

The King's Highway.

And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The Way of Holiness: . . . The wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. Isaiah 35:8.

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WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

[The first of a series of sermons preached in the Albert Street Baptist church, Woodstock, N. B., by the Pastor Mr. Martin, on the general topic "The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit." The other three sermons are on the following themes.]

"Where is the Spirit's sphere of His ministry?"

"What is the work of His offices?"

"The relation of the Spirit to Christ and the scriptures."

TEXTS—Jon. 14:16, Rom. 8:2, Jon. 14:17.

It is evident the present dispensation in which we are living, is the dispensation of the Spirit, or of the third person of the Holy Trinity. The vagueness and mystery, attaching in many minds to the doctrine of the Spirit, are due largely to a failure to recognize the present age as the "time ministry," as Dr. Gordon calls it, of the Holy Spirit. This same author further says, "This ministry is distinct from all that went before and introductory to all that is to come after, it has a definite beginning and termination." Cardinal Manning in an admirable treatise on the Holy Spirit, calls this age "The temporal mission of the Spirit."

This time mission of the Spirit was inaugurated on the day of Pentecost and will continue until Jesus shall come again. In the interim between the ascension of Jesus and His glorious appearing to the Holy Spirit has been committed the office of comforter, teacher, sanctifier and guide. He becomes the sole "vicar of Christ." It scarcely need be said that proportionate attention should be given to His person and work as compared with that bestowed on the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.

Our four discourses on the Holy Spirit, of which this is the first, are intended to be a reverent review of some of the main teaching of the holy scriptures concerning the eternal third person, the Spirit of God. In this sermon we shall speak of the revealed personality of the Holy Spirit as the all important preliminary to all else we shall say concerning Him.

First, we will show that the Spirit is a divine person.

We must go into the holiest in the scripture tabernacle for the decisive teaching on the personality of the Holy Spirit. We open the pages where our Lord himself teaches the secrets of spiritual life, there, under the shekinah itself, lies our doctrinal stronghold for this article of faith. Jno. 14-16. There the blessed Christ speaks with emphasis of the Spirit as a person.

John 14:16, And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever.

John 15:26, But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.

John 16:7-8, 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 depart, I will send him unto you.

And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.

In these central and decisive passages we have the Spirit revealed to us in so many words as "Him," as

the living conscious exerciser of true personal will and love as truly as the Lord Jesus himself.

1. Christ always spoke of the Spirit as a person.

"He will convince of sin."

"He will testify."

"He will guide into truth."

He never referred to the Spirit as a divine faculty, influence, or mode.

He is directly associated with the person of the Father and the Son. Matt. 28:19, Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Holy Ghost.

2 Cor. 13:14, The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all. Amen.

3. Personal acts are ascribed to Him.

Mark 13:11, But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate; but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost.

Acts 20:23, Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.

Rom. 8:15-16-26, For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.

Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

With the Paschal discourse in mind we know that it was He not It that "brooded" over the primeval deep. He not It "spoke" by the prophets, "moving" those holy men of God. He not It came upon the virgin, and anointed her son at Jordan and led him into the desert of temptation, and gave utterance to the saints at Pentecost. He not It, effects the new birth, and is the breath of the new life, and the earnest of coming glory. By Him, not by It, the believer walks, and mortifies the deeds of the body, filled not with It, but Him. He, not It, speaks to the churches in the Revelation and calls the thirsty soul to come to the living water. Rev. 22:17.

4. Equal power and glory with the Father and Son are ascribed to him.

(1) Names proper only to the most high God are given to Him, such as Jehovah.

Acts 28:25, And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, with Isa. 6:9-7, Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.

And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and say ye indeed, but perceive not.

Heb. 3:7-9, Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice,

Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:

When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.

Ex. 17:7, And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord, saying, Is the Lord among us, or not?

Acts 5:9, And Ananias, who he had heard to keep back part of the price of the land?

While it remained as it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

(2) Attributes proper only to the most high God are given to him.

Omniscience, 1 Cor. 2:10-11, But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

Omnipresence, Ps. 139:7, Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?

Omnipotence, Luke 1:35, And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

Eternity, Heb. 9:14, How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God!

5. We learn from the Paschal discourse that the Spirit takes the place of Christ himself, filling the void in the disciples hearts with a whole wealth of personal, gracious action, abiding, revealing, teaching, leading, conveying into the inmost part of their being the presence of Christ, so that while absent he would be present, while invisible would be seen. Surely such a presence and such an action was intended to call forth on the disciples part a reverent and loving reciprocity. "The Spirit with our Spirit" (Rom. 8:16) is a phrase meant to carry endless blessed applications in the experiences of the life of faith.

6. The sacred rightfulness of our worship of the Holy Spirit is as surely established as anything can be that rates on large and immediate teaching from the scriptures. He is a person, if he is divine, how can we help the attitude of adoration. Our Lord prescribes to us such an attitude when he gives His baptism formula, "In the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." And when in the Acts and Epistles the Holy Spirit is set before us as presiding over the community of saints in sacred majesty, above all when in the Paschal discourse our Lord presents him to our faith as co-ordinate with himself in "glory and grace," "another comforter." As we come to more fully recognize the character and work of the Spirit as a divine person, Jesus will unceasingly become the object of our faith, hope and love, and the more he will be glorified through the ministry of the blessed "Third Person."

(2) We will look next at a few of the names which are given the Spirit, and which set forth some of his blessed attributes. In that helpful book, "The Ministry of the Spirit," by the

late Dr. Gordon, in the chapter on the naming of the Spirit, the author says, "the Son of God was named by the angels before his birth, (Matt 1:21). Thus he came not to receive a name, but to fulfil a name already predetermined for him." In like manner was the Holy Spirit named by our Lord before his advent into the world. Jno. 14:17, "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever." The meaning of this name can only be found in the actual life and history of the Spirit. Only as we know the person can we interpret the name.

(1) We will consider how much is suggested by the word which is translated comforter, helper, advocate, the word "Paraclete." The verb "Paraclete" is derived, means "to call to one's aid in time of peril." Very beautiful is the word in its application to the disciples of Jesus at the time of the advent of the Spirit. They were in deep sorrow because of the loss of the visible presence of the Master. They were in peril because of the bitter hatred of the Jews who were the instigators of the death of their Master. They were in deep perplexity at the remembrance of their Master's words "If I go not away the Paraclete will not come." But when the Spirit came, "their sorrow was at once turned into joy," their fear of the Jews was removed, and when the Spirit unfolded to their minds their Master's words and the deeper meaning of his life and work, their understanding was enlightened and their perplexity was at an end. How the Spirit sighed over, pitied and assisted those early disciples at every step of their journey. He became to them the real presence of their Master. He made the person and work of Christ not only a great fact upon which they could center their faith, but an inward spiritual force the source of all their blessed experiences. What the word Paraclete meant to the first disciples it means to every disciple who shall live in the dispensation of the Spirit.

(2) Another name by which the Spirit is known is "the Spirit of Life." Ro. 8:2, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." He is the Divine Factor in the new creation of the sinner into a true child of God. Jon. 3:5, "Jesus answered, verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." In his free and all powerful work in the soul which he quickens into a second life, he brings it into contact with Jesus Christ. It is the incarnate, sacrificed and glorified Redeemer that the Holy Life-Giver imparts, infuses and develops within the believer.

In its last analysis life eternal is Jesus Christ himself. 1 Jon. 5:12, "He that hath the Son hath life." Gal. 2:20, "Christ liveth in me." Whatever may be found in the life and character of Jesus, the Spirit is seeking to make real in the life of every believer so that we will actually live our life in the life of another, and the very person of Christ will possess our whole being. The will of Christ will be ours; the purity of Christ will be ours; the love of Christ will be ours; the unselfishness of Christ will be ours; the obedience of Christ will be ours; the patience of Christ will be

ours; the health of Christ will be ours; the zeal of Christ will be ours; the works of Christ will be ours. Having the Spirit, we should remember how fully and truly by the Spirit we possess the Son. And in weakness, in sadness, in temptation, under the burdening sense of spiritual decline, we will without delay or misgiving use and enjoy our possession of the Son in the very hour of our need.

(3) I shall mention but one more sacred name attached to the Spirit, a name given him by our Lord and associated with his work of inspiration, conviction and teaching. "The Spirit of Truth." Jon. 14:17.

In his promise to send the Spirit of Truth from the Father, our Lord very definitely tells us what his principal work would be. "He shall testify of me." "He will guide you with all truth." "He will convince the world of sin." We conclude from these words of Jesus that he can only be known by the revelation of the Spirit, that sin can only be understood by the conviction of the Spirit, and the Scriptures can only become spirit and life as the Spirit unfolds to the spiritual mind the mind of Christ. Scripture was not meant for the understanding only, but for the heart and life.

We have spoken at some length upon the revelation of Jesus to the believer as his life by the Spirit, therefore we will in closing, look at His work in "convincing of sin" and guiding into all truth. We are greatly mistaken if we think that since the day of Pentecost the Spirit has been universally diffused in the world, touching hearts everywhere. Christ says in the Paschal discourse concerning the Spirit "whom the world cannot receive." Again he says, limiting the power of the comforter, "I will send him unto you." "The disciples of Christ were to be the recipients of the Spirit, and his church the mediator between the Spirit and the world." It is as the messengers of Christ go into the world with the message of life that the Spirit witnesses to the message they bring, convincing of the sin they reprove, and recommending the righteousness they proclaim. The Spirit is in the church testifying of Christ, and through the church bringing conviction to the world. Evangelization is necessary if men are to be convicted of sin and brought to Christ.

The Spirit alone can open up to the soul the things of Christ we read of every where in the Scriptures. The book is emphatically the book of God. The subject of the book is beyond a question the person and work of Christ. The life of the book is the Spirit and the truths of the book can only be spiritually discerned. Surely, then, the one by whose inspiration the book was written, and who is the author and giver of the new spiritual life in the believer, must be the one who alone can unfold the "hid treasures of wisdom and knowledge" wrapped up in the book. This is a part of his gracious work, and to the prophet and peasant, in the pulpit and pew, he is ready to guide each child of God into the holy of holies of the scripture tabernacle, where a continuous vision of God may be had and where the soul may "delight itself in fatness."

Flattery is a sin too little warned against or guarded against. When we flatter we combine treachery and falsehood—two of the most despicable of sins.