

CHAPTER VII. GATHERING POWER OF THE CHURCH FORESHADOWED

Instances like the octogenarian, with the den of his youth, and more than the vigor of his prime and like Carosso, made eminent by grace; and the African woman, greater in her poverty and sickness than the Hon. Judge in his health and his wealth, are types — very imperfect ones, certainly — foreshadowing the power and blessedness of the whole church of the future.

Happily, too, the growing shadow of the incoming glory, indicates the time when all shall have the fulness of this experimental knowledge of Jesus, as at hand.

There is one movement of the times which must strike every reflective observer; it is this process of POPULARIZATION. God, in his providence, is spreading the treasures of knowledge and power amongst the people. Everything, in every department of human acquisition, which has hitherto been kept within the narrow circle of the limited few, God is now opening out to the millions. He is making the masses rich; lifting them up; and ennobling them in every element of true greatness. There are 'prentice boys, this day, who know more than Franklin did of the workings of the fiery fluid, brought down from the clouds by him, and had they lived in his time and known what they now know, their memories would be lifted up to lofty niches in the temple of fame.

Many a lad in the engine works, taking the early lessons of his trade, knows more of the power and application of steam than Watt or Fulton knew; and many a school-boy is better acquainted with the order, numbers, magnitudes, distances, motions and laws of the heavenly bodies than Copernicus. Really, these school-boys and 'prentices are greatest in these elements of greatness, than Franklin, Watt, Fulton and Copernicus.

Knowledge is popularized, and knowledge is power. But the best of all knowledge is the knowledge of Jesus, and the greatest of all powers is the power of God through faith in Jesus, and this knowledge and power are being popularized.

The question is often asked, Why does not God raise up some Whitefield or Luther in our day?

The answer is, He is raising up a multitude of Whitefields and Luthers. He will have all men to be *Kings and Priests*. The same great truths which made Luther and Whitefield great, will soon make the whole church of Christ upon earth, a church of Whitefields and Luthers;— if not in intellect and eloquence, yet in living union with Jesus, which was the greatest and noblest endowment of these noble men.

This popularizing process is universal. It goes forward in everything. Not alone in the utilities, but in the luxuries and elegancies of life. "Costly apparel," such as once must be sought alone in king's palaces, finds its way now into the cottage. Silks, satins, broadcloths — where will you not find them? The servant does not wait now for the cast-off clothing of master or mistress, but buys new from the shop, more showy, if less costly, than their employers wear. Gold chains, once the ornaments of the princes of Mammon, now festoon the persons of the servants of tradesmen. Travel — formerly the rare privilege of this favored few — is now enjoyed beyond the sea, to countries remote, by flitting, migrating myriads; while at home, the whole people, drones only excepted, like bees of this hive, sip nectar and gather manna from every flower, and every pool too, alas, in the land. Coach and livery are distanced out of sight, and almost driven from the track by the iron-horse and his train; and he and his owners care little who rides and pays; whether plebian or prince. Even the light and the lightning are harnessed in for this process of popularization. Turned artist, this light paints our likeness in a few seconds for a few cents, with truthfulness which, if it does not flatter like the pencil, never lies. And so it comes about that these facsimiles of our loved ones, ere-while the rare and treasured ornaments of mansions and palaces only, are now piled up in every cottage. And the lightning, tamed and taught — not the English — but a universal language, is turned spokesman for the world; and soon, if not already, will so speak as to be heard, whether in

behalf of king or peasant, the whole world over in a single moment of time. It is, therefore, just in harmony with this universal movement, that God is also popularizing the deeper and sweeter knowledge of Jesus.

A scene occurred one morning in far-famed Old South, Boston, in the morning meeting in the chapel, too natural to be noticed as at all extraordinary by the attendants at that precious daily reunion. At the close of the meeting, after the sound of the Doxology had ceased its hallowed vibrations, as the people were greeting each other, and leaving the chapel, two of the venerable men always occupying the front seats, with their ear-trumpets upturned to catch every word, arose and greeted each other. One placed his trumpet to his ear, and turned up its broad mouth toward his stooping white-headed companion. The other, bending down and almost burying his face in the open mouth of the trumpet, with a show, loud, waiting utterance, said, "Well — brother — we have been long — meditating — thinking — trying — to find out how — this divine life — could be best promoted — in the soul — and — we shall get it yet! Yes, we shall find it yet!"

"O, yes, yet! We shall — we shall!" was the answer.

Yes. Yes, venerable Father! Even so. You *will* very soon. The Master will soon call for you and then you shall see Him, and He is the "*best way*," the only way. God grant, however, even now, before ye shall go hence, that Jesus may reveal himself to you as the best way.

In that same assembly, a moment before its breaking up, a fair-haired youth arose and said, "Dear brethren, help me to praise God! I have found this way! Jesus is the way! He is mine and I am his! He is complete, and I am complete in him!"

Here were the venerable fathers feeling after the better way, and here was the child in it already, happy and satisfied.

Leaving that sacred place and falling in with one of the dispersing worshippers — "Ah my Brother," — so was the greeting — "You seem to understand that Christ is all in all. Your remarks show that you are in the light."

"Ah yes Brother. Those words of Dudley Tyng stand up for Jesus — and those other words, 'Praying IN Jesus' — as his father has published them to the world, came home to me like a new revelation. I have long been a Christian, and an active one, but the life hidden with Christ in God, I never understood till then; but since then my views have been all new, and the fire has burned in my heart as it never did before."

Introduced to one in the meridian of life, who had been many years bearing his part in a prominent city church, he began talking of Jesus and what the Saviour had done for him. "O His ways are wonderful. He has dealt with me in great wisdom and mercy," said he. "I had a lovely wife. She was the sunshine of the house — and we were the happiest family in the world — so we used to think and say. But God came and took my wife away. My children felt it deeply. I was inconsolable — all summer I went mourning and bowed down. Life was a dreary waste. I thought I should go down in sorrow to the grave. But I was led to make a new covenant with the Lord, and somehow, I can hardly tell how, Jesus manifested himself to me as the way, and now all was new to me. The Bible was new. The Christian life was new. The world was new. And I am happier now than I ever have been in all my life — happy in Jesus."

And he is not alone in his church. Others too, have come out in the same fulness of light. And yet others are feeling for it.

After an address to S. S. Teachers, closing with the thought that the well-spring of power to the workers for Jesus is union — an abiding union with Him.

"That is it! That is it!" said one of their number. "That is the very thing. O for that living union with Jesus."

At the parlor fire-side, half an hour later, in the sweet home of another of the teachers addressed. "You touched the spring of all power," said he, "in the closing remark."

"Yes," responded his excellent companion, "I have felt it for years, and longed to have the experience of it myself. My husband has been deeply interested a few months now, and

now do tell us How is it?"

Here too, another yearning heart was found — one who is a missionary among the Indians. She had left home, and friends and all, to go and tell the Indians of Jesus.

Her life was laid thus a living sacrifice upon God's altar. She had tried the work and loved it, and longed to be worthy of it. And now, while home on a visit, hearing one and another speak of a new and higher experience, she grasped at it in a moment, as what she needed to satisfy the cravings of her own soul, and also to give her a higher power of usefulness in her mission.

"Tell me," said she, "all about it. I must have it, but how? It is wrapped all up in mystery to me. I long to have it explained."

In another place, one who had been some while enlightened, and been a living witness, testifying the things that Jesus had done for her, and how precious he was to her every day, and all the time, said, —"Come and see us. There will be gathered at our house tomorrow evening, the parlors full of those, either recently come out into the fulness of faith, or seeking instruction as to the way."

These are the incidents of a few hours, and they are given to show a little of what comes to the star-face in the view of a single observer, of the great work, going on, deep down in the solid and substantial stratum of the church, hidden almost entirely from the eye even of the Christian world.

So God is popularizing this union — this abiding vital union of Christians with Christ.

So also, is it in the field of activities as well.

The attentive observer cannot fail to see that the church is in the transition of a new phase of its life and power. The Philips and Stephens are multiplying; but what is most remarkable is to see the privilege of actual usefulness grasped by so many who have thought hitherto they could do nothing. Young men, business men, maidens, mothers, clerks, apprentices, journeymen, firemen, and even those who have run after the firemen — in some instances outstripping even the watchmen on the walls — and this increasing every day.

Prayer and exhortation come from the lips of those in all grades of the church, from the youngest to the oldest, and in the tones and words of glowing hearts and fire-touched lips. The old man no longer says, "I am a dry tree, I cannot bear fruit." The youth no longer says, "I am untutored, I cannot speak." The businessman has ceased to plead, "I am busy, I cannot spare time." All come up, and all come up to the help of the Lord. This at least is the tendency of the present, and in this there is a prophecy, that *all will come up* in the future at hand, if they do not already.

And O, of the power the church will have then, we can form no conception! Isolated cases of the power of abiding union with Jesus and its blessed abundant fruits, do certainly give some idea of individual power; but then these are isolated cases, and isolation is weakness, combination is power.

A thousand grains of powder, or a thousand barrels if you please, scattered a grain in a place and fired at intervals, would burn it is true, but would produce no concussion. Placed together, however, in effective position, they would lift up a mountain and cast it into the sea. Even so the whole church filled with faith and fired by the Holy One who gave the tongues of fire on the day of Pentecost, will remove every mountain, fill up every valley, cast up the way of the Lord, and usher in the jubilee of Redemption.

Something of this power we may see in such instances as the great awakening.

What was the secret spring touched by the Lord a hundred years ago to throw open the doors for the reception of Jesus by the tens of thousands then converted to God? Just this very experience of full salvation in the leaders and others.

What was it by which the Lord prepared Edwards, the Wesleys, and Whitefield, to herald the blessed Jesus to the multitudes with such simplicity and power? Just this very experience of full salvation.

What was it that gave Luther power to break his own Roman fetters, and become the champion of the free? Just this experience of the power of Jesus in him for full salvation.

What was it that gave the apostles power to come forth into the light themselves, and shed the light in such effulgence upon a benighted world? Christ the Sun of Righteousness risen in their own souls.

And if in the past this has wrought such glorious things by the few, and the isolated, O, what will it not work when it shall pass into the experience of all?

Christ in the church, walking in invisible power amongst the golden candlesticks — Christ seen by the faith which is the evidence of things not seen — Mighty to save!

And the world seen in its guilt and peril!

Death at hand. The Judgment near. Heaven and Hell — with the impassable gulf between — opening to receive the crowding multitudes who are hasting onward!

Ah! When these great realities shall become the realities of living experimental apprehension, then will the church arise for the conquest, and then shall the battle be fought and the victory won.

There is one way in which we may shadow, dimly to ourselves, the power of the church, then. Suppose every church in the world revived at the same moment, greetings from the north and from the south and from the east and the west, coming in from every city and towns and hamlet and habitation, "The Lord is here!" "the Lord is here!" Then suppose that to go on from year's end to year's end unceasingly — no longer in spasms, chills and fevers no more alternating, but ever and ever the Lord working His works; sinners seeking and finding the Saviour; Jesus the hope of glory — every man's theme!

Ah! that would be glorious!

But even then, you must add the higher element of power. Jesus our sanctification, filling every man's cup of blessedness to overflowing, before the picture is complete.

When Jesus was on the earth in person, and the people saw him with their eyes, and heard him with their ears, they thronged him, and wondered at all his mighty works. Then he was only in one place at a time. The economy of God for the future is that of the presence of Jesus in all the plentitude of his grace and power in every place at the same time; working works of salvation more wonderful than miracles, and his presence realized by faith so that it is really substantial; that is actual.

In the days of His flesh, even his disciples failed to understand the nature of His kingdom and the glory of His designs. God's economy for us in the future is that we shall be strengthened with might in our hearts, that Christ may dwell in us by faith; that we, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able with all saints to comprehend the length and breadth and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, and to be filled with all the fulness of God.

Then, when this is the status of universal experience, and when Christ is realized as present in every church, working in power, not limited by unbelief, as it was in the days of His flesh, and when the cry of every church is, the Lord is with us! The Lord is with us! and the glory of every soul is Christ the hope of glory — then will the church come up to its normal state and to its predicted efficiency. And then a short work the Lord will make of it in the earth. For then he who stands out against the power of truth and grace will soon be cut off by the righteous hand of unsparing judgment. Amen. Even so come Lord Jesus. Come quickly. Amen and Amen.