

ficacy of the Blood is the grave of water (John 3:5, 19:34; Tit. 3:5).

We therefore summarize here, as follows: 1. Man's ultimate intrinsic end, the end to which he is ordained by his Creator, is Union with God, Beatitude, Life Everlasting. 2. His ultimate extrinsic end is the glory of God (Matt. 25:34-40, Isa. 43:7, Rev. 4:11). 3. The one essential prerequisite or means to the attainment of these ends is the life with the Holy Spirit. 4. The beginning of this life with the Holy Spirit—the Spiritual Life—is in Union with Christ on the basis of the terms of pardon, namely, faith in Christ, repentance toward Christ, confession of Christ, and baptism into Christ. 5. The Spiritual Life embodies the three phases as described above—the *purgative*, the *illuminative*, and finally the *unitive*; and the end product is the fully redeemed person, redeemed in spirit and soul and body (1 Thess. 5:23). These five fundamental propositions, on which the Scriptures speak with uniform consistency and clarity, constitute the framework of the present series of studies of the Holy Spirit and His operations.

5. Difficulties of Our Subject

Certainly if the truth regarding the person and work of the Holy Spirit is to be preserved and disseminated at all, it will have to be done by the Church. The "world," said Jesus, cannot receive the Holy Spirit, "for it beholdeth him not, neither knoweth him" (John 14:17). The "world" simply is not interested in the Holy Spirit, in fact, the "world" cannot be expected to be interested in Him. Speculative theologians, analytical critics, demythologizers, and all their kind, like the disciples whom Paul found at Ephesus (Acts 19:2), seem not to realize that there is a Holy Spirit, or at least choose deliberately to ignore the claims He makes for Himself in Scripture. In the very nature of things, the Church alone—the true evangelical Church—can be looked to, to keep alive in the hearts of men whatever knowledge they may possess of the Spirit's being and activity (1 Tim. 3:15). Why, then, is the doctrine of the Holy Spirit so generally neglected by the Church of our time?

Undoubtedly one reason for this neglect is *the press of secularism on the spiritual life of the Church*. We are living in an age of things: gadgets of all kinds, visible and tangible things, physical things, mechanical things; things shaken up, pressed

down, running over. The circumstances of our mechanical and highly artificial civilization are surely anything but conducive to thinking in spiritual terms. The human race is so dominated at the present moment by *the sheer tyranny of things* that it stands in grave danger of losing its sense of the higher values of life, and hence the very music and dream of living. Somehow—perhaps through great suffering?—we shall have to learn anew the fundamental truth stated by our Lord, that “a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth” (Luke 12:15).

Another explanation, perhaps, of the Church’s neglect of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is in *the adverse reaction occasioned by the extravagances of those who carry the doctrine to such fanatical extremes*. The tendency on the part of certain sectists and cultists to ascribe to an operation of the Holy Spirit almost every impulse, emotion, and passion of the human soul, is derogatory to religion in general and most of all to the Spirit Himself. Such travesties on religion result not only in alienating thoughtful people from the Church, but also in discouraging intelligent churchmen from attempting to expound the doctrine of the Spirit lest they, too, fall into some grievous error. The ecstatic and orgiastic extravagances of so-called “Holiness” sects and mystic cults are anything but helpful to the spread of the Christian faith.

Then, again, *the obvious centrality of Christ in the Christian System, and in fact of the entire revelation of God to man, as recorded in the Bible*, may be cited as another reason for the prevailing tendency to overlook the Holy Spirit and His role in human redemption. The principal task of the Spirit in all ages, and especially in the present Dispensation, has been to testify concerning the Messiah. As Jesus Himself put it, in conversation with His disciples (the eleven) on the night of His betrayal, “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth. . . . *He shall glorify me: for he shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you*” (John 16:13-15). The Bible itself is the record of God’s progressive revelation to man through the agency of the Spirit. This entire revelation centers in the person and work of the Messiah: in the Old Testament, the Messiah who is to come; in the New Testament, the same Messiah, who has come, who has died for our sins, been buried, and raised up from the dead, and exalted to the right hand of God the Father. The revelation, however, is the work of the Spirit of God. In the words of an eminent

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writer on the subject, this—the glorification of Christ—is “the temporal mission of the Holy Ghost.” In Scripture, we have the complete testimony of the Spirit regarding the mission and work of Messiah, the Great Demonstration that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God (Matt. 16:16; John 20:30-31; Rom. 10:9-10). With becoming modesty, therefore, the Holy Spirit has kept Himself in the background. Nor has He indicated anywhere on the sacred pages that He would have men exalt and glorify Him; rather, He would have them honor, exalt, and glorify the Christ, the Anointed One. For in serving and glorifying Christ, they also exalt and glorify the Spirit who bears witness to Him. “He shall glorify me,” said Jesus explicitly, of the Spirit.

Again, it seems evident that another prime reason for the neglect of the doctrine of the Spirit in our time lies in the difficulties inherent in the nature of the subject itself.

In the first place, in this connection, there is the great difficulty of trying to apprehend, much more to comprehend, the being and nature of a Reality of whom it is impossible for us to get a mental image. Human thought is carried on largely in terms of images in the mind and of the language (symbolism) by which the meaning of these images may be communicated; indeed it is doubtful that, without the power of receiving and retaining images, man in his present state would be able to think at all. By its very nature the human mind, unaided by divine revelation, is prone to conceive of God only in those forms of which mental images can be derived: hence the worship of the sun, moon, earth, and stars; of animals, plants, and even insects; and the worship of gross and gruesome idols. These are all things that can be seen, and men adhere instinctively to the things they can see. But the Spirit of God is not to be apprehended through the physical senses: His order of being lies beyond the physical (John 1:18, Exo. 33:20, Col. 1:15, 1 Tim. 6:16, 1 John 4:12, 2 Cor. 4:18). He is to be apprehended only through the intellect, affection, and will: that is to say, only through the “inner man” (2 Cor. 4:16). And even this apprehension has to be intelligently examined and kept within proper bounds by what He has revealed about Himself in Scripture; otherwise, untold confusion is the result. The difficulty here is precisely the difficulty involved in propagating a religion whose God is pure Spirit (John 4:24). This probably accounts for the fact that so many people—professing Christians though they may be—scarcely know that there is a Holy Spirit. They

seem incapable mentally of grasping the concept of an incorporeal Reality. This problem will always confront those who are trying to spread abroad in men's hearts a spiritual faith and life.

In the second place, there is the equally great difficulty of *the inadequacy of human language to communicate Divine thought and to bring Divine Realities down to the level of human comprehension.* This must have been the most profound problem encountered by our God Himself in His efforts to make known, through the Spirit, His Plan for the redemption of mankind. It accounts fully for the anthropomorphisms, types, symbols, metaphors, allegories, and parables of the Bible: to adapt His thoughts to our comprehension such devices are indispensable. The inadequacy of human language is the source of a great many of the problems which arise in our study of the Holy Spirit and His work. The profound mysteries of the subject, which are the mysteries of the very Being of God, and the mysteries of all other forms of being as well, appear to be shut out entirely from our human view: they are truths which simply lie too deep for words (Deut. 29:29). There are intimations in Scripture that the Spirit Himself labored under considerable difficulty in attempting to portray in words for future generations to read, some of the more profound events in the life of Christ and even some of the mysteries of His own operations in the created world. Perhaps, as Raymond Calkins has pointed out,¹ this difficulty is indicated by such words and phrases which occur not infrequently in the New Testament, as "like," "like as," "as if," "as it were," etc. Take, for instance, the scene at the baptism of Jesus: the opening of the heavens, the voice of the Father introducing His Only Begotten, and the descent of the Spirit upon the Son." "I have beheld," said John the Baptizer later, "the Spirit descending *as* a dove out of heaven; and it abode upon him" (John 1:32). This very simile shows that John found it difficult to describe the experience adequately in human language. Luke, who asserts in the prologue to his biography of Jesus, that he had obtained the information recorded therein from "eye-witnesses and ministers of the word" (Luke 1:2), clarifies the scene at the Jordan to some extent, but retains the simile. He says: "Jesus also having been baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended in a bodily form, *as* a dove, upon him" (Luke 3:21-22). Again, of the suffering of our Lord in Gethsemane, Luke writes: "And being in agony

1. *The Holy Spirit*, 105, 106.

he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became *as it were* great drops of blood falling down upon the ground" (Luke 22:44). Luke is always precise in the use of language. Especially is this true of his description of the demonstrations which accompanied the descent of the Spirit upon the Apostles on the day of Pentecost. Luke was not there, of course, when it happened. He is relating what he has been told by others who were present on the occasion. "Suddenly there came from heaven," he tells us, "a sound *as of* the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, *like as of fire*; and it sat upon each of them" (Acts 2:1-3). Not a real wind, but the *sound* as of a mighty wind; not actual fire, but tongues parting asunder which had the appearance of flames of fire. These similes—and there are many others of like import throughout the Bible—all indicate how difficult it must have been for the Spirit, in preparing the permanent record of these earth-shaking spiritual experiences, to describe them adequately in human language. Of course, there is nothing surprising about this fact. The mysteries of the Being of God (the "ultimates") are facts which in themselves lie beyond the pale of human experience and are therefore always in some measure incommunicable to us; hence, they must be apprehended by faith (Heb. 11:6). We shall have to be content, therefore, with only partial knowledge, such knowledge as the Holy Spirit has seen fit to vouchsafe us, through the instrumentality of inspired men, in the Word of Life. For the fact remains that in this earthly life we do "see in a mirror, darkly." Our physical senses, instead of opening the real world to our view, actually shut it out. This of course is in adaptation to our present terrestrial environment. Only when we shall have laid aside the veil of this flesh shall we be able to discern Reality "face to face." This, moreover, will surely be a psychical rather than a physical vision. (Cf. 1 Cor. 13:12, 1 John 3:2, 2 Cor. 5:7, James 1:23, Phil. 3:12, Matt. 5:8). Hence, insofar as this present life is concerned we shall have to be content with what has been revealed (cf. again Deut. 29:29).

6. The Proper Approach to the Subject

How shall we approach the study of the Holy Spirit and His work? This is a matter of utmost importance.

In the first place, *we must come to our task in profound*