



When The Holy Ghost Is Come

Chapter 23 – VICTORY OVER EVIL TEMPER BY THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

"Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you."

Two letters recently reached me, one from Oregon, and one from Massachusetts, inquiring if I thought it possible to have temper destroyed. The comrade from Oregon wrote: "I have been wondering if the statement is correct when one says, 'My temper is all taken away.' Do you think the temper is destroyed or sanctified? It seems to me that if one's temper were actually gone he would not be good for anything."

The comrade from Massachusetts wrote: "Two of our Corps Cadets have had the question put to them: 'Is it possible to have all temper taken out of our hearts?' One claims it is possible. The other holds that the temper is not taken out, but God gives power to overcome it."

Evidently these are questions that perplex many people, and yet the answer seems to me simple.

Temper, as usually spoken of, is not a faculty or power of the soul, but is rather an irregular, passionate, violent expression of selfishness. When selfishness is destroyed by love, by the incoming of the Holy Spirit, revealing Jesus to us as an uttermost Saviour, and creating within us a clean heart, of course such evil temper is gone, just as the friction and consequent wear and heat of two wheels is gone when the cogs are perfectly adjusted to each other. The wheels are far better off without friction, and just so man is far better off without such temper.

We do not destroy the wheels to get rid of the friction, but we readjust them; that is, we put them into just or right relations to each other, and then noiselessly and perfectly they do their work. So, strictly speaking, sanctification does not destroy self, but it destroys selfishness – the abnormal and mean and disordered manifestation and assertion of self. I myself am to be sanctified, rectified, purified, brought into harmony with God's will as revealed in His word, and united to Him in Jesus, so that His life of holiness and love flows continually through all the



avenues of my being, as the sap of the vine flows through all parts of the branch. "I am the Vine, ye are the branches," said Jesus.

When a man is thus filled with the Holy Spirit he is not made into a putty man, a jelly fish, with all powers of resistance taken out of him; he does not have any less force and "push" and "go" than before, but rather more, for all his natural energy is now reinforced by the Holy Spirit, and turned into channels of love and peace instead of hate and strife.

He may still feel indignation in the presence of wrong, but it will not be rash, violent, explosive, and selfish, as before he was sanctified, but calm and orderly, and holy, and determined, like that of God. It will be the wholesome, natural antagonism of holiness and righteousness to all unrighteousness and evil.

Such a man will feel it when he is wronged, but it will be much in the same way that he feels when others are wronged. The personal, selfish element will be absent. At the same time there will be pity and compassion and yearning love for the wrong-doer and a greater desire to see him saved than to see him punished.

A sanctified man was walking down the street the other day with his wife, when a filthy fellow on a passing wagon insulted her with foul words. Instantly the temptation came to the man to want to get hold of him and punish him, but as instantly the indwelling Comforter whispered, "If ye will forgive men their trespasses;" and instantly the clean heart of the man responded, "I will, I do forgive him, Lord;" and instead of anger a great love filled his soul, and instead of hurling a brick or hot words at the poor Devil-deceived sinner, he sent a prayer to God in Heaven for him. There was no friction in his soul. He was perfectly adjusted to his Lord; his heart was perfectly responsive to his Master's word, and he could rightly say, "My temper is gone."

A man must have his spiritual eyes wide open to discern the difference between sinful temper and righteous indignation.



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Many a man wrongs and robs himself by calling his fits of temper "righteous indignation;" while, on the other hand, there is here and there a timid soul who is so afraid of sinning through temper as to suppress the wholesome antagonism that righteousness, to be healthy and perfect, must express towards all unrighteousness and sin.

It takes the keen-edged word of God, applied by the Holy Spirit, to cut away unholy temper without destroying righteous antagonism; to enable a man to hate and fight sin with spiritual weapons (2 Cor. x. 3- 5), while pitying and loving the sinner; to so fill him with the mind of Jesus that he will feel as badly over a wrong done to a stranger as though it were done to himself; to help him to put away the personal feeling and be as calm and unselfish and judicial in opposing wrong as is the judge upon the bench. Into this state of heart and mind is one brought who is entirely sanctified by the indwelling Holy Spirit. Hallelujah!

Dr. Asa Mahan, the friend and co-worker of Finney, had a quick and violent temper in his youth and young manhood; but one day he believed, and God sanctified him, and for fifty years he said he never felt but one uprising of temper, and that was but for an instant, about five years after he received the blessing. For the following forty-five years, though subjected to many trials and provocations, he felt only love and peace and patience and goodwill in his heart.

A Christian woman was confined to her bed for years with nervous and other troubles, and was very cross and touchy and petulant. At last she became convinced that the Lord had a better experience for her, and she began to pray for a clean heart full of patient, holy, humble love; and she prayed so earnestly, so violently, that her family became alarmed lest she should wear her poor, frail body out in her struggle for spiritual freedom. But she told them she was determined to have the blessing, if it cost her her life, and so she continued to pray, until one glad, sweet day the Comforter came; her heart was purified, and from that day forth, in spite of the fact that she was still a nervous invalid, suffering constant pain, she never showed the least sign of temper or impatience, but was full of meekness, and patient, joyous thankfulness.

"Love took up the harp of life, and smote on all the chords with might smote the chord of Self,



that, trembling, passed in music out of sight."

Such is the experience of one in whom Jesus lives without a rival, and in whom grace has wrought its perfect work.

"No form of vice, not worldliness, not greed of gold, not drunkenness itself, does more to un-Christianise society than evil temper," says a distinguished and thoughtful writer.

If this be true, it must be God's will that we be saved from it. And it is provided for in the uttermost salvation that Jesus offers.

Do you want this blessing, my brother, my sister? If so, be sure of this: God has not begotten such a desire in your heart to mock you; you may have it. God is able to do even this for you. With man it is impossible, but not with God. Look at Him just now for it. It is His work, His gift. Look at your past failures, and acknowledge them; look at your present and future difficulties, count them up and face them every one, and admit that they are more than you can hope to conquer; but then look at the dying Son of God, your Saviour – the Man with the seamless robe, the crown of thorns, and the nail-prints; look at the fountain of His Blood; look at His word; look at the Almighty Holy Ghost, who will dwell within you, if you but trust and obey, and cry out: "It shall be done! The mountain shall become a plain; the impossible shall become possible. Hallelujah!" Quietly, intelligently, abandon yourself to the Holy Spirit just now in simple, glad, obedient faith, and the blessing shall be yours. Glory to God!

"HAVE YE RECEIVED THE HOLY GHOST SINCE YE BELIEVED?"