



*the
Golden
Candlestick*

**THE PLACE AND THE WORK OF
THE HOLY SPIRIT**

Part 2

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You may come to a position which you do not know how to meet; you see no resource for it. A new crisis has arisen, and the Holy Spirit must show you just how Christ meets that particular situation for you. That is the Spirit's witness to Christ, and that is the testimony of Jesus, the Holy Spirit maintaining it in us as a living, progressive thing. It is not that the Holy Spirit showed us ten, twenty, thirty, forty years ago that Jesus is the Saviour and there it stopped; but that every week, month, perhaps day since the Holy Spirit has been witnessing to something more of Christ in us. That is the testimony of Jesus. And right to this very day there is something that the Holy Spirit can show to us of the Lord Jesus which we never saw before, and bring the testimony right up to date. That is the church's ministry, that today — not ten years ago — I have a Christ who is right up to date in meeting my need. If the church had maintained *that* position, what a different story there would have been! The testimony today has resolved itself into a set of doctrines and creeds, and theological interpretations, the philosophy of Christianity, and all that sort of thing, instead of this experimental reality by the Holy Spirit.

How shall the testimony be maintained? Not by our preaching certain facts as contained in a book, but by our testifying to those facts having been made living realities by the Holy Spirit in our hearts. "He shall bear witness of Me ... ye also bear witness ...". That is what ministry is.

The world ministry of the glorified Christ carried out by the Holy Spirit

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth: 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 go, I will send Him unto you. And He, when He is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgement ... He shall glorify Me: for He shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you" (John 16:7-14).

A wide range is now brought in. It is the Holy Spirit moving out in the wide range of the world in relation to the glorified Christ. Every bit of this statement relates to Christ personally. "*Of sin*, because they believe not on *Me*; of righteousness, because I go to the Father ... of judgement, because the prince of this world hath been judged" (v. 9-11). Who did it? Christ! It is the threefold work of the Lord Jesus:

"They believe not on Me". Therefore they are convicted of sin. How does that apply? Well, He bore our sins in His own body on the tree, and if they do not believe that, then they are convicted under sin, they still remain under sin. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that

are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:1). But if you have not believed that He has borne your sin you are under sin, and the Holy Spirit’s work is to bring that home.

“Of righteousness, because I go to the Father.” Convicted in respect of righteousness “because I go to the Father”. That is another aspect and a very blessed aspect. The question of righteousness is all settled if Christ gets through to the Father. Surely the object of His coming was to deal with the whole question of righteousness. God requires righteousness, and will not set aside one iota of His requirement. In His own Person the Lord Jesus provided God with what He wanted, and because He did that He was able to go to the Father. Seeing that He is altogether righteous, He goes to the Father. Now the Holy Spirit comes to convict in relation to the fact that in Christ God has found what He wants — righteousness. And the whole righteousness question has been settled, and is represented by the Man in the glory.

“Of judgement, because the prince of this world has been judged”. Again you come to the darker side of things. This is a terrible contemplation for a sinner convicted of judgement. Upon what does judgement rest? This: that you are in the same company as the devil, the prince of this world who has been judged. If you have not accepted the Lord Jesus you come under that judgement, and you company with the devil. There is no judgement in Christ. We are delivered from judgement in Christ, altogether delivered. The fear of death and the fear of judgement has gone for ever for those who are in Christ, but the Holy Spirit convicts of judgement where we are not in Christ, and says that we lie under that judgement that the devil lies under. God never intended that; God never intended hell for any man or woman. Hell was never brought into being for you or for me, or for any man or any woman. Hell was made and is reserved for the devil and his angels, *but* there is the awful possibility of our being in league with the devil, in complicity with the devil, and we are there by nature if we have refused the Lord Jesus. We are said to be by nature children of wrath. Why is that? Simply because there is a spiritual, hidden alliance between all in Adam and the devil. Adam brought about that alliance with the devil, and broke his alliance with God; and all the children of Adam are in the alliance which Adam brought about by disobedience to God and obedience to the devil.

Christ has come and borne the wrath in our place, to deliver us from the wrath. Faith in the Lord Jesus means that we are saved from judgement, *but* the Holy Spirit is here to tell us that if we are not in Christ there is inescapable judgement. The world ministry of the Holy Spirit in relation to Christ. He

bore our sin; therefore we need not bear it. He provided righteousness for us, that we may come to God. He delivered us from judgement by bearing the judgement Himself. The world ministry of the Holy Spirit is related to Christ in glory, because of what Christ has done by His cross.

Men under the government of the Holy Spirit have ever been used to raise those major issues. Through their preaching, conviction of sin, of righteousness and of judgement has resulted. That is the work of the Holy Spirit.

If we are out of Christ the sin question lies at our door; we are responsible. We have to answer to God in the matter of all righteousness. Can we do it? We have to face sure and certain judgement! Are we ready for it? The Holy Spirit would convict concerning these things, but He is pointing to One who has borne the sin, so that we need not bear it; One who has provided us with a righteousness which we could never provide for ourselves; One who has swallowed up our judgement in His cross. The Holy Spirit bears witness to Him, the Christ who has gloriously accomplished all that work for our salvation. That is world ministry concerning the glorified Christ.

So we reach the final word: What is provided for us in the Holy Spirit? God has given His Spirit, and the Word says that He gives His Spirit to those who ask. You can have a no more beautiful, effective presentation of the whole case than that which is found in Luke 11. See how the Lord Jesus deals with this matter. He says: "Of which of you that is a father shall his son ask a loaf, and he give him a stone? or a fish, and he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he give him a scorpion?" (v.11,12). Which of you would do that? You say: No man in his right mind, unless he was a perfect fiend, would do a thing like that! It only wants an ordinary ground of loving parenthood to at least not do that, but if bread is asked, to give bread, if possible. Well, then, if you parents — and you, even at best, being evil "know how to give good gifts unto your children, *how much more* shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" (v.13). "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you" (v.9). All that is related to the Holy Spirit.

We have to recognise the necessity of the Holy Spirit, the values of the Holy Spirit, and the meaning of the Holy Spirit; and then, convinced to the very depths of our being that we cannot go on without the Holy Spirit, we come and seek, knock and ask, and He will not withhold.

THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH

Reading: John 14:16-17,26; 15:26-27; 16:12-15.

It is good for us to dwell upon some of the values of the Holy Spirit. The very things said about the Holy Spirit, the things which are commanded with reference to the Holy Spirit, are themselves indications of our need, that just show exactly what the Lord knows to be our need. He indicates both need and supply by the very phrases and terms in which He speaks of the coming and activity of the Holy Spirit. It is upon some of these that we shall dwell.

Notice how in these passages there is one designation given to the Holy Spirit, three times repeated. It is “the Spirit of truth”. Surely there is a significance of no small value in that the Lord Himself so repeated that title of the Holy Spirit; that in speaking of the other “Comforter” or Advocate He should repeatedly call Him “the Spirit of truth”. It must carry with it something to be taken account of. On the surface, of course, it would seem to mean that the Holy Spirit would impart and bring forth truth. That is true, but that is not the whole meaning of the phrase. The Holy Spirit has always brought truth to light, but there is a deeper meaning in the Lord’s title, and if we could really get that deeper value it would be some enrichment to us. It is something which we individually need, and which the Lord’s people as His church very much need.

It would sound quite commonplace if we were to say that if only the whole church all the way through from the beginning had remained under the absolute government, control and direction of the Holy Spirit a much greater testimony to the glory of Christ would have been found in this world than there is. That is a very ordinary kind of statement, but when you begin to look into the meaning of the Holy Spirit’s government, control, direction and ministry in general, and break it up, and analyse it, you become more and more deeply impressed with the tremendous and indispensable values of that ministry. And in this one connection alone, as the Spirit of truth, there are two values which cannot be overestimated, and which, if only they were found in their place among the people of God, would count for very much to His glory.

As the Spirit of truth He represents something extra to the Scriptures

He represents for the church, and for the Lord's people an extra something to the Scriptures. The Scriptures are the Scriptures of truth, but no one can really get the good of the Scriptures in a living way, enter into the living values of the Scriptures, except by the Holy Spirit. That, again, sounds a commonplace statement, but how searching it is!¹

Think of all the handling of the Scriptures that has gone on for twenty centuries! It can, in the main, be divided into two: the morally intellectual and rationalistic handling of the Scriptures, and what it has led to — a desert, a wilderness, a desolation. The result is that all the authority of the Scriptures has been set aside, and man's intellectual equipment has become the authority in the place of the Word of God. On the other hand, the merely mental taking hold of the Scriptures, not in a rationalistic way, a critical way, nor in the realm of antagonism, or opposition, or question, but in quite earnest, sincere, honest and devoted attention to the Scriptures; a mastery of the Scriptures, a great comprehension of the content of the books of the Bible and of the Bible as a whole — honest, earnest, devoted, sincere as it may be — can know very little more life than the other. There may be a great knowledge of the Scriptures, and yet a dead knowledge for all really spiritual purposes².

There is a classic illustration in the New Testament of what we are speaking about, in the case of Apollos. It was said of Apollos at one time of his life, that he was in a place of responsibility in the church, that he was a man mighty in the Scriptures. And yet it is disclosed almost immediately afterwards that the people under his ministry had never heard of the Holy Spirit's advent, and presence.

When the Lord Jesus thus speaks again and again of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of truth, He touches a very real need, and shows that the Holy Spirit provides for that need, that there is an extra something to the Scriptures, without which even the Scriptures cannot get us into the realm of real spiritual fruitfulness. There is only one realm in which you may have anything extra to the Scriptures, and that is the Holy Spirit's interpretation of them, the Holy Spirit's illumination of them, the Holy Spirit's quickening of them in our hearts. The Spirit of truth is just that extra and indispensable factor. There

1. With "something extra to the Scriptures" the author does not mean to say that the Holy Spirit's interpretation of the Scriptures ever deviates from the original, intrinsic message of the Scriptures, but that without the help of the Holy Spirit it is impossible to see how that very message can be applied and actually apply it.

2. The author does not mean to say that Bible scholarship has no real value. He had great respect for some learned brothers in Christ, like George Campbell Morgan and Martyn Lloyd-Jones.

is the truth concealed, but the Spirit of the truth is necessary to make that concealed truth a revealed truth. There is a great deal of difference between knowing truth through the Word of God by the Holy Spirit's revelation, and knowing truth as a statement in the Word of God. It is that which discriminates between what is, after all, without vital energy and that which is throbbing with life.

We are saying nothing for the moment, of necessity, about ministering the Word. It is possible for a very dead and unenlightened person to preach the Word of God, and the Holy Spirit to quicken the Word and make it live in some heart. But what we are saying emphatically is this, that unless the Holy Spirit does that, even the Word, though it be the Scripture, will fall short and fail. There is no special charm attached to the Book as a book. The value of the Book is that the Holy Spirit, who gave it, uses it; otherwise it can be used to death and not to life. And so you can find that even the Scriptures in the hands of one thousand different men can be given at any given point one thousand different interpretations. And the Holy Spirit does not give one thousand different and contradictory interpretations of the Word of God.

As the Spirit of truth He acts as a check upon all things said and done

What a factor that would be today in the church, if it were really operating! A check upon all things said! Do you know what it is to say something and the Holy Spirit act as a brake upon you, and tell you at once that that is not true and you had better put that right? Do you know what it is to have said something and find that when you have said it the bottom has fallen out of everything, and you cannot go on and that thing comes back to you? You feel there was something not quite right about that? Do you know what it is for the Holy Spirit to register in you, after you have said something, a sense of: 'You will have to think about that again; we have not finished with that yet?' And you know quite well that something has been buttonholed and you have to come back to that later on. And when you come back to the thing and get more light, and go over it again, you say: 'Well, my light on that was very imperfect, and I was dangerously near making a mistake, and the Holy Spirit knew it.' He is acting as a check upon things said. What a factor that is in ministry, and in life, in the general intercourse of the Lord's people. If you know that, it surely indicates that you are in the hands of the Spirit.

Think of the wider ranges of the whole testimony, the whole ministry of the church as well as of the individual conversation. What a factor for preserving things in absolute purity is the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit! It is almost unthinkable, beyond our imagination — what a different state would

prevail if that had always been the case in the history of the church! Think of all that has come in, that has not been checked up and ruled out as wrong, and has come to hold away. Why? Simply because the Holy Spirit was not there in control. It never would have been if He had been in His place.

Then as to things done as well as said: “They assayed to go into Bithynia; and the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not ... having been forbidden of the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia” (Acts 16:6,7). We know the fruitful result of that checking of action by the Holy Spirit, that Macedonia immediately became open. If on all things in our lives there was just that checking of action by the Holy Spirit, how much fruitless activity would be ruled out, and how everything would be conserved in a realm of fruitfulness.

These are only suggestions as to the necessity of the Holy Spirit, and it shows what the Lord has provided for His church. That is the nature of the church’s government of the life of the Lord’s people who will walk in the Spirit; the Spirit of truth giving the Lord’s own thought in life about things in His Word, checking the utterances and activities of His people. If you think about it in the realm of comparison or contrast with what there is, you will see how inestimable is the value of the Spirit of truth. We shall never say a wrong thing without knowing that we have said it. We shall never do a wrong thing without knowing all about it. We shall be having a wonderful, living unveiling of the Lord in His Word by the Spirit of truth.

There are certain other things which are said about the coming of the Spirit of truth. We are shown that there would be an effect in the different parts of the life and constitution of the believer.

The effect upon the mind

You will see from the Word, if you read it with this thought before you, that the coming of the Holy Spirit had a wonderful effect upon their minds.

a) Illumination

In the first place it was in illumination of the mind. The Lord Jesus said it would be so. “He shall take ... and show” (John 16:15, AV). “I have many things to say unto you, but ye *cannot* ... now” (John 16:12). Your capacity is such now that I cannot say it; when He comes that capacity will be enlarged, and you will be able! You will see what now you cannot see, even though I were to say these things! You will understand what it is now impossible for you to understand, even though I were to go on talking! But when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, there will be a wonderful change in your minds!

Paul more fully dealt with that matter, and it is a point to note that he dealt with it at what we may call quite an advanced point in the life of the church. When you get to the letter to the Ephesians you are getting into a fairly large realm of revelation. You are certainly not at the beginning of the Christian life when you are in the realm of Ephesians. You are coming to ultimate things; unto the profoundest things; you are in the realm of the mystery which had been hid from all ages and generations. The apostle *there*, in relation to believers who may have a lot of revelation, a lot of truth, prays that they may be granted a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. This matter is going on and on, and ever on, and Paul, the aged, will still have the longing to know Him, even at the end. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the illumination of the mind concerning the Lord Jesus, in an ever-growing way, right on, continuously.

We find that blessed movement in the case of the disciples themselves. How their minds were arrested! How difficult it was — no — impossible for them to understand what He was saying! How they betrayed their failure to grasp the inner meaning of all that He had been saying! The depravity of human nature is never more terribly exposed than when you come into the place of the upper room. When you think of all that is represented by at least arriving in the upper room, and all that being together there means at that time; the atmosphere saturated with pathos and the tragedy of the cross; the gathering shadows which all must have felt; and yet in that upper room, when they had been sitting together with Him at the table, and the bread had been broken, and these unspeakably solemn things had been uttered; even there the depth of the hopeless depravity of human nature is possible, and they had to quarrel as to who would be greatest, and stand upon their dignity and allow Him to act the servant in their presence. Yes! This thing is so deep, so strong, that it comes out in the most sacred moments, the most solemn hour. It betrays itself when you would think the very last thing in all the world that could ever insinuate or show itself would be personal interest. It comes out even there. How it shows the denseness, the leadenness of human spirit to understand.

Over against that dark picture of impenetrable leadenness of spiritual apprehension, what a glorious change in so short a time, when you find now they have apprehended; but not only have they apprehended, a proof that *it is* spiritual apprehension is shown in the fact that it is all now unto Him. You can tell how much spiritual apprehension people have, not by their talk, not by their phraseology, not by their grasp of Scripture, but by their selfless conduct, by their selfless, disinterested devotion to the Lord. That is how it was with them. You find a wonderful insight into the things that the Lord had said. Through the letters and writings, afterwards you are able to see that what

they did not then grasp, now they have grasped. They have seen right through now. The Holy Spirit has come as the Spirit of illumination to their minds.

It is a great day when what we have been hearing, what we have been listening to, what has been coming to us as words, is suddenly lit up in our minds and we see it aglow with divine light and glory. We find that we have been in possession of treasures of the value of which we knew nothing.

What a value that puts upon the Holy Spirit! I sometimes wonder what would happen if all that we knew about the Lord in a mental way suddenly did become quickened into life by the Holy Spirit. We speak about the wonderful work of the apostolic days, but what was at the heart of it all? What was it that was represented by that ministry which really did turn the world upside down, and which registered such tremendous divine force upon this earth? You say: 'It was the Holy Spirit!' Yes, but how? They had seen the Lord as they had never seen Him before! They had entered into the spiritual and living meaning of all that He had been saying and doing. They had never seen it, but now it was all alive in its true, divine value, and they entered into it, and their hearts were just full of wonder.

Let us take an illustration from the Old Testament. You know the Old Testament type of Pentecost. You know that the first feast of the Jews was the Passover, and at the Passover time, the harvest time (for harvest time commenced with the Jews from the very first day that the sickle was put in) the first ripe grain was gathered (a very precious sidelight on the Lord Jesus, the Firstfruits of the harvest), and the Passover marked Israel's redemption. Israel, as it were, was the firstfruit brought out of the world in redemption. The harvest commenced. It was a process. Fifty days after the Passover and redemption from Egypt they found themselves at Sinai. What happened at Sinai? The law was given! More! The tabernacle was given! The tabernacle was brought into being bit by bit, fragment by fragment, every detail according to a divine, heavenly pattern. And when the tabernacle was in order, every part in its place, the whole structure perfectly arranged, the Shekinah Glory descended and filled the tabernacle. That was the first Pentecost, fifty days after Passover.

You have the Lord Jesus as the Passover, and fifty days after there is Pentecost. What was Pentecost? The glory of the Lord coming in to make living all that which (perfectly true, absolutely accurate, quite right) was as yet dead. In the case of the tabernacle every law has been obeyed, every commandment observed, every detail attended to according to specification, the whole thing is finished, perfect, and yet dead, not operating, not functioning, until the Shekinah Glory descends, and then it all becomes alive. It is all throbbing with divine possibility. And so at Pentecost. The doctrine is

all represented, the teaching may be all there, there will never be any teaching extra to what is existing on the day of Pentecost (you will have a fuller illumination of what does exist, but you will not have anything extra), it is all there. The disciples could have gone out and preached it all as a comprehensive system of truth, but it was dead until the fifty days expired, and then the Shekinah Glory — the Holy Spirit — descended and filled it all, and it became living.

That is exactly what it was that lay behind the effectiveness of their ministry. It was not that they were preaching certain truths. It was that the glory from above had entered into those truths in a living way. The Holy Spirit had made every bit alive in them.

What a difference it makes. Shall we not agree from our hearts as never before that the Holy Spirit is *essential*? And does not this explain weakness, failure, ineffectiveness? We preach the truth; it is not that we are not orthodox; it is not that we are preaching something contrary to the truth. But so often it falls short. It is all so absolutely and perfectly right, and yet it lacks something. Have you not met that again and again? You have to say: ‘Well, I can find no fault with what is said, *but* there is something that is not there which ought to be there. It is immaculately correct, *but* ...!’ What a lot there is hanging upon that “but”.

b) Conviction and certainty

We have only spoken about the illumination of the mind. There were other effects upon their minds. There came to their minds a mighty, new conviction and certainty. We cannot get away from that. These men are sure; they are certain; they are not speaking surmises, they are not guessing; they are not saying: ‘Well, I suppose!’ Or: ‘So to speak!’ No! It is declaration, with absolute certainty. It is a work of the Holy Spirit. They knew!

The effect upon the heart

There were also different effects upon the heart.

a) Sanctification

We have suggested as much in what we have said as to their personal interests, relationships with one another, their quarrelsomeness, like little children quarrelling for first place, and so on. Now their hearts by the Holy Spirit are sanctified, and the root sin of all sins is dealt with, and that is self. If you can get to that you have touched, I should say, everything that you can touch, for all other forms of sin are traceable in some way or another to self. Sometimes

it showed itself in what looked like quite reputable forms: “I will follow thee even unto death” (Matt. 26:35); “I will lay down my life for thee” (John 13:37). That is magnificent self! But it is self-confidence. Self-confidence is self after all, and it is proved incapable of getting through in divine things. But now the root sin is dealt with, the backbone of self is broken, has snapped. The Holy Spirit did that. The heart is sanctified right at that point, where all things are touched; self is smitten with a fatal blow.

Self may at some subsequent time lift its head, but in the spirit it will be known immediately what it is. That is, there will be the recognition of the fact that it is forbidden, it must not be, it cannot be. There has been something done which, while it has not eradicated that thing from the whole nature, represents that that thing has been smitten with a mortal wound, and the one who has come that way knows quite well that, even though self should at some time seek to express itself, it is a deadly realm, something out of bounds, you dare not go over there, and you are glad to get back again. Death lies registered upon self when the Holy Spirit gets in charge. It is always like that. That is the secret of sanctification. It is the smiting of that root thing, so that all other out-growths of the life are selfless, and there is a great abandonment to the Lord, shown in a great devotion to His children. A heart devotion to the Lord’s interests, as represented in men and women all around.

b) Assurance

Not only was there a mighty conviction and certainty in the mind, there was heart assurance. One of the blessed things that you are able to trace through apostolic ministry is heart assurance. If you would only pause to think about that, you would find that the apostles were marked with wonderful, grand assurance of heart. It is one of those things which we cannot appreciate as spectators. Standing back without the same experience, the same knowledge of the Holy Spirit, we simply say: ‘If I were put into circumstances like that, my faith would give out, I could not believe any more! Do you mean to tell me that that great catalogue of sufferings, afflictions, distresses, all that that meant, did not disturb their assurance of heart? I do not understand that! If I went through all that I could not believe God’s love, God’s wisdom! I could not see how that could all be to the glory of God!’ But the assurance of heart through it all is a marvellous thing. They come out of these things, they come through these things, and their hearts are undisturbed, they are as sure of the Lord as ever they were. They do not hesitate to tell you that they were perplexed and bewildered. We can believe that they were perplexed sometimes. “Pressed out of measure”! (2 Cor. 1:8). Anybody who knows something about pressure can sympathise with that. And yet all the time there

is that counter thing, represented by a glorious series of “but’s”: “Persecuted, *but* ..., cast down, *but* ...” (2 Cor. 4:9, AV). This is not mere human optimism. There is something more than that here. This is the strength of a victorious Christ brought into the heart by the Holy Spirit. This is the Holy Spirit in the heart; and who shall say that we do not need the Holy Spirit in this respect?

c) Rest

Heart rest by the Holy Spirit. This is an extra element.

We shall go no further with the fact of the Holy Spirit in them and upon them, as it is seen in other realms of their being. But this is enough to once more bring us to the place where surely we shall continually seek to have these lives of ours under the complete government and in the complete possession of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the glorified Christ.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN RELATION TO THE BELIEVER AND TO THE CHURCH

Reading: Acts 19:1-7.

In meditating in the Word we have been impressed with the striking absence of that in the New Testament which is in the nature of a declaration that the Holy Spirit is indispensable. There is very little indeed in the New Testament in the nature of a definite statement that the Holy Spirit is indispensable. That may sound strange, but it is very significant, for it is all so much in the nature of assumption. It is taken for granted. The Lord Jesus, for instance, begins to give definite teaching on the coming of the Holy Spirit. He speaks after this manner: "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you" (John 16:7). The rejoinder might be: 'Well, we would sooner have You! We are quite satisfied with You! Why should we want another?' But in the very statement of the Lord there is clearly an indication that it was supremely important that the Holy Spirit should come, and that He was coming. He did not say definitely and positively: 'You can never do without the Holy Spirit!' He took it for granted. It was assumed.

Take these words again, from Acts 19. Paul came to Ephesus and found certain disciples, and said to them: "Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed?" (Acts 19:2). It is taken for granted that that is the natural course of things. It is assumed that the life of believers is a life in the Spirit, and the question was clearly prompted by what was to the apostle a very manifest absence of what ought to be in the normal course.

This attitude, shall we say, of the New Testament toward the matter of not declaring in a downright way the necessity, but assuming the necessity, of the Holy Spirit surely implies one or two things.

In the first place it implies that the promise of the Holy Spirit must have been well known among the Jews. That means that, so far as the Jews were concerned, the Old Testament must have created in them the knowledge that the Holy Spirit would come one day, as their essential, indispensable life. That is, that everything was hanging upon that day when the promise should be fulfilled. That would lead us back to the Old Testament, and a study of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament.

On the other hand, it implies that there must have been in the main, definite teaching on the matter among the Gentiles; for if the thing were taken for granted in this way, and surprise is felt when another state of things is found in one place at least, that must imply that it was the general thing, the rule, to bring before the Gentiles the fact that the Christian life is a life in the Holy Spirit, and that the Christian life falls far short of its real meaning if the Holy Spirit is not there and in evidence.

So that what we are led to from both of these implications, as to the Jews and as to the Gentiles, is that the Christian life in the New Testament is represented as a life in the Spirit, and it is clearly shown that anything else is not really the Christ life. In the case of the Corinthians and the Romans the contrast is presented between walking in the Spirit and walking in the flesh, and it is made perfectly clear in those letters that a walk in the flesh is not the Christ life. Or, on the other hand, the Christ life is the life in the Spirit, and to speak of the Christ life is only a stronger way of speaking of the Christian life, or the Christ life is the Christian life.

Having that as our foundation, we come to look at a few things of a primary character and importance, pointed out in the New Testament and made very clear, in connection with the Holy Spirit.

Christ known and glorified by the Holy Spirit

The first, perhaps the most important, thing is that Christ will be known and glorified in the measure in which the Holy Spirit is in possession and operation. That is very simple, but it forms the foundation to all else. We may put it in another way: The measure in which Christ will be made glorified is the measure in which the Holy Spirit is in possession and in operation. In our individual lives, and in the life of the church there will be no more manifestation of the great heavenly fact of Christ being glorified than there is the possession of us, and the operation in us, by the Holy Spirit. His all-inclusive and supreme object is to express in believers and in the church what actually exists in heaven, so far as the Lord Jesus is concerned. He is glorified there. The Holy Spirit cannot make Him any more glorified than He is, but the Holy Spirit has come to express the fact that Christ is glorified in believers and in the church.

The day of Pentecost saw the expression of the great heavenly fact of Christ being glorified in the church. What took place at Sinai fifty days after the redemption from Egypt, when the completed tabernacle was filled with the Shekinah Glory, took place in spiritual reality on the day of Pentecost, fifty days after the Passover in Jerusalem. The glory descended and filled

the house. We are not looking for further descents of the Holy Spirit; in that sense He is here. When the glory filled the tabernacle in the wilderness all that remained for the eye of the people was not the glory but a cloud. The glory was within, concealed, and, so far as that was concerned, they had to move in faith. That glory, as we know, sometimes manifested itself. In judgement the glory appeared at the door. The result of the appearance of the glory at the door of the tabernacle was very terrible, as a rule in awful judgement of some sin that had crept in. It was a terrible thing to see the glory in that dispensation. But for the greater part of their history they had to go on believing that the glory was inside, and not seen; that it was concealed, And very largely through this dispensation we have to move in faith as to the presence of the glory, the Spirit of glory. Faith is the means by which we know the glory.

We have said that the presence of the Holy Spirit even in power does not always mean that we are taken off the plain of a life of faith. Some people are asking the question: All this teaching has been in the church for a long time, and many have enjoyed something of the experience of it, *but* what about the manifest evidence and results? The answer to that question has already been given, that very often the greatest manifestation of the working of the Holy Spirit is entirely concealed from our senses, and we are not conscious of it. Things are done, and we only discover years afterwards that they were done in some lives. We did not know at the time. Mighty things, revolutionary things, were done in lives, things which demanded the infinite power of the Holy Spirit to do them, and we knew absolutely nothing about it at the time. Perhaps you say: 'Then how am I to know whether I have the Holy Spirit or not?' What we are seeking to do through this exhortation is to bring home to our hearts, as the Lord enables, or as the Lord will do through His Word, firstly, the absolute necessity of our lives being completely governed by the Holy Spirit. Then what that means; and then what the basis of such a life is. The rest remains with us as an exercise before the Lord, to see to it that we stand on the Lord's ground in this matter.

The first, and the all-pervading fact brought into view by the New Testament in connection with the Holy Spirit, is that Christ in glory will only be expressed in us in the measure in which the Holy Spirit has possession of us, and is allowed free operation in our lives.

The Holy Spirit making essential truth become clear and living

The function of the Holy Spirit is that illumination by which all essential truth becomes clear and living. The Lord Jesus said quite distinctly that that is

what would happen when the Holy Spirit came. This is of great importance, that all essential truth should be made clear in our hearts and living. That is the function of the Holy Spirit. We shall not get far without that, and one of the great results of that will be this; the bringing about of oneness of mind upon all vital matters. In spite of the situation as it is in the world today. In spite of the diversity of mind, interpretation, things so diverse that it seems a hopeless situation. In spite of it all, though there may be ten thousand different and contradictory opinions on, and interpretations of, vital truths, we nevertheless affirm, without any hesitation, that where the Holy Spirit is absolutely dominant there will be oneness of mind upon vital truths, absolute oneness.

It is necessary that it should be so for the constituting of a distinctive and definite testimony. It is the Holy Spirit who is in charge of the testimony, and today one of the characteristic weaknesses of Christendom is its diversity of opinion upon vital matters. It has no solid face to present to the world upon vital matters. It is divided and broken up into innumerable fractions and pieces upon things which are of primary importance, and that simply means that the Holy Spirit, for some reason, has not absolute sway, absolute government. We cannot hope to remedy it, and we are under no illusions that what we are saying may clear that world situation up. But we speak within a certain compass, within perhaps a very limited range. If you and I are completely under the government and dominion of the Holy Spirit, we will come to the same position on all things that are of vital importance, and, coming there, there will be a testimony in definiteness and distinctiveness and in power, by reason of that oneness which cannot be by just one or two being in that position. It must be the work of the Holy Spirit. It is His work. He would do that, and if He gets hold of us what is wrong and erroneous will go, and what is right and true will become our mutual position, and we shall have one voice and one mind on those things which really do matter to the Lord. That is no small thing.

Perhaps we do not know the tremendous value of the apostles being of one mind at the beginning; that is, the spiritual impact of it, not just that men listening to them were listening to men who were all agreed upon certain things, and prepared to say exactly the same things. There was in the realm of spiritual intelligences, and in the whole spiritual realm, the registration of something done by the Holy Spirit. It was represented by a spiritual oneness of mind; and spiritual oneness of mind is something which has power in it. You can get a dozen people together to discuss certain things, and, after a process of elimination, to arrive at certain conclusions, to which they all subscribe; and then say that you have got a state of oneness, and begin to work

upon a common platform. That may lack a mighty impact as out from God. But when the Holy Spirit does a thing like that, there is something behind it which brings heaven in, brings God in. You cannot come to a position like that by saying: I agree with certain terms of expression, certain conclusions, a certain position, certain statements, certain doctrines; I agree to such-and-such a testimony! No! You must come into that by the Holy Spirit, and unless you are there as the result of the Holy Spirit's bringing you there, and bringing you together on that basis, that element will always be lacking. Yes, things are being said, and, so far as the language and the terms are concerned, it is all the same, *but* there is a difference, and that difference represents a hole in the bag, through which there is a leakage of power.

If you are not able to appropriate and appreciate that, do ask the Lord at any rate that, so far as all vital truth is concerned, you may be absolutely under the government of the Holy Spirit, and wherever there is another one in that position you will find yourself in spiritual agreement, and that is going to count for the Lord. Oh, that the Lord should secure today in all parts of the world yet a company of those who have come to oneness concerning the truth by the Holy Spirit!

This is one function of the Holy Spirit among other things: the making of one mind on all vital matters.

The Holy Spirit bringing elevation

The result of the Holy Spirit being in possession is manifested in an elevation. That needs explaining. We see in the book of the Acts that when the Holy Spirit possessed these men and women who comprised the church, then they were lifted above all the natural, human elements of unsaved men and women. That elevation was unaffected by all the differences of nationality, disposition, character, or any other difference. That elevation was unaffected by persecution, threats of death, or any other thing. You notice this happened, that whereas there had been national prejudices — Jews could not tolerate Gentiles, and Gentiles could not tolerate Jews — and then in a whole series of other differences of constitution, temperament, make-up, disposition, outlook, likes and dislikes, you find that that whole realm of things was transcended when the Holy Spirit ruled in the lives of these people. Jew loved Gentile, and Gentile loved Jew, and it was as though they had moved into another realm altogether, where they were unaffected by these things. They are lifted above the ordinary human elements of unsaved men and women, and if they went into a place utterly hostile to them, and to which by nature they would have been hostile before; and if that hostility against them showed itself, and they

were persecuted, threatened, and made to suffer; they were still above it all. That is, they did not come down to meet that on its own level. They never answered back on that plane at all. They were above it.

They acted as though they had swept that whole thing on one side, and were after one definite object. That object necessitated their ignoring all this. Supposing they had taken it on, as the way. As Jews they went into Gentile cities, and the Gentiles said: 'These hateful Jews have come here!' And supposing those Jews had taken that on, and said: 'They hate us Jews!' And then they had reacted from that natural point of view. What hope would there have been? The fact that they triumphed is a mark of their having come entirely out of that realm, and they were lifted above all human considerations. It was a moral ascendancy, and so they were able to go right on without being affected by the activity and the operation of all these natural elements in unsaved men and women.

That operates today when a man or a woman, with the love of God shed abroad in their heart, goes to a country where the people, by reason of their history, social conditions, religious state and all other conditions, would be naturally hostile, and such a one is, nevertheless, unaffected by it, but goes on. That does not mean that they are unconscious of it, but they are unaffected by it. Even when the thing breaks out upon them in persecutions, in open antagonism, the natural features are not allowed to rise up and influence conduct, but there is a movement as above it, and a winning through because of that.

We know quite well that if we are going to live upon the natural level of differences of make-up, temperament and all that sort of thing, and be constantly taking that into account, there will be no glory for the Lord Jesus, and there will be no spiritual progress. The necessity for us, even as Christians among ourselves, is that we should know something of that moral elevation; that we should be unaffected to the point of reaction on that level by those things.

This is a work of the Holy Spirit. It is a marvellous thing as you look at it. National prejudice is a very strong thing, and it can go a long way, even with Christians. But the Holy Spirit lifts right above all those things, and it is necessary. The thing may work out in other directions, where even among ourselves it is necessary constantly for fresh energisings of the Holy Spirit to get on top of what is human nature in one another. There will be no spiritual progress otherwise, and no glory to the Lord. That is exactly what is in the book of the Acts. The Holy Spirit getting possession lifted them onto a level where these natural, human elements did not touch them, or in any way cause them to react wrongly. That is one of the great secrets of their victory in all these places where they were met by the flesh.

That is exactly what the apostle means when he says: “For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds” (2 Cor. 10:4, AV). What is that? A mighty ascendancy above what is natural. It is a mighty weapon! Think of how the enemy strives to get us down to the place where we answer back, in the flesh, and take things on their own level, and be even with them. The devil is always trying to get us down there, and when he does, it means defeat every time. While we remain in the Spirit, which means to be above that, what a tremendous weapon it is! It means that the enemy is robbed of his power; he is disarmed.

That is a work of the Spirit, and who shall say that that is not necessary? We are all conscious of the necessity of that, everywhere, in all directions. That was a mark of the church at the beginning. The Lord bring a fresh, mighty inflow of the Spirit to that end among us all.

The elevation by the Holy Spirit bringing unity

The chief glory of that elevation is seen in the spiritual unity of believers. There will never be any real spiritual unity in any expression, in any enjoyment, in any manifestation or concrete way, only on that level, in that spiritual elevation above human nature. In other words, only insofar as the Holy Spirit has full possession and government. But the chief glory of that work of the Holy Spirit, of lifting us above the level of natural and unregenerate humanity, is seen in the spiritual unity of believers, in which there is displayed a reconstituting of human relationships; for the Holy Spirit reconstitutes human relationships. He disposes of one constitution of human relationships, which is no relationship at all — it is all clash, strife, friction and consciousness of limitation in the realm of fellowship — and He reconstitutes human relationships upon a basis of fellowship, love and brotherhood in the purest sense, as differing from the human relationships which are selfish, individualistic in outlook and competitive in action.

The Holy Spirit takes up the whole matter of human relationships within the company of God’s people, and reconstitutes those relationships upon this basis of love and fellowship; and that is the chief glory of this new level, this elevation. Perhaps that seems a very technical or academic way of saying what could be said in simpler language. It just amounts to this, that when the Holy Spirit really has His way in us He brings about a glorious family life, a holy family life, where what is merely personal is dismissed, what is merely individualistic goes, where what is selfish is ruled out, and the family lives for the family, for one another.

That is what is in the book of the Acts. What a company! Read the end of some of Paul's letters, and look at all the names, and you will see that there are as many different temperaments as there are names. Not only are there different nationalities, but there are even more differences of temperament and constitution, outlook, make-up, and yet you have a family spirit marvelously displayed. In those first chapters of the book of the Acts how wonderful is the display of that family spirit. It would be interesting to know exactly the former life condition of all those people of whom it is said that they sold their possessions, and had all things common, and met together in this fellowship, continuing in fellowship and breaking of bread. It would be interesting to know just what their former life was. It would be interesting to know what you could have done with them apart from the Holy Spirit having come upon them; how far you would have got in realising that position, coming to that ideal, without some mighty divine activity outside of themselves. A lot of people have tried that sort of thing many times, but it does not last very long; it breaks down. But here you have it. It is a wonderful thing. Without any conference, discussion, arrangement, it simply happened by one divine act. That is a work of the Holy Spirit, and that needs to be recovered. When the Lord can get that, He has a display of His glory, He has an expression of the triumph of His cross, He has something which speaks very audibly and eloquently of that which no man can bring about.

We are saying all this in order that we shall be led definitely to the Lord about having our lives governed by the Holy Spirit. Give the Lord no rest until you are assured that your case has been placed quite definitely before Him, and that, so far as your side is concerned, the thing is understood by the Lord, as to where you stand. Leave the rest to Him. We do not suggest that you reach out and strain after some great external manifestation of the Holy Spirit, but we do urge that there shall be a definite and continuous understanding with the Lord that our lives become Holy Spirit filled and dominated, to all these glorious ends which we are considering.

There are two things, one as to the individual and the other as to the church, which are marks of the Holy Spirit's real work within.

Assurance and sealing as God's testimony to acceptance and sonship

As to the individual, a basic work of the Holy Spirit is assurance and sealing as God's testimony to acceptance and sonship. That is a simple, and perhaps an elementary, thing, and yet even here in so many the evidences of the Holy Spirit are lacking. Let us repeat that: A basic work of the Holy Spirit is to bring about assurance and the knowledge of sealing, as God's testimony

to our acceptance and our sonship. For all uncertainty as to our acceptance, for all weakness of assurance as to our sonship, *the* need is the work of the Holy Spirit. That is His business; that is His work.

There are many of the Lord's children today (it must be said with regret and grief, but it is true) who lack that settled assurance of their acceptance, and that knowledge that they are sealed by the Holy Spirit, and that God has borne testimony in their heart to their acceptance and to their sonship. The Holy Spirit would do that work in us if we recognised that that is His work, and that we would definitely have a transaction with the Lord about it in faith. There is something wrong and the Holy Spirit has in some way been superseded, overruled, set aside, quenched, grieved, if any child of God comes to a place where they doubt their acceptance with God, and have no assurance of their sonship. It is made perfectly clear in the Word that we are sealed by the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit becomes the seal in us of our acceptance, and the witness to our spirit that we are children of God. "Because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father". It is that uprising within our hearts from the Holy Spirit of the word "Father". It is a great thing really, out of your heart, to be able to say, "Father". We can speak about the Fatherhood; we can have a mental acceptance of Fatherhood; we can recite prayers which call God our Father; we can move in that realm religiously. But there is something mighty in the coming right out from our inner being, with that strength of assurance and rest, and the real expression of our spirit: "Father!" You hear that in the cross of the Lord Jesus. Oh! what a mighty triumph that was, that, "Father...". If ever there was a triumph in this universe it was represented by that one word as uttered by Christ on the cross. He had just passed through the full judgement of sin; the wrath of God, all the waves and billows, passed over Him. He had gone out into the wilderness. He had gone out from the presence of God, excluded, God-forsaken, to all the terrors of the lost. He had tasted that cup, drinking it to the dregs, the cup of God's wrath, only just before. Then there broke from the depths of His Being one word: "*Father*, into thy hands I commit My spirit." There is triumph in that one word when it comes in that way. There is something matchless in it.

It is in exactly the same realm that the apostle says: "No man can call Jesus, Lord, except by the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:3). We can call Him the Lord Jesus, speak about the Lord Jesus, believe He is the Lord Jesus; but there is something more in that being borne right out from our innermost being, with Holy Spirit meaning: "*Lord Jesus*"! just as Christ said: "Father"! There is something in the Holy Spirit utterance of this kind that is more than all our religion, doctrine and theology.

The Holy Spirit would establish in us that assurance, and give us the knowledge of our acceptance and our sonship. Lay hold of that by faith! Make it yours! Do not argue! Do not stand outside wondering if perhaps it may be! *It is!* It is yours! Stand into it! He has come to do that for you!

Qualification, equipment and power for world ministry

As to the church, the Holy Spirit represents qualification, equipment, and power for world ministry. That is a subject in itself, but it is clearly revealed in the New Testament.

The Holy Spirit moving in closest relation to the cross

The Holy Spirit always moves in closest relation to the cross. That means, for our present purpose, that none of these things can be true, we can have the knowledge of none of them, only on the ground that what Calvary represents *is* the position in which we stand. The cross does represent our end, our death in Christ; and until we have really accepted that position quite definitely and deliberately, facing all that it means, with the great comprehensive, many-sided: "... no longer I ...", all that we have said about the Holy Spirit has no meaning for us.

We said that something has happened if our assurance has been shaken; the Holy Spirit has been set aside. How do you set the Holy Spirit aside? By setting aside the ground upon which the Holy Spirit works, that is, the cross. That is making the cross of none effect in some way or another in our lives. The Holy Spirit must have the cross as His basis of activity.

I am a profound believer in baptismal regeneration, and I found my position upon John 3:5! But what do you mean by baptismal regeneration? What is the water? It is the testimony to your sharing a grave with Jesus Christ, your being baptized into His death. Then subsequently comes the question of the Spirit. First the death, then the Spirit. That is the order in the New Testament. Baptismal regeneration is not that you are regenerated by going into a bath of water, but by going spiritually into that which is represented thereby. There is no regeneration until you have shared Christ's death, been planted together with Him in the likeness of His death. The Holy Spirit works always in relation to the cross: "Except a man be born of water ..." (that is the symbol; that is the type of your birth with Christ, your sharing His death.) "... and of the Spirit...". (That is subsequent, because the Spirit comes after the cross, upon resurrection ground). These two things go together: "Behold the Lamb ..."; "He shall baptise you with the Spirit ...".

The basic thing is death and burial union with Christ

Our last emphasis is an old one, but it is the indispensable one. You may struggle after the true expression of the Holy Spirit in any of His ways of ministry and blessing; but you will struggle in vain unless you have accepted once and for all this basic position of death and burial union with Christ as to the entirety of your Adam relationship and life. When that is accepted as much by faith as anything else is accepted, and there is the understanding with the Lord that there is the driving of a stake clean through that old life, you know quite well that he has been struck his mortal blow. Although that old life may wriggle, it knows the stake is through; although that old life may sometimes let you know that he is still there, you know quite well that something has happened to you, and you cannot do as you once did. You are not free to do as you once did; you dare not. Every time you move in that realm, or toward that realm, you find yourself smitten again. You come under something that you cry to be delivered from, and you are glad to flee from that ground. Thus you are made to know that something has happened, that the sword of God has gone clean through that Adam life, and God is against it.

That must be our position. Before the Holy Spirit can take up His work we have to come to an understanding with the Lord that He makes us know that. The Holy Spirit will act upon that, and for ever after will make us very sensitive to what is of the Lord and what is of ourselves. We shall not need to be told; we shall know. The amazing thing is that so many of the Lord's people do not recognise what is themselves and what is the Lord. A real problem is how many good Christian people there are who can accept what is obviously and manifestly untrue, and never in their own hearts hear the Holy Spirit say to them: 'That is not true! Do not believe it!' They take it, and carry it on, and use it. But the answer to that and all such problems is a life more utterly lived in the Spirit. If we were moving as governed by the Holy Spirit I do not believe that we could believe a lie about anybody without knowing somehow that it was a lie; that we could accept a report about anyone which was false, and the Holy Spirit not say in us: "Be careful; that is false, against one of My own." Would God there were more of the regulating ministry of the Holy Spirit. He is willing and wants to do that, and it is necessary.

Herein is the force of the appeal. Do let us ask the Lord to bring these lives of ours to that place where the Holy Spirit really does dominate them, and that we shall never move in any way contrary to the Lord's mind without knowing it. That is a high level! Let us aspire to it. It is not impossible. If we know it a little (most of us can testify that we know it a little), we do know that if we have heard something which was not true the Holy Spirit has said:

‘Prove it first; make sure; do not take that as it stands; there is another side to that.’ If we know it in that measure, surely we can know it more. If the Holy Spirit will go that far with us, surely He will go farther still. Let us ask the Lord that this may be.

Concluded.