

# The Holy Ghost Who Dwelleth in Us

2 Timothy 1: 14.

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## Chapter 1.

### *INTRODUCTORY.*

The Holy Spirit occupies a very special place in relation to Christians, distinct from anything set forth in Old Testament times or enjoyed by Old Testament saints; distinct from what was enjoyed by the disciples who companied with the Lord previous to His death, resurrection, and ascension; and distinct from what will be wrought in men (Israelites and Gentiles) after Christians are gone from the earth to the Lord; when the time will have come for the millennial reign of Christ, and its attendant glory and blessing.

We will reverently speak of His unique service in Christianity, and invite the reader's prayerful study and exercise of heart over the Scripture; that we may seek to answer to the grace that God has shown to us, and to the position Christ has won for us, loyally and largely, till He come.

First of all.

## **WHO IS THE SPIRIT?**

We require to distinguish between the ordinary human spirit conferred on God's creature man in Gen. 2: 7, by the breath of God, and the Spirit of God who moved independently on the face of the waters before man was made, in Gen. 1: 2 The first constitutes man a responsible being before his Creator, destined to exist for ever; the second is a Divine Person. They are very clearly separated in 1 Corinthians 2: 11. The spirit of man equips him for intelligence within the compass of his position as a man; the Spirit of God searches the deep things of *God*. We met a man not long ago who foolishly argued that, inasmuch as unconverted men had not the Spirit of God, each of them would cease to exist when he died. But when this passage was pointed out to him, he wisely bowed to the word which shows that every man has his own spirit whether he has the Spirit of God or not.

The Holy Ghost is a separate Personality in God. His Name is seen in conjunction with the names of the Father, and the Son, in Matthew 28 Christian baptism commits one to the confession of God as revealed by Christ, the full revelation of the one true living God being Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. There are not two Gods, or three Gods, as ignorant objectors allege; but three Personalities in one God. These three ever subsisted in the Godhead; and with regard to the Holy Spirit, He is expressly called the Eternal Spirit (Heb. 9: 14). Before the worlds were made, God is (Heb. 11: 3, 6); but even when heaven and earth were created these material things were not capable of bringing to light all that God is. Moreover, though Enoch and Noah walked with God, and Abraham was called God's friend, and the Lord spake face to face unto Moses as a man speaketh unto his friend, their great intimacies did not bring to light the full truth. He was known to the patriarchs under His name of Almighty God, for the attribute of All-might pertains to the whole Godhead. Later, an advance was made when God especially linked His name of Jehovah with the nation of Israel (Exodus 6: 2, 3), for eternal existence and unchangeable glory (which are implied in that name) belong equally to the whole Godhead. Yet amid all the glories unfolded by the prophets, the Godhead secret was never fully disclosed until in the fulness of time Christ came When it was no longer a question of the creation of worlds, or of the power that could sustain faith and reward it, as in Old Testament times, but rather of making purgation of sin and of revealing all that God is, the appearance of the Son of God in a concrete human form, apart from sin, necessarily brought to light His relations with the other Persons in the Trinity. Christianity therefore is based upon the knowledge of God as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

But once we have light as to Him we can see how large a part the Spirit played in the history of the world in times that are past. In creation He is the first Personality distinguished by Name (Gen. 1: 2), and is there seen in connection with the ordering of the earth for man. In Job 26: 13, He is found garnishing the heavens. See also Isaiah 40: 13. The formation of man is attributed to Him in Job 33: 4. He operated in a special way in all the writers and in all the writings of the Scripture (2 Sam. 23: 2; 1 Chronicles 28: 12; Neh. 9: 30; 1 Peter 1: 10-11; 2 Peter 1: 21; Heb. 3: 7; Heb. 9: 8; Heb. 10: 15). He imparted special wisdom to men, understanding, knowledge, skill (Ex. 31; Neh. 9: 20); peculiar and temporary energy and power (Balaam, Num. 24: 2; Othniel, Judges 3: 10; Gideon, Judges 6: 34; Jephthah, Judges 11: 29; Samson, Judges 13: 25, etc.; Saul, 1 Sam. 10: 6, 10, etc).

**He is spoken of DIRECTLY and PERSONALLY**, as in Genesis 1: 2; Matthew 3: 16, etc.; John 7: 39; Acts 8: 39; Acts 13: 2; Acts 16: 6, 7; Romans 8; 1 Corinthians 12; Revelation 22: 17.

**He is spoken of SYMBOLICALLY**, under the idea of seven Spirits, in Revelation 1, 3, 4, 5. Compare Isaiah 11: 2. Thus also Christ is spoken of symbolically as a Lamb having seven horns and seven eyes.

**He is spoken of TYPICALLY**, as *oil*, for anointing, etc., Exodus 30: 22-33. Compare Acts 10:

38 and 1 Samuel 16: 13. And as wind, or *breath* (Ezek. 37: 1-10. See verse 14).

**He is spoken of CHARACTERISTICALLY**, as the Spirit of grace (Zech. 12: 10; Heb. 10: 29), of truth (John 14: 17, 26, etc.), of holiness (Rom. 1: 4. So called everywhere the Holy Ghost), of life (Rom 8: 2), of Christ (Rom. 8: 9, etc.), of sonship or adoption (Rom. 8: 15), of God's Son (Gal. 4: 6), of power, love, and a sound mind (2 Tim. 1: 7), and of glory and of God (1 Peter 4: 14).

**He is spoken of PROPHETICALLY**, in Isaiah 44: 3, where it is foretold that He will be poured out on Jacob's seed through the sovereign will and mercy of God; in Ezekiel 11: 19, and 36: 26, 27, in contrast with their former idolatry and uncleanness, and their captivity in heathen lands; also in Joel 28, where Jehovah declares His purpose to bring all flesh, i.e., Gentile as well as Jew, under the Spirit's power. I his will be connected with the future deliverance in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, when God shall save His remnant of the Jews; though the Apostle Peter Indicates a partial fulfilment of it in Acts 2: 16, etc.

**Lastly, He is said to give character** to gift (Rom. 1: 11);

„ „ the mind, life, and **disposition of saints**

generally as such (Rom. 8).

„ „ certain godly believers in contrast with

certain carnally minded believers

(1 Cor. 2: 15; 1 Cor. 3: 1; 1 Cor.

14: 37; Gal. 6: 1).

„ „ the part taken by saints in Christian

assemblies, and among their **fellow-**

**Christians (1 Cor. 12)**

„ „ the resurrection body (1 Cor. 15: 44).

„ „ the whole of our blessings (Eph 1: 3).

„ „ our songs (Eph. 5: 19).

„ „ the house of which we form constituent

parts, and our sacrifices (1 Peter 2: 5)

## **Chapter 2**

### **THE SPIRIT-BIRTH (John 3)**

The Lord's words to Nicodemus in John 3 show clearly that the first or old natural birth does not furnish material suitable for the kingdom of God, and will not do for Him. He speaks of the necessity for a new birth. "Except a man be born anew he cannot see the kingdom of God." It is not merely that he will not be found in it; he is positively unable to see it apart from a new Spirit-birth. The "anew" shows that no training or environment can affect the old nature so as to produce what is required, i.e., power to "see" (ver. 3), and power to "enter" the kingdom of God (ver. 5).

The Lord uses three terms:

(a) born anew (vv. 3, 7);

(b) born of water and of Spirit (ver. 5); and

(c) born of the Spirit (vv. 6, 8).

The first nullifies our natural estate as born in the ordinary course of generation; the second indicates the agencies used to produce the new; and the third shows the lineage, and the character imparted.

(a) As to the person, he must be born anew. Born duke or democrat, no antecedent history counts. No blue blood found in, nor blue ribbon found on, the natural man averts the necessity spoken of; no red cross benefits conferred, nor red flag prospects sought after, can secure this radical change; no Jewish ordinance nor Christian rite can effect it. Simon Magus was baptised, but was in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity; the dying thief was never baptised, yet was found in Paradise with the Lord. Whatever place baptism has in the Christian economy, and however near its doctrine comes (Rom. 6) to the same repudiation of the old life derived by natural generation, it is not the theme here in the beginning of John 3 Baptism teaches the judgment of the old standing of man after the flesh; new birth is the commencement of another line altogether.

(b) The Lord evidently uses the term water to Nicodemus because the Jewish Scriptures of which he was the teacher (ver. 10, N.T.) spoke in this language of the coming blessing of the Jew. Isaiah 44: 3 says, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed and my blessing upon their offspring." This will be the preliminary to their saying by and by, "I am the Lord's." The need of the Israelite will be met, and the need of the land supplied, by the same hand, and by the fulfilment of the written prophecies relating to both; the Spirit conferred, and the blessing given in a national way to Jacob in the Holy Land. Then again the prophet in Ezekiel 36: 25, 26 says: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, etc., etc." This again is connected with the regeneration of Israel, of which the thirty-seventh chapter is a further illustration. All this Nicodemus knew in the letter of it, but had not apprehended its meaning. It was not the application of cold water to the body in bathing which was meant by the prophet, when he spoke of cleansing away their filthiness and their idols; still less was it any incantation of a priest with so-called holy water, which never produces moral or radical change. Every Jew knows, and every reader of Scripture ought to know, that a young man cleanses his way by taking heed thereto according to *God's Word* (Psalm 119: 9). It is *God's Word* which, when applied by the mighty energy of the Holy Spirit, produces a new birth and a new way of looking at things, *God's way*. It conveys *God's estimate* of things, it permits of our estimating good and evil as they affect *God*. Until a man has his eyes opened in this new way, he can never see the Kingdom of *God*. He can see how things affect himself, or how they effect his fellowmen. He can fight against oppression, or combat drunkenness, or legislate against slavery, and gambling, and theft, and adultery and murder. He can see the evil of such ways and aim at their restriction for his own comfort or from compassion to others. He can as a man in the world pity the poor, the sick, the wounded, the bereaved, and most earnestly seek to alleviate the misery he finds around him. He can be courageous in battle, and patriotic in sentiment, and even enthusiastic in religion; and yet lack this "*sine qua non*," this one thing which is not only needful but vital, not needful only but imperative: "*Ye Must be born again.*"

The Spirit then uses the word of *God* in producing the new birth. Whatever sentiments and affections and capabilities lie in a man naturally, they are accounted null, and are negated by this sweeping change. So far as the new birth '*per se*' is concerned, it removes nothing and changes nothing of what was communicated at the old birth; it teaches by implication that it is *God's intention* to do

away with the old, but in itself it does not do away with it. It does not furnish atonement, nor a judicial standing in righteousness before God, nor does it in the least of and by itself determine the character of a man's blessing; it is not a measure of any man's blessing, but rather what must precede every positive blessing in all dispensations. Whoever in the Old Testament times was the subject of Divine delivering mercy in a spiritual sense, was born again; so in this age; so in the millennial age yet to come. Men must be born of water and of (the) Spirit to enter the kingdom of God.

The word of God thus used by the Spirit of God, imparts a totally new direction to a man's heart, and perceptive faculties, and will, and becomes the new standard by which he learns to estimate everything. Like Asaph, if ever he is tempted to judge of things according to a fleshly mind, he is delivered from its conclusions by getting into God's presence and receiving God's thoughts (Ps. 73). In personal affliction, instead of judging God by his circumstances, he learns to perceive with Job the end of the Lord (James 5: 11). In famine, and war, and pestilence, in domestic and national adversity, he discerns the discipline of the Lord; in affairs of a private or of a public nature he is governed by the fear of God. Failure and sin instead of driving him to despair like Judas, drive him to confession and restoration like David. But in all this a man might be, as the eunuch of Acts 8 probably was, and as Cornelius in Acts 10 certainly was, still a seeker after God's salvation; born again, and destined for blessing and eternal life, but not yet, in the Christian sense of the word, saved (Acts 11: 13, 14)

(c) Our Lord also teaches us that just as really as at the first birth that which is born of the flesh is flesh, so in this new birth that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. The man who has been led to bow to God truly has not merely changed his opinion, as a Jew or a heathen might embrace Christianity, but partakes in the sight of God of a new spiritual nature after the essential character of the parentage if I may so say, characterized by spiritual instincts, affections, and desires. It is when we perceive this fact that we can begin to trace things to their sources, what emanates from the flesh and what from the Spirit. This is so even when, as yet, the subject of this divine work has not learnt how peace and deliverance come. A chapter like Romans 7 becomes painfully real. The seventh of Romans never fails to touch us, to touch our hearts, I mean even long after we have found peace and deliverance; but for those who enjoy deliverance it is rather like retracing our experience than miserably living it through.

Will the reader, in conclusion, compare with John 5, James 1: 18, and 1 Peter 1: 22, 23?

## **Chapter 3.**

### ***THE SPRINGING FOUNTAIN AND THE SPREADING RIVERS.***

In John 4, the Lord spoke of supplying the one who asked of Him with living water, which should be in him a fountain (N.T.) of water springing up into everlasting life. I believe that all will understand this to refer to the Holy Spirit, especially when we come to read John 7: 38, 39. But it is evident that the Lord presents a new phase of the Holy Spirit's service different from the new birth spoken of in chapter 3 Birth lies at the commencement of life; but this is the living itself.

(1) It is descriptive of a joy based upon the knowledge of God as a Giver of blessing, not a demander of righteousness as under the law. It speaks thus of God as known in Christ, not as at Sinai; of the gospel in its great essential of grace (John 4: 10).

(2) It offers the satisfaction of every want, and the charging of the soul with such a pressure of blessing that, far from casting the soul downward, depressed and defeated and miserable, it urges it upward to boundless enjoyment, in freedom from every earthly drag, satisfied and happy in the

knowledge of God (ver. 14). And this, mark, is not the exception proposed among those who drink; it is the "whosoever" that drinks for whom it is all available.

(3) It fits the renewed soul, blessed in its relations with God, and with Christ, and with the Holy Spirit, to become a worshipper. Not indeed "in this mountain," nor yet "at Jerusalem," for the whole order of material things was to give place to worship "in spirit and in truth." But the new kind of blessing puts the renewed soul in such a position that it would hear the Father's Name; and learn the mode of the Father's grace, God revealed now as Father, and seeking such to worship Him (ver. 23). The Holy Ghost leads to this worship, not according to the rubrics of man, nor even according to the ritual imposed so wisely and graciously in the Old Testament as typical of what was to come (but destined to disappear in Christ); but according to the holy liberty designed for all "true worshippers." It is a new kind in which the externals of religion are eclipsed and displaced by what is deeply inwrought by the Spirit, and is produced by the enjoyment and realisation of the truth (ver. 24). It puts the worshipper, moreover, into present touch with the Christ of God as God's new Centre, through whom the whole of God's wondrous revelation of Himself is made, and in whom all the perplexities as well as the needs of the awakened soul are forever resolved (vv. 25, 26. Compare 2 Chr. 9: 1-12).

All this, so feebly explained and so briefly summed up, the Holy Spirit is prepared to do with every Christian, and is given for that very purpose. Does it not strike the reader that somehow we miss, and have missed, much of the joy and power that the Holy Ghost would bring into our lives, if only we would make room for Him? Shall we make it a daily prayer that God may give us to be filled with the Spirit? It will be our privilege to examine later some of the details of His service, as well as to endeavour to detect some of the hindrances to His gracious work.

### ***The Spreading Rivers,***

Finally, in John 7: 37-39, the Lord makes a statement which seems designed to arrest people by its magnificence. The occasion of its utterance enhances its grandeur. It was not spoken at a time when everyone was reminded of conspicuous failure, or convinced of the weariness of a hollow show. It was the Feast of Tabernacles (vv. 2, 14), the period above all periods in the Jewish Calendar when the nation was called upon to rejoice. It was the great Harvest Thanksgiving, when every heart was supposed to be brimful of joy and of gratitude to the great Giver of earthly good. It was the time when the fruits of the land had been gathered in, and when all Israel dwelt at Jerusalem in booths, in the national confession of God's great favour to them; of the deliverance from Egypt effected for them; and of the bounties His hand had lavished on them in the Holy Land (Lev. 23: 33-43). It was earth's most favoured nation in earth's most favoured day; and the hour when, for once, had they but known Him, Jehovah Himself was there in their midst, healing, teaching, blessing. And more; where day succeeded day in accumulating joy, this was the last day, the great day of the feast. Where every day was great this was the greatest, when man might be presumed to have reached the acme of human happiness.

Was it possible that *there*, and *at that time*, one could have an unsatisfied heart, and long for a deeper communion than that best of festivals could afford?

The murmurs among the Jews, their marvel at the words of Jesus, their cavil over His works, their speculations as to who He was, the presence of officers from the Pharisees and chief priests sent to arrest Him, the strange and awful language used of the Lord as to His disappearance from their midst, and their hopeless search for Him subsequently when it would be impossible to find Him, — all of which are referred to in the chapter, had made this mysterious Visitor the centre of the vast throng, the theme of every tongue. It was when thus in their midst that Jesus looked over the people whom the

best of earthly blessings had left ignorant of the Blesser who was amongst them; and, knowing how unsatisfying it is to have the grandest religious celebration without a heart-knowledge of Himself, said, "If any man thirst, let come unto Me and drink." Oh, how many there are amid cathedral splendours and gorgeous religious festivals, weary and sick at heart, to whom one moment's contact the Holy Son of God would mean ten thousand times more than all the song and vestments, the ornate building and the fragrant incense, and the crowd of so-called worshippers.

But Jesus offers the most wonderful thing to crown any and every personal blessing. We can truly say that in coming to Him our thirst is quenched, our personal need met. This He pledges indeed (ver. 37). But He does more. He propounds a fulness of blessing from Himself of such sort that, instead of depending on plentiful harvests, and congenial circumstances, and wondrous earthly providences, the believer, indwelt by the Holy Ghost, would be a perpetual marvel of happiness and blessing; a man with every personal craving at rest, every affection satisfied in Christ, and a perennial contributor to the scene around him; not indeed of *drops* of blessing few and far between, but of rivers, yea, rivers of living *water*. Not of mere philanthropic good, to benefit merely the bodies or the circumstances of men; but of spiritual good, living water, good for this life and for that which is to come. Rivers too which however much may be taken from them flow on generously for all sorts and conditions of men, night and day, in summer warmth and winter cold; the supply kept up in untiring fulness because its source is in Jesus glorified. Blessing for saint, blessing for sinner, blessing for the widow, blessing for the fatherless, blessing for the poor, blessing for the needy. Always accessible, always flowing, no effort to supply the living water; for the Holy Ghost is the Power that never wearies in filling the heart to overflowing with the love and glory of Christ, and in reproducing His character in us; teaching us to do good because God is good; and because we have learnt His goodness in Jesus. They are living waters which get deeper as you go further, as in Ezekiel 47; that avail for the blossoming of a desert, or for the healing of a Dead Sea, that bring life where they go, and yield food and drink and medicine for all.

This again is not for some special class, or some advanced Christian, but "he that believeth on Me" is the subject of this wondrous grace.

Does the reader take it in that God intends his life — our lives, — to be thus under the control of the Holy Ghost that He may fill us to infinite and abiding satisfaction of heart, overflowing upwards in worship to the Father, and outwards to the need around?

Is it not lawful for us, nay, incumbent upon us, to search out what hinders? We shall see, as we proceed in what varied ways the Spirit is prepared to act with us to give us that fulness of enjoyment which God has designed for us through Christ.

## Chapter 4

### ***THE COMFORTER.***

The Gospel of John gives us an introduction to fellowship with Divine Persons in a more distinct way than in the three preceding gospels. Being written by the Apostle John at a time when the body of Christian teaching committed to the Apostle Paul had been established, it seems designed to open out that intercourse with Father, Son, and Holy Ghost for which all teaching and blessing is designed to prepare and qualify us.

Nothing can be finer than the presentation of the glories of Christ, the revealer of the Father, in the first chapter. The One who is the Word in relation to God was the Light in relation to men. Two

things thus meet in Jesus, the revelation of what God is, and the disclosure of what man is. No wonder that, in order to bring these two together — God in all His glory, and man in all his darkness — it was necessary that Jesus be the Lamb of God that sin might be put away; and be the Baptizer with the Holy Ghost that He might inaugurate a new order and condition of men wherein His own nature and character might be reproduced.

But though the world was made by Him, the world knew Him not. It was the world's condemnation that it knew not its Creator. Nor was the special nation of Israel any better. He came to His own, prepared by the scriptures of the prophets for His advent, but they received Him not. Thus the Lord stood alone in all His unique glory, unknown by the world and rejected by Israel. But a few, relatively few, the subjects of a new birth of God, received Him and believed upon His Name, and to these he gave the privilege of becoming the children of God.

Henceforward this new company, distinguishable from the world at large, and also from the Jewish nation hitherto described as "His own," are seen to be the subjects of His special affection and care. They are described characteristically and constantly as believers, "he that believeth," "they that believe upon Him," in contrast with others. These are His sheep (John 10), these are the people to whom the Spirit was to be given (John 7: 37-39). It is these, such as these, who are seen gathered with Him on that never-to-be-forgotten night referred to in John 13: 1, when the Lord lifts the title of "His own" from the Jewish connection of the first chapter and places it upon the brows of his beloved, given to Him by the Father out of the world. Nor upon *their* brows alone; for the affection which was there shown to the little nucleus of the Gospel story is passed on in John 17: 20, to those who should believe on Him through their word. The apostolic testimony has led to the conversion of others to the Lord, and to their inclusion in the same interest, affection, and blessing. Through grace we are of that number.

Thus it is that we read these chapters now; they the nucleus, and we who now believe in Christ are the subjects of the same love, the recipients of the same Spirit, and equally the happy objects of the Father's counsels secured for the Father's house.

Let us then see the Lord's thought for us in providing the Comforter This is the same Holy Spirit of whom we have before spoken. He is referred to by the Son of God in four parts of these three wonderful chapters in John's Gospel. The first is John 14: 16, 17; the second is John 14: 26; the third, John 15: 26, 27; and the fourth, John 16: 7-15.

First of all, let us recall and realize our position. The world knows not Christ, and Israel has rejected Him. But we have been born of God, we have received Him, and have believed upon His Name. The Lord, being now exalted and glorified, and having sent down the Holy Spirit (John 7: 37-39), two things appeal very blessedly to us. One is that we (i.e. true Christians one and all) are the subjects of his unchanging, precious love. Looking down upon the believer in any part of the world, and at every time in his history, the gracious Saviour, Son of God, whispers to him, "My own." Secondly, the Holy Spirit has been given to us; and although this opens out into marvellous meanings and wonderful privileges, the fact itself is our starting point.

Let us now study John 14: 16 *First of all*, the company loved of the Lord (Judas has gone out) is assured of the intercession of the Lord in His new place. The Son addresses the Father, and communes with Him on our behalf. The Father and the Son find it worth their while to think about us and study our interests.

*Secondly*, the Father, perfectly in unison with the Son's affection and care, grants the request and gives the Comforter. That is, the Holy Spirit given to believers is here described as the Father's gift to us in answer to the Son's prayer for us.

*Thirdly*, the One He gives is described as "another Comforter." No one can doubt that Jesus had been a Comforter to His disciples, soothing as a nurse, encouraging as a master and teacher, undertaking as a guardian. But the disciples losing Him as to His presence with them on earth, were to have the other Comforter, charging Himself in the same way with the responsibility of their welfare.

*Fourthly*, the new Person to be their Comforter would not be with them for a few years and then leave, as had been the case with the Lord Jesus. He is given with nothing less than a permanency in view, as long as there were saints to be responsible for. The "for ever" goes from the beginning to the end of our stay here. It goes past our Christian youth and old age, it goes past our joys and sorrows, it goes on though we stumble and fail. The love of Christ is for ever, "to the end," and the Spirit's abiding with us is as enduring as the love.

*Fifthly*, this Comforter is the Spirit of Truth; the greatest possible contrast to the pretence, false show, unreality, and treacherous friendship that characterize the world. You might perhaps think that your weakness and the presence of the flesh within might expel the Holy One, and lead Him to give you up. But no; in coming in, in being given of the Father to you, He is the Spirit of Truth, and knows all about you when He takes possession. Nothing disconcerts Him, nothing takes Him by surprise. You make fresh discoveries as to yourself; *He* makes none, because He knew it all at the outset. Hence, knowing all, He takes you for better or for worse (as men say), and never gives you up.

*Sixthly*, you are comforted in this, that you are no longer reckoned as part of "the world" which cannot receive Him, but among the "you" dear to Christ, who do know Him. The world can see and know what is visible and tangible and capable of analysis; but only the believer can know the Spirit.

*Finally*, it is with the disciples that the Spirit makes me, and it is in them that He dwells. We who are Christians alone form the company honoured by His residence and further He is in us. Unlike the Lord Jesus who on earth was simply with and not in His disciples, the Holy Spirit dwells in us; a most wonderful fact. It is made possible as we learn elsewhere, on the ground of the atonement, in which our sin has been judicially dealt with and thus done away for God.

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The next passage in which the Comforter is referred to is John 14: 26. In passing let us note that the name "Comforter" is the same in the Greek original of the New Testament as the "Advocate" of 1 John 2: 2. While Christ is our Representative, our Guardian, our Solicitor, on high, maintaining our interests before the Father, the Holy Ghost is equally so for us down here in the world. In this passage, the first element of help for us is that He is given His simple, absolute Name in the Godhead — the Holy Ghost. Let us consent to ponder this stupendous reality, a Divine Person dwells in us. Do we not well to ask ourselves what is the Object of His being within us, that we may fall in with it, and obtain the full benefit of His presence?

It will be noticed that, in this new verse it is not presenting the fact of the Spirit being the Father's gift (as in v. 16), so much as that He is sent on a mission from the Father. A definite purpose is before Him, a commission on the Father's part. This is nothing less than to act in the Name of the Son, to care for His honour, and to promote His interests in the saints. Nothing is nearer to our affections than to see Jesus exalted. Cold is the heart that does not long to be wholehearted for Christ, to be gripped by His love, to be surrendered utterly to His will, that our whole being should be radiant with His life, not self. What we wish to point out from this verse is that in every such purpose and aim and notwithstanding every deterrent influence we have the support of God the Holy Ghost within. May we see what irresistible power there is at our disposal in so far as we are at His disposal.

Now in the words that follow we have two ways indicated in which He pursues His mission. The Lord shows what one might call the objective themes with which He engages believers' hearts. Let us recall that Christ is on high in the Father's presence, and that the Spirit has come from the glory into which Jesus has gone, to make His Name everything to us. The expression "He shall teach you all things" needs then to be read and understood in that connection; it surely implies the "all things" bound up with the position and glory of Christ in the Father's presence. While the Saviour was on earth He was not able to unfold all that was in the Father's counsels to the disciples; this is implied in verse 25 and is definitely stated in John 16: 12. But when the Comforter arrived He would not be under restraint. Coming from the supreme height to which Jesus was ascended and knowing all the glory and all the love of that bright home, the Father's house, He would teach us *all* things. Dear saint of God, what education is indeed open to us, and what a Teacher! Do you not long to be able to use such a Guest, your permanent, indwelling Friend?

Nor are we to lose what Christ was on earth. For this seems to be implied in the remainder of the verse He shall "bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." Nothing would be omitted or forgotten of all the telling and proving of that love which He had brought into the world which had for ever won His disciples' hearts. The Spirit, while filling our souls with the brilliant light of His glory, never fails to keep our hearts in touch with the grace of His service here. Christ in incarnation, lowliness, suffering, and rejection, yet revealing God; Christ crowned with glory and honour, in resurrection life, the last Adam, set over all by the Father's hand.

These are the objective themes with which the Spirit, sent from the Father, engages our hearts. Is it possible for me, among the least of God's saints, to be at home with all that Christ has been and is? Yes, more than possible; it is God's design in giving us His Holy Spirit, the Comforter.

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A third passage awaits us. It is John 15: 26, 27. To understand it a little we require to read its context. The end of the fourteenth chapter shows that up to that point the Lord had the disciples inside with Him. The fifteenth then seems to view them as coming out into the world, privileged and responsible to bear fruit for the Father, and yet certain to meet with hostility and hatred from the scene outside. Verses 17 and 18 show a remarkable contrast; love in the circle within, hatred from the world without. Christianity is, properly speaking, a love circle. You have the Father loving the Son, and the Son loving the Father. You have the Son loving the disciples, and the disciples loving the Son. You have the Father loving the disciples because they loved Jesus. You have the disciples loving one another. And I think that the picture can hardly be complete without a suggestion that the disciples seeing what the Father is, in and through Jesus the Son must have begun to love the Father too. Anyway, here is a love circle, and through grace, though few and weak, we are in it.

And what outside? Hatred; just downright, unreasoning, blind hatred. Hatred to the Father, hatred to the Son revealing the Father, hatred to the disciples who bear testimony to the Son, hatred to every testimony given by the Holy Ghost through the disciples. A love circle in the midst of implacable hatred. Such are we here, in no strength or power of our own, assailed by all that corruption or violence can invent to blight our testimony and to obliterate every trace of the Christ of God. Who could stand for one hour were it not for the Spirit of God?

But we have verse 26. The same Spirit, the gift of the Father in John 14: 16, sent of the Father in John 14: 26, is here said to be sent of the Son from the Father. The risen One, upon whom fell the brunt of the opposition to God in His earthly life, who knew the bitter and ceaseless hatred of men against the whole truth of God, understands perfectly the position of His dear disciples left here, the raging of the

antagonism that would test their faith and wear their spirits, and destroy their loyalty if possible. Viewing it all, and knowing exactly what they needed, He having reached the Father's presence on high, sent down the Comforter to them, to be with them in this otherwise unequal conflict. As seen in this passage, then, the Comforter comes to sustain the testimony of Christ in the world from which Christ has been rejected with hatred; and is again described by the Lord as the Spirit of Truth. He is identified with, and bears witness to, the whole range of truth. The world is a vast system of unreality and falsehood, and is hostile to the truth; there is the element of contrariety in it to every detail of the truth of God. In whatever aspect truth is presented to it, it fights against it; it gives no quarter and shows no pity. Whoever stands for Christ will be relentlessly persecuted. Its character is unchanged through all the Christian period, and notwithstanding all the revelation of the patience and love of God.

In the midst of such a scene the Spirit appears, and raises the testimony to Christ. He identifies Himself with it, and with the disciples who were standing for Him. It is to be remarked that when it is a question of testifying unto Jesus, the words are added, "which proceedeth from the Father," that is, that while He is sent by the Son from the Father, He comes voluntarily and as an act of His own. Gladly does He come even into this uncongenial scene if it be to render tribute to the honour of Jesus, and to keep alive the light for His Name. "He shall testify of Me" Thus is summed up in one clause the whole of the Christian witness. It is to be here for Christ. But it involves much. It involves the displacement of self, it means warfare, defensive and offensive. It costs, it hurts; yet neither hurt nor cost can be for a moment deterrent if only Christ be precious as the Spirit would make Him precious.

The Apostles were to be associated with the Spirit in this testimony for their absent Lord; but while they were the beginning of the host, a vast number have since followed in their steps, and have been added to the nucleus of witnesses. The Spirit remains. The subject of testimony, Christ, is the same. The hostility of the world undergoes no diminution nor attrition. But the units who form the vessels of testimony are in solution; these coming, those going. How simple our Christianity would be if we only realised that the Holy Ghost raises the flag for Christ, and that we Christians simply rally round the uplifted standard. Nothing other than Christ; nothing less than Christ.

Our last passage is John 16: 7-15. A very world of meaning seems to lie in these verses, but we must strictly limit ourselves, praying that the gist of the Lord's words may be conveyed to the reader and that, like good seed in an honest and good heart, it may germinate and grow.

The news of His coming absence filled the disciples with sorrow. Although they did not yet realise to the full all the character of the world in which they were to be left, nor the gain that would accrue to them by His going, the sense that they were to be left was a pain and a grief that for the moment appalled them. Once more does the gracious Son of God bring in oil upon the troubled waters, referring a little more in detail to the Comforter and to His service. But His introductory words in this section are amazing. Notwithstanding all the sweetness and power of their association with Him on earth, despite all the marvellous gain it must have been to these few simple men to see the service of the Son of God, to hear His ministry, to realise His love, to walk in such exalted company, to be shepherded by such a Person amid such surroundings, their loved Master's words fall upon their ears, mysterious yet true they must be, for they were His words "It is expedient for you that I go away." It is profitable for you, it is to your advantage that I leave. Oh, how could they have understood it if He had stopped there? Let us reverently trace out the words that followed: "If I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send Him unto you." The gain of which He spoke would be conveyed to them by the Comforter whom He would send. The presence of the Holy Spirit with them, consequent upon His departure to the Father, would be more to them than His presence could then be, while in flesh and blood upon earth.

It is intelligible if we come to understand what His death, resurrection, and exaltation would effect for them. The atonement for sin to be wrought by the shedding of His Blood, the life to be shared with Him as the Man risen victoriously out of death, the place in the Father's presence to be taken on their behalf to show their destination in the Father's purpose all these things were involved. It was with all this in view that the Lord speaks of going away; and promises the Comforter as their solace and their gain in His absence. Do we realise all that the Spirit is given to be to us? Dare one of us say that there is naught more to be learnt or enjoyed of what He can do in us?

There are two great lines opened up by the coming of the Comforter as our Lord indicates here. The first is what His coming means in regard to the world; the second, what it means in regard to His own that are in the world.

The first is declared thus, "When He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment,"

His presence here, and Christ's enthronement on high, are related to each other as the two sides of a coin. Now Christ's exaltation in heaven is God's reversal of man's rejection of Him on the earth.

These then depend mutually the one on the other; if Jesus had not been rejected here, the Spirit would not have descended to take His place. The presence of God the Holy Ghost, resident among Christ's people and in them, brings demonstration in itself independent of any such thing as preaching of the state of the world into which He has descended. It is a world which has not believed in Jesus, God's Son. It is a world which, in spite of civilization and education and philosophy and inventions, is guilty before God of the rejection and murder of its own Saviour. Whether autocracy be in the van or democracy rule; whether religion be prevalent or irreligion; the voice of the world religious, and the world political, and the world social, has been raised once for all in its critical hour against Christ, "Away with Him, crucify Him." This then defines its character in the Spirit's eyes, and in the eyes of him who is indwelt and taught by the Spirit; it is SIN. It may come with its honours, its rewards, its pleasures; it may offer its wealth or its fame or its interests; but over them all the Christian sees that definition writ large, SIN; "of sin, because they believe not on Me."

Now at first sight this would make it appear as though sin had got the upper hand, even though the Spirit be here to protest against it. But a second consideration is brought before us. While we feel the wrong, the deadly wrong, of Christ's rejection, and are taught to repudiate with all our hearts the world's refusal of Him, we are comforted when we think of what took place immediately afterward. For He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, claimed by it for the Father's presence on high. While we see, and are ashamed of, and by grace repudiate, the world's wrong act in refusing Him, we are taught to approve of and delight in God's right act in accepting and exalting Him. It shows us there is such a thing as righteousness in the universe, even though it consist for the moment in removing Christ personally from the sphere of human sight. We know at least where He is gone, and that the place which He occupies in the Father's presence is Father's righteous answer to the world's wrong. The Spirit's presence here, contingent as it was upon His going there, is a continual reminder that righteousness exists, and will prevail against sin's worst doings. It is the pledge that God will in His own time, and publicly, establish righteousness on the throne and right every wrong, even as He has already privately done so in setting Christ there, where we see Him by faith. If we think alone of the cross, unrighteousness seems to have prevailed; but we look into the Father's presence and we see that after all righteousness has conquered, and is in evidence from the lowest point to the highest.

But, finally, this leads to a very serious conclusion. Behind the world's action has been the prince of this world. However little we know of the way evil spirits operate through human minds, Scripture

leaves us in no uncertainty as to the fact that Satan can and does use man as a tool to give effect to his purposes. By craft at the beginning he became the dominating factor in Eve's mind and set her in motion against God; and the forces then started in their germs developed in the clearest way when he led Jew and Gentile together into the murder of God's Son. So that in the death of Christ we see Satan's purpose challenging God's purpose; the counsels of the prince of this world set against the counsels of God. Which was, which is, to prevail? Christ's exaltation on high, and the Spirit's presence here in the world, is God's answer, and solves it all for us. The prince of this world is judged. God has already given to Christ personally the place He is to occupy according to His plan; and the Spirit is here quietly and resistlessly carrying out His purpose in respect of His disciples. And this brings the whole world, as a system dominated by Satan and built up according to his purpose, under the judgment of God. All that he plans will be overturned by the same power that has set Jesus on high out of death, and has sent the Spirit to testify of Him here.

Such then is the world's character as the Spirit's presence determines it for us.

But then it is clear that if this be so, the Holy Ghost must aim at occupying our minds, not with the world as we see it now, the awful sphere of Satan's workings, but with the world to come, when the Father's counsels will prevail. How blessedly natural therefore are the words which follow in John 16: 13-15.

First, let us point out that the Spirit is to guide us into *all* truth. There is now no limit to what He may teach us, and grant us the realization of. Secondly, however, He is to *guide us*, not exactly force us. It supposes no reluctance on our part, but rather a glad surrender to our Guide. Any point at which we submit to be deflected by human affection or earthly interest is the point at which we lose His guidance, and miss the path of truth. Any reserve in our hearts as to putting ourselves under His absolute control because of some cost dreaded, and no one can tell what we miss. Many would like to save themselves exercise by following human leaders, eminent teachers, and so on; but it is a sad substitution for the One of whom Christ says, "*He shall guide you into all truth.*"

But now we see the blessed themes with which He would fill our hearts, all I doubt not, in connection with the Father's counsels, and what you might call the Father's world.

In verse 13: "He will show you."

In verse 14: "and shall show."

In verse 15: "and shall show."

The first is in connection with "things to come."

The second, "He shall glorify Me."

The third, "All things that the Father hath."

These three things are all to be opened out to us in so far as the Spirit of God has His way with us. All the details of the world to come, all the glories of Christ, and the whole range of the Father's counsels which have Christ for their Centre.

Oh dear fellow-believer, may we be more in earnest about giving the Holy Ghost His place in our lives, and so find our souls filled and thrilled with the delights He has to place before us, and enjoying the fellowship with God's thoughts for which His grace has fitted us.

## Chapter 5

### ***THE SEAL.***

We will now consider the operation of the Holy Spirit in sealing believers. In the Scripture use of the term, one of the meanings of sealing is the concluding of a transaction as in Romans 15: 28, the putting into a person's hands of something that has been designed for him and prepared for him, so that he can possess and use it. A second idea connected with it is the closing up for safety of something important and vital, as in Jeremiah 32: 10, 11; Revelation 20: 3. A remarkable illustration is found in Job 41: 15-17, where the scales of "leviathan" are compared to a close seal, and are described as impenetrable even to air. A third meaning is illustrated by the letters and books said to be sealed; they were to be opened at their destination by competent persons, or the persons for whom they were intended (see Dan. 12: 4, 9; Rev. 5: 1). Yet another and additional application of the seal was to ratify a certain resolution or determination (Neh. 9: 38 and Neh. 10: 1). We may add the thought of proof of a mission or service, as in 1 Corinthians 9: 2, And there is in its use by high personages the undoubted thought of authority, so that no one who feared the power of the high personage would dare to break the seal. Such seems to be the bearing of passages like Daniel 6: 17; Matthew 27: 66; and those which refer to Christians. Finally, the seal expresses claim in the sense of title to possession (Cant. 8: 6; 2 Tim. 2: 9; and Eph 1: 13, etc.).

It is helpful to study the history of certain of the saints at Ephesus which has been recorded for us, because in their case we learn more clearly than elsewhere the process of soul which leads up to Christian sealing. While we have the fact stated also in Corinthians, we are in the former shown what experience they passed through they received the Holy Ghost. In hardly any place was the contrast between Christianity and all else so emphatically shown.

In Acts 16: 6, Paul and his companions were forbidden to preach the word in Asia, the Holy Ghost very definitely leading him at that moment to the then heathen Europe. But after his years of service there, he called in at Ephesus, the capital of the province called Asia, and reasoned with certain Jews in the synagogue which had been erected in that place. The Scriptures i.e. such as the Jews had at the time, the Old Testament as we call them were evidently known and taught even in that centre of idolatry. God as Creator and Lawgiver, and the Messiah as the hope of Israel, were of course known to the minds of those in that limited company. Evidently they appreciated Paul's talks, but he would not be persuaded to stay with them at the moment. He moved on to Judea and was for a time occupied in other labour. But he had left a Christian couple in Ephesus (Acts 18, 19); a man and his wife who appear to have been a quiet plodding yoke of oxen, not eminently gifted but toiling privately and painstakingly with individual souls. They had, as Christians, more light than the Jews of the synagogue, but patiently waited till God showed them how they might help them into further light.

Such was the situation when a notable preacher came along, who had been the subject of blessing under John the Baptist's ministry. Just how he had been reached we are not told; possibly, and even probably, he had been among the throngs who listened to John himself at the Jordan. The truth as preached by the Messiah's forerunner, with its terrible exposure of Israel's state, his appeal to their consciences, his demand that they should repent, had all told either directly or indirectly on Apollos; and he had bowed in the confession of his sins, awaiting along with hundreds of others similarly reached the coming in of the expected Messiah of Israel. Nay, John had even gone further; for when multitudes had been reached by his ministry, had been born again, and led up to a right and true sense of their sins, confessing them, he went so far as to point out to them who the Messiah was, the lowly

Jesus of Nazareth (John 1).

This we must understand in order to appreciate the exercises of Apollos and his service. He had been at Alexandria, and now came to Ephesus with the deep desire to lead his Jewish brethren into the same position and hope as himself. For him it was not enough that a man was a Jew, a descendant of Abraham; the axe was laid to the root of the tree, and if even a Jew did not bring forth fruits for repentance he would meet with judgment and would perish. We can picture with what earnestness he would proclaim the kingdom of God in its moral bearings, showing his startled hearers their sins against God, proved, as the Old Testament had so clearly foretold, by their dispersion among the Gentiles. Moreover, he may have informed them too that the Messiah had actually been seen in Judea and Galilee, for this was true, and formed part of John's own testimony before he was beheaded. But even if he included that much, beyond it he could not go. Nor could he lead his hearers further than John had led him. He was then a new-born soul, a confessed sinner, repentant, and hoping to be saved sooner or later.

Among those who felt his earnestness were Aquila and Priscilla, the godly couple whom Paul had left behind. Perceiving an opening to show kind hospitality to the devoted preacher they took him under their roof, and while giving him every attention, showed him clearly how things had moved on since the time of John's preaching; and how the Saviour-Messiah pointed out by the Holy Ghost and through the Baptist's voice, had completed his earthly course of humiliation by suffering for Israel's sins, and indeed making propitiation in view of the sins of the whole world. Thus the atonement foreshadowed under the law being affected, God had raised the Messiah from the dead, and given Him the place of glory and honour also foretold in the sacred writings; from whence He would in due time bring in Israel's blessing, and fulfil all the purpose of God. Apollos evidently was greatly helped by these quiet talks, and when the time came for his itinerations to be extended to other districts, he carried with him the very definite help that he himself had received.

But in the meantime his ministry had been so far owned in Ephesus that some of the Jews there had taken the same step that he had taken long before, i.e. they had been baptised with John's baptism. They do not seem to have been swept off their feet by any popular craze; they were plainly good solid men who had seen how John was the forerunner of the Messiah, and that his appeal for the repentance of Israel was indeed God's trumpet voice to them. They then had owned their sin, publicly confessed it on the lines of John's baptism, and were now quite ready to receive any further light God would vouchsafe. In point of fact many, we suppose, who are called Christians in our days are just where they were in the state of their souls; earnest, pious, devoted souls, who yet would be unable to say definitely that they were saved. The preaching which they had heard was sound enough as far as it went, and they knew they had been led forward by it in a right direction; but they were too honest to go beyond what they really knew; and they were waiting, and while waiting, very earnestly hoping, to be saved. They were not yet assured of forgiveness from God, and they were not yet sealed by the Spirit. They may have heard the name of Jesus, and have looked to Him to be their Saviour; but the spiritual benefits of His death and resurrection had not yet been declared to them, the "full gospel" had not been preached, and they were neither saved nor sealed.

At this stage in their history, Paul returned (Acts 19: 17). Meeting at an early moment with the little group of earnest, longing souls, he swiftly discerned as might some skilled physician with his patient that underneath their earnestness there lay a craving not yet satisfied, and that they had not yet apprehended the first lessons of Christianity proper. Oh how tenderly and yet fully he laid bare their lack, while quickening their desire to have it met, by his searching question, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" Or, (as our Revised Version puts it), "Did ye receive the Holy Ghost

when ye believed?" He knew that the true gospel of God when believed does not leave the believer in the mere expectancy of salvation, but clenches the possession of the forgiveness of sins by the gift of the Holy Ghost to dwell in the believer.

Their defect, however, was not wilful. Blessed as it had been to be the subjects of a work of God, blessed to be awakened from any trust in the mere formalities of their Jewish religion, and to be concerned about their soul's welfare in the desire to make their calling and election sure, they had never yet heard the emancipating gospel of Christ. The coming of the Holy Ghost was a consequence of the accomplishment of redemption, and the resurrection and ascension of Christ to the right hand of God (John 7: 39; John 16: 7; Acts 2: 32-38). They had not so much as heard whether the Holy Ghost had come. The tidings of redemption as God presents it in His gospel, of the complete and eternal settlement of sin's desert in the death of Christ, the absolute defeat of Satan, the break-up of his claim for eternity on the soul who trusts in Christ, the right of God to every believer, the establishment of blessing and eternal life in Christ, never to be contradicted or annulled, for all who believe in Him, the consequent gift of the Spirit with all that His entrance involved all this was as yet unknown because it had as yet been untold; they had not so much as heard. Oh how many thousands of converted souls, pious and devoted, are void of the peace and power that they all are entitled to by grace, because they have never been told of Jesus glorified and the Spirit given.

How pleasant it must have been to "our beloved brother Paul," as Peter called him, to tell these men of Jesus. They had willingly gone as far as John's teaching could carry them and were earnestly hoping for salvation. Now just as willingly did they listen to "the word of truth, the gospel of their salvation" (Eph. 1: 13). It presented Christ to them as the object of their faith, outside of themselves, in whom their redemption had been wrought out through His blood. His atonement is not an uncertain factor, to leave the believer in a wretched poise, a neutral position, between certainty and uncertainty. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of offences, absolute and eternal, for it is according to the riches of His grace. There is a wealth of grace in the heart and purpose of God as opened out in Ephesians 1: 3-14, in accordance with which He has bestowed upon the believer the forgiveness of sins; it is not of some sins, nor sins up to a certain time, but absolute and eternal forgiveness of sins. And this is intelligible, for it is in Christ that this has all been wrought out and in whom it subsists. Had He remained in some way under a cloud, had there been in His case any reluctance on God's part to clear Him when He had once charged Himself with our liabilities, we could have harboured some uncertainty as to our relations with God. But when we see that God has first wrought out our redemption in Christ, and has then raised Him from the dead and greeted Him in resurrection with unalloyed satisfaction, and has awarded to Him the highest place in the heavenlies where does uncertainty come in? I no longer look at myself, for it is not in me that redemption has been wrought; but I look at Christ, and Christ glorified, in whom it has been wrought out, and I am saved. It was to the Ephesians the gospel of their salvation, not the hope of it, but the good news of all accomplished in Christ.

Paul, in Acts 19: 4, connects what they had previously learnt with what he was telling them, implying that John's preaching was a necessary preliminary, but leading them up to Jesus that they might believe upon Him. It was enough. They had been hoping to be saved before; now they learned that they were saved, and saved by Jesus. The forgiveness of sins formerly lodged for was now possessed; and the happy believers at once took sides openly and out and out for the Lord Jesus (ver. 5). Further, seeing that they had committed themselves definitely and forever to the Lord Jesus, Paul had no hesitation about committing himself to and identifying himself with them. It is at this point, where they definitely committed themselves to the Lord Jesus, the risen Saviour, that the Holy Ghost

took possession of them. The taking possession by the Holy Ghost is common to all who thus believe the gospel of their salvation; the speaking with tongues and prophesying is particular to their case and is not referred to in the epistle (Eph. 1: 13, 14).

Thus is the believer sealed. When the sovereign action of God, at work in a man's soul, has produced the fear of God and the burden in the conscience of sin, there will be a true turning from sin, and exercise as to what is good and evil, right and wrong; there will be piety and earnestness and often much zest and activity. But it is not till there is definite committal to the risen Saviour, it is not until the forgiveness of sins is truly enjoyed (Acts 10: 43, 44) that the Holy Ghost is given. And this is learnt when we see the Saviour risen who bore them all, and put them all away. It is when the believing soul is seen under the efficacy of the precious blood of Christ that the Holy Spirit at once enters God's seal upon the work of Christ — God claiming for Himself the now redeemed one, and thereby challenging and refuting all rival claims. In the wisdom of God Paul was used instrumentally at Ephesus to communicate the Holy Spirit to them; but in Acts 10 even when Peter was present the Holy Ghost ignored him, and came directly to Cornelius and the believing company in his house. The laying on of an apostle's hands might be an accompaniment but it was plainly not a necessity: the essential thing was faith in Christ to the forgiveness of sins; and that, God owned. This is helpful to us in these days when apostles are no more.

A reference or two to the Old Testament may help us to see what is included in the idea of sealing.

In 1 Kings 21: 8, Jezebel wrote letters in Ahab's name and sealed them with his seal, sending the letters to the elders and the nobles that were in his city, dwelling with Naboth. Those to whom the letters were sent read the contents as being Ahab's commands, and the *seal* showed that Ahab's power and authority were behind the sealed contents.

In Esther 3: 12, and Esther 8: 8, are found two letters of King Ahasuerus, the one written under Haman's influence and intrigue, for men to rise up against and exterminate the Jews; the other under Mordecai's guidance, authorising the Jews to exterminate every one that dared to lay hands upon them. Both letters were written in the king's name and sealed with the king's ring, and neither was cancelled; for the writing which is written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's ring may no man reverse. The sealing, therefore, implied the unalterable purpose and will of the one whose seal it was. No man could reverse it.

In Ezekiel 9: 4 (to which may be added an explanatory reference to Rev. 7: 2, 3) we see that ere the Lord brought in judgment, He secured for Himself those who owned their sin and were humbled because of it. The judgment was terrible, as will be also God's judgment upon the unbelieving and the sinner; but verse 6 is explicit: "Come not near any man on whom is the mark." Explaining the "mark" by the sealing of the twelve tribes of Israel in Revelation 7, we see that those who are sealed or marked are immune from the judgment of God; *no judgment for them*.

These three elements connect themselves with sealing. First, the power and authority of the one whose seal it is are behind the thing sealed. Secondly, no man may reverse what is declared under the seal. Thirdly, when the day shall come for the execution of the judgments of the Lord, there is no judgment from God for those who are sealed and so have God's mark set upon them.

Now dear fellow-believers, let us read a verse in 2 Corinthians 1: 22: *God, who hath also sealed us.*" In verse 2 is shown where we are seen in God's eye, whether apostles or ordinary Christians, i.e., *in Christ*. God gives us our new footing there, and loves to settle us consciously into our new position. But I will ask, "Who is it that has sealed us?" The answer is "God."

We have seen that it is by His Spirit that He has sealed us, taking possession of us for Himself on the ground of what Christ is, and His work for us. Let us then understand that HIS power and authority are behind our sealing: that He repudiates every other claim to us; That He guarantees our safety against all comers. Further, He will allow no interference with His will and purpose in sealing us; no man may reverse it. Try as the devil may to upset our blessing, greater is He that is in us than He that is the world; and we can with joy say, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Finally our being sealed by God's own Spirit is God's guarantee that no judgment will fall upon us. There is a day coming, awful in the extreme for all whom it concerns; a day when the long restrained wrath of God must fall upon all who know Him not and believe not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. But that day has no terrors for us who are saved and therefore sealed; we have boldness in the day of judgment, because as He is so are we in this world. We move through this world but are not of it; God looks down on His beloved redeemed ones here, and loves to place His hand upon us, uttering His great secret to our stilled and happy hearts. "You are Mine." Do we not look up gratefully and gladly, and in quiet rest in Christ's atonement for us, knowing we are sealed by His Spirit, say reverently, "My God, I am Thine?"

In this hearty recognition that we are God's we have the support of the Holy Ghost. For of course He is not anything less, even as the seal, than a living, acting, Divine Person. He comes into us to convey to us the sense every moment and every day and in every circumstance, "You belong to God." In so far as He is unchecked and ungrieved in us will He constantly assure us of the results of Christ's work for us, and engage us with the thought of God being for us, the infallibility of His purpose, the impossibility of any reversal of His claim to us or His will for us, and the blessedness of His unchangeable favour. It is the fact He is prepared to do all this in us that gives such weight to the important exhortation in Ephesians 4: 30. Saints are sealed truly until the day of redemption; i.e. the day when Christ will publicly claim what is lawfully His even now (Eph. 1: 14). Naught reverses or changes this blessed fact.

## Chapter 6

### ***THE EARNEST.***

There are three references to the Holy Ghost as the Earnest. From these, with the contexts in which they are found, we gather some most helpful food. But let us study two things.

It cannot be too strongly urged that the Spirit is a Person, just as our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is a Person. We may consider the Person of Christ on the Divine side as the Son of God, or on the Human side as Man. But while both Divine and Human, He is one Person. So also the Spirit is the Comforter, the Seal, the Earnest, etc., and may be considered in these different functions separately; yet He who exercises these functions is one Person. We cannot possess Him as Seal and be without Him as Earnest. He who is the Seal is also at the same time the Earnest. But these are two different services rendered by Him, and require to be distinctly apprehended and used.

Secondly, every passage of Scripture to be rightly apprehended needs to be taken in its own context. We lose greatly if we read one idea only into each verse where the Earnest is mentioned.

Let us now read 2 Corinthians 1: 18-22. We find there three different preachers, Paul, Silas, and Timothy. They all had peculiar abilities and varying modes of service. But their theme was one. They preached the Son of God, Jesus Christ. Their education, their travels, their environment, had never furnished them with another Person to preach. They knew of the *first* Adam, but he had broken down.

They read of Noah, but he failed in self-control. They were connected with Abraham, in whom the Israelites boasted after the flesh; but he denied his wife, and was only reckoned righteous with God on the principle of faith. Moses would not do as the one on whom to rest for eternity, for he came short and could not, in his earthly lifetime, enter the Promised Land. David was likewise a true saint but a bad foundation, for he committed adultery when he got out of communion with God. Solomon made a fine start, but broke down in the race. The whole nation of Israel as such could no more be trusted or preached than any individual amongst them, for they were either carried into captivity because of their sin, or else were guilty of the murder of their Messiah under the direction of their religious leaders, and with the sanction of the ruling Gentile power. Nor did the Gentile world offer any one who could be all that God required or that man needed, still less be a Redeemer for sinners and bring men back to God, sin expiated, God glorified, enmity removed, and a nature given that could boast in God and abide in communion with Him. But all this the Son of God, Jesus Christ, was and had done, so they preached Him.

This involves His Deity (Son of God), His Humanity (Jesus), His resurrection, office, and position (Christ).

As to His Deity, He was Son of God from eternity, and as such was the Agent by whom God created all things (Col. 1: 13, 16), and by whom He made all the succeeding ages of the universe (Heb. 1: 2). He was none the less Son of God when assuming human being and condition (Luke 1: 26-35). He is Son of God in resurrection (as Rom. 1: 3, 4 declares), and has passed through the heavens (Heb. 4: 14). Neither the incarnation nor the death of the Lord have tarnished His Sonship in the Deity (1 John 2: 22, 23).

As to His humanity He is the Word become flesh, God manifest in flesh. This involves both being and condition. The reality of His being as Man is evidenced by the fact that He did not come as Adam did, full grown, but was conceived in the Virgin's womb by the power of the Holy Ghost no taint of human generation, though born as human beings are born, in due time and growing up as we all grow up, from infancy to youth, and from youth to maturity. It was no mere assumption of a condition, but the growth of a Being; He increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man. His Name was called Jesus. Jesus is not the name of a condition but of a Person, a real living Being. By that name henceforward known He passed through the conditions and circumstances familiar to us, but in all the moral excellence brought by His Deity into humanity. The three cardinal features of dependence, obedience, and love, were seen in all their perfection and completeness in Jesus. He awakened the delight of heaven, and the faith and love of His people; but the hostility of Satan and of the world under Satan's power. He was rejected here and hanged upon a tree; but in so doing suffered for men the curse of the law, the judgment of God, the sting of death. He took in grace our sins with their burden, their shame and their righteous due, and atoned for them by the blood shed at Golgotha. He maintained at full height the truth of God which says the sinner must die, the holiness of God which puts sin at unutterable distance from Him, the righteousness of God which brings condemnation and infinite punishment upon the guilty. In so doing, He also became the full expression of all that God is in love and wisdom, meeting our deep need in such a fashion as to overcome every difficulty, and to reveal God's every attribute in brightest rays, so that He has set out all the glory of God has glorified Him. He submitted to death so that, rising again, He annulled its every power, and removed its sting for believers. He allowed Satan to do his worst, and then rising quietly and victoriously from the grave has triumphantly emerged with the keys of hades and of death in His hand; the foe defeated, his power broken, the way open now to the full and absolute fulfilment of every purpose and promise of God.

As to His Position, He ascended on high to the throne of God, by God's right hand exalted, and is

there made both Lord and Christ (Acts 2). In Him is the YEA to whatever promises of God there be. The promises of God involved the overthrow of Satan (Gen. 3: 14, 15), the bringing in of secure blessing for men (Gen. 22: 15, 18), the establishment of the purposes of God (1 Chr. 17: 11). None other ever stood forward to do all this. All others failed before Satan, failed before men, failed before God. But even in coming into the world, the Lord Jesus had all this before Him, knowing it all beforehand and coming to do it. He shouldered the responsibility of all these promises, said "Yes" to them all, and set Himself to their accomplishment. His death in all its infinite value, eternal efficacy, and far-reaching effects will result in these three things: the complete defeat and confusion of Satan and all who side with him, the securing of infallible and boundless blessing for men, and the accomplishment of the will, the establishment of the kingdom and the glory of God through the whole universe and throughout eternity. No single promise of God will fail of its uttermost fulfilment. Even as Christ has undertaken it and has said, "Yes" to it, so in the end will it be found that all is completed and fulfilled, and He will be able to say "Amen" to it. It is as good as done already, so absolutely certain is it of accomplishment, and so absolutely secure for it is every one who is in Christ.

Such is the One whom the Apostles preached, such is the Person, such the work, on whom and on which all depends, such the foundation on which all the superstructure of blessing rests. Is it any wonder that on this ground of what Christ is to God, He gives believers the Spirit as the Earnest of it all. The "earnest" is a pledge given to show that a contract will be carried out, an engagement fulfilled. It also enables us to discover now what the future fulness of blessing will be like, for it samples the whole. Herein, by the gift of His Spirit, God has pledged Himself that He is going to see this thing through. As surely as He has saved us through Christ and by faith in Him, giving us the Spirit as His seal upon the efficacy of Christ's work done for us, so surely will He secure the end for which Christ died and for which God has saved us. It will not be mere charity to do so; it is an engagement to which God binds Himself by all the stability of His own purpose and according to all the infinite value He sees in Christ and His work. It will all terminate to the glory of God by us. Not only to the glory of God, but by us. We are a necessary part through grace of the display of that glory.

Is it not significant in this connection that it is said: "He hath given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts"? Does not the Holy Spirit love to stir our affections in response to all this grace? The *mind* is necessarily enlightened and enlarged beyond anything that man could do for it; but especially is the *heart* touched and warmed and drawn out Godward as the Holy Spirit shows us the stability of everything which depends upon Christ.

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Our second passage speaking of the Earnest is 2 Cor. 5: 15. From the point in the third chapter where the face of Moses was said to be affected by the glory of the first covenant, the effect upon Christians of the glory now revealed through Christ is considered. In 2 Cor. 7 it is said that the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ is like a treasure in earthen vessels, the weak old creation body being not compatible with the marvellous nature of the blessed light communicated to us. The result of this knowledge in our souls is that though the outward circumstances are unchanged as yet, and the Christian's body is still as frail as ever, the inward man is sustained and empowered in spite of the environment. If the eminent naturalist's theory is that in nature a created being adapts itself to, and is formed by, its environment, here at least is a living and constant contradiction to it in grace. Troubled on every side there is the earthen vessel; yet not distressed there is the effect of the light. Perplexed but not in despair; persecuted but not forsaken; cast down but not destroyed; here we have in alternation the outward circumstances of the earthen vessel, and the effect of the treasure in it. We bear about in the body the dying of Jesus that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body. Though

the outward man perish yet the inward is renewed day by day. Thus we learn that though the human being feels and is affected by the external pressure in the temporal scene around us, the renewed soul is fed and strengthened and encouraged by what is eternal in Christ.

But it will not always be that we shall have bodies so easily worn out. Chapter 5 introduces us to a new figure, in which the outward man is compared to a tent, and the glorified body to a settled house: "If our earthly tabernacle house" — here we have indicated the present body of flesh and blood in all its frailty, and its temporary character "be destroyed" — the dissolution of the body "we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." The new and glorified body for which we are destined will be like a house of God's workmanship, in which none of the frailties introduced by human origin will exist, capable of sustaining all the joys and services of the heavens for eternity. It would in a way be a poor thing if we were introduced into the heavens in the company of Christ, into all the brightness of the Father's house, with bodies that would grow tired and weary. Look at Peter and his companions in the Mount of Transfiguration. Overcome by sleep they might have missed much of the brightness of the scene. Look at John in Revelation 1, seeing the glory of the Son of Man, and falling at His feet as dead. Dear fellow-Christian, when you and I are for ever with our Lord we shall have these frail bodies changed (or if dead we shall be raised) into a condition suited to the glorious scenes of eternity; never to be weary again, never to need intervals so to say for refreshment or sleep, nevermore to feel the pressure of outward circumstances, or to be overcome by the weight of glory.

At present, and as long as we are down here in existing conditions, we groan, and Scripture recognizes it. It does not suppose that we are dead to nature, but very much alive to the realities of the scenes through which we pass. But while so feeling them, we are said to be earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven. When the mighty power of Christ is put forth to undo the work of death, it will (so far as Christians are concerned) result in our appearing in perfect suitability for the heavenly glory for which we are destined. (Alas! for the unsaved, the same power will be put forth to take them out of death, but when they assume the bodies in which they are to suffer the of God, they will appear in a condition exposed to those judgments, naked, uncovered, unsuitable to God). But though Christians, who are regarded as living in temporary structures, at present groan under the burden of existing trials, yet our desire is not exactly to lay aside the frail body and to die, so much as it is to undergo the change referred to at the end of verse 4; not to be unclothed (i.e. to die; the body to be laid aside in the grave, and the spirit to go to the Lord), but clothed upon (the spirit to be invested with its new habit, clothed with its new abode, the glorified and heavenly body, at the coming of the Lord). In this latter case, instead of the frail body being swallowed up for a time by mortality, mortality itself will be swallowed up of life. Life, in all its might and fulness, will invade and overflow every fibre of our beings, and we shall (without dying) partake in the mighty victory of life, our glorious and eternal conformity to the image of God's Son. This is referred to in Rom. 8: 11: "He that raised up Christ from the shall also quicken your mortal bodies because of His Spirit that dwelleth in you." It is also spoken of in Philippians 3: 21: "The Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body." It is the consummation so far of God's purpose that we should be conformed to the image of His Son (Rom. 8: 29). The operation itself is described in detail in 1 Corinthians 15: 51-57.

But to return to our text: "Now He that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit (2 Cor. 5: 5). For nothing less than this has God secured us, and in view of its absolute fulfilment is the Spirit given to us as the Earnest. He is the Pledge on God's part that we shall be in the heavenly glory with and like Christ, in perfect suitability to all the light and

power of the glory of God, never to be exhausted by it nor wearied in it; always to be and to feel at home in it without any sense of pressure or unfittedness to bear more. It is the certainty of this which is conveyed to, and which gladdens, our hearts now. No occurrences on earth; not our weakness, not even death itself, can alter the purpose of God by a hair's-breadth or delay it by an instant; and we are always confident by reason of it (verse 6). Every care is awakened to be well-pleasing to the Lord, for we are so certain and so soon to be in His company; and so absolute is our likeness to Christ to be that we are to be allowed to look out over our own life-story, and to see our own course as He has seen it; we are to be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ, to weigh our every action here in the balances of His judgment, we ourselves being first transferred there in bodies like His own.

"There with unwearied gaze,  
Our eyes on Him we'll rest;  
And satisfy with endless praise  
Our hearts, supremely blest.  
"Knowing as we are known'  
How shall we love that word;  
How oft repeat before the throne,  
'For ever with the Lord."

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The last reference to the Earnest is in Eph. 1: 14. It is almost with trembling that we approach the grandeur of the grace of God unfolded there. Perhaps we might be tempted after thinking of 2 Corinthians 5 to imagine that nothing could be finer or higher than that. But will the reader remember that our subject has largely been the magnificence of what God will do for us as how He will conform us to the image of His Son, how we groan now and how we shall appear by and by. But in Ephesians 1 we are let into the deeper secret of what God will do for His own glory in connection with *Christ*. True, we are told that God has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, but everything is in accordance with something that lies behind; something that is greater than our blessing, though that was needed to carry out the greater plan. His *will* has determined it (vv. 5, 9), His grace is giving effect to it (vv. 6, 7), it will all result in His *glory* (vv. 12, 14). Having saved us through Christ, and made our every blessing secure beyond loss or recall, He now takes us into His confidence (see ver. 9, etc) as to this plan. Christ is not only our beloved Lord and Saviour, but He is the One who is God's Centre for the heavens and the earth. All that has witnessed sin's sad history and that has been tainted by the entrance of sin into the universe is to be recovered by God through Christ. Evil will be subjugated and eventually removed, all its disorder and chaos reversed, order will be brought into it for God, and God's will will be effectuated in every part of it. If we think of our individual blessing only it is but a very small part of the vast universal scheme that God is working out, of which Christ is the Centre, not we. The whole vast creation is to be put under the administration of Christ; not the earth only but the heavens also. Christ as Man will regulate the universe for God, and will secure His good pleasure in every part of it to its uttermost bound. The heavens will be populated according to God's eternal counsel with the subjects of redemption and reconciliation, and all under Christ; every throne, every principality, every power under Him, the church, the other heavenly saints in their families, the angels, owning His blessed sway; the earth also, Israel, the Gentiles, the very beasts in the field, and indeed all creation, blessed under Christ. The One whom we know in our personal relations with Him

as Saviour and Lord is found to be the One who is competent to hold everything for God, and adequate to secure the accomplishment of God's will in the whole blissful universe; evil cast out, Satan overthrown, death removed, blessing brought in, God's will done.

But verse 11 brings in what is developed later in the Epistle, that the saints who form the church, i.e., the saints of this present dispensation from Jew and Gentile, redeemed and indwelt by the Spirit, are destined to inherit this portion in association with Christ. Eve had no separate dowry which she brought to Adam, but in Adam she inherited all that was his. Rebekah brought no dowry to Isaac, but in Isaac she inherited all that Isaac had. Oh, the riches of God's grace, that you and I, dear fellow-believer, are to be together with Christ; we and all God's redeemed of this church period are to be together with Christ in such sort that we are to be His companion, His bride, in His exalted position as Head over all, and centre of God's counsels, and of all this vast plan of blessing. This is not fancy, but solid truth, plain unvarnished fact, soon to be realized. We are to be associated with, and united to Christ in all the splendour of this glorious place, brought there according to God's determined purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will; suitable to Christ even in His most exalted position and character as Man, capable of entering sympathetically and intelligently into all the interests of His vast domain in heaven and earth, the subjects of His love, the companions of His heart for evermore, even to the ages of the ages. The mind almost reels, imagination fails, the reality of it can be understood only by the power of the Spirit of God who searcheth all things, yea, the depths of God.

It is in this connection then that the Holy Spirit of promise (not the promised Spirit) is said to be given, connected, that is, with the whole purpose of God which He has promised shall be fulfilled in Christ. By Him we are sealed for it, marked off as belonging to God individually in view of it; but He is also the Earnest of our inheritance. He is bestowed upon us, and indwells us as God's pledge that He will carry out to the last detail all that He has planned for Christ, and for us as belonging to and sharing with Him. All this again will not be mere charity to us, but it is part of God's counsel for His own glory; we shall be there in the plan as God's workmanship, not to disgrace it, or to be in any sense incompatible with it. By the work of God, and through redemption, we shall be with Christ without any disparity. You might have a prince marrying a commoner, and whatever of love there was in it, the prince's honour would be somewhat tarnished, while there would be almost surely a disparity between the two. But not so the church, for every individual in it is formed in the nature of Christ as Man, holy, and without blame in love (ver. 4), and is of His lineage, accorded the position and affection of sonship to the Father (ver. 5), and will be capable of enjoying to the full, and sharing, all the confidences of God, all Christ's glory, and all His interests in this scene of blessing beyond compare.

Putting our three passages together, we see then that the Holy Spirit is spoken of as Earnest in these three connections. In 2 Corinthians 1 it is in connection with the stability of the foundation on which we are set; in 2 Corinthians 5 with the certainty of the prospect which lies before us; in Ephesians 1 with the vastness of the blessing God has planned for Christ. The sinner saved by grace and sealed by the Spirit finds that God guarantees the fulfilment of every promise, and in token thereof has given him the Holy Spirit as the Earnest.

## **Chapter 7.**

### ***THE ANOINTING.***

We will now touch upon the subject of the Holy Spirit as the Unction or Anointing. There are two passages which refer to Him in this way; 2 Corinthians 1: 21 shows that it is God who has anointed

Christians in connection with their new position in Christ, and 1 John 2: 18-27 indicates that the youngest Christians have all the advantages which the anointing confers.

To take the last passage (1 John 2) first, the reader will do well to note that in verses 12 and 28, "little children" is better rendered "children," since the word so translated is one meaning children (of God) in general, of all stages. It is a different word from that in verses 13 and 18, which does really mean children in a stage of infancy, and for the sake of distinctness is still preserved as "little children" in the New Translation by Mr. Darby.

In verse 12 we have clearly the privilege of all the children of God. This communication of the Holy Ghost through the Apostle John comes to them because the whole question of their sins is settled for the Name's sake of the One who is the propitiation for them (ver. 2). It is not the blessing of one more than another in the family; be we old or be we young in the faith, we are all here addressed as those whose sins are forgiven absolutely. Even as there is no room for uncertainty in the divine clearance of our sins, so is there no room for doubt in any of our minds when we see that clearance.

In verse 13, there follow differences in the growth and maturity of those in the family: here we find there may be fathers, young men, and little children or "babes." But while of course it would be true of the young men, and of the fathers, it is emphatically stated of the babes, that they know the Father. Nothing is more foreign to the whole truth of Christianity than the idea that a person should be ignorant of his relationship with the Father. It is the inalienable privilege and right of each Christian, though a babe.

In verses 14-27 we have the same three divisions of the family referred to. The fathers are dismissed in half a verse. The young men occupy from the middle of ver. 14 to the end of ver. 17. Then the little children or "babes" occupy from ver. 18 down to ver. 27. And it is to babes that it is said "Ye have an unction from the Holy One" (ver. 20), and in connection with whom we read that the "anointing" (same word as unction) abides in them, and teaches.

Then the exhortation follows in ver. 28 to all the "children" to abide in Him.

To sum up, all the children of God

(a) are forgiven their sins; including the babes.

And (b) the babes know the Father,

and are (c) possessed of the anointing.

We are not therefore plunging into very difficult lessons, for though this part of our chapter reads rather strangely to our uninstructed ears it is assumed that even babes in the divine family can grasp it. The passage is of peculiar interest! as are also the epistles to the Thessalonians) as showing the kind of thing in which young converts were instructed in the Apostle's days. But let us consider this anointing and its meaning.

That it refers to the service of the Holy Ghost is proved from Acts 10: 38, where we read that "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power." He became Man in very deed, humble, dependent, obedient; and if we cannot fathom the deep mystery of His Person, we may at least learn that when He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by the devil, he did it not by any Divine, personal, inherent power as Son of God though He is Son, but as Man by the power of the Holy Spirit. He was indeed the Christ, i.e., the anointed One; such being the meaning of His title Christ. He was the One qualified in every way to fulfil every promise to the nation of Israel, and to be their Messiah. But His rejection by the Jews proved that the time had not yet come for the fulfilment of

those earthly promises, and the Lord told His disciples they were not to tell any man that He was the Christ (Matt. 16: 20). When He was raised from the dead, the still dependent though now victorious Man (yet ever Son of God) it is said of Him (Acts 1: 2) that He was taken up, after that He *through the Holy Ghost* had given commandments unto the apostles that He had chosen. He was by the right hand of God exalted (Acts 2: 33), and made both Lord and Christ in resurrection glory, to be the Administrator and Fulfiller of all God's purposes from *thence*: and in that new position and still the dependent though glorified Man, He received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, that He might in His power carry all out for the glory of God; and then sent Him to earth to act here for Him. The Spirit came to the company of the redeemed on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem, and attached Himself to each of them individually, filling them by His power, and qualifying every one of them to be here and zealously in the testimony for Christ. To that company so wonderfully started in Divine power has God been adding by the work of His grace from that day to this, saving men through faith in the risen Christ, and giving to those saved ones the Holy Spirit to indwell and to empower them to be here for Christ. The outward failure of the Christian community to walk in truth as we see it today, does not alter God's grace to the saved individual; the believer is as truly a child of God, and is as truly indwelt and anointed by the Holy Ghost, as in the days when all was outwardly so bright. But this produces at once the great privilege, and with it the grave responsibility, of being here in spite of the general failure, maintaining the whole truth of Christ.

Seeing now that even the youngest Christians have this unction or anointing from the Holy One, we may read two or three Old Testament passages which afford help as to what is meant by the "anointing."

1. Leviticus 8: 1-12, gives us the anointing of Aaron as Priest.
2. 1 Samuel 16: 1-13, gives us the anointing of David as King.
3. 1 Kings 19: 13-16, gives us the anointing of Elisha as Prophet.

1. No one can read Exodus 28: 1, in conjunction with Leviticus 8: 1-12, without seeing that God by the anointing of Aaron sanctified him or set him apart for the office and service of priest. The whole congregation of Israel was summoned, their attention was particularly called to the Divine authority by which the choice was made, and in a most conspicuous way Aaron was designated for the exercise of the priestly functions. And in all the other occurrences of this anointing it seems clear that it is God's way of bringing a man into a particular office or position and publicly marking him out or designating him for it.

2. This is equally the case in 1 Samuel 16: 1-13, where David superseded Saul, by choice of the Lord, as King. The failure of the people's choice and his rejection by Jehovah cleared the way for the introduction of God's man. So Adam set in authority at first has broken down and failed, and God has introduced the second Man, Christ, who must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. But in David's anointing and designation as King, there follows in ver. 13, the remarkable addition that "the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward." How could he who had been hitherto a simple shepherd comport himself and be in behaviour as was suitable to a king? The anointing not only marked him out for the position, but conferred upon him the necessary power and fitness to be and to walk in every way worthy of the position for which he was designated.

3. In confirmation of what has been said as to the marking out for position by the anointing, we have

- 1 Kings 19: 13-16, Elijah was to anoint Hazael for the of Syria, Jehu for Israel, and Elisha as

prophet as a successor to himself. But the words "in thy room" at the end of verse 16 are very suggestive. Elijah had seemingly laboured in vain and had spent his strength for nought and in vain, as was said later of the Messiah in Isaiah 49. But God had appreciated his faithful service, and would shortly bestow upon him the unique and splendid honour of taking him up into heaven. Yet in grace He purposed that Elijah's faithful testimony should be continued in Elisha. We have then Elijah taken to heaven, and Elisha left on earth in the same position to represent him, "in his room," as it says. For this the anointing was to qualify and equip him; that he might be the representative of the man who was taken into heaven.

Now Christ is the One who fulfils all these types, whether of Priest, King, or Prophet. Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness. We may not pretend to bottom the deep glory of His Person. but while He is in His eternal and essential glory the Son, He has become in being and nature Man; as such has died and risen again, and is officially designated as the Christ, i.e., the Anointed One, Priest, King, and Prophet. Moreover, in the perfection of His Manhood — though ever Son — He will fulfil all the duties and responsibilities of His glorious offices by the power of the Holy Ghost. Without controversy, great is the mystery.

But we are concerned for the moment as to the meaning of the anointing for the Christian.

In 2 Corinthians 1: 21, the new position in which every believer is established, and for which he is designated is, "in Christ." I say every believer advisedly, for as in John's epistle the three stages of fathers, young men, and little children, are contemplated, so here the "us with" takes in the apostles and the Corinthian saints, some of whom he had very pointedly and in a different sense quite reproachfully in fact called babes in his first epistle. They ought to have been more advanced, considering the time they had been converted and the opportunities they had had. But the "us with you" takes them all in, every believer; and our position before God is not in Adam, or in sin, or in ourselves, but in Christ. Once we have believed the gospel truly and have received the Holy Spirit, it is God's delight to indicate to us our new position, and to establish us in it: to settle our souls into the happy realization by the Spirit's power of what that new position involves. But He has anointed us also. By the gift of the Spirit He has definitely set us apart and designated us for the position; by the same anointing He has given us power to be in every respect consistent with the whole of that position and all that it involves, and in result, and in so far as we use the power given to us we should become descriptive here on earth of the Man that has gone into heaven.

Each of these elements opens out into a world of exercise; but oh, that it could be conveyed to the oldest as well as to the youngest Christian that you are really and truly furnished with the indwelling Spirit as the power by which failure may be avoided, difficulties may be overcome, and consistency maintained with the whole revelation of God in Christ, whether in the individual, or in the church, whether in the personal life and service, in the home, in our natural relationships, in our responsibilities as Christians, children of God, brethren of Christ, members in the body of Christ, partakers of the heavenly calling, pilgrims on our way home every character indeed in which as Christians we can be considered. It is passing wonderful, and failure only comes in because we fail to understand what is meant by being in Christ, or because we do not use the power given to and resident in us.

Only one thing more need be added at the moment. It is that in 1 John 2, the little children, seeing that they possess the unction or anointing, are instructed that they need not yield the least fraction of ground to the enemy. Even if the enemy should labour to seduce them, there is a very simple axiom by which to detect him, that no lie is of the truth. Jesus is the Christ; Jesus is the Son of God. He

is both the one and the other. The youngest Christian, being taught by the Holy Ghost, knows that any one denying in his teaching that Jesus is the Anointed, risen Man, or that He is the eternal Son of God, equally Divine with the Father, is on antichristian lines. There is, I fear, among many a readiness to deny Personality to the Son in Manhood, to teach that the Manhood of Christ is to be regarded as a condition assumed, and to deny that He became Man in nature. This is antichristian in character, for it undermines both the atonement and the priesthood of Christ, and it makes of all His perfect dependence and obedience simply a condition assumed or to put it baldly, a character acted, as one might act a character on a stage. The Manhood of Christ is real, even as His Deity as Son of God is unchanging and eternal.

The Spirit of God is the power by which all false teaching can be exposed, and all seduction into error avoided; and by which the youngest Christian can stand in the truth, undaunted by Satan's terrors and uncorrupted amid the most subtle counterfeit that he can invent, even were it possible for him to come up against the antichrist himself. We can never therefore excuse ourselves in any failure; failure can only be that we do not use the power conferred upon us in the gift of the Holy Ghost.

## **Chapter 8.**

### ***THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY GHOST.***

Of all the functions of the Spirit in connection with Christians this seems to be the one which opens out in the largest way. In 1 Corinthians 12: 13 the whole Christian company is said to have been baptized by the Spirit into one body. It is an unfortunate circumstance that very many earnest believers, in their dissatisfaction with the usual dead-alive state of things in Christendom, and in their desire to come more under the power of God's Spirit, have fixed upon this expression and have sought a quasi-baptism of the Spirit which leads them away from its real significance. It is not our business to contend with them, for at least we are seeking in these studies how to be more fully, yea completely, under His control. But we may see what the Scripture teaches; and God forbid that we should while affirming our aim to be filled with the Spirit shun what the Spirit is here pre-eminently to produce.

It is clear from the passage referred to, that all believers, whether Jew or Gentile, whether Paul the Apostle or his Corinthian converts (and with them all converts in Christ in every place), are formed into one body by the baptism of the Spirit. They are blessed as individual believers on receiving the gospel of their salvation, and are indwelt by the Holy Ghost, anointed, and sealed, and in them He operates as the Earnest. These things have been considered in previous chapters. But we are here led further. The same Spirit is the One who forms us into one body; so that every divergent interest which we might have had as individuals, even if they were as widely apart as those of Jew and Gentile, should be submerged in a community of interests under one sovereign direction. The figure is used of a body as a whole and of its members in particular. It does not seem to be the object of the Apostle in Corinthians to show in any special way the glory of Christ as the Head (which is the theme of Colossians), nor the way that He nourishes and administers to its growth and promotes its unity (as in Ephesians), but rather to indicate the Divine power that works in and animates the members of the body in their relations one with another. The whole of the twelfth chapter is given up to this theme. The Holy Spirit moving a man will never for one moment lend His support to any utterance derogatory to the glory or authority of Jesus; nor will He fail for an instant to support His Lordship. There is such a thing as inflation by an evil spirit, a demon; but the Spirit of God when a man in the Christian assembly will

start him with the truth of the unassailable holiness of Christ, and His unquestionable Lordship, the risen, triumphant, glorified Man. There will be almost infinite diversity in the way Christ is presented by different men; distinctions of gifts (ver. 4); distinctions of services (ver. 5); distinctions of operations (ver. 6); but with every function there is the one Spirit, and not another; the one Lord, and not another; the one God, and not another. Unity, and the thought and principle of unity, lies behind all the diversity.

But, moreover, there is sober definite purpose in all the diversity. Nothing is more foreign to the spirit of Christianity than for a man to get up under a pretended afflatus, and jabber away in an unknown tongue as a mere fact. That is of man or of the devil. Tongues were originally given for the purpose of reaching foreigners in a meeting, or of voicing their praise or prayer in an intelligent fashion. Being in this way useful, as well as phenomenal, they became a sign even to any unbeliever who might be present, but they were not intended to be signs to believers (1 Cor. 14: 22). Everything done in the assembly when convened, and as led by the true and holy Spirit of God, was for edification, encouragement, and consolation; and nothing for display (1 Cor. 14: 15). The true phenomenon in Christianity is to see a multitude of persons, differing oftentimes in nationality and speech, and always in social status and temperament, so delivered from self-interest by having drunk into one Spirit, that while each is at liberty to take part if *led by that Spirit* and as led by Him, there is perfect order and subjection one to another, and undoubted profit and edification in what is done.

But the reason of this is stated in our chapter (1 Cor 12: 12, 13). Just as the varied members of a human body, however diverse, being under one will and one control work together in harmony, so it is with the Christ. All saints, indwelt by the Spirit, are corporately associated together under the designation of "the Christ" (see ver. 12, N.T.). It is not a voluntary association of believers agreeing upon a certain mode of procedure, but an organic unity formed in the power of the Spirit, and subsisting actually and continuously whether convened into one place or scattered. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." What is formed by the baptism of the Spirit (and concerns and embraces all the members of the body as an accomplished fact), is on our side entered into by our drinking into one Spirit. While the unity is formed, and we are in it through grace and the mighty power of the Spirit, we can only realise it and act according to it by imbibing the thought of God and being consistent with it, so that Spirit displaces flesh. It is to be feared that very few Christians who speak so earnestly of being "baptized by the Spirit" enter into it in the corporate sense referred to in the passage, because they are not in the position where the Spirit's operations in the assembly can be known. Congregations are usually under the rule of man, and know nothing of this liberty of the Spirit in assembly. Yet the Lord vouchsafes to many a great sense of His love, and their true devotedness up to a certain point might well put others, perhaps better instructed, to shame. Would that they could combine all true service and zeal according to the Word with the exercise of this privilege also.

Now if we have understood that all Christians who are indwelt by the Spirit are also baptized by the Spirit into one body, we can perhaps study with more interest its import. The body of any creature is always formed according to its proper uses and habits. So a bird has wings, a fish has fins, etc. It is created for its specific purpose, and all things according to the plan of God. A human body is the vessel in which man was designed to be the image and likeness of God, as representing Him in the world. In Adam this failed; but what failed in Adam is made good in Christ. Christ personally is all that God can desire or require in man, and all that God is is expressed bodily in Him. But Christ was rejected on earth, and disappeared from man's eyes by His death. So that there is no personal Christ on earth. He was raised from the dead, it is true, but is hid in the heavens; and the Holy Ghost is here on earth to

represent Him. And not only have we the gospel told out for the salvation of souls, but we have the mystery of the gospel, that there is to be here a mystical body comprising all saints from Pentecost to the Rapture, to be descriptive of Christ. Hence the "body" is called "the Christ." He is absent and unseen; but the body is here, formed by the baptism of the Spirit, in which the whole character of Christ is to be wrought and effectuated. All that He is in life, and affection, and mind, and character, is to be seen in the saints collectively.

What, then, of Christ is to be set forth? First let us say that Israel nationally was intended to be God's witness; the visible and tangible evidence in a *national* way of what God was. Israel failed; and this opened the way for God to bring out the hidden wisdom which was ordained before the world unto our glory.

There are four mentions of the baptism of the Holy Ghost in the four gospels. In Matthew, where the Lord's Kingship and authority are especially the theme, we have Matthew 3: 11. It was clearly God's purpose, according to that gospel, to have Christ in authority, and to have a people, baptized by the Spirit, who would be absolutely responsive to Him and subject to Him, and able to administer of His authority for His Name. Israel having failed, the church comes by God's grace into the position they forfeited, not in a national but in a corporate way. To this end, then, are we baptized into one body, that we may be descriptive of Christ; in absolute subjection to His authority, and capable of acting for Him in a corporate way till He come.

In Mark, we have the service of Christ in His prophetic character, like Elijah and Elisha in the days of old. In Mark 1: 8, it is clear that He would fain have prepared Israel to be a people capable of understanding Him in that capacity, and of representing Him in loving service to God and men. But Israel failing, He has now formed us by the baptism of the Spirit to the same end; namely, that having accepted of His service for ourselves we in our turn should be now able to represent Him by faithful and diligent service to God and men.

In the Gospel of Luke, the Manhood of Jesus is especially the subject, and the way in which the true character of God was displayed and revealed in a Man. Reading Luke 3: 16 in this light, it appears that Israel as a nation was to become the vessel for all the moral attributes of God to be expressed; but as they rejected the counsel of God about themselves at that time, we have come in for this likewise by the baptism of the Spirit. That is, it is the purpose of God to mould us in our character so that as the body is descriptive of the head, so the saints should indeed, as members of the body of Christ, show not the traits of a carnal nature, but the very graces of Christ, so fragrant to God.

Finally, in John 1: 33, there is the same thought underlying the passage. Christ is seen in the fourth gospel as a Heavenly Man on earth, expressing what eternal life is, and relationship of the Son as a Man with the Father, and all the communion and blessedness of that life and that relationship. When this was presented to Israel, they only refused it all. Thus by God's sovereign favour we are brought in, by the baptism of the Spirit, to be associated with Christ now risen from the dead; that in us may be seen the life, the affections and joys of the relationship, and the blessedness of this intimate communion.

Summing this all up, and remembering that only by the failure of Israel nationally do we come in (yet by the eternal counsel and purpose of God), it is ours to set forth in a corporate way what Christ is. We can see what is in Christ, and that His body has been formed for the expression of Him in a practical way in a world exactly opposite to Him. We are to answer to Him in the sense of administering everything in the Christian community according to God (Matthew); to represent Him in His untiring and perfect service Godward and manward (Mark); to correspond with Him in all His

gracious character as the Man of God's good pleasure (Luke) and to walk as sons of God, heavenly men, filled with His Spirit, and in the enjoyment of that eternal life which lies outside of our ordinary life though affecting us in it (John).

These traits and qualities are not to be looked for in the world; nor will they be found in the outward mass of professing "Christendom." But it is intended that they should be found among Christians; since we are baptized by one Spirit into this one body for the very purpose of continuing "the Christ" on earth during His absence. For this all saints are required; it is only in the "new man" comprising all saints that it could be fulfilled. And to further it, it is necessary that all that is of flesh be excluded, all that is of man be negated, that all may be practically of the Spirit.

It only remains to trace the history in the Acts, as to the baptism of the Holy Ghost. In Acts 1: 5 we have the Lord's own prophecy of its fulfilment as to the disciples who were then of His company; as in Acts 2 we have its accomplishment in their case. On the day of Pentecost it was perhaps exclusively Jews and Jewish proselytes who were brought in. But in Acts 10, supplemented by Acts 11: 15, 16, we have a Gentile band introduced. Thus as to its composition we have one body formed of Jew and Gentile, by the baptism of the Spirit. Into this body God has been bringing souls through faith in Christ and by the reception of the Spirit; so that of every saint viewed in his relation to his fellow-saints in this dispensation can it be said: "By one Spirit are ye all baptized into one body." As far as reception of the Spirit now is concerned, this takes place individually where the gospel of "your salvation" is received; but when received, the same Spirit who seals us individually also unites us with every other sealed one, and so we have a corporate history as well as a particular one.

The baptism of the Spirit then is not some extraordinary infilling of the Holy Ghost in answer to a Christian's earnest prayers, or diligent seeking or self-surrender, or laying all upon the altar," but the simple fact proper to every saint that he belongs to "the body" whatever he may be as an individual believer, or servant of Christ. So that every saint has corporate responsibilities as well as personal ones. If I were asked to say what Christians may pray for, it is that they may be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5); that the Spirit who does already indwell them (Eph. 1) may indeed have absolute control will, affections, indeed the whole man, being brought entirely under His sway. In that case we should not only have learnt how the flesh has been judged in the death of Christ, but that we have put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and holiness of truth (Eph. 4). And it may be that some who speak of an extraordinary "baptism of the Spirit" really mean the filling of the Spirit already indwelling, though they use the wrong term to describe it. But if they were really to be filled with the Spirit it would mean the destruction of all self-complacency, and of man's disorder in the church of God, and a heart-absorption with Christ to which most are strangers.

In explanation of Joel 2: 28, to which Peter refers in Acts 2, it confirms what I have said; that it is God's purpose to have His earthly people Israel filled with His poured-out Spirit in a *national* way. But as they through their rulers rejected the counsel of God in the gospels and the Acts, God has temporarily set them aside; and in the meantime is carrying out still grander purposes in Christ's body, the church, in a corporate way.

## **Chapter 9.**

### **CONCLUSION.**

"The Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us." 2 Tim. 1: 14.

In the foregoing chapters the work of the Holy Spirit as indwelling individual believers has been chiefly considered. We may recall how that two outstanding facts characterize Christianity as set forth in Scripture. The one is the 'ad interim' position of the risen Man Christ Jesus, the Son of God, at the right hand of God; the other is the 'ad interim' sojourn of the Holy Ghost on earth during the period of Christ's rejection here and session yonder. When Christ moves downward to fetch us who believe upon Him, the Holy Spirit whose present mission will have been accomplished, will move upwards with those whom He has led to Christ; and thenceforward His activities will take another form.

Recalling further the substance of what has been said in these chapters, we must surely be convinced of the immensity of the range of blessing, and the variety of its aspects into which the Holy Spirit is here to lead our hearts. Greater than all is the intimate knowledge of the Blessor, the communion with Divine Persons into which it is His mission to conduct us.

Closely related to this is His service within us, enabling us to enjoy practical deliverance from the world, and from the power of sin, both external and internal; and producing in the subject believer a definite conformity to every aspect of Christ's glory and character by the energy of a living affection for Him. It would help us all to trace out in the different epistles the way the Spirit first establishes the truth as it is set out for us, and is true of us, in Christ; and then indicates in detail the work in saints which puts us into true alignment with Him, and produces corresponding life and works in us down here.

We have then three things.

(1) God's delight in Man, the Man of the new and heavenly order, set forth in Christ now in His presence; Object of His love, Man of His pleasure.

(2) The Spirit's mission to earth at this present time to produce men after Christ's order and pattern, acting in His various offices and functions to produce both intelligence of God's will and affections that love to reproduce Christ here.

(3) The evident need that we should be under the Spirit's full guidance and control in order that we should be perpetually under the influence of Christ, and freed from every influence that would grieve the Spirit and distract us from the Lord.

With such possibilities before your mind beloved unknown reader, will you not seek with the writer to take the glories of Christ and the presence of the Holy Ghost seriously? Divine Persons have laid themselves out to capture our hearts' affection, and to lavish upon us all that love could give. This is not mere mercy or philanthropy, but the sheer love of God that has wrought to produce a race of men in whom, with Christ as Head, He can hold fullest, sweetest, eternal communion. Let us see Christ in resurrection life and heavenly glory, Centre of the Father's counsels, Object of His Father's love, and remember it is God's purpose that we shall be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be Firstborn among many brethren. Will this not move our inmost being to seek conformity to His whole will and pleasure now.