

'The Holy Spirit' or 'Power from on High'

by A. B. Simpson,

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'The Holy Spirit'
or
'Power from on High'

by Rev A. B. Simpson,

Volume 2

New Testament

'The Holy Spirit' or 'Power from on High'

by A. B. Simpson,

Volume 2 - Chapter 1

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE LIFE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." Matt. 3: 11.

These words from the lips of the forerunner intimate that there was to be a great distinction between the old dispensation which he was closing, and the new, which Jesus Christ was about to usher in.

The distinction was to be very marked in connection with the manner and measure in which the Holy Ghost would be poured out upon the people of God and manifested in connection with the work of redemption. The two natural emblems of water and fire are used to denote the difference between the two dispensations.

We have seen that the Holy Ghost was present on earth during the Old Testament age, speaking through the prophets and messengers of God, and working out His divine purpose in the lives of God's chosen agents, and instruments. But the New Testament is preeminently the age of the Holy Ghost, and we might, therefore, expect that there would be a great and infinite difference. The principal difference between the old and new dispensations, with respect to the presence and manifestations of the Holy Ghost, might be summed up in the following particulars.

1. In the Old Testament, the Holy Ghost was given to special individuals to fit them for special service; in the New Testament, the promise is that the Spirit shall be poured out upon all flesh, and they shall not need to say, one to another, "Know the Lord, for all shall know Him," through the divine unction, "from the least to the greatest." The universal outpouring of the Holy Ghost upon all believers is the striking feature of the New Testament.

2. The Holy Spirit was with men and upon men, rather than in them in the Old Testament. In the New Testament dispensation, the Holy Ghost comes to dwell in us and to unite us personally with God, and to be in us, not only a Spirit of power and a preparation for service, but a Spirit of life, holiness, and fellowship with the Divine Being. It is not the influence of the Holy Ghost that we receive, but it is the Person of the Holy Ghost.

3. This leads us to the third distinction; namely, that under the Old Testament dispensation, the Holy Ghost was not resident upon earth, but visited it from time to time as occasion required.

Now the Spirit of God is dwelling upon the earth. This is His abode. He resides in the hearts of men, and in the Church of Christ, just as literally as Jesus resided upon the earth during the thirty-three years of His incarnation and life below.

4. Perhaps the principal difference was this; in the Old Testament age the Holy Ghost came rather as the Spirit of the Father, in the glory and majesty of the Deity, while under the New Testament He comes rather as the Spirit of the Son, to represent Jesus to us, and to make Him real in our experience and life. Indeed, the Person of the Holy Ghost was not fully constituted under the Old Testament. It was necessary that He should reside for three and a half years in the heart of Jesus of Nazareth, and become, as it were, humanized, colored, and brought nearer to us by His personal union with our Incarnate Lord. Now He comes to us as the same Spirit that lived, and loved, and suffered, and wrought, in Jesus Christ.

In a sense, our Master left His heart behind Him, and when the Holy Ghost comes to dwell within us, He brings the living Christ and makes His person real to our hearts.

This must be the meaning of that remarkable passage in John 7: 37, 38, where Jesus said that the Spirit in the believer should flow out like rivers of living water; then the evangelist adds, "The Spirit was not yet; because Jesus was not yet glorified." The Holy Spirit, in the form in which He was to be manifest in the coming age was not constituted until after the ascension of Jesus. Now, He comes to us as the Spirit of Christ. Therefore it, is intensely interesting to us to look at the relation of the Holy Ghost to the person of our Lord in His first baptism and earthly ministry.

This is our present theme. May the Holy Ghost Himself illuminate and apply it to all our hearts!

I.

Our Lord was born of the Holy Spirit. The announcement by the angel to Mary connects the Divine Spirit directly with the conception and incarnation of Christ. "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, therefore, that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the son of God." Luke 1: 35.

The human mind cannot fathom this mystery -- a holy Christ conceived and born of one who was herself the daughter of a sinful race. We cannot believe in the immaculate Mary, but we can believe in the immaculate Son of God, born of her without sin.

The very fact that she was an imperfect and sinful woman adds to the glory of this mystery and makes it the more perfect type of the experience through which we also come into fellowship with our living Head. For just as Jesus was born of the Spirit, so we, the disciples of Jesus, must also be born of the Holy Ghost; for "except a man be born from above he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

The mystery of the incarnation is repeated every time a soul is created anew in Christ Jesus. Into the unholy being of a child of Adam, a seed of incorruptible and eternal life is implanted by the divine Spirit, and that seed is in itself, through the life of God, holy and incorruptible. Just as you may see in the sweet springtime the little white, spotless shoot, coming from the dark soil and out of the heap of manure, unstained by all its gross surroundings, so out of our lost humanity the Holy Spirit causes to spring forth the life of the newborn soul; and while the subject of that marvelous experience may seem an imperfect being, still he has that within him, of which the apostle has said, "His seed remaineth in him, and cannot sin; because it is born of God." He can sin, but that holy nature implanted in him cannot; it is like its Author, holy, too.

"And so He that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified, are all of one, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren." Like Him we are born of the Holy Ghost and become the sons of God, not by adoption, but by the divine regeneration.

II.

Jesus Christ was baptized by the Holy Spirit. Not only did He derive His person and His incarnate life from the Holy Ghost, but when at thirty years of age He consecrated Himself to His ministry of life and suffering and service, and went down into the waters of the Jordan, in token of His self-renunciation and His assumption of death, the heavens were opened and the Holy Ghost, by whom He had been born, now came down and personally possessed His being and henceforth dwelt within Him.

No one can for a moment deny that this was something transcendently more than the incarnation of Christ. Up to this time there had been one personality, henceforth there were two; for the Holy Ghost was added to the Christ, and in the strength of this indwelling Spirit, henceforth He wrought His works, and spake His words, and accomplished His ministry on earth.

But this also has its parallel in the experience of the disciples of Christ. It is not enough for us to be born of the Holy Ghost, we must also be baptized with the Holy Ghost. There must come a crisis hour in the life of every Christian when he, too, steps down into the Jordan of death; when he yields his will to fulfill all righteousness, like his Master; when he voluntarily assumes the life of self-renunciation and service, which God has appointed for him in His holy will, and when there is added to him, as a divine trust, the Holy Ghost; henceforth it is not one, but two, and then these two are one.

I remember the day when my daughter walked down one aisle of this building, and another walked down the other aisle, and they met at this altar and then they walked back after that simple, solemn ceremony, but not as they came. It was not one person now, but two; yet those two were one, and she leaned her weakness upon his strength and, assuming his name, henceforth looked to him for all the needs of her life.

And so there comes a time when the believer joins his hand with the Holy Ghost, and there is added to his new heart and his Christian experience the mighty stupendous fact of God Himself, and the personal indwelling of the Holy Ghost.

How perfectly this is described in the two sentences in Ezekiel. "A new heart will I give unto you and a right spirit will I put within you." This is the new heart in us. "And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you shall keep My commandments and do them." That is the baptism with the Holy Ghost. And so Peter and the other disciples were born of the Spirit before the day of Pentecost; but Jesus promised them that they should be baptized with the Holy Ghost at the appointed time, and when that day was fully come there was added to their true Christian life the divine personality, the infinite presence and all-sufficiency of God, the indwelling Holy Ghost, who had lived and wrought in Jesus Christ.

Beloved, have we entered into this experience? Have we received the Holy Ghost since we believed, or have we allowed our theological traditions and our preconceived ideas to shut us out from our inheritance of blessing and of power? Let us do so no longer. Let us, with the Master, step down to Jordan, enter with Him into death, rise with Him in resurrection life into the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and then go forth in the fulness of His power and liberty, even as He.

Oh, if the Son of God did not presume to begin His public work until He had received this power from on high, what presumption it is that we should attempt in our own strength to fulfill the ministry committed to us and be witnesses unto Him!

III.

No sooner had the Lord received the baptism of the Holy Ghost than He was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to "be tempted of the devil." This is especially emphasized by the evangelist. It was not the devil that appeared first, but it was the Spirit. In the Gospel of Mark the language is still stronger, and it is said that he was "driven of the Spirit."

Perhaps His human spirit recoiled from the awful ordeal of the wilderness, as it afterwards shrank from the anguish of Gethsemane, and the Holy Ghost pressed Him forward by one of those resistless impulses which many of us have learned to understand, and for forty days His blessing was challenged; His faith was tested; His very soul was tried by all the assaults of the adversary.

He was brought into certain places that seemed to contradict all that He believed, and to challenge all that had been promised to Him. The devil might well say to Him, "Art Thou indeed the Son of God in the midst of hunger, desolation, and wild beasts, and every form of suffering, cast off and neglected even by God, and left in destitution and desolation?"

And then, amid all these perils and privations, suddenly there opened before Him the vision of

power and pleasure -- the kingdoms of the world and all the glory of them, if He would but yield a single point and accept the leadership of the enemy, who doubtless appealed to His higher nature and represented Himself as an angel of light, or perhaps approached Him through His own form, and all the visions and possibilities of power He might use for the good of men and the benefit of the world.

These and other more subtle insinuations and instigations came to Him on every side and yet, amid them all, He stood unmoved in His obedience to His Father's will and His reliance upon His Father's word, until Satan was driven from His presence, and He came forth more than conqueror. And so the first thing that we may look for, after the baptism of the Holy Ghost, is the wilderness with its desolations and privations. Circumstances will surely come to us, which seem to contradict all that we have believed, and to render impossible the promise of God. Even God will seem to have failed us, and when all is dark as midnight, the vision of help from other sources will come to us, and a thousand voices will whisper to us their promises of sympathy and aid, if we but yield a single point of conscience and give ourselves up to the will of the deceiver. All the temptations of our Master will come to us, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, the pride of life, the temptation to take help from forbidden sources, or perhaps to carry even our faith to the extreme of fanaticism and presumption.

All these will come, but if the Spirit has led us up into the wilderness He will lead us out. If we will but lift our eyes above the tempter to the divine Deliverer, we shall find that even Satan shall be compelled to become our ally; and, more than conquerors, like our Master, we shall take our enemy prisoner and make him fight our very battles.

Let us not fear the conflict; let us not shrink from the testing; let us not count it strange concerning the fiery trial that is to try us; let us not see the devil first, but the Lord always above him, and the Holy Ghost in the midst of our being, our Victor and Deliverer. "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against Him."

We must first fight the battle in our own soul that we are to fight in the world. David must meet Goliath alone, before he can meet him in the hosts of the Philistines. Jesus must conquer Satan in single combat, before He can go forth to drive him out of hearts and lives. And so we, too, must live out our public service in the private arena of our own spiritual experience, and then repeat our victory in the victory that God shall give us for the lives of others.

Beloved, shall we not trust, through all our tests and trials, and take the Holy Ghost as our Deliverer in the hour of temptation, and our blessed and divine Discipliner, leading us through the ordeal of suffering to the strength of victory?

IV.

We next read that Jesus went forth in the power of the Spirit from the wilderness into Galilee. He was not weakened but strengthened by His conflict, and almost immediately afterward we

find Him standing in the synagogue at Nazareth publicly declaring, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to

bind up the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." Luke 4: 18, 19.

Henceforth all His teachings, all His works, all His miracles of power were attributed directly to the Holy Ghost. In the twelfth chapter of Matthew and the twenty-eighth verse, we have a very distinct statement of the connection of the Holy Spirit with His miracles of power. "If I by the Spirit of God, cast out demons, then the kingdom of God is come unto you." That is to say, it is the Holy Ghost that casts out demons in us, and this same Holy Ghost is to remain in us and to perpetuate the kingdom of God in the church through the dispensation.

It is a very wonderful truth that it is the same Spirit who wrought in Christ, that He has given to the church to perform her works of love and power.

This was what the Master meant when He said, "He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto the Father." The Holy Ghost in us is the same Holy Ghost that wrought in Christ. We yield to none, in honor to the Son of God. He was truly the Eternal God, "very God of very God." But when He came down from yonder heights of glory, he suspended the direct operation of His own independent power and became voluntarily dependent upon the power of God through the Holy Ghost. He constantly said, "I can of mine own self do nothing." He purposely took His place side by side with us, needing equally with the humblest disciple the constant power of God to sustain Him in all His work. Not that He might be dishonored in His glory and majesty, "For being in the form of God He thought it not a thing to be grasped to be equal with God, but He emptied Himself and made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant."

And so He went through life in the position of dependence, that He might be our public example and teach us that we, too, have the same secret of strength and power that He possessed, and that as surely as He overcame through the Holy Ghost, so may we.

Oh, what a solemn spectacle it is to see the Son of God spending thirty years on earth without one single act of public ministry until He received the baptism of power from on high, and then concentrating a whole lifetime of service into forty-two short months of intense activity and almighty power!

But He has left to us the same power which He possessed. He has bequeathed to the church the very Holy Ghost that lived and wrought in Him. Let us accept this mighty gift. Let us believe in Him and His all-sufficiency. Let us receive Him and give Him room, and let us go forth to reproduce the life and ministry of Jesus and perpetuate the divine miracles of our holy Christianity through the power of the blessed Comforter.

This is the mighty gift of our ascended Lord. This is the supreme need of the church of today. This is the special promise of the latter days. God help us to claim it fully and, in the power of the Spirit, to go forth to meet our coming Lord.

'The Holy Spirit' or 'Power from on High'

by A. B. Simpson,

Volume 2 - Chapter 2

THE BAPTISM WITH THE HOLY GHOST

"He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." Matt. 3: 11.

This sounds almost like an echo of the last promise of the Old Testament. The voice of "the Messenger" is taken up by "the Forerunner." "He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap; and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them like gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness."

In the last chapter we have seen the relation of the Holy Ghost to the person of Christ. First, He was born by the Spirit, then He was baptized by the Spirit, and then He went forth to work out His life and ministry in the power of the Spirit.

But "He that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one;" so in like manner we must follow in His Footsteps and relive His life. Born like Him of the Spirit, we, too, must be baptized of the Spirit, and then go forth to live His life and reproduce His work. And so our next theme is the baptism of the Spirit of God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

I. THE BAPTIZER.

It is Christ's province to baptize with the Holy Ghost. The sinner does not come first to the Holy Spirit, but to Christ. Our first business is to receive Jesus, and then to receive the Holy Ghost. Therefore, the great promise of the Old Testament is the coming of Christ, while the great promise of the New is the coming of the Spirit.

Jesus received the Spirit from the Father. We receive the Spirit from Jesus. It is necessary for us, in order that we may fully receive the Holy Ghost, that we shall first receive Christ in His person as our Savior and as our indwelling life.

The Father gave the Spirit to Him not by measure and, if He dwells in us, He will bring the Spirit with Him, and He shall dwell in us likewise in the same measure in which He dwells in Jesus.

Our mere human hearts are not fit temples for the Holy Ghost. It is only as we are united to Christ that we are prepared and enabled to receive the Holy Ghost in the fullness of His life and power. It is the Christ within us, that still receives the Holy Ghost.

And so, when our Master was about to leave the world, it is significantly stated that He

breathed upon them, and said: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." The Holy Spirit came upon them through the breath of Christ. This significant action emphasized the fact that the Spirit was imparted to them from His own person and as His own very life. It is true that the act of breathing on them did not bring immediately the residence of the Holy Ghost into their hearts, for this could not be until after the day of Pentecost. But it was meant to connect it with Himself, so that when the Holy Ghost did descend and dwell in them they would receive Him as the Spirit of Jesus, and as communicated to them by the breath and the very kiss of their departing Master.

As we have already seen, the Holy Ghost comes to us as the Spirit of Christ and even as His very heart, the One who wrought in Him His mighty works and repeats them in us.

Would we receive the baptism with the Holy Ghost, let us receive Jesus in all His fullness. Let us draw near to His inmost being, and from His lips let us in-breathe the Spirit of His mouth.

II. THE BAPTISM.

What is the baptism imparted to us by Christ?

Sometimes we hear this spoken of as if He baptized us with something different from Himself, some sort of an influence, or feeling, or power. The truth is, the Spirit Himself is the baptism. Christ baptizes, and it is with or in the Spirit that He baptizes us. There is, therefore, one baptism with the Spirit once for all, and, from that time, the Holy Ghost Himself is our indwelling life.

The word "baptize" is significant in this connection. Literally, it might be translated "Baptize you in the Holy Ghost." It is scarcely necessary to say that the word baptize means to immerse, and carries along with it always the idea of death and resurrection. There is something very significant in this in connection with the reception of the Holy Ghost. It means that we are baptized into death, and raised into life, and thus receive the Spirit from on high. Just as Jesus went down into the Jordan, which was the symbol of death, and there received the Heavenly Dove, so we must step down into the death of all our strength and all our life, and, surrendering ourselves completely to Him, rise in newness of life with Christ, and thus receive the Holy Ghost as the seal and source of that new life.

The most important condition of the baptism with the Holy Ghost is that we shall truly die to all our own life, and enter into the meaning of Christ's resurrection. We must be completely submerged, not a hair of our head left; in sight; then when we cease from ourselves we shall enter into God and find that while, in one sense, we have received the Holy Ghost into us, we have in a far greater sense been received into the Holy Ghost. He is too vast and glorious for any soul to exhaust His fullness; therefore, after He has filled and flooded all our being, there is an overflow as boundless as the ocean of immensity, and we are still in that ocean as the element of our inexhaustible life.

It is scarcely necessary to say that the baptism of the Holy Ghost is our union with the living personality of the Spirit. It is not an influence. It is not a notion, nor a feeling, nor a power, nor a joy, into which we are submerged; but it is a heart of love, a mind of intelligence, a living being as real as Jesus Christ of Nazareth, and as real as our own personality.

III. THE SYMBOL OF THIS BAPTISM, FIRE.

"He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." This does not mean that the Holy Ghost and fire are different, or that the baptism of fire is something distinct from that of the Spirit, but simply that the figure of fire expresses more fully the intensity and power of this divine baptism. It means that the soul that is truly baptized with God is a soul on fire. Fire is the most forceful and suggestive of natural elements, and seems made especially to symbolize the Holy Ghost.

1. It is a penetrating element. It goes to the very fibre and heart of things, and is internal and intrinsic in its action. And so the Holy Ghost "pierces to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a Discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." He searches our inmost being, and requires and produces "truth in the hidden part."
2. Fire is a purifying element. It separates the dross from the gold. It burns up the stubble and purges the vessel from all defilement. It is the type of the cleansing, sanctifying Spirit of God, who alone can purify our sinful and polluted souls and burn up the dross of sin.
3. Fire is a consuming element. It is the most destructive of forces; so the Holy Ghost comes to destroy all that is destructible, to consume all that is corruptible, and to burn out all that is combustible. God wants a people that have been so burned out, that when the testing fires of the great final day shall come there shall be nothing left to consume. It is not only the sinful but the earthly, the natural, the self-bound life, that the Spirit comes to wither, until there is nothing left but the divine and everlasting. "The grass withereth and the flower fadeth; because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it." Do we not want this blessed fire? Shall we not welcome this blessed flame? Are we not weary of the things that wither and decay, and do we not desire the life that cannot pass away; the loves and friendships that shall never say good-bye, and the treasures that shall meet us in the sky?
4. Fire is a refining element. And so the Holy Ghost in the great Refiner. He comes, not only to cleanse, but to improve, to elevate, to mature, to beautify and glorify the soul, and fit our heavenly robes for the marriage of the Lamb. "He shall sit as a Refiner and Purifier of silver." There is an instantaneous and there is a gradual work of the Holy Ghost. There is an act by which He baptizes us into Himself forever. And there is a process in which He sits down beside the crucible, and watches the molten silver until it perfectly reflects His image, and then He removes the fire and declares the work complete. He comes not only to give us love, but all the gentleness of love; not only long-suffering, but also "all long-suffering with joyfulness;" not only

"the things that are pure, and true, and honest," but also the "things that are lovely and of good report." Let us welcome the refining fire. Let us invite Him to sit down in our willing hearts, and finish His glorious work, until we are "all glorious within," our clothing of wrought gold, and our raiment "white and lustrous" for the Marriage Feast.

5. Fire is a necessary element in preparing almost every article of food for our nourishment. We cannot live on raw wheat nor uncooked meat. It must pass through the process of fire to be wholesome and nourishing; so the Holy Ghost prepares the Word of God for our spiritual subsistence. A great many people live on raw and cold theology. It is little wonder that they are spiritual invalids and suffer terribly from bad digestion. A little truth, thoroughly prepared and presented to us by the loving hands of the Holy Ghost, is worth volumes of dry theology and learned exegesis.

The Passover must not be eaten "raw or sodden," but it must be roasted in the fire and properly prepared. The Holy Ghost is as necessary as the blood of Christ and the word of truth. He is a very foolish preacher who tries to preach without Him, and a very foolish Christian who expects to find the truth and the power of God without His blessed anointing and constant illumination.

6. Fire is a quickening element. And so the Holy Ghost is the source of life. What is it that makes the spring, the flowers, and the swarming life of the insect world? It is the warmth of spring, it is the fire of yonder sun. And so the Holy Ghost quickens our whole spiritual being into vitality. Like the mother bird, whose warm bosom incubates the germs of life that she has dropped into her nest, so the Spirit of God vitalizes all our being, and quickens into life and blessing seeds that lay dormant, perhaps, for years. He quickens our spiritual life; He quickens our intellectual life; He quickens our physical life, and is the source of healing and strength.

7. The Holy Spirit, like fire, melts the rigid heart and molds it into the form of God's holy will, and highest purpose. Without the Holy Ghost we are set in our own ideas, plans, and thoughts; but the soul that is filled with the Holy Ghost is adjustable, both to God and to man. The easiest people to get along with are those most filled with God.

The Spirit is a great lubricator and mellow, and He keeps us adjusted to the will of God, and to the providences of life as they meet us, day by day, in God's perfect order of place and time.

8. Fire is the great energizer and source of power. It is the real secret of the electric current and the throbbing piston of yonder engine. And so the Holy Ghost is the source of all spiritual power. He and He alone can give effectiveness to our lives, and make us tell for God and humanity, and the great purpose of our existence. We need His power in every department of life. He is not only for the pulpit, but for every walk of life. The Holy Ghost will give power to all who will receive it, to make life effective and to make us accomplish the purpose of our being.

The Old Testament age was a life of effort, struggle, and human endeavor. It was man's best

with God's help; but God is through with that forever. God is not now trying to get people to do as well as they can, but He is offering to undertake Himself the whole responsibility of their life and work, to enter and possess their hearts, and to be their all-sufficiency. And so we are without excuse if we fail through our own imperfection and ability . God is not blaming us for what we do not do, but for what we do not let Him enable us to do.

"Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you;" and we "can do all things through Christ who is our strength."

9. Fire warms, and so the Holy Ghost is the source of love, zeal, and holy earnestness. He sets souls on fire for God, and duty, and humanity. He makes us all aglow with divine enthusiasm. An ordinary mind will accomplish more than a brilliant one, if it is alive with holy earnestness.

We are living in an earnest age. All the forces of human intelligence are intensely alive. Be in earnest. The world is in earnest. Satan is in earnest. God is in earnest. Redemption is an earnest business and cost its Author every drop of His crimson blood. The Holy Ghost is intensely in earnest. Everything in heaven and earth and hell is in earnest but man. It is an awful thing for a Christian, redeemed by the blood of Christ, and destined to an eternal future of weal or woe, to be frivolous or trifling. O, friend, think, if that day you are wasting were to be cut off the end of your life, instead of the middle, how quickly you would awaken and tremble at the thought of trifling! If every hour you waste were deducted from the sum of your life at the close, how frightful the sacrifice would seem! And yet it is even so. God help us to be intensely aroused to life's solemn meaning!

Now, the Holy Ghost will make us earnest. Indeed, one of His own names is this, "The Earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession." The earnest means the reality. The Holy Ghost is the reality of things, and He makes us real and earnest, too.

10. Finally, fire is a protective element. The eastern shepherd surrounds his fold by night with a little wall of fire, as he heaps up the dry wood of the desert in a circle around his flock, and the wild beasts fear to come within the fiery wall. So God says, "I will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her."

The Holy Ghost defends us from the power of evil. A heart on fire with God throws off a thousand temptations. An electric wire, charged with the fiery current, is as mighty as a battery of artillery. A hot stove cover throws off the water that vainly tries to rest upon it. So a heart filled with the Spirit of God is proof against temptation, sin, sorrow, and even disease.

Oh, let us be filled with the Holy Ghost, and we shall carry a charmed life and be preserved from all the powers of earth and hell!

'The Holy Spirit' or 'Power from on High'

by A. B. Simpson,

Volume 2 - Chapter 3

THE WISE AND FOOLISH VIRGINS; OR, THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE COMING OF THE LORD

"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps." Matt. 25; 1-4.

The Gospel of Matthew is the Gospel of the King, and its latest chapters are full of the Master's teachings about His coming. The parable of the virgins is a picture of the attitude of the church at the coming of the Lord, and the necessity of the Holy Ghost in order to prepare us for that great event.

The ten virgins, like the ten servants in the parable of the pounds, represent the whole church. The church is often represented in the Scriptures under the figure of a woman. It is an unnecessary and irrelevant strain to try to make a distinction between the virgins and the bride, and assume that the bride is somewhere in the background of the parable, and in a still higher place than the wise virgins. If that were so, it is strange that the Lord makes no reference to so important a part of the dramatis personae in any of these closing discourses. The truth is, that which is elsewhere represented by the bride is here represented by the virgins. Sometimes the church is called a bride, sometimes a building, sometimes a body, sometimes disciples, servants, virgins; but it is always the same church, and all that is necessary in the interpretation is to simply work out the figure used in each case, consistently with itself, and not to drag in every other feature and accompaniment which a lively fancy may suggest. As well might we try to work out an hypothesis for the mother in the parable of the prodigal son, or to find a meaning for all the figures introduced in the necessary drapery of any of the parables. The Great Teacher has one object in view in this great parable -- to show the need of special preparation for the Lord's coming, and we only confuse the mind, and detract from the simple object of the lesson when we try to bring in a whole system of theology.

I. THE POINTS OF RESEMBLANCE BETWEEN THE WISE AND FOOLISH VIRGINS.

1. They were both virgins. They were both separated and pure. It is possible to have a blameless character, to have come out from the world and to be faultlessly right, moral, and correct in our life, and yet be devoid of the Holy Ghost and unprepared for the Lord's return.
2. Both were looking for the coming of the bridegroom. They had all gone out with this one

object and were definitely expecting and preparing for him. And so we may fully believe in the doctrine of the Lord's return, may be deeply interested in it, may be personally desiring and expecting it, and yet may be, if we are without the Holy Ghost, unprepared for it, and be found among the foolish virgins at the last.

3. They both Slumbered and slept. The Greek word for 'slumbered', literally means 'nodded'. It vividly describes the drowsiness that gradually creeps over one, until, at last, unwillingly and almost unconsciously, he falls asleep. It implies that, even at the very best, the people of God are more than half asleep. And yet it is a very different thing to doze with the oil in your vessels, than to fall asleep utterly unprepared for your Master's appearing.

4. Both were called just before the Bridegroom came. How gracious it was of the Master to send word to the sleeping virgins! He has promised us that "that day shall not overtake us as a thief." And even the foolish virgins were awakened at the last moment, and were aware of the Master's near approach. But, alas! it did not avail them now; it was too late to obtain the oil and prepare their dying lamps for the glorious procession that welcomed their King's return.

There was much, very much, in their favor. Just one thing they lacked. But it was enough to prevent their entering in. God help us all to make sure of "that one thing needful!"

II. THE DIFFERENCE.

What then was the difference between these two classes of virgins? What was the secret of failure on the part of the foolish ones?

1. Five were wise and five were foolish. It is not enough for us to be earnest and well meaning. God expects us also to be intelligent, instructed, and wise. "Be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." "See that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil."

It will be no excuse for us in the day of His coming that we did not know what He expected of us. He has given us full instructions, and to neglect His word is evidence of guilty and careless disobedience. How many are defaulting in their life and service because they do not even understand the truth about their Master's coming, and the Bible is to them a sealed book! God make us wise!

2. The foolish virgins were impulsive, shallow, enthusiastic, and lacking in real solid and lasting qualities. This is indicated by the simple statement that the first thing that the foolish virgins thought about was their lamps, and the first thing that the wise thought about was their vessels and the oil that filled them. The one looked at the transient flame; the other at the abiding source of life and light. The one represents the present people; the other the permanent people with whom we are always coming in contact.

John Bunyan expresses the difference by his two characters of Passion and Patience. The one wanted everything now; the other wanted that which he would have at the end.

3. But the supreme difference between the wise and foolish virgins was the fact that the foolish virgins took their lamps only, and the others took the oil in their vessels. This, we need hardly say, expresses these two great facts and experiences; namely, a Christian life and the baptism with the Holy Ghost. The burning lamp represents the spiritual life which has been kindled by the Holy Ghost; the oil in the vessels with the lamps represents the Holy Ghost Himself, personally received in the consecrated heart.

There is an infinite difference between these two facts. The apostles before Pentecost and the apostles after Pentecost represent this difference.

The vessel, of course, is our personality -- spirit, soul, and body; the oil is the Holy Ghost who comes to the yielded and obedient heart to control it, and fill it with the fullness of God. This is the true preparation for a life of holiness and for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

With this we are ready to meet Him when He appears, and although we may have but a few moments to prepare, and may even nod and sleep at times, we have the secret of the Lord within us, and "we shall be found of Him in peace."

This is the great question which God is pressing upon His church today. "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" This is the great mark of distinction between Christians and Christians. Beloved, let us make no mistake, but let us be filled with the Spirit and so "give all diligence to make our calling and election sure."

III. THE EFFECTS UPON BOTH CLASSES.

1. The wise virgins were ready, and after a few moments of immediate preparation were received to the marriage feast and the joy of their Lord.

2. The foolish virgins woke to find their lamps expiring. "Give us of your oil," they cried, "for our lamps are going out." They were not able to supply their lamps from the vessels of the wise. These needed all the oil they had for the great occasion which had come, and there was none to spare for the lamps of the other virgins.

It is true that the Holy Ghost is indivisible, and we cannot give part of our blessing to another. If we have Him, we have Him personally and He cannot be separated into parts. We need all His fullness for our own preparation. We may lead others to Him and help them to receive Him, but they must take Him for themselves.

3. We may receive even this blessing too late. It would seem to be implied that the Holy Spirit

might still be secured, even at the very moment of the Lord's return, but "while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and they that were ready went in, and the door was shut."

There will be, doubtless, many spiritual blessings poured out upon the world immediately after the Parousia of our blessed Master, and the translation of His waiting Bride; but it will be too late to enter into the joys of the marriage, and escape the sorrows of the great tribulation. Time is one of the factors in every great question, and it is not only well for us to obey God's call, but it is essential to obey it promptly. The very essence of obedience is, "redeeming the time" -- the very point of time -- "because the days are evil."

O beloved, let us not lose a moment before we receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost! There is not an hour to spare. We are in solemn days, and we are neither ready to live nor to die, nor to meet our coming Lord, without the Holy Ghost.

There is something very suggestive in this figure of buying. The traders in this case do not represent any body of men who can sell us the Holy Ghost; they simply represent the divine sources from which we receive Him, the divine method which God has provided. There is a sense in which we buy Him by making Him our own. When we buy a thing, it becomes our own property, and so we may receive the Holy Ghost for ourselves and claim Him as our very own.

In the early part of the parable the beautiful original expresses the idea very strongly. "They took their own lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom."

There is another sense, also, in which we buy. We must give up something. We must let something go, before we can receive the Holy Ghost. Indeed, we must let all go and then receive Him in His fullness.

A few weeks ago, as we were passing out of a large meeting, a sobbing girl was sitting near the aisle, and asked us to pray with her. Her heart was very heavy. She had come to the Gethsemane of life; she was letting go everything, and some of the things were very dear; but she was true to God and obedient to the heavenly calling. Less than a week afterwards, we were passing away from that place, and a friend came up to greet us and say goodbye. It was the same face, but we scarcely knew her, it was so transfigured. The light of heaven was shining in her beautiful countenance, and the joy and glory of the Lord had lighted up all her face. The sacrifice was past; the resurrection morning had come; she had let all go, and she had received Him.

There is still another sense in which we buy this great blessing. Christ has purchased it for us, and He says to us, "Come ye, buy and eat! yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price." The Holy Ghost is the purchased privilege of every believer. Beloved, come and receive Him, and receive Him at once, that you may be prepared for the trusts of life and the great Parousia.

4. The foolish virgins were excluded from the marriage of the Lamb. All that this means we dare not attempt to explain. That it does mean a difference, a mighty difference between the two classes of Christians, there can be no doubt, and that there shall be such a difference between those who shall meet the Master with joy, and those who meet Him with grief; between those who have confidence, and those who shall be ashamed before Him at His coming, the Bible leaves us no room to doubt.

Just what will be the peculiar privilege of those who enter in, and the severest loss of those who are excluded, it is presumptuous to attempt to define in detail; but it will be loss enough, sorrow enough, to be shut out of anything which our Master had for us; and the soul that is willing just to be saved and forego its crown and a place in the bosom of the Lord, is too ignoble almost to be saved. God write upon our hearts the solemn emphasis of that awful sentence, "the door was shut!"

5. But there was still a more solemn word, "I know you not." They came, they came perhaps with oil. They knocked; they begged for entrance, but He from within only answered, "I know you not." This, as has been shown by Dean Alford, is very different from the more terrible sentence addressed to others, "I never knew you." It is simply an intimation that they are not in the circle of His intimate personal friendship. He does not exclude them from salvation, but He excludes them from the place of the Bride, and the innermost center of His communion and love.

Beloved, what constitutes a bride? It is not wedding robes nor dowry nor surroundings. It is the heart of love that knows her bridegroom and responds to his affection. It is an interior preparation, and this is the preparation which the Holy Ghost is offering today to the children of God. He is calling out a Bride for the Lamb. He is saying to many a hesitating heart, "Hearken, O daughter, and consider; forget also thy kindred and thy father's house; so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty; for He is thy Lord, and worship thou Him."

The Holy Ghost is bringing those who are willing into a closer fellowship with Jesus, and giving them such an acquaintance with Him that in that day no bolts, nor bars, nor closed doors can keep them from the bosom of their Lord. They know Him and are known of Him; when He appears, His loving smile will recognize them and the magnetic attraction of His presence will draw them in a moment to His heart and His throne.

May God make us willing to receive this blessed preparation that we may be found ready at His coming!

'The Holy Spirit' or 'Power from on High'

by A. B. Simpson,

Volume 2 - Chapter 4 THE PARABLE OF THE POUNDS; OR, POWER FOR SERVICE

"Occupy till I come." Luke 19: 13.

Archelaus, the son of Herod, went to Rome to secure, by influence at the court of the Emperor, the kingdom of Judea, and then returned to enjoy his patrimony. Christ used this familiar illustration to represent His return to the Father to receive the Kingdom, and then to return to enjoy it with His followers during the millennial age. This is the frame-work of the parable of the pounds.

The special theme of the parable, however, is the trust committed to His disciples during His absence, and the resources given them to enable them to fulfill their trust. While the Master is representing us and caring for our interests at God's right hand, we are left here to carry on His work and to represent the interests of His Kingdom; to enable us to fulfill this ministry He gives us the necessary resources. These are illustrated by the pound, or mina, given to each of the ten persons. This was a little sum of money worth about fifteen dollars. It represents the resources which God gives to His servants for their work. What are these resources as represented by the pounds?

In answering this question it is necessary to remember the difference between the parable of the pounds and the talents. In the case of the latter, there was a difference in the endowment and endowment of the servants. They had different talents. In the case of the pound, they had an equal allowance. They cannot therefore mean the same thing. If the talents represent our natural gifts of wealth, social influence, or personal intelligence and capacity, then the pound must represent the special endowment of the Holy Ghost given to the people of God and the servants of Christ to equip them for their work.

We are taught most distinctly that spiritual service must come from spiritual enabling. "No man can say that Jesus Christ is Lord except by the Holy Ghost." No man can render any acceptable service to God through natural talent or fleshly energy. The apostles were commanded "to wait for the promise of the Father," and were to "receive power after that the Holy Ghost had come upon them," and then to be witnesses unto Christ, in the power of God.

There is but one divine enabling for service, and that is the enabling of the Holy Ghost. There was but one pound given to each of the servants, and it is the one promise to every true servant of Christ -- "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost."

The same amount was given to each of the servants, and the same Holy Ghost is given to all who will receive Him. We do not receive a part of His Person or power, but we receive Him personally, and have as much of His life and strength as we are able to take. The Holy Ghost is one and indivisible, and there is no partiality whatever in the opportunity which God gives to every one of His consecrated children to serve and glorify Him.

The talents may be quite different. One may be obscure, while another may be in the blaze of publicity; but the same power is given to each one, and the same glory will redound to God through each, no matter how different they appear in the judgment of the world.

This blessed pound is given to every one of His servants. The Holy Ghost is purchased for all who belong to Christ and will yield their lives in surrender and obedience to the divine Spirit. The Apostle has given us the simple condition when He says, "The Holy Ghost whom God hath given to them that obey Him." The promise of Pentecost was not restricted to a few special cases, but the Apostle distinctly states, "The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

God does not send us warring upon our own charges. He gives to us all that is needful for the trust committed to us. If you should be sent by a great commercial house to carry out a trust for them in some distant land you would expect them to pay your expenses, to provide you your ticket, to give you all necessary introductions, and to equip you thoroughly for your important journey. And when God sends us on His great embassy, He pledges Himself to enable us to carry it out successfully. This promise of power just means -- all we need for efficiency. It is sufficiency for efficiency, all personal qualifications, providential workings, and divine enablings that we have a right to expect for the successful accomplishment of the work that is given us to do.

If our work is in the secular realm, we have a right to expect His help and success. If it is in directly spiritual things, we have a right to expect it there. The power is in proportion to the place. God's provision is ample for God's trust. Now the Holy Ghost is the equivalent of all we need for our trust and work.

An English writer, I think Mr. Pearse, tells how he once spoke to a poor woman in a London City Mission, and tried to show her how Christ was the adequate supply for all her need. She could not understand it at first, and then he stopped and began to ask her about her home and her circumstances, and what she needed for her family. Then, handing her a shilling, he said, "Now what would you do with this shilling if you had it?" She told him that she would spend two pence for bread, and a penny for coal, and so on until she had spent the shilling. "So you see," he said, "that this shilling is really not a shilling, but it is coal, and sugar, and bread." "Now," he said, "Christ is the same. Looking at Him in one way He is Christ but in another way He becomes to you peace and joy and salvation and answered prayer, providential help and guidance, supply for all your needs, -- everything God can be to you both for time and eternity."

The illustration was very simple and beautiful. She understood it and accepted the Savior, who was the equivalent of all her need.

Just in the same sense the Holy Ghost is the equivalent of all things. Therefore, in one place in Luke, He says, "How much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Ghost to them that ask Him;" and in another place in Matthew He says, "How much more will your Father in heaven give good things to them that ask Him." So this pound is the equivalent of all we need for our work.

Do we need to understand the Bible? He will be Light and Teacher. Do we need unction? He will give the anointing of the Holy Ghost. Do we need faith? He will be to us the Spirit of faith. Do we need sympathy and love to draw souls to Christ? He will be in us, the love of God shed abroad by the Holy Ghost. Do we need power to convict and convert men? He will convict the world of sin and righteousness and judgment, and will accompany our words with His effectiveness. Do we need a power that will cooperate in the circumstances of life? He will make all things work together for us. So the Holy Ghost is just all things, and none of us is excused if ever we fail or come short. God has made provision for all that we require, and He will surely expect us to be faithful and true and to measure up to His high calling.

A Quaker lady was approached, one day, by a friend who begged her to pray for her son, who was going down to destruction through the power of drink. The Quaker lady turned to her and said, "Sister, has thee prayed for thy son?" "Oh yes," she said, "I pray as well as I can, but I'm afraid my prayers are not worth much. I want you to pray, for I believe you know how to pray better than I." "Sister, has thee prayed with thy boy?" she again asked. "Why," replied the lady, "I couldn't pray aloud, I should be embarrassed at the sound of my own voice. Why, you don't expect me to pray in public, do you? I'm a woman." "Sister," said the Quaker friend, "what right has thee to be weak, so that thee cannot pray for thy boy? Thee has the same Holy Ghost as I, to be thy power. Sister, I will not pray for thy boy, till thee prays with thy boy." The lady went away, angry, like Naaman of old, and feeling very badly used; but, like Naaman, she came to her senses a little later, and God began to talk to her, and to make her feel that her friend was right; that she ought not to be powerless; that perhaps her boy was going to perdition through her own weakness and unbelief.

There were many tears and much heart-searching and earnest prayers to God for righteousness and help; at length the Holy Ghost came to her heart, and she began to pray for her boy in faith and love. One night, he came home in a drunken stupor, lay down in his room, and was soon fast asleep. But the Spirit drew that mother to his side, and she knelt and laid her hand on his hot brow, and began to smooth his tangled hair and pray to God that He would touch his heart and save her boy. Suddenly, he awoke, and the Holy Ghost sobered him in a moment. He looked up in surprise, and cried, "Mother! you praying for me? Oh God, have mercy on me," and then he broke down in repentance and prayer for his own soul. God heard those united prayers, and before the night was over that boy was saved, and that mother's heart was filled with the Holy Ghost.

"O sister, what right has thee to be weak?" O brother, why should you be ineffective and powerless? "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto Me." We have said that the Holy Ghost is given alike to all God's servants. Why then was there such a difference? There is a difference in the way that we use the Holy Ghost. He is given to us to use Him, and this is the meaning of that word, "Occupy till I come."

A similar thought is expressed in the twelfth chapter of 1 Corinthians, where the apostle says, "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." He is given to us to "profit," to use, to invest, to exercise the divine gift, and thus to grow; and as we use the Holy Ghost, we become accustomed to using Him, and we have great boldness in the faith and work of God; our efficiency increases and multiplies, until the one pound is worth ten, and the servant hands back his trust, tenfold greater than he received it. This is the reason of the difference between men and men. It is a difference of faithfulness. It is a difference of diligence in improving the trust given them. It is a very solemn thing to receive divine power. God invests Himself in men, and God is a great economist of power and is deeply grieved when we waste His treasures; when we let His power lie idle, or sluggishly neglect the mighty trust that has cost Him so much.

Let us use God's precious gifts. Let us be diligent and faithful in the exercise of spiritual things, and, as we do, our faith will grow; our love will increase, and our usefulness will expand until we shall "bring forth some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundredfold."

The word "occupy" in the original is a very striking one. Indeed, even the English word is quite suggestive. It implies that we do not own our gifts, but that they are simply lent to us, and we use them as the gifts of another. It is not your power. It is not your faith, but His, and He lends to you His own divine sufficiency for the special service required of you; when the service is performed, you are no stronger nor wiser than before. You just quietly depend upon Him for His own personal power for the next service and opportunity.

But the word in the original has a still stronger force. It is a word of affairs. It literally means to be engaged in business affairs. The expression, "trading," used later in the parable, expresses the same idea. There is the deepest emphasis in the expression. The Holy Ghost is not restricted to what we call spiritual things, but He is a great business manager. He is a Spirit of practical wisdom and power. He is an all-round Friend, and He wants to be concerned in all the affairs of our life. Indeed, there is nothing secular, but all things that are given to God are sacred, holy and divine.

It is not necessary, therefore, that you should give up your business and go out of the world to serve Him; but let it be God's business, and then it will always be service. God has no better opportunity for glorifying Himself than to use a man in the secular affairs of life, and be as near to him on Monday as on Sunday; in the workshop as in the holy sanctuary and the secret place.

There are plenty of preachers in the world today, but God wants more practitioners. There are many apostles, but Christ is looking for living epistles. There is nothing that speaks more for God than a life spent in the blaze of the world, yet lighted up with holy and heavenly purity and power. Such lives preach to men, whether they want to hear or not.

We are living in a day when the great men of the world are businessmen. The strongest men of the present century are our railroad kings, our bankers, the founders of our immense corporations and commercial enterprises. These men have gigantic intellects and far-reaching power. Why can they not be as mighty for God as they are for the world? Why can they not be as effective on the Board of Missions as they are on the Board of Trade? They can spend their millions for railways and business corporations; what is to hinder their spending their hundreds of millions to spread the Gospel of Christ? Why should the day not come when men of wealth and successful enterprise shall invest, not a few thousand, but ten, twenty, yes, fifty million, for China, Africa and India? I should not eulogize the man who should come to me and say, "I have twenty million I want to spend for evangelizing Central Africa." I should say to him, "You have done just right, but you have been a long time getting at it."

When businessmen come to understand that this is the nature of entire consecration, we shall see greater things than were seen on the day of Pentecost. Then young men will come forward and consecrate their lives to God, and He will give them the millions that belong to Him to spend as grandly for Him, as the men of the world are laying out their treasures for commercial enterprises and gigantic schemes of selfishness and gain. God help us to "occupy" in these practical ways and days, with a view of His coming!

The most encouraging facts which I know today are just such facts as I have spoken of. There are men in this country who are carrying on great commercial enterprises for the exclusive purpose of devoting the proceeds on a magnificent scale to the evangelizing of the world, and the giving of the Gospel to all nations.

"Occupy till I come." The object of the Holy Ghost and the object of the consecrated believer must always have direct reference to the Lord's personal return. The business of the Holy Spirit is to prepare Christ's people and the world for His second coming. First, this will be done by the spiritual preparation of our own hearts and lives. The Bride must be made ready, and so the Holy Ghost is working out today a wondrous work of sanctifying grace, in the hearts of the chosen few who are willing to hear His call and to prepare for His return.

But this is not all. Our work is also to have reference to His coming. We are "to occupy till He come." We are to accomplish our ministry with direct reference to the millennial reign of Jesus. Our Christian work is to be shaped and molded by this consideration. Oh, what a difference it would make in our methods of service, if we would make this the standpoint and object of all our work for God! Then we should not have 120,000 ministers among sixty million on this continent, and a few hundred among the vaster millions of China.

Oh, if the Holy Ghost had His way, how many of us He would scatter to the uttermost parts of the earth! I think I see Him going through Scotland, and dismissing a thousand preachers, and saying, "Go to India, China, and Africa." I think I see Him entering a western town, where a dozen churches are competing for the scanty population and trying to establish their separate sects. I can hear Him say, "Shut up three-fourths of these places, and send the men to the neglected and destitute fields where no voice speaks of Me."

How much of our Christian work is standing in the way of Christ's will! How much of our best service is not the service of the Holy Ghost, and is not occupying till He come! How long we have delayed Him even by doing good, and not doing it in His way! But we can be looking for His coming even in our business.

It is very beautiful to notice that in the picture given of Christ's return and the translation of His waiting people, they are found occupied in their callings. It is night in one part of the world, and "two are in one bed;" "one is taken, and the other is left." It is all right to be in bed when Christ comes, if it is night, far better be there than in sin. It is early morning in another place, and "two women are grinding at the mill." One of them is getting her husband's breakfast ready. It is quite right to be found there, and so she is taken right up from her secular occupation. It is midday in another land, and two are in one field working at their harvest. It is all right to be there, too, if the work is done for God. There is no need for them to hurry home and change their clothes. There is no need to go and fix up things. They are "found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless." And so these toiling farmers are taken right up to be with God, and meet their Lord in the air, and to sit down with the wedding robe at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

How beautiful to know that all that is done for God is sacred! How sweet the old story of the New England Legislature; when the storm came on, and some of the members thought that the day of judgment had come, one of them anxiously moved that the house adjourn. An old Puritan sprang to his feet and said, "Mr. Speaker, if the day of judgment has not come, there is no need for this unbecoming haste; and if it has come, I, for one, prefer to be found at my post. I move that the house do not adjourn." Thus let us "occupy" and be occupied with the Master's work, and for His glory and His approval.

Finally, when He comes there will be a just award. The servant that has faithfully used his endowment of power, receives the Master's commendation and is promoted to higher service. I am so glad that the coming of Christ is not going to end our work. I should not want to meet Him if I had to give up working for the Master. Thank God, we shall have higher service through the eternal years. "Be thou ruler over ten cities." Oh, how much greater is the recompense than the service! A city for a pound; ten cities instead of a hundred and fifty dollars!

All our service here is but a training for that higher ministry. How touching to hear the Master say, "Thou hast been faithful over a very little." The man that had gained ten pounds had done "a very little." The highest service we do for God on earth is but "a very little." We are simply playing at service, or rather going to school at it. We are taking lessons in true ministry. The

best we do is but childish and trifling, but it is preparing us for the grand service of the ages to come when, with our Lord Himself, endued with His wisdom, power, and glory, we shall be co-workers, perhaps, amid yonder constellations or, on this green earth, to restore it to the beauties and glories of Paradise again, and to rear the eternal temple for which He is now preparing the precious stones.

The Master does not say that they have been successful, but He recognizes them as having been "faithful." God help us at least to be faithful!

The reward will be in proportion to the fidelity of the servant. The servant that had gained tenfold was rewarded tenfold, and the servant that had increased his investment fivefold received only in proportion. Beloved, we are laying up our treasures. We are carving our eternal destiny. We are preparing our immortal crown. Oh, how the days are telling! God help us to be true!

But alas for the servant who came with his pound wrapped up in a napkin! It was nicely kept. It was a clean napkin, perhaps a costly one. He had taken good care of his salvation. He had nursed his blessing, and he gave it back as good as he got it. But was the Master pleased? Alas, alas, for such a servant! "Take from him the pound, and give it unto him that hath ten pounds." He was not lost. He was not destroyed, as the "enemies" of the Master were. He was deprived. He had some place in the kingdom, but he was forever conscious of an opportunity lost, and a life that never would come again. Beloved, we may save our souls, but lose our lives. We may gain an entrance into heaven, but lose our everlasting crown. God help us to be our best!

Not easily shall that crown be won by any. Even the great apostle did not think rashly of his reward, but straining every nerve and reaching forth unto these things that were before as one that had not yet attained, he used this intense language, "If by any manner of means I might attain unto the resurrection from among the dead." So let us so run that we may obtain.

Beloved, we have an eternity before us. We have an unfading crown to win or lose; we have a life in which to win it, and we have the infinite Holy Ghost to enable us for this mighty competition, for this glorious prize, for this divine trust. God help us to be TRUE!

'The Holy Spirit' or 'Power from on High'

by A. B. Simpson,

Volume 2 - Chapter 5

THE HOLY GHOST IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

"In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified." John 7: 37-39.

In the first seven chapters of the Gospel of John, we have a very striking progressive unfolding of the doctrine of the Holy Ghost; first, in abstract statements of truth, and then, illustrated in a very significant and beautiful miracle.

I.

First, we have the Holy Spirit in relation to the Lord Jesus. In John 1: 32, we see the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and abiding upon Him, and in John 3: 34, we are further told that God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him.

Up to this time all men had received the Spirit by measure; that is, they had received some of His gifts, influences, and power; but Christ received the Spirit Himself in His personal presence and immeasurable fullness, and since then the Spirit has resided in the world in His boundless and infinite attributes.

Christ first received Him as a pattern for His followers, and then gave Him forth to them, from His own very heart, as the Spirit that had resided in Him, and that comes to us softened by His humanity and witnessing to His person.

Therefore we read in the next place not only of Christ's receiving the Spirit, but of Christ's giving the Spirit. In John 1:33, the great forerunner says of Him, "The same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." It is Christ that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. It is through Him we receive the Spirit. It is He who "hath shed forth," as the Apostle Peter says, the power from on high, and the Spirit of Pentecost.

This is the peculiarity of the Holy Ghost as He comes to us in the New Testament age. He comes not only from the Father, but especially from the Son, and through the Son, and He comes to us as the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ.

II.

We next see the Holy Ghost in relation to the believer; first, He is presented to us as the Spirit of regeneration. In John 3, verses 5 and 6, Christ says, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit."

The very first experience of the Christian life is to receive the new heart from the Holy Ghost. The natural man is unable even to see the Kingdom of God, and is powerless to enter. The Holy Ghost creates in us a new life and a new set of spiritual senses altogether, through which we discern, understand, and enter into the life of God and the spiritual realm. "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

Next, we see the Holy Ghost in His deeper, and personal indwelling in the heart. In John 4: 14, Christ said to the woman of Samaria, "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life." This is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. It is much more than regeneration. It is the personal in coming of the Spirit Himself, bringing not a cup of water, but a well of water, and establishing in the heart the fountain of life, so that we are henceforth dependent, not upon each other, but upon God only, for the source of our life.

Again in John 7: 37, we have a still stronger expression to describe the interior life of the Holy Ghost in the heart; "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink." Drinking of the Spirit is more than receiving the Spirit. It is possible for us to receive the Spirit and have Him, and yet not use Him nor drink from the flowing fountain as abundantly as we might.

The Apostle in 1 Cor. 12: 13 uses the same figures where he says, "By one Spirit are ye all baptized into one body, . . . and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." To use the old figure, it is the bottle in the ocean and the ocean in the bottle. It is possible for us to be in the Spirit, and yet not be receiving the Spirit as fully as we need. Drinking is the habit of faith, an exercise of our spiritual senses which constantly renews and quickens our spiritual life, refreshing us and filling us, so that we are glad to pour out our full vessel in service for others.

Then this receiving of the Spirit needs, on our part as well as on Christ's, the using and giving forth of the Holy Ghost to others. And so we read in the next verse, "He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive." This is the outflow of the spiritual life. This is the evidence that we are filled, because we cannot hold it longer, and now occupy ourselves in imparting the blessing to others. Like Ezekiel's river, it is flowing not in, but out, pouring in streams of blessing through the dry and desert places of life. As soon as our life becomes positive, unselfish, and outflowing, it becomes unspeakably magnified; so that what was a well, in the heart, has grown to rivers of blessing, in the life devoted to God and

expended in blessing the world.

The river suggests the idea of fullness, magnitude, and abundance; spontaneous, free, and overflowing, it does not need to be pumped but flows of itself for very fullness. It is the service of a glad, unselfish and loving heart.

God does not want anything that has to be pressed from an unwilling giver. The prayer that is offered God from a sense of duty, the work that is done just because we have to do it, the word that is spoken because we are expected to be ministers and to be consistent with our profession, are dead, cold, and comparatively worthless. True service springs from a full and joyful heart and runs over, like the broad and boundless river. Like the river, too, it runs downward into the lowest places and aims to reach the saddest, hardest, and most hopeless cases. And, like the river, it is a perennial and ever flowing spring, running on amid the changing scenes around it, flowing through the whole course of life, and saying, like the beautiful streamlet as it glides along, "Men may come, and men may go, but I go on forever."

This is the power of the Holy Ghost. It makes us simple, sweet, exuberant, full-hearted, and enthusiastic for God, and our work, and our words are the overflow of a life so deep and full that it brings its own witnesses, and it makes others long for the blessing that shines in our faces and speaks in our voices and springs in our glad and buoyant steps. And it is not merely a river, but rivers. It runs wherever it can find a channel and blesses every life that it touches on its way. Is God thus using us, and has He thus filled us with the Holy Ghost until the fullness overflows?

It is not necessary that we should be always preaching. Indeed, sometimes we are looking too far off for the service that God expects of us. Just at hand we might often find the opening and the channel which would bring blessing to some heart that God has brought into our life, to prepare us for future blessing to a wider circle.

An anxious, earnest Christian woman was crying to God for service and wondering why she was tied up in her home and unable, like other women, to go out and reach a broader place. Her bright little girl was playing beside her and calling in vain to the preoccupied mother to help her with her little doll, which had lost a finger or a garment, and which to her was the central object of life.

Again and again she came to the mother with her little trouble, and the mother, fretted and worried with her own spiritual need, pushed her off, and, at length, rather harshly sent her away and told her not to bother her, as she was busy about higher things. Wearied and disappointed, the little one went off alone into a corner and sat down with her little broken doll and cried herself to sleep.

A while afterward, that mother turned around and saw the little rosy cheeks covered with tears, and the little wrecked doll lying in her bosom, and then God spake to her, and said, "My child,

in seeking some higher service for Me, you have broken a little heart of Mine. You wanted to do something for Me. That little child was the messenger I sent, and that little service was the test I gave you. He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in more, and he that is unfaithful in the least is unfit for the greater."

The mother learned her lesson. She picked up the little lamb in her arms and kissed her awake; then she asked God and her baby to forgive her, and began from that hour to pour out the love of Christ on every object that came in her way. As she became faithful to do the things nearest at hand, God widened her sphere until the day came when, standing among her sisters, leading the on to higher service and speaking to hundreds and thousands of her fellow-workers, she told the story of her experience, and the lesson by which she learned that God does not need our great service, but simply that we should meet Him in the things that He brings to us, and that we should everywhere be channels of blessing and love.

So let our lives be filled, and then emptied throughout the channels around us. Let us come to Him, and drink and drink again, and yet again, until our hearts are so full that we shall go out to find the sad, the sinning, and the suffering and comfort them with the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

This was the story of the Master. This must be the story of the disciple. We receive that we may give, and only as we give, shall we continue to receive; the more abundantly we impart, the more richly shall we be filled with all the fullness of God.

III.

Let us now look at a beautiful object lesson of this double truth in the second chapter of this blessed Gospel. It is the miracle of Cana of Galilee. The evangelist tells us that this was the first of Christ's miracles, and it must have had a special significance. He also tells us that it was a miracle which manifested forth His glory, and this undoubtedly suggests to us that there was some deep lesson back of this miracle, which made it worthy to occupy a place right in the beginning of the deeply spiritual teaching of this wonderful gospel. Indeed, it is a kind of parable and symbol of the whole truth which we have been endeavoring to unfold from the direct teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ in the passages which we have quoted.

1. We see the failure of our natural life, joy, and love, in the exhausting of Cana's wine. Beautiful, indeed, is the bridal scene with its fair and fragrant blossoms, the freshness and beauty of youth, the vigor and nobility of young manhood, the sympathy of innumerable friends, and the bright and sunny hopes and prospects of future happiness. But oh, how soon the vision fails! How quickly the goblet of pleasure is drained, and how often the serpent is left in the dregs, and all that remains is a memory more bitter because of the joy that has turned to sadness!

Alas for life, if this were all! But it is just when the natural fails, that the divine begins. It is just

when the old creation dies, that the new creation rises. It is just when Cana's wine is exhausted, that Jesus of Nazareth appears. And now we see in this exquisite miracle the very truths we have been endeavoring to unfold.

2. Next we have the filling of the vessels. The Master's command is, "Fill the waterpots with water to the brim." They were just earthen vessels, waterpots for ordinary use; but they were empty and clean, and all that was necessary was to fill them with pure water. They represent these vessels of our human lives, earthen vessels; but if they are empty vessels and offered to the Master, and if they are filled to the brim with the Holy Ghost, of which water is ever the type, then something will surely come to pass.

They must be full to the brim. A whole heart must receive a whole Christ. The Holy Ghost does not take us by halves, nor will He give Himself by halves. It is the fullness which makes the overflow.

3. Next comes the other and nobler side of the miracle. The filling is the smallest part. What next? "Draw out now, and bear to the governor of the feast." Begin to use the water, and lo! it becomes wine.

Oh! how clear and plain the lesson! It is blessed to receive the Holy Ghost, but it is more blessed to impart Him. And the only way you will know that you have received Him, is by beginning to give Him. You must go forward like the servants of the parable, in faith, and draw out before you see the miracle; but as you bear it to the guests, lo, it becomes wine, and it rises to a higher quality. Both are types of the Holy Ghost, but the wine is the higher. The water speaks of cleansing and fullness, but the wine tells of joy, and love, and life divine.

When we are receiving the Holy Ghost we are only cold water Christians, but when we are pouring forth His fullness in holy service we are drinking of the heavenly wine, and we are made partakers of the Master's own divine and ineffable joy.

It is exactly the same idea expressed later in the rivers of living water, running out, and running over; but it is more than the river. It is the joy and the gladness that turns all life into a marriage feast and a joyful song. Even the world itself is forced to admit, like the ruler of Cana's wedding, that the best wine has come last.

Oh, that we might so live and so minister that men would recognize, even as he, the higher qualities and value of the blessing that He brings! All around us are hearts and lives where the wine of earth has failed, God help us to bring them the heavenly cup, and the divine life of the Lord Jesus Christ, until this poor, starving world shall recognize that we have something better than they, and shall be made hungry by our benignant faces and our overflowing joy.

Now, in conclusion, how are we to receive this blessing? Let us hearken to the message of Mary. "Whatsoever He saith unto thee, do it." It comes to us through some step of obedience to

the Master Himself. He will show you the way, and as you obey Him step by step, you will enter into the joy of your Lord. He will interpret every experience and more than realize every anticipation.

But next, you must not forget the other command, "Fill the water pots with water; fill them to the brim." Leave no vacant place in the soul. Hold back no part of your life from Him. Yield a whole heart and fill it with a whole Christ.

And then finally, above all else, go forward and use the gift of His love. "Draw out, and bear to the governor of the feast." Take the life that He has given and use it to comfort the sorrowing, save the lost, help the discouraged, and minister in the name and grace of your blessed Master; as you go forth, the Holy Ghost will go before you, and will work through you, and lead you on from strength to strength, and will multiply you one hundred fold, until, like Ezekiel's vision, the trickling streamlet will become "water to the ankles," "water to the knees," "water to the loins," "water over head, a river to swim in," a torrent of blessing and of power, with the trees of life on either shore, the leaves of healing, and the gladness and the glory of Paradise restored all along your way.

'The Holy Spirit' or 'Power from on High'

by A. B. Simpson,

Volume 2 - Chapter 6 THE COMFORTER

"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever." John 14: 16.

These three chapters contain Christ's deepest teachings concerning the Holy Ghost.

I. THE NAME, THE COMFORTER.

This is not a very happy translation. The Greek word is Paraclete, and it literally means a God at hand, One by our side, One that we may call upon in every emergency. The Latin word, advocate, has the same meaning, One that we call upon or call to us, One ever within call. In this connection, the Holy Ghost is represented to us as the present and all sufficient God. Of course, there is comfort, infinite comfort in all this; but the primary idea is not so much spiritual enjoyment, as practical efficiency and sufficiency for every occasion and emergency that arises.

This is just what the Holy Ghost is -- God for everything. God at hand under all circumstances and equal to all demands. Oh, what comfort this brings to our oppressed and struggling life! A God able to make all grace abound to us; so that we, always having all-sufficiency in all things, may abound unto every good work.

II. MODE OF HIS PRESENCE.

He shall be in you. "He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." The presence of God, through the Old Testament and even during the ministry of Christ, was a presence with men; but in the New Testament dispensation and after the coming of the Holy Ghost, it was to be a presence in men.

The Holy Ghost was to become corporately united and identified with the life of the believer, so that He would bring us into direct personal union, and act, not upon us, but in us and through us, becoming part of our very life, and controlling every faculty, volition, and power, from the inmost depths of our being. This is the difference between the two classes of Christians we find today; those who have God with them, and those who have Him in them.

It may not be possible to explain it. It certainly is impossible to make spiritual mysteries plain to any that have not experienced them. It is difficult to explain how the sunshine enters into the midst of the flower and manifests itself in all the living beauties and tints of the blossom; how

the water saturates the ground and comes forth again in the leaf, and laden fruit; how the influence and image and personality of a friend becomes a part of our very being, until we think as he thinks, and act under his influence. These are but distant approximations to the blessed mystery of the Holy Ghost's entering, as a Person, into the life and being of a consecrated disciple and controlling every choice, affection, thought and action, and thus fulfilling His own promise, "I will dwell in you and walk in you," "And I will put My Spirit within you, and I will cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do them."

III. THE DURATION OF THIS ABIDING.

"He shall abide with you forever."

The Holy Ghost comes to stay. He seals the heart into the day of redemption. He takes possession of it to depart no more. We may grieve Him; we may lose the consciousness of His approval; but He has loved us with an everlasting love, and we are kept by His power through faith unto salvation.

There are some who tell us that the Holy Ghost will leave the world at the coming of Christ. This is not the promise of the Master. "He shall abide with you forever." Even when Jesus comes, He will still remain. For through those dark tribulation days, there will be souls on earth that need His consolation, His keeping and His help; He will linger with them through the darkness, and then, through the millennial age, He will cooperate with Christ as He did during the days of His earthly ministry, in bringing this world into harmony with the will of God, and establishing the dominion of righteousness throughout the utmost limits of the creation.

We do not dishonor the work of the Spirit when we pray for Christ to come. The grandest theatre of His work will be in these millennial days, for which we are looking forward with longing and prayer.

IV. HIS RELATION TO JESUS CHRIST.

"Whom the Father will send in My name," that is, in My character, to represent Me. He will be "another Comforter." He is to correspond in His relation to us to what Christ was, but He is to be a substitute for Christ, a successor to Christ, and, indeed, more to us than Christ could continue to be. "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you."

Oh, how precious His presence must be, if it can be more than Christ's presence was! Can we conceive how much Jesus was to these disciples? More than a mother to her child, more than a shepherd to his flock, more than a guide through the pathless desert, more than a pilot on the trackless ocean.

The disciples had leaned upon Him, lived upon Him, and were utterly dependent upon Him for

everything, and yet He says, "It is better for you that I go, for One will come that will be more to you than I have been in all these relationships."

Beloved, is the Comforter more to us than Jesus was to His Galilean followers? Ah, then how much more you have to learn of His intimacy and His ministry. Is He to you the Counselor and Companion of every moment, the Leader and the Guide of every step, the Teacher of all you know, the Substance of all you believe, the Source of all your strength and joy and life? This He wants to be. Christ could only be present in one place; but He can be everywhere. Christ spoke to them from outside their natures, He speaks from within. Christ was to a certain extent a physical presence; He in a spiritual, that enters into the deepest life of our being, blends with every consciousness and every thought and every capacity and feeling.

Was He so to supersede and substitute Christ as to displace Him? Not at all. On the contrary, He was to make Christ more real than He had ever been. Here is the great mistake that many are liable to make in their zeal for the honor of the Holy Ghost. They represent Christ as far away at the right hand of God, and they think they honor the Spirit when they exclude the personal presence of the Master.

This was not the way the Savior taught, and this is not the way the Spirit comes. Nay, listen, "He shall testify of Me, He shall not speak of Himself." "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you." "At that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in Me, and I in you."

"He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. If a man love me he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

It is not possible to read these verses and not see that the personal and conscious presence of Jesus Christ is to be ever with His people through the ministry of the Comforter. Indeed, the great business of the Holy Ghost is to stand behind the scenes and make Jesus real. Just as the telescope reveals not itself, but the stars beyond, so Christ is revealed by the blessed Spirit, as the medium of our spiritual vision.

Just as the atmosphere can bring yonder sun down until he is nearer to us here than if we went up into the air to meet him, so the Holy Ghost, God's divine medium for the revelation of spiritual realities, brings Christ from the throne, until distance is annihilated and space has no power to divide.

Surely, if a human telephone or telegraph can sweep at a flash or by a wave of sound across intervening space and bring the distant near, it is not hard for the divine Author of light and life, and all creation, to open a line of communication from earth to heaven, so that we may dwell in the heavenlies, and the living realities of that world be within whispering distance of our quickened souls.

It is even so. Through the telephone of prayer, we may catch the very voice of our absent Master, and be conscious of the heartthrobs of His love; we may even go on into the presence of the spirits of the just made perfect, and almost hear the songs that echo around the throne. Yes, He is with us still, "all the days even unto the end of the age." The presence of the Comforter but makes Him nearer and dearer, and enables us to realize and know that we are in Him, and He in us.

V. THE SPIRIT AS A TEACHER.

Not only does He reveal the person of Christ, but He reveals the truth which Christ only began to teach. "He will guide you into all truth, He will teach you all things." "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now, howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth; for He shall not speak of His own knowledge; but that which He shall hear He shall speak."

And so the Holy Ghost, the Author of the Scriptures, is the Illuminator and Teacher of the Word. He makes the truth clear, intelligible, and intensely real, just as you have seen on some great occasion the metal frames, where some grand illumination was to take place; and it seemed to you, in the light of day, that the forms of men and the figures of crowns and stars and processions could be dimly traced in that network of leaden pipes, erected above the triumphal arch, but it was dull and dim to you and made little impression upon your senses or your mind. But wait till evening, till the sun goes down, and a flash of light bursts over that dead framework. Lo! in a moment it is lighted up, and you see the figure of the military hero, the glowing crown with its many colored jewels, the procession of living forms and all the pageant of a grand triumph. The light has done it all.

And so this Holy Book needs to be lighted up by the Holy Ghost, and then we do not read the Bible from a sense of duty; it speaks to us as the living message from our Master, the love letter of our Bridegroom's heart.

Then how gentle and patient the Holy Ghost is in teaching us! He will guide us into all truth. He knows how fast we can go, and He does not cram us; but He unites the word to the action, and the action to the word, and fits His teaching into the framework of our lives, making truth real, day by day, "line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little," until He has led us on to the graduating class, and fitted us for the more mature tasks of the school of faith.

How much He left to be revealed in the later epistles and the Apocalypse that they could not then endure! And how much truth He keeps back from us, until we are ready not only to understand it, but fully to obey it and translate it into the living characters of our experience!

VI. THE HOLY GHOST AS A REMINDER OF TRUTH.

"He shall bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you."

Not only does He teach us, but He quickens our intellect to remember and to learn. He is the Author and the Illuminator of the mind, and He is the Spirit of suggestion. He knows how to bring back forgotten truths in the moment of need. He knows how to suggest the promise in the time of depression. He knows how to say, "It is written," and put into our hand the sword of the Spirit, when the adversary's wiles are trying and perplexing us.

He knows how to "waken our ear, morning by morning, to hear as one that's been instructed, that we might know how to speak a word in season to Him that is weary." He knows how to give the appropriate message for the fitting time, and then to bless it and send it home with lasting power.

Let us trust Him to guide us, to speak through us, triumph through us, and to be our monitor and mother until all the mazes of life shall have been passed.

VII. THE HOLY SPIRIT AS THE SPIRIT OF POWER FOR SERVICE.

"He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." We can rebuke the world but He alone can convict it.

He can make our expression, our words, our actions, awaken in the hearts of men a sense of sin, and a realization of eternity.

He can bring the message to the conscience and press the will to the great decision, and make our words vehicles for His power. Then He alone can convict of righteousness, and so reveal Christ that it shall not be merely reformation and self-improvement, but true repentance, faith and reliance upon the finished work of Jesus Christ. He can convict the world of judgment. He can pass sentence of death on self, sin, and the world, and separate men from this present evil world for the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He can take men out of the power of the prince of this world, and introduce them into the kingdom of God's dear Son. He can give victory over Satan and finish the work which He begins.

Oh, how helpless all our work without Him! Oh, how He waits to show us the great things that He is willing yet to do, not only for us but for the world!

Finally, He is the Spirit of hope, and the promise and the realization of the future. He will show you things to come.

Oh, how this promise was to be fulfilled in the later teachings of the epistles and the

Apocalypse, concerning the blessed hope of the Lord's coming! And the same Spirit that has given the light of prophecy, can give the light of interpretation and the life of faith and living hope! He alone can make these things real to us; He alone can center our hopes and hearts in the blessed hope of Christ's coming, and the throne of His Ascension.

It is not enough merely to know that Christ is coming, and to desire it, but it is a great crisis in the life of a soul when it becomes truly centered there, when the source of attraction is removed from the earth to the heavens, and when it learns to live under the power of the world to come. It is one thing to be lifting up the world from the earth side, it is another thing to be drawing up the world from the heaven side. It is one thing to be a man on the earth, living for the glory; it is another thing to be a man in the glory, living for the world. We must be taken out of the world first, and then sent back into it, to be any blessing to it.

The reason that Christ knew how to live was because He did not belong here. The Father had sent Him from heaven, and we must be sent from heaven, too, and work on earth as men that dwell in heaven. Oh, may the Spirit so show us things to come that we shall have our center in the throne of our ascended Lord, and with Him see and live and work to save the world in which, for a little while, we sojourn!

'The Holy Spirit' or 'Power from on High'

by A. B. Simpson,

Volume 2 - Chapter 7 WAITING FOR THE SPIRIT

"Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." "Wait," saith He, "for the promise of the Father, which ye have heard of Me." "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place."

These three passages all suggest a single and very definite thought -- waiting on God for the filling of the Holy Ghost. The law of time is an important factor both in nature and in grace. There are some operations which are instantaneous, but there are many more that require the lapse of time and the process of development. The principle of vegetation is gradual, unfolding first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. Winter is as needful as spring to fertilize the ground, and the seed must lie silent in the soil until it germinates and springs into the blade and the blossom.

And so, in the spiritual world, there is a place for waiting. God's work of creation was not instantaneous but successive. The promise of the coming Redeemer waited for four thousand years. Abraham waited for the fulfillment of the promise of his son. Moses waited forty years before he could go forth to the great work of His life. Jesus waited for thirty years to begin His public ministry.

The promises of God are for those that wait for Him; and the spiritual life which, in some respects is instantaneous in its operations, in others, is progressive. There is a moment when we definitely receive the Holy Ghost; but there is a preparation for His coming, and a waiting for His fullness for us, just as much as for Jesus and Moses. Doubtless there is a sense in which they waited, which cannot be true of us. For them the Holy Ghost was not yet sent from heaven. The day of Pentecost was the moment of His arrival on earth. Up to that moment He had resided in the person of Jesus, now He was to reside in his Body, the Church, and the earth was to be His home. In that sense we cannot wait for the coming of the Comforter, for He has come and He is here.

But even if the Holy Ghost had come to earth already, that very same command would still have been given to the disciples to wait in the upper room. There was a preparation on their part, just as necessary as the Spirit's coming from heaven to earth. And there is a preparation on our part just as necessary in these days.

It is important, however, that we understand the true nature of this waiting. It is not waiting for the Lord, but it is waiting on the Lord. It is not looking forward to a distant blessing, but it is continuing in the attitude of receiving and claiming the blessing, and giving time for the Holy

Spirit to fill the waiting heart with all His fullness.

It is more than expectation of a future blessing. It is rather accepting a present blessing, and yet a blessing so large and full, that it cannot be taken by us in all its completeness in a moment of time, but requires the opening of every vessel of our being, and the continuance of our heart in the attitude of receiving.

The Master is calling us, as He called them to these seasons of waiting, and there are deep reasons in the principles that underlie all Christian experience, which will show the importance and necessity of our thus waiting on the Lord.

I.

This season of waiting on the Lord was fitted and designed to mark a great transition in their lives, an epoch of spiritual new departure, an era of the chronology of the heart. God wants His people to have such epochs and such eras.

As we read the records of geology we find that the surface of our globe has been formed by successive layers, between which can be traced successive breaks. There is a stratum of rock, and then there is a stratum of wreck and conglomerate masses, between the layers of previous strata.

It is so in spiritual life. These days of waiting lead us to new planes and new advances. Sometimes it is very desirable that there should be a complete break, that we may get out of the old ruts, and be free to take a higher place, and make a bolder advance.

In music one of the most effective things is the emphatic pause. The word "Selah" in the book of Psalms expresses this pause, and in order to have the effectiveness of such a pause it cannot be too complete a silence. Then the chorus which follows has a double emphasis. And so the Holy Ghost has given us our Selahs in the chorus of spiritual life, emphatic pauses when God wants us to be still and listen to Him, and break away from old ideas and measures, and reach out into the larger fullness of His thought and will.

II.

This time of waiting on God was also necessary in order to teach them the greatest lesson of the Christian life -- to cease from themselves. The greatest danger about these men was not in what they might fail to do, but in what they might try to do. The greatest harm that we can do is the attempt to do anything at all when we are not prepared, and when we do not understand our Master's will. Suppose a regiment of soldiers should start off without their captain's orders, or their necessary equipment or artillery; the next attempt of the army would be rendered more hopeless by their rash exposure and needless failure.

And so the Master wants to keep us from doing anything, until we are prepared to go forth in His strength and victory. Our hardest lesson to learn is to unlearn, and to know our utter helplessness and wretchedness.

The deepest experience into which they had to enter was self-crucifixion, and crucifixion is the death not only of the evil self, but of the strong and self-sufficient self.

Peter had not yet learned to be still, for before these waiting days were over we find him rushing again to the front, and proposing the election of a new disciple, without the divine direction or recognition. The best that can be said of his work is that it did no harm if it did no good, for God never afterwards seems to have recognized the apostle that Peter led the brethren to choose, but in His own time He called His own apostle.

And so it was necessary that these days should be spent in waiting and learning to be silent, and forming the habit of the suspension of our own activity, and the dependence of our will entirely upon the direction of the Holy Ghost. There are times when the most masterly thing we can exercise is inactivity, and there are times when the most mischievous thing we can do is to do anything at all.

That is a most instructive story that is told of the nervous passenger on board a vessel in a dangerous storm, who was running about the deck in every direction, and asking the captain what he could do to save the ship from going to the bottom; at last the captain, more alarmed by him than by the tempest, fearing that he would drive the passengers into a panic, called him to his side and said, "Yes, you can help me immensely if you will just hold that rope hard and firm; and don't let it go until I tell you!" He eagerly grasped the rope and held it tight and steady until the storm was past, and then he walked about the deck boasting that he had saved the ship, until the captain, hearing of this, came up and, looking at him with a twinkle in his eye, said, "Why, do you know the reason I gave you that rope to hold was to keep you quiet? The only good you did by holding on so steadily was that you were kept from doing any mischief."

Ah, how much mischief we do by doing our own work! How long it took God to teach Abraham to be still! How long Abraham tried to help God to the fulfillment of His own promise! Then he got Sarah into his counsel, and then he took Hagar into partnership, and out of it came Ishmael. Out of Ishmael came nothing but sorrow and hindrance, until, after a quarter of a century had been spent, God quietly fulfilled His own promise in His own way.

How long it took Moses to learn to be still! Forty years he had to wait in the desert until all his young-mannishness had died, and his precocious activity had been changed into modesty and even timidity; then, when Moses shrank back and asked God to send someone else, Moses was small enough and still enough for God to use for His people's deliverance. And so, when he came to the gates of deliverance, his first lesson was to "stand still and see the salvation of God;" to do nothing but wait for Him, and then God stepped upon the scene, and did the work Himself.

God cannot use us until we come to the end of ourselves, and see our utter worthlessness, and helplessness, and then put on His mighty strength, and go forth, crying, "I am not sufficient even to think anything as of myself; but my sufficiency is of God."

III.

These waiting days were necessary to enable the disciples to realize their need, their nothingness, their failure and their dependence upon the Master. They had to get emptied first, before they could get filled. Oh, how often they must have thought, as those days went by, of the positions they were now to occupy, the responsibility that was resting upon them, the charge that the Master had committed to them, and their utter inability for it all! How they must have recalled their folly, their unbelief, their strife, their selfishness, their fears, their defeats, and shrunk back into nothingness, and even stood aghast at the prospect before them, until in the very dust they cried to Him for help and strength needed.

And so God wants us to go apart and quietly wait upon Him, until He searches into the depths of our being, and shows us our folly, our failures, our need. There is no wiser nor better thing to do on the eve of a season of blessing than to make an inventory, not of our riches, but of our poverty; to count up all the voids and vacuums and places of insufficiency; to make the valley full of ditches, and then to bring to God the depths of our need for Him to fill.

And it takes time to make this work thorough. It takes time to burn it into our consciousness. It takes time to make us feel it. It is one thing to know in a general way our need and failure; it is quite another thing to realize it, to mourn over it, to be distressed about it, and to be filled with sorrow and shame and that holy zeal and revenge upon ourselves which the apostle tells us is part of true repentance.

In the golden stairway of the Beatitudes, the first promise is to those that are poor in spirit; but there is another step still deeper down on the way to God, and that is "Blessed are they that mourn." It is needful that we shall mourn over our poverty, that we shall realize our need, that we shall be deeply troubled over our spiritual wretchedness, and that we shall come with such hunger that nothing less than all the fullness of Christ can ever satisfy us again.

There are some spiritual conditions that cannot be accomplished in a moment. The breaking up of the fallow ground takes time; the frosts of winter are as necessary as the rains of spring to prepare the soil for fertility. God has to break our hearts to pieces by the slow processes of His discipline, and grind every particle to powder, and then to mellow us, and saturate us with His blessed Spirit, until we are open for the blessing He has to give us. Oh, let us wait upon the Lord with brokenness of heart, with openness of soul, with willingness of spirit, to hear what God the Lord will say!

IV.

These days of waiting are important also that we may listen to God's voice. We are so busy that we cannot hear. We talk so much that we give Him no chance to talk to us. He wants us to hearken to what He has to say to us. He wants us on our faces before Him, that He may give us His thought, His prayer, His longing, and then lead us into His better will.

And if He keeps us waiting long, we know the message when it comes will be worth all the delay. "If He tarry, let us wait for Him." Only a few times did He speak to Abraham. Only a few times did He speak to Paul. But these were messages that will live forever, and their echoes have sounded through all the years, and will resound from the ages yet to come.

Let us wait upon God, not so much in prayer as in hearkening.

V.

God wants us to wait upon Him also that we may realize not only our need, but His fullness and His will for us. He wants to show us the vision of the future as well as of the past. He wants to open to us the treasures of His grace, and make us know all the riches of the glory of His inheritance in us.

He wants to lift up our eyes northward and southward and eastward and westward, and then say to us, "All the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it."

He wants to give us the vision of the King in His beauty and the land of far distances. He wants to reveal to us yet unexplored regions of glorious advances in the life of faith. He wants to call us to higher service, and show us mightier resources and enabling for the work of life.

Oh, it is so sweet to wait upon the Lord and dwell on high, to survey the mountain peaks of His glorious grace and look out on the boundless fullness of His promises and His power, and to hear Him say, "Call unto Me, and I will answer thee, and show thee" not merely the things thou hast seen, but "great and hidden things which thou knowest not!"

This is the waiting to which He is calling us today. God grant that these days before us may bring the vision, and then the victory!

VI.

Waiting on the Lord is not only a preparation for the Holy Spirit, but is a process of receiving the Holy Spirit. There is a cumulative power in waiting prayer to bring the answer and the blessing, breath by breath and moment by moment. God's blessing is too vast and our capacity is too great to be filled in a moment. We must drink, and drink, and drink again, and yet again, if we would know all the fullness of the river of His grace.

Take an ash barrel, and begin to pour into it a bucket of water, and your whole bucket will be exhausted before the water has made the slightest impression; the ashes will be as dry as at first, and you can pour bucket after bucket, and still the ashes be as dry as ever. It is only when the barrel has been filled that at last you see the first trace of the water you have been pouring in. That ash heap was so dry that it could only be saturated by degrees from the bottom upwards; and it is only when the whole body has been saturated, that the first evidence appears.

And so our hearts are so dry, that we need to wait upon the Lord for days and days before there is any impression. But all the while the dry ground is filling, and the thirsty soil is absorbing, and after the waiting is completed we shall know that it was not in vain; we shall realize that not one breath of prayer was vainly spent; we shall find that every moment was storing up the treasures of His grace and power in the depths of our being.

Beloved, we do not wait enough upon the Lord. We do not spend sufficient time at the Mercy Seat. We allow the rush and hurry of life to drive us off, and we lose time instead of gaining it, by our reckless haste.

Yes, that is an instructive old story about the horseman pursued by his foes, who found his trusted charger beginning to fail in the race, for one of the shoes upon his feet had been detached, and he was slipping upon the rocky path. Suddenly the horseman dismounted at the blacksmith shop, where the two ways met, and although he could see his pursuers over yonder hill, bearing down upon him, yet he waited long enough to shoe his horse. He called to the blacksmith, "Be quick," as he threw him a coin of tenfold value; and the sweating workman filed and hammered and clinched the nails, and did his work fast and well. And when the last nail was turned, and the fugitive leaped into his saddle, the hoofs of his pursuers were thundering just behind him, and he heard their shouts of triumph, as they felt they had secured their prey.

But no! he leaped into his saddle, plunged his spurs into his horse's haunches, and dashed away like the lightning, because he was now prepared for the journey.

Ah yes, he gained by losing time, and would have lost all by going before he was prepared. O, beloved, "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." "Wait for the promise of the Father, which ye have heard of Him." "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength."

Without the Holy Ghost you are unequal to the journey of life; you are unfit for the service of the Master; you are unwarranted in attempting to preach the gospel, or to win a soul for Christ, and you are unprepared for the future which He is immediately opening to you. Oh, let us wait at His feet; let us learn our weakness; let us realize our nothingness; let us get emptied for His filling, and then baptized with the Holy Ghost or filled anew with His utmost fullness; and we shall go forth not to our work, but to His, and find that "He is able to do exceeding abundantly

above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us. To whom be glory now and forever. Amen."

'The Holy Spirit' or 'Power from on High'

by A. B. Simpson,

Volume 2 - Chapter 8 POWER FROM ON HIGH

"Ye shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Acts 1:8.

The greatest need of human nature is power. Man is weaker than all other creatures. The tiger's cub is able to take care of itself, but the human being spends one-third of an ordinary lifetime before he reaches maturity.

He is the prey of all the elements around him, and morally he is much weaker still. In his heart are elements of evil that drag him downward, and around him a thousand influences that lead him astray.

There is unspeakable pathos in the cry of a poor, sinning woman who once said in a hospital, as we were pleading with her to do right: "I am not strong enough to be good;" there is infinite comfort in that blessed assurance of the Holy Scriptures, "When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."

The gospel is a message of strength. "It is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth." It is the special ministry of the Holy Ghost to give power from on high. How much is signified in this mighty promise? How far have we come short of His fullness? How far may we claim its fulfillment?

We cannot find a better answer than in the book of Acts. This verse is the keynote and the table of contents. Every word in this verse points forward to a whole section of the book which follows.

The first chapter of Acts tell us the story of the power. The next chapters tell us of the witnessing which followed. Then we have the church in Jerusalem. Then we have the gospel in all Judea. Then we have the story of Samaria. And finally, the closing chapters are wholly devoted to the preaching of the gospel unto the uttermost part of the earth.

We shall not attempt now to trace the unfolding of this order through the book of Acts, but shall simply endeavor to illustrate the meaning of this word "power" by the facts and incidents of the story of the apostolic church, as given in the book of Acts, which is really the story of the acts of the Holy Ghost more than the acts of the apostles.

I. THIS IS THE POWER OF A PERSON.

The right translation is, ye shall receive not power, but the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you. It is not your power, but His power. It is not abstract power under your control, but it is a Person, whose presence with you is necessary to your possessing and retaining the power.

He has the power and you have Him. In the science of electricity, it has been found that the best form in which this motive power can be used to run our street cars, is not through storage batteries, but through overhead wires. The power is not stored up in the car, but in the dynamo and the wire, and the car just draws it from above by constant contact, and the moment it lets go its touch the power is gone. The power is not in the car, but in the wire.

And so the power of the Holy Ghost is power from above. It is not our power, but His, and received from Him moment by moment.

In order to receive this power and retain it, there are certain conditions which are necessary. One of them is that we shall obey Him and follow His directions. We can only have His power in the line of His will. The car can only draw the power from the wire in so far as it follows the track. It can have the power to run along the highway, but it cannot have it to run into the neighboring farms and follow the capricious will of the driver. The Holy Ghost is given to them that obey Him, and obedience to the Holy Ghost is a much larger thing than many dream.

It is not merely to keep from doing wrong in some little contracted sphere; but it is to understand and follow the whole will and purpose of God in the use of this divine endowment. We cannot have it to please ourselves. We cannot have it to please ourselves even in the mode of our Christian work. We can only enjoy the fullness of the Spirit, in so far as we use this fullness for the work to which He has called us.

This verse is the measure and the limit of the Spirit's power. He is given that we shall be witnesses unto Christ, both "in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

We can only know the fullness of the Spirit's power as we use it to give the gospel to the whole world. Only in the line of the world's evangelization and the fulfillment of our great trust can the church of God ever realize the utmost meaning of the promise of Pentecost.

II. IT IS THE POWER OF HOLY CHARACTER.

It is not primarily power for service, but it is power to receive the life of Christ; power to be, rather than to say and to do. Our service and testimony will be the outcome of our life and experience. Our works and words must spring from our inmost being, or they will have little power or efficacy. "We must ourselves be true, if we the truth would teach."

The change produced by the baptism of the Holy Ghost upon the first disciples was more remarkable in their own lives than even in their service and testimony.

Peter, the irresolute disciple -- always running ahead of his Master, boasting in his self-confidence of what he would do or would not do, and then running away at the threat of a servant girl, transformed into the fearless hero, who stood before the murderers of His Lord and charged them with their crime, and then with lowly spirit and humble heart, going forth to walk in his Master's steps, and at last to die upon his Master's cross with downward head, is a greater miracle in his personal life than even in the wondrous power of his public testimony.

The spirit of unselfish love, that led to the entire consecration of all their means to the service of Christ and the help of one another, was an example that could not fail to impress the skeptical and selfish world. The "great grace" that was upon them all was more wonderful than "the great power" with which they bore witness to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The heroic fortitude with which they endured unparalleled sufferings, "rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Jesus," was an exhibition of power that no man can gainsay, and carried a weight of conviction that nothing can counterpoise.

This is the power which the church needs today to convince an unbelieving world; the power that will make us, not inspired apostles, but "living epistles, known and read of all men." Nothing is so strong as the influence of a consistent, supernatural, and holy character. Many a skeptic, whom all the books in the universe would never have convinced, has been converted by the sweet example of his Christian wife.

Many a missionary among the heathen has found that the failure of his temper and spirit has done more in a moment to counteract all his teaching than years could undo. "He that keepeth his spirit is greater than he that taketh a city." And the power that can surpass the angry word, and stand in sweetness in the hour of provocation in the humble kitchen and laundry, has often become an object lesson to the proud and cultured mistress, until her heart has hungered for the blessing which has made her lowly servant's life a ministry of power, and her humble heart a heaven of love.

III. IT IS THE POWER OF TRUTH.

The Holy Ghost works through the Holy Scriptures, and so the baptism of Pentecost was clearly identified with the power of the Word.

The very first thing that Peter did after the Holy Spirit came was to quote the Scriptures, and explain the manifestation from God's own inspired Word, and it was a Scriptural sermon which was used in the extraordinary conversions of that day.

If you will carefully notice the different messages of the apostles, you will find that in every

instance they made large use of the Bible, and some of their messages are simply statements of Scripture and quotations from the Old Testament.

The Holy Ghost has given the Holy Scriptures and will never dishonor His own message. The more we know of Him, the more will we honor His Word. The Bible must ever be the foundation of spiritual power, and the instrument of spiritual service; but it must ever be in the power of the Spirit. "The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life."

The late Dr. Gordon tells of a Sabbath he spent abroad, on which day he went in the morning to hear a distinguished preacher who was celebrated for his Biblical knowledge. He came home delighted with the clear and brilliant expositions of the truth that he had heard, but chilled with the icy coldness of the message. It was true, clear, Scriptural truth, but as cold as an iceberg.

He went in the afternoon to hear another preacher distinguished for his fervor, and he came back delighted with the earnestness and unction of the preacher but it was a fire of shavings, and there was not truth enough in it to make it lasting.

He went again at night, and heard a third preacher, and he came away not only instructed, but thrilled, because this sermon had been not only an exposition of Scriptural truth, but it had also been alive with the power of God and full of the fire of the Holy Ghost. It was not a fire of shavings, but of substantial fuel, and it left not only a memory of truth, but a glow of warmth that filled his heart with joy and love. This is the power of the Holy Ghost, speaking the truth in love; the Bible ablaze with holy fire; the Word of God dissolved in unction and love, until it can be observed in every fibre of our being, and become the nutriment of our life.

IV. IT IS THE POWER OF LOVE.

The baptism of Pentecost was a baptism of love. It brought a love to God that annihilated the power of self. "Neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own." Their costliest treasures were yielded up to God. Their wealth, their homes, were held at the service of the church of Christ.

It was love to one another, and they were so absolutely bound together that they formed a corporate body. There was no schism or possible place for the paralysis or mutilation of the whole body of Christ. Today the church of Christ has broken to pieces. Here and there we find a sound member, but the whole body is mutilated and severed, so that it is not possible for the Spirit to flow with undivided and unhindered fullness through the whole; consequently we do not have the gifts of the Spirit in the same measure as in the day of Pentecost. The body is carrying about with it diseased and lacerated members, and it takes the strength of those that are whole to carry those that are broken.

What we need today is the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and then the union will come because of

the unity, and we shall not need our platforms and our convocations to bring the body together, but bone to his bone, member to member and heart to heart we shall stand in "unity of the Spirit," and the Church of Jesus will be "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."

The baptism of the Holy Ghost will always bring a spirit of love. It will fill the heart with devotion and devotedness to God, with tender consideration for one another, with loving regard for our brethren, with intense longing for the salvation of souls, and with sweetness and charity toward all men.

V. IT IS THE POWER OF SUPERNATURAL GIFTS AND DIVINE HEALING.

The name of Jesus, through the power of the Holy Ghost, was efficacious to restore the paralytic at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, and even to raise the dead at the prayer of Peter.

At every great crisis in the apostolic ministry, we find a special manifestation of supernatural power. It was given to emphasize their testimony in Jerusalem. It was specially marked at the opening of the gospel in Samaria. It was still more wonderfully manifested as Peter preached through all Judea. And at every new point in Paul's missionary journey we find "God bearing witness by signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds."

You will notice, however, that the healing of the sick and the working of supernatural power were not primary ends, but rather testimonies to something more important, even the reality and power of the name of Jesus, and the message of mercy through the gospel.

And so, while we must still recognize the supernatural ministry of the Spirit, which never was intended to be interrupted, and ought to be expected yet more wonderfully in these last days before the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, let us never make the mistake of regarding it as an end, or allowing it to take the place of the higher truths that relate to our spiritual life. At the same time, let us not ignore it. The church is one through all the ages. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and forever"; the Holy Spirit is unchanged, and the constitution of the church is identical with the twelfth chapter of First Corinthians and the plan which God gave at Pentecost.

We cannot leave out any part of the Gospel without weakening all the rest; and if there ever was an age when the world needed the witness of God's supernatural working, it is this day of unbelief and Satanic power. Therefore, we may expect, as the end approaches, that the Holy Ghost will work in the healing of sickness, in the casting out of demons, in remarkable answers to prayer, in special and wonderful providences, and in such forms as may please His sovereign will, to prove to an unbelieving world that the power of Jesus' name is still unchanged, and that "all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him, Amen, forever."

Let us not fear to claim His power for our physical as well as our spiritual need, and we shall

find that, "if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in us, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken our mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in us."

VI. IT IS THE POWER OF PROVIDENTIAL WORKING.

There is nothing more remarkable than the manner in which God's providence worked in line with the first disciples, showing that He who dwelt within them was the same God that controls the universe and all the affairs of human life.

How wonderful the providence that brought representatives from the whole world to meet at Pentecost, and then to receive the power and go forth to their homes in every nation, as witnesses for Jesus!

How marvelous the providence that brought Philip and the eunuch of Ethiopia together down there at the cross roads of the desert, and then sent the prince on to his home in Africa converted, enlightened, and filled with the Holy Ghost, to be a witness for Jesus to his whole nation, and perhaps bring all North Africa to God!

How remarkable the providence that sent Peter to the housetop, and then brought to him the vision that illuminated his mind, enlarged his ideas, and prepared him for his greater commission for the Gentile churches; then, when he was ready, sent, on the very niche of time, the messengers of Cornelius to knock at his door and take him up to Caesarea to preach the gospel to the Gentiles and witness the outpouring of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost!

How wonderful the providence of God that opened the church at Antioch and prepared a new center for Gentile Christianity, in the larger spirit of the cosmopolitan congregation, and then gathered there men like Paul and Barnabas to be the leaders of a wider movement for all the world!

How marvelous the providence that saved Peter from the cruel hand of Herod, opening his prison doors on the very night preceding his intended execution, and smiting Herod down with a hideous disease in the hour of his presumptuous purpose to destroy the Church of God!

How extraordinary the providences that followed Paul through his wondrous life, opening his way from land to land, and making storm and tempest, and even the very viper that sprang upon him, to work for the cause of Christ!

And still the same God rules in the same realm of Providence. Still the Holy Ghost within us can control the circumstances around us. Still the march of events will keep time to the leadings of the Spirit. And the man that walks in the Holy Ghost shall have a charmed life and be immortal till his work is done, and he will find that winds and waves and fierce and cruel men, and even Satan's very emissaries shall be forced to become auxiliaries to His purpose, and work with Him for the furtherance of the Gospel.

And so God has shown in the lives of men like Arnot, in Africa; Paton, in the New Hebrides; George Muller, in Bristol, and many a humble missionary of the cross who has dared to trust the mighty promise of the ascending Master, the permanent value of His words, "All power is given Me in heaven and in earth, and lo, I am with you all the days, even unto the end of the age."

VII. IT IS THE POWER FOR GUIDANCE.

The Holy Spirit gives power for guidance. He directed them. He led their steps. He sent Philip to Samaria, and down to the desert to meet the eunuch. He sent Peter to the housetop and then to the home of Cornelius. He restrained Paul and Silas from preaching in Bithynia and Ephesus, and then He sent them to Macedonia, to give the gospel to Europe.

Step by step He was the Guide of all their ways, and He is still our Counselor and Guide; and if we will trust Him and acknowledge Him in all our ways, He will direct our steps and lead us into all the fullness of our Father's will.

VIII. IT IS THE POWER FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH.

There is nothing more wonderful than the oversight of the Holy Ghost in the church of the apostolic age. He was its recognized Leader and Head. He directed its councils, and was acknowledged as its President. He controlled its disciples, kept out unworthy members, and preserved it from the touch of the world.

How solemn and awful His dealing with Ananias and Sapphira! How suggestive the solemn statement "of the rest, durst none join themselves unto them"! Oh, if the Holy Ghost is in the Church, the world will not have to be kept out; it will be only too glad to stay out.

Alas, that day should have come when learning, genius, influence and worldly power should be recognized in the house of God, and the world should be sought by sinful compromises and unholy attractions, and the church should be baffled and hindered by the "mixed multitude" that she has no power to keep away. God is trying to show His ministers and people that He is adequate for all the needs of His work, and any pastor and church that will fully recognize Him, shall always be prospered and blessed, spiritually, financially, numerically, influentially, and every way.

Oh, that God would show His Church her true power and glory, and that she might again be the woman "clothed with the sun, with the moon beneath her feet!"

IX. IT IS THE POWER OF CONVICTION OVER THE HEARTS OF MEN.

The power of the Holy Ghost is not always a conscious power on our part. It is marked chiefly by effectiveness in reaching the hearts of others. On the day of Pentecost, it was the power to convict the consciences of men, and to influence and control their actions. "They were pricked to the heart, and they said, Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

It is not always the highest excitement that indicates the strongest power. The great question is, "What is the effect upon the hearts and lives of men?" When Demosthenes used to speak in Athens, the people forgot all about Demosthenes, and said, "Let us go and find Philip." It put the "go" into them. And so when the Holy Ghost is present in power He leads to results.

The speaker may be very calm, and have little consciousness of the power, but in the audience are men and women who are brought face to face with God; and the truth is "manifested to every man's conscience in the sight of God," and a Voice within says, "Thou art the man." The will is led to decide and choose for God, and men turn from sin and yield themselves in entire surrender. This is the power we want -- the power that "will convict men of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment;" not the power of great machinery, of thrilling eloquence, melting pathos, and marvelous preaching and singing but the power that quietly moves upon the hearts of men, in their workshops and in their homes, until they are constrained to give themselves to God.

X. IT IS THE POWER TO SUFFER.

Perhaps there is no more remarkable manifestation of the power of the Holy Ghost, in the early church, than the sweetness and grandeur with which they endured all things for Jesus' sake. Beaten with stripes and humiliated before the council, they came together, not to condole with each other or show their bleeding wounds, but to rejoice "that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Jesus."

Hunted out of Iconium by a mob of respectable women, pelted with stones and hooted from the community, the "disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost." Theirs was a gladness that did not recognize their sufferings, but lifted them above persecution, and counted it but part of their coronation.

And so the power of the Holy Ghost will give us the heroism of endurance and enable us, like our Master, for the joy set before us to endure the cross, despising the shame. It will bring about a spirit of self-denial and holy sacrifice; it will make it easy for us to let go things and give up things "and endure all things for the elect's sake," and to say with the great apostle, "Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all."

XI. IT IS THE POWER FOR SERVICE.

Finally this was the power for unwearied, earnest and effective work. It was a power that could enable Paul, in a single lifetime, while supporting himself by his own manual labor,

unsupported by any missionary society or church, and without the facilities of our railroads, steamboats, telegraphs and means of communication, to girdle the globe and preach the gospel everywhere, and say in words of superlative triumph, "So that from Jerusalem, round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ."

O, beloved, we are living in an earnest age, and surely the Holy Ghost ought to produce earnest men today. God give to us this power for work that will multiply our lives until they measure up to the extraordinary opportunities, and to the marvelous intensities of these last days on which the ends of the world are come.

Oh, for a race of Pauls! Oh, for an army of Gideons! Oh, for a band of heroes! Oh, for the baptism of the Holy Ghost in all the meaning of Pentecost and in all the highest thought of Christ Himself!

'The Holy Spirit' or 'Power from on High'

by A. B. Simpson,

Volume 2 - Chapter 9 FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT

"They were all filled with the Holy Ghost." Acts 2: 4. "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." Eph. 5: 18.

I.

These words imply that there is a difference between having the Spirit and being filled with the Spirit. These disciples, on the day of Pentecost, had, in some measure, received the Spirit previously. The Lord Jesus must have meant something when He breathed on them and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." And the disciples to whom the apostle wrote the Epistle to the Ephesians had already been "sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise," which was the earnest of their inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession; but they were not filled with the Spirit.

What this difference is we may not be able to state explicitly or accurately. Our theories and definitions may be at fault, and it is probably unnecessary that we should understand all about it theoretically. The most important thing is that we should feel after it until we find it; that we should long for it and press forward to receive it. It is very probable that many a soul is converted without being distinctly conscious of the process at the time, and that many a Christian receives the gift of the Holy Ghost when he is stumbling after it and reaching out for it in the darkness and the dimness of spiritual trouble. And so we may not know all about this, but we may earnestly desire it and persistently seek until we find it. All divine conditions transcend our understanding, and our most real, intense and important experiences often come to us by processes which we our-elves could not explain.

The most familiar operations of the natural world afford a forcible illustration of this distinction. We all easily understand the difference between the shallow stream and the overflowing river. In both cases there is water, but in one case it is a feeble current, while in the other it is an overflowing stream that drives the innumerable wheels of the factories along the shores. The power all comes from the fullness which causes the overflow.

We can easily understand the difference between a boiler full of water and a boiler full of boiling water. In the one case it is cold water which fills, but which has no power; in the other it is the water converted into steam, driving the wheels of the mighty engine and carrying the cars across the continent along the iron track.

That single degree of temperature makes all the difference in the world between power and impotence. The Scriptures of truth bear out this distinction with the greatest possible clearness and force.

In writing to Timothy, the Apostle Paul says, in the first chapter of the second epistle and sixth verse, "Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. God hath not given us the Spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

The gift was already bestowed and fully recognized, but it was like an expiring flame -- the embers of the fire were falling into ashes, and the flame was almost dead. The word used is rekindle, stir up the fading embers, rekindle the fire -- be filled with the Spirit.

Again, in 1 Corinthians 12: 7, we read, "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." This word "profit" expresses the whole difference between receiving the Spirit and being filled with the Spirit. Every one may receive the Spirit, but only a few "profit withal"; that is, improve the gift, develop it, exercise it, and reach its utmost fullness.

All this is perfectly unfolded in the beautiful parable of the pounds, Luke 19. The one pound given to each servant is the special endowment of the Holy Ghost, power for service; but the improvement of the pound, in each case, is different, according to the diligence and fidelity of the servant. And so the outcome of each life is different, and the final reward bears the same proportion. It is a wonderful and solemn truth and places an awful responsibility upon every one of us for the right use of God's spiritual gifts, and especially that Gift of gifts, the blessed Holy Ghost Himself.

In the twelfth chapter of First Corinthians and the thirteenth verse, we have another remarkable statement: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

It is one thing to be baptized into the one body by the Spirit; it is another thing to drink into that one Spirit. The first is an act; the second is a habit. The first brings us into a relationship; the second is the true use of that relationship, the drinking of His fullness until we become filled, and the habit of abiding in His fullness so that we are always filled.

Once more, the same truth is very beautifully taught in the story of the widow and her pot of oil, already referred to in connection with 2 Kings 4: 1-7. That little pot of oil represents the Holy Ghost; but the outpouring of the pot of oil into all the vessels which the widow borrowed from her neighbors, illustrates the fullness of the Spirit, as we receive Him into all the needs of our life, and into all the circumstances which God's providence brings to us as opportunities for the development of our spiritual life and the richer fullness of the Holy Ghost.

So many have the Holy Ghost confined in a little pot of oil and hidden away on the shelf of a

cabinet. God wants us to go out into all the needs of life, and pour that divine fullness into every vessel that comes to us, until our whole life shall be a living embodiment and illustration of the all-sufficiency of Christ.

II.

Let us now inquire what are some of the effects and evidences of the filling of the Holy Ghost.

1. To be filled with the Spirit, in the first place will bring us the fullness of Jesus. The person and work of the Holy Ghost must never be recognized apart from the person of Christ -- to do this is sure to lead us into Spiritualism. Natural religion recognizes the spirit world. Spiritualism is full of it. The priestess of Apollo was called the Pythoness, because she inhaled a spiritual influence until her whole body became swollen like a python, and her whole being was alive with intense spiritual force; but it was the spirit of evil; it was a spirit apart from the person of Christ and the true God.

The Holy Ghost never comes to us apart from Jesus. He is the Way to the Father, and He is the Way from the Father to us; and the blessed Spirit when He comes witnesses not of Himself but of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us be very careful of this. It is possible to become inflated with a spiritual influence, and yet to ignore and even disobey the Lord Jesus Christ, and to be led into pride, self-sufficient sentimentalism, and even sin.

The object of the Holy Ghost, like that of an artist, is to picture Jesus upon the canvas and make Him real to us, while the blessed Actor Himself is, in a measure, out of sight.

The more we are filled with the Holy Ghost, the more we recognize Christ, depend upon Christ, live upon Christ alone. Therefore this very word "filled" is used in connection with Him.

In Colossians 2: 9, 10, we have these two remarkable relative verses, "In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and ye are complete in Him." Literally translated, it reads, "In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead in a bodily form, and ye are filled with Him." God fills Jesus; Jesus fills us. Christ is the ideal man, the pattern of what a man should be, and God has put into Him all that humanity needs to be to satisfy Him; therefore, in order that we should be true men, we must relive His life, reproduce His personality, receive Him, grow up into Him, and live Him in all the completeness of His glorious life.

So we read, "Of His fullness have all we received, even grace for grace." We ourselves are insufficient for every situation, and the great business of the Holy Ghost is to bring us up to the situations of life and show us our insufficiency, and then reveal to us Christ and bring Him into our life as the supply of our needs. So in connection with that wonderful promise of the Holy Ghost in the fourteenth chapter of John, the true sequel is, "I am the Vine, ye are the branches. Abide in Me and I in you. He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for apart from Me ye can do nothing."

This is the life into which the Holy Ghost brings us, the life of personal union with and constant dependence upon the Lord Jesus Christ. To be filled with the Spirit, then, is to be filled with Christ, and so live that our constant experience and testimony will be, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

2. To be filled with the Spirit will exclude the life of self and sin, and will, of course, bring us into a life of holiness, righteousness and obedience.

We read in Exodus 40: 34, 35, that "when the cloud of the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle, Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation; because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle."

This is the true picture of a Spirit-filled man. The indwelling and in-filling of the Holy Spirit excludes self and sin. There is no room for Moses when the glory of God fills our being.

3. The filling of the Holy Ghost will bring us joy and fullness of joy. "These things have I spoken unto you, "the Master said after He had given us the promise of the Spirit, "that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." And so the apostle prays that "the God of hope may fill us with all joy and peace in believing, that we may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost."

The fullness of the Spirit must crowd out pain, doubt, fear and sorrow, and bring the joy of Christ to fill our being. What is it that makes the melody in an organ? It is not the touch of skillful fingers only on the keys, but it is the filling of the pipes by the movement of the pedals. I may try in vain to play the most skillful tune, unless the organ is filled; and so our songs of praise are dead and cold until the breath of God fills all the channels of our being. Then comes the heart-song of praise and the overflowing fountain of gladness.

4. So all the fruits of the Spirit come from the Spirit-filled heart. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, faith, temperance." These are all fruits or, at least, the fruit of the Spirit, and spring spontaneous from the fullness of the Holy Ghost.

When, a few years ago, I stood at Hebron and looked at the pool of David and saw it overflowing, my friend turned to me, and said, "This is the token by which we know that the valleys of Judea are filled with water, and its plains will be covered with fertility and luxuriance. The rains have been abundant because the pool of David is full at Hebron, and the sources of irrigation are ample."

And so when the heart is full of God, the life will be full of godliness. Spontaneously and sweetly will spring up all the fruits of righteousness, holiness and blessing, and "the desert

shall rejoice and blossom as the rose."

5. Again, the Holy Ghost can fill our minds and understandings with knowledge and light, and control our thoughts with harmony and sweetness and strength. The peace of God that passeth all understanding will keep our hearts and minds, and our thoughts will be stayed upon Him, and "brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ."

6. Yes, our very bodies will feel the fullness. The Holy Ghost is a true tonic for physical energy and perfect health. The fullness of the Spirit is the elixir for body and brain and being. To be filled with His blessed life will make our feet spring, our nerves steady, our brain strong, our circulation regular, and our whole being at its best for God and holy service.

7. Then, also, our very circumstances keep time to the blessed fullness of the heart within.

Like the widow's pot of oil that flowed out into every vessel, so the presence of God touches everything that comes into our life, and we find that all things work together for good to us if we love God and fulfill His purpose.

Our circumstances will become adjusted to us, or we become adjusted to our circumstances, and the whole of our life, "fitly framed together," will become vigorous, and full of power and blessing.

8. The blessing will no longer be expended upon itself; but we shall have enough and to spare; it will overrun until there is not room to receive it, and the residue will become the inheritance of a suffering world. These are the lives God uses, and God cannot use us until we are running over.

It was when Cana's water was poured out that it was changed from water into wine. It was when Ezekiel's river ran from the sanctuary to the desert that it grew deeper and broader and fuller. And it is when our lives are lost in self-forgetting love that we know all the fullness of God.

III. HOW MAY WE BE FILLED?

1. We must be empty.

I have a phonograph into whose sensitive gelatine cylinders I dictate my literary work. One busy day, I dictated a large amount of matter, filling up every cylinder. I spent nearly two days getting through a great amount of literary labor, and felt very much relieved that it was off my hands.

But when my typist proceeded to copy the messages which I had spoken to these cylinders, she could not understand the words, they were all jargon and confusion. The reason was very

simple. I had neglected to shave off the former dictation before giving the new message. I had really dictated a lot of matter into ears that were already filled and, therefore, it had made no impression. My work was lost, my labor was in vain. But I learned a lesson that was worth all its cost, and that is, that we must be empty before we can be filled. God cannot speak His messages into full ears. The Holy Ghost cannot pour His fullness into those who are already full.

2. We must be hungry. For "He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich hath He sent away empty." The caravans on the burning desert, when they cannot find the accustomed well of water, let loose the thirsty harts and they sweep over the burning plains, panting with thirst, until they find the water brooks.

And so the hungry heart always finds the living bread, the thirsty soul is always filled with water. There is nothing that finds God so quickly as an earnest soul. We always find Him when "we search for Him with all our hearts."

3. We must be open if we would be filled. "Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it." We must be free from prejudice and preconceptions of truth that shut us up from God's voice. We must be adjusted so as to catch His whisper and understand His will.

4. We must receive as well as ask; we must believe as well as pray; we must take the water of life freely; we must know the secret of drinking the living water, if we would be filled.

5. We must wait upon the Lord. The heart is too large to be filled in a moment; the soul is too great to be satisfied with a mere mouthful. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." We must "continue in prayer"; we must be much at the throne of grace; we must learn the secret of communion as well as supplication; and as we thus wait upon the Lord, we shall be filled until we shall find it a luxury to give forth our blessing to others.

6. And finally, if we would be filled, we must learn to give as well as receive; we must empty our hearts, that they may be refilled. God is a great economist and He loves to bless those who make the best use of their blessings, and become in turn a source of blessing to others.

The Holy Ghost is given for service; God cannot bless a selfish soul; and there is no selfishness more odious in His sight than that which can hoard God's spiritual blessing, and let others die in ignorance of the gospel, and suffer through selfish neglect.

"The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth others shall be watered himself." In this blessed work of winning the lost and giving the gospel to the world, we shall find our own rich reward, and "the fullness of the blessing of Christ."

'The Holy Spirit' or 'Power from on High'

by A. B. Simpson,

Volume 2 - Chapter 10

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Rom. 8: 9.

We approach, in this great epistle, a spiritual temple, and from its illuminated windows there shine out the beams of lofty and divine truth. It is so glorious that it needs only to be stated to bring its own illumination and vindication. This, the greatest of the epistles, presents to us the doctrine of the Holy Ghost with a symmetry and fullness quite as remarkable as the unfolding of the other doctrines which it contains.

I.

First, we have the witnessing Spirit. In Romans 1: 3, 4, the Lord Jesus Christ is said to have been "of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."

The Spirit of holiness has been interpreted to mean the divine nature of Jesus Christ, but it is quite proper and, indeed, a more simple interpretation to apply it directly to the Holy Ghost as a divine Person, witnessing to the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ, by raising Him from the dead according to the will of the Father.

The Holy Ghost was ever the witness to Christ's divinity, and the Spirit Who had so distinct a part in the offering up of His sacrifice (for it was "by the eternal Spirit that He offered Himself to God without spot") had surely as important a part in His resurrection. This is the first view we love to take of the Holy Spirit, as the Witness of Jesus, and especially of the risen Jesus, the living Christ, and the divine Lord.

II.

We next see the Holy Ghost as the Spirit of life and holiness. In Romans 8: 2, we read, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

This is the first work of the Holy Ghost in sanctifying the soul. Let us carefully notice the place where this comes in. It is subsequent to our justification by faith and our surrender to Christ in death and resurrection. Then the Holy Spirit comes and takes possession of us and breathes into us the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. This becomes a new law of life and power in our

spiritual being, and this new law lifts us above and sets us free from the old law of sin and death.

Just as the law of life lifts us above the law of gravitation, and the power of my will can raise my hand in spite of that physical law which makes dead matter fall to the ground, so the Holy Ghost, bringing Christ as a living presence into my heart and life, establishes a new law of feeling, thinking, choosing, and acting, and this new law lifts me above the power of sin and makes it natural for me to be holy, obedient, and Christ-like.

III.

We see the Holy Spirit operating in the mind as well as in the spirit, and we read in the next paragraph, verses 5 and 6, "The minding of the flesh is death, but the minding of the Spirit is life and peace." The Holy Spirit enters the mind and disposes it to the will of God, so that we choose the things that He chooses, and think God's thoughts after Him.

We mind the Monitor Who dwells within us; we listen to the voice that speaks to us; we follow His directions, and "we walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

IV.

The Holy Spirit is next revealed as the Spirit of quickening and healing in our mortal flesh. In verse 11, "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal body by His Spirit that dwelleth in you."

The Holy Ghost is the source of physical as well as mental and spiritual life. The human body consists of more than the outward frame. There is the inner mechanism of nerves, and, inside of that, the vital fluids and currents which quicken, energize, and impel the whole material organism.

Inside of all this is the principle of life, and inside of this is the Holy Ghost in the consecrated believer. He is most distinctly represented to us here as a vital force in our material being, a source of life, quickening, exhilaration and physical energy for those that know Him and obey Him. He is the Spirit that raised up Christ from the dead, and He dwells in our mortal bodies as a quickening life. This is not the immortal body of the resurrection, but the mortal frame of the present life which feeds upon the divine life. And this is the secret of living on the life of God.

It is thus that our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, and our frames are the members of Christ, and partake of the life of our living Head.

V.

The Holy Spirit, as the guide and director of our Christian life, is very clearly presented to us in the next few verses. "Therefore," adds the apostle, "we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

We are to "live after the Spirit"; we are to obey our divine Guide; we are to follow our heavenly Leader; we are to yield ourselves to the Mother and the Monitor who comes to direct our pathway.

Christian life is not a mere moment of blessed transformation, but it is a life of continual abiding and obedience. Step by step, we must walk with God and maintain the attitude and habit of dependence and holy obedience. The Holy Spirit never wearies of the care of our life, and we should never weary of His loving jealousy for us. This is the secret of peace and gladness constant obedience and a hearkening spirit that waits to catch the whisper of His will and obey His every word.

VI.

In this passage we have another most important truth; namely, that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of crucifixion. He is the One that mortifies our evil nature and holds us in the place of death and resurrection life. The attitude of the Christian life is that of reckoning ourselves dead, indeed, unto sin.

This attitude must be maintained as a habit, and there are constant occasions when the old life will seek to reassert itself and must be held steadily in the place of death. This is what is meant by "mortifying our members," and this can only be done by the Holy Ghost. If we attempt it ourselves we shall be everlastingly in the attitude of attempted suicide, and we shall never reach the place of peaceful death. The reason so many ghosts are walking around is because so many people have tried to die in their own strength, and have got up in the same strength, and walk about as the apparitions and shadows of the old carnal life.

The Church of God is full of these uncanny spirits, these live corpses, these resurrected ones; and they are very sad looking objects to themselves and to everybody else. The true secret is to be so full of the Holy Ghost that, like the autumn leaves which drop off by the coming of the spring, our old life shall be kept in the place of death by the expulsive power of divine love and Christ's indwelling life.

VII.

The Spirit of sonship is also clearly unfolded in this beautiful paragraph: "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." The Holy Ghost brings us into the same relation with the Father as Jesus Christ, the divine Son. We are made partakers of His Sonship through

His indwelling life, and the prayer of the Master becomes fulfilled in us and through us, "that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me, may be in them and I in them." It is because He is in us that the Father loves us with the same love that He loves the Son, and we dwell in the blessed consciousness and confidence of this place of child liberty and love.

We are called the first born ones. We are all first born ones, even as He is the First Born One and the Only Begotten. We partake of His very Sonship; and as the bride shares the bridegroom's family and home, so we enter into all privileges, immunities, glories, and prospects of Christ's own glorious life. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us," and the Spirit hath brought to us, "that we should be called the sons of God."

Beloved, have we received power thus to become the sons of God, and does the Spirit, not of adoption, but of Sonship, cry out instinctively from our inmost being, "Papa, Father," our own dear Father, His Father and our Father, His God and our God?

VIII.

The Spirit of hope and anticipation of the coming glory is next seen. And so we read in verse 23, "And not only they, but ourselves also, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption; to wit, the redemption of our body."

That is, the Holy Spirit awakens the consciousness and brings the earnest of the coming glory, and calls forth our eager longing and outreaching for it. Just as the embryo birdling in its shell, when the time for its birth draws near it, presses through the restraints that confine until at last it bursts the fragile shell and leaps forth into liberty and life to breathe the air of the great world, and soon to leave the firmament on eagle's wings, so the Spirit-filled heart has in it the bud and the embryo of a transcendent future, and it stretches out even now its nascent wings, and groans within itself for the coming glory.

Who is there of all the disciples of Christ who has not some time felt the birth-pangs of a grander life and the prophecy of a future transcending all we know of power and blessing?

We have not only the conception and anticipation of this glorious future, but the apostle says we have "the first fruits" even now. The Spirit of God in our hearts is the prophecy and promise of the coming age of more glorious spiritual life when we shall be like Him, and clothed with His perfections and something of His wisdom and power, we shall share His throne forever.

The touches of divine healing that have thrilled our mortal frame are but the foretaste of the resurrection hour, when we shall sweep up into the fullness of our eternal manhood, and these mortal frames shall be as beautiful, as glorious, as pure, and as strong as His glorified body on the throne.

What we have seen of answered prayer, of power over nature, of victory over circumstances,

of divine life even in this limited sphere, these are but anticipations and earnest-payments of the time when we shall inherit the kingdom which Adam lost, and share man's destined dominion over the whole creation.

And so the Holy Spirit in us is teaching us the millennial song, is waking up in us the pulses of the resurrection, is illuminating before us the vision of the coming glory, and is calling us out to prove even here our celestial wings.

And as the parent eagle teaches her little ones to fly, moment by moment and effort by effort, luring them from their soft nest, bearing them on her mighty wings, so the Mother Dove is teaching us to spread our wings upon the higher air and press forward into a little of our future inheritance.

Oh, let us not be disobedient to these heavenly visions! Let us not repress these outreachings. Let us not quench these immortal fires. And let us not cramp and stunt, and crush out the heavenly inspirations and aspirations which carry with them not only the prophecy, but the vital power of an endless and boundless life.

IX.

In the twenty-sixth verse we have the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of prayer. "Likewise also the Spirit helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what to pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."

This is the deep mystery of prayer. This is the delicate divine mechanism which words cannot interpret, and which theology cannot explain, but which the humblest believer knows even when he does not understand.

Oh, the burdens that we love to bear and cannot understand! Oh, the inarticulate outreachings of our hearts for things we cannot comprehend! And yet we know they are an echo from the throne and a whisper from the heart of God. It is often a groan rather than a song, a burden rather than a buoyant wing. But it is a blessed burden, and it is a groan whose undertone is praise and unutterable joy. It is "a groaning which cannot be uttered." We could not ourselves express it always, and sometimes we do not understand any more than that God is praying in us, for something that needs His touch and that He understands.

And so we can just pour out the fullness of our heart, the burden of our spirit, the sorrow that crushes us, and know that He hears, He loves, He understands, He receives; and He separates from our prayer all that is imperfect, ignorant and wrong, and presents the rest, with the incense of the great High Priest, before the throne on high; and our prayer is heard, accepted and answered in His name.

X.

The Spirit of service is His attribute. The Holy Ghost is next represented as the Spirit of power for consecrated service. In the twelfth chapter of Romans and the first verse, there is a singular and beautiful force in the use of the Greek word "paraclete."

The expression, "I beseech you, therefore, brethren by the mercies of God " literally means, "I paraclete you by the mercies of God"; that is, not I, but the Holy Ghost beseeches you, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. This is the Holy Spirit's message to the saved and sanctified children of God, and this is the true power for consecration and service.

We may so identify ourselves with the blessed Paraclete, that our appeals and messages to men shall not be ours but His, and we can say, "I Paraclete you"; in the name of the Holy Ghost, beseech you. Thus our words and works will come to men with the authority and the power of the Holy Ghost.

XI.

The Spirit of gladness is revealed in Romans 14: 17. "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Romans 15: 13. "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost."

The Holy Spirit is always the Spirit of gladness, and the Spirit of gladness and hope is essential to power for service and effective testimony for Christ.

XII.

The Spirit of missions is His Spirit. The crowning revelation of the Holy Ghost in this sublime epistle is the Spirit of evangelization for the whole world. It is very beautiful that in this, the most doctrinal of all the epistles, the most profound theological treatise on justification, sanctification and the purposes of God ever written by inspired hands, should be these closing words respecting the ministry of the Holy Ghost for the evangelization of the whole world. But how could it be otherwise from such a soul and such a hand as Paul's?

Listen to these inspiring words: "I have written more boldly unto you, as putting you again in remembrance, because of the grace that was given me of God, that I should be the minister of Jesus Christ unto the Gentiles, ministering the Gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be made acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost. I have therefore my glorifying in Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God. For I will not dare to speak of

anything save those which Christ wrought for me, for the obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed, through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ; yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation; but as it is written, To whom He was not spoken of, they shall see; and they who have not heard shall understand." Rom. 15: 15-21.

To the glowing heart of Paul the work of missions was just the offering up of the Gentile world as a great living sacrifice to God, sanctified by the Holy Ghost. To present this offering to God was the glorious and all absorbing service of his life, and in this he had claimed and received the mighty power of the Holy Spirit; so that his soul could truly say, "through mighty signs and wonders from Jerusalem round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ." He could not rest in the beaten tracks of old and occupied fields, but pressed forward to the regions beyond to tell the story of divine love and grace, where Christ had not been named.

In an age when all our methods of international communication were unknown, when there were no railroads, steamboats, telegraphs, nor missionary societies, this lone man preached the Gospel, from land to land, until he could say of this vast region of the known world that circled round Jerusalem, he had so fully preached the gospel of Christ that no place was left in those parts, and that he was now at length at leisure to visit his friends in Rome and do some home mission work.

Wherever the Holy Ghost has possession of our hearts and lives, this will be the impulse that will possess us, and it will be the practical outcome of our consecration, until we shall have given the gospel as a witness to every tribe and tongue, and the purpose of the Christian Dispensation to gather out of the Gentiles a people for His name shall be accomplished, and the Lord Himself shall come.

Oh, may the Holy Spirit help each of us, from the study of this wonderful epistle, to understand His meaning for us and for our times, and to rise from the grandest truths of the gospel to the grandest work of the ages!

'The Holy Spirit' or 'Power from on High'

by A. B. Simpson,

Volume 2 - Chapter 11

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians unfolds the doctrine of the Holy Ghost in a number of distinct paragraphs, bringing out four different aspects of the truth, that are full of practical significance.

In the second chapter we have the Holy Ghost presented as the source of mental illumination and the Spirit of wisdom and revelation. In the third and sixth chapters we have the Holy Spirit in His indwelling in our spirit, and His sanctifying power. In the sixth chapter we have the Holy Spirit dwelling in our body and uniting us to Christ. And in the twelfth chapter we have the Holy Spirit constituting the whole body of Christ and uniting it, filling it with life, and enduing it with power for service.

I. THE SPIRITUAL MIND.

1 Cor. 2: 6-16. The last verse of this wonderful chapter expresses the particular truth of which the whole chapter is an unfolding -- "We have the mind of Christ." The Spirit is here represented as the Quickener of the mind, and the Source of mental illumination, and the Revealer of spiritual truth. There are three distinct and important thoughts in the chapter. The Holy Spirit is the Revealer of super-natural truth.

1. In the first place, the Spirit is the revealer of sources of knowledge. For "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

There is much that eye hath seen, but there are truths beyond our natural vision just as wonderful as this world of light and beauty, when it is suddenly revealed to a man who has always been blind, and whose vision is restored. His first thought is, "How beautiful, how wonderful! Why didn't you tell me of this before?"

And so there are spiritual truths, and there is a world of higher vision which God has for the quickened spirit, and which our natural senses never could discover; and when we see it in the light of His revealing, we wonder we never heard of it, and we think everybody ought to see it.

There are things which ear has heard, the words of eloquence and wisdom, the notes of

melody and harmony; the whisper of affection, the voices of nature and human love; but there is a higher realm whose messages of heavenly truth and divine love ear hath never heard. There are words of tenderness and wisdom which the Shepherd's voice is waiting to speak to those who know it, and the Holy Ghost is longing to give to "him that hath an ear to hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

There are thoughts and truths which human hearts have conceived, wonderful creations of the human imagination, wonderful conceptions of the human soul, wonderful inductions from human observation and perception, wonderful systems of thought and philosophy. But there are deeper and higher truths for the heaven-taught soul which will fill the ages to come with wonder and rapture. "In Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," and some day we shall know, even as He, all the secrets of truth. But He cannot speak them to us until we are able to hear them. This is the province of the Holy Ghost. Some of these truths He has revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures, but this is but a primary revelation for the present age and, as we shall know Him better, He will lead us on and up to all the heights and depths of knowledge in the cycles of eternity.

"For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." Like a mother who is searching through her wardrobe to find what will fit the ages of her children, like a teacher who is wisely discriminating, and determining just what class he can put the pupil into according to his progress, so the Holy Ghost is searching constantly to find how much we can stand; how far He can advance us; how fully He can reveal to us "the mind of Christ," and He is often disappointed, because as babes, we are unprepared for His higher messages.

2. We need more than supernatural truth, we need a supernatural mind to receive it. And so the next thought presented here is the Holy Spirit's ministry in giving to us the mind of Christ, and a supernatural power of reception. "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man that is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God."

You may repeat this sermon to the little canary bird that sings in your chamber, and he may bend his little head in earnest attention and try to take in your thought and meaning, but you will find that he has not grasped it. His little mind is not equal to your higher thought; he has only the mind of a bird, while you have the mind of a man. In order to make him understand you, you will need to put your mind into his brain.

And so when we bring our little mind up to the great thoughts of God, we are inadequate; we cannot take them in. Your canary may have a bigger head than your neighbor's canary; it may know one or two notes of song; it may have a few little tricks that others have not learned; it may be an educated, a cultivated, a professional bird; but it is only a bird. And so your philosopher, your man of science, your scholar, may know a few intellectual tricks, which the common mind is ignorant of; but he has only a human mind, he cannot take in the things of God without divine illumination.

This is the reason why "the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God." "But," He adds, "we have received the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." "We have the mind of Christ."

This is the stupendous truth which revelation holds out, that we may have a divine capacity in order to understand a divine revelation. The Holy Ghost does not annihilate our intellect, but He so quickens it and infuses into it the mind of Christ, that it is practically true "that old things have passed away, behold, all things have become new."

He can give us the power to cease from our own thoughts, and He can put into us His divine thoughts. He can make the truth real and living, so that it glows and shines with the vividness of intense realization. He can enable us to grasp it, to feel it, to remember it, and to understand it. He can light up the page until it glows as the firmament of stars at night or as the sunshine of the day that makes all objects plain. He can stop our foolish and vain imaginations and "bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." Blessed baptism for our poor wandering minds! Blessed "peace of God that passeth all understanding," that can "keep our thoughts" as well as our hearts by Christ Jesus! Blessed sight as well as light that the blind can have!

Therefore, in that beautiful and symbolical Gospel of John, where every act of Christ was an object lesson, we find that, after He had revealed Himself as the Light of the world, He immediately healed the blind man and restored his sight, as much as to say, "It is not only light you need, but vision." He came "that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind!"

3. There is one more thought still, and that is the insufficiency of human wisdom to know the things of God. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

The natural man here is not, of course, the fleshly man, but it is literally the physical man; that is, the soul man, the intellectual mind, the cultured mind, the mind of the philosopher. It is not for want of human education that men do not know the truth of God, but it is for want of spiritual organs. Therefore it is that "the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God, and He taketh the wise in their own craftiness." Therefore it is that scholarship and genius and even ecclesiastical authority so often fail to grasp the deeper spiritual truths of the gospel, and even oppose and hold up to ridicule and scorn the things that God hath revealed to them that love Him.

And so, beloved, when you find the gifted and the influential, even in professors' chairs and sacred pulpits, opposing the truths that are dearer to you than your life, and that you have seen in the living light of God, do not wonder; do not feel provoked; do not answer back according to their folly; but pray for them; pity them and, as you have opportunity, let the light of the truth they do not know shine into their hearts. Let them feel the touch of your love. Let them see the tears of your deep and earnest compassion. Let them behold the glory that shines through your face and life, and some day they will become hungry for the secret of the Lord which you have

found.

When Apollos preached in Ephesus the wonderful wisdom of the schools, Aquila and Priscilla heard him and saw his great lack. They did not criticize him and denounce him, but they lovingly prayed for him; they gently brought to him the deeper truth, and God opened his heart to receive it.

And Oh, men of culture, men of self-confidence, you will never find the truth by your processes. You cannot understand it without the divine revelation. You are blind, and dark, and doomed, unless God will give you light. Oh, lie down in humility, abasement, and helplessness, at His blessed feet; confess your blindness, and cry to Him like Bartimeus of old, "Lord, that my eyes may be opened"! And you, too, shall receive spiritual sight, and behold wondrous things out of his law.

II. THE INDWELLING OF THE HOLY GHOST AS OUR SANCTIFIER.

1 Cor. 3: 16, 17: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."

1 Cor. 6: 11: "And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

Here we have the Holy Spirit as the indwelling presence of the sanctified heart, and, indeed, as the source of its sanctification and preservation. This is the mystery of godliness -- God dwelling in the temple of a human soul. It is not merely that the temple is made holy, but, being separated and sanctified, it is made the abode of God Himself, and He lives in it His own glorious life. "I will dwell in them, and I will walk in them."

The apostle appeals to the Corinthians with the question, "Know ye not?" The power of this blessed relationship is in knowing it, recognizing it and living under its power. There are many glorious facts, which, if we but knew them, would revolutionize our lives. For ages the world lived on the edge of the profoundest secrets of science and nature, and because it knew them not, it never entered into their power; but when it knew the secret that was locked up in the lightning and the steam, then all the forces of our modern commercial and industrial life at once came upon the scene of human life.

And when we know that we have within us the in-dwelling presence of God, we become at once partakers of His omnipotence. When we know that we have within us the power that can lift us above every temptation, difficulty and sorrow, we become partners in the power of God, and we go forth with the shout of a conqueror.

0, beloved, many of you are living in poverty, defeat and disappointment, when you might be

conquerors and millionaires -- spiritual millionaires! Only claim your rights, only touch the wire that is throbbing with electric fire, only draw upon the bank account which is deposited in your name, only use the resources that belong to you, only know and prove your full salvation, and you shall go forth as the victorious sons of God, and conquered difficulties shall fall beneath your feet, and you shall march forth, shouting, "Thanks be unto God, who always causes us to triumph in Christ Jesus."

III. THE HOLY SPIRIT FOR OUR BODY.

1 Cor. 6:19. "What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God?"

This is a different truth from the one that we have been considering, at least it is a different measure and degree of the same truth. The Holy Ghost not only fills the heart, but He fills, or wants to fill, the body, too. He wants to have us surrender to Him every physical organ and member, and possess it, fill it, and quicken it with His divine life. He is the Former of our body as well as the Father of our spirit, and He is able to impart to every part of our frame the very life of the risen Christ. And when He fills the body and makes it His temple, He unites it with Christ. Then also the thirteenth and the fifteenth verses become true, "The body is for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body." "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?"

Then He introduces us to that mysterious and glorious relationship where we call Him Husband, where we are wedded to the very life of our beloved Lord, and where He imparts to our vital being and our physical organism His own resurrection life and strength.

This is a relationship as pure and holy as the very heart of God. It cannot be compared with any human relationship; it is infinitely above it. It is a fellowship in the Holy Ghost so delicate, so sacred, so pure, that the faintest image of earthliness would defile it. But it is as real, as actual, as satisfying, as the most tender and intimate of human affections; and, indeed, all we know of earthly love and earthly joy is only its imperfect type and shadow. It is the source of physical quickening for the consecrated body. It makes our bodies the members of Christ. It brings into every part of our being His very life; it makes Him to us our Life and Living Bread. It translates into actual experience His wonderful words, "As the living Father hath sent Me, and as I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me."

This is a love and a life that "none but he that feels it knows." But He will teach it to the consecrated and obedient heart, and He will give to us even here a foretaste of that blessed fellowship above where we shall sit down at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, and live forever on His own divine life.

Then we are also taught that this indwelling of the Holy Ghost in our body, and this union of our frame with the personal Christ will bring entire sacredness, dedication, and consecration to all our being. "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price; therefore, glorify God in your

body which is God's." The reading of the Authorized Version is wrong here. The word spirit is not found in the original. He is speaking exclusively of our physical life. It is our body that is bought with a price. It is our body that is not our own. It is our body in which we are to glorify God.

And how shall we glorify Him but by letting Him live in it, look through it, and work in it for others, until our whole physical life shall be an expression of God's grace and fullness, and He shall look through our holy lives, and walk in our springing steps and shine in our glowing faces and speak in our living, loving tones, and be revealed to men in all we think and say and do.

Oh, what a sacredness it gives to life to receive it breath by breath and moment by moment from Him!

They tell of a poor Chinese woman who had refused to accept Jesus from the missionary nurse that waited upon her. She was dying of an ulcerated arm, and when the doctor said that if she could get anyone to give up his flesh and blood to be transfused into this shrunken and diseased member she might be healed, she sent for her son and asked him if he would let the doctor take the pieces of flesh and the drops of blood from his arm to be infused into his mother. He refused, and then she broke down in deep sorrow and discouragement.

One day the missionary nurse found her weeping and sat down by her side and asked her if she would allow her to give her flesh and blood to heal her. She was deeply moved at the offer, and although she protested that, it was too much to ask, yet she allowed the operation to be performed. Day by day she continued to improve, and at length the arm was healed, and a white patch of pure flesh and skin covered the place where the ulcer so long had consumed her flesh.

One day the missionary nurse saw her weeping again and looking at her healed arm with strange tenderness. She asked her what was the matter, and the native woman said, "Teacher, I have been looking at this white spot on my arm, and thinking you gave me your flesh and blood to heal my poor diseased body. Why could you do it?"

And the teacher said, "It was only for love of Jesus, because He gave His life for me."

The poor Chinese woman wept afresh, and looking up, she said, "Teacher, I want your Jesus. If He can make you love me that way, when my own son refused to save me, I want Him to be my Jesus, too." And that poor Chinese woman was brought to Christ by the love of a missionary who could give her very flesh to her.

O, beloved, as I look at these veins that were once so dark with the currents of disease, and think of Him who not only gave His life for me, but who every morning freshly gives it to me, how can I live for myself; how can I live for the world; how can I prostitute to sin these God-given powers; how can I but feel, as this text has said, "I am not my own, I am bought with a

price, I will glorify God in my body which is God's"?

God help us so to receive the life of Jesus, and so to give it forth in holy, consecrated service for Him, and for the world, which can only be brought to Him by the living pattern of His great love, and by the indwelling of His own wondrous life, through the Holy Ghost which is given to us!

'The Holy Spirit' or 'Power from on High'

by A. B. Simpson,

Volume 2 - Chapter 12

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." 1 Cor. 12: 13.

The whole of this wonderful chapter is devoted to the unfolding of the profound truth that the church is the body of Christ, and that the Holy Ghost is the life of the church, constituting and sustaining its union with Christ, the living Head, and clothing it with divine power and efficiency for its holy ministry.

I. THE HOLY GHOST CONSTITUTES THE BODY OF CHRIST.

"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." The church is not an organization. It is an organic life; it is a living body constituted by the Holy Ghost, and united to Jesus Christ, its life and living Head. Eve was created in the person of Adam, at first, and then, afterwards was taken from him by the special act of God, and united to him as his bride. So the Church is taken out of Christ by the Holy Ghost, and then given back to Him in divine union, as His glorious Bride.

Each individual member is thus called and created anew in Christ Jesus and, one by one, the Lord adds to Himself and to His Church such as shall be saved. No other power can constitute a church. Men may be added to organizations, but this does not make them the body of Christ. The union must be vital; the work must be divine. It is called a baptism. This word expresses the deep truth of death and resurrection. It is by the death of our natural life and the resurrection life of the Lord Jesus Christ, that we become incorporated into His glorious body and united with His life as the great Head of the Church.

Everything pertaining to the natural life is incongruous with the true Church of Christ. The greatest curse of the church today is the carnal element that still adheres to it through unsanctified men. The greatest need of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ is to be baptized into death through His cross, and raised into His divine life. This the Holy Ghost alone can do. This He is doing, member by member and moment by moment, as the days go by, gathering out of every people and kindred and tongue, a body for the Lord, a Bride for the Lamb. And when the last member shall be gathered and the Bride shall be complete, the Lord will come and unite His body to its waiting and glorified Head.

So those alone belong to the true body of Christ, who through the Holy Ghost, have passed through death into resurrection. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body."

II. THE HOLY GHOST SUSTAINS THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH.

The apostle adds in the same verse, "We have all been made to drink into that one Spirit." It is one thing to be baptized into the body, it is another thing to drink of the ocean into which we have been plunged.

The Holy Ghost becomes the vital element of our new life. In Him we live, and move, and have our being. As the bird lives in the air, as the fish lives in the sea, as the flower lives on the sunshine, so we live in the element of the Holy Ghost; and, as we drink of His fullness, our life is maintained and grows into the maturity of Christ.

This is the secret of being filled with the Spirit, and this is the source of fruitfulness and life. Have we thus been made to drink into that one Spirit? He has to make us drink. He has to make us so hungry and thirsty that we will fly to Him for His life and love. He has to press us into the hard emergency, so as to constrain us to receive His fullness. And thus He is watering, nourishing, filling, and perfecting His glorious workmanship, and preparing it for the maturity of the body and the fullness of Christ.

III. THE HOLY GHOST UNITES THE BODY.

"For there is one body," not two, "and as we have many members in one body, so also is Christ."

1. He unites us to Christ the Head, and then He unites us to one another in Him. Each individual is connected directly with the Lord Jesus Christ, as the source of his individual life, and from Him life must come to every member and extremity of the body.

But He needs His Church just as much as His Church needs Him. What is a head without a body? What is a body without a head? And so the Church here is called by a very solemn name, "So also is Christ." The Church is spoken of as Christ; the Head in heaven is Christ; the body on earth is Christ. It represents Him; it stands for His merits, rights, and name, His holy character, and vital power. It is filled with His life; its holiness is His presence; its physical strength is derived from His resurrection life, and all its power is just the working out of the ascended Lord. He is still working through it, and continuing to work, as He began on earth, and we can look up, and say, "As He is, so are we also in this world." All our sufferings He shares. The most tender cords of sympathy bind us to Him. When His disciples are persecuted and hurt, His heart from the throne is thrilled with sympathetic pain, and He cries, "Why persecutest thou Me?"

2. But not only so, the Holy Ghost unites the members also together. "Therefore if one member

suffer, all the members suffer with it; if one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it." Weakness or disease in any portion of the human body affects the whole; so the morbid sickly condition of so many members of the Church of Christ today affects the whole body, and holds back the strength of Christ's cause from accomplishing results which He has a right to expect.

Therefore it is a very solemn thing to be responsible for schism or separation in the Church. When we do we sin against the heart of Jesus, we sin against the Holy Ghost, we sin against the very body of Christ. Therefore it is not only necessary to keep from offences, injuries, and attacks upon the body of Christ; but we must also maintain a healthful spiritual condition, or we shall defile the whole body by sympathetic contact. And, therefore, if we are filled with the Spirit, we shall have a very tender, compassionate and sympathetic heart toward Christ's Church, and shall be solicitous and sensitive for her welfare and prosperity. It will be our joy, like the great apostle's, "to be offered upon the sacrifice and services of her faith," and to "fill up that which remains of the sufferings of Christ for His body, the Church;" sharing with the blessed Head the needs of His people, bearing one another's burdens, and so fulfilling the law of Christ.

IV. THE HOLY GHOST ENDUES AND ENABLES THE BODY OF CHRIST FOR ITS VARIOUS MINISTRIES.

This is the special theme of this chapter and all we have said leads up to it.

1. Every ministry, in order to be effectual, must be inspired and made efficient by the Holy Ghost. No man can rightly say that Jesus Christ is Lord, save by the Holy Ghost. God cannot use secular and natural gifts apart from the Holy Spirit. "If any man speak, let him do it as the oracle of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability that God giveth, that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ." It is not splendid talent, it is not deep culture, that constitute efficiency in the body of Christ, it is simply and absolutely the power of the Holy Spirit. It is a divine ministry and must have a divine equipment.

2. We are also taught that every member of the Church may have the Holy Ghost for service; for "the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal"; that is to say, the Holy Ghost is no respecter of persons, but is ready to endue and enable every servant of Christ for the work to which he is called, and the place in the body to which he is appointed.

This blessed enduement is not for apostles, prophets, miracle workers, teachers, special officials, merely, but for every member of the Church of God. Every part of the body is necessary and important, and, as the apostle reasons very beautifully from human physiology, the weakest and humblest members of the human frame are often most highly honored; so also, in the Church of Christ, God uses and honors the weakest and the lowliest, filling them with His own enabling, and thus glorifying His own grace.

3. There is infinite variety. As in the human body, every member has his separate office, and the unity is enriched by the diversity which it harmonizes. God does not want any man to copy another, but each to be himself, with God added.

Our ministries are determined in some measure by our place in the body, by our environment, by the circumstances and providences amid which we are placed, by leadings, and natural instincts and preferences, and by the gifts both of nature and of grace. Just where we are, the Holy Ghost waits to equip us, enable us, and fit us for higher usefulness, and most efficient service.

He names a number of these gifts. Some are called be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, some workers of miracles, some counselors, some just helps, and some governments; but you will notice, that the helps come before the governments, and the teachers come before the miracle workers. It is not brilliancy that God recognizes, but service; and if you cannot be a wonder worker, you can be at least a little lamp to give light to the path of some traveler, or you can be an armor-bearer to stand beside some other worker and help along.

4. Each of these gifts of the Holy Ghost is administered by the Holy Ghost Himself. The man, who is used as an instrument, does not receive the glory and is not recognized as the worker, but simply as the instrument. And so we have the significant expression, "All these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit." It is the Spirit that works, and the man is just the vessel through whom He exercises His sovereign and Almighty grace. As Richard Baxter has put it so wisely, "Each of us is just a pen in the hand of God, and what honor is there in a pen?" While we recognize this we shall be saved from all self-consciousness, egotism, and elation, and we shall lie in the dust at His blessed feet, hidden and empty vessels, in the place where He can use us best.

5. There is one other thought of great significance, and that is, that as the servant uses the gift, it grows. "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." As we wisely use and faithfully improve the gifts of the Holy Ghost, they grow in effectiveness and we become more and more used and honored of God, until He may be pleased to add to us not only one, but many gifts, as we covet earnestly the best gifts, and He shall multiply the fruit of our service by thousands and tens of thousands, so that, in the day of recompense, our seed shall be as the stars of heaven and our crown shall be brighter than their supernal light.

What a solemn truth it is to have God Himself as our Enabler, our Enduement for service! Yes, He has given to us a crown to win; He has given to us a life in which to win it; He has given to us an age of extraordinary opportunities, and He has given us the Holy Ghost to work out in our lives the highest possibilities of existence. God help us to be true to our tremendous trust, and to our brief but infinite opportunities, through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the power of the blessed Holy Ghost.

'The Holy Spirit' or 'Power from on High'

by A. B. Simpson,

Volume 2 - Chapter 13 THE HOLY SPIRIT IN SECOND CORINTHIANS

"Now, He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." 2 Cor. 1: 21, 22. "Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, not written with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart." 2 Cor. 3: 3. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." 2Cor. 3: 18.

These three verses present to us five striking and instructive symbols of the Holy Spirit; jewels, they are, of holy metaphor, flashing celestial light from their faces, and speaking of the deepest truths of Christian experience.

I. THE ANOINTING.

"He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God."

The figure of anointing runs through all the Scriptures, and it is crystalized in the very name of Christ and Christian. Christ means the Anointed One, and the Christian is the Christ-one, or the one that has been anointed with the Holy Ghost. We see it in all the ceremonies of the Old Testament. Especially was it employed in the setting apart of the three great officials of the Old Testament; the prophet, the priest, and the king.

Prophets were anointed that they might be set apart as witnesses and messengers of the will of God, and so we are God's witnesses and messengers. Priests were anointed to stand between God and the people, and make intercession in behalf of others; and so we are anointed as God's holy priesthood, to come near into His presence, to worship at His feet, to present the incense of faith, love, and devotion, to bear upon our hearts the sufferings, sins, and needs of others, and to share the priesthood of our glorified Master. And kings were anointed to rule in the name of God, and to stand in glorious majesty representing Jehovah to the people; and so we are a royal priesthood, kings and priests unto God and His Father; and, possessing the Holy Ghost, ours shall be a regnant life, victorious over self and sin, triumphant over temptations and difficulties, and glorious in the dignity of our high calling.

For this threefold ministry we are anointed of the Holy Ghost. Only the Holy Spirit can fit us for so high a calling, and He is given to every follower of Jesus who is willing to receive and obey

Him.

The figure of anointing is used with still more wide and beautiful significance. It speaks of holy gladness. "Anointed with the oil of gladness above our fellows." "Thou anointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over." It is the symbol of healing, "anointing with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up."

This anointing is the privilege of the humblest believer, and of the most unworthy sinner that is willing to receive Jesus and be baptized with the Holy Ghost. There is no more beautiful figure of the anointing, in the Old Testament, than the story of the leper in the book of Leviticus. A poor outcast, unworthy and sinful, he was brought unto the priest in his helplessness and misery; then he was touched with the blood, washed with the water, disrobed, and cleansed; and then he was clothed upon in the garments of holiness; the blood of the oil touched the tip of his ear, his thumb, and his foot, and he, too, became an anointed one.

So, still, the most helpless, hopeless, and worthless may receive the very highest gift of the Lord Jesus Christ, the blessed Holy Ghost, and say with the apostle, "Now He which stablisheth us in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God"; and then go forth to say with the Master, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; for He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim deliverance to the captives, the recovering of sight to the blind, and set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

II. THE SEAL.

The seal is associated with all the relics of antiquity and all the customs of business in every age. It is used first to authenticate and certify; and so the Holy Ghost certifies the believer, putting the stamp of God upon him, giving to him the witness of his acceptance and the assurance of His full salvation.

Next, the seal is the token of ownership; and so the Holy Ghost sets us apart, stamping us as the property of God, and marking us as no longer our own, but the purchased possession of Jesus Christ, bought by His blood, bound to live for His service and glory.

Again, the seal is the expression of reality. It cuts its impression in the wax and makes it real, tangible and enduring; and so the Holy Ghost makes the things that we have known, real, and turns into actual experience that which was before but theory. He makes truth real; He makes Christ real; He makes divine things facts in our consciousness and our blessed experience.

Finally, the seal transfers the image and the Holy Ghost imparts to our receptive hearts the very image of Jesus Christ, and leaves the stamp of His character upon our lives.

You cannot, however, affix the seal to the hard and settled wax. It must be soft and melted;

then the impression is easily made and becomes fixed and abiding; and so God has to soften our hearts before He can seal them. Oh, the blessedness of brokenness! The Holy Spirit is ever seeking to melt our rigidness into tenderness, so that He can impress upon us the stamp of His ownership and His image, and make us the representatives of Christ to all who see and know us.

The sealing of the Holy Ghost is a very definite and explicit act. In the Epistle to the Ephesians we are told exactly when it occurs. "After ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." We first yield ourselves, and then we believe and receive the Holy Ghost by a definite act of committal and faith; then His work begins.

We come and set our seal to the divine covenant; for "he that hath received Him, hath set his seal that God is true." And then, on our seal, which we have affixed with our trusting, trembling hands, the Holy Ghost comes and puts down His mighty seal upon us, the double stamp is given, and we are fully sealed unto the day of redemption. Beloved, have you received the anointing, have you been sealed by the Holy Ghost?

III. THE EARNEST.

This is also a very significant word. It has been reproduced in almost all languages from the original Hebrew. The very same Hebrew word reappears in the Greek language and in other tongues.

It represents the first installment in the purchase. When I buy a piece of land, I make a payment on the signing of the contract, and the seller is bound by my payment to make good to me the deed in due time, and I am bound to follow it up with the complete payment. It is a first installment, a part payment, binding the whole transaction.

It has still another sense closely akin to this. In Oriental countries and ancient times, the seller, also, gave a first installment, as well as the buyer. Taking a little handful of soil from the land purchased, he put it into a bag and handed it to the purchaser as a pledge of the whole property's being transferred to him in due time. It was the very same soil as he had bought, though only a portion of it, but it was the guarantee that all the rest should be duly transferred.

So the Holy Ghost is to us the payment in part, and the pledge in full, of our complete inheritance. He is the first fruit of the harvest, He is the first portion of the inheritance. He brings into our heart and life the very same blessed reality which heaven will complete; the only difference will be in measure and degree. And so we have the double earnest. First, we have Him in our hearts as the earnest of the spiritual inheritance which heaven will bring. But a little later, in the fifth chapter and the fifth verse, we have a little different phase of the earnest. "Now He which hath wrought us for this very thing is God, who hath also given us the earnest of the Spirit." Now, the very thing of which Paul is speaking there is not our spiritual inheritance, but our physical inheritance in God. It is the resurrection body, it is the glory which Christ is to

bring, when we shall be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven, and he clearly states here that the Holy Spirit is the earnest of this, also.

What can this mean but the blessed truth and the still more blessed experience to many of us -- the Holy Ghost's imparting to the body the very principle of the resurrection life, quickening it, exhilarating it, strengthening it, inspiring it with divine life and vigor, lifting it above disease and pain, and anticipating, in some little measure, the glory of the resurrection.

IV. EPISTLES OF CHRIST.

"Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart." 2 Corinthians 3:3.

We have here a new figure of the Holy Spirit as the great Recorder transcribing Christ and His character and life upon the living tablets of human hearts and lives. It is a beautiful figure; each of us is represented as a volume published to the world, and carrying to men the message of Christ. It is the only volume that many ever read. It is the Bible bound, not in Russia, nor Morocco, nor cloth, but in human lives. This is the work of the Holy Ghost, and this is the highest ministry of every consecrated life. Beloved, are we thus revealing Christ to the world? Are we thus carrying the living message of His love and will to men and women around us? Are we written on by the finger of the Holy Ghost? Oh, how sacred were those holy tables of stone on which God's own fingers recorded the ancient law, and which He deposited for safe keeping in the Ark of the Covenant! How much more sacred the tables on which the Holy Spirit is now inscribing the very life of Jesus, and entrusting to the keeping of our consecrated lives!

God help us to receive the message and then to publish it so truly, so sweetly, so wisely and so consistently, that it may be known and read of all men, and that it shall minister Christ to a world that will not read His Bible, and does not know His grace. As has been happily said, "Each of us is either a Bible or a libel." God help us to be living epistles of Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Ghost.

V. PHOTOGRAPHS OF JESUS.

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." 2 Cor. 3: 18.

This is the last of these metaphors of the Spirit, and it carries the thought to a beautiful and perfect climax. We are not only books, but we are illustrated books; we are not only epistles of Christ, but we are photographs of Christ. In the center of the volume of our life is a living picture, which the Holy Ghost is ever perfecting, and in which He is revealing to the world the very glory of Jesus.

The idea is very striking, and exquisitely fine. We are represented as gazing with fixed look upon the face of Jesus Christ, and, as we gaze, His likeness is reflected in our countenance; the Holy Ghost is taking a picture of Jesus, not on a sensitive plate, as in our photographic art, but on a human face, and the face becomes a living illustration to the world of the glory of our Lord.

In order that this picture may be perfectly taken, we must keep our own face steadfast, and our eye fixed upon Him, and as we do so His glory is reflected in our countenances, and His very image is reproduced in our faces. It is also necessary that we must gaze with open face. There must be no veil nor cloud between. As in the photographer's art, the little covering must be removed from the face of the camera in order that the impression may be taken; so the world, the flesh, and every obstruction must be put aside, and with unclouded face and single eye we must look steadfastly to Him; and as we become occupied with Christ, and abide in His fellowship, His glorious likeness is reproduced in us, and we stand before the world, not only living epistles but living likenesses, of our blessed Lord. Sublime conception! We are illustrated volumes, revealing to the world our blessed Savior, even as He revealed to the world His glorious Father.

It was His to be the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person. It is ours to be the image of His glory and the express image of Him. As He represented God, so we are to represent Christ, and men will know Him by what they see of Him in us.

This is the blessed work of the Holy Ghost. He is the Artist that stands behind the canvas and brings out the glorious, heavenly picture. Not only so, but He makes a living picture. We are not stereotyped and put away in a cabinet, but the picture is renewed from day to day, and each day should be brighter than the past. It is "from glory to glory," even brighter and brighter until it shall be lost in the light of heaven. It is not even "from grace to glory." We are to reach the stage of glory, and then go on "from glory to glory" in increasing luster forever.

Beloved, have we understood these things? Oh, may the Holy Ghost enable us to realize and fully prove the blessed meaning of these five heavenly symbols of the Holy Ghost -- the anointing, the seal, the earnest, the living epistles, and the living photograph of the Savior's face! Amen.

'The Holy Spirit' or 'Power from on High'

by A. B. Simpson,

Volume 2 - Chapter 14

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN GALATIANS

"If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." Gal. 5: 25.

The Galatians were the Scottish Highlanders of ancient times and the ancestors, also, of the hot-blooded race that transferred the name of Gaul from the Province of Galatia to ancient France.

They were a warm-hearted and generous people, quick to receive the teachings of Paul, and quick also to be led astray by the false teachers that followed him. And so we find him warning and pleading with them, with his warm-hearted enthusiasm, against the seductions of the Judaizing party, who had begun to lead them back from the simplicity of Christ to the entanglements of the law.

The theme, therefore, of the Epistle, suited to the condition of the Galatians, is FREE GRACE. In opposition to the misleading men who were seducing them from the liberty of the gospel, he reiterates, again and again, the freeness of the grace that saved them at the beginning, and that now must still sanctify and lead them all the way through.

And so this thought gives tone to all the apostle's references to the Holy Spirit in the epistle. These references are by no means few or unimportant, and they are all touched with the complexion of this glorious theme, the freeness of the Gospel and, of course, inferentially, the freeness of the Holy Ghost.

I. The Holy Ghost is received by faith and not by the works of the law.

"O, foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you? This only would I learn of you. Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" Gal. 3: 1, 2.

The Holy Ghost is just as freely given as the blood of Jesus and the justifying righteousness of God through Christ. The Holy Ghost is promised just as salvation is promised, and received just as salvation is received, by simple faith in the blood of the Lamb, and the act of appropriating the blessing to ourselves. Not by our surrendering, not by our consecration, not by our sufferings or crucifixions, but by simply believing, do we receive this great gift of Jesus Christ, the blessed Holy Ghost.

He is not given because we deserve it; He is not given because we have suffered; He is not

given to those who struggle, but He is freely given to those who freely receive Him, on the simple promise of God, and by child-like trust in His grace and love.

We must trust the Holy Ghost as well as Jesus. We must speak to the rock and bid the waters flow. If we strike it with our violent hands and our struggling self-efforts we shall only keep back the blessing which we seek. Let us believe; let us receive the Holy Ghost.

II. Our whole Christian life must be sustained and maintained by the Holy Ghost through the same simple faith by which we first began.

And so we read again, Galatians 3: 3: "Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?"

Oh, how many are so foolish! They begin as hopeless sinners at the foot of the cross, taking all as the sovereign gift of divine mercy, and then they begin to build up a sort of reputation and condition of self-constituted strength and try to sanctify themselves by their own set of credentials, crucifixions, and ineffectual struggles. It is, indeed, utterly foolish and vain. We need the same grace to keep us as saves us at first. "By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand."

Our Christian life is just a succession of the simple acts of faith with which we first began. "As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him." And the Holy Ghost is essential to sustain and maintain all the exercises of spiritual life by His own divine efficiency and spontaneous working to the very close of our Christian life.

O, beloved, have you been so foolish? Cease your hard and vain endeavors, and simply abide in Him. Be filled with the Spirit, and the fruit will take care of itself.

III. Our Christian service and our power for service through the Holy Ghost are by simple faith and the free grace of God in Christ.

And so we have the next appeal in Galatians 3:5. "He, therefore, that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth He it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?"

Yes, the very ministry, for which the Holy Ghost enables us, must be done in simple faith and dependence upon His gracious gifts. The Holy Ghost in His power for service, is given just the same as in the beginning, in the name of Jesus, in the exercise of divine mercy, and by simply believing God and taking Him at His word. According to our faith is it unto us. "He that ministereth the Spirit"; here is not some man, but it is God. It is Jesus that ministereth the Holy Ghost and He does it to them that believe and as they believe. Would we then have this deeper fullness, we must believe in the Holy Spirit; we must receive Him by implicit trust in the promises of God.

IV. We have the Holy Spirit next presented as the sum of all the blessings that come to us through Christ and the great covenant with Abraham on which the gospel is founded in Gal. 3:13, 14, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law . . . that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

The promise of the Spirit, therefore, is the substance of the covenant with Abraham and the supreme blessing of Christ's redemption. And as the covenant with Abraham was purely one of faith and not of works, long antecedent to the dispensation of law, so the Holy Ghost must be as freely given as all the other blessings of the gospel. The inference is quite justified that if we have not received the Holy Ghost we have not inherited the full blessings of the covenant with Abraham, and the full purchase of Christ's redemption.

The Holy Ghost is just the Agent who applies to us the redemption purchased by Christ, and without Him the cross becomes but a vain possibility to us, and the gospel an unfilled promise.

Beloved, have you received the promise of the Spirit? Other promises are called the promises, but this is called THE PROMISE; it is the one all-embracing promise that includes all the rest, and without it all the rest are vain. Oh, let us claim the promise of the Father, and the inheritance of faith in all its blessed fullness!

V. THE SPIRIT OF SONSHIP AND OF CHRIST.

The Holy Ghost is next presented, in this beautiful epistle, as the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ dwelling in our heart through our union with Him, and bringing us into His very sonship, and the fellowship of His inheritance. "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Gal. 4: 6.

This sonship is the peculiar promise of the New Testament, the peculiar privilege of those who are united to the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is not the sonship that comes by virtue of our creation; this is not even the sonship that comes by virtue of our regeneration and God's begetting us as His children, but this is a new and higher sonship, that comes by virtue of our union with Jesus Christ, and it brings us into His very relationship to the Father.

He is the only begotten Son, the First Born, and we also are first born ones, and called "the church of the first born ones who are written in heaven." It is in His very Sonship and with His very heart within us, that we look up and say, "Abba Father;" it is a double Fatherhood, a twofold experience, born of His very heart and then wedded to His Only Begotten Son. Oh, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God! We are the sons of God, and "we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him." We are no longer servants, but sons and heirs of God, through Christ.

Beloved, have we received power thus to become the sons of God and to let the Holy Ghost work in us our high calling?

VI. THE HOLY GHOST AS THE SPIRIT OF SANCTIFICATION AND VICTORY.

GAL. 5:16. "This I say then, walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. For the Spirit," that is, the Holy Spirit, "lusteth against the flesh, and the flesh against the Spirit, and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."

A single letter here sheds God's own perfect light upon the exposition of this verse, and that is the capital with which we spell the word Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit that resists the flesh, and He alone can overcome it and exclude it, and as we "walk in the Spirit, we shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh."

Here is God's great secret of holiness; not fighting sin, but being filled with God. It is the old principle of the expulsive power of a stronger force and a supreme affection. Just as water excludes air from that tumbler when it is filled with water; just as light excludes the darkness when the room is lighted, so the indwelling of the Holy Ghost excludes the presence and power of sin.

It is the old question of struggling to sanctify our wives, and fighting the flesh to keep it down, on the one hand, or rising with God above it and dwelling in that higher, holier element, where we are removed from its control. It is the question whether we shall try to cleanse the swamp of its filth and its abominable creatures, or whether we shall fly above it, and dwell in the pure light of heaven with the Holy Ghost, where its miasmas cannot reach us, and its serpents cannot crawl.

It is the old fable of the cleansing of the Aegean stables by spades and carts and scavengers, or the simple and better way of letting the current of the mighty river flow through that stable until it sweeps all its impurities away and turns its banks into a paradise of loveliness. In a word, it is the glorious privilege of sanctified, not by works but by free grace, not by self effort, but by simple faith in the indwelling presence and power of God.

VII. THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT.

This naturally follows from the previous thought, and it is exquisitely brought out in the next few verses, where we have the works of the flesh in their manifold forms. First, the acts of impurity; then, the sources of impurity; then, the idolatry to which impurity leads; then, malignity and hate in all their forms, pouring out toward men the evil that had already separated from God, and finally, the awful excess of crime and sensuality into which it brings men.

In contrast with this dreadful picture He gives us "the fruit of the Spirit, which is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance, faith."

These are not fruits, but fruit. It is all one fruit. We have not a great many things to do but just one, and that one thing is to love; for all these manifestations of the fruit are but various forms of love. Joy is love exulting; peace is love reposing; longsuffering is love enduring; gentleness is love refined; meekness is love with bowed head; goodness is love in action ; temperance is true self-love, and faith is love confiding, so that the whole sum of Christian living is just loving. And we do not even have to love, but we only have to be filled with the Spirit and then the love will flow as a fountain, spontaneously, from the life within. It is all free grace; it is all the fullness of an inexhaustible stream, the artesian well that pours from the boundless depths, and flows in floods of blessings on every side.

Oh, how easy is this life, how delightful, how true, how glorious!

VIII. OUR PART IN RECEIVING THE SPIRIT, AND CO-WORKING WITH HIS WORKING.

GAL. 5:25. "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." Is there then nothing for us to do but just lie passive in His hands while He works in us? Oh, yes; there is much for us to do. We must "walk in the Spirit;" we must co-operate with God; we must keep step with our blessed Companion; we must follow as He leads the way.

It is the habit of constant dependence and obedience; and as we thus walk with Him, He will be manifested in us and will fill us with His fullness and work out in us the fruition of His life.

There are things to do, but they are to be done at His leading and at His enabling. There are attitudes to be maintained, but they are as natural as the steppings of a little child that holds its mother's hand, and walks by her side through the great city, where it knows not a single street or number. It is not our walk so much as our Companion. It was not Enoch so much as the One with whom Enoch walked. And yet Enoch had to keep step with His blessed Friend and, as we thus abide in Him and walk in Him and follow Him, we shall know all the fullness of His love, and will follow on to know the Lord.

IX. THE ATTITUDE OF THE SPIRIT FILLED MAN TO THE WEAK AND ERRING.

GAL. 6:1. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

Is this life in the Spirit to make us proud and self-sufficient in our attitude to others? No, it will make us tender, compassionate and full of sympathy to the faltering ones, who stumble by our side. It is the spiritual man that is to restore the erring, and even he, with all his experience, is to consider himself, "lest he also be tempted," and to know that he is just as weak and frail as his brother.

It was when Peter had reiterated his love and had been accepted anew of his Lord after the deep and humbling lesson, that he received, as his highest trust, the command to feed the feeble sheep and the helpless lambs. So, as we are filled with the Spirit, it will be the spirit of gentleness, the spirit of patience, the spirit of compassion, the spirit that will restore the erring, and seek and save the lost.

Finally, the Spirit, in relation to the future; sowing to the Spirit, reaping to the Spirit.

What is the bearing of all this present life on the life to come? It is very real; it is very solemn; it is very lasting. "God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. He that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting, and he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption."

Oh, how the days are telling! We may scatter the thistle down; we may throw our precious seed in the depths of sin, but there shall be a sad reaping bye-and-bye; or, we may sow seeds of patience and trust, of holy suffering, and unselfish service, and bye-and-bye we shall reap if we faint not.

Oh, ye that trifle away the precious hours and opportunities of these days, some day you will wake to find how much you have lost! Some day, when, with a converted soul and a consecrated life, you long for holy usefulness and oh, how you will mourn that you wasted your youth and lost the opportunities that would have fitted you for glorious work for God until it is too late!

O, ye who seem to see no fruit now, go on! Sow to the Spirit and wait; "Cast your seed upon the waters, and you shall find it after many days." And some day, in yonder heaven, you will know what this promise means, "I have called thee, that thou shouldest plant the heavens." Some day as you see the avenues of glory planted with the trees of righteousness and blooming with the flowers of Paradise, an angel voice by your side may tell you that these were the sowing of years of faith and patience, these were the seeds of faith and prayer, of sacrifice and obedience, that you planted long ago.

Pray on, beloved. You are planting seed in heavenly soil, and some day your rapturous soul shall embrace the answer. Suffer on, patient soldier of the cross. It may not be given to you to serve; it may not be given to you to preach the Gospel; it may not be given to you to do the work for which you would gladly give all the world; yours is to stand bravely, truly, in the ordeal of pain, misconception, irritation, uncongenial surroundings in the household, in the business office, in the place of terrible temptation. Be true. You are sowing to the Spirit, and some day you will reap the amaranthine flowers and fruits of glory.

You shall have your crown. Nothing that the Spirit breathes can ever die. Nothing that the Spirit plants can ever perish. Sow on. Weep on. Wait on. Hold on. It may be weeping now, it will be rejoicing bye-and-bye. It may be sowing now, but it will be reaping bye-and-bye.

'The Holy Spirit' or 'Power from on High'

by A. B. Simpson,

Volume 2 - Chapter 15

ALL THE BLESSINGS OF THE SPIRIT; OR, THE HOLY GHOST IN EPHESIANS

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all the blessings of the Spirit in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus." Ephesians 1:3.

This is the text of the whole Epistle to the Ephesians. That epistle is an unfolding of "all the blessings of the Spirit." This is the true translation of the passage.

There is a great difference between the blessings of the Spirit and spiritual blessings. This is a case where a single noun is worth a hundred adjectives. The person of the Holy Ghost is worth more than all His gifts.

The blessings unfolded in this epistle are said to be "in the heavenlies"; that is, in the higher realm and element where we dwell in Christ, above the natural life, and in fellowship with the heavenly world.

The apostle's theme, in this sublime epistle, is the higher blessings of the Holy Ghost, which He makes known to those who enter into the fullness of Christ, May the Holy Spirit Himself enable us to see and enter into all the blessings of the Spirit!

I. THE SEALING OF THE SPIRIT.

"In whom, after ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession." Ephesians 1:13-14.

We have already spoken in a former chapter of the seal and earnest of the Spirit, and it is not necessary to enlarge upon them here. The seal is the mark of ownership, reality, certainty and resemblance, the earnest is the first installment and pledge of the full inheritance. The Holy Ghost, when He seals us, makes real and sure to us the blessings of our inheritance and stamps us with the image of Christ; and, as the earnest, He gives to us the promise and the pledge of all the fullness of our future heritage.

This promise is the privilege of every disciple, and it may be claimed and received, by simple faith, the moment we believe. It is recognized not as the crowning experience of Christian life,

but rather as its beginning.

Beloved, have we been thus set apart and stamped as the purchased possession of God, and made to know in our inmost experience the hope of our calling, and the foretaste of our future glory?

II. THE SPIRIT OF ILLUMINATION.

The Holy Ghost next opens our inner eyes, and reveals to us the vision of our high calling and our full inheritance. This is given at great length in the sublime passage, Ephesians 1:15-23. This is the apostle's first prayer for the sealed ones of whom he has already spoken.

He asks for them, that the Holy Ghost may be to them the "Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him." This is a special divine revelation beyond the power of human intellect in its own natural wisdom and strength. It is not only that new truths are unfolded and illuminated but new spiritual vision is given to understand and realize them. The eyes of their understanding are to be enlightened. This should rather be translated, "the eyes of your heart." It is the deeper spiritual nature that is here referred to, the very core of our being, and the fountain of our thoughts and conceptions of divine things.

It is not through our cold intellect, but through our spiritual instincts, that we are to understand the heavenly vision. There are things that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have they entered into the heart of man; but God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit." There are humble Christians who could not spell a word of two syllables or explain a single rule of grammar, who have thoughts and conceptions of God, and raptures of heavenly joy, for which an angel would gladly leave his throne.

The object of this vision is: first, "that ye may know what is the hope of His calling." This means the glorious purpose for which He has called us, as an object of delightful hope and expectation, that we may know our high destiny and be thrilled with the joy of its anticipation.

Next, He prays that we may know "the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints." The word "know" in all these clauses, means, in the original, to know fully, to know to the utmost. The "inheritance in the saints," means that glorious work of grace which Christ is fulfilling in the hearts of His people, and which is yet to be consummated in the eternal glory, when we shall sit with Him upon His throne, and share with Him, as His glorified Bride, His eternal kingdom. This is the inheritance for which He Himself gave up His primeval throne, and for which we count all things but loss.

The apostle prays that the sealed ones may catch the vision of this glorious inheritance in its present and future possibilities, and may fully know all the riches of its glory. This will take the glow from every earthly picture and from every worldly prospect, and this will make sorrow light and things present seem like empty bubbles and worthless dreams. Still further, he prays that

they may fully know "what is the exceeding greatness" or rather the surpassing greatness of His power, or, as the Greek expresses it, "His `dynamite,' to us-ward who believe."

It is not merely joy and glory that the vision unfolds, but actual and practical power. There is nothing we so much need as power. We are ever coming into conflict with forces too strong for our human weakness. We are fighting a ceaseless battle and we are inadequate for the weakest of our foes and the smallest of our difficulties. We are "without strength," and the deepest need of our heart is for spiritual power. But there is for us all the power we need, treasured up in Him who said, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth." The word here used for power has received a new significance through the progress of modern science.

The terrific force expressed by "dynamite" is here represented as the figure of the spiritual power that the holy Ghost wants to show us and impart to us, if we can only see and receive the surpassing greatness of His "dynamite" to us-ward who believe. But we must see it, and believe it, or we cannot have it.

What is the difference between the nineteenth century, with its blaze of light and its resources of mechanical power, and the fifteenth century with its slow and tedious processes of toil? What is the difference between our Empire Express sweeping over the land at sixty miles an hour, and the poor Indian savage on his snow shoes, travelling in a month the distance that now we can cover in a day? There was just as much power in nature then as now. The hidden forces of electricity and of steam were all in existence then, as much as today. Ah, the difference was, he did not know it, and we do. And so there are stored up in Christ spiritual forces surpassingly greater than the dynamite or the electric engine; but millions of Christians go stumbling, groaning, and defeated through life, because they do not know the riches of the glory of their inheritance.

What right have we to be weak? What business have we to fail? What excuse have we to be ignorant with such a treasure house of blessing stored up at the throne of grace, and at the call of faith and prayer?

And then he gives us an object lesson of all this in the resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is not a mere theory but an accomplished fact. All this power has been actually proved and tested, and what was true once can always be true again. What was fulfilled in the life of Jesus can be fulfilled in each of us. And so he prays that our vision may be quickened and enlarged, so that we can see the working of his mighty power, as it was wrought "in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him the head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all."

All his surpassing power has been already exemplified in the resurrection of Christ. It burst for

Him the fetters of the tomb, rent asunder the sepulcher, shattered the Roman seal upon the stone, scattered the terrified soldiers that guarded the tomb, and brought forth the risen Lord in all the glory of His immortal life. Not only so, it raised Him far above the empty tomb, far above the earth itself, up through the air, and the fields of space, past the planets and the constellations, yonder to the Central Throne, where He sat down in the place of honor and power, at the right hand of the eternal God.

It exalted Him far above all government and power and might and law and every name that is named, both in the present age and in all the ages to come. Think of all the names you know; think of all the powers you fear; think of all the foes you dread, He is far above them all.

And He is there not for Himself but for you. He is Head over all things for His body, the Church. His very business there is to use His power for us. His eternal occupation is to represent us. He is as much in need of us as we are of Him. He is but a head without us; for we are His body; we are the complement of His life; we are the other half of His being, and when He helps us He helps Himself; when He blesses us He is more truly blessed. Therefore we may confidently claim the boundless fullness of His blessing and know that all that is true of Him may be just as true of us, for "as He is, so also are we in this world."

To see this vision is to be omnipotent. May the Holy Ghost anoint our eyes and show us His glory!

III. THE SPIRIT OF ACCESS AND COMMUNION.

Having seen the glory of our ascended Lord, we are next admitted by the Holy Spirit, in access and communion, into His presence. "For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." The door is open now, and we can go in and out with the freedom of children, gazing upon His glory and drawing from His fullness, strength for weakness, and grace for grace.

This is by the Spirit. It is He who gives to us the sense of need, the spirit of prayer, the confidence to come, the witness of acceptance, and the blessed fellowship of constant communion. We are to "pray in the Holy Ghost," and as we follow His suggestions, and breathe out His groanings, and aspirations, our God-given prayers will reach the throne and come back to us in blessing.

IV. THE INDWELLING SPIRIT.

But now we have a far grander vision. We have seen the glory yonder, within the heavenly gates, and amid the splendors of the throne. We have had permission to enter through the open doors of prayer, and gaze upon it, and draw from its stores of grace. But now the Holy Ghost brings it all down to us, and puts it into our very heart and being.

The heaven above becomes the heaven within; the Savior enthroned at God's right hand becomes the enthroned Lord of our heart and being, and God Himself removes His tabernacle from heaven to earth, and dwells in very deed with men, and in the temple of the believing heart. This is the next stage of the Spirit's working in this sublime epistle. It is twofold; first, in the whole Church as the body of Christ, Ephesians 2: 21, 22. "The whole building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

Then also it is fulfilled in the heart of each individual Christian, Ephesians 3: 16-19. "That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God."

The essence and substance of this prayer is, that we may be filled with all the fullness of God, and that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith, so fully that we shall "know the breadth, and length, and depth, and height" of His measureless love.

Now for this the Holy Ghost has to strengthen us and prepare us. In our ordinary condition, we could not stand the glory and power of such a blessing. It would be like putting a charge of powder that would fill a cannon into a pocket pistol, and the only effect would be the explosion and destruction of the pistol. If God were to give us all the power for which we sometimes ask him, it would destroy us. We should be so lifted up with self-consciousness and self-importance that we should be ruined, or else we should be crushed by the weight of glory. Therefore, He prays, first, that we may be strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man, so that Christ may dwell in the heart by faith.

Just as the maker of that cannon strengthens it at the breech, doubling the thickness and strength of the metal where the pressure is heaviest, and gradually tapering it to the muzzle, that the resistant power shall be equalized to the strain, so the Holy Ghost prepares us to be the vessels of His grace and power. Perhaps the maker of that cannon experimented for many years before he got the quality of the metal and the strength of the barrel perfectly adjusted to his purpose. Perhaps he often broke it up and recast it, before he dared to put the stamp of his establishment upon it, and trust it in the battleship of his country. And so the Holy Ghost has to work long and patiently with us, and often to break us, over and over again, before we can be fully trusted with His highest commissions, and stand the exceeding weight of glory which He wishes to put within us, and upon us. Let us not be afraid of His mighty love, nor shrink from the pressure of His wise and mighty, molding hand.

In the vision of Daniel the empires of the world were represented under the magnificent image of a figure with a head of gold, shoulders and arms of silver, trunk of brass, and legs of iron. It was a very splendid-looking form of grandeur and power, but the end of it was that it was

broken to pieces, and scattered like the chaff of the summer threshing floor. The secret all lay in this, that as the image descended toward its feet, the strength of the iron was mixed with miry clay, and the feet, on which its grand form rested, were no better than clods of mud.

Many a grand looking life has no better support than this, and all the work that rests on mixed materials must go to pieces in the hour of strain. God is taking the clay out of us. He wants men and women made of unmixed steel, that will stand the pressure of the power that He means to give them, and the glory with which He is yet to clothe them.

The truth is, God blesses every one of us as much as He can and fills us as full as we can hold. The trouble is, some of us cannot hold much. As we yield ourselves to His gracious working, He will fill us more and more with all the fullness of God. Christ shall be to us an indwelling presence, and we shall "comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge." For He "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think," and the only limit is, "according to the power that worketh in us."

Dr. Boardman tells of a lady in London, to whom this passage came with such convicting power that she felt she could not rest until God had made it real to her. She knew that she had never received exceeding abundantly above all that she asked or thought, and she just went to her Father, and asked Him to make His word true to her, and told Him that she would never cease until this verse had become her actual experience.

She waited upon God for many weeks, and when she came back she told her pastor that her prayer was answered, and God had revealed Himself to her in a manner far exceeding her highest thought. But she said that He had shown her that there was so much more yet for her to receive, that He had raised her thought as far above her blessing, as her blessing had been above her former thought. And so He was leading her on from glory to glory, and as each new capacity was filled it was enlarged and filled again.

This is indeed true ; and so we may all have exceeding abundantly and be kept forever in that strange paradox of the spiritual life, ever satisfied and yet ever hungering and thirsting for more.

V. THE LIVING OUT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN OUR DAILY EXPERIENCE.

All this beautiful inward experience would be but a holy mysticism if it did not have a direct practical bearing on our common life. And so we have in Ephesians 5: 9, 10, 17, 18, the practical bearing of all this upon our everyday life. "For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth; proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. Wherefore, be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit." This is to be the habit of our daily life, and as we are thus filled with the Holy Ghost, our lives will be filled with goodness, righteousness, and reality.

We will not be shams and professions, but blessed expressions of the divine life within, and our whole being, inspired with a divine exhilaration, shall overflow in gladness, goodness, sweetness, unselfishness, and blessing, to all with whom we come in contact.

VI. THE OVERCOMING LIFE THROUGH THE HOLY GHOST.

The last picture in the epistle carries us forward to the closing and crowning experiences of the Christian life. It is a scene of conflict and fierce temptation. We are "wrestling with principalities and powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, with spiritual wickedness in the heavenlies." These throng the thickest at the very gates of heaven. Think it not strange that we should find such beings and such conflicts in the heavenly places. That is just where they love to concentrate their forces, and turn us back at the very portals of glory. Let us not be "terrified by our adversaries, which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to us of salvation, and that of God." We have seen these principalities before in this epistle. They are the powers of which we were told in the first chapter, that Christ was "far above them." They are conquered foes, and in Him we are already "more than conquerors."

But how shall we meet these terrific forces? Thank God for the Holy Ghost again. "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, then the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him."

First, we have the sword of the Spirit, Ephesians 6: 17. "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." This was Christ's weapon in the conflict when He met the adversary in the wilderness, with the repeated word, "It is written." And when the devil, surprised at the power of this heavenly sword, picked it up and began to use it himself by quoting Scripture, Christ took the other edge of it, and struck him back the last fatal blow by His answer, so sublimely wise, "It is written AGAIN."

The Holy Ghost has given us this Word, and He is not likely to ignore it in His own manifestations to our hearts. Indeed, it is His purpose that we shall live out every particle before we pass from this earthly stage to the life beyond. It is He, and He alone, that can make it the sword in our victorious hands, suggesting to us the promise or the reproof or the command which we need for each new situation, and then arming it with the fiery point and piercing edge, that will cut through all the devil's disguises and make us always to triumph in the battle of life.

Then we have the prayer of the Spirit in the eighteenth verse. "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." This is our next victorious weapon; and the most remarkable thing about it is, that the principal part of the prayer is not for ourselves at all, but for others. It is when, like wise generals, we turn the position of our foe and attack him directly, by praying for others, that we compel him to retreat and let us alone; and, as we become occupied with the high and holy thoughts of unselfish love and prayer, we forget the troubles that were crushing us and the temptations that were pressing us and we are lifted clear above the battlefield, into those

heavenly places where the serpent's fangs cannot reach us, and the devil's fiery darts cannot come.

VII. WHAT SHOULD BE OUR ATTITUDE TO THIS HEAVENLY FRIEND?

We have it beautifully expressed in Ephesians 4: 30. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." It is not said that we make Him angry, or drive Him away; but we grieve Him, disappoint Him, and cause Him pain.

He has set His heart upon accomplishing in us, and for us, the highest possibilities of love and blessing; when we will not yield to His wise and holy will; when we will not let Him educate us, mold us, separate us from the things that weaken and destroy us, and fit us for the weight of glory that He is preparing for us, His heart is vexed, His love is wounded, His purpose is baffled; and if the Comforter could weep, we would see the tears of loving sorrow upon His gentle face.

Just, as a mother fondly longs for the highest education and success of her child, and feels repaid for all her sacrifices and toils when she beholds her noble boy in the hour of his triumph; just as a loving teacher spends years in the training of his pupil, and when, at last, some day, that successful student is rewarded with the highest prizes and the acclamations of the university, he takes his favorite in his arms with a joy far greater than as if the triumph were his own, so our blessed Mother God is jealously seeking to work out in our lives the grandest possibilities of immortal existence; and, some day, when that blessed Spirit shall take us by the hand and present us to Jesus as His glorious Bride, "without spot or wrinkle or any such thing," the joy of the Holy Ghost will be greater than our own.

Oh, let us not disappoint Him! Let us not grieve Him. Let us not hold back from Him. Let us not sin against His forgiving, longsuffering love. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

'The Holy Spirit' or 'Power from on High'

by A. B. Simpson,

Volume 2 - Chapter 16 THE HOLY SPIRIT IN PHILIPPIANS

"For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ." Phil. 1: 19. "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfill ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind." Phil. 2: 1-2.

The Epistle to the Philippians is the sweetest of the Pauline letters. It is the unfolding of his inmost heart and of his tenderest relations, to the most fondly-loved of his spiritual flocks. No other church e as quite so dear to him as the little band at Philippi, who were the first seal of the beginning of his missionary work on the continent of Europe. He could say to them truly, "I have you in my heart. Ye are all partakers of my grace. I thank God for your fellowship in the gospel, from the first day until now."

But it is not only the expression of a hallowed human love; it is also the embodiment of all that is most mellow, mature and delicate, in the Christian spirit and temper. It is the ripeness of the mellow fruit, just ready to fall from the branch; it is the bloom on the peach, delicate as the rainbow tint, and soft as the wing of an angel. There is something about its tone that can be understood only by the finer senses of the deepest and highest Christian experience.

While the great Epistle to the Ephesians is like the tabernacle building, with its deeper and deeper unfolding of truth and life, the Epistle to the Philippians is like the sweet incense on the golden altar and in the holy place.

There are only two references to the Holy Sprit in this epistle, but these two are in perfect keeping with the structure and spirit of the whole epistle.

I. THE SUPPLY OF THE SPIRIT.

The word for "supply" employed here is a very unusual one, and has a special and strongly figurative significance. It is the Greek word, Epichoregos, and it refers to the Epichoregos, or chorus leader in ancient Greece. On a great festival occasion it was customary for a certain man, as an act of public generosity and also a distinguished honor to himself, to provide for the public entertainment of the people by an elaborate musical exercise, consisting of a great many pieces, a great variety of music, musical instruments and performers; it was his business to

supply all that was necessary for this performance, to meet all the expenses of the occasion, to secure all the performers, instruments, assistants, etc., and see that everything was supplied and also to lead the chorus. From this old word, our expressions chorus, and chorus-choir are derived. Now this word conveys the idea of supplying, but also of supplying especially the parts in a musical chorus; and it carries along with it the idea of something harmonious and glorious. It is a very abundant supply and it brings a very triumphant result.

This word is used in a remarkable passage in the first chapter of 2 Peter, "Add to your faith courage, knowledge, temperance, godliness, brotherly kindness, charity." This word "add," is the same Greek term, Epichorego. It means, "chorus into your faith and life these beautiful graces"; bring them all into tune, and work them out in harmony and praise, so that your life shall be a doxology of joy and thanksgiving. And then, at the close of that paragraph, the word reappears, "For so shall an entrance be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." Literally it might be translated, "So an entrance shall be chorused unto you." That is, the very graces that were wrought into your earthly life and attended you as a heavenly choir shall wait for you at the gates of heaven and sing you home to your coronation. The love and gentleness, the faith and patience that you exercised in your earthly pilgrimage shall be waiting yonder, as a train of musicians, and shall celebrate your victory and your recompense.

Now this is the word used in the passage in Philippians, "the supply of the Spirit of Christ Jesus." The Holy Ghost is the choir leader, and He is bringing into the apostle's life all the supplies of grace he needs to make his life not only tolerable but triumphant, and turn everything into a chorus of praise.

The apostle had just been telling us before of the peculiar trials through which he was passing and the subtle foes that were distressing and harassing him, by even preaching the very Gospel that he loved so well, for contention and strife, "Supposing," he says, "to add affliction to my bonds." Yet so abundant was the supply of the Holy Ghost, as the Choir Leader of his victorious life, that he rose above their jealous hate, turned the very trial into a triumph and was enabled to bring blessing out of the devil's blows and to exclaim in a chorus of praise, "What then, notwithstanding every way, whether in pretense, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice; for I know that this shall turn to my salvation," that is, my complete and full salvation, "through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ."

And so for us, beloved, the Holy Ghost is able to provide so fully, that

"Ills of every shape and every name,
Transformed to blessings, miss their cruel aim."

This was to turn to his salvation. He does not, of course, mean his literal deliverance from condemnation, but that deeper, fuller life in Christ which is all comprehended in complete

salvation. It is one thing to be "saved as by fire"; it is quite another thing to be saved to the uttermost.

Now the apostle says that this is to come to him "through their prayer." We can help each other to the deeper and fuller supply of the Spirit of Christ Jesus. If our heart is open to receive the blessing, the prayers of others reach us and add to the measure of our fullness.

Every breath of true prayer accomplishes something and makes some addition to the measure of blessing that we ask for ourselves and others. There is no greater service that you can render to a true child of God than to pray for him in the Holy Ghost, and in that deep divine love that brings you into a common touch with his life and needs. Especially is this true of those who stand in public places to represent Christ to others, and who must receive, first, the stores of blessing which they are called to impart. Let us pray for them and we may be very sure the blessing will come back to us. To keep up the figure of the text and the imagery of the chorus, our prayers are just the breath which fills the mighty organ and swells the strain that bursts from every pipe and every note.

II. THE COMMUNION OF THE SPIRIT.

PHIL. 2: 1, 2. This passage is a very exquisite one. It touches the most delicate shades of Christian feeling. It speaks of "consolation in Christ," the tenderness of His comforting love. It speaks of the "comfort of love," the sweet and healing balm of sympathy and holy affection. It speaks of the "fellowship of the Spirit," the communion of the saint with God, and with his brethren in the holy Ghost. It speaks of "bowels of mercies," the finer chords of spiritual sensitiveness, which thrill responsive to every touch of pain or joy in each other's hearts. There is something about it so refined and exquisite that the rude, coarse mind cannot grasp it, and it is literally true, "that none but he that feels it knows."

It is especially of this third phrase that we are to speak -- "If there be any fellowship of the Spirit." The Greek word is *Koinonia*, which might be literally translated, in common. It really means to have things in common.

1. It is used first of our fellowship with God. "Truly, our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ." "The communion of the Holy Ghost."

Our communion with God is the basis of all other communion. And communion with God is not merely external worship and articulate prayer but it is really oneness with God, and having everything in common "with Him." Just as oil and water cannot mix, just as iron and clay cannot blend, so there can be no communion between God and the sinful soul. We must be reconciled to Him; we must be at one with Him; we must be conformed to His image and partakers of His very nature and filled with His Holy Spirit.

There must be in us the organ of intercourse. It is not enough to have a telegraph wire reaching

your office from the distant city, but you must also have a battery here in order to receive the message of the wire. And so we must have with us the spiritual organs of communion with God, in order to enter into His fellowship.

We may have such fellowship. The Holy Ghost is the channel and organ of this communion. He is at once the electric current that conveys and the battery that interprets the message both ways. "Through Him we have access unto the Father." We can pour out our heart into His and He can pour in His heart into ours. We can ask Him for the things we need and get them. But more than all the things we get, is the answer of His own heart to ours. And more than all the words which He speaks to us, or we speak to Him, is the deep and silent communion of the heart that is in accord with His holy will, and living in the consciousness of His delightful presence.

It is not necessary to be always speaking to God, or always hearing from God, to have communion with Him; there is an inarticulate fellowship more sweet than words. The little child can sit all day long beside its busy mother and, although few words are spoken on either side, and both are busy, the one at his absorbing play, the other at her engrossing work, yet both are in perfect fellowship. He knows that she is there, and she knows that he is all right. So the saint and the Savior can go on for hours in the silent fellowship of love, and he be busy about the most common things, and yet conscious that every little thing he does is touched with the complexion of His presence, and the sense of His approval and blessing.

And then, when pressed with burdens and troubles too complicated to put into words and too mysterious to tell or understand, how sweet it is to fall back into His blessed arms, and just sob out the sorrow that we cannot speak!

"Too tired, too worn to pray,
I can but fold my hands,
Entreating in a voiceless way
Of Him who understands.

"And as the weary child,
Sobbing and sore oppressed,
Sinks, hushing all its wailings wild
Upon its mother's breast,
"So on Thy bosom, I
Would pour my speechless prayer;
Not doubting Thou wilt let me lie
In trustful weakness there."

2. This also includes our communion with one another. "The fellowship of the Spirit" means fellowship in the Spirit with spiritual minds. Thank God for the article in the creed which binds together the Church of every age and clime, "I believe in the communion of saints."

This must, of course, be first of all, communion in the Spirit. It is not the fellowship merely of natural affection but it is the communion of hearts that have a divine life in common. Of course, it is dearer and closer with those that are dearest to us but, even in the case of our nearest friends, our love must be transformed or it cannot be lasting or bring us into spiritual communion.

Then it is communion in the truth, and the closer our agreement in the truth, the closer will be our communion in the Spirit. Therefore as God leads us on to deeper teachings and higher truths, He intensifies our fellowship.

We can remember the time when we were first saved and were brought at once into the same fellowship with all others that were saved. Our little note was "Jesus saves me," and every saved man was a brother beloved. We just wanted to take him by the hand and tell him we were brothers. But it was just one little in the chorus. It was the soprano, and soprano alone makes very thin music.

After a while we learned the deeper basis of sanctification, and then we got a new note, and a new part to our song. And our music grew richer, and our harmony fuller.

We can remember the first time we met another Christian who had also learned the blessed truth of Christ our Sanctifier. He was not only a brother, but he was doubly a brother. And oh, how delightful it was to find one that could understand our deeper feelings and teachings in the Spirit, and how much closer was our communion in the fullness of the truth!

After a while we added a third part, the triumphant tenor of divine healing, and the Lord's supernatural life in our body. Shall we ever forget the first time we were thrown into the society of those who understood and believed these things? We had been standing alone, misunderstood, misrepresented, perplexed, and as we found some other heart that was treading the same lone way and living in the same blessed experience, it was a threefold chord, and a divine fellowship.

And yet there is one more part in perfect music, the soft suggestive undertone of the alto, that carries our thoughts afar and wakes up the chords of memory and hope. And so we came into the fourth truth of this blessed gospel -- the Coming of our Lord, and the glorious hope of His return. Need I say that this brought a deeper fellowship still with those who stand together in this holy expectation as the waiting Bride of the Lamb? And so God makes us one in the fullness of the truth. Let us not lightly think of any truth which He has given us, or fail to be true to His testimony and our mutual fellowship.

Then again, we have fellowship not only in the truth, but in the life of the Spirit. All the platforms in the world will not make us one without oneness of heart. The fourfold gospel is not any better than the thirty-nine articles without the Holy Ghost. The true secret of Christian union is the

baptism of the Spirit and the fullness of the life of Christ in all who believe.

And this is the fellowship of prayer. It makes us sensitive to each other's needs and burdens and it binds us all together, like travelers in the mountains, so that if one falls the others hold him up, and if one suffers all suffer together.

Let us ask God to show us all that this ministry means for us and for His servants; let us each be so "fitly framed" in the body of Christ, that we shall carry upon our hearts the very ones the Spirit would assign to us, and the very burdens which He would have us share with them.

Finally, it is fellowship in service. We are called together for a common testimony and a common work in these last momentous days. It is not accidental that the Holy Spirit has given us a common experience and has led us out in similar lines of truth and life. He is preparing a mighty spiritual movement in these last times for the special preparation of the Master's coming, and we cannot miss His special calling without great loss to ourselves, and great hindrances to His purpose for our lives and for His church.

When God brings into our life a special experience of truth and blessing, we cannot go on as heretofore, but there is always some special ministry and testimony for which we have been prepared, and we are to stand together for the propagation of these present truths, and the help of other lives that need the very blessing that has come to us.

How solemnly some of us feel that if we had faltered in our testimony, when God first spake to us these deeper things, not only should we have lost the best work of our life, but multitudes of other lives might have missed their blessing, too.

Whatever else we do, beloved, let us be true. Let no coward fear, let no compromise with popular opinion and halfhearted respectability make us falter in our high calling, or be faithless to the bonds of fellowship in the little flock that the Master is preparing for His kingdom.

"If there be, therefore, any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship in the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfill ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind."

'The Holy Spirit' or 'Power from on High'

by A. B. Simpson,

Volume 2 - Chapter 17 THE SPIRIT OF LOVE

"Your love in the Spirit." Col. 1: 8.

This is the only reference to the Holy Spirit in the Epistle to the Colossians. The theme of this beautiful letter is the fullness and glory of Jesus. But Jesus cannot be glorified without recognizing the Holy Ghost; and so we have this brief reference to the blessed Spirit. But brief as it is, it shines like a heavenly pearl, reflecting the deepest and most important truths concerning the blessed Comforter.

The apostle had just been visited by Epaphras, one of the ministers of the Colossian Church, and he had reported to him the condition of that Church. It was all summed up in one sentence, "He declared unto us your love in the Spirit." This seems to have been the one characteristic of this Colossian Church; it was full of love. Its fellowship was perfect, its union unbroken; its members were filled with charity, unselfishness and consideration for one another. There were no gossiping tongues; there were no slanderous rumors; there were no misunderstandings and quarrels; there were no criticisms, murmurings and bad feelings, but all were joined together in harmonious love and beautiful cooperation in the testimony, work and worship of the Church. And this was manifestly a divine unity. It was "love in the Spirit." It was not mere partisanship, nor personal friendship; it was not because they were clannish, and united in little cliques of personal favoritism, but it was all so heavenly, so holy, so Christ-like that it was evidently the prompting of the Holy Ghost. And so, as the apostle hears of it, he exclaims with thanksgiving and deep joy, "We give thanks to God, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love ye have to all the saints, for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven."

Would to God that this beautiful picture might be more frequently repeated. Let us look at it as a pattern of true Christian love and an illustration of the choicest and noblest work of the Holy Spirit.

There is plenty of love in the world and always will be. It is the secret of every romance, the theme of every poem, and the center of every play that has ever touched the heart of humanity, or charmed the ears of men. It lies back of all that is heroic in national history. It gilds every record of patriotism and glorifies every home altar and fireside. But there is a great difference between the love of nature and "love in the Spirit."

I.

Natural love is an instinct and a passion; the love of the Spirit is a new creation and the fruit of the supernatural life imparted by the Holy Ghost, when the soul is born from above. The natural heart knows nothing about it. Human love may only be a little higher in measure, degree and character than the instinct of the mother bird over her young, or the fondness of the lioness for her cubs. It is born of earth and with earth it will pass away. But the love of the Spirit descends from above. It is part of the nature of God and it must last forever. It is the kinship of a heavenly family and the bond of an eternal home.

II.

Natural love is selfish in its nature and terminates upon its own gratification; divine love is unselfish and reaches out to the good of its object. And therefore the strongest affection born of earthly passion may turn to the bitterest hate, if it is crossed and disappointed. It can strike down, with the deathblow of vengeance, the one for whom it would have given its life, when that one awakens its jealousy and resentment. Divine love on the other hand, forgets itself, and seeks to bless its object.

It does not love for the sake of the pleasure of loving, nor for the sake of the pleasure the loved one can afford; but it loves in order to bless and help and elevate and it shrinks from no sacrifice even the sacrifice of its own happiness, if it may accomplish its high purpose for its object.

III.

Natural love is based upon the attractive qualities of its object; divine love springs from something within, and is the outflow of an irresistible impulse in itself. Mere human love is attracted by the goodness and loveliness of the one it loves, fancied or real. But divine love can seize upon the most unlovely, can love it into loveliness, and can keep on loving through an impulse in its own heart, when everything in the circumstances would render it impossible. And so, "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

We see a faint approximation to this kind of love in true motherhood. Who ever saw a mother yet that did not have a "beautiful baby?" Others might not see it but she sees it. And even when that babe is decrepit, feeble and fretful, and a source of constant trial and strain, instead of lessening, it intensifies that maternal affection. Night and day it is her joy to minister and suffer and serve; and when that little sufferer passes out of her life, her loss is all the greater because it cost her so much, and she knows not how to get on without the frail and feeble dependent one, which was almost her very life.

God loved us because of something in Himself and so if Christ is dwelling in us, we shall love because of the Christ within us, and we shall love even the unworthy and the unlovely, because He loves them, even when we cannot love them for themselves.

IV.

Natural love is sensitive and lives in the sunshine of responsive affection, but divine love is long-suffering, patient, and true, in the darkest hour of suffering and wrong. The very element of divine love is suffering. In the sublime picture given in First Corinthians, the thirteenth chapter, love begins her march by "suffering long," and ends by "enduring all things," while in the center stands the signal, "love is not provoked." The whole environment of her being is suffering and wrong. She can suffer without being unkind and endure without being hard. Her sublimest example is the Son of God in the midst of His cruel foes; the more they wronged Him, the more He felt that they needed His love and the more He longed to suffer that He might bless and save them. This is ever the spirit of Christian love.

A few weeks ago, when half a score of martyrs fell in Southern China, one of the survivors, in speaking of that hour, said that when they were all expecting death, the only consciousness which she remembered was the intense joy and love which seemed to be breathed into their hearts from the very gates of heaven. And when the tidings reached their friends in England, there was no word of resentment, even from those who loved them best, but a still deeper longing to go forth in yet diviner love and save men from the ignorance and the blindness which could make them perpetrate such a crime.

The love that blesses those that bless us is only earthly, "do not even the publicans the same?" But the love that reaches out to those who can make no return, the love that blesses them that curse us, and prays for them that despitefully use us and persecute us, and would die for those that would take our very life, this is the love of God; this the Holy Ghost alone can produce in the heart.

V.

Natural love is fitful; divine love is abiding and everlasting. Natural love depends either upon our moods or the moods of those we love. But divine love is the eternal Christ within us, loving on the same through good and ill forever. Oh, how much we need to pray, "Search me, oh God, and see if there be in me any evil way, and lead me in the way everlasting!"

Do we not want the affections that shall be forever? Are we not tired of having our heartstrings torn? He is able to give us His own everlasting love.

VI.

Natural love is exclusive, partial, and partisan; divine love is comprehensive and universal, like the very heart of God. It does not love its favorites, but it loves for love's sake all that need to be loved. It does not ignore the closer ties and fellowships of life. It does not love all alike with the same affection nor even with the same degree; but it loves each in the place where God

has fitted him and her into our life, and loves all in due proportion and world-wide sympathy.

It gives the husband a deeper affection to the wife, who has her peculiar place in his heart. It gives the friend a yet more delicate and special bond of fellowship with the one that fits into the closest sympathy and fellowship of the heart. But it has room for every fellowship, every tie, and every friend, each in his true place, and all in perfect symmetry, and fullness. Like the broad bright sunshine, it goes wherever there is room, and it goes most quickly where there is largest room. Like the blessed Master, it has the John, that leans upon its breast, and the Mary, that enters into its deeper confidences; but it has also the Peter who, in his place, is loved as truly, the Thomas, who finds the sympathy he needs, and the little child, that lies in His bosom with confiding delight. This is the love of God.

Human love becomes antagonistic and dislikes those who are not within the charmed circle, but God's great love has a universal fairness, justness, and rightness, and yet a sweeter tenderness, and a finer delicacy in its every heart-throb and holy tendril, than the finest sentiment of human affection.

VII.

Human love is intemperate; divine love is moderate and self-restrained. The petulant, passionate mother, in one moment can hug to her bosom her beloved child with passionate affection, and in the next can pour out the fierce invectives of wrath upon his head. The impulsive father can love his boy so intemperately and indulgently, as to be unwilling to deny him the wishes and gratifications which he knows may cost him his character and his future life. True love restrains and even dares to displease, that it may do even greater good in the end to its object. And thus God loves us, even to wounding us that He may heal, and chastening us, that He may save.

Thus it was that Joseph loved his brothers, restraining the bursting affection of his heart, while he sternly stood off from these guilty men, and brought them to repentance; and then, when they saw their wrong, he was the first to forgive, and help them to forget; throwing himself upon their bosom, with passionate intensity he cried, "Be not grieved nor angry with yourselves, it was not you, but God."

This is divine love, a thoughtful, sober, far-seeing devotion, brave enough to wound that it may heal, and to correct that it may save.

VIII.

Human love lives by sight; divine love walks by faith. And so we read, "love believeth all things, hopeth all things." When it cannot see the quality of loveliness in its object now, it prays that God may place it there, and it believes in the answer to its prayer, and acts as if it were already fulfilled; and then hope joins hands with faith and looks out into the future, until the vision

becomes a present realization, and it covers its object with all the glory of that which some day is to be.

Thus God loves us. He sees us, not as we are today in our unworthiness and sin, but as we shall be, some day, when we shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of our Father, and reflect the glory and the beauty of our Savior's face; and this is what He recognizes and delights in. He treats us every moment as if we were already glorified. He sees us "in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." He "believes all things, and hopes all things" for us, and purposes to fulfill all things in us. This is the love with which we should bless our friends. Thus should we pray for them, believe for them, and see them in the light of God and heaven; and thus our love will lift them up to its own vision, and realize in them its own holy purpose.

IX.

Human love is human; "love in the Spirit" is the love of God within us. It is the love of the Holy Ghost Himself, filling and flowing in our hearts. It is not the best that we can feel, or say, or do, but it is the very heart of Christ reproduced in us. And so it has been well said that the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians is just a photograph of Jesus, and the true way to read it is to insert Christ instead of love, and then to transfer to it our hearts and lives and insert Christ instead of self in our experience. Then, indeed, it shall be true that "Christ in us suffereth long and is kind; Christ in us seeketh not His own; Christ in us envieth not, is not puffed up; Christ in us rejoiceth not in iniquity but rejoiceth in the truth; Christ in us is not provoked; Christ in us beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things, and never faileth."

And so we are thrown back again upon Him, and constrained to sink out of self into Christ, and to say, "Not I, but Christ that liveth in me." This is the purpose of the Holy Ghost, to show us our insufficiency and Christ's all-sufficiency and, step by step, to transfer the living picture to our lives and reproduce the living reality in our experience.

This, then, is "Love in the Spirit." The blessed Spirit of Love has come down from heaven to teach us this crowning lesson of righteousness, holiness, and divine conformity. For "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in Him," Love is the fulfilling of the law. Love is the sum of all goodness. Love is the essence of holiness. Love is life.

The Holy Ghost has come to train us in the school of love. Day by day He leads us out into some new lesson as we are able to bear it. And when things seem hard and trying, it is just another class in the school of discipline, another opportunity of putting on Christ Jesus and learning either the patience, or the long-suffering, or the gentleness of love.

An injured bishop was once complaining to Francis De Sales how a brother had wronged him, lied about him, and tried in every way to defame him; the good saint listened and assented, saying, "Yes, my brother, it's all true; it's very wrong; it's very unkind; it's very unjust; it's very cruel;" and then he added, "but there is another side to it." "But," said the Bishop, "do you mean

to say that there is any excuse or reason to justify this? "

"Not on his part, my brother, but there is on the other side of the question, a still higher reason for it, and it is this: that God has let all this happen to you, and all this to be said about you, to teach you the lesson that is worth more to you than even your good name, and that is to hold your tongue when people talk about you, which it is very evident you have not yet learned."

The good Bishop saw the lesson, and silently received it. Would to God that we might see in everything our Master's hand, our Teacher's lesson, our Father's love. Life would become to us a school of love, and we so sweetly perfected in this highest grace, that nothing could part us but, above the hand of every enemy we should see the hand of love more richly blessing us and making "even the wrath of man to praise" God, and minister to our perfection. Then, perhaps, we should some day be able to say, like one of the Medieval saints, "It is so sweet to love my enemies that if it were a sin to do so, I fear I should be tempted to commit that sin, and if it were forbidden by the Lord, I fear it would be the greatest temptation of my life to disobey that commandment."

God, give us the "love of the Spirit," and say to us afresh the new commandment : "Love one another, as I have loved you."

'The Holy Spirit' or 'Power from on High'

by A. B. Simpson,

Volume 2 - Chapter 18

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THESSALONIANS

"For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost." 1 Thess. 1: 5.

"Having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost." 1Thess. 1: 6.

"God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." 1 Thess. 2: 13.

"Quench not the Spirit." 1 Thess. 5: 19.

The first three of these four passages present to us three aspects of the work of the Holy Ghost; as the Spirit of power, of joy, and of holiness, and the last passage presents the practical side of the question and the solemn danger of our quenching the Holy Ghost.

I. THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT.

The apostle attributes the conversion of the Thessalonian Christians to the power of the Holy Ghost. His work among them was accompanied with extraordinary manifestations of the Spirit's convicting and converting power. Speaking of it again, the apostle says, "Yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain; when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."

So wonderful was their awakening and turning to God, that he could say of them: "From you sounded out the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak anything. For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come."

These wonderful results the apostle attributes entirely to the power of the Holy Ghost, accompanying the word of God, and giving it such authority that they received it, not as the word of man, but as a direct message from the living God.

This is the first element in the power of the Spirit, that it takes the worker and the speaker quite out of view, and brings the hearer face to face with the authority of God.

This is what Paul means, when he says that his word came to them with much assurance. This means, literally, much boldness. He spoke to them as a messenger direct from heaven, and they so received him. His message was not with wisdom of words, nor studied rhetoric, but with divine authority. How much of our preaching is with words only -- logical words, rhetorical words, well-uttered words, perhaps pathetic words, words that move to tears or to enthusiasm, but only words!

The Holy Spirit's power leads men beyond all forms of expression, to the substance of God's great message of repentance and salvation, and the necessity of immediate decision and obedience. It makes people do something, and do it at once and forever.

The word for power here is dynamite. It is the kind of power that breaks up things. It breaks up the conscience and convicts it of sin. It breaks up the heart and melts it to repentance. It breaks the will into surrender and choice. It breaks the fetters of sin, the habits of life, and the bonds of Satan.

Not only does it speak to men in much assurance, but it produces in them the same assurance. It makes them to know that God is speaking, to know that they are sinners, to know that they are lost, and then to know that they are saved.

Beloved, have we felt this convicting, converting, transforming power? Fellow-workers, is this our reliance, our supreme and sole dependence for the salvation of men, and the service of our King?

II. THE JOY OF THE SPIRIT.

One of the first results of the conversion of the Thessalonians was the spirit of joy. "Ye received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost."

The spirit of gladness is one of the immediate fruits of the Holy Ghost. The new life is essentially a joy-life, banishing the very elements of sorrow and gloom, and bringing us into the light of an everlasting sunshine.

The joy of the Holy Ghost is not a natural emotion and it is not dependent upon favorable circumstances or pleasant surroundings. In the present case, their joy is in an immediate contact and contrast with much affliction. They had everything to try them -- persecution, the loss of friends, the danger of even death itself; but the very extremity of their affliction only developed a deeper and diviner joy.

So it ever is. Christian life is an everlasting paradox; sorrowful yet always rejoicing; poor yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

It is an inexplicable mystery. The world cannot understand it; the world cannot give it, and, thank God, the world cannot take it away. We cannot understand it ourselves. It is a song in the night, that gives no other reason for its singing than that the song is there. It is a fountain in the desert, that flows from no visible source, and empties into no earthly outlet, and runs according to no prescribed channel. It is an artesian well that bursts from the rocky depths, and flows on without the mechanism of pumps, or endless chains, or human buckets, or hands. It is glad, just because there is a gladness there that came from heaven and belongs to heaven and lives in heaven forever.

It is a blessed heritage. It is a fortune to its possessor, even amid the depths of penury. It is an antidote to temptation and sin. It lifts us above the power of evil and holds us in the impregnable heights of peace and victory. It is a balm for sickness and pain, and a holy elixir for nerve and brain and every outward ill. It is an inspiration for service, and gives an irresistible emphasis to our appeals to the sin-sick and sorrowing world; it is vain to call the lost and weary to the gates of mercy, when the telltale countenance, the tired manner, and the sepulchral tone assure them, that they are happier than we. The joy of the Lord is our strength, not only for holiness, but for health, and happiness, and holy influence on other hearts and lives, and in all our work for God and man.

Beloved, open your heart and receive the joy of the Spirit.

III. THE SANCTIFICATION OF THE SPIRIT.

The first thing that strongly impresses an ordinary and candid reader of this verse is the strong and universal language in which sanctification is here spoken of as an essential part of our salvation.

It is stated in the most unambiguous language that we are "chosen to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." We are not chosen to salvation irrespective of our spiritual condition, but we are chosen to those conditions; and one of the essential conditions is sanctification of the Spirit.

How any man or woman can expect salvation, and yet be indifferent to his sanctification, is very hard to understand. The salvation consists largely in the sanctification itself, for thus, and thus alone are we saved from the virulent and soul destroying power of sin.

Sanctification is here attributed to the Holy Spirit. It is His work, not ours; it is as much a part of the free gift of God in Christ as our justification and forgiveness. In the previous epistle, fifth chapter, twenty-third verse, its nature is very fully expressed in the apostle's prayer: "The very God of peace, or the God of peace Himself, sanctify you through and through; and I pray God

your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it." God Himself must do this work, and He does it through the blessed Holy Ghost.

The word, sanctify, has three specific meanings; namely, to separate from, dedicate to, and fill with.

First, we must lay off, and separate from, the old life of self and sin. There are some things we cannot consecrate to God, but we must lay them down. The old sin-offering could not be laid on the altar -- it was unclean, because the sin of the people had been transferred to it; it must be carried outside the camp and there burned with fire in the place of judgment. And so we cannot consecrate our sin and our sinfulness to God. We must renounce it; we must lay it off; we must die to it; we must be separated from it.

Then, secondly, comes the dedication to God. This is the place for consecration. This is the place for the burnt-offering. That was laid on the altar and accepted as a sweet-smelling savor. And so when we have separated from our sinful self, we offer our new life in Christ to God in entire dedication, and He accepts it as a sweet savor. But even then it is nothing but a consecrated will, a mere possibility, an empty vessel, clean, but empty still, and the very power to make the consecration worth anything to God, must come from God Himself. He has the vessel, but He must fill it and keep it full. And so this is the third meaning of sanctification. It is the filling of the Holy Ghost, who takes our consecrated will, our clean and empty vessel and all the possibilities of our new and yielded life, and so unites them to Jesus, and fills them with the very life of Jesus, that we just live out the life of Christ from day to day, and we shed forth the fullness which the Holy Ghost supplies within.

Our life is not our own, but "of His fullness have we received, even grace for grace."

Now this is the sanctification of the Spirit. It is His peculiar province thus to sanctify the souls that have been justified through the grace and the blood of Christ.

First, He shows the soul its need of sanctification, its inherent and hopeless sinfulness, and its utter inability to bring a clean thing out of an unclean, or live a holy life, with an unholy heart. Next, He shows us God's provision for our sanctification in the free gift of Christ, the efficacy of His atonement for the death of our old self, the power of His blood, and the willingness of the Holy Spirit to undertake this work, to cleanse our heart, and to dwell within it. Then He leads us to the next step -- a glad and full surrender and committal of our soul to Him for this blessed work, an unreserved separation from all evil, and an equally unreserved dedication of our all to God, and to His perfect will.

Then He accepts us, and makes real the transaction into which we have entered; by full surrender and appropriating faith, He puts to death our old life of self and sin and He enters and dwells within our consecrated heart, uniting us to Jesus, filling us with His own all-sufficient

grace and presence, and leading us henceforth moment by moment, in constant dependence upon His glorious grace.

In one sense, this work is instantaneous; it has a definite beginning and a moment in which we count it all eternally settled. In another sense, it is progressive, as He leads us on from step to step, from strength to strength, from grace to grace, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

As each new revelation of light comes, He calls for new obedience and new advances; yet while we walk in the light, we are fully accepted according to the light we have, and counted holy and well-pleasing in His sight.

It is after we receive His sanctification and enter into perfect union with Him, that our real growth begins; and the church of Christ has yet to learn the depths and heights and lengths and breadths of the fullness of life in the Spirit, as the providence of God makes new situations for the obedient disciple from day to day, and the Holy Ghost fits us into them by His all-sufficient grace.

IV. THE PRACTICAL APPEAL.

"Quench not the Spirit."

In view of these three blessed aspects of the Spirit's work, how tender and solemn the appeal: "Quench not the Spirit"! While this primarily refers to the Church collectively, it may also be true of the believer individually.

It is possible for us, as private Christians, so to misunderstand, hinder, and disobey the loving leadings of the gentle Holy Ghost, that we shall quench His holy fires and disappoint His great purposes of love.

I do not say that a soul that truly believes in Jesus Christ will be lost at last, but, beloved, it may lose very much of what salvation ought to mean. It is one thing to be lost; it is another thing to lose our crown, and our Father's highest will; the Scriptures are full of loving warnings against the danger of coming short of our full inheritance, and losing aught of our full reward.

The Holy Ghost is like a sensitive lover. A woman's heart is not won by a violent assault, but by the gentle approaches of respectful, sensitive, and considerate love; and, at any point along the way, she can check and chill the advances of the heart that woos her, until, at last, she quenches the love that would have laid all at her feet. And so the Holy Ghost comes to us, with respectful and gentle monitions. He will accept no sacrifice which is not freely given, He will require no obedience that is not gladly rendered. But He does ask us for sacrifice and obedience as the proof of our love, and He does place us in situations of perplexity and trial, through which alone we can receive the training which His love designs for us.

Now here it is that disobedience and refusal may come in. We may shrink from His gentle leading; we may refuse the trial through which He would bring us to some glorious victory; we may choose the easier path, and shun the dreaded cross; but, in so doing, we grieve the Holy Ghost; we arrest our own progress; we compel our God to wait until we are ready to go forward with Him, and after a while we may so wear out His patient love, that He shall find us unfit to receive the blessing He designed for us, and while we may not lose our soul, we shall be rejected from our crown.

There are souls that have lost something out of their life forever, and, perhaps, have become so hardened that they do not even know what they have lost.

It is possible to take a piece of iron, red-hot, and then plunge it into the water and cool it, and do this so many times, that, at last, the very metal scales off like ashes, and the temper and substance of the iron is corroded and destroyed.

It is possible to wear out our hearts by disobedience and repeated chills of divine love, until, at last, there is nothing left but dross.

Oh, let us be careful how we play with the voice of God, and the infinite, everlasting gentleness and love of the mother heart of the Holy Ghost! "Quench not the Spirit."

You may do it by disobedience; you may do it by distrust; you may do it by self-indulgence and cowardly softness; you may do it by yielding to temptation; you may do it by going into the world and selling your birthright for a mess of pottage; you may do it by petulance, irritation, an angry look, a hasty word; you may do it by impatience and rebellion against the hand of God. Let us be careful. Resist not the Spirit. Grieve not the Spirit. Quench not the Spirit.

And, finally, we may quench the Spirit in others. We may hinder the work of God in human souls. We may hold back the Church of Christ from victory. We may paralyze the whole body by keeping one or two members in a state of chronic disease.

So Moses, Joshua, and Caleb were kept back for forty years by Israel's unbelief. So the Church is kept back today from the fullness of Pentecostal power, by the weakness of so large a part of the body of Christ. And so, many a soul is cramped, or chilled, or even seduced from God's high purpose and the Spirit's holy calling by the mistaken love, or the thoughtless and unholy influence of some one that called himself a friend.

God saves us from the fearful guilt of not only sinning, but causing others to sin. God help us to fan the flame of divine life and power in our own and other hearts, until it shall burn, not only with the light of Pentecost, but as the beacon watch fire of the Advent Morning.

'The Holy Spirit' or 'Power from on High'

by A. B. Simpson,

Volume 2 - Chapter 19

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE EPISTLES OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY

In the pastoral and personal letters of Paul to his son in the gospel, Timothy, we have five important references to the Holy Spirit. We shall consider them in their logical order.

I.

The Holy Spirit in relation to the person and work of Jesus Christ. 1 Timothy 3: 16, "Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit."

The reference here is, no doubt, to the witness of the Holy Ghost to the incarnate Son of God. This was given not only by the announcements that preceded his birth, and by the supernatural manifestations of the Holy Ghost that accompanied and followed it, but especially at His baptism, when the Spirit of God publicly descended and abode upon Him, bore witness to His divine Sonship, and united Himself with His person, becoming henceforth the enduement of power for His ministry and work. Henceforth the Holy Ghost continually bore witness to Jesus Christ by manifesting the power of God in His words and work.

It was through the Spirit that He spake His messages; it was through the Spirit that He cast out demons and healed the sick; it was through the Spirit that He offered Himself without spot to God and stood victorious in the conflict and suffering of the cross; it was through the Spirit that He overcame the power of Satan, not only in the wilderness, but in the final conflict; it was through the Spirit that He presented His perfect sacrifice at the throne of His Father, and it was through the Spirit that He rose from the dead "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of Holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."

And then the Holy Ghost still further justified His claim, by coming down as He had promised, and taking up the work that He had begun, and bearing witness to the ascended Lord in the ministry of the apostles, in the organization and work of the Church, and in all the miracles of grace that have followed through the Christian age. Jesus is justified by the Spirit, who witnesses to Him as the Son of God, the Savior of the world, and the faithful and true Witness in all His promises and claims.

Wherever the Holy Ghost still comes, He will always be found witnessing to Jesus, and honoring the Son of God.

II.

The Holy Ghost in relation to the Holy Scriptures. 2 Timothy 3: 16, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

The Holy Ghost is here presented in relation to the Word of God. It is His own word and, wherever it comes, He witnesses to it and honors it. The man who knows the Holy Ghost best will know his Bible best, will love it, will live upon it, and will use it as the weapon of his work and warfare.

The expression here used literally means "God-breathed," "every Scripture God-breathed is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." The Holy Scriptures are the breath of God. Just as He breathed into man the breath of life, and man became a living soul, so He has breathed into the Word His own life, and it is the expression of His thought, His mind, and His heart. Just as you breathe upon the window-pane, and the vapor clouds it, so God has breathed upon the page, and lo, His very thought and heart are there, not as dead letters, but as the living message of His love.

We recognize this holy book as the very Word of God. It is not a volume of valuable historical records, ethical principles, and sublime poetry; but it is a direct message from heaven speaking to man with the authority of His Lord; as we so receive it, believe it, and put our whole weight upon it; it becomes real, and the Holy Ghost witnesses by its actual effect upon our hearts and lives that it is, indeed, the true word of the eternal God.

Then it becomes profitable to us; in the first place, for teaching, giving us true views of God's will and of the things we most need to know; next, for conviction, as the word literally means, for reaching the conscience, and showing us where we are wrong. Then it becomes the word of correction, or direction, not only showing us the wrong and making us conscious of it, but showing us the right and how to enter into it. And, finally, it is the word of "instruction in righteousness," building us up, as the word literally means, and carrying us on into the maturity of Christian manhood. Thus the man of God becomes mature in his own experience, and thoroughly furnished unto all good works, for the help of others and the service of His Master.

The man of God must live by the Word of God, and the Holy Ghost never will pass by or lightly esteem the Word that He has given. There are two extremes. The word without the Spirit is dry and dead, but the Spirit without the word is incomplete. Let us honor the Holy Scriptures; let us study them; let us habitually use them, search them, feed upon them, incorporate them into our lives, and use them as the weapon of our warfare against Satan, and for the souls of men.

III.

The Holy Spirit's message for our own times. All this Word is the Spirit's message, but He has given some messages in these epistles explicitly for our own times. And so we read, 1 Timothy,

4:1, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving head to seducing spirits, and doctrines of demons."

This is more elaborated in the second epistle, third chapter, the first to the fifth verses. "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come, for men shall be lovers of their own selves, . . . having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof."

When we want to print a passage with peculiar emphasis we underline it, and our printer sets it up in italics. When we want to emphasize it a little more, we put two or three lines under it and then he sets it up, not in italics, but in capital letters, and sometimes in large capitals.

Now this is the way the Holy Ghost has written these verses. It is His emphatic, italicized, double capital-lettered message to the men of today, to the closing days of the nineteenth century and the first moments of the twentieth century. "He speaketh expressly." It is His message to us, and it is His emphatic message that we do well to hear.

It is not a sentimental and rose-colored message, glowing with poetry and complacency; it is a solemn warning of danger and holy fear. It speaks in no ambiguous tones. Its voice is, "Take heed," "Look out," "Beware." It tells us not of days of universal liberty and Christian influence; it speaks not in the eloquent language of our modern apostles of progress, recounting the spread of the Gospel, the increase of the professors of Christianity and the advent of the speedy Millennium of our age; but it tells us that, as the days hasten to their close, they shall get darker and more dangerous still; not glorious times, but "perilous times"; times of seducing spirits; times of strong delusion that would believe a lie; times when the light within us shall be darkness; times when the most dangerous elements will be in the very Church of God, and on the part of those who have "a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof"; times when the men that seem to be the most upright, the most self-denying, "abstaining from meats, and forbidding to marry," and apparently the very impersonations of self-sacrifice and the highest morality, shall be the very leaders of Satanic delusion and monstrous iniquity.

These times are upon us already. The vista is opening; the century is closing with lurid clouds on every side. Was there ever a spectacle so humbling and so heart-breaking as the heavens are looking upon today? Thousands and tens of thousands of helpless Christians butchered like cattle in the shambles, and outraged by brutal lust, at the bidding of a sovereign ruler of Europe, and with the tacit consent of six great powers who control ten millions of soldiers! All this going on for weeks and months and years, under the light of heaven and the eyes of diplomacy, and men threatening to go to war about every trifle, and not a sword raised, nor a protest uttered, against these outrages and butcheries! Surely, human government is an utter failure. Surely, the best of our kingdoms and kings are as the potter's clay. Surely, weakness and wickedness have joined hands. Surely, God is showing the utter incapacity of man to rule this earth, and the utter need of the coming of the Prince of Peace and the mighty King, who shall judge the people with righteousness and the poor with judgment. He shall judge the poor of the people, and save the children of the needy, and break in pieces the oppressor. He shall

deliver the needy when he crieth, the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and save the souls of the needy. He shall redeem their souls from deceit and violence, and precious shall their blood be in His sight.

Oh, for that blessed King to come! The whole creation groans, the persecuted Armenian cries, and the saints under the altar plead, "How long, oh Lord, how long?" The Spirit speaketh expressly that these things are to be so, and the very fact that they are becoming so is light even in the darkness, and the first streak of dawn in the black sea of night.

Thank God the morning is at hand. Let us listen to the Spirit's voice, let us watch and pray and be ever ready.

IV.

The Holy Spirit as the Christian's enduement for life and service. 2 Tim. 1:6, 7, "Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, that is in thee by the putting on of my hands. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

Here we have, first, a distinct recognition of the Holy Ghost, definitely given. God hath given the Spirit not of fear, but of power, etc.

The tense employed here in the Greek is always emphatic; it is the aorist tense, and it expresses an act that has been definitely done at a fixed moment in the past. It is not a progressive experience; it is not a gradual approach to something, but it is something done, and done at once, and done once for all. In this sense the Spirit is given. It is the crisis hour in the life of the believer, when the Holy Ghost is thus received as the enduement for life and power in all our spiritual need, and according to all the fullness of the Master's promise.

Beloved, have you thus definitely received the gift and the promise of the Father? Many promises you have claimed, but has the promise been thus made real to you? What reason can you give that it is not so? Oh, do not let another hour pass until at His feet you definitely surrender yourself, and receive Him according to His Word!

But again, we notice that even after receiving the Holy Ghost there is much for the believer to do. And so Timothy is entreated and reminded to stir up the gift of God, which is in him. The word here used is a metaphor, and describes the rekindling of a sinking fire. The flame of divine life and power is declining, or, at least, it is undeveloped and incomplete, and it is to be revived, rekindled, and stirred up.

Now the Holy Ghost when given to us is a divine investment for us to improve, and as we use, develop and improve it, it multiplies in our hands. It is the pound in the parable, which may be increased to ten pounds. It is the pot of oil in the widow's story which may be poured out into all

the vessels of the house and all the vessels of the neighborhood, and increased as it is used. It is the water in Cana's vessels which may be emptied into the vessels and poured out to the guests until it becomes wine, abundance of wine, enough for all the needs of the occasion.

The Holy Ghost may thus be stirred up and developed or He may be neglected and left to decline and languish, until, instead of being God's mighty dynamo, and all sufficient power, He becomes but a protest against our unfaithfulness and our negligence.

Beloved, let us stir up the gift of God that is in us. Let us take away the ashes from the declining fire. Let us put on the coal and the fuel of living truth. Let us set on the draught by prayer, and let it burn until it warms the household of Christ and becomes a light and a benediction to a perishing world. And, as we stir up the gift of God that is in us, it becomes to us the Spirit of power, of love, of courage, and of a sound mind. And so we have the fourfold fullness of the Holy Ghost represented in these strong words.

First, He is not the Spirit of fear, which is just another way of saying that He is the Spirit of courage. We must have courage to begin with, or we shall never be able to press on to any of His other gifts. We must have courage to deny ourselves and suffer, to say "No" to our wills and our craving self-indulgence, and to let go everything that hinders His highest will and our highest blessing.

We must have courage to believe what God says, and to confess that we believe; and we must have courage to go forward and obey His bidding and enter into all fullness.

Secondly, He is the Spirit of power. Courage without power would but throw our lives away. Courage combined with power will make us invincible. The Greek word for power is dynamite. He is the dynamite that accomplishes results, and breaks down all barriers and all hindrances.

Beloved, have you this power? Is your life telling? Are your purposes accomplished? Are your prayers effectual? Are your lives victorious, or are you baffled and thrown back by waves on every shore and by every billow or opposing rock? God hath given us the Spirit of power. Stir it up. It is not your power; it is the Spirit of power. It is the indwelling Holy Ghost. The mighty cable is running beneath your street; attach your ear to it, and it will carry any weight that you place upon it. Power is there, anyhow, and if you do not use it, it only runs to waste.

Thirdly, He is the Spirit of love. Courage without power is ineffectual frenzy, and courage and power without love would be despotic and monstrous cruelty. It needs love to give beneficence to the power and direct it for the good of others. So the Holy Ghost gives us the Spirit of love, which turns all our purposes and all our accomplishments into benedictions. It is not our love. We come to the place continually where we cannot love, but it is His love. It is Almighty love; it is love to the unlovely and distasteful; it is the love which in Him forgave His enemies and prayed for His murderers.

But there is yet another element needed in this four-fold enduement. We need the Spirit of wisdom, the Spirit of a sound mind, or, as some have translated it, the Spirit of discipline. This is the Spirit that holds all our powers in equilibrium, keeps us in perfect balance, and enables us to turn all forces, all resources and all opportunities to the best account.

Mere power and courage without wisdom might throw themselves away, and even love, without a sound mind, might become a misguided sentiment, and at last defeat its own purpose. And so the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of practical wisdom, restraining, directing, and controlling all our thoughts and purposes and actions, so that we shall accomplish the highest and best results.

Now this is not our wisdom. It is not common sense. It is not a sound judgment and a level head, as men speak. But it is the indwelling Holy Ghost, training us, and disciplining us, restraining us, and educating us to understand His thought, to follow His leadings, and to walk in His will.

It is sometimes different from the counsels of human wisdom; but it is always safe, always best to obey God. The wisdom of Paul and Silas would have led them to stay in Ephesus, Bythinia, and Asia; but the wisdom of the Holy Ghost sent them into Greece and Europe, for God foresaw what it meant to evangelize that great continent of the future. The wisdom of the flesh would have held back almost every bold enterprise of faith and courage which the Church of God has ever made; but the wisdom of God was justified in His children, as they went forward at her bidding, and were strong in God's command.

The Holy Ghost is equal to all our situations. Let us trust Him. Let us obey Him. Let us follow His wise and holy training, and He will lead us in a safe way wherein we shall not stumble.

Now the essence of this enduement consists in the proportion of all its parts. It is not courage alone, nor love alone, nor wisdom alone, nor power alone. Mere wisdom would make us hard and cold, but wisdom set on fire with love and energized by power will enable us to bless the world.

The lion is the emblem of courage; the ox is the symbol of strength; the man is the emblem of love; and the eagle with her soaring vision is the type of wisdom, all blended in the one Spirit of courage and love and of a sound mind.

With such a divine provision, beloved, why should we be afraid? Why should we be feeble? Why should we be harsh, or tried? Why should we be foolish or fail? Let us stir up the gift of God which is in us, and put on the strength, the life, the might of the Holy One, and go forth, insufficient in ourselves but all-sufficient in His boundless grace.

V.

Finally, we have the Holy Ghost represented here as the power Who will enable us to keep our sacred trust. 2 Timothy 1:14, "That good thing which was committed to thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us."

The words, "good thing committed to thee," are the same as the apostle uses in the previous verse, where he speaks of that which "I have committed unto him." Literally, it means, my deposit. There are two deposits; there is one deposit which we have put in the keeping of Christ, and we know He is able to keep it; it is our precious soul; it is our eternal future; it is the momentous interests of our life beyond.

But He has also given a deposit to us. God has invested a trust in us that is as dear to Him as the trust that we have committed to His keeping -- it is His glory; it is His testimony; it is His kingdom on earth, "the good thing which was committed to us." Oh, shall we keep it, and hand it back untarnished and glorious and approved when we shall meet Him?

Thank God, the Holy Ghost is given us to enable us to keep it -- "that good thing which was committed to thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us."

Not only does He take care of His end, but He comes also to take care of ours. Blessed Friend, Blessed Helper, Blessed Substitute, Blessed All-Sufficient One, we receive Thee; we lean upon Thee; we commit to Thee Thy trusts to us, as well as our trusts to Thee; and in Thy wisdom and in Thy might and in Thy love, and in thy All-mightiness, we go forth to finish the work committed to us, to watch and work for our Lord's appearing! Amen.

'The Holy Spirit' or 'Power from on High'

by A. B. Simpson,

Volume 2 - Chapter 20 REGENERATION AND RENEWAL

"He saved us by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed upon us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior." Titus 3: 5, 6.

This passage gives us a grand view of the plan of salvation. First, the apostle tells us of our former condition, when "we were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another."

Next, he tells us of the source of our salvation. Negatively, it was "not by works of righteousness which we have done," but, positively, "it was according to His mercy that He saved us" through the kindness and love of God our Savior.

The work of salvation is altogether divine. "Mercy shall be built up forever." It was mercy that saved us, and it is mercy that keeps us saved. We shall never get beyond the divine mercy. A poor Indian, once, when asked how he got saved, took a little worm and put it on the ground, and then built a fire of dry leaves around it. The worm caught the smell of the fire and felt its dangerous heat, and began to flee, but only met another wall of fire on the other side, and so went from side to side in terror and despair; until at last, finding no way of escape, it gathered itself up in the center of the circle and lay there helpless and dying. Then the Indian stretched out his hand, picked it up and saved it. "That was the way," said he, "that mercy saved me." It is according to His mercy that He has saved us, and it is mercy every day that fulfills in us all the fullness of that great salvation.

Then He tells us of the special steps. "By the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which He shed in us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior; that, being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

This seventh verse does not mean that justification follows regeneration. The Greek tense implies that it precedes it. "Having been justified by His grace" is the true force of the tense. God takes us as sinners and justifies us through His grace the moment we believe, and then He regenerates us and gives us the Holy Ghost and leads us forward into all the fullness of His grace, and on to the blessed hope of our eternal inheritance.

We have, however, only to deal in this connection, with two steps in this scale, "the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost."

I. REGENERATION.

This literally means "the laver of regeneration." The Greek word really refers to the laver in the ancient tabernacle. You know that in the court of God's ancient sanctuary there were two objects of deep interest. The first was the altar of burnt offering where the sinner came and, transferring his guilt to the sacrifice, received atonement through the blood; the next was the laver, or fountain of water, where he saw his defilement in its mirrored sides, and then cleansed them in its flowing stream. The first represented the blood of Christ; the second represented the Holy Spirit in His regenerating work. This court was open to all the people. It represented the free, full provision of the gospel for the sinner, the justifying, redeeming work of Jesus, and the regenerating grace of the Holy Ghost.

And so the laver of regeneration represents the primary work of the divine Spirit in quickening the soul that, is dead in sin, and bringing it into the life of God. The Bible is full of this. The sinner is constantly represented as dead in trespasses and sins. It is not merely a matter of light. It is not enough for him to form good resolutions and accomplish moral reformations. It is life he needs. And, therefore, we read, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." Therefore, the Lord Jesus says to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born. again, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." Therefore, the prophet Ezekiel says of the coming salvation, "I will take away the hard and stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. A new heart will I put within you, and a right spirit will I give unto you." This is the laver of regeneration, this is the indispensable work of the Holy Ghost in conversion.

Last night I knelt beside a dying bed. It was a dear lad who had for months been dying, but had no one to lead him to the Savior. That day a dear friend had for the first time told him of Jesus and tried to lead him through the narrow gate.

As I knelt by his side, with his weak brain, and sinking body, I felt how impossible it was for me to make him understand his need in this change.

He had never done anything very wrong, and he had no deep sense of outward sin, but God helped me to show to him that "that which is born of the flesh is flesh" and that his natural heart could not enter the family of heaven any more than the little kitten upon the hearth, or the canary in the cage, could be a member of my family or enter into my sympathies, joys, and conceptions.

Then, as his heart felt his need of this great change, it, was easy to lead him to Jesus and to offer him the free gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord, and to tell him that he could take it in a moment as the gift of God's great love. Then it was that the blessed Holy Ghost came to our relief, and showed His almighty new-creating power.

Never shall I forget the strange sweet flash of eternal light that shone across his countenance

for a moment, as he accepted that gift and with all his heart said, "I will," and then threw his head upon my breast and his arms about my neck, and for a long time lay there, while I prayed, and he entered into the bosom of everlasting love.

When I left him, all was peace and the sweetness of heaven; and in the early morning he passed through the gates into the city, and those that were by his side told us how, just before he passed through, God gave to him a vision of the opening heavens and the chariot that was to bear him home; and the dear family, who knew not God and scarcely understood these wondrous things, were unspeakably touched with the message of divine grace that had come to him, and through him to them, from the gates ajar.

This is the laver of regeneration. O precious friends, you cannot enter heaven without this new heart! You cannot see the Kingdom of God without this divine life, You cannot come into it without this divine touch. You cannot bring it to yourself. You cannot work it up by struggling and by effort. Thank God, there is a better way. "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name; which were born not of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

O, sinner, come to the laver of regeneration! Let your hard and stony heart bow at the feet of Jesus. Receive Him; come to Him with all your hardness and helplessness, with all your lack of faith and feeling; and He will take away the stony heart, and give you a heart of flesh, He will plunge you in the laver of regeneration, and then lead you on into all the fullness of His grace and glory.

II. THE RENEWING OF THE HOLY GHOST.

After we have received the new life it needs to be sustained; it needs to be cherished, matured, built up, and led on into all the fullness of Christ. This is the work of the same blessed Mother God that brought us first into life. This is what is meant by the renewing of the Holy Ghost.

1. First, it suggests the daily dependence of our life. We are not supplied in a moment for a lifetime. We have no store of grace for tomorrow. The manna must fall each day afresh; the life must be inhaled breath by breath; we must feed upon the living bread day by day. It is not at our command, but all derived from Him.

We must abide in Him, and He in us, "for apart from Him we can do nothing." Our store of grace is not a great reservoir, but just a little water pipe carrying enough for the moment and ever passing on. And so we must learn to live in constant communion with Jesus and constant fellowship with the Holy Ghost.

He is only too glad to have our fellowship. He does not weary of our oft returning. He longs to have us come to Him and keep coming again and yet again, and "He is able to save to the uttermost," or rather, forevermore, "all that keep coming unto God by Him, seeing He ever

liveth to make intercession for them."

2. The language implies our spiritual freshness. We cannot live on old food and stale bread; but God's supply for us is perpetually fresh and new. "I will be as the dew unto Israel" is His own blessed figure. It does not rain always, but the dew comes every night and sparkles every morning upon the flower and the leaf. It comes gently, quietly, not in the rush of the tempest, to wash out the tender plant, in the supply which refreshes without disturbing. And then it comes in the hottest weather and the most trying times. Indeed, the dew does not fall, but rises; it is always in the air and is absorbed by the plant just as its condition is fitted to take the moisture that is always floating in the atmosphere. The Holy Ghost is always within reach, if we are in condition to receive and absorb Him. Oh, let us drink in the dew of His grace and live in the renewing of the Holy Ghost!

What a beautiful figure of this was given in the rod of Aaron, which, when placed within the holy sanctuary, budded, and blossomed, and bare fruit. So the rod of faith, and prayer, and holy priesthood, and communion, bears fresh buds, blossoms, and ripe fruit, continually.

Still more beautiful was the figure of the water that flowed through the desert for the supply of Israel's thirst. Once it was struck at Horeb and opened its bosom for the flowing stream, but ever after that the river was there to supply their needs. And so, when they thirsted again, God sent them back and bade Moses not to strike the rock, but "speak," said He, "to the rock, and it shall give forth its waters." Moses made the mistake of striking it, but the waters were there and flowed all the same, and God's faithful grace was still supplied.

And yet again, when they came into the boundless desert, there was nothing but the fiery sand beneath them and the burning sun above them. But again the water was there. All they had to do was to gather in a circle, and dig with their spades a well in the desert, and then gather around it and sing their song of faith and praise; and lo, the waters gushed forth, and their need was all supplied.

This is the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Thus He supplies our daily needs. Thus He waits to meet the cry of faith. Thus He loves to answer the song of praise, and flow through all our being with His glad and full supply, until "the wilderness and the solitary place shall rejoice, the desert (of life) shall blossom as the rose." This is what the Apostle Peter meant when he spoke of the "times of refreshing that should come from the presence of the Lord," before "the times of the restoration of all things," which Christ's advent shall bring. We are in "the times of refreshing," and we are waiting for the times of restitution. Oh, let us take the blessing! Oh, let us claim the fullness! Let us receive the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Let us enter into the mighty promise, "I will make you and the places round about you a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing."

3. There is one more thought suggested by this expression. The Greek word here used is employed once only besides in the New Testament. We find it in that remarkable passage in

the twelfth chapter of Romans, where the apostle says, "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind."

It is well known that the expression there should be translated, "Be ye transfigured by the upward renewing of your mind." It is the same word as here used for "renewing," and it is connected there with the figure of transfiguration.

The thought of the apostle here is that the Holy Ghost is leading us on to our transfiguration. It is not merely grace, but glory, that He wants to bring us into. It is not enough to be regenerated, we want also to be glorified. It is not enough to go to the laver of regeneration. Let us enter in through the door, and then go in and out and find pasture. Let us pass in to the golden lamps of the Lord. Let us feed upon the table of shew-bread with its sweet frankincense. Let us breathe the odors of the incense that fill the sanctuary. Let us have "boldness to enter into the Holiest by a new and living way;" and there, in the light of God's Shekinah presence, there, under the wings of the cherubim, there, in the innermost presence of God, let us anticipate the glory of the life beyond, and go forth with its radiance upon our brow to shed its blessing upon a dark and sorrowful world.

The Holy Ghost wants to transfigure our lives just as truly as He transfigured Christ's. Two and a half years of that blessed life of ministry had passed. He, too, had been born of the Spirit. He, too, had been baptized in Jordan's banks. From the opening heavens the Holy Dove had come down to rest upon Him. He had gone forth, in the power of the Spirit, into the conflict with Satan in the wilderness, and the service of love through the villages of Galilee.

But now He was going down into the deep valley of Kedron, into the shame of the judgment hall, into the dark, sad conflict of Gethsemane, into the mystery of the cross, into the awful place of God's forsaking for the sins of men, into the deep, cold grave. And He needed more. He needed the glory as well as the strength of God. And so He went up to Hebron's height that night, and was clothed upon with the glory of His primeval throne, and His Advent reign; and then, in that glory He went down from the mountain to cast out the demoniac at its foot, to triumph over persecution, rejection and every adversary, to endure the cross, despising the shame, and to be the Conqueror of sin and death.

So we read that, after this, there was a strange majesty in His mien, "and as they saw Him, they were amazed, and as they followed, they were afraid." O, beloved, we, too, are entering upon strange and solemn times! Dark clouds are round about the horizon, lurid lightnings are flashing from the sky; solemn mutterings are heard upon the air; there are signals of a crisis; everything is troubled; days of solemn meaning are drawing nigh.

We need more than we have had. We need to pass from grace to glory. We need the transfiguration life as well as He. We need to look from Hebron's height above the valley of humiliation and suffering, away to the sunlit hills of the Advent glory. Oh, shall we be transfigured, too? And then shall we go forth, like Him, to triumph over Satan, sin and death, to

shed the light of His glory around us, to stand unmoved amid the perils and convulsions of our time, to meet our coming Lord, proving "all that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."

Let us come apart with Him like the three disciples of old. Let us rise to an exceeding high mountain apart. Let us not fear the shadows of the night, and the cloud of the glory as we enter in; and we, too, shall know something of the meaning of His mighty promise, "The glory which Thou gavest Me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as We are One."

'The Holy Spirit' or 'Power from on High'

by A. B. Simpson,

Volume 2 - Chapter 21

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

There are five special references to the Holy Ghost in this epistle.

I. THE HOLY SPIRIT IN RELATION TO CHRIST'S DEATH.

Hebrews 9: 14. "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"

We have seen that the Holy Ghost was connected with the whole life of the Lord Jesus Christ. Through His overshadowing He was born the incarnate Son of God. Through His baptism He was anointed for His special work. Through His leading He was brought into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, and then led forth in victory. He anointed Him to preach the gospel. He cast out demons through the Holy Ghost. All through His life the Spirit was in partnership with Him, and He condescended to be dependent upon Him for divine strength and grace even as we His disciples.

But now we see the Holy Ghost in the last hour of His life, ministering on the Cross of Calvary, and taking part in the last and most important act of the Master's whole life. "Through the Eternal Spirit He offered Himself without spot to God." The blessed Comforter was with Him in that dark, lone hour. He strengthened Him for His agony in Gethsemane, and upheld Him so that He could not die before His time nor sink under the power of the devil.

He sustained Him in sweetness, gentleness, and spotless righteousness, through the awful ordeal of shame and suffering, in the judgment hall and the Roman praetorium. He stood with Him in the anguish of the cross, when all others forsook Him, and when even His Father's face was turned away. To the very close of that great sacrifice, the Holy Ghost ministered, suffered and sustained, and then presented that offered life before the throne of God, as a perfect and spotless sacrifice for sin, and a sufficient ransom for every sinner's life.

Blessed Holy Ghost, how much we owe to Him, even for the Cross of Calvary, and the great Atonement! And just as He was with the Master in His crucifixion, so will He be with the disciple. He will enable us, likewise, to die to self and sin. It is only through the Holy Ghost that we can be truly crucified. "If we through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, we shall live." But if we try to kill ourselves, we shall only be like poor Nero, who stabbed his body a hundred times, but never dared to stab himself to death. Would we die with Jesus and rise into

all the fullness of His endless life? Let us receive the Holy Ghost, and let Him love us into death and life eternal.

Then, if even these mortal lives should be laid down, before the coming of our Lord, the same blessed Paraclete that was with our dying Lord, will overshadow our last couch of pain, and, on His mighty wings of love, will bear our departing soul across the lonely voyage, to the bosom of the Father, and present our spirit without spot before the Throne of God. Blessed and eternal Spirit, our Mother God and Everlasting Friend, oh, how much we owe to Thee!

II. THE HOLY GHOST AS THE WITNESS OF THE NEW COVENANT.

Hebrews 10:15. "Whereof also the Holy Ghost is a witness; for after that He had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, after these days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and write them on their minds, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people, for I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."

This is the Gospel revealed by the Holy Ghost to Jeremiah, in the dark and declining days of ancient Judaism, when, through the broken windows of the earthly temple, the prophet's vision looked to the light of a better morning.

This ancient covenant, so gloriously revealed to Jeremiah, is three times repeated in the Epistle to the Hebrews; and it must, therefore, be entitled to the greatest significance and weight. It is, indeed, the very essence of the Gospel. It breathes the spirit of the New Dispensation.

Under the old economy the law was written upon tables of stone. Here it is written upon our minds and upon our hearts. Thus it is made a part of our very nature, thought, desire, choice, and being. It is the instinctive and spontaneous impulse of our very life, and it is as natural for us to love it and to do it, as to live and to breathe.

We all know the force of the great law of love. How much do you suppose it would cost for that father and husband to hire the woman who nurses his children, and takes care of his home? What amount of money could purchase her toil and labor, as she lives by his side, shares his fortunes, and works herself to death for these helpless little ones? No earthly consideration could induce her to undertake this charge, no law except the law of force could make her such a slave. Yet there is another law, the law of love, and God has written it upon every mother's heart; and by the drawing of that sweet law of love, she leaves her father's house, her luxurious home, her comfortable surroundings, and goes forth with the man she loves, to share his fate, to toil by his side, to nurture his children, to work early and late for these helpless little ones, unwearied, unconscious of any sacrifice and only too glad to be able to pour out her very life to make them happy. Ah! this is the law upon the heart! This is the way the Spirit of God puts into us the will of God and makes it our choice and our delight.

Therefore, the Holy Ghost was given at Pentecost on the exact anniversary of the giving of the law. Pentecost and Sinai are the two ordinances in the calendar of the ages that correspond with each other. The first was the law written upon stone; the second was the law in the living power of the Holy Ghost in human hearts and lives.

Beloved, have we learned this secret of life and power? Do we know the divine covenant, the indwelling Spirit, and "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus," making us "free from the law of sin and death," and "fulfilling the righteousness of the law " not only by us, but "in us"?

Then it is added, "I will be your God, and ye shall be my people." We do not become His people first, thus constituting Him our God; but He first becomes our God, and we are His people. The mother is before the babe, and it is her motherhood that constitutes its childhood. It is because she is its mother, that it is her child. And so God calls us, chooses us, saves us, fills us, and we respond to His love and become His willing, obedient children.

Then our sins are not only forgiven, but forgotten. We are lifted above every cloud of condemnation, and it is true for ever, "their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."

Beloved, have we entered into this New Covenant by the Holy Ghost, and are we walking under the spontaneous and all-impelling impulses of the indwelling Holy Ghost?

III. THE HOLY GHOST IN RELATION TO THE SUPERNATURAL SIGNS AND OPERATIONS OF THE GOSPEL.

"God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will." Heb. 2: 4.

The apostle gives us in this passage a vivid picture of the preeminence of the "great salvation" of the Gospel as compared with the law. The dispensation of Moses was introduced by angels and by men, but the Gospel has been "spoken to us by the Lord," and repeated by those who were sent directly by Him, and then confirmed to us by the Holy Ghost Himself.

The passage refers not only to the signs and wonders of the early chapters of Christianity, but to the supernatural power which God has promised to every age and stage of the dispensation, to confirm to an unbelieving world the divine reality of God's great message. The Holy Ghost is still present in the Church, and is still giving the confirmatory signs, not only by His miracles of grace in the hearts of men, but by His miracles of Providence in the Church and in the world and His miracles of power in the bodies of those who trust Him.

Beloved, do we know these signs, and are we proving them to the world? Is this gospel still a living power, and its own great witness? Who is there among us that has not seen enough to make us know and feel that it is the power of God? "How shall we escape if we neglect so

great salvation?"

IV. THE HOLY GHOST IN RELATION TO OUR IMMEDIATE DECISION FOR GOD.

"Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith, Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts."
Heb. 3:7, 8.

This is always the Holy Spirit's message to men. It is always a present message, an urgent message, and demands an immediate decision. Back of it, He is always pointing to that solemn story of the wilderness, when God's chosen people came forth from bondage under His mighty hand, and advanced under His glorious leadership to the very gates of Canaan. Then, in one fatal moment, they faltered, doubted, disobeyed and went back to nearly half a century of failure, disappointment, and a dishonored death. Just for a single day they stood upon that narrow isthmus, and then they took the wrong step, and lost all by indecision. Oh, how sad, how desolate these wilderness years, ever moving but going nowhere; toiling, suffering, but accomplishing nothing, simply marking time, waiting for the sad inevitable hour that should close their disobedient lives!

Beloved, there are still such lives, there are men and women who have missed their opportunity. They have disobeyed their high calling, and have gone back from the gates of promise. They are simply marking time and finishing a life whose one sad echo will be forever, "Alas, what might have been!"

This is true of the sinner. There is a moment when he must decide or perish. The Holy Spirit's message to him is always, "Today, while it is called today," for it may not be all the day; it may be a golden moment on which eternity hangs, "Today, while it is called today, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts."

It is also His message to the disciple, for each of us comes up to the gates of the Land of Promise, to the point of a great decision, to the place for entire consecration, to the Jordan's bank where the Holy Ghost is waiting to descend upon us if we will dare to step down into the waters of death and self-dedication. And there comes a moment when there is no time to lose. It is NOW OR NEVER. Oh, if it is such a moment with any of us today, beloved, "while it is called today, harden not your hearts"!

Yes, and even after we have received the Holy Ghost there are crisis hours in consecrated lives. There are great doors of service offered; there are great openings for higher advances; there are sacrifices to be dared, advances to be made, promises to be claimed, victories to be won, achievements to be undertaken; but they will not wait for us. Like harvest time, they are passing by, and the Holy Spirit's message to us is, "Redeeming the time because the days are evil."

It is not merely the time, it is the point of time, ton kairon, the very niche of time. We have not

days for it, but only moments. The days are evil, the moment is golden; let us seize it while we may. God help us, beloved, to understand that message, and to let that blessed Guide and Friend lead us from victory to victory, and at last present us faultless in the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.

V. THE HOLY GHOST IN RELATION TO THE BACKSLIDER.

There are two very solemn passages in this epistle in relation to the backslider.

"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them to repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame," Chapter 6:4-6.

"Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" Chapter 10: 29.

Time and space will not permit us to enter fully on the exposition of these verses, but a few remarks may throw sufficient light upon them to prevent their being a stumbling-block to sincere and trembling hearts.

In the first place, it is quite certain from other Scriptures, that there is mercy and forgiveness for every sinner who is willing to accept the mercy of God through the Lord Jesus Christ. Again and again, the infinite mercy of God to the penitent sinner has been repeated and reasserted, until no sincere penitent need ever doubt his welcome at the throne of grace. "All manner of sin and of blasphemy," our Savior has said, "shall be forgiven unto men."

In the next place, the sin of the persons referred to here is no ordinary sin. It is not a mere fall, but it is "falling away," and falling away so utterly that the backslider wholly rejects the very blood of Christ through which he might be forgiven, and throws away the only sacrifice and hope of mercy. He crucifies to himself the Son of God afresh; he puts Him to an open shame; he tramples upon His blood, and he defies and does despite unto the Spirit of grace.

The difficulty of his salvation arises not from any limitation of God's mercy, but from the fact that he utterly rejects God's mercy, and the only way by which it could be manifested through the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the third place, the case supposed is not necessarily an actual case. It may be of the nature of a warning and a supposition, and the very warning is given in order to prevent it from becoming a fact. The mother cries to her child, "Come back from the edge of the precipice or you will be killed," but this does not imply that the child is to be killed. It is the very means by

which it is saved from death. God's warnings are not prophecies, but they are His loving way of keeping back that which otherwise would happen. And so the apostle adds, "we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak."

Finally, in the Revised Version there is a little word of comfort and hope in the sixth verse. Instead of "seeing they crucify to themselves" the translation is, "so long as they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh." It implies that in a certain spiritual condition they cannot be saved nor forgiven, but it also implies that so soon as they abandon that condition, and become penitent and accept the blood of Christ, the mercy of God is still free and full.

There is, therefore, no reason to infer from these very solemn warnings that any penitent soul need despair of being forgiven. At the same time, the warning is so solemn that we would not for one moment weaken its tremendous force. For we never can tell, when we begin to go back or even look back, where we are going to stop. That which seems but a trifling fall may become a "falling away," and may end in the rejection of Christ and the defiance of God. Our safety lies in heeding the solemn warning, "The just shall live by faith, but if any man draw back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe unto the saving of the soul."

The story is told of a man who advertised for a coachman. Among those who came were two who seemed to him to be particularly bright. He took them aside and asked them how near they could drive to the edge of a precipice without falling over. The first candidate answered that he could go within half an inch and had frequently done so, just shaving the edge and feeling perfectly safe. He then asked the other the same question. "Well, sir," replied the man modestly, "I really cannot tell, because I have never allowed myself to venture near the edge of a precipice. I have always made it a rule to keep as far as possible from danger, and I have had my reward in knowing that my master and his family were kept from danger and harm."

The master had no difficulty in deciding between the two candidates. "You are the man for me," he said, "the other may be very brilliant, but you are safe."

Ah, friends, let us not play with danger, trifle with sin, nor venture so close to the edge of the lake of fire that we may not be able to return! The Holy Ghost, as our loving, jealous Mother, is guarding us from harm by these very warnings. Like the Pilgrims in the Palace Beautiful, who went on their way saying, as they had looked at the wonderful visions of the palace, "These things make us both hope and fear," so, in a wise and holy fear as well as a bright and blessed hope, lies the balance of safety and the place of wisdom. Thus walking in His love and fear, may we be kept by the Holy Ghost until that glad hour when we, through the eternal Spirit, too, shall offer ourselves, without spot, to God.

'The Holy Spirit' or 'Power from on High'

by A. B. Simpson,

Volume 2 - Chapter 22 GOD'S JEALOUS LOVE

"The Spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy." James 4: 5.

In the marginal reading of the Revised Version, we find this verse translated: "The Spirit that He hath made to dwell in us yearneth over us unto envy." A still more happy rendering is, "The Holy Spirit, that dwelleth in us, loveth us to jealousy."

This is a little gem in a mass of rocks, a little flower in a wilderness, a little bit of poetry and sacred sentiment embosomed in the great epistle of common sense. One would almost as readily expect to see a rose in a wilderness or a blossom on a glacier, as to find this exquisite little bit of sentiment in the epistle of the most practical of all the apostles.

For James has really struck the keynote of the entire system of revelation. This is the golden thread that runs through the whole Bible, from the bridal of Eve to the Marriage of the Lamb. The love life of the Lord -- this is the romance of the Bible, and the golden chain of Revelation.

The story of Rebekah is a kind of idyl, setting forth the whole idea in her romantic wooing and wedding. Just as Abraham sent his trusted servant to bring a bride for Isaac, and just as old Eliezer faithfully discharged that trust, finding, wooing, and then bringing home the beautiful Rebekah, and at last presenting her to the arms of Isaac, waiting for her in the eventide; so the Holy Ghost has been sent by the Father to call from this sinful world a Bride for His beloved Son, and, having called her, to bring her home, to educate her, to robe her, and gradually to prepare her for her glorious meeting with her Lord, in that sublime event which is to be the consummation of the age -- the Marriage of the lamb.

Now, the Holy Spirit is represented in this passage as loving us to jealousy, and holding us sacredly to our blessed Bridegroom and Lord. In the context we read about the friendship of the world and the sin of adultery. The true reading of this passage, "Ye adulterers and adulteresses," is simply, "ye adulteresses." It is wholly in the feminine gender. He is not speaking about the earthly marriage bond, but about the fidelity of the Bride of the Lamb to her heavenly Lord. The Church is represented throughout the Scriptures as a wife, and the sin of unfaithfulness to Christ as spiritual adultery. Therefore, it is the adulteress that is mentioned here, and she is asked in the most solemn manner, "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever, therefore, will be the friend of the world is the enemy of God."

Compromise with the world is unfaithfulness to Christ and adultery in His sight. It is in this connection that our text is introduced. "The Spirit that dwelleth in us loveth us to jealousy." He is constantly guarding our loyalty of heart and our single and unqualified devotion to Christ alone.

Now, the Spirit which is given to each of us is holding us true to Christ. He first wins and woos us to Christ and then holds us true to Him, and leads us on until we shall be prepared to meet Him at His glorious coming.

This figure could be much better understood in eastern countries and ancient times than now. Almost every Oriental marriage has a go-between, a friend of the bridegroom and the bride, who arranges the preliminaries, and brings the parties together, just as Eliezer brought Rebekah to Isaac. This is the high mission of the Holy Spirit, and in its discharge He is so true to Christ that the least spot upon our holy character, the least compromise in our allegiance and devotion awakens in His heart a holy jealousy. He has devoted Himself to bringing about our union with Jesus, and to fitting us for it in the highest possible measure.

This is the purpose of all His dealings with us, this is the meaning of all the discipline of our life, to call us to Christ, and then qualify us for our high calling, as the Bride of the Lamb.

I.

First, He seeks and finds us, and brings us to Jesus in conversion. He sees in us those qualities which God created for Himself, and which Satan is prostituting for our shame and ruin, and He sets His heart on winning us for our heavenly Lord.

This will explain the fact that must often have occurred to many of us, that God revealed Himself to us in mercy many a time before we knew Him as a Savior, and a Father, and answered many of our prayers when we really had no claim upon His promise. He was wooing us to His love. He was trying to make us understand that He was seeking us. He was presenting to us the jewels of Isaac that we might be drawn from the gifts to the Giver and led to listen to His overtures of grace. He was treating us in advance as His friends and His children. He was leaping over the intervening years of sin and unbelief, and anticipating the hour when we should love Him, and weep with bitter sorrow that we did not sooner understand and accept His love to us.

O, beloved, He is calling some of you now! He is longing for you with a jealous love. You belong to Him by God's eternal purpose, you will some day love Him and live for Him with all your heart, and then you would give the world to be able to undo the years of your present sin and folly. Oh, let Him reach your hearts; let Him win your affections; let Him draw you to His bosom and make you His beloved!

II.

But secondly, even after we come to know Him as a Savior, He is pressing us forward to a deeper union and a closer fellowship. We have come to Him for refuge from judgment, and from guilt; we have accepted Him as a Deliverer from condemnation and from fear; we have fled for refuge, like the little bird pressed by the storm upon the deck of the passing steamer; but He wants us closer; He wants us to put away our doubts and fears, and to enter into His confidence and fellowship. And so the Holy Ghost is loving us into the life of entire union with Jesus and unreserved consecration to Him.

Thousands of Christians know Him only as a shelter between them and their guilt and danger; He wants to take them into the innermost chambers of His heart and make them partakers of His deepest love. And so the Holy Spirit is wooing the children of God, and drawing them to the very bosom of Jesus. He is saying to them "Hearken, Oh daughter, and consider, forget thy kindred and thy father's house; so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty: for He is thy Lord, and worship thou Him."

He wants us to turn away from every earthly idol, and give Him our whole heart, that He may give us His in return, and make us the partakers and the heirs of all His riches and His glory. This is what consecration means. This is what the baptism of the Holy Ghost is. In this His jealous love is calling some, even as they read these lines.

III.

But even when we thus yield ourselves to Christ in full consecration and receive Him by the Holy Ghost as an indwelling Savior and the Ishi of our heart, we have only begun Rebekah's homeward journey, and the Holy Ghost, like Eleazar, has to lead us on through all the way, educating and preparing us for our meeting with our Lord.

And all through this life of discipline and experience, He is still loving us with a ceaseless and tireless devotion, and pressing us forward with jealous solicitude into God's highest and best will. And so He becomes our Sanctifier. He is preparing our wedding garments and fitting them to us, so that the King's daughter shall be "all-glorious within." "She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework." She shall be robed not only in garments white, but garments bright, the wedding robes of the Marriage of the Lamb.

When we receive Christ as our Sanctifier, there is a sense in which we are wholly sanctified from the beginning. We have accepted all the will of God, and God counts us fully obedient. Our will is utterly surrendered and His will is our unqualified choice. But oh, how much there is for us yet to learn, how much more light, how much more realization, how all these things have to be wrought into the very fibre of our being! As that young lady takes the pattern of embroidery that has been stamped in its minutest details upon the fabric, in one sense she has the whole pattern from the beginning. But now she goes to work with worsted, and silk, and threads of gold, and puts in many a stitch, with patient, delicate needle. She works into that

pattern every tint and color and costly material, until it is not only a stamped pattern on the canvas or the silk, but a beautifully inwrought figure with every tint of the rainbow, and with all the brilliant sheen of satin and silk, and silver and gold, and perhaps with precious pearls skillfully wrought into the glowing design. So the Holy Ghost stamps the image of Christ upon us from the beginning; He then goes to work to burn it in and work it in, until our clothing shall be of wrought gold and finest needlework. So He is loving us to jealousy in His deeper work of sanctifying grace, sensitive to every spot, guarding against every slip and failure, and aught that could mar the fullness and perfection of God's great purpose of grace within us.

Some day we shall thank Him for His love, when we stand with the glorious Bride of the Lamb, presented faultless before the presence of God with exceeding joy, while the wondering universe shall come to see the Bride, the Lamb's Wife, with robes more radiant than all the gems of earth and colors more glorious than a thousand rainbows or a thousand suns.

No thoughtful mind can fail to appreciate the importance and the reality of this deeper work of the Holy Ghost. It is one thing to have love, but it is another to have the love that suffereth long and is kind; that never faileth; that is not provoked. It is one thing to have patience, but it is another to "let patience have her perfect work that we may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." It is one thing to have forbearance and longsuffering, but it is another thing to be "strengthened with might unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness." It is one thing to have the things that are just and right, but it is another thing to have the "things that are lovely and of good report," not only the useful and the necessary, but the beautiful and the decorative qualities of Christian life. It is one thing to have the graces of the Holy Ghost in form; it is another to have them in maturity. It is one thing to have the grapes of June or July; it is quite another to have the mellow purple fruit of September or October, ripe and ready for the vintage.

We have seen the Holy Ghost thus leading on a soul, here adding a touch, there subtracting an excess, there deepening a line, there ripening and mellowing a quality. Silently, gradually, day by day and moment by moment, we have seen the picture growing more complete, more symmetrical, more deep, and full of strange indescribable expression, until at last we felt somehow that the work had been wrought into the depths of life, and that the soul was ripe and ready for the Master's coming.

IV.

Along with this work of sanctification, there is also a work of separation, and crucifixion. That anything may grow, something must die. He is separating us from the influences of the alien world, and the thousand forces that could distract or counteract His gracious purpose. It is here that His jealous love is most manifest. It is here that He has often to break our idols, and sever the cords that bind us, which would weaken our character, or hinder our highest growth. But the deeper and higher we are to grow, the narrower must our range of earthly sympathy become. And so He has not only to separate from sin, and from the ungodly and unholy world, but to separate us from a thousand things that touch the life of self, and that enter in as

hindrances between us and our Lord's highest purpose.

We may not see it ourselves, but He sees it, and He loves us too well to let it hurt us. It may be some dear friend; it may be some innocent and what we regard as an absolutely holy affection. But He may see that that love, or that friend is taking His place, and instead of becoming an attachment to the Head, it becomes a barrier between us and our living Head. Instead of a fruit-bearing branch it becomes a parasite, drawing away our life, or a prop on which we lean instead of rooting more strongly in Him, and so He gently detaches us from it.

It may be that our ambition, or our literary taste, or our fondness for some artistic delight, our beautiful home, our refined friendships, our higher pursuits in the lines of aesthetic taste, are absorbing much of the strength of our life and making Him and His work less. And, so the flashlight falls upon this, and the surgeon's probe detects it, and the deep cathode ray goes through the very flesh and bone, till it reaches the very intents of the heart, and brings to light the hidden danger; then He tests our loyalty and love and calls upon us to surrender it to Him.

Yes, it may be even our Christian work that is absorbing our affection and enthusiasm and leaving Him out. It may be for an idea or an ambition that we are working, rather than for our Lord, and so His jealous love sometimes must destroy the vision that He may save His child. We are reminded of the apprentice boy, who saw his master gazing intently at the beautiful fresco that he had just completed upon the ceiling, and gradually stepping backwards to admire it, until he was on the very edge of the scaffold and another movement would have dashed him to the pavement below. Suddenly the faithful apprentice dashed forward, seized the painter's brush and dashed it over the beautiful fresco, daubing it, and destroying it with one ruthless blow.

The master sprang forward with a cry of agony, but in a moment he stopped and looked at the pale, trembling boy, pointing with his finger backward to the scaffold where he had stood, and then he understood it all. He took the boy into his arms and in a paroxysm of tears he embraced him, and thanked him that he had spoiled his work and saved his life.

So the blessed Holy Ghost has marred the vision of our past, and has desolated the hopes of our future that He might save us for something better. Let us trust Him to the end; let us let Him love us as much as He wants to; let us never doubt His faithful will, nor question the commandments which are "for our good always. "

V.

The jealous love of the Holy Ghost is also educating us, and seeking to enlarge our vision and our thought, so that He can better fit us to be the eternal companion of our glorious Bridegroom. He is trying to make us understand the majesty of His purpose, and to bring us into partnership with Him in His glorious plans to save the world, and in the ages to come, to lead out His redeemed ones into the highest and grandest services for the universe. His heart

is often grieved and disappointed, to find us so narrow, so self-bound, so unable to enter into His glorious purposes, and His eternal designs.

There is a sad story told of a young couple who became betrothed in early life. Afterward the young man went to college, and acquired a liberal education, and then went abroad and traveled for years in a foreign country, finishing his studies and widening his views of life and men. All the while they kept up their correspondence and their engagement, and at last one day he came back to meet his beloved and claim her as his bride. But, alas, he found that while he had grown, she had remained stationary. He loved her still, and her whole life was bound up in him. But she was not able to understand him; she was not able to enter into his higher thoughts and plans, and she was not able to be the companion of his magnificent mind. He wedded her, but more and more, from day to day, he saw that the breach was widening. Her horizon was no wider than her neighbor's fence and her neighbor's farm; her world was scarcely bigger than the kitten on the hearth, the lambs that gamboled in the field, and the milk-pan and kitchen range.

He never told her, and she scarcely understood the shadow that had fallen upon his life, but, day by day, he pined and wasted away, until at last he died of a broken heart.

Ah, friends, our beloved Bridegroom with His glorious mind, His sweeping vision of the universe and His mighty purpose, not only to redeem this world, but to glorify His Father's name in every star and constellation of yonder space through His redeemed ones by-and-by, must often be grieved to find us so slow to understand Him!

You sit down in your corner grocery to make a petty fortune; you work away at your farm in order to make a scant living and some day have a farm for your boys, and you get absorbed in your little circle, and perhaps your little bit of a church. You never think of the great world that is waiting to be saved, the millions that have never heard of Jesus, or the high purpose of His heart to make you, with Him, the queen not only of the millennial years but of the whole redeemed universe. Let us rise to meet His thought; let us get out beyond our self-bound, earth-bound life, and enter into His plan for the world, and speed His glorious coming, and His mighty purpose for all mankind.

VI.

And so again, the Holy Ghost is leading us out, and developing our faith and thus preparing us for the higher life of the world beyond. For faith is just the wings by which we are some day to sweep across the abyss and soar amid the heights of the ages to come. Even after we receive the Holy Ghost we are content to move on in small planes and small circles, and we do not want to be disturbed or pushed out to harder, higher things; therefore, the Holy Ghost has to come and just compel us by His love to develop into spiritual strength and energy of which we thought ourselves incapable.

"As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, taketh them, beareth them upon her wings, so the Lord alone did lead Him." And so He stirs up our nest and pitches us out in mid air, helpless and defenseless orphans, and we think that it is to destroy us, but it is only to constrain us, that we may strike out the little wings of faith and learn to fly in the great unseen. And when we get a little weary, He stretches out His mighty pinions and bears us up again until we are ready for another lesson. And so through hardship, through the discipline of trials, through new circumstances into which He brings us, through difficulties for which we feel unequal He is developing us, throwing us upon Him, teaching us to claim His grace and educating us for the higher energies, and the nobler manhood of the life to come. Oh, how He delights in us when we yield to Him! How disappointed He is in us when we refuse! How sad when the clay will not let the Potter fashion it, and He has to throw it aside! Beloved, let us trust His love, and yield to His high and holy purpose of love and blessing.

VII.

Finally, the Holy Ghost is yearning for our higher usefulness, and training us for service. The life of God is an unselfish life; the employment of the ages to come will be wholly benevolent and self-forgetful. Our service for Christ today is a great investment through which we are laying up treasures beyond, that are to constitute our everlasting riches and reward. And so the Holy Ghost is pressing us forward to make the most of present opportunities; He is trying to get us to plant the seeds of usefulness and to invest the things that we hold dear in sacrifice and service, which yet will bear immortal flowers and plant the heavens with trees of righteousness and fruits of glory.

'The Holy Spirit' or 'Power from on High'

by A. B. Simpson,

Volume 2 - Chapter 23

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE EPISTLES OF PETER

There are three important truths respecting the Holy Spirit presented in the Epistles of Peter.

I. THE SPIRIT OF INSPIRATION.

In 2 Peter 1:21 we are told that "the prophecy came not by the will of man, but holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." This is a very explicit statement of the doctrine of inspiration. They were not giving their own opinions; they were not writing by the impulse of their own will. Sometimes they said things that were contrary to all their natural preferences and attachments, as for example, when Samuel pronounced his judgment upon the house of Eli, or when Jeremiah uttered his awful warnings against his dearly loved people and country.

But they were "moved by the Holy Ghost." The Greek word 'moved' is a very strong one, and in the Revised Version is translated "borne." They were swept along by a mighty impulse which carried them far beyond themselves. They did not always even understand their own predictions, for in 1 Peter 1:10, we are told that "the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when It testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow."

Daniel tells us that he heard but understood not, his own vision. Sometimes they saw the vision of a glorious King, sometimes of a bleeding Lamb. But they did not always fully comprehend what it all meant, nor when it was all to be fulfilled. It loomed before them as a glorious vista of far reaching promise, but there was many a cloud upon the vision, and all they clearly knew was that "not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister" these wondrous revelations of truth.

In the next verse the apostle speaks of the Holy Ghost, not only in the message of the prophets, but in the message of the ministers of the gospel, as these truths are now preached unto us by the ambassadors of Christ, "with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven." The ancient prophet was the organ of the Spirit, but the minister of the gospel has the very presence and person of "the Spirit sent down from heaven," accompanying his message and giving authority and power to his word; so that when we speak the message of God, we speak in the very name of God, and those who hear are responsible for rejecting or receiving, not the word of man, but the very word of the living God.

II. THE SPIRIT OF SANCTIFICATION.

1 Peter 1: 2, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." The Apostle Peter fully believed in the sovereignty of God, and in the divine purpose of election ; but he did not believe in any foreordination apart from personal sanctification. The truth is, there are two ends to the divine purpose. On yonder side the cable is fastened to the throne, and hidden from our view is the inscrutable and inaccessible light of God; but on this side the cable of divine mercy is within our reach, and we may fasten it around our own hearts through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, so that we may make our calling and election sure, and know that we belong to the heavenly family.

The word "through" should rather be translated "in" sanctification. Holiness is the element and atmosphere of the divine calling, and as we are found there we must be inseparably linked with Him; and apart from this spiritual condition, we have no right to rest in any theological dogma or ecclesiastical form. Let us leave the theology of it to God, and let us make the practical application sure.

Let us carefully notice the form of expression here used. It is not sanctification by the Spirit, but sanctification of the Spirit. There is a great difference. Sanctification by the Spirit might leave us crystalized into a sanctified state, like the wax when the stamp is withdrawn, or like the clock wound up to go by its own machinery. But sanctification of the Spirit is not a self-constituted state, but a sanctification which consists in our union with the Spirit, and makes and keeps us dependent upon His indwelling life and power every moment. We are not sanctified apart from Him, but only as we are filled with Him, and abide in Him continually. We are but the vessel, an empty shell which He must fill, and keep ever freshly filled by "the renewing of the Holy Ghost."

The Greek genitive expressed by the preposition 'of' indicates the most intimate connection between our sanctification and our possession of the Holy Ghost. Beloved, have we the Spirit as our Sanctifier and our Life? Have we something more than holiness, even the Holy One Himself to "dwell in us and walk in us," and ever "cause us to keep His statutes and judgments and do them?"

Again, the sanctification of the Spirit brings us the "sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." Now, the blood of Jesus Christ means the life of Jesus Christ, and the life of Christ has always a twofold application. First, the life of Christ was given for us through the shedding of His blood and the atonement of His death on Calvary. But the life of Christ is also given to us by His union with us and abiding in us.

This latter sense is the one covered by the "sprinkling of the blood." We read in the twenty-fourth chapter of Exodus, that when Moses was about to take the leaders of Israel up into the mount, he offered sacrifices of oxen, slaying the bullocks and pouring out half of their blood upon the altar, thus signifying the shedding of Christ's blood for us in the offering of His

sacrifice upon the cross. But the other half of the blood he took in basins and carried it up unto the Mount, sprinkling part of it upon the people and the book of the covenant; and, thus sprinkled with blood and accompanied by the blood, they went up into the very presence of God, and were received into His love and favor. Instead of the thunders and lightnings which yesterday made Mount Sinai a scene of terror, the blue heavens without a cloud covered them as a celestial dome, and Jehovah received them into His presence chamber, feasted them as princely guests at a royal banquet, and, it is added, "upon the nobles of Israel he laid not His hand; but they did eat and drink, and they saw God."

Now, the sprinkled blood in this beautiful type is quite different from the shed blood poured out upon the altar; it represents the life of Christ imparted to us, and making us fit for His presence and fellowship. This is the work of the Holy Ghost. He brings us into living union with the person of Jesus and reproduces in us the very life of Christ.

We believe this is the meaning of the strong expressions used so often respecting the life and blood of Jesus. We are said to be "saved by His life." Again, the "blood of Jesus Christ His Son," that is, the life of Jesus Christ, "cleanseth us, or keeps cleansing us from all sin." So again, in the sixth of John, it is by eating His flesh and drinking His blood that we have eternal life, and that life is nourished from day to day. Beloved, do we know the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, and are we living upon His life?

There is another beautiful type in the Old Testament throwing much precious light upon this striking figure. It is the account of the red heifer in the nineteenth chapter of the Book of Numbers. We will pass by the other applications of this remarkable type, and refer only to the sprinkling of the water of separation. When any one in the camp of Israel had become defiled by the touch of the dead, or by contact with uncleanness in any way, it was provided that he should be cleansed and restored by sprinkling with the water of separation. This water was made out of the ashes of the heifer that had been sacrificed and then burned, and preserved in a sacred place for this purpose. Water was poured upon it and then, with a bunch of hyssop, the unclean person was sprinkled and cleansed.

Now, we know that the water which you make out of ashes is known as lye, and it is pungent and cutting in its operation as caustic or fire. The sprinkling that came in this way upon the unclean would not be likely to be forgotten. It was a cleansing that would cut to the core, and burn to the bone. And so the work of the Holy Ghost is not always soft and complacent, but often most searching and consuming. He brings home to our hearts the application of the death of Christ, until it takes us into actual fellowship with His death, and makes us also willing to die to the sinful or selfish thing which He has revealed in our natural life.

There is, therefore, a sense in which the sanctifying work of the Holy Ghost is at once immediate and progressive. There is a moment in which we actually enter into personal union with Jesus and receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost. In that moment we are fully accepted, and are fully sanctified up to all the light we have. But as the light grows deeper and clearer He

leads us farther down, and farther on, at once revealing and healing every secret thing that is contrary to His perfect will, as we are able to bear it, and bringing us into perfect conformity to the very nature and life of Christ.

It is somewhat like the operation of the limestone brook upon the wooden branch that is left lying in the flowing stream. Day by day, the limestone held in solution is deposited in the open fibers of the wood, until after a while the wood has been changed to stone and, while retaining its natural form, its substance has been transformed into the nature of the stone. So there is a sense in which the Holy Ghost holds the life of Jesus Christ in a kind of solution, and imparts it to us, until we become perfectly conformed to the very image of our glorious Pattern and Head.

Once more, the sanctification of the Spirit leads to "obedience." It is not all theory and experience, but it is intensely practical and real. It runs into our daily lives in the home, the factory, and the store. It makes us better men and women, and compels the world to testify to its genuineness and reality. And then it becomes so easy. It is not the obedience of effort, but the spontaneous and joyful outflow of life and love. He not only dwells in us, but He also walks in us. "And what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh," "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus," does accomplish, "making us free from the law of sin and death, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

III. THE SPIRIT OF GLORY.

1 Peter 4:14, "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you." The work of the Holy Ghost is more than cleansing. It is also glorifying. He comes not only to make our garments white, but lustrous, like the transfiguration light and the marriage robe.

In the ancient tabernacle there were three sections. The first represented salvation; it was the Court where the worshiper came to the altar and the laver for the atoning blood and the cleansing water. The second was the Holy Place, the chamber where the priests had their home, and where they dwelt with God amid the light of the golden lamps, feeding upon the sacred bread and frankincense, and breathing the fragrant odors that arose in clouds of incense from the golden altar of intercession. This represented sanctification, communion, fellowship, the life of abiding in personal union with the Lord Jesus Christ. But there was another chamber farther in. It was the Holy of Holies, the sacred presence chamber of God, where the Shekinah glory shone between the outstretched wings of the heavenly cherubim. This was God's image of the glory. This represents, of course, the future glory of our heavenly home and the millennial day for which we are waiting. But This also represents the beginning of that glory into which we may enter now. For the Holy Ghost is the earnest of our future inheritance, and He brings its fore-gleams and foretastes to us here.

That inner chamber, in the days of Moses, was shut off from view. Only the high priest might

enter it, and he but once a year. But the veiling curtains were rent asunder when Jesus died, and the glory was opened wide for us to enter in. And so we read the divine invitation, "Having, therefore, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living Way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith." Yes, we may enter into the glory even here. "The glory which Thou gavest Me, I have given them," is our Savior's parting bequest. Not only does He give us His peace and His love, but He gives us His glory, too, and into its heavenly radiance we may enter now. "Whom having not seen, we love, in whom though now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." "Not only so, but we glory in tribulations also." "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you."

It is difficult, if not impossible, to make this intelligible to any one who has not been initiated into the alphabet of heavenly things. It needs spiritual senses and instincts to comprehend it. But almost every child of God has at one time or other, been touched with some thrill from the Spirit of glory. Perhaps it lighted up the closet of prayer until it became the gate of heaven. Perhaps it touched your sorrow with a light that transfigured the night into morning and the shadow of death into the light of heaven. Perhaps it came when Jesus healed your body and gave you the first fruits of the resurrection. Perhaps it comes to you sometimes when you sit and think of the cross behind you, the Christ within you, and the home before you, and you scarcely know whether you are in the body or out of the body. But the blessed Spirit is ready to bring it to us just where we need it most.

It would seem as if its congenial sphere was the place of suffering, persecution and reproach. It would seem as if, when earth's barometer goes down to the lowest point, heaven's sunburst always comes most brightly through the tempest clouds. It is "in tribulation" "we glory"; it is "when reproached in the name of Christ" that "the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon us."

But let us be very sure that we are reproached "in the name of Christ," as the passage should be translated. Let us not suffer, as the passage suggests, because of our own foolishness or sin, as transgressors or busybodies. But, standing in the name of Christ, living in His high and holy character, representing Him and resembling Him, let us not fear if trials come, and storms of sorrow fall. The cloud will be but His background for the rainbow. The pillar that loomed by day as an enshrouding mist, will glow by night like a celestial fire;

"And sorrow touched by God grows bright
 With more than rapture's ray,
 As darkness shows us worlds of light
 We never saw by day."

'The Holy Spirit' or 'Power from on High'

by A. B. Simpson,

Volume 2 - Chapter 24

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN

One is impressed with the limited number of direct references to the Holy Ghost in the great epistle of the beloved disciple in comparison with his references to the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There are only four or five passages in all this long letter, in which the blessed Paraclete is mentioned by name, but Christ is referred to over and over again. One is led to inquire why this should be. And perhaps the answer suggests a deep and beautiful truth. John was so saturated with the Holy Ghost that, like the Holy Ghost, who never witnesses of Himself, He was constantly thinking of Jesus, and witnessing of Him. The very fact that he was not directly referring to the Spirit was the best evidence that he was in the Spirit, and that he was occupied, as the Holy Ghost always is, in thinking of Jesus and glorifying the Son of God.

And so, beloved, as we are most full of the Holy Ghost we shall be most occupied with Jesus; so that we will not think so much of our own experience or of the glorious Friend within us as the face of Jesus and the depths of His heart of love.

There are, however, several very important references to the Holy Spirit in this epistle. Before we take them up in detail, it is necessary that we should explain our silence respecting one of the verses in this epistle which bears most direct witness to the Holy Ghost.

It is the well known passage, 1 John 5: 7: "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one." This verse which contains so direct and theological a testimony to the doctrine of the Trinity is undoubtedly spurious. It is not found in any of the early manuscripts, and by the consent of the highest scholars of our age it has been omitted from the Revised Version, and was undoubtedly added by some transcriber, who had more zeal for theology than discernment of the mind of the Spirit and the order of thought in this chapter. The verse is quite irrelevant in the place where it is introduced, and it is by no means necessary to prove the divinity, either of the Son or of the Holy Ghost.

I. THE HOLY GHOST AS THE DIVINE ANOINTING.

"But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him." 1 John 2:20, 27.

We have previously referred to the symbol of oil, and the figure of anointing, with reference to the Holy Spirit. The idea of this passage is substantially the same as in the passages formerly referred to. The word is a little different. It is not so much the anointing as the unction, the 'chrism' which is here mentioned.

We need not remind our readers that this word 'unction' or 'anointing' is the same word from which the Christ comes, so that "anointed one" just means 'Christ one'. We read in the previous verses of the anti-Christ and of the many anti-Christes who shall come. In contrast with these are 'the Christ ones'. The Holy Ghost is raising up Christ men. The word Christian is derived from this root, but it is not entirely satisfactory. A Christian is one that is somehow connected with Christ, but a 'Christ one' is one that is united with Christ and represents Him, being, in fact, a second edition of Him, and representing the very life of Christ among men.

Now this was the great mission of the Holy Ghost -- to set apart the Christ, and make Him the great pattern for all future men. Having accomplished this work in the glorification of Jesus, He is now reproducing the Christ, in the 'Christ ones', and calling and training the disciples of Jesus to represent the Master and repeat His life through the Christian dispensation.

We have already called attention to the use of anointing in setting apart prophets, priests, and kings, and to the special significance of the name of Christ in relation to His threefold office as our Prophet, Priest, and King. In like manner we are anointed to be prophets, priests, and kings of the Church of God, to be God's witnesses to men of His will and work, to be God's intercessors for men, and to be God's kingly ones, victorious over self and sin, and waiting to share with our blessed Head the kingdom of the millennial age.

Now the Holy Ghost calls us to this high ministry and fits us for it. The anointing here spoken of is described as a divine gift, "Ye have an anointing." The verb here is quite emphatic. It means we have received a special gift, and we know we have received it. Beloved, have we received the divine anointing, the Holy Ghost?

His work is here referred to especially in two aspects; as a Teacher, and as a Keeper. As our Teacher He brings to us the mind of God through the Holy Scriptures. The language here used does not imply that we are inspired as the apostles and prophets of the Lord, to know the will of God apart from the Holy Scriptures. It does not mean that we are not to receive the message of God from human lips; but it does mean we are not to receive any message as the word of man, but, even when we are taught by the ministers of Christ, we are to receive them as the messengers of God, to compare their word with God's Holy Word, and only to receive it as it is the voice of God, speaking to our conscience in the Holy Ghost.

But this anointing not only teaches us, but keeps us abiding in Him. The great object of this blessed presence in our hearts is to unite us to Christ, and to keep us ever dependent upon Him and close to Him, so that "when He shall appear we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming." So let us receive Him; so let us abide in Him; so let us

represent our blessed Lord. And in the age of anti-Christ let us be not only Christians but Christ ones, standing for our Lord on earth as He ever stands for us in heaven.

II. THE INDWELLING SPIRIT.

"And hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given to us." 1 John 3:24. "Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit." 1 John 4:13.

It is not so much, however, the indwelling of the Spirit that is here referred to, as the indwelling of Christ through the Spirit. The object of the Holy Ghost is to reveal and glorify Jesus and make Him personal and real in the life of the believer.

This is not a matter of faith, but it is a matter of knowledge. "We know that He abideth in us." It is real to our consciousness, it is satisfying to our hearts. Christ is to us a personal presence, claims our affection, and satisfies all our need, while the Holy Ghost just ministers Him to us, and holds us in abiding communion with Him as the source and substance of all our life for spirit, soul and body.

We shall never rightly understand the Holy Ghost so long as we terminate our thought upon Him. The Scriptures always lead us on beyond every subjective experience to the person of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

III. COUNTERFEIT SPIRITS.

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they be of God, because that many false spirits have gone forth into the world." 1 John 4:1. The great ambition of the devil is to counterfeit the Holy Ghost. He has always had many counterfeits and many anti-Christ, but as the age draws to a close "the spirits of wickedness in heavenly places" will grow thicker and "the wiles of the devil" will become more subtle and deceiving.

Already we can discover the beginning of that age of Satanic delusion which is to close the present dispensation and gather the hosts of evil to "the great battle of the Lord God Almighty." Often he comes in the disguise of good and as an angel of light, and God has warned us to be watchful and to "be not deceived."

The Apostle John gives us the supreme test, and that is the witness these spirits bear to the Lord Jesus Christ. When any spiritual influence terminates upon itself and does not directly lead us forward to the Lord Jesus Christ and to glorify and vivify Him, we have good reason to be doubtful of it. Any spiritual experience that rests chiefly in the experience and in its delightfulness or significance, is very apt to prove another spirit. The Holy Ghost always witnesseth to Christ.

This passage gives us a still more discriminating touchstone by which we may detect some of the spirits that have gone abroad in our own day. "Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God; but this is that Spirit of anti-Christ of which we have heard that it should come," and which even in John's day was in the world.

This is the spirit that denies the material world and the actual physical incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ, making the story of creation a beautiful allegory and the account of Christ a fiction, discarding the doctrine of sin and atonement and the actual crucifixion of Christ as a substitute for sinful men.

It is not necessary to name the plausible and wide-spread error which is abroad today, which tells us that there is no material world, that there is no material body, that there is, therefore, no physical basis for disease, that everything is ideas and mind, and that all we have to do is to think rightly, and everything else will be right, for pain is only an idea in the mind and if we refuse to believe in the pain it will cease to exist, and healing will follow as a matter of course. This is neither Christianity nor science, but it is the false spirit which John predicted eighteen centuries ago, and one of the harbingers of the final anti-Christ.

But there are many more abroad. There is real danger among those who know the Holy Ghost, that they should become absorbed or lifted up in their own self-consciousness, and thus be separated from Christ and the truth. Satan is trying to get us on a pinnacle of the temple that He may cast us down into some wild fanaticism or presumption. If we are God's true children he cannot kill us, but he can break our backs and disable us for the battle of the Lord. He can mar our testimony, cause our good to be evil spoken of, and make us so extravagant and ridiculous that we shall not commend our testimony to thoughtful and well-balanced men. May God give to us "the spirit of a sound mind," as well as of "love and power."

IV. THE SPIRIT OF VICTORY.

"Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world." 1 John 4:4.

The secret of victory is to recognize the Conqueror within and the adversary as a conquered foe. John does not say we shall overcome, but he says we have overcome them, because He that is in us is "greater than he that is in the world." "He that is in us" has already conquered, and He leads us on to His own victory. We are to meet the enemy as already subdued and, like Joshua and the hosts of Israel, to put our feet upon the necks of the giants and look into their faces with defiance. Satan has power only when he can make us dread him. He flees before the victorious faith and holy confidence.

At the same time, John fully recognizes the power of him that is in the world. "We are of God," he says later, "and the world lieth in the wicked one." It lies in his arms, a helpless captive,

taken alive at his will. He is the power that controls it, and, although it may look sometimes like a very cultivated, beautiful and civilized world, yet the principle that lies at the root of all its progress and power is human selfishness and, therefore, godlessness. Christ is not yet the sovereign of all the world. He is the sovereign of His people's hearts; He is in them; Satan is in the world. But the heart in which He dwells is already victor, and goes forth to every conflict with the battle cry, "Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

V. THE WITNESSING SPIRIT.

This is the last aspect under which the Holy Ghost is presented in the Epistle of John. "It is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit and the water and the blood, and these three agree in one," 1 John 5: 6, 8. The three witnesses who agree upon earth are the Holy Ghost, the water of baptism, and the blood of Jesus Christ which we commemorate in the Holy Supper, and which we recognize as the atonement for our sins, and the purchase of our redemption. It is of the witness of the Spirit that we are called, however, to speak here.

1. The Holy Ghost witnesses first through the Word, and this is John's argument in this passage. He says, "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which He hath testified of His Son; for God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." Then he goes on to say that if we receive not this witness "we make Him a liar, because we believe not the witness which God hath given of His Son." This is the message of the Gospel. It is the Holy Ghost that speaketh. It comes to men as God's witness and He declares to the sinner that God hath given to us eternal life, that this life is in His Son, and that if we accept His Son, we have life. Now our duty is to believe this witness, and to believe it implicitly and immediately; the moment we do believe it, it becomes true for us, and we are included in the objects of this great salvation. This is where faith must commence, by taking God's witness and believing His Word respecting our own salvation through Jesus Christ.

2. The Holy Ghost next witnesses in our hearts that that which we have believed is true for us and real to us. "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in Himself." The moment we believe the Word, that Word becomes effectual in our hearts and brings us into the actual experience of peace and salvation. The Word comes first and then the inward witness. We cannot receive the Holy Ghost's assurance of our acceptance of salvation, until we believe on the simple Word of God that we are accepted and saved, simply because we have come to Christ as He commanded us, and we are not cast out as He promised. Then the soul enters into a real and conscious peace and a delightful assurance, based upon God's Word and repeated by God's Spirit to the individual conscience, that we are the children of God.

3. The Holy Ghost witnesses to our deeper union with Christ and our divine Sonship. When the disciple fully yields himself to God, he is sealed with the Holy Ghost; the Spirit of Sonship is shed abroad in the heart, and Jesus Christ is made personal and real to the soul. The Spirit of

God testifies to our union with Him. And so Christ has said, "At that day"; namely, when the Spirit of God comes, "ye shall know that I am in the Father, He in me, and I in you." This is the sealing of the Spirit. This is the wedding ring forever authenticating the marriage of the soul to its Beloved.

4. The Holy Ghost witnesses to God's acceptance of our prayers. This follows in 1 John 5: 14, 15, "And this is the confidence we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us. And if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him."

5. The Holy Ghost witnesses to our service, and gives us the seal of power and usefulness. "God also bearing witness unto them with signs and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will," Hebrews 2: 4. We go forth to the service of Christ and the Holy Ghost bears witness to our service. He gives us power for service; He gives us souls for our seals; He makes our words effectual, and He makes our fruit "remain" for His glory and our own eternal joy.

Every servant of Christ who is baptized with the Holy Ghost has a right to expect the witness of the Spirit to his work. Just as of old, "they went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the Word with signs following," so still we have a right to expect "the signs following." Sometimes they are spiritual signs, in the conversion of souls; sometimes they are physical signs, in the healing of the body; sometimes they are circumstances of marvelous import, in answered prayer, difficulties removed, signal providences of God, and the manifesting of God's approval and blessing. So God has set His seal upon the missionary work of our day. So God has set His seal upon the testimony of those who have dared to claim the fullness of the gospel, and enter into all the riches of their inheritance. So God will set His seal upon every life that is fully consecrated and fully yielded to Him.

Beloved, claim the witness, expect the power; do not be satisfied without His seal to your testimony.

6. The Holy Ghost not only witnesses to us, but witnesses through us. The special object of His coming upon us is that we shall be witnesses unto Jesus. "Ye shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto Me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth."

This is the great ministry of the Spirit, to witness through the disciples of Christ to the Church, to the world, and especially to the heathen.

Beloved, have we, as we read these words, the consciousness that we have been true to our testimony? Have we stood for Christ in our home? Have we spoken to all in our household fearlessly and fully the witness of Christ Jesus? Can we say that we are "pure from the blood of

all men?" Are we known in our business and social circles as uncompromising friends of Christ? Have we dared to speak in the Church of Christ in every proper and becoming way the message and the witness of the Master? Is our position known? Are we out and out for Christ, and is it our joy and privilege, as opportunity is afforded, to bear witness to the unsaved, of Him who is able to save to the uttermost? And shall we some day find waiting for us a chorus of loving hearts that shall be our eternal crown and seal?

A few weeks ago, the writer had the great joy of standing in a pulpit before a large congregation, and hearing the pastor of that great Church rise and tell his people that more than twenty years before, he had been led to Christ by the one who now stood by his side, although this fact had never yet been known to this one, whom he introduced to his people as, under God, the instrument of his salvation and usefulness. As our heart thrilled with humble gratitude to God for such a privilege, we seemed to see the vision of a time when, in yonder heavenly world, one and another might come forward and greet us and lead us to the throne and tell the blessed Master that He had used us to bring them to God, and we for the first time should meet and know the children from many lands that the Holy Ghost had made seals of our ministry. O beloved, will anyone there be waiting and watching for thee? Have you some surprises in store at God's right hand when you shall "rest from your labors and your works shall follow you?"

Let us receive the fullness of the Spirit first, and then we cannot but give Him. Let Him witness in you and to you, and then He will surely witness through you. Oh, let us be so fully given to Him, that He can possess us and control us, and then can use us to reproduce in others blessing which we have received!

In a frontier Indian mission station, a little girl, one day, came to her teacher and said, "Teacher, will you let me do something?" The teacher asked her what she wanted to do. She said, "I want to give myself away to you, because I love you," and kneeling down by her side and putting her two hands in the teacher's, she said, "I give myself to you, because I love you." And the little heart just swelled with gladness, as she threw herself into the arms of her teacher, so glad to be owned and loved.

A few days afterwards she asked the teacher how she could consecrate herself to Christ. She had heard about it, but didn't understand it. The teacher said, "Darling, just give yourself away to Jesus as you gave yourself away to me."

A light came into the little face, and kneeling down again beside her teacher, she clasped her hands, and looking up with holy reverence, said, "Jesus I give myself to You, because I love You;" and then the Holy Ghost came down and she knew she was sealed His own forever.

She had a very wicked father in a distant station, a cruel, brutal man who refused to listen to the gospel. She began to pray for him, and one day she asked the teacher if anything could be done to save him. "Why," said her teacher, "write to him and tell him that you have given

yourself away to Jesus, and ask him to do the same." The little letter was sent with many tears and prayers. Days and weeks passed by, but nothing seemed to come out of it. She did not know but he was fiercely angry and waiting for some terrible revenge. But one day he appeared at the mission. He had walked fifty miles, and was tired and broken, and tears were running down his face. He asked for the teacher, and then he requested to be baptized. He said he had come "to give himself away to Jesus," and amid the rejoicings of his little one, and all at the station, the rough, brutal, wicked man gave himself to Jesus and became a humble follower and fearless witness of the Savior he had hated and despised.

Beloved, shall we let Him have us, and then shall we let Him use us likewise?

'The Holy Spirit' or 'Power from on High'

by A. B. Simpson,

Volume 2 - Chapter 25 THE HOLY SPIRIT IN JUDE

"These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit. But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." Jude 19-21.

The Epistle of Jude, like the Apocalypse which follows it, is written for the last times. It draws a striking contrast between the first and last chapters of human history, especially in the forms of wickedness which prevailed at the beginning and will return at the end, and it records a prophecy of the Lord's return uttered by Enoch in antediluvian times, and soon to be fulfilled in the times in which it is our lot to live.

In the present passage, Jude describes two classes of men and draws a strong contrast between them. They resemble each other, but the one is the counterfeit of the other. The forms of wickedness that are to be most dangerous in the times of the end, are not those marked by open defiance of God, but those that shall be cloaked under a form of godliness without the power, and be Satan's counterfeits of the Holy Ghost. Let us look first at the counterfeits, and then at the genuine people.

I. SATAN'S COUNTERFEIT PEOPLE.

"These are they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit," Jude 19. This is an unhappy translation. The word sensual, as used in current speech, means immoral, gross, licentious and openly wicked. The Greek word does not convey this impression. The word sensuous would be nearer to it, but even this is too strong. The word natural is better, and it is so translated in the second chapter of First Corinthians -- "the natural man." The only way to convey the true conception is to Anglicize the Greek word, and call it "psychical." It is derived from the Greek word 'psyche,' meaning the soul. It describes the intermediate part of human nature. Man, according to the philosophy of the Bible, is a trinity like his Creator, consisting of spirit, soul, and body. The spirit is the higher nature, that which knows God, distinguishes between right and wrong, and is capable of religious affections, emotions, and exercises. The physical is the other extreme. It is the material organism indwelt by the soul and spirit, and the instrument of its desires, purposes, and operations. Intermediate between these two is the soul, the natural mind, the seat of the affections, the understanding, the tastes, that which loves and hates, that which thinks, that which can be cultivated, and which has at once its lower passions and its finer tastes. The psychical man is the man that is controlled by this department of his being.

There are three conditions in which we may live. First, we may be controlled by our lower nature, our animal existence, our body and its gross appetites. This is pure sensuality. Secondly, we may be controlled by our tastes, by our intelligence, by our affections and passions, by our psychical nature. Thirdly, we may be controlled by our spiritual nature.

The psychical man is the man that is controlled by his natural mind, whether its tendencies be high or low. He is the man born of his mother, descended from Adam, inheriting a fallen human nature, and acting entirely from its promptings. He may be a very refined man, a very intellectual man, a very intelligent man, a very affectionate man, a man full of domestic virtues and patriotic fire, but he is a natural man.

Now all these three departments of our nature are fallen and under the curse. Our body is subject disease and death. Our soul has become self-centered and has wound about itself and its own gratification, a watch spring around its center. And even our spirit is fallen; the conscience is deranged; the will is enfeebled and wrongly directed, and our highest aspirations and intuitions are under the influence of wicked spirits and unholy motives.

It is not enough for us to subject each or all the departments of our nature to any one of them, even to the spirit, because our natural spirit is fallen, too. Some people think that all that is necessary is to crucify the body, to put it into a cage, feed it on herbs and roots, deny it every gratification, and sometime it may lose its evil propensities. This has been proved to be a monstrous failure. The moment the restraint has been removed, it has sprung back to all its former tendencies. You may crush it, but you cannot destroy its evil trend.

Some again tell us that all we need is to exterminate the soul, to crucify our human passions, our earthly affections, our natural tastes and desires, and become cold, abstracted, and spiritual. Well, the devil is a spirit, but he is the most wicked of spirits. The monk in his cell, shut off from every earthly thought, desire, and affection, may be the incarnation of wickedness, Jesuitism, cruelty and unholy ambition.

God's remedy is to yield up the whole man -- spirit, soul, and body to God, hand it over to death, and then receive a new creation, a converted body, a regenerated soul, a new spirit in the glorious work of a complete conversion. But even this is not enough; for even when converted, we will, if left to ourselves, relapse again, and therefore we need not only a new heart and a new spirit, but the HOLY SPIRIT to enter and keep the new man, to garrison the heart and mind, to hold the citadel, to dwell and walk within us, and "cause us to keep His statutes."

Now, the apostle says of these men that they have not the Spirit. They have a substitute for it, and it is their own spirit, or rather their own soul, their carnal mind, their human wisdom, their cultivated nature. They are psychical men.

Well, the generation has not passed away, the world is full of them still. What is Theosophy? What is Christian Science? What is much of our modern preaching? What is the religion of culture? It can weep under the pathos and eloquence of the preacher; it can even preach under the impulse of impassioned eloquence until the people weep, but both preacher and people may be but psychical men after all. Perhaps they weep today in the church, and will weep tomorrow in the theater. When the French were shedding streams of human blood in the terrible revolution of a hundred years ago, they were spending their evenings in the theater of Paris shedding floods of tears over sentimental plays. There is a great deal of counterfeit feeling even in modern religion.

The sublime oratorio may lift your soul to raptures of delight; the perfect harmonies of the classic hymn may charm your cultivated taste, but this is not religious feeling. Nay, you may even bow beneath the magnificent arch of yonder Cathedral, and in its dim religious light you may feel a kind of awe that you think is worship, but it is pure sentiment, and you can go out from all this to live for self and sin. It is mere psychology. It is only the kindling of the human mind. Thus heathen idolatry rouses its votaries to intensest feeling and overpowering enthusiasm.

Thus poetry, art, music and eloquence in every age have charmed and thrilled the human mind. But it is only human feeling after all, and has nothing to do with the work of the Holy Ghost. The power of the Spirit reaches the conscience and convicts it of sin, enlightens the understanding, and reveals the differences between right and wrong, and the beauty and authority of the will of God. It touches the will, and crucifies it to its own selfish choice, and then conforms it in glad surrender to the will of God; it controls the whole life in simple and practical obedience and service. There may be far less sentiment and feeling, "but by their fruits ye shall know them."

We have to guard against the counterfeit, and not mistake the psychical for the spiritual, for the "natural man (the psychical man) receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned."

The natural man, of "flesh and blood, cannot inherit the Kingdom of God." The Adam race cannot enter the eternal home, but through death to life we must pass into the resurrection of Christ, and through His spiritual life, born of the Second Man, the Lord from heaven, we share His eternal inheritance.

"He that saveth his life [psyche] shall lose it, but he that loseth his life for My sake shall keep it unto life eternal." We must lay down this self-life even in its sweetest and highest forms. Shall we lose it forever? Nay, we shall receive it back in resurrection power, and in the ages to come shall have a grander culture and a nobler satisfaction forever. Some day God will clothe us with the rainbows and cause us to shine as the sun in the Kingdom of our Father, and He will give us a mind, a capacity, a test to appreciate and enjoy it, too, and yet hold it only for His glory.

II. THE SPIRITUAL MAN.

"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

1. The spiritual man is a man of faith. Faith is the foundation of the Christian life and character, and on this foundation we build up ourselves. We can grow no wider than the foundation. We can advance only "according to our faith." We are to "add to our faith courage, knowledge, temperance, godliness, brotherly kindness and charity," and all the graces of Christian life. They are to be taken by faith and, step by step, we are to go forward by successively receiving from the fullness of Christ, "from faith to faith," from grace to grace, from day to day.

The spiritual man is a man of love. "Keep yourselves in the love of God." While faith is the foundation, love is the element in which we grow and live, and so Christ has said, "Abide in My love." It is the congenial atmosphere of our life and growth. Love is life, and only as we keep ourselves in the love of God and dwell in the cloudless communion of His fellowship, can we grow.

3. The spiritual man is a man of hope. He has a glorious outlook; he has a heavenly horizon; he has an infinite vision. From day to day the vision grows larger, and the inspiration grander. There can be nothing glorious without hope, and the higher the hope the mightier its inspiration.

Ours is a glorious hope, an infinite hope, looking out on the eternal years and reaching up to the very heights of God. And as we live under the influence of this blessed hope, we are raised to a majesty and grandeur that dwarfs all petty earthly things and gives sublimity to our life and character.

4. The spiritual man is sustained and upheld in his life of faith, and love, and hope, by the prayer of the Holy Ghost. This is the power that impels his life; this is the inspiration that upholds his faith, and hope, and love; this is the force that continually supplies the strength of his whole. The Holy Ghost has come to undertake the whole care and responsibility of the consecrated life. He takes His place there as the Pilot upon the deck to bring the vessel into the harbor; as the Contractor for that building, providing all necessary supplies for its erection and completion; as the Teacher and Trainer of some important school, undertaking the whole discipline of that young and precious life; as the Mother, undertaking the care and oversight of her precious child; as the Commander-in-Chief for some great campaign, with his eye and hand on every detail of the conflict -- so the Holy Ghost sits down as the Author and Finisher of our spiritual life. He is looking forward every moment to the glorious consummation. He has understood, as we cannot understand, God's glorious plan for us. He sees us every moment as we shall be when we shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of our Father. He comprehends the perils that surround us, the defects within us, the temptations without us, and all the possibilities and disabilities of our life, and He has determined to carry us through in spite of all

to the glorious consummation.

Now He does this through the ministry of prayer. He takes us into partnership with Him in the work of our own development and full salvation. He does not work upon us as the potter upon the plastic clay, but He works with us and requires our cooperation with Him; so, as each need arises, He gently lays it upon our own heart; He whispers it to us as a breath of prayer, or a burden of desire, and He leads us out to present it to the Father in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, step by step, moment by moment, He prays out in us every need of our own life, every need of our work, every need of the other lives that He lays upon us, and the Father sends the answer in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is not a moment in the believer's life when the Holy Ghost is not vigilantly, tenderly watching over him,, and guarding him with more than a mother's care. And if we were only more sensitive to understand, more quick to hear, more ready to respond, our lives would be one ceaseless breath of prayer, and everything would come to us through the blessed channel of the Spirit's intercession. Then truly we would "pray without ceasing," and "in everything give thanks," and "wait upon our God continually." Then we should never miss a single hint, suggestion, or ministry of prayer; but we would be in perfect touch with our blessed Guide and have the continual consciousness of His approval, and the sense of meeting His highest, fullest thought.

This, beloved, is the secret of many an experience which you have not perhaps understood. This is the explanation of that depression that sometimes falls upon your heart and brings the tears gushing to your eyes, or makes you bury your head in your hands and pour out a supplication which you cannot comprehend. He sees some need, some peril, which you cannot comprehend, and He is praying against some evil which some day you will know. When you are about to take a false step, to enter upon a wrong path, to miss some important call, or to be deceived by some subtle wile of Satan, He is there to pray the prayer within you which may be only a groan that cannot be uttered; but if you are wise you will yield to it, and you will answer to His touch. Often it is a prayer for some other life, some soul in peril, somebody in dire distress or disease, some cause that needs assistance, some wrong that needs resistance, some need of the Master's heart which He is letting you share with Him.

Oh, to be more sensitive to His voice, and more obedient to the prayer of the Holy Ghost! Then we should miss nothing of His highest will, and your life would be all sunshine in the presence of the Lord.

Now, what is the prayer of the Holy Ghost?

1. The Holy Ghost lays upon us the desire and burden of prayer. Sometimes we understand it; sometimes we do not. Sometimes it is a joyful consciousness of spiritual elevation; sometimes it is an unutterable and inarticulate groan. Sometimes it is a definite sense of need, a consciousness of personal defect, or a heart-searching sense of our own emptiness and

failure. It is a blessed thing to "hunger and thirst after righteousness." The sense of need is the shadow side of the blessing. Let us thank the Holy Ghost when He gives us the burden of prayer.

It was God's highest commendation of Daniel of old that he was "a Man of Desires," and it is the promise of God that if we delight in the Lord "He will give to us the desires of our heart."

2. The Holy Ghost enables us to pray according to the will of God. He gives us direction in our prayers. He saves us from wasting our breath and asking at random. He illuminates our mind to understand the Scriptural foundations of prayer, and makes us understand the things that are agreeable to the will of God, enabling us to ask with confidence that it is His will, and that we have the petitions that we desired of Him.

Mr. George Muller often says that it takes him much longer to decide what he is to pray about, than to obtain the answer to his prayer when he does present his petition.

3. The Holy Ghost gives us access into the presence of God. He creates for us the atmosphere of prayer. He gives us the sense of the Father's presence. He leads us to the door of mercy and steadies our hand as we hold out the scepter of prayer, and reveals to us that inner world of divine things which none but he that feels it, knows.

4. The Holy Ghost enables us to pray in the name of Jesus. He shows us our redemption rights through the great Mediator, and coming in His name we can ask even as He, and humbly, yet confidently claim, "Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard me, and I know that Thou hearest Me always."

5. The Holy Ghost enables us to pray in faith, "for He that cometh unto God, must believe that He is, and that He is the rewarder of those that diligently seek Him."

He enables us when we pray to "believe that we receive the things that we ask," and to rest in the Master's word, without anxiety or fear. He witnesses to the heart the quiet assurance of acceptance and He sustains us in the trial of our faith which follows, enabling us still to trust and not be afraid.

6. The Holy Ghost enables us to pray the prayer of love, as well as the prayer of faith. The Holy Ghost leads us into the dignity and power of our holy priesthood, laying upon us the burdens of the Great High Priest, and permitting us to be partakers of "that which remaineth of the sufferings of Christ for His Body, the Church." In this blessed ministry we are often made conscious of the needs of others, and permitted to hold up some suffering or tempted life in the hour of peril; and we shall find some day that many a life was saved, many a victory won, and many a blessing enjoyed through this hallowed ministry that reaches those we love by way of the throne, when we never could have reached them directly.

When we become wholly emancipated from our own selfish cares and worries, and fully at leisure for the burdens of the Master, the Spirit is glad to lay upon us the needs of the multitudes of God's people, and the burdens of the whole Church and Kingdom of Christ, so that it is possible to have a ministry as wide as the world, and as high as that of our great High Priest, before the Throne.

7. The Holy Ghost leads us into the spirit of communion, so that when we have nothing to ask we are held in the blessed silence and wordless fellowship in the bosom of God. This should become the very atmosphere of our being.

Finally, as we thus "pray in the Holy Ghost" we shall be enabled to "build ourselves up on our most holy faith," we shall "keep ourselves in the love of God," and we shall "look" in heavenly vision "for the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." And the benediction of this beautiful epistle shall be fulfilled in our lives. "Now unto Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen."

'The Holy Spirit' or 'Power from on High'

by A. B. Simpson,

Volume 2 - Chapter 26 THE SEVENFOLD HOLY GHOST

"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day." Rev. 1: 10.

"The seven Spirits which are before his throne." Rev. 1: 4.

"And before the throne seven lamps of fire, which are the seven Spirits of God." Rev. 4: 5.

"Having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." Rev. 5: 6.

The book of Revelation is the last message of the Holy Ghost to the Church of Christ. It was given after the first generation of Christians had passed away, and only John was left of all the immediate followers of the Lord. Christ had been half a century in heaven, and He came back once more to visit the Apostle at Patmos, and give the final unfolding of His will to His followers of these last days of the dispensation. It is peculiarly, therefore, the message of Christ to us; and it is called in the Apocalypse itself, the message of "the Spirit unto the churches."

In the passages that come before us now we have a picture of the Holy Ghost Himself as He came to John in this Apocalypse.

I. THE SEVENFOLD FULLNESS OF THE SPIRIT.

The seven Spirits which are before the throne cannot mean any created spirit, for it would be blasphemy to associate any lower beings than divine persons with the Father and the Son in the ascription of glory and worship given to the Trinity in this passage.

It is evidently the Holy Ghost represented as a sevenfold Spirit. Seven, the number of perfection, is used to denote the perfect fullness of the divine Spirit in His attributes and works. He is the Spirit of all power and wisdom, all life and love, all grace and fullness, all that we can ever need for the fulfilling of life's duties and the accomplishing of God's perfect will for each of us.

We might stop to specify the seven great attributes of the Holy Ghost, as the Spirit of Light, the Spirit of Life, the Spirit of Holiness, the Spirit of Power, the Spirit of Joy, the Spirit of Love and the Spirit of Hope; but when we have named these seven glorious aspects there are yet as

many more that we might still name, for, like the love of Jesus, the love and grace of the Holy Ghost pass our knowledge.

Can you think of anything you need for your spiritual life, your physical being, or your service for God and man? You can find it in the Holy Ghost. Is there any place where you have failed, or others have failed? That is just the place that He is equal to with the grace that never fails. "He hath given to us ALL THINGS THAT PERTAIN TO LIFE AND GODLINESS," and "He is able to make all grace abound unto us, so that we always, having all sufficiency in all things, may abound unto every good work."

Then the mention of the seven Spirits in connection with the seven Churches would seem to suggest the beautiful truth that there is a separate aspect of the Holy Spirit for each separate Church. He is not the same to all; He is direct and specific in His relation to His Churches and to His people, and the whole of His love and grace is given distinctively to each one. Just as a fond mother with a dozen children gives her whole heart to each of her children, so the Holy Ghost gives Himself to each of us specifically, and you and I can press up to the place where John lies upon the Redeemer's breast, and dare to call ourselves the "disciple whom Jesus loved."

Beloved are we fully proving the sevenfold Holy Ghost?

II. THE FULLNESS OF THE SPIRIT OF LIGHT.

"Seven lamps of fire before the Throne." Rev. 4:5.

This is a picture of the fullness of the Spirit of light. It comes in the midst of a scene of grandeur and terror. A door is opened in heaven, and John beholds the throne of the eternal Jehovah, surrounded with the insignia of majesty and the manifestations of God's avenging wrath and power.

Judgment is about to begin upon a wicked world, and the spirits of wickedness that have so long possessed it. There are voices of thunder and lightnings of wrath gleaming from the central throne, but in the midst appear these seven lamps of fire, shedding their benignant light upon the lurid scene, and immediately all is transformed. Before the throne is a sea of glass like unto crystal, and the scene of judgment becomes changed to one of peace. And then "the Lamb in the midst of the throne" appears, and the songs of the whole creation arise to God and to the Lamb.

These seven lamps before the throne remind us of the vision of Zechariah in the fourth chapter of His prophecy, representing the Holy Ghost as the sevenfold light of the Church, and the oil of that supplies the ever-burning lamps. We have no other light but the Holy Ghost, and His is perfect light, sevenfold effulgence, shining upon every mystery, every perplexity, and every step in life's pathway.

He gives to us the light of the Holy Scriptures, revealing the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation, and the will of God for our conduct. He is the light of life, giving guidance in our pathway, and showing us how to walk through the tangled mazes of life. He is the Light that searches and reveals our heart, and then shows us the precious blood that cleanses, and the promise suited for every time of need. He is the perfect Light that never deceives, that never exaggerates, that never evades or hides the most painful truth, that never changes, fails or leaves us in darkness.

And He is not only the Light, but He is also Peace and warmth, He is "a burning," as well as "a shining Light." He gives life as well as light, power as well as direction, love as well as truth, and when we receive His light we become also "burning and shining lights," and our lives will be living illustrations of the truths that we profess and the principles that we hold.

III. THE HOLY SPIRIT AS THE SOURCE OF PERFECT SIGHT.

"Having seven horns and seven eyes which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." Rev. 5 : 6.

This is the most sublime vision of the Lord Jesus Christ in the whole book of Revelation. As the evangelist stands looking into heaven, he beholds a scroll containing, it would seem, the purpose and the will of God for the future ages, sealed. No man in earth or heaven was able to open the scroll, or loose the seals. Suddenly an angel turning to him, explained that the mystery was about to be solved and that One had been found that was able to loose the seals and open the scroll. It was the Lion of the tribe of Judah, who had prevailed to loose the seals "and open the book."

As John stood looking for the Lion, lo! it was a Lamb, bearing the crimson marks of suffering and death, and yet, on closer inspection, wearing also the insignia of infinite power and wisdom, for he had seven horns and seven eyes, the types of perfect power and perfect knowledge.

These seven eyes represent the seven Spirits of God, that is the sevenfold Spirit of God, sent forth into all the earth. We need more than light; we need sight to see the light, the power of an inward illumination, the creation and quickening of a new set of spiritual senses that can take cognizance of the new spiritual realities that the Holy Ghost reveals, and that can recognize the person and the presence of the Lord Jesus, whom it is the Spirit's great delight to make manifest. And so the Holy Ghost is represented here as the eyes of Christ, the eyes of God within us for our illumination.

This suggests the beautiful expression in one of the Psalms, "I will guide thee with Mine eye." God gives us His very eyes, and in His light enables us to see all spiritual truth and all divine realities. Therefore, it is quite significant that when our Lord Jesus Christ had revealed Himself

in the Gospel of John as the light of the world, He immediately follows His beautiful teaching by healing a blind man, thus suggesting to them that what they needed was vision, even more than truth. And then He proceeded to tell them that He had come into the world, "that they which see might be made blind, and they that were blind might see, "and that their very confidence in their own wisdom was the cause of their blindness and their inability to understand His teaching.

This is what the Holy Ghost brings to us, the vision of the Lord, power to see divine things as God sees them. Not only does He give us the knowledge of the truth, but the realization of it. Not only does He reveal to us the promises, but He enables us to appropriate them. Not only does He show us the living bread and the flowing water of life, but He opens our mouths to drink, and gives us the taste to receive and know the blessedness of these things. Not only does He speak to us; He speaks through us, thinks in us, gives us divine instincts and intuitions, and enables even our own sanctified judgment to act under His influence and by His suggestion, so simply and yet so perfectly that it is not so much God speaking to us, as God speaking through us, and "working in us to will and to do of His good pleasure."

These seven eyes, we will notice, are the eyes of the Lamb as well as the eyes of the Holy Ghost. Perfect unity between the Spirit and the Son is most strikingly expressed in this strong and sublime figure. The seven horns represent the power of the enthroned Christ and the seven eyes represent the wisdom of the indwelling Holy Ghost. Between these horns and eyes, between the infinite power of Jesus and the infinite wisdom of the Holy Ghost how can we ever fall or fail?

Let us ever recognize the Holy Ghost as the Spirit of Jesus, and let us ever honor the slain Lamb, as we honor the Holy Ghost.

Again, the eyes of the Lord are represented as "sent forth into all the earth." The Holy Ghost is operating not from heaven, but from earth. The infinite wisdom of God is present with His Church to direct, guard, and energize all her work for Him, until the mystery of redemption shall be accomplished, until the seals of the scroll shall all have been opened, and the vision all fulfilled in the glorious return of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

IV. IN THE SPIRIT ON THE LORD'S DAY.

Having given us this account of the fullness of the Holy Ghost, he next speaks of His relation to us. John says, "I was in the Spirit." Observe he does not say -- "The Spirit was in me." This is also true but the other expresses a greater truth. A Spirit so sevenfold, so vast in His resources and attributes, is too large even for the whole of the human heart, therefore, he becomes an ocean of boundless fullness in which we are submerged and in which we dwell. As we listen to the expression it seems as if we were standing beside a spring, and we drank from it until we were filled. Then it still kept flowing on until it became a pool, and then an ocean, a great and boundless flood into which we were plunged until we could find neither fathoming line nor

shore, but laved [washed] and drank, until we were lost in the ocean of His infinite fullness. This is the divine conception. The Holy Ghost is the very element and atmosphere in which we live, as the mote in the sunbeam, as the bird in the air, as the fish in the sea, as our lungs in the ether whose oxygen we inhale, and on whose breath we live. Not only are we filled with the air by a single inspiration, but the air is all around us still, and we can breathe and breathe and breathe again, and yet again, until it becomes the source of our ceaseless life, and only limited by our capacity to receive it.

It is our privilege not only to be thus in the Spirit in seasons of holy rapture and special elevation, but we may dwell there, abiding in Him and He in us, so that it shall be true, indeed, in a spiritual sense "in Him we live and move and have our being." Then will every day be "the Lord's day"; then will all life be one ceaseless Sabbath of holy rest and heavenly fellowship, and every place be a sanctuary, every season a Sabbath, and every moment a heaven of peace and joy and love.

"Come blessed, holy, heavenly Dove,
Spirit of light and life and love,
Revive our souls we pray,
Come with the power of Pentecost,
Come as the sevenfold Holy Ghost
And fill our hearts today."

'The Holy Spirit' or 'Power from on High'

by A. B. Simpson,

Volume 2 - Chapter 27

THE SPIRIT'S MESSAGE TO THE CHURCHES

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Rev. 3: 22.

The seven letters of the Lord Jesus to the seven churches of Asia contain the last message of the Holy Ghost to the Churches of the Christian age. These messages were not addressed to the Apostolic Church; for all the apostles except John were already in heaven, and the first two generations of Christians had passed away. In a very peculiar sense these epistles represent the message of the risen Savior and the Holy Ghost to the Churches of the last days and our own times. While they are the words of the Lord Jesus Himself, they are also represented, in that perfect unity which the Scriptures constantly recognize between the Spirit and the Son, as the words which the Spirit saith unto the Churches.

A short circuit through the western part of Asia Minor would take one in the order of these epistles from Ephesus to Smyrna, and thence to Pergamos, Thyatira, and the other cities mentioned. It has been supposed by many thoughtful interpreters, that these Churches represent in chronological order the successive conditions of Christianity from the time of John to the end of the age. This is doubtless true to a certain extent.

Ephesus, strong in its orthodoxy, zeal and Christian work, represented the Church immediately after the apostolic age. Smyrna, persecuted and suffering, represented the next epoch of persecution and martyrdom. Then came the reaction of Pergamos, the prosperous and worldly Church with its greater perils and temptations representing the period of Constantine, when Christianity was the established religion of the State, and the world had ceased to oppose and exchanged her persecuting frown for the fawning smile of seductive pleasure.

The Church at Thyatira represents the next stage, the rise of spiritual corruption, and especially of the Romish apostasy. This is naturally followed by Sardis, a condition of entire spiritual death, which well represents the darkness and death of the middle ages.

Philadelphia follows, feeble, but true, loyal to Christ's word and name, and receiving His approval and benediction. This represents the Reformation era, the cause of that and the revival of spiritual life and power under Luther, Cranmer, Knox, Doddridge, Baxter, and the religious life and deeper spiritual movements which have been going forward, in a blessed minority of the Churches of Christ, during these later centuries.

There is yet one picture more, it is the Church of the Laodiceans, rich, prosperous, self-satisfied, widely respectable, but thoroughly lukewarm, indifferent, and deeply offensive to the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ. He stands as One outside the door, knocking for admission, warning of coming judgment, and soon to return again and sit down upon His Millennial throne. Surely this represents the Church of today, and the still more worldly Church of the immediate future, the last age of Christianity before the coming of the Lord.

Now, while the picture is chronologically true, at the same time each of these Churches represents a condition of things that is permanent and perpetual to the time of the end. While Ephesus represents the first ages of Christianity, yet it is found all the way through. While Philadelphia represents the dawn of the Reformation, yet the spirit of Philadelphia runs on, and the representatives of true revival and vital Christianity are found to the close, and so all these Churches are concurrent as well as successive.

They represent seven conditions of Christianity which may almost always be found in some quarter of Christendom, and to which the Holy Ghost is speaking His last solemn message of warning, reproof, or promise. Let us look at them in this light.

I. THE SPIRIT'S MESSAGE TO THE STRONG CHURCH.

The Church at Ephesus was a strong Church. It was full of good works. "I know thy works," and not only thy works, "thy labor" -- works that cost something, "and thy patience" -- works that are continuous. It was an orthodox and a jealous Church, which stood firmly for what it believed to be the truth, and it withstood without compromise all that was false and counterfeit. "Thou hast tried these that call themselves Apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars." This is a very high testimony, and one would think that a Church of which the Master can say so much, must be considerably in advance even of the average standing. But the Lord is not satisfied with Ephesus. The Spirit's message is one of the deepest searching and condemnation. Our English version poorly expresses the emphatic meaning of this condemnation. It is not "I have somewhat against thee," but rather "I have against thee." I have so much against thee, that if thou dost not change this cause of offence and reproof I cannot bear thee; I will not suffer thee; "I will come unto thee and remove the candlestick out of its place, except thou repent."

What was this grave charge? What was this solemn omission? "Thou hast left thy first love." It was the lack of love, the lack of fervor, the lack of devotion to the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. They had the active and the orthodox element, but they had not the heart life, without which all these are but empty forms, and for which Christ will accept no substitute.

You do not marry a wife to do your cooking and washing as an African savage, but to be your companion, and to give you the devotion of her heart. If she were to excuse her want of love, by the fact that she had so much work to do, you would tell her that a servant could do your work, but only a wife could give you the love for which your heart longs. This is what Jesus asks from His Church, and He will take nothing else instead.

What is this first love? Is it the intense demonstrativeness which we manifest at our conversion, that glad overflowing, perhaps over-effervescent devotion of childhood, which passes into sober and earnest but quiet habits of faithfulness and obedience? And are we to accept His reproof if we do not always feel the excitement of our first experiences? Certainly not. First love does not mean the love we have first had when we were converted, because He wants us to have something better as the days go by. It is not first in the order of time, but it is first in the order of importance. He means the love that puts Him first, the love that gives Him the supreme place, the love that makes Him the first waking consciousness, and the last thought as we fall asleep at night, the supreme joy of all our being, the gladly accepted sovereign of our will and all our actions, and the One apart from whom we have and want nothing; the first and last of our heart's affections, and our life's aim. This is what Christ expects, and without this love our noblest liberality, our loftiest zeal, our busiest work, is but a sounding brass, a tinkling cymbal, and a disappointing mockery to His loving heart.

This is the first and the last message of the Holy Ghost to these seven Churches. Jesus wants your love. A dear Christian friend once passed through a peculiar experience. It seemed to her as if Christ was not satisfied with her life, and so she began to plan for more work. She added another Sunday School class, another Ladies' Society, a few more hours of laborious work, and still she was not satisfied. Month after month the hunger grew, and the sense of disappointment only increased.

At last she threw herself before Him, and said, "Lord, will you not show me what it is You want? What more can I do to please You?" And then a gentle voice seemed to whisper to her, "It's not more work I want, but more love, and I want you to work less and love Me more." And as she let herself fall into His loving arms, and learned to lean upon His breast, and sit like Mary at His feet, while Martha was bustling around with her busy work, she found that what the Master wanted was her heart, and her first love. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

II. THE SPIRIT'S MESSAGE TO THE SUFFERING CHURCH.

Rev. 2: 8-11. The Church in Smyrna was a martyr Church. It represents the suffering people of God in every age. It is not always outward fire. There is a keener pain in the white heat of inward trial, and there are sorrows still for human hearts to bear, as piercing as in the martyr days. What is the Spirit's message to the suffering church? "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life." Do not get out of your trouble as easily and as quickly as you can by any possible means, but rather be faithful in your trouble, be faithful even if it kills you; be faithful not until death, but unto death, faithful even at the cost of death itself. The great temptation to the tried ones is to regard deliverance from trouble as the principal thing.

How noble the example of the men of Babylon in contrast with this! "If it be so," they said, "our God is able to deliver us, and He will deliver us out of thy hand, oh king; but if not, be it known

unto thee, oh king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." That is the true attitude of faithfulness, to stand like Christ in the wilderness, refusing the devil's help, until God Himself shall set us free, or accept the sacrifice at its fullest cost. This is the greatest need of today, the backbone and the royal blood of self-sacrificing loyalty to principle and to God. When the Holy Ghost can find such men and women, He can accomplish anything by them.

III. THE SPIRIT'S MESSAGE TO THE WORLDLY CHURCH.

This is represented by Pergamos. Rev. 2: 12-17.

This Church dwelt where Satan's seat was, and Satan's throne is in the world. Its special danger was the doctrine of Balaam, the temptation to go to worldly banquet with the great and influential, to eat of things sacrificed to idols, and to indulge in unholy pleasure, holding the doctrine of the Nicolaitans -- the form of godliness, and yet the liberty to sin.

This is the peculiar temptation of the Church of today, to hold on to God with one hand, and to the world with the other, to compromise sterling principle for the approval of the influential and the great, to go to their feasts, keep in touch with social amusements, to retain their influence and approval, and yet pretend to be true to God. In contrast with the forbidden bread, and the forbidden love of this present evil world, the Holy Spirit offers something better -- the hidden manna of the heavenly banquet, and the everlasting love of the Lord Jesus Christ, represented by the white stone with the new name written upon it, which no man knoweth save he to whom it is given.

Let us refuse the temptation of the world's bread and the world's friendship, and some day we shall sit down in His banqueting house, and His banner over us will be love as He receives us to the Marriage of the Lamb, and gives us the rapture of His own love, one thrill of which would compensate for an eternity of earthly delight.

Beloved, is He speaking to some of you? Is the world plausibly trying to win you to a worldly life? "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

IV. THE SPIRIT'S MESSAGE TO THE CORRUPT CHURCH.

Thyatira represents the age of corruption, and the counterfeit life of the wicked one. The striking phrase found in this epistle -- "the depths of Satan" -- well represents the abominable mysteries of the Papacy, and the kindred perils which are gathering around the church in these last days, through Satan's counterfeits and the false life of Thyatira.

This will doubtless increase as the age draws to its close. There will be false prophets; there will be visions, illuminations, revelations, "osophies" and "isms" yet more and more.

In opposition to these, the Holy Ghost has given us a safe criterion in this epistle, "I will put upon you none other burden, but that which ye have already, hold fast till I come." This settles the whole question. There is to be no new revelation, no new Bible, no new authoritative voice from heaven. We have it all now in the Holy Scriptures, and all we have to do is "that which we have, hold fast till He come."

These men come to us with their theosophies and their revelations, telling us, as the serpent told Eve, of higher life and loftier spiritual planes; but it is the false, elusive light of the lamps of the pit. In answer to it, we have only to hold up the word of God, and all these illusions will be exposed, even as the sunlight not only chases away the darkness of the night, but eclipses the feeble torchlight glare.

In contrast with all this, how glorious the promise which the Spirit gives to the faithful overcomer! In opposition to the devil power which the adversary offers, and the false light of his revelations, the Lord Jesus says, "I will give him that overcometh power over the nations in the millennial kingdom, at My second coming and the true light of the Morning Star," the power and the light which are from above, and which shall be forever. O, beloved, are any of us turning our eyes to the false delusive torchlights of error, fanaticism, superstition and a false mysticism? "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

V. THE SPIRIT'S MESSAGE TO A DEAD CHURCH.

Sardis represents the culmination of all that has gone before, a Church which has a name to live, but which is really dead. What is His message to such a Church? Alas! it is useless to speak to a dead Church, but He can speak only to the remnant that is still alive within it. And to these He says, "I have a few names, even in Sardis, that have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy."

If God has placed you in such a community, you can stand faithful; you can live in vital connection with Him, and you stand as a true confessor of Christ where all around are dead. And to such He gives a glorious promise; "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out His name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels." "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

Beloved, be true, though you stand alone, and someday you will hear your name confessed before the Father's throne.

VI. THE SPIRITS MESSAGE TO THE LITTLE FLOCK OF FAITHFUL ONES.

The Church in Philadelphia meets nothing but words of approval from the Lord. It is the little Church, it has but little strength, but it has been faithful in two respects. It has been true to

Christ's word and loyal to His name. It holds its testimony clear and true to the word of God and the holy Scriptures, and in contrast with ecclesiastical names and outward forms, it recognizes and honors the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. The holy Scriptures and the living Christ, these are its testimonies. It is easy to recognize the true evangelical flock of Christ by these signs in all the ages, and especially in these last days.

In contrast with higher criticism, down grades and latitudinarian views, are we standing, beloved, for the simple authoritative, unchanging Word of God? In contrast with all other names are we standing for the person, the divinity, the glory, and the all-sufficient grace of the living Christ, and proving the power of Jesus' name?

Then for us also the Spirit speaks these mighty promises: First, "an open door" of service, that none can shut; secondly, a part in the glorious translation of the bride at the coming of the Lord. "I will keep thee from the hour of temptation that is coming upon all the world, to try them that dwell on the face of the whole earth"; thirdly, a place of permanence and honor in the new Jerusalem, a part in the Millennial kingdom of our Lord, where we shall stand, as pillars in His temple, bearing the name of the new Jerusalem, and the new name Jesus Christ, identifying us with Him in His personal love and glory forever.

O beloved, in view of this high calling and these glorious truths, let us be true, and "he that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

VII. THE SPIRIT'S MESSAGE TO AN INDIFFERENT CHURCH.

There is something awfully suggestive in the fact that the Church of the Laodiceans is spoken of quite differently from all the others. Even Sardis was recognized as His Church; but this last Church is not His Church, but theirs. It is the "church of the Laodiceans," and He seems to say to it, as He did to His own Israel of old, "Behold your house is left unto you desolate."

You have not wanted me to control, you may have your Church if you will. The very name Laodiceans means "to please the people." It represents a popular Church, and a timeserving age. It is a very large, wealthy, powerful Church; it is rich, increased with goods, in need of nothing. It is also a self-satisfied Church. The reports of its membership, its finances, its missionary organizations are very flattering. It is doing a great deal of work; it is spending a great deal of money, and it is thoroughly satisfied with its own progress and prosperity, but alas! in the eyes of its Lord, it is "the poor, the miserable, the blind, and the naked one." He is represented as excluded from its interior, and standing knocking at its door as a stranger, He is uttering His last solemn warning and appeal, and telling of chastening and judgment about to come upon it. He is counseling it to buy of Him the gold of true faith, the white raiment of divine holiness, the eye-salve of spiritual illumination.

But alas, the saddest and the most solemn part of all this picture is, that it represents the last stage of visible Christianity, the Church at the end of the age and at the coming of the Lord!

Beloved, can it be possible that the Church of our fathers, the Church of the reformers, the Church of the martyrs, could ever become such a Church? Ah, ask yourselves did not the Church of Paul and John become the apostasy of Rome?

What is the real secret of all this? "Thou art lukewarm," -- respectable indifference; the same cause which led to the rejection of Ephesus, only aggravated and intensified; the want of heart; the want of love; the want of enthusiasm; the want of Jesus Himself within. The Church that has lost the spirit of revival, the Church that has lost the simplicity of fervor, the Church that looks upon religious experience as sentimentalism, fanaticism, and extravagance, clothed in a stately respectability and self-satisfied complacency, folds her arms, and says, "I am rich, increased with goods, and have need of nothing," while Jesus is standing at the door, and the last judgments are about to fall.

And now the Master turns from the Church of the Laodiceans, and His last message is not to the Church, but to the individuals in it, who are willing to stand out from its indifference, and to be spiritual overcomers. "If any man will hear my voice, and open the door. I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit down with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne."

It is to the individual the promise is given. Yes, even if the Church should become apostate, one by one we can stand true to God, and still may win our crown.

There are two promises: First, we must receive the Christ within; secondly, we shall sit down with Him upon His throne. The Prince comes to us now in disguise. Soon He will come in all His glory to know those who have stood with Him in these days of trial and rejection, Oh, in view of that great day, God help us to be true!

It is said that Ivan, of Russia, used sometimes to disguise himself and go out among his people to find out their true character.

One night he went, dressed as a beggar, from door to door, in the suburbs of Moscow, and asked for a night's lodging. He was refused admittance at every house, until at last his heart sank with discouragement to think of the selfishness of his people. At length, however, he knocked at a door where he was gladly admitted. The poor man invited him in, offered him a crust of bread, a cup of water and a bed of straw, and then said, "I am sorry I cannot do more for you, but my wife is ill, a babe has just been given her, and my attention is needed for them." The emperor lay down and slept the sleep of a contented mind. He had found a true heart. In the morning he took his leave with many thanks.

The poor man forgot all about it, until a few days later, the royal chariot drove up to the door, and, attended by his retinue, the emperor stopped before the humble home.

The poor man was alarmed, and throwing himself at the emperor's feet, he asked "What have I done?"

Ivan lifted him up, and taking both his hands, he said "Done? you've done nothing but entertain your emperor. It was I that lay on that bed of straw; it was I that received your humble but hearty hospitality, and now I have come to reward you. You received me in disguise, but now I come in my true character to recompense your love. Bring hither your newborn babe." And when the child was brought to him, he said, "You shall call him after me, and when he is old enough, I will educate him and give him a place in my court and service." Giving the man a bag of gold he said, "Use this for your wife, and if ever you have need of anything, don't forget to call upon the poor tramp that slept the other night in that corner."

As the emperor left him, that poor man was glad indeed that he had welcomed his king in disguise. The day is coming when amid the splendors of the advent throne, we would give worlds for one glance of recognition from that royal eye.

And we shall be so glad when, amid the myriads of the skies, we shall see His loving smile and meet His recognition and hear Him say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, sit down upon My throne. You were not ashamed of Me when I came to you in disguise. Now I have come to confess you before My Father and His holy angels."

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

'The Holy Spirit' or 'Power from on High'

by A. B. Simpson,

Volume 2 - Chapter 28

THE HOLY SPIRIT'S LAST MESSAGE

"The Spirit and the Bride say, Come." Rev. 22: 17.

This is the last message and the last mention of the Holy Ghost in the New Testament. It is usually interpreted as an appeal to the sinner to come to Christ, but it is really a prayer on the part of the Spirit and the Bride, for Christ to come back again, in His promised second advent. It is answered by His gracious message, "Behold, I come quickly," and the response of the apostle and the church, "Even so, come Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen."

It is very striking and beautiful that the last word of the Holy Ghost in this great Apocalypse, which is devoted to the unfolding of the Lord's return, should be a cry of prayer to Him to come. The great business of the Holy Ghost since Christ's ascension has been to prepare for His return. The two last messages of our departing Master, recorded in the first ten verses of the Acts of the Apostles, are the promise of the Holy Ghost and the promise of His second coming. Between these two promises lies the whole Christian age, and the object of the first is to fulfill the last.

The Holy Ghost has now unfolded the prophetic vision, and as He closes it until the end of time, He pours out one ardent prayer and unites the beloved Bride of Jesus in it, "Come Lord Jesus." And then He sends the message forth to all around and adds, "let him that heareth say come." And, turning to the world and the sinner, He utters the last message of inviting mercy to come to Jesus. "Let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will let him take the water of life freely."

This passage suggests the connection of the Holy Ghost with the Lord's return.

I.

The Holy Ghost has given us the predictions of Christ's second coming. It was He that whispered to Enoch the first testimony respecting the advent in antediluvian times. It was He that gave to dying Jacob his vision of Shiloh's reign. It was He that revealed, even to double-hearted Balaam, the glory of the latter days, until he longed to have a part in it. It was He that enabled Job to speak of the day when in his flesh he should behold his living Redeemer and see Him for himself and not for another. It was He who inspired the heart of David to sing so often and so sublimely of the Prince of Peace, whose name should endure forever and whose sway should reach from shore to shore. It was He who gave to Isaiah his prophetic fire, and

revealed to Daniel and Zechariah the panorama of the ages. Through the lips of the Master on the side of Olivet He foretold the fall of Jerusalem and the end of the Age.

It was He who taught the early Church this blessed hope, as the comfort of her sorrows and the inspiration of her labors. It was He who gave to the first apostolic council at Jerusalem its clear outline plan of the Christian age, and revealed to Paul the great apostasy, and the glorious messages of the advent in the Epistles to the Corinthians and Thessalonians. And now to the last of the apostles, He has unfolded with a clearness far surpassing all former visions the glorious truth of the Lord's return, and as He sums it all up He turns heavenward in one last prayer, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

By and by, when we read this book in the light of heaven, we shall find that every incident and detail of the Lord's return has been unfolded. Much of it we have misunderstood; much of it may remain somewhat obscure until the time of the end, but nothing has been left unsaid that we need to know to fit us for the meeting with our Lord. The Holy Ghost has made the testimony clear and plain. One word of every twenty-five of these New Testament Scriptures is about this great theme.

He is a very foolish man who reads his Bible without seeing it, and who misses the benediction pronounced in this very book, on "him that readeth and on them that keep the words of the prophecy of this book."

II.

The Holy Ghost has interpreted and illuminated the prophetic Scriptures.

It is not enough to have the prophetic word, we need some one to enable us to understand it.

Daniel uttered these advent visions, but he dimly comprehended them, and was told to seal them up until the time of the end. But he was also told that, as the end drew near, the wise should understand, and this is just what is happening today.

The most remarkable sign that we are in the last days and that the mystery of the ages is about to be finished, is the wondrous light which the Holy Ghost has shed on the interpretation of prophecy in our time.

Mistakes there have doubtless been; obscurities still there are; much yet remains to be made plain, but the great landmarks of the future are clear and plain, and the church of Christ knows enough to be able to be true to her trust and ready for the coming of her Lord.

The brightest and soundest scholarship of the age is on the side of pre-millennial truth. The light of science has become tributary to the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, and the truth

respecting the Lord's coming has been so widely published and so simply illustrated and proclaimed, that no earnest Christian today need be in darkness with regard to that day. Nor need the most illiterate and simple disciple of Christ shrink back from the study of prophecy because it is mysterious and obscure. The Holy Ghost will make it plain, and will bless us in its study, as we earnestly read and faithfully keep the words of this prophecy.

III.

The Holy Ghost is preparing for the Lord's coming by awakening the desire and expectation of Christ's return in the hearts of His disciples.

When the Lord Jesus was about to come to earth for the first time, His faithful people were waiting for redemption and for the consolation of Israel, and at the proper time, they were there to welcome Him. It needed no special note of invitation to bring Simeon and Anna to the temple when the infant Jesus was to be presented there; but, through the simple and unfailing guidance of the Holy Ghost, they were both on time, and Simeon took the holy Babe in his arms and blessed Him, and Anna went forth from that joyful scene, womanlike, to tell of His coming "to all that waited for redemption in Jerusalem."

And so will it be at the last. Christ's Simeons and Annas will be waiting too. And already they have caught the first rays of dawn, the first intuitions of the Bridegroom's drawing near.

As the hour draws near this will become more uniform and universal among the little flock, and when He appears His Bride will not be left "in darkness that that day should overtake her as a thief," but she will be found ready and waiting to go forth to meet Him.

This blessed hope, which is taking possession of so many of our hearts, is one of the signs of our time, and its sympathetic throb is felt even among the votaries of false religion, who, with an instinct that they cannot understand or explain, are also looking for the appearing of some great One in the present generation.

Sometimes these holy intuitions are truer and more unerring than the conclusions of our science and philosophy. The little bird makes no mistake when, following an impulse in its little heart, it spreads its wings on the air and sails away to southern lands as winter is coming on. It knows that the springtime is there and it finds it true.

The little fellow was right as he stood holding the string of his kite which had gone far out of view in the lofty firmament, when the boys laughed at him and told him it was gone, who answered firmly, "No; 'taint neither, it's all right. I know it 'cause I feel it pull."

Ah, beloved, can you feel it pull? And, although worldly wisdom may scoff, and human ambition may plan for the coming generations, and the self-centered world roll on around its little axis, yet our eyes are upon the east, and our hearts tell us with an intuition that we know is true that

the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

It is the blessed Holy Ghost. Let us listen to His whisper; let us catch his full meaning; let us, as the day draws near, be found "bending ourselves back," and "lifting up our heads" and, like the bird upon the branch, with fluttering wings and uplifted eye waiting for the signal of its mate, let us be ready at His earliest call to rise to meet Him in the air.

IV.

The Holy Ghost is preparing for Christ's return by the spiritual enrobing of His children.

The call is going forth. "The marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready; and it was granted to her that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints."

The Holy Ghost is preparing a people today for the coming of Christ. There is a marked movement in all sections of the Christian world for an entire consecration to Christ, that we may receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost and be transformed and conformed to Christ.

This is the very time that the Bridegroom is near at hand. When the Bride is found robed and ready, her Lord will not be long behind. This is one of the special religious movements of our time. Call it by what name you please, sanctification, the second blessing, the higher Christian life, the baptism of the Holy Ghost, entire consecration -- it is the call of God today to His own people, and it is the precursor of the Master's coming.

Our Lord's beautiful parables of the wedding robe and the ten virgins are founded on this great truth, the need of special preparation for the coming of the Lord. In the former parable it is personal holiness that is implied, and in the latter the indispensable need of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Both these qualifications are freely given in the grace of God. To the Bride it is "granted that she should be arrayed in linen, clean and bright." She does not have to make her own apparel but simply to put on the beautiful garments of her King, and like Rebecca of old, go forth arrayed in the robe which He has given, and covered with his veil to meet Him with acceptance at His coming.

Beloved, have we received the wedding robe? Have we made sure of the oil in our vessels with our lamps? Are we arrayed in raiment not only "clean" but also "bright," not only without the stain of sin, but with all the beauty and glory of the priestly garments? There is an inner and an outer robe. The inner robe must be spotless, the outer must be glorious. This is why the Holy Ghost is leading us through the discipline of life.

The word for "white" here in Revelation means bright, and it is the same word used about the transfiguration garments of our Lord. Beloved, let us put on the white robe and the beautiful

garments, and, through the grace of the Holy Ghost, be robed and ready for His coming.

V.

The Holy Ghost gives the earnest of the resurrection.

We have already referred to this in former chapters, in connection with the physical life of Christ manifested in the believer through the Holy Ghost. This is an anticipation of the resurrection life. This is a foretaste and first fruit of the physical glory which is awaiting us at his coming.

Divine healing, rightly understood, is just the life of Jesus Christ in our mortal flesh and a foretaste of the resurrection. It is the work of the Holy Ghost to "quicken our mortal body" as He dwelleth in us. Beloved, do we know this supernatural life? And are we thus already tasting the fountain of immortality which is to supply our life eternally from its exhaustless spring?

VI.

The Holy Ghost is working in the providence of God among the nations, to prepare for the coming of Christ.

The wonderful events of our time are the beginning of those overturnings which are to bring in the kingdom of Christ and His millennial reign. The Ancient of Days is already working among the nations, and through the power of the Spirit of God is breaking down the barriers and opening up the highway for Christ's return. The same Holy Ghost that of old touched the hearts of heathen kings and made them God's instruments in accomplishing His purpose, is calling out today the various providential agencies which are but part of God's plan for the approaching end of the age. Surely, the extraordinary events that are so rapidly happening around us in every quarter of the globe are full of portentous meaning.

The wonderful progress of knowledge, the running to and fro of men, with their commercial activities and their methods of transportation and communication by land and sea, wars and rumors of wars disturbing the whole political realm, revolutions and upheavals of society and political institutions -- all these are full of meaning and promise, and through them all moves the steadfast purpose of the Holy Ghost, whose "eyes run to and fro throughout the whole earth," and whose hand is moving men to the fulfillment of His higher will.

VII.

The Holy Ghost is enabling and sending forth the disciples of Christ to fulfill their great trust in witnessing for Christ and evangelizing the world.

This is His greatest work of preparation for the coming of Christ. In direct connection with the promise of the Spirit is the great commission, "Ye shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto Me, . . . unto the uttermost part of the earth."

And so today we witness the mighty workings of the Holy Ghost in sending out the message of the gospel to the neglected at home and the heathen abroad. The Holy Spirit is more than a delightful sentiment in the believer's heart. He is a mighty influence of practical, missionary zeal and world-wide evangelization, and the heart in which He is saying, "Come Lord Jesus, come quickly," will always be heard crying, "Let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

Beloved, if we are truly filled with the Holy Ghost and longing for the coming of Christ, we shall be active witnesses and workers in preparing for Him. We shall be found faithful to our trust wherever God has placed us. We will be soul-winners at home, and if we cannot go abroad we will help others to go and give the gospel quickly to all the world.

How much of our religious life is comfortable sentimentalism, taking the pleasant part, enjoying the selfish luxury, doing as much Christian work as is agreeable, and yet knowing little or nothing of the ceaseless self-sacrificing and intense devotion of the Lord Jesus Christ to finish His work and bring this revolted world back to His Father!

O, beloved, are we wholly in earnest? Have we, too, "a baptism to be baptized with, and are we straitened until it be accomplished?" Are we going forth "as much as lieth in us" to give the gospel of the Kingdom to all nations that the end may speedily come?

Perhaps, dear brother, as you read these lines, God may be calling you to go forth and call home the lost disciple who shall complete the number of the Bride and then bring back our adorable Redeemer.

Nay, perhaps, dear sinner, as you read these lines, you may be the soul for whom Christ is waiting to complete His glorious Bride, as He calls, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

There are three little words that seem sweetly linked together here. The first is "come, Lord Jesus," that is the Spirit's cry, and that will be the cry of every one who is filled with the Spirit. "Let him that heareth say, Come."

The second is, the word, "Go." If we are truly saying "come, Lord Jesus," we will go with the Gospel of salvation to the lost at home and the heathen abroad. And the third is the same word, "COME" again. For this will be our message, as it is the Spirit's, to a lost and dying world. "Come to Jesus." "Let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

It is said that when Queen Victoria first visited Scotland, it was arranged that the tidings of her arrival should be signaled from Edinburgh, and by beacons on the mountain tops should be flashed all over the land until it reached from Leith to Stirling, and Stirling to Inverness, and Inverness to distant Caithness, and from mountain to mountain, the beacon blazed forth its joyful welcome, "The Queen has come."

So this text seems to be a cry from the watchtower. Oh, let us haste to plant the watch fires on all the mountain tops of earth; let us station the watchmen for the morning; let us as make ready for the beacon blaze; and, some sweet morn, the nearest watcher shall catch the signal, flash it from post to post, and tower to tower, and land to land, till all around the globe he that heareth shall say "Come," and the shout shall go up from the meeting ranks of earth and heaven, "THE LORD HAS COME." EVEN SO COME LORD JESUS, COME QUICKLY.