In chapters xvi and xxvi, the work of the Spirit is described as being to teach all things, to bring all things to remembrance, to lead to all truth, to show things to come, and to bear witness (xv. 25, 26, xv. 26, xvi. 13). He is called by the Spirit of truth. According to xvi. 12-14, He is God of Himself, but whatsoever He shall hear He shall speak. He is to teach the things of Christ and manifest them to the apostles. Therefore we might expect the means by which the Lord is at work in the New Testament tradition is by His Spirit. We are familiar with the phraseology of our Lord in speaking of coming Himself and of sending His Spirit, as though these were synonymous terms, and correspondingly, just as Paul sometimes identifies the Spirit of the tradition and sometimes the Lord, we find references to the Spirit speaking in the New Testament. Thus in the Apocalypse, time and time again in the messages to the churches there is an allusion to instead of the Spirit of truth. Again, in I Timothy iv. 1, 'the Spirit speaketh expressly' that some shall depart from the faith in the last days. This compares closely with Thessalonians iv. 15, where 'we say unto you by the word of the Lord' is followed by reference to the second advent. The Spirit speaking and the Word of the Lord are coterminous. In 2 Corinthians iii we have the contrast between the Old and New Covenant, the difference being that the New is a ministry of the spirit, and in the same passage there is that difficult equation that 'the Lord is that Spirit'. Cullmann points out this close correspondence and refers to the prophecy of Jeremiah xxxi. in which a New Covenant is concerned with a law written on men's hearts. Ezekiel xxxvi. 26 reveals further that the means of the Law being written on men's hearts is the Spirit within them. The Lord as the new Law and the Spirit are joined together.

When therefore the apostles are claiming authority for the traditions which they hand on, they are doing so because the Spirit is at work in them. This means that the Lord is working through them and their traditions are not only not the traditions of men, yet also not the tradition of the Spirit was not the sole prerogative of the apostles. The Church of succeeding generations also has the Spirit. Is it therefore true, as the Roman Catholic theologians and as Chrysostom said, that 'the apostles are the same One who produces and delivers everything, even as at this time'? The answer of the Scripture is in the negative, for although the gift of the Spirit is not limited to the apostles, there is a limitation in John xv. 27 which is most important. The Spirit is to bear witness of Christ, and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.' The special witness of the Spirit is in this way limited to eyewitnesses. In that sense the apostles possessed a unique gift that was not a unique Cullmann emphasizes this point by reference to John xvi. xvii, where the apostles are prayed for separately from those who should believe on Christ and to do their word. Peter was conscious of his own position, and if one were to write out of the apostle is dealt with in a passage which emphasizes the tradition. Paul is speaking of the Spirit's revealing work in 1 Corinthians ii when he says that God had kept from previous generation that which had been revealed 'unto us by His Spirit', and 'we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth.' The Spirit is concerned with the handing on of the tradition as well as its revelation. Luke is careful in the prologue of his Gospel to point out that he himself did not write in order a declaration of those things which he surely believed among us, even as they delivered (paradoson) them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word. This limitation to the apostolic eyewitness is borne out by Ephesians iii. 4, 5, where Paul speaks of the 'mystery of Christ which in other ages was not made known even as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit'. Two classes were entrusted with the revelation of the truth, one of which was the apostles and the other the prophets. There is no record of the testimony of the charismatic prophets, but we have the testimony of the apostles, and they received the truth 'by the Spirit'.

Conscious of this ministry the Spirit through the apostolic eye-witnesses has no difficulty in placing the same eyewitness testimony on a level with the prophesy of old time, when holy men of God were moved by the Holy Ghost. The Holy Spirit was at work in both Old Testament Scripture, means by which the Lord is at work in the New Testament tradition.

If this conception of the work of the Spirit in the content and transmission of the tradition is correct, and the work He exercises in this respect is limited to the apostolic witness, then any tradition which occurs beyond the apostolic witness is not the tradition of men. Also, we speak rightly when we say that the Lord spoke to us, when we really mean that the Word of God has come home to us in a certain way, but not as belonging to the unbroken tradition of the Spirit. We are not looking back to a static book, but as the Spirit was active in speaking through the apostles then, so He is active in speaking through the apostolic witness now. The Word of God is indeed the Spirit's sword.

D. J. V. LANE.

The Nature and Purpose of the Charismata

There have been many divergent evaluations of the nature and purpose of the charismata, or spiritual gifts, which occupy such a prominent place in the life of the early Church. From the various lists of charismata which are given in the New Testament (Rom. xii. 6-8; 1 Cor. xii. 4-11, 28-30; cf. Eph. iv. 7-12) it is evident that their number, variety and diffusion were considerable. Yet each gift had its specific effective working of the Holy Spirit and was intended to edify the Body of Christ.

Liberal theologians have been prone to deny the miraculous character of the charismata and represented them as the natural manifestations of primitive enthusiasm. The end of the second century this spirit of enthusiasm gave way to a more rigid and disciplined Church which recognized the official tended more and more to supercede the charismatic ministries. The spiritual gifts began to disappear, but, being the product of an abnormal mental state, were liable to emerge under similar conditions in later religious revivals. Such gifts, such as prophecy, were regarded as particular manifestations of familiar phenomena of the Hellenistic age.

By way of contrast, the Roman Catholic theologians have acknowledged the divine origin of the charismata, and have gone on to affirm the possibility of certain gifts in the Church, notably the miracles of healing and other miraculous powers. Support for this general point of view, the testimony of the Church and the tradition of the Church, the Elin movement has come from the opposite wing of the Church, where the Elin movement 'sophisticated' and 'sensational' gift of healing, which was lost (so it is said) as a result of a decline in faith and spirituality, and a growth of sectarianism, about the time of the conversion of Constantine in A.D. 324. It is often given for the purpose of prophecy at a somewhat earlier date, though there have not been wanting those who have said that neither prophecy nor healing have entirely ceased in the history of the Church. One of the most popular views of the charismata is that advanced by a school of Anglican divines at the beginning of the eighteenth century. This school maintained that the charismata were given for the purpose of founding the Church, and were gradually withdrawn when the Church became strong enough to continue without their assistance. The date for
the cessation of the charismata is usually placed in the fourth century when Christianity had acquired the support of the civil power. The theory lost none of its popularity despite the fact that as early as 1749 Dr. C. G. Hamburger pointed out in his famous Free Enquiry that it was contrary to patristic evidence. The silence of the Apostolic Fathers led him to state that 'in the interval of about half a century . . . after the death of the Apostles . . . we find not the least reference to any standing power of working miracles . . . but on the contrary the strongest reason to presume that the extraordinary gifts of the Apostolic age were by this time actually withdrawn.' He found it impossible to believe that the gifts were withdrawn during the first half of the second century and then restored. Middleton pointed out in his famous Free Enquiry into the relation of the charismata to Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Church and its ministry. Investigation will have to be made into many subsidiary problems, such as the nature of the Pentecostal and Corinthian glossolalia, and the relation of the charismata to similar supranormal phenomena mentioned in patristic and Hellenistic literature. This enquiry is now in progress.

Dudley.

WILBERT G. PUTMAN.

References:

The KINGDOM, THE POWER AND THE GLORY

It is generally accepted that the idea of the kingdom of God was the central theme in the preaching of Jesus. Most scholars would also agree with T. W. Manson that it is 'something through and through spiritual' and 'a personal relation between God and the individual human being', while some simplify a community of people, who claim to be under the rule of God. But concerning the time of the coming of the kingdom there still remains considerable disagreement. It seems that there are grave weaknesses in all the main positions that have come to my notice at least. Thorough-going eschatology has lost much ground and is faced with many passages in the Gospels as we have them, which seem to state quite clearly that the kingdom has arrived (whatever may be the meaning of ἐνικήσει in Mk. i. 15). If that is what Jesus taught, we have to assume that a disappointed Church managed to adjust itself well enough to the situation to read back into the words of Jesus a more correct interpretation than He had intended to offer. In opposition to that is set a system of eschatology which is not seen either of any historical origin or relevance, and which seems to be strained further than is legitimate. There are sayings in all strands of the synoptic tradition which are hard to apply to anything but the historical Christ (e.g., Lk. vii. 38; Mt. xxiv. 27; Lk. xvii. 24 from Q; Mt. xix. 28 from M; Lk. xxi. 31 from L). There are too many references to be written off as being due to misunderstanding by the early Church. If they were so radically wrong on so vital a matter, the reliability of the
the cessation of the charismata is usually placed in the fourth century when Christianity had acquired the support of the civil power. The theory lost none of its popularity despite the fact that as early as 1749 Dr. Conyers Middleton pointed out in his famous Free Enquiry that it was contrary to patristic evidence. The silence of the Apostolic Fathers led him to state that if there was indeed an interval of about half a century after the deaths of the Apostles . . . we find not the least reference to any standing power of working miracles . . . but on the contrary the strongest reason to presume that, if anything, the extraordinary gifts of the Apostolic age were by this time actually withdrawn. He found it impossible to believe that the gifts were withdrawn during the first half of the second century and then restored. Middleton agreed with current Anglican opinion that the charismata were given for the purpose of founding the Church, but held that this had been accomplished in apostolic times.

In 1917, Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield delivered a series of lectures, originally published under the title Counterfeit Miracles (given further prominence as Miracles: Yesterday and Today (1953). Leaning heavily on Middleton, Warfield sought to reinstate the view of the theologians of the post-Reformation era that the charismata ceased with the apostolic age. In addition to the argument from silence propounded by Middleton, Warfield examined the writings of the later Fathers and came to the conclusion that there was much greater abundance and precision of evidence, such as it is, for miracles in the fourth and succeeding centuries, than for the preceding ones. The date for the cessation of the charismata suggested by the Anglican school was purely artificial and based on a preconceived theory rather than the facts of history. We are compelled to accept one of two alternatives: either that miraculous powers have never been withdrawn, as the Romanists claim; or that they lasted only as long as the apostolic age.

After examining the evidence for the validity of the ecclesiastical miracles Warfield went on to the latter alternative. The charismata were withdrawn according to the New Testament, not directly for the extension of the Church, but for the authentication of the apostles as the messengers of God. The possession of these gifts and the power to confer them on others constituted one of the signs of an apostle. The gifts ceased gradually with the death of those on whom the apostles had conferred them.

Dr. W. H. Griffith Thomas has regarded the charismata as a testimony to Israel. The gifts are seen to be in operation up to the end of Acts, but not afterwards. 'These facts seem to show that the miraculous gifts recorded in Acts were specifically and solely for Israel; that they were demonstrated to have power to vindicate the Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth, but not intended for permanent exercise in the normal conditions of the Christian Church when Christ had been rejected by Israel . . . Acts iii. 19-21 plainly shows that if only the Jews had then and there accepted Christ, he would have come back according to His own promise, but as they wilfully refused to accept Him, and maintained this refusal on every occasion when the offer was made, the supernatural manifestations of the Holy Spirit came to an end, and the normal graces of the Spirit have become naturally more prominent in the Gentile Christian Church and as associated with the Apostle Paul.'

In the face of this rather bewildering variety of opinion, one may well ask, What is the truth about the nature, purpose and continuance of the charismata? To answer the question it is clearly necessary to give close attention to the teaching of the New Testament in an effort to formulate a distinct and right understanding of the charismata. The subject has been obscured by hazy theories defended in the smoke of controversy, and there has been surprisingly little thorough examination of biblical evidence. There is need for an accurate definition of terminology, such as that of the Pentecostal gnosticos, the Spirit's gifts, and the relation of the charismata to similar supernormal phenomena mentioned in patristic and Hellenistic literature. This enquiry is now in progress.

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