

## The Promise of the Spirit

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Just before leaving the disciples, Christ gave them the promise, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; 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."

Had men been consulted in regard to their choice of the blessing to be bestowed, they would have asked for some inferior good. But the Lord took the matter into his own hands, and promised his Spirit,--a blessing which, when received, satisfies every need.

Christ had an infinite variety of subjects from which to choose in his teaching, but the one upon which he dwelt most largely was the endowment of his Holy Spirit. What great things he predicted for the church because of this endowment! Yet what subject is less dwelt upon today? what promise less fulfilled? Prophecies are dwelt upon, doctrines are expounded, but the promise of the Spirit, the fulfillment of which is necessary for the success of God's work, is incidentally touched upon, and that is all. Other blessings and privileges have been set before the church but the thought entertained regarding the promise of the Spirit is that it is not for the church now, that at some time in the future the church will receive this gift. But this promise belongs to us now as surely as it belonged to the disciples.

God's people seem to be incapable of comprehending and appropriating this promise. They seem to think that only the scantiest showers of grace are to fall on the thirsty soul. They act as if they must rely on their own efforts for salvation, and as a result they have little strength for the work of overcoming. They have little light to give to the souls dying in the darkness of error. Church members have long been content with little of the blessing of God. They have not felt the need of reaching for the exalted privileges provided for them at infinite cost. Their spirituality is feeble, their experience dwarfed and crippled; and therefore they are disqualified for the work of the Lord. They are unable to present in the power of the Spirit the great and glorious truths of God's Word.

It is not because of any restriction on God's part that the riches of his grace do not flow to men. His gift is godlike. He gave with a liberality that men do not appreciate because they do not love to receive. If all were willing to receive, all would be filled with the Spirit. By resting content with small blessings, we disqualify ourselves for receiving the Spirit in its unlimited

fullness. We are too easily satisfied with a ripple on the surface, when it is our privilege to expect the deep moving of the Spirit of God. Expecting little, we receive little.

### How Do You Treat Christ's Representatives?

The necessity of the Holy Spirit's working should be realized by all. Unless this Spirit is accepted and cherished as the representative of Christ, whose work it is to renew and sanctify the entire being, the momentous truths that have been intrusted to human beings will lose their power on the mind. It is not enough for us to have a knowledge of the truth. We are to walk and work in love, conforming our will to the will of God. Of those who do this the Lord declares, "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts." God is the mighty, all-powerful agency in this work of transformation. By his Holy Spirit he writes his law in the heart.

Thus divine relationship is renewed between God and man. "I will be to them a God," he says, "'and they shall be to me a people.' There is no attribute of my nature that I will not freely give in order that man may reveal my image." When we allow God to work his will in us, we shall harbor no sin. In the refining furnace all dross will be consumed.

When the Holy Spirit came down on the day of Pentecost, it was like a rushing, mighty wind. It was given in no stinted measure; for it filled all the place where the disciples were sitting. So will it be given to us when our hearts are prepared to receive it.

Let every church member kneel before God, and pray earnestly for the impartation of the Spirit. Cry, "Lord, increase my faith. Make me to understand thy word; for the entrance of thy word giveth light. Refresh me by thy presence. Fill my heart with thy Spirit that I may love my brethren as Christ loves me."

God will bless those who thus prepare themselves for his service. They will understand what it means to have the assurance of the Spirit, because they have received Christ by faith. The religion of Christ means more than the forgiveness of sin; it means that sin is taken away, and that the vacuum is filled with the Spirit. It means that the mind is divinely illumined, that the heart is emptied of self, and filled with the presence of Christ. When this work is done for church members, the church will be a living, working church.

We are to seek most earnestly to be of one mind, of one purpose. The baptism of the Holy Spirit, and nothing less can bring us to this place. Let us by self-renunciation prepare our hearts to receive the Holy Spirit that a great work may be done for us, so that we can say, not, "See what I am doing," but, "Behold the goodness and love of God!"

### A Spirit-Filled Church

After Christ's ascension, the disciples were gathered together in one place to make humble supplication to God. And after ten days of heart searching and self-examination, the way was prepared for the Holy Spirit to enter the cleansed, consecrated soul temples. Every heart was filled with the Spirit, as though God desired to show his people that it was his prerogative to bless them with the choicest of heaven's blessings. What was the result?--Thousands were converted in a day. The sword of the Spirit flashed right and left. Newly edged with power, it pierced even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow. The idolatry that had been mingled with the worship of the people was overthrown. New territory was added to the kingdom of God. Places that had been barren and desolate sounded forth his praises. Believers, reconverted, born again, were a living power for God. A new song was put in their mouths, even praise to the Most High. Controlled by the Spirit, they saw Christ in their brethren. One interest prevailed. One subject of emulation swallowed up all others,--to be like Christ, to do the works of Christ. The earnest zeal felt was expressed by loving helpfulness, by kindly words and unselfish deeds. All strove to see who could do the most for the enlargement of Christ's kingdom. "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul."

In the twelve disciples the leaven of truth was hidden by the Great Teacher. These disciples were to be the instruments in God's hands for revealing truth to the world. Divine power was given them; for a risen Saviour breathed on them, saying, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." Imbued with this Spirit, they went forth to witness for the truth. And so God desires his servants to go forth today with the message he has given them. But till they receive the Holy Spirit, they cannot bear this message with power. Till they receive the Spirit, they cannot realize what God can do through them.

The mighty power of the Holy Spirit works an entire transformation in the character of the human agent, making him a new creature in Christ Jesus. When a man is filled with the Spirit, the more severely he is tested and tried, the more clearly he proves that he is a representative of Christ. The peace that dwells in the soul is seen on the countenance. The words and actions express the love of the Saviour. There is no striving for the highest place. Self is renounced. The name of Jesus is written on all that is said and done.

We may talk of the blessings of the Holy Spirit, but unless we prepare ourselves for its reception, of what avail are our works? Are we striving with all our power to attain to the stature of men and women in Christ? Are we seeking for his fullness, ever pressing toward the mark set before us,--the perfection of his character? When the Lord's people reach this mark, they will be sealed in their foreheads. Filled with the Spirit, they will be complete in Christ, and the recording angel will declare, "It is finished."