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John Wesley, Charles Simeon, and the Evangelical Revival

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ON the 7th February, 1838, the Masters and Seniors of Trinity College, Cambridge, published a notice requiring all undergraduates to "attend Chapel eight times at the least in every week, that is, twice on Sunday and once every other day." Failure to comply, they suggested, might lead to rustication. The undergraduates complained to the Senior Dean, who pointed out to them that chapel-going was a privilege highly valued by their elders and betters. The students, however, had not failed to notice the laxity of their professors in this matter. They formed a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Undergraduates, and kept a close check on faculty chapel attendance. At the end of the Lent Term they published a class list in which the fellows of the college were classified according to honours standing. The Deans were disqualified from receiving the prize medal for regular attendance and good conduct since they were required to attend chapel twice daily. The Senior Tutor obtained a rather poor second; two fellows were not classed at all. The only fellow to attain first class standing was a Mr. Perry who was later to become Bishop of Melbourne.¹

The religious state of affairs at Cambridge illustrated by this episode from the annals of the early nineteenth century represents a vast improvement on what had gone before. Eighty years earlier in 1757 the university sermon in Great St. Mary's one April Sunday morning had been solemnly preached to the Heads of Colleges, a Mr. Rigby, the Duke of Bedford and his son. No other persons had been present! Indeed, the noble Duke was there only because he had brought his son up to Cambridge to "settle him at Trinity," and was no doubt concerned to see that the lad did the right thing on his first Sunday.² By contrast, however, a writer in 1834 could say, "Let the reader enter the University Church at the hour of service, and he may sometimes see six or seven hundred undergraduates in the performance of a voluntary worship, and hanging with deep attention on the accents of the preacher."³ When we ask what had made such a reformation possible, the answer is to be found in the work and witness of two Anglican priests, John Wesley of Christ Church and Lincoln Colleges, Oxford, and Charles Simeon of King's College, Cambridge.

The elder of the two men, John Wesley, was born at Epworth in 1703, the son of a parish-priest, and had a miraculous escape from death when his father's rectory was maliciously set on fire in 1709. In the confusion, John

1. Charles Smyth, *Simeon and Church Order* (C.U.P.), 1940, p. 127.

2. *Op. cit.*, p. 131.

3. *Op. cit.*, pp. 132-133.

was not missed by his parents for some time, and was only snatched from his bedroom seconds before the burning roof collapsed. So he spoke of himself in after-life as "a brand plucked from the burning." He went up to Oxford, and was ordained deacon in 1725 on election to a fellowship at Lincoln College. After an abortive attempt at a curacy in his father's parish, he returned to his alma mater and took over the lead of the "Holy Club," or "Methodists," which his younger brother Charles had already started. In 1735 he visited Georgia as a missionary for S.P.G., an episode which must be regarded as a complete failure. He incurred the wrath of the settlers by insisting on baptising their children by total immersion; he refused to use the burial service at the funeral of a dissenter, and would not give holy communion to unconfirmed members of the Anglican Church, although there was no other ministry available. He became entangled with a lady who eventually brought an action against him, not, however, for breach of promise, but for repelling her from the communion table. Ultimately, he was forced to return to England by public opinion, apparently quite undeterred by this latter experience, and married a widow some years later with whom he was anything but happy. He records the failure of his marriage in his *Journal* in the words, "I did not forsake her, I did not dismiss her, I will not recall her."⁴

It was, of course, on the way home from the mission field that the dejected Wesley fell in with the Moravian Brethren, and began to think seriously about his spiritual state before God. As he confessed to his diary, "It is now two years and almost four months since I left my native country in order to teach the Georgian Indians the nature of Christianity. But what have I learned of myself meantime? Why—what I the least of all suspected:—that I who went to America to convert others was never myself converted to God."⁵ But it was not until the evening of the 24th May, 1738, while listening to a reading from Martin Luther's preface to Romans at a little meeting in Aldersgate Street, London, that he received the assurance of the Spirit. "I felt my heart strangely warmed, I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for 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."⁶

Charles Wesley had been the subject of a similar experience a few days before, and it is from this period that we may date what has now come to be called "the Evangelical Revival." Church historians have dealt adequately with the formal record of the growth of the embryo Wesleyan Church; at first, of course, nominally Anglican, but growing so large so quickly, that it soon found itself in opposition to the Established Church and, contrary to the wishes of its founder, eventually broke away. From these histories it is clear that John Wesley was the architect of the move-

4. John Wesley's "Journal", 23rd January, 1771.

5. *Ibid.*, 7th February, 1736 and 29th January, 1738.

6. *Ibid.*, 24th May, 1738.

ment and its organiser. His brother Charles was the theologian and the hymnologist, whose magnificent hymns might well be sung in heaven itself for their excellence. George Whitefield, without fear of contradiction, was the Chrysostom, "the golden-mouthed preacher," whose words could (and did) sway the multitudes; and Lady Huntingdon provided both the "Connexion" and the financial support which were so necessary.

The Wesleyan scheme of theology, as one would expect from this brief biography of its founder, was based on the absolute necessity of justification by faith alone. Where complete faith in Christ was exercised by a surrender of the will, it was maintained that there must inevitably follow an assurance that Christ had accepted the individual concerned. This spiritual experience was called "the new birth," and in the early days of the movement was invariably highly emotional, although of course, not therefore necessarily suspect. But while this gift of assurance was at first regarded as an indispensable necessity, it should be noted that Wesley said at the end of his life that this had been a mistake. "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 were forgiven they were under the wrath and curse of God, I marvel 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 pain of damnation, denounced on all who enjoy it not."⁷

Clearly the work of the Spirit cannot be limited to any one group, or to any one mode of operation laid down by that group. However, Wesley and his colleagues did perform a great service to the catholic church in drawing attention to the much neglected doctrine of the Spirit, and this was the specific Wesleyan contribution to theology. Dr. Wheeler Robinson has laid down the canon that the post-Reformation centuries represent "the Arian controversy" of the Holy Spirit,⁸ doing for the doctrine of the Spirit what the fourth century did for the doctrine of the Son. And if that is a true statement, we can see in the period two phases which have contributed to our modern understanding of the Spirit. The first came with what Dr. G. F. Nuttall calls "the Holy Spirit in Puritan faith and experience," and is to be found in the seventeenth century writings of the Puritan divines like Baxter, Sibbes and Bunyan.⁹ This phase represents the rediscovery of the Holy Spirit as the mainspring of all Christian activity, and resulted in that type of pietism which is still practised to-day in the Society of Friends.

The second phase came with this Wesleyan, or Evangelical, Revival which overspilled from the Church of England into the founding of the Methodist Church, and, at the same time, gained a following among many who remained as "evangelical clergy" within the Established Church. Here,

7. Southey's *Life of Wesley*, p. 175.

8. H. Wheeler Robinson, *The Christian Experience of the Holy Spirit* (Nisbet), 1928, p. 65.

9. G. F. Nuttall, *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience*, (Blackwell), 1946.

then, in the second phase, we have a new realisation of the work of the Spirit in redemption, rather than any speculative insight into the doctrine of the Person of the Holy Spirit and His relation to the Father and the Son. For the theology of revival, we can only go to the sermons and the diaries of the preachers, this being one of the significant differences between the Evangelical Revival of the eighteenth century and the Tractarian Movement of the nineteenth century. The latter has left us a plethora of theological works. The former has left us a witness to the power of consecrated lives. The evangelicals converted thousands of what have been called Nothingarians, people who were "nothing going nowhere"; the Tractarians insisted that our intellectual appreciation and liturgical expression of the deep things of God should match our spiritual participation in what He means to us in personal experience; and both views, of course, have a vital place in the Christian life of the twentieth century.

So it was that, apart from its essentially Protestant insistence on justification by faith, the only specific Wesleyan contribution to theology, was the doctrine of Perfectionism; and here we find that Wesley contradicted himself as to what he meant by it, and Whitefield disagreed with him to the point of estrangement. This subject has been dealt with fully by a great Methodist theologian, Dr. Newton Flew,¹⁰ who reluctantly concluded that Wesley, in his attempt to define the doctrine, meant different things at different times. The proof-text, of course, is to be found in I John 3:9: "Whosoever is born of God doeth no sin, because his seed abideth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God." Wesley referred this passage to what he called "sinless perfectionism," reasoning that, since love is the fulfilling of the law, therefore he who loves God and his neighbour fulfils the law to perfection, and need not look for any other evidence. Whitefield, who was a double-dyed Calvinist, referred it to an indefectible principle of grace in the individual, reasoning that, if the Holy Spirit indwells the believer, it is impossible for him to fall into sin. Neither view has stood the test of time, having obvious limitations, and, in particular, causing irreparable harm in the hands of those uninstructed in the finer points of theology. We may, however, detract nothing from the greatness of Wesley as the pioneer of modern evangelism in noting his failure to arrive at a satisfactory pneumatology. Indeed, it would have been strange if the man whose primary interest was the ministry of conversion should have had time to produce a classical theology of conversion. That, in fact, is still to come. The reducing of Christian experience to adequate and satisfying theological propositions takes a long time and if the work of the patristic period on the doctrine of the Son is anything to go by, it may be hoped that the theologians of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries will be able to bring to its logical conclusion, the thesis laid down by Wesley two hundred years ago.

10. R. Newton Flew, *The Idea of Perfection in Christian Theology*. (O.U.P.), 1934, ch. xix.

II

It is commonly asserted that the English Established Church in the eighteenth century was filled with Arians, Latitudinarians and Nothingarians and none else, except a few high churchmen left over from the Laudian régime (of whom John Wesley's father was one!). The retort of Bishop Butler to John Wesley, "Sir, the pretending to extraordinary revelations and gifts of the Holy Ghost is a horrid thing, a very horrid thing!" is usually quoted at this point as indicative of the low ebb of rationalist theology. But this, of course, is only one side of the picture. There certainly were many gentleman-parsons such as the one who was asked what he thought of Wesleyanism and replied, "My dear Sir, there may be other doors into heaven than the Church of England, but I am sure that no gentleman would use them!" But there was also Grimshaw, rector of Haworth in Yorkshire (to be the home of the Brontë family a hundred years later) who would set his congregation to read the 119th psalm while he went round the village with a horsewhip rounding up the strays and driving them into church for the sermon. And once inside his church, it was said, "he was at times like a man with his feet on earth and his soul in heaven." When he commenced his ministry there were twelve communicants; when he died, twelve hundred. John Fletcher of Madeley, was converted as a minister of the Established Church, by reading Wesley's Journal, and laboured for twenty-five years in a large, poor parish in Shropshire. He had been offered a living elsewhere, but had refused it on the grounds that the income was too large and the population too small. Accordingly, he addressed himself to the rector of Madeley, who was willing to exchange his large parish for the smaller one, and so gave himself to a fervent evangelical ministry. James Hervey, who had been one of Wesley's original Holy Club of Methodists at Oxford, lived a short but fruitful ministerial life, and wrote two books, one of which, with the alarming but typical eighteenth century title, *Meditations among the Tombs*, became one of the most popular devotional classics of the age. John Berridge, who often preached for Wesley and Lady Huntingdon, sacrificed academic honours at Cambridge to go to the humble parish of Everton in Bedfordshire, and there exercised a preaching ministry which has been the envy of ministers ever since. Thousands flocked to hear him from all over England, and scenes were witnessed in his churchyard which were comparable to the effects of the preaching both of Wesley and Whitefield. Henry Venn, rector of the important Yorkshire living of Huddersfield, also exercised a remarkable ministry of conversion. But without doubt the most romantic character connected with the Evangelical Revival in the Anglican Church was John Newton. He had been an atheist in his youth, engaged in the slave-trade and plying between the African ports and the southern States. He was converted by reading the Bible during a hurricane in the south Atlantic, and eventually gave up the slave-trade and sufficiently educated himself to be able to go to university. He became

the bosom companion of William Cowper, the evangelical poet, and wrote many hymns after he was ordained and had become rector of Olney in Buckinghamshire. Among other hymns of his such as *Approach my soul the mercy-seat, Glorious things of thee are spoken*, and the little two-verse gem, *May the grace of Christ our Saviour*, we find the hymn which he wrote especially for the first service in a newly-constructed chapel which he had built:

*Great shepherd of Thy people, hear;
Thy presence now display;
As Thou hast given a place for prayer,
So give us hearts to pray.*

All these, and many more, were contemporaries of Wesley, working along his lines (and often in collaboration with him) but doing so within the limits of Established Church order. Some of them, of course, had gone outside the boundaries of their own parishes when they had seen people neglected, but most of them saw what they regarded as the red light, when the Methodist lay-preachers began to celebrate communion and took to themselves the work of the ordained clergy against the wishes of Wesley. It is therefore true to point out that, alongside the specifically Wesleyan revival, there was an evangelical party in the Anglican Church who agreed with Wesley in his interpretation of the doctrine of redemption, but parted company with him in the matter of church order. These were the first generation Anglican evangelicals, and suggest the truth of a wider interpretation of the history of the Evangelical Revival which would claim that it bears the true characteristics of a work of the Spirit, in that it was both spontaneous and universal. It began with Wesley and his colleagues, both inside and outside the Established Church, but the movement was bigger than all of them put together. There were hundreds of evangelists involved, whose names are not, and never will be, known. What happened, perhaps, was not so much that "John Wesley to the fight and to the rescue came," but that "a deep spiritual awakening sprang up almost simultaneously in different districts all over England." How it progressed is epitomised in the work of Wesley, but he was a part rather than the whole.

Just how much had to be done by these men in the England of the Industrial Revolution is beyond the ken of many a parish-priest today with his highly organised techniques and pastoral training. And just how much they failed to do is demonstrated by the continued existence in the nineteenth century of men like the Rev. Sydney Smith, Canon of St. Paul's Cathedral in London, renowned as a wit. He, on his part, epitomises not the nineteenth, but the eighteenth century Anglican minister who despised any form of religious enthusiasm whatever, and carried his religion rather too lightly to be of much use to God, and certainly lightly enough to be a constant source of amusement to his fellows. Some examples of Canon Smith's table-talk in the shadow of St. Paul's and selected at random, will illustrate the point:

I have, alas, only one illusion left, and that is the Archbishop of Canterbury . . .

As the French say, there are three sexes—men, women and clergymen . . .

I never read a book before reviewing it; it prejudices a man so . . .

My idea of heaven is eating *pâtés de foie gras* to the sound of trumpets . . .

What a pity it is that we have no amusements in England, but vice and religion . . .

Bishop Berkeley destroyed this world in one volume octavo; and nothing remained after his time but mind; which experienced a similar fate from the hand of Mr. Hume in 1739 . . .

What Bishops like best in their clergy is a dropping-down-deadness of manner . . .

The Evangelical Revival was born in an age when divines were sympathetic to the claims of reason and had lost the truth that there is a road to the heart which sometimes bypasses the intellect. The direct influence of a Personal Spirit was regarded as a gift limited to the apostolic age, and it was not uncommon for this to be taught from the pulpit. The first sign of a new approach to this problem of the work of the Holy Spirit in the individual was being propagated from at least one pulpit in the university of Cambridge while the young Sydney Smith was drinking tea with the ladies and amusing them with his wit.

III

Charles Simeon was born in Reading in 1759, the fourth and youngest son of a well-to-do family. His eldest brother died young, but of his two remaining brothers, one was a member of Parliament and a baronet, while the other was an exceedingly prosperous merchant of the City of London and a director of the Bank of England. Charles went to the Royal College of Eton at an early age, and, at the age of nineteen, went up to King's College, Cambridge with a scholarship. Here he discovered that he must make his communion once a term in order to satisfy the requirements of his university, this being an age when the sacrament was still used as a test of orthodoxy and only members of the Established Church were allowed the privilege of an university education. His immediate reaction was that "Satan was as fit to attend such a service as I," and he promptly set about preparing himself to meet His Lord worthily. He read two books on how to prepare to make his communion and went through a period of self-examination and contrition. Later in the same term, however, he was required to make a second communion on Easter Day, and it was in Holy Week, 1779, that he discovered the true meaning of the Lord's sacrifice.

As I was reading Bishop Wilson on the Lord's Supper, I met with an expression to this effect: "That the Jews knew what they did when they transferred their sin to the head of their offering." The thought rushed into my mind. What! may I transfer all my guilt to another? Has God provided an offering for me, that I may lay my sins on his head? then, God willing, I will not bear them on my own soul one moment longer. Accordingly I sought to lay my sins upon the

sacred head of Jesus; and on the Wednesday began to have a hope of mercy; on the Thursday that hope increased; on the Friday and Saturday it became more strong; and on the Sunday morning (Easter Day, April 4th, 1779) I awoke early with those words upon my heart and lips, "Jesus Christ is risen to-day; Hallelujah!"¹¹

So was the man who was to be the leader of the second generation of Anglican Evangelicals for the next fifty-five years converted in his own college chapel.

From 1782 onwards the history of the evangelical movement in Cambridge is, to all intents and purposes, the history of Charles Simeon. In that year he became incumbent of the parish of Holy Trinity, situated in the city market place a few steps from the University Church, and there he remained until his death in 1836, living in his fellow's rooms in college and ministering to a mixed congregation of town and gown. He never married, but concentrated the whole of his energies in two directions, ministering tirelessly to his parishioners on the one hand, and on the other, to those undergraduates who were destined for the sacred ministry. The first Theological College in the British Isles was not, of course, founded until 1816. Prior to this date, men simply went to a Bishop at the conclusion of their degree course, and were forthwith ordained and farmed out to curacies with no pastoral or theological training whatever (unless, of course, they had elected to read theology for their B.A.). Simeon, however, did his utmost to rectify this situation by holding weekly meetings in his rooms for all who would come. Here he moulded the teaching and preaching of no less than fifty-three graduating classes, expounding the Bible to them, reading the Greek Testament with them, teaching them how to take services, how to compose a sermon, how to give spiritual counsel.¹² So Lord Macaulay, the essayist, wrote to a friend: "As to Simeon, if you knew what his authority and influence were, and how they extended from Cambridge to the most remote corners of England, you would allow that his real sway over the Church was far greater than that of any Primate."¹³

As with Wesley, however, when we come to seek Simeon's theology, we must read his sermons and his biographical notes. And here, in the 2,536 sermons of the *Horae Homileticae*,¹⁴ we find a fully-developed doctrine of the work of the Holy Spirit set in the context of the doctrine of redemption. It begins with a clear and full appreciation of the trinitarian nature of God which never allowed Simeon to slip into the prevalent sin against the Holy Ghost of thinking of Him as "It." He wrote words worth repeating when he said, "How astonishing are our obligations to each person in the Sacred Trinity! The Father is the great source and fountain of all our blessings: Christ is the procurer of them, and the medium through whom they come:

11. William Carus, *Life of Simeon* (Hatchard), 1847, p. 9.

12. Cf. Abner Wm. Brown, *Recollections of the Conversation Parties of the Rev. Chas. Simeon*, (Hamilton Adams), 1863.

13. Trevelyan, *Life of Lord Macaulay*, 1876, i. 67 note.

14. Simeon's *opus magnum* in XXI volumes, now being re-issued by Zondervan's, Grand Rapids, Mich. under the title *Expository Outlines on the Whole Bible*.

and the Holy Spirit is the agent by whom they are conveyed to us. Let us hold fellowship with each in his distinct office and character, and acknowledge with gratitude their united exertions."¹⁵ Jews hold fellowship with the Father only; and the large majority of Christians hold fellowship with the Father and the Son; but neither has exhausted the fulness of God's revealed nature. From the beginning of creation, the Spirit and the Word have been the agents of the Father. After the Fall of man, and the consequent need for recreation, the Father sent the Son and the Spirit to deal with man's problem. Jesus Christ, as the Second Adam, was, above all else, the charismatic man; the one in whom the Spirit of God dwelt in His fulness; but He received the Spirit not only in order to perform the work of Saviour, but also in order to make Him available to the redeemed. God has provided for His people forgiveness and justification through the Son; and newness of life and sanctification through the Spirit. This is the second creation, brought about by the same agents as the first, and explains the Lord's words to Nicodemus with reference to the need for a new birth "from above."¹⁶

The significant fact of Simeon's thesis, however, is his unwillingness to confine the work of the Spirit to inspiration, guidance and sanctification. The Spirit is the handmaid of the Saviour in the act of redemption itself; inferior in His work of glorifying the Son and pointing men to Him; but equal as to His Person. The relationship between man and the Spirit began, not at Pentecost, but at least at the moment of creation. St. John began his gospel with the formula of Genesis 1:1 because the recreation of fallen man, made possible through the sacrifice of Christ the Word, and effected in us through the operations of the Holy Spirit, is the new creation directly parallel with the first creation. The Word and the Spirit are seen at the beginning of both of the covenants of God. In Genesis, the *ruach Jahweh* and the *dabar Jahweh* move into the void and the chaos and bring into being order, light and beauty. In the fourth gospel, the *Logos* (in the prologue) and the *Pneuma* (in chapters 14–16) move into the greater and more terrible darkness and chaos of a fallen world, and create in the souls of redeemed men, life of a new quality—eternal life, which is characterised by its order, light and beauty. So may the old covenant be reinterpreted in the light of the new. The Holy Spirit, unrecognised then as God Himself, was at work through the Law, the History of God's ancient people, and their Prophets, preparing the way for the moment of recreation. When it came, we should expect to find the Spirit present, and here it is said that when the Word became flesh, the Spirit was the conceiving power. Certainly He was very much in evidence at the Lord's baptism and temptations, and it was by Him that the Lord healed and to Him that the Lord appealed. If we may accept one interpretation of Hebrews 9:14, it was by the eternal Spirit that the Son offered Himself on the Cross without spot to the Father; and St. Paul certainly regarded the Spirit as the motive power in the Resur-

15. Sermon 2002.

16. John 3:3, 5.

rection.¹⁷ The Ascension also falls naturally into place as the culmination of a life lived in the power of the Spirit of Holiness. Jesus Christ, God and man, victorious over death, returned to His eternal home to direct operations from the place of power, with the promise that He would now give the Spirit to His followers to be in them what He had been in the Lord Himself. So the pattern of the Lord's incarnation is the pattern for His Church as the extension of that incarnation. Its essential nature was, to quote Simeon, "the Holy Spirit co-operating with the Lord Jesus Christ in effecting the redemption of a ruined world," and as such, revealed in history the ultimate truth that there is one God in Three Persons, and that He is love. This is the basic statement of the New Testament record in which, as Simeon put it, "the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are represented as concurring in the great work of redemption: the Father sending the Son into the world; the Son laying down his life for us; and the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son, to apply that redemption to our souls."¹⁸

This, according to Simeon, is the only context in which we may begin to observe how the Spirit works in the individual believer. It will be observed in passing, however, that while he gives full weight to the particular offices of the Father, the Son and the Spirit in redemption, he also insists on the unity of the economy of redemption. The Holy Three are mutually involved at every level, thus giving no place to that departmental attitude to the Holy Trinity which says dogmatically that the Father creates, the Son redeems and the Spirit sanctifies. This is far too trite a statement. Nevertheless, when we ask how Simeon described the work of the Spirit in bringing the individual person into a living relationship with this supra-personal God, we must admit that he argued from the only experience of which he could speak with authority, namely, his own conversion. This, of course, is a weakness as well as a strength, for it issues in a rather formal attempt to canalise the work of the Spirit in one particular direction. On the other hand, it carries conviction precisely because large numbers come to Christ by way of conversion, and, as Wesley had discovered to his surprise when he came to re-read the New Testament with new eyes many years before, most of the people in its pages appear to have come the same way. For Simeon then, the work of the Spirit in the individual is a threefold process in which He may be said to operate as the Prevenient Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, and the Spirit of Holiness.

As the Prevenient Spirit, He initiates in men both the desire to come nigh to God and the will to do so. Often He makes men dissatisfied, using some apparently chance incident in their experience to set them thinking about their relationship to God. In short, wherever men and women begin to look to Jesus Christ, the Spirit is at work within them, for it is His office to glorify Christ as Saviour. Simeon's epigram summing up this aspect of the Spirit's work was, "As Christ died for all, so does the Holy Spirit strive with all."¹⁹ This was surely the thought underlying St. Paul's comment, "No man can

17. Rom. 1:4.

18. Sermon 487.

19. Sermon 2459.

say that Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit."²⁰ For the Christian there can be no such thing as chance. The omniscient, ubiquitous Spirit never misses an opportunity to glorify the Lord, and it may be that it is He who creates the opportunities as well.

As the Spirit of Christ, the Comforter enables the individual to enter the kingdom of God through the labour of spiritual birth. Here the whole vast problem of the meaning of conversion is raised in an acute form. In so brief an article it is not possible to deal with it adequately, but the main points have already been demonstrated in the features of both Wesley's and Simeon's experience. First they experienced conviction of sin, failure and unworthiness: "I who went to America to convert others was never myself converted to God"; "Satan was as fit to attend such a service as I." Then they began to see that Christ alone could meet their needs and entered upon a period of hopefulness and yearning for release: "I felt my heart strangely warmed, I felt I did trust in Christ . . ."; "On Wednesday I began to have hope of mercy; on Thursday that hope increased; on the Friday and Saturday it became more strong." So finally came certainty: "An assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins"; "On Sunday morning I awoke early with those words upon my heart and lips, 'Jesus Christ is risen to-day.'" In these, and a million other Christian case-histories, the individual is aware that something has happened to him. In the words of St. Paul, "If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new";²¹ and those who have experienced it know it to be the work of the Son and the Spirit in recreation.

So we come to the third and last phase of the work of the Spirit in the individual, His work as the Spirit of Holiness. Both Wesley and Simeon regarded conversion as the beginning, not the end, of Christian experience and insisted that sanctification, progress in holiness, cannot precede it. Men can only begin to grow into the likeness of Christ after they have entered that relationship described by St. Paul as "being in Christ." The fruits of the Spirit are evidence of the existence of a new life; they are not, and never have been, evidence for an improvement in the old life. This simple fact explains why so many people get discouraged about their inability to conquer habitual sins. They are not looking for the work of the Spirit in the redemption of the whole man. They are looking only for partial improvement of the old man, and the Holy Spirit is never content with that, and will not give that.

IV

From the foregoing sketch of the life and work of two great evangelists, it is abundantly evident that the Evangelical Revival represents another phase in the development of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Their experience and witness demand that we should re-examine our expectation

20. I Cor. 12:36.

21. II Cor. 5:17.

of the work of the Third Person of the Blessed and Undivided Trinity in twentieth century man; and especially so in the light of present trends in evangelism on a global scale. Theology has already asked, and adequately answered, the question, What does the Holy Spirit work in us when we are Christians? But there is a prior question which has not yet been satisfactorily answered, and which the pressure of contemporary movements requires that we answer truthfully: What will the Holy Spirit work in men in order that they may become Christ's?