

also says, writing of Christ, who is now at the right hand of the Father: "He that descended is the same also that ascended far above all the heavens" (Eph. 4:10). What is said here of the Son may be said also of the Spirit. When He—the Spirit—shall have accomplished His temporal mission upon earth, He, too, will return to the Father, and to the Son also. And when He ascends to Heaven He will take the Body of Christ with Him,—the one new man which shall have been formed, as a result of His redemptive work, of both Jews and Gentiles. He will present the Bride to the Bridegroom, who will take her unto Himself in glory. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, and with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:16-17).

The Patriarchal era was the Dispensation of the Father, the Jewish that of the Son. The present Dispensation is that of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit descended to earth on the first Pentecost after the Resurrection of Christ. He began at once His great work of forming the Body of Christ. He came to indwell that Divine Body. The Church is, and will continue to be, as long as time lasts, the "habitation of God on the Spirit" (Eph. 2:22). The Church will continue to be God's Sanctuary until Jesus comes to meet her in the clouds and to receive her, as His Bride, into loving personal everlasting communion with Himself in glory.

We no longer pray for the Holy Spirit to come down from Heaven. He came—almost two thousand years ago. He has been here throughout all the intervening years. He will be here to the end of time, indwelling the Church, vitalizing her members, sanctifying them, renewing them from day to day, preparing them, collectively as His Bride, to meet the Bridegroom when He comes again.

2. The Earnest of the Spirit

The Scriptures teach that the indwelling Spirit Himself is to the Christian the *earnest* or *pledge* of that heavenly inheritance to which he shall ultimately attain as a child of the Heavenly Father: the pledge on the Father's part that

He, the Father, will give him this inheritance. 2 Cor. 1:21, 22—"Now he establisheth us with you in Christ, and anointed us, in God; who also sealed us, and gave us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." Eph. 4:30—"And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, in whom ye were sealed unto the day of redemption." The redemption of what? The redemption of our *bodies*, of course, the putting on of immortality,—the redemption of our bodies from the very consequences of sin, without which Redemption would not be complete. Eph. 1:13, 14—"Ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is an earnest of our inheritance, unto the redemption of God's own possession, unto the praise of his glory." Rom. 8:23—"Ourselves also, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to wit, the *redemption of our body*." These Scriptures clearly teach that God's saints have been sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, marking His possession of them in body, soul and spirit; and that the indwelling Spirit is the earnest or pledge that they shall ultimately take possession of that "inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven" for them (1 Pet. 1:4).

Now what is this eternal inheritance with respect to which the saints are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:17)? The Apostle Paul, by inspiration of the Spirit, makes it very clear what this inheritance shall be, 2 Cor. 5:1-5: "For we know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens." The "earthly house of his tabernacle" alluded to here is evidently the *physical body*, which is subject to dissolution. The "building from God" obviously refers to the *spiritual body*. He continues: "For verily in this we groan, longing to be clothed upon with our habitation which is from heaven; if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For indeed we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed [surely we do not want to be bodiless as Oriental mysticism would have it], but that we would be clothed upon, that what is mortal may be swallowed up of life. *Now he that wrought us for this very thing is God, who gave unto us the earnest of the Spirit.*" Thus it is made clear that the heavenly inheritance to which the saints of God shall ultimately fall

heir, is *immortality*. (*Immortality, in Christian doctrine, has reference strictly to the ultimate resurrection and glorification of the body. That part of man which is now mortal, and which may be made immortal by the working of that mighty power which God wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead (Eph. 1:19-20), is the body. Immortality (incorruption) must not be confused with mere survival.*) The indwelling Spirit is to the Christian a pledge on God's part of that eternal redemption, or putting on of immortality, which is one of the rewards of the Christian faith.

Christianity is unique in that it promises us, not only the reconciliation of our spirits with the Divine Spirit, but also the redemption of our bodies. There is no other Faith in the whole world which holds out such a hope. Phil. 3:20, 21—“For our citizenship is in heaven: whence also we wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, according to the working whereby he is able even to subject all things unto himself.” The same idea is conveyed in those well-known words of Jesus to the Eleven, John 14:2—“In my Father's house are many mansions.” What are the “mansions”—literally, “abiding-places”—alluded to here? Evidently the spiritual bodies with which the saints are to be clothed in the day of glorification. The same idea is taught throughout the entire fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians. Here the Apostle writes: “If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. . . . The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is of heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. . . . But when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory” (1 Cor. 15:35-57). The Apostle is contending here for the *bodily* resurrection and glorification of the saints. Their eternal inheritance is immortality. The indwelling Spirit is to them God's pledge that they shall ultimately come into possession of their spiritual bodies, that they shall put on glory and honor and incorruption (Rom. 2:7) and dwell forever with the Lord.

This is all prefigured under the Old Covenant. Under the Law of Moses, fleshly circumcision was the sign or token of

Covenant relationship. It was to the fleshly seed of Abraham the earnest of the Divine promise that they should eventually come into possession of Canaan, the Land of Promise. So, under the New Covenant, the indwelling Spirit—spiritual circumcision—is the seal, and at the same time the earnest or pledge to all Christians that God will bring them, in the fulness of time, into the heavenly Canaan, the rest that remaineth for the people of God (Heb. 4:9). Canaan, the home of Abraham's fleshly seed, is, throughout the Scriptures, the type of Heaven, the eternal home of Abraham's spiritual seed.

3. The Holy Spirit and Glorification

We come now to the last and probably the greatest work of the Holy Spirit in and for the saints of God—the consummating act of His temporal administration, Rom. 8:11 again: "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall give life also to your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you." The final work of the Holy Spirit for the saints of God will be *the quickening of their mortal bodies* preparatory to their final presentation to the Lord in glory.

The same Spirit who seals us, who indwells us, who is in us as the earnest of our inheritance, who transforms us from glory to glory, who intercedes for us with groanings which cannot be uttered, will never leave us—provided, of course that we do not quench the Spirit—until He shall have raised our bodies from the dead and transformed them into spiritual bodies, like unto the body of our glorified Redeemer ("conformed" them unto the image of the Son, in *body* as well as in spirit, Rom. 8:29). This work of the Holy Spirit is known in Scripture as *glorification*. Rom. 8:30—"whom he foreordained" in His Eternal Purpose, "them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified."

Nor is there anything unbelievable in this doctrine. The human spirit, as the organism is now constituted, is the vital principle which holds the matter of the body together and unifies it; when the spirit leaves the body, the latter falls apart, decomposes, resolves itself into its original elements. Now if