

(Power From on High) 6. the Comforter

by A.B. Simpson

The Holy Ghost is a God at hand, a practical efficiency and sufficiency for every occasion and emergency, who guides us into all truth, teaches us all things, and convicts the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.

Scripture: John 14:16-17, John 14:26, John 16:13, Romans 8:26

Topics: "The Holy Spirit", "Comfort and Guidance"

Description

A.B. Simpson emphasizes the role of the Holy Spirit as the Comforter, highlighting His presence as a constant source of support and guidance for believers. He explains that the Holy Spirit, or Paraclete, is not only a comforter but also empowers Christians to live effectively and fulfill God's will. Simpson elaborates on the Holy Spirit's indwelling presence, His eternal companionship, and His role in teaching and reminding believers of Christ's truths. He reassures that the Holy Spirit will remain with believers forever, guiding them in their spiritual journey and equipping them for service. Ultimately, the Comforter brings believers into a deeper relationship with Christ, making His presence more real and accessible in their lives.

Transcript

"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever."
John 14: 16.

These three chapters contain Christ's deepest teachings concerning the Holy Ghost.

I. THE NAME, THE COMFORTER.

This is not a very happy translation. The Greek word is Paraclete, and it literally means a God at hand, One by our side, One that we may call upon in every emergency. The Latin word, advocate, has the same meaning, One that we call upon or call to us, One ever within call. In this connection, the Holy Ghost is represented to us as the present and all sufficient God. Of course, there is comfort, infinite comfort in all this; but the primary idea is not so much spiritual enjoyment, as practical efficiency and sufficiency for every occasion and emergency that arises.

This is just what the Holy Ghost is -- God for everything. God at hand under all circumstances and equal to all demands. Oh, what comfort this brings to our oppressed and struggling life! A God able to make all

grace abound to us; so that we, always having all-sufficiency in all things, may abound unto every good work.

II. MODE OF HIS PRESENCE.

He shall be in you. "He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." The presence of God, through the Old Testament and even during the ministry of Christ, was a presence with men; but in the New Testament dispensation and after the coming of the Holy Ghost, it was to be a presence in men.

The Holy Ghost was to become corporately united and identified with the life of the believer, so that He would bring us into direct personal union, and act, not upon us, but in us and through us, becoming part of our very life, and controlling every faculty, volition, and power, from the inmost depths of our being. This is the difference between the two classes of Christians we find today; those who have God with them, and those who have Him in them.

It may not be possible to explain it. It certainly is impossible to make spiritual mysteries plain to any that have not experienced them. It is difficult to explain how the sunshine enters into the midst of the flower and manifests itself in all the living beauties and tints of the blossom; how the water saturates the ground and comes forth again in the leaf, and laden fruit; how the influence and image and personality of a friend becomes a part of our very being, until we think as he thinks, and act under his influence. These are but distant approximations to the blessed mystery of the Holy Ghost's entering, as a Person, into the life and being of a consecrated disciple and controlling every choice, affection, thought and action, and thus fulfilling His own promise, "I will dwell in you and walk in you," "And I will put My Spirit within you, and I will cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do them."

III. THE DURATION OF THIS ABIDING.

"He shall abide with you forever."

The Holy Ghost comes to stay. He seals the heart into the day of redemption. He takes possession of it to depart no more. We may grieve Him; we may lose the consciousness of His approval; but He has loved us with an everlasting love, and we are kept by His power through faith unto salvation.

There are some who tell us that the Holy Ghost will leave the world at the coming of Christ. This is not the promise of the Master. "He shall abide with you forever." Even when Jesus comes, He will still remain. For through those dark tribulation days, there will be souls on earth that need His consolation, His keeping and His help; He will linger with them through the darkness, and then, through the millennial age, He will cooperate with Christ as He did during the days of His earthly ministry, in bringing this world into harmony with the will of God, and establishing the dominion of righteousness throughout the utmost limits of the creation.

We do not dishonor the work of the Spirit when we pray for Christ to come. The grandest theatre of His work will be in these millennial days, for which we are looking forward with longing and prayer.

IV. HIS RELATION TO JESUS CHRIST.

"Whom the Father will send in My name," that is, in My character, to represent Me. He will be "another Comforter." He is to correspond in His relation to us to what Christ was, but He is to be a substitute for Christ, a successor to Christ, and, indeed, more to us than Christ could continue to be. "It is expedient for

you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you."

Oh, how precious His presence must be, if it can be more than Christ's presence was! Can we conceive how much Jesus was to these disciples? More than a mother to her child, more than a shepherd to his flock, more than a guide through the pathless desert, more than a pilot on the trackless ocean.

The disciples had leaned upon Him, lived upon Him, and were utterly dependent upon Him for everything, and yet He says, "It is better for you that I go, for One will come that will be more to you than I have been in all these relationships."

Beloved, is the Comforter more to us than Jesus was to His Galilean followers? Ah, then how much more you have to learn of His intimacy and His ministry. Is He to you the Counselor and Companion of every moment, the Leader and the Guide of every step, the Teacher of all you know, the Substance of all you believe, the Source of all your strength and joy and life? This He wants to be. Christ could only be present in one place; but He can be everywhere. Christ spoke to them from outside their natures, He speaks from within. Christ was to a certain extent a physical presence; He in a spiritual, that enters into the deepest life of our being, blends with every consciousness and every thought and every capacity and feeling.

Was He so to supersede and substitute Christ as to displace Him? Not at all. On the contrary, He was to make Christ more real than He had ever been. Here is the great mistake that many are liable to make in their zeal for the honor of the Holy Ghost. They represent Christ as far away at the right hand of God, and they think they honor the Spirit when they exclude the personal presence of the Master.

This was not the way the Savior taught, and this is not the way the Spirit comes. Nay, listen, "He shall testify of Me, He shall not speak of Himself." "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you." "At that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in Me, and I in you."

"He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. If a man love me he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

It is not possible to read these verses and not see that the personal and conscious presence of Jesus Christ is to be ever with His people through the ministry of the Comforter. Indeed, the great business of the Holy Ghost is to stand behind the scenes and make Jesus real. Just as the telescope reveals not itself, but the stars beyond, so Christ is revealed by the blessed Spirit, as the medium of our spiritual vision.

Just as the atmosphere can bring yonder sun down until he is nearer to us here than if we went up into the air to meet him, so the Holy Ghost, God's divine medium for the revelation of spiritual realities, brings Christ from the throne, until distance is annihilated and space has no power to divide.

Surely, if a human telephone or telegraph can sweep at a flash or by a wave of sound across intervening space and bring the distant near, it is not hard for the divine Author of light and life, and all creation, to open a line of communication from earth to heaven, so that we may dwell in the heavenlies, and the living realities of that world be within whispering distance of our quickened souls.

It is even so. Through the telephone of prayer, we may catch the very voice of our absent Master, and be conscious of the heartthrobs of His love; we may even go on into the presence of the spirits of the just made perfect, and almost hear the songs that echo around the throne. Yes, He is with us still, "all the days

even unto the end of the age." The presence of the Comforter but makes Him nearer and dearer, and enables us to realize and know that we are in Him, and He in us.

V. THE SPIRIT AS A TEACHER.

Not only does He reveal the person of Christ, but He reveals the truth which Christ only began to teach. "He will guide you into all truth, He will teach you all things." "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now, howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth; for He shall not speak of His own knowledge; but that which He shall hear He shall speak."

And so the Holy Ghost, the Author of the Scriptures, is the Illuminator and Teacher of the Word. He makes the truth clear, intelligible, and intensely real, just as you have seen on some great occasion the metal frames, where some grand illumination was to take place; and it seemed to you, in the light of day, that the forms of men and the figures of crowns and stars and processions could be dimly traced in that network of leaden pipes, erected above the triumphal arch, but it was dull and dim to you and made little impression upon your senses or your mind. But wait till evening, till the sun goes down, and a flash of light bursts over that dead framework. Lo! in a moment it is lighted up, and you see the figure of the military hero, the glowing crown with its many colored jewels, the procession of living forms and all the pageant of a grand triumph. The light has done it all.

And so this Holy Book needs to be lighted up by the Holy Ghost, and then we do not read the Bible from a sense of duty; it speaks to us as the living message from our Master, the love letter of our Bridegroom's heart.

Then how gentle and patient the Holy Ghost is in teaching us! He will guide us into all truth. He knows how fast we can go, and He does not cram us; but He unites the word to the action, and the action to the word, and fits His teaching into the framework of our lives, making truth real, day by day, "line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little," until He has led us on to the graduating class, and fitted us for the more mature tasks of the school of faith.

How much He left to be revealed in the later epistles and the Apocalypse that they could not then endure! And how much truth He keeps back from us, until we are ready not only to understand it, but fully to obey it and translate it into the living characters of our experience!

VI. THE HOLY GHOST AS A REMINDER OF TRUTH.

"He shall bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you."

Not only does He teach us, but He quickens our intellect to remember and to learn. He is the Author and the Illuminator of the mind, and He is the Spirit of suggestion. He knows how to bring back forgotten truths in the moment of need. He knows how to suggest the promise in the time of depression. He knows how to say, "It is written," and put into our hand the sword of the Spirit, when the adversary's wiles are trying and perplexing us.

He knows how to "waken our ear, morning by morning, to hear as one that's been instructed, that we might know how to speak a word in season to Him that is weary." He knows how to give the appropriate message for the fitting time, and then to bless it and send it home with lasting power.

Let us trust Him to guide us, to speak through us, triumph through us, and to be our monitor and mother until all the mazes of life shall have been passed.

VII. THE HOLY SPIRIT AS THE SPIRIT OF POWER FOR SERVICE.

"He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." We can rebuke the world but He alone can convict it.

He can make our expression, our words, our actions, awaken in the hearts of men a sense of sin, and a realization of eternity.

He can bring the message to the conscience and press the will to the great decision, and make our words vehicles for His power. Then He alone can convict of righteousness, and so reveal Christ that it shall not be merely reformation and self-improvement, but true repentance, faith and reliance upon the finished work of Jesus Christ. He can convict the world of judgment. He can pass sentence of death on self, sin, and the world, and separate men from this present evil world for the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He can take men out of the power of the prince of this world, and introduce them into the kingdom of God's dear Son. He can give victory over Satan and finish the work which He begins.

Oh, how helpless all our work without Him! Oh, how He waits to show us the great things that He is willing yet to do, not only for us but for the world!

Finally, He is the Spirit of hope, and the promise and the realization of the future. He will show you things to come.

Oh, how this promise was to be fulfilled in the later teachings of the epistles and the Apocalypse, concerning the blessed hope of the Lord's coming! And the same Spirit that has given the light of prophecy, can give the light of interpretation and the life of faith and living hope! He alone can make these things real to us; He alone can center our hopes and hearts in the blessed hope of Christ's coming, and the throne of His Ascension.

It is not enough merely to know that Christ is coming, and to desire it, but it is a great crisis in the life of a soul when it becomes truly centered there, when the source of attraction is removed from the earth to the heavens, and when it learns to live under the power of the world to come. It is one thing to be lifting up the world from the earth side, it is another thing to be drawing up the world from the heaven side. It is one thing to be a man on the earth, living for the glory; it is another thing to be a man in the glory, living for the world. We must be taken out of the world first, and then sent back into it, to be any blessing to it.

The reason that Christ knew how to live was because He did not belong here. The Father had sent Him from heaven, and we must be sent from heaven, too, and work on earth as men that dwell in heaven. Oh, may the Spirit so show us things to come that we shall have our center in the throne of our ascended Lord, and with Him see and live and work to save the world in which, for a little while, we sojourn!

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