

# Lecture 13 "The Seven Spirits of God."

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*Rev. 1: 4-8; Rev. 19: 10.*

## "Another Comforter"

*Thirteen Lectures on the Operations of the Holy Ghost.*

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It must be clearly apparent to the most casual reader of the book of the Revelation, that the way in which the Spirit of God is presented in this book, is entirely different from that which has been before us in the previous parts of the New Testament. That which we have been looking at for a good many evenings has been the testimony of the Holy Ghost concerning Himself, in various parts of Scripture, and in varied ways, in relation to Christianity. What has been before us has been the truth of the one Spirit, and of that one Spirit dwelling on earth now, since the day of Pentecost. When we come to the book of Revelation we read no more of the one Spirit, but of "the seven Spirits of God."

In the first chapter (Rev. 1: 4), the fourth (Rev. 4: 5), and in the fifth (Rev. 5: 6), we read of "the seven Spirits of God." Now, God's Word is perfect. Are there then, in the same way as we have been looking at the One Spirit, in the early part of the New Testament, seven such Spirits? Ah, that cannot be! we are confronted with this thought, that in the book of the Revelation the Spirit of God is presented in a character totally different from that which has been before us in the other sections of the New Testament. That is not to be wondered at, because in this book you find that the dealings of God are different altogether from those which are brought out in the early part of the New Testament where you have unfolded God's action in grace on earth. The great thought of the book of the Revelation, on the contrary, is God winding up matters on earth, dealing with man in various aspects of responsibility on earth, and therefore you find that this book is emphatically the book of judgment. This, I have no doubt, is the reason why people do not read it much.

The devil is clever enough to keep souls from carefully studying any part of God's Word, which distinctly details, not only the judgment of the professing Church, the judgment of the world, the judgment of the whore — the false Church — the judgment of the living, and the judgment of the dead, but also Satan's own judgment. Little wonder that he would tell you, that this is a book which nobody can understand, although the Holy Ghost prefixes its contents with the words "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein, for the time is at hand." Not only that, but He says in the last chapter, "Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." There is no other part of Scripture that God has prefaced, and concluded, with a specific blessing, in the

same way as He has this book, and yet if there be one section of the Bible that is neglected, it is this. If you and I have not as yet paid much heed to this book, we had better seek light from God, and begin its study straight off. I know the study of prophecy is apt to feed the mind, rather than touch the soul's affections, and fill the heart with the joy that flows from a sense of the love of Christ. That joy is our own proper portion, but, if we know our own portion, we are free to look at that which God has told us about others, and there is great profit in studying that which is here told us.

In the book of Revelation we have the Spirit of God presented to us in a character that answers to a remarkable statement in the Old Testament, to which I will refer. You find it in the eleventh of Isaiah. There the Spirit of God gives us a prophetic forecast of the coming kingdom, and reign of the Lord Jesus Christ, as Messiah upon earth. "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord" (vers. 1, 2). You have a sevenfold character of that Spirit given there, and I have no doubt it corresponds to what is called "the seven Spirits of God" in the book of Revelation.

No longer now is it the "one Spirit" baptizing into "one body," as we have seen, but that character of action on the part of God's Spirit, which goes out to all the earth, in the day that ushers in the millennium. It is the Lord Jesus who will take up the reins of government then, and will deal with the earth in that day, and just what is given us in the second verse of the eleventh of Isaiah, will be the character of His action, by the Holy Ghost, in the day which the book of the Revelation brings before us. What is that day? It is the day when the Church shall have been taken up out of this scene. It is the moment when the Lord, as the bridegroom, shall have come for the Church, and shall have taken it out of this scene as His bride, and when the saints shall be taken to their home. Furthermore, they are seen, under the figure of the crowned elders of Revelation 4 and Revelation 5. In Revelation 6 and onwards, we have unfolded what then goes on upon earth, all of which the apostle John sees in vision. The world-wide work and action of the Spirit of God, as connected with the *throne* of God, is presented to the seer as the energy of "the seven Spirits of God."

Before I develop this at all I should like to glance with you over the New Testament, in order that you may see that, in its various sections, God's Spirit is always presented, according to His special object in each book. This we can then compare, and contrast with what the book of Revelation gives us. Thus we shall have distinct and fresh before our minds what the Spirit of God is in Christianity, as compared with what His action will be in the day which lies before us, and which is undoubtedly characterised by that word in the nineteenth chapter of Revelation — "the Spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus." Now, "the Spirit of prophecy" is clearly that which indicates and points to that which is coming. What we have been hitherto engaged with, is the wonderful fact that the Holy Ghost has come; but in every part of God's Word, and in the book of Revelation, no less than in every other part, when the Spirit of God speaks about Himself and His ministry, it is in a character which is exactly suited to the truth which He is unfolding in that particular part.

In the Gospel of John the Lord first unfolds the wondrous fact that "another Comforter" was to come, who was to *abide*, whereas He Himself was going away. In the Acts of the Apostles, He had come. The gift of the Spirit — the promise of the Father — the Comforter, was received, and in that book we see how He *filled* the Lord's servants, and the Lord's people.

As we pass to the epistles I will ask you to turn over the leaves of your Bible, because you will not follow me unless you do so, while I seek to indicate what is the main line followed by the Holy Ghost in each epistle. Details you may study at your leisure another day.

The first chapters of Romans are occupied with showing how a man can be "just with God," and you do not read one word about the Holy Ghost's indwelling the believer till you get to chapter 5, where we get the expression, "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Rom. 5: 5). The truth is brought out that man's utter ruin, and degradation, and lost condition, have been met by the blood of Christ, and by the righteousness of God, and that he is now justified righteously, by faith in the One who died and rose again, consequently his sins are forgiven, and he is in peace and favour before God, standing in Christ, and rejoices in hope of the glory of God. That is true of every believer. He is not merely forgiven, but is in the favour of God, and rejoices in hope of the glory of God. It is nothing uncertain to him. But there is more than that, "Hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." The first action of the Holy Ghost here seen is to shed God's love abroad in the believer's heart.

Now, passing on to the eighth chapter, we find Him both as characterising the condition of the Christian and as an indwelling person. We find the believer is in Christ, and in the Spirit, as the power of that new position, and that the Spirit of God dwells in him for comfort, for consolation, for everything that concerns him in his pathway down here, and the result is he is led happily on his journey homewards, the righteous requirement of the law being fulfilled in him, as he is walking after the Spirit.

Look next at the fifteenth chapter. There is a remarkable expression there. The apostle says in the fifteenth verse, "Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God, that I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that *the offering up of the Gentiles* might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost." (Rom. 15: 15) A remarkable statement, and you may say, What does it mean? You remember the two wave loaves, baked with leaven, spoken of in the twenty-third of Leviticus, are presented to the Lord as being "the first-fruits." Christ Himself is the wave sheaf, and the "first-fruits" He takes with Him, on the ground of His death and resurrection, are the Gentiles, who had no link with or claim upon God, but who, being reached, blessed, and saved by the Gospel, are presented to God, as the first-fruits of the death of the Lord Jesus. The believer — the Gentile believer — is here presented before God as being in a condition and state suited to the eye, heart, and nature of God. Such you see is the testimony of Romans. We are brought to God in the Spirit; the Spirit personally dwells in the believer, and we have the joy of knowing that we are thus acceptable before God, being "sanctified" (set apart to God) "by the Holy Ghost." Such is the aspect of this truth in Romans.

We pass now to 1st Corinthians, for every epistle presents the Spirit of God in a distinct way. In this epistle we find a great deal about the Holy Ghost. Look at the second chapter, where it was a question of the wisdom of the world, making much of man, and setting great store upon the outcome of the mind of man. The apostle brings out this, that everything, as to the knowledge of God, and even as to the reception of the things of God, must be by the Holy Ghost. The wisdom of man is set aside by the cross, and replaced by the communications of the Holy Ghost. This we get alluded to in 1 Corinthians 2. "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, *even* the hidden *wisdom*, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known *it*, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, 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." There most people stop. They say things are given, but you cannot know them. Read on, my friends, "But God *hath revealed them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." It is the Holy Ghost who reveals everything.

The Old Testament state and condition of soul is described in the prophet's words, "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 *now* all is altered; the Holy Ghost has come; and what does He do? He "searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." We are cast upon the Spirit of God for everything. "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; communicating spiritual [things] by spiritual [means]." They are *revealed* by the Spirit, and *communicated* by the Spirit. And now look at the fourteenth verse" But 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." They are *revealed* by the Spirit, *communicated* by the Spirit (there you have inspiration), and they are also *received* by the Spirit. What a death-blow to the working of the mind of man. That is the great truth of this part of the epistle. In chapter 3 Paul shows that the assembly is the temple of God. In the sixteenth verse he says: "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. 3: 16) He would waken up these Corinthians to the truth that they were God's dwelling-place, and as the temple of God is holy, and the Holy Spirit was there, the temple must be kept suited for the owner. Coming now to the sixth chapter the truth is taught there, that the body belongs to the Lord, and the body must be used for the Lord. It is a great thing to remember that our bodies are the Lord's. And why? See what he says, "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make *them* the members of an harlot? God forbid." Further down he says, "What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is* in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body" (1 Cor. 6: 19). The body is the Lord's, and I have to be very careful to do His pleasure. The fact has ever to be borne in mind by the believer that the Holy Ghost dwells in his body. Passing on to the twelfth and fourteenth chapters, which have been very fully before us on previous evenings, I merely note that in the former we learn that everything of a spiritual nature springs from the Holy Ghost, and spiritual gifts He disposes to every man according as He wills.

Profit is to be the keynote in God's assembly, and all depends upon the Holy Ghost. Then these gifts must be nurtured in the atmosphere of the thirteenth chapter — love — if they are to be of any use, in the sphere of their operation, which we have in the fourteenth chapter — the assembly in function — under the control and action of God's Spirit. We do not need man's interference, or his regulations, or his arrangements in the assembly of God, because the Spirit is perfectly competent for all that relates to the needs of God's assembly.

Passing to the second epistle to the Corinthians, you get what is very blessed in the first chapter. The apostle was going through tremendous persecution, terrible difficulty, and he brings out the way in which God by the Holy Spirit sustained him. Apparently the Corinthians suggested that he was not to be relied on, as he thought of coming to them, and after all did not come. Therefore he says in the seventeenth verse, "When I therefore was thus minded, did I use lightness? or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yea yea, and nay nay? But as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea. For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." He says, in fact, If I have to change, God does not. Then follows a rich unfolding of the Spirit's gracious actings. "Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, *is* God; who hath also sealed us, and hath given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts" (2 Cor. 1: 21, 22). I know of no fuller or more beautiful expression of the varied action of the Holy Spirit, than you have contained in these last two verses. You have the believer *stablished* in Christ, *anointed*, *sealed*, and receiving *the earnest* of the Spirit in the heart. The Spirit alone can bring you into the sense of the place you have *in* Christ. It is not merely that the Holy Ghost gives the sense of being cleansed, but the soul is led into the sense of what it possesses as being in Christ, in the new place that Christ, as Man, has now before God, and into which, in His ineffable goodness and love, He introduces us. But more, "and hath *anointed* us." That is power. It is the power of perception. The anointing is clearly for this reason, that we may see things clearly. The Spirit not only gives us power to see the divine pathway we should tread, but also the perceptive enjoyment of things divine. Further, He "hath also *sealed* us." What does sealing mean? It is the abiding mark on the believer, that he is the Lord's, and the Holy Ghost is that mark. He is the seal upon the believer, as it is put in Ephesians, "In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, *ye were sealed* with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance" (Eph. 1: 13, 14). The earnest of the Spirit is that energy of the Holy Ghost which brings the soul of the believer into the present enjoyment of that which belongs to him, in connection with the inheritance — the future glory to which he is heir, as being a co-heir with Christ.

The earnest of the Spirit brings the soul into the enjoyment of that which will be his in the future, but which he knows perfectly well is his now. On the one, who has not merely trusted in Christ personally, but who has received the forgiveness of his sins, and has bowed to the righteousness of God, God puts His seal. The last thing you do with a letter is to seal it. The last thing God does with the soul is to put His seal upon it. Faith is a blessed thing, and leads to the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins, and the sense of being blessed of God, but until the Holy Ghost dwells in the soul, thus sealing it, there is not an abiding sense of enjoyment of God's favour in the heart. That is what makes the Christian bright. Some Christians say, "I shall be

quite happy in heaven." Why are you not happy before you get there? I want to know. Here is what will make you happy. Here is what the Holy Ghost has to give. He delights to give the soul the enjoyment of what belongs to it long before it gets there. This scripture reminds one of the two spies returning to the camp of the Israelites with the grapes of Eshcol. But we have what is much better than the grapes of Eshcol. They were brought *to* Israel in the desert. We are brought by the Spirit to the place where they grow — to heaven in spirit now. The Holy Ghost brings us into the sense of the glory and magnificence of the scene where Christ is, and our hearts are at home long before we get there. We know the atmosphere of the land, and taste of its fruits long before we reach it, it the Spirit of God be in. our hearts.

In the seventeenth verse of the third chapter of 2nd Corinthians, we have another great truth in respect of the Spirit, "Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." Bondage marks the soul under law; liberty is the portion of the one who possesses the Spirit. Are you in liberty? I find many dear children of God groaning, and moaning, and bowed down like bulrushes. Now this should not be, for "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is *liberty*." Not merely are you to know, that you are forgiven, but you are to know, experimentally, that you are out of bondage. If you have the Holy Ghost dwelling in you, there is *liberty to gaze on Christ in glory*. "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: 17, 18). It is the Holy Ghost having His own way in your heart. Upheld by grace, you are kept going through this world, in the liberty of the Holy Ghost, and the joy which the liberty of God alone can furnish.

We come now to the last chapter, and there find a lovely word about the Spirit. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, *be* with you all. Amen." That is a formula which I fear is often lightly used. But think of it! Look at the blessedness of the statement — the grace of the Saviour, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost. What is the communion of the Holy Ghost? Is it not the beautiful in-breathing of all the love of the Father, and the glory of the Son — the breathing of these thoughts into the soul by the Holy Ghost that we have dwelling in us? I fear we know little of it. And that is why we ought to feel desirous of having more of it.

The way the Spirit of God is presented in the epistle to the Galatians is, that the power to deliver from the lust, the energy, and the activity of the flesh, lies, not in the law, but in the Holy Ghost. "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among 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 Galatians were going back to the law, and the moment you get a man under law the Spirit is set aside. He is not under the power of the Holy Ghost. When you come to the fourth chapter you find — "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ (Gal. 4: 4-7). He does not give the Spirit to make you a son, but He gives you the Spirit because you are a son. The one who believes in Christ Jesus is a child of God, "for ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3: 26); and the one, who is

a child of God, receives the Spirit of adoption because he is a son, and that he might say what the Spirit always leads him to say, "Abba, Father." Consequently He says, "Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ."

This leads to a very practical injunction. "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot (should not) do the things that ye would" (Gal. 5: 16, 17). Led by the Spirit you will not do the things which the flesh will try to make you do. This verse is often read to mean that a Christian cannot help sinning, whereas the very reverse is what is taught. The Spirit's power is greater than that of the flesh. What a happy thing for the Christian to walk in the Holy Ghost, superior to the claims and lusts of the flesh, and delivered from the law, which is the next result of the Spirit's leading. "But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law" (ver. 18). Then follows a list of the works of the flesh, which the law failed to keep in order, and in contrast therewith, that which is the fruit of the Spirit. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (vers. 22, 23). The old man was kept in order by no law, and the new man needs no law to keep him in order, he is by nature an orderly being, and produces suited fruit. The fruit of the Spirit is what may be called a compound fruit. It has many features, all beautifully intermingled and entwined. All were seen perfectly in Christ, and should be seen in us. The Spirit of God alone can produce this fruit, but He does produce it, in contrast to the law, which never could, or can. The law could not produce love, though it could condemn you for not loving your neighbour as yourself. It could not give you an object. It could not deliver from the flesh, nor could it deliver from the judgment that it demanded. The Spirit delivers from everything and fills the heart with Christ.

I need not speak of the Ephesians, because we have had it before us pretty fully on a previous occasion. Only to notice that it is full of the Holy Ghost as setting the saint in heavenly relationships first, so that, in heavenly power, he may fulfil all earthly relationships.

The epistles to the Philippians and Colossians are remarkable by the absence of any allusion to the Spirit of God, save in a passing way. In Philippians Paul writes of the "fellowship of the Spirit" (Phil. 2: 1), and "worship by the Spirit of God" (Phil. 3: 3); while of Epaphras, in Colossians, he says, "Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit." These two things are beautiful. The true and normal character of the life of the Christian is unfolded in the Philippians. Christianity is the life of Christ reproduced in the life of the Christian here, by the power of Christ as his object, and to be seen in this world. There is "the fellowship of the Spirit" in that. In Colossians, on the other hand, the main subject is the glory of Christ, as Head, and the unfolding of His glories as the head of His body. Of that body we all are members, hence "love *in* the Spirit" (Col. 1: 8), is a characteristic feature of the life each member possesses.

In the first epistle to the Thessalonians there is a great deal about the Holy Ghost. In the first chapter at the sixth verse we have, "And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with *joy of the Holy Ghost*" (1 Thess. 1: 5). The more bitter the persecution the more abounding the joy. It is always so. In the fourth chapter at the eighth verse we read, "He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit," The fact that the Holy Spirit is in him, is to make the Christian careful

not to overreach his brother in the matter in hand. I must be careful how I treat you, and how I deal with you. In the last chapter, we have the remarkable injunction, — "Quench not the Spirit, despise not prophesyings" (vers. 19, 20). That is different from the verse which says, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit" (Eph. 4: 30). That refers to the individual. There are three ways in which the Spirit of God may be hindered. In the seventh of Acts we have the fact given us, that the world may, and does "*resist* the Holy Ghost" (ver. 51). In the fourth of Ephesians individuals are bid not to "*grieve*" Him. Here, in the bosom of the assembly, it is, "*Quench* not the Spirit." You may ask how can we quench the Spirit? Anything that hinders the free action of God's Spirit in the Christian assembly, is quenching the Spirit. It is coupled with, "Despise not prophesyings," which evidently alludes to efforts that were made to disparage the more excellent gifts in favour of what perhaps set off the man more, as, for instance, the gift of tongues, and the like. But it may have also wider application to any attempt to limit the action of the Spirit, as, for instance, an attempt to shut the mouth of some brother, whose ministry the rest did not care for. That will not do in God's assembly. No mouths must be closed save those that God has closed. That you will find distinctly in the fourteenth of 1st Corinthians. Every woman is bid to "keep silence in the assemblies," but every man is to be free to be the mouthpiece of the Holy Ghost — free to pour forth his soul in worship, and thanksgiving, as well as in ministry, if so led of the Spirit. Consequently, "Quench not the Spirit" is God's word. Are you then, dear fellow-believer, worshipping in an assembly where God's Spirit has full liberty? To go where this is not the rule, and practically acted upon, is to disobey the command, Quench not the Spirit."

In the second epistle to Timothy, the apostle gives a word that is very helpful, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Tim. 1: 7). I think Timothy felt there were tremendous difficulties to face. All the Christians in Asia had turned away from Paul, and from heavenly truth, and this he doubtless felt. He was inclined to be downhearted, and therefore the Spirit of God, through Paul, reminds him of what His special character was in such a day of difficulty, when He says, "For God hath not given us the *spirit* of fear; but of *power*, and of *love*, and of a *sound* mind." These are the sentiments with which the Holy Ghost fills the bosom of the Christian, and to this Paul adds, in the fourteenth verse, "That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us." It is by the Holy Ghost alone we can keep that which God has committed to us. Everything turns on the way in which we treat the indwelling Spirit, individually, and the ever-abiding Spirit in the midst of the assembly, collectively.

In Titus we find a most refreshing word about the Holy Ghost. There we learn how God has saved us. "Not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour" (Titus 3: 5, 6). I think it is a most refreshing truth to know that the Holy Ghost is shed on us "abundantly." Do all Christians believe it? Do you? Do I?

Passing now to Hebrews you will find the Holy Ghost recognised as being on earth, as in Hebrews 6: 4 we read of those who "were made partakers (*metochous* companions, see Heb. 1: 9, there rendered fellows) of the Holy Ghost." This does not mean that they had received the Holy Ghost to dwell in them, but that they were in the place of privilege — the house of God — where He dwelt, and thus they were His companions. In this condition every baptized professor of

Christ is. How solemn and awful therefore, if, with such privilege, Christ should not really be known. Paul was "persuaded better things" of those to whom he wrote, however. The Holy Spirit is thereafter spoken of as "the eternal Spirit," and "the Spirit of grace." In the ninth chapter at the fourteenth verse, we read that Christ "through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God." Christianity deals with eternal realities, and in this epistle you find the Spirit coming down to give us the knowledge of the place that belongs to us through the Lord Jesus Christ. In Hebrews 10 He takes a most blessed place as the witness, come to us from God, of the value of Christ's work, and of the blessings that accrue to us therefrom. In verse 9 you have the *will* of God, in verse 10 the *work* of Christ, and in verse 15 the *witness* of the Holy Ghost — the three persons of the Trinity all active in blessing. In the latter part of the twenty-ninth verse of this tenth chapter you have a lovely title given to the Holy Ghost. The expression, "hath done despite unto the Spirit of *grace*," is in contrast with the law, the breakers of which "died without mercy."

The Apostle James makes no allusion whatever to the Spirit, but Peter gives us a most instructive word in his first epistle, where he says in the tenth verse, "Of which salvation the prophets have enquired 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. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us, they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into. Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1: 10-13). The Spirit of prophecy, so abundantly found in the Old Testament, is here alluded to, as unfolding the sufferings, and glories of Christ. First come the sufferings of the Saviour, and then the glories at the revelation of Jesus Christ. But what comes in between? The Holy Ghost has come down from heaven, to give the believer all the joy that Christianity embraces in itself — the knowledge of the Father and of the Son.

In his second epistle Peter alludes to the bygone action of the Spirit, "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as *they were* moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1: 21). The Holy Ghost took up and used various vessels, in Old Testament times, to unfold the mind and will of God, and Peter is led by the Spirit to say that they spoke by the Holy Ghost.

The apostle John's reference to the Holy Ghost is as a witness to the value of the work of the Saviour. In the first epistle, in chapter 5, verse 8, we read, "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: 8). The Christian is now before God, in all the value of the work, which this blessed Son of God has accomplished, and the Holy Ghost is the witness to the work, and its results, in God's gift to us of eternal life in His Son.

Jude contemplates the apostasy, and decay of Christendom, and nothing can be more solemn than what he describes. "These be they," he says, "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 remarkable thing in all the epistles is, that the believer

is regarded as having received the Spirit. Have you the Holy Ghost? then, I would ask. It is a serious question. It is not, Have you faith? It is, Have you the Holy Ghost? "Building up yourselves on your most holy faith, and praying in the Holy Ghost," should be the normal condition of God's people now.

It is a very noticeable fact, that in the New Testament, we never find prayer addressed *to* the Holy Ghost. Hymns and prayers, do not carry with them the stamp of what is divine, except they be *by* the Holy Ghost. Everything to be real must be *of* the Holy Ghost, and *in* the Holy Ghost, but the Holy Ghost is not, in that sense, an object of petition. It is *by* Him alone we worship, and *in* Him we should pray. He is down here as the servant of the Father's glory, and the servant of the glory of the Son. Likewise, and consequently, if it be a question of worship, it is to be "in spirit and in truth," and if it be prayer, it is to be prayer in the Spirit, and, in Scripture, I repeat, is never *to* the Spirit.

Then what about singing? you may perhaps ask. Well, the injunction is, "Be filled with the Spirit, speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing, and making melody in your hearts to the Lord" (Eph. 5: 18, 19). Again, we have, "I will sing *with the Spirit*, and I will sing with the understanding also" (1 Cor. 14: 15). The Holy Ghost is at the bottom of all the joys of the Christian. This being so, why do we not find any hymns given to us in the New Testament? But, you say, Look at the Psalms of David, you have plenty there. I quite admit the beauty of the Psalms of David, but the songs that suited David's day, and the notes that become ours, are quite different. Why, then, are there no hymns in the New Testament? I think the reason is this — the Holy Ghost is here, and the Holy Ghost is the source of real worship, and God would not formulate that, or limit it. Men like formulas. They are saved the exercise of faith thereby. But formula is ever cold and lifeless. Worship must not be formulated in any sense, because the Holy Ghost must be the spring of it, and I have no doubt those psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, spoken of in Ephesians 5 and Colossians 3 are those which the Holy Ghost indited after the day of Pentecost.

The Holy Ghost has led certain vessels of His power to express in these metrical lines what the truth is, springing from the joy, into which He first brings the believer, by the truth. There may be plenty of verse, and plenty of rhyme, yet His action be conspicuous by its absence, but a spiritual song is a song which the Holy Ghost alone can produce. He is free to use the pen of any servant, or vessel, for this service to the Church, as He is free to use the lips of any servant, in oral ministry. It may interest you to know that the number of hymns and spiritual songs which have been written in all languages — chiefly, and in their order numerically, in German, English, Latin, and Greek, from the day of Pentecost until now, is over four hundred thousand, and these all breathe, with more or less clearness, the power of the name of Jesus. Thank God for them! I do not say that the Holy Ghost has produced every one of these metrical compositions, but, most certainly, we are indebted to the Spirit for many of these spiritual songs, which proclaim the beauties, and the glories of the Saviour. Again, I say, Thank God for them! and yet it is sad to think that many a Christian has lived, and died, and never sung the name of Jesus. Why? Because he has not found it in the Psalms of David, and they only have been his psalter. He has lived in a bygone dispensation.

Nothing is more manifest, and sad. Those psalms speak of an earthly people, of an earthly company, and though well suited to the state of souls, and the dispensation when they were written, as well as anticipating the day of the glory of the kingdom yet to be established, they are not suited to be an expression of the worship the Holy Ghost would produce in the saints, towards the Father, and the Son, in this day of full redemption. They do not touch the ground on which the saint is, who has been brought into that liberty of the Spirit, which we have been speaking about this evening. If you really touch that ground, you will find you will need something more full of Christ, and expressive of heavenly joy, than the Psalms of David are. I have not a word to say against these psalms — God forbid the thought — for they are most precious, as bringing Christ Himself so often before us, but, what I oppose, is the wrong use made of them, in confining the New Testament saint to the hymnal limits of the saint of the old and bygone dispensation.

Beautiful as are David's psalms, they were not intended by God to be the expression of the worship of the saints in the day of the Holy Ghost. When He had come, He was quite competent to use vessels to produce those metrical compositions which express the feeling of the saints. I know of nothing more beautiful than to go into an assembly, and to find that out of a given selection of these hymns, the Holy Ghost will pick out one song after another, which will just suit the felt condition, and be the worshipful expression of the assembly, *at that moment*. There is nothing more helpful to an assembly than a well-chosen hymn, and, sometimes, nothing more hinders the Spirit, than a hymn. Some men think that anybody can give out a hymn. I do not think I can give out a hymn rightly, unless I have the distinct guidance of the Lord therein. A brother may say, I had such a hymn *on my heart*, and so I gave it out. Yes, but that is no evidence of guidance, for a sister might have a hymn on her heart, yet she has to be silent in the assembly, and not give it out. No, we must have the guidance of the Lord.

Let us now look for a little at the truth of the Spirit in the Revelation. Its presentation is plain and simple. It is presented in a new character, in a day yet to come, when Christ takes up the rule once more, and comes to earth in His judicial capacity. The earth will then be under the direct judgment of God, and then it is, that the Spirit of God is spoken of, as "the seven Spirits of God." In the fourth chapter in the fifth verse we have — "And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God." Clearly these seven lamps of *fire* indicate that God is dealing with the whole earth judicially, even as you find in Revelation 5: "And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God *sent forth into all the earth*." From Revelation 6 to the end of chapter 19 we have brought before us the varied judicial actions of God upon the earth, as He prepares the scene for the coming in of the first begotten of the dead, the Lord Jesus. There is the universal action of the Spirit in that day. It will take the form of judgment. He will sweep the earth of all its ungodliness, so that the kingdom of the Lord may be established.

When John had heard and seen all these coming sorrows, we read — "And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. 19: 10.) The thought conveyed is, that the action of the Spirit produces amongst

the saints of that day, an earnest looking for what is to come. There is something they are looking for, because it had not come — viz., the kingdom of the Lord, which would bring them blessing and liberty. We are not looking for these blessings. We have them. The Holy Ghost has brought us to the Father, brought us to the Saviour, and brought the Saviour to us. We dwell in Him, and He dwells in us. We are not waiting for the Spirit. He is dwelling *with* us, and *in* us. That is our joy. The Holy Ghost as the "one Spirit," has brought our souls into this.

By-and-by, in the day of the book of Revelation, the Spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus, and that is what the saints, spoken of there, are looking for, sighing for, and desirous of obtaining. They are waiting for deliverance and blessing — waiting for peace. You and I are brought now into that which is our rest for eternity — the love of God. The only thing you and I have to wait for now is Jesus. And the book closes with the cry of the Bride for the Bridegroom — "Come, Lord Jesus." "The Spirit and the bride say, Come."

At the end of the book, the very close of the Word of God, you come to the point where the Lord, in closing the book, and putting it, so to speak, into our hands, once more presents Himself to the hearts of His people. And the Spirit dwelling in the Church to form its affections according to the relationship in which it stands to Christ, gives the answer that He looks for. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come." The Bride is upon earth still — contemplating the moment when she shall be presented to the Saviour, the coming One.

And now, beloved friends, what have you and I to do? To wait for the Lord Jesus, and nothing but Jesus, for we have the Holy Ghost. We are waiting for the coming of the Saviour — the Bridegroom of our hearts — the One who died for us, who gave Himself for us, and who loves us with a love stronger than death, and who will not be satisfied until He has brought His blood-bought Bride into the Father's house. "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come."

But, I think I hear you say, I never thought of the Lord's coming in that way. You ought to join in the cry by the way which the Spirit utters here. "And let him that heareth say, Come." If you are in Christ you ought to join in the chorus. Ah! you say, I am not ready. There is a word for you then. "Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." You may have it now, where you sit. "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." While Jesus waits, and forbears to come, look to Him, thirsty, anxious soul, and drink. Trust His name, rest upon Him, count upon His grace, and drink of this living water, and what then? When He comes you will not be left behind. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

God give us in His grace to know what it is to walk in the Spirit, and serve the Lord, while we wait for the coming of the Saviour, bringing forth the fruit of the Spirit, that we may be acceptable in our walk and ways. Then when we hear His voice, and rise to meet Him, what joy, what blessing, are ours — we rise to be with Him for evermore, never more to wound Him, to grieve Him, or wander from Him. Our eternity is one of unhindered blessing, and enjoyment of God. Oh! do not let us forget that what we have the Holy Ghost for, is to bring us into the present enjoyment of that which will be our portion for ever.

