

6. THE HOLY SPIRIT

BESIDE the speaker's desk in the House of Representatives in Washington, D.C., sits a man who knows parliamentary law thoroughly. Sometimes the speaker may not know just the proper procedure to take in some parliamentary tangle, but this expert knows without looking at his books, and quietly whispers the proper answer. Through study and experience he is able to give a quick decision in difficult situations.

When Jesus was about to leave this world, He said to His disciples, "I will send you another Comforter." Comforter is a combination of two Greek words meaning "the one called to stand by," like the man at the speaker's side, ready to help in times of perplexity. This One came on the day of Pentecost to stand by and give counsel to every Christian. Here are the words of Jesus: "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it sees him not, neither knows him: but you know him; for he dwells with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." John 14:16-18.

The Holy Spirit comes as a gift from the Father and the Son: "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!" While Jesus was with His disciples, He was their comforter, guide, and helper. Now He promises "another Comforter.... even the Spirit of truth!"

Jesus was the great Teacher. He taught His disciples when He was with them, but the Holy Spirit also is a teacher. "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 14:26. Ghost is simply the old English form of the word "spirit." Therefore, the Holy Spirit and the Holy Ghost are one and the same. Notice here that the Holy Spirit is not only a comforter and a helper but a teacher, bringing to remembrance the things which Christ has taught. It is when the Word of God is understood by the teaching of the Spirit that we understand it, and not before.

When my father and mother were away holding evangelistic meetings, I stayed for months-yes, even for years at a time-on the farm with my grandfather and grandmother. While still in my teens I watched beside the bed of my dying grandfather, of whom I was fond. Alone with him that last night, I was unable to keep him from getting out of his bed, for he was a strong man. He went to the sideboard, picked up his Bible, opened it to the second chapter of First Corinthians, and read these words to me: "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knows no man, but the Spirit of God." Verses 10, 11.

Then he said, "Remember, Son, you are planning to be a minister of Christ. You have received a call from Him, but you will never understand the Bible or be able to explain it to other people unless the Holy Spirit dwells in you and speaks through you. Since the Holy Scriptures are written by the Holy Spirit-for 'holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost' (2 Peter 1:21)-the Holy Spirit alone can fully explain them. You must be a spiritual man if you expect to have power as a preacher. If you ever understand the Oracles of God, it will be through the power and teaching of the Holy Spirit. Listen to this [and then he read on]: 'Now we have received, not the spirit of the world but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Ghost teaches; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them. because they are spiritually discerned.'--- 1 Corinthians 2:12-14.

Then he laid down the Bible and quietly returned to his bed, from which he never arose. But his words keep ringing in my heart: "If you wish to understand the Bible and preach it with power, you must be a spiritual man." Those words of my grandfather were simply another way of saying what Jesus said-that when the Holy Ghost comes into the life, "he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." Now, the Holy Spirit testifies of Jesus. He glorifies Jesus. Jesus said, "When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceeds from the Father, he shall testify of me." John 15:26.

When our Savior returned to heaven, His presence through the Holy Spirit was still with His disciples on earth. Of the coming of the Spirit He said, "He dwells with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." John 14:17, 18. Thus Christ is present by the Holy Spirit, the Comforter. The world cannot receive Him because the world deals with the tangible and the visible, but the real presence of the Holy Spirit is with the believing disciple. Jesus said, If a man love me, he will keep my

words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." Verse 23. Through the presence of the Holy Spirit each believer may have direct access to the truth of God, God's Word.

Notice now three things that Jesus said about the work of the Comforter: "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and you see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." John 16:8-11, 13.

First of all, the Holy Spirit convicts of sin, for the word reprove has the sense of "convict" in the original. Jesus Himself convicted the wicked of their sins. as we read in John 7:7: "The world cannot hate you; but me it hates, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil." So does the Holy Spirit convict the heart of man. Of those who heard the Apostle Peter preach on the day of Pentecost, it is written, "They were pricked in their heart." Acts 2:37.

True conviction of sin and the realization of our need of a Savior come from the Holy Spirit. J. Floyd Jones says that when he was pastor of a certain church, he felt that he was a complete failure. Something seemed to be wrong. He was a young man and was working especially for youth. In that community stood a great challenge to Christian faith—a man who had more influence than any other man in the community. He was well educated and beloved by everybody. If someone's house burned, he always gave more than anyone else to rebuild it. He even gave to the church, but he was not a member, not even a Christian. Since he did not attend church, his example was a great barrier to the minister's efforts to reach the young people.

One night Pastor Jones, lay awake for hours and as he prayed, a voice seemed to say, "Why don't you strike at the source of your trouble? Prepare a sermon especially for this man and get him out to hear you—

He worked for many days on his sermon and drove by the townsman's home and told him that at his next service he would preach a sermon that he had prepared especially for him, and invited him to come. In a friendly way the man said it would be impossible for him to attend that morning, but he would be in the evening meeting. So the minister spoke on something else in the morning and kept his special sermon for the evening. But at nightfall a snowstorm developed. Very few attended church, and the man for whom the sermon had been prepared was not among them. The preacher was completely disheartened. It seemed that he would never have an opportunity to reach that man. He preached a short sermon on some other topic and went home.

As he sat by the fire, meditating and praying to himself, it seemed that a voice in his heart directed him to go to the man and preach the sermon to him alone, as Jesus did to Nicodemus. Before he realized what he was doing, Jones had dressed and was driving to the man's house. It was after one o'clock on that cold winter night, and he was afraid that he would be considered insane coming at such an hour and through such a snowstorm. But he was sustained by the knowledge that he was obeying the impression that had come to him as he studied the Word of God and prayed.

When he came within sight of the house, he saw a light. As he stepped upon the porch, the door opened at once, and the man reached out to him. With a sob he said, "Thank God! He has sent you to show me the way to find Him. I have been reading my Bible all night, but it is all dark to me. Your special invitation this morning got me to thinking, and I want to find God." In a few moments he had found Him. The conviction of the Holy Spirit on both the pastor and the sinner drew them together to the salvation of a soul.

In the second place, not only does the Holy Spirit convict of sin but of righteousness—the righteousness of Christ. When Jesus was on earth, He pointed the way to the perfect righteousness which is required of all who enter God's kingdom. (Matthew 5:48.) Since the Savior went back to heaven, this has been the work of the Holy Spirit. It points men to the righteousness of Christ, both imputed and imparted, as the only hope of salvation. (Romans 10:340; Galatians 2:20.)

The Holy Spirit in the heart leads to loving and natural obedience. A litterateur in a great English university once made a special analysis of Tennyson's poems, and a tabulation of the various forms of poetic composition found therein. When this was shown to Lord Tennyson, he said, "You are exactly right. I was true and obedient to every specific regulation here outlined, but I did not know that I was doing it."

So obedience, revealing the righteousness of Christ, is the fruitage in the Spirit-filled life. If we are led by the Spirit, we are not under the condemnation of the law, and we do by nature the things contained in

the law. His holy righteousness, lived out in the life of Jesus, is ours. When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, from the very presence of God, he had a shining face, but he "knew not that ... his face shone." (Exodus 34:29.) So the Spirit-filled Christian obtains his righteousness, not by effort, but by communion with God, by the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Third, the Holy Spirit convicts of judgment. He warns men of the danger of rejecting the salvation so freely offered in Christ. During the great advent movement in the days of William Miller a revival meeting was being held by William Lull in a schoolhouse at Windham, New York. For six weeks there were only two converts, a woman and a boy. One evening a group of young men gathered in a tailor's shop were talking about the meetings. One of them, Orrin P. Matthews, said, "Boys, would you like to hear Miller's sermon on the judgment? "

Several of them said, "Yes, Orrin, go ahead; let's have it."

Matthews had read William Miller's sermon on the judgment. He was quite an elocutionist and also had a remarkable memory. So, getting up on a chair, he began. He had not gone far when he noticed that the tailor's helper, seated in a corner of the room by himself working overtime, had stopped and was sitting there with bowed head.

Matthews turned to him and asked, "What's the matter, Cowels? Are you under conviction? If so, I'll pray for you. Someone said I could pray as well as old Giles up there at the meeting." Then he got down on the floor and began to pray. But when he had spoken only a few words, he stopped and began to tremble like a leaf. His friends thought he was sick, and inquired what was the matter. He couldn't reply; he just kept on trembling so they took him home.

The next morning several of the young men called to see how he was, and he said, "Boys, as I was making that mock prayer, a terrible conviction for my sins came over me. I just couldn't speak. Boys, I'm under conviction." The others admitted that they were in the same condition. They decided to go to the meeting that night and respond to the invitation to go forward.

They did go to the meeting, but Matthews failed to lead the way forward, and no one made a move. After the meeting, they went back to the tailor's shop, locked the door, got down on their knees, and began to pray so loudly that even the neighbors could hear them. That night three of the young men were converted. The next evening they all went to the schoolhouse and openly confessed their faith in Christ. Then a great revival spread through all that area. Three of the young men, including Matthews, who had been the mock preacher, entered the Christian ministry. The first of this group to find salvation was the youngest, Delos Lowe, who later became the father of John S. Lowe, who tells the story.

Before the day of Pentecost the disciples were full of fear and unbelief, but after the Holy Spirit had come upon them in fulfillment of the promise of Jesus, they were fearless witnesses to His resurrection. They preached the gospel to all the world, and many of them gave their lives as martyrs to the faith. They had no doubts as they went forth filled with heavenly power, for Jesus had said, "Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry you in the city of Jerusalem, until you be endued with power from on high." Luke 24:49. Think of the invincible power that the church of God would have today if all Christian believers, were endued with the power and presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives!

There is a terrible spiritual drought in the hearts of millions-yes, even millions of Christians. To all those who are thirsty for the water of life, Jesus says, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believes on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly [heart] shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spoke he of the Spirit' John 7:37-39. All earthly springs and fountains fail to satisfy the human heart.

God created man in His own image, and his spiritual hunger and thirst can never be assuaged by the merely material things of this world. Man will never be satisfied with anything but the water of life. "Whosoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." John 4:14.

Mendelssohn once visited a cathedral containing one of the most priceless organs on the continent of Europe. He listened to the old organist and then asked if he might play. The organist did not know him and said to him, "It is not our custom to let strangers play on this organ.

At last the great musician persuaded him to let him play just a little. As he played, the great cathedral was filled with such music as the old organist had never heard before in all his life. With tears streaming down his face, he came over and put his hand on Mendelssohn's shoulder and asked, "Who are you?" The answer came, "Mendelssohn."

Dumfounded the organist said, "And to think that such an old fool as I came nearly forbidding Mendelssohn to play on my organ! "

If we could only realize what heavenly harmonies the Holy Spirit can draw from our lives, we would never be content until He has possession of us and works through us and by us to accomplish our Lord's will in the world.

BIBLE SUMMARY

The Holy Spirit is either mentioned or referred to 354 times in the Bible.

The Holy Spirit is first mentioned in Genesis 1:2, where we are told that "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters," at creation. The Holy Spirit is mentioned in Isaiah 40:13 and also in Isaiah 63:11, where we read that God put the Holy Spirit within Moses. In Judges 13:25 we find that the Spirit of God was the secret of Samson's power. David spoke with the aid of the Spirit. (Matthew 22:43.) The Spirit caused Eldad and Medad to prophesy. (Numbers 11:26.) The Spirit was in Joshua. (Numbers 27:18.) The Spirit testified through the prophets. (Nehemiah 9:30.) No one can hide from the Spirit's presence. (Psalm 139:7.),

In the New Testament we read that the Spirit speaks (1 Timothy 4:1); teaches (1 Corinthians 2:13); bears witness (Romans 8:16); makes intercession (Romans 8:26); distributes the gifts (1 Corinthians 12:11); and invites the sinner (Revelation 22:17).

What is the evidence of the Holy Spirit in the life?

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Galatians 5:22, 23.

How are we to live in order to avoid an evil life?

"Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." Galatians 5:16.

What does the Holy Spirit bring to our hearts?

"The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."

What are the leading gifts of the Spirit to the church?

"Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant." 1 Corinthians 12A. "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." Ephesians 4:11. "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." 1 Corinthians 12:28.

Do all these gifts come from the one Holy Spirit?

"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit." 1 Corinthians 12A. See also verses 7-11. Jesus said that the day would come when His disciples would be not only guided by the Spirit but filled with the Spirit. "At that day you shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you." John 14:20.

Is it possible for the Holy Spirit to withdraw from a person?

"And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man." Genesis 6:3. And David prayed, "Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me." Psalm 51:11.

The Holy Spirit is God's greatest gift. It brings all other blessings in its train, for Jesus said: "You then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" Luke 11:13. Shall we not ask Him? Shall we not pray for the Holy Spirit today?