

the greatest importance for the study of the Old Testament religion is your doubtless correct explanation of the Passover. It is entirely in harmony with ancient customs, with philology, and with common sense.

What Dr. Trumbull's explanation of the Passover is, may now be told in a sentence.

The Passover night was a night to be remembered. But long before that night the custom had existed, and the Israelites must have been familiar with it, of welcoming a guest, or of accepting a bride or bridegroom who was to become one of the family, by the outpouring of blood on the threshold of the door,—by staining the doorway itself with the blood of the covenant. On this night Jehovah announces to the Israelites that He is to enter into a covenant with them. And the covenant must be ratified with blood according to the well under-

stood and inevitable formula. Each Israelite household must prepare a sacrifice, and the blood of the sacrifice must be poured out upon the threshold before Jehovah can pass over that threshold to enter the house as its honoured and welcome Guest. If there is no blood upon the threshold,—and there will be no blood this night upon the threshold of the Egyptian homes,—then He cannot enter that home as a Guest, only as an Enemy and Avenger. But if the blood is on the threshold, He will pass over it into the house; the Threshold Covenant is made; He will go into them and sup with them, and they with Him.

So, the Passover is not so called because the Lord passed over the houses of the Israelites as He went to slay the firstborn among the Egyptians. It is so called because Jehovah passed over the Israelite threshold when the Covenant Blood was there.

The Spirit of Power.

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PART II.

HAVING seen what is implied by being filled with the Spirit, let us see how that state came to pass. We must first notice the outer means employed; and, having disposed of that as the least important part, we shall then try to see the inner temperament which accompanied and marked the conditions into which we are inquiring.

Let me say at once that the outer means varied, though there seem to have been methods which were considered regular in ordinary circumstances, and could be relied on for effect. The means was like the miraculous signs which interpreted and evidenced the blessing when that had come; it was something merely to help men to receive that more easily and surely, and was, as we shall see, no more essential than the signs were. The regular means was preaching, followed by baptism and the laying on of hands. For the last part of

the process, the deacon evangelist Philip seems to have been insufficient, and had to send for the Apostle Peter; whilst in another case Ananias of Damascus was sufficient when no apostle was procurable. The explanation of the difference is difficult; but I may slightly forestall what I have yet to say by suggesting that the person who used the sign was one in whom the subjects of the rite had confidence. As used by him, the sign really roused their expectation, and enabled them to lay hold for themselves on God's pledge. This explains what occurred in the case of the Samaritans. To them the blessing came along with conversion. It was the exalted or ideal state of men very thoroughly and quite suddenly converted. Philip did not carry for them the authority of an apostle. He had preached, and they had believed; but only as Simon Magus did too (viii. 13), with a historical faith which recognised the Messiahship of Jesus,

and the purpose of God by Him. On the other hand, Peter brought to the single-hearted and expectant among them a promise both authoritative and individual. When they realised that and its greatness, when they realised it vividly by faith in the sign they subjected themselves to, they sprang into the possession of spiritual life, and even found themselves filled with this phase of it. The same explanation holds good in the case of Ananias and Paul. Paul knew to expect Ananias, and that he was warranted in accepting his services (ix. 12), just as the Samaritans knew of the authority of Peter and John in the matter. And to Paul the unclosing of his eyes was as the act of baptism which usually preceded the laying on of hands; it implied a definite promise by its symbolism, as the laying on of hands the fulfilment of that promise. For him it preceded baptism, and by its specialness superseded any further laying on of hands. The ordinary fashion was followed by Peter at Pentecost, by the same apostle in Samaria, and by Paul in the case of the Baptist's twelve disciples at Ephesus. On the first of these occasions, Peter describes the process as pledging the result; and the result, as we saw, is looked on as so naturally and surely following, that the author mentions the various steps leading up to it, yet leaves it unmentioned. In all three cases the men who were convinced of the historical Christ submitted to the rites prescribed in faith of the result, and were enabled to appropriate it through these. But whilst this was the rule in ordinary circumstances, and could be depended on for bringing the result desired, the means was not always needed: the faith by which the blessing came was in itself sufficient. Sometimes the blessing came by the word of preaching only, sometimes with baptism added, but without the laying on of hands. For the blessing of God is gracious, and after a lordly fashion. Means is only a help to faith. At Cæsarea, for instance, this blessing came just as the message of the preacher's words became clear, immediately after he had begun to preach (xi. 15). Baptism followed after the gift came. But the end had been gained by the people's vivid faith without aid of symbol; for, added to the apostle's word and their own prepared expectancy, was the fact of the miraculous guidance vouchsafed beforehand to both parties.

In another class of cases we might describe

the men as rising to the occasion, or as being influenced by their circumstances. The circumstances they found themselves placed in developed or roused them. Without doubt this was true in the case of the weak little apostolic band in the midst of prejudiced and hostile Judaism, towards which it yet felt a deep sense of duty. Thus it was with Peter and the Jerusalem church when they were revived. Thus it was seemingly, too, with Stephen when installed in office, and bound to strengthen the church; and thus, too, when he realised the feeling toward himself, and saw the opportunity of making what was his last speech. Barnabas caught the contagion of the revival he entered into at Syrian Antioch. The disciples at Pisidian Antioch received the Spirit in fulness of power when, like the Pentecostal disciples, they were left alone, and realised the privilege of depending directly on the glorified Saviour. Quite markedly the circumstances influenced these men, and enabled them to receive the Holy Ghost in power. Quite naturally and rightly. For, as I have said, the effect of the Spirit's presence was the irresistible impulse of proclaiming Christ adequately and suitably. In other words, the Holy Spirit had regard to the particular situation of the believer who was called to testify; and though the man might have general qualifications for Christian work, fitted him for the particular need. The occasion was the measure, and so became the means, of adequately meeting it. What such occasions implied, you can see by the fact that before Pentecost, and in the case of the revival within the Jerusalem Church, diligent prayer was offered. That prayer is expressly related in the latter of these two cases. I am not concerned with it here more than to say that it certainly shows a deep sense of need of help from God in the performance of present duty, and makes a corresponding claim of help from Him as of right. Without doubt the prayers preceding Pentecost cannot have differed greatly from that. In the case of Barnabas, and more manifestly even of the believers in Pisidian Antioch, prayer was absent because they believed in their complete right to expect and depend on their Lord when doing His work, either in personal weakness or amid dangers of the enemy. Barnabas had that faith habitually, and exercised it instinctively as a matter of course. It was not the first time in which he had proved it. He was a man full of

the Holy Ghost and of faith. The church of Antioch got this faith suddenly; it came on them without knowing the need, and therefore without praying; rather by the preaching of the teachers who were being withdrawn from them, and by the vivid approval of their own enlightened conscience.

We have seen that the outer means was comparatively unimportant, a help which could be dispensed with at least on occasion. What, then, was the inner temperament with which the presence of the gift was associated? Examine the cases and you will find—what you must remember—that all the people spoken of were either Christians waiting and longing to serve Christ by spreading His salvation, or they were those who had just been born vividly into the possession of that spirit. We have nothing to do in this book with any using of unsaved men to save others or do God's work. Simon Magus shows how alien it is from God's plan. The right understanding of the inner state with which this blessing was associated separates it altogether from such cases as a distinct thing. We have to do with men not lukewarm but earnest, very much converted (if I might use such a phrase), and with no other thought than their paramount obligation to that Lord to whom they owed their very selves. We have already seen in the prayer of the Jerusalem Church, as it waited for revival, both a sense of their need as His witnesses, and a sense of their right to depend on their risen Saviour for all that need demanded. But this sense of their right to depend on the exalted Lord, and of their safety in trusting Him for these particular circumstances in which He had placed them, implied faith in Him, the realising of His presence and power and worth; implied Him not far off, but near, and helpfully near,—not only outside them but in them, not only for them but with them. The former part—their right and safety in trusting their risen Lord—is constant and unvarying. In it He is the object of vivid views, of keen appreciation, and of strong, confident trust. In the latter part—their conception of His nearness—the form varies. In the prayer of the Jerusalem Church, in ch. iv., there is no clear expression of the place of the Holy Spirit as mediating the presence of Christ, and bringing to men aptly, according to need, His saving power. Yet, without doubt, the fact itself is implied. Room is left for it. The Holy Ghost

is mentioned in their prayer (iv. 25), though the subject of the prayer is only the blessing He brings rather than Himself (iv. 29). I take it, therefore, that such self-conscious knowledge and direct mention of the Holy Spirit was not needful. It may be, and, I think, ought to be, where the preparation for this blessing is apparent in all its steps. But we cannot limit the preparation to one type and believe it unreal any more than conversion is, unless all the steps of the ideal process are equally clear in it. The first of the two parts is absolutely needed. Vivid faith for help in present need when serving in Christ's cause cannot be lacking. Direct remembrance or clear knowledge of how the help is to come may not be present. Yet, without doubt, that must have become more and more a habitual thought. The early Apostolic Church believed very firmly in the reality and constant presence of the Holy Ghost. It seems to have had the habit of referring the minute and ordinary incidents and phases of life to Him. Peter states that Ananias of Jerusalem, in hypocritically copying the action of the early Christian givers, lied to the Holy Ghost (v. 3), and not merely to man. Peter's declaration in explanation of the apostolic preaching was, We are witnesses of these things; and so also is the Holy Ghost, which God hath given to them that obey Him (v. 32). Stephen asserted to his audience, 'Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost' (vii. 51); and Ananias of Damascus seems not to have been at all unfamiliar with Him, though His name is not mentioned in the message that was to be delivered. In fact, Ananias seems to know what was implied, and states explicitly to the new and inexperienced seeker what to himself had not needed open expression (ix. 12, 17), 'The Lord, even Jesus, . . . hath sent me . . . that thou mightest receive the Holy Ghost.' Ananias did not need the information, but Saul did, in order to exercise faith by which to understand and accept that which was to be conveyed. The original disciples must have been occupied with this question, if we may judge from the familiarity which Peter shows in dealing with the Old Testament information on the subject. Most likely, too, Christ's saying, 'Receive' (or take, *λάβετε*, John xx. 22) 'ye the Holy Ghost,' may have guided and helped them. And the sense Peter had of the important place which the Spirit now occupied for all, and of the need they had to grasp clearly His work as representing and applying Christ, is

clear by the place which that apostle assigns at once to laying on of hands.

But the essential feature of the state was that clear sense of their right to lay claim on their all-powerful and ever-present Lord, which created both boldness and enthusiasm. The boldness to meet the occasion (they spake the word with boldness) was the outer and apt manifestation of the enthusiasm. But the enthusiasm is the true heart-mark of the state; sometimes in a spate, as when men were *πλησθεῖς*, 'filled,' sometimes in a steady flood, as when a man was *πλήρης*, 'full.' This enthusiasm, regulated by a sense of the need of the occasion, is the essence of the state. For it means that these men saw Christ with the eyes of the Holy Spirit, and knew Him after the same appreciative fashion. They were taught of the Spirit. They had absorbed his views. He had enlightened and quickened them in a general way. But now by having their eyes directed to their Lord, and having the vivid remembrance of present need ringing in their ears, they were able to receive such definite views as suited them at the moment; quickened, guided enthusiasm was the result. This state thus linked itself on to the process of conversion, and formed its culminating point or legitimate result. The one dealt with the needy sinner's cry, and the other with the weak servant's claim. The faith which grasped the blessing as theirs received the power. The enthusiasm which the Spirit had for the crucified Lord became theirs. The Father had borne witness by the resurrection from the dead that this was His Son with power, and the Holy Spirit of truth now became the Spirit of the truth as it is in Jesus. He came forth, for He had now some one worthy of all His enthusiastic service, one by whom He could bless men to the fullest of His loving desire. He had thrown Himself into the Saviour's service; and He found in these waiting, willing, weak men just the means by which He could act. He fell on them as on Christ when in faith the Saviour had dedicated himself at baptism, and was coming up out of the water in the act of prayer. He ran from the head to the skirts of the great High Priest. So it was promised: Ye shall receive power when the Spirit is come. Thus, too, it was fulfilled to their knowledge: We are His witnesses, and so is the Holy Ghost. Therefore, as time went on, I have no doubt men became more familiar with the part the Spirit took in mediating the help of Christ, and that made faith more in-

telligent, and so easy and strong. Thus Stephen became *πλήρης*, and not *πλησθεῖς*; and in this state Barnabas acted habitually and without effort, as we have seen. But the condition of the men in whom the blessing was found was not that of men who have their eyes on the Spirit; for He hides Himself, and is invisible save for His results, as they found; but it was that of men who have their eyes on Christ; which is the attitude of the Spirit Himself, the attitude of all who are in sympathy with Him, and fit therefore to be moved in all their parts and faculties for His great end. The men looked up rather than in. They forgot every danger in the assurance their Lord's presence and love and power gave.

It is hardly necessary that I should go into detail of the cases, after what I have said. The overbrimming enthusiasm which came from the firm faith of their authorised claim on the Lord, explains all the signs and effects which are related. At Pentecost there could be little realisation of the place the Holy Ghost was to hold in this work till He came. Words as to Him are unreal altogether, apart from experience. He is known by looking backwards rather than forwards. In Stephen the marked characteristic was strength of faith. He was a man full of faith and power, because he was full of the Holy Ghost (vi. 5, 8). That lay at the root of the fact that, falsely accused and already as good as murdered, his face, when he rose up to speak, was seen by all the crowd to be like the face of an angel. In him the faith which fulness of the Spirit accompanied, raised to its highest pitch by the raging of the people and danger of the occasion, enabled him to realise Christ as never before, and the hidden object of his faith—the Lord of Glory at the right hand of the majesty on high—seemed to him now to become visible. This was, however, but the intensifying of his habitual mood, and not the altering of its object in any respect. This meant only being filled with the Spirit even beyond his usual, but as ever filled suitably to the occasion. For it was such an occasion and such an experience as he had never been in. It is even more special than that which Peter is represented as having occupied in chapter iv. One cannot help remembering that as Christ came up out of the water praying, He looked up too, and the heavens were opened to Him. But He saw the Holy Spirit on this side descending; that was His desire, and what His

faith claimed. Stephen saw into the other side, and there for him was his Lord in the place of glory. He saw not the Spirit; he saw Christ; but he saw by the power of the Spirit, by the Spirit whom Christ saw descending; he saw Christ as the Spirit does, for he was filled with the Spirit (vii. 55). At Cæsarea the glimpse which specially prepared and expectant hearts got of God's wide and altogether unexpected grace,—they were Gentiles, but 'He,' as Peter preached, 'is Lord of all' (x. 36),—not only convinced them, but roused the most vivid faith with all signs of the Spirit's power. So it was with the disciples of John. They heard what John knew nothing of—the crucifixion, the resurrection, and the ascension of Christ, and the meaning of these; and their faith, accepting salvation personally as from their Lord on high, received the sign of the presence of that Spirit who had blessed them though they knew not; and with that came the irresistible impulse to speak the Christ, who was their blessing, yet not like other men but miraculously, after the manner of the Spirit Himself (xix. 4). The sudden enlightenment of the Pisidian Christians as to their direct nearness to Christ was the means to them, as to the Gentiles of Cæsarea, of receiving this glad, enthusiastic power. Instruction made all the difference in the case of Apollos; from being merely 'fervent in spirit' (*ζέων τῷ πνεύματι*), with unenlightened enthusiasm, he became able to declare Christ from the Old Testament, so as to meet the need of his brother Jews whom he met in their synagogues, *i.e.* he

was able to speak Christ suitably and adequately. The enthusiasm in Barnabas—quieter and steady going as suited his nature, and one *πλήρης* rather than *πλησθεὶς*—was due to his spiritual apprehension of those unsuspected possibilities of salvation in Jesus Christ which manifested themselves when he came to fulfil his mission to the young church of Syrian Antioch.

Let me add only one word. To desire the power of the Spirit, as Simon Magus did, is as sinful as desiring the Spirit of power is commendable and commanded. The power comes not as a thing, but as part of the Spirit. And as it cannot be separated from Him, so He cannot be sundered from Christ. He comes for Christ, and He comes by the appreciation of Christ. The man who has learned to trust Christ for everything personal must learn to trust Him too for all connected with service. To be devoted to Christ is to be filled with the Spirit, and to have the power of the Spirit. None of the Spirit's power is wasted when your whole being rings harmony with His as to Christ; it overflows. But the Spirit will not let the power out of His own hands; He must fill and rule you, that it may be used only for Christ. So it is vain to think the power is other than a gift of the moment to the faith of the occasion, though it may be held every moment. The faith which lovingly lays hold on the Lord as its perfect strength and its only hope in all Christian service receives the power of the Spirit to meet the need which drew it out.

The Expository Times Guild of Bible Study.

THE new session of 'The Expository Times Guild of Bible Study' is now commenced. We have chosen the Books of Haggai and Malachi for the Old Testament, and the remainder of the Acts of the Apostles (xiii.—xxviii.) for the New. This completes in each case not merely a portion of Scripture, but a period of Sacred History.

The sole condition of membership in 'The Expository Times Guild' is the promise to study one or both of the appointed portions of Scripture between the months of November and June. That promise is made by the sending of the name and address (clearly written, with degrees, etc.) to

the Editor of THE EXPOSITORY TIMES, at Kinneff, Bervie, N.B. There is no fee, and the promise does not bind anyone who, through unforeseen circumstances, finds it impossible to carry it out.

The aim of 'The Expository Times Guild' is the study, as distinguished from the mere reading, of Scripture. Some commentary is therefore recommended as a guide, though the dictionary and concordance will serve. Recent commentaries on Haggai and Malachi are not so numerous as on Zechariah. But Orelli's *Minor Prophets* (ros. 6d.) could scarcely be excelled for more advanced study, while Dods' *Haggai, Zechariah,*