieving Him, came home with overwhelming force to my mind, as Christians of older standing have doubtless often experienced in connection with special times of refreshing. But as I thought of life, with all its untried positions and temptations opening out before me, I thought, "Can I possibly be kept from losing the holy influence of these precious services? Can I be kept day by day through life without sinning against God? Can I always live entirely to Him and for Him?" And then I thought of that glorious promise, "I will dwell in you and walk in you, and you shall be my people and I will be your God." "Ah!" I said, "if God is willing to do that, it is enough I am sure, if He will dwell in my heart, He will not allow anything that displeases Him to remain there, and if he walks in me, it will be to walk even as Jesus himself also walked. I shall do always what is pleasing in God's sight."

"But," thought I, "is not this too much to hope for? I cannot tell; I will just ask God." And there, in the darkness of the night, alone upon my bed, I just said, "Lord, if Thou art willing to come and dwell in my and walk in me, come now; but, if I am asking more than your words mean, oh do now for me the nearest to this you are willing to do." And then, certain that God would at once do for me the full pleasure of His will with mighty power, I repeated the words, "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation," till they seemed to come back like an echo from on high. "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation," and I felt that my young heart had become the home of my Lord and my God. It is so still.

Is not this experience, into which I was not led by human books, or human teachers, but, as it were, by the Father's own hand, identical with that "higher life" after which so many Christians are now aspiring?



Asa Mahan

I have been pleased to find, as I have grown up, many experiences answering to my own, some of which, related in [Asa] Mahan's "Baptism of the Holy Ghost," I subjoin.



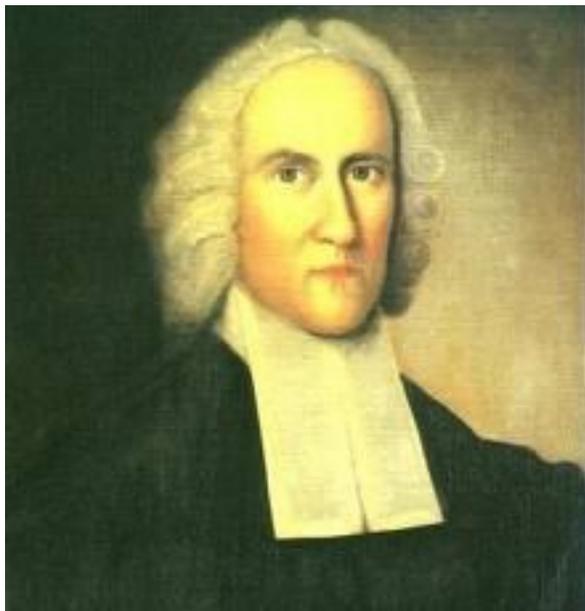
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NOTE: To read Mahan's "Baptism of the Holy Ghost:
<http://truthinheart.com/EarlyOberlinCD/CD/Mahan/BapHG.HTM>

That is the earliest years of life God can fully reveal Himself to the longing soul is beautifully shown by the following account of

A LITTLE CHILD:



Jonathan Edwards

In the era of the great revivals in the days of President [Jonathan] Edwards and the Tenants – a child so young, that none expected that she would be converted. Two facts in her appearance and conduct attracted, at length, the attention of her mother – the fact that she spent most of her time alone in her bedroom, and the deep sadness upon her countenance whenever she came from that place. “What is it, my daughter,” the mother inquired, “that makes you appear so sad?” “Why, mother,” the child replied, “God won’t come to me. I call to Him,

and He won’t come to me.” A little time after, the previous one came from her room, and with unspeakable joy upon her countenance exclaimed, “Mother, God has come. He comes to me now when I pray to Him.” From that moment onward that child was “the wonder of many.” In prayer especially, she had a freedom and power of utterance which old disciples could hardly equal. Not did this distinct consciousness of the presence and light of God ever leave her, not did the consequent savor of God cease to encircle her, until death, which occurred when she was upwards of sixty years of age, removed her within the veil.

“This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith.” The feeblest among us may be “more than conquerors through Jim that has loved us.” Even

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“at evening time there will be light” to all who “walk in the light of God.” By the grace of Christ and “the power of the Spirit,” we can “rule our own spirits.” “We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us.”

Yes; there is no temper, appetite, passion, or circumstance, but this baptism can subdue into calmness, sobriety, peace, and love. ALL THINGS can be done, within the will of God, by this Strength of Israel resting upon us.

A peculiar and special degree of moral and spiritual power, with God and with people, is a characteristic which he would present as distinguishing those who receive this baptism. The form of power possessed by each is in certain respects unlike that possessed by others. Yet in all it has this one common tendency – an almost resistless influence to draw others toward God, purity, and heaven.

Some are “sons of thunder;” others are “sons of consolation.” Some have special wisdom as teachers of truth; others are endued with the special power of exhortation. Some have peculiar forms of courage and faith, by which they have special power to “strengthen weak hands, and confirm feeble knees;” other have equally special forms of power in ministering to the necessities of the sick and afflicted. Others still have special power in exciting in believers the spirit of hunger and thirst for the bread and waters of life. “What do you think of Mr. _____?” said one Christian to another? “I have not heard him.” The clergyman referred to was a man “full of faith and of the Holy Ghost.” “Well,” replied the other, “if you will hear this man a few times, and not feel such a hungering and thirsting after righteousness as you never felt before, your experience will differ from mine.” Others have special power in drawing sinners to repentance.

Power to prophesy – that is, to “speak to people for consolation, for exhortation, and edification” – this is universal among all who receive this anointing. When one or more individuals in a given church have this baptism, there will be a constant Divine influence drawing the whole body heavenward. When the Church generally shall be endued with this power, “Gentiles will come to her light, and kings to the brightness of her rising.” If, then, we would “serve God and our generation” according to His will in Christ Jesus our Lord, we must, one and all of us, tarry in the place of prayer, and struggle there with “strong crying and tears,” until we are “endued with power from on high.”



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The gloriously simple thought of getting all peace and righteousness by getting God into the heart is set forth by President Edwards: -

President Edwards thus describes the baptism which rendered his subsequent life so holy and powerful for good. "One day, when walking for Divine contemplation and prayer, I had a view, that for me was extraordinary, of the glory of the Son of God, as Mediator between God and people, and His wonderful, great, full, pure, and sweet grace of love, and meek and gentle condescension. This grace, that appeared so calm and sweet, speared also great above the heavens; the Person of Christ appeared so ineffably excellent, with an excellency great enough to swallow up all thought and conception, which continued, as near as I can judge, about an hour, which kept me the greater part of the time in a flood of tears, weeping aloud. I had an ardency of soul to be, what I know not otherwise how to express, emptied and annihilated, to lie in the dust and to be filled with Christ alone, to love Him with a holy and pure love, to trust in Him, to live upon Him, and to be perfectly sanctified, and made pure with a divine and heavenly purity."

Of the lady who afterwards became his wife, and who, during her married life, often had visions of the Divine glory and love, under the power of which she would lie helpless for hours, President Edwards thus writes: -

"They say there is a young lady in _____, who is beloved of that great Being who moves and rules the world, and that there are certain seasons in which this great Being, in some way or other invisible, comes to her, and fills her mind with exceeding sweet delights, and that she hardly ever cares for anything, except to meditate on Him; that she expects after a while, to be received up where He is, to be raised up out of this world and caught up in heaven, being assured that He loves her too well to let her remain at a distance from Him always. There she is to dwell with Him, and to be ravished with His love and delight forever. Therefore, if you present all the world before her, with the richest of its treasures, she disregards it, and cares not for it, and is unmindful of any pain or affliction. She has a strange sweetness in her mind, and singular purity in her affections; is most just and conscientious in all her conduct, and you could not persuade her to do anything wrong or sinful if you would give her all the world, lest she should offend this great Being. She is of a wonderful sweetness, calmness, and

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benevolence of mind. She will sometimes go about from place to place, singing devoutly, and seems to be always full of joy and pleasure, and no one knows for what. She loves to be alone, walking in the fields and groves, and seems to have someone invisible always conversing with her.”

Nor is the gentle influence of the baptism from on high less apparent in the hour of death than amidst the turmoil of life.

The wife of a friend of mine was passing away through the gradual advance of consumption. From childhood death had been to her mind “the king of terrors.” During her sickness, also, she had been greatly alarmed with the idea of dying. As her husband entered the room one day, she exclaimed, with an unearthly glow upon her countenance, “My dear husband, there is nothing fearful about dying. Death has no terrors. The idea of dying is sweet to me now.” From that moment she adjusted her spirit for the approaching change with all the sweet equanimity with which she had before adorned herself for the bridal hour. Indeed, the embrace of death was to her mind the bridal hour of her immortal spirit.



Charles G. Finney

It is when this great work is wrought in the soul that the believer obtains power to bring men to Jesus. In Finney's *Enduement of Power*, I find the following: -

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NOTE: To read Chalres Finney's Enduement of Power:

http://www.gospeltruth.net/1868_75Independent/720815_endfromonhigh.htm

Soon after I was licensed to preach I went into a region of country where I was an entire stranger. I went there at the request of a Female Missionary Society, located in Oneida County, New York. Early in May, I think, I visited the town of Antwerp, in the northern part of Jefferson County. I stopped at the village hotel, and there learned that there were no religious meetings held in that town at the time. They had a brick meeting-house, but it was locked up. By personal efforts I got a few people to assemble in the parlor of a Christian lady in the place, and I preached to them on the evening after my arrival. As I passed round the village, I was shocked with the horrible profanity that I heard among the men wherever I went. I obtained leave to preach in the school-house on the next Sabbath; but before the Sabbath arrived I was much discouraged, and almost terrified, in view of the state of society which I witnessed. On Saturday the Lord applied with power to my heart the following words, addressed by the Lord Jesus to Paul, Acts 18:9,10: "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not your peace; for I am with you, and no one will set on you to hurt you; for I have much people in this city." This completely subdued my fears; but my heart was loaded with agony for the people.

On Sunday morning I arose early, and retired to a grove not far from the village to pour out my heart before God for a blessing on the labors of the day. I could not express the agony of my soul in words; but struggled, with much groaning and, I believe, with many tears, for an hour or two without getting relief. I returned to my room in the hotel; but almost immediately came back to the grove. This I did thrive. The last time I got complete relief, just as it was time to go to meeting. I went to the schoolhouse, and found it filled to its utmost capacity. I took out my little pocket Bible, and read for my text: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" [John 3:16]. I exhibited the love of God in contrast with the terrible manner in which He was treated by those for whom He gave up His Son. I charged home their profanity upon them; and, as I recognized among my hearers several whose profanity I had particularly noticed, in the fullness of my heart and the gushing of my tears, I pointed to them, and said, "I heard these people call upon God to damn their fellows." The Word took powerful effect. Nobody seemed offended, but almost everybody

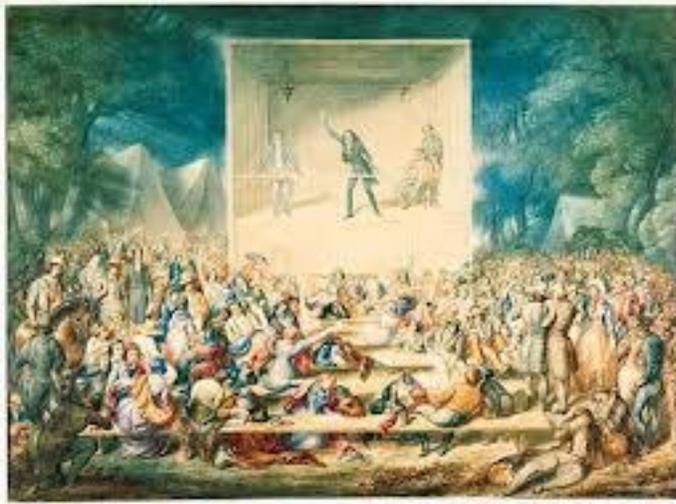


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greatly melted. At the close of the service, the amiable landlord, Mr. Copeland, rose and said that he would open the meeting-house in the afternoon. He did so.

The meeting-house was full, and, as in the morning, the Word took powerful effect. Thus a powerful revival commenced in the village, which soon after spread in every direction. I think it was on the second Sabbath after this, when I came out of the pulpit in the afternoon, an aged man approached, and said to me, "Can you not come and preach in our neighborhood? We have never had any religious meetings there." I inquired the direction and the distance, and appointed to preach there the next afternoon, Monday, at five o'clock, in their school-house. I had preached three times in the village, and attended two prayer-meetings on the Lord's day; and on Monday I went on foot to fulfill this appointment. The weather was very warm that day, and before I arrived there I felt almost too faint to walk, and greatly discouraged in my mind. I sat down in the shade by the wayside, and felt as if I was too faint to reach there, and if I did, too much discouraged to open my mouth to my people.



Charles Finney preaching in the "Burned Over District" - a key location during the Second Great Awakening

When I arrived I found the house full, and immediately commenced the service by reading a hymn. They attempted to sing, but the horrible discord agonized me beyond expression. I leaned forward, put my elbows upon my knees and my hands over my ears, and shook my

head withal, to shut out the discord, which even then I could barely endure. As soon as they had ceased to sing, I cast myself down upon my knees, almost in a state of desperation. The Lord opened the windows of heaven upon me, and gave me great enlargement and power in prayer. Up to this moment I had had no idea what text I should use on the occasion. As I rose from my knees the Lord

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gave me this: "Up, get you out of this place, for the Lord will destroy this city." I told the people, as nearly as I could recollect, where they could find it, and went on to tell them of the destruction of Sodom. I gave them an outline of the history of Abraham and Lot, and their relations to each other; of Abraham's praying for Sodom; and of Lot as the only pious man that was found in the city. While I was doing this, I was struck with the fact that the people looked exceedingly angry about me. Many countenances appeared very threatening, and some of the men near me looked as if they were about to strike me. This I could not understand, as I was only giving them, with great liberty of spirit, some interesting sketches of Bible history. As soon as I had completed the historical sketch, I turned upon them, and said that I had understood they had never had any religious meetings in that neighborhood; and applying that fact, I thrust at them with the sword of the Spirit with all my might. From this moment the solemnity increased with great rapidity. In a few moments there seemed to fall upon the congregation an instantaneous shock. I cannot describe the sensation that I felt, nor that which was apparent to the congregation; but the Word seemed literally to cut like a sword. The power from on high came down upon them in such a torrent that they fell from their seats in every direction. In less than a minute, nearly the whole congregation were either down on their knees, or on their face, or in some position prostrate before God. Everyone was crying or groaning for mercy upon his soul.

They paid no further attention to me or to my preaching. I tried to get their attention, but I could not. I observed the aged man who had invited me there, as still retaining his seat near the center of the house. He was staring around him with a look of unutterable astonishment. Pointing to him, I cried at the top of my voice: "Can't you pray?" He knelt down and roared out a short prayer, about as loud as he could halloo; but they paid no attention to him. After looking round for a few moments, I knelt down and put my hand on the head of a young man who was kneeling at my feet, and engaged in prayer for mercy on his soul. I got his attention, and preached Jesus in his ear. In a few moments he seized Jesus by faith, and then broke out in prayer for those around him. I then turned to another in the same way, and with the same result; and then another, and another, till I know not how many had laid hold of Christ and were full of prayer for others.

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After continuing in this way till nearly sunset, I was obliged to commit the meeting to the charge of the old gentleman who had invited me, and go to fulfill an appointment in another place for the evening. In the afternoon of the next day I was sent for to go down to this place, as they had not been able to break up the meeting. They had been obliged to leave the school-house, to give place to the school; but had removed to a private house nearby, where I found a number of persons still, too anxious and too much loaded down with conviction to go to their homes. These were soon subdued by the Word of God, and I believe all obtained a hope before they went home. Observe, I was a total stranger in that place, had never seen nor heard of it until as I have related. But here, at my second visit, I learned that the place was called Sodom, by reason of its wickedness; and the old man who invited me was called Lot, because he was the only professor of religion in the place.

After this manner the revival broke out in this neighborhood. I have not been in the neighborhood for many years; but in 1856, I think, while laboring in Syracuse, New York, I was introduced to a minister of Christ from the St. Lawrence County, by the name of Cross. He said to me: "Mr. Finney, you don't know me; but do you remember preaching in a place called Sodom?" I said, "I shall never forget it." He replied, "I was then a young man, and was converted at that meeting." He is still living, a pastor in one of the churches in that county, and is the father of the principal of our preparatory department. Those who have lived in that region can testify of the permanent results of that blessed revival. I can only give in words a feeble description of that wonderful manifestation of power from on high attending the preaching of the Word.