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APPENDIX ELEVEN

THE PLACE OF EXPERIENCE

Donald Gee

This is the expanded text of the article referred to in Chapter Fourteen

EXPERIENCE — yes, indeed; thank God for it! Is it not the great essential to setting any ministry whether public or private, aglow with convicting power? Is it not the substance without which cleverness, arguments, masterly doctrinal statements, and the finest eloquence remain but as an empty shadow, in danger of ending in mere words, nothing more?

No man possessed of a Scriptural experience needs be afraid of an argument; he is beyond its reach. Any man rejoicing in a living experience of God in his life has a power independent of, and mightily beyond, all external training in logic or theology.

We dare to press this glorious asset when we contend for the mighty truths God has made living to us since the Comforter has come and we have known what it is personally to ‘speak with other tongues’ as the Spirit gives us utterance, and to rejoice in many another manifestation of His presence also.

It is true that we meet some who would discount the value of this line of argument altogether, who remind us that we must not live on experiences; but it is more true that the men and women who founded Christianity were those who had been set on fire and kept on fire by burning personal experience; and all down the ages ever since, revival has centred — not around the dust of doctrinal battlefields and the places of exact presentation of some orthodox creed — but the rather where valiant, humble hearts have dared to venture their lives and their all on fresh discoveries of the glorious fact and boundless possibilities of a living Christ in that acid test, but the most convincing of all

proofs — actual experience in the hurly-burly of life as all men know it. And in these experiences that are labelled ‘Pentecostal,’ we humbly affirm that we have done the same; to God be the glory!

It would be the direst folly — an inevitable road to disaster and fanaticism — to put aside or even undervalue the absolute necessity of sound doctrine and an impregnable Scriptural basis for whatever is claimed on the line of experience...

Facts are awkward things to dispose of! To the glory of God we can testify — yes, verily by the thousands — to having received a mighty experience, an actual crisis in our Christian experience and in our lives, that has ever since lifted all things to a higher level, has thrust us forth in testimony and service for the Lord Jesus Christ that was before undreamt of, has made us new men and women in a very real sense, has altered the current of our lives, has changed our whole vision both for this life and the next, has flooded the Word of God (with) new meaning and power, and has made us taste as (never) before the exquisite fullness of obeying the ... commandment ‘to love the Lord our God with (all) our heart, all our soul, all our mind and all our strength.’ And all this came to us when, dissatisfied with our former Christian experience, and sure there (was) something for us more satisfying, we came in sincerity of heart and purpose to our Father in heaven, asking for the fulfilment of certain definite promises in the Word, asking for a Baptism of the Holy Ghost like unto that received by the early Christians and portrayed on the pages of our New Testaments — and with it came speaking with tongues...

We are not ashamed of it...

We suggest that those who have no personal experience of these things might well speak more softly at times.¹

¹ GN 16:11 Nov 1925, pp.8f