

THE HOLY GHOST IS THE WITNESS.

We do not see why there is any need of confusion in the matter of the Witness of the Spirit. Just so long as we stay by the simple truth of the Word of God and put right things in their right places, we will have order and blessing, but when we wrest or strain the Word to bake it fit some theory it is bound to lead to confusion, and will make shipwreck of faith. Nothing could be plainer in the Bible than the fact that the Holy Ghost is the work of God in our hearts. In 1st John 5:6, we read: "It is the Spirit that beareth witness," and in the 10th verse of the same chapter it says: He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself. In Romans 8:16 it says, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." In the same chapter He is called the Spirit of Adoption, whereby (by which) we cry, Abba, Father." That is to say, it is by the Holy Ghost that we are able to say in relation to God, "Father, Father."

Again in Gal. 4:6 we read, "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father."

Jesus, Himself, made the whole matter of the Spirit's office very plain when He said in John 16:14: "He shall glorify me: for He shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you," and in the next verse, where He says, "He shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you." Thus it is made very clear that the great work of the Holy Spirit is to witness to, and reveal, and glorify Jesus. The aim of the whole gospel dispensation is, "Christ in you the hope of glory," and that in all things He should have the prominence.

Jesus also made it very clear that the Spirit would not draw attention to His own gifts and works, for, said Jesus. "He shall not speak of Himself." That makes it clear that if we seek to magnify the gifts of the Spirit, instead of seeking to magnify Jesus Christ, we will be led to error, and to the mere spectacular, and will be seeking manifestations instead of Christ-likeness.

The Spirit witnesses to our sanctification as well as to our conversion. Remember that it is the office of the Spirit to make real in us what has been provided in Jesus Christ; and is not Jesus made unto us sanctification? Did he not give himself for our sanctification? The work of the Spirit is to make real in my heart what my faith claims in Jesus, so when my faith claims the blessing of holiness, the Spirit witnesses that it is done—that it is a reality. John Wesley said in this connection, when asked concerning the witness of the Spirit to our entire sanctification: "That Scripture, 'we have received, not the Spirit that is of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we may know the things which are freely given us of God.'" I. Cor. 11:12. Now surely sanctification is one of "the things which are freely given us of God." And no possible reason can be assigned why this should be excepted, when the Apostle says: "We receive the Spirit" for this very end, that we may know the things which are thus "freely given us."

Now the truth of the matter is, what we call the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, or the filling of the Spirit is but the positive or witnessing side, or phase of the work of sanctification. It can be briefly stated this way. God wills our holiness or sanctification, Christ died to provide it, the Holy Ghost

effects it in us; or as I said before makes real, and witnesses to what my faith has appreciated from the provision of Christ. Someone has even more briefly and effectually put it this way, "God thought it Christ bought it; the Bible taught it; faith sought it; the Holy Ghost wrought it."

But now we find that in spite of this plain teaching there is a teaching abroad that is confusing the people by telling them that the Baptism or falling of the Holy Ghost is a separate thing from sanctification, and must have another witness apart from the Holy Ghost, thus robbing the Spirit of His chief work of witnessing to the things of God. I have reference to the teaching that the Baptism of the Spirit must be witnessed to by speaking in tongues. There would be as much good sense in saying that we needed a candle to witness that the sun was shining, when in its noon-day glory it beamed upon the earth. The very idea that the Holy Ghost, who is the witness, should need anything as uncertain and transient and variable as speaking or muttering in some unknown tongue. If there were any Scripture to lead to such a conclusion, it might give us more patience with the advocates of the theory, but there is none. It is founded of course on Acts 10:45-46, but as a matter of solemn truth the record does not say that the tongues were an evidence of anything. Not a single mention is made in all the epistles that speaking in tongues was the witness or evidence of anything. That whole episode in connection with Cornelius was given for Peter's benefit to cure him of his bigotry and to convince him that God had granted salvation to Gentiles, and the great proof of it was that God who knew the hearts should witness to them or bear them record, which He did by the Holy Ghost. Peter either by discernment of Spirit or direct inspiration had concluded that God had accepted Cornelius before the Holy Ghost had been poured out upon the house of Cornelius at all. Just stop and read Acts 10, and note the 34th and 35th verses. Peter had just listened to Cornelius' account of why he had sent for Peter, and when Cornelius had finished, Peter said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him." God had not sent Peter to Cornelius to hear speaking in tongues to convince him that Cornelius had received the Holy Ghost, but had sent him to Cornelius to let him know that God had granted repentance and salvation to the Gentiles. This was made clear to Peter no doubt in more ways than one; he first became convinced as he heard Cornelius testifying, and then he was further convinced when he realized that God had witnessed to Cornelius' faith by giving him the Holy Ghost. No matter by what means Peter was able to perceive that the Holy Ghost had fallen, one thing is certain, there is absolutely no mention that it was speaking in tongues that convinced him. It does simply mention the fact that those who had come with Peter were astonished, because that on the Gentiles was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost, and the fact was mentioned that they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God, but it simply does not say what it was that convinced them that it was of God. It may have been something included in the magnifying God. When folks say that tongues alone, and in every case is the evidence, they are not holding to Scrip-

ture record.

Not long since I was in a meeting where the speaker asked how many had received the Holy Ghost according to Acts 2:4. To my utter astonishment about a hundred put up their hands. It looked to me very presumptuous and closely approaching the sin of Ananias, when I was satisfied that not one of them had ever spoken a word of a known and spoken language, as was positively the case in Acts 2:4. All branches of the Tongues folks admit that there are cases of spurious tongues, and many cases have been known where the tongues have continued when the person had backslidden, then if tongues were to be the witness of the Holy Ghost, we would most certainly need a third witness to tell us when the tongues were genuine.

Let me say further while on this topic, that some of our good people still believe that the so-called Pentecostal people are preaching holiness or entire sanctification, but as a movement they are not. I had a personal talk with an individual of this sect just recently and he admitted that he did not now believe in the eradication of sin, though he once did, before he got in touch with these people.

If anybody in the world knows anything about what is going on in religious circles in this country and has had a chance to observe things it is the Rev. Bud Robinson. Let me quote him a bit. In referring to a Tongues preacher that came to his meeting recently in a western state he said: "He seemed to be a fine fellow, but when we preached on straight second blessing holiness, he could not stand the test and said so. He was somewhat in the dark and did not know just where he was in his experience." This same thing could be said of many.

H. C. MULLEN

THE RIGHT TEMPER FOR CHURCH MEMBERSHIP!

The church stands in no need of half-hearted people, who can't make up their minds to struggle against debasing influences and tendencies, and simply want to get through life as comfortably and safely as possible. The great need of the Church is not so much a numerous membership as a consistent and earnest membership. The Church is not inviting people because it needs people so much as for the reason that people need the Church. Consider what the Church has to give: the companionship of like-minded men seeking to serve God, the guidance of its experience, the help of its tested methods, the inspiration of its great tasks, the uplift of its united worship, the teaching of its prophetic leaders. Don't ask yourself patronizingly whether you should not help the Church. Ask yourself whether you don't need its aid. Those who come thinking that they have much to bestow on the Church and little to learn or receive from it are usually in their self-sufficiency neither helped themselves nor helpful to others. A sense of need and a desire to learn are the tempers that lead to the most fruitful Christian experience. It is to those who feel themselves poor in things of the spirit, to those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, that the invitation is extended.—Dr. Carl E. Grammer.

Our sins are debts that none can pay but Christ. It is not our tears, but His blood; it is not our sighs but His sufferings that can testify for our sins. Christ must pay all, or we are prisoners forever.—Sel.