

*T H E*  
**Spirit of God**  
**and His Operations**



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# The Spirit of God and His Operations

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In the human body there appear sometimes malignant growths of such a distinct character that they can be clearly defined and easily removed by the surgeon's knife. There are other growths, however, that are so closely bound up with vital parts that their removal is a matter of much difficulty because they have to be dissected out with the utmost care and the highest skill so that life may not be imperiled or healthy tissue injured. It is somewhat similar as to the body of truth committed to the saints. Malignant growths in the form of false doctrines have again and again appeared, some of them so markedly foreign to the whole revelation of God that the clumsiest spiritual surgeon could detect them and remove them with the Word of God aptly applied; others, however, are so subtle because of being skilfully woven into the texture of truth that the greatest care is needed in dealing with them, lest

in opposing the error we should be found injuring what is the undoubted truth of God.

In the latter class we place a great deal that is taught as to the person and work of the Spirit of God. Much that is put forth we must stamp as error, but it is so mixed with what is truth that one in dealing with it has to use extreme caution lest he should find himself in opposition to what is clearly of God.

When, for example, the presence of the Spirit of God in the world today is insisted on and His personality as a Divine Being is emphasized; when the church of God is charged with neglect of these vital facts and their tremendous consequences for the individual believer and the saints collectively, and when the call is sounded forth to give heed to these things, then one can feel only sympathy with all this and recognize in the fullest way the need for the urgent appeal. This, to revert to our figure of speech, is healthy tissue which ought not to be and must not be injured but encouraged and developed to the utmost.

But when we find interwoven with those timely truths as to the Spirit of God the assertion that He is living in the world in the same way, or rather in a greater way, that is with greater power than our Lord Jesus, if He had remained here, and

that He is incarnated in blood-washed men and women, then we say a cancerous sore of error has fastened itself upon the healthy tissue of truth and we must as skilfully as we can, use the knife of the Word to dissect away this error, leaving uninjured the "faith once for all delivered to the saints." So we reject wholly and unhesitatingly the foregoing assertion as to the manner of the Spirit's presence amongst us. The doctrine enunciated is essentially and dangerously false.

**In No Sense Whatever Has the Holy Spirit  
Become Incarnate,**

and we cannot see how any one with a true idea of incarnation could make such a statement.

Think for a moment of the bearing of this on the profound mystery of the Word becoming flesh and dwelling among us. That which was and ever will be His glory, "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a Servant, and was made in the likeness of men," is taken away or at least evacuated of all meaning to the soul by these erroneous statements.

But along with the foregoing statements is coupled another that we must examine. It is that no saint is indwelt by the Spirit as a person of the Godhead separa-

ble from Christ, unless that saint has definitely and consciously accepted or taken the Holy Spirit in the same way that he first took the Lord Jesus when he was saved. The element of truth in this statement is that saints are indwelt by the Spirit of God received by them, but this truth is used here only as a groundwork for serious error.

Then, in addition, it is being held and taught that it is not only permissible but that it is proper and becoming that we should address prayer to Him even as we do to the Father and the Son. The effect as a whole of these views is to push the Son out of His place and in fact to dishonor Him, although probably that is not the intention of those who make these statements. But we know that Satan has this ever in view and alas! saints have again and again unconsciously lent themselves to His purposes to their own shame and the injury of their fellow-believers.

Probably the best way to meet these errors is to examine what the Word teaches as to the presence and operation of the Holy Ghost. This will build up the truth in the soul and destroy error at the same time. The first thing then that we would notice is that in every epistle addressed to the saints in the New Testament it is taken for granted that

### **They Are Indwelt by the Spirit of God.**

It has been stated that the reason for God's people being worldly and in a poor state generally is that they have not been taught this truth (?) about the reception of the Spirit of God. Let us test this by the Word.

Look, for instance, at the Corinthian saints. They were carnal, worldly, heretical and almost everything else that God's people ought not to be, and the Apostle wrote to them to correct their sad condition. Now let us ask, does he suggest that the explanation of their state is that they had not received the Holy Ghost? No, emphatically not. Carnal as they are, he writes to them, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor. 3:16), and "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God?" (1 Cor. 6:19). Thus collectively and individually they are reminded of His presence among them and in them, and not once is the suggestion made that what they needed was to receive Him for their deliverance from the evils rife among them.

Later on, in chapter 12, verse 13, he says, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one

Spirit.” Furthermore, in the second epistle to these same Corinthians, which also has the character of correction,—although some evils had been removed,—the Apostle says, “Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath *anointed* us, is God; Who hath also *sealed* us, and given the *earnest* of the Spirit in our hearts” (2 Cor. 1:21, 22).

So that to saints, who were as much out of touch with God as one can conceive of saints ever being, does the Apostle write, not that they needed to receive the Spirit of God, but that they already had Him in His person and work in the fullest way.

The epistle to the Galatians is another of these corrective epistles. The saints addressed here had wandered far from the truth of God in the gospel. Does the Apostle suggest that the explanation of their condition is the non-reception of the Holy Ghost? Not at all; but on the contrary, he asks them the question, “This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith?” (Gal. 3:2) and in another place says, “Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father” (Gal. 4:6).

We have referred to these epistles because here, if anywhere, we would expect to find, if it existed, some confirmation of



the assertion that worldliness among saints is to be attributed to their not having received the Holy Ghost. But the very contrary is the case and the truth shown here is that saints may be worldly and carnal, and unsound in walk and doctrine, *in spite* of the presence and operations of the Spirit of God in them.

We repeat, then, there is not in the epistle a hint of one being acknowledged as a Christian at all without his having received the Holy Ghost. Moreover, there is the positive statement in Romans 8:9, "But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His."

All kinds of arguments have been used to get rid of this definite statement and many attempts have been made to modify it by translating the Greek words in a new way; but to the simple mind there is but one meaning possible, and that is that unless one has the Spirit of Christ he is not Christ's. And as to the form of the Greek expression, it is the same as is found in 2 Tim. 2:19, "The Lord knoweth them that are His." Let the words then have their full weight on the conscience, for they sum up all that we have found from all the Epistles.

As a confirmation of this from another side, we may cite Jude 19, where the writ-

er describing ungodly men who had crept in unawares among the saints says of them, "These be they who separate themselves, sensual, *having not the Spirit.*" This would have no force whatever as Jude uses it, if we allow the thought that there are Christians without the Spirit of God. It is a most significant statement, and, when coupled with Romans 8:9, makes an impregnable defense against the claim that there are Christians who have not received the Holy Ghost.

Such a class is unknown, at least in the Epistles, and this is felt by those we are opposing, so to support their views they usually resort to the Acts of the Apostles. There we must follow them.

No one with the slightest acquaintance with the Word will question the statement that the presence of the Spirit of God in the believer individually and the church collectively is a blessing that belongs to this dispensation. Whatever may have been the character of His operations among the people of God prior to Pentecost, it is manifest that since that time He has been here in a wholly new way. John the Baptist, the forerunner of the Lord, distinguishes his own work from that which was to follow, by saying, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He that cometh after Me is mightier than I, Whose shoes I am not worthy to

bear; He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire” (Matt. 3:11), and again, “He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon Whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost” (John 1:33). As to the time when this should be done, we are informed in John 7:39 that it would not be until Jesus should be glorified—that is to say, until His death, resurrection, and ascension to the Father. This is further emphasized in John 14, 15, and 16, where the Lord in His last meeting with His own before His death, tells them in detail of this marvelous gift, the Holy Ghost Who should come to them after He had gone. In chapter 16, verse 7, He says, “It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you,

**But If I Depart I Will Send Him Unto  
You.”**

In keeping with this we find Him in Acts 1, after He is raised from the dead, commanding His disciples to remain in Jerusalem until they should receive this blessing. This they did, and so the book of the Acts is a history of the coming of the Spirit of God into the world and the beginning of His operations among men, consequent on the death, resurrection, and

glory of the Lord Jesus. The nature and diversity of these operations in all their details would be an interesting and profitable study, but we propose for the present to call attention to what we may call His *initial* work. It is most necessary in order to an intelligent apprehension of this book, to distinguish His operations, the *completed* from the *continuous*, the *temporary* from the *abiding*, for many have been led into error of a very grievous kind both in doctrine and practice, by unthinkingly regarding all His operations recorded here as a sample of what He would always do in this age. So you have people advertising Pentecostal meetings, and these are often accompanied by gross extravagances of speech and conduct, which are supposed to be a renewal of the early times of the Spirit's work. Now all such errors are corrected when we bear in mind that Pentecost was, so to speak, the birthday of the Church of God, for the descent of the Holy Ghost on that historic occasion, was that which constituted those gathered in that upper room, this new thing now brought into being, henceforth to be known as the Church of God, the body of Christ. This baptism with the Spirit was extended later to other groups of believers, the Samaritans in chapter 8, and the Gentiles in chapter 10, "for by (or, *in*) one Spirit were we all baptized into one body,

whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free" (1 Cor. 12:13, R. V.). And the Church of God has existed on earth from that time to this, without one instant's cessation of being, so it is the height of absurdity to think of another Pentecost or a fresh baptism with the Spirit.

Some have contended that the Church did not exist until Paul was raised up, but this cannot be maintained from Scripture, for the Church is spoken of as in being, again and again before Paul's name is even mentioned. True it is he was the one raised up of the Lord to communicate to the Church its place and privileges, but this is easily understood. A child is born into a wealthy family without having any conception of its surroundings or place in society. Later on it learns all this but it does not acquire the place by learning of it. It only learns what it already has. So the Church of God in its earliest days was nothing less than the Church of God, although it may have been quite ignorant of its marvelous place and portion until Paul was empowered to make it known.

We repeat then, these early chapters of the Acts of the Apostles bring before us the mighty operation of the Spirit of God in bringing into being this wonderful thing called the Church of God, but that being done, it was done once for all, for the very

nature of the operation forbids the thought of its repetition. With this in mind it is easy to understand the delay in the case of the Samaritans. They had a system of worship among them which they claimed was of equal authority with that which obtained in Jerusalem. This is plainly stated by the woman in John 4, but her claims are positively refused by the Lord. He says to her, "Ye worship ye know not what, we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews." So that this rivalry might be forever buried out of sight in a righteous way, the Spirit of God is withheld from them until Peter and John came down from Jerusalem and prayed for them and laid their hands on them. Thus carefully is the unity of the Church established and maintained; for had the Samaritans received the Holy Ghost independently of the action of the apostles from Jerusalem, there might have been apparent ground for a claim that there was now a Samaritan church as well as a Jewish one. And on the other side, this unity is protected in the case of the Gentiles in Acts 10. The Roman Centurion is ordered to send for Peter, and when the gospel is being preached to the company gathered in his home, the Holy Ghost falls on them directly, and thus the prejudice at Jerusalem that would have refused the Gentiles a place in this new thing is re-

buked, and its voice silenced. When Peter is taken to task for going to the Gentiles, the climax of his defense is, "Forasmuch as God gave them the like gift as He did unto us who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I that I could withstand God?" In the case of the Samaritans the danger lay in their reviving their ancient claim; in the case of the Gentiles the menace to unity was in the possibility of the Jews maintaining their ancient prejudices. How admirable was the wisdom of God that removed all these perils!

Acts 10 is the last of these operations and a word that has been used to describe them, now disappears from the book entirely. It is the word "fall." It is used in Acts 8:16 with reference to the Samaritans, "For as yet He *was fallen* upon none of them;" and in Acts 10:44, referring to the Gentiles, it is said, "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the Word," and once more in Acts 11:15, Peter in rehearsing his visit to Cornelius says, "And as I began to speak

### **The Holy Ghost Fell on Them As on Us at the Beginning."**

Thus in these three cases His action is described by a word never again used concerning Him or His operations. This is

very significant and helps to mark off this period from all that followed as being entirely distinct in character.

Now it may be legitimate enough to argue from the passages we have looked at in the Acts of the Apostles that *birth of the Spirit* is not the same thing as the *gift of the Spirit*, but surely it is not legitimate to argue from them, as is sometimes done, that there may be an interval of years between them. No intelligent Christian would raise a question as the disciples gathered in the upper room having been born again before the Spirit was given, but the reason for their not having the Spirit is plain, "Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7:39). Can this be alleged now as a reason for anyone not having the Spirit? In the case of the Samaritans, the reason is just as obvious; He had not yet come to Samaria, "He was fallen *on none of them.*" But when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that they had received the Word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John and thus as soon as possible a legitimate way was opened up for Him to come upon them. Let it be noted, too, that while the operation of receiving the Word of God, and receiving the Spirit of God are spoken of as distinct, the reason for their being given the latter was that they had received the former, and there was no avoidable delay between the operations.



The third case, that of the Gentiles in Acts 10, is very simple, and that is the pattern for us today, for we are Gentiles. As soon as Cornelius and his company heard the gospel and believed it, the Holy Ghost came upon them. This is distinctly stated in Acts 10 and emphasized in Acts 11:15, where Peter says, "*And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them.*" In Acts 15, where the matter is again rehearsed by Peter, he says, "Men and brethren, ye know that a good while ago, God made choice among us that the Gentiles by my mouth *should hear the Word of the gospel and believe.* And God which knoweth the hearts,

**Bare Them Witness, Giving Them the Holy Ghost."**

Here is the whole matter in a nutshell. The Gentiles heard the gospel and believed it, and God immediately sealed them and gave them the earnest of the Spirit in their hearts, as well as baptized them into the one body.

There are one or two more cases in the Acts of the Apostles that we must look at, but let us pause here to ask a question. Why should anyone argue from what has been before us that there should be today a measurable interval between believing the gospel and receiving the Spirit? I can-

not class myself with the disciples in the upper room for obvious reasons, nor with the Samaritans in chapter 8. The state of things represented by them has long since passed away. To put myself in the case of the disciples in Jerusalem would be to deny that the Holy Ghost had come,—to put myself in the place of the Samaritans, would necessitate apostles to communicate to me the Spirit. The Holy Ghost has come, and the apostles have ceased, so, we repeat, the state of things represented by these two classes has passed away. This is what we mean by operations of the Holy Ghost that are *temporary* as distinguished from those that are *abiding*. The work of God in its abiding character and sphere in this dispensation began in Acts 10, and we may surely thank God for the record there. We have already dwelt on it but observe again how suitable it is for all time. The gospel was believed and the Holy Ghost was given *as soon as the gospel was believed*. Their responsibility was ended as soon as they believed the gospel, the communication to them of the Holy Ghost God took care of, without further action of any kind on their part.

The two other cases in the Acts of the Apostles that we must look at are very instructive in every way, although we confess that we do not see how people who claim to be Christians without the Spirit

of God, can find any comfort in them. But they are sometimes appealed to by such and by others who, although claiming to have the Spirit for themselves, yet allow the thought of there being real believers in Christ today who have not received the Holy Ghost.

The first case is that of Paul as recorded in Acts 9. Of course we would expect in his case some exceptional features, and while there are such, yet it is remarkable how uniform the action of God is with all who turned to Christ from among the Jews after the coming of the Holy Ghost. On the day of Pentecost many were convinced of the Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth, and their terrible sin in rejecting and crucifying Him. This conviction brought forth the cry, addressed to the Apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" In like manner, Saul of Tarsus, engaged in his dreadful work of seeking to blot out all that called on that Name, is smitten to the earth and learns that he has been guilty of persecuting the Blessed One, Jesus, the Messiah of Israel, the Son of God. He, too, cries out, "What shall I do, Lord?" exactly the same as the convicted ones on the day of Pentecost. They addressed their question to the Apostles, he to the Lord Himself. But the state of soul is alike—one of

## Conviction

of sin—and in neither case was there peace. But on the day of Pentecost the answer was immediate, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

With Saul the Lord deals differently, as might be expected, and he is told to go into Damascus to learn what he shall do. For three days and three nights he remained in darkness, neither eating nor drinking, and at the end of that period Ananias is sent to him with the message of peace. He puts his hands on him that he may receive his sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost, and calls on him to be baptized that his sins may be washed away (Acts 22:12-16). The message to him is practically the same as the one given to the awakened Jews on the day of Pentecost. Up to the visit of Ananias we do not doubt there was a terrible storm raging in the bosom of Saul—waves of remorse, repentance, grief and despair must have almost overwhelmed him. We know enough of his character as revealed in the Word to be able to imagine some of the feelings of his heart during those three days. He was not a weak character, but a man of deep convictions and great moral force. For one like him to learn that he had been

engaged in a campaign of wickedness, when he thought he was doing God's service must have meant a complete collapse. Perhaps for a time there was no thought of prayer, so great was his grief, but at last on the third day he bends his knee to seek mercy of the One against Whom he has sinned, and while thus engaged he sees in a vision a man coming to him with a message of peace and comfort. Very soon his vision is realized and his soul is basking in the sunlight of the grace of our Lord Jesus, in the power of the Holy Ghost.

Sometimes people get a little confused in reading the various accounts of Paul's conversion, especially the last one in Acts 26, because in this one none of these details are given. But one must bear in mind the circumstances in which Paul tells his story here. He is before king Agrippa and so he omits all details. The name of Ananias is not mentioned, nor the three days of blindness, nor even his baptism. The whole story is condensed, as was becoming in the circumstances — the details, however, are given in chapter 9, and chapter 22, and are all most interesting.

Now let us turn to Acts 19, where we have the last instance of the receiving of the Holy Ghost—the case of the Ephesian disciples. Let us look at their history and their condition when the Apostle Paul met them. Chapter 18 will throw some light

on this. There we read of Apollos, a Jew of Alexandria, coming to Ephesus and teaching diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. Probably these disciples are the fruit of this testimony in the synagogue—at least they know no more than Apollos knew when he came to Ephesus. Apollos himself has been instructed in the full truth of Christianity by Aquila and Priscilla, but instead of remaining to communicate it in the synagogue he passes on to Corinth. Then Paul comes on the scene and finds these disciples. They are, of course, Jews, but Jews who had received through Apollos the testimony of John the Baptist and had been baptized with his baptism. John's testimony was a call to repentance and his baptism was a baptism to repentance. Now the Holy Ghost was not given to souls because of their repentance, and evidently Paul saw at once that these disciples were lacking in the very essential of Christianity. So he puts his question, "Did ye receive the Holy Ghost when ye believed?" (R. V.). Their answer and Paul's question, too, as given in the Authorized text is somewhat misleading, but the Revised Version simplifies it. It reads, "Nay, we did not so much as hear whether the Holy Ghost was given." It is absurd to think of believers not knowing of the existence of the Holy Ghost, and besides, an integral

part of John the Baptist's testimony was that the Messiah should baptize with the Holy Ghost. But they had not heard of the fulfilment of this—in other words, they had not heard the gospel, that the Lord Jesus had come, and died and risen again and gone back to the Father, and that consequent on this the Holy Ghost was here. This confession of theirs leads Paul to explain to them the import of John's baptism, and when they heard it they submitted to Christian baptism, according to the rule established for Jews on the day of Pentecost, and Paul having laid his hands on them, they received the Holy Ghost.

The only element present in this case that was lacking in the case of those Jews who were converted on the day of Pentecost is the laying on of the apostle's hands, and we believe the reason for this is easily found. They were Jews, as we have pointed out, but by this time the wave of blessing had receded from Israel and was now flowing over the Gentile world. Peter and his companions have disappeared from the record of the work of God. They were the apostles of the circumcision, but the circumcision is no longer the sphere of the Grace of God,—it has become an empty shell set aside by God. Paul, the apostle of the uncircumcision, is now at the front, and the change is seen in the way in which God dealt with these Ephesian Jews. He

is about to do a great work in Ephesus through Paul, and He paves the way for it by magnifying him among these disciples. In the days when God was working among the circumcision, the Samaritans had to learn that their religious system could not be owned by God at all,—now the Jews must learn that their system, too, had been set aside, and blessing for them must come through the one who was the apostle of the uncircumcision. The Samaritan system never was of God, but how much better is the Jewish system now? Not a whit. The words of the Lord are now being fulfilled, “The hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father” (John 4:21). “This mountain” was Gerazim, the Samaritan holy place, and it never was owned by God. Jerusalem was God’s holy place, but it is now set aside. This is the meaning of these Jewish disciples having to receive the Holy Ghost through Paul,—the hour has come for Jerusalem and all that for which it stands to be set aside, and the establishment in its own proper character, of the Church of God.

In Ephesus God did a very great work, and Paul was signally honored in it. Not merely did he communicate the Holy Ghost by the laying on of his hands, but just as in Jerusalem Peter’s shadow was sought by the sick for healing, so here



handkerchiefs are taken from Paul's body to the sick, and the diseases depart from them, and the evil spirits go out. In all truth he could say, "I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles" (2 Cor. 6:5). Furthermore, the work of God flourished in other ways, reminding one of Jerusalem in its palmyest days. There was the effort of the vagabond Jews to use the Name of Jesus which ended in their utter discomfiture, resulting in fear falling on them all, even as in Jerusalem the attempt of Ananias and Sapphira led to the same result. In Jerusalem there was the sacrifice of personal possessions to meet the need of the needy; in Ephesus there is the same whole-hearted abandonment of self-interest, in the burning of books to the value of about ten thousand dollars,—so mightily grew the Word of God.

In keeping with all this, the Epistle to the Ephesians is the one where the glorious character and place of the Church is unfolded in all detail, straining human language almost to the breaking-point to set it forth. Furthermore, when in days of declension the Lord would set forth, in a seven-fold picture, the various steps of departure from Him, He chooses Ephesus (not Jerusalem) as the starting point. It is to Ephesus He says, "Thou hast left thy first love" (Rev. 2:4). Not by the self-sacrifice of the Jerusalem saints, great as that

was, but by the devotedness of Ephesus does He measure love to Himself in its highest character. The reason for this we have already stated,—it is that the state of things in Jerusalem was but *temporary*, and so Jewish in character that it cannot be taken as a fair exhibition of the Church of God in its abiding character. In Ephesus, things are so ripened in the development of the purposes of God, that we have in the work there all the salient features in their due proportion of that wonderful masterpiece of God,—the Church of God. Or, in other words, we might say we have in Jerusalem the Church as a new-born babe,—in Ephesus, the Church in full maturity.

We have now gone over all the instances of the receiving of the Spirit of God recorded in the Acts. Which one of them justifies the theory of delay in this day in being sealed with the Spirit after believing in the Lord Jesus? Only in the case of the Samaritans or Jews is there any delay, and yet even in their case, is there any ground for speaking of an interval of years or even months? None whatever. *It is a theory, without one shred of Scripture to support it.* We reject it wholly. It may be of interest to look at the matter further, for the sake of positive edification.

## **Is It According to Scripture to Pray to the Holy Ghost?**

Some errors in doctrine and practice are unimportant, being hardly worth extended notice; others, however, because they have within them sinister possibilities, call for the most careful examination and refutation. It has ever been Satan's effort in this dispensation to dishonor the Lord Jesus Christ, and the means he has used to this end have been various. In the early days of the church he openly assailed His Deity in the system called Arianism, but this having failed, principally through the noble stand of Athanasius, he gradually introduced another system called Mariolatry, the worship of the virgin Mary, and by means of it the greater part of the professing church has been led astray, so that in it the glory of the Son of God is eclipsed by the place given to the woman who had the great honor conferred on her of giving birth to Him when He became man. Every movement in the way of revival has become a target for Satan's arrows, and an object of his most cunning devices, especially when that revival led (as every real revival must lead) to the Lord Jesus Christ getting his true place again in the heart and testimony of His people.

Now in discussing the question of praying to the Holy Ghost, it is not our object

to be critical of words or expressions that may be used in prayer, or exacting in the matter of forms or modes of address. We have heard of an old preacher, who, when he was questioned about praying to the various persons in the Divine Trinity, replied, "Do not trouble about it; there are no jealousies in the Godhead." With him we entirely sympathize, but when as part of a system that seems to make much of the Holy Ghost, there is incorporated a demand that we pray to Him directly, then we come to a standstill and begin to ask what this means. Is it merely the harmless error of some extremist, or is it a fresh effort of Satan to dishonor the Son by pushing the Holy Spirit out of the place the Word gives Him? Assuredly if this latter be the case, it is not a new device, although there may be some new features that call for more care and dependence on God to unmask the enemy. Long ago a servant of the Lord pointed out the possibility of the truth as to the Spirit of God being used to *eclipse*, not *reveal* the truth as to the Father and the Son, and this, he said, was simply the work of Satan. We confess we feel that in the system we have been examining in these papers, this is what is being done.

It might be sufficient as an answer to the question we put at the beginning to point out that neither in the Old Testa-

ment nor the New do we find precept or example for addressing ourselves in prayer to the Holy Ghost. To verify this, all one needs is a Concordance and a Bible. Furthermore, not only is there this negative testimony, but we believe the suggestion is wholly opposed to the testimony of the Word in a positive way. Let us look at it.

The first thing we call attention to is the salutation by the Apostle Paul to the saints in every epistle. We quote one of them because they are practically identical in all: "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 1:7). The Spirit of God is not mentioned by him in these salutations, be it noted. Moreover, when writing to the Corinthian assembly, which was planted in a veritable hot-bed of idolatry, he says: "For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth (as there be gods many and lords many). But to us there is but one God the Father, of Whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom are all things, and we by Him" (1 Corinthians 8:5, 6). Again let it be observed, in this formal statement of the Godhead in opposition to the lies of idolatry, there is no mention of the Holy Ghost. In perfect agreement with this is the testimony of John in his first epistle, "Who is a liar, but

he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father, but he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also. Let that therefore abide in you which we have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son and in the Father” (1 John 2:22-24). This is a most significant passage, because it is a statement of the truth in opposition to the denial of the Antichrist, and there is no mention of the Holy Ghost. Is the Holy Ghost not a Divine Person then? Assuredly He is; but if we are subject to the Word, we are bound to see that the Divine Persons Who are presented to us in this dispensation as subjects of testimony and objects of worship are the Father and the Son. The Holy Ghost is here to turn our minds and hearts there. He is identified with us, so to speak, not with them.

When in a formal way the work of the Spirit in the individual believer is unfolded in Romans 8, it is ever as

### **Linked With Us in Our Circumstances,**

not with the throne of God. In the matter of prayer we are told in verse 26, “Likewise also the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray

for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.” The Spirit is in the hearts of the saints, identifying Himself with them in their circumstances and forming the prayers fitting their varied needs. Sometimes these prayers are impossible of human utterance, save as a groan, but these groans are interpreted by Him Who searcheth not the words, but the hearts engaged in prayer. In other words, He is on the human side, not the Divine side, in the matter of prayer, so that the idea of praying to Him falsifies the whole meaning of the presence of the Spirit of God in His people, and is a practical denial of the fulfilment of the Lord’s words, “He dwelleth with you, and *shall be in you*” (John 14:17).

We hardly need to offer Scripture to justify prayer to the Father, because the New Testament abounds with it from the time our Lord taught the disciples to pray, saying, “Our Father Who art in heaven” (Matt. 6:9), right on to the days of the Apostle Paul, who says, “For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Eph. 3:14). None probably will question the propriety of

this form of address to our God. Some, however, hesitate about addressing the Son in prayer. But we think there is no need for hesitation as to this, for in John 5:22-23 we read, "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son,

**That All Men Should Honor the Son,  
Even as They Honor the Father."**

It was not the fancy of the poet but the authority of the Word that led him to sing:

*"All the Father's counsels claiming  
Equal honors for the Son,"*

for we read in Rev. 5:13, "Every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, heard I saying, "Blessing and glory and honor and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, *and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.*" Here surely is worship which the Son shares with the Father, coming from all the hosts of heaven. Then as to prayer, one example will suffice. It is found in 2 Cor. 12:8, "For this thing I besought the Lord (not the Father) thrice, that it might depart from me. And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee, for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me." We have quot-



ed the passage in full because it shows beyond possibility of question that it was Christ Who was addressed in prayer, for in His answer He says, "*My strength is made perfect in weakness,*" and the apostle's commentary is "that the *power of Christ* may rest upon me."

Let us then adhere to the form of sound words, for only in that path are we safe. The Apostle Paul in writing to the Corinthians says, "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy, for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus whom we have not preached,

**Or If Ye Receive Another Spirit Which  
Ye Have Not Received,**

or another gospel which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him." The spirit that would attract attention to himself as an object of worship or as one to be addressed in prayer is another spirit than Him Whom we have received, Whose every movement in us is towards the Father and the Son, to Whom be glory for ever and ever.



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