

# (Power From on High) 11. the Holy Spirit in the First Epistle to the Corinthians

by A.B. Simpson

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*The Holy Spirit is the revealer of supernatural truth, the source of mental illumination, and the indwelling presence of the sanctified heart, bringing entire sacredness, dedication, and consecration to all our being.*

**Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 2:6

**Topics:** "The Holy Spirit", "Sanctification"

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## Description

A.B. Simpson emphasizes the multifaceted role of the Holy Spirit as presented in Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, highlighting His function as the source of wisdom, the indwelling sanctifier, and the unifier of the body of Christ. The Holy Spirit illuminates our minds, enabling us to grasp divine truths that surpass human understanding, and sanctifies our hearts, making us temples of God. Simpson urges believers to recognize the power of the Holy Spirit within them, which empowers them to live victoriously and glorify God through their bodies. He illustrates the transformative love of Christ through a poignant story, encouraging a life of service and devotion to God. Ultimately, the sermon calls for a deeper relationship with the Holy Spirit to experience the fullness of God's presence and power.

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## Transcript

The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians unfolds the doctrine of the Holy Ghost in a number of distinct paragraphs, bringing out four different aspects of the truth, that are full of practical significance.

In the second chapter we have the Holy Ghost presented as the source of mental illumination and the Spirit of wisdom and revelation. In the third and sixth chapters we have the Holy Spirit in His indwelling in our spirit, and His sanctifying power. In the sixth chapter we have the Holy Spirit dwelling in our body and uniting us to Christ. And in the twelfth chapter we have the Holy Spirit constituting the whole body of Christ and uniting it, filling it with life, and enduing it with power for service.

### I. THE SPIRITUAL MIND.

1 Cor. 2: 6-16. The last verse of this wonderful chapter expresses the particular truth of which the whole chapter is an unfolding -- "We have the mind of Christ." The Spirit is here represented as the Quickener of the mind, and the Source of mental illumination, and the Revealer of spiritual truth. There are three distinct and important thoughts in the chapter. The Holy Spirit is the Revealer of super-natural truth.

1. In the first place, the Spirit is the revealer of sources of knowledge. For "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

There is much that eye hath seen, but there are truths beyond our natural vision just as wonderful as this world of light and beauty, when it is suddenly revealed to a man who has always been blind, and whose vision is restored. His first thought is, "How beautiful, how wonderful! Why didn't you tell me of this before?"

And so there are spiritual truths, and there is a world of higher vision which God has for the quickened spirit, and which our natural senses never could discover; and when we see it in the light of His revealing, we wonder we never heard of it, and we think everybody ought to see it.

There are things which ear has heard, the words of eloquence and wisdom, the notes of melody and harmony; the whisper of affection, the voices of nature and human love; but there is a higher realm whose messages of heavenly truth and divine love ear hath never heard. There are words of tenderness and wisdom which the Shepherd's voice is waiting to speak to those who know it, and the Holy Ghost is longing to give to "him that hath an ear to hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

There are thoughts and truths which human hearts have conceived, wonderful creations of the human imagination, wonderful conceptions of the human soul, wonderful inductions from human observation and perception, wonderful systems of thought and philosophy. But there are deeper and higher truths for the heaven-taught soul which will fill the ages to come with wonder and rapture. "In Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," and some day we shall know, even as He, all the secrets of truth. But He cannot speak them to us until we are able to hear them. This is the province of the Holy Ghost. Some of these truths He has revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures, but this is but a primary revelation for the present age and, as we shall know Him better, He will lead us on and up to all the heights and depths of knowledge in the cycles of eternity.

"For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." Like a mother who is searching through her wardrobe to find what will fit the ages of her children, like a teacher who is wisely discriminating, and determining just what class he can put the pupil into according to his progress, so the Holy Ghost is searching constantly to find how much we can stand; how far He can advance us; how fully He can reveal to us "the mind of Christ," and He is often disappointed, because as babes, we are unprepared for His higher messages.

2. We need more than supernatural truth, we need a supernatural mind to receive it. And so the next thought presented here is the Holy Spirit's ministry in giving to us the mind of Christ, and a supernatural power of reception. "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man that is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God."

You may repeat this sermon to the little canary bird that sings in your chamber, and he may bend his little head in earnest attention and try to take in your thought and meaning, but you will find that he has not grasped it. His little mind is not equal to your higher thought; he has only the mind of a bird, while you have the mind of a man. In order to make him understand you, you will need to put your mind into his brain.

And so when we bring our little mind up to the great thoughts of God, we are inadequate; we cannot take them in. Your canary may have a bigger head than your neighbor's canary; it may know one or two notes of song; it may have a few little tricks that others have not learned; it may be an educated, a cultivated, a professional bird; but it is only a bird. And so your philosopher, your man of science, your scholar, may know a few intellectual tricks, which the common mind is ignorant of; but he has only a human mind, he cannot take in the things of God without divine illumination.

This is the reason why "the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God." "But," He adds, "we have received the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." "We have the mind of Christ."

This is the stupendous truth which revelation holds out, that we may have a divine capacity in order to understand a divine revelation. The Holy Ghost does not annihilate our intellect, but He so quickens it and infuses into it the mind of Christ, that it is practically true "that old things have passed away, behold, all things have become new."

He can give us the power to cease from our own thoughts, and He can put into us His divine thoughts. He can make the truth real and living, so that it glows and shines with the vividness of intense realization. He can enable us to grasp it, to feel it, to remember it, and to understand it. He can light up the page until it glows as the firmament of stars at night or as the sunshine of the day that makes all objects plain. He can stop our foolish and vain imaginations and "bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." Blessed baptism for our poor wandering minds! Blessed "peace of God that passeth all understanding," that can "keep our thoughts" as well as our hearts by Christ Jesus! Blessed sight as well as light that the blind can have!

Therefore, in that beautiful and symbolical Gospel of John, where every act of Christ was an object lesson, we find that, after He had revealed Himself as the Light of the world, He immediately healed the blind man and restored his sight, as much as to say, "It is not only light you need, but vision." He came "that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind!"

3. There is one more thought still, and that is the insufficiency of human wisdom to know the things of God. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

The natural man here is not, of course, the fleshly man, but it is literally the physical man; that is, the soul man, the intellectual mind, the cultured mind, the mind of the philosopher. It is not for want of human education that men do not know the truth of God, but it is for want of spiritual organs. Therefore it is that "the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God, and He taketh the wise in their own craftiness." Therefore it is that scholarship and genius and even ecclesiastical authority so often fail to grasp the deeper spiritual truths of the gospel, and even oppose and hold up to ridicule and scorn the things that God hath revealed to them that love Him.

And so, beloved, when you find the gifted and the influential, even in professors' chairs and sacred pulpits, opposing the truths that are dearer to you than your life, and that you have seen in the living light of God, do not wonder; do not feel provoked; do not answer back according to their folly; but pray for them; pity them and, as you have opportunity, let the light of the truth they do not know shine into their hearts. Let them feel the touch of your love. Let them see the tears of your deep and earnest compassion. Let them behold the glory that shines through your face and life, and some day they will become hungry for the

secret of the Lord which you have found.

When Apollos preached in Ephesus the wonderful wisdom of the schools, Aquila and Priscilla heard him and saw his great lack. They did not criticize him and denounce him, but they lovingly prayed for him; they gently brought to him the deeper truth, and God opened his heart to receive it.

And Oh, men of culture, men of self-confidence, you will never find the truth by your processes. You cannot understand it without the divine revelation. You are blind, and dark, and doomed, unless God will give you light. Oh, lie down in humility, abasement, and helplessness, at His blessed feet; confess your blindness, and cry to Him like Bartimeus of old, "Lord, that my eyes may be opened"! And you, too, shall receive spiritual sight, and behold wondrous things out of his law.

## II. THE INDWELLING OF THE HOLY GHOST AS OUR SANCTIFIER.

1 Cor. 3: 16, 17: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."

1 Cor. 6: 11: "And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

Here we have the Holy Spirit as the indwelling presence of the sanctified heart, and, indeed, as the source of its sanctification and preservation. This is the mystery of godliness -- God dwelling in the temple of a human soul. It is not merely that the temple is made holy, but, being separated and sanctified, it is made the abode of God Himself, and He lives in it His own glorious life. "I will dwell in them, and I will walk in them."

The apostle appeals to the Corinthians with the question, "Know ye not?" The power of this blessed relationship is in knowing it, recognizing it and living under its power. There are many glorious facts, which, if we but knew them, would revolutionize our lives. For ages the world lived on the edge of the profoundest secrets of science and nature, and because it knew them not, it never entered into their power; but when it knew the secret that was locked up in the lightning and the steam, then all the forces of our modern commercial and industrial life at once came upon the scene of human life.

And when we know that we have within us the in-dwelling presence of God, we become at once partakers of His omnipotence. When we know that we have within us the power that can lift us above every temptation, difficulty and sorrow, we become partners in the power of God, and we go forth with the shout of a conqueror.

O, beloved, many of you are living in poverty, defeat and disappointment, when you might be conquerors and millionaires -- spiritual millionaires! Only claim your rights, only touch the wire that is throbbing with electric fire, only draw upon the bank account which is deposited in your name, only use the resources that belong to you, only know and prove your full salvation, and you shall go forth as the victorious sons of God, and conquered difficulties shall fall beneath your feet, and you shall march forth, shouting, "Thanks be unto God, who always causes us to triumph in Christ Jesus."

## III. THE HOLY SPIRIT FOR OUR BODY.

1 Cor. 6:19. "What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God?"

This is a different truth from the one that we have been considering, at least it is a different measure and degree of the same truth. The Holy Ghost not only fills the heart, but He fills, or wants to fill, the body, too. He wants to have us surrender to Him every physical organ and member, and possess it, fill it, and quicken it with His divine life. He is the Former of our body as well as the Father of our spirit, and He is able to impart to every part of our frame the very life of the risen Christ. And when He fills the body and makes it His temple, He unites it with Christ. Then also the thirteenth and the fifteenth verses become true, "The body is for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body." "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?"

Then He introduces us to that mysterious and glorious relationship where we call Him Husband, where we are wedded to the very life of our beloved Lord, and where He imparts to our vital being and our physical organism His own resurrection life and strength.

This is a relationship as pure and holy as the very heart of God. It cannot be compared with any human relationship; it is infinitely above it. It is a fellowship in the Holy Ghost so delicate, so sacred, so pure, that the faintest image of earthliness would defile it. But it is as real, as actual, as satisfying, as the most tender and intimate of human affections; and, indeed, all we know of earthly love and earthly joy is only its imperfect type and shadow. It is the source of physical quickening for the consecrated body. It makes our bodies the members of Christ. It brings into every part of our being His very life; it makes Him to us our Life and Living Bread. It translates into actual experience His wonderful words, "As the living Father hath sent Me, and as I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me."

This is a love and a life that "none but he that feels it knows." But He will teach it to the consecrated and obedient heart, and He will give to us even here a foretaste of that blessed fellowship above where we shall sit down at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, and live forever on His own divine life.

Then we are also taught that this indwelling of the Holy Ghost in our body, and this union of our frame with the personal Christ will bring entire sacredness, dedication, and consecration to all our being. "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price; therefore, glorify God in your body which is God's." The reading of the Authorized Version is wrong here. The word spirit is not found in the original. He is speaking exclusively of our physical life. It is our body that is bought with a price. It is our body that is not our own. It is our body in which we are to glorify God.

And how shall we glorify Him but by letting Him live in it, look through it, and work in it for others, until our whole physical life shall be an expression of God's grace and fullness, and He shall look through our holy lives, and walk in our springing steps and shine in our glowing faces and speak in our living, loving tones, and be revealed to men in all we think and say and do.

Oh, what a sacredness it gives to life to receive it breath by breath and moment by moment from Him!

They tell of a poor Chinese woman who had refused to accept Jesus from the missionary nurse that waited upon her. She was dying of an ulcerated arm, and when the doctor said that if she could get anyone to give up his flesh and blood to be transfused into this shrunken and diseased member she might be healed, she sent for her son and asked him if he would let the doctor take the pieces of flesh and the drops of blood from his arm to be infused into his mother. He refused, and then she broke down in deep

sorrow and discouragement.

One day the missionary nurse found her weeping and sat down by her side and asked her if she would allow her to give her flesh and blood to heal her. She was deeply moved at the offer, and although she protested that, it was too much to ask, yet she allowed the operation to be performed. Day by day she continued to improve, and at length the arm was healed, and a white patch of pure flesh and skin covered the place where the ulcer so long had consumed her flesh.

One day the missionary nurse saw her weeping again and looking at her healed arm with strange tenderness. She asked her what was the matter, and the native woman said, "Teacher, I have been looking at this white spot on my arm, and thinking you gave me your flesh and blood to heal my poor diseased body. Why could you do it?"

And the teacher said, "It was only for love of Jesus, because He gave His life for me."

The poor Chinese woman wept afresh, and looking up, she said, "Teacher, I want your Jesus. If He can make you love me that way, when my own son refused to save me, I want Him to be my Jesus, too." And that poor Chinese woman was brought to Christ by the love of a missionary who could give her very flesh to her.

O, beloved, as I look at these veins that were once so dark with the currents of disease, and think of Him who not only gave His life for me, but who every morning freshly gives it to me, how can I live for myself; how can I live for the world; how can I prostitute to sin these God-given powers; how can I but feel, as this text has said, "I am not my own, I am bought with a price, I will glorify God in my body which is God's"?

God help us so to receive the life of Jesus, and so to give it forth in holy, consecrated service for Him, and for the world, which can only be brought to Him by the living pattern of His great love, and by the indwelling of His own wondrous life, through the Holy Ghost which is given to us!

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Source:

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