

"In my name"

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The above words occur no less than seven times in the last discourse of our Lord, recorded in John 14-16. And of these seven no less than six refer to the place of privilege and responsibility in which His disciples would find themselves after His departure to the Father, as may be seen if John 14: 13 and 14; John 15: 16; John 16: 23, 24 and 26, be read. Though He would be no longer visibly amongst them, so that to Him they could go with their enquiries and requests, they would be able to ask in His name, with the certainty that He Himself and the Father also, to whom He was going, would grant what they asked.

Our first enquiry is, what is the force and meaning of asking in His name? The answer surely is, that the Lord was leaving His disciples during His absence as His representatives. As far as His interests in this world are concerned, they were left to represent Him, and their requests as His representatives would be granted. A place of remarkable privilege indeed: and equally a place of great responsibility.

Take a simple illustration. The heads of a large business concern have to leave for the antipodes. They depart after giving powers to several of their subordinates to act for them during their absence. They can sign cheques, which the bank will certainly honour. A cheque is but a request — in proper legal form — that money be dispensed to somebody else, and the bank honours the business in whose name the cheque is issued.

We may at once feel inclined to say, Yes, but what if those deputed to sign for the firm as representatives of the absent chiefs, misuse their authority, and use money for their own purposes? And we have to reply that such breaches of trust among men do happen all too often, and the bank, unaware of the fraud, may pay the cheques. So here, of course, our illustration fails. No bank has power to discern what lies behind the issuing of a cheque. If it is technically correct, it is honoured and paid.

But, HE who presides over the "bank" of heaven — if we may thus apply our figure — possesses omniscience, since, "all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4: 13). We may close our requests by saying that we make them, "in the name of the Lord Jesus," but He will know whether we are really asking for things that are in His interests, or whether we are asking for things, that will suit our own desires merely. Only that which is really and genuinely "in His name," as representing His interests, is sure to be granted, and this should produce in us much searching of heart as to what we ask as left to represent our Lord. We have of course full liberty to make known all our requests unto God, with thanksgiving, as stated in Philippians, 4: 6, but that is another matter. We are **not** told there that what we ask shall be granted, but we **are** told that our hearts and minds shall be kept in the peace of God through Christ Jesus.

But now we must take note of the seventh occurrence of this wonderful phrase, which occurs in John 14: 26, for here we see the impelling Power, that lies behind the other six occurrences of the words. The main announcement of this farewell discourse is the coming of the Comforter, the Spirit of God, and here the Lord states that the Father will send Him "in My name;" that is, as My great Representative, to maintain My interests. This is a remarkable statement, and the force of it may be more clearly seen, if we place it alongside another statement of our Lord, "I am come in My Father's name" (John 5: 43). He came as representing His Father, concerned with His interests, and now that He

is departing, the Holy Spirit comes to represent Him and concern Himself with His interests.

What we read in John 16: 13, is in keeping with this. The Spirit did not come to speak "of," or, more literally, "**from** Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak." Clearly then, He came not to **originate**, but rather to **give effect** to the word of God, and to represent the absent Lord, who had gone on high; caring for His interests.

Now let us put these two things together. The Spirit is come as the Divine Representative of the absent Lord, gone on high; the disciples are left as the human representatives, with authority to ask in His name. Having done so, we shall at once realize that consequently it is of the utmost importance that we are dominated by the Spirit of God. He indwells us that He may dominate us. This we see brought to pass in the Apostle Paul, when he writes that, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8: 2). The word, "law," is here used evidently in the sense of, "effective control." Dominated now by the Spirit, Paul was set free from the domination of sin and death. He not only had "life in Christ Jesus," but also the Spirit, as the energy of that life. In verse 9 of that chapter He is called, "the Spirit of Christ," since He is here as we have seen, to represent Him.

Hence the great importance of that injunction in Jude 20, "Praying in the Holy Ghost." If we are enabled to pray **thus**, the requests we make will be in complete harmony with the mind of the Spirit. We, though imperfect, are left here to act and make requests in the name of our absent Lord. The Spirit, who is Divinely perfect, is sent in His name. Now if our prayers are "in the Holy Ghost," they will be marked by the suitability that He alone can impart. The requests, that we make then in our prayers, will really be, as our Lord said, "in My name."

It is when we pray **after this fashion** that the answer is so sure — "that will I do," "I will do it," "He will give it you."