

STUDY IX

THE BAPTISM, WITNESS AND SEAL OF THE SPIRIT OF AT-ONE-MENT

Spirit Baptism, One Only--in Three Parts--The Significance of this Baptism--
"The Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven"--Another Baptism of the
Spirit Promised "Upon all Flesh"--Its Significance--Prayer for the
Spirit--The Witness of the Spirit--Its Importance--No Peace With God
Without It--Few Know Whether They Have It or Not--"Tis a Point I
Long to Know"--How to Recognize the Spirit's Witness--Differences
of Administration--The Spirit's Testimony--"Sanctified by the
Spirit"--"Filled With the Spirit"--The Seal of the Spirit--"The Promise"
which it Seals--Unto the Day of Deliverance--The Highest Attainment
to be Sought--and Retained.

"When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord
in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing
mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And
there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and they sat upon
each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began
to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." *Acts 2:1-4*

THE DAY of Pentecost was a most notable one in the history
of the Gospel Church. It indicated that our Redeemer
had appeared in the presence of God for us, as our great
High Priest; that he had offered before the Father the merits
of his sacrifice, finished at Calvary fifty days previously;
that the Father had accepted the sacrifice fully; and consequently
that the apostles and believers who had accepted
Jesus, and who were desirous of approaching to the Father,

E210

and becoming *sons* of God (*John 1:12*), were now recognized
as such--the holy Spirit thus testifying their acceptance:
hence it is termed the "Spirit of adoption" into the
family of God. It was appropriate that so important a matter
should be clearly demonstrated: it was not only important
that the apostles and believers should receive the holy
Spirit, the Spirit of divine favor, in their hearts, but that

they should have an outward manifestation which would be a satisfactory proof, not only to themselves but to all subsequent believers, that God had fully accepted the Church as sons and joint-heirs with Christ.

But nothing in connection with this narrative in any sense of the word necessitates the thought of a personal holy Spirit, separate from the Father and the Son. Quite the contrary: the fact that the holy Spirit was received in them all of itself implies that the holy Spirit is not a person, but an influence, a power exerted by a person--the power or influence of God exerted in and upon his newly adopted children. This is further evidenced by the fact that the various powers and talents of the apostles were energized, quickened and enlarged by this influence. The Apostle explains that it was here that our Lord Jesus "gave gifts unto men"--spiritual gifts. (*Psa. 68:18; Eph. 4:8*) The great gift of his own life had already been given, and constituted the *redemption price* for the whole world--and a portion of the ransomed myriads, a little flock, having been especially given to Christ to be his joint-heirs and associates in the Kingdom, and the selection of this little flock having already begun, as represented in those who waited for the Pentecostal blessing, the time had come for their recognition. It was the Father who there recognized the Church of Christ, in the sense that the impartation of his holy Spirit, as an influence and power, implied the reconciliation of believers; so that they were no longer treated as sinners and aliens, nor even as servants; now as sons they were made "partakers of the heavenly gift." We are informed that this holy Spirit, holy influence, holy power, which emanates

E211

from its fountain or source, the Father, was poured out, nevertheless, appropriately by God's honored representative, through whom every Blessing of God has come and will come, namely, Christ Jesus our Lord and Head.

The Apostle Peter, speaking under the inspiring influence of the holy Spirit, explained the matter, that it was *of* the Father and *by* the Son, saying, "Jesus--being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the holy Spirit, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear." (*Acts 2:33*) Accordingly, there can not be too much stress laid upon this baptism of the holy Spirit, seeing that it marks the acceptance of the Church, and that without it we would have no proof of the acceptance of our Lord's sacrifice and of our justification.

However, we must most emphatically object to the common but erroneous and thoroughly unscriptural idea which prevails amongst many very earnest Christians, to the effect that frequent baptisms of the holy Spirit are to be expected and sought. Such an expectation not only is unwarranted by any promises given us in the Word of God, but is thoroughly at variance with the divine arrangement therein laid down. It should be noticed that the Scriptures mention only three baptisms of the holy Spirit; and the necessity for each of these, and for no more, is manifest--the three being parts or divisions of the one baptism. (1) The baptism of our Lord Jesus. (2) The baptism at Pentecost. (3) The baptism of Cornelius, the first Gentile convert accepted as a "son." Let us examine these baptisms of the Spirit in this order.

(1) Not only was our Lord's baptism of the holy Spirit necessary to himself, that he might be a partaker of the divine power; as the divine agent, and as the earnest of his inheritance, his begetting to the divine nature; but it was proper also that there should be such an outward manifestation or recognition of him as would permit others to know him as God's Anointed. The manifestation was that of a dove descending and lighting upon him. Nor are we given

E212

to understand that the people in general witnessed this manifestation of divine favor; the understanding rather is that John the Baptist, who was at the time doing a reformatory work in Israel, and who was recognized as a prophet, a servant of the Lord, alone witnessed the descent of the Spirit upon our Lord, and he bore testimony to the fact. The statement is, "And John *bare record*, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven, like a dove, and it abode upon him; and I knew him not [knew not that he was the Messiah]: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shall see the Spirit descending and remaining upon him, the same is he which baptizeth with the holy Spirit. And I saw, and bare record, that this is the Son of God." ***John 1:33***

(2) The baptism of the Church at Pentecost, as John here explains, was to be done by Christ, "he which baptizeth with the holy Spirit." Peter confirms this, as we have seen, declaring that Christ did shed forth his holy Spirit. He alone can so baptize, because he has redeemed the world, bought all with his precious blood; and because no man cometh unto the Father but by him, and because the Father

judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son; and because the Son, highly exalted, acts as the Father's representative, to introduce into full fellowship with the Father those who come unto the Father by him. We have already seen that this baptism of the Church with the holy Spirit was necessary, as a testimony, as a witness, in the same manner that it was necessary that the baptism of the Spirit upon our Lord Jesus should be witnessed and testified.

The rushing wind filling the place, and the "cloven tongues of flame" which "sat on each of them" (probably the eleven apostles only--designating them as the Lord's special representatives and the holy Spirit's mouthpieces--see *verse 14*), were not the holy Spirit, but merely *manifestations* to their senses representing the invisible. Similarly the dove which John saw was not the Spirit but a manifestation

E213

to his senses. The dove, the emblem of peace and purity, fitly represented the fulness of Jehovah's spirit of love in Jesus; as the cloven tongues fitly represented the mission of the apostles to be, under the holy Spirit, to testify as "*witnesses.*" *Acts 2:32; 3:15; 5:32; 10:39,41; 13:31*

(3) A special manifestation of the divine power in connection with the acceptance of Cornelius, the first Gentile convert, was necessary; because hitherto Gentiles had been outcasts, unacceptable to God even as servants; consequently it would not occur to the Jewish believers that the Gentiles would be accepted into the high position of *sons* of God, unless some pointed manifestation of divine favor to that effect were granted.

As already seen, it was not the divine program that any Gentiles should be accepted until the end of the "seventy weeks" of Jewish special favor, three and a half years after Pentecost;* hence the fact that converts from among the Gentiles were to be fellow-heirs (on an equality) with converts from among the Jews, could not be indicated in the baptism of the Spirit at Pentecost. And in view of the deep-rooted prejudices of the apostles as well as other Jews, it was most appropriate that the acceptance of Cornelius should be *manifested* to the senses of the Apostle by the *same* evidences given at Pentecost. Nor is it necessary to suppose that the "cloven tongues of flame" sat on Cornelius: in common with the converts from Judaism, he probably received some of the "gifts" which came upon *all* at Pentecost.

How else could we have ever known that the Gentiles

were accepted of the Lord? If the baptism of the Spirit and the Pentecostal blessings had come only upon the believers who were of the natural seed of Abraham, it might have left us in doubt all the way down through the Gospel age, as respects the standing of the Lord's people who by natural progeniture were Gentiles. But by the baptism of the holy Spirit coming upon Cornelius, the Lord made fully manifest

*See SCRIPTURE STUDIES, Vol. II, Chap. 7.

E214

the fact that there was no longer any difference between Jew and Gentile, bond and free, male and female, so far as acceptance with him in Christ was concerned. None are acceptable of themselves, in their own unrighteousness-- hence only those who come unto the Father through the Beloved One are accepted in him. *1 Cor. 12:13*

Aside from these three baptisms of the holy Spirit there is no other reference to the subject in the Scriptures: consequently the thought of many of the Lord's people, that they must expect, labor for and pray for another or repeated baptisms of the holy Spirit is quite unwarranted. Such baptisms are wholly unnecessary, because the one baptism at Pentecost, supplemented by that upon Cornelius, fills every requirement. Those baptisms came not merely upon the individuals who enjoyed the blessing, but representatively were for and upon the Church, the Body of Christ, as a whole. The fact that this representative work for the Church was made in two parts--upon the first Jewish believers at Pentecost, and upon the first Gentile believers in the house of Cornelius, is only in harmony with our Lord's statement on the subject to Peter, before his crucifixion, saying, "I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven." (*Matt. 16:19*) A key signifies power to unlock, to open; and keys, in the plural implies that more than one door was to be opened. As a matter of fact, there were just two doors, and just two keys; and the Apostle Peter used both keys--doing the opening work to both Jews and Gentiles, as the Lord had predicted. He used the first key at Pentecost, where he was the first, chief, principal speaker, who introduced the new dispensation of the Spirit to the three thousand who at once believed and entered the door. (*Acts 2:37-41*) Again, when the due time had come for the Gospel to be preached to the Gentiles, the Lord, in accordance with his choice, sent Peter to do this work, telling Cornelius to send for Peter, and telling Peter to go to Cornelius,

and to speak the words of the Gospel to him and his household. On this occasion Peter used the second key,

E215

opening the Gospel door before the Gentiles, God witnessing to the fact by the miraculous manifestations of his holy Spirit upon Cornelius and the other consecrated believers from among the Gentiles with him.

The proper thought respecting the baptism of the holy Spirit is that of an outpouring, a shedding forth, an anointing, which, however, is so complete (*covering* every member of the body) as to be properly designated an *immersion*, or "baptism." And this same anointing or baptism continues upon the Church down through the age--covering, permeating, sanctifying, blessing, anointing, from then until now, each one who *comes into* the anointed "body." And this will continue until the last member has been received and fully anointed. The Apostle John speaking also of this baptism, styling it an anointing, says, "The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you." (*1 John 2:27; Psa. 133:2*) He does not say, the numerous anointings which you have received, but *the* anointing, the one anointing, more being quite superfluous and out of harmony with the divine arrangement.

From the divine standpoint the entire Church is recognized as one--as a whole, for, "As the body is one, yet hath many members, so also is Christ...Ye are members in particular of the body of Christ." (*1 Cor. 12:12,27*) In harmony with this thought the Scriptural presentation of the matter is that although the Lord considers us individually, and in many respects deals with us individually, yet our standing before the Father is not so much as units, but as members or parts of a unit, which unit is Christ, head and body. Hence we are informed that after we have believed our next step is to get into the body of Christ--to be baptized into his body.

We will not here discuss the subject of baptism in general, leaving that for future consideration, but we note the fact that believers are invited to be baptized into Christ, in order that they may come into or under his baptism of the holy Spirit. The holy Spirit not being a person, but a holy

E216

Spirit or power possessed by the Church, all who would have this blessing must come into relationship with *this*

Church, Christ's body. It is not to be obtained otherwise. Nor do we mean by this a membership in an earthly Church--a Methodist body, a Presbyterian body, a Lutheran body, a Roman Catholic body, or any other body of human organization. We mean a membership in the *ecclesia*, whose members can be assuredly recognized only by their possession of the holy Spirit of love--attested by its various fruits and witnessed to as we have seen foregoing.

Whoever becomes truly united with Christ, and thus truly united with all the members of the body of Christ, needs not to pray for present or future Pentecostal blessings, but may look back with joy and confidence to the original Pentecostal blessing and the blessing upon Cornelius, as the evidences which the Father gave, through Christ, of his acceptance of the Church as a whole: and with the divine arrangement all should be fully content. We do not say that our Lord is wroth with those who, with mistaken thoughts, ask, contrary to his will, for numerous Pentecosts: rather, we will suppose that he will have compassion upon their ignorance and misdirected prayers, and without altering his own plans and arrangements will pour them out a blessing--as much of a blessing as their erroneous expectations and neglect of his Word will permit--accepting the groanings of their spirits for heavenly communion.

It is strange that these dear friends who continually pray for baptisms of the Spirit have never noticed that the apostles did not pray for future Pentecosts, neither did they instruct the Church so to pray. Do such friends think themselves wiser than the inspired apostles, or holier than they, or more anxious to be filled with the Spirit? We will trust that they have no such egotistical and presumptuous imaginations, and that their feelings are merely those of ignorant children, who thoughtlessly and sometimes peevishly tease indulgent parents for unnecessary and unpromised blessings and mercies, which cannot be granted them.

E217

The General Baptism of the Spirit

"Afterward I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh." *Joel 2:28*

The holy Spirit is to be the channel of reconciliation between the Almighty and the race of sinners redeemed with the precious life of Christ. As the object of the sacrifice of Christ was to open up the way by which God could be just,

and yet be the justifier of all who believe in him, and who seek to come unto the Father by him, so his work, as the glorified Mediator, is to bring back into full fellowship with God so many of the redeemed race as are willing to return when granted full knowledge and opportunity. We have seen that this work of bringing back the members of the fallen race into harmony with God is divided into two parts: (1) the Church of this Gospel age, and (2) so many as will, of the remainder of mankind, during the coming Millennial age.

We have seen that the basis of harmony is not that God condones sin, and excuses it, and permits us to return to his favor as sinners, but that the sinners are to put away their sins, accept heartily the divine standard of righteousness, and to come back into full harmony with God; so that they will seek and attain, through appointed channels, and under the supervision of Christ, the heavenly Father's holy Spirit, mind, will, disposition--receiving it as their own mind, will or disposition, and thus be transformed by the renewing of their minds. This, which we have seen is God's program for the Church, is also declared to be God's program, through Christ, for the reconciliation of the world unto himself during the next age. Not one iota of the divine law will be modified; sin and imperfection will not be excused and counted as perfection and righteousness.

The world of mankind will be in the hands of the Christ for reformation and restoration to the image of God, lost through father Adam through transgression; and as a part of the means for bringing the world back into harmony

E218

with God, the influence of Satan, which now is upon the world, binding and blinding mankind, will be removed (**2 Cor. 4:4; Rev. 20:2**), and thereafter, instead of the world being under the influence or spirit of deception and error and ignorance and superstition, it shall be under the influence or Spirit of truth and righteousness and love. Instead of outside influences being a pressure upon the hearts of men, to fill them with anger and malice, hatred, strife and selfishness, this influence or spirit will be restrained and ultimately destroyed, and the contrary influence or Spirit of righteousness, goodness, mercy, sympathy, love, will be developed. Thus, through Christ, the holy Spirit of God will be poured out upon the world of mankind--first, in giving them enlightenment; secondly, in giving them help, assistance, strength, to overcome their own inherited

tendencies; and third, in instructing them and leading them back to the image and likeness of God, lost through father Adam's disobedience.

While these prospective privileges and blessings for the world are glorious, and rejoice our hearts far beyond anything that the Lord's people have seen in times past, they nevertheless offer no comfort to enemies of the Lord, or to those who, when they have the opportunity, refuse to receive of his holy Spirit, and to be filled by it. It will be poured out for all flesh, but it will be necessary for those who would enjoy it and be profited thereby to avail themselves of its privileges: just as it is necessary for believers of this Gospel age, who would come under and be blessed by the holy Spirit, to make use of the means; to consecrate themselves and to eat the truth, that they may have "the Spirit of the truth." When the great Prophet and Life-giver, the great Priest after the order of Melchizedek (Christ, head and body, complete), stands forward to bless the world, it will mean a blessing for all who will receive the words of that prophet, and obey them, and obtain the blessing of eternal life, by obedience; and it will mean the destruction by the Second Death for all those who refuse to hear him, as

E219

it is written, "Every soul which will not hear [obey] that Prophet shall be destroyed from among the people." **Acts 3:23**

Joel's prophecy, it will be noticed, is stated in the reverse order to that of its fulfilment; the blessing of all flesh is stated first, and the blessing upon the Church last.

No doubt this order of statement was of the Lord's design, so as to cover or hide some of the glorious features of this great promise, until the due time for it to be understood. (**Dan. 12:9,10**) Although it has been read over for centuries, it could not open up and disclose all of its wonderful treasure until God's "due time" had come. Throughout this Gospel age the Lord has poured out his Spirit upon his servants and handmaidens only; and blessed has been the experience of all those who received it--all who were immersed into the body of Christ, and made partakers of his anointing as sons; and it was to this feature that the Apostle Peter referred in his discourse at Pentecost. He quoted both parts of the prophecy, but, under the guidance of the holy Spirit, he did not expound or illuminate the first part; because the time for it to be understood had not yet come. Hence, instead of explaining the *difference* between the holy Spirit upon the servants and the handmaidens during this

Gospel age ("*in those days*"), and the holy Spirit upon all flesh "*afterward*," in the next age, he merely says, referring to the holy Spirit upon himself and the other believers, "*This is that which was spoken by the Prophet Joel*"--a part of that, the beginning of that which was spoken. It will not all be complete until the pouring out of the Spirit upon all flesh, which is not yet. Moreover, the prophet mentions other things, which are not yet fulfilled. He refers to the darkening of the sun and the moon, and the coming of the great and notable day of the Lord, which are events now nigh at hand, the great day of wrath, which intervenes and separates between the outpouring of the holy Spirit upon the Church, "the servants and handmaidens," in these days, and "all flesh," afterward.

E220

As we have seen, there will be no difference between the Spirit of God, as it will come upon the world in the next age, and the Spirit of God as it comes upon the Church in this age, because it is the *same* Spirit of truth, Spirit of righteousness, Spirit of holiness, Spirit of sanctification, Spirit of harmony with God--the Spirit or influence which God will exert in favor of righteousness and goodness and truth. Nevertheless, it will not mean the same thing in every particular then that it means now. To receive the holy Spirit of God now, and to live in harmony therewith, means necessarily a conflict with the spirit of the world, which abounds on every hand. For this reason it is that those who receive the holy Spirit now, and who walk in harmony with it, are instructed to expect persecution and opposition from all who do not have the Spirit--the vast majority.

To receive the holy Spirit in the future will not mean persecution, because the order, arrangement, government, of the next age will be very different from the present one: whereas the prince of this world is Satan, the prince of the world or age to come will be Christ; and whereas the majority of mankind are now under the influence of Satan, willingly or unwillingly, knowingly or unknowingly, in the next age the whole world will be under the influence of Christ and his righteous government. And the Truth will then be made free and common to all, from the least unto the greatest. Since the law of the next age will be the law of righteousness, truth, goodness, and will be *ruling*, as the Kingdom of God, those who come into harmony with that government and its law, and who have the Spirit of Truth, will not suffer persecution as a result thereof, but, on the

contrary, will experience favor and blessings and make progress in proportion as they receive of that Spirit of holiness.

The possession of the holy Spirit, during the Millennial age, will not as during this age signify a *begetting* of the Spirit to a spirit-nature, nor will it signify an acceptance to joint-heirship with Christ in the Kingdom. That promise

E221

belongs only to this Gospel age, to the servant and handmaiden class, who receive the holy Spirit and are actuated by it during this age, when, in consequence of the present prevalence of evil, they are obliged to *suffer for righteousness' sake*; and upon whom, therefore, "the Spirit of *glory* and of God resteth." **1 Pet. 4:14**

The possession of the holy Spirit during the Millennial age will simply signify that the recipient has come into harmony with Christ, the Mediator, and is to that extent in harmony with God and in line with the blessings which God has provided for mankind in general, which blessings are not a *change* of nature, to the divine, but a *restitution* to all that was lost through the failure of the first Adam. (**Acts 3:19-21**) The possession of the holy Spirit by such will be an evidence that the work of *regeneration* by the second Adam to perfection of human nature "bought" for them by the great sin-offering has commenced in them; and that if continued it will ultimately bring perfection of restitution to the human likeness of the divine Father.

We are to remember that the blessings which Christ will give to the world during the Millennial age, as the regenerator of the world, are the blessings which he bought for them by the sacrifice of himself. As he gave himself, as "the man Christ Jesus," a corresponding price for the man Adam, upon whom the condemnation came, so it was the manhood, rights, privileges and life and kingdom of Adam that were purchased by the great sacrifice for sins; and these purchased things are the things which are to be *restored* to the regenerated world, through their regenerator or father, Christ Jesus our Lord, the second Adam. **Eph. 1:14; Acts 3:19-23**

The fact that our Lord Jesus was not the second Adam while in the flesh, but is the second Adam as a spirit being (since his resurrection), would not imply that he, as the second father of the race, would give to mankind spirit life or spirit being in their regeneration. On the contrary, we are to remember that the thought conveyed by the word "father"

E222

is *merely* "life-giver," without respect to the nature. Thus in father Adam's creation he is called a son of God, because created in the moral likeness and image of God, and not as implying that he was created in the divine nature; for we know that he was of the earth, earthy, while God is a spirit. The principles underlying this power by which God, as the life-giver, has become the Father of all creation, through his active agent, our Lord, is more particularly shown in a preceding chapter, under the caption, "The Undeified One:" we merely call attention to the matter here, to guard against misapprehension. God's purpose in connection with the creation of the world, and man as its inhabitant and lord, and the lower animals as his subjects, has not been changed by reason of the permitted disobedience and fall: the original plan remains as at first. After the evil attempted by the Adversary shall be ultimately expunged, the divine plan, as originally designed, will be fully accomplished through Christ. The Church of this Gospel age, which shall, as we have seen, be highly exalted and glorified as the Bride and joint-heir of Christ, is an exception to the restitution of mankind: it is called out or selected for a special purpose, and is particularly tried and tested, fitted and prepared for high exaltation, joint-heirship with Christ--a change from the human nature to a nature above the angelic nature--"far above angels, principalities and powers," partakers of the divine nature.

But while we ought not to pray for unpromised new *baptisms* of the holy Spirit, we are taught most positively to seek and pray for the Spirit as a satisfying portion.

Praying for the Holy Spirit

"If ye then, 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." *Luke 11:13*

Although "all things are by the Son," yet here as everywhere

E223

he gives the glory and honor, as the fountain of blessing, to the Father. The entire work of redemption and reconciliation is the Father's work--through the Son. And

our Lord declares that it is the Father's good pleasure that we should have more and more of his Spirit of holiness. He bids us seek for and ask for this, as the great supreme blessing. As for earthly blessings, our Redeemer tells us that our Heavenly Father knoweth what things we have need of--he knoweth better than we know what earthly blessings will be helpful, and which would be injurious to us. We need not, therefore, as do the unregenerate and the heathen, think of and pray for earthly blessings; but rather, as those who have come into the relationship of sons, and who have full confidence in the Father's provision, we may expect that he will give what is best, and we may rest ourselves content in that promise and faith.

The Heavenly Father is pleased to have us desire and ask for more and more of the holy Spirit--a disposition more and more fully in harmony with his Spirit: and all who thus desire and ask and seek it shall obtain their good desires; the Father will be pleased to so order the affairs of such that hindrances to the Spirit, whether in them or in their environment, shall be overcome, that his loving Spirit may abound in them--that they may be filled with the Spirit. But in this there is no suggestion of necessity for fresh baptisms of the holy Spirit: the baptism came at the beginning, and now all there remains to do is to open the sluices in every direction, so as to let the holy Spirit of love and truth penetrate into and permeate every action, word and thought of our beings. We need divine aid, the operation of the Lord's wisdom and providence, to show us what clogs the sluices and to help us to remove the obstructions.

The Spirit of holiness in abundance can only be received by those who earnestly desire it and seek it by prayer and effort. The mind or spirit of the world must be driven out of our hearts, in proportion as we would have them filled with the holy Spirit, mind, influence. Self-will must also give

E224

place. And because it is in proportion as we are emptied of all things else that we are ready to receive of his fulness, therefore the Lord would have us come into this condition of earnest desire for filling with his Spirit of holiness, that we may be willing and anxious to displace and eradicate every other contrary influence and will.

This evidently is the thought of the Apostle, in his prayer for the Church at Ephesus, that "Christ [the Spirit of Christ] may dwell in your hearts by faith [that figuratively he may sit as king, ruler, director of every thought, word

and deed]; that ye being rooted and grounded in love [the holy Spirit or disposition] may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth and height, and to appreciate the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled with *all the fulness of God.*" (*Eph. 3:19*) He who is filled with the Spirit of Christ, and with a full appreciation of the love which he manifested, will have the Father's Spirit in full measure.

Nothing in the scripture under examination can in any manner be construed to imply that the Heavenly Father would be pleased to have his children ask him for another God--a third person of a trinity of coequal Gods. Such a thought is repugnant to the passage and its connections: and those who entertain such an erroneous view must necessarily be blinded to that extent to the true beauty and force of this promise. It would be strange indeed if one member of a coequal trinity of Gods referred to another as able and willing to give the third *as* earthly parents give bread, fish and eggs to their children. (See preceding verses.) The entire passage is consistent only when the holy Spirit is properly understood to be the divine mind or influence bestowed variously for the comfort and spiritual upbuilding of God's children.

Our text institutes a comparison between kind earthly parents giving natural food to their children, and our kind

E225

heavenly Parent giving his holy Spirit to them that ask him. But as the earthly parent sets the food within the reach of his family, but does not force it upon them, so our heavenly Parent has set within the reach of his spiritual family the good provisions of his grace, but he does not force them upon us. We must hunger and thirst for them, we must seek for them, not doubtfully, but with faith respecting his willingness to give us good gifts. When, therefore, we pray for the holy Spirit, and to be filled with the Lord's Spirit, we are to look about us and find the provision which he has made for the answer to these prayers, which he has thus inspired and directed.

We find this provision in the Word of truth; but it is not enough to find *where* it is: if we desire to be filled we must eat; assuredly we must partake of the feast or we will not experience the satisfaction which the eating was designed to give. He who will not eat of a full table will be empty and starved, as truly as though there were no food. As the asking of a blessing upon the food will not fill us, but thereafter we

must partake of it, so the possession of the Word of God, and the offering of our petition to be filled with the Spirit, will not suffice us; we must eat the Word of God, if we would derive his Spirit from it.

Our Master declared, "The *words* that I speak unto you, they are Spirit and they are life" (**John 6:63**); and of all who are filled with the Spirit it is true, as spoken by the prophet, "Thy words were found and *I did eat them.*" (**Jer. 15:16; Rev. 10:9**) It is absolutely useless for us to pray Lord, Lord, give us the Spirit, if we neglect the Word of truth which that Spirit has supplied for our fulfilling. If we merely pray for the Spirit and do not use the proper means to obtain the Spirit of truth, we will continue to be at most only "babes in Christ," seeking outward signs, in proof of relationship to the Lord, instead of the inward witness, through the Word of truth, which he has provided.

E226

The Witness of the Holy Spirit

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." **Rom. 8:16**

Few doctrines are of more importance to God's people than this one; because on it depends to a considerable extent their possession of "the peace of God which passeth all understanding." (**Phil. 4:7**) How can they have "full assurance of faith" (**Heb. 10:22**) if they lack the witness of the Spirit testifying to their sonship--to their adoption into the family of God? Yet how few have the slightest conception of what is meant by this expression "witness of the Spirit," or what kind of experiences should be expected and looked for as constituting the Spirit's witness to our sonship.

The question is therefore a very important one--How does the holy Spirit witness to us respecting our at-one-ment with the Father--that we have become sons of God, and that under divine providence we are being prepared for the glorious things which God hath in reservation for them that love him, and who are to be joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord, in the Millennial Kingdom? On few subjects have Christians in general felt more disturbed than on this--the witness of the Spirit. Not knowing what the witness of the Spirit is, many of the best of the Lord's people must confess that they know not whether they have it or have it not. Others, more full of assurance than of knowledge,

claim that they have the witness of the holy Spirit, and refer to their happy *feelings* as the evidence. But soon or later such, if candid, must confess that the "witness" they rely on is a most unsatisfactory one: it fails them in the times of greatest need. When all men speak well of them, when health is favorable, when they are financially prosperous, when friends are numerous, they feel happy; but in proportion as some or all of these conditions are reversed they feel unhappy: they lose what they suppose was the "witness of the Spirit," and cry in anguish of soul:

E227

**"Where is the blessedness I knew,
When first I found the Lord?"**

Such are deceived and misled by their feelings: they feel themselves happier and think themselves drawing nearer to God at times when really they are, under the Adversary's leading, going straight into temptations. This accounts for some of the frequent and sudden "falls from grace" which some experience and which astonish themselves as well as their friends. Deceived by an unreliable "witness" they felt secure, were off guard and fell an easy prey to temptation at the very time they felt "so happy in the Lord" (?). Again, the trials and disappointments of life designed to draw us near to our Father, and to make us most appreciative of our Savior's loving sympathy and care, are partially lost upon this class; because losing the witness of their feelings, which they falsely consider the witness of the Spirit, they feel so bereft, and so hungry and thirsty for a return of the good feelings, that they lose many precious lessons obtainable only when leaning confidently on the Lord's bosom and communing with him, whilst passing through life's Gethsemanes.

Another class of Christians learning the unreliability of the "witness" of *feelings* seem to conclude that God has denied (to them at least) any reliable evidence of his favor-- any sure "witness" on the subject of their acceptance as "sons" into his family. Their doubts are expressed in the well-known hymn:

"'Tis a point I long to know--
Oft it causes anxious thought:
Do I love the Lord or no?
Am I his or am I not?"

This uncertainty arises in part also from a misapprehension of the doctrine of election: and yet these friends are quite correct in concluding that their changeable

E228

feelings could not be a proper criterion by which to judge of their sonship. Others, because the Scriptures declare, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee," judge of their sonship by their peace of mind: but when they look at the heathen and at the worldly, and see that many of them apparently have peace of mind too, their view of the Spirit's witness proves insufficient to sustain their hopes, or to give them assurance. Then the dark hour comes, and they say, How easy a matter to be deceived, and are in torment lest they have grieved the Spirit--for "fear hath torment."

Persons of large credulity (misnamed *faith*) will imagine they hear the Spirit's "whisper" to an inner ear and they congratulate themselves accordingly--even though they should subsequently ascertain that the information "whispered" was absolutely untrue. Other Christians of more logical mind, who cannot thus delude themselves, are perplexed that their friends should so confidently assert the witness of the Spirit, while they themselves have no such assurance.

The difficulty lies largely in the erroneous view that the Spirit is a person, and which seeks to apply personality to its witnessings. When the fact is recognized that the Spirit of God is any power or influence which God may be pleased to exercise, the subject is clarified and the "witness of the Spirit" becomes a matter easy of distinguishment. It will be a blessing to those who have this witness to know it of a surety: and it will be a blessing to those who have not this witness to ascertain their lack; so that they may fulfil the conditions and obtain the witness, without which none are authorized to consider themselves sons of God, in acceptable standing with the Father.

But what a joy and peace divine comes to those who have the true witness--to those who have the correct experiences and who have learned how to read them! It is to them indeed joy in sorrow, light in darkness, comfort in affliction, strength in weakness. And the full and explicit directions on

E229

this subject, as on all subjects, are found in that wonderful

book, our Father's Word--the Bible. In it and through its testimonies God's Spirit witnesseth with our spirits.

"How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in his excellent Word.
What more can he say than to you he hath said:
You who unto Jesus for refuge have fled!"

How to Know the Spirit's Witness

A man's mind or spirit may be known by his words and conduct; and so we may know God's mind or Spirit by his words and dealings. The testimony of his Word is that whosoever cometh unto him (by faith, and reformation from bad works and dead works, through Jesus) is accepted. (*Heb. 7:25*) Hence the questions to be asked of themselves by those who are seeking a witness of the Spirit respecting their sonship are:

Was I ever drawn to Christ?--to recognize him as my Redeemer, through whose righteousness alone I could have access to the heavenly Father, and be acceptable with him?

If this can be answered in the affirmative, the next question would be:

Did I ever fully consecrate myself--my life, my time, my talents, my influence, my all--to God?

If this question also can be answered in the affirmative, the inquirer may rest fully assured that he has been accepted with the Father, in the Beloved One, and recognized of him as a son. And if scrutinizing his own heart's desires and sentiments he finds it still trusting in the merit of Jesus, and still consecrated to do the Lord's will, he may allow the sweet confidence and peace which this thought of harmony and relationship to divinity brings, to fully possess his heart. This conviction of the Lord's grace toward us in Christ constructed from facts of our own experience, built upon the unalterable character and Word of God, is not

E230

mutative, not changeable, as it would be if built upon the shifting sands of feelings. If doubts or fears intrude in some dark hour, we have only to take the "Lamp" (God's Word) and examine afresh the facts and the foundation, and if our hearts are still loyal to the Lord, faith, joy and peace will instantly return to us; if we find our faith in "the precious blood" crumbling, or our consecration slipping away, we

know the true condition of affairs, and can at once make the proper repairs and thus re-establish our "full assurance of faith." (*Heb. 10:22*) But be it noticed that each one who would have this *assurance* must "set to his seal that God is true" (*John 3:33*): that our Lord changeth not, but is "the same yesterday, today and forever." The Lord's people may therefore rest assured that having once come into the conditions of divine favor, they may continue under those conditions so long as their hearts are loyal to God and their desires in harmony with his will: so long as they are at heart obedient to the divine commands--briefly comprehended in the word Love--to God and men. *Heb. 11:6; 13:8*

Whoever has taken the specified steps has the assurance, the "witness" of the Word of God, that he is a child of God; and this, during the Gospel age, signifies that he is a branch of the true vine, a probationary member of the true Church. (*John 15:1*) To such the Word of God *witnesses* that they have joined the true Church, which is Christ's body. This witness is given to their spirit, their mind, by God's Spirit, which testifies through his Word. And the same Spirit of Truth assures such that if their hearts continue faithful to the Lord to the close of their probation--if they willingly and gladly take up the cross daily, seeking as best they are able to follow in the Master's footsteps, their probationary membership in the Church of Christ will shortly be changed to actual membership--after they have finished their course, and been made sharers in his resurrection, the first resurrection. *Phil. 3:10*

However, the Spirit of God, through his Word, witnesses

E231

with equal clearness that it is possible for those who have already become branches of the true Vine to be cut off, if unfaithful--if they fail to bring forth the proper fruits of the Spirit of love. "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he [the Father] taketh away, and every branch that bringeth forth fruit he purgeth [pruneth] it, that it may bring forth more fruit." The Spirit of God, through his Word, thus testifies or witnesses to us the rule of our heavenly Father's dealing with his sons--chastisements, pruning, taking away of the dross, and a development of the fruit-bearing qualities. Hence, to have these experiences, after having become identified with the "Vine," is to have the witness of the Spirit that we are still in the "Vine," and still recognized as "branches" of it--still under our Lord's care and discipline. On the contrary, if any one lack these disciplines, prunings,

etc., after having become identified with the Vine, he lacks this "witness of the Spirit," and correspondingly has reason to doubt his acceptance with the Lord. *Heb. 12:7*

If we were all perfect, absolutely perfect, and had been proven so by tests, the case would be different; God would then love us for our perfection and harmony with himself; then chastisement and bitter experiences would be signs of his disfavor. But as it is, we all know that all are imperfect, that we all come far short of the divine standard; and that our new hearts, our new wills, our transformed minds or spirits, alone are acceptable with God--and that through the merit of Christ, and in a probationary sense, with a view to our testing, development and final perfecting. Only in proportion as we learn to appreciate the divine perfections, and our own deficiencies, can we appreciate the many and important lessons to be learned, and the necessity for the trying experiences we are required to undergo in order to develop in us the divine likeness.

The Scriptures inform us that the Heavenly Father is preparing a glorious spiritual Temple, in and through which the world of mankind is to have the privilege of coming

E232

to at-one-ment, reconciliation with himself. We see in the Scriptures the great Architect's ideal in respect to this temple--that the ideal of the whole was represented in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, its chief corner stone, and "top-stone," "laid in Heaven." We can see the better what is required of all those who will be acceptable to God as the "living stones" of that Temple--to be builded together with Christ the Head, "for an habitation of God through his Spirit." And we discern our own roughness by nature, our inharmony with the graceful lines of the Temple, delineated in its "top-stone." We can readily discern that much chiseling and much polishing are absolutely necessary to us, if we would be fitted and prepared for the place in this Temple to which, through the grace of God, we aspire. And hence those who find that they are not receiving the blows from the Lord's hammer and chisel, lack this "witness" which the Spirit of God through his Word testifies must come to all the living stones of his Temple: and which even the grand Top-stone did not escape. If divine providence does not mark out for us a "narrow way" with a certain amount of difficulty and adversity--if we are simply permitted to rest without afflictions, trials, etc., then we may know of a surety that God is not dealing with us as with the

living stones which shall form part of the Temple--the sons--because we lack this "witness" of our acceptance and preparation. A realization that such is our condition ought to send us promptly to the Lord to inquire *why* we have no tribulations and adversities, and to "examine ourselves" whether or not we be still in the faith (**2 Cor. 13:5**); and whether or not we are still endeavoring to walk faithfully in the footsteps of our Master, in fulness of consecration to the Father's will. But if we have this "witness" of chiselings, polishings, prunings, disciplines, chastisements, let us take them patiently, joyfully, appreciatively, as evidences of our Father's love essential to our attainment to our high calling--in full accord with the Spirit's testimony or witness--that we are sons of God, "heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus

E233

Christ our Lord, [only] *if so be that we suffer with him*, that we may be also glorified together." **Rom. 8:17**

The Spirit's "Differences of Administration"

"Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye be without chastisement, then, are ye bastards and not sons." (**Heb. 12:8**) Afflictions and troubles come upon the world, as well as upon the Lord's saints, but these are *not marks of sonship*, except to those fully consecrated to the Father's will and work. The Spirit and Word of God "witness" only to his sons. Nor are the prunings and chastenings in the Lord's family always the same. As earthly children require different kinds and degrees of discipline, so with God's children: to some, a *look* of disapproval is sufficient; to others a word of rebuke is necessary, while still others must be scourged, and some repeatedly. An earthly parent rejoices most in the obedient and promptly submissive child, for whom the word or look of reproof is sufficient to prune away the evil; and so also our Father in Heaven declares his approval of those who "tremble at his word." **Isa. 66:5**

Such cooperate with God in the development of their own characters, noting their own defects and seeking to correct them--hearkening for the Father's voice of direction, instruction or loving reproof, and ever seeking his approving smile: their sentiments are well described by the words of the poet:

"Sun of my soul, my Father dear,
I know no night when thou art near.
O let no earthborn cloud arise,
To hide thee from thy servant's eyes."

This is the class of whom the Apostle writes, who judge themselves, and who, therefore, need less chastening of the Lord. (*1 Cor. 11:31*) To be of this class requires fulness of

E234

consecration; and these are and will be the overcomers, who shall be deemed worthy of joint-heirship with Christ Jesus their Lord in his Kingdom. To this class, obedient and watchful, the Lord says, "I will guide thee with mine eye," "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel and afterward receive me to glory." Those who can be guided only by continual scourging are not of the overcoming class, and will not be accounted worthy to be of the Lord's Bride, and have such a "witness" from the Lord through the Spirit of the Truth. *Psa. 32:8; 73:24*; contrast *Rev. 7:9,14*.

Nor are chastenings always proofs of faults, or a "witness" of the Lord's disapproval. On the contrary, as with our Lord, so also with his faithful followers, divine providence leads the faithful and obedient into the path of suffering and self-denial, not as chastisement of a contrary will, but as tests, by self-sacrifice, of the measure of love and devotion to the Father's will, and to the cause of righteousness. As our Lord was chastened for our transgressions, not his own, when he bore the sins of many, so his followers in many respects suffer, not for their own wrongdoings, but by reason of the wrongdoings of others, for they are called as the Apostle declares, to "fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ, for his body's sake, which is the Church." *Col. 1:24*

What the Holy Spirit Witnesses

In the light of the foregoing, let each of the Lord's professed sons examine himself whether or not he have "the witness of the Spirit," that he is one of the children of God: and let us repeat the examination frequently, and thus "watch" and keep ourselves in the love of God, rejoicing in the witness of his Spirit.

Are we being pruned continually? Are we passing through such experiences, great or small, as are removing

E235

from us more or less rapidly the fleshly tendencies, which war against the soul--anger, malice, hatred, envy, strife, selfishness, rudeness, and all things contrary to the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus--the Spirit of love? If so, to the extent that we can realize this pruning work in progress, we will no doubt be able to recognize growth in the proper direction--in meekness, patience, gentleness, brotherly kindness, love. Whoever, after a careful examination along these lines, marked out in the Lord's Word, can realize such experiences in progress may know of his continued acceptance with God, because he has *this witness of the Spirit*.

Again, the Spirit witnesses that "Whosoever is born [begotten] of God, sinneth not." (**1 John 5:18**) The child of God may be overpowered by his old nature (reckoned *dead*, but not fully, actually so); he may be overtaken in a fault, may err in judgment or in word, but he will never *willingly* transgress the divine law. So then, if our hearts can respond that we delight to do God's will, and would not willingly violate or in any manner oppose it--that we would rather have God's will done, and his plan fulfilled, even though it should dash our fondest hopes and break every tender tie--then we have this witness that our spirit or mind agrees with the witness of the Spirit of the Truth here recorded: and this is a witness, not only that we were once accepted into God's family, but that we are there still.

The Spirit witnesses, through the Word of God, that those who are the Lord's people are separate from the world--that their hopes and aims and general spirit, disposition, are different. "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you." "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." **John 15:19; 2 Tim. 3:12**

Can our hearts testify that these words properly represent our experience in life? If so, the Spirit (mind) of God is thus again witnessing with our spirit (mind) that we are his. Nor should we forget that the world spoken of by our Lord includes

E236

all the worldly-minded ones, in whom the spirit of the world has a footing. In our Lord's day this was true of the nominal Jewish Church: in fact, all of his persecutions came from professors of religion. Hence, we must not marvel

if all who are walking in our Lord's footsteps should have a similarly disappointing experience, and find that the spirit of the world, in its most antagonistic form, will be manifested in a quarter where we might naturally expect it least--amongst those who profess to be the children of God. It was the chief religionists of our Lord's day who called him Beelzebub, a prince of devils. And the holy Spirit witnesseth through our Lord's Word, saying, "If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household." (*Matt. 10:25*) If, therefore, we have been evilly spoken of, because of our identification with the Truth, and our service of it, we have in this an additional evidence or witness of the Spirit that we are in the right pathway.

Had our Lord Jesus joined hands with the popular leaders in the Jewish Church, and abstained from speaking the truth in love, abstained from pointing out the false doctrines of his day, he would not have been "hated," nor "persecuted"; on the contrary, he probably would have been "highly esteemed amongst men." But, as he himself declared, much that is "highly esteemed amongst men is an abomination in the sight of God." *Luke 16:15*

Had our Lord simply kept quiet and refrained from exposing the hypocrisies, shams, long prayers and false teachings of the Scribes and Pharisees, they no doubt would have let him alone, would not have persecuted him; and he would not have suffered for the Truth's sake. So also it is with his followers: from a similar class, the Truth and those who have the Spirit of the Truth, and who follow the Lord's instruction, letting their lights shine, will now incur hatred and persecution. And if some, for these reasons, and while doing their best to speak the truth in love, suffer therefor,

E237

happy are they, for as the Apostle said, "The Spirit of glory and of God resteth on you." They have this witness of the Spirit to their faithfulness in the narrow way. *1 Pet. 4:14*

Again, the holy Spirit witnesses, through our Lord's testimony, that whosoever is ashamed of the Redeemer and of his Truth which he taught, of him will the Lord be ashamed when he comes to make up his jewels. (*Mark 8:38*) Whoever, therefore, finds his heart so in love with the Lord and his Word that he takes pleasure, on every suitable occasion, in acknowledging Jesus as his Redeemer and Master, and to faithfully present the Word of his testimony, so long does such an one have this as another witness of the holy

Spirit that he is a child of God, and an heir of the Kingdom. Such have reason to rejoice in the Master's promise that they are just the kind whom he will be glad to confess before his Father and before the holy angels. But if any have not this witness--if, on the contrary, their hearts witness that they are ashamed of the Lord, ashamed to confess themselves his followers, ashamed to own his "brethren," the members of his body, and ashamed to confess the doctrines which he taught--any who have these experiences have the witness of the Spirit that if this condition of things be not altered the Lord will be ashamed of them at his second coming, and will not confess them before the Father and his holy messengers.

Further, the holy Spirit witnesses that, "Whosoever is born [begotten] of God *overcometh* the world: and this is the victory that *overcometh* the world, even your *faith*." (*1 John 5:4*) Let us examine our hearts, our spirits, our minds, in the light of this testimony of the holy Spirit. Are we overcomers, according to this standard? The standard is that to be the Lord's we must be out of harmony with the world, in conflict with it--its aims, its hopes, its ambitions. The thought of conflict is contained in the expression, "overcometh the world." And we can readily see that no one can be an overcomer of the world who is in sympathy and affiliation

E238

with it, and its general spirit of selfishness, pride, ambition, etc.

Before we decide positively whether we are overcoming the world or not, let us notice that we are not to overcome the world by flattery, nor by joining with it in its follies and attempting to give these a religious twist; nor are we to overcome the world by engaging in some moral or religious work, such as teaching a Sunday-school class, or helping the poor, or joining a sectarian church. In none of these ways does the Lord indicate or "witness" that we can overcome the world. His statement is positive, that the victory which *overcometh* the world is our *faith*. The Spirit thus witnesses that to be overcomers we must "walk by *faith*, and not by sight." We must look not at the things that are seen--popularity, worldly show, denominational greatness, etc.--but must look at the things which are not seen--the spiritual and eternal things. (*2 Cor. 4:18*) We are to have the faith expressed by the poet's words:

"I would rather walk in the dark with God,
Than go with the throng in the light."

Furthermore, the holy Spirit witnesses to us, through the Word, that if we are the children of God we will not be ignorant of things present nor of "things *to come*," because we will be enlightened and taught of God, through the Word of his grace--the Word of his Spirit. As we mature, "grow in grace," we will desire and seek and obtain, in addition to the milk of the Word, the "strong meat" which the Apostle declares is for those of fuller development. (**1 Pet. 2:2; Heb. 5:13,14**) The development in the graces of the Spirit, faith, fortitude, knowledge, self-control, patience, piety, brotherly kindness, love, will bring us into closer fellowship with the Father and with the Lord Jesus, so that the Lord will be able and willing to communicate to us more and more clearly a knowledge of his gracious plans, as well as of his own gracious character.

E239

Referring to this growth, the Apostle Peter says: "If these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall be neither barren nor unfruitful in the *knowledge* of the Lord Jesus Christ; but he that lacketh these things is blind, *and cannot see afar off*....For if ye do these things ye shall never fall; for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." **2 Pet. 1:5-11**. Compare **John 16:12,15**.

Each should ask himself whether or not he has this witness of the Spirit, this testimony to his growth as a new creature in Christ Jesus, and whether or not he is developing and maturing the kind of fruit here specified. Let us remember also that our growth in love and in all the fruits of the Spirit is dependent largely upon our growth in knowledge; and our growth in knowledge of divine things is dependent also upon our growth in the fruits of the Spirit. Each step of knowledge brings a corresponding step of duty and obedience, and each step of duty and obedience taken will be followed by a further step in knowledge, for so, *the Spirit witnesseth*, shall be the experience of all those who shall be taught of God in the school of Christ. If we have this witness of the Spirit of growth, both in grace and in knowledge, let us rejoice therein, and let us follow on in the same pathway until it shall bring us, under divine guidance, to that which is perfect, both in knowledge and in grace.

The Holy Spirit's Future Testimony

The holy Spirit will witness to the reconciled world of mankind in the next age, very similarly as to manner, but very dissimilar as to facts. Those possessing the Spirit will no longer be the few special servants and handmaids, but as the Prophet Joel declares "all flesh." (*Joel 2:28*) The Spirit's "witness" will no longer be "whosoever will live godly shall suffer persecution"; for no persecution will then be permitted.

E240

It will no longer "witness" to a "narrow way" of sacrifice, for the day of sacrifice will be past: "A highway shall be there" and it shall be without stumbling stones. (*Isa. 35:8; 62:10*) It will "witness" that "Evildoers shall be cut off: but those who wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth." (*Acts 3:23; Psa. 37:7-11*) It will "witness" blessings to the welldoer and punishments and destruction to wilful evildoers. It is the same Spirit of God but under differences of administration.

Having learned *how* the holy Spirit "witnesses" and *what* are some of its testimonies through God's holy Word, we do indeed find these very much more satisfactory than all the doubts and fears inspired by mental and physical conditions--feelings, falsely called by some the witness of the holy Spirit. Nevertheless, we should call attention to the fact that all Christians cannot have the same witnessings from the Spirit of God with their spirits or minds. All Christians of large experience and development should have testimony or witness on *all* these points, and on other points set forth in the Scriptures: but there are young Christians who have not yet progressed far enough to have all of these witnessings; some, perhaps, may be truly begotten of the Lord, and as yet have but few of them. The great Husbandman does not expect fruitage, neither green nor yet the developed and ripe fruit, from the fresh and tender sprout of a branch.

The first witness that the newly begotten may have is, that they are accepted with the Lord; that they are young branches in the true Vine; and that the Spirit of the Vine is in them--the desire to grow and to be like the Vine, and to bring forth fruitage. Nor should it be long after the branch first shoots forth, before the sign of leaves and the buds of promise for fruit will be discernible. The newborn babe in the spiritual family manifests its relationship to the older

and more developed members of the family, not by its eating of the strong meat, which might strangle it, but by desires for the strengthening milk, to grow thereby. *1 Pet. 2:2*

E241

Those who find themselves possessed of any of the foregoing witnessings of the Spirit should rejoice correspondingly; and every particular they are lacking they should endeavor to cultivate and develop, so that they may ultimately have the witness of the Spirit in their favor on every point of the Scriptural testimony respecting the pathway and experiences of the Lord's faithful people. Such will no longer need to sing--"Tis a point I long to know." On the contrary, they will know, will have full assurance of faith, and will be rooted and grounded and built up and established in the faith. This is the divinely arranged way: we wholly escape from fear--from "Doubting Castle"--for our trust rests securely in the divine promises, which never fail. This is as true in the time of trial and adversity and darkness as when we are more particularly enjoying the light of our heavenly Father's smile. The poet expresses the correct thought, saying:

"When darkness seems to veil his face
I rest in his unchanging grace.
His oath, his covenant, his blood,
Support me in the whelming flood.
When all around my soul gives way,
He then is all my hope and stay."

Sanctified by the Spirit

"But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are holy, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." *1 Cor. 6:11*

Sanctification signifies a *setting apart* or separating. All who are sanctified, set apart, fully consecrated to God, must first be washed or *justified*--either actually cleansed from sin, or reckonedly cleansed--"justified *by faith*." Actual justification will be the route of approach toward God on the part of the world during the Millennium, under the guidance and help of the great Mediator, and as part of the process of the Atonement. Reckoned justification, that is, justification

E242

by faith--is the arrangement which operates during this Gospel Age, by which we who are sinners by nature, and in whose flesh dwells no perfection, are reckoned clean, holy, justified, acceptable to God through our acceptance of Christ as our Redeemer. We believe the Scriptural testimony that "Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures"; and believing this, and desirous of escaping from sin, we are accepted of God as though perfect, sinless, as justified through the merit of the precious blood. Being thus justified by faith, we have peace with God, and can approach him, and will be received by him, and can begin to *do works acceptable* to the Father, through the merit of our Lord Jesus Christ. The evidence which we have of our justification and sanctification comes to us through the Word, and is called the "seal" and "witness" of the Spirit in us.

The *power* which enables us to live up to our consecration vows is the holy Spirit or holy mind of God, which we receive as a result of our faith in Christ, and our consecration to be "dead with him." The Spirit of the Truth, which we obtain through the study of our Father's Word, in our Spirit of obedience thereto, furnishes us the needed strength for overcoming the world and our own perverted appetites. Accordingly, the text under consideration declares that all the cleansing which we have experienced, all of our justification, and all of our setting apart to righteousness, and our separation from sin--all the victories and blessings in these directions have come to us through the merit of our Lord Jesus, and by or through the channel of the Spirit of holiness, the Spirit of God, which we have received.

Other scriptures are in full harmony with these findings. The same Apostle Paul prayed for the Church, "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly." (*1 Thess. 5:23*) He is not here contradicting the statement foregoing, that it is the holy Spirit of God, which sanctifies. It is God who sanctifies, and the medium, method or channel is his holy Spirit and not another person.

E243

The Apostle Peter declares the Church to be "elect [chosen] through sanctification [setting apart] of the Spirit unto obedience." (*1 Pet. 1:2*) The thought here is that those whom God now recognizes as his chosen ones, and who are exhorted to make their calling and election sure, are chosen, not arbitrarily, but according to fixed principles, viz., that if the holy Spirit of God (influence of the Truth) operating

upon them shall bring them to the condition of full obedience (sanctification) to the Father's will and plan and providence, then they shall constitute the elect.

The Apostle Paul, in another of his epistles (*Eph. 5:26*), attributes this sanctification and cleansing power in the Church to the Word of God, saying, "Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might *sanctify* and *cleanse* it with the washing of water by the Word." We are not to suppose that the Apostle is here contradicting his previous statement, to the effect that *God* sanctifies the Church, nor contradicting his other statement, that it is the *Spirit* of God that sanctifies the Church. Clearly and unmistakably, his thought in every instance is, that it is the holy Spirit of God, operating through the Word of his truth, that he has designed shall produce in us cleansing, justification, sanctification.

Thus also our Lord Jesus prayed, "Sanctify them through thy Truth: thy Word is truth." (*John 17:17*) Thus we see that the various scriptures upon the subject taken together, teach that the sanctification of the Church is accomplished by the Spirit of the Truth, imparted to the consecrated ones through the Word of God which he provided for this very purpose.

All who are thus sanctified are thenceforth "*new creatures in Christ Jesus*," and are addressed as "them that are sanctified in Christ." (*1 Cor. 1:2*) Yet this sanctification in Christ is not aside from the Spirit of God, nor aside from the Word of God; for it is by reason of our acceptance of the divine plan and provision, by reason of our coming to the point of

E244

sanctification of the Spirit, that we are one with Christ our Lord. And this is further shown by the scripture which says, "Both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one [of one spirit, of one mind, begotten of the Spirit of Truth], for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren." (*Heb. 2:11*) Thus it is that we are "washed, sanctified, justified, in the name of our Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God"--the Spirit of Truth.

Be Ye Filled with the Spirit

"Be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always." *Eph. 5:18-20*

The intimation of this scripture is that the Lord's people may have a greater or less degree or fulness of his Spirit. To be his they must have some of his Spirit for "if any man *have not* the Spirit of Christ he is none of his." (*Rom. 8:9*) It rests with ourselves largely with our use of the means which God had provided, how fully we may be filled with his Spirit and disposition, his influence--the Spirit or influence of his Truth, which he has revealed for the very purpose of sanctifying our hearts and lives, and separating us from those who have the spirit of the world.

Nothing in this and similar texts involves the thought of a personal holy Spirit: quite the contrary. If a person were meant, it would be inconsistent to urge the recipient to a greater or less filling. The person who could enter could alone have to do with the filling; if he is great, he will fill the more, if small, he will fill the less. The holy Spirit conceived of as a person, one of a trinity of Gods, equal with the Highest, could not be supposed to get into the small compass of an imperfect man, and then not even fill that little heart. But when the correct thought of the divine power and influence is understood the Apostle's exhortation is thoroughly

E245

reasonable. We should continue seeking to be filled with the holy mind or disposition of our God, so beautifully exemplified in the person and obedience of our dear Redeemer, his Only Begotten Son.

And this thought of being *filled* with the holy Spirit is in harmony with the Apostle's suggestion in another place, that our mortal bodies are like leaky vessels, cracked, marred, which God permits to be filled with his holy Spirit. The Apostle's suggestion is that in view of what we know of our own imperfections, and our liability to let slip from us the holy influence, inspired of God through the Gospel, we should give the more earnest heed lest we should let these things slip from us, because "we have this treasure [the holy Spirit, the renewed mind in harmony with God] in earthen vessels." (*Heb. 2:1; 2 Cor. 4:7*) It behooves all who would walk in the footsteps of our Master, who would share in the

sufferings of Christ, and in the glory that shall follow, to seek in the Lord's way to be *filled with his Spirit*. To this end we need to keep close to the Lord, and to the fellow-members of his body--close in sympathy, in love, in cooperation; and we need also to keep close to the Word, which is the fountain of the sanctifying influence to the entire Church. "Sanctifying them through thy Truth: thy Word is truth."

It is in vain that we seek to be filled with the holy Spirit if we do not give attention to the divine arrangement provided for this very purpose. If we neglect the Word of God we are neglecting this sanctifying power; if we neglect prayer we are neglecting another privilege, and the helpfulness which it brings. If we neglect to assemble ourselves with those who are the Lord's people, and in whom we see the "seal" of this Spirit, we will fail to get the benefits and helps which "every joint supplieth"--including the helps which God has promised to the Church as a whole, through various members which he sets in the body for the exposition of his Word, and the obtaining therefrom of its sanctifying power or Spirit. *1 Cor. 12:25-28; Eph. 4:16*

E246

The exhortation, therefore, "Be ye filled with the Spirit," implies much: it implies that we should make use of the various arrangements and provisions which the Lord has made for our spiritual development. Though we cannot have personal contact with the Lord, we may have intercourse through prayer and through the members of his body, and through the Scriptures. Though we cannot have actual contact with the Apostles, we may have contact with their words. If we cannot have actual contact and personal fellowship with the members of the Church, we may have intercourse with them through the mails, and through the medium of the printed page. If we desire to be *filled* with the Lord's Spirit, we must obey these, his instructions.

The Seal of the Spirit

"In whom [Christ] ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of Truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were *sealed* with the holy Spirit of the promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance." *Eph. 1:13,14*

Seals in olden times were used for various purposes.

- (1) As a signet or signature, a mark of attestation or acknowledgment.
- (2) To make secret, to render secure against

intrusion--as in *Matt. 27:66; Rev. 10:4; 20:3*.

It is in the first of these senses that the Lord's people are said to be "sealed with the holy Spirit of the promise." The Apostle does not say, as some seem to suppose, that we were sealed *by* the holy Spirit as a person, the so-called third person of a trinity of coequal Gods: he declares that we were sealed "*with* the holy Spirit of *the promise*"; quite a different thought, as all will perceive. The holy Spirit is from the Father: he does the sealing through Christ *with* the holy Spirit, which itself is the *seal*. This is attested by the Apostle (*Acts 2:33*), and is in full accord with the record respecting our Lord Jesus, who was the first of the house of sons to be thus sealed. We read, "Him hath God the Father *sealed*"--*with* the holy Spirit. *John 6:27*

E247

The expression "Spirit of *the promise*," like other terms used in reference to the holy influence of God, as the "Spirit of holiness," "the Spirit of Truth," is descriptive: it shows that there is a connection between this sealing and the *promise* which God has given us. It is an advanced evidence or attestation of God's covenant with the "sealed" one, that "the exceeding great and precious promises" of the "things which God hath in reservation for them that love him [supremely]" are true; and that he shall inherit those promised blessings after he has endured faithfully the *tests* of his love and devotion which God will apply.

The Apostle refers to this same sealing later on in the same epistle, and there identifies the "promise" with the "day of deliverance." (*Eph. 4:30*) In other words then, the seal of the Spirit of promise unto the day of deliverance is but another form of expressing the thought--we (the Church) "have the *first-fruits* of the Spirit"--the hand-payment as it were, binding the contract or covenant between the Lord and us, and assuring us that if we faint not we shall inherit the promise to the full.

This seal of covenant relationship, of sonship and heirship, is not an outward sign upon our foreheads; nor is it a mark or manifestation of God's favor in earthly affairs, in worldly prosperity; nor is it now, nor was it ever, the "gifts" of healing, or of speaking with tongues, etc., for many who possessed those miraculous "gifts" lacked the seal and witness of the Spirit. *Acts 8:13-23; 1 Cor. 13:1-3*

The seal or pledge of the holy Spirit is in the heart of the sealed, and hence it is that no man knoweth it save he that receiveth it (*Rev. 2:17*), except as others may see the fruits

of it in his daily life. "He who establisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."

2 Cor. 1:21,22

This earnest or seal of sonship is the Spirit of love which is at-one with the Father and all his holy arrangements, crying out, Abba, Father; I delight to do thy will, O my

E248

God. He who has this seal or mark of sonship is he who not only seeks to do the will of the Father, but doing it finds it "not grievous," but delightsome. **1 John 5:3**

The Spirit of adoption or sealing as sons, the possession of the first-fruits or earnest of the coming inheritance, is, then, one of the most advanced "witnesses" of the Spirit--the very cream of Christian experiences in the present life. Before attaining this stage of experience we must receive our share of the *anointing* by coming into the anointed body of Christ, the Church, by being *begotten* of the Spirit of Truth unto sanctification of our spirits to know and do the Lord's will. This experience comes after we have been *quickened* of the Spirit to the service of righteousness: it is an evidence, so to speak, that we have passed from the embryo condition to one in which God can consider us sons and seal us as such.

As all believers should seek to come under the anointing and begetting influence of the holy Spirit of God, the Spirit of the Truth--so all who have been thus begotten of the Spirit to sonship should seek to attain that position of fulness of harmony with the Father that he can acknowledge and seal. And having attained this position, let all be careful not to mar or blur the seal--not to quench or extinguish this precious treasure--not to turn this spirit of love and joy in the holy Spirit of fellowship and communion into a spirit of heaviness, darkness, grief. Not to spoil this seal, but to keep it ever bright and fresh, should be the constant effort of all who receive it.