

Spiritual Breakthrough ***The Holy Spirit and Ourselves***

by
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All Scripture quotations are from the New English Bible

1

A classic instance

‘SAM, what is the matter? You look so different!’

Samuel Brengle smiled, returned the book he had borrowed from his student friend, and left as quickly as he had entered. It was too early, he decided, to share his secret. He was not sure he could trust his voice. No attempts at a casual manner could hide the exhilaration, the tingling glow he felt throughout his whole being. Just 20 minutes previously God had invaded his soul in so vital a way that it seemed to Sam that he was still poised somewhere between Heaven and earth. He knew it was too soon to tell, but he cherished an inward assurance he had never before known. He who had been a seeker for so long had become a finder!

Brengle knew that something important had happened to him, but he could have no inkling of how momentous the events of that morning were to prove to the course of his life. He could not have known that the gusts of the Spirit now released in his life were soon to blow him from the comparative lull of the Boston Theological Seminary where he was studying, right into the storm centre of the early-day Salvation Army warfare, that he would almost be killed in a hooligan attack, that during his convalescence he would begin to write of his personal experience of God, and that his writings would lead him to be hailed as a prophet and a saint within the Army.

Not in his wildest imagination could Brengle have seen himself travelling the world for 30 years as a roving evangelist, influencing thousands by his powerful oratory, or dreamt that his books would sell over a million copies and would continue to sell long after his death, or foreseen that year by year Brengle institutes would be convened around the world for the purpose of studying, exploring and praying for the kind of spiritual breakthrough experience that was granted to him that morning.

If Brengle had known that his name was to become synonymous with Christlikeness in both the sense of character and spiritual

power, that he would be regarded as an Army 'saint', that no one outside the Booth family itself would make a greater spiritual impact on The Salvation Army, and that what had happened to him that morning would be spoken of by generations of salvationists yet unborn—young Sam would have shaken his head in disbelief.

But all of this was hidden from Brengle on that morning of 9 January 1885. His thoughts were on the present and, inevitably, on the recent past. The sense of peace that enveloped him seemed too good to be true. What a contrast to all he had been through! Later he was to discover that many others have had to traverse the same wilderness before arriving at the promised land.

Brengle was now 25 and 13 years had elapsed since his conversion. From a spiritual point of view those 13 years had been very mixed. Soon after his conversion he had struck out angrily at a lad who was taunting him, and had discovered on reflection that there was much that was unlike Christ in his character. The incident itself was unimportant but for Brengle it symbolised the incompleteness of God's work in his life.

He had also been increasingly troubled with the way he seemed always to oppose what he felt were God's plans for his life. If God wanted one thing, Brengle would want the other. By nature he was an ambitious orator, eager to impress the world. But the Spirit seemed to have other ideas. On this point, as with so many others, young Brengle was at odds with God.

The lack of spiritual power in his life was also something that troubled Sam deeply. Not only was he defeated by the tempter far too frequently, but waves of doubt would often wash over him, sometimes almost smothering him completely. Some days he found it well-nigh impossible to believe in God at all. On those days he found the tension of having to fulfil his outward religious duties whilst inwardly being in a state of apathy or even rebellion almost too much to bear. And he had to admit that he was an ineffective Christian as far as his work for the Kingdom was concerned. Brengle had a natural aptitude for preaching and he found the kind of visiting the students engaged in no strain, but he knew inwardly that his efforts lacked the anointing from above which alone could make them effective.

But what troubled him most was the absence of immediacy in his

spiritual life. Others could speak in glowing terms of communing with their Lord, of finding inner resources, of being uplifted, inspired, sometimes even of being upbraided, by the Holy Spirit within. Their religion seemed real. It was vital, warm, throbbing. Prayer and the reading of God's word appeared genuinely to excite them. Even the prospect of yet another service in the chapel was greeted with enthusiasm. Compared with this Brengle felt that his spiritual life was dry and barren. He could remember times when God had felt close, particularly soon after his conversion, but of late it had more and more seemed a matter of going through the motions.

Evelyn Underhill has with her usual perceptiveness diagnosed this particular predicament which is common to many believers. 'So many Christians are like deaf people at a concert,' she writes in *The Spiritual Life*. 'They study the programme carefully, believe every statement made in it, speak respectfully of the quality of the music, but only really hear a phrase now and again. So they have no notion at all of the mighty symphony which fills the universe.' Brengle's trouble was that he could not hear the music. But he knew it was there—he had heard the occasional snatch—and he was profoundly dissatisfied with things as they were.

Does God plant the seeds of spiritual dissatisfaction within us, making us seek for that which will meet the soul's hunger and thirst for righteousness? Many would say it is all part of the Holy Spirit's work within us because they trace their first faltering steps towards spiritual fulfilment from that gnawing sense of incompleteness, even despair, that made them reach out for the something more they intuitively felt beckoning them on.

It was certainly so for Brengle. At 25 years of age his spiritual development had reached crisis point. He had looked inwards, had not liked what he saw, and now he was looking for help.

God, as always, had someone ready. 'Why don't you call in to see me sometime?' asked Dr Daniel Steele, the revered Professor of Didactic Theology at Boston University. Sam was surprised at this personal interest in an unknown student, but the doctor had noted that some of Sam's questions after lectures betrayed a more than theoretical interest in the great matters of spiritual living.

'If what I have experienced of God, of abundant life, is all there is to Christianity, then it is all a cruel mockery,' exclaimed the

young student as he faced Dr Steele in his office. The doctor reached for his New Testament and together they looked at some of the vibrant passages which speak of life in all its fullness for the believer. A new hope was born in Sam's heart that evening. They met a number of times, and under the professor's personal guidance Sam's eyes were opened to the promises of the word— promises he had often read but which he was now seeing with new eyes. The writings of Wesley, Fletcher, Dwight L. Moody—and Catherine Booth—fanned the flame of faith in the young heart. There was something more!

And on a Saturday morning the rumbling crisis came to a head. In *Portrait of a Prophet*, his biography of Brengle, Clarence Hall describes the events of that day:

He is up and dressed early this morning for a particular reason. For several days conviction that he should be sanctified has lashed his soul into restlessness, rendering sleep almost impossible; for weeks he has searched the Scriptures, ransacked his heart, cried to God almost day and night. Today, he tells himself, he must obtain—or be lost for ever.

At nine o'clock in the morning it happens. A great sense of peace flows over his soul:

Is this the blessing? He need not put the question twice. Like a great, wordless, all-enveloping 'Yes' he gets the answer from every chamber of his body and soul. It is as though all nature, visible and invisible, had nodded its head in testifying assent, and in the next instant has begun the movement of a cool, refreshing breeze within him and started springs of sparkling waters bubbling up all through his being. Whereas all previous blessings have been transitory, coming and going, this experience has the feel of permanency. His throat emits no shout, his feet do not dance, but his face registers unmistakably what has happened.

No wonder his student friend is startled when Sam enters his room with the book. Word soon spreads round the college: 'Something has happened to Samuel Brengle!'

But this is only the beginning. The divine fire has been lit in his soul but it is still only smouldering. The sense of divine presence remains with him during that day and the next as he boldly tells of his experience from the pulpit, but it is not until the third day that the fire bursts into flame and the glory of God almost consumes him. Brengle recalls the moment in a passage of classic beauty:

I awoke that morning hungering and thirsting just to live this life of fellowship with God, never again to sin in thought or word or deed against Him, with an unmeasurable desire to be a holy man, acceptable unto God.

Getting out of bed about six o'clock with that desire, I opened my Bible and, while reading some of the words of Jesus, He gave me such a blessing as I never dreamed a man could have this side of heaven. It was an unutterable revelation. It was a heaven of love that came into my heart. My soul melted like wax before fire. I sobbed and sobbed. I loathed myself that I had ever sinned against Him or doubted Him or lived for myself and not for His glory. Every ambition for self was now gone. The pure flame of love burned it like a blazing fire would burn a moth.

I walked out over Boston Common before breakfast, weeping for joy and praising God. Oh, how I loved! In that hour I knew Jesus, and I loved Him till it seemed my heart would break with love. I was filled with love for all His creatures. I heard the little sparrows chattering: I loved them. I saw a little worm wriggling across my path: I stepped over it; I didn't want to hurt any living thing. I loved the dogs, I loved the horses, I loved the little urchins on the street, I loved the strangers who hurried past me, I loved the heathen—I loved the whole world!

A breakthrough of such power that it transformed a student of divinity into a spiritual giant! Looking back on those days many years later, he writes, as Hall records:

I have never doubted this experience since. I have sometimes wondered whether I might not have lost it, but I have never doubted the experience any more than I could doubt that I had seen my mother, or looked at the sun, or had my breakfast. It is a living experience.

In time, God withdrew something of the tremendous emotional feelings. He taught me I had to live by my faith and not by my emotions. I walked in a blaze of glory for weeks, but the glory gradually subsided, and He made me see that I must walk and run, instead of mounting up with wings. He showed me that I must learn to trust Him, to have confidence in His unfailing love and devotion, regardless of how I felt.



Samuel Brengle could never be the same again. A new energy had been poured into him and spiritual gifts came into play which made him a fearless and powerful preacher. The events of those days at the seminary were to launch him on a crusade which even after his death still continues through his writings. He never tired of speaking of the reality of God indwelling the human personality and transforming it to his own likeness. He had the gift of being

able to paint the picture of God's glory in the soul of man so vividly that it awakened in his hearers an almost passionate longing for real and immediate experience of God. His descriptions of the divine inpouring sometimes border on the poetic:

Do you want to know what holiness is? It is pure love. Do you want to know what the baptism of the Holy Ghost is? It is not mere sentiment. It is not a happy sensation that passes away in a night. It is a baptism of love that brings every thought into captivity to the Lord Jesus; that casts out all fear; that burns up doubt and unbelief as fire burns tow; that makes one 'meek and lowly in heart'; that makes one hate uncleanness, lying and deceit, a flattering tongue and every evil way with a perfect hatred; that makes heaven and hell eternal realities; that makes one patient and gentle with the froward and sinful; that makes one 'pure, peaceable, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy'; that brings one into perfect and unbroken sympathy with the Lord Jesus Christ in His toil and travail to bring a lost and rebel world back to God. (*Helps to Holiness*)

His readers and hearers sensed that he himself possessed what he professed. They did not hesitate to call him a saint.

Accounting for the experience

What actually happened to Brengle that morning, and what is its significance for us today? We live in an era when increasing numbers of Christians, of all denominations and of all types of personality, are testifying to life-transforming moments of spiritual breakthrough similar to Brengle's experience. In some cases sought for, in others arriving completely unexpectedly, these moments of divine invasion have set luke-warm, apathetic and nominal believers on fire for God, and have lifted their spiritual awareness into dimensions previously undreamt of. Their stories make compelling reading and quicken hope and holy desire.

But how does one account for these moments of infilling? The phenomenon of the new birth, of Christian initiation, is understood and is clearly marked on theological maps. But what about this further experience which came to Brengle subsequent to his conversion? Are moments like these marked on the spiritual maps? Are they promised in the Scriptures? Is it possible to lay down norms for the Spirit's working in individual lives? But how much can be predicted with certainty? And if these are deeper or higher

or richer or fuller dimensions of Christian experience, who may, and how does one, enter in?

It is to attempt some answers to these questions that this book has been written. The outline will be simple.

Taking Samuel Brengle's experience as our starting point we will first of all call other witnesses who claim to have shared similar moments of divine breakthrough. What further light on the nature and value of these experiences can be gleaned from the pages of Christian biography? Our study will centre on post-conversion experiences, but not exclusively, for all spiritual experience is basically the breakthrough of the divine into the human consciousness, and it is therefore difficult, from an experiential angle, to draw hard and fast distinctions between a conversion and a postconversion experience.

Many readers might find these two chapters with their catena of human stories the most rewarding in the book. The variety of experience is enormous—an important fact to bear in mind—and yet there are certain clearly discernible similarities and patterns of experience which emerge.

Having looked at these testimonies in considerable detail we will then turn to three different schools of Christian thought which seek to account for the experiences we have studied.

Are these transforming moments best explained as instances of the blessing of holiness, in the Wesleyan sense of entire sanctification? Brengle certainly interpreted what had happened to him along these lines. 'On the morning of 9 January 1885, God sanctified my soul.' Behind the key phrase of 'entire sanctification' lies a complex but fascinating structure of Christian thought, and this we must survey.

Or are these experiences better interpreted as instances of the 'baptism in the Holy Spirit'—a phrase which also was never far from Brengle's lips? This term, which was much used in the early Salvation Army, has received widespread currency of late, and we shall need to look at the doctrinal explanation which it represents.

Or are these experiences best defined as moments of spiritual awakening, or what has sometimes been termed by the Church as 'mystical conversion'? Through the 20 centuries of Christian

thought runs a rich vein of deep spirituality. What have the classic saints to tell us about these moments of divine breakthrough?

Having completed our study of these three main ways of considering moments of spiritual breakthrough we will then finish the task by seeking to draw the search to a conclusion and to apply our findings to our own needs and circumstances.

The book is aimed both at the head and the heart. Intellectual doubt can be a very real hindrance to spiritual receptivity, and if the presentation of facts helps to clear away some mental haziness then the book will have served its purpose well.

The testimonies

Before we turn to the human stories of the next two chapters, a word of introduction might be helpful.

In our search for parallels to Samuel Brengle's testimony we shall range over a wide spectrum of Christian experience from the past and the present. But as soon as we try to study spiritual experience through testimonies we are faced with an almost insurmountable problem. It is the unanimous testimony of all who have known moments of intense spiritual experience that these are ineffable. Words cannot describe them—'they are better felt than telt'. Changes of attitude or character resulting from such moments can be put into words without too much difficulty, but to capture the actual moment, the surge of emotional warmth, the sense of illumination of the mind, and the feeling of new resources being released within—the essence of an experience which utterly satisfies the soul—seems beyond the power of words. Even Catherine of Genoa, that practical visionary of the 15th century who never tired of trying to describe her inner commerce with God, ends up by sighing:

Oh, that I could tell you what the heart feels, how it burns and is consumed inwardly! Only, I find no words to express it. I can but say: Might but one little drop of what I feel fall into Hell, and Hell would be transformed into a Paradise.

Not even a genius like Blaise Pascal, the brilliant French scientist, thinker and writer, could find words with which to

describe adequately the dramatic and life-changing visitation which came to him at the age of 31. After his death a servant found a small parchment hidden in the lining of his coat which in brief and broken but moving phrases records the moment:

The year of grace 1656
Monday, 23rd November . . .
From half-past ten till half-past twelve
FIRE

God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob,
Not the God of philosophers and scholars,
Certainty, certainty, feeling, joy, peace
God of Jesus Christ. . . .

Fortunately for us the fact that these moments cannot be adequately translated into words has not deterred the saints from making the attempt. But in view of the inherent problem, any collection of testimonies will tend to highlight the experiences of those who have most vividly experienced the divine, and of those most able to communicate their experience. Having then shared vicariously these moments of intense religious experience, we can better understand our own perhaps much paler moments of spiritual awareness.

2

Moments of spiritual breakthrough

TRYING to classify testimonies about spiritual experience into categories is like trying to divide the experience of falling in love into its component parts. It is an impossible task and can prove misleading when it is attempted.

But the human mind likes order, and the testimonies have therefore been grouped under three headings: those that highlight that something is felt, those that stress that something is perceived, and those that bring out that something is received. But a vivid encounter with the divine is likely to contain all three elements, and most of the testimonies quoted will illustrate more than just one point.

Moments of feeling

A spiritual experience is something that is felt. This is perhaps its most characteristic constituent element. 'God's love has flooded our inmost heart through the Holy Spirit he has given us' (Romans 5:5, *NEB*), exclaims Paul. 'It was as if liquid love was being poured into the entire depths of my soul,' writes a 20th century apostle. 'I was utterly overwhelmed with joy,' adds a salvationist. In a highly intellectualised personality, where the springs of feeling have been allowed to dry up, the feeling content will be less prominent but deep down it will be there none the less.

Even the cerebral Pascal had to exclaim with astonishment, 'Feeling! Joy, peace!' It should be mentioned in passing that anyone who insists on not mixing emotion with his religion diminishes greatly the possibility of personal experience of the divine. It is like trying to fall in love without becoming emotionally involved.

A Salvation Army officer describes her experience in poetical form:

Oh, Jesus, I love you! I love you!
With a pounding heart and a racing brain,
I whisper these words again and again,
And deep in my heart I feel love's sharp pain,
It's breaking me, making me, new once again.

You touched me this morning, you held out your hand,
The miracle happened—I don't understand.
I thought love was dead, that all feeling had gone,
Emotions were dried and tears there were none.
You kindled the embers, you made the heart flame,
In one flashing moment my love burnt again!

A young salvationist lass puts it like this:

I felt a blanket of love slowly descend upon me, its warm radiance spreading through my whole body. Its peace and joy settled within me and dispelled all doubt: Jesus was alive!

In his autobiography Dwight L. Moody recalls:

The blessing came upon me suddenly like a flash of lightning. I remember I was walking the streets of New York, and right there on the street the power of God seemed to come upon me so wonderfully I had to ask God to stay His hand. I was filled with a sense of God's goodness, and I felt as though I could take the whole world to my heart.

Charles Finney, the American evangelist whose writings greatly influenced William and Catherine Booth, in his memoirs describes in vivid terms his experience:

As I turned and was about to take a seat by the fire, I received a mighty baptism of the Holy Ghost. Without any expectation of it, without ever having the thought in my mind that there was such a thing for me, without any recollection that I had ever heard the thing mentioned by any person in the world, the Holy Spirit descended upon me in a manner that seemed to go through me, body and soul. I could feel the impression, like a wave of electricity, going through and through me. Indeed, it seemed to come in waves of liquid love. No words can express the wonderful love that was shed abroad in my heart. I wept aloud with joy and love.

When I awoke the next morning, instantly the baptism I had received the night before returned upon me in the same manner. I arose upon my knees in bed and wept aloud for joy, and remained for some time too much overwhelmed with the baptism of the Spirit to do anything but pour out my soul to God.

Stanley Jones, the well-known missionary and writer, describes, in *Victorious Living*, the infilling which transformed his ministry:

I was a Christian for a year or more when one day I looked at a library shelf and was struck with the title of a book, *The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life*.

As I read it my heart was set on fire to find this life of freedom and fullness. I reached the forty-second page when the Inner Voice said very distinctly, 'Now is the time to find!' I pleaded that I did not know what I wanted, that when I finished it I would seek. But the Inner Voice was imperious, 'Now is the time to seek.' I tried to read on, but the words seemed blurred. I was up against a Divine insistence, so closed the book, dropped on my knees and asked, 'What shall I do?' The Voice replied, 'Will you give Me your all—your very all?' After a moment's hesitation I replied, 'I will.' 'Then take My all, you are cleansed,' the Voice said, with a strange inviting firmness. 'I believe it,' I said, and arose from my knees. I walked around the room affirming it over and over, and pushing my hands away from me as if to push away my doubt. This I did for ten minutes, when suddenly I was filled with a strange refining fire that seemed to course through every portion of my being in cleansing waves.

It was all very quiet and I had hold of myself—and yet the Divine waves could be felt from the inmost centre of my being to my fingertips. My whole being was being fused into one, and through the whole there was a sense of sacredness and awe—and the most exquisite joy. I knew then, and I know now, that I was not being merely emotionally stirred, but the very sources of my life were being cleansed and were taken possession of by Life itself. My will was just as much involved as my emotion. The fact is the whole of my life was on a permanently higher level.

Peace, serenity, wonderful stillness, deep tranquillity, are descriptive words frequently used of moments of spiritual breakthrough. Brigadier Joseph Korbel recalls in *In My Enemy's Camp*:

I did not fully understand what it was all about. I only knew that a tremendous, fantastic change had taken place in my life. A new and very real joy filled my heart, and I felt as if a great burden had been taken off my shoulders. *I had a feeling of deep satisfaction and peace beyond understanding.* My soul was singing praises to the Lord whom I had not known until just then. My lips were not able to form a single prayer of thanksgiving, but I knew I was no longer alone. The presence of the Holy One was with me. What glory filled my soul!

'The presence of the Holy One was with me.' A moment of spiritual awareness. 'There came a wonderful peace and feeling of

God's presence that I am very certain of,' writes another. And J. E. Carpenter, too, speaks of feeling himself to be in God's presence:

I went out one afternoon for a walk alone. I was in the empty, unthinking state in which one saunters along country lanes, simply yielding oneself to the casual sights around which give a town-bred lad with country yearning such intense delight. Suddenly I became conscious of the presence of someone else. I cannot describe it, but I felt that I had as direct perception of the being of God all around about me as I have of you when we are together. It was no longer a matter of inference, it was an immediate act of spiritual (or whatever adjective you like to employ) apprehension. It came unsought, absolutely unexpectedly. I remember the wonderful transfiguration of the far-off woods and hills as they seemed to blend in the infinite being with which I was thus brought into relation. This experience did not last long. But it sufficed to change all my feeling. I had not found God because I had never looked for Him. But He had found me. (*Joseph Estlin Carpenter*, by C. H. Herford.)

'An inexplicable sweetness,' was the way St Augustine described his feelings in these moments of awareness. 'An inexplicable sweetness, such that, if it should be perfected in me, I know not to what point my life might not arrive.'

Moments of perception

But moments of spiritual encounter are not only felt. They are moments of insight. The mind perceives truth in a supernatural way, it is illumined in a way which defies description but which is real beyond doubt to the experiencer. Everything seems to click into place. Often there is a strong sense of assurance that all is well and that all will be well.

In *The Christian Agnostic*, Dr Leslie D. Weatherhead recalls such a moment which came to him at the age of 19 when as a student minister he was travelling by train to fulfil a preaching engagement:

The third-class compartment was full. I cannot recall any particular thought processes which may have led up to the great moment. But the great moment came and when, years later, I read C. S. Lewis's *Surprised by Joy* I thought, 'Yes, I know exactly how he felt. I felt like that.' For a few seconds only, I suppose, the whole compartment was filled with light. This is the only way in which to describe the moment,

for there was nothing to see at all. I felt caught up into some tremendous sense of being within a loving, triumphant and shining purpose. I never felt more humble. I never felt more exalted. A most curious but overwhelming sense possessed me and filled me with ecstasy. I felt that all was well for all mankind—how poor the words seem! . . . I was right to want to be a minister. I had wanted to be a doctor and the conflict had been intense, but in that hour I knew the ministry was the right path for me. For me it was right, right, right. An indescribable joy possessed me.

In a few moments the glory had departed—all but one curious lingering feeling. I *loved* everybody in that compartment. It sounds silly now, and indeed I blush to write it, but at that moment I think I would have died for any one of the people in that compartment. They seemed—all of them—immensely lovable and valuable. I seemed to sense the golden worth in them all.

Brenge spoke of ‘an experience that burns up doubt and unbelief as fire burns tow’. A young student’s testimony is typical of many:

I went to church that morning (he writes), merely hoping for some help in my searching, and when I left, two years of aimlessness and futility and agnosticism had simply faded out as if they had never been. For the first time I felt alive, and that my life had a centre and really mattered.

Illumination came to Martin Luther through a sentence of the Creed:

When a fellow-monk one day repeated the words of the Creed, ‘I believe in the forgiveness of sins,’ I saw the Scriptures in an entirely new light; and straightway I felt as if I were born anew. It was as if I had found the door of paradise thrown wide open.

The assurance of rightness with God, of sins forgiven and a relationship restored—a frequent neotic quality of spiritual experiences—came to John Wesley as he listened to a reading of Luther’s preface to the Epistle to the Romans:

About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for my salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.

Certainty came to Augustine in an intuitive flash as he read a verse from Romans.

I had no wish to read more and no need to do so. For in an instant, as I came to the end of the sentence, it was as though the light of confidence flooded into my heart and all the darkness of doubt was dispelled.

Sometimes these experiences of the Spirit convey not only a sense of rightness but also seem to convey actual information about God, man and the universe, knowledge which profoundly satisfies the intellect. Unfortunately the details of the knowledge thus gained are lost as soon as the moment of awareness is over, leaving only the abiding impression that everything in the universe makes perfect and wonderful sense.

Attempts to recall and commit the details to writing make extremely turgid and sometimes seemingly nonsensical reading, as the authors despairingly admit. But the revelation appears to have been real enough and perfectly satisfying to the intellect at the time. Many people who have experienced a moment of awareness will know something of this aspect of experience, though probably in much paler form than the examples which follow.

The inspired shoemaker Jacob Boehme, of the 17th century, who has been described as 'the most astonishing case in history of a natural genius for the transcendent', records:

In one quarter of an hour, I saw and knew more than if I had been many years together at a university.

Francis Xavier, a distinguished scientist and philosopher of the 16th century, wrote:

I, too, in my youth pursued knowledge with ardour, and I even prayed God to help me attain it to make me more useful to my congregation. After this prayer I found myself inundated by divine light; it seemed to me that a veil was raised before the eyes of my spirit, and the truths of the human sciences, even those which I had never studied, became manifest to me by an infused intuition, as to Solomon of old. This state of intuition lasted about twenty-four hours; then, as if the veil had fallen again, I found myself as ignorant as before.

Few have experienced illumination in such startling detail, but the sense of having experienced a reality which from then on cannot be doubted or denied is a more frequent experience. Thomas R. Kelly, the 20th century Quaker, speaks for many when he says, in his *Testament of Devotion*:

One emerges from such soul-shaking, Love-invaded times into more normal states of consciousness. But one knows ever after that the

Eternal Lover of the world, the Hound of Heaven, is utterly, utterly real, and that life must henceforth be forever determined by that Real.

Teresa of Avila, that practical saint of the 16th century, adds a further insight on this same theme:

God establishes Himself within one's soul in such a manner that when the soul returns to herself it is impossible to doubt that God has been in her and she in Him. And this certainty remains so firmly imprinted on one's mind that if one should go for many years without being raised again to this condition, one could neither forget the favour that has been received nor doubt its reality.

A further aspect of that which is perceived in spiritual experience is the sense of affinity, harmony or even unity which emerges between the experiencer and the created world. The experiencer feels at one with the universe and feels that he belongs, that he is at home, so to speak. It is as if in one timeless moment he has experienced what life should always be.

The created world often seems suffused with a new glory as a result of a divine revelation, which further heightens the sense of belonging. Jonathan Edwards describes this aspect:

The appearance of everything was altered; there seemed to be, as it were, a calm, sweet cast, or appearance of divine glory, in almost everything. God's excellency, His wisdom, His purity and love, seemed to appear in everything: in the sun, moon and stars; in the clouds and blue sky; in the grass, flowers and trees; in the water and all nature; which used greatly to fix my mind.

Billy Bray, the irrepressible illiterate evangelist of the 19th century, who used to say, 'I can't help praising the Lord. As I go along the street, I lift up one foot, and it seems to say "Glory"; and I lift up the other, and it seems to say "Amen"; and so they keep up like that all the time I am walking'—recalls this detail:

I remember this, that everything looked new to me, the people, the fields, the cattle, the trees. I was like new man in a new world.

Another describes his experience thus:

When I went in the morning into the fields to work, the glory of God appeared in all His visible creation. I well remember we reaped oats, and how every straw and head of the oats seemed, as it were, arrayed in a kind of rainbow glory.

Evelyn Underhill, 20th century writer on the spiritual life:

I still remember walking down the Notting Hill main road and observing the extremely sordid landscape with joy and astonishment. Even the movement of the traffic had something universal and sublime in it.

Perhaps it was more than poetic licence that enabled George Wade Robinson to write:

Heaven above is softer blue,
Earth around is sweeter green,
Something lives in every hue,
Christless eyes have never seen,
Birds with gladder songs o'erflow,
Flowers with deeper beauties shine,
Since I know, as now I know,
I am his and he is mine.

Moments of reception

It is a well-attested fact that moments of divine invasion can also mediate to or release within the personality new and unsuspected powers of remarkable strength. The experiencer feels himself cleansed and then positively re-energised, morally, spiritually and even physically.

The sense of beautiful newness in the world without is matched by a sense of clean and beautiful newness within. A Salvation Army officer writes of such a moment:

All of an awful sudden God showed me at least part of my sinful self and how phoney, despicable and small I really was.... God's workings in me over the next minutes or hours (of which I was not aware) were so real that they have never lost their sharpness or reality. He made me clean! Right through! Shiny clean like I'd never known before! A shine which glowed white and clear in every pore of my being. No fuzz or murkiness or scaliness—just pure and clean. What a wonderful God! But that was just the beginning because as my heart lifted in praise for this wonderful blessing, He filled me with Himself; and warmth of love, golden mellowness, gentle strength, peaceful power, deep joy began to bubble from inside as my hands began to rise towards God.

George Fox, founder figure of the Society of Friends, describes the moment of his divine visitation:

All things were new, and all the creation gave another smell unto me than before, beyond what words can utter. I knew nothing but pureness, innocency and righteousness, being renewed up into the image of God by Christ Jesus, so that I was come up into the state of Adam, which he was in before he fell.

The annals of The Salvation Army abound with accounts of men and women who have received miraculous new moral energy through moments of divine breakthrough. A well-known case is that of Henry F. Milans, whose life and career as a successful newspaper editor were destroyed through alcohol addiction. He became an outcast of society until introduced to the power of Christ through meeting with the Army.

In *Out of the Depths* Clarence Hall describes the moment when Milans knelt at the penitent form:

There stole gently across his troubled spirit the consciousness of a great peace. He seemed to feel close beside him a comforting Presence, and he thought he heard with an inner ear a Voice which said: 'Come. We will start life all over again without the habits that have spoilt it. Trust Me, I will keep thee.' He arose from his knees. He says that he was not ecstasized by an overpowering emotion. No instantaneous wave of exaltation swept over him. Comfort, yes; but no rushing, overwhelming desire to leap and shout. No seventh heaven descended to engulf him in a cloud of glory. But nineteen years later he is able to declare: 'From that moment to the present I never have been tempted to take a drink of anything with alcohol in it. If I were again to become a drunkard I should have to acquire anew the appetite for liquor. I should have to learn all over again to love the drink that was for thirty-five years the greatest love of my life.'

A former drug addict named Joseph, quoted by David Wilkerson in *The Cross and the Switchblade*, tells:

Jesus helped me get rid of drugs. I used goof balls and marijuana, and I was beginning to skin pop heroin. I already had the mind habit and I had to do this thing. When I heard about Jesus it kind of shocked me that He loved people in spite of all their sins. It stirred me when I heard that He puts real teeth behind His promises, by coming into us with this baptism of the Holy Spirit.... So I got wanting this, just like Neda. In the chapel I cried to God for help, and that's when He came around. I wasn't lonely any more. I didn't want any more drugs. I loved everybody. For the first time in my life I felt clean.

In *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, William James quotes the words of a military officer who looks back on a moment of

spiritual breakthrough which freed him from the bonds of impurity:

I was effectually cured of all inclination to impurity—a sin that I was so strongly addicted to that I thought nothing but shooting me through the head could have cured me of it; and all desire and inclination to it was removed, as entirely as if I had been a sucking child, nor did the temptation return to this day.

John of the Cross, the great Spanish religious leader and writer of the 16th century, sums up the almost miraculous power which can be released through what he calls the ‘touches’ of God on the soul:

They enrich it marvellously. A single one of them may be sufficient to abolish at a stroke certain imperfections of which the soul during its whole life had vainly tried to rid itself, and to leave it adorned with virtues and loaded with supernatural gifts.

In many instances it is the spiritual re-energising rather than the moral change which is the most notable effect of a spiritual experience. A frequent comment is that what was previously nominal and formal and habitual as far as the spiritual life is concerned, what was in a sense an acting out of a part, now becomes real, spontaneous, joyous and utterly satisfying. Abundant life becomes an actuality. God’s presence is really felt. It is no longer a matter of pious words. Love and joy well up, love towards God and love towards other people. The Scriptures come alive and are imbued with a new and heightened significance. Prayer becomes real and lifts one into new dimensions of spiritual awareness. Meetings for prayer and worship become a joy. The desire to witness to others becomes intense. In Evelyn Underhill’s phrase—those that were previously like deaf people at a concert, now actually hear the glorious music.

Spiritual powers, hitherto latent, which equip the Christian for spiritual ministry to others, are also released, and the true meaning of the word ministry becomes apparent to the experiencer for the first time. The effect in the lives and ministry of both lay and ordained servants of God has at times been highly dramatic.

A Salvation Army officer describes a long period of spiritual barrenness at her corps, which leads to a personal crisis:

Then I opened my heart to the Holy Spirit, and He came and flooded me with love and peace and power. You may judge how real that

baptism was when I tell you that during the next week-end we had twenty-five seekers, and only one week has passed since in which there have not been some converts.

Dwight L. Moody noted a new persuasiveness coming into his preaching. 'I took the old sermons I had preached without any power,' he writes. 'It was the same old truth, but there was new power.'

In his spiritual autobiography, *None Can Guess*, Michael Harper describes the change that came over his preaching immediately following his empowering experience:

I found I had a new fluency as I spoke. I was so clear-headed. Almost for the first time in my life I found myself leaving the shelter of my notes and adventuring out, blown along by the wind of the Spirit. I even had moments when I wanted to stop and listen to what I was saying, it was so interesting! The words of the Lord Jesus came literally true, 'It will not be you that speaks, but the Holy Spirit.' I did not have to turn to the commentators all the time, I was actually being given original thoughts! And the words were meeting with a real response in the audience. I found myself at last communicating effectively, and I was excited about the things I was saying.... This new sense of freedom in speaking was one of the revolutionary results of this experience. My whole attitude to preaching changed overnight. It was not a matter of giving up preparing sermons. That would have been wrong. But from now onwards the preparation of the speaker was very much more important than that of the material he was to use.

In *Power from on High*, Charles Finney, whose testimony we have already noted, writes of the extraordinary converting power with which he found himself endued following his Spirit baptism:

I was powerfully converted on the morning of October 10. In the evening of the same day, and on the morning of the following day, I received overwhelming baptisms of the Holy Ghost, that went through me, as it seemed to me, body and soul. I immediately found myself endued with such power from on high that a few words dropped here and there to individuals were the means of their immediate conversion. My words seemed to fasten like barbed arrows in the souls of men. They cut like a sword. They broke the heart like a hammer. Multitudes can attest to this. Oftentimes a word dropped, without my remembering it, would fasten conviction, and often result in almost immediate conversion.

This power is a great marvel. I have many times seen people unable to endure the word.... Several times it has been true in my experience that

I could not raise my voice, or say anything in prayer or exhortation except in the mildest manner, without wholly overcoming those that were present. This was not because I was preaching terror to the people; but the sweetest sounds of the gospel would overcome them. This power seems sometimes to pervade the atmosphere of one who is highly charged with it. Many times great numbers of persons in a community will be charged with this power, when the atmosphere of the whole place seems to be charged with the life of God. Strangers coming into it, and passing through the place, will be instantly smitten with conviction of sin, and in many instances converted to Christ.

For the Rev J. Cameron Peddie, of the Church of Scotland, the new power released through a spiritual experience was the power of healing. In his book *The Forgotten Talent* he tells of a growing conviction about spiritual healing which led him eventually to set aside one hour each day, from 11 pm until midnight, from his busy ministry in the slums of Glasgow, for the purpose of preparing himself spiritually for the reception of the gift of healing. He describes his method of spiritual discipline, and then comments:

For a whole year I carried out these daily tasks as faithfully as I could, always expecting something to happen that would make clear to me that the Lord recognized the personal private covenant I had tried to enter into with Him and call me to the Healing Ministry. But no such thing happened and I continued my special programme for a second year. But still there was no call other than my own wishful thinking. A third year passed, then a fourth, with the same result, and I was tempted to give up. But, under the impulse of what must have been the Holy Spirit, for no other power could have sufficed to keep me going, I regularly continued my routine. Before the end of the fifth year something happened.

The sign came on May 17, 1947, between the hours of 11 a.m. and noon, exactly thirty years to the hour after my ordination.... This particular day I was alone and was preparing lunch. What happened might have been expected in the sanctuary, a cathedral or on some piece of holy ground. But it happened as I stood at the sink in the kitchen paring potatoes, a knife in one hand, a potato in the other. What my thoughts were I cannot remember, but I have no doubt that being alone I was talking to the Father about the work I wished to do. Whatever thoughts engaged my attention, suddenly I felt myself gripped by a strange benevolent power that filled me with an unspeakable sense of happiness. I seemed to be drawn up out of the body and did not know where I was, whether 'in the body or out of it'. It was supreme and final bliss! Joy filled my heart and overflowed in tears, helplessly I cried, like a child, the tears pouring from my eyes. All I could say was, 'Father, oh, Father'. I was the Prodigal Son arriving home and the Father had fallen on my neck and was kissing me. I had reached, I knew, the home of ultimate truth and all things were clear and plain. All doubts vanished.

Every question-mark was erased and I knew, I simply knew, that God is and that He rewards all who diligently seek Him.

In some instances of spiritual experience the moral and spiritual re-energising is coupled with a new and exhilarating mental and physical vitality. 'Sermon topics came to me until I grew exhausted writing them down,' writes a minister, and references to intense feelings of physical well-being are frequently made. Baron von Hugel writes:

All the great mystics, and this in precise proportion to their greatness, have ever taught that only such ecstasies are valuable as leave the soul, and the very body as its instrument, strengthened and improved.

John L. Sherrill follows the account of his baptism in the Spirit with:

The next three months were one long smile, one long laugh, one long bounding out of bed each morning to meet the day. Never had I known such a protracted period of well-being. My work went well. I glimpsed what being a creative father could be like: when the children burst into my office I stopped working, really glad to see them, and when they left I turned back to the interrupted business without missing a beat. If one of the boys slipped into my shop and gouged a groove in my grinding wheel I bawled him out, sure, but in my annoyance was no rejection of him.

Many deep-rooted psychological quirks, which I had used most of my life to keep people at a safe distance, disappeared entirely during these months. I got to know old friends on an entirely different level and made new ones without the shyness which is my usual lot.

A salvationist missionary confides in her diary:

12th June. Three weeks ago today I received such blessing which has, praise God, remained and increased with time. During the week—which has been very exacting with all the extra work—two people have told me how pretty or lovely I look! I record this only to show that the loving Spirit of the Lord changes our faces too!

16th June. Between 5 and 6 a.m. I am ready to get up and spend long periods in prayer for the sheer joy of communion with God. Wake up feeling exuberant—so different from before. This experience gives one such energy. I used to be such a weary person, but am now able to work much harder and longer. All thanks to Him!

19th June. Look back with joy on the very best month of my life, but do not dwell in the past. This experience is progressive.

It is by no means uncommon for an intense spiritual flash to accomplish actual mental or physical healing. Long-standing and deeply-entrenched phobias, complexes and deviations have been known to dissolve miraculously before the divine inrush. A Finnish Salvation Army officer tells of being released from her fear of witnessing to her faith:

How humiliating it was for me to be unable to testify, even in a few words, of the true life the soul lived in God, while others stood up to testify freely and convincingly. Then the most wonderful thing that can befall man happened to me. God sanctified my spirit, soul and body: purified and sanctified it. All the chains were gone. I was free! Oh, the exultation of my soul! I was free to love souls—men and women whoever they were; free to testify and pray without fearing criticism. I was free to testify of my experience on streets or boats, in the docks, among factory workers, yes, to hundreds of godless men and women. Free, because the chains of pride, selfishness, comfort and sin no longer fettered and weighed down.

Physical healings, sometimes almost unnoticed at first, sometimes of a dramatic nature, are occasionally mentioned. Major Henry Andrews tells of how he was afflicted by stammering for 20 years, an affliction which made it impossible for him to speak effectively in public:

After being a Salvationist for two years with no sign of improvement, I went to the holiness meeting one Friday night. While sitting in the meeting the Holy Spirit said to me quite clearly, 'All things are possible to him that believeth.' I dropped to my knees and cried out: 'Lord, I believe!' In an instant the work was done. To God be the glory. I got to my feet and said, 'Dear comrades, God has healed me. Pray for me. I am going to be an officer.' Hallelujah! What I said has come true, and I have now been a corps officer for over thirty-one years.

Other characteristics

Intense moments of spiritual breakthrough are sometimes accompanied by sensory impressions which are very real to the experiencer. The most widely quoted are those of supernatural light and inner voices.

Paul both sensed a light and heard a voice in his dramatic encounter with God. 'As I was on my way, your majesty,' he reports to King Agrippa, 'in the middle of the day I saw a light

from the sky, more brilliant than the sun, shining all around me and my travelling-companions. We all fell to the ground, and then I heard a voice saying to me in the Jewish language, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” (Acts 26:13-14, *NEB.*)

Charles Finney describes a vivid sensory impression of light at his conversion:

All at once the glory of God shone upon and around about me in a manner almost marvellous. A light perfectly ineffable shone in my soul, that almost prostrated me to the ground. This light seemed like the brightness of the sun in every direction. It was too intense for the eyes.

In some cases, but more rarely, the sense of light evolves into fully-formed visual images and becomes an actual ‘vision’.

References to sounds and voices speaking are often to be found in the reports of spiritual encounters. The problem of disentangling metaphorical language and factual description is daunting, but the reports of inner, and seemingly outer, voices are too numerous to be dismissed simply as poetic licence. A number of instances have already been cited in our survey of testimonies, but the following recollection, by Major A. Oram, combines both the visual and aural elements:

There came a day when I realized that there was ‘something more’. What, I did not know. In this state of seeking what seemed to me then a will-o’-the-wisp, weeks passed by. The final victory came after a most trying day; work seemed to pile up and the foreman seemed more difficult than ever before.

The day closed, the machines became silent and, as usual, I made my way to my bedroom where I spent about fifteen minutes in prayer. Coming out of my room, still burdened with the desire and the weight of the day, I seemed to hear a voice asking, ‘Have you received what you sought?’ After some hesitation I had to reply in the negative and I felt an urge to return. Instantly there came the temptation to wait till some other time, but I returned and knelt beside my bed. I had nothing to say to God, I had said it all in the prayer before; but there broke from my heart—and by now the tears were falling—one sentence, ‘O Lord, help me!’ And He did, for the room seemed flooded with a strange light and as though One spoke came the words, ‘I will, be thou clean.’ I knew then that the work had been done—that for which I had long sought had come.

Commissioner William Ebbs recalls:

The manner of my coming into the fullness was almost akin to the breaking of a storm. I had been following the speakers in a holiness convention with peculiar attentiveness, for I knew that I had not responded to the highest call. To be quite frank, at that time I had lost much of my spiritual 'punch' and was really unhappy. In spite of this I maintained my public activity and even tried to assume that all was well. During that meeting my soul had responded to the truths expressed with great clearness and when Mrs Booth had concluded a most persuasive appeal for complete abandon to God, I said: 'O Holy Spirit, have Thy way, and lead me.'

At that decisive moment I heard the voice of the leader announce 'Major Ebbs will pray.' I rose to my feet and stepped to the rail with a strange mellowness in my heart. My petition started when something entirely unforeseen happened. The radiance of the Holy Presence fell upon me and—the victory in my own soul having been gained but a few moments before—a Voice distinctly said to me: 'Witness! 'Tis better than to intercede.' I hardly remember what happened. I know that I told the great audience what had transpired and then, leaving the platform, I walked down to the Mercy Seat and wept for joy before the Lord.

The publication of an account in a Salvation Army periodical of someone 'hearing' celestial music in a moment of deep sorrow, drew out the following testimony from a retired officer, who until then had never shared it with any one:

I heard celestial music when I got converted, when I accepted Christ in the 'Palais de la femme' in Paris in 1933. I heard it for hours all around me, in the street, in the subway, I couldn't say for how long. And it was so celestial, so divine, so beautiful, so delicate, that after this experience I could not touch the piano for weeks on end. Every time I started playing the music which before had uplifted me so much, it sounded just so vulgar and coarse, nothing more than vulgar noise. No Beethoven, no great composer otherwise enjoyed, would satisfy me for months afterwards. After hours of this heavenly music, it faded away slowly, became fainter and fainter and finally ceased entirely. And all that time I did not feel the ground under my feet. It was like walking in the air. I am very grateful to God for this wonderful manifestation of His welcome and love to me. Since then I have come to believe that the music is all the time around us, but we hear it only when it pleases God to open our ears to it.

'Great nervous excitement of any kind, but especially fear and joy, has to overflow into the muscles somehow,' writes J. B. Pratt in *The Religious Consciousness*, and this leads us to yet a further possible characteristic of moments of spiritual experience. Intense spiritual moments may in some cases result in weeping or laughing, shouting or clapping, and a number of other bodily reactions

which, though they may bewilder the onlooker not caught up in the same excitement, seem the most natural way in the world to the experiencer of expressing what is welling up from within. A person's basic temperament will largely dictate the manner of his response, however, and people of quiet disposition are unlikely to react out of character through spiritual release.

Ballington Booth reports on a holiness meeting held on 13 September 1878, a report typical of many:

Everyone was overpowered by the Spirit. One young man, after struggling and wrestling for nearly an hour, shouted 'Glory! glory! glory! I've got it. Oh, bless God!' One young woman shook her head, saying, 'No, not tonight,' but soon was seen on the ground pleading mightily with God. Every unsanctified man or woman felt indescribably. Three or four times we cleared the tables and forms, and again and again they were filled.... One brother said, 'Oh, oh! if this ain't heaven, what'll heaven be?' Another brother said, 'I must jump.' I said, 'Then jump,' and he jumped all around. So we sang, cried, laughed, shouted, and after twenty-three had given their all to the Master, trusting Him to keep them from sinning, as He had pardoned their sins we closed, singing,

Glory, glory, Jesus saves me,
Glory, glory to the Lamb.

3

Breakthrough to fuller living

HOW important are the moments of spiritual breakthrough we have been looking at? Have they lasting value? Do they effect real and enduring changes in the personality? Do they raise life permanently to a higher level and into a new dimension? Or are they but a religious version of the drug addict's 'trip'—a moment of glory which vanishes and leaves the experiencer poorer than before?

'By their fruits ye shall know them' (Matthew 7:16), said Jesus, and this is the only way in which the value of spiritual encounters can be judged. Wonderful accounts of inner glory that do not leave a Christlike imprint on the experiencer are to be suspected. As Bishop Kenneth E. Kirk puts it: 'Unless an alleged experience of God brings with it a call to disinterested action of some kind or other—unless there is reaction, response, reciprocity—we shall scarcely be able to avoid the conclusion that something is amiss.'

The actual moments of revelation are usually brief. In some instances mere seconds, in others minutes, in rarer instances a matter of hours, in a few cases a day, seldom, if ever, longer. However, where the experience has been powerful and uplifting, life-enhancing emotional glow will remain for a much longer time, sometimes weeks, sometimes months. For some people the emotional tone of life is never quite the same again. Having entered into a new dimension they now sense the presence of the Lord in a new, seemingly permanent way, not perhaps with the intensity of the original moment of glory, but nevertheless quite differently from anything known prior to that experience.

Most people, however, report that at some point or other following the moment of divine infilling the soul is overtaken by spiritual darkness. The glow vanishes, and for a period of weeks, or months, possibly years, the soul enters a dark night. This does not mean that all the benefits of the spiritual experience are lost, it is more a matter of loss of feeling. From the psychological point of view it is

a matter of emotional cycles—paying, as it were, for the exaltation enjoyed. The human psyche cannot live continually at a high emotional pitch. There have to be periods of rest. From a spiritual point of view, these are the times when the soul learns to live by faith rather than feeling, and are reckoned by many to be the crucial periods in a believer's spiritual development.

The intensity of the periods of soul darkness depend a great deal on the spiritual and psychological make-up of the individual. Those who experience the highest heights are likely to touch the deepest depths, whilst for others the emotional pendulum will only swing slightly. The following, however, seems to be a fairly typical testimony. Mrs Captain Riley writes in *The Officer* that, after a period of spiritual exaltation:

All at once, for no reason that I could see, a sudden darkness overshadowed my soul; the heavens became as brass. I prayed but there was no response. I was mostly troubled because I had lost the sweet nearness I felt to God. In looking back over this time I am sure God was in the shadows though I did not see Him. I am glad He kept me from doubting Him. After about three months the sun came out again and 'He walked with me, and He told me I was His own'.

It is a mistake to lay too much stress on feelings. Some of the mightiest men of the Spirit have received comparatively meagre assurance from their feelings that they were being used of God. John Wesley is a case in point. There is no question that as a consequence of his Aldersgate experience on 24 May 1738 John Wesley's ministry was transformed. As W. E. Sangster puts it: 'Before this day John Wesley was a man marvellously equipped but pitifully ineffective, after this day he was an apostle!' The fruits were there to be seen by everyone. But unlike many of the saints, Wesley was not to know great ecstasy. In fact, the emotional content of his experience, which he describes as his heart being 'strangely warmed', was so slight that he often wondered whether anything had happened at all. Add to this the fact that Wesley inclined towards over-emphasising the importance of feelings—and you have a recipe for spiritual unhappiness.

John Wesley is such an important figure in our study that we will take the time to follow his changing feelings as recorded with amazing candidness in his *Journal*, if only to show that effectiveness as a servant of God does not depend on how much or how little we feel. John Wesley's testimony might come as a comfort to some.

‘After my return home’, he writes in his entry for that day, ‘I was much buffeted with temptations: but cried out and they fled away.’ Here follow some more brief extracts taken from the first week after the experience.

25th May, 1738. The moment I awakened, ‘Jesus, Master’ was in my heart and in my mouth. (Later in the day.) Yet the enemy injected a fear, ‘If thou dost believe, why is there not a more felt change?’

26th May, 1738. My soul continued in peace, but yet in heaviness, because of manifold temptations.

27th May, 1738. Believing one reason for my want of joy was want of time for prayer, I resolved to do no business till I went to church in the morning, but to continue pouring out my heart before Him. And this day my spirit was enlarged.

28th May, 1738. I walked in peace, but not in joy.

Second week after the experience.

31st May, 1738. On Wednesday did I grieve the Spirit of God, not only by not ‘watching unto prayer’ but likewise by speaking with sharpness instead of tender love, of one that was not sound in the faith. Immediately God hid His face, and I was troubled, and in this heaviness I continued till the next morning, June 1st, when it pleased God... to give comfort to my soul.

3rd June, 1738. I was so strongly assaulted by one of my old enemies, that I had scarce strength to open my lips, or even to look for help. But after I had prayed faintly as I could, the temptation vanished away.

4th June, 1738. Was indeed a feast-day. For from the time of my rising till past one in the afternoon, I was praying, reading the Scriptures, singing praise, or calling sinners to repentance. All these days I scarce remember to have opened the Testament, but upon some great and precious promise.

6th June, 1738. I had still more comfort, and peace and joy; on which I fear I had begun to presume....

Five months after the experience. The text ‘Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith’, read in the evening lesson, prompts Wesley to consider his own spiritual progress.

14th October, 1738. I cannot find in myself the love of God or of Christ. Hence my deadness and wanderings in public prayer; hence it is, that even in the Holy Communion I have frequently no more than a cold attention. Again, I have not that joy in the Holy Ghost; no settled

lasting joy; nor have I such peace as excludes the possibility either of fear or doubt.

Yet upon the whole, although I have not yet that joy in the Holy Ghost, nor the full assurance of faith, much less am I, in the full sense of the words, 'in Christ a new creature'; I nevertheless trust that I have a measure of faith, and am 'accepted in the beloved'.

Eight months after the event in Aldersgate, a lengthy selfanalysis which one presumes must have been written in a depressed state of mind. The entry for three days before this is an account of an all-night meeting.:

'About three in the morning, as we were continuing in prayer, the power of God came mightily upon us.... As soon as we recovered a little from that awe and amazement at the presence of His Majesty, we broke into song....'

But this now seems far from his thoughts. Selected extracts from the self-analysis:

4th January, 1739. My friends affirm that I am mad, because I said I was not a Christian a year ago. I affirm, I am not a Christian now. For a Christian is one who has the fruits of the Spirit of Christ, which (to mention no more) are, love, peace, joy. But these I have not. I have not any love of God.

I do not love either the Father or the Son. How do I know?... I feel this moment I do not love God; which therefore I know because I feel it. There is no word more proper, more clear, or more strong.

And I know it also by St John's plain rule: 'If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.' For I love the world. I desire the things of the world, some or other of them and have done all my life.

Again, joy in the Holy Ghost I have not. I have now and then some starts of joy in God; but it is not that joy: for it is not abiding; neither is it greater than I have had on some worldly occasions.

Yet, again I have not 'the peace of God', that peace, peculiarly so called. The peace I have may be accounted for on natural principles. I have health, strength, friends, a competent fortune, and a composed, cheerful temper. Who would not have a sort of peace in such circumstances? But I have none which can with any propriety be called a peace which passeth understanding.

From hence I conclude, though I have given, and do give all my goods to feed the poor, I am not a Christian. Though I have endured hardship,

though I have in all things denied myself, and taken up my cross, I am not a Christian. My works are nothing, my sufferings are nothing: I have not the fruits of the Spirit of Christ. Though I have constantly used all the means of grace, for twenty years, I am not a Christian.

Notwithstanding, Wesley continues his already God-blessed ministry which increased in effectiveness constantly. During 1739 he appears to enter less troubled emotional waters and the negative tone disappears from the personal references in his *Journal*.

But even 28 years after the Aldersgate experience, in a fit of depression, John writes to his brother Charles:

27th June, 1766. I do not love God. I never did. Therefore I never believed in the Christian sense of the word.... If I ever have had that faith it would not be so strange. But I never had any other evidence of the eternal or invisible world that I have now.... I have no direct witness.

It is obvious that Wesley knew what it was to be in the trough of despair, and by recording his feelings so faithfully he has enriched our knowledge of Christian living enormously. It is so easy in testimonies to give the impression that spiritual living is one unbroken state of being in the seventh Heaven. But if Wesley, and Luther, and Peter and Paul, not to mention our Lord Himself, knew temptation, suffering and times of spiritual desolation, it is likely that most if not all Christians will sooner or later have to pass through the same valley. And the main point to be made is that, despite the ups and downs recorded in the *Journal*, the ultimate value of the Aldersgate experience cannot be questioned. It released unsuspected spiritual powers in Wesley which turned England upside down by setting in motion the most powerful revival the country has ever known. And despite the oscillations in feeling states which the *Journal* reveals, there is little doubt that if at the end of his days Wesley had been asked to name the most important moment of his life, he would have replied: 'Aldersgate, 24 May 1738, about a quarter to nine.'

Other testimonies

But let us now call other witnesses and ask them to tell us of the long-term value of their spiritual breakthrough. The testimonies that follow have a longer perspective than those in the last chapter. They will further illustrate a number of the points already made,

but the emphasis will be on how the testifier evaluates his spiritual crisis some time after the event.

Moving from Wesley's *Journal* to the spiritual diary kept by the late Major Thomas Kyle, when a young businessman in Glasgow, reveals a completely different picture—and yet for all his effectiveness as an evangelist, Major Kyle would have been the first to grant that John Wesley, despite all his internal agonies, was an infinitely more influential instrument in God's hand. Here are some key phrases selected from the daily entries following his baptism with the Spirit.

Second week after the experience. It is now nearly eight years since God pardoned my sins. But He has wonderfully blessed my soul within the last fortnight. I have prayed to God for years that I might receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. And now I have received it, praise His Holy name. I feel I would rather lose my life than lose this blessing. I felt very near the Lord this morning. I have been with Him all day. I have felt the joy of the Holy Ghost so greatly in me that I have to go to Him and ask special grace to bear the joy.

Third week. God bathed our souls in heavenly bliss at the 7 a.m. prayer meeting. I felt exceedingly refreshed in body when I rose this morning, although I had been working so hard for Jesus yesterday. The Lord is increasing even my physical strength. Lord, I am getting nearer Thee every day. I feel the longer the light burns the brighter it becomes. Lord, let it burn! Have felt filled with the Spirit and with power. I feel it is getting better.

Fourth week. I felt nearer my Saviour this day than ever. How precious He is. None but they who feel it know. Wonderfully refreshed in spirit this morning. It is getting better every day. Felt very near to the Lord, although I have had greater joy than today. A most blessed day in my experience.

Fifth week. Precious time with the Lord this morning. This has been my spiritual birthday. It is eight years today since God saved me, but how I regret that I should have worked for Him all these years without full power in the Spirit. Rose early, had reading and prayer—my spiritual breakfast.

Sixth week. More grace every day. The best Sunday that I have spent on earth. Was delightful to be all day with Jesus. If God gives me such joy here I can understand how we shall be able to praise Him through the long eternity!

Seventh week. A baptism of fire in the hall at eleven. Oh, it was glory in our souls! Yes, it's getting better. I feel the love of God sweet to my

taste. All day I was talking to Him. Went to visit: the house was full of His presence. After work went to the meeting and had a plunge in the fountain. Truly it was heaven to be there.

Eighth week. A time of great joy together as we spake of all that God has done for us. It is hard to get people to understand the doctrine of holiness. Well, I believe that the difficulties in the way of understanding it are self-caused, and are some idols that they are not willing to give up. I will preach it for it is the backbone of the gospel. Salvation Army excursion to Edinburgh. Heaven all the way, heaven there, and heaven all the way home!

Ninth, tenth and eleventh weeks. He is blessing me very much every way. Felt very near the Lord today. I bless God that He has given me such an appetite for visiting the sick. Spent a quiet day with Jesus. Felt very much in the Spirit all day. Lord, let me walk with Thee for I do delight in Thy company. I could see His hand today in all my steps. I do thank God for the power He has given me to control myself. It is heaven below when you are guided by the Spirit. Glorious day with General Booth. The Lord was in our presence. A powerful time.

Eight years later the Major writes:

Lifted this book and felt I should write my present experience after nearly eight years of silence. I do thank God that He has kept me free to serve Him, and though my service has not been as great as I should have desired it, yet I am pleased that the dear Lord kept me at the feast so long, and I do feel that I love Him and the work better than ever I did before. Bless His name for ever.

A testimony written one year after a breakthrough experience, must be quoted at length because it illustrates so many important aspects:

One day, a year and a half ago, I was at a really low ebb and had been so for a number of years, although outwardly appearing to be confident and able in carrying out of Salvation Army duties. Inwardly I felt more and more poverty-stricken and more and more frustrated about the whole thing.

The stress of trying to preach the gospel, carry out the impossible task of being a Salvation Army officer and the internal conflict in my own spirit was weighing heavily upon me physically. I was under the doctor's care. It was with great difficulty that I conducted meetings each Sunday. These trials were bringing me to a state of brokenness and surrender where I would seek the Lord. Desperately I cried to Him in my desperation for The Salvation Army, for my own life, for my own spirit. I saw clearly that I could go along as an 'organisational' man and would have,

undoubtedly, a successful career in the Army. It was 'on the cards', but it would be a hollow thing if I did not have what God was giving me a great hunger for—His anointing and the certainty of His presence. I surrendered everything to Him—ambition, family security, everything. A sense of utter helplessness without Him made me cry for His help.

At that moment all by myself at the Mercy Seat in the Citadel I knew the very presence of God as He touched me with a quiet assurance and a peace, assuring me that He had heard me, had accepted and forgiven and would restore me. One cannot put into words a spiritual experience like this. I just gave Him praise and glory and I shouted loudly in thanks for the blessing. From then on I enjoyed a closer fellowship. I longed to seek His face in prayer. There was a freshness and a newness in my spirit.

The testimony continues with the account of how he is led into the fellowship of people who have been renewed spiritually and how he begins to search the Scriptures along these lines for himself. Talking the matter over with a relative some months later he is surprised to discover that she has been baptised in the Spirit.

The presence of the Lord lit up that living room that morning after breakfast as we talked about Him. We prayed together. She laid her hands on my head as she prayed and at that moment I knew such a tremendous anointing of God that I could feel it physically. I rejoiced in Him! I praised Him!

After I left I was walking on air. I understood something of the testimony of men like Brengle, Finney, Torrey and Moody. Brengle called it a baptism of love. As I walked down the street I loved everybody and I was just bursting with the joy of the Lord.

I knew I was healed and this has been confirmed in the year since then. Whereas before I could only mount the steps of the platform if I had taken the doctor's prescription, I now found that I was longing to speak to people about Jesus; longing to tell them of His love and His greatness; longing to preach to them that He is alive and real.

But this wasn't the only kind of healing. All my intellectualism and doubt was cured. I found that instantaneously I knew it was all true. The Bible, the miracles, the apostolic power—it is as true today as it ever was!

I ask myself: how had I missed it? Why had it only come to me at forty-one years of age? How long and tenderly and patiently the Lord has to deal with us!

He discovers that he has been empowered to minister to others:

That first Sunday there was a new sense of the power of God in our meetings. I felt His anointing in a new way as I preached. There was an unusual amount of conviction present. The congregation knew that something had happened to their officer and many said so. That night we felt constrained to have an extra time of prayer at the conclusion of the evening meeting and practically the whole congregation stayed and there was much seeking and earnestness in prayer.

A young lady in her twenties had given a moving testimony in the meeting and the Lord impressed me that if I would lay my hands upon her head she would receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Now this was a strange thing because I had never done such a thing in my whole life! I did sum up the courage to whisper to her that if she wished to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit she should come forward in the prayer meeting and I would pray with her. But she didn't feel led to come forward. However, so strong was the urge of the Spirit upon me, that I sought her out after the meeting in the songster room.

Although I was rather embarrassed I simply said, 'Kneel down', which she did just where she was with two others. Immediately the Spirit of God descended upon her in a most startling way. It was like a powerful physical electric shock accompanied by a sense of spiritual joy and the reality of the living presence of Jesus. Instantly she rejoiced and prayed and praised the Lord. Her life has subsequently changed in a remarkable way. Her worldliness and spiritual poverty have given way to great joy and satisfaction in the Lord. She testifies to a marvellous new walk in the Spirit.

But at the time I was thunderstruck! I'd never seen such a thing in my life. When we prayed with the other two the same thing happened. The very power of God entered their lives, and they knew that they had entered His presence. We all did! It was an experience that defies words. It took us so completely by surprise. There was no possibility of contrivance, auto-suggestion, fanaticism, etc. It was a deep cleansing. It was a great empowering. It was simply an infilling of the Spirit. One person saw the very presence of Jesus in a great light. She has radiated that light of Jesus ever since. In fact, each person who has been baptized into the Spirit this year has shown evidence, consistently, of the wonderful love, joy and peace of the Lord. There has been no fanaticism but a deep love for people, for the Bible and for prayer.

On being told of what has happened, his wife asks him to pray with her too:

So we returned to the songster room and we all knelt and prayed that the Lord would answer the longing of her heart. She is very quiet and reserved and not given to emotional demonstration. Well, the power of the Lord was so present with her and she received such a blessing that

she did something I have never seen her do before in prayer. She laughed and laughed and laughed till the tears rolled down her cheeks, so great was the joy of the presence of the Lord. She knew the joy unspeakable!

He sums up the year since his spiritual breakthrough:

Now one year later I still find this great joy. I still find myself praising the Lord as I walk down the street, singing to Him in my car, praying wherever I am and always knowing His power and reality very, very near. He has brought me deeper into Himself and I praise Him, for I am a very needy person. I hinder the work of the Lord so terribly, but I long to let Him express Himself more perfectly through my life—through the breaking down of self, and through obedience to His Spirit. I long to obey God rather than men.

It has been our experience this year that we are equipped moment by moment through the power of the Holy Spirit in an undreamed of way. We have rejoiced even in tribulations. It has been a wonderful year. We have seen miracles. We have seen people whose lives have been completely changed. One couple had been separated for one-and-a-half years. They now have a beautiful marriage. People have been healed. We have seen the impossible come true. I could write a book. I believe thoroughly in all the gifts of the Spirit simply because the Lord has manifested them through us. I feel our lives have accomplished more for the Lord in this one year than in the previous dozen!

This kind of testimony corroborates Brengle's statement that the divine breakthrough 'is not mere sentiment, not a happy sensation that passes away in the night'. But let us extend the time interval further as we listen to Mrs Major Booth Davey giving her testimony five years after the decisive event:

A little over five years ago I entered into this glorious experience of Entire Sanctification and the conscious in-coming of the Holy Spirit. My conversion had been a very real one, and during my training days I had wonderful revelation and experiences, but after I became a wife and a mother I had not the same opportunities for unbroken times of prayer and found it difficult, often indeed impossible, to get the same mellow feelings I used to have. I began to find certain risings of feeling which very much discouraged me. Sometimes I doubted whether I ought to have married.

I had great difficulties in hiding these moods and if the children did anything annoying, I felt irritable and cross and often showed it to them. I had very little patience. I was tempted to think it was my nerves and that my quickly growing family was the cause of it. I was full of selfpity and tempted to be envious of others who seemed to have life so

much easier. After such experiences I was very unhappy and would plead with God to give me power to rise above all this. I thought it must be that I needed the power of the Holy Spirit. I made up my mind to seek after Him.

I was a fortnight praying and weeping, claiming and doubting until at last I had a revelation of myself, my inbred sin, the 'old man', which filled me with amazement. I was humbled and ashamed. Everything of mine was carnal and loathsome. I was shorn of everything of self—and was glad to be. I stretched out helpless hands to Him. The Holy Spirit came and entirely sanctified me and by faith I received Him.

Two hours after I felt as though a ball of rapture had burst within me. I stood still and said to myself: 'What is this?' The answer came so softly and gently: 'This is the Holy Ghost.' I was filled with joy and praise and was lost in Him for a long time. Inbred sin was destroyed, burnt out; the Comforter had come.

I began to know what real worship was. I often go to pray meaning to ask for many things, but am so filled with love for God that the time is spent in weeping and adoring Him. The joy of communion gets deeper and sweeter every day. Those former unholy feelings are never felt. I have such peace and joy when troubles come and a wonderful confidence in my Father's working for me and in His success.

This entrance into the life of full salvation has taken away all my anxiety for the future. I am surprised often at the contentment and confidence I have in God. I can leave everything to Him, feeling quite sure that when the time comes for action every necessary door will be opened. I used to think it was impossible not to worry. Now I cannot worry! I feel I must praise God all the day long. My whole being seems wrapped up in Him. The things of time and earth have lost the former undue value they had in my eyes, including ranks, titles and position, and I regard them only in so far as I can use them to further His Kingdom.

In meetings I experience wonderful waves of blessings, so deluging my soul that it is only with a strong effort I hide my emotion. It is union with Him, through the Blood of Christ, by the Holy Spirit who, dwelling within, keeps His temple clean and radiates His life and health until every part is affected.

My love for sinners changed. It became a passion, so that everything in my life must bend to it. I shall never forget an incident at Sherburn Hill. I was wedged in amongst a lot of 'drunks' in a billiard room. The power of God fell, and ten of them made a Penitent-form of the billiard table. We were so packed together that to deal with them our faces nearly touched, and we had the full benefit of the spray of their drunken

spluttering. This at one time would have revolted me, but now I did not mind a bit. My love for them rose above all personal recoilmets. I did not mind how long I breathed the beery breath as long as I could guide them into the Kingdom.

Andrew Murray makes the perceptive comment that ‘in the life of the believer there sometimes comes a crisis, as clearly marked as his conversion, in which he passes out of a life of continual feebleness and failure to one of strength, and victory, and abiding rest. The change is in many cases as clear, as marked, as wonderful, as conversion.’ His point is well illustrated in the spiritual pilgrimage of a Salvation Army officer who records her impressions five years after the dramatic days which transformed her spiritual life:

You ask about the permanence of the experience. Has it lasted? Is it progressive? And I say ‘Yes’, a thousand times ‘Yes!’

It was mainly through corps cadet lessons and the consistent teaching of sincere Christians in our holiness meetings that as a teenager I first sought the blessing. It was certainly a spiritual milestone—but a seeking rather than a finding. ‘When the Spirit grieves—He leaves’ suggested to me that He was the kind of Person who would go off in a ‘huff’ if things did not go His way. This was frustrating and unsatisfying as I tried by a full surrender and good works to placate Him. I wanted desperately to enjoy a positive life with the Holy Spirit, but I was riding a ‘spiritual seesaw’ for more years than I care to remember.

The Holy Spirit now makes Jesus real to me. Since that day when He saturated me with His love and brought about that life-transforming encounter with Jesus, I have been fully and completely satisfied in Him.

He gives me peace. For long enough my moods, depressions, guilts and fears were a stumbling-block and although I tried to live above them and hide them from others, they were a constant menace. I have found that He brings stability into my life.

He is my Teacher. As with the new-born child, I feel that most progress was made during that first year of receiving Him, but throughout almost five years He has been revealing Himself steadily and patiently, mainly through prayer and the Scriptures. He gives the desire for prayer and makes it a pure delight.

He gives release from inner contradictions, which makes service unfettered and a joy. For many years it was a conscientious devotion to duty which was the basis of my service. But duty of itself is a hard experience—cold and unfeeling. With the Spirit there is liberty!

And what about Samuel Brengle himself? Ten years after his experience he writes:

These years have been wonderful. God has become my Teacher, my Guide, my Counsellor, my All in All. He has allowed me to be perplexed and tempted, but it has been for my good. I have no complaint to make against Him. Sometimes it has seemed that He had left me alone, but it has been as the mother who stands away from her child to teach him to use his own legs that he may walk. He has not suffered me to fall. He has been with my mouth and helped me to speak of Jesus and His great salvation in a way to instruct, comfort and save other souls. He has been light to my darkness, strength to my weakness, wisdom in my foolishness, knowledge in my ignorance.

When my heart has ached, He has comforted me; when my feet had well-nigh slipped, He has held me up; when my faith has trembled, He has encouraged me; when I have been in sore need, He has supplied all my need; when I have been hungry, He has fed me; when I have thirsted, He has given me living water. Oh, glory to God! What has He not done for me? I praise Him! I adore Him! I love Him! My whole being is His for time and eternity. I am not my own. He can do with me as He pleases, for I am His.

During these ten years God has enabled me to keep a perfect unbroken purpose to serve Him with my whole heart. No temptation has swerved that steadfast purpose. No worldly or ecclesiastical ambition has had an atom of weight to allure me.

And now for two older men looking back on their full life-span. The first, Samuel Chadwick, methodist minister, author and former principal of Cliff College, Sheffield:

I owe everything to the gift of Pentecost. It came to me when I was not seeking it. I was about my Heavenly Father's business, seeking means whereby I could do the work to which He had called and sent me, and in my search I came across a prophet, heard a testimony, and set out to seek I knew not what. I knew that it was a bigger thing than I had ever known. It came along the line of duty, in a crisis of obedience.

When it came I could not explain what had happened, but I was aware of things unspeakable and full of glory. Some results were immediate. There came into my soul a deep peace, a thrilling joy, and a new sense of power. My mind was quickened. There was a new sense of spring and vitality, a new power of endurance, and a strong man's exhilaration in big things.

Things began to happen. What we had failed to do by strenuous endeavour came to pass without labour. It was gloriously wonderful.

The things that happened were the least part of the experience. The wind and the fire and the tongues excited most comment, but they vanished, and it was the realities that remained that were most wonderful. The experience gave me the key to all my thinking, all my service and all my life. Pentecost gave me the key to the Scriptures. The same Spirit gave me new understanding and experience of prayer, and with these gifts there came a new endowment of wisdom and power. From the first day of my Pentecost I became a seeker and winner of souls.

Finally, let Lieut-Commissioner Julius Horskins tell of how his life was transformed 45 years previously:

At the age of twelve years I sought and found Christ as my Saviour, and it was not long before I discovered that my heart was seeking for a deeper experience and a closer walk with my God.

The Salvation Army opened up work near my home at Notting Hill, and I went to some of the meetings held. One Friday night I heard an exposition from God's Book on 'Holiness of Heart', and I said to myself, 'That is what you have been seeking for years.' At the close of the meeting I went forward to receive this blessing, but alas! I got no further in my experience. But I felt that I was on the right track. It was faith to accept that I needed.

At this time I was working some miles from my home, and although our store did not close until midnight on Saturdays, it was my custom to rise at 4 a.m. on Sunday morning and prepare for my long walk in order to attend the knee-drill at 7 a.m. These walks were times of communion with God. I was young and strong, and I looked forward to this weekly walk for what it meant to my soul.

One Sunday morning I was passing over Clapham Common as usual. Rain had fallen heavily during the night and the common was far from inviting as a prayer ground. My steps gained speed, assisted by my singing and praying. My soul's one great desire was to secure the blessing of full salvation. God knew this and came to me in an unexpected manner. I was aroused from my songs and thoughts of God by a voice which said, 'Be ye holy.' I turned to see who followed me, but seeing no one I walked on, and again came those compelling words, 'Be ye holy!' Down I went upon my knees. There I waited. I could not speak for some time, then a sweet, calm peace came into my soul, and I knew without a doubt that the work of making holy had been done in my soul and I prayed with liberty.

That day began a new era in my spiritual life. I walked along with a new kind of spring in my step, sang and prayed with joy. It was heaven; I was on the mountain top. My life became a new life; I had a new joy, a new power. Everything seemed changed—the streets, the houses, the

people, all seemed to wear a fresh aspect, even the trees seemed to me to praise the Lord. I went home singing. I went to bed singing.

For many weeks I attended the meetings at my corps as often as the distance would allow me, for the fire burned within my soul. Then our Captain announced a night of prayer to be led by the General at 272 Whitechapel Road. How I longed for this night. A whole night for prayer! The time went all too slowly; I not only counted the days but the hours as the time grew nearer. The anticipated night came and I hastened to the hall. The crowd! The singing! The preaching! Everything held me. At 3 a.m. I was at the Holiness Table, giving my heart, my life, my all to God and the Army for officership. Oh, what a floodtime came! That night's consecration decided my life-work for God.

Forty-five years have passed since on Clapham Common I was led into the full light of perfect love, and I rejoice in the fact that I am able to testify to its power to keep always and under all circumstances. To God be all the glory.

Are there patterns of experience that can be discerned from this welter of testimony, especially with regard to the post-conversion experiences, which are the special subject of our study? The mind can only grasp that which has been classified and arranged in order, and it is therefore not surprising to discover that theologians have sought to establish certain doctrinal frameworks to account for these invasions of the divine. Our next task must be to turn to the first of three such doctrinal explanations which we shall be looking at, and ask how these moments of spiritual breakthrough can best be interpreted.

4

Spiritual breakthrough: entire sanctification?

WE have already noted that Samuel Brengle interpreted the spiritual breakthrough that came to him 13 years after his conversion in terms of sanctification. ‘On the morning of 9 January 1885 God sanctified my soul.’ We must now look more closely at the doctrinal structure which lies behind this statement.

Broadly speaking there are two strands of thought within Christian thinking regarding sanctification—growth in righteousness, or, simply, growth in Christlikeness. The first, which Dr W. E. Sangster, the renowned methodist minister and scholar, describes as the *improving* approach, considers progress in holiness as a process, ‘whereby we are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness’ (*Shorter Catechism*), which commences at conversion and continues, sometimes with many fits and starts, right throughout life, reaching its culminating point only in death, when, released from the old nature, the soul stands pure before God.

The second approach, labelled *imparted* by Dr Sangster, sees the process of development in sanctity as reaching a culminating point already in this life, marked by a crisis experience through which full sanctity is imparted. Further progress remains possible beyond this point, but there is a clear distinction between the ‘before’ and the ‘after’. Through the crisis experience the believer has entered the state of being ‘entirely sanctified’.

Brengle’s simple testimony, quoted above, shows that he interpreted what he had experienced in terms of the *imparted* thought pattern.

The *imparted* approach to sanctification cannot be considered without reference to John Wesley, that towering figure of the 18th

century Church. All of the current strands of theological thinking which emphasise a further work of grace following conversion—which J. F. Brunner refers to as *theologies of subsequence*—look to John Wesley as their source.

Wesley saw the crisis of conversion as taking us out Egypt's land—but leaving us wandering in the wilderness. Definitely better than being in bondage back in Egypt, but still not quite the promised land. A second crisis is needed to get us from the wilderness into the actual promised land of Canaan.

He viewed this second crisis experience in quite radical terms. 'He believed and taught this,' says Sangster, 'that in an instant and by a simple act of faith, perfection was "wrought in the soul",' leaving it entirely cleansed from sin.

As Wesley explains: 'Although we may, by the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the body, resist and conquer both outward and inward sin; although we may weaken our enemies day by day; yet we cannot drive them out. By all the grace which is given at justification (conversion) we cannot extirpate them. Though we watch and pray ever so much, we cannot wholly cleanse either our hearts or hands. Most sure we cannot, till it please our Lord to speak to our hearts again, to speak the second time, "Be clean"; and then only the leprosy is cleansed. Then only the evil root, the carnal mind, is destroyed; and inbred sin subsists no more.'

He called the resulting state Entire Sanctification, or Christian Perfection, and saw it as an ultimate stage in Christian growth which most people would only attain shortly before death. But he could see no reason why this perfection should not be attained earlier:

Question: May we expect 'entire sanctification' sooner than a little before death?

Answer: Why not? For although we grant (1) that the generality of believers, whom we have hitherto known, were not so sanctified till near death; (2) that few of those to whom St Paul wrote his Epistles were so at that time; nor (3) he himself at the time of writing his former Epistles; yet all this does not prove that we may not be so today.

The key to Wesley's thinking is his understanding of sin. He saw sin as something which could be rooted out, removed, got rid of once and for all, like a cancer or a rotten tooth.

Given that starting point one can follow Wesley's reasoning with sympathy. If sin could be destroyed, he argued, was it not eminently reasonable to presume that God was able and willing to do it during the lifetime of the believer? What kind of God would it be who was content with a half-finished task? Surely He would complete the work already begun!

Indeed the scriptural support which Wesley marshals consists not so much in explicit assertions that the spiritual path of the Christian is necessarily marked by a further work of grace, as a series of Scripture passages which implicitly make that suggestion by stressing the completeness of God's redeeming work, and the need for a full response on our part. Wesley rested his case chiefly on the following 30 references: Ezekiel 36:25, 26, 29. Matthew 5:7, 42; 6:10. John 8:34ff; 17:20-23. Romans 2:29; 12:1. 2 Corinthians 3:17f; 7:1. Galatians 2:20. Ephesians 3:14-19, 27. Philippians 3:15. 1 Thessalonians 5:23. Titus 2:11-14. Hebrews 6:1, 7:25; 10:14. 1 John 1:5, 7-9; 2:6; 3:3, 8-10, 36; 5:13. James 1:4.

Some of the force of these texts is diminished, however, if Wesley's basic presupposition—that sin is a 'thing' which can be removed—fails to persuade. And not everyone has felt able to follow him on this point. 'This is not the biblical idea of sin,' comments another well-known methodist scholar, Dr Newton Flew. 'Sin is a far more subtle, pervasive and persistent enemy than that.' Sin is coming short of the glory of God. And that is a state which cannot be put right by an extraction. It is in the clash of motives, our lack of courage, our lack of zeal, rather than in the more obvious sins of commission that sin in all its complexity is revealed.

After Wesley

But we must now notice a point of the utmost importance for anyone seeking to understand the imparted approach to the doctrine of sanctification, and that is that the doctrine has not remained static. A process of erosion with regard to some of the more radical aspects of the teaching began even during Wesley's lifetime as his thinking developed through study of the Scriptures and observation of the experiences of his converts, and continued under his followers after his death in 1791.

Many variations of the doctrine began to make their appearance as scholars wrestled with it. Matters like whether sin is ‘eradicated’ or merely ‘suspended’ or ‘suppressed’ were argued at length. Some laid increasing emphasis on the positive side of Wesley’s teaching, the perfection of love. Others sought to avoid the word perfection because of its inherent difficulties. Sangster, in commenting on the variety of teaching that emerged, puts it well when he says that ‘the flavours of difference on some minor points are so subtle that only a connoisseur can savour them.’

The process of gradual modification of Wesley’s original insight has in fact continued right down to our times, and over the years key terms have taken on new shades of meaning, rendering study of the subject doubly difficult.

Without entering into the welter of detail, the evolution of *imparted* thinking from Wesley’s time until the present can be summed up in terms of ‘crisis and process’ by saying that whereas in Wesley’s original concept the process came first and was followed by a culminating crisis, the pattern has increasingly become that of a crisis which is seen as initiating the process.

For Wesley, the crisis point was only a few feet away from the very summit of the mountain of holiness. The state of ‘entire sanctification’ ushered in by the crisis experience, was a state of ‘Christian perfection’ granted, as we have already noted, only to a few, and usually just before death, and so high an attainment ‘that few of those to whom the apostle Paul wrote his epistles were sanctified, *nor he himself at the time of writing his former epistles.*’ To the question, ‘Can you show one such example now?’ Wesley replied: ‘There are many reasons why there should be few, if any, indisputable examples. What inconveniences would this bring on the person himself—set as a mark for all to shoot at.’

But Wesley himself began moving the crisis point down the mountainside so as to allow for considerable progress *after* the crisis. ‘There is no perfection which does not admit of perpetual increase,’ he said—arousing considerable controversy by his singular use of the word. Later in his long life he refers not to ‘few, if any’ examples, but to ‘625 examples of our Society in London who were exceedingly clear in their experience.’ And following his death the downward trend with regards to the positing of the crisis experience continued, until it was increasingly seen as a necessary and attainable experience for *all* believers.

It would be fair to say that the dominant thought today is not that of a process leading to a culminating crisis, but rather the reverse, the crisis is seen as 'triggering off' the process of sanctification. Somewhere in the foothills, the pilgrim experiences a spiritual crisis which sets him a-climbing the hill of holiness. The crisis has become the gateway, not the goal. And the crisis is therefore not for the few athletes of the spirit who have nearly made it to the top. It is the way in to spiritual progress, and is therefore meant for everybody.

Before attempting to draw some conclusions from the above trend, it will be instructive briefly to chart the history of holiness teaching, especially as it relates to William and Catherine Booth and The Salvation Army.

The holiness movement

In the mid-19th century there was a religious awakening both in Britain and in the USA which was linked with holiness teaching. This had the effect of spreading the Wesleyan emphasis into all denominations, and gave birth to what is now known as the Holiness Movement. Charles Finney was one of its prominent figures, and William E. Boardman's *The Higher Christian Life*, possibly the most influential book of its kind ever written, dates from this period.

A desire among Christians whose lives had been transformed through a further experience, to meet together to warm their hands at the Wesleyan fire but without having to leave their own denominations, led to the formation of a number of inter-denominational and more or less informal groupings.

In England the most important such movement was the Keswick Movement, which derived its inspiration from Canon D. T. Hartford Battersby, Vicar of St John's Church in Keswick, who had received a new gift of spiritual power in 1874. This movement has continued ever since to stress the higher Christian life in its annual conferences at Keswick, but without Wesley's strong stress on attainable perfection. Well-known names such as F. B. Meyer, Andrew Murray, Hudson Taylor, R. A. Torrey and Alan Redpath, are representative of the movement.

In America the revival of Wesley's teaching led to the era of camp meetings, when whole trains were chartered to take people to holiness camp meetings. Springing originally from within Methodism this new feature on the religious scene soon touched many denominations. It eventually led to the formation of the National Camp Meeting Association for the Promotion of Holiness. In 1867 the National Association for the Promotion of Holiness was formed, to link together believers in Wesley's teaching.

'For many years', writes George E. Failing in *Insights into Holiness*, 'the entirely sanctified were urged to remain in their local churches to "leaven the lump". Then either one of two things happened, or perhaps both: (1) the "leaven" was unable to permeate the "lump" and in some cases the "leaven" was cast out by the "lump"; (2) those who met together so often in these holiness fellowships came to desire constant communion with one another and mutual support. Between 1890 and 1910 most of the present-day holiness denominations had their beginnings.'

The revival of Wesley's teaching was also an important factor in the launching of the Pentecostal movement at the beginning of the 20th century—a story we shall be considering later.

William and Catherine Booth

William and Catherine Booth were personally influenced by the revival of John Wesley's teaching in the mid-19th century. Catherine writes in 1861 to her parents from Gateshead where William is a minister of the Methodist New Connexion. Both of them are 32 years of age:

My soul has been much called out of late on the doctrine of holiness. I feel that hitherto we have not put it in a sufficiently definite and tangible manner before the people—I mean as a specific and attainable experience. Oh, that I had entered into the fullness and enjoyment of it myself.

Some time later:

I spoke a fortnight since at Bethesda on holiness, and a precious time we had. William has preached on it twice, and there is a glorious quickening amongst the people.... I have much to be thankful for in my dearest husband. The Lord has been dealing graciously with him for

some time past.... He is now on full stretch for holiness. You would be amazed at the change in him. It would take all night to detail all.

In a letter dated 11 February 1861 she opens her heart to her parents:

My mind has been absorbed in the pursuit of holiness, which I feel involves this and every other blessing.... I resolved to seek till I found that pearl of great price, 'the white stone which no man knoweth save him that receiveth it'. In reading that precious book *The Higher (Christian) Life*, I perceived that I had been in some degree of error with reference to the nature, or rather manner, of sanctification.

On Thursday and Friday I was totally absorbed in the subject and laid aside almost everything else and spent the chief part of the day in reading and prayer, and in trying to believe for it. On Thursday afternoon at tea-time I was well-nigh discouraged and felt my old besetment, irritability; and the devil told me I should never get it, and so I might as well give up at once. However, I knew him of old as a liar....

On Friday morning God gave me two precious passages, but again unbelief hindered me, although I felt as if getting gradually nearer.

I struggled through the day until a little after six in the evening, when William joined me in prayer. We had a blessed season. While he was saying, 'Lord, we open our hearts to receive Thee', that word was spoken to my soul: 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear My voice, and open unto Me, I will come in and sup with him.' I felt sure He had long been knocking, and oh, how I yearned to receive Him as a perfect Saviour! But, oh, the inveterate habit of unbelief! How wonderful that God should have borne so long with me.

When we got up from our knees I lay on the sofa, exhausted with the excitement and effort of the day. William said, 'Don't you lay all on the altar?' I replied, 'I am sure I do!' Then he said, 'And isn't the altar holy?' I replied in the language of the Holy Ghost, 'The altar is most holy, and whatsoever toucheth it is holy.' Then said he, 'Are you not holy?' I replied with my heart full of emotion and with some faith, 'Oh, I think I am.' Immediately the word was given me to confirm my faith, 'Now are ye clean through the word which I have spoken unto you'. And I took hold, true, with a trembling hand, and not unmolested by the tempter, but I held fast the beginning of my confidence, and it grew stronger; and from that moment I have dared to reckon myself dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God through Jesus Christ, my Lord. I did not feel much rapturous joy, but perfect peace, the sweet rest which Jesus promised to the heavy-laden.

Though William has not left us a corresponding record of his

own experience, a letter he wrote a month later to the President of the New Connexion includes the sentence: 'My soul has lately been brought into a higher walk of Christian experience.'

It would have been fascinating to hear how William and Catherine Booth viewed the Gateshead experience in their later years as they looked back on their total spiritual journey. Unlike Wesley's Aldersgate experience it cannot be said that previously latent resources were suddenly released within the Booths through the experience, for William had already proved his power as an evangelist and Catherine had already launched out on her ministry. Nor can it be said, and in this way they are *like* Wesley, that the experience lifted them on to a totally new plane of Christian living, turning previous defeat into uninterrupted victory and previous doubt into continuous certainty. As far as one can judge by their letters, their spiritual apprehension, always sensitive, continued with its inevitable ups and downs. About two years after the Gateshead experience, in the midst of a hard and seemingly unfruitful evangelical campaign, William, in Hyde, near Manchester, writes to his wife:

I wish I were in a more satisfactory state spiritually. I feel almost dead; powerless. Consequently my preaching and praying in public has but little effect on the people. But wishing produces no improvement. O that God would come and give me some new light or some new power. Will you pray for me? I never felt less emotion and power in prayer in my life. And I am sure I don't know what to do....

Shortly after his spiritual experience at Gateshead, William severed his link with the New Connexion and became an independent evangelist. For the next few years his thinking was to centre on the doctrine of conversion, and it is not until the establishment of The Christian Mission in London that the subject of Entire Sanctification re-surfaces.

The Christian Mission

The mission which William Booth established in East London in 1865 attracted evangelists and helpers from many and diverse theological backgrounds. The need to establish uniformity of doctrine was soon felt. On the subject of sanctification this appears to have taken some time.

The East London Christian Mission's first doctrinal statement was published in 1867 and consisted of seven points. No mention of holiness teaching was included. Three years later, in 1870, the doctrinal statement of The Christian Mission (the changed title reflecting its expansion) was revised and extended to 11 points. In this document William Booth committed the movement to the following article of faith on sanctification—a statement which remains The Salvation Army's official doctrine on the subject:

We believe that it is the privilege of all believers to be wholly sanctified, and that their whole spirit and soul and body may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Much of the wording is taken from 1 Thessalonians 5:23.)

Six years later, in 1876, George Railton moved at the Annual Conference that the following definition should be added to the wording of the doctrine so as to remove any ambiguity:

That is to say, we believe that after conversion there remain in the heart of the believer inclinations to evil, or roots of bitterness, which, unless overpowered by divine grace, produce actual sin; but that these evil tendencies can be entirely taken away by the Spirit of God, and the whole heart, thus cleansed from everything contrary to the will of God, or entirely sanctified, will then produce the fruit of the Spirit only. And we believe that persons thus sanctified may, by the power of God, be kept unblameable and unreprouvable before Him.

But even as late as 1877, Bramwell Booth remarks at the Annual Conference:

This evening I have been especially rejoiced in observing in the various testimonies we have heard that we are at length leaving behind us the position of apologists on this great theme, and I think the time for this has fully arrived. We have apologized for the doctrine of holiness of heart for long enough; we have hesitated, I fear, in our utterances only too long, and I hope, nay, I rejoice, in feeling assured that one great result of this blessed gathering will be that, from this time, both as individuals and as a Mission, we shall openly and plainly and unflinchingly make our glory in our God, and our boast in His perfect salvation.

At this same event William Booth expounded in detail the Mission's stand on sanctification. His address to the 1877 Conference vies with some articles he wrote on the subject for *The War Cry* in 1880 as being the most important statement we have from William Booth on the matter of holiness, and a lengthy extract from *The Christian Mission Magazine*, 1877, is therefore justified.

It seems to me there is a large amount of uncertainty abroad amongst us on this subject. Many of our people seem to live in what may be called an indefinite land; they are all uncertainty and fear. If you ask the question, 'Have you got a clean heart? Has the Lord made, and does He keep you holy?' you can get no distinct answer either one way or the other.

Now this is largely the result of misapprehension. People don't know what is intended by a clean heart, or how it is to be got, and how it is to be kept. Now tonight I want, if possible, to state plainly what at least our views are on this theme. In doing so, I may premise that I have no new truth to set forth; the doctrine is as old as the book.

Holiness to the Lord is to us a fundamental truth; it stands to the forefront of our doctrines. We write it on our banners. It is in no shape or form an open debatable question as to whether God can sanctify wholly, whether Jesus does save His people *from* their sins. In the estimation of the Christian Mission that is settled for ever, and any evangelist who did not hold and proclaim the ability of Jesus Christ to save His people to the uttermost from sin and sinning I should consider out of place amongst us.

What do we understand by holiness? . . . Holiness in its broad signification means separation from all unrighteousness and consecration to God.... This deliverance can be, and in the early stages of the experience of most Christians is, only partial. That is, while the soul is delivered from the domination and power of sin, still there are the remains of the carnal mind and roots of bitterness left in the heart, which, springing up trouble the soul and often lead it into sin, and which, if not continually fought against and kept under, attain their old power, and bring the soul again into bondage.

Nevertheless, in this state, the soul, when faithful, has peace with God, the guidance of the Holy Spirit, power for usefulness, and the witness of the Spirit, which creates in the soul that blessed sense of assurances and certainty with regard to salvation which together go to constitute an inward heaven. All this is compatible with the conscious existence of sin in the soul.

But this deliverance from sin may be entire.... Sin cannot only be held in bondage but destroyed....

There are three broad and well-defined relations in which a man can stand towards sin:

- (1) He can be *under sin*—under its power. He is its slave....
- (2) He can be *over sin*. It may be that pride, envy, anger, malice, lust and all or whatsoever other evils ruled him with a rod of iron before may

be there. Bruised and broken and faint they may be, but still they exist; but the Master has taken them from the throne of the soul and given the saint power over them. He is now no longer under sin, but under grace. They—that is, the old habits and tempers and tendencies and inclinations—can still make their presence felt; they can whisper and suggest and claim and rise up, but they are no longer the masters; the Philistines are still there, the old proprietors of the land, but they are put under harrows and saws and instruments of iron and held in bondage. The soul in this state has *power over sin*. But there is another state, and that is:

(3) *Without sin*, in which the promise of the Holy Ghost in Ezekiel is fulfilled when He says: ‘Then I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you....’

Now in this experience this engagement is fulfilled, and Paul’s prayer for the Thessalonians, and through them for all saints, is answered. The God of peace sanctifies wholly, and the whole body, soul and spirit is preserved blameless.

Now I am free to confess that about this state there may be difficulties and perplexities. I simply insist that it is described in the Bible, and that the descriptions of the Bible have been verified by the experience of thousands of saints. It means a clean heart, being cleansed from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit—sanctified wholly, being made perfect in every good work, and God working in the soul all the good pleasure of His will...

William Booth continues by stressing that this experience implies: (1) Full deliverance from all known sin, (2) The consecration of every power and possession to God and His work, (3) Constant and uniform obedience to all the requirements of God. But it is not a state without imperfections, without temptation, or without the possibility of failing. He then goes on to say:

Now there is the blessing of holiness as I understand it to be taught in the Scriptures, and now I am to ask you what you ought to do with it, and to this question I reply, *get it!*

After dealing with the conditions of repentance and faith, he winds up in characteristic fashion:

Who is to accomplish this revolution in your soul, and finish the new creation already begun? Who is going to make you holy? Your new evangelist, who, you have been informed, enjoys and preaches the blessing? This strong will of yours? That book you are going to read? No! Not these things all put together and, I will add, your faith, and the

book of books into the bargain. Let me ask, who saved you? The living God, and He is going to sanctify you. If ever done, He will do it. He will do it all. What follows? Why simply this, that when you have brought yourself to God you have nothing more to do but simply to trust Him. Roll yourself on His promise, plunge in the fountain, honour the Blood, but oh! do it now.

Some of you are old and grey-headed, and you have been hearing and reading and talking about this blessing a long, long time, but you are little or no forwarder and, my brethren, you won't be until you trust the living God, and then it will be done at once.... Brethren, be ye holy, but be holy now.

Three Army holiness teachers

Apart from William and Catherine Booth themselves, it is the names of George Scott Railton, Bramwell Booth and Samuel Brengle that will for ever be associated with holiness teaching within the Army.

Railton gave the Army its first full doctrinal exposition of the doctrine in the doctrine book which was published in 1881. The treatment is in very similar terms to William Booth's 1877 speech, but with characteristically pungent additional comments like:

Question: Are there any special fruits of sanctification noticed in the officers of The Salvation Army?

Answer: Yes; for it is impossible to be an efficient officer without the enjoyment of this blessing. Almost every officer has, at one time or another, possessed it, too; so that those who do not possess it must be in a fallen condition, and more or less wretched and untrue.

Bramwell Booth's name became synonymous with The Salvation Army 'holiness meeting'. 'The character of these meetings,' writes Begbie, 'eventually provoked the fiercest attacks ever made upon William Booth by religious people,' and he notes that the holiness meetings also caused dissension within the Army's ranks, and that some members left as a result. 'The holiness meetings were disapproved of by those who objected to excitement, and the teaching of holiness by others.' But the holiness meetings saw the early Army at its most powerful.

Begbie, in introducing reports of holiness meetings from *The*

Christian Mission Magazine, remarks that they ‘afford no real picture of the extraordinary sights which were witnessed, nor do they give an adequate account of the effects produced upon the souls of those who took part in them’. He continues: ‘Bramwell Booth tells me that, after many years of reflection, and disposed as he now is to think that in some degree the atmosphere of those meetings was calculated to affect hysterically certain unbalanced or excitable temperaments, he is nevertheless convinced, entirely convinced, that something of the same force which manifested itself on the day of Pentecost manifested itself at those meetings in London. He describes how men and women would suddenly fall flat upon the ground, and remain in a swoon or trance for many hours, rising at last so transformed by joy that they could do nothing but shout and sing in an ecstasy of bliss. He tells me that beyond all question he saw instances of levitation—people lifted from their feet and moving forward through the air. He saw bad men and women stricken suddenly with an overmastering despair, flinging up their arms, uttering the most terrible cries, and falling backwards, as if dead—supernaturally convinced of their sinful condition. The floor would sometimes be crowded with men and women smitten down by a sense of overwhelming spiritual reality, and the workers of the Mission would lift their fallen bodies and carry them to other rooms, so that the meetings might continue without distraction. Doctors were often present at these gatherings. Conversions took place in great numbers; the evangelists of the Mission derived strength and inspiration for their difficult work; and the opposition of the world only deepened the feelings of the more enthusiastic that God was powerfully working in their midst.’



Something of Pentecost does indeed pervade this report of ‘A Night of Prayer’, in August 1878, described in *The Christian Mission Magazine* as ‘undoubtedly the most wonderful meeting ever held in the history of the Mission’:

Round the table in the great central square Satan was fought and conquered, as it were, visibly by scores of persons whose names and numbers no one attempted to take. Evangelists came there burdened with the consciousness of past failings and unfaithfulness, and were so filled with the power of God that they literally danced for joy. Brethren and sisters who had hesitated as to yielding themselves to go forth anywhere to preach Jesus, came and were set free from every doubt and fear, and numbers whose peculiar besetments and difficulties God alone can read, came and washed and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb.

That scene of wrestling prayer and triumphant faith, no one who saw it can ever forget. We saw one collier labouring with his fists upon the floor and in the air, just as he was accustomed to struggle with the rocks in his daily toil, until at length he gained the diamond he was seeking—perfect deliverance from the carnal mind—and rose up shouting and almost leaping for joy. Big men, as well as women, fell to the ground, lay there for some time as if dead, overwhelmed with the Power from on high. When the gladness of all God's mighty deliverance burst upon some, they laughed as well as cried for joy, and some of the younger evangelists might have been seen, like lads at play, locked in one another's arms and rolling each other over on the floor.

For a number of years Bramwell Booth conducted weekly holiness meetings in Whitechapel, London, and exercised a highly influential ministry. But as he became increasingly absorbed with the administration of the Army, and especially when he became General in 1912, it was Samuel Brengle who grasped the holiness torch and carried it round the world to the second and third generations of salvationists.

Brengle's special contribution to the presentation of the doctrine lay in his strong emphasis on the positive side of the experience—the inpouring of divine love and power—rather than the removal of sin, though this was included. He frequently termed the experience the baptism with the Holy Spirit, a fact of some significance in an era when the pentecostal movement was claiming that term as its own, and he spoke of the baptism with the Holy Spirit and the blessing of holiness as two sides of the same coin. He discusses this point in a chapter entitled, *Is the baptism with the Holy Spirit a third blessing?*



There are four classes of teachers whose views appear to differ on this subject. There are:

- (1) Those who emphasize cleansing; who say much of a clean heart, but little, if anything, about the fullness of the Holy Spirit and power from on high.
- (2) Those who emphasize the baptism with the Holy Ghost and fullness of the Spirit, but say little or nothing of cleansing from inbred sin and the destruction of the carnal mind.
- (3) Those who say much of both, but separate them into two distinct experiences, often widely separated in time.
- (4) Those who teach that the truth is in the union of the two, and that, while we may separate them in their order, putting cleansing first, we

cannot separate them as to time, since it is the baptism that cleanses, just as the darkness vanishes before the flash of the electric light....

The first blessing in Jesus Christ is salvation, with its negative side of remission of sins and forgiveness, and its positive side of renewal and regeneration—the new birth—one experience.

And the second blessing is entire sanctification, with its negative side of cleansing, and its positive side of filling with the Holy Ghost—one whole, rounded, glorious, epochal experience. And while there may be many refreshings, girdings, illuminations and secret tokens and assurances of love and favour, there is no third blessing in the large sense in this present time.... In eternity we shall have the third blessing—we shall be glorified.

Clarence Hall's overall assessment of Brengle's holiness teaching completes the picture: 'He taught that this experience of holiness—of the blessing of a Clean Heart, the Army's term for what is otherwise spoken of as Entire Sanctification, Indwelling of the Spirit, Full Assurance of Faith, Overcoming Power, Death to the SelfLife, etc—comes to a person through an entire consecration of the body, mind and soul; is the point of the soul's severance from sin in disposition as well as in deed; and is wrought in the believing heart by the Holy Spirit, by whom the heart is cleansed of the roots of sin and is made pure, and the believer thus rendered Christlike, entirely Christlike, and nothing else but Christlike.'

The Salvation Army today

The main thrust of Salvation Army holiness teaching today would seem to be an emphasis on the *process* of sanctification, with the *crisis* seen as the gateway experience to growth in holiness. As General Frederick Couetts puts it in *The Call to Holiness*:

... In penitent obedience I yield up a forgiven life. In faith believing I receive of His Spirit. That is the beginning:

The beginning—but not the end. This is the commencement of the life of holiness, not its crown. This is the start, but only a start. And a start loses all meaning unless there is a continuance.

The crisis must be followed by a process. In the initial act of surrender I receive of the fullness of the Spirit according to my capacity to receive.

But that capacity grows with receiving—as a bandsman’s facility to play grows with playing, or to speak with speaking or to follow his craft by practising it.... There’s a long, long trail a-winding between start and finish. Any comprehensive view of the doctrine of holiness must have room for both. The experience can neither be explained nor lived without crisis and process.

The greater stress on the process is also illustrated by the changes of emphasis to be observed in the succeeding editions of the official *Handbook of Doctrine*. Until 1969 the editions devoted about 7,000 words to the crisis experience and only about 200 to the process. But in the handbook published in 1969 a different pattern emerges. The chapter heading changes from *Entire Sanctification* to simply *Sanctification*, and the proportion of words dealing with the crisis and the process are reversed. The crisis is again seen as the beginning, not the culmination of the process:

The experience of holiness involves both a crisis and a process—the initial dedication when the commitment is made, and the process or subsequent action by which the implications of this commitment are worked out in every department of life.

There is a great deal to be said for this emphasis on the process. Holiness, after all, ought not to be so much the pursuit of a particular religious experience, as the day to day, indeed moment by moment experience of seeking to live, by the grace of God, an evermore Christlike life in a sinful world. And without losing its distinctive stress on a crisis subsequent to conversion, the increased attention paid to the process has also brought The Salvation Army’s holiness teaching closer to the mainstream of Christian thinking, which William Sangster describes as follows in *The Pure in Heart*:

Recognizing the truth in Wesley’s teaching of sudden moments of vision and special occasions of divine receptivity, they recoil from any stress on ‘second’ works of grace if only because life has brought them *many* moments of vision and receptivity, and they could not select just *one* experience (subsequent to conversion) which is to remain forever unique.

God is constantly at work in the soul,’ they argue. There are times of spiritual crisis in the minds of all aspiring pilgrims, but the fallow periods are important too. If one keeps open to the grace of God, the grace comes in, and the Holy Spirit fashions the Divine Son in the soul of His consenting servant.

They see it all as a steady advance in holiness. Swifter at one time than at others, the work steadily advances. Anyone who can tell us how better to work with God must be heard—and heard with eagerness—but holiness they feel is given to no man in an instant of time, if only because God ever deals with us as persons and not by ‘strokes of omnipotence’.

But whether the interpretation of the crisis as simply the gateway to the mountain trail of holiness *fully* accounts for the kind of experience that Samuel Brengle knew on 9 January 1885 needs consideration. Moving the state of being perfect before God into the future as an ideal always beckoning us on, is a positive step. We are able to share Paul’s sentiments: ‘It is not to be thought that I have already achieved all this. I have not yet reached perfection, but I press on, hoping to take hold of that for which Christ once took hold of me’ (Philippians 3:12). But on the other hand we must also guard against the error of minimising the epochal nature and transforming power of a crisis experience such as Brengle experienced.

Though the scriptural grounds for postulating a crisis point subsequent to conversion which initiates the process of sanctification may not be overtly evident, there is no doubt that the lives of countless Christians have been totally transformed by a moment of visitation that does remain forever unique for them.

We must now see what further light the next major doctrinal structure to be studied can throw on these moments of feeling, perception and reception, which leave the soul renewed.

5

Spiritual breakthrough: baptism in the Holy Spirit?

BREngle often spoke of his experience as his baptism in the Holy Spirit. He saw it as the positive side of a two-sided experience. God had cleansed and God had filled him. The blessings of sanctification and baptism in the Holy Spirit were one and the same thing to him. But the phrase, baptism in the Holy Spirit, has been used to convey many meanings in its day, and in view of its currency in the present time, we must inquire further.

The term baptism in the Holy Spirit was frequently used in the early Salvation Army. A visitor to Manchester in 1880 comments: 'From the large posters in the city I discovered that a baptism of fire was to be the object of the morning's musterings of the zealous salvationists.' For a time, judging by announcements in *The War Cry*, 'baptism of fire' was the accepted name for the Sunday morning meeting.

'We are met this morning for a baptism of fire. We want this baptism of the Holy Ghost,' says William Booth to 1,500 people gathered in Spitalfields in 1880. And at Falmouth: 'Some of you here have had a baptism of water, now you are going to have a baptism of the Holy Ghost!'

Reports like the following abound in *The War Cry*:

After we had had a few testimonies the glory came in a marvellous manner. Talk about a baptism of fire like they had at Pentecost, we were all filled and flooded and some overwhelmed with the divine presence. And then the Captain and the Lieutenant lay on the floor, both were filled unutterably full of glory and of God. All of us got such a baptism we had not had for a long time.

Some years previously William Booth had penned a letter to the missionaries at Dunedin Hall, Edinburgh, in which he expressed his thinking on the baptism: 'Success in soul-winning work depends on

certain conditions. First and foremost, the Pentecostal baptism of the Holy Ghost. Spiritual work can only be done by those who possess spiritual power. No men could do the works that are being done in your midst, except God was with them. But how much more might be done had you all received this Pentecostal baptism in *all* its fullness.'

Forty years later William Booth would have found it difficult to express himself in the same terms without being misunderstood, for by then the phrase 'baptism in the Spirit' would have become associated with a highly distinctive, rigid and controversial doctrinal structure. But when William Booth wrote his letter, the term was in the main used to convey the idea of an infilling or enduement of spiritual power which could be repeated many times in the life of a believer. It was the kind of experience one could pray for and expect every Sunday morning in the prayer meeting. 'Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me!' It was *a* baptism with the Spirit, rather than *the* Baptism with the Holy Spirit—with definite article and capital B. 'All of us got such a baptism we had not had for a long time!'

The phrase had also become increasingly used in the late 19th century in connection with teaching on entire sanctification, and was sometimes used in this sense in Army publications. But in the main it was used in the general sense described above.

Salvationist writings of the era do not offer a detailed exposition of the baptism of the Spirit in this general sense. In this the early Army appears to have followed Charles Finney. There is a strong emphasis on the need for pentecostal power but no attempt to build up a doctrinal structure as, for example, with the doctrine of holiness. The first Salvation Army doctrine book issued in 1881 devotes considerable space to holiness teaching but there is no mention of baptism in the Spirit. The term was no doubt felt to be self-explanatory.

But the dawn of the 20th century was to change that, and to turn the phrase into one bristling with difficulties.

It all began at 7 pm on 31 December 1900. The 40 students at a Bible college in Topeka, Kansas, had come to the conclusion that the biblical evidence of baptism in the Spirit was speaking in tongues, and they were now praying for the experience. When the

principal of the college, the methodist evangelist Charles Parham, was persuaded to lay hands on one of the students, 'a glory fell upon her, a halo seemed to surround her head and face' and she began to speak in tongues.

But it was not until 1906 that the full impact of this event began to be felt. An ordained Negro minister, W. J. Seymour, who had been influenced by the teaching emanating from Topeka, found the doors of a Negro church closed to him in Los Angeles. He moved into an old livery stable in Azusa Street and began to hold services. Within a short time a revival began which was to last three years and which attracted people from all over the world. And the result? 'At the turn of the century', writes David du Plessis, 'there was no Pentecostal Movement. Today it consists of a community of more than ten million souls that can be found in almost every country under the sun.'

The pentecostal thrust in the 20th century is a remarkable chapter of Church history and continues with considerable vigour in many parts of the world. It has been particularly powerful in Scandinavia and in North and South America.

It is instructive to learn, however, that some of the older pentecostal groups are facing the same problems that seem eventually to beset all churches born through revival. It appears, for example, that conversions are no longer so marked. 'The older pentecostal churches know that the experience of conversion was more dramatic in the early days,' comments Walter J. Hollenweger in his monumental *The Pentecostals*, and quotes J. E. Campbell: 'Today even pentecostals, and especially their children, become Christians in a milder manner, without being able to point to a definite emotional crisis taking place at a definite time. Some of the very best saints of the church bear testimony to this type of conversion experience, which results from a lengthy period of Christian training.'

Surprisingly, it appears that not even the crucial experience which is the touchstone of pentecostalism is shared by all in the older churches. 'In the older pentecostal denominations', continues Hollenweger, 'the majority of members have not received the baptism of the Spirit,' and quotes this incisive comment: 'One cannot help but observe that the fervour of the holiness and pentecostal movements cooled as the social and economic status of the participants improved.'

From the beginning of the 20th century the term ‘baptism in the Spirit’ became the distinctive ‘trade-mark’ of pentecostalism and because of the rigid doctrinal structure which was erected around it and its frequent association with tongue speaking the term was avoided by other churches for fear of misunderstanding. There are considerable differences in the way that the various denominations within pentecostalism understand and use this term. It is the emphasis on the *experience* rather than its doctrinal interpretation that unites them. But in view of the fact that the *experience* is currently overflowing into non-pentecostal denominations, and with it much of the pentecostal interpretation, it is important that we look more closely at the mainstream of pentecostal thinking on the subject.

Baptism in the Spirit

The distinctive teaching of pentecostalism is the emphasis on a second crisis experience subsequent to conversion which is called the baptism in the Spirit. This experience is seen as giving power for witness and releasing the gifts of the Spirit within the personality and increasing the fruit of the Spirit. Speaking in tongues is considered by most pentecostals to be the necessary sign that the blessing has been received.

As will be observed, this is also a theology of subsequence. There is something more to be attained, something more to be received in the life of the believer following conversion. There are shades of Wesleyanism here. Indeed, ‘the Pentecostal child was brought up in the nursery of the Holiness Movement’, comments Michael Harper in *As at the Beginning*, ‘from which it acquired so much of its teaching—and also, strangely enough, a great deal of its persecution. Methodism . . . had always taught both the decisiveness of the conversion experience and also of a further experience, variously called “Entire Sanctification”, “Holiness”, “Perfect Love”, “the Second Blessing” and later “the Baptism in the Spirit”. It was largely from this rock that the Pentecostal stone was hewn.’

At the first the pentecostal churches added the baptism in the Spirit as a *third* blessing to the Wesleyan two-stage pattern of conversion and entire sanctification. But soon the majority of pentecostal churches adopted a new two-stage pattern—conversion followed by the baptism in the Spirit, with sanctification under-

stood as a process commencing at conversion. There is still some divergence of opinion on this point among pentecostal churches.

The doctrine of the baptism in the Spirit does not raise the same kind of difficulties we noted when studying Wesley's concept of sanctification as originally presented, for the emphasis is entirely on the positive aspects. There is no mention of sinlessness, or perfection; it is a gift of God which releases fullness of love and fullness of power. The difficulties are therefore less evident, though this does not mean that the doctrine is without its problems for the New Testament student.

But the additional teaching, that the initial evidence of the baptism in the Spirit is speaking in tongues, is full of difficulties. Even a number of the pentecostal denominations have now abandoned this particular stand, and instead teach that any of the supernatural gifts of the Spirit is sufficient evidence. But this linking of a particular crisis experience, the baptism of the Spirit, with the gift of tongues, has given the phenomenon of speaking in tongues a prominence in this century which it has never had before.

It needs to be said quite definitely that whatever other merits the doctrine of baptism in the Spirit might have, and whatever the views we might hold on tongue speaking, the case for linking the two and making the gift of tongues the necessary evidence for the baptism has virtually no scriptural basis. It rests almost entirely on the fact that in three instances quoted in the book of Acts—the apostles (2:4), Cornelius (10:46) and a number of converts in Ephesus (19:6)—the gift of tongues accompanied the receiving of the Spirit. Some feel that it can also be inferred from the happenings in Samaria (Acts 8:17), but those instances represent the total New Testament support for this teaching. Against that must be placed the fact that the Bible nowhere explicitly makes this link-up and that when Paul deals with the subject of spiritual gifts in general and the gift of tongues in particular he clearly expects a negative answer to his question, 'Do all speak with tongues?' (1 Corinthians 12:30).

The pentecostal movement lays great emphasis on all the gifts of the Spirit listed in the New Testament, and stresses that these gifts were not intentionally withdrawn by God from the Early Church, as is sometimes argued, but were lost through faithlessness and ignorance, and that today we are regaining what should always have been there. The Church as a whole owes a great debt to pente-

costalism for highlighting this neglected dimension of Christianity.

But we must now examine the doctrine of the baptism in the Spirit as a second experience more closely.

The scriptural foundations on which this doctrine rests are different from those on which the teaching of entire sanctification are built. This is an important point. From the angle of scriptural support, the 'experiences' are not just two sides of the same coin.

The scriptural backing for Wesley's original concept is built up from a series of Scripture texts dealing with cleansing from sin, putting on the new man, and concepts of holiness and perfection. Though the positive element is also there, for example, as in the text 'perfect love casteth out fear' (1 John 4:18)—and the positive element in the form of the indwelling Holy Spirit has received increasing attention in the holiness movement—the basic idea, however modified, remains that of cleansing.

When we come to look at the scriptural backing for the pentecostal doctrine we find ourselves moving into entirely different areas of the Bible. 'Pentecostalism is built four-square on Acts,' writes James G. Dunn in his important study, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*. 'So far as its doctrine of Spirit-baptism is concerned Paul need not have written anything.'

The scriptural support does not consist of a series of proof texts as used by Wesley, but is rather a matter of drawing out meaning from the recorded experiences of certain of the early Christians. To pentecostal eyes these biographies show that God performs his work of grace within us in two distinct stages.

There are four main passages. The first, the miracle of Pentecost itself (Acts 2). J. G. Dunn summarises the line taken: 'Pentecostals argue that those who were baptized in the Spirit on the day of Pentecost were already "saved" and "regenerate"'. Their reception of the Spirit on that day was not their conversion; it was not the beginning of their Christian life. In other words, Pentecost was a second experience subsequent to and distinct from their earlier "new birth". As such it gives the pattern for all Christian experience thereafter.'

Not everyone would agree with the assumptions made and the conclusions reached. The day of Pentecost was a unique event and

the disciples were in a unique situation. They were experiencing the dawn of a new era, something that could not be repeated in the experience of other believers. It is therefore difficult to rest too much weight on this instance. It is interesting to note also that later on the apostles seem to have looked back to Pentecost as their own *initiation* to faith, rather than as a further experience. When reporting to the Church at Jerusalem about the conversion of Cornelius and his household, Peter uses a significant choice of words: 'The Holy Spirit came upon them, just as upon us *at the beginning*', and 'God gave them no less a gift than he gave us when *we put our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ*' (Acts 11:15, 17).

The second instance is one of the most intriguing problems in the New Testament. What happened in Samaria? We read in Acts 8 that Philip preached in Samaria and that when the people 'came to believe Philip with his good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, men and women alike' (verse 12). That is straightforward. A few verses later comes the conundrum. 'The apostles . . . sent off Peter and John, who went down there and prayed for the converts, asking that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For until then the Spirit had not come upon any of them. They had been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus, that and nothing more. So Peter and John laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit' (verses 15-17).

Those that hold that Spirit baptism is a definite second work lay great stress on this passage. To them it is conclusive proof that this is the way God has arranged matters. The passage is certainly intriguing and raises a number of questions, which may never be adequately answered. But it must be pointed out that the passage is a double-edged sword. Pentecostalism sees it as a supreme proof that the reception of the Spirit is a second work. But those who disagree rest almost as much weight on the same text to prove the opposite case. The whole point of the passage, they argue, is that everyone was surprised by the fact that the Holy Spirit had not come to the believers when they were baptised. It is because the case was unusual and unexpected, and therefore perplexing, that Peter and John had to be sent to investigate and the matter came to be mentioned in Acts.

The third instance is the story of Paul's conversion as recorded in Acts 9. Paul was converted on the road to Damascus, goes the argument, but it was not until three days later that he was baptised in the Spirit. Again, the interpretation depends on how one views

the events of those days. Those that start from the pentecostal premise are likely to see two distinct experiences—conversion and Spirit baptism—while those who are not looking for second experiences will probably view the events of the three days as part of the same, single experience, a spiritual crisis which lasted three days.

The fourth narrative instance which is seen as supporting Spirit baptism as a second experience is the case of the 12 Ephesians. When Paul reached Ephesus he found a number of converts to whom he said, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?” “No,” they replied, “we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” He said, “Then what baptism were you given?” “John’s baptism,” they answered. Paul then said, “The baptism that John gave was a baptism in token of repentance, and he told the people to put their trust in one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus.” On hearing this they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus; and when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them and they spoke in tongues of ecstasy and prophesied’ (Acts 19:2-6).

Paul’s initial question carries an additional punch in the *Authorized Version* where, through a mistranslation, it is rendered: ‘Have ye received the Holy Ghost *since* ye believed?’

The pentecostal interpretation of this passage stresses that the ‘converts’ were Christians already, and therefore the implication of Paul’s question is that one can be a Christian and not have received the Spirit. This is certainly one interpretation, but others would argue that by their replies the men revealed their ignorance of the heart of the Christian faith. They were possibly followers of John the Baptist or ‘supporters’ of the Church. But whatever they were, Paul seems to treat them as *non-Christians* in that he first baptizes them into the name of the Lord Jesus before laying hands on them.

These four instances represent the kernel of the pentecostal argument for Spirit baptism as a second experience. Against this must be set the many other instances of conversion mentioned or implied in Acts in which the matter of subsequent Spirit baptism does not appear to arise, and the fact that nowhere in the Scriptures does it expressly say or even hint that the reception of the Spirit is a second experience. On the contrary, the reception of the Spirit is often expressly linked with conversion itself, as in Romans 8:9: ‘If a man does not possess the Spirit of Christ, he is no Christian.’

And in the one remaining description in Acts of the Spirit being received, the conversion of Cornelius and his household (Acts 10), the pentecostal case is in difficulty from the start, and the supporter of two-stage experience has to fall back on such arguments as (a) Cornelius was in fact converted before Peter preached to him, or (b) he got converted in the course of Peter's sermon, or (c) conversion and Spirit baptism did happen simultaneously here but are nevertheless distinct acts of God.

But what about experience? If the scriptural case is not strong for the theology of subsequence we have studied, it could be argued: does not the fact that many Christians have experienced such a baptism, as a second experience following conversion, prove that the teaching is true? It is certainly a most important factor that cannot be dismissed lightly, but doctrinal patterns cannot be inferred from experience alone. The teaching of a further experience has led many believers to seek and to pray for a divine infilling —and it has come. That they have labelled the experience their 'baptism in the Spirit' and thought of it as a necessary second experience has not affected the experience itself or its value for the experiencer. But if that same explanation becomes a stumbling block to a fellow believer who longs for a similar happening in his own life but cannot accept the doctrinal structure which surrounds it, then we have a duty to seek for the best possible explanation of these moments of divine breakthrough, so that no one will be put off from seeking the kernel by the unattractiveness of the shell.

Holy Spirit renewal

The early pentecostal movement met with a great deal of opposition from the established churches, and this made it turn in on itself with the result that the Christian world was only dimly aware of the revival which was taking place on a world scale. But in the 1950s their world secretary, David du Plessis, felt led to make an approach to the leaders of the World Council of Churches. He was agreeably surprised by the warmth of his reception and the genuineness of the interest shown. The initial encounter led to invitations for himself and his colleagues to address ecumenical conferences, and though David du Plessis could not have known it at the time, those early trickles of sharing and discovery were to lead to a vast overflowing of pentecostal experience into most other denominations in later years.

It happened to different people in different places and so quietly that no one was aware that a new work of God was taking place, until the summer of 1960. On Passion Sunday that year, the Rev Dennis Bennett, of St Mark's Episcopal Church in Van Nuys, California, told the congregation that he had been filled with the Holy Spirit and had spoken in tongues. 'That service', writes Michael Harper, 'set off an earthquake whose tremors were picked up on ecclesiastical seismographs all over the world.' Church members took sides on the issue, tension grew, and by June the situation was sufficiently newsworthy for both *Time* magazine and *Newsweek* to write it up. The publication of the story 'brought into the open a movement which had been gathering momentum for at least four years', continues Michael Harper. 'It gave many lay people courage to come out into the open and declare what God had been doing in their lives.'

If the beginnings of the so-called Holy Spirit revival or charismatic movement can be dated, then it dates from that summer of 1960. Since that time this renewal, centred on personal experience of the Holy Spirit, has grown and crossed denominational boundaries in a notable way, with the result that today there is no major denomination which it has not touched.

In growing numbers Christians all over the world have entered into a new spiritual dimension through a spiritual breakthrough experience and have found not only a new, vital reality in their own spiritual life, but have found themselves becoming effective in God's service through the release of spiritual resources within them.

The various denominations have on the whole responded with great maturity to this upsurge of new spiritual life in their midst, and have sought to make room for and welcome the new emphasis into the hallowed shrines of their own traditions without allowing these to be swamped in the process. And this applies not only to protestant churches, for the Roman Catholic Church has been notably warm towards the Holy Spirit renewal, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in the USA asserting as early as in 1969 that: (1) the movement appeared to be theologically sound; (2) there were dangers involved in it; (3) but they wished that more priests would get involved in it. When Pope Paul addressed a congress of Roman catholic 'pentecostals' in Rome and joined them in worship, the ultimate seal of approval was given.

In some congregations, however, the upsurge of new spiritual energy has led to friction. Some degree of tension is perhaps unavoidable, but regrettably not all who have received a new touch of spiritual power have been as wise as they might. Insufficient allowance has sometimes been made for the natural and very understandable hesitations of other members of the congregation, and for the fact that the Holy Spirit works in different ways in different people. In some cases there has been a deplorable tendency to look down on those who have not shared a similar experience as somehow spiritually inferior. It has not always been appreciated by those full of excitement because their spiritual eyes have been opened that one reason for the seeming lack of excitement in others could be that they have been able to see for many years!

Not all have been able to differentiate between the vital and the peripheral in their experience, and attempts at wholesale introduction of pentecostal customs, terminology, worship, gestures, music, theology and traditions as a necessary part of spiritual renewal have met with well-deserved resistance. This tendency to imitate all things pentecostal was much in evidence in the early days of the Holy Spirit renewal, but today there is a greater awareness that the Spirit is able to work through any of the traditional forms of worship in the various churches. The Holy Spirit renewal has also suffered its quota of individuals whose claims to spiritual fullness have not been matched by their conduct, and the claims of some to be 'Spirit led' when it has seemed more a matter of blaming their own inconsistencies on the Holy Spirit has also led to the renewal being criticised as a whole.

But despite these problems there has been a widespread recognition that no revival is ever blemish-free, and that at no time has the work of God been revived without it producing resistance. As someone has put it, the spiritual temperature of the average church is so low that when someone comes along whose temperature is normal he gets accused of having a fever! Apathy never takes kindly to enthusiasm. It has also been widely recognised that exclusive attention to the minus factors of a revival whilst ignoring the far greater plus factors puts us in danger of falling into the trap which Gamaliel warned about: 'you risk finding yourselves at war with God' (Acts 5:39).

The too-eager taking over of everything pentecostal in the early days of the Holy Spirit renewal was particularly acute in the realm

of theology. Not only was it the pentecostal experience which was crossing denominational boundaries, it was the pentecostal interpretation as well, down to the last detail. In the 1960s Christians from denominations with no previous 'second blessing' links were freely attributing their new spiritual release to the baptism in the Spirit as a necessary second experience, evidenced by speaking in tongues. But much has happened since then.

The theologians of the major churches have been forced by events to re-think their teaching on the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Dissatisfied with the pentecostal theology of subsequence, they have had to return to the New Testament to discover how best to account for these experiences. A number of denominations have set up doctrinal commissions, with fruitful results, and many individual theologians and writers from right across the theological and denominational spectrum have produced exciting work in a very short time.

The question of speaking in tongues has also been reassessed. In the early years of the renewal the gift of tongues was frequently regarded as the necessary evidential sign of spiritual renewal. But this stress has faded a great deal, partly because it has become increasingly accepted that this teaching lacks scriptural support, and partly because of the simple fact that countless Christians are finding release of the Spirit in their lives without speaking in tongues. The link which should never have been made in the first place, the link which sought to bind spiritual fullness with the gift of tongues, is now effectively being broken. The point needs to be stressed. It is perfectly possible to be 'baptised in the Spirit' without speaking in tongues.

The Salvation Army and the Holy Spirit

The Salvation Army was born of a Holy Spirit revival. The rapid expansion in the late 1880s was the result of a mighty outpouring of pentecostal power. It was little wonder that *blood and fire* became the motto of the young movement. Pentecostal scenes like the following which Bramwell Booth describes were the order of the day. He tells of a night of prayer in Stockton in 1878:

Then we went to prayer, and oh, such praying, such desperate determined calling upon Jesus to manifest His almighty, sanctifying

power. It was answered. First one and then another began to praise God—began to shout, or laugh, or cry.

After refreshment, we resumed at 1.45. During the singing of the chorus 'Washed in blood and filled with glory', several, both men and women, fell to the ground, overcome with the power of the Holy Ghost. Then we had testimony and exhortation. Everyone knelt. Heaven drew near to earth. The glory of God filled the Old Theatre, Stockton, and many in our company fell on their faces. Others looked on and shouted, or cried or laughed. No one seemed to be leading in prayer and yet all seemed to be praying. We saw, we heard, we felt things unlawful to be uttered. 'Stay Thy hand, stay Thy hand,' we heard a brother near exclaim; while another, down whose face tears of joy followed one another, was shouting: 'Lord, enlarge—glory, glory—the vessel. Lord, glory, glory!—enlarge—glory!—the vessel.' We think the Lord did it. It's never well to ask Him to stay His hand. Many burst out praising God for full deliverance, and oh, the scene of bewildering and enthralling rejoicing surpassed any description. Some were greeting one another with the holy kiss. Some wept in one another's arms. Some sat and some stood, and some seemed as if they were on the verge of an ascending cloud.

There was a delightful openness and responsiveness in the early Army to the work of the Spirit. Instances of spiritual healing were numerous. In looking back on this period, Bramwell Booth writes about 'well authenticated instances of Divine healing' in *Echoes and Memories*:

The Army has ever had in its ranks in various parts of the world a number of people unquestionably possessed of some kind of gift of healing. If extravagances have gathered round the subject in some quarters, they ought not to be permitted to obscure the central fact, which is that the healing of the sick by special immediate Divine interposition, in answer to prayer and faith, has undoubtedly occurred. Surely there is nothing surprising in this. On the contrary, it would have been surprising had it been otherwise. For we have not merely recognized that the healing of the sick by the power of God has from the beginning been associated with the office of prophets, priests, teachers and apostles, but it has always seemed to us in perfect harmony with the views and experience of the Army itself that God should heal the sick after this fashion. Not only has nothing to the contrary ever been taught amongst us, but far and near we have insisted upon the fact that God does raise up the sick in answer to our prayers; and numerous instances of this healing ministry have occurred throughout our history.

Instances of speaking in tongues were rare among the early salvationists, and there is little mention of the subject. Bramwell Booth

comments: 'Although some of our own people have received what is spoken of as a gift of tongues, we have almost invariably found that one of the consequences has been a disposition to withdraw from hard work for the blessing of others and from fearless testimony to the Saviour.'

Perhaps the gift of the Spirit most evident in the early days was what Charles Finney called 'converting power'. The way in which teenage salvationist lads and lasses were used to bring whole communities to conversion can only be explained by the operation of a supernatural, miraculous power: the power of the Holy Spirit.

The explosion which sent the Army through Britain and then to the world was a divine one. But revivals must eventually end, and unless in the meantime God's people have built up a structure that will keep what has been gained, the revival will fade away and leave nothing permanent. It is to the everlasting credit of William Booth and his colleagues that they built a structure so solid and yet elastic that it not only retained what had been gained but has been able to expand and adapt itself to changing conditions.

The transition from an open, free, Spirit-led movement to the more ordered ways of a settled church is not without its danger. The main danger is that the pendulum might swing too far. No one gets so respectable as those with an unrespectable past! No one gets so ordered as those with a history of disorder, and no one gets so conformist as the converted non-conformist! It is a well-attested fact of church history that movements born of revival tend to look back at their beginnings not only with pride but also a degree of discomfort. And one cannot help but think that many contemporary salvationists would feel strangely out of place, say, in the night of prayer at Stockton which Bramwell Booth described. Is this an indication that the pendulum has in fact swung too far?

The greater emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit in recent years within the Church has been reflected in Salvation Army writings. General Clarence Wiseman deals with some of the issues of contemporary concern in *Living and Walking in the Spirit*. 'The New Testament does not teach that Christians need a new baptism in the Spirit,' he writes, 'for they already possess the Holy Spirit, otherwise they would not be Christians. What is required is an awakening to the necessity for an utter and complete surrender to the Spirit, allowing Him to take full possession of body, mind and soul, purging the centre as well as the periphery of existence, con-

trolling the life-style and the full gamut of human relationships.’

‘What should be the Army’s attitude towards the gifts of tongues?’ he asks. ‘Surely the answer is that it should be the attitude adopted by Paul. It must not be negative: though, as with all sensitive issues, evil is bound to try to get a toe-hold, so there must be a cautionary note. Tongues have their place in the Bible, and therefore should not be ignored.’

The General then deals with Paul’s understanding of the gift, adding that ‘The Salvation Army has always considered it inadvisable to allow speaking in tongues in its meetings.’ In this the Army is in line with all the major churches who, whilst accepting or welcoming the trend towards informality and freedom in prayer group meetings, see the original tradition which gave birth to their particular style of worship as equally Holy Spirit inspired.

‘However,’ adds the General, ‘this does not deny salvationists the right to use the gift in their private devotion, should it be God’s will to bestow it upon them. Not a few Christians have found release from personal inhibitions, and new freedom and joy in the Lord through the exercise of the gift of tongues, and no one would wish to deny them this liberating experience.’



The Salvation Army was born of the Spirit and must remain in the Spirit if it is to be used of God. Dare one believe that the pendulum is swinging once again, away from an over-emphasis on tradition, order, organisation, money and means, towards a balanced yet life-giving dependence on the Holy Spirit? The answer lies with the individual salvationist.

6

Spiritual breakthrough: a spiritual awakening?

WE are still searching for a comprehensive interpretation of what happened in the Boston Seminary on 9 January 1885 at around 9 am. The ideas associated with sanctification and the baptism in the Spirit have shed light. But have the ancient traditions of the Church anything to add to the subject?

There is a rich vein of deep spirituality which has run through Christianity from its inception to the present day that we must examine. 'No serious student of sanctity can help but feel awed when he surveys the rich treasures of what is commonly called "catholic spirituality",' writes W. E. Sangster in *The Pure in Heart*. 'The possession of the whole Western Church before the great schism of the 16th century, it has been still further enriched through four more centuries by those who have remained loyal to the Roman obedience. The experience of many saints, and the direction of great "doctors of perfection", have produced a mass of deep counsel of holiness, which has been systematized and codified, and bears now an easily recognizable and classic shape.'

Could it be that somewhere here we might find some truth to help us in our understanding of moments of spiritual breakthrough? In order to answer we must first set the scene.

Classic Christian counsel on spiritual growth likens it to a way along which the pilgrim must proceed. Progress along the way represents various stages of spiritual growth and various experiences that people will pass through. Writes Simon Tugwell in *Did You Receive the Spirit?*: 'The commonest teachings of Eastern and Western Christians see the Christian life in three stages, though, unlike the Pentecostals, they are less concerned with precise, datable experiences, and talk rather of stages, each of which can be clearly distinguished by its characteristic range of experiences and

“evidences”. The transition from one stage to another may be sudden and dramatic, or long and obscure.’

The three classic stages of the way are the Purgative Way, the Illuminative Way and the Unitive Way. We shall ask Dr Sangster to take us for a conducted tour by means of some extracts from *The Pure in Heart*.¹

The Purgative Way

All who would begin on that path which ends at intimate union with God must begin with purification. God’s purpose with them at this stage is to purify their souls. The intermediate steps involve an apprenticeship to serious prayer, penance to atone for the past, mortification to safeguard the future, and a constant warfare against temptation and sin.

With the logical thoroughness and schematization of the schoolmen, the capital sins are labelled, unmasked and set in order. Those who set out for the heights are shown their adversaries as pride, envy, anger, gluttony, lust, sloth and avarice. The character of the sin is delineated, its subtlety exposed and the remedy offered.

But by Purgation men reach only the foothills of the great range. This is but the first stage of the path which leads to the heights.

The Illuminative Way

It will be clear that any soul upon the Illuminative Way is advanced in the spiritual life. By the power of the Holy Spirit, the sins which did previously so easily beset the pilgrim are largely cast aside. The great aim on this part of the journey is the imitation of Christ: the positive achievement and exercise of the Christian virtues.

Put at its simplest, the aim of the Illuminative Way is, so to identify ourselves with our Lord, that He becomes the soul and centre of all our living. He is the soul and centre of our thoughts. **Whenever our minds relax from the concentration on daily tasks, they turn to feasting in thought on Him, as lovers think of the one beloved. Clearly then, He is the soul and centre of our affections too. As knowledge increases, love deepens, and as love deepens, the eagerness for still more knowledge increases also. Our hearts run out to Him with an ever-increasing love. And love leads to imitation—conscious and unconscious. I aim to be like Him, and consequently He becomes the centre and soul of our actions too.**

Prayer becomes habitual. Those on the Illuminative Way love prayer. Though there may be times when prayer is still an act of will, and discipline drags them to their knees, this is not usual with those on the Illuminative Way. Inevitably, the cardinal virtues are built up in them

(prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance), and the virtues classified as 'theological' too (faith, hope and charity). New temptations attack them and the seven capital vices assault them in more subtle forms, but, while they are set firmly on their course and the Holy Spirit dwells within, they do not miss their way.

The Unitive Way

The purified soul, adorned with the virtues of Christ, advances now towards intimate and habitual union with God. This is, indeed, the state described by St Paul: 'I live and yet no longer I, but Christ lives in me.' According to catholic spirituality, there is a great simplifying of all things for the seeker after holiness when he reaches the Unitive Way. The love of God becomes the only virtue of the soul. Even the pattern of prayer and meditation is simplified, in the sense that life is one perpetual prayer. Men of great discernment pick out these rare souls by three chief marks. They have a great purity of heart, a great mastery of self, and their minds are all taken up by God.

The spiritual life

But what sort of quality of life is produced by this process? Are the saints sickly hot-house plants? On the contrary, comments Evelyn Underhill in her classic work *Mysticism* (a term which is here used in the sense of 'deep spirituality'): the chief characteristic of the higher reaches of the Unitive Way is 'an access of creative vitality. It means man's small derivative life invaded and enhanced by the Absolute Life: the appearance in human history of personalities and careers which seem superhuman when judged by the surface mind.'

Teresa of Avila comments on this compulsion to activity which she discovered on reaching the peak:

The most surprising thing to me is that the sorrow and distress which such souls felt because they could not die and enjoy our Lord's presence are now exchanged for as fervent a desire of serving Him, of causing Him to be praised and of helping others to the utmost of their power.

The classic saints were anything but impractical recluses. The very opposite. 'When we look at their lives,' continues Evelyn Underhill, 'we find ourselves in the presence of an amazing, a superabundant vitality: of a "triumphing force" over which circumstance has no power.' After listing some of their practical accomplishments, she asks: 'How came it that these apparently

unsuitable men and women, checked on every side by inimical environment, ill-health, custom, or poverty, achieved these stupendous destinies? The explanation can only lie in the fact that all these persons were great mystics. In each a character of the heroic type, of great vitality, deep enthusiasms, unconquerable will, was raised to the spiritual plane, remade on higher levels of consciousness. Each by surrender of self-hood, by acquiescence in the large destinies of life, had so furthered the self's natural genius for the Infinite that their human limitations were over-passed. Hence they rose to freedom and attained to the one ambition to the "naughted soul"—"I would fain be to the Eternal Goodness what his own hand is to a man".

Only the Holy Spirit can make a saint. 'All holiness derives from God,' as Sangster puts it. 'Sanctity is His wherever it is found. The Holy Ghost has been at work in all aspiring souls. Only God could make Catherine Booth and Teresa of Avila. Only God could make Francis de Sales and Fletcher of Madeley. Only God could make William Law and Tikhon Zndonskey.' And whether we think in terms of baptisms of the Spirit or stages of a way does not in one sense matter very much. Perhaps God is amused by the many ways in which we try to describe his work within us! But at the same time it is sad that for so long protestantism has ignored the rich legacy of spiritual wisdom gleaned over many centuries.



This was one of the losses of the Reformation. With the Reformation emphasis on salvation by faith rather than works, the old classic way towards sanctity (which admittedly at the time was in need of repair) seemed to smack too much of salvation by works. So it was abandoned.

The lack of emphasis on holiness teaching is one of the sorrier parts of the Reformation story. Many branches of the protestant communion still hold to some form of the idea of 'imputed' holiness, that God accepts us as holy whether we are or not because 'the robe of Christ is wrapped around us', and this takes away the incentive to setting out on the path to holiness. For it is a costly journey.



It was precisely to oppose this tendency that Wesley formulated his teaching on sanctification. He despaired of converts who did not grow in grace. Christ did not die to produce such sorry specimens of abundant living! Having been schooled himself in the disciplines of the catholic way to sanctity, and knowing how sterile

they could become when divorced from the power of the indwelling Spirit, he sought to crystallise a doctrine which would keep the accent on the work of God, to be received by grace through faith just like salvation, but which would nevertheless keep all that was good in classic spirituality. By so doing he brought back to protestantism a much-needed emphasis on holiness. But ‘when Wesley insisted that the grace of God which justified us by faith would entirely sanctify us by faith also, he seems not to have allowed enough for the differences between a changed relation with God and a completely changed life’, comments Dr Sangster. ‘Put bluntly, one is an assertion about God and the other is an assertion about ourselves.’



It is to be hoped that one or the results of the Holy Spirit renewal, in which both protestant and Roman catholic believers (not to mention Eastern orthodox and pentecostal) are being brought together through an *experience* of the Spirit, will be a sharing of insights about the development of Christlike living.

Spiritual awakening

But having now set the scene we must inquire where an experience such as came to Samuel Brengle would fit into the classic pattern of spiritual development. Where along the ascending pathway that has been described would such a spiritual breakthrough be placed?

The answer is hardly in doubt. It would be placed very near the beginning of the road. If anyone brought up in the classic pattern of spirituality had been present that morning, he would have put his hands on the young man’s shoulders and said: ‘Sam, the Lord has granted you a spiritual awakening. He is calling you to a great spiritual journey.’ And if Sam had been schooled in the same tradition he would have known and recognised that what had happened to St Francis and St Teresa and to many other saints had happened to him, and that the Purgative and Illuminative and Unitive stages of the road lay beckoning him on.

The fact that Brengle did not speak of his experience in terms of a ‘spiritual awakening’ did not hinder his advance along the road to saintliness, for we know from his life story how he grew in grace and in power from that moment. But the danger of teaching which

stresses a special baptism of the Spirit is that this is seen as the ultimate in spiritual grace and power rather than just its beginning.

Let us look more closely at the experience which spiritual writers and psychologists speak of as 'mystical conversion', and which we are suggesting is identical with the moment of breakthrough which Brengle experienced.

Robert H. Thouless in his *Introduction to the Psychology of Religion* draws a clear distinction between ordinary conversion, that is, from an irreligious to a religious life, and mystical conversion, from an ordinary religious life to a life of deep spirituality. 'The accounts of mystical conversion', he writes, 'are typically of a conventionally religious person, living the usual life of the devout world, much respected for his piety and good works. He, however, feels a restless yearning for something more than his life is giving him. He begins to cut himself free from the ties that bind him to the life to which he has been accustomed. Then, after a longer or shorter period of unhappiness due to a painful inner conflict, he passes through an experience which he is unable to describe, but which has given him a revelation in the light of which his subsequent life must be lived.'



This seems a fair description of many of the testimonies that we have studied.

Evelyn Underhill comments:²

This awakening, from the psychological point of view, appears to be an intense form of the phenomenon of 'conversion'.... It is a disturbance of the equilibrium of the self, which results in the shifting of the field of consciousness from lower to higher levels, with a consequent removal of the centre of interest from the subject to an object now brought into view: the necessary beginning of any process of transcendence....

Those to whom it happens, often enough, are already 'religious': sometimes deeply and earnestly so. Rulman Merswin, St Catherine of Genoa, George Fox, Lucie-Christine—all these had been bred up in piety, and accepted in its entirety the Christian tradition. They were none the less conscious of an utter change in their world when this opening of the soul's eye took place.

Sometimes the emergence of the mystical consciousness is gradual unmarked by any definite crisis. The self slides gently, almost imperceptibly, from the old universe to the new. The records of mysticism,

however, suggest that this is exceptional: that travail is the normal accompaniment of birth.

In another type . . . there is no conversion in the ordinary sense; but a gradual and increasing lucidity . . . intermittently accompanies the pain, misery of mind, and inward struggles characteristic of the entrance upon the Way of Purgation. Conversion and purification then go hand in hand, finally shading off into the serenity of the Illuminated State....

Commonly, however, if we may judge from those first-hand accounts which we possess, mystic conversion is a single and abrupt experience, sharply marked off from the long, dim struggles which precede and succeed it. It usually involves a sudden and acute realization of a splendour and adorable reality in the world—or sometimes of its obverse, the divine sorrow at the heart of things—never before perceived. In so far as I am acquainted with the resources of language, there are no words in which this realization can be described. It is of so actual a nature that in comparison the normal world of past perception seems but twilight at the best. Consciousness has suddenly changed its rhythm and a new aspect of the universe rushes in. The teasing mists are swept away, and reveal, if only for an instant, the sharp outline of the Everlasting Hills....

In this abrupt recognition of reality 'all things are made new': from this point the life of the mystic begins. Conversion of this sort has, says De Sanctis, three marked characteristics: a sense of liberation and victory; a conviction of the nearness of God; a sentiment of love towards God. We might describe it as a sudden, intense, and joyous perception of God immanent in the universe; of the divine beauty and unutterable power and splendour of that larger life . . . to be lived by the self in correspondence with this now dominant fact of existence.

The case of Pascal, quoted earlier, whose written testimony was found sewn into the hem of his garment, is a classic instance of a mystical awakening. Francis of Assisi is another. Attempting to flee God's hand he was in a deeply divided state, but 'being led by the Spirit', records his biographer, 'he went in to pray; and he fell down before the crucifix in devout supplication, and having been smitten by unwonted visitations, found himself another man than he who had gone in'.

Catherine of Genoa, deeply religious by nature, after years of loneliness and depression, visits a holy man. 'Suddenly, as she knelt before him, she received in her heart the wound of the unmeasured love of God, with so clear a vision of her own misery and her faults, and of the goodness of God, that she almost fell upon the ground. And by these sensations of infinite love she was so greatly drawn by

purifying affection away from the poor things of this world that she was almost beside herself, and for this she cried inwardly with ardent love, “No more world! No more sin!” And at this point, if she had possessed a thousand worlds she would have thrown all of them away.’

The similarity of what is experienced, what is felt and what is perceived and what is received, in records of ‘spiritual awakenings’ to that described in testimonies of sanctification and baptism in the Spirit, including the similarity of events leading up to the experiences and results flowing therefrom, would seem to indicate that these experiences are substantially the same *from an experiential angle*. It is the *interpretation* of the experience, the thought pattern surrounding it, which varies.

Positive consequences derive from making this identification. For the believer brought up in the sanctification or baptism of the Spirit schools of thought, a clearly defined way towards holiness opens up before him. He may not wish to subscribe to all the details of all the writings on the subject, but a definite goal is set before him and maps for the road are available for the asking.

For those brought up in the older traditions new possibilities also open up. The belief associated with ‘spiritual awakenings’ has usually been that they should not be actively sought. God sends them in His own good time. This has often led to a kind of personal spiritual stalemate. ‘A great gulf seemed to be set between “ordinary” prayer and “mystical” prayer,’ writes Simon Tugwell, ‘and there seemed no way through for the majority of Christians. Into this situation the Catholic Pentecostal movement clearly comes as a major breakthrough. Its emphasis is practical in the extreme and it offers easy access, to all and sundry, into spiritual prayer. And it manifestly “works”: things do actually happen to people!’

The guidelines offered to would-be pilgrims in the classical pattern of spirituality have generally been felt to go beyond the subject matter of the Bible, in the same way that, for example, books on prayer do. The basic experience, whether of the Spirit or of prayer, is based on the Scriptures, but the detailed further teaching takes over where the Bible leaves off. There is therefore no attempt to account for either the crisis or the various stages of the process in terms of the New Testament. The crisis experiences are simply seen as gracious, empowering visitations by the Spirit.

Sometimes sought after, sometimes arriving spontaneously, they open a new world to the soul and call it to further progress.

Let Evelyn Underhill have the last word in this chapter as she links the experiences of the great saints with our own:

Every person, then, who awakens to consciousness of a Reality which transcends the normal world of sense—however small, weak, imperfect that consciousness may be—is put upon the road which follows at low levels the path which the mystic treads at high levels. The success with which he follows this way to freedom and full life will depend on the intensity of his love and will; his capacity for self-discipline, his steadfastness and courage. It will depend on the generosity and completeness of his outgoing passion for absolute beauty, absolute goodness, or absolute truth. But if he move at all, he will move through a series of states which are, in their own small way, analogous to those experienced by the greatest contemplative on his journey towards that union with God which is the term of the spirit's ascent towards its home.

1 Copyright © 1954 by W. E. Sangster from *The Pure in Heart*: Epworth Press 1954.

2 Copyright © 1911 by Evelyn Underhill from *Mysticism*: Methuen 1960.

7

Towards a conclusion

WE must now begin to pull in the threads in our search for the most satisfying interpretation of the kind of spiritual breakthrough that Samuel Brengle experienced on that Saturday morning long ago. The chapter will be brief for a number of points will be developed further in the pastoral chapters which follow.

Our enquiry is more than a theoretical one. There is a widespread awareness among many Christians that they are living at a substandard level of Christian experience. John Wesley had an apt diagnosis of the condition. 'Desert Christians', or 'half Christians' were the terms he coined for those who, spiritually speaking, had left Egypt but had failed to make it to Canaan.

Many would accept that these terms describe their spiritual condition with great insight. 'In our moment of truth', writes John V. Taylor, 'we whisper to ourselves: The Word of God tells me I am this and I know I am not. It says the church is all that, and I know we are not.'

But coupled with this awareness comes the intuitive feeling that, in the haunting title of Catherine Marshall's book, there is *Something More*. And for the one who knows 'divine dissatisfaction' within, there is something more. Something more to be discovered, something more to be attained, something more to be received. **The Christian life is meant to be life experienced in all its fullness. Not a constant disappointment.**

To build a doctrinal structure which adequately accounts for and leads the seeking soul to break through into that 'something more' is not as easy as at first glance it might seem. Some have even been driven to conclude, on an ultra-rigid interpretation of the Scriptures, that there cannot be anything more to be experienced. If we have been born again then by definition we are already experi-

encing all that can be known. But, as Thomas A. Smail puts it in *Reflected Glory*:

To tell believers who know themselves to be spiritually inadequate that rivers of living waters are pouring from them, to tell those who feel futile and fruitless in their Christian service that the outpoured energy of the Holy Spirit is freely at work in them, to tell Christians who are hardly aware of the Holy Spirit that they are already baptised in the Spirit, solely because the New Testament is interpreted as saying that all Christians are baptised in the Spirit—all this is to run into complete unreality.

We can be quite sure that it is not God's will that his people should always have an inferiority feeling and be inwardly dissatisfied about their spiritual life. No. For the hungry soul there is something more. And many are entering into the experience.

John Wesley was right in his basic insight that the Christian life is meant to be a victorious life, and that God longs to 'make us holy in every part, and to keep us sound in spirit, soul and body' (1 Thessalonians 5:23). There *are* higher heights of holiness to be reached. There is something more. And the doctrine of sanctification sheds light on how to break through to those further dimensions of Christlikeness.

The doctrine of baptism in the Spirit also reflects this inner yearning of the human heart for fullness. The New Testament, from cover to cover, sets before us a quality of Spirit-filled living quite beyond that commonly experienced today—and it leaves an aching longing within us. But there is a way through to this fullness, and the doctrine seeks to encapsulate it.

The classical pattern of spirituality reminds us that moments of 'spiritual awakening', however uplifting, are but a beginning. The moment of glory takes us into a new world. But we must not stand still. There is a long trail ahead—and it leads to even greater glory.

Each of the major doctrinal structures we have looked at makes its contribution to a fuller understanding of these post-conversion moments of spiritual breakthrough.

But doctrines which seek to show that the Scriptures indicate the need for a further work of grace subsequent to conversion are handicapped by the fact that the Bible nowhere explicitly states this to be so. As we have noted, the biblical foundation for such

teaching is in the nature of an inference drawn from the very obvious difference between promise and reality, or is inferred from the experiences of certain biblical personalities. This poses a real problem for many. And yet the existence and value of post-conversion moments of spiritual breakthrough are beyond question.

The way through would therefore seem to be to consider these experiences as *completing in experience* the fullness of the experience of 'new birth', of which the Scriptures speak in great detail using many and varied metaphors. Through these postconversion experiences, we experience in actuality what theoretically and potentially has always been possible to anyone who is 'in Christ'.

Just why so many should seem to fail to enter into their full and rightful heritage at the actual moment of new birth is far from clear. But possibly through ignorance, or unbelief, or disobedience—or through some deep-seated psychological hindrance he cannot even begin to fathom—the seeking soul sometimes fails to find *in experience* what is his in theory. Only through a further touch is the divine work completed.

This understanding of the post-conversion experiences we have been considering seems most adequately to match the human experience with the great and glorious promises of the Scriptures. If for *any* reason we have failed to be filled at the heavenly banquet, we must come again—and if needs be, again and again.

The Salvation Army *Handbook of Doctrine* deals with the point and sets out the underlying theology as it relates to the experience of sanctification.

The Atonement provides for man's sanctification as well as for his salvation. This means that the work of Christ 'who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption' (1 Corinthians 1:30), provides the possibility of being sanctified in Christ quite as much as being justified in Christ. Sanctification, justification, regeneration and adoption are equally part of the inheritance of those who trust in the saving virtue of the Atonement.... Whenever this work of grace is not being fully expressed in a Christian's life, the explanation lies not in the lack of divine provision but in his failure to make co-operating response.... Through lack of knowledge, faith or willingness, he is not claiming what God *has* provided.

With regard to baptism in the Spirit doctrine, the writings of

James D. G. Dunn may be taken as representative of the careful, scholarly reassessment which the renewal movement has stimulated. The same emphasis on the conversion experience that we have noted comes across. After examining all the relevant New Testament passages in *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, he concludes:

The gift of the Spirit may not be separated in any way from conversion, whether to be set before conversion as its presupposition, or after conversion as a merely empowering, confirmatory or charismatic gift. The gift of the Spirit (that is Spirit-baptism) is a distinct element within conversion, indeed, in the New Testament, the most significant element and focal point of conversion. It is the gift of saving grace by which one enters into Christian experience and life, into the new covenant, into the Church. It is, in the last analysis, that which makes a man a Christian.

And in commenting on the phenomenon of the number of Christians who are having to complete their conversion, as it were, through a further experience, he asks pointedly: 'Has modern evangelism held forth the promise of the Spirit explicitly enough?' Indeed it could be asked: 'Is our proclamation of God's gift of salvation as a whole sufficiently comprehensive?'

There is no one term that adequately describes the 'experiences of completion' of which we have been speaking. 'The blessing of holiness', 'the blessing of a clean heart', 'baptism in the Spirit', remain deeply meaningful terms and will for many convey all that is needed. But for others they will have less helpful associations. We shall be considering other possible terms, but 'letting the Spirit be released within us' may prove illuminating for many. And yet, salvationists can reach right back into the history of their movement for a term that is uniquely rich in meaning and association: the term *full salvation*.

Our forefathers well understood that many of their new converts entered into a very partial experience of the blessing of salvation, and the promise of 'full salvation' was continually held out before them. The 'blessing of holiness' is indeed the completion of the experience of salvation. The special beauty of the old term 'full salvation' is that it makes this explicit.

Of course, what the converts in reality experienced was not so much salvation as 'half salvation'. They took hold only of part of the blessing that was being offered. In Wesley's phrase, they were

‘half Christians’. But later they were to complete in experience what potentially had been theirs all along. In other words, they were to experience *salvation in all its fullness*.

If we are looking for a phrase to sum up the meaning of the experience Samuel Brengle knew on that sunlit morning, it would probably be just that: *salvation in all its fullness*. That morning Brengle took hold of his rightful heritage as a son of God. He was sanctified, he was baptised in the Spirit—he entered into full salvation.

Let Francis Bottome, with the insight of the poet, describe the blessing:

Full salvation, full salvation,
Lo! the fountain, opened wide,
Streams through every land and nation
From the Saviour’s wounded side!
Full salvation,
Streams an endless crimson tide.

O the glorious revelation!
See the cleansing current flow,
Washing stains of condemnation
Whiter than the driven snow.
Full salvation,
O the rapturous bliss to know!

Love’s resistless current sweeping
All the regions deep within,
Thought and wish and senses keeping
Now, and every instant, clean.
Full salvation
From the guilt and power of sin.

Life immortal, Heaven descending,
Lo! my heart the Spirit’s shrine;
God and man in oneness blending;
O what fellowship is mine!
Full salvation,
Raised in Christ to life divine.

Care and doubting, gloom and sorrow,
Fear and shame are mine no more;
Faith knows naught of dark tomorrow,
For my Saviour goes before.
Full salvation,
Full and free for evermore.

Though in one sense the task of this book has been completed, its purpose would not be fulfilled without some words of personal guidance to the seeking soul. In the following two chapters a wideranging enquiry is set out in conversational style between author and a seeker after truth that attempts to deal with a number of questions relating to our search for spiritual fullness and how we ourselves might enter into salvation in all its fullness.

8

Seeking spiritual fullness

I AM a salvationist born and bred, and I have followed with interest all you have said about moments of spiritual breakthrough. I feel there may be something here for me. I am an active salvationist, a bandsman, songster and young people's worker, and I enjoy my service, but I have often wondered whether I was not missing out spiritually somewhere. I went to the mercy seat when I was seven, and though the occasion was significant to me at the time, I have since wondered whether anything actually took place. Then I went through a difficult patch in my teens, but at youth councils one year I went forward and gave my all to God. For a few days after that I felt different. I felt something had really happened, but then it began to fade, and after a week or two I came to the conclusion that it was just the same old me back again.

Since then there have been certain occasions when I have felt close to God, when, for example, the band went specialising and there was a marvellous break in the Sunday night prayer meeting and many seekers came forward, but on the whole I cannot claim to be very much spiritually alive. I pray each day and sometimes read my Bible, but I must admit it is something of an effort. When I hear of others speaking of how real God is to them, and hear testimonies to great spiritual encounters like the ones you have mentioned and how it made them effective people both inwardly and outwardly, I feel a very real longing for something similar to happen to me. Of late I have become increasingly dissatisfied with myself and unhappy. I feel I am reaching out after something, but so far nothing has happened.

There are dozens of questions I want to ask you, but before I ask you about further experiences of God can I say that the thing that bothers me most in all this talk about further experiences is that I do not seem to have had a first experience! I cannot remember a single occasion in my life when I have felt a divine breakthrough, as you call it. I sometimes wonder whether I am really saved. Perhaps

I am still outside the Kingdom. If one has not had a definite and datable conversion experience, can one call oneself a born-again Christian?

You touch here on one of the most vital questions for all who have been brought up within a Christian setting, and particularly in a non-sacramental setting like the Army. Strange as it may seem, even after 2,000 years there is a considerable divergence of thought within Christianity as to how those who are born into the Church are born into the faith—are regenerated or ‘born again’. The Bible is not very explicit on this point.

No one has any difficulty in understanding the way a non-Christian can come to faith and be regenerated. What happened to Paul on the Damascus road poses no problems for the theologian. He was gloriously born again, he was converted, he got saved—all phrases meaning the same thing.

It is when we come to those nurtured in the faith from birth that the theoretical problems start. Some Christians have a sacramental approach to the question and hold that when a child is baptised he is then regenerated. The practice of baptising infants has generated a lot of heat at various times in Church history, and we may not be able to agree with the rationale behind it, but the underlying theory is at least clear.

But, as we have noted, those that hold this view in a sense only postpone the real-life problem until later. What are they to make of a teenager who was baptised as an infant but who bears none of the marks of Christ upon him? Sometimes the attitude has been that his behaviour is a great shame but that the teenager is nevertheless ‘born again’, an approach which does not always commend the Christian faith to others. And sometimes the attitude has been—as was John Wesley’s opinion—that what had been gained through infant baptism had obviously since been lost and must be regained through a conversion experience.

But non-sacramental Christians like ourselves, and those who cannot agree with infant baptism, also have their problems, and the problem is to try and define the actual moment when the child, reared in a Christian home, is born again. Where our thinking differs from those who believe in child baptism is that we hold that ‘salvation’ must be consciously received through faith and

repentance. Here again there is no real problem with a child who comes new to the faith and is overwhelmed by the good news, seeks Jesus as his Saviour and is wonderfully converted. The Bible nowhere says that conversion is for adults only. That children of even very tender age can know and experience the kind of divine breakthrough we have been illustrating has been demonstrated again and again. But what about the child who has been taught to pray and to love God at his mother's knee? Must he be expected to be able to give the date and time at which the work was done?

The answer can only be a firm no. There are many Christians who were reared in a loving and godly atmosphere who cannot recall or describe the moment of their regeneration. When it actually happened is God's secret. Perhaps it was that moment of understanding and outgoing love towards God during prayer time one evening, or in a moment of spontaneous contribution and faith, or in that meeting now only dimly remembered. Who knows? Only God himself.

William Booth was quite specific on this point. In *The Training of Children* he poses the question, 'May not children grow up into salvation without knowing the exact moment of conversion?' and proceeds to answer: 'Yes, it may be so; and in the future we trust this will be the usual way in which children will be brought into the Kingdom. When the parents are godly, and the children are surrounded by holy influences and examples from their birth, and trained up in the spirit of their early dedication, they will doubtless come to know and love and trust their Saviour in the ordinary course of things.'

'The Holy Ghost', he continues, 'will take possession of them from the first. Mothers and fathers will, as it were, put them into the Saviour's arms in their swaddling clothes, and He will take them, and bless them, and sanctify them from the very womb, and make them His own, without their knowing the hour or the place when they pass from the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of Light. In fact with such little ones it shall never be very dark, for their natural birth shall be, as it were in the spiritual twilight, which begins with the dim dawn, and increases gradually until the noontide brightness is reached.'

The all-important criterion as to regeneration is not when or how it happened, but whether I am now alive in Christ, or in the old phrase, whether 'Jesus saves me now'. Christianity is not so much

about a birth as about a life. For some people the change from night to day is like shutters suddenly being removed and the light streaming in. For others, as William Booth describes, there is no conscious memory of any shutters being there. From as far back as they can remember they have been open to God, and have watched the dawn turn into full day. But what does it matter that they cannot pin-point a precise moment when day began as long as they are living in daylight? No one is expected to be able to describe their moment of natural birth in order to prove that they are alive!

Well, put like that I suppose I am 'alive in Christ', but I don't feel very much alive, if you know what I mean. I believe in God, and I suppose you could say that 'Jesus saves me now'—but it all seems unreal somehow, as if it is a matter of words rather than actuality. Is that because I haven't yet got the Holy Spirit? Perhaps that is the missing dimension.

If you have been born again then you already have the Holy Spirit, to use your phrase. A Christian is by definition one who is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. It is that fact that makes you into a Christian. The couplet from the song book says it well:

Soon as my all I ventured on the atoning blood,
The Holy Spirit entered and I was born of God.

Now, admittedly, you sometimes hear testimonies like: 'Jesus came into my heart when I was saved, but it was not until many years later that I received the Holy Spirit.' And a testimony like that can give the misleading impression that the Trinity has somehow fallen apart and that it is possible to *experience* the persons of the Godhead separately and individually. But however helpful and necessary trinitarian doctrine is to a full understanding of the nature of God, it was never meant to suggest that there is more than one God. In *experience* there is only one divine reality that we can encounter, and the testifier in this case is adding a dash of interpretation to his testimony.

To speak of that reality which indwells us, sometimes as God, sometimes as Christ, and sometimes as the Holy Spirit, can be helpful as long as it does not obscure the fact that from an experiential angle there is only one reality which can be known. Note how in this famous passage from Romans, Paul moves with ease from calling that indwelling reality 'God's Spirit', 'the Spirit of Christ', 'Christ' and 'the Spirit'—but the sense of the paragraph makes it clear that he is speaking of one and the same person:

You are on the spiritual level, if only *God's Spirit* dwells within you; and if a man does not possess the *Spirit of Christ*, he is no Christian. But if *Christ* is dwelling within you, then although the body is a dead thing because you sinned, yet the spirit is life itself because you have been justified. Moreover, if the *Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead* dwells within you, then the God who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give new life to your mortal bodies through his indwelling Spirit (Romans 8:9-11) (author's italics).

But it is not only in testimonies that the separation between the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit appears. Any teaching which sees the 'baptism of the Spirit' as a distinct second work tends naturally to speak of the Spirit being *received* at that point, and one can forgive the busy Christian for failing to note the small print which says that the Spirit was also at work in his conversion.

So you can be quite sure that the Holy Spirit is already at work within you. And if you do not feel that 'streams of living water are flowing out from within you', as Jesus described the person alive with Spirit, then it is important that we discover what it is that is hindering you from enjoying *in experience* what the New Testament tells us you already possess potentially.

You mean I ought to seek a 'baptism in the Spirit'?

You need to seek for the *release* of the Spirit within you. Whether you want to call this 'baptism of the Spirit' is up to you. The trouble with the phrase is that it is almost impossible to use it these days without bringing into play the narrow and rigid associations, which have been shown to be unscriptural. But it is an evocative, biblical and indeed beautiful phrase, and if we could use it in the wider sense in which it was used in the early Army then all would be well.

'We have refused to wear the uniform of a second blessing theology,' states Thomas A. Smail about the renewal movement, 'and the question is therefore whether we can, without being shot down, continue to fly a "baptism in the Spirit" banner!' His answer is, yes. The phrase ought still to be used even if it means painstaking explaining. But others feel that the phrase is now too 'loaded' and that we ought to seek for some other term. He quotes Canon Michael Green's plea: 'Could we not bear to call the rose by some other name? It will smell just as sweet.'

The term *release* of the Spirit has been suggested. Also *discovery*

of the Spirit, *manifestation* of the Spirit, *renewal* or *rekindling* of the Spirit, or seeking the *fullness* of, or being *filled* by the Spirit. None of them is quite right. Perhaps you will find the word-picture of *full salvation* helpful to you. But, of course, it is the experience of the Spirit which is of ultimate importance, not its label.

But if I read you right, the New Testament does not describe such an experience. What scriptural support is there then for seeking a further blessing?

The New Testament as a whole provides all the scriptural support you need if you feel spiritually hungry. When you read its promises and its descriptions of abundant living, you cannot but agree with Canon J. B. Phillips who, after spending 14 years translating its pages, recorded: 'It is the sheer spiritual zest and drive of the New Testament which fills one with both wonder and wistfulness. It is as though in these pages there lies the secret of human life. The secret is not mere theory or ideal, but a fresh quality of living worked out in terms of ordinary human life and circumstances. Above all, the general impression is of something supernatural, of supra-human truth and a supra-human way of living. The wistfulness arises, of course, from the comparison between the shining, blazing certainty of the New Testament writers and the comparatively tentative and uncertain faith and hope we meet so often in present-day Christianity.'

The Scriptures, both directly and indirectly, show us what life in the Spirit ought to be like. As co-heirs with Christ the promises are meant for us. If there is a problem it must be on our side, not God's. We must therefore open ourselves further that he may deepen the work within and through us.

Reading the New Testament through and comparing its 'suprahuman way of living' with our own can be a humbling and painful experience. But from such an exercise can come new faith and a new vision of what God longs to accomplish through us. And if we add the testimonies of contemporary Christians who say that they are already experiencing a new power of the Spirit in their lives an almost unanswerable case builds up.

But are these intense spiritual experiences open to everyone? Could it not be that the New Testament records the experience of people who had a great gift for spiritual experience, and that the

ordinary average Christian functioned at a much lower level of spiritual awareness? Is it not also possible that the people who have experienced renewal have a particular kind of personality which makes them more sensitive to things spiritual? How can I know whether such an experience is for me?

These are vital questions and we must spend some time answering them. First, let us define carefully what we are talking about. We have agreed that a Christian is someone who by definition is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. The question now arises, is it always possible for a believer to *feel* this indwelling, or does it remain more an intellectual conviction, or even a matter of faith for some, perhaps due to their temperament and general make-up? Our reply must be guarded. Towards the end of his life John Wesley wrote some words in a letter which stands as a warning to us. 'When fifty years ago my brother Charles and I, in the simplicity of our hearts, told the good people of England that unless they *knew* their sins forgiven, they were under the wrath and curse of God, I marvel, Melville, they did not stone us! The Methodists, I hope, know better now; we preach assurance as we always did, as a common privilege of the children of God; but we do not enforce it, under the pain of damnation, denounced on all who enjoy it not.'

After 50 years of pastoral experience Wesley was driven to the conclusion that the *experience* of religion, by feeling or mental intuition, was 'a common privilege of the children of God'—but he had to allow that for some the Christian path has to be trod more by faith than by feelings.

Now, I grant to you that the testimonies chosen for our consideration were chosen because of their vividness and colour. This is really the only way open to us for the study of testimonies, but we need to make due allowance all the time for the fact that the experiences described are likely to be reproduced in paler form in the lives of the average believer. But there is really no doubt that some people have a greater natural capacity for religious feeling than others. They are gifted in that way just as some are more musically gifted than others. Their temperaments make them especially sensitive to experiences of the Spirit and they therefore experience powerfully and dramatically what to others will be a hardly discernible emotional ripple. Moments of divine breakthrough can therefore range, in Thomas Kelly's words, 'from sublime heights to very mild moments of lift and very faint glimpses of glory'.

All people have *some* capacity for direct spiritual experience. One of the most striking features of the Holy Spirit renewal is the diversity of the people in whom the Spirit has been released. Young, old, high-brow, low-brow, light-hearted, serious, introverts, extroverts, modernists, fundamentalists—there seems to be no common denominator which gives us a clue. Many people who started by thinking of themselves as temperamentally less responsive to spiritual experience have found themselves, to their surprise, deeply stirred. The basic capacity within the human consciousness is there but, of course, the intensity will vary from person to person, for psychological reasons as well as reasons of faith, not to mention God's sovereign freedom to work more powerfully through one of his servants than another.

Some people's spiritual life will be highly 'charismatic'. There will be plenty of fireworks. Great uplifts will often be followed by the deepest depths. A sense of the miraculous will pervade everything. They will feel with intensity, both love and joy—and pain. For others it will be a much quieter walk. No great ups or downs—just deep serenity, with the occasional shaft of joy, as they walk in the Spirit.

Always keep in mind that *feeling* God's presence is not the only and by no means the most important factor pointing to the Spirit's work in you. It is the emergence of the fruit of the Spirit in your life and character, those gracious Christlike qualities, and sensing yourself as being used in God's service through some of the natural or supernatural gifts of the Spirit, which are the real tests. In Galatians 5:22, Paul speaks of the harvest, or fruit, of the Spirit as being 'love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, fidelity, gentleness and self-control.' These are qualities of character and states of the mind, as opposed to the more service-orientated 'gifts' of the Spirit. Any spiritual experience which does not give some evidence of the fruit of the Spirit is to be suspected. Remember how little support John Wesley got from his feeling states following the Aldersgate experience? And yet how mightily he was being used by God!

I once asked a much respected commissioner, a saintly man of God, to tell me of the greatest moment of spiritual feeling he had known.

'The nearest I have come to a "heavenly" experience,' he replied, 'was when I was a sergeant at the training college. We

sergeants were allowed to attend the annual officers' councils conducted by Commissioner Samuel Hurren. They were mighty gatherings. The commissioner was a wonderful orator and he was also a master at conducting meetings, using new songs and melodies that gripped us. All of us sergeants seem to have experienced a similar uplift because I remember how we used to gather for extra prayer meetings in the mess. The days following the councils would bring back waves of emotion. That was the time when the song "Come Ye Yourselves Apart" was first introduced, and for years afterwards the reading or the quiet humming of this song in my morning devotions would bring back tender feelings and mellowness of spirit. But the heavenly experience gradually subsided, however hard we tried to hold on to it, and in a week or 10 days the feelings were gone and I myself, as far as I could judge, was back to "normal".

No earth-shattering experience to report, but rather a now faint memory of events long past. And yet that the commissioner was used of God throughout his life there was no doubt.

You ask me how you can know whether a spiritual breakthrough experience can be yours. I can only reply in Wesley's words, that it is the common privilege of the children of God to *know* through experience the power of God at work in them. The discovery may bowl you over or it may be a faint glimpse of glory or you may see it in the evidence of God working *through* you, as was the case with Wesley, but, unless you are part of that small minority who are called to walk by faith only, you will *know*.

But if I am one of these low-keyed people who do not experience these things very vividly, could it be that the little I already know of the Spirit, from time to time, is all that I am capable of or that God will grant me? Perhaps the Spirit is already at work and I don't need this release or filling at all.

This is certainly a possibility. The test is whether your spiritual life is satisfying to you. There is always something of a longing in the heart of every Christian to be drawn nearer to his Lord, and yet that longing can co-exist with a deep sense of joy and peace and satisfaction. But it is when we become dissatisfied with ourselves and our spiritual attainment, when we find ourselves hungering and thirsting for righteousness as never before, almost agonising for reality in our religion (all part of the Holy Spirit's preparatory

work), that we know that God is wanting to break through in some new way. You try and tell one who is hungering, starving for something more, that he is already satisfied. You try and tell a seeker that he is already a finder. It just does not work. And it is by this test that you will know whether God is drawing you on to some further revelation in your spiritual life.

I was interested in the great variety of the personal experiences which you instanced earlier. How do you account for the variety and how might it affect me personally?

The constant factor in the variety of human spiritual experience is, of course, the Spirit of God. If, for a moment, we think of the Spirit in more impersonal terms, as a power, we can then say that the divine power *acts* upon us and that all we do is to *re-act* to the divine touch. In a sense the initial action will always be the same, the divine power is the constant factor, but the reaction to the divine inflow will vary according to the infinite permutations of human circumstances, needs and desires.

A person's basic psychological make-up will therefore have an important bearing on how the divine touch will be manifested. We have already noted that some people appear to have a greater capacity for religious experience than others, but whether we are the cool, logical, reasoning type of personality, or the warm, intuitive, feeling type will also tend to shape the form of the actual experience. What to one will predominantly seem like an utterly compelling flash of insight, will to the other seem like a warm sense of emotional well-being, but equally as compelling. You will remember that we divided the testimonies according to the stress on what was *felt*, *perceived* and *received*. All intense spiritual experience probably contains the three ingredients, but the proportions of the mix varies according to our basic personality.

But this is only helpful to a degree. The Spirit is not impersonal. We are not opening ourselves up to a blind force but to a God of love who knows our needs and understands our expectations. It is therefore more helpful to think of the Spirit as coming to the aid of our infirmities and responding to our spoken or unspoken prayers.

That is why, as Thomas A. Smail points out, 'the most prominent feature of the experience for some will be a new sense of close-

ness to Christ; for others it will be the discovery of a new urge to pray and reality in prayer; for others a new sense of openness to people and of effective relationship with them; for others an entering into victory at a salient point of moral defeat; and for yet others a new boldness to be Christ's witness'. Of course, sometimes it will seem that the Spirit in his generosity goes way beyond our specific petitions, but you can be quite sure that he will not force upon you gifts that you do not want.

You mention gifts. What about the gifts of the Spirit? Should I expect to receive these gifts? Should I pray for specific gifts?

You ought to consider very carefully what the New Testament has to say about gifts of the Spirit. The main section dealing with the subject is 1 Corinthians 12-14. 'These chapters are like a honey sandwich,' observes David C. K. Watson in *One in the Spirit*, 'with love as the honey in the middle. Unfortunately, some lick the honey and ignore the rest of the sandwich, which is missing the whole point in Chapter 13; while others swallow the bread but forget about the honey, and that is bad for the spiritual digestion! It is therefore important to stress the "both/and" aspects of these chapters.'

'Notice', continues David Watson, 'the great variety of gifts. In verses 8-10 we have nine of the more remarkable ones; verses 28-30 add apostles, teachers, helpers, administrators; Ephesians 4:11 includes evangelists and pastors; and Romans 12 speaks about serving, exhorting, giving (money and aid) and "acts of mercy". Thus, depending on how we group these gifts, there are either seventeen, nineteen or twenty-one distinct gifts that are mentioned in the Scriptures.'

But it is unlikely that even this list is exhaustive. The New Testament is not a volume of systematic theology. The Spirit's work is infinitely varied and it would be beyond any human being to attempt to list all the possible ways in which the Spirit might work through us. But the New Testament lists give us a starting point.

Paul speaks of the Spirit 'distributing the gifts separately to each individual at will', and that 'in each of us the Spirit is manifested in one particular way, for some useful purpose', and that 'the higher gifts are those you should aim at' (1 Corinthians 12:7, 31).

Yes, you should expect to receive gifts of the Spirit. This in a sense is only another way of talking about the need for more power, or more love for souls, phrases that we often use. Paul points out that the Spirit will gift us each in some particular way, and that when we each fulfil our role, the Church as a whole can meet the needs of the world. This does not mean that we are limited to only one gift, but rather that one particular gift will be our main contribution to the body of Christ.

Sometimes powers are granted to us for certain occasions only. Thus some people have felt an inner urge to mediate the power of healing in some particular instance, and have discovered that the gift was there, but for that occasion only. The Christian is God's instrument and God can perform his miracles through him as need arises.

Should you pray for specific gifts? It seems as if God plants within us the desire for the gifts that he wants to give us! The Quakers talk about Christians being given 'a concern' for something, and we talk about people feeling led in some direction or other. These are different ways of speaking of a real fact of experience. God *does* implant within us different concerns. Some Christians feel particularly strongly about the outcasts of society, some have a passionate concern for evangelism, others feel their task is to build up the saints, or to teach. This is, of course, the whole point of Paul's various lists of functions within the Church. And just as God gives different concerns to different people, so he grants the gifts that will enable us to fulfil the allotted role. How often have we not heard that God equips those he calls? This is the same truth clothed in different words.

So if God has given you a 'concern' and your own need points in the direction of a gift listed in the New Testament or even one not listed, pray specifically for that gift. Our forefathers continually singled out the gift they called 'love for souls'. We know what they meant and we also know how abundantly that was granted to so many of them.

Can one guarantee that a sick person will be healed through a powerful infilling, as was mentioned in some of the testimonies, or that people bound by phobias or compulsions will be set free?

No, that sort of guarantee cannot be given. The kind of miracles you mention do happen again and again, but it would be unfair of

me not to point out that they do not always follow. Why this is so is one of the unanswerable mysteries of life. Why are some people healed through spiritual means and others not? Why are some released from their fears in an instant, while for others it is a long process, and others again never find complete release? It could be a lack of faith on the part of the person concerned, for Jesus said, 'According to your faith be it unto you,' but that suggestion seems far too glib and easy and cold when we are faced with actual instances of human suffering. It is like blaming the sufferers for their misfortune. The degree of faith of some sufferers is so intense that it becomes heart-rending to watch. Could it be, then, that the Spirit, the wind that bloweth where it listeth, for some reason withholds healing or release? That would seem to be totally contrary to the nature of God. So we are no further forward. We are faced with a mystery.

David Wilkerson, in his *Beyond the Cross and the Switchblade*, tells of a deep-seated fear of flying which he felt was crippling his ministry. To get rid of it he tried 'every technique known, spiritual and temporal'. He tried 'praying, fasting, relinquishment, seeking deliverance, requesting intercession', but nothing worked. Someone suggested to him that he ought to think of it as a 'structural weakness' and to learn to live with it, and adapt his life accordingly. At first this seemed utterly repugnant to David. An admission of defeat. But in the chapter entitled 'The fear I couldn't conquer' he tells how eventually he was led to accept this fear as a part of him, to look at it like Paul's famous thorn in the flesh, and to adapt his travelling plans accordingly.

He concludes: 'Many of us are built with structural weaknesses which we are not able to conquer. Paul says they are there to keep us humble. When we face these, admit our inability ever to overcome them, He will—if we just ask Him—make a way of escape that we may be able to bear it.'

What was Paul's testimony? 'Three times I begged the Lord to rid me of it but his answer was: "My grace is all you need; power comes to its full strength in weakness." I shall therefore prefer to find my joy and pride in the very things that are my weakness; and then the power of Christ will come and rest upon me. Hence I am well content, for Christ's sake, with weakness, contempt, persecution, hardship, and frustration; for when I am weak, then I am strong' (2 Corinthians 12:9-10).

Great sensitivity of spiritual discernment is, of course, needed to distinguish between a 'structural weakness' which God wants us to bear gracefully and a flaw which can be remedied. But God has his own ways of letting us know the truth about ourselves.

9

Entering into spiritual fullness

WHAT must I do to experience 'salvation in all its fullness' in my own life?

WE sometimes talk about our part in a spiritual encounter as the fulfilling of certain conditions. We say, for example, that there are certain conditions on which God saves us. Now if what you are seeking is in fact a completion, or fulfilment in experience, of the work of salvation, it should not surprise us if we find that the conditions are exactly the same. If in our experience we have only found 'salvation' in the sense of forgiveness and of belonging to the family of God, when all along God meant us to find 'full salvation' and to enjoy all the promises he has made, then it is because somehow we did not fulfil the conditions sufficiently adequately.

The conditions of salvation are crystallised in two words—repentance and faith. Whatever other words and metaphors and illustrations we might choose to use to describe our part in seeking for the experience of salvation—which includes our forgiveness and being born again as a child of God through the Holy Spirit—they all boil down to these two basic ideas. We repent, we turn away in sorrow from the past, we confess our sins and renounce them for ever, and we consecrate ourselves to God. And then we put our faith in God, we trust him to accept us and do his work within us, according to his promise.

The literature which springs from a background of sanctification or baptism in the Spirit teaching gives us comprehensive lists of the conditions which must be fulfilled for the further blessing to be bestowed. But it is interesting to note, though not surprising, that all of these conditions can easily be grouped under our two headings of faith and repentance. This gives us further confirmation of the fact that what we are seeking is not a different but a deeper work of grace.

Let us look more closely at the cluster of ideas surrounding the word repentance. Often it is not the more obvious sins of commission that trouble us most when seeking a fullness experience, but it is rather the sins of omission, the good we ought to have done, which trouble us. We feel there is still too much of self and that we have failed to yield ourselves fully to God and to love him with all our mind, heart and soul. The idea of consecration therefore becomes all important.

We repent of our lack of willingness to yield ourselves completely to God, and we abandon ourselves to his will. We say to him that we are his for time and eternity and that 'Thy will shall be fulfilled in me, whatever the consequences be.'

Because of the lack of self-knowledge from which most people suffer, this emptying of ourselves needs to be a continual process. The Holy Spirit, throughout our early life, will be revealing to us areas of our personality which have not yet been surrendered, and 'our consecration must keep pace with God's revelation'. Spiritual crisis points arise only because of our failure to expand our faith and commitment to match God's unfolding plan for us.

'This consecration', writes Samuel Brengle in *Helps to Holiness*, 'consists in a perfect putting off of your own will, your disposition, temper, desires, likes and dislikes, and a perfect putting on of Christ's will, Christ's disposition, temper, desires, likes and dislikes. In short, perfect consecration is a putting off self and a putting on Christ; a giving up your own will in all things and receiving the will of Jesus instead. This may seem well-nigh impossible and very disagreeable to you; but if you mean business for eternity, and will intelligently and unflinchingly look at this strait gate through which so few enter, and tell the Lord that you want to go through that way, though it cost you your life, the Holy Spirit will show you that it is not only possible, but easy and delightful thus to yield yourself to God.'

But complete consecration of themselves to God is a hurdle from which many of God's children appear to shy away.

When it comes to faith this is again but an extension of the faith that leads to salvation. We need to be intellectually convinced that the kind of life in the Spirit we have been talking about is indeed open to us. Such faith will come to us, as I have mentioned, by the

reading of Scripture, and devotional writings, supplemented by hearing the preaching of the word, and testimonies of those who already know this life. Faith in that sense is not something we can work up. It is something that arises spontaneously within us when we expose ourselves to the full impact of God's revelation in Christ.

But at some point or other there must come that moment of heart trust when we, in the old phrase, claim the promise for ourselves. This concept is not without its practical difficulties so we must deal with these.

Before you do, could I just mention that if consecration and faith are the conditions for the release of the Spirit or full salvation then I feel that I have many times reached that point. I have fulfilled the conditions, but nothing ever seems to happen. Time and again I have surrendered my all to God, genuinely so, and I have believed the promises of Scripture and put my trust in him—but nothing happens. Why?

Your problem is shared by many. It may well be that your consecration is not so complete as you would like to think, and that God is getting two conflicting messages from you, or it could be related to this question of what is called *appropriating* faith. Let's look at them in turn.

There is a line in a song from the musical *Glory!* which gives us the key to successful seeking after spiritual blessing. 'If you want it, it's yours!' Yes, believe it or not, the line says it all. If you *really* want it, it's yours for the taking. God is like a generous, loving father, who longs to shower his gifts on us. It is not a matter of wresting blessings by brute importunity from a reluctant God. He longs to give, and we know from what Jesus told us that God takes the initiative in these matters.

But why, then, does he not answer my cry and rend the heavens and come down? The answer may be quite simple; perhaps at heart I do not want him to! Sometimes the prayer of our lips does not correspond with the prayer of our heart. Or in more psychological terms, sometimes the prayer of my conscious mind is being contradicted by the prayer my subconscious mind is lifting up to God. And we do not even have to think of it in such psychological jargon. If my set addresses to God at special, holy times, are continually being contradicted by the way I order my days and by the value I place on certain things, hopes, aims and ambitions, and

the general set of my life, then these are an indication of what the *real* me wants, and my praying—however sincere it may seem to me—is not representative of the full me at all. God answers the prayers that arise from the *real* me, not those of the religious me which surfaces from time to time.

H. E. Fosdick speaks of this in *The Meaning of Prayer* as prayer of the dominant desire. ‘Many of the speeches we have addressed to God that we have called our prayers are not real prayers at all. They are not our dominant desires. They do not express the inward set and determination of our lives. What we pray for in the closet is not the thing that daily we are seeking with undiscourageable craving. And prayer that is not dominant desire is too weak to achieve anything.’ God answers the prayer of our dominant desire.

Now this may help us to understand why the longed-for breakthrough does not come. But it still leaves us with a real problem. How do I reach the point where the real me wants the Spirit to be released, the point where my dominant desire is to walk in the Spirit?

Some people have called this process wrestling with God, but it is much more accurate to talk of wrestling with myself. The personality for a season turns into a battlefield as the spiritual and the carnal self set to. And one by one the unworthy motives and subconscious resistances are unmasked and dealt with. For some it is a period of intense mental and spiritual agony.

What are some of these voluntary and involuntary hindrances to liberty within the personality? The list of possibilities would be immensely long, but fortunately the Holy Spirit has a way of putting his finger on our particular problems, so that we are not left wondering. They can range from grudges held against others to fear of ‘letting go and letting God’, fear of ridicule, fear of becoming ‘too spiritual’, fear of trusting the future to God’s hands, fear that surrender will lead ultimately to material loss, or loss of prospects. It could be wrong actions, thoughts or attitudes which we refuse to part with. Or a shrinking from the suffering of the cross and from being a co-worker with God in seeking to save the world. And, as Simon Tugwell comments, ‘What we are up against, as we seek to enter more fully our Christian heritage, is often not sin so much as psychological blockages and mental hangups. What is required is a transformation at a level inaccessible to reason and deliberation alone.’

Many people, including Brengle, witness to this time of travail, of inner darkness, before the dawning of peace and light. But it is during this process that the desire for a spiritual breakthrough, through the Spirit's preparatory work, becomes the dominant one. And when, at last, you *really* want it—it's yours!

Let me add that other people, with beautiful, childish simplicity of faith and consecration, appear to walk with the utmost of ease into spiritual release. They seem to be the naturals in the Kingdom. The rest have to struggle to enter.

Well, I think I must be one of the struggling kind, but perhaps part of my problem lies in this business of claiming God's work of grace by faith. I remember once when I went to the mercy seat that the counsellor suggested I should claim 'the blessing' by faith, and believe that something had happened within me, even though all my intuition told me nothing had in fact happened. Well, I kept this up for a day or two, but it seemed like one big pretence, and gradually I sort of forgot about it. Nothing ever came of it, and I am therefore wary of the whole idea of claiming by faith.

Here we come to the crux of the matter. There is a real danger that we shall end up as eternal seekers unless at some point we reach out and grasp that for which we are seeking. Some people have been seeking reality in their religion for years, on and off. They have waited, prayed, sought, fasted, knelt at the mercy seat, had hands laid on them, done everything, in fact, except receive the gift that is offered.

Now I admit that there can be an element of God's timing in all of this. It is no use urging people to take a step of faith for which they are not inwardly ready. Arriving at complete consecration may take a long time for some. All kinds of psychological barriers may have to come down. And arriving at intellectual acceptance of the New Testament revelation may also be a lengthy process. But allowing for all of that, there does come the moment when the seeker knows intuitively that the time is ripe. He is within the reach of the promised land. One step more and he will be there.

It is at this point that appropriating, as contrasted with intellectual, faith comes into play. As Dr Sangster puts it, 'Faith steps forward and grasps by anticipation the thing which is to be.' What in effect happens is that the seeker so trusts God to be true to his promises that he accepts *by faith* that the work is done, and thanks

God and praises him for fulfilling his promises, and then proceeds to live *as if* the work of grace has been wrought. Sooner or later the inward confirmation will come.

It is like Peter walking on the water. Unless at some point he had stepped out of the boat and actually trusted the Lord's word that the water would support him, he would never have known it in experience. The eternal seekers are the ones who hesitate to take the step over the boatside. 'It's too risky,' they say. And so they remain in the boat. And they never discover that the water can support them.

'I tell you,' said Jesus, 'whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it and it will be yours' (Mark 11:24).

David C. K. Watson: 'The nature of faith is to take a promise of God, believe it to be true, claim it humbly and yet confidently, and then start praising God that *it is already true*, whether or not the experience of its truth comes immediately.'

Samuel Brengle:

If we give ourselves to God, there is but one thing more to do; that is, to take the blessing by faith and wait patiently on Him for the witness of the Spirit that it is ours.

'A nobleman whose son was sick came to Jesus, and besought Him that He would come down, and heal his son; for he was at the point of death. Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe. The nobleman saith unto Him, Sir, come down ere my child die. Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. *And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him,* and he went his way' (John 4:47-50). The next day when he got home he found his boy well. Hallelujah! That is the kind of faith that walks off with the blessing.

Jesus will not fail you at this point if you patiently look to Him and hold fast your faith. Again and again I have seen people burst into the light when they have consecrated their all and believed in this way.

And let it be said, it was true to Brengle's own experience. He placed his all on the altar on the Saturday morning. It was an act of faith that brought him a measure of peace and joy. From the pulpit on the Sunday he witnessed to what he had done. But it was not until Tuesday morning that the fire descended from Heaven, consuming the offering and filling him with glory.

Another window into the same truth is the whimsical picture that Dr Evan Hopkins draws for us, of three men in a parade. First comes Mr Fact, then behind him Mr Faith, who is followed by Mr Feeling. They are in the correct order, but the trouble is that Mr Faith keeps wanting to turn round to see if Mr Feeling is following. But as soon as he does that he takes his eyes off Mr Fact and is in difficulties. 'If only Mr Faith would keep his eyes on Mr Fact,' says the doctor, 'he would find Mr Feeling following close behind.'

The facts are the great promises of the New Testament and it is on these that we base our faith. The spiritual life is not seated in the emotions but in the will, and when after much consideration I 'will to believe', I fix my intention and I fix my eyes on the great facts before me. Now, my feelings may rebel and send me all kinds of contradictory messages to divert my attention from the facts before me, but the testimony of all who have walked this way is that if I persevere, if Mr Faith keeps his eyes on Mr Fact, then Mr Feeling will eventually come into step behind.

I can see that you are troubled about this point, and knowing that you have been disillusioned before, I can understand why. But a point that might help you is to remember that no one expects you to make extravagant 'claims' about your feelings, claims which your emotions might flatly contradict. It is no use thanking and praising God for the rapturous joy, heavenly love and earthshattering power you feel if you feel none of these things. God does not expect us to become liars. No, your claims of faith must be centred on the facts, not the feelings.

Let me try to describe to you how you might approach the moment of discovery, though this is such an intensely personal matter that it is difficult to say anything very specific.

You might well feel you ought to start by reviewing some of the great statements in the New Testament that have inflamed your faith, the promises which you feel are beckoning you on. You will no doubt have certain texts in mind that seem vested with special meaning for you. Passages like John 3; John 14-17; Acts 2; Romans 8; 1 Corinthians 12-14; 1 John 1, are continual reminders of the reality which is promised to us. You might end with the classic words of Jesus:

And so I say to you, ask, and you will receive; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened. For everyone who asks receives, he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

Is there a father among you who will offer his son a snake when he asks for fish, or a scorpion when he asks for an egg? If you, then, bad as you are, know how to give your children what is good for them, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him! (Luke 11:9-13).

Then thank God for all he has already done in your life. Thank him for Jesus and thank him because he has made you a child of God. But then review in prayer your failures of the past, your sins and shortcomings which the Holy Spirit has been pointing out to you. Thank him for revealing them all so clearly to you. Then renounce them and ask God to forgive you and to cleanse you. Accept his forgiveness by faith and thank him for it. You are now a clean vessel.

Then 'offer your very (self) to him, a living sacrifice, dedicated and fit for his acceptance' (Romans 12:1). Place yourself unreservedly in God's hands; yield, surrender, abandon, consecrate yourself to him. As Brengle said, you may have to go over this a number of times until you are sure you have given your all. Certain verses from the song book might be of help at this point, or words of consecration like the following, which are quoted in *Fire in Coventry*, by Stephen Verney:

I am no longer my own, but Thine. Put me to what Thou wilt, rank me with whom Thou wilt; put me to doing; put me to suffering; let me be employed for Thee or brought low for Thee; let me be full, let me be empty; let me have all things, let me have nothing; I freely and heartily yield all things to Thy pleasure and disposal.

And now ask God to release the Holy Spirit in your life, to come in fullness, to baptise you, to fill you, to grant you salvation in all its fullness according to the promises you have just read. Use whatever words have the deepest meaning for you, but ask him to penetrate every pore of your being and to fill you with himself. Ask him to refine you, to mould you. Ask him to make you more Christlike. And ask him to bestow on you all the resources of the Spirit. If you are favoured with a good imagination then try to visualise it happening—God filling the empty vessel with his glory and releasing any inhibitions within you.

And now comes the step of faith. Thank God for his promises and tell him that you are taking him at his word. That if 'the promise is to you, and to your children, and to all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God may call' (Acts 2:39), then

you are going to take it to include *you* as well. And simply accept the gift by faith. Begin to thank him and to praise him for filling you with himself. 'Thank you, Lord. I believe that at this moment your Spirit is being released within me, that you are filling me with your wonderful fullness, that your power is coursing through me, and that you are making me alive in the Spirit and giving me new spiritual power so that I might be a more effective servant of yours.'

Notice the present tense of the verbs. Faith exercised in a future tense amounts to nothing. That is like staying in the boat. But after you have thanked God in the present tense, affirm your step of faith even further by praising him in the past tense. Thank him for having given the gift you asked for. Praise him for having granted what you sought.

Now notice that nowhere have there been any claims about feelings. You have accepted by faith the fact of the Spirit's release within you. Let Mr Faith keep his eyes on Mr Fact and all will eventually be well. Though in one sense the step of faith needs to be as determined and heroic as Job's—'though he slay me yet will I trust him'—there should also be an element of happy anticipation and eager expectation—almost a looking for the miraculous. You have placed your all on the altar and you are determined that it will stay there whatever happens—or does not happen. You are determined that Mr Faith is not going to look back. Neither now nor in the future. But at the same time, precisely because you trust God, you look forward to the future with eager anticipation.

What happens then?

You keep thanking and praising God and begin to live *as if* the promise has been fulfilled in you. You walk on the water, in other words. And you will be surprised to find that it supports you.

I have deliberately not stressed the feeling element too much, but, of course, it is not unusual for a seeker actually to *experience* the 'life in all its fullness' of which Christ spoke at the actual moment of his dedication of himself to God. As he lifts his heart in praise and thanksgiving he begins to feel overwhelmed by feelings of love and joy and peace—to a greater or lesser degree depending on his basic personality. But it is important that the feeling element should not become the touchstone.

For many people there is a time-lag between their consecration and finding inner assurance that something has happened. But the steps of faith and consecration, '*definitely taken and unwaveringly persevered in*, will certainly bring you out sooner or later into the green pastures and still waters of this life hid with Christ in God. You may be perfectly sure of this.'

May I just interject another question here and ask whether it is best to seek God alone or in the company of other people?

Many people have found this inner completion when they have been praying on their own. Brengle is a case in point. But it is interesting to note that the New Testament does not mention solitary seeking. In the Bible the Holy Spirit is always mediated through another human being. The old Army tradition of someone kneeling with you at the mercy seat and 'helping you through' is therefore very much scriptural. Your own faith and your own seeking will be powerfully enhanced if there is a group of believers who will join you in faith and prayer.

How will confirmation come to me that something new has taken place within?

Well, you know what happened to Brengle. It could be anything from that kind of experience down to just a faint glimpse of glory, or Wesley's 'my heart was strangely warmed', or some evidence of your being used by God in a new way. It is impossible to tell. But in some way or other God will reveal in you or through you that something has indeed taken place.

Do not be disappointed if it turns out to be different from what you had anticipated. Thank God for any sign which comes your way, however small, and let it encourage you in your walk of faith. God deals with us in different ways. You are only at the beginning of a new life-style. God's presence may gradually unfold to you—a frequent pattern of experience—and you may watch in amazement as the gifts and the fruit of the Spirit develop in you.

And what of the future?

This book has dealt mainly with the actual moments of spiritual breakthrough that lift us to a higher level of awareness rather than dealing with the life in the Spirit which follows. But it is the life that follows which counts. According to the classic pattern of spiritu-

ality you stand at the threshold of a period in your life which will be full of ups and downs as God continues his refining work within you. You will become increasingly aware of God's Spirit at work in the world and in you. But this same breakthrough in experience which makes us aware of the Spirit's presence also makes us more acutely aware of the evil forces which surround us. You may therefore experience temptation in increased measure.

At first there will probably be a time of inner glow, the kind of honeymoon time that God grants us. But this eventually fades. You may recall Brengle's comments: 'In time, God withdrew something of the tremendous emotional feelings. He taught me I had to live by my faith and not by my emotions.' Donald Gee puts it delightfully: 'The kiss with which the father greeted the returning prodigal son must have been like sweetest balm upon his weary spirit; yet no one would suggest that the father kept on kissing him all the time!'

The way ahead is exciting. As you let the Spirit work freely in and through you, you will find your life becoming a spiritual adventure. It will be costly and demanding. The heavenly gales may blow you where you do not want to go. But through increasing prayer and praise, and increasing turning to God's word, and increasing sharing with his people, and increasing giving of yourself to others and to God's service, and by increasing trust and selfyielding, you will find yourself ever more alive in God and ever more being used by him as a 'co-worker'.

'Of one thing I am certain:' wrote Paul, 'the One who started the good work in you will bring it to completion by the Day of Christ Jesus' (Philippians 1:6).