

THE MINISTRY OF THE SPIRIT IN HOLINESS.

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The Holy Spirit is the impersonator of the Holy Child Jesus. He is both successor and executor of Christ our Lord. The prophets spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Peter preached the gospel with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. It is His office work to inspire all divine ministry.

1. The Spirit lifts up a standard of holiness.

This He does by convincing the soul as to sin. The sinner himself, if convicted at all, is convicted of holiness as a standard of redemption and duty. Every sinner before conversion assures us that, when he becomes a Christian, he expects to be a holy one. Every believer also, under the convicting influence and power of the Holy Spirit finds no other interpretation of the promises and the commandments that the ideal which holiness teaches. Useless prejudice blinds and inbred sin confuses there is a universal hunger after that type and degree of holiness without which no man can see the Lord. In all gospel preaching and teaching, we may rely more fully upon the Spirit's persuasion than upon the force of syllogism and human argument. When the comforter is come in His personal and general presence, He will convict of sin as an act, of sin as a fact, and of purity as an inevitable need of the soul and demand of the Scriptures.

When human examples fail, or professors of holiness fall, or destructive criticism misinterprets; when superstition blinds and false teaching alludes, we may well intercede for and expect that the third person of the Trinity, in spite of all darkness and fog and falsehood, shall lift up a standard for as many as the Lord our God shall call—and He calls all men unto holiness by voice of the Spirit.

2. The Holy Ghost presides in the administration of all enterprise for the spread of Scriptural Holiness. Holiness in human hearts is identical with the Kingdom of Jesus in the world. The Spirit is working, both under divine sovereignty and in answer to a million prayers, for the enthronement of Jesus among men. The Holy Spirit guides into all truth, applies all truth, uses it and works through it that all men may believe and receive. The inspired truth of the Holy Scriptures is the uplifted wire; the Spirit is the fire that communicates the voice and will of God upon His throne to the hearts of men upon His footstool. The Holy Ghost is the specific administrator in this final dispensation of the Trinity, and He is the director of the thoughts, agents and forces that constitute gospel history today. As the executor of the Father's will and the administrator of the Son's inheritance on earth, we may well regard the Holy Spirit as the inspiration of all events, as the controller of all genius in the history of men, that make for the Kingdom of Heaven below. Our faith is strengthened as we recall how the Holy Ghost transformed the martyrdom of Stephen into the conversion of Saul and spread the gospel into Samaria through Philip's evangelism. He forbade Paul preaching the Word in Asia; and, when they essayed to go into Bithynia, the Spirit suffered them not but called by vision over to Macedonia and to Philippi. The presidency of the Holy Ghost is above all presidents. We may well appeal to Him and to His ruler-

ship when all other rulers and presiding officers disappoint us. And this is true of His work in civic affairs as well as in ecclesiastical and evangelistic enterprise.

The Holy Spirit should be retained as a personal director of public and private ministry.

As Jesus presided over and directed the disciples and the multitude by the Sea of Galilee, so the Spirit should operate in all efforts for the salvation of souls. The spirit of Jesus may well be relied on to select texts, formulate matter, apply the truth, attend with unction and secure results. In the ministry of holiness truth, the Paraclete, may be trusted to inspire both matter and manner as well as to direct the arrows to the right spot, "For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you"—(Matt. 10-20). In personal work, whether on the street or in the congregation, as well as in the pulpit, the Holy Spirit vouchsafes to guide into all truth. And thus through our human judgment, He secures the wise selection of individuals as well as tactful words and manners. No pulpiter, no teacher, no persuader, is adequately equipped without the abiding Spirit of Pentecost as a co-worker in soul winning.

4. The witness of the Spirit to the grace of Holiness in the soul is the clear teaching of God's word, as well as the experience of His saints.

"Hereby we know that he abideth in us by the Spirit which He hath given us"—(1 John 3-24). This attesting Spirit is the kernel of consolation through the Comforter. It is the breakwater against skeptical and scholastic criticism. The communion of the Holy Ghost is the assurance of the Spirit which hides the soul in the Gibraltar fort of divine certainty. To secure the clear experience of the Spirit's witness, is the climax of all teaching, of all ministry in the promotion of holiness.

5. The Holy Spirit opens and brightens the future. "Whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak, and He will show you things to come."

He will beget a prophetic ministry as well as a prophetic testimony. "We know not what we should pray for as we ought but the Spirit maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. He crowns intercessory prayer with answers in advance so that the praying heart shouts and rests in vision of coming victory. The Holy Ghost leads the triumphant prayer which brings the soul out of the woods into the open. It is by the Spirit we are able to "pray through" as well as to pray up. It is the office of the Spirit to clinch the promises and to reveal the glorious resources of Jesus Christ, which is the guarantee for the supply of all our needs. The abiding Comforter, if properly utilized will exterminate from our religion all superstition, fear and presentiment or reliance upon signs and old wives' fables. He will dissolve all the spectres of suspicion and fear, transforming the terror of storms and waves into the music of Jesus' voice saying, "Be of good cheer; it is I, be not afraid." This He does because He takes of the things of Christ and reveals them unto us. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him and the Lord's secrets of healing, of revival victory and public events have sometimes been given as truly as the vision of the prophets was given by the Holy Ghost in olden times. It is a well attested fact that the selection and election for two presidents of the United States were pre-announced in the assuming faith that followed prayer for the nation's good.

Pages might be crowded with similar facts attending prevailing prayer in the Holy Spirit.

6. The Spirit directs the activities of holiness.

Its machinery as well as evangelistic plans have been prompted and executed by the power of the Holy Ghost. Enterprises involving faith for money to run orphanages, schools, missions, build churches and found asylums has been brought out by reliance upon the sanctifying and conquering Third person of the Trinity. The ministry of holiness is a ministry that contemplates the helpless and the unsaved in the whole world. The Holy Spirit is to carry out Christ's last command, "Go ye into all the world and preach my gospel to every creature." I believe the promised Spirit of Pentecost is the seal and secret of every successful enterprise of the missionary type. The Pentecostal fire-brand or stamp attests the genuine and condemns the spurious; for God works by His Spirit in harmony with the Holy Scriptures. Hereby may we test such religious frauds as Eddyism, Mormonism and many other selfish and exclusive cults of the last days. If our ministry does not reach after the whole world and the poorest and most needy; if it does not include primarily, the ungospelized and the unsaved, it is defective and probably satanic. If it is seclusive or exclusive in method, or becomes an agency to proselyte well-to-do church members, or build up a clannish denomination; if it itches for eloquence or leadership and is ambitious for its own and does not look upon the things of another, even upon the whole of redeemed mankind; if it slights or dispenses with any portion of the inspired Word of God, or rules out vital doctrines of the Holy Scriptures in the name of higher learning or new theology, then it may be well said, that ministry is born from beneath and not from above. It comes from the pit and not from the throne of the living God.

The ministry of the Spirit, in brief, contemplates the successful spread and operation of the Kingdom of Jesus among men on earth. It prepares souls likewise for His Kingdom in glory. It separates, sanctifies and fits the bride for union with the bridegroom in the feast above. The Spirit glorifies Jesus, making Him real as well as divine and at hand. Taking Christ thus on board the ship, as an Orpheus with his harp, you will be raptured with the music of Heaven. You will have no use for the wax of Ulysses in your ears. But freed from the siren charm of worldliness and sin, and with songs of everlasting joy, you shall guide into the harbor of the New Jerusalem to sit down in a holiness conference of shining delegates for a thousand blissful years.

Paul at Athens preached to a congregation whose chief occupation was to tell or to hear some new thing. He did not seek to outbid the sentimentalists who dispensed novelties, or the ingenious curiosity-mongers who guessed at the truth. He plainly preached the gospel of the risen Christ and the power of his resurrection. That power throbs in his words unto this hour. Paul would have done the same had he lived in this age of daily newspapers and electric communication.—*Christian Advocate*.

Perfection in most things is unattainable, but they who aim at it and persevere will come much nearer to it than those whose laziness and despondency make them give it up as unattainable.—*Chesterfield*.