

# *Things That Differ:*

*The Holy Spirit's Work*

*In Varied Aspects.*

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— OR, —

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— BY —

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# Things That Differ :

## THE HOLY SPIRIT'S WORK IN VARIED ASPECTS.

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“**L**ET not your heart be troubled.” Not to the world did the Lord speak thus, but to those given Him by the Father. But how could they not be troubled in view of His departure? The following words give the answer: “Ye believe in God, believe also in Me . . . I go to prepare a place for you . . . I will come again and receive you unto Myself” (John xiv. 1-3). Though lost to sight, He was to be to them as real an object of faith, as the unseen God, in whom they then believed. Though far away, He would no less be occupied for them than when He was with them here below. Though absent, it would not be for long, for soon He would come again to take them to be with Himself. Later on, the Lord goes further: “If ye loved Me,” He says, “ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father, for My Father is greater than I” (v. 28). If for their own sakes they could not but be sad at the thought of losing Him, for His sake they should be glad that He whom they had known

in humiliation as the Son of Man, was about to return to the glory of the Father's house. Later on still, in chap. xvi. 7, He reveals the surprising fact that it was truly expedient for them that He should go away, "for," He adds, "if I go not away, the Comforter will not come to you; but if I depart I will send Him unto you." How great must be the blessing promised, if rather than it be forfeited, 'twere better to see their beloved Lord depart! The advent of the Comforter was indeed to prove to be not only the consequence of His departure, but the condition of His return—not in the sense of John xiv. 13, "I will come again and receive you unto Myself" (a promise certain of literal fulfilment), but in the spiritual sense of verse 18, "I will not leave you orphans, I will come to you." The office of the Spirit would be to glorify Christ, to fill His people everywhere with increasing revelations of their unseen Lord, and to make His personal presence a blessed reality.

The special object of these papers is, to seek to distinguish between some of the various phases of the Spirit's operations, namely, between those that are plenary in bestowal and *permanent* in character on the one hand, and those which are *fluctuating* in character and subject to renewal or increase on the other.

The former are connected chiefly with our relationship to God and our position and possession in Christ; the latter with the experience and enjoyment of our privileges. The former do not need to be renewed, because the full effect of the first bestowal is never lost; the latter being variable

in measure and progressive in character do need constant renewal. Great confusion has arisen and exists to-day in the professing church, from a failure to distinguish these two aspects of the truth. Some teachers insist much on the important side of the Spirit's work in connection with our standing in Christ; others are occupied almost exclusively with what certainly ought not to be lost sight of, the experimental side of things. The former hold fast to the truth that the Spirit has come, that believers have been baptized into one body, and are His temple, &c.; the latter urge the necessity of a fuller experience of power and blessing, and when they do so in Scriptural terms, help is often the result; but when such expressions as a "fresh baptism of the Spirit" are used, and believers are exhorted "to wait for the Spirit," or "get their Pentecost," the result is not for edification. Some Christians profess to see little importance in the way they express themselves, provided they mean right in a general sense; but the Spirit of God says by the mouth of Paul: "Hold fast the form of sound words" (I Tim. i. 13).

Before entering on our main subject, it may be well to remind ourselves of the careful distinction to be drawn between the relations of the Spirit to the people of God before and after Pentecost. It is true that certain operations are common to all dispensations. The Spirit, for instance, strove with men even before the flood, and filled men of God before as well as after Pentecost; but, generally speaking, there has been a great change in His relations with believers since that notable

day. The prayer of David in Psalm li. 11, "Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me," was in harmony with the dispensation, for such had been the sad experience of Saul. But now, whenever the Spirit comes to dwell, it is "for ever" (John xiv. 17). Before Pentecost, when "the Spirit was not yet given" (John vii. 39), it was right to expect the Father to give the Holy Spirit to them that "asked Him" (Luke xi. 13). Now the Spirit is given "to them that *obey* Him"—*i.e.*, yield obedience of faith to the Gospel (Acts v. 32; *cf.* Rom. i. 5, 2 Thess. i. 8). Though we may and should ask to be strengthened by the Spirit (Eph. iii. 16), it is as unscriptural to ask God to "send down His Holy Spirit" now, as it would be to ask Him to send His beloved Son to die for our sins. Before Pentecost, the Holy Spirit accomplished in various ways the purposes of God, but He did not DWELL in the people of God. The Lord distinguishes the relation of the Spirit to the apostles before and after Pentecost by such words as these: "He dwelleth *with* you, and shall be IN you" (John xiv. 17). Before Pentecost the Spirit "rested upon the seventy elders" (Num. xii. 25), and came upon a Samson and a David. At Pentecost "the Comforter, the Spirit, the Holy" (John xiv. 26, lit. Greek) came down to make believers His temple. We need not dwell further on this aspect of the truth. Though there are operations of the Spirit, as has been said, common to all dispensations, no intelligent believer will deny that Pentecost has introduced a vital change in the relations of the Holy Spirit to the people of God.

## OPERATIONS OF THE SPIRIT :

### PERMANENT AND VARIABLE.

THE question in Psalm xxiv., "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Who shall stand in His holy place?" found its full answer in the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ. "The everlasting doors" were lifted up to let the King of Glory in, and the Son of Man entered in virtue of His own blood, and was "straightway glorified."

"Lo! He takes the highest station;  
Oh, what joy the sight affords!"

But even then, He could not forget His own. He receives and sends forth upon them the promised Comforter to unite them in one body to Himself, and every operation of that blessed Spirit only reveals some fresh relation between them and their ascended Lord. To rightly divide these operations is the object before us. Some are the inalienable portion of all believers. Such we may term *permanent* operations. Others depend on individual appropriation and growth in grace. We may call these *variable* operations. They may be summarized thus :

#### PERMANENT OPERATIONS.

1. Regeneration (Titus iii. 5).
2. Sanctification, perfect (2 Thess. ii. 12; 1 Pet. i. 2).
3. Baptism in the Spirit (1 Cor. xii. 13).

4. Indwelling of the Spirit (John xiv. 7; 1 Cor. ii. 16).
5. Witness of the Spirit (Rom. viii. 16; Heb. x. 15).
6. Anointing (2 Cor. i. 21; 1 John ii. 20, 27).
7. Sealing (Eph. i. 13; iv. 30).
8. Earnest (2 Cor. i. 22; v. 5).

#### VARIABLE OPERATIONS.

1. Renewing (Titus iii. 5; Col. iii. 10).
2. Sanctification, progressive (2 Cor. iii. 18; Rom. viii. 13).
3. Filling (Acts ii. 4; iv. 31).
4. Supply of the Spirit (Gal. iii. 3; Phil. i. 19).
5. Spirit of Adoption (Rom. viii. 15; Gal. iv. 6).
6. Teaching (John xvi. 26; xvi. 13; 1 John ii. 27).
7. Inworking (Gal. v. 17, 22; Rom. viii. 26).
8. Enduement (Luke xxiv. 41; Eph. iii. 16).

This list lays no claim to be exhaustive. Nor is it affirmed that the various operations here enumerated are experienced in any given order, or are even necessarily closely connected. As the object is to distinguish rather than to deal fully with the various aspects of the Spirit's work, a brief treatment of each will suffice.



## REGENERATION AND RENEWING.

WE will consider first *Regeneration* and *Renewing*, found together in Titus iii. 5: "Who hath saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

REGENERATION.—"Ye must be born again" (John iii. 7). To enter a divine sphere, a divine nature is indispensable. This new birth is therefore essential in all dispensations, whether before or after Pentecost. Born at first, possessed of one nature, fallen and corrupt, a man is born again of the Spirit. In other words, by means of the Word and by the agency of the Spirit, he is brought to repent and believe the Gospel. The old evil nature is not regenerated or even improved, but the possessor of that nature is born again, and receives in addition to the old a new nature, holy and heavenly, and a new life which is the very life of Christ risen. This regeneration admits of no degree. A father in Christ is not more regenerate than a babe in Christ. Nor can the experience be repeated, because the life imparted never dies. The ecclesiastical figment of "a germ of life" implanted in baptism, which may or may not come to fruition, as also that doctrine, so widely held to-day, that a true child of God may become "unborn again," and so need to be regenerated afresh, are both foreign to the Word of God. The same may be said of the modern

teaching which affirms that a man can be born again and yet not possess eternal life (*cf.* John i. 12, 13, and I John v. 13). These teachers do not explain what kind of life it is these semi-Christians possess, who are regenerated and yet have not received *eternal* life. When Paul reminds Titus that they had been saved "by the *washing* of regeneration"—the word for "washing" is that translated "bathed" in John xiii. 10, R.V., "He that is bathed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." Regeneration is accordingly a blessing received once for all. It introduces the newborn one into the family of God, "for which cause He [Christ] is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Heb. ii. 11).

RENEWING.—"The renewing of the Holy Ghost" is a continuous and should be an uninterrupted process. New birth will lead to new growth. "As new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby" (I Pet. ii. 2). We have the same root (*anakainosis*) in three other passages of the New Testament. Col. iii. 10—which teaches that the subject of the renewal is "the new man"; the means of it, increased knowledge of Christ; the pattern of it, the image of Christ. Again, from Rom. xii. 2, we learn that the seat of this renewal is the inner man; and from 2 Cor. iv. 16, that this process is normally going on in the believer day by day. We see therefore that this operation of the Spirit is not accomplished once for all at conversion, but is a progressive process in the one who walks in the Spirit, and whose "delight is in the law of the Lord" (Psa. i. 3).

## SANCTIFICATION :

### PERFECT AND PROGRESSIVE.

THE next pair of truths we will consider are *Perfect Sanctification* or divine calling, and *Progressive Sanctification* or divine conformity.

PERFECT SANCTIFICATION.—Some may feel surprise that this subject should be treated thus early, and especially as one of the completed operations of the Spirit. This need not be were it remembered that the meaning of the word “sanctify” in the New Testament is “to set apart for a special object.” The altar sets the gift apart (Matt. xxiii. 19). The Lord Jesus set Himself apart (John xvii. 9). The unconverted husband is set apart (1 Cor. vii. 14), relatively by the believing wife. In none of these passages can “sanctify” mean “to be made holy.”

“Sanctification of the Spirit” might indeed have been considered first, for it begins before regeneration, and represents the action of the Spirit in bringing an elect soul to Christ; “elect according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. i. 2). Here we have four things in their true moral order—(1) the sovereign choice of the Father, (2) the setting apart by the Spirit of the elect for God

through various dealings or leadings — a work issuing in (3) his obedience of faith, resulting in (4) his sheltering beneath the atoning blood. This initiatory work may begin in childhood and extend over many years, but it is only when the sinner obeys the Gospel that he becomes a child of God, and receives forgiveness. The same order is found in 2 Thess. ii. 13: election, sanctification, belief of the truth. This may also account for the fact that in 1 Cor. vi. 11, sanctification precedes justification. Of course it is utterly antisciptural to allow any idea of personal holiness to precede justification, as the Romanists and Ritualists do, but sanctification here only means setting apart for God "by His will," through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ "once for all" (Heb. x. 10). The sinner who is thus set apart is henceforth a saint, and is so addressed in the epistles. This side of sanctification is positional and perfect. The believer is set apart for Him, on the ground of whose work He is for ever saved.

PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION is the practical carrying out of the divine purpose. The day that Pharaoh called Joseph to rule over all the land of Egypt, he became ruler, though he knew nothing of government nor of the ways of courts. He neither returned to prison nor to Potiphar's house, but set himself apart to fill the rule of Pharaoh's choice. This is practical sanctification — the apprehending that for which we have been apprehended of Christ Jesus. This is progressive to the end of life. Never can the prayer of 1 Thess. v. 23, become inapplicable to any one of us: "The

very God of peace sanctify you wholly." This work is never intended to be the ground of our peace or the object of our contemplation, but we are to see to its accomplishment. "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Rom. viii. 13), And as the Word of God is applied to our souls by the Spirit, so it progresses every day, "Beholding . . . we are changed . . . as by the Spirit of the Lord."



## BAPTISM AND FULNESS.

THE third pair of blessings are *Baptism* in the Spirit and the *Fulness* of the Spirit.

BAPTISM IN THE SPIRIT.—The witness of John the forerunner was to Christ as the Lamb of God, as the Son of God, as the Baptizer in the Holy Ghost (John i. 29-34). This baptism is referred to specifically seven times in the New Testament: four times in the Gospels prophetically, twice in the Acts historically (Acts i. 5; ii. 16), and once in the Epistles doctrinally (1 Cor. xii. 15). "In one Spirit were ye all baptized into one body." Some consider this baptism as an attainment of advanced believers; but were this so, could the apostle have written as he did to the Corinthians, who were "carnal, and walked as men" (1 Cor. iii. 3)? To such Christians, modern teachers would rather have written, "You need the baptism of the Spirit." The apostle's words clearly show that all believers receive this blessing at their conversion. This is indeed the distinctive truth of the present economy: union with Christ ascended to heaven, by the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven. Exhortation to believers to "seek their Pentecost," or "to get a fresh baptism of the Spirit," lead to spiritual pride, confusion, and weakness. All believers are in the "one body," and Christ is

their head. Faith grasps what God reveals, and acts accordingly.

THE FULNESS OF THE SPIRIT.—In Acts ii. 41, we read: "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost," but in chap. iv. 31, we see some of these same persons being re-filled. Each fresh need demands fresh fulness, and our hearts need to be emptied in works of faith, deeds of love, or words of power, to be kept full. At Pentecost the fulness came unsought; later it came in answer to their prayer. In Eph. v. 18, we read: "Be not drunk with wine . . . but be filled with the Spirit." The exhortation, like the prohibition, ever holds good. This is no single act of permanent import, but a habit of the soul. Room must be made for that which is of God, by refusing that which is not of God. As has been said, "If we want to get on, we must give up."



## INDWELLING AND SUPPLY.

THE next operations of the Spirit to be considered are His *Indwelling* and His *Supply*.

THE INDWELLING is connected with the reception of the Spirit, and that again with His permanent advent. When Christ was glorified, the rivers of living water of John vii. 38, flowed down from Him to His people—destined in their turn to be the channels of blessing to those around. The reception of the Spirit constitutes the believer a temple of the Holy Spirit, and the means of this reception is faith. This is the clear inference from the apostle's question in Gal. iii. 2, "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" No question is raised, be it noted, as in the case of the twelve disciples in Acts xix., whether or no they had received the Spirit. Paul knew them; he did not know the Ephesian disciples, and his question to these latter proved to be justified. They had heard of Christ as "He that should come after," but apparently neither of His death and resurrection, nor of the great event of Pentecost. They are not types of present day believers; to all of whom it could be said, as to the Corinthians: "Know ye not that your body is [the] temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you" (I Cor. vi. 19). By the reception of the

Holy Spirit, the Lord Jesus is brought to His own in the sense of John xiv. 18: "I will not leave you orphans, I will come to you." We must not confound "the gift of the Spirit" with the miraculous GIFTS of the Spirit. The latter are abnormal, and may even be possessed by unregenerate men; the former is essential to and demonstrative of vital Christianity. The hundred and twenty at Pentecost received both the gift and the gifts. The three thousand, as far as we read, received only the former. The reception of the Spirit is a permanent blessing to each believer; for where once received, He dwells "for ever" (John xiv. 16).

THE SUPPLY OF THE SPIRIT.—This is a question of measure and renewal. Paul refers to it in Phil. i. 14: "I know that this shall turn to my salvation, through your prayer and the *supply* of the Spirit of Jesus Christ." The reception of the Spirit in verse 2, had been a definite act in the past. This *supply* in verse 5 was a present continuous experience, and closely connected with the "fulness" of the Spirit, already referred to. In I Cor. x. 4, we read, that all Israel *drank* of one spiritual drink (where the tense marks a definite past experience), "for they all *drank* of that Spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ." Here the tense denotes habitual course. We too need this daily drinking from Christ, and though to ask God to "send the Comforter" is a practical denial of Pentecost, we may well claim fresh supplies of His refreshing grace and power.

## THE WITNESS AND SPIRIT OF ADOPTION.

THE next operations of the Spirit to which we would direct attention are "The *Witness* of the Spirit" and "the Spirit of *Adoption*" referred to together in Rom. viii. 15, 16.

THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT.—In what does this witness consist? Some would have us believe it to be some inward voice—a *direct* testimony of the Spirit to their hearts concerning the truth, or will of God. Such seem to claim for their acts and utterances, something very little short of inspiration. "The Spirit," say they, "taught them thus and thus, and told them to do this or that." Others who hear their words and observe their ways, find it difficult sometimes to believe that they are really led of the Spirit. A true message from God, like a sharp sword, will make its power felt, without any adventitious claims, and a life in the leading of the Spirit will ever be according to the Word. Others hold that the witness of the Spirit consists in some special experience of joy and blessing in the soul, which assures them that they have indeed part and lot in the things of God.

However precious such special seasons of communion are, they are not in themselves the witness of the Spirit, but are rather the result of believing

that witness. To rest in experiences, is a sad mistake. It leads to introspection, and sometimes to spiritual darkness, but never to settled peace. Listening to what the Scriptures say concerning Christ, and occupation with Him, is what fills the soul with peace and joy in believing (Rom. xv. 13). Indeed, it is what the Spirit says in the written Word that is truly His witness, as reference to Heb. x. 15-17 will show. In this chapter the writer, after upholding the blessed truth that the Lord Jesus by one offering hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified, adds, "Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us." What is this witness, but a passage quoted from an Old Testament prophet—"Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more" (Jer. xxxi. 34)? What the Scriptures say about any particular truth, is the Spirit's witness to that truth. Again, in Rom. viii. 16, we read: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." Notice it does not say *to*, but *WITH* our spirit. The new nature implanted in believers by the Father, recognizes our new relationship and says, "Abba, Father." The Holy Spirit bears corroborative witness, in such passages as John i. 11, 1 John iii. 1, to the blessed fact that all believers are indeed children of God.

Once more, we find in 1 John v. 10: "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in Himself." "Is not this," some one may ask, "an inner experience of blessing, which assures the believer that his faith is real?" I believe not. The words mean rather that he who believes the

witness of God concerning His Son, will be able to tell you what that witness is. He not only knows whom he believes, but he knows what he believes. Suppose you meet a man who is looking remarkably happy. You ask him the reason. He tells you he has just heard some good news. Were you to enquire what the good news was, would he not be able to tell you? Yes, indeed, in the very words in which he had heard it. In the terms of our text, he would have "the witness in himself." It is so with the man who believes God. He has in his heart what he has heard with his ears.

There is one more passage, which I must refer to, which may seem at first sight to controvert what has just been said. It does so only in appearance. Turn to Acts xx. 23: "The Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city that bonds and afflictions abide me." This witness of the Spirit is illustrated in the following chapter. The prophet Agabus warned Paul: "Thus saith the Holy Ghost, so shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owneth this girdle." "In every city" the apostle had received similar warnings. But only men of prophetic gift could speak thus. Their word was the spoken Word of God. We do not expect these direct revelations now, for we have God's written Word complete in our hands. This witness of the Spirit is invariable and permanent, and to it we do well ever to give heed. Thus the Spirit will bring it home to our hearts, for our spiritual growth and advancement in the knowledge of Christ.

**THE SPIRIT OF ADOPTION.**—This the believer receives because he is the child of God, and it is

increasingly enjoyed by him as he walks in the Spirit and grows in the knowledge of God. It was for this in part, that God sent forth His Son: "that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. iv. 5). The word "adoption" is hardly adequate as a translation of the original word, conveying as it does to our ears the sense of *assumed* rather than of ACTUAL relationship. The word really means, "the making, or constituting a son." This is borne out by the words which follow in Galatians: "And *because* ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying Abba, Father." This is an attitude of soul to be diligently cultivated, to the glory of Him who "of His own will begat us with the Word of truth" (Jas. i. 18), and of Him who, by His grace, is not ashamed to call us brethren (Heb. ii. 11). Some believers remain a long time in the infant stage. Others, like the Corinthians and Hebrews, get back into it. Such have "a spirit of bondage again to fear," but this the apostle assures us is not of God. That which He gives is the Spirit of adoption. The Father recognizes and owns His child. The child replies, if "a Jew by nature," "Abba," and if a Gentile, "Father."



## ANOINTING AND TEACHING.

THE next operations to be considered are *Anointing* and *Teaching*. They are linked together in I John ii. 27.

ANOINTING.—In Old Testament times, four classes of persons were anointed with oil, namely priests, prophets, kings, and cleansed lepers. They were thus sanctified, or set apart, to a certain office or position before God (see Lev. viii. 10–12). In the case at least of the priest, a holy ointment was used. This was made of principal spices: myrrh, cinnamon, calamus, and cassia compounded with olive oil. In this precious ointment we may surely see a figure of the Spirit of God, communicating to the believer by His holy unction, the perfections and the preciousness of Christ.

In Exodus xxv. 20, 26, we read that the tabernacle and its furniture were also anointed with this same holy oil. The dwelling place of God, and all that pertains to it, must be set apart for God by the divine unction. As it is written, “Holiness becometh Thine house, O Lord, for ever” (Psa. xciii. 5). This ointment was not to be imitated, nor might it be poured upon man’s flesh. It was for the priests alone, and even in their case, could only be applied after the blood had been sprinkled. The order observed in the cleansing of the leper

was even more precise and remarkable. The oil then used was not the holy ointment, but one log of ordinary oil, implying the same truth of the Spirit's anointing, but in a simpler form, teaching a more elementary truth. This was applied to the cleansed leper *upon* the blood of the trespass offering (Lev. xiv. 17). The lesson is clear. Only to whom the blood of Jesus Christ is known in its cleansing power, is the anointing of the Holy Spirit given. On no other ground, but of that perfect cleansing and sanctification which the blood of Christ gives to all believers, could the divine Comforter take up His abode in them.

To profess to bestow the Spirit, as some do, upon children of a certain age, irrespective of whether they give evidence of true conversion to God or no, is not only a foolish pretension, but a serious offence against God and His truth. If such children are converted, then they already have received the Spirit; if they are not, then the pretence of giving them the Spirit is sacrilege. Yet how many true Christians seem to be wholly unexercised in the solemn responsibility which they incur in practising, or having fellowship with such unscriptural ways! Only the other day, I heard of two preachers who once professedly gathered in the Lord's Name alone, but who have turned back to the "beggarly elements" of a worldly religion, actually advising some of their converts to go through the "rite of confirmation." One could only feel sad at heart for converts and preachers alike!

It is hardly needful to remind ourselves that

"Christ" is a Greek title of the Lord Jesus, signifying "The Anointed," and corresponds with the Hebrew word "Messiah" in the Old Testament. Our Lord was "The Anointed One" at His birth. As we read, "Unto you is born this day . . . a Saviour which is CHRIST the Lord" (Luke ii. 11). Later, in the same Gospel, we read of the fulfilment of the words: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor" (chap. iv. 18). Thus was the Lord anointed for His ministry. Every act, every word of His, all through His blessed life and fruitful service, was in the power and demonstration of the Spirit. And after His death, resurrection and ascension to heaven, we read concerning Him: "God hath made that same Jesus . . . both Lord and CHRIST" (Acts ii. 36). His anointing in resurrection (Heb. i. 9) was peculiar. Before, He had received the Spirit for Himself alone, but now, in order that He might share the same blessing with His people. The oil poured upon the high priest's head flowed down even to "the skirts of his garments" (Psa. cxxxiii. 2). This is evidently referred to in 2 Cor. i. 21, "Now He which establisheth us with you in Christ and hath anointed us in God," as being the portion of all the Corinthian saints, and hence of all the people of God. In 1 John ii. 20, the apostle writes to the "little ones" (the same word as in verse 13, though distinct from that which is employed in verse 12—the latter being the generic term for all the family of God)—"*Ye have* an anointing from the Holy One"; and from verse 27, we learn that this is an abiding

blessing. "The anointing, which ye have received of Him, *abideth* in you." Anointing is therefore one of the abiding aspects of the Spirit's work, which is not repeated. "The Lord hath set apart Him that is godly for Himself." The Holy Spirit not only sets the saint apart, as the oil upon the cleansed leper did, but He qualifies and strengthens for life and testimony. We may oftentimes forget His holy presence and grieve Him by our ways, but the divine unction never loses its efficacy, and never needs to be renewed.

TEACHING.—The gift of the Spirit was closely connected by our Lord (see John xiv., xvi.) with the further instruction of His disciples: "He shall teach you all things"—"He will guide you into all truth"—"He will show you things to come." These promises doubtless had a primary application to the early disciples in view of their special service and testimony in word and deed, and likewise in their peculiar ministry of writing the Gospels and Epistles. What men, unaided by the Spirit, could have traced that divinely perfect portrait of the Blessed One, which we have in these Gospels—marvellous alike in their silence as in their revealing? In I John ii., already referred to, the same aspect of truth is emphasised. "Ye need not that any man teach you, because that same anointing teacheth you." This cannot mean that we should despise or undervalue those whom God has given and qualified to teach in the Church. How could the Spirit of God teach that we should dispense with or ignore the gifts of the risen Christ, who "gave some evangelists and some pastors and

*teachers*" (Eph. iv. 11). No, but these "little children" in the family of God, had been taught by the Spirit to know Christ, and they needed not the seducing antichrists they are warned against, who, like the New Theologians of our day, wished to re-teach—with a vital difference—what they already knew. It would be well if this were more thought of in these days of breadth without depth, when it is considered charity to listen to every ancient heresy dressed up in whatever new garb may be in vogue, however contrary to God's truth. Ministry of the Word, in the power of the Spirit, is for the edification of the Church, and the Spirit does use those whom He has Himself gifted and furnished, to edify the people of God. We need such ministry to check and control what we have gathered from the Word in private. Babel voices differing, but of no uncertain origin, seek an audience all around us, and we need to take heed not only *how* but *what* we hear. It is true that now we only "know in part," and we need consequently to "grow in knowledge" as well as "in grace." But it is well to remember that whatever fresh truth we learn, it will never contradict truth already learnt from the Spirit, through the written Word.



## SEAL AND INWORKING.

THE Spirit's *Sealing* and *Inworking* need to be carefully distinguished.

THE SEAL.—As to this great subject, three questions arise: (1) In what does it consist? (2) Who receive it? (3) Is it an experience to be repeated? Mention of sealing is not infrequent in the Old Testament (1 Kings xxi. 8; xxxviii. 14; Cant. viii. 6), though very often only in a figurative sense. Sealing suggests three ideas, themselves closely allied: Attestation, Authority, Preservation.

*Attestation*.—In our day, in the case of certain documents, the signatory first writes his name in the presence of a witness, and then puts his finger on a certain red mark at the side, which bears the seal, which is conventionally supposed to be his own, and utters the formula, "I deliver this as my act and deed." Then the witness signs his name. The idea would seem to be, that the seal attests the signature. In 1 Kings xxi. 8, we read that "Jezebel" wrote letters in Ahab's name for the arrest of Naboth, "and sealed them with his seal." The king's seal must attest the genuineness of the king's name. In Jer. xxxii., the title deeds of the field which the prophet bought at the word of the Lord, were sealed in the presence of witnesses, Do we not find a parallel to this in Rev. v.? What was that "little book sealed with seven seals," but

the title deeds of the purchased possession of this earth? Only One was found worthy to open these seals, and He it was of whom the witnesses could testify: "Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof; for Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood, out of every kindred and tongue, and people and nation." Yes, He is worthy, for He has paid the purchase price. So also the Lord justifieth His claim as Son of Man to give the "meat that endureth unto everlasting life" (John vi. 27), by adding, "for Him hath God the Father sealed"—a reference surely to the descent of the Spirit at His baptism, to attest the Father's witness from heaven to His beloved Son.

The Ephesians, too, were "sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise" on believing in Christ (Eph. i. 13), with which we may connect the striking words in Acts xv. 8, in reference to Cornelius and his friends: "God, which knoweth the hearts, bear them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit even as He did unto us." The presence of His Spirit in the believer is a precious witness that God has applied "the blood" to the soul, and thus vouches for the authenticity of His own work there. This paragraph must not close without a brief reference to Rom. iv. 11, where Abraham is said to have "received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, yet being uncircumcised." This verse has led many to speak of circumcision in general as the "seal of the old covenant." But how could circumcision be a seal in the case of infants (the normal recipients of

the rite), of a righteousness which they did not possess? This would be no better than signing and sealing a blank form. Circumcision was "a sign" to all who received it, it was "a seal" of a previously possessed righteousness only to Abraham and those who shared his faith, at the first institution of the rite.

*Authority.*—The thought of attestation naturally leads on to that of authority. When we see a seal, the usual question is: "Whose seal is it?" The seal that the Pharisees set on the tomb of our Lord by the authority of Pilate, "Make it as sure as ye can," carried with it not their authority alone, but also that of the whole Roman empire behind them. Let him break it who dare! A single angel flouted the power of Daniel's fourth beast! But who would dare to tamper with the seal which is set on believers, or could if he dared? For it is God's own seal—His Holy Spirit. "Now He which establisheth us with you in Christ and hath anointed us in God, who hath also sealed us" (2 Cor. i. 4); and "if God be for us, who can be against us?"

*Preservation.*—The third thought in sealing is the more usual one, and springs out of what has gone before. A seal is for the preservation of that on which it is set, for what purpose the context alone determines. Darius, forced by a superior law, sealed the lions' den, that none might rescue Daniel. The sealing on our Lord's grave, already referred to, was an additional precaution against its violation. The 144,000 of Israel sealed in Rev. vii. are sealed for safety, and accordingly they are found again in chap. xiv., having passed unscathed

through the furnace of the Great Tribulation. And thus God claims as His own all believers of this dispensation, and by sealing them with His Spirit, guarantees the continuation of His own work. Hence we read: "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption," for "God is stronger than His foes."

*Who receive this sealing?* Some teach that it is often an advanced experience, long subsequent to conversion. I have never seen in such writings one scriptural proof of what they affirm. The way they do seek to advance their conception is, first to describe a very low type of believer, and then to ask: "Can such be said to be sealed with the Holy Spirit?" I answer, Yes; for "the sealing of the Spirit" in Scripture does not necessarily connote a specially advanced condition of spirituality in its recipients. If we turn to the three passages in the New Testament (those already referred to) where the sealing of believers is directly mentioned, we shall find that it is an experience predicted of all the people of God in this economy. In 2 Cor. i., the apostle writes to "the Church of God which is in Corinth, with all the saints in Achaia," and in verse 21, he says of them and himself, without any qualification, "God hath sealed us." Are we to suppose that since the first epistle was written, the Corinthians had all become so greatly advanced believers that they had all received "the sealing?"

Again in Eph. iv. 30, Paul writes: "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are [lit. were, *aorist*] sealed unto the day of redemption." He

does suggest the possibility of their "grieving" the Spirit, but he never suggests the possibility of some of them not having yet been sealed by that Spirit.

I have reserved the consideration of Eph. i. 13 to the last, because I believe it is the defective translation of the A.V. of this verse, "*after* having believed," which first gave rise to the erroneous teaching here referred to. The R.V. translation is doubtless right: "In whom having believed ye were sealed." There was not a believer among them who had not received this sealing, and that when he believed. The thought of an interval between "believing" and "being sealed" is not found in the text.

*Is this an experience to be repeated?* The question has been already forestalled, and can be briefly answered in the negative. There is no such thought in the Word of God. The Christian is sealed "unto the day of redemption"—that is, the day when the Lord Jesus shall return. Then not only the soul but the body of the believer will reap the full blessing of redemption. This sealing is God's work. "Nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it" (Eccl. iii. 14).

INWORKING.—The work of Christ for us on the Cross is, we rejoice to know, a completed work. "Nothing can be put to it, neither can anything be taken from it" (Eccl. iii. 14). In proof of this, the Lord Jesus has "for ever sat down at the right hand of God" (Heb. x. 12). I know that many connect the words "for ever" with the one

sacrifice mentioned before, but the force of the expression here translated "for ever" is not duration, but uninterrupted continuance. The same word is translated "continually" in verse 1, where the meaning is that under the old régime no year was to elapse without a day of atonement. On the other hand, the work of the Spirit is an uncompleted work of a daily conforming of believers "to the image of the Son"—a good work which He will continue "until the day of Jesus Christ."

Were the believer merely forgiven and then left to himself, how could he hope to overcome powers of sin within and without? It is true that when we believe we receive a new nature, but this does not imply that the old nature is either removed, renewed, or subdued. Even the new nature cannot control the old. As the friend of Luther discovered to his grief, "Old Adam was stronger than young Melancthon." The Holy Spirit is our resource. Accordingly we read in Gal. v. 17, R.V., "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye may not do the things that ye would."

It has been rashly asserted lately, that the Spirit here is not the divine Spirit, but merely the renewed spirit of the believer. That I appeal to the context. The Holy Spirit is without controversy referred to in verses 16 and 18. How can the Spirit in the medial verse be another spirit? On the contrary, the effect of walking in the Spirit in verse 16, is shown, in verse 17, to be that same Spirit's control of the flesh. Notice, however, that this

control is not exercised independently of the believer himself.

The moral and doctrinal wrecks strewing the course of the professing Church, or men who "once ran well," warn us in solemn tones to "work out our salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure." We must walk in the Spirit with watchfulness, self-denial, and dependence upon God, and then we shall know increasingly a power in us, not our own, controlling the workings of the flesh within and producing the ninefold fruit of the Spirit, so acceptable to God, so cheering to the saints.

Here comes in a vital point. There is hardly a conflicting sect in Christendom to-day, hardly a jangling doctrine, that does not claim in some special sense to be the product of the Holy Spirit. "Laughing prayer meetings," "Holiness dancings," "Perfectional preachings," we are asked to believe are all under the special direction of "the Spirit." Yes, but what spirit? "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they be of God." It is too often forgotten that the Holy Spirit is not the only higher spiritual power in the universe. The fact that we are to try the spirits shows that the false may easily be mistaken for the true. One test is, the true will always confess that "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh"; in other words, will "glorify Christ," and the second is, "God cannot deny Himself." The Spirit of God will never be contrary to the Word of God. The workings of the Spirit will ever coincide with the writings of

the Spirit. If the word of Christ dwells in us richly, we shall be in safeguard.

This brings us to another point. What is the great need of the saints to-day? Is it more conferences? We have abundance of them, and blessed seasons they often are. Is it more addresses? Perhaps of them we have sometimes a superabundance. What is needed, some believe, is not more talking to men, but more speaking and dealing with God in prayer, secretly and unitedly. It is sometimes said, "If we can do nothing else, we can pray." I would rather say, "If we can truly pray, we can do all else." The man of prayer, who has power with God, alone has true power with men. But though we have a responsibility to "give ourselves to prayer," and to "continue in prayer and watch in the same with thanksgiving," we have to admit that "we know not what we should pray for as we ought."

What, then, is our resource? Neither printed prayers nor prepared prayers, but "praying in the Holy Ghost." It is the Spirit again who helps our infirmities, and maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered (Rom. viii. 26). This will preserve from the formalism of liturgies, with their endless repetitions, and the deadness of extempore prayers with their wearisome reiterations.

All this is intimately connected with that which is the highest privilege of the child of God—the worship of the Father. Worship can never rise higher than its source. There is nothing, therefore, which more imperatively demands the unceasing

ministry of the divine Spirit. There is nothing in which His ministry is more systematically set on one side in the professing Church. For preaching, believers feel the need of His operation. For worship, they too often ignore it. "Through Christ we have access *by one Spirit* unto the Father" (Eph. ii. 18). It is not by lecturing on worship, or even by clear teaching as to our standing in Christ, that worship can be produced, but by the revelation of Christ to the soul by an ungrieved Spirit. The sweet incense is Christ, the holy fire is the Spirit of God. If we knew more of self-judgment and confession in the presence of God before we come together, we should know less of lifeless worship and unprofitable service when we come together. Our cups would be running over. "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth." All else is guilty vanity.

Though the apostle never prays that the Ephesian saints should be sealed with the Spirit, he does pray that they might be "strengthened by the Spirit in the inner man, that Christ might dwell in their heart by faith" (Eph. iii. 16). May we know more fully this great blessing. ■



## EARNEST AND ENDUEMENT.

**W**E now come to the last pair of the operations of the Spirit which we have to consider with the help of that same Spirit: The *Earnest* and the *Enduement* of the Spirit.

THE EARNEST OF THE SPIRIT.—If, as we have seen, the sealing of the Spirit is God's attestation of His work in a soul and a guarantee of its continuance, the earnest is the pledge and foretaste to the believer of future blessedness. An earnest, though less in measure, is not different in character from that of which it is the foretaste.

The jewels on Rebecca's hands were a pledge of the silver and gold she would possess, as the bride of him whom Abraham had "appointed heir of all things" (Gen. xxiv. 36, 53). "The good things of Egypt," sent by Joseph for his father "by the way," were a foretaste of the sure promise, the good "of all the land of Egypt is yours" (Gen. xlv. 20, 23). The grapes of Eschol were but a sample of the land of promise, "for surely," said the spies, "it floweth with milk and honey, and this is the fruit of it" (Num. xiii. 24, 27).

As in the case of "the sealing," three distinct passages in the New Testament bring before us "the earnest" of the Spirit, and each in a different relation. In 2 Cor. i. 21 (in connection with "all the promises of God") it is presented as given by

*God.* "He that stablisheth us [present continued action] with you in Christ is God, who . . . hath given [past definite act] us the earnest of His Spirit in our hearts." Is not such an "earnest" intended to encourage us to claim the promises? In 2 Cor. v. 6, it is connected with the clothing upon of the believer, who will be alive when the Lord returns. "Now He that has wrought us for the self-same thing [*i.e.*, the swallowing up of life of that which is mortal] is God, who hath also given unto us the earnest of His Spirit."

The presence of the Spirit is the earnest of the transformation of the living believer, just as in Rom. viii. 11, it is the guarantee of "the *quicken*ing of the mortal body." This "quicken~~ing~~" is interpreted by some who hold unscriptural views as to sickness, to mean that a Christian, if only he had faith enough, would never know sickness. His body would be above such a thing. Only a few go so far as to say that a Christian ought never to sleep in death; but though the latter idea is clearly fanaticism, and as contrary to all Christian experience as it is to the Word, it is nevertheless more logical than the more timid interpretation just referred to, for clearly the verse does predicate something for the believer's body, analogous to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is true that the Lord does strengthen His people physically on special occasions, and render them sometimes temporarily superior to hunger and even suffering, but the word for "quicken" in this verse means "making alive what was dead" (*e.g.*, I Cor. xv. 36). "That which thou sowest is not *quicken*ed except

it die," and the promise of the verse in Romans is not for the present but for the future. "*Shall* quicken your mortal bodies." If believers habitually neglect the ordinary rules of prudence, as regards their bodies, they will surely reap a temporary breakdown or a condition of chronic neurasthenia. The third passage where the "earnest" is referred to is Eph. i. 13. Here it is not so much "the redemption of the body" that is in view, as "the redemption of the purchased possession." This goes on further, to the manifestation of the sons of God in glory with Christ, and the entrance into the promised inheritance. God has revealed unto us by His Spirit, through the Word, what eye and ear and heart could not conceive, "the things prepared for them that love Him."

The earnest of the Spirit is not only the possession of the Spirit, but the resulting present experience of blessing. If Christian experience becomes a ground of confidence or of self-exaltation, it is entirely out of its proper place; but a Christian without Christian experience is "dead while he liveth." The presence of the Spirit ungrieved, produces Christian experience in the believer. He reveals Christ and the Father, sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts, fills us with joy and peace in believing, and makes us overflow with praise and worship, and long to be with and like our Lord.

There will be evil days, when the heart will be "in heaviness through manifold temptation," but the Elims will succeed the Marahs, even if we are

unable to rise by faith at the time of trial, and rejoice "with joy unspeakable and full of glory." But the best here below is only a foretaste of the future, and the highest now can never be but the lowest there, if we may so speak. If John knew what it was to rest on the bosom of His Lord down here, he will surely never know a lower place up yonder. If Mary chose the good part of resting at His feet to hear His Word, then that "part shall never be taken away from her." The ministry of the Spirit is for the manifestation of Christ, who is "the way to the Father." In heaven we shall no longer need "the earnest" of the Spirit, but He will never cease to abide with us, as the revealer of Christ and as our power for worship. We may therefore well sing :

"What will it be to dwell above,  
And with the Lord in glory reign,  
If the sweet foretaste of His love  
So brightens all this earthly plain?"

ENDUEMENT.—This word is from a Greek verb *enduein*—to put on, to clothe. Thus "John was *clothed* with camel's hair" (Mark i. 6); "Herod was *arrayed* in royal apparel" (Acts xii. 21); "Bring forth the best robe and *put it on* him" (Luke xv. 22). It is the same word in the three passages. The word is often used too for spiritual "outfit." We need for our daily walk to be "*endued* with the Lord Jesus" (Rom. xiii. 14); for spiritual conflict to be "*endued* with the whole armour of God" (Eph. vi. 11); for our intercourse one with another to be "*endued* with bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind" (Col. iii. 12); and for our testimony,

to be "*endued* with power from on high" (Luke xxvi. 49).

As we have already seen, the coming of the Comforter was associated with a testimony of Christ to His own (John xvi. 14), and not only so, but also with a testimony for Christ through them to the world. "He shall testify of Me, and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning" (John xv. 27). And in the next chapter the promise is, "He shall convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment" (John xvi. 8).

In Matt. xxviii. 18-20, we see the Lord as the One to whom all authority (*exousia*) is given in heaven and on earth, commissioning His disciples to go forth on a new errand. In chap. x., He had already sent them forth, but into a carefully defined and limited sphere (see verses 5, 6). Now the sphere is unlimited, and no nation, not even Israel, is to have preferential treatment. This commission has never been abrogated. If we do not find in the Acts the formula, "into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," it is only because such use was taken for granted. How, for instance, could it have been omitted at Pentecost? And yet the formula is not mentioned in Acts ii. Truly, the Lord has not left us without marching orders, throughout the nineteen centuries of this dispensation. But not only did the apostles need authority (*exousia*), but they needed power (*dunamis*). To this our Lord refers in Luke xxiv. 49, above quoted. "Tarry ye in Jerusalem, until ye be endued with POWER from

on high," and this was explained in Acts i. 8. "Ye shall receive power after that the HOLY GHOST is come upon you." This promise was blessedly realised at Pentecost. Men who had fled like scattered sheep before the wolves, now stood firm as lions. He who had denied his Lord by the flickering fire of a servants' hall, now in broad daylight charged his Master's murderers with having "denied the Holy One and Just." Later on, the boldness of Peter and John convinced the great ones of Jerusalem that they had "been with Jesus," and this "apostolic succession" of witnesses has never ceased. In one sense, the enduement received at Pentecost never left the apostles, for the Spirit remained on them; but as far as the practical outcome went, it needed renewing. It seems quite clear that the apostles felt the need of a fresh enduement when they prayed, in Acts iv. 29: "Grant unto Thy servants that with all boldness they may speak Thy Word," and the answer came, "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the Word of God with boldness." It can hardly be gainsaid that Peter needed fresh power at Antioch, when his old enemy, "the fear of man," again got the mastery—"when fearing them of the circumcision." We need fresh power for every act of service, and "they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength" (Isa. xl. 31). The apostle Paul, than whom we may doubt if anyone was ever more endued with power from on high, nevertheless felt his need of more power when asking the saints to pray: "And for me, that utterance may

be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the Gospel" (Eph. vi. 19). Though a mighty man of God, he realized intently His own weakness, and continued dependence upon God. "When I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Cor. xii. 10); "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. iv. 13). He is ever the same to strengthen and to help. But, it may be asked, Why then is not more power experienced in our service? First, I would say we must not overlook or undervalue what God is doing. Are we not all monuments of His grace, and have we not abundant cause for praise? Yet for all that, we may be much "straitened in ourselves." It is true that the ruined state of things around must sadly hinder corporate testimony, and that if the world is not blessed, it is they who "resist" or even "blaspheme" the Holy Ghost. But are we not also responsible for having "grieved" or "quenched" our divine Indweller? The love of money; neglect of the Word of God for the books of men; worldly conformity and other evils, have joined hands to hinder the blessing. Was not the state of things depicted in 2 Cor. xii. 20 enough to prevent blessing? Would it not perhaps describe the condition of things even now, in some assemblies of the saints? "Debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, back-bitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults." May not here be the secret of weakness? We have been so intent on setting our brother right, that we have sometimes forgotten self-judgment, and grass has grown on the path to the throne of grace.

Let us then afresh "separate ourselves unto the Lord" (Num. vi. 1); let us take away from the midst of us . . . the putting forth of the finger, speaking vanity, and draw out our soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul: then shall we enjoy in larger measure the fulness and liberty of the Spirit, and be of those who "build the old waste places and raise up the foundations of many generations; and we shall be called The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in" (Isa. lviii. 9, 10, 12).

"May the Lord comfort our hearts and stablish us in every good word and work!"



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