

Offices and Relations of the Holy Ghost

by A.B. Simpson

A.B. Simpson's sermon explores the multifaceted roles and relationships of the Holy Spirit within the Godhead, believers, and the Church across different dispensations.

Scripture: John 14:16

Topics: "Role of the Holy Spirit", "Relationship With Christ"

Description

A.B. Simpson explores the multifaceted role of the Holy Spirit within the Godhead, emphasizing His unique relationship with the Father and the Son, and His vital presence in the life of believers and the Church. He illustrates the Holy Spirit as the executive of the Godhead, the one who brings the revelation of Christ to the world, and the personal guide and comforter for believers. Simpson highlights the Holy Spirit's work in convicting the unsaved, empowering the Church, and His continuous presence throughout various dispensations, affirming that He will remain active even during the tribulation. The sermon underscores the necessity of the Holy Spirit for spiritual life and the Church's effectiveness, portraying Him as the source of all grace and gifts. Ultimately, the Holy Spirit glorifies Christ and facilitates a deep, personal relationship between believers and the Savior.

Transcript

I.

The Holy Spirit in Relation to the Godhead.

This Divine person has a special place in the Trinity, and in the Divine economy.

With respect to the Father, He is spoken of as proceeding from Him; the same term is also used of His relation to the Son; He has been called the executive of the Godhead.

Many figures have been used; although all such figures must ever be unsatisfactory to illustrate the relation of the Divine persons. Perhaps the most successful is that which compares them to the various forms of light; primeval light, representing the Father; solar light, that is, light centered in an actual sun, representing the Son, and atmospheric light, that is, the light reflected and refracted, and turned into vision and illumination in the atmosphere and the world around us, the Holy Ghost, who brings to us the Divine Presence, and practically applies to us the benefits of God's revelation and grace.

His relation to the second person of the Godhead is very clearly revealed; it was He who ministered in His incarnation, and through whom He became the Son of Man as well as the Son of God. It was He who personally united Himself with the person of Christ, and became the power of all His miracles and teachings. It was He through whom "He offered Himself without spot to God." It was He through whom He arose from the dead. And after His resurrection it was by the Holy Ghost that He gave commandment to His apostles of all things concerning the kingdom of heaven. Again, it was in His own person that He received and shed forth the same Spirit of Pentecost upon His disciples, so that Jesus is ever identified with the Holy Ghost in all His work and ministry.

Nor is there any reason to suppose that He will be sent from the world in the millennial kingdom, but will be an actual and joyful witness of the blessed fruits of His own gracious working, as well as the Saviour's suffering and death.

II.

The revelation of the Holy Spirit to the world and the sinner.

"Whom the world cannot receive" is Christ's own explanation of his relation to the unsaved, "because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him." The Holy Ghost cannot dwell in an unconverted soul. On man's flesh the anointing oil could not be poured of old, nor can it still.

At the same time, He can and does work in the hearts of the unconverted, producing conviction and conversion, and leading them to a saving union with the person of Christ. This is His own special work; the sinful soul is dead in trespasses and sins, and it is His to quicken it, to convict of sin; and then of righteousness and judgment, and bring to the heart the revelation of Jesus, and, as it accepts Him, the assurance of pardon, the peace of God, and all the quickened graces of the new life in Christ.

III.

This relation to the believer.

Having led the soul to Christ, the Holy Spirit now becomes the personal Guide, Teacher, Sanctifier and Comforter of the believer. His various ministries will be unfolded in the following chapters.

When the heart is fully surrendered to Him, He becomes its personal, permanent, indwelling Guest; bringing with Him the manifested presence of the Father and the Son, leading into all truth, guiding in all the will of God, supplying all the needed grace, unfolding the life of Jesus Christ in the believer's daily life, and developing all the fruits of the Spirit in their full variety and complete maturity.

He is the Spirit of light and revelation, of guidance, and of wisdom. He is the Spirit of holiness. He is the Spirit of peace, joy and comfort. He is the Spirit of love, gentleness, patience, meekness, and forbearance. He is the Spirit of prayer and intercession. He is the Spirit of power for service, and the source of all our gifts as well as graces. He is the Spirit of physical life and healing. He is the Spirit of faith and hope, enabling us to claim the promises of God, and revealing to us the glorious prospects of the future. Our whole spiritual life is nourished and cherished by His love and care; and all we are, and have, and may become, in our Christian life, is due to His personal indwelling, and His faithful love and in-finite grace.

But in all His work in the believer's heart and life, He ever represents and reveals, not His own person or ours, but the Lord Jesus: He is the Spirit of Christ; "He shall testify of me; He shall glorify me," was the

Master's own language; "for He shall take of the things that are mine, and shall show them unto you."

He reveals to us our personal union with Jesus and makes Christ actual to our consciousness. "At that day," that is when He comes, "ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you."

Like the telescope, which shows the observer, not its own beauty, but the heavenly orbs on which we gaze through its crystal lens, so the Holy Ghost becomes the invisible medium through whom we behold the face of Jesus, and are brought into the consciousness of His grace and fellowship.

Therefore, the soul is conscious of Christ, rather than the Spirit, even in the moment of His most blessed visitations. And yet we may be directly conscious of the Spirit also, and hold immediate fellowship with Him personally, receive the assurance of His love, and pour out into His heart our gratitude and affection.

IV.

Relation to the Church.

Not only to the individual believer, but to the collective body of the people of God does the Holy Spirit specially come. It is He who constitutes the Church, and clothes her with the life and power of her Living Head. Until the day of Pentecost and the descent of the Spirit, the apostles were not permitted to go forth, and to speak and work for the Master.

The Holy Ghost is the very life and power of Christianity, and without Him the Church is like a ship without fire in her engine, or steam in her boiler; like an army of soldiers lying lifeless; like Ezekiel's vision in the plain; like a body without an animated soul.

The Church was never intended to be a natural and intellectual organization, but a supernatural instrumentality wholly dependent upon the direct power of God for all her efficiency, and therefore, needing to be ever separated from the arm of flesh and the strength of mere human agencies.

The Church in which the Holy Ghost abides is no mere sectarian fragment, but the whole body of believers united to Christ, the Living Head. "There is one body, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling, for by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body;" and though there be diversities of gifts, it is the same Spirit; differences of administrations, it is the same Lord; varieties of operations, it is the same God which worketh all in all. For to one is given, by the same Spirit, the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge, by the same Spirit; to another faith, by the same Spirit; to another the gift of healing, by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another divers kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues; but all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will.

For as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many."

V.

The Revelation of the Holy Spirit to the various Dispensations.

In all the dispensational periods of the past, the Holy Ghost has been present. Even in the antediluvian days, He strove with men. Under the Levitical economy He was present, qualifying the builders of the tabernacle for their work, anointing Moses, Aaron, and Joshua for their ministry, inspiring the ancient prophets for their messages, and enabling the individual believers of the Old Testament to know, believe, and obey God in the measure of their spiritual life.

But until after Christ's ascension the Holy Spirit was not personally resident as He is now. His influences were exercised upon the hearts of men, but His presence was not localized, as it has been since the day of Pentecost, in the body of Christ, the Church. Just as Queen Victoria exercises her influence over her Canadian provinces, but does not reside there, so the Holy Spirit was present in the world potentially, but not personally, as now.

Since the beginning of the Christian dispensation, however, he has resided on earth, and not in heaven, and is here locally, as the Lord Jesus was during His earthly life. The transcendent pre-eminence which a New Testament saint enjoys is, that his soul and body become the living and actual temple of the Holy Ghost.

This is the time of His special working; in an age when we may look for His unlimited operations, and toward the close of which we should anticipate the mightiest triumphs of His grace and power, as He shall usher in the next, namely, the millennial age, with the personal presence of Christ once more on earth, as in the days of His flesh.

But, even then, the Holy Ghost will not be absent. He will ever reside in the believer and the Church.

The question has been argued whether the Holy Spirit will be present on earth during the tribulation days, after the saints have been translated to be with the Lord in the air. We cannot doubt that He will still remain on earth, for how else could the Jewish remnant, who shall follow the Lamb, be converted, sustained and saved; also the Gentile remnant, who during those awful days shall turn to the Lord, including perhaps many of the members of a cold church who were not ready for the Master's coming at the time of His appearing?

We, therefore, cannot agree with the view of some; that when the saints are caught up to meet the Lord, the Holy Spirit shall be taken away from earth. We believe He has chosen this dark abode of sin and sorrow as the scene of His ceaseless, and ultimately triumphant labors, and that He shall yet rejoice over it as a restored and renovated realm, shining in all the loveliness, sinlessness and blessedness of His accomplished restoration.

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