

The Spirit in the Apocalypse as compared with the Epistles

Rev. 1: 4, 5, Rev. 19: 10.

Lecture 10 of 'The New Testament Doctrine of the Holy Spirit.'

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These two portions of the Revelation have been read that we may be enabled to contrast the aspect of truth given us by the Holy Ghost in the last book of the New Testament with the testimony of the epistles. Our course now, therefore, must be somewhat discursive. For instead of confining myself to a particular Scripture, I shall endeavour to put together in a somewhat comprehensive view a number of passages scattered over the epistles, chiefly St. Paul's, which we have looked at either not at all or for other purposes. Having taken a rapid survey of these scattered lights I shall endeavour to put into juxtaposition with them that which is furnished in the Revelation on the subject.

The Holy Ghost is always presented, whatever Scripture may treat of Him, according to His own object in each book where the reference occurs. This remark applies to one topic no more than another that may be in hand; but as it is true of other doctrines, so of the Holy Ghost. Thus we have seen, in the epistle to the Romans, that righteousness is the subject, and especially the righteousness of God. Hence, till this has been thoroughly cleared, there is not one word about the Holy Ghost at all. It is only in Rom. 5 where the first allusion is found, as indeed also the first statement of God's love along with it, as already noticed. "The love of God," says the apostle, "is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." Thus the whole question of our sins, and God's judgment of them, of sin and deliverance from it, has been fully met before the Spirit of God is Himself introduced. It was not well to open the work which goes on in the heart until God had been thus shown amply vindicated in the redemption and resurrection of Christ. But it is in Rom. 8 (that is, when we have had not merely our sins, but sin, fully discussed) that the apostle launches into an ample doctrinal exposition — the doctrine of the Spirit, viewed both as a condition and also as an indwelling person.

But I do no more than allude to this now, as it has been already before us. Let me recall the fact, that all is viewed on the side of righteousness, and this practically, after all is clear about the righteousness of God. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." This is the only possible way now, or indeed at any time, in which the righteousness of the law could be fulfilled in the saint. It is in walking after the Spirit. The believer is first set free as in Christ before God. There must be liberty as well as life; and founded on this righteousness, the moral scope and purpose of the law is fulfilled in the believer. It is not exactly by the believer; still less is it fulfilled *for* the believer, which is as baseless as it deserves a harsher name. It is fulfilled in us, and is thus a more intrinsic thing than if simply by us. Love, as we are told elsewhere, is the fulfilling of the law; and this the Holy Ghost works in us as possessed of a new nature, and now able to treat the old man as judged in the cross. The new nature is then drawn out in loving God and man; and thus the righteousness of the law (in vain sought under law) is fulfilled in us who walk after the Spirit. It is the display of what is according to God's moral nature, which is thus accomplished in the exercise of the new man by the power of the Holy

Ghost.

This illustrates how thoroughly the Holy Spirit, and the character of His operation in the believer, is determined by the scope of the epistle. Having laid down, first, man's ruin as needing the gospel, and God's righteousness as revealed in it, the apostle now turns to the answer of practical righteousness in the children of God; and the Holy Ghost takes His place in reference to both. When righteousness is cleared, the love of God can be freely spoken of as shed abroad in our hearts; and, further, the Spirit is shown to be a power that displaces not only sin, but law as an external test, which can in no way enable such as we are to work inward and practical righteousness.

In the first epistle to the Corinthians we have the Holy Ghost after another sort altogether, and with remarkable fulness. What gave rise to this was carnality at work in almost every possible form except legalism. They were too loose to like the law; but their carnality was beyond all power of the law to remedy: law can only condemn the carnal. Christ alone can meet such evil, or any other; but Christ also made good by the power of the Spirit. Hence we find in this epistle the wisdom of man, first, judged by the cross (1 Cor. 1); and, next, supplanted by the communications of God's Spirit. These communications which he takes up in 1 Cor. 2 are shown to be revealed by the Spirit, and set forth in words which the Holy Ghost gave, as He alone is for man the power of receiving them. Thus the Holy Ghost gave the truth, and the words, and the capacity to bow and understand. The Holy Ghost, in point of fact, has to do with everything as to the truth of God, which is only rightly seen in Christ Himself. Clearly, then, the Corinthians, who were wishing to bring in some wisdom from the world in the hope of making the gospel more palatable, were thus completely at fault, and, in fact, in opposition to the mind of God.

Then, again, the next chapter (1 Cor. 3) shows, though I need not dwell on much of it, how the Holy Ghost is viewed as having constituted believers God's temple. This is urged as a standing fact, as well as the consequent seriousness of meddling with God's sanctuary, and bringing in either mere trash, or positive defilement and destructive evil. "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy." But even supposing a man did not defile the temple of God in the strongest sense, if he brought in what was worthless, all his labour should come to nothing, and be burned. He himself might be saved, but it would be as one who passed through the fire. This is, of course, figurative, but a most instructive figure, intimating the application of God's judgment to the work, though the man himself might escape.

The next, and very solemn use that is made of this gift of the Spirit, is as regards the believer's body. It is not now that together Christians constitute the temple of God, but that each one's body is His temple. This is a capital truth of Christianity; for the Corinthians fell into that error which has been perpetuated in our own day, that, if we be only right in heart, it matters not about the body — that we must not be too particular as to outward things, among which comes, of course, the body as the outward instrument of the man. To such it seemed an unspiritual thought to be occupied with the body: why not insist on the inner man? Let the soul be right, and the rest may be safely left. Not at all, says the apostle Paul; the Holy Ghost is pleased to dwell in the man, and makes, not the soul, but the body, His temple. If the body is consecrated to the Lord, if it is separated by the power of the Holy Ghost, the soul must surely be all right. But there might be excuses made, so as to leave the body free for self-indulgence and downright wickedness, while highflown sentiments filled the spirit of a man. This, it is evident, is hateful to God. "Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body." (1 Cor. 6)

After this (1 Cor. 12), not to notice every passage, the Holy Ghost is described in the Church, first, operating in the way of gifts, His manifestation given to each, on which enough, perhaps, has been

said to excuse my not delaying now. Again, 1 Cor. 14 regulates the exercise of these gifts in the assembly of the saints, in God's assembly. Thus is established the important principle, that the possession of power of the Holy Ghost exempts none from the Lord's authority by His word. Yea, it is the Holy Ghost who applies that word to deal with Christian conscience in the use that is made of His power. In vain does a man plead that he has a word from God, and that it must be spoken. Not so, save in due season, and in the proper place. A word may be ever so truly from the Lord, but He holds to His own order in His own house. Nor does the Spirit of God set aside in the smallest degree personal responsibility in the exercise of gifts. The word, and the word alone — not the Spirit — is the standard. (Compare 2 Tim. 3) And this, I need not say, is an invaluable truth; for the tendency of men who really believe in the action of the Spirit of God is more or less to subject the word to the Spirit, instead of owning what is made so plain in Scripture, that the Holy Ghost subjects His own manifestations to the authority of the word of the Lord — the word that He has Himself inspired.

Next, in the second of Corinthians, when God had wrought powerfully to awaken and recover the souls of the saints, we have a passage of great weight connected with our theme. The apostle expressly consoles the saints who had been cast down. He himself had experienced a fearful persecution, but had been brought out of it. Next, he tells them, that "all the promises of God in him [Christ] are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." They had been, some of them, reproaching him for not having kept his purpose. Did this, at best vacillation, seem like an apostle? If any man's word ought to be trusted, surely an apostle's ought; but Paul had not come as he had promised. The change of purpose as to his visiting them was thus turned artfully against his authority. At any rate, he answers, if I have not kept my purpose, God keeps His in the gospel. "All the promises of God in him [Christ] are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us. Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." This is precisely what takes place in the dealings of God with the soul; and all is here presented in a remarkably full and orderly manner. The believer is established by God in Christ, which, of course, supposes that he is quickened with the life of Christ. I do not mean that this establishment in Christ is only quickening, but that, when a soul is thus established, he must needs have been quickened. This is the strongest way of putting the blessing; for Christ gives force and fulness to that which is inherited of previously existing privilege. Then, again, he is said to be "anointed;" for the Holy Ghost is the power of his knowing all things according to God. "Ye have an unction from the Holy One," as we read even of the babes in 1 John 2. So, immediately after his establishment in Christ, anointing is mentioned — the Spirit's opening of the believer's eyes, and giving him power to see and take in things with a new and divine capacity. Moreover, the Spirit seals the believer on the ground of accomplished redemption, and becomes to him the earnest of the future inheritance. "Who hath sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."

Let us now turn to another Scripture, where the same double thought occurs — the epistle to the Ephesians; for the brief remarks I shall make on this subject may suffice for both. In Ephesians 1: 12-14 it is written, "that we should be to the praise of his glory who first trusted in Christ." "We"* means from among the Jews, who anticipate the nation in being brought to rest our hopes on Christ the Lord. "In whom ye [the Ephesians] also, after ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance," etc. You will observe that the apostle treats of the Holy Spirit in two special points of view, and in relation to the two main subjects he had been and is setting forth in the chapter. One is the *call* of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; the other is the *inheritance*. The Holy Ghost deals with us in relation to both. Relatively to the call of God He seals the believer; and relatively to His inheritance He is the earnest in our hearts. In the one case He is the power of conscious separation

unto God on the ground of that which is now complete. And therefore, you will observe, that in this very verse it is said, "After ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your *salvation*." It is only consequent on this that the Holy Ghost deigns to take such place in the believer. He seals the person of him who rests on redemption; and He becomes the earnest of the inheritance of glory, which we shall share along with Christ.

* "We, apostles and Jews, that had this privilege first to trust in Christ." (T. Goodwin, *in loc.*) "'In whom you also,' you Ephesians you Gentiles — 'you also.'" Here is A WORK OF THE HOLY GHOST DISTINCT FROM FAITH: 'after you believed, you were sealed'. The capitals here are Dr. G.'s, who repeatedly insists on their distinctness, and controverts Piscator and Calvin, who held the common confusion He draws truly from πιστεύσατε, "after that ye believed," that the faith was not contemporaneous with but antecedent to the sealing of the Spirit. So Ellicott. Alford is not clear.

On this subject there are often difficulties in the minds of true children of God. My only object and desire, in saying a few words now on it, is to contribute one's mite of help, with a view to removing, I trust, some of the difficulty, and, I must add, somewhat of prejudice, that darkens the subject. That there should be some difficulty in comprehending such a theme as this ought not to surprise any who know how the world has encroached on the domain of the saints. I was thankful, the other day, in glancing over an old Puritan writer, to note, that even he admitted its distinctness from faith (and certainly Puritanism is not the quarter to which I should look for intelligence in the doctrine of the Holy Ghost). But still, just because it was little expected, it may have been the more pleasant to find a theologian lifted up above the too common legal traditions of his party. It was the homage that a godly mind paid to the plain and precious truth of God. Be it remembered too, that this good and able man, a couple of hundred years ago, wrote at a critical period, when the moral side of the law was asserted with more keenness than perhaps at any other time. Legalism ordinarily is the great hindrance in the way of understanding the Holy Ghost. It is legalism in some shape or another which causes difficulties. The Holy Ghost is the power of holiness to the believer, as law was the strength of sin to men under it. The law dealt with flesh. The Holy Ghost now dwells where the new nature is.

In quickening, the Spirit of God finds a soul that has no life whatever towards God. There is nothing but fallen nature before He imparts the new creature by faith of Christ. The soul is connected by faith of the word with Christ; there is a spiritual nature communicated which it never had before. "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit," as flesh comes from flesh. But the sealing of the Spirit supposes a holy thing already there, whether one looks at Christ, or the saints as in Christ. Of course, there is no sealing of the old nature. The Holy Ghost seals that new nature, or rather the quickened person. But is there not more? I believe that in our case there is another thought. It is not only that there must be something good and holy to seal, and that it would be monstrous and absurd to suppose the Holy Ghost sealing the old nature or the flesh; quickening supposes an absence of life, but sealing further implies that there is something to seal which is according to God. For even a new nature is not enough; because the saints had a new nature all through the Old Testament times (though not revealed then), yet we never hear of their being sealed of the Spirit. But now more is implied. The sealing of the Spirit does not come simply on quickening, though it always supposes it, but follows the reception of "the gospel of our salvation." "In whom after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed," etc. I do not lay any particular stress on the word "after" here, but am willing to take it, as some contend, for "having believed." Still it comes precisely to the same effect in the end. Most decidedly, in my opinion, it assumes that the saints had already believed, and that the sealing was a subsequent action of the Holy Ghost on their souls. In short men are not sealed as unbelievers, which would be the most miserable thing if possible. They are sealed as

believers, as they were quickened when dead in sins.

The question of the time elapsing between believing and sealing is of slight consequence, but the distinctness of the two things is of great moment. Let there be but a minute; still they are distinct, and the sealing follows faith. The unbeliever needs to be quickened, the believer to be sealed. Far from allowing it to be a doubtful point or an open question, to my mind Scripture is positive and uniform, that the sealing of the Spirit invariably follows faith, and is in no case the same thing, or even in the same moment, as faith. I hold that whoever does not see it confounds the action of the Spirit of God in quickening or giving to believe with that which is altogether of another nature. The danger too is, that people are thus exposed constantly to confound the condition of saints in the Old Testament times with Christianity. Undoubtedly the Holy Ghost dealt with souls of old; undoubtedly they were quickened, and believed. Were they sealed? Had they the earnest of the Spirit in their hearts? Neither.

This brings us now to the reason of the difference. It was not because they were unbelievers, or without quickening; for their faith is certain, and to be born anew is indispensable for God's kingdom. But the gospel of salvation was not yet a known published ground of blessing for the soul in its relation to God. That is, the condition of old was always one simply of expectancy; there was as yet no enjoyed communion with God in peace and deliverance. Christianity has brought in all this and more. Christ is come, and has accomplished redemption; and the Holy Ghost, now sent down from heaven, brings us not merely the promise — for this of itself is never Christianity — but the promises verified in the highest degree in Christ Himself: Wherever it is simply *promise* presented to an unconverted soul, the gospel of *salvation* is not yet understood. I admit, of course, that there are promises where the soul has found Christ. Some things are future, and, of course, in that sense they are not fulfilled (for instance, the resurrection of the body and the display of glory). But I maintain that Scripture attributes the greatest possible importance to the fact of (not bare promise now, but) accomplishment in Christ; and that this is precisely, therefore, what is now preached (not promised) in the gospel. It is not a mere hope of Christ, which is exactly where those under law always find themselves. They are constantly yearning to be saved, for an interest in Christ, and so on. This was all right in the Old Testament, and no person was entitled to go beyond it. The Messiah was not come, nor the work done: hence it would have been sentiment to have believed more, and not the truth of God; not reality, but imagination. It is not according to God's present testimony to set forth promise only; indeed there is no such thing as a "promise of forgiveness" now. Forgiveness is an actual fact; while eternal life is a present possession, but future also. Salvation, in a most true sense, is the believer's portion (Eph. 2), and so complete that the believer is said to be risen with Christ, and seated in heavenly places with Him. Viewed as far as Christ, it is as perfect as it ever can be, although our bodies must be changed into the likeness of His body by-and-by. In this sense salvation is only at hand, not yet come.

Accordingly the Spirit of God takes a new relation or mode of action in reference to this development of the ways of God, and the impartation of the full blessing. As far as the soul is concerned, salvation is already perfect, and the Holy Ghost (in dealing with the soul now) bears the message of this, and seals the person of him who believes the gospel. The sealing supposes not only a new birth, which was true of old, but, beside this, it is based on redemption complete, and supposes the work of Christ known. Even we do not seal a thing until it is done. Nobody would think of sealing a letter till it was written. Thus it always supposes that the ground, on which an object that is sealed already stands, is finished and firm. Hence the act of sealing, which is applied by the Holy Ghost, clearly indicates the completeness of what is in question.

As the Holy Ghost seals to the believer the salvation which the gospel announces (which is, in fact, the way in which the call of God now displays itself in Christ), the other side has its place. There

is that which has not yet come; and the Holy Ghost even there is not a promiser, but an earnest. He is an earnest, not of Christ's salvation, any more than of God's love, but of the inheritance. The Christian has God's love as complete towards him as he ever can have it. I have such a salvation for my soul that even God Himself could not make it more perfect; but I have not yet the inheritance; and the Holy Ghost, instead of merely holding out a promise now, gives me to taste it — gives me to enter into the anticipation, joy, and blessing of it even while I am in this world. Therefore, He seems to me to be called the earnest of it.

This may suffice for the text in the Ephesians; but I must go back for a moment to the Galatians, though it may seem to savour of disorder. "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" They knew well, though beguiled by Judaisers, that law works never led to ministering the Holy Spirit to them, any more than to working miracles among them. (Gal. 3) This, however, does not for all minds decide that they are distinct. I shall refer to another and later expression in Galatians 4, which is very explicit. When His people were under law, "God sent forth his Son . . . to redeem them that were under law, that we might receive sonship. And because ye [Galatians, who were not under law] are sons, God [when redemption was accomplished] hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Thus it is the Holy Ghost giving us the consciousness of the relationship already ours by faith in Christ. (Gal. 3: 26.) They were *sons* already — "Because ye are sons." But then they might not have the known enjoyment of this relation; for this "God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." The meaning and force is thus as plain as possible. Under the law the believer, although a child, never had the consciousness of a child. He was ostensibly and in his experience in the condition of a servant, though lord of all, as the apostle elaborately explains. The reason of this was because, for the first time, he was under law. He was like a minor, under guardians and stewards till the period fixed by the father. He was held in bondage under the principles of the world, and the law scourged him, and made him feel how naughty he was, and what rebelliousness there is in human nature. All this was going on during the legal system. But now is come a wholly different state of things, as the apostle shows here.

So the epistle to the Romans taught us that grand truth of Christianity as to the flesh, that I am entitled, nay bound, to regard it as dead. I am never called to die to it. This is natural, pietistic, mystic, but not at all the truth revealed in Christ. I am never called to die to the flesh. Dying, of course, to nature and the world is practically spoken of — dying daily. But it is another thought altogether, and is a question of exposure to trial and death for Christ continually. But as to the flesh, I am entitled by grace to say that I have died already; and I am called on to reckon myself henceforth and always dead. Mysticism is an effort to become dead in oneself, and sounds well; but grace gives me the title of Christ to believe in the power of His death for me, and of my death in Him; so that I may, without presumption, reckon myself dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus.

The epistle to the Romans gave us this teaching in connection with righteousness; but here, what is taught is in contrast with the legal system of restraints which served to deal with those under age. Redemption has brought us by faith of Christ into the place of sons, and we have the Spirit of God's Son given to us as the power whereby we cry, Abba, Father. Such is the connection of the Holy Ghost with the doctrine of this epistle. The object of the enemy there was to draw away believers from the liberty with which they had been made free in Christ, and from that blessed relationship of sons before their God and Father, back again under ordinances of the law, in one shape or another. The Holy Ghost is the great delivering power given to us, founded upon redemption by and in Christ. But a few words more on the presentation of the Holy Ghost in the Ephesians before we pass on. We need not enlarge on all the allusions to the Holy Ghost; for there is not a chapter that does not furnish one or more. In

the testimony of Ephesians 1 and Ephesians 2 the Holy Ghost is viewed as the power of access to the Father for both Jew and Gentile that believe now: at the close we are told of Him also as the constitutive power of the habitation of God. It is not the habitation of God in an external manner like Israel. No visible cloud of glory marks His presence in the Church; but there is the utmost reality in the fact that the Holy Ghost dwells there. In Ephesians 3 the Holy Ghost is not only a revealing power, as in Ephesians 1, for our intelligence, but also an inward energy for deepening the spiritual communion of the Christian, and strengthening his inner man according to those riches that are in Christ. In Ephesians 4 the doctrine of the Spirit of God is largely developed in relation to the body, as well as to individual gifts. Above all, in the latter part of the chapter we have Him alluded to as the active power and personal measure of holiness in walk. It is not merely doing this or that which can suit the new man, but not grieving this divine person, by whom we were sealed unto the day of redemption. It is not enough that we have the truth of the old man judged, and the new man given; but there is the Holy Spirit of God, whom we are on no account to grieve. Ephesians 5 furnishes another and a very interesting allusion to the Holy Spirit. We are called upon there not to yield to carnal excitement, but to be filled with the Spirit, and, in connection with this, "speaking to each other in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord."

And here I will allow myself to make some remarks which, I think, may be helpful to souls often charged with the inconsistency of using hymn-books, whilst they object to forms of prayer. There is no such thing in the New Testament as a body of praise metrically prepared for Christian use. There is no provision of psalms, or hymns, or spiritual songs, written by inspiration for the Christian; there is very abundantly for the Jew. Do you wonder at this? It seems to me simple, suitable, and full of interest. The Jew needed such praises made for him; the Church does not; for the Christian and the Church, having the Holy Ghost, as the Jew had not, has within a full spring for making melody in his heart. This seems to me the reason why there is no external supply provided for Christians. To the Church, having the ever-present and indwelling Holy Ghost, belongs the well of living water; nay, each individual Christian has it, and so far, naturally and normally, breaks out into psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs. Thus, what to some is an evidence of the need of human forms, or to others a ground for falling back on the psalms of David, is really the most striking proof, in the simplest possible way, of the actual blessedness of the Church of God and of the Christian, if they had only faith to use their goodly heritage. Those who are under all the dolorous experience of the law, and cannot therefore enter into proper Christian worship, may, no doubt, require to be provided and stimulated with the Jewish store of the psalms, which, if they only understood, suppose a wholly different experience as well as relationship. There is no spring of joy in themselves; they want a provision for them outside. But just because we have Christ, and, besides, the Holy Ghost as a divine power for enjoying our Saviour, with our God and Father, it would be to lower the Church's place to make for our singing a provision of psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs in the word of God. Holy Scripture deals with the Christian as grown up to man's estate, and supposes the Church, unless beguiled by deceivers, to be standing in full liberty before God, in intelligence of His mind, and confidence of His love, entering into the riches of His grace and of His glory in Christ; and this because the Holy Ghost is in the Christian and in the Church. The consequence is, that such conscious blessedness naturally — not to say necessarily — finds its expression, as is said here, not merely in praise, but "speaking to each other in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord."

Again, I do not the least doubt that these psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs here spoken of were Christian compositions — not indeed extemporaneous, any more than Davidical, but their own suited expressions of various praise. They were the fruit of the Spirit of God working in the early believers, causing them to express their own proper joy to God, instead of casting them on an inspired

provision, which does not enter into their distinctive privileges and joy, but in all directly belongs to others who are as yet to come. Does not this, then, fully meet those persons who urge captious difficulties, and say, "After all, you have a hymn-book, and we must have forms"? It seems to me so. The expressions here really intimate that there were known metrical compositions of these kinds; that there was a due and characteristic expression of praise and thanksgiving, as well as of the different spiritual experiences of the Christian. These varieties seem meant by "psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs." They have each their own proper character, and no one can take up a Christian book of praise to God without finding one and the other and all of these things. But, I repeat, these compositions are left room for among Christians, instead of being provided ready by God's inspiration outside themselves; indeed, this is one of the peculiarities of the Holy Ghost's action in the New Testament. He has come down to be in us. He is not merely One who writes for us and teaches us: there is this kind of testimony. You will find, particularly in the Apocalypse, and occasionally elsewhere, even the prophetic character of revelation still, as "The Spirit speaketh in the latter times," etc. Thus we do not lose in the New Testament the predictive element which abounds in the older Scriptures, any more than the narrative. There is in the epistles special instruction on Christian standing and conduct, ministry, etc. Besides, the Holy Ghost leads the believer in joy and praise. He does not give up His function in furnishing authoritative injunctions or visions of the future; but neither is in any way the characteristic dealing of the Holy Ghost with the Christian or the Church. The praise of children, the expression of common as well as of individual joy in the Lord, cannot but go forth from the heart now, as well as from the lips, to the praise of God, and this, too, in a rhythmical form.

The only other allusion to the Spirit of God which remains to be noticed now in the Ephesians occurs in the last chapter, where prayer is called for in the Spirit: "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit." Never does the New Testament speak of prayer "to," but "in" the Holy Ghost. It is not that the Spirit is not worthy of worship and prayer; it is not that He is not God, equally with the Father and with the Son; but He has been pleased, since redemption, to take a place in us which precludes His being made the definite object of prayer while thus dwelling with us. Prayer to *God* includes the Spirit with the Father and the Son. Therefore, where Christian subjects are revealed, it is invariably praying "in the Spirit," and not to Him. Praying to the Spirit would be unconsciously not to believe in the Holy Ghost as dwelling in the Church and in the believer; as it is the expression of want of faith in one of the great distinctive Christian privileges, always known among those who confound the Church's estate with the Jewish position.

Without touching on the minute passages in the Philippians, which speak of the Spirit in point of character rather than as an indwelling person (that is, as the source of fellowship, and the character of worship as contrasted with what was special), let us observe the remarkable omission of the Spirit of God in the doctrine of the Colossians. It has been often noticed; but I refer to it in passing. This epistle as strikingly brings out the new life or nature, as the kindred one to the Ephesians makes much of the Holy Ghost. Of course both features are connected with the peculiar strain of their respective epistles.

In 1 Thessalonians the Holy Ghost is introduced with remarkable strength and simplicity, and this from their conversion throughout their whole career. (1 Thess. 1: 5, 1 Thess. 4: 8, 1 Thess. 5: 19.) The texts need no extended remarks, save perhaps the last, which is sometimes misunderstood: "Quench not the Spirit." It is totally different from grieving of the Spirit, against which we are warned in Eph. 5. Grieving Him is clearly a personal question; whereas quenching Him is just as emphatically with regard to others, and mainly, I suppose, in public action, or, at least, in the use of their gifts. I am not to hinder another, nor to raise difficulties as to the manifestation of the Holy Ghost in any brother. It may be a great work, or a very little one. This is not at all the question; but — Is it of the Spirit? Respect for

the presence and operation of the Holy Ghost in all the variety of His action in the Church would keep the greatest from quenching the Spirit in the least. God certainly does not despise the day of small things.

In both epistles to Timothy we hear of the Holy Ghost repeatedly. I have referred to the prophetic episode in the first epistle; but the introduction of the matter in 2 Tim. 1: 7 is deeply interesting also. "God," says the apostle, "hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." (See also ver. 14.) It is not hard to see why the Holy Ghost is so spoken of in this place. Timothy shrank from the difficulties of Christian warfare — from that sorrow and trial into which the service of Christ, more particularly among the assemblies, necessarily brings him who seeks to be faithful. Hence the apostle reminds him of the gift which had been given him through the imposition of his own hands, and adds that the Spirit, who is given to us Christians, is not the Spirit of cowardice, but of power, love, and discreetness (σωφρονισμοῦ). There are thus two things — the gift given him by the imposition of the apostle's hands, and, besides, the general character of the Spirit given to the saints. Clearly this was for the purpose of stirring up the trembling man of God. Why should he be surcharged with grief at difficulties, dangers, disappointments, or even the defection of those who had once laboured with the apostle himself, but were now turned against him?

In Titus we have a rich passage — not about a gift to a beloved servant, but the common place of blessing into which Christianity brings a soul (Titus 3: 4): "After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." Here we have not the being born anew or of God, which is common, in my judgment, to all saints at all times, but that form and fulness which now pertains to the Christian. It is "the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour." This appears to be distinctly the full power of the blessing which characterizes the Christian. The new birth simply is universal; but the new place and the gift of the Holy Ghost thus richly awaited the accomplishment of redemption. Therefore this is said to be "shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour." Thus the passage very strikingly shows both what always is and must be true, and what only became possible according to God's wise ways when the hindrance was removed, flesh was judged, and the Holy Ghost could be shed thus abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour

There are various references in the epistle to the Hebrews; but I need only notice two expressions for a moment — "the Spirit of grace," and "the eternal Spirit." They are both to be applied to the Holy Ghost, and stand in evident contrast with Jewish things: the "*Spirit of grace*" in contrast with *law*, and the "*eternal Spirit*" with temporary dealings as of old.

Next, we come to a passage in 1 Peter 1, of much interest to the believer: "Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace which should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with (ἐν) the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven." Now, this passage demands and will repay the most careful consideration. First there is the clear statement of the working of the Spirit of Christ in the prophets of old; but what He was in them was a spirit of prophecy; that is, He gave them to bear witness to what was coming. He gave their souls to bear witness to the sufferings that belonged to Christ, and the glories after these. How much they

understood, and how far they could enjoy, are other questions; but He set both before them. We find all this in the Psalms and prophets generally, and in Isaiah, Micah, Daniel, and Zechariah, with especial clearness. But, again, we find much more: "Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven." Thus, now that the gospel is sent out, because Christ has come and the great work of redemption is accomplished, the Holy Ghost takes quite a new place — "sent down from heaven," you will mark, which is not said about the working of the Spirit of Christ before. Evidently the mission of the Holy Ghost sent from heaven is contra-distinguished from the Old Testament operations, however blessed, of the Spirit of Christ. It is the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven who is the power of the believer's entering into that which is now reported in the gospel. Besides, there remains the accomplishment of the prophecy at another epoch, when the kingdom shall be (not preached, but) set up in power and glory here below.

Accordingly there are three things in all: first, the Holy Ghost predicting; next, the present enjoyment of soul-salvation proclaimed by the gospel in the power of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; and, thirdly, the revelation of grace at the appearing of Christ, which will be the fulfilment of the prophecies. That is, there is a mighty work accomplished, and, no doubt, prophecy touches on that work, though it goes far beyond what prophecy has revealed. Finally, the full accomplishment of prophecy awaits the appearing of the Lord in glory. Between the two — after Christ came to suffer, but before He appears in glory — the Holy Ghost is sent down from heaven; and we enjoy in faith by His power what the gospel announces in Christ. We shall find the importance of this by-and-by, when we look at the Revelation; but these preliminary remarks may serve to bring out the contrast with what we shall find there.

On 2 Peter I need not dwell, as the chief allusion is simply to the Old Testament prophets, who spoke under the influence of the Holy Ghost.

1 John might claim a particular hearing, as we have there very full instruction as to the gift of the Holy Ghost to us, whereby we have God dwelling in us, and ourselves dwelling in God. But as this again would detain us from that which is proposed for this evening, I only refer to it by the way.

At length we come to the Revelation, where the first words in which the Spirit of God is announced place the subject on entirely novel ground — novel at least in the New Testament. Here it is outside not only usual phraseology but spirit to speak of "the seven Spirits;" so much so that some ancients as well as moderns have denied the reference to the Holy Ghost, and applied the phrase to the seven presence-angels. (Rev. 8: 2.) I do not myself doubt that the allusion is to the sevenfold spiritual power of which we hear in Isaiah 11. But the style is unprecedented in the New Testament. The connection differs here, of course, as applying to a transitional time of judgment on men, while the Jewish prophet was showing how the fulness of the Holy Ghost was to rest on the Messiah.

Thus the Apocalypse is not at all occupied in its prophetic visions with the ordinary objects of the New Testament. This is evidently the key to the change of the style. Hence the Revelation — about to treat not of the display of grace, but of God's government — is pregnant with allusions to the Old Testament. No person is capable of understanding the book who has not the ways of God of old before his mind's eye. But bearing in mind its constant allusion to the law and the prophets, while at the same time it connects New Testament elements with this leading up into the eternal state after a sort far beyond the Old Testament, one may follow its communications somewhat more intelligently.

Hence, though saying "grace be unto you, and peace," God Himself is spoken of after another manner than we have found before. It is "from him which is, and which was, and which is to come." He

speaks as Jehovah. It is a translation, if one may so say, of the Hebrew "Jehovah" into the New Testament language. As God is thus brought before us, so is His Spirit — "the seven Spirits which are before his throne." Any one familiar with the New Testament must be so much the more struck by such an expression. Do we not always hear of the Spirit — yea, "one Spirit"? Is not this the emphatic teaching of the apostle Paul? Is not this the ground and formative power of the one body of Christ, that one Spirit dwells in every disciple of Christ, knitting together and incorporating into one all the various members? Surely so. Here; in the very terms of the salutation, we hear of the "seven Spirits;" and more than this, "the seven Spirits which are before his throne." It is another order of ideas, wholly different from what we find in the epistles. He is "the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven" elsewhere; He dwells in the believer; He distributes and operates in the Church. Here it is the seven Spirits that are before God's throne. How comes this? We are entering on a scene of government and judicial dealings. We are closing the heavenly parenthesis of grace where God made the wondrous display of the mystery, hid from ages and generations in the glory of Christ on high, and of the Christian and Church united to Him there. Even in the preface of the seven churches and of Christ in relation to them, judgment is the point, and the Holy Ghost is viewed according to the governmental character that the book as a whole unfolds to us. God Himself is thus presented judging, and about to govern directly, instead of providentially. It is the book consequently where every system, and man as such, must be judged. The churches are judged in the first place; the world is next judged; then the quick (at Christ's appearing, and before His earthly reign closes), and in the last place the dead are judged. Throughout it is judgment.

Consistently with this the Holy Ghost is viewed according to an earthly and judicial character, resuming an Old Testament aspect, but with a depth characteristic of the final and complete revelation of God. The prophet speaks of "the seven Spirits;" it is the full but varied perfection of the Holy Ghost acting according to the developed ways of God Himself in government, and therefore designated as being before His throne.

In the addresses to the churches, there is a remarkably coincident manner of speaking even to them: "What the Spirit saith *to* the churches." It is not the working of the Spirit of God *in* the saint or the Church. It is not the habitation of God in the Spirit. But even He, in addressing them here, takes rather the place of warning and of exhortation as One outside. Christ Himself does the same. He is not here as the head of the Church communicating nourishment and cherishing His body. He is seen walking in priestly robe — more than a priest, but as a priest too; not indeed interceding or bearing up the believer, but, on the contrary, searching with His eyes as a flame of fire, and dealing with that which was contrary to the mind of God. This is clearly the revelation that we have even of our Lord Himself in the things seen. Consequently He Himself is described as the Son of man — an extraordinary designation relatively to the Church; and why so? Why is He seen as Son of man here? He is going to take the kingdom. Meanwhile judgment is given to Him because He is the Son of man. (John 5) Thus the Lord has taken the place of a judge, even though the subject be the churches themselves. Every kind of judgment is in His hands. "Alas! who shall live when God doeth this?" Hence we find that the best of these churches — the first of them at least — is threatened with the removal of its candlestick if it repented not; (and did it repent?) while the last of them, although called to repent, is threatened positively with being spued out of our Lord's mouth. Thus, as for the churches, there was utter and hopeless rejection.

Then ensues a vast change; and (whatever may be judged) redeemed ones — no longer on the earth — are glorified in heaven; and the Lord is seen above as a Lamb that had been slain (a rejected Christ) in the presence of God and on His throne. There, again, is seen once more the Spirit, but still as seven Spirits, symbolized by seven lamps or torches of fire (still judicial); as also in the next chapter

there is power and activity in the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth — not any longer a question of preaching the gospel with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. The Church is not in view any more than the gospel, but a mission into all the earth, where He is a Spirit, not of grace, but of government, dealing actively with the earth universally. The churches, too, are no longer heard of; they are here not even objects of testimony for the Spirit of God. Hence forth God is occupied with other and earthly plans, the heavenly joint-heirs being seen on high with Christ. The Spirit of God, then, acts in view of all the earth.

This of itself sufficiently indicates the great peculiarity of the Holy Spirit's action at this Apocalyptic period. The largest portion of the book treats of the transitional interval after the churches have disappeared from the scene, and before the Lord Jesus comes from heaven with His glorified saints in judgment of the earth. I believe that this is in brief a true account, as far as it goes, of the main subject-matter of the Apocalypse. The churches are gone, and are no more heard of after chapter 3 (save in the exhortations at the end). Then we hear, as remarked, of the seven horns and eyes representing the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. The term of long patience ceases, and divine judgments run their course. It is not that there are not saints called and witnessing; nor, of course, could there be saints without the quickening power of God's Spirit acting by the word as of old. But what is the character of the action of the Holy Spirit in and by these saints who follow the Church on earth? What is the nature of His communications to their souls? What is the experience that He forms within, or the walk that He leads to without? The answer in the words of the Apocalypse itself is, that the Spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus (for such is what I suppose the order really ought to be, though, being reciprocal, the grammar admits equally of either). It is a question here entirely of contextual propriety, whether you take first the one member or the other.

Now, this at once lets us into the total difference in the relation of the Spirit of God towards these saints, as compared with His aspect toward the Church and the Christian. The Holy Ghost, as a present and characteristic fact, dwells in the believer as a spirit of communion. What I learn in Christ, I enjoy as mine. It is all my portion and delight. There is not a single revelation that God makes of His Son that I am not entitled to take as the comfort of my heart. The Christian has a direct interest in all His glory. He may see that which only presents Him as an object of worship for the soul, as the Son of the Father; but, still, nothing more delights him, because, as born of God, and having the Holy Ghost setting the heart free, it is the joy of the believer to have One above himself, whatever His love — One before whom he can fall down and worship. We know, alas! how John proved his own weakness here (the abuse of what in itself would be perfectly right to a divine object); but the glory of the angel for a little while dimmed the homage of his heart, and divided it: so bright was this revealing personage, that the prophet was going to worship him. But the believer (whose heart knows the Son of God, knows His grace, delights itself in His glory as the Holy Ghost brings before him Jesus) is a willing worshipper, as of the Father, so of the Son.

In all other things where Christ is not simply thus as the Son, the eternal One, and divine Person, the object of worship, we have One who is both above us, and in deep and ungrudging love is pleased to share His relationship with us. In fact, all that He had given Him, He gives to us; all that He has wrought, He has caused to contribute to our infinite blessing. In all this, you observe, it is the Holy Spirit of God who takes of the things of Christ, and shows them unto us. He is glorifying Christ, but it is by showing His things to us. He makes our hearts run over with the joy of Christ that we possess.

This is not the case in the Apocalypse. Look at the saints in Rev. 6, which is the first place where any on earth are brought before us in the prophetic part as a matter of fact. They desire the Lord's judgment of their adversaries. They are wistfully longing after some good they have not got. This is the

case even in Solomon's Song, not what pertains to the Church or the Christian's relationship, as I shall show presently in speaking of the book of the Revelation. But the position of saints on earth, after the Church has disappeared, is such that the Holy Ghost is only the Spirit of prophecy. The sole testimony that He renders to Jesus is as a prophetic spirit which casts them on the future — on what they are to receive by Jesus when He appears. It is not so with the Christian; and this is a fact which may suggest much as to differing principles in the display of God and the blessing of the saint. Two things are wanted to set one in real blessedness as a present thing. I want a satisfying object for my affections, and I must possess that object; I want a stimulus for my expectations, being still in the body, and surrounded by objects that Satan uses as means to draw one away from God. Now, it is essential for me, that as I have Christ for my heart, so I should yet have Him to wait for in the other sense of my hope. We want these two things, that seem to be contradictory but in reality are the essential constituents of full blessing for the saint and for the Church. If there be not a satisfying object before my heart, what exercise or rest can there be for its affections? But the Christian has Christ. And therefore it is that the Holy Ghost does seal him, gives him this unction, gives him to know what he has, and is his power of enjoying Christ and what Christ has given him. But then the same Holy Ghost leads me to look for Christ. This we shall find in the Revelation too — for us, not for those who are to succeed the Church. It is only with the Bride that the Spirit says, "Come." It is only in dealing with her that He prompts her cry, and joins in saying, "Come." And He says "Come," because He who loves us best, and is truly loved by our hearts, has told us that He is coming. Then the Spirit, who honours His word, instils this desire, and makes us long for Him. But then He is One who loves as none other could love — who has spent Himself in His love, that I am waiting for. Therefore I have, while I have not; I have all the blessedness, consequently, of possession by faith, and yet have all the stimulus of hope, that makes me look out of the present scene, only to be perfectly satisfied when He has me and I have Him in the heavenly glory where He is gone.

This is precisely what meets the heart in Christianity. Christ has come down to the world, and loves me where I am. He loved me in the midst of my folly, and in spite of my sins. At the same time He is my hope; and I shall be like Him and be with Him where He is. And this is what is found in Christianity, and nowhere else. It could not be before Christ came, because the object was not come nor fully revealed. It cannot be after Christ has come again. At His coming there will be full and everlasting blessing, and all sorrow and difficulty shall vanish away. Then the path for saints on the earth will be an easy one. But now there is the opposition of the Spirit of God to Satan's power. Therefore there is every possible element to hinder and try the child of God. But there is the blessedness of faith and hope. The Holy Ghost is the spring of all power. He, since redemption, takes His place in the believer and in the Church. How blessed is the portion of the Church of God!

But manifestly, when the Church goes on high, there will be no longer any kindred state. The Spirit of God will quicken souls, as He did before He was sent down from heaven and formed the Church. That is, there will be the same elementary and eternal work of the Holy Spirit as long as there are souls here below, and a God to know vitally. Besides, the Holy Spirit, working appropriately, will throw them upon the future. This is not wonderful; because it is simply the order then before God. Thus the contrast is plain. The heavenly saints just before will have been taken out of the world: here are these souls which are being prepared for the millennial earth. It is a strictly transitional period; but the form of the Spirit's action and testimony is to direct hearts to the future that is about to be revealed. The spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus. Thus it is not the opening out of the fulness of redemption. It is not the power which gives the soul the consciousness of drawing "within the veil," where there is "an anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast." Nothing of our peace and joy appears: saints have this now in Jesus. But the emphatic form intimates that the Holy Ghost will direct them to

look to Him for the future. They will have to wait. Other souls must also suffer like them. (Rev. 6: 11) Accordingly we find some such words as these, "How long, O Lord?" They look for One who is to come; and nothing but the mighty power of God can give them to believe this: such will then be the deceit of unrighteousness.

It is not for man to dispute with God; and it is not for a believer to question the word of God. All our wisdom is in exercising at once simple faith in the Scriptures, which has a sedative effect on the soul in presence of all questions, difficulties, and doubts of mind about these matters. If God has revealed the future, He has revealed it for us to know. So far is it from being true that the Christian has enough to do in occupying himself exclusively with his own blessings, on the contrary, you rob the Christian of part of his peculiar inheritance if you induce him to quit this vantage-ground. Not only has he faith's possession now, and hope's anticipation, but he stands here put on an eminence whence he can survey the future, looking right into eternity itself. What can be larger, what more blessed, than the place of a Christian? Oh, how little we enter into, and know, and enjoy our proper blessing in Christ! The Apocalyptic saints will have not this, but a prophetic testimony from the Spirit of Jesus.

There is no need for me to say more now on this subject. Let me simply recall your attention to the closing words, as proving more fully what has been already asserted — that the Holy Ghost, after the prophecy terminates, is shown to us at the close in unison with the hope of the Bride, which means the Church of God, and nothing else. The attempt to apply the Bride in the Revelation to Jerusalem seems to me a delusion. "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come." Here we have clearly the Spirit guiding the Church, viewed in her own bridal anticipation of Jesus. The place where it occurs makes the call all the more striking; because, after having gone through the whole course of God's dealings with man up to the very end, after even the final judgment before the great white throne, after fully describing the new heavens and the new earth, it might have detracted somewhat from the Christian's own proper joy to have been so much occupied with prophecy. Indeed, such study always depresses, where there is not a counterpoise of heavenly hope. I am persuaded prophecy, when alone, tends to produce an earthly effect on the Christian's soul, and leads one to fritter away the spiritual energy which is intended for Christ and the Church, and for souls in their need and danger, if the mind be let go after merely detailed objects of earthly judgment and curious knowledge. Of course, this is positively injurious for the saint of God, just in proportion to the measure of its exclusion of Christ and heavenly things.

Mark how the Holy Ghost has here provided against this peril in relation to the Church. We may go through all these prophetic visions which John wrote for us, and we may see in them a complete picture of the future, which unites the scattered lights of the rest of Scripture into a focus in the Apocalypse. After it is all done, the main thing that He sets Himself to do is, as it were, to establish us in looking completely out of the earthly scenes for our own proper object — Christ. And this seems to me all the more impressive if not surprising, because it is in a book so eminently prophetic. This final call, however, at once lifts US out of the lower region of prophecy into that which suits the renewed heart in its truest affections for its right and heavenly attraction — Christ on high and coming again.

The Lord give us to enjoy with an ever deepening relish the marvellous light which God's word affords us as to the Holy Spirit who deigns to be in us (though solely for Christ's sake), and this because of His estimate both of Christ Himself and of that redemption which is our immovable foundation before God. May we not merely learn more about the Spirit, but, guided of Him, have our hearts strengthened, enjoying by Him in Christ our Lord all that God has been pleased to reveal to us in His precious word.

