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**Golden**  
**Candlestick**

**THE WELL WITHIN**

**T. Austin-Sparks**

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*Volume 229*

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# **THE WELL WITHIN**

**T. Austin-Sparks**

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Please note that most of the Bible quotations are in the New American Standard Version.  
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## THE SPIRIT DWELLING IN US

*Reading: John 4:14, 7:38-39, 14:17; Eph. 3:20-21; Col. 1:29; Rom. 8:11.*

The words in the first of that series of passages may be the key to our meditation: "... the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." *The well within!*

So far as the truth is concerned there may be very little that is fresh to your minds in what may be said, but nevertheless I feel that you and I are conscious, in a greater or lesser degree, of the need for this truth to become a reality. The very suggestion of a well within springing up unto eternal life immediately finds some heart response. We probably know all that the New Testament has to say on the matter, and yet how far we are from the real enjoyment of the knowledge which we possess in that way.

First of all we will dwell upon the tremendous fact which is here set before believers, as the wonderful possibility which the Lord has made for our lives. You will probably have noticed that the one thing common to these six passages of the Word was, that what is referred to there is represented as being an inward matter; the well within, in striking and forceful contrast to that well without, to which the woman in John chapter 4 repeatedly came and never found finality. Firstly, the rivers flowing from within, having their rise inwardly; and then the explicit statement: "He ... will be in you" (John 14:17); "... the power that works in us ..." (Eph. 3:20); "... I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me

mightily." (Col. 1:29); "But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you ..." (Rom. 8:11). We cannot get away from what the Lord's thought and design is, that the Holy Spirit, the Fountain of life, and light, and power, and of everything, should really be *within* the believer. It is a tremendous fact, a tremendous reality, presented to us by the Lord in His Word. Familiarity with the idea has very largely robbed it of its power, and it sometimes becomes necessary for you and for me to take ourselves, so to speak, over into the corner, and sit down and say, Now, do you really believe that the third Person of the Godhead is truly resident within you? That is, He through Whom the worlds were made, He Who has through all the ages been the Executive of the Godhead in all that God has done creatively, directively, providentially, He Who brought into being that wonderful order represented in the New Testament and accomplished those marvellous feats of divine strength which commenced with the raising of the Lord Jesus from among the dead. From time to time we have to challenge ourselves on that fundamental and initial question of our lives in relation to the Lord.

Simple and elementary as this may sound, I have no hesitation in saying that with all my heart I believe it to be the burden of the Word of the Lord for us at this time. The measure of your consciousness of the need I am not able to gauge, but I know that the Lord's people in every age have been deeply sensitive of it. I know in my own heart too that this matter lies at the root of a tremendous sense of need in our own day, and that the Lord's people are being greatly exercised on many matters which have their solution at this very point.

I am content to dwell with the fact that the Lord has definitely presented this to you, to me, and to all who will believe, that as the very basis of their entire life, and all that has to do with it, He Himself — and there is equality in the Godhead; the Holy Spirit is not less God than the Father or the Son — in all that He is and has, really does reside in the believer and wills so to do: "He ... will be in you." You will notice that the context of that declaration, that

statement, shows that the Lord Jesus put that in a place far above His own remaining among them in physical presence. Oh, that you and I might wake up to some fuller meaning of this fact. It would make all the difference. It is not the fact about which there is any doubt. There ought not to be any doubt about the fact. As to God's statement, it is as clear as anything could be; but our apprehension is so imperfect, and we lose so much because we do not take up a position of a living and active faith upon God's fact. The Lord would say to us again and again: I am in you! What possibilities that brings! What that meant to Israel of old, the Lord's being in the midst of Jerusalem! Everything settled itself for them on the ground that the Lord was in the midst of Jerusalem. There was peace, assurance, joy, strength, when they could say: "God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved" (Ps. 46:5), and when the Lord could say as from the centre of Jerusalem: "I will defend this city." But the reality of the Lord's indwelling of the believer is a greater reality than the Lord's being in Jerusalem of old. There is something deeper, something fuller about this than all the former.

Now let us ask ourselves: Do I really believe this with all my heart? The Lord, the Lord Almighty, the Lord All-sufficient, is *within* me! We can grasp with our mentality the idea that Jesus Christ is exalted to the right hand of the Majesty on High, and away there somewhere in the glory He reigns. He is Lord, He is enthroned, and all the authority is His in heaven and on earth. And we mentally visualise Him as ruling, governing, ordering all things there, but we find it very much more difficult to bring the whole thing right down into the inwardness of our own individual life. Yet if the Word of God means anything at all it means that Christ is in me "the hope of glory". It is only as that which we believe to be true of Him in exaltation is apprehended by faith as a working *inward* reality, that that is made good in us and through us. There is a sense in which faith has to bring Christ out of heaven to the very centre of our being and we have to believe that what is true of Him there is true in us, and all the value of that can be an inward value.

That is the ground of our exercise as we contemplate the whole

prospect of human impossibilities, unsolvable problems, the whole outlook within and without. We have to resolve it into one thing: Christ within is the answer, and anything else or less than that means despair.

We may see as we proceed how this works out departmentally, but for the moment we are viewing it comprehensively, and first of all stressing the fact that that Christ, Who was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father; that Christ, Who ascended far above all heavens; that Christ, Who sat down at the right hand of the Majesty of the Throne in the heavens; that Christ, to Whom has been committed all authority in heaven and in earth; that Christ, with all that is said of Him in the New Testament, is in us in the Person of His Holy Spirit. What more can you want than that? It can be reduced to one thing: that you have all that it is possible to have in the Person of the Holy Spirit resident within, and faith has somehow to get across to that. That is the secret of enlargement. We have to discover how that great truth of God becomes a living reality in the believer. There is the fact as presented to us, presented to faith, and we see how in the Word all that was accomplished was on that basis. Paul said: "To this end I also labor, striving according to His working [energy] which works [energizes] in me mightily" (Col. 1:29, lit.). All that was wrought out was resultant from what was being wrought in. But a further word will be said upon that presently.

This basic fact presented to us in the Word is the indispensable necessity. The Lord would not have given it such an important and emphatic place, if it were not indispensable, but if you look again, you will see that He does put it in that place where it is taken for granted that everything hangs upon it. We have before pointed out that the New Testament rather assumes the necessity for the advent of the Holy Spirit than declares it. Reading the Gospel by John, with the great amount that is said about the Holy Spirit, especially in connection with His coming, its necessity is taken for granted. The Lord Jesus said: "... if I do not go away, the Helper [Comforter] will not come to you ..." (John 16:7). Your reaction to

that might be: What does that matter? We would sooner have You! But the Lord takes it for granted that the coming of the Spirit is so much more important than His staying. "The Comforter will not come"! Well, does that matter so much when we have You? Yes, it matters infinitely more than having Me in physical presence! He is speaking as though that thing simply must be. It is the all-inclusive, all-embodying necessity. Nothing whatever is possible apart from the indwelling Holy Spirit.

You will notice that the Lord Jesus runs two things closely together, and really they are not two, they are one. He speaks so much about abiding in Him and the resultant fruitfulness; or on the contrary the failing to abide in Him and the resultant death; and associates that closely with the Holy Spirit's coming, the Comforter being with and abiding in you. "Abide in Me, and I in you ..." (John 15:4). It is only another way of saying, the Holy Spirit in you, the Spirit of Jesus. How is the spiritual truth of such great importance bound up with that way of speaking? Well, what does it mean not to abide in Christ, or in other words, not to abide in the Spirit? It means to abide in yourself, or to take excursions into yourself. See what happens when you take excursions into yourself. What do you find there? Weakness, doubt, questions, darkness, sin! Oh, a sorry state of things! Then go and try to do the work of the Lord on that basis and see how far you get. Accept the challenge of a great divine purpose on that basis, and you know quite well it will be disaster. "*Abide* in Me ..."! Nothing is possible unless you do, and all is possible if you do abide within the living reality of the Holy Spirit being within you. That is what it means. Yes, I am weak, in every way weak and incapable of facing up to the demands of the day! Well, if I abide in myself what a poor kind of day it will be! I am confronted with a problem, and in myself I cannot see my way through that problem, I cannot solve that problem, that problem is beyond me! If I abide in myself then it is deadlock! Ah, but supposing, with all the consciousness of my weakness, my inability, my helplessness, I see that right there at the centre of my being is One Who has all power, all strength, all ability, and I decide to



step clean out of myself into *Him* and stay there, what a different issue there will be! That is abiding in Christ. The well within is the indispensable reality, the all-inclusive necessity.

It is not as though we were, as the Lord's people, called to live on the ordinary plane. If in this world we were just as other men and had to meet these problems with the same means as other men have to meet them, do this work as others do, then we, like others, would seek to be as efficient as we could be for the meeting of the demands of this life and of this world. If we were in business, we would make ourselves as efficient as we could possibly be for the business demands of this life. In whatever realm we moved we would seek to be thoroughly equipped to stand up to it. But as the Lord's people we are living in a realm which is extra to this world; so much bigger, so much more intense, with such demands as the men of this world know nothing of; such forces to encounter, such work to be done: work which can never be done by the greatest efficiency of men. It is another realm, a higher, an eternal world, in which the very best equipment and the greatest efficiency of man counts for little, if anything. It is the realm in which God, and God alone, is Sovereign. Therefore the Lord has anticipated the realm, the sphere, in which believers will have to live and do their work, and all that they will meet, and He has laid the foundation for that: — "He ... will be in you", "because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4), "according to the power that works in us", he is able to do exceedingly more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think.

One further word on the crisis of this inwardness. It is a crisis. It is not something into which we slip. It is not something which we may simply take for granted. The recognition of that fact has perhaps become the ground upon which the whole matter has been pushed too far, and a crisis of such an intensive character has been sought, that very often the whole matter has been carried out of a realm of truth to a realm of falsehood and deception. Be that as it may, the fact remains that this is a crisis. Sooner or later you and I will have to come to recognise the fact that it is only as the Holy

Spirit is resident within us — not as a part of doctrine, not as a part of Christian truth, but as *the all-inclusive basis* of the Christian life in every detail — and accept and appropriate that, that there will be the possibility of our living triumphantly, effectively, fruitfully, or in any way to the glory of God. It is a crisis. Some have called it a second blessing, simply because they did not recognise it at the outset. It is not necessarily a second blessing. It has come later because the recognition of it has come later. That is what is meant by a second blessing, but be it the first or the hundredth blessing it still takes the basic place in God's thought. God does not work with us in time. He works in the eternal now, and this thing, though it come to us forty years after, in God's mind still goes back to the moment when we first believed: that is, in His thought and intention this thing was meant from that very moment to be the fullest reality in our lives. The Lord never fixed the gift of the Holy Spirit as the fulness of our life for some subsequent date in the experience of a believer. If the believer puts it there, that is the believer's misfortune. With God it is the initial thing, and that is how it was in the Lord at the beginning. God made it initial, and wherever you look, whether it comes in the believer's experience at the beginning or later, it is always a crisis. The nature of the crisis may differ in different people, in different places, but it is always a crisis. It means that God's eternal fact has become a realised thing in a moment of time. Some people call it the baptism of the Spirit, and it goes by other names.

We gather all those things up into this one statement, that, whatever you may call it, it is the crisis in which we come to recognise that God the Holy Spirit is *everything* to the life of the believer. We need not worry ourselves with the technique of it along the line of designations and titles and times. Reduce it to this: God's thought firstly was, and is, that the Holy Spirit should be the *well* from which the first, every subsequent, and the final drop of life for the believer is drawn. God's thought is that that should become the reality in the life of the believer from the first moment. If we have not recognised that — perhaps for want of instruction, or for

one of many reasons — let us remember that God dates that for us from the first moment, and we should claim our birthright the moment we recognise it. You are not coming into some subsequent thing in the programme of God; you are coming back to the original thing. Do not go about saying that you have got a second blessing, meaning that you have come into something which God has been holding back from you for a certain time, something that God has been keeping in store for you. That was yours at the beginning. The New Testament makes that perfectly clear, and if it has not been entered into it is not God's fault or God's arrangement. Today you may have been a believer in Christ for many years, and you may come into your first great inheritance now, to make the Spirit of the Highest the Well of your life, resident within you.

Let us not be troubled about systematised doctrine in this matter, but get down to God's plain bedrock facts, and all the other questions will be solved. You can enter into your initial birthright in this matter today (you can call it the baptism of the Holy Spirit if you like — what you will call it will not matter very much; it will be the reality that will mean everything to you). You can call it a filling if you like. What is a filling? It is, after all, only the realisation of a great fact, an entering in an enjoyable way into God's great fact. At any rate that is one side of it. Let us remember the strong emphasis upon the fact, and all that is bound up with that of meaning, and value, and possibility, and divine intention, and all the disaster and tragedy which follow a failure to apprehend it. The Lord Jesus has said:

“... the water that I shall give him shall be *in him a well of water*” (AV),

“... from his innermost being will flow rivers of living water ... this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive” (NASB),

“He ... will be *in you*”,

“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works *in us*”,

“To this end I also labor, striving according to His working

[energy] which works [energizes] *in* me mightily”,

“But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells *in* you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit ...”.

We leave the aspects of application and just seek to rejoice in the inclusive truth and seek from the Lord faith to appropriate what He has appointed as our very birthright.

## **THE ABSOLUTE DOMINION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

*Reading: Rom. 8:1-9; Eph. 3:14-19; Phil. 2:1-4.*

Let us reiterate and re-emphasise this one point in our meditation, that the Lord has bound up everything with the Holy Spirit, and with the Holy Spirit as dwelling within the believer, in so far as every kind of relationship with Himself is concerned. That is, the Holy Spirit is the very spring, the source, the stream, and everything of God. Therein is the necessity for the Holy Spirit to be definitely within the believer. The Lord knows quite well, perfectly, comprehensively, how true that is. You and I reach that knowledge sometimes by labyrinthine ways, tortuous paths of experience. Very often it is late in the day when we awake to it, but He knows before ever we start that that is His precedent, His basis, and that all (without the exception of one iota) depends upon the Holy Spirit, and upon Him as within.

Having said that we want to recognise how it applies in the specific direction of the nature and the life of the believer.

There was a day upon which a man came to the Lord Jesus, and in deep honour and respect worshipping Him said, "Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" (Mark 10:17), to which the Lord Jesus instantly, as in a flash, returned: "Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone" (NASB). Whether that question was to test the man's discernment, as to whether he recognised Who the Lord Jesus was, may for the moment be set aside, as it does not touch our consideration, but the statement of the Lord Jesus goes right to the heart of things. "There is no one

good except God alone"! Now, you can extend that as much as you like. Those are words right from the lips of Christ. Paul did not say that. Peter did not say that. They agreed with it and taught it. But in the first instance as a direct, concise, burning, searching statement it came right from the lips of none other than Jesus Christ Himself. With all His knowledge of past history. His knowledge of Abraham, and Moses, and David, the patriarchs and the prophets, all His knowledge of the men who were in Jerusalem in the day in which He lived: yes, and can we not say with His knowledge of the future of the race, He made His statement: — "There is no one good except God alone." That clearly says that goodness is bound up inseparably with God, that goodness is in God only, and goodness is therefore inseparable from God.

Of course, that does not tally with a great deal that is taught. I am not concerned at the moment with what is taught outside of the Word of God. If we are going to entertain the other side of things, namely what is believed and taught among men as to the innate goodness of human nature, then we have to draw our conclusions from the Word of God. Sooner or later we shall be forced to take sides, when the Word of God has either to be accepted or rejected; for the Word of God undoubtedly teaches that goodness is in God alone, and goodness is inseparable from God. The only way of getting round that statement and its implications is by means of another false doctrine that we are all gods potentially. But we reject all that kind of thing and believe the Word of God.

If then this is true, that God only has goodness, and that goodness is not apart from God, the utter, absolute, indispensable necessity, for any goodness is that God should be in us; not that we should be gods, not that we should partake of deity, not that we should have innate divinity, but that the New Testament, or the Biblical sense, in the teaching of the Word of God should be known as coming at a definite point in the history of a believer, to take up His residence within by the Holy Spirit, and that point as marking new birth from above. All goodness is bound up with that crisis, with that act, with that fact of an advent of the Spirit to the indi-

vidual here. And even then we in ourselves do not become good: all the goodness is still inseparable from God, and is His goodness. For goodness of any kind whatever in these lives of ours, we are continually dependent upon God the Holy Spirit. He is the goodness of God in the sense of divine nature, and that goodness of God is only expressed in us as we live in the Spirit, walk by the Spirit, and not after the flesh.

That is the positive statement by way of causing us to face the necessity and the position in which we are, and we shall be forced to that conclusion sooner or later if we are going to walk with God. It does not matter whether we have been believers for fifty, sixty, seventy or more years, we shall be brought positively to this position, that every bit of goodness depends upon the Spirit of God in us, and that we are capable, even at the end, of failing in goodness if we fail to continue walking in the Spirit. We cannot take this for granted. We have to continue in the Spirit.

Blessed be God, there is the other way of contemplating this. We have to enforce the fact, but it is good to contemplate the prospect. The Lord, we have said, has taken full account of this from the beginning. He knows that there is none good save God. He knows that there is no goodness in man. He knows that man's idea about goodness in himself is all an illusion, and that He has only to put man into given circumstances, under sufficient trial and pressure, to discover to man himself that there is not the goodness in him that he thought there was. He knows quite well that apart from Himself there is no goodness. Having ranged that whole realm and summed up that whole comprehensive fact, He has provided that goodness to be an inward thing in the Person of the Holy Spirit, and has made it possible for man, in whom there is no goodness, to be good with the goodness of God. When you come to contemplate the real goodness of a saint, there is something about it which so far transcends the highest goodness of the humanitarians. It is a spiritual goodness, which is not just natural generosity. It is something which has come out of fires in which all such natural elements and features have been proved inadequate, in which the life has

come to know that it cannot stand up to the demands apart from something of God coming in to be the backbone, the very substance of that life.

Nothing harmonises with God but God Himself. Nothing ever comes back to God but that which comes out from God. Nothing can have fellowship with God but God's own nature. That is why He has given us His Spirit, to make fellowship right at the centre of our being possible, because there is that there which is Himself. Do you think that God can have fellowship with us? No! Never! Fellowship with God is only in Christ. That is only another way of saying the Spirit of Christ is known of us only as we live in the Spirit. The Spirit of Christ in us is the Spirit of fellowship with the Father, and as we are under the Spirit's government, guidance and influence then fellowship with the Father is possible, but never otherwise. There is no harmony, only the harmony of what is essentially alike. If you get two unlike things in this universe you do not have harmony, you cannot have oneness. Oneness, harmony, demands sameness, and that is why God has put His Spirit in the believer. The Spirit is the Spirit of unity. Our unity among ourselves as the Lord's people depends entirely upon the mastery of the Holy Spirit of every one of us. Our fellowship with God demands absolute government by the Holy Spirit. God finds in His Spirit in us Himself, and when we come completely, without a strained element, a discordant note, a foreign factor, into line with the Spirit of God and are mastered, governed by the Spirit, then fellowship, oneness, obtains, but only in so far as that is so.

This is something more than religion. Religion may be very self-ish, very proud, very cruel, very schismatic and divisive, in a word very un-Godlike. This is something more than religion. Religion may *seem* to produce a semblance of Godlikeness, but not far from the surface there are all manner of things which are not in the divine nature. They only need to be crossed, provoked, opposed, challenged, and you find that beautiful religious surface disturbed, and you encounter things which are not of God, not of the Spirit of God. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is something more than religion.



You and I can love God only with God's love. We love Him because He first loved us. That is simply saying, because His love has come into our hearts, because His love reached us and did something, we love Him. We sing:

*"I love Thee, Lord: yet 'tis no love of mine  
That goeth forth to that great heart of Thine:  
'Tis Thine own love ...".<sup>1</sup>*

We cannot love God in the true way with our natural love, but only by His love in our hearts. Have you discovered that? Have you not been put to the test on that? When you have professed that you love Him, declared your love for Him, and have then been put to the test you have found that that love could not take the strain. The love that is going right through, through all the test and all the strain, will only be His love, not ours. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of divine love placed within us to make possible that which no human love could accomplish, even towards God.

If that is true Godward, how true it must be manward. You may think that you could love some people in the Lord, but if you love them with other than the Lord's own love, the time will come sooner or later when you will discover that you cannot go on with them. Our love for one another in the long run depends entirely upon the love of God in our hearts shed abroad by the Holy Spirit. "For this reason I bow my knees to the Father ... that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might *through His Spirit* in the inner man ... that you, being rooted and grounded in love ..." (Eph. 3:14-17). What a terrific business this love business is among the saints. Strengthened with *power* to be rooted and grounded in love! God knows what He is talking about. He knows the forces in us with which He has to do. But here is the prayer that we may be strengthened with might *by His Spirit* within. It is the Spirit *within* Who produces the love which alone can keep the Body of Christ together and build it up. It is built up in love.

<sup>1</sup> James Mountain, Hymnary 232.

It is held together in love, not truth. Truth, held in carnal wisdom, has divided more saints than perhaps anything else. If you are going to make truth the basis of your union or your oneness it will not last long. We do not, of course, mean that truth at any time is ignored or set aside, but refer to that carnal approach to, and use of it by such as hold it more in the heads than in the heart. Love in the Holy Spirit, not feigned love, professed love, assumed love, not a nice loving manner on the outside, not mere sentimentality, but that inwrought love of the Holy Spirit, is the only thing that will go through. Think of all the forces that have to be encountered by the Lord's people in the realm of fellowship and think of the only thing (the one thing) that can meet those forces and defeat them. That is the love of the Holy Spirit within.

If that is true Godward and among the saints, how much more so toward the ungodly, the world. Romance soon fades away, when you really get into actual touch with this world as it is. It is easy to talk about loving the heathen. Well, go to do so and try without the love of God in your heart, and see how you get on! We talk about loving men to God. Ah, yes! but that requires something more than you or I are capable of by nature.

This is not rhetoric, this is not teaching, these are hard facts. We are brought up against this again and again as we go on, and we never get so far advanced in our spiritual life as to be beyond this test. We come to a place where we meet the hatred and malice of others, produced by the devil in the hearts of ungodly men, and then we are in the supreme test as to whether we have in us the Holy Spirit as the nature of God, or whether our own old nature is still uppermost.

We want to keep the positive note struck again and again through all our meditation. While there is the dark side of failure, and while there is that aspect of utter need, the impossibility of anything apart from this, yet here the promise is: "... shall be in you a well of water ... springing up". We shall have to seek the Lord more fervently about this matter of the Holy Spirit springing up in us in the love of God. It must be. Are you registering a vow that it shall

be? My heart has been registering this in these past days, that my quest will be for the well springing up as never before, or in other words, for a fulness of the Spirit such as we have never known. Do in your heart settle that you are going to make this a very, very much more serious matter between yourself and the Lord than it has ever been before.

So we see the necessity of the *continual* working of the divine nature in us. That is what the Lord meant when He said: "Abide in Me ...!" "Abide in Me ...!" "Abide in Me ...!" It is a continual work of the Spirit. It is not something done once and for all; it is a continual expression of the divine nature. There is all the difference between a mechanical contrivance and a living organism. On my car I have a one spot oiler for 200 miles. I simply have to put my foot on a pedal, and a shot of oil goes right through the whole chassis. That is done every 200 miles. That is one thing. But a vine and branches is quite another thing. The vine does not shoot its life through the branches once every 200 miles, once a week: it keeps the stream flowing. I believe that is what is meant by the vision of Ezekiel of trees on the bank bearing fruit every month. It means that divine life is not a life that is supplied once a year, nor that is measured out in quantities for longer or shorter periods, but as the life of a vine to its branches, the divine life flows to its members in a perpetuated and continuous supply. And we must not be spasmodic in our expression of the divine nature; just to show love when we feel so nice and good. We have to seek to be able to show that love of the Spirit at all times. That is what is made possible. You say, You are presenting a counsel of perfection! The standard is far too high! Yes, it is quite true that it is so. But are you going to allow that to fill you with despair? One glance at oneself would mean final despair. If I accepted myself as the criterion today I would get out of it all. That is my knowledge of myself before God. But I am not going to hopelessly allow that to rule over me. By God's grace, with *all* the overwhelming mass of what I am that I would not be, what I am not that I would be, I stand on God's ground, that the Holy Spirit is in me, and He can yet do something. Stand on that ground. He

can turn despair into hope, failure into His glorious success. There is still yet a little while in which to grow in this grace, and by God's help we go on. The divine nature is with the Holy Spirit in us. He may be doing deeper things than we know, and perhaps a part of the necessity is that we should know how much it is necessary for that work to be done, that we should be conscious of our own hopelessness.

As the Spirit was the divine agent in the first creation, when He brooded over the chaos, and out of chaos produced a cosmos, so the Spirit is the agent in the new creation in Christ Jesus, and He can produce what is of God in a realm which is utterly unlike God. Contemplate things as they were at the first creation. They were anything but Godlike. Darkness is not Godlike. Darkness was over the face of the deep. With God there is no darkness; in Him there is no darkness at all, so that that whole state is contrary to God, and much more than that. Out of all that was so contrary to God the Spirit of God brought an ordered universe, upon which God could look and say: it is very good! That Creator Spirit is the Spirit of the new creation. We have put off the old man and have put on the new man which is created after the image of *Him*. What is the heart of the new creation? It is God Himself by the Spirit, with all His virtues and excellencies, seated at the centre of a believer's life, to conform that believer to His own likeness. Shall not our hearts cry:

*"Finish, then, Thy new creation!  
Pure and spotless let us be."*<sup>2</sup>

Take this as an appeal that we shall seek as never before to have our lives *inwardly* governed by the Holy Spirit, really and truly the expression of the well within. If you ask me what is the doctrine of sanctification by the Holy Spirit, I say that is it. It might be put in other words. There might be a systematising of the doctrine of sanctification, but I say, when everything has been said about sanctification by the Holy Spirit, it can be brought to this: it is the Spirit

<sup>2</sup> From *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling*, Charles Wesley.

of the Lord having *absolute* dominion at the centre of the life. You cannot get outside of that, and that is it. That removes condemnation: "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus ... For the law of the *Spirit of life* in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death." (Rom. 8:1-2). It is the Spirit of life in Christ.

## THE HOLY SPIRIT IN RELATION TO THE MIND OF THE BELIEVER

*Reading: John 16:12-13,25; 1 Cor. 2:6-16; Gal. 1:15-16; 1 John 2:20; Rev. 3:17-18.*

All these passages bear upon this particular phase of the Holy Spirit's work in the believer. They present the truth in a twofold way. On the one hand their positive declaration is that *the knowledge of eternal, heavenly, spiritual things, the things of God, is an utter impossibility apart from the Holy Spirit*. That is a very positive statement of the Word of God. On the other hand, they are equally emphatic in stating that *the Holy Spirit indwelling will reveal to the believer these divine things*. In fact, that is what He is there for. His presence within is set over against the total incapacity of man to know divine things of himself, even by his best equipment.

That brings us in this realm to the same conclusion as we were brought to in the moral realm. Then we saw that goodness is alone in God, and that goodness is bound up inseparably with God; hence only as God the Holy Spirit resides and operates *within* a life is it possible for goodness according to God to be found in that life. In the realm of the mind the conclusion is the same. Knowledge of a spiritual kind, of an eternal kind, of a heavenly kind, is with God, and is bound inseparably with God. He is the fountain of knowledge, He is the river of knowledge, He is the sum total of spiritual knowledge. All true knowledge is spiritual knowledge. The spiritual lies behind everything else, and if you divorce anything else from the spiritual which lies behind it you find yourself, sooner or later, in

an impasse, at a deadlock. That is why all the wisest of this world, and of these ages have never got through, never answered the ultimate questions of the universe and solved the ultimate problems, because the explanation is a spiritual one. This whole universe is existent upon a spiritual basis, that is, God's eternal, heavenly, spiritual thought is behind it, and its explanation is with God. No man's life or existence is capable of explanation apart from God. It is a very true statement that "in Him we live and move and have our being (exist)" (Acts 17:28). That is more true than the majority realise.

Behind everything there lies the divine thought, the divine mind, that which is eternal, heavenly and spiritual. It is wrapped up with God, and never can be had apart from God. But wonderful as it may seem, it is God's desire that you and I should share His thoughts, know His mind, be in fellowship with those great eternal, heavenly and spiritual realities behind everything else. Not that we should have them in ourselves, but we should have them in spiritual union with Himself. Because that is His desire, and because that is impossible to man by nature apart from God, the Holy Spirit — Who knows the mind of God, the thoughts of God, all those background spiritual realities which are bound up with God — has been given to the believer. The believer by the indwelling Spirit can be initiated into those ultimate thoughts and intentions of the divine mind. That is revelation by the Spirit.

We come back to dwell a little longer upon the negative side, the inability of man by nature, the incapacity in the realm of the things of God. This is universal. This touches every point of which we can conceive, even in the matter of redemption. The whole truth of redemption is a mystery until revealed by the Holy Spirit. It may be a story; we may speak of the story of redemption, and we may know the story of redemption, and we may tell the story of redemption. But until the Holy Spirit has done that by which the mystery of redemption is a disclosed thing in the heart, the story of redemption is no different from any other story; that is, it is something learned, something heard, and something recited. But

it is without power and eternal value until the Holy Spirit comes in on it and acts within the heart of the believer in relation to it. Redemption is not just a story. Redemption is a living reality within the heart. But that can only be true for an individual on the ground of a definite, positive, concrete act of the Holy Spirit. It is at that point that Christendom has so largely gone astray, having made Christianity, even in its great redemptive story, a system of truth, a creed, something objectively presented to the reason, to the mind of man. Grace has its mysteries. The mysteries of grace can only be disclosed by direct action of the Holy Spirit. We may know all about grace and remain strangers to grace.

Why was it that the apostles, who were in possession of all the *facts* of Christianity, were never allowed, never released, to go out into the world with those facts until the Holy Spirit had come and verified, fulfilled and witnessed to those facts in an inward way? There would have been the verification of their eyes and their ears. They could have said, We have seen Him! We saw Him as He walked up and down our land! We saw Him in every kind of situation! We marked His manner! Our eyes beheld, we witnessed, we saw Him in the judgement hall! We saw Him crucified! Yes, and more, we saw Him after His resurrection, and we saw Him go up! And our ears have evidence; we heard Him! We heard what He said, we heard how He said it, our hands handled Him, we have the evidence of our senses! God said, It is not enough. In this realm the evidence of the senses will not carry you through. Something more than that is needed. After all, that is all objective. You need something more than that. The day would come when, under extreme pressure and trial, when you saw the devil with his counterfeit evidence, you would say, Was it all true? Was it not an illusion? Were our senses playing us false? Was that resurrection, after all, a real thing, or did we imagine these things because of some high-tension state of our psychic beings at the time! Oh, no, senses will not go through in this realm. You have to meet counterfeits. The devil can give you presentations. The Lord held them back, and forbade them to go out with the merely historic evidence, so called, the sentient evidence.



He demanded that before they went out with the gospel into the world the Holy Spirit should verify *in* them, witness to everything *in* them, and make it all by His indwelling an inward reality, an inward power. When that happened they could meet anything and go through.

It is a spiritual kind of knowledge which is indispensable. Christianity is founded upon that fact. Even Paul, to whom there appeared the Lord in the blaze of glory on his way to Damascus, will not rest upon that alone, but will remind us that it pleased God to reveal His Son *in* him. Paul is not to be accounted for solely upon the ground that he saw a vision at noonday on the Damascus Road. The inward counterpart of that is the deeper explanation: "It pleased God ... to reveal His Son *in* me" (Gal. 1:15-16). That kind of knowledge, inward, greater than every other kind of knowledge, and without which Christianity is not verified, is bound up with the Holy Spirit as an inward reality.

If it is true that apostles, and everyone else following in their train, have their commission alone upon an inward verification and revelation of Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit, it is equally true that no man can believe apart from that. It is not with man to say, Well, I will believe! I will believe tomorrow! Sometime I will believe! That is not in man's power at all. God help our belief if we are left to ourselves! You and I can only believe by the enabling work of the Holy Spirit. Therein lies the *awful* peril of putting off a touch, a movement of the Spirit, an hour of the Spirit, and not coming into line. It is never within man's power to say when he will believe. It may be possible now to believe in the Lord Jesus, but never be possible again. That is with the Spirit of God. That faith is based upon the Spirit presenting Christ in a spiritual way, in an inward way. Man by nature is in darkness. The Word of God makes that perfectly clear, with constant emphasis. "The god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelieving" (2 Cor. 4:4, NASB). Just as the Creator Spirit brought beauty and order and harmony out of chaos in the beginning, so He brought light out of darkness. The same Spirit of the new creation is the Spirit of light for the darkened

heart. The Lord has given His Spirit for our natural darkness and blindness, to be illumination and knowledge unto salvation and unto everything else related to God.

Reason in the natural mind over the things of God leads to death. There is no way through into life by means of natural reason. There are mountains of evidence as to that. You could today contemplate a long history of the chaos and disintegration resultant from human reason in spiritual things. Ninety-nine per cent of all the divisions among Christian people today on doctrinal grounds is due to human reason, natural reason, coming into the realm of the things of God. If we sit down with the things of God, to discuss them in the cold light of human reason, we may at any time be split into as many fragments as we are people, and there is no safeguard against it. Then there may grow up as many sects as fragments. That is history. We have already said that if you make truth as such the basis of your oneness, your oneness will be smashed to pieces in due course. Truth as such is not the ground of oneness. The Holy Spirit as the Spirit of light and love is the ground of oneness. Love makes for forbearance where the measure of truth differs and differs to that degree that some cannot see a vital point, yet love will postpone division upon it. But force the issue of seeing all alike, to the same degree at one time, and you smash things to pieces. Look on the wreckage of Christendom today, resultant in the main from natural reason being brought to bear upon divine things.

I think the Lord Jesus made a most striking and tremendous statement when He said: "... the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life" (2 Cor. 3:6). What letter? Is He speaking of letters outside of the Scriptures? Yet all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, they are divinely inspired through and through, they are inspired of God. *They kill!* That is terrific. The letter of the Scriptures, the inspired Scriptures, can kill as the letter. What does He mean by that? He means that the Spirit, Who inspired the Scriptures, must inspire the heart to understand them, in order that there might be life. The two things are necessary. An inspired reader, as well as an inspired Word. It is not enough to take up your position upon the Bible and

say that it is the inspired Word of God from cover to cover. That will not result in life, necessarily. There are plenty of people who believe that, and who are killing themselves with their belief in it! Something more is needed. That Spirit Who has breathed into the Word has to breathe into us, so that that which is of Himself *in it* is taken hold of by Himself *in us* and made living in us. Otherwise, inspired as it may be, it may kill.

These are great things that we are saying, but they are all true, and they are all clustering around this central reality — the absolute necessity for the indwelling Spirit, in order that we may have the most fragmentary living knowledge of God and of His things. There is no knowledge of God except only that knowledge which is in God and which God gives to us by His Spirit. It is bound up, locked up, with God. There is a time and a place when human reason has to be dumb, when it has to allow worldly men to think that that they have won; when we have to proceed, even against our natural wisdom, in the direction of God's justification, to follow a spiritual leading in which natural reason has no place but may be against it. The wisdom of this world calls it foolishness, and in the end the wisdom of this world is proved to be the foolish thing. There is a time and a place in which we have to say to our own natural wisdom, Be silent! To follow that line would be to do what? Meet the world on its own level, with its own means, and where do you get to as spiritual people when you do that? You may score, you may just come out on top, but what have you gained? You have worldly gain, and perhaps spiritual loss in the course of things. At best you are left on the level of nature. There is a wisdom from above which is not understood by the wise of this world, it is the wisdom of the Spirit. It is inspired wisdom. It is so difficult to follow. What a business it is to hush that fleshly wisdom. It will have the last word. It hates to feel that it is beaten, that it has had to give way; when you have got such a splendid answer, such an excellent retort, such a fine argument; when you can quench the thing and it is done, and instead you have to hold back and say, Well, supposing I do win, what then? I may have beaten men, but have I gained spiritually?

Is that the highest wisdom? Is it the greatest thing to be conqueror, or is there not a greater to be more than conqueror?

There was a time in the history of this world when that issue was trembling in the balances after the Boer War in Africa. The Boers had been crushed, and then the question arose, Should this country impose the iron rule, put down the heel and keep South Africa, all the great Boer constituency, under that heel? Had we done so we should have been conqueror. But this country adopted another course. It put the Boers in charge of their own government. The result? South Africa came with its heart right over to this country, and there was no break, but rather a glad serving. That is only an illustration. There is such a thing as meeting men on their own level and beating them. There is such a thing as winning outright in another realm altogether, a spiritual realm, where the gain is far greater. This is spiritual wisdom.

Let us remember that the Fall was, in the first place, due to a bid for knowledge out of dependence upon God. Satan said: "... you will be like God, knowing ...". That knowledge involved a violation of God's rule, a setting aside of God in His place, acting in independence of God and in disobedience. The bid was made for knowledge out of dependence upon God, and look at the result. What knowledge has been sacrificed! That whole universe of spiritual knowledge was lost. It was not gained; it was lost. It is only as you and I come back into that utter dependence upon God that we can know Him and His things, and that, in other words, is a life of daily dependence upon the Holy Spirit for every bit of spiritual knowledge; daily, and in reality, dependence upon the Holy Spirit.

Just as in the beginning the whole of the race fell by reason of that bid for knowledge out of fellowship with God, so the church too, early in the church era, fell through exactly the same thing. It fell from its high spiritual place because it took to trusting in men for its wisdom in the things of God and departed from the absolute and undivided illumination and direction and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. You are not outside of the New Testament when you reach that point. Read again Revelation 3:17: "Because you say, 'I am

rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' — and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked — I counsel you to buy from Me ... eye salve, that you may see." Blind in an Apostolic age! Needing eye salve in *an Apostolic age*! A terrible thing! Why? The Holy Spirit has been abandoned, the Holy Spirit, concerning whose anointing of the same writer wrote: "... you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things" (1 John 2:20). The ground of the anointing has been abandoned, resulting in "you ... are blind"! What is the eye salve if it is not the blessed work of the Holy Spirit in anointing blinded eyes?

What was true with the race in the beginning, and true with the church, has been the unhappy history all along, and explains the state of things today. All this surely will drive us back to the basic position. It is said not by way of information, teaching; it is all one tremendous emphasis, and so much more could be added to it if it were necessary, in order that you and I should come back to this position of God's Word. You and I cannot know anything of God in a living way without the indwelling Holy Spirit, *but* there is the other side: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him" (1 Cor.2:9). That does not mean the future heaven. That is an old statement, but then the apostle adds his own bit to that statement and says: That is how it is in nature, "But ..." — this is how it is in grace. That is how it is for fallen man, but this is how it is for redeemed man. That is how it is for man separated from God, but this is how it is for man indwelt by the Holy Spirit. — "But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit." All the knowledge which the Holy Spirit has, which it is necessary for you and me to have in order to come into the fulness of God's purpose is within us already when we have received the Spirit. What tremendous possibilities that sets up! Thank God for that reality! It is one of the most treasured possessions that any man or woman could have. It is a working reality. It makes everything possible.

We know how much ministry is the result of the Spirit within, because we know how utterly it is not of ourselves. It is a working

reality. What is true for ministry is true in every realm where spiritual knowledge and spiritual understanding is necessary.

The point is that faith must make the link. "Lord, I know I am without knowledge, without understanding" — but He that is perfect in knowledge is with You! Oh, hang that word upon your wall: "One who is perfect in knowledge is with you" (Job 36:4). He knows exactly what He is going to give and what He is going to do, and that faith should keep there, at rest, in peace, confronted with the greatest demands and obligations and responsibilities, yet still assured He knows. But He is within, and He will make known as is necessary. Believe mightily in the Holy Spirit. Believe mightily in the indwelling Holy Spirit. This is your equipment. We may be ignorant, uninstructed, but the Spirit, perfect in knowledge, is within! Faith must be active. Faith demands a getting up and a stepping out on the Lord and His perfect knowledge, and then it becomes active. Paul said: "For this purpose also *I labor*, striving according to *His power* [working], which mightily works within me"! (Col. 1:29 NASB). Get the sense of that: "*I labor* ... striving according to *His power* [working], which mightily works within me"! Paul was saying that the Lord in His energy is there within, and that he committed himself on the ground of that. I labour on the basis of His labouring! If Paul had stopped labouring in faith in the energy of God nothing would have happened. It means that faith has to commit us to those divine energies, and we have to step out on them, and then we see what the Lord does. It is wonderful what the Lord does when faith steps out on Him *at His command*. That is not presumption.

May the Lord bring home the main message. It is, a well *within*; "... From his innermost being will flow rivers ..." (John 7:38, NASB); "... according to the power that works in us" (Eph. 3:20). This unto Christ-likeness, and this unto divine knowledge.

## **THE NECESSITY FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT**

*Reading: John 4:14, 7:38-39; Rom. 8:2, 11; 1 Cor. 15:45; 2 Cor. 3:6.*

We are related at this time as a fragment to the whole purpose of God in the gift of the Holy Spirit. That purpose, that thought, is the absolute necessity as known by God for the Holy Spirit being with us and in us. The Lord knows how utterly necessary the Holy Spirit is, how completely indispensable. He has ranged the whole need, and out of His perfect knowledge He has sent the Spirit and made known to man the necessity for the Spirit.

The Lord does not do things without an adequate purpose. The coming of the Holy Spirit as sent by the Father is not something incidental, is not just a fragmentary thing, is not a part of a scheme. It is the whole thing. It gathers up all the hope of God. God's hope in any realm, in any direction, for anything, rests upon the presence of the Holy Spirit here in this world and in the hearts of His own. There is no hope apart from the Holy Spirit for God or man.

He has come to meet the deepest need of man's being as known by God. Apart from the Holy Spirit man's being will have no justification. It will be utterly impossible for man to realise the object of his being. The existence of this world has no eternal meaning only in so far as the Holy Spirit gets His way, fulfils the purpose of His coming. Hopeless despair, utter vanity, and meaninglessness pervade this universe apart from the active operation of the Spirit of God.

We have been seeing how true that is along one or two specific

lines. Firstly, as to that kind, that type that order of spiritual and moral beings, indwelt, actuated by the divine nature, which alone can inhabit the world to come, which alone can stand eternally before God, which alone can pass through those coming fires which will consume all that is un-Godlike. For such a man, such a woman, such a kind; all the goodness, all the virtue, all the excellency, all the Godlikeness — in a word all the holiness, is bound up with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit has come to make men and women like God in order that they may go through the judgement fires which will destroy all un-Godlikeness. That is a necessity for the Holy Spirit. He is the nature of God to dwell within us, to actuate, to change all the ugliness of our own fallen nature into the beauty of the Lord.

In the same way there is the need of knowing the Lord, knowing the things of the Lord, knowing heavenly things, divine things, spiritual things, the secrets of the Lord, the things which are hidden even from the wise and prudent of this world. Such knowledge is essential, such intelligence is indispensable, but the first remotest fragment of it depends entirely upon the Holy Spirit. That need, and all that it means of an intelligent and understanding fellowship with God, growing, increasing, enlarging, until we come to the full knowledge of Him, has been taken account of to the full by God and met in the gift of the Holy Spirit, so that all spiritual knowledge depends upon the inward working of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, to take of the things which are Christ's and show them. It is all God meeting a need.

### **The consciousness of the need of life**

We now go on to see one further way in which the Holy Spirit meets the God-known need, the need of which most of us have been made aware, and are becoming more and more deeply aware. Oh, blessed be God, that the awakening to the consciousness of the need is only God's way of leading us to see what His supply is, and as the need grows deeper in our consciousness and our own



helplessness and hopelessness as in ourselves becomes intolerable, it is just the Lord's way of leading us to the Spirit, into a greater fullness of the Spirit. Then if we are groaning under the sense of spiritual need, let us remind ourselves that those groanings may be but the travail pains of a new fullness of the Spirit. If only we recognise what God has given us, and what He intends our sense of need to lead unto!

So for a little while we seek to see God in His recognition of our need, and in His supply for it, touching us at the point where our consciousness is the consciousness of the need of life.

### **The Spirit of life**

The significance of the Holy Spirit in the realm of spiritual death is a power and a testimony of life. The passages quoted above bear upon that one great truth: "... springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14): "... rivers of *living water*" (John 7:38): "... the law of the Spirit of *life* ..." (Rom 8:2); "... the last Adam ... a *life-giving spirit*" (1 Cor 15:45); "... the Spirit gives life" (2 Cor. 3:6). Those are the statements. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of life because God has taken account, and full account, of the reign of death.

### **The Spirit of death**

Let us think then of that over against which the Holy Spirit stands as the Spirit of life, as the life-giver — death. There are a few things that we might say about death, not by any means exhausting all the meaning and working of death, but there are a few things which are quite patent as the effect of death, or as related to death.

First of all, we must remind ourselves that *death is an active spiritual force in this universe*. Death is not just something which is related to or located with our passing from this present world and, as we call it, from this life. That hardly needs to be said, but so often when you speak of death, immediately people's thoughts fly to a funeral, as though that were death in its sum total. No! Death

is something more than that. If we did but know it, that is a very minute fragment of the meaning and working of death. Death is a mighty, active force and energy in the universe.

Look again at some of the ways in which the Scriptures speak of death. "Death reigned ..." (Rom. 5:14). That puts death upon a throne. That makes death a monarch. That puts death over a kingdom. No mere mock kingdom, and no mere mock king. "Death reigned." See all those statements as to the work which the Lord Jesus did in His death. He swallowed up death in victory! But what an immense victory! What an intense victory! What a struggle! What a conflict! How deep and terrible was that death grapple in the darkness before death was swallowed up! Death is represented as something which had to be dethroned and destroyed, something which had gained a mastery, a dominion in God's universe, and the deposing of which cost the exercise of God's infinite, almighty, exceeding great power. The Holy Spirit does not use words lightly, and when he speaks about the "exceeding greatness of His power ... which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead" (Eph. 1:19,20), it is only another way of saying that the surpassing greatness of the power of such a God as Almighty God is, was required to destroy that power of death, to raise His Son out of it. Death is a terrific thing, an active energy of tremendous power in this universe.

## **The nature of spiritual death**

Recognising that, we look into it more closely and see something of its nature. Death means the absence of a vital element which is essential to the situation of man, and without which man may have very much substance but lack that element which will result in his being found out again and again along the line of disappointment and dissatisfaction.

I heard once of a child who went suddenly all to pieces. Its whole constitution broke down, so that it could not stand upon its legs although it was a grown child. It had no power to support itself.

There it lay, when it ought to have been running about healthy and strong, utterly helpless. Its whole constitution collapsed, and when an enquiry was made as to the cause of this, it was discovered that the child had been given, as its main support and nourishment, milk which had been boiled and boiled and boiled, so that the very life in it had been destroyed. The child had drunk, I suppose, gallons of it, and the mistake had been to imagine that if only the child could be induced to drink so much liquid called milk it was bound to flourish. But there was an absence of that vital element, and although there was the bulk, life was not there, and collapse followed. We have learned a good deal about vitamins in recent years, and we know that it is not the bulk of food but the vital elements that matter most. We may eat a lot and get no nourishment, while we may take a very small amount of concentrated essence and get a great deal more than from a much larger measure.

Death is the absence of a vital element essential to the constitution of man if man is to answer to the divine standard. Man may have the bulk of what he would call life, pleasures, possessions, this world and its things; and yet the fact remains, whether he knows it or not, there is the absence of that vital element, which is finding him out all the time and making him know that all this is not satisfying the essential quest and hunger of his being. This thing is not carrying him through; He is never reaching a finality of satisfaction. He is all the time coming up against the fact that he must have more and more and more, and it does not matter how much more he has, he is still without satisfaction: he never reaches a complete end.

That is the principle of John 4:14, or of the whole of that chapter: "Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain [well] of water springing up into everlasting life." It does not mean that we do not want any more of Christ, but it does mean that we have found that in which there is full and final satisfaction. Death is the absence of that element, and that means breakdown sooner or later — the sooner the better if it be in terms of time.

### ***1) Arrest of progress and attainment***

Then again, death means an arrest and interruption in progress and attainment. Man goes so far. He has made that much progress in this life, in this world, in the things thereof, in attainments, achievements, and then death intervenes, and he is cut down as a flower and goes no further. There is an arrest and an interruption in progress, in attainment. He never goes through to completion, to perfection: it all falls before it is ripe. That is death.

### ***2) Separation from God***

Again, death in all this, and in much more, is betrayed, and we have the evidence in these things that death means separation from God. And this is the proof, that there is that absence of the final thing, the ultimate thing, the complete thing, that which makes the breakdown, the disintegration, impossible. What is that? It is God! It is union with God. This arrest, this interruption, this stopping short at a certain point, and there, as with the falling of the tree, it lies; that is not God's thought, that never was God's thought. That speaks of separation from God. Death is separation from God.

### ***3) In the hold of a master intelligence***

Death is in the hold of a master intelligence, a master personal intelligence, who dresses it up and puts a mask on it, and makes it look like life; and men go arm in arm with death and think that it is life, and they call it life. The world is in that deception, that delusion. The world thinks it has life, talks about "seeing life", "enjoying life", and it is but death dressed up and masked. No man outside of Christ has true life. Life is a lie, life is a falsehood, life is a deception apart from Christ. It is not life, it is death. That means that the exposure will most certainly come sooner or later, and men who have rejected Christ as the Life, and who have not received the Spirit of Life, will discover that they have been deceived: they have been terribly and awfully cheated by a lie of the devil. The exposure is coming. It comes very often in this life. Very often it comes at the end. The tragedy is that for many it comes too late. It is the grace of God if

it comes in time for recovery.

#### **4) *Seemingly favourable to the ungodly***

Spiritual death is seemingly favourable to the ungodly. That has been the problem of many saints in the time of trouble. Jeremiah and David said: "Why does the way of the wicked prosper?" (Jer. 12:1); "For I was envious of the boastful, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there are no pangs in their death" (Ps. 73:3-4). The problem of saints is the seeming favourableness of death to the ungodly. Yes, very often it does seem to be favourable to its own. Ah, but the end is not yet, the story is not yet complete. That unveiling will come.

#### **5) *A fierce enemy to the saints***

While it may be seemingly favourable for a time to the ungodly, it is a positive and fierce enemy to the saints. Death — not dying, but death — is a great active, energetic force in this universe in the hold of that master personal intelligence, and is set with all fierceness, animosity, hatred, bitterness, intensity against the saints of God, and there is no doubt about that. You and I know that in measure. We know what it is to encounter death spiritually. We are coming to know that more and more. Certainly the more we go on with the Lord, the more intense will be that drive of spiritual death against us to swallow us up. Death is intelligently and fiercely directed against the saints, as a spiritual force in this universe. Sometimes you can almost cut it, you sense it; it is so evil that you want to get out of the place where you are, the spiritual death is so awful. Some of us have known what it is actually to have to get out of a certain place as quickly as we could, because of that sense of spiritual death.

You know it in prayer times. It meets you when you purpose prayer. You know it in the world as you go to your business, You meet that thing, which is intangible, apparently impersonal, but a force to quench your spiritual life, to submerge you spiritually, to rob you of spiritual energy, spiritual vitality, to take your testimony

from you, to bring you home at the end of the day's work as wrung out spiritually. And in many other ways we know that death is set against the saints.

### **God has taken the measure of spiritual death**

That is death, but does not God know all about that, and more than that? He knew it from the beginning: "Through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men ..." (Rom. 5:12). God knew that. God knew that this whole world became baptized into death, an awful death. All men by nature are in that realm. Whether they are alive to it or not, they are there. God has completely taken the measure of spiritual death, and He knows what we are up against; He knows man's foe. He knows the foe to His purpose for man, His thought for man. His intention for man. He knows the full force of that enemy against everything that is true to Him, as to His eternal design for this universe. And He knows how impossible it is for you and for me, by reason of that very fact, the fact of that into which we are born and which is born in us as a spirit of death — how impossible it is for us ever of ourselves to attain unto His thought. And because He has valued it, and knows it all, He has sent the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of life in Christ, and the Spirit is set over against all this, and much more.

The Holy Spirit is also an active, mighty energy in the universe at work. If there is a working power in this world, there is also another, and "He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4). Thank God for that. Greater! Oh, can it be? Do I believe that? These great truths come to our hearts and minds, but we often do not believe them. We know this awful power of death, and we do not go on in a living faith that *greater than all that* is He that is in us. Still, it is the truth of God's Word, and you and I have to face up to it now. We have to go back into that world, into that realm, and meet this thing. It will press upon mind, it will press upon body, upon spirit. It will press all round. We have to take a

new attitude over this matter toward the Holy Spirit, We have to go before God and lay hold of this birthright, the Spirit of life in Christ, as a mightier energy than that energy of death in God's universe. He stands over against that natural absence of the vital element for man's constitution and becomes that very element. The simple illustration is of a water of life, *living* water; not stagnant water, but water with something in it. If you taste some water, there is not much in it. Everything of value has been boiled out of it, and it is very insipid. But there is some water that has got a sparkle in it. There is an element. The Holy Spirit is set forth in the Word of God as that kind of water that has in it, or which is in me as an element, a vitality of life, which brings into the constitution that which is essential to its maintenance, so that it does not break down.

### **The Holy Spirit stands against spiritual death in every way**

The Holy Spirit is given to us to be (if we may put it this way) the vital element for our constitution, so that there will be none of that breakdown, no disappointment. He stands over against that, and, blessed be God, He stands over against that arrest and that interruption. Listen! "Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into *everlasting* life." (John 4:14); "... whoever *lives* and believes in Me shall never die" (John 11:26). That is continuity, no interruption, no arrest. That is going right through. It is a blessed thing to know that although the work may not be complete here it will go on for the believer. We may stop short so far as this scene is concerned, it may be far short of His likeness, but when we awake from death we shall be like Him. The thing will be completed. That is not interruption. That is not arrest. "The LORD will perfect that which concerns us" (Ps. 138:8). This is what it is to go right through. It is the power of an endless life: no interruption, no break, no arrest. Why? Because by the Spirit we have been brought back into union with God, the separation has been destroyed, put away, and "He who is joined to the Lord is one

spirit with Him" (1 Cor. 6:17). That makes all the difference in every way, in every direction.

The important thing for us is this, to recognise that whereas man by nature is under the dominion of him that has the power, the hold of death, you and I have to come to the place where we are *utterly* under the dominion of the Lord the Spirit; translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of the Son of God's love, and under the complete Lordship of the Spirit of life. Life in this divine, eternal, heavenly sense, will be more or less our experience as we are under the government and dominion of the Holy Spirit. If our dominion is limited our life will be limited. If our surrender, our consecration, our abandonment to the Spirit is partial, then our life will be the same. Being filled with the Spirit simply means the Spirit having full possession. So many people think of baptism or the filling of the Spirit as becoming conscious of tremendous power which they can use and wield. They have failed to see that the one essential preparation to be filled with the Spirit means to be willing to be weak and nothing. Yes, willingness to pass out of consideration, willingness to be walked over by the world, willingness to be trodden under foot and to be made nothing. That is the way to the fulness of the Spirit; not to feel yourself so mightily powerful, having power that you can use. That is not the fulness of the Spirit. To know the fulness of the Spirit requires the domination of the Spirit and demands that we shall be subject to the Spirit. Men in this world are subject to the devil. They may not know it — most of them do not — but the fact remains. You and I have to become subject to the Spirit. Just as for them the great exposure will come sooner or later, and they will wake up with their eyes wide open to the awful delusion of death; oh, blessed be God! the day is coming when you and I, with eyes enlightened as not now, in an awakesness which we do not possess now, and know the fulness of the meaning of life in Christ. Oh, how wonderful that will be, when we enter into the fulness of that life in His presence where there is no death at all.

The Holy Spirit is set over against death in every way to meet our need. There is even a quickening of the mortal body against the



working of death to do the will of God. There is a quickening of the mind against death for the purposes of God. There is a quickening of the heart, of the will, of the spirit, by the Spirit of God for the purposes of God, against the working of death in all these realms.

These are facts, not merely truths stated, but glorious facts. The Lord is seeking to urge us into these facts, perhaps to drive us into them through our painful and terrible experiences of death. He is seeking to bring us to the place where we refuse death spiritually, where we resist death, where we say, No! that is not God's will! That is not God's way! That is not God's purpose! *Life* is God's way! In other words, the testimony to the living Lord can only be borne and maintained as we have our life in the Spirit of life, in the power of the Spirit, and He is in us as a well, welling up, as rivers flowing out.

We must ask the Lord — let us really do it — that in this realm of death, this sphere of death, the influence, the effect, the registration, the outworking of our lives by reason of the indwelling Spirit shall be that *life* is making itself felt against death everywhere, in every direction, and those who are open to life shall find life coming through us, from us, to them; and those who are in death and will to be so, shall find that there is another force with which they have to reckon, the force of life in Christ.

You see why the Lord has sent the Spirit. You see the need for the Spirit. You see the blessed provision of God over against a great need, a very real need. But, oh, this must not stay there. When the word ends, at that point the real work begins. You must prevent the world coming on until you have really made this a matter of practical meaning before the Lord. Otherwise you will be broken, the forces of death will so press that you will not be able to cope with them. The enemy is out to kill us. We need a mighty energising, renewing, accession of the Spirit of life. Let us pray for one another, for all the Lord's people. Remember that this very largely depends upon fellowship, cooperation. One of the enemy's strategies in bringing about death is to isolate members, to get them separated, detached, and then he pounces upon them and breaks them. The triumph of life is very largely a matter of fellowship. The

Lord has ordered it so. Cooperation is a law of its operation. It is the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, which is life triumphant. Shall we then let the Lord work this out in our lives.

## **HINDRANCES TO THE FULNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

*Reading: John 4:14, 7:37-39; Eph. 4:30; 1 Thess. 5:19; Gen. 26:15,18.*

From the Lord's side it is very clear in the Word that the Holy Spirit life in us, with all its outflow, up-welling, should be a spontaneous thing. On His side there are no difficulties. So far as He is concerned there is nothing more to be done to make that possible. The very fact that when the Lord Jesus reached the glory in the power of a completed, perfected, finished work, the Holy Spirit spontaneously came out from heaven, is proof that from heaven's side there was nothing remaining to be done for that release. The Lord has done all that needs to be done that it should be so. But over against that is the fact that it is not always so in our case, that the spontaneity of this up-welling and outflowing of the waters, of the rivers, is not a very general thing. We have to deplore the limitation and mourn that it is so frequent among the Lord's people. It becomes, therefore, necessary for us to look to see where the trouble is and why it is. We will spend this little time before the Lord in seeking to have our eyes opened and our hearts touched in this matter.

The well is there, the spring is there. If we have believed into Christ, if we are the Lord's, the Spirit is within, the well is within. There is no doubt about that if we are true believers. If we have passed from death unto life, if we have come into a living union with Christ, if we by faith have stepped into all the value of His work in

the cross and His resurrection, and appropriated that as sinners, and have been born again, the well is within, the Spirit is within. But we have all seen springs which are not bubbling up. We have come upon a swampy patch, seen the evidence all around of there being a spring, but it is not very attractive. There is no manifestation of a real springing up, simply a running all round to waste, no definite course being taken, no positive line being struck, no real purpose being served, but just a percolation. And when you look to see why this is, it is not because the spring is not there but because there is an interruption. There may be a big stone that lies right on top of the spring, an accumulation of things pressing upon it, and instead of it rising up and springing fresh and strong, and taking its definite course and forming the beginnings of a river which will grow, broaden and deepen, until some great world purpose is served, it is making this local disappointing state of things, serving no definite purpose.

Very often that is the state of a life, it may be that many of us will have to confess that we have been like that in this matter. It is not that the Lord is not in us, the Spirit is not within, that there is no well; it is because there are various things lying heavily on the spring; obstructions, hindrances, things which have got to be removed in order to allow that spring to well up, and to take a definite course, and to be the rivers of living water serving a purpose.

Abraham dug the wells. He was the man of faith. Faith digs the wells. The Philistines blocked them up, Isaac re-dug them. Isaac speaks of the power of a risen life in union with heaven. Therein you have a good deal that indicates the way of the open well. Carrying that over to the New Testament it means this: the Lord Jesus as the greater Isaac has, in the power of His resurrection, ascension, heavenly life, opened up anew this fountain, these wells of the Spirit for His own, which have been choked and blocked by many things which were contrary to God. Those wells are opened in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. The Spirit *is* given, but we have to enter into the exercise by which that is made a reality in our own experience. Isaac entered into a definite exercise in relation to this

matter. There were the wells, the water was there, but they were choked and blocked and filled, and he put himself to work to recover their fulness. Our greater Isaac has done that work, but we have to come into exercise with Him in this matter, to see that that which He has done for us is made good in us.

It would be quite impossible for us to summarise or catalogue all the things which might be the nature of hindrances. We might mention two or three.

### **Hindrances in the realm of the mind**

We have spoken earlier of the natural blindness and darkness of man, and of his utter inability to pierce through with his own mind to the things of the Lord, spiritual and heavenly things; and therefore the Lord has provided the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of truth, revelation and spiritual knowledge. The hindrances in this realm to the fulness will surely be of this character if we persist in putting *our own minds* in the way of the Holy Spirit. That is not only done by ungodly, unbelieving people, as we call them, but that is a real trouble with a great many of the Lord's own people. They are like Philistines, still circling round divine truth with their own minds, trying to analyse it and understand it. They are always full of questions, and if you speak to them about it their answer is usually something in this direction: Well, are we not supposed to use our reason? What have we got brains for? Does the Lord not want us to use the faculties that He has given us? You see, they have not settled once and for all this matter that God has established and declared, that the natural man *cannot*; and you find the people whose main trouble (we refer to believers, to Christian people) is their heads, always question either the things of God as written in His Word, or the ways of God in their lives. The Lord has taken them through certain crises, led them through certain experiences full of perplexity. There is no doubt about their seeming to be full of contradiction. It is all a great problem, a tangle, but they have got their heads into the tangle; they have allowed their reasons to be

entrapped in that which looks so complex, so difficult, so problematic in their own experience. You find that they are down with their minds in an analytical way upon the problem of their own experience, the problem of the ways of God with them, the problem of His strange providences, the problem of His delays, His contradictions that He seemed to have moved so definitely in one certain direction, and then, as things have turned out, it has all gone the other way. It seems that He has cut clean across His own path, and there is a contradiction seemingly in the ways of God.

There are many other aspects of the problem of our relationship to the Lord and His dealings with us, as well as the problem of truth as in His Word. Then, thrown into the vortex of an awful mental conflict over it all, life is robbed of its testimony, its definiteness; there is no positive blow being struck in any one certain direction. Life is just like that suppressed spring; it is running to waste all round, and making a quagmire, and there is no river going straight out, increasing in depth and strength and volume. That fact is patent in multitudes of lives, and most of us have been there for periods at least. It is one form of our failure to come to God's position about our ability to understand Him, and it is ever against that in all its forms of expression that faith stands. We know how difficult it is to come to this, and it is easy to say things like this at times, but we have to face facts. We have to face this fact, and it will arise again and again to be faced, that over against all this mystery, these problems, this complexity, the only way by which the Spirit will be liberated in us is an attitude and position of positive faith in God, in God's faithfulness. We shall come to the place where it will be one of two things: either we go completely out in our fog, in our morass, because we cannot see and understand, and lose everything and become miserable, and remain under a cloud; or else we shall come to this other position, basic to all else, which opens the way for God; that we deliberately, definitely and positively take our position of faith upon God's *faithfulness*. Even then we are not going to get right through. We are not at that moment going to be emancipated from all our difficulties and have all our

problems solved. The answer may not come instantly so that we see at once the explanation to everything, but the heart will come to rest; there will be that peace which becomes the blessed experience of him whose mind is stayed on *the Lord*, because he trusts in Him. That is just the opposite of the man whose mind is stayed on himself and his difficulty. "You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You." (Isa. 26:3). It does not say, Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace who gets the answer to all his questions! No, the basic thing is a faith attitude toward God's faithfulness. I cannot see, I cannot understand, it is all perplexing and bewildering, but God is faithful, He knows what He is doing! When I have been tried, I shall come forth as refined gold! In the meantime there is no light, but God ...

That removes a big stone, and I venture to say that that clears the way for a new joy, a new peace, a new rest, a new strength, and that the Lord will respond to that attitude. And whether or not He answers and gives the explanation of His ways, the heart will come to a place where the Spirit has a flow. The Spirit has been hindered by this incessant going round our problem. It checks the Spirit. The Spirit says, in effect, I cannot flow in you, I cannot get a way through you; you check Me, you arrest Me because you do not trust Me, do not believe Me; because before ever you will commit yourself wholly you must have an explanation! That is always a way of arresting the Spirit. Here we touch what we mean by the exercise of faith. There is no exercise of faith if you get your explanation full and clear. Exercise of faith means that in the mystery you set yourself in the direction of God's faithfulness. There is only one thing to fasten upon in such times, and that is the faithfulness of God. If you doubt that, everything is gone.

All that is in the realm of the mind, and what a hindrance the mind can be to the life of the Spirit, checking the well.

### **Hindrances in the realm of the heart**

There may be also a hindrance in the realm of the heart. It

may be in our heart relationship to the Lord, a reservation in our devotion, something which is interfering with our real wholehearted abandonment of ourselves to the Lord, or it may be in the direction of others. We must remember that the Holy Spirit can never have His free, full course in us and through us if we *knowingly* have a reservation in the direction of other children of God. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of fellowship, the Spirit of love, the Spirit of unity, and so often He is just held up, quenched, because there is a failure in fellowship, a failure in love for others. You say, Surely love for others is the result of the Spirit, not the paving of the way for the Spirit! Well, it is both. The Spirit would be spontaneous, and we should discover, I believe, that we could love a great deal more than ever we thought we could love, if only we would set ourselves in the direction of it. We have allowed human considerations to come in to interfere, natural elements to take hold. We have allowed our own susceptibilities to get in the way, to affect and to influence us. It may be in a habit of criticising, talking, not intentionally to the hurt of others, but with that eternal "but" which just takes away something. They are this, and that, and something else which is good, *but* ... and then upon the "but" comes a reverse of the whole thing, which spoils it, and puts them in a totally bad light. We are all ready to confess that we know something about this, that the Holy Spirit in us has more than once reacted to anything like that when we have just used that "but". We have spoken in a certain way, and before we have got very far we have felt very miserable inside for having said that; death has set in, there has been a check, we feel we have in some way to get that put right. Perhaps you think this is elementary, but it is very important for the release of the Spirit in us. We have to work at our relationships with one another.

We have to set ourselves definitely to digging out this earth in the well, to clear the way for the Spirit in this matter, and before the Lord to have this exercise; that we are not going to allow this criticising, this talking, are not going to allow these natural elements to influence us so much as they have done in the past. That whole realm of relationships has to be reviewed, and we have to give the



Lord a clear way in the matter of our hearts. It is important.

Fellowship covers a great deal of ground. Some of us have had to learn very seriously the lessons of fellowship. With many there is a *natural* independence. To such it is quite *natural* to take an individual line, and to defer to others a most difficult thing. Not that the judgement of others is undervalued or underrated, but to these it is simply the way to go on, doing your own work, looking after your own business and getting on with things. But there is a loss in this. Whether it is natural, or whether it is deliberate, the Holy Spirit is against that kind of thing. The Holy Spirit demands fellowship. In the sphere of the people of God the Holy Spirit demands the team order of things, the family spirit. The Word is full of those things which point in that direction, each one esteeming the other better than himself, no man looking upon his own things, but upon the things of another. We could quote many passages of Scripture pointing in the direction of fellowship, so that what is personal to ourselves does not become the thing which overrides others but has to be subjected to the interests of the whole. Anything that is of that isolated, detached, individualistic strain, that failure to recognise, accept and fall in with the family thought of God, fellowship, cooperation, deferring, referring, drawing in: anything which refuses the principle of the teamwork among the workers of the Lord is against the Holy Spirit, a check to Him, an arrest. And we shall find that the Holy Spirit becomes fuller, deeper, richer, more spontaneous the more we let go the individualistic and come into line with the Lord's thought of a family and a fellowship.

In the realm of the heart the Holy Spirit demands real exercise. We have to let ourselves go. We are not suggesting that this is always deliberate and conscious. We know too well what natural reserve is, and how easy it is for certain individuals just to be alone, and how they prefer it, and all their peace and satisfaction is in being left alone. Other individuals, of course, are just the opposite: if you do not give them fellowship, if they cannot have people around them, they will die. We thank God always for those people, they mean a lot to us; but the others who want to be left alone go

through things when they come into the realm where the Holy Spirit operates. The Lord is constantly hammering it in, and saying, You must let go! Loosen those tight cords; let yourself get into fellowship! It may be agony, but we must; and as we do we find there is life, there is enrichment, there is fulness, there is addition and increase of the Lord. Some of you are in the crowd, but still alone, by yourself. Get in, right in, and let go! Do not always choose the back seat because you like to be left alone and not interfered with. It will cost you something, and very often you will have the reaction in yourself, Oh, people will be thinking I am pushing to the front! Give the Holy Spirit a free course along the line of fellowship, and you will find you have a check over you if you become self-assertive. The type of person we are referring to need not fear about that. The Lord help us to get busy and dig that well.

We will say one further word, upon a more positive thing which interferes with the Holy Spirit. The question which is before us is: Do we want this of which the Lord has spoken? Do we want a well springing up unto eternal life? Do you want this, that out of your inward parts shall flow rivers of living water? If you want it, it means that you will be in earnest, and that you will give due and serious consideration to anything that might get in the way of that. Any reservation of obedience on any matter about which the Lord has spoken to you in and through His Word is a definite paralysing of the Holy Spirit in your life. You can never hope to know the well springing up, the rivers flowing out; it is never coming your way, it will never be a part of your experience, if on any point where the Lord has spoken to you as to what He would have you do, you have been disobedient. The well is choked by disobedience to the known will of God, whatever that may be.

It is choked and blocked by inconsistency in our lives. That is something which contradicts the mind of the Lord. Worldliness contradicts the Lord; taking on the fashions and modes of this world is a contradiction to the Lord. The Holy Spirit cannot go on if there is that inconsistency. A bit of flesh is a contradiction to the Spirit. Flesh and the Spirit are set over against one another. The world and

the Lord are set over against one another. If there is a bringing of these things together there is an inconsistent state, a contradictory state set up, and the Holy Spirit cannot go on with that. He says, No! that must go!

The Lord watches us as we take responsibility in this life for spiritual things. The Lord watches how we use the time at our disposal. Time is a very valuable thing. The time is very swiftly passing. Are you quite sure that without strain, without trying to make something, you are watching the trust of time? Time is a great trust, and a great responsibility. I believe the Lord watches us, in how we employ ourselves, our reading, and many other things. If we want the Holy Spirit to have a free, full, spontaneous way through us these things which are contrary to the Spirit must be adjusted, must come into the line of the Holy Spirit.

This is not going to be a narrow life. This is not going to be a loss of enrichment. This is going to be fulness, it is going to be testimony. It is going to be blessed effectiveness, it is going to mean very much to the Lord. So the word is, in all these and in many other ways, "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit", "Do not quench the Spirit." That is the direct way of saying: Do not allow any rocks, stones, rubbish, to lie like a dead weight upon the spring. Remove it. Get these things out of the way, and you will find that the Holy Spirit stream, the spring, begins to take a definite course, life becomes marked by something definite, and it deepens, it broadens, and begins to serve a worthwhile purpose, whereas it has been and might continue to be the suppressed waters of the Spirit of life percolating, making a quagmire and moving out to nothing very worthwhile. May the Lord save us from that.

This word is of a very practical character. We need to examine very practically the possibilities of things getting in the way of this welling up unto eternal life, flowing out of rivers of water. The Lord save us in all these things.

## **UNITED IN THE LIKENESS OF CHRIST'S DEATH BY THE HOLY SPIRIT**

*Reading: John 12:20-34.*

This portion of the Word of God brings us in a very real and definite way to the manner in which the Lord, the Spirit, becomes the inward life, energy and power of the believer. The question we might ask is: How does this take place? We have recognised the fact of it, and we have taken into account something of the result of it. We have said that it is a crisis. In an inclusive way we have also said that the crisis is a new birth, and that this takes place in a new birth, but even then, we have not got to the bottom of the method. To answer an enquiry with simply the statement of a fact is not always a full answer. Nicodemus asked the question, "How can a man be born when he is old?" The Lord Jesus was only able to say to Nicodemus, and is only able to say to such as Nicodemus, You must be born again; to stress the fact and leave the thing in the realm of a mystery: "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8).

And while this will always remain a mystery, because life is a mystery which has never yet been solved (there is no given solution to the mystery of life), yet the Lord does give us a little deeper insight into the way in which He makes that wonderful transition from without to within, the way in which He as the very life and energy, and everything else, of the believer passes from the objective to the subjective. In this chapter He gives us that clue. You will

notice that at this point in the Gospel by John the cross definitely comes into view. Whatever hints there may have been before, it is here that the thing is stated emphatically and presented definitely. There is no ambiguity at all about the statement of the Lord Jesus in this chapter: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself" (John 12:32 NASB). There is little doubt as to what the meaning of that is. And similar things are said here which bring His cross out of the realm of the indefinite, and the abstract, right before you as a concrete thing.

Now you will notice another thing; the intensified teaching which follows this point. It is from here that His teaching takes on a depth, an intensity, which is not found earlier, especially in a twofold connection. First of all, as to *union with Himself*. From this point union with Christ becomes a very much more definite thing than it has been. It will not be far on before He will speak about the vine and the branches, and all that is on His heart of abiding in us. Then, secondly, with that His fuller and clearer and more definite *unveiling of the Holy Spirit*.

These things are parts of a whole. They are two factors which make one complete thing, union with Christ, and the indwelling work and energy of the Holy Spirit. These things develop from the point where the cross is brought so definitely into view. Reading backward from chapters 16, 15, 14, you have your question: How can that be? Chapter 16 is especially relative to the Holy Spirit, the coming of the Comforter, and what He will do. Chapter 15 says: "I am the true vine ... I am the vine, you are the branches", "Abide in Me, and I in you ... ". Chapter 14 is again the Holy Spirit. You ask, How can the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of the departing Christ, be as Christ, as utterly Christ as Himself within the believer, with all that that means in outworking? Read backwards to chapter 12, and you have your answer in verse 24: "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain." The Lord Jesus was undoubtedly speaking of Himself, as you notice: "... if I be lifted up ...". This He said, signifying by what death He would die." He referred to Himself as the grain of wheat

falling into the ground and dying. Now the question is this: There is a grain of wheat. In that grain of wheat there is a certain vitality, a certain energy, a certain life. Here is an ear: on that ear there may be forty, fifty, sixty grains, and every one of those grains, those corns of wheat in that ear, possess the life of that one grain that went into the earth and died. How is it done? The fact is there; and if you could watch the process in the dark, in the grave, you would see that as that corn yielded itself up, allowed itself to be subject to the disintegrating forces, gave itself unto death, at a certain point there came a germinating, a quickening, an expanding; and out from what remained as the living element in that corn there commenced to grow the stem, forcing its way upward, and through that stem the life of that corn passing, until at the top of that stem this ear began to form, surely by reason of that life which has come up from the grave, from the death.

How does Christ get into the believer? How is the church formed as an ear of corn? How does every individual believer as a corn of wheat come to possess His life? The answer of the New Testament is that it grows out of death. It comes out of His death. It begins down in the grave with Him. The indwelling Holy Spirit, the well within, all that that results in as we have been seeing, and much more, is consequent upon some kind of a union with Christ somewhere in the dark, and in the death, and in the hidden places where disintegrating processes are going on. That is only another way of saying, death-union with Christ. It means that if you and I are to be possessed of this life, indwelt by this Spirit, in-energised by this divine power; if all this is to be true, a well within, rivers from within, the Spirit with all His mighty potentialities within, everything else has to go but the life of Christ, and we have to go somewhere down into the place where there is nothing but the life of Christ, where it becomes His life, and no other life. He has shown us the way in His own case. He has shown us in His own Person something of what that means.

John's Gospel is a wonderful book for teaching on the Holy Spirit. Go through this Gospel, taking out everything that has to

do with the Holy Spirit from chapter 1 onwards, and you will find there is a great deal. But if you go right back to the first reference to the Holy Spirit in this Gospel, in chapter 1 from verse 32, you will find that He has to do with the baptism of the Lord Jesus, His being baptised by John in Jordan; and on His coming up out of the water the heavens open and the Spirit is seen lighting upon Him. I want you to recognise the deep significance of His baptism. You can understand John's problem. What was John doing? He was preaching repentance, and the remission of sins. John baptised with the baptism of *repentance* unto the remission of sins, and John's preaching was preaching of a white heat about sin. "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father' ..." (Luke 3:7-8). John was no meek and mild sort of man. He came in the spirit of Elijah, the prophet of fire; and John at Jordan was dealing with sin and repentance, and baptism on that ground. "Then Jesus came ... to John ... to be baptized by him" (Matt. 3:13). John's question was, What have You to repent of? What sins need to be remitted by You? "I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?" Do you see John's problem? He had seen Jesus; he knew Who He was. The Lord had spoken to John and said: "Upon whom you see the Spirit descending ... this is He ..." (John 1:33). Here is a man who is denouncing sin, preaching repentance, and baptising for that very purpose and on that ground, and there comes to him One Who is *sinless*, with not the remotest shadow of a suggestion of sin or need of repentance, and demands to be baptised *on that ground*. Was there ever a self-humbling like that? "Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matt. 3:15). What humility! That is not mock, that is not feigned. He is taking His place in type, in figure, where He will presently have to take it literally, being made sin for us; and He is showing in type and in figure, as He enters in spirit into this thing, that that is the only way in which, by which, the Spirit can come and dominate, govern and energise a life, a life that is utterly empty of self, a life which has

dismissed every element of self. The Lord Jesus did that. It is an amazing self-humbling. And in so doing He says, in another way: Down there in that grave everything has to go that is not of God, not the Lord, it has to be yielded up to the death. And then, when you get there, you know the mighty energies of that divine life.

That is how the Lord gets into us. You and I think while that is going on that the Lord is going further and further away from us, and that the situation is becoming more and more hopeless. We are conscious of the break-up, the disintegration, the disappearing of everything; we feel ourselves becoming smaller and smaller. But the Lord says, that is the way in which He forms ears, re-creates, brings to birth that which He is as its vital energy. That is how it is done. So that to be filled with the Spirit means to be emptied of everything else. To be energised by the Spirit means to have no other energy.

Here were these people, coming from near and far to look at Him, thinking that they were going to see something wonderful, and He knew quite well that they could not see anything wonderful in Him. Those Greeks came and said: "We wish to see Jesus", but they were to be very disappointed, and in the moment when they were seeking to see something wonderful, He in a parabolical way said: Wait a while and you will see something wonderful! You will see presently, when I have passed by the way of that cross, been lifted up, as an ear of corn; you will see a harvest field as the result of this: you will see Me as you could never see Me now. The wonder of Christ is displayed in those who are living in the power of His indwelling life and energy. That is Christ glorified. In other words, Christ is glorified in Spirit-filled men and women; and Spirit-filled men and women are the result of a death union with Him, in which that which is not of Him has been broken up and scattered, and only what is of Him remains.

Now perhaps the idea of being filled with the Spirit is not so romantic after that as it had seemed before. Perhaps you had thought it was only the matter of having a waiting meeting and getting a marvellous filling of the Spirit of glory, with ecstasies and



sensations. There are no real ecstasies and pleasant sensations down there where the corn of wheat is going to pieces! Ah, but that is the war here mentioned. That is true for you and for me. We ask the question, How is the Lord coming into us? He is coming into us just in so far as we go down into *His* death, and our natural life is broken up and scattered, and He becomes the everything for our future being and activity, and all else. That is how the Lord gets into us. That is how the Lord makes the power of His Spirit manifested in a life.

What is true in the matter of our own spiritual experience, is true of all spiritual development. Every fresh increase of that which is of the Lord goes that way by fresh crises. Now here is the one grain of wheat. The first ear is seen in that company at Pentecost. If you are going to turn that ear, forty, or sixty, or even a hundred corns into as many again, or to multiply that ear in the same ratio as it stands to the original one, every one of those corns has to go down into the experience of death. Every bit of increase is by a fresh baptism into death, a fresh going into the place where anything that gathers around, encrusts or is associated, which is not utterly Christ, disappears. That is the history of the growth of the Lord's work, the growth of the church. It is a long succession of fresh baptisms into death, in which certain elements which are natural elements of men and women are dealt with and broken down, and there is an enjoyment of the Lord.

So that not only individuals have this experience, but companies have this experience, and it is a very good thing too; although it is a very painful thing, it is a very healthy thing when the Lord takes companies of His people down into death. There are certain companies today who would do well to have a fresh baptism into the death of Christ: they would know a new accession of life. Perhaps the weakness, the poverty, of a great many is that they do not know sufficiently the meaning of that union in death, that baptism into His death, that falling into the ground and dying. But where there has been a mighty testimony in this world it has always been by that means. You can look at quite a number of such and have the expla-

nation. Here you have that little company of Moravian brethren at Herrnhut, a very poor thing, and yet needing enlargement to a world testimony. There came the deluge of blood, so that they were almost wiped out, resulting in the Moravian testimony as it was in its purity at the beginning, a worldwide testimony such as has been hardly equalled in the history of the work of God. We could put our finger upon many others. We have read the story of a work of God in relation to the China Inland Mission, of Hudson Taylor's going out, and of the company, the increase of the number; of this being followed by a deluge of blood, so that it seemed that the whole thing was going to be wiped out. Hudson Taylor paces his room in sheer agony and sheds tears because of those dear children of God being massacred. But what is the result? Tenfold enlargement every time. We know something of this in our own experience. It is the way of the increase. "And I, if I be lifted up ...". That is only another way of saying, If the corn of wheat falls into the ground and dies, "I ... will draw all men to Myself." That is the ear from the corn.

That is how the Lord gets in, and that is how the increase comes, the enlargement. You see the one inclusive hindrance to the fulness of the Spirit is *all* that which is not Christ. That is what it amounts to. And when the Lord takes us into deepening experiences of personal death it is just His way of getting rid of that which is in ourselves, in order that there may be an enlargement of His life, His energy, His Spirit.

This is no new word, no new idea, but it is as true as anything we have ever heard, and while as a prospect it may not fascinate us very much or draw us, it may be an encouragement. The Holy Spirit will never come to inflate us, will never come to make us something big and important. The Holy Spirit's coming will be on the ground that we have become less than ever, united with Him in the likeness of His death.

## **THE SPIRIT OF JUDGEMENT AND THE SPIRIT OF BURNING**

*Reading: Josh. 6:17-25; Lev. 27:28; Rom. 6:1-11; Gal. 3:13-14; John 17:19; Rom. 1:4; Isa. 4:4.*

*"When the Lord has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and purged the blood of Jerusalem from her midst, by the spirit of judgement and by the spirit of burning" (Isa. 4:4).*

You may say that that is not a very pleasant aspect of things, that that sounds very terrible, and not very inviting. Viewed from one standpoint, of course, it is very terrible. It is by no means a pleasant matter to consider. But as our hearts have very fully endorsed all that has already been said to us as to the necessity of the Holy Spirit in this direction and in that, we shall come to the same position on this particular matter and acknowledge the necessity for the Holy Spirit to come as the Spirit of judgement and the Spirit of burning. It depends entirely upon where you stand in this matter, how you view it, and what the effect of it will be in your heart.

Let us bring immediately into view the great object which the Lord has ultimately in His mind. We know that the Lord is working towards a future, towards a future age, or ages of ages. He is making preparation for those coming ages. All that He has been doing and is doing is in relation thereto. In the coming ages He is going to have a state of things which can never see a repetition of a fall with all its consequences: that is, He is going to have everything so constituted as to be entirely free from any elements which can be

destroyed because of corruption. The Lord's future realm of things will be without corruption, devoid of all corruptibility, and therefore beyond the possibility of fall, ruin and judgement. That is the object which He has in view and toward which He is working.

### **The cross is central and basic to the divine intention**

The cross of the Lord Jesus is central and basic to that divine intention. It was the universal judgement of God upon sin, and all sinfulness, and all the ground of sin. In His cross the Lord Jesus gathered up sin in itself, all that in which sin worked as its ground and its media, and in His cross the judgement of God fell upon sin universally, sinfulness and all sinful nature, and all that lent itself in any way to the operation and activity of sin.

Two things happened, then, in the cross of the Lord Jesus.

Firstly, the *evil was destroyed from before the face of God*. It was destroyed from the very presence of God. It was banished entirely from God's realm of things. A new realm came into being with the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. A kingdom came, He was the first One to occupy that kingdom, and the type also of all the rest who would occupy it with Him. From that kingdom of God, that new kingdom brought in with the Lord Jesus in resurrection, evil, with all that works with it, was banished by judgement, destroyed from the presence of God. In that kingdom no evil comes; it has been judged in the cross of Christ.

Secondly, that which happened at Calvary was that *the good was brought through to God*. The evil was destroyed from before the face of the Lord, the good brought through to God. The evil was sinful man. "He was made a curse for us ...". He Who knew no sin was made sin, and in one awful moment, for sin not His own, He was banished from the presence and from before the face of God, representing a whole race of sinful humanity. That was put out in the cross of the Lord Jesus under the judgement of God's fire; and what a fiery judgement it was that the Lord Jesus endured when He took the place of sinful man and was made sin and a curse!

The good was *sinless* Man, and while He was made sin and made a curse, it did not alter the fact of what He was in Himself, it did not interfere for one moment or in the smallest degree with what He was in His own Person. He was still in Himself sinless, as Man, and as such He was brought through unto God. That is the meaning of the words in Romans 1:4: "Who was determined (or set forth) the Son of God in power ... *according to the spirit of holiness*" (RVM). That clause "the spirit of holiness" does not refer to the Holy Spirit. It refers to the essential nature of the Lord Jesus, that essentially His was a *holy* spirit, and therefore He could be raised from the dead. It was not possible that death could hold *Him*. It was not possible that death could master Him, because His was a *holy* spirit. Death only has dominion where there is unholiness, and so He was determined to be the Son of God with power "according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead; even Jesus Christ our Lord". His resurrection is on the ground of the holiness of His own nature, and because of that He can come through and survive the judgement of all the other and come back to God. That was briefly the work of the cross.

### **The Holy Spirit is always found in relation to the cross**

You will find again and again the Holy Spirit is set forth as being very clearly and intimately related to the cross. He was made a curse for us "that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" (Gal. 3:14). There is the cross and the Spirit. In Christ's own baptism, which was a figure of His cross, the Holy Spirit is immediately associated. It is always like that. We know quite well that the Holy Spirit is related to the cross. In what way? In this twofold way:

On the one hand *as the Spirit of judgement and burning*, as the Spirit to judge sin and to bring it to destruction. To come into the presence of the Holy Spirit apart from the Blood of the Lord Jesus will and must be a terrible experience. It must mean smiting and judging and burning and destroying.

That is illustrated in the Old Testament. Those who pressed

in of themselves, in their fleshly energy, to touch the fire of the altar, found that fire breaking out on them to their destruction. It is a figure of the infinite peril of failing to appropriate all the value of the precious Blood of the Lord Jesus when we come into touch with the things of the *Holy Spirit*. To bring our own unholiness into touch with that holiness without the Blood to intervene is a disastrous thing. The Holy Spirit on the one side acts as a fire to judge sin and to destroy.

But then there is the other side of the cross with which He is associated. He is also related to the cross in order that *He might produce those values of the perfect Christ within the heart of the believer*; that is, that He might bring, by His own presence, the indestructible goodness of Christ into us.

You see He is working in two ways. He is working to get rid of all that which is foreign to God, and which, on the other hand, must be destroyed, which can never go through the fire and survive and come out on the other side. That is why the Holy Spirit applies the cross again and again in the experience of a true believer who is walking with Him, and going on with Him, in a breaking way, in an emptying way, in a shattering way, in a grinding to powder way. The Holy Spirit keeps very short accounts with us if we really are seeking to live a life in the Spirit, and He brings home the cross to our flesh and our fleshliness, and He *cannot* have it. It *cannot pass* with Him. We may rest assured; we need not worry about crucifying ourselves. All that we have to do is to seek to be Spirit-governed, Spirit-led, Holy Spirit energized, and the rest will follow. It will follow as surely as day follows night, that the Holy Spirit will operate on the ground of that side of the cross which smites our old man. He tells us all the time that our old man was crucified and that we must recognise it. The body of sin was destroyed. The Holy Spirit demands a recognition of it at every point, and a life in the Spirit is a life in which the flesh has no liberty at all.

That is familiar to us, but that is only one side. The other side is that the Holy Spirit has come to produce all that which is the nature and character of that new, eternal kingdom of which Christ

is the Standard, the great Head, Representative and Spring, indestructible and incorruptible, which shall survive and go on eternally without any interruptions of judgement. He has come to produce that. And again, we can rest assured that just as a life surrendered wholly to the Lord the Spirit will find itself continuously judged by the cross, met by that working of judgement against the flesh, so a life under the Holy Spirit's government and domination *must* grow into the likeness of Christ. It *must be* transformed into His image. It must become partaker of His divine nature. Christ *will* be formed by the Holy Spirit in one who is surrendered to Him. That is what He has come for. He is forming the order of the coming ages, and in this way He is getting rid of all that which would jeopardise the new creation, the new kingdom. The Lord is taking no risks in this new creation. That is why the Holy Spirit deals with us as He does, and that is why the Holy Spirit has come. In this new creation God has secured a guarantee against a repetition of what has happened in this creation. Blessed be God for that. It is all sealed in the blood of the eternal covenant, it is all accomplished by the mighty work of the cross of the Lord Jesus.

## **The issue**

This is going to be made true, active, experimental on one side or the other in every son of Adam sooner or later. In the cross of Christ the work which we have just mentioned was not done for a few. It was not done in relation to just a small number of men. It was done in relation to the whole race. It was done in relation to every child of Adam, and it is going to be made effective in everyone sooner or later in one way or the other.

It is going to be made effective in the whole race, but that issue of the judgement can be sooner, or later, according to our attitude toward it. I trust we have recognised and accepted our judgement, the judgement *upon ourselves*, our sin, our sinfulness, our sinful being, our sinful nature, in the cross of the Lord Jesus; that we by faith have seen, acknowledged and accepted Him as judged in our

place, and then have received the Holy Spirit to bring in an active, experimental way an end to a life in the flesh. Have we done that? The Holy Spirit says, "Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts" (Heb. 3:15, NASB). Today! What has been done in Christ in His cross for all men is going to be made active in the case of all men sooner or later. We can have it now with all the blessed value of having it unto salvation; but it will come, and if we leave it beyond the day of the Holy Spirit we shall have to meet it without any of the possibilities and prospects of having the Holy Spirit working for us; that is we shall simply have to meet that judgement in ourselves, rejected from the presence of God. Do you say: Once destroyed and you are destroyed, and it is all over? Ah, but you have failed to understand the meaning of that going out, that banishment from the presence of the Lord if you think that that is so. You have failed to enter into the awful, terrible meaning of that cry from the cross: "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matt. 27:46). That broke the heart of Christ. There is something in that going out into a darkness and a desolation which no other man has ever known to the full. That is the darkness and the desolation of God-forsakenness which must await all those who have not accepted that God-forsakenness as borne for them by His own Son, the Lord Jesus. The issue of the cross has to be met. We are bound up with it. We cannot get away from it. God in His grace has done it for us and has sent the Spirit to make it good in us. It is a question of sooner, or later. If it is sooner, then there are all the prospects and possibilities of the positive side, in which the Holy Spirit has come to constitute in us that which is of the eternal Son of God, that which is of His holiness, to bring into us in His own Person the very values and virtues of the Lord Jesus, so that we go right through the fire.

There are going to be fires yet. Every man's work shall be tested, tried, by the fire. Every man's life will be tried by the fire. Those fires have no horrors or dread for those who have seen them spent upon their Substitute. It is a great thing to know now that you can go right through judgement with no fears, no horrors, no



dreads. You can go through because there is that in you which is indestructible, incorruptible, and which can survive and stand eternally before a God of infinite holiness without any fear or misgiving as to what that eternity may hold. We may rest on eternal establishment because there is no disintegrating force in that realm.

“Devoted”! That word in Joshua 6 verse 18 (ASV) gives a great illustration of this truth. The peoples of Canaan were typical of the state of fallen man, but they were typical of that final state when the iniquity of the Amorite was full. God had waited. God had more than one purpose in keeping His people wandering in the wilderness. He was doing something in relation to them, but He was also doing something in relation to the people in the land. That something had extended over a period long before Israel came into the wilderness. For four hundred years God had His eye upon the people of that land, and His word concerning them was, that the iniquity of the Amorite was not yet full. But when Israel marched through the Jordan and compassed Jericho the iniquity of the Amorite was full; the hour had struck when sin had reached its full development, and judgement was at the door. And so, because it had come to its fulness, God said, Wholly, utterly devote! And to the fire they devoted everything. But that which could stand the fire, that over which the fire had no power, the silver, and the gold, and the brass, that was to be brought into the treasury of the Lord. What can stand the fire? What can come into the House of the Lord? What can abide in His presence? Nothing of sinful man, nothing which belongs to the iniquity of the Amorite! No, that goes to the fire, and is destroyed from before the face of the Lord.

The point is this: Do we see with a fresh emphasis the necessity for the Holy Spirit to be within? The necessity for the Holy Spirit is this: that on the one hand He should make good all the work of Calvary in getting rid of that which can come under the destructive fire of God’s judgement, and so He is the Spirit of burning and of judgement. We sing: “Refining fire, go through my heart.”<sup>3</sup> Well, it is easy to sing hymns like that. But He is the Spirit of burning. The

<sup>3</sup> From *Jesus, Thine All-Victorious Love*, Charles Wesley.

fire is necessary if we are going through, if we are going to be able to stand for ever in the presence of God Who is infinitely holy. The necessity of the Holy Spirit is to make good Calvary's work on the side of putting away all that would keep us out of God's presence, all that would bind us to a perishable and destructible creation, all that would keep us as a part of that which can and must come under the judgement fires of God to eternal loss. The Holy Spirit has come to save us from that. But more, He has come to bring into us in His own self the life and the energy of our new creation, that which goes on, which will never see judgement, never see death, never know destruction, but which comes through into the House of God to abide. This is the necessity for the Spirit.

The Lord Jesus said: "For their sakes I consecrate Myself (this is the same word, "devote") that they themselves also may be consecrated (devoted) in truth" (John 17:19, RVM). Oh, that we may be those in whom, because Christ by His Spirit dwells, there is a spirit of holiness which means survival, resurrection. The passage in Romans 1:4 brings into view Christ raised from the dead as related to others who will be raised from the dead. That word: "*determined* the Son of God with power", is a word which is elsewhere translated "ordained", or "appointed". It does not mean that in resurrection He became the Son of God, but it means that in resurrection He received an official appointment for a purpose in a certain relationship. That is, He was in resurrection appointed with power in relation to raising the dead. Because of the spirit of holiness He could be raised from the dead, and then He is appointed in relation to all those whom He will raise from the dead. But the spirit of holiness puts Him in the place of authority and power to raise all those in whom His Spirit is, to raise in that same kind of resurrection as is His. And so the Roman letter develops that very truth.

When you come to chapter 6 it is: "For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection ..." (Rom. 6:5). What is the likeness of His resurrection? It is resurrection on a basis of a life and a nature indestructible, which is His. That is the kind of resurrection

we want. We do not want just reanimation. We do not want to come back from our graves and live this life again. We want a resurrection after the likeness of His resurrection. What is that? According to the spirit of holiness, and those in whom that is — *His* spirit, *His* nature imparted — He will raise, like unto Himself. He has died unto sin once and for all, and those who are raised with Him have come into the *once and for all-ness* of death to sin and life unto God. That is the blessed work of the Holy Spirit now.

I do not know whether you follow all this or understand it. Do not worry if you do not. Allow impressions to come if you cannot retain words. The great impression is this, that the Lord Jesus has done a mighty thing in His cross to secure a kingdom and a creation which can never suffer the ravages of another fall, and the Holy Spirit has come to make that good in you and in me, and it is to be had by faith.

## **POWER BY THE HOLY SPIRIT**

*Reading: Phil. 2:13; Eph. 3:20; Col. 1:29; 2 Cor. 6:1; Eph. 3:7.*

We always relate power with the Holy Spirit. Probably more than of any other form of His presence and activity we think of the Holy Spirit in the terms and realm of power. Rightly so, although clearly not exclusively so, it is upon this matter of the Spirit as power in the believer that the Lord is leading us to meditate and to have exercise of heart.

We have seen this inclusive thing about the sending of the Spirit; that the Lord had entirely summed up the universal need of man, the need of man from every standpoint, of every kind. And having beforehand taken the sum of that need in every way, He answered to that need by sending the Spirit. So that the coming of the Spirit is set over against a many-sided state of need; need in the realm of goodness, goodness utterly absent from man (from the divine standpoint) in his fallen state. The need also of knowledge and understanding in the things of God — spiritual, heavenly, eternal things; a knowledge which is impossible to man in his natural condition. These and other forms of need have been met by God in the Gift of the Holy Spirit; the Spirit of holiness, of goodness, of the divine nature, to dwell within man; the Spirit of truth, of revelation, of knowledge, of illumination, of understanding as God's answer to man's blindness and darkness and total inability to understand the things of God. Thus the Holy Spirit answers the need, and is the provision, and He becomes that within those who believe unto receiving Him.

What is true in these various directions is true in the further direction of God's knowledge of man's utter weakness, the universal weakness of man as touching his ever being able to *do* the will of God. Whatever his desires might be, his longings, his motives, he is incapable of accomplishing the will of God. It is not in him, and the fuller the revelation of the divine mind as presented objectively to man the greater is man's consciousness of his own weakness, if he is honest with himself. Paul is the great exponent of that fact. The oracles of God were committed to Israel. That great objective presentation of the divine standard of righteousness was brought supremely to Israel, and with that presentation there came the manifestation as in no other realm of the total inability of man to *do*. Paul says: The law came, I died! Why? Because the law could not save. It could only bring to light human weakness, and thereby bring condemnation unless there was a power imparted to fulfil it. The Holy Spirit has come as the answer to the universal weakness of man in the realm of doing, of accomplishing.

There is not only the passive side of weakness in man, that man is weak in himself; but there is this paradox about human weakness, that the weakness of man is the expression of a mighty strength. That is to say, there is a power, an energy at work in this universe which expresses itself in the total inability of man to do the will of God. There is another force at work which breaks the power of man to do God's will. Man is not only in a state in himself. He is under a mighty dominion which weakens him, destroys him in the realm of *doing* what God wills to have done. Evil is not just a negative thing. Evil is not just a passive thing. Evil is a positive, energetic force which is being projected, put forth, maintained, sustained, upheld by a great evil intelligence who is always set forth as one who has great power. Evil is not just man's poor state in himself. It is a positive strength, and only those who try to counter it know how strong it is. The man who talks about evil as being negative, is a man who has never set himself against the devil, a man who has never come into the real spiritual realm of meeting the primary foe of God and man. The man is a fool who talks like that, however wise

he thinks himself to be. Evil is a positive energy proceeding from one who is its fountain, its spring, and he is called the prince of the *power* of the air, the spirit that now works (energises) in them that believe not. By reason of the state in himself, and by reason of this other force which is operating in him and upon him, of which he may be very largely unconscious, man is weak even when he thinks he is strong. The men who have the greatest idea of their own strength are, from God's standpoint, usually the men who are the weakest.

It is over against that that the Holy Spirit has been sent. The power of the highest! The Spirit of the Lord of Hosts! These are terms which indicate the superior power of God over all other powers. The Spirit of *Him* has been sent to become an indwelling energy in the believer.

That is our general position. In some way we have to come to the Lord's own special emphasis on the matter, and His particular application. I am most anxious that we should not be carried away in flights of thought and far-reaching themes, nor be occupied with the study of a subject. God forbid that it should be so. We are not dealing with the subject of the Holy Spirit. We are not giving a treatise of the doctrine. If we were, we should do so in an altogether different way, and should be severely technical. We should be careful to divide up the whole subject into its right places and positions and so on. That is not now our subject, but our concern is that we should come to the real present meaning of the reality of the Holy Spirit in us. Words must be used. There must be the means of the Scripture. But let us have our hearts stretched out to the Lord that that shall not be all, but that we shall get somewhere in this matter.

Having that then in view, this word 'energy' in the passages mentioned, and which occurs in a great many more passages, becomes a word of great meaning. It is used as a noun and as a verb. It is God's energy, and then that energy is in action: "which energises". There is the mighty energy of God, and that mighty energy of God is seen to be active within the people of God for various purposes. At the moment we want to keep to the fact of the

divine energy and work within us, and that for the main end which God has in view.

We may, therefore, begin by reminding ourselves of that with which we are familiar, that God is working to a great and definite end. Sometimes that is just a little difficult to believe. We see so much confusion, and so much contradiction in what purports to be the work of God. The whole situation from our human standpoint seems to be so complex and so mixed, and we do not always see clearly, and perhaps we do not always believe positively, that nevertheless God is occupied with a definite object. He is working towards a clearly defined end.

We are not going to speak of what the end is; it is enough for us to know that the Word of God refers clearly to a purpose. God is working to a purpose. That purpose has been with Him from before times eternal, and His heart is still occupied with that purpose. That is where you and I begin with God; that things in the Christian life are not merely incidental, and are certainly not accidental, but are all related and positively connected with something which God has in hand which He calls His purpose. We know that His purpose relates to His Son. The Lord Jesus is the centre of His purpose, and God working in relation to Him. It is a great thing and is a real strength to us when we grasp that fact. In my own experience it has been a tremendous strength to my life and in service, to know that it is not just a matter of suffering into the realm of generalities and taking things as they come, but entering a realm as ordered, as systematic, as clearly defined, as settled as ever has been anything in the history of this universe. We come into that. The word for us is that we are called *according to His purpose*. We are *the* called according to His purpose. That puts us in the way of something quite definite and quite concrete.

Are you quite sure that has a *grip* upon your heart and life; that you have not *just* become a Christian; that for you the matter might be summed up as this: it so *happens* that you have been born and brought up in a Christian home, or that at some time in your life you came into touch with Christians, or with Christ, and thus you

have become one of the great mass of Christians; and now you are a Christian, and there are certain things which obtain within the sphere of Christians which you observe because they are the things to be observed, and so on. Now, if you are the Lord's, bring all the meaning of the fact of His having ever laid His hand upon you; no matter how He has done it; whether He has given you the advantages of being born into a Christian home, and all those gracious facilities of Christian encompassment, or whether He may have laid His hand upon you in some definite crisis to draw you to Himself. Bring it all out of the realm of the general into line with a purpose of God, and remember that, although the method and the manner, and perhaps the intensity of your experience may not be just as was that of Saul of Tarsus, nevertheless it is equally true in your case and my case that we have been apprehended for a purpose, and we can say as truly and definitely as ever Paul said: "that I may lay hold of [apprehend] *that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of [apprehended] me.*" (Phil. 3:12). Do you believe that? Has that gripped you? Or are you just flowing with the mass of Christians, and taking the Christian course? Forgive this elementary word, but we must have a starting-point. We can never see, and we can never come into the energies of God, until we have recognised that. The energies of God relate to that. These energies are not proved until you and I wake up to the fact that we are not just one of a crowd going on in a certain direction with a certain kind of life, a certain order of things called 'Christian'; but that we are *called according to His purpose*, have been apprehended for a purpose, and have to make that calling and *election* sure. That is a word to believers. (The Lord can say to Ananias about Paul: "he is a chosen vessel of Mine" (Acts 9:15). And Paul will later say to all believers, to you and to me by the Holy Spirit: "So run that you may attain [the prize]" (1 Cor. 9:24, ASV). Peter by the same Spirit says: "Be even more diligent to make your call and election sure." Election is not to salvation. Election is to the purpose of God, and you can miss the purpose of your election. Paul was afraid of that: "... for fear that after having heralded others I should be rejected"! It was a matter



of the object with which the Lord had called him and for which He had laid His hand upon him, and it was not a matter of salvation.

Unto this purpose of God, for this, God Himself is involved in a direct and immediate way. God has committed Himself to be an inside Worker in this purpose. This is in direct contrast to the notion that God is One who simply stands, so to speak, on the rim of things superintending. He is not doing that. God is not just standing outside there, having launched a scheme, and now superintending operations from a certain distant point, a vantage ground. No! God is represented by the Word as having come right into the thing Himself. He is within the purpose. He is involved in it. He is actively working *in* the purpose *in* the believer. The Lord Jesus said: "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working" (John 5:17). It is good to think of God in this thing, and not remote, not outside, not merely a great superintending Providence afar off, but right inside. The great word of the Old Testament about Israel was this: "In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the Angel of His Presence saved them" (Isa. 63:9). The "Angel of His Presence" was the Lord Himself. No matter what the aspect of this thing may be, whether it be the affliction, the suffering, the cost or any other phase of the proceeding of His purpose, God is *in* it, and actively in it.

To this end, the end of His certain clear purpose, all the divine resources of wisdom, knowledge, grace and power are committed and are available. God has, so to speak, brought with Him all that He has for the realisation of His own purpose. When you and I come into line with that purpose, we come into the realm where God has come Himself, and into which He has brought all His resources. All the resources of God are therefore committed to this purpose and are available to those who are in it: wisdom, knowledge, grace, power, and all else. They are known in that relation. How important it is for us to be in perfect oneness with God in what He is doing, in His time of doing it, in His method of doing it. If so, then all this is to our account, and He in the midst of us is mighty.

The next thing is that men — you and I and all who will respond

to His call — are *immediately* related to God's object. They are not only the object themselves. They are that. Men are going to be the realisation of God's object. That is to say, Christ is going to have the fulfilment of all God's thought, not only in Himself as an isolated Person, but in the whole company of the redeemed. Men are the object in view; the church is to be the fulness of Him that fills all in all. But not only is man related as the object. He is also related as the instrument for the realisation of the object. You and I are called to be instrumental in oneness with God toward the realisation of this great purpose, and therefore we see the necessity for an intelligent and sympathetic fellowship and cooperation with God. "We then, as workers together with Him ...". We then, as fellow-energisers with God! An intelligent fellowship in cooperation with God toward His great end. If we really do come into a living fellowship with God we shall most surely be brought to share with God His very travail towards the bringing forth of His purpose in fulness, filling up that which is lacking of the sufferings of Christ. To us it will be given in the behalf of Christ not only to believe, but also to suffer for Him. Our hearts so often in their waywardness, in their forgetfulness, think or tend to think, that in the time of suffering in the work of God, in our relationship to the Lord, it is the Lord Who is against us. We think it is the Lord putting us through painful experiences because we must go through them; and very often we relate our sufferings in the main to that work of discipline and chastisement when it really is a sharing with the Lord of His sufferings over some purpose. I think the enemy sometimes comes in and gives the twist just there, and we begin to regard a time of suffering as something that is against ourselves, as something to do with ourselves personally, and we begin to groan under it, complain, feel fretful about it, and take the attitude: Oh, must we have more suffering? Is it necessary for us to go through so much? Why, there is hardly a break! We hardly get out of one passage before we are in another! Is it necessary for the Lord to keep the pressure so continuous with hardly a chance to breathe between one spasm and another? Our minds begin to regard it as a personal matter. But afterwards we

begin to see that it was not so much personal as related to something that God was doing; some bit of work, some service, some practical object that the Lord was reaching out to secure. It was more perhaps in the realm of others than in our own realm.

That is fellowship with God in His purpose. There has to be intelligent and cooperative fellowship with God in His purpose. You and I will have to tell ourselves a little more definitely sometimes that the Lord is suffering when we are suffering, and that we suffer together with Him unto something; and take the attitude, not that the Lord is there and we are here, and He is facing us, and we are being forced to face Him, and He is smiting us and bruising us, and bringing us some further suffering; but the Lord is at our side and we are suffering together in relation to great divine objects. His suffering and ours are one suffering. If we could only gain that position we should be saved from a great deal. We should find it tremendously helpful, and the enemy would lose a lot of ground. If we could but take the position more often: "Lord, we are alongside of You for this thing! You are not against us in this. You are with us. And we will stand together and suffer together unto the object which You had in view!" I think there will come strength that way. Our strength is so often taken away in suffering because we think the Lord is giving us another thrashing for some reason or other. It is quite true that a purifying work does go hand in hand with such suffering, but to have a right understanding of the suffering and in consequence a right attitude toward it is invaluable. Notice the word. It is: "We then, as workers together ...". It is "sunergeo", together in energy, together in energy with God. The method of God is not that of standing and dictating to us what is to be done. The Lord does not take the place that many men take when they have purposes to accomplish or have an object in hand. They call people and say, Now you do this, and I am going to stand and watch you do it! If we may say it reverently, the Lord does not take the place of the foreman of works, and simply stand by to say what is to be done, dictate the orders, and see it done. The Lord does not do that. God is not dictating, but is working, and calling us to work

with Him. That is far removed from our being automatic in service. That is not simply taking us up and causing us to do things without any sympathy in ourselves, without any intelligence in ourselves, simply making us do things. That is not the character of the fellow-servant of Jesus Christ. Such a one is a yoke-fellow. The Lord and His servant are yoked together. The Lord Himself is working and He is the main worker. But with Him in the yoke is His servant. There is an entering into His travail, into His passion, and into responsibility with the Lord. When you really have responsibility you are a very different kind of workman from the paid workman. Not the master workman, whose own interests are at stake, and you see what kind of work he puts in, and what time he puts in. Then note the employee, who has no personal interests in the thing, no personal responsibility, who is paid for his job. Well, he stands about until the whistle blows, then leisurely takes off his coat, and then when it is time to stop work, he has his coat in hand waiting for that whistle, and almost before it begins he is off. But the man who is bound up with it, who is in it, whistle or no whistle he goes on, and puts such work in and such heart in because his life depends upon it. His heart is in it. That is the fellow-worker, the fellow-energiser with God.

We gather all that up and bring it to the matter which we have especially before us. Do you see that the Holy Spirit is the centre of all that? The Holy Spirit has come as very God, with the divine purpose, so to speak, in His hand, in His heart. He is the Spirit of the purpose of God from all eternity. He has Himself given the call. If we have responded He has been the very energy by which we have responded to the call, and as we have responded to all that ground of acceptance and of union with God in Christ in obedience of faith, He has come *into* us, and He has come in with the full purpose of God. He has come into us moreover to give the emphasis to that particular and peculiar aspect of the whole purpose which relates to us individually, to relate us to the whole, and to give a specific emphasis in us individually in relation to the whole. Then by the energy of God within, unto the realisation of that purpose, in our measure, in our particular contribution, relationship, the energy of

God has worked. Paul says: "For this purpose also I labour, energising according to His energy which energises in me mightily" (lit.). "I am energizing according to *His* energy which energizes in me mightily." Or again: "... according to the power which *energises* in us ...". That is the meaning of power. It may sometimes be accompanied with ecstasy, but it is deeper than ecstasy. Do not let us get our eyes fixed upon the ecstasy of a baptism of power. Power is the deep, inward energizing of the Holy Spirit in relation to the purpose of God, and if we are called according to His purpose, then to the realisation of that measure of the purpose which relates to us, and with which we are related, as a member of Christ, we can, we have a right to call upon the energy of the Holy Spirit in every way. We can call upon His mighty energy unto that, energy for mind, for body, for spirit. It works *in* us; it energises *in* us. The Holy Spirit has come for that. Mark you, all must be kept in line with God's purpose. The Holy Spirit does not energise unto anything else. Anything in our lives which is out of line with God's thought will not find the support of the Holy Spirit. If we are wasting our strength, if we are spending our strength out of the purpose of God, then we cannot count upon the energy of the Holy Spirit.

I am going to tell you something that I can only tell you because it belongs to many years ago. I was in the work of God, in what is called "the ministry", and in the early days things were not too flourishing financially. In those days I used to indulge myself in smoking. And there was a dear brother who had a very close walk with the Lord, who from time to time, knowing the difficulty, used to send me a cheque. From time to time I received a cheque from him, and he would say: As I was in prayer before the Lord, I think He laid it upon my heart to send you this! One day I met that brother on the street, as I was puffing away. I noticed a shadow come over his face, and he opened his heart to me and said: "Brother, I know things are not too easy with you, and from time to time I have tried to make things easier, and came to your help. But I hold my resources sacred for the Lord; I try to put every penny in the direction of realising something for the Lord, and I see that what

I am giving to you is going up in smoke! I do not feel that I can consecrate my resources to that! I cannot stand behind you if you are going to waste my dedicated resources!" He said something like that, but not exactly those words.

Now you see what I mean. You can forget the incident. It was only an illustration and belongs to years ago, thank God! But you and I cannot count upon the resources of God, the energies of God, if we are going to use our strength outside of His purpose. If we are going to pour out our energies and use our resources where God is not glorified, then He cannot come to our support. The Holy Spirit will energise and support us, and place the resources of God at our disposal, if we are bent wholly and utterly upon the purpose of God. In so far as we are on full stretch for the Lord, and seeking not to do His work with our own energies and with our own understanding, but to come wholly under the government of the Holy Spirit, to be entirely subject to the Holy Spirit, it does not matter how weak we may feel, how empty we may be, we can count upon the energies of God. It is not a matter of what we have at all; it is a matter of our being wholly subject to the Holy Spirit, and then we have all the resources of God at our disposal. That is power. Power is not a question of feeling ourselves to have something, to be something, to be able to do something: power is that the Holy Spirit is our energy and solely our energy, the energy of God in us.

The moment has come for the best bit of introspection that you have ever done. Ask yourself personally: Do I believe that God has laid His hand upon me, and called me by His grace, into the fellowship with His Son in relation to a purpose? Do I believe as to myself individually, whatever I may or may not be in myself by nature, and whether old or young, that inasmuch as I know the Lord as my Saviour in a living way, His hand has come upon me in relation to a purpose. Do I believe that? Then are you *wholly* given to God for His purpose? Further, are you definitely and positively cooperating with God in His purpose? The problem that many well-meaning children of God have is that they believe these things, and they love the Lord, but they are so passive. This is all true of them, but

they are so limp. Paul says: "I also labor, striving according to His working [energy] which works [energises] in me mightily." I do not believe that Paul waited until the energy so rose up in him that he could not help himself. I believe that there were many times in his life, as there have been in your life and in mine, when there was no sense of the energy, but just a consciousness that the Lord wanted us to put forth an effort to get on to our feet, to take a stand, to move in faith, and then the energy energized. Quit your passivity! Repudiate your limpness, and in abandonment to God stand on your feet, and in faith move with God. You will see things happen. You will know the energy of God. If you do not think that is a true principle, read the Gospels again. The energy which was in the word of Christ never manifested itself, never made itself felt, or effected its end, until a man had been challenged to do something and had done it in faith. "Rise, take up your bed and walk." (John 5:8). But I have been here thirty-eight years! I have tried that scores of times! But he put forth the effort, he essayed, and he found he could do it. That was the law which governed the coming in of energy. It is a challenge to active faith. The power of God comes in on that ground! "According to the power which energises in us".

We will ask the Lord to apply this to our hearts in a practical way.

## **THE NECESSITY FOR SUBJECTION TO THE HOLY SPIRIT**

*Reading: Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8,14.*

We are considering in this meditation the necessity for, and the blessed fruit of, total subjection to the Holy Spirit. This fruit is only possible on the ground of that complete subjection to the Holy Spirit.

Let us look more closely for a few moments at this necessity for subjection to the Holy Spirit. You notice what the Lord said to His disciples after His resurrection: "Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high." "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me ...". Then they continued steadfastly in prayer from that time. We know that that continuing steadfast in prayer lasted for about ten days. The final words of the Lord before His ascension were these about tarrying and being endued with power. That was at the end of forty days. He had been appearing to them by the space of forty days. It was on the day of Pentecost that His promise was fulfilled, and we know that Pentecost is fifty days after the Passover, so that they continued ten days more tarrying in prayer before they received the Holy Spirit, the fulfilment of the promise. We must recognize and apprehend the real significance of that tarrying. There has been some mistake about this matter of tarrying, as though the tarrying itself were something, that there must be a tarrying for tarrying's sake, because tarrying itself is



required, before there is a fulness of the Spirit. But we want to get behind the tarrying and understand its purpose, and we can do so by looking at the course of things in the Word. It is interesting that this instruction to “*tarry*” should come at the end of chapter twenty-four of Luke’s Gospel.

Look at the course of things. The Lord Jesus had spoken frequently and much about His cross. He opened His heart to His disciples, and it would have been very difficult for Him to have been more precise about His cross. He said definitely: “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes ... and they will ... kill Him. And the third day He will rise again” (Mark 10:33-34). What could you have more precise than that? But He said much more about His cross and His resurrection. He tried to get them to grasp it and sought to bring home to them the fact that while the cross would be a reality it would not be the end. They would see Him again. He would rise again. Having said it all, the cross comes immediately into view, for straight away He goes up to Jerusalem, is betrayed into the hands of wicked men, is crucified. And as they see these scenes closing in upon Him, and while the last phases are taking place — one denies with oaths and curses — they are all, as He said they would be, offended because of Him. The Shepherd is smitten, the sheep are scattered, they *all* forsook Him and fled.

If what He had said to them had really entered into their hearts their position would have been this: Yes, this is what He said! It is all taking place! But this is not the end. We are going to see something beyond this! But they forsook Him, they lost hope and faith, lost everything. Then we find them in this state represented by the two who went to Emmaus, who poured out their story to the One Whom they thought must be a stranger in Jerusalem: “Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?” And He said to them, “What things?” So they said to Him, “The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people ... But we were hoping that it was He who was

going to redeem Israel" (Luke 24:18-21). You see blank despair there. How true it was that they could not, on that basis with a yet darkened understanding, follow Him through. How true was their weakness, their inability to go right on at all costs with their Lord. It was not in them to do it.

But further, the Lord has now risen and has met them, and as He appears to them and speaks to them, they become full of a glow and excitement and wonder, deeply stirred, hardly grasping the meaning of it all. And you can feel that the atmosphere so far as they are concerned is tense with emotion. "The Lord is risen indeed ...". Well, it might now have happened that they would have gone out on that ground to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, the uttermost parts of the earth, and in that mood, in that emotion, in that excitement begun to broadcast the whole thing. What would that have amounted to? It would still have been themselves with their human ideas of what it all meant. It would still have been those untrustworthy selves. (On such foundation they had only to meet a modern psychologist and the whole thing would have gone to pieces!). They would have broken down disastrously if they had met the forces of the devil in their nakedness, in all their wit, in all their deceivableness and twisting, as well as in all their malignity and antagonism and bitterness. They would have broken down as completely as before! It would have been another offence of the cross because they were only out, after all, on the ground of a new emotion, a new enthusiasm, a new excitement, a new wonder. The Lord said: "*tarry*" [stay]. You have broken down once, with all your good intentions. Your emotions were quite good before! Your enthusiasms were quite good before! Peter had protested: "Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble." (Matt. 26:33). You cannot doubt the enthusiasm. You cannot doubt his well meaning. But that is not good enough for this business. He would have been just the same Peter afterwards with but a new enthusiasm, perhaps with new elements in the background of his enthusiasm, but still as of old, had he not tarried. The disciples might have gone out in this way, and then there would have been

a repetition of the crash. The Lord was taking no risks. He knew human nature, and He was not trusting it: "... tarry in the city ... until you are endued with power from on high."

Do you see the meaning of that? It meant this in effect: You have attempted things before in your own strength, with your own well meaning, your good motives, your enthusiasms, your natural devotion, and you have failed! You have proved beyond a doubt that you cannot take the strain of this eternal business, this great heavenly purpose; this purpose which is to encounter all the ultimate spiritual forces of this universe! It will take more than you at your best! It will take more than your greatest enthusiasm, your deepest devotions, your most mastering passions! What you need is to come into subjection to the Holy Spirit with your enthusiasms, your emotions, your intentions, your motives, your everything. You cannot go out riding them as your fiery steeds! You have to be subject to the Holy Spirit.

Was that not the meaning of the tarrying? Think for a moment what that tarrying must have meant in the matter of subjection. Meet the Lord risen from the dead, after you have seen what happened to Him on the cross and see if you do not feel that you want to go and preach the fact everywhere, talk about it, and let everyone know. I venture to say that we would feel mightily stirred to go and talk and do and feel tremendously enthusiastic if we had met Him again and again after His resurrection, after having seen Him crucified and laid in the tomb. We would have had some strong feelings. Were there ever more difficult days than those ten for these men? They were having to rein in, to hold down, and they dared not move whatever they were thinking about it, whatever they were feeling about it, however much they felt the world ought to know this. No, not on the ground of what I think or feel about it at all! The Lord has said "*tarry*"; there is something else necessary. So, in a sense the cross was operating against those emotions for ten days. They continued in prayer for those ten days.

Was not that a working of subjection? If we were put into their place, had their feelings, knew what they felt after they had met

Him so frequently on resurrection ground, and knew what He had said to them; if we could be in the place that was theirs then, we should find it very difficult to keep on our knees for ten days. We should have been wanting every few minutes to get up and run off and talk about it. To keep at that prayer for ten days, with a knowledge like that, an experience like that, is terrific; it means some holding down. Ah, yes, they were having to learn under the government of the Lord that everything for the future for them was to be subjection to the Holy Spirit. That is the meaning of tarrying. It is not tarrying for tarrying's sake. It is not having tarrying meetings to wait for something, but it is the tarrying which is the breaking of the power of our natural selves even in relation to the things of the Lord.

On the positive side the purpose of the tarrying is in order to our coming to the position fully and finally, that it is no use our attempting this thing; it is only the Holy Spirit who can do it. It is *only* the Holy Spirit who can do it. Not until we have come to the place where the Holy Spirit is our Master is there any hope whatever of going through. We can go through when the Holy Spirit has got the mastery, but we never shall otherwise. These disciples had the very best opportunity, the very best ground that ever men had on the outside for going through. They had the Lord, they had seen His miracles, they had heard His words, they had been given His promises, His assurances; He had told them plainly that He would rise again, and they broke down with all that. And you and I with much less than that on the outside, will also break down unless we come to the place to which they came, that of subjection to the Holy Spirit.

The purpose of the tarrying is that the Holy Spirit should get His place of supremacy in us. The period might have been one day, it might have been fifty, it might have been years. Ten days were not necessary. It means until we are subject. I know there is a sovereign side of this. I know there is the divine ordering over this. I know what Pentecost stands for in the divine plan of things, but on the human side it is undoubtedly the yielding to that position that

we cannot, no matter how we feel or think about it, we dare not, we *must* not, only under the government of the Holy Spirit. But I think there is a significance in the ten days. It would take too long to explore that fully at this time, but we know that in the Scriptures ten is the number representing responsibility. The hangings of the Tabernacle of old were upon tens; the tens took responsibility for the hang! Ten is the number of responsibility and the result of waiting for the ten days was that at the end of these days the Holy Spirit came and took responsibility for everything. Had the Lord given them a world commission? The Holy Spirit was coming to take charge of that and be responsible for it; and when He did take responsibility for the world commission things happened. Those men went out right enough; they had to wait no longer. They did not know that the time of waiting was going to be just ten days, as far as I can see. The Lord's word to them had been "not many days from now" and they waited in obedience and the Spirit came.

It may be that you are waiting, not because God has fixed a day to which His own must wait, but because God has fixed a *spiritual place* regarding which His own must wait. You are being held back by the Lord until you reach that place of utter subjection to the Holy Spirit, where your natural elements do not take possession of divine purposes. But, mark you, when you get to that place the Holy Spirit will see about your release, the Holy Spirit will take responsibility for the Testimony and for your ministry.

He took responsibility for the men. It is a good thing to have someone take responsibility for you. When the Holy Spirit takes responsibility for you, you are in a very safe place. He took responsibility for them and constituted them *witnesses*. Remember that it does not say He constituted them preachers. It does not say that He constituted them Christian workers. He constituted them witnesses: "... you shall be My witnesses" (NASB) when the Holy Spirit is come upon you. The word there in the Greek is the same word as our word "martyr", with a little inflection at the end of the word. It means a man who represents something, and then that the virtue of that was continually going out from him. We call our

paper '*A Witness and a Testimony*'. The witness is the instrument possessing or representing something. The testimony is that which flows out from the witness. And that is just the difference in the Greek change in the word; one is the man and the other is that which comes out of the man. You must have the man before you can have the issue. Before you can have a testimony, you have to have a man or a vessel, and the Holy Spirit does not constitute propagandists of truth. The Holy Spirit constitutes men and women *who are* that truth intrinsically. "You shall be My witnesses." That is to say, men who in their very being are energised, actuated, indwelt by Him. That is what the Lord Jesus means when He says: "My witnesses". Everything that comes from you will be of Me. That is the well within, the rivers flowing out from within. It is the Spirit of Jesus doing it. What a difference there would be in the world if it were like that in the case of everyone who preaches. God give us grace to be made witnesses. But you see what it means, utter subjection to the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit constitutes the church. Man never constituted the church. Man has never yet added one member to the church. Man has too truly set up his own thought of the church to which, maybe, he supposes he can add on that others may join. But to that which God calls His church the Holy Spirit alone can add, and that by quickening and giving life where He will. This no man may take upon himself to join, nor has the power to do so. "And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47). "Yet none of the rest dared join them ..." (Acts 5:13).

The Holy Spirit not only constitutes but positions in the church. If you want to know what God has marked out as your place, your purpose, your ministry, your vocation, your contribution to the whole scheme of things, come under subjection to the Holy Spirit and you will know that position, will be energised by the Holy Spirit in a direction which sooner or later you will recognize as specific, peculiar *to you*. The Lord has just given you that emphasis, that inclination which marks you as having a ministry. It may be small, it may be unseen, it may not be public, but it will be something. Do

believe that we all have a place in that Body. The Word teaches it emphatically. You have a place, and you are indispensable, and no one dare ever say to you: "We have no need of you!" In the Body of Christ you are essential. But to come into a functioning activity in your place you have to be subject to the Holy Spirit, Who alone knows your place, Who alone can bring into effect that which is related to you in the divine mind. The ordering, the positioning, the ministry is ordered by Him. You need not worry about ministry. Do not start by grasping at ministry. Do not begin by being concerned about your ministry. Do not worry for a moment about your ministry in the first place. Become subject to the Holy Spirit, seek to be brought to that place where the Spirit of God dominates your life, and you will get your ministry; nothing can keep you out of it. There is an energy there which will energise you unto your ministry, which is a greater energy than all the power of the devil and men to keep you out. To have a mandate from the Throne of God is to have a mandate from the highest seat of authority. Read Daniel again: "... He removes kings and raises up kings ..." (Daniel 2:21). The disposition of man is in the hands of the Most High. Men may shut doors to you. Men may forbid you; men may seem to be making it impossible for you to do your work. If you are in the energies of the Holy Spirit, believe me, you are fulfilling your ministry. Do not worry about your ministry. Come into the place where the Holy Spirit absolutely governs and dominates you. Seek that and all the rest will follow, whatever is God's purpose for you.

Furthermore, we shall come into the terrific conflict of the spiritual realm. We shall find that there is another energy; that if there is an energy of the Holy Spirit, there is an energy of the evil spirit, he who is spoken of in those very same terms, with the very same word: "... the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works [energises] in the sons of disobedience ..." (Eph. 2:2). Paul speaks of the coming of Satan in Antichrist, "The coming of the lawless one is according to the working [energising] of Satan" (2 Thes. 2:9). There is another mighty energy, an evil energy, against the saints, against the purposes of God. How are you and I going

to succeed against that, meet it, and be able to go through? Well, here is this divine energy; and complete subjection to the Holy Spirit means that the blessed outworking will be that we, while encountering that mighty opposition energy, shall come out on the other side victoriously: "because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world." (1 John 4:4). That's a tremendous thing to say, because we have learned that he that is in the world is very mighty. The power of Satan is nothing to be laughed at. I always feel a shudder when I hear people glibly, lightly, singing such things as we sometimes hear about Satan being under their feet, Satan a defeated foe. It is true, but it is not a thing about which you and I make fun of. It will not be long before we discover that our flesh is not capable of standing against the devil, even if he is beaten at Calvary. It is an awful thing to set yourself, apart from the infinite energies of the Holy Spirit, against the devil. We dare not do it. That does not mean that we are going to accept the spirit of fear. We are remembering that the Holy Spirit is seen as the Super-energy of this universe; but in the conflict and the pressure and the antagonism, only He can take us through, *only He*. Blessed be God, He knew that, and that is why He sent the Holy Spirit. Herein is the necessity for a life subject to the Holy Spirit. Those who are not, and who go out to meet the enemy, will be knocked all over the place. We see the wreckage of such in all the world today.

The Holy Spirit is our *power* for endurance. The Word is quite clear that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of endurance in pressure. Read a passage like this in 2 Corinthians 1:6: "Now if we are afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer. Or if we are comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation." You have the word "energy" there, and the literal translation of those words is "being energised in the endurance of the sufferings which we suffer". Is that not wonderful! That is the mighty energy of the Holy Spirit: "being energised in the endurance of the sufferings"! Take hold of that. When we feel pressed out, pressed down, crushed, and the power of endurance seems to be disappearing fast, let us come back to the



word that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of divine energy, and we shall be energised in the endurance of the sufferings which we suffer. We shall not endure apart from that divine energy.

This subjection to the Holy Spirit works out in all these ways and many more, and it makes prayer the potent force which prayer is intended to be. We remember the words in James 5:16: "The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much." The literal words are: The energised prayer of a righteous man avails much in its working, in its energising. Oh, for more Holy Spirit energised prayer, *availing much* in its working. Let us square down on that. No weak platitudes, but a seeking of the Holy Spirit to energise us in prayer unto the much availing in the working of that prayer.

We finish with this final urge upon our hearts: the need for complete subjection to the Holy Spirit in mind, heart, will, spirit, soul and body is made abundantly clear by the fact that all these blessed issues are only possible on that ground. Did you not like the idea of total subjection to the Holy Spirit? The flesh does not like that idea. The flesh never did like the idea of total subjection to anything or anybody, but here it is the best thing. It is a glorious thing. It is how Christ is glorified in us.

Now this is a truth presented. Will you do this one thing, go to the Lord continually about this? Will you definitely seek the Lord on this matter? Will you really have exercise before God continually about this? Will you do it at once? Will you do it continually? It will be a thing which will not be all accomplished in one moment. We can commit ourselves to it in a moment, in an act, but we shall have to follow it up continually. Ask the Lord to work out subjection to the Holy Spirit. There is so much that is superficial about us. We get an idea that it might be good to do this, to go there; there might be something for the Lord in it. Good people have invited us here and there, and we feel that there is nothing wrong in it, and perhaps something to be gained by our trotting off here and there, doing this and doing that. Now, we have got to stop it. Because there *seems* to be good in it, because there *may* be something for the Lord in it, is not good enough. We have to stop that impulse and get down

before the Lord and say: "O Lord, do You want me to go there, because if I go even led by an idea that there may be something good in it even for You, I might be there when I ought to be here where something infinitely more important is on hand?" We have to come to the place where we go before the Lord and seek to have every emotion, every impulse, every movement, every suggestion tested out, weighed up, as to whether the Holy Spirit is leading to that. We are so superficial. May the Lord get us under His mastery.

We have been very strong and emphatic, but it is only because we feel the importance of this. Please do not regard this as a theme. Look at it as a challenge, a call, an entreaty from the Lord. Let it be as a mighty urge to get down before God to endeavour that our lives henceforth shall not just be governed by superficial emotions, enthusiasms, motives, but that we shall be subject to and governed by the Holy Spirit. Oh Lord, bring us there! Will you keep before the Lord on that matter?

The purpose of this publication is to encourage God's people to lay hold on eternal life, the hope set before them, knowing that Jesus Christ, their Saviour, will soon return to establish His eternal Kingdom, "so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 1:12).

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