

things in Christ." Eph. 2:4-7: "God, being rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ . . . and raised up up with him, and made us to sit with him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus; that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." In the entire process of Divine revelation and demonstration, the Spirit has modestly kept Himself in the background, in order that the Son might properly fulfil His mission in the world of Messiah and Redeemer.

In this Great Demonstration of the Messiahship of Jesus, the first work of God the Father, through the agency of the Spirit, was the inspiration and consequent communication of mankind, of the Messianic predictions of the Hebrew Prophets. God the Father spent some forty centuries and more building up under the Old Covenant, by inspiration of the Spirit, a system of types, metaphors, and specific predictions, to serve the purpose of identifying the Messiah at His appearance in the world. As we have already seen, these Messianic predictions of the Old Testament were all fulfilled, even to the minutest detail, in the life, work, death, resurrection and exaltation of Jesus of Nazareth; and the types and metaphors of the Old Covenant were fulfilled, likewise to the minutest detail, in the antitypes of the Christian system.¹ The conclusion is unavoidable that the same Spirit who inspired the prophecies and types, inspired also the corresponding fulfillments and antitypes; the unity of the Scriptures can be accounted for on no other basis.

2. The Spirit and John the Baptizer

The activity of the Spirit under the Old Covenant became steadily intensified with the approach of "the fulness of the time" (Gal. 4:4) Divinely appointed for the appearance of the Messiah in the world and the establishment of the New Institution.

The first mention of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament Scriptures is in connection with that unique character, John the Baptizer, of whom it was declared, by the announcing

1. For the Messianic prophecies, *vide* Part Eleven, sect. 5, and for the Old Testament types, *vide* Part Eight, sect. 10, *supra*.

angel to Zacharias his father, prior to the child's conception: "He shall be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb" (Luke 1:15).

John, the son of Zacharias and Elisabeth, was the last representative of that long line of Hebrew Prophets which began with Samuel, and one of the most illustrious of that entire line. So illustrious was he in the sight of Heaven, that the Messiah Himself felt constrained to pay tribute to him. "Verily I say unto you," said Jesus, "Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist" (Matt. 11:11).

The fact must be kept in mind that, although the account of John's ministry is given in the New Testament or Christian Scriptures, that ministry itself was actually wrought under the Jewish Law and in the Jewish Dispensation. As a matter of fact, John's ministry was a special manifestation of Divine Providence toward the Jewish nation, and toward that nation only. The New Covenant did not come into effect until Jesus died on the Cross, thereby ratifying the New Covenant with His own precious blood, and at the same time abrogating the Old (Col. 2:13-15, Heb. 9:11-28); and the New Institution was not set up until the Holy Spirit descended, on the first Pentecost after the Resurrection of Christ, to take possession of the Apostles and to guide them in their ministry, and to incorporate the Body of Christ. Pentecost was the Day of beginnings, one of the most significant of which was the beginning of the Holy Spirit's hegemony on earth in and through the Church.

How was the Holy Spirit associated with John the Baptist? What was the Spirit's relation to John's character, ministry and message?

1. *The Holy Spirit foretold John's ministry, through the ancient Hebrew prophets.* Through Malachi, the Holy Spirit spoke, saying: "Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, will suddenly come to his temple" (Mal. 3:1; cf. Matt. 11:7-15, Mark 1:2, Luke 7:24-35). And through the prophet Isaiah, the Holy Spirit spoke as follows: "The voice of one that crieth, Prepare ye in the wilderness the way of Jehovah; make level in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and

the uneven shall be made level, and the rough places a plain; and the glory of Jehovah shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it" (Isa. 40:3-5; cf. Matt. 3:1-3, Mark 1:3, Luke 3:1-6, John 1:23). According to these Old Testament prophecies, John was to be the forerunner, the herald, of the Messiah. He was to prepare the way for the advent of the Son of God and to introduce Him to the world. John's ministry, moreover, was to mark the beginning of a world-wide moral and spiritual revolution, in which repentance and remission of sins should be preached in the name of Christ unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem (Luke 24:45-49). Concerning the prophecy of Isaiah, McGarvey writes: "Commentators give detailed application of this prophecy, and, following their example, we may regard the Pharisees and Sadducees as mountains of self-righteousness, needing to be thrown down, and thereby brought to meekness and humility; the outcasts and harlots as valleys of humiliation, needing to be exalted and filled with hope; and the publicans and soldiers as crooked and rough byways, needing to be straightened and smoothed with proper ideals of righteousness. But the application is general, and not to be limited to such details. However, civil tyranny and ecclesiastical pride must each be leveled, and the rights of the common people must be exalted before the kingdom of God can enter in."¹ (cf. I. J. W. McGarvey and Philip Y. Pendleton, *The Fourfold Gospel*, 68. Isa. 2; Zech. 4:7). In a word, the effects of the Gospel proclamation were to be, that those of low degree should be exalted, and those of high degree debased; that all should be required to come to God on the same terms of penitence and obedience and humility, and each should ultimately be judged according to his own works; that there should be neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female, in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). "The glory of Jehovah shall be revealed, and all flesh [i.e., without regard to distinction any longer between Jew and Gentile] shall see it together." This message was, of course, revolutionary, and John the Baptizer was indeed a moral and spiritual revolutionist.

2. *The Holy Spirit also prepared John for his ministry and inspired his testimony.* This preparation began with John's parents. "There was in the days of Herod, king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abijah: and

he had a wife of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years," that is "well advanced in their days." One day when Zacharias was attending to his priestly duties in the Temple, an angel appeared unto him, "standing on the right side of the altar of incense," with the announcement that, in answer to his prayers, his wife Elisabeth should bear him a son. "Thy wife Elisabeth," said the angel, "shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and he shall drink no wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israle shall he turn unto the Lord their God. And he shall go before his face in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to walk in the wisdom of the just; to make ready for the Lord a people prepared for him" (Luke 1:5-17). It is to be noted especially that John was to be filled with the Holy Spirit "even from his mother's womb"; also that he was to go before the Lord "in the spirit and power of Elijah" (Cf. I Kings 19:19). This means, of course, that the mantle of prophecy, discarded by Elijah long centuries before, and the voice of prophetic utterance, stilled throughout the intervening years since the restoration of the Temple and the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, would both be temporarily restored in all their vigor in the ministry and message of John. He was to be the last of the illustrious line of prophets; upon him the mantle of Elijah should descend. His message was to be the message of the Spirit to the Jewish nation, and the Spirit prepared him in a special sense for his work and guided him in the accomplishment of it.

3. *The Holy Spirit inspired John's parents to utterances of praise and prophecy.* In the course of time, Mary, the expectant mother of Jesus, paid a visit to her kinswoman, Elisabeth, in "a city of Judah" (Hebron). "And it came to pass, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit; and she lifted up her voice with a loud cry, and said, Blessed

art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come unto me" (Luke 1:41-43). Again, following the birth of John, when the child was presented in the Temple on the eighth day for circumcision, according to the Law, "his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying:

"Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel;
For he hath visited and wrought redemption for his people,
And hath raised up a horn of salvation for us
In the house of his servant David . . .
Yea and thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Most
High:

For thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to make ready
his ways;

To give knowledge of salvation unto his people
In the remission of their sins. . . ." (Luke 1:67-79).

4. *The Holy Spirit inspired John's message to the Jewish nation.* We read that "the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel" (Luke 1:80). His childhood and youth were spent in the desert solitudes, where he was being prepared and strengthened for the great work which God had marked out for him to accomplish. The wilderness nourished his stern, solitary spirit; there the consciousness of his Divine mission came to him fully; and "out of the desert he burst on the nation," says Maclaren, "sudden as lightning, and cleaving like it." "Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberias Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee . . . in the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness" (Luke 3:1-2). This statement, "the word of God came unto John," expressly identifies him with the great prophets. It means, in short, that the Holy Spirit guided him and inspired his message from that day forward.

5. *The Holy Spirit bore witness to Jesus, thus enabling John to identify Him as the Son of God.*

[Matt. 3:1-6]: And in those days cometh John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. . . . Now John himself had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins: and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then went out unto him Jerusalem, and all Judea,

and all the region round about the Jordan; and they were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins." [John preached the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins (Mark 1:4, Luke 3:3)] saying unto the people that they should believe on him that should come after him, that is, on Jesus [Acts 19:4]. [Matt 3:13-17]: Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to the Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John would have hindered him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? But Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus when he was baptized, went up straightway from the water; and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon him; and lo, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. [The descent of the Spirit upon Jesus at the latter's baptism was the Spirit's own sign (proof) to John that this was the Messiah whose coming he had been announcing to the multitudes.] [John 1:29-34]: On the morrow he [John] seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man who is become before me; for he was before me. And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, for this cause came I baptizing in water. And John bare witness, saying, I have beheld the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven; and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize in water, he said unto me, Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and abiding upon him, the same is he that baptizeth in the Holy Spirit. And I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God. [This—the baptism and anointing of Jesus—was the climactic event of John's ministry; from that moment John decreased, whereas the One whom he had announced to the world as the Son of God, increased (John 3:30)].

It must be understood of course that the name of this son of Zacharias and Elisabeth was John (Luke 1:13). When he began preaching and baptizing people, however, he became known as John the Baptizer.

Scripture teaching regarding the work of the Holy Spirit in relation to the ministry of John the Baptizer may now be summed up as follows: 1. The Spirit foretold by the Old Testament prophets the fact of John's ministry, the purpose of it, and the nature and effect of his message. 2. The Holy Spirit rested on John himself "even from his mother's womb," and especially prepared him for the work which God called him to do. 3. The Holy Spirit moved Elisabeth his mother, and Zacharias his father, to inspired utterances of praise and prophecy. 4. The Spirit came to John in the wilderness bringing him "the word of God"; immediately thereafter he began preaching, "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." 5. The Holy Spirit bore witness to Jesus in John's presence, by descending and abiding upon the latter at His baptism, thus

authorizing John to announce Him to the world as the Messiah, the Son of God.

Perhaps attention should be called to the fact here that John also, in the course of his preaching, announced that Jesus Himself would be the Administrator both of Holy Spirit baptism and of the baptism of fire. Matt. 3:8-12: "Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of repentance; and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And even now the axe lieth at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. I indeed baptize you in 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 in the Holy Spirit and in fire: whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly cleanse his threshing-floor; and he will gather his wheat into the garner, but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire." Cf. the words of Jesus Himself: "I tell you . . . except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). The Gospel Dispensation is the Dispensation of Divine judgment. As Paul said to the philosophers on the Hill of Ares: "The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now he commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent; inasmuch as he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:30-31). Holy Spirit baptism and the baptism of fire are subjects which will be treated fully in a subsequent section.

John's voice was indeed "a voice crying in the wilderness" (John 1:23). But it was a Voice that has been heard from that day to this, a Voice that will continue to be heard as long as time lasts. It comes ringing down through the centuries to us, crying: "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. . . . Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of repentance." It was a Voice supplied and vitalized by the Spirit of God.

3. The Spirit and the Begetting of Jesus

Among other things, the Spirit foretold through holy men of old (1) that the Messiah-Redeemer of mankind should be the Seed of a woman, that is, according to the flesh (Gen.