

# (Power From on High) 25. the Holy Spirit in Jude

by A.B. Simpson

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of distinguishing between true spiritual feeling and counterfeit feeling, and highlights the role of the Holy Spirit in enabling believers to live a spiritual life.*

**Topics:** "The Holy Spirit", "Spiritual Growth"

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## Description

A.B. Simpson emphasizes the distinction between those who are led by the Holy Spirit and those who are merely psychical, lacking true spiritual depth. He explains that the psychical man is controlled by his natural mind and emotions, while the spiritual man is built up in faith, love, and hope through the Holy Spirit's guidance. Simpson warns against the counterfeit forms of godliness that can deceive believers, urging them to rely on the Holy Spirit for genuine transformation and prayer. He highlights the importance of yielding every part of our being to God and the necessity of the Holy Spirit in maintaining a vibrant spiritual life. Ultimately, he encourages believers to pray in the Holy Spirit, which leads to a deeper relationship with God and a life marked by His love and mercy.

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## Transcript

"These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit. But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." Jude 19-21.

The Epistle of Jude, like the Apocalypse which follows it, is written for the last times. It draws a striking contrast between the first and last chapters of human history, especially in the forms of wickedness which prevailed at the beginning and will return at the end, and it records a prophecy of the Lord's return uttered by Enoch in antediluvian times, and soon to be fulfilled in the times in which it is our lot to live.

In the present passage, Jude describes two classes of men and draws a strong contrast between them. They resemble each other, but the one is the counterfeit of the other. The forms of wickedness that are to be most dangerous in the times of the end, are not those marked by open defiance of God, but those that shall be cloaked under a form of godliness without the power, and be Satan's counterfeits of the Holy Ghost. Let us look first at the counterfeits, and then at the genuine people.

### I. SATAN'S COUNTERFEIT PEOPLE.

"These are they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit," Jude 19. This is an unhappy translation. The word sensual, as used in current speech, means immoral, gross, licentious and openly wicked. The Greek word does not convey this impression. The word sensuous would be nearer to it, but even this is too strong. The word natural is better, and it is so translated in the second chapter of First Corinthians -- "the natural man." The only way to convey the true conception is to anglicize the Greek word, and call it "psychical." It is derived from the Greek word 'psyche,' meaning the soul. It describes the intermediate part of human nature. Man, according to the philosophy of the Bible, is a trinity like his Creator, consisting of spirit, soul, and body. The spirit is the higher nature, that which knows God, distinguishes between right and wrong, and is capable of religious affections, emotions, and exercises. The physical is the other extreme. It is the material organism indwelt by the soul and spirit, and the instrument of its desires, purposes, and operations. Intermediate between these two is the soul, the natural mind, the seat of the affections, the understanding, the tastes, that which loves and hates, that which thinks, that which can be cultivated, and which has at once its lower passions and its finer tastes. The psychical man is the man that is controlled by this department of his being.

There are three conditions in which we may live. First, we may be controlled by our lower nature, our animal existence, our body and its gross appetites. This is pure sensuality. Secondly, we may be controlled by our tastes, by our intelligence, by our affections and passions, by our psychical nature. Thirdly, we may be controlled by our spiritual nature.

The psychical man is the man that is controlled by his natural mind, whether its tendencies be high or low. He is the man born of his mother, descended from Adam, inheriting a fallen human nature, and acting entirely from its promptings. He may be a very refined man, a very intellectual man, a very intelligent man, a very affectionate man, a man full of domestic virtues and patriotic fire, but he is a natural man.

Now all these three departments of our nature are fallen and under the curse. Our body is subject disease and death. Our soul has become self-centered and has wound about itself and its own gratification, a watch spring around its center. And even our spirit is fallen; the conscience is deranged; the will is enfeebled and wrongly directed, and our highest aspirations and intuitions are under the influence of wicked spirits and unholy motives.

It is not enough for us to subject each or all the departments of our nature to any one of them, even to the spirit, because our natural spirit is fallen, too. Some people think that all that is necessary is to crucify the body, to put it into a cage, feed it on herbs and roots, deny it every gratification, and sometime it may lose its evil propensities. This has been proved to be a monstrous failure. The moment the restraint has been removed, it has sprung back to all its former tendencies. You may crush it, but you cannot destroy its evil trend.

Some again tell us that all we need is to exterminate the soul, to crucify our human passions, our earthly affections, our natural tastes and desires, and become cold, abstracted, and spiritual. Well, the devil is a spirit, but he is the most wicked of spirits. The monk in his cell, shut off from every earthly thought, desire, and affection, may be the incarnation of wickedness, Jesuitism, cruelty and unholy ambition.

God's remedy is to yield up the whole man -- spirit, soul, and body to God, hand it over to death, and then receive a new creation, a converted body, a regenerated soul, a new spirit in the glorious work of a complete conversion. But even this is not enough; for even when converted, we will, if left to ourselves, relapse again, and therefore we need not only a new heart and a new spirit, but the HOLY SPIRIT to enter

and keep the new man, to garrison the heart and mind, to hold the citadel, to dwell and walk within us, and "cause us to keep His statutes."

Now, the apostle says of these men that they have not the Spirit. They have a substitute for it, and it is their own spirit, or rather their own soul, their carnal mind, their human wisdom, their cultivated nature. They are psychical men.

Well, the generation has not passed away, the world is full of them still. What is Theosophy? What is Christian Science? What is much of our modern preaching? What is the religion of culture? It can weep under the pathos and eloquence of the preacher; it can even preach under the impulse of impassioned eloquence until the people weep, but both preacher and people may be but psychical men after all. Perhaps they weep today in the church, and will weep tomorrow in the theater. When the French were shedding streams of human blood in the terrible revolution of a hundred years ago, they were spending their evenings in the theater of Paris shedding floods of tears over sentimental plays. There is a great deal of counterfeit feeling even in modern religion.

The sublime oratorio may lift your soul to raptures of delight; the perfect harmonies of the classic hymn may charm your cultivated taste, but this is not religious feeling. Nay, you may even bow beneath the magnificent arch of yonder Cathedral, and in its dim religious light you may feel a kind of awe that you think is worship, but it is pure sentiment, and you can go out from all this to live for self and sin. It is mere psychology. It is only the kindling of the human mind. Thus heathen idolatry rouses its votaries to intensest feeling and overpowering enthusiasm.

Thus poetry, art, music and eloquence in every age have charmed and thrilled the human mind. But it is only human feeling after all, and has nothing to do with the work of the Holy Ghost. The power of the Spirit reaches the conscience and convicts it of sin, enlightens the understanding, and reveals the differences between right and wrong, and the beauty and authority of the will of God. It touches the will, and crucifies it to its own selfish choice, and then conforms it in glad surrender to the will of God; it controls the whole life in simple and practical obedience and service. There may be far less sentiment and feeling, "but by their fruits ye shall know them."

We have to guard against the counterfeit, and not mistake the psychical for the spiritual, for the "natural man (the psychical man) receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned."

The natural man, of "flesh and blood, cannot inherit the Kingdom of God." The Adam race cannot enter the eternal home, but through death to life we must pass into the resurrection of Christ, and through His spiritual life, born of the Second Man, the Lord from heaven, we share His eternal inheritance.

"He that saveth his life [psyche] shall lose it, but he that loseth his life for My sake shall keep it unto life eternal." We must lay down this self-life even in its sweetest and highest forms. Shall we lose it forever? Nay, we shall receive it back in resurrection power, and in the ages to come shall have a grander culture and a nobler satisfaction forever. Some day God will clothe us with the rainbows and cause us to shine as the sun in the Kingdom of our Father, and He will give us a mind, a capacity, a test to appreciate and enjoy it, too, and yet hold it only for His glory.

## II. THE SPIRITUAL MAN.

"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

1. The spiritual man is a man of faith. Faith is the foundation of the Christian life and character, and on this foundation we build up ourselves. We can grow no wider than the foundation. We can advance only "according to our faith." We are to "add to our faith courage, knowledge, temperance, godliness, brotherly kindness and charity," and all the graces of Christian life. They are to be taken by faith and, step by step, we are to go forward by successively receiving from the fullness of Christ, "from faith to faith," from grace to grace, from day to day.

The spiritual man is a man of love. "Keep yourselves in the love of God." While faith is the foundation, love is the element in which we grow and live, and so Christ has said, "Abide in My love." It is the congenial atmosphere of our life and growth. Love is life, and only as we keep ourselves in the love of God and dwell in the cloudless communion of His fellowship, can we grow.

3. The spiritual man is a man of hope. He has a glorious outlook; he has a heavenly horizon; he has an infinite vision. From day to day the vision grows larger, and the inspiration grander. There can be nothing glorious without hope, and the higher the hope the mightier its inspiration.

Ours is a glorious hope, an infinite hope, looking out on the eternal years and reaching up to the very heights of God. And as we live under the influence of this blessed hope, we are raised to a majesty and grandeur that dwarfs all petty earthly things and gives sublimity to our life and character.

4. The spiritual man is sustained and upheld in his life of faith, and love, and hope, by the prayer of the Holy Ghost. This is the power that impels his life; this is the inspiration that upholds his faith, and hope, and love; this is the force that continually supplies the strength of his whole. The Holy Ghost has come to undertake the whole care and responsibility of the consecrated life. He takes His place there as the Pilot upon the deck to bring the vessel into the harbor; as the Contractor for that building, providing all necessary supplies for its erection and completion; as the Teacher and Trainer of some important school, undertaking the whole discipline of that young and precious life; as the Mother, undertaking the care and oversight of her precious child; as the Commander-in-Chief for some great campaign, with his eye and hand on every detail of the conflict -- so the Holy Ghost sits down as the Author and Finisher of our spiritual life. He is looking forward every moment to the glorious consummation. He has understood, as we cannot understand, God's glorious plan for us. He sees us every moment as we shall be when we shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of our Father. He comprehends the perils that surround us, the defects within us, the temptations without us, and all the possibilities and disabilities of our life, and He has determined to carry us through in spite of all to the glorious consummation.

Now He does this through the ministry of prayer. He takes us into partnership with Him in the work of our own development and full salvation. He does not work upon us as the potter upon the plastic clay, but He works with us and requires our cooperation with Him; so, as each need arises, He gently lays it upon our own heart; He whispers it to us as a breath of prayer, or a burden of desire, and He leads us out to present it to the Father in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, step by step, moment by moment, He prays out in us every need of our own life, every need of our work, every need of the other lives that He lays upon us, and the Father sends the answer in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is not a moment in the believer's life when the Holy Ghost is not vigilantly, tenderly watching over him,, and guarding him with more than a mother's care. And if we were only more sensitive to understand,

more quick to hear, more ready to respond, our lives would be one ceaseless breath of prayer, and everything would come to us through the blessed channel of the Spirit's intercession. Then truly we would "pray without ceasing," and "in everything give thanks," and "wait upon our God continually." Then we should never miss a single hint, suggestion, or ministry of prayer; but we would be in perfect touch with our blessed Guide and have the continual consciousness of His approval, and the sense of meeting His highest, fullest thought.

This, beloved, is the secret of many an experience which you have not perhaps understood. This is the explanation of that depression that sometimes falls upon your heart and brings the tears gushing to your eyes, or makes you bury your head in your hands and pour out a supplication which you cannot comprehend. He sees some need, some peril, which you cannot comprehend, and He is praying against some evil which some day you will know. When you are about to take a false step, to enter upon a wrong path, to miss some important call, or to be deceived by some subtle wile of Satan, He is there to pray the prayer within you which may be only a groan that cannot be uttered; but if you are wise you will yield to it, and you will answer to His touch. Often it is a prayer for some other life, some soul in peril, somebody in dire distress or disease, some cause that needs assistance, some wrong that needs resistance, some need of the Master's heart which He is letting you share with Him.

Oh, to be more sensitive to His voice, and more obedient to the prayer of the Holy Ghost! Then we should miss nothing of His highest will, and your life would be all sunshine in the presence of the Lord.

Now, what is the prayer of the Holy Ghost?

1. The Holy Ghost lays upon us the desire and burden of prayer. Sometimes we understand it; sometimes we do not. Sometimes it is a joyful consciousness of spiritual elevation; sometimes it is an unutterable and inarticulate groan. Sometimes it is a definite sense of need, a consciousness of personal defect, or a heart-searching sense of our own emptiness and failure. It is a blessed thing to "hunger and thirst after righteousness." The sense of need is the shadow side of the blessing. Let us thank the Holy Ghost when He gives us the burden of prayer.

It was God's highest commendation of Daniel of old that he was "a Man of Desires," and it is the promise of God that if we delight in the Lord "He will give to us the desires of our heart."

2. The Holy Ghost enables us to pray according to the will of God. He gives us direction in our prayers. He saves us from wasting our breath and asking at random. He illuminates our mind to understand the Scriptural foundations of prayer, and makes us understand the things that are agreeable to the will of God, enabling us to ask with confidence that it is His will, and that we have the petitions that we desired of Him.

Mr. George Muller often says that it takes him much longer to decide what he is to pray about, than to obtain the answer to his prayer when he does present his petition.

3. The Holy Ghost gives us access into the presence of God. He creates for us the atmosphere of prayer. He gives us the sense of the Father's presence. He leads us to the door of mercy and steadies our hand as we hold out the scepter of prayer, and reveals to us that inner world of divine things which none but he that feels it, knows.

4. The Holy Ghost enables us to pray in the name of Jesus. He shows us our redemption rights through the great Mediator, and coming in His name we can ask even as He, and humbly, yet confidently claim,

"Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard me, and I know that Thou hearest Me always."

5. The Holy Ghost enables us to pray in faith, "for He that cometh unto God, must believe that He is, and that He is the rewarder of those that diligently seek Him."

He enables us when we pray to "believe that we receive the things that we ask," and to rest in the Master's word, without anxiety or fear. He witnesses to the heart the quiet assurance of acceptance and He sustains us in the trial of our faith which follows, enabling us still to trust and not be afraid.

6. The Holy Ghost enables us to pray the prayer of love, as well as the prayer of faith. The Holy Ghost leads us into the dignity and power of our holy priesthood, laying upon us the burdens of the Great High Priest, and permitting us to be partakers of "that which remaineth of the sufferings of Christ for His Body, the Church." In this blessed ministry we are often made conscious of the needs of others, and permitted to hold up some suffering or tempted life in the hour of peril; and we shall find some day that many a life was saved, many a victory won, and many a blessing enjoyed through this hallowed ministry that reaches those we love by way of the throne, when we never could have reached them directly.

When we become wholly emancipated from our own selfish cares and worries, and fully at leisure for the burdens of the Master, the Spirit is glad to lay upon us the needs of the multitudes of God's people, and the burdens of the whole Church and Kingdom of Christ, so that it is possible to have a ministry as wide as the world, and as high as that of our great High Priest, before the Throne.

7. The Holy Ghost leads us into the spirit of communion, so that when we have nothing to ask we are held in the blessed silence and wordless fellowship in the bosom of God. This should become the very atmosphere of our being.

Finally, as we thus "pray in the Holy Ghost" we shall be enabled to "build ourselves up on our most holy faith," we shall "keep ourselves in the love of God," and we shall "look" in heavenly vision "for the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." And the benediction of this beautiful epistle shall be fulfilled in our lives. "Now unto Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen."

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