

Power from on High

The Council desired me to say more upon this subject. Consequently, on the Lord's Day, I took for my text the assertion of Christ that the Father is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him than we are to give good gifts to our children.

1. I said, This text informs us that it is infinitely easy to obtain the Holy Spirit or this enduement of power from the Father.

2. That this is made a constant subject of prayer. Everybody prays for this, recurringly, and yet, with all this intercession, how few, comparatively are really endued with this spiritual power from on high! This need is not met. The lack of power is a subject of constant complaint. Christ says, "*Everyone that asketh receiveth*", but there certainly is a "great gulf" between the asking and receiving that is a great stumbling block to many. How, then, is this discrepancy to be explained? I then proceeded to show why this enduement is not received. I said:

1) We are not willing, upon the whole, to have what we desire and ask. 2) God has expressly informed us that if we regard iniquity in our hearts He will not hear us. But the petitioner is often self-indulgent. This is iniquity, and God will not hear him. 3) He is uncharitable. 4) Censorious. 5) Self-dependent. 6) Resists conviction of sin. 7) Refuses to confess to all the parties concerned. 8) Refuses to make restitution to injured parties. 9) He is prejudiced and uncandid. 10) He is resentful. 11) Has a revengeful spirit. 12) Has a worldly ambition. 13) He has committed himself on some point, and become dishonest, and neglects and rejects further light. 14) He is denominationally selfish. 15) Selfish for his own congregation. 16) He resists the teachings of the Holy Spirit. 17) He grieves the Holy Spirit by dissension. 18) He quenches the Spirit by persistence in justifying wrong. 19) He grieves Him by a want of watchfulness. 20) He resists Him by indulging evil tempers. 21) Also by dishonesties in business. 22) Also by indolence and impatience in waiting upon the Lord. 23) By many forms of selfishness. 24) By negligence in business, in study, in prayer. 25) By undertaking too much business, too much study and too little prayer. 26) By a want of entire consecration. 27) Last and greatest, by unbelief. He prays for this enduement without expecting to receive it. "*He that believeth not God, hath made Him a liar*". This, then, is the greatest sin of all. What an insult, what a blasphemy, to accuse God of lying!

I was obliged to conclude that these and other forms of indulged sin explained why so little is received, while so much is asked. I said I had not time to present the other side. Some of the brethren afterward inquired, "What is the other side?" The other side presents the certainty that we shall receive the promised enduement of power from on high, and be successful in winning souls, if we ask, and fulfil the plainly revealed conditions of prevailing prayer.

Observe, what I said upon the Lord's Day was upon the same subject, and in addition to what I had previously said. The misapprehension alluded to was this: If we first get rid of all these forms of sin, which prevent our receiving this enduement, have we not already obtained the blessing? What more do we need? Answer: There is a great difference between the peace and the power of the

Holy Spirit in the soul. The disciples were Christians before the Day of Pentecost, and, as such, had a measure of the Holy Spirit. They must have had the peace of sins forgiven, and of a justified state, but yet they had not the enduement of power necessary for the accomplishment of the work assigned them. They had the peace which Christ had given them, but not the power which He had promised. This may be true of all Christians, and right here is, I think, the great mistake of the Church, and of the ministry. They rest in conversion, and do not seek until they obtain this enduement of power from on high. Hence so many professors have no power with either God or man. They prevail with neither. They cling to a hope in Christ, and even enter the ministry, overlooking the admonition to wait until they are endued with power from on high. But let anyone bring all the tithes and offerings into God's treasury, let him lay all upon the altar, and put God to the proof herewith, and he shall find that God *"will open the windows of heaven, and pour him out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it."*

by Charles G. Finney

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CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLIES INTERNATIONAL, P.O. BOX 888, COFFS HARBOUR NSW 2450, AUSTRALIA