



THE HOLY SPIRIT ACCOMPANYING THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL



X

WHEN the final day of reckoning shall be reached, and all shall be judged according to their works, every sinner will be left without excuse. It will then be seen that Heaven has done all in its power to save to the uttermost every soul who has had an accountable existence. In bestowing Jesus upon the world, the Creator in that act poured out heaven's choicest treasure. Every day He showers upon us innumerable blessings; for in Him we live, and move, and have our being. He has surrounded us with agencies for good, of which we know nothing only through their effect. In order that the gospel, which "is the power of God unto salvation," might be preached to all nations, men have gone to all parts of the world to preach Christ and Him crucified; they have endured privation and want in zones inhospitable, depriving themselves, without murmuring, of the society of dear ones and the comforts of home; all of which they have cheerfully endured that they might present the good news of salvation to a lost and ruined race.

All of man's efforts would prove futile in laboring to save the lost, were it not for the aid of the Holy Spirit, that wonderful unseen agency which accompanies the promulgation of the gospel. Our Saviour, speaking of that mysterious power, says, "I will not leave you comfortless. I will come to you." "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring

all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you." John 14:18, 26. Again, in John 16:7, 8, the Saviour adds, "Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove [margin, "convince"] the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."

When the Saviour declared that it was advisable for Him to depart, the disciples must certainly have been astonished beyond measure. How could it be profitable unto them for Him to depart after having spoken unto them as never man spake; after having healed the sick, raised the dead, forgiven sin, and calmed the troubled soul? He explained all by stating that if He did not depart, the Comforter would not come, and that when He should come, He would convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment: in other words, a power would be sent into the world from the Father that would awaken the conscience of the sinner whenever sin should be committed. Every living, accountable soul is a witness to the truthfulness of this declaration; for, whatever our station in life, whether rich or poor, free or bond, whenever we do wrong, there comes a rapping and tapping at the heart's door, and a gentle voice says, "You did wrong: you should repent, confess, and reform your life." We may reject its wooings, but it comes to us over and over again, to reprove us of our sins, and urge us to walk in the ways of righteousness.¹

Oftentimes, when the sinner defiantly disregards that gentle voice, and ignores that benign power, then it arrays before him the fearful realities of the judgment, and he deeply feels his deplorable condition, as he exclaims, "I am lost! I am lost!" But thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ, it is not so; for as long as the wrong doer desires to be better than he is, and knows that unless he is, he is not prepared for death and the judgment, he has not passed the bounds of mercy. His feeling thus is an evidence that the Spirit is working for his salvation, and that there is mercy for him; but he should fully realize that the opportune time has come for him

to surrender to God, that peace like a river may attend his way. The Holy Spirit not only convinces of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, but it fills other offices, among which it becomes our "earnest," not only of our salvation and a home in heaven, but a pledge of our future inheritance in the final restitution of the earth. One definition of the word "earnest" is "a pledge or payment given as an assurance of earnest or serious purpose to discharge an engagement or fulfill a promise; a token of what is to come." Paul in speaking of what is to come and of what God will accomplish, says that "in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him; in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will; that we should be to the praise of His glory who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory." Eph. 1:10-14.

Surely this quotation teaches us unmistakably that every time we are convinced of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, that the Holy Spirit is a pledge, or *earnest*, to assure us that we shall gain an inheritance in the purchased possession. A simple illustration will perhaps more clearly convey to the reader's mind the significance of the term "earnest."

Mr. A possesses a fine farm. Its acres are broad, and in a high state of cultivation. Mr. B is anxious to obtain the farm, and approaches Mr. A to ascertain if he will sell, and if so, on what conditions. The two gentlemen talk the matter over. Mr. A agrees to take a stipulated sum. The two men are strangers to each other. Mr. B states to Mr. A that as soon as he disposes of some property he will return and purchase the farm. Mr. A replies, "I have no doubt that you are sincere in your statements, but as you are an entire stranger, I do not know that I shall ever meet you again." Whereupon, Mr. B takes

from his purse gold coin to the amount of five hundred dollars, and passing it to Mr. A says, smilingly, "Please receipt me for the same on the purchase price, and I will return and take possession of the property." Mr. B departs, and the report rapidly spreads that Mr. A has sold his farm; and when accosted in regard to the matter, he confirms the report. Some of his more skeptical neighbors say, "You will never see Mr. B again. He certainly will not pay you the price stipulated, so you may as well be content to keep your place." Mr. A's eye kindles, being lighted by faith, and he exclaims with assurance, "He paid me five hundred dollars as an earnest, or pledge, that he will return, and take the farm. He has too much invested in it to abandon it now."

The above faintly illustrates how the Holy Spirit is an earnest of our inheritance. When man sinned, he lost dominion of the world, and the beautiful planet that then was, passed under the dominion of the usurper, and man became the abject slave of sin. Jesus, pitying his condition, came to redeem not only man, but the world. He invested in our world thirty-three years of his life, wherein he was beset with the same temptations that surround us. He was ridiculed and mocked; his character was maligned, and at last he was falsely accused, arrested by a merciless mob, and crucified. Thus he invested in the purchased possession his time, talent, labor, and life. Having made this investment, he has an interest in it, and some day He will return to claim His own, and the soil which drank His blood will ere long compose the foundation of His throne.



XI

THE ministry of Jesus Christ on earth was drawing to its close, and He felt extremely anxious to give His followers the clearest evidence possible that He was the true Messiah. He desired that their faith might be strengthened in Him, so that it would not be shaken as they should see Him delivered into the hands of His enemies. And further, fearing that when they should see their supposed King die the ignominious death of the cross, they might lose faith in the expected kingdom, concerning which they had hoped so long, He said unto them, "There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in His kingdom." Matt. 16: 28.

A short time after this, Jesus chose three of His most prominent disciples, Peter, James, and John, and led them up the steep of a neighboring mountain, away from the sight and sound of human activity. They ascended the mountain for the purpose of engaging in prayer. The day had been well filled by the Master in ministering to the needs of the people. He had taught great multitudes and healed the sick. As they reached their destination the sun was setting, and the lengthening shadows were veiling plain and valley. Still the snows on the upper peaks flashed and glowed in the light of the setting sun as if aflame. Soon the golden light disappeared, and valley and summit were alike wrapped in a mantle of darkness. The Saviour knew that the darkest hour of His earthly pilgrimage was fast approaching, and He prayed most earnestly for strength divine, that He might be able to pass through the coming conflict. His disciples,