

The Holy Spirit's Service

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MAY/JUNE 1977

The truth relating to the Holy Spirit of God — His deity, His work, His abiding presence with believers — is one of the most important subjects of the holy Scriptures. Sometimes referred to as "the third Person in the Trinity," He is nevertheless possessed of full Deity — He is God. He has His place in the first sentence of the Scriptures. "In the beginning *God*" (Elohim — Hebrew plural indicating "three"), He "garnished — (Made beautiful) the heavens" (Job 26: 13). He is the Source and Power of the new life in the believer; He helps in our warfare with the flesh (Galatians 5: 17); He helps us in our infirmities and in our prayers (Romans 8: 26); He is the strength and support of even the smallest of God's children against the power of Satan (1 John 4: 4); by Him we are "sealed" and "anointed" and have the "earnest" of the inheritance; we belong to God; we have power to walk in the dignity and fragrance of Christ Himself, and the light of the glory to come illumines our path. By Him the love of God has been deluged into our hearts, and He enables us to respond to that love as we say from those full hearts — "Abba, Father" (Romans 5: 5; Romans 8: 15). He "abides" with us — the Comforter — alongside to help at all times.

The above but touches the fringe of the many blessings enjoyed by believers in the gift of the Spirit of God, the importance of which gift is so markedly stressed by the Lord Jesus Himself in His "Upper Room" ministry in John's gospel. Happy indeed and fruitful the life in which He has undisputed control.

Features of the Holy Spirit's activities particularly, but not exclusively, relevant to the present day may be briefly considered. Whilst all around we see disintegration and moral breakdown, "Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming," how blessed to have the sure testimony of God by His Spirit regarding "things to come." We have no need to speculate, the ministry of the Spirit in the Epistles and in the book of the Revelation gives to the believer a clear unalterable view of God's present and future dealings with the world and its course. John 16: 7-15 is replete with encouragement — sin dealt with, righteousness manifest in Christ at God's right hand; the prince of the world (Satan) judged! The ground thus cleared in the affections of the believer for the Holy Spirit to engage in that which is so infinitely precious to His own heart — testifying to all that stands related to the things of the Father and of the Son, and thus glorifying Christ in the hearts and minds of His own! Precious service indeed! This testimony abides and will abide, lighting up the darkest hour with divine glory and power. As engaged with and beholding the glory of the Lord we shall, "by the Spirit of the Lord," exhibit features of Christ Himself — the most potent testimony to men around us.

In Romans 8: 14 we read "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." There is a dignity in these words almost beyond expression. Quickened by the Spirit we are no longer debtors to the flesh, in which we could never please God. The Spirit of God is the power by which we mortify the flesh, and we are thus enabled to walk in communion with God Himself, a life which answers in a practical way to the truth of our adoption as sons, and in which there is pleasure and joy to the heart of God, and responsive affection in ours as we say in the liberty and joy of His presence "Abba, Father." This precious service of the Holy Spirit will result in a walk of dignity and testimony before men, but above all else, beloved, there will be joy in the heart of the Father as He takes account of those who walk *before Him* as displaying in some measure the features so perfectly seen in Christ as

Son.

We are conscious of the increasing power of evil in man's world, and his total inability to deal with it. How thankful to know that one result of the Holy Spirit's presence is His ability to restrain evil (2 Thessalonians 2: 7). However great the power of violence and corruption, all is under divine control, and the truth of this ministers comfort and assurance to the believer. He who is competent to give the saints victory in their conflict against the power of sin and Satan is the One who exercises divine control over all the evil extant today, and will do so until the coming of our Lord, a truth so apparent in the Thessalonian epistles.

A most blessed aspect of the Spirit's ministry is given to us in 1 Peter 4: 14. Faithfulness to a rejected Christ will of necessity involve its measure of suffering. How precious the content of this Scripture — "If ye are reproached in the Name of Christ, blessed are ye, for the Spirit of God rests upon you" (J.N.D.). The word "rests" implies the thought of "refreshment," thus the dark hours of persecution are lighted up with rays of divine glory comforting and refreshing the soul with a foretaste of its eternal joy and portion — even the day of God itself.

"And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come." This last reference in Scripture (Revelation 22) to the Holy Spirit carries its own charm and sweetness. Responsibly the church may have sadly failed, its responsive love to Christ often weak indeed; but how precious to contemplate a moment when the affections of the saints are in full accord with the desires of the Spirit Himself, hearts and voices mingling together in true desire for the coming of Christ. What a moment of joy for the blessed Spirit of God! His service complete and true bridal affections produced and seen in the hearts of those to whom it is His joy to "glorify Christ."

We have but touched the fringe of this holy subject; may we give the blessed Spirit of God His rightful place in our hearts and lives, ever remembering that He is the *Holy* Spirit, the power within us enabling us to appreciate and answer in a practical way to that atmosphere of holiness and joy which characterises the thoughts of God.