

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE CHRISTIAN

John 16:1-15.

A person is a being who knows, feels, and wills. A person can be approached or shunned, trusted or doubted, adored or insulted, loved or hated. The doctrine of the personality of the Holy Spirit is of the highest importance from the standpoint of:—

1. Worship.

If He is a Divine Person, and He is, and we think of Him as an impersonal influence, then we are robbing a Divine Person of the worship which is His due; also, the confidence, love, surrender, and obedience which rightly belong to Him. Do you worship the Holy Spirit? Quote the Doxology. It is one thing to sing words, and another to realize the meaning and force of them.

2. Experience.

A full realization of this means an entire transformation of life and service.

3. Practice.

If you think of the Holy Spirit as a mere influence or power, then your thought will be, "How can I get hold of the Holy Spirit and use it?" If you think of the Holy Spirit as a Divine Person, then your thought will be, "How can the Holy Spirit get hold of me and use me?" Thinking of Him as an influence leads to self-confidence and self-exaltation. Thinking of Him as a Person leads to self-renunciation, self-abnegation, and self-humiliation.

The Holy Spirit convicts us of sin, effects our spiritual birth, and gives us power to confess Christ as our Saviour and Lord. Thus we are brought into the Christian life by the power of the Holy Spirit. But that is not all. The Holy Spirit does many things for us after we enter upon the Christian life. There are so many sides to the work of the Holy Spirit in connection with God's children that it is impossible to do much more than briefly mention them in this message.

1. He Regenerates.

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit." Titus 3:5.

Regeneration is an impartation of the Divine nature. In regeneration we are given new minds, new affections, and new wills. Man may convert, but only the Holy Spirit can regenerate.

2. He Seals.

"In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." Ephesians 1:13. Here is the inter-linking chain of Divine security. The sealer is God, the believer is the possession sealed, the Spirit is the seal, and the One in whom we are sealed is Christ. A seal is:—

(1) A stamp of validity.

Authenticates something as genuine. One enters a school, makes

an agreement with the faculty, finishes the work, and receives a diploma with the seal of the school upon it.

(2) A mark of ownership.

Cattle upon the range are branded.

(3) A sign of protection.

God shuts us up in Christ and the Holy Spirit seals us there. What a wonderful position to be in! We cannot get out and none can get in to take us out. The believer cannot be molested until Christ is deposed, and that will never be.

(4) A guarantee of safe delivery.

An example of this is when a car is sealed by the express company forbidding any tampering with it whort of its destination. Our safety and arrival on the day of the redemption of the purchased possession are committed unto the Holy Spirit. The doctrine which represents a sinner in Christ today and lost tomorrow is not of the Holy Spirit. When He regenerates a soul He seals it "unto the day of redemption." We are sealed so that Satan cannot touch us, circumstances cannot ruin us, and death cannot rob us.

3. He indwells.

At the time of regeneration the Holy Spirit enters the heart of the believer and dwells there continually. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" I Corinthians 3:16. "What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in your, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" I Corinthians 6:19. As He dwells within God's children He is constantly at work on their behalf in numerous ways.

4. He Gives Assurance.

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." Romans 8:16. "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father." Galatians 4:6. Nothing is more powerful in Christian service than assurance.

5. He Guides Us in the Study of the Word of God.

"But the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." John 14:26. "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth." John 16:13. Human wisdom gives us knowledge about God's Word; the Holy Spirit, as our interpreter, gives us knowledge of the Word itself. We ought never to undertake any study of the Word of God until we have sought the guidance of the Holy Spirit in that study. The Holy Spirit guides us into fuller truth and clearer light.

6. He Helps Us in Prayer.

"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." Romans 8:26. He teaches us how to pray and for what to pray.

7. He Sanctifies Us.

The process of sanctification is that of being separated from sin and set apart to God for His purposes and His glory. It begins at regeneration and should continue until the redeemed soul meets his Lord face to face in the glory.

8. He Strengthens Us.

(1) He Strengthens in the inner man.

"That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man." Ephesians 3:16. The inner man is often weak, but the Spirit gives new vitality.

(2) He sustains.

In times of opposition and strain He works to uphold and maintain the morale of the believer.

(3) He Gives Victory.

He enables us to subjugate the habits and desires of the old nature. He enables the child of God to "carry on" in the face of seemingly insurmountable difficulties to glorious victory.

9. He Empowers Us for Service.

"But ye shall receive power upon the coming of the Holy Spirit upon you." Acts 1:8. True believers often long for power to live holy in Christ, to have a closer fellowship with Him, to overcome worldly aspirations, personal ambitions, fleshly appetites, secret sins, man fearing, disobedience, timidity, and laziness. This power the Holy Spirit provides. If we are to enjoy this power we must constantly search our hearts, consistently surrender our lives, and consecratedly serve our Lord. The strength of a church is not in its numbers, wealth, or equipment, but in how much the Holy Spirit has free course in the lives of its members.

10. He Directs In Our Work.

"As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them, and when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away." Acts 13:2-3. God knows what every believer needs, and He offers the Holy Spirit for every seeking heart to meet all emergencies of life and every service until Jesus comes. God requires the believer to surrender to the Holy Spirit and let Him rule the Heart and life. Willingness to follow the Spirit's leadership regardless of the cost is the key that unlocks to the divine storehouse of power and sets the joy-bells of heaven ringing in the surrendered soul. Receiving His guidance requires a sincere desire to know God's will, and a fixed determination to obey when the light is given, regardless of the cost.

11. He Comforts Us As Believers.

"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." John 14:16-18. Dr. Joseph Parker, the great London preacher of the last generation, used to say to young ministers: "Preach often to broken hearts. You will find one in every pew. You will find them where you least expect them."

Some of the most beautiful pictures in my memory are those of some of God's saints who have passed through great sorrows with a peace that passeth all understanding. The Holy Spirit had brought a peace which the world cannot give and which the world cannot take away.

How we need to heed the injunction recorded in Ephesians 5:18, "Be filled with the Spirit." Being filled with the Holy Spirit produces holiness of life, power for service, and patience in trials. It glorifies Christ for believers to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Fulness of the Spirit refers to His control over the thoughts, words, and deeds of the child of God. Just as we do not take a drink of water unless we are thirsty, so we do not appropriate the fulness of the Spirit unless we desire that fulness. Therefore, the first condition is a desire for the Holy Spirit to control our thoughts, our words, and our deeds. The fulness of the Holy Spirit is the solution to every spiritual problem. Being filled with the Spirit is our privilege and long-neglected duty. May we let Him have all of us and fill us and control us and use us.