

The Executive of the Godhead

by Daniel Steele

Daniel Steele emphasizes the vital role of the Holy Spirit as the Executive of the Godhead in transforming and sanctifying believers.

Scripture: John 14:26, Acts 1:8, 1 Corinthians 6:19, Galatians 5:22, Ephesians 5:18

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Sanctification"

Description

Daniel Steele preaches about the essential role of the Holy Spirit as the Executive of the Godhead in the transformation, sanctification, and habitation of souls who believe in Christ Jesus. He emphasizes the importance of fully honoring and acknowledging the Holy Spirit as a distinct person and not just an impersonal force, highlighting that the Spirit is actively at work in producing spiritual life and character in believers. Steele urges the Church to embrace the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, emphasizing the need for more praying, preaching, and living in alignment with the Spirit to experience spiritual illumination and fulfillment.

Transcript

FOR several years our mind has been labouring to invent some concise expression for the sum of all the offices of the Third Person of the Trinity, in the transformation, sanctification, and habitation of souls who fully believe in Christ Jesus. At last Dr. Hodge, [President of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Princeton, N.J. U.S.A.] has struck out with his die the very coin which our own mint has failed to stamp and contribute to the currency of Christian experience and theological discussion. "The Holy Ghost is the Executive of the Godhead." We telegraph our thanks to Princeton. May Dr. Hodge's mint continue to pour out its golden coin into our religious literature for many years more. This clear cut conception and expression of the work of the Spirit is exceedingly beautiful because it is indisputably true. Law emanates from the Father, and mercy and judgment are committed to the Son, while the Executive of both Persons is the ever blessed Spirit. Here we have the three departments of government: the legislative, the judicial, and the executive. Through the Holy Spirit the Father and the Son operate on human souls, reproofing, regenerating, witnessing and sanctifying. We now see how a person may honour the Father, and in a measure the Son, and yet fail of obtaining the highest spiritual grace through a failure to honour the Holy Ghost, the blessed Comforter; just as a man may show all proper respect to the lawmaking and law-interpreting departments of our own government, and secure their action, and then miss his purpose at last by ignoring the last link necessary to its realization -- the executive officer, without whose agency statutes and courts are ineffectual. We fear that there are many Christians who inadvertently fail in their

tribute of respect, faith, and worship to the Holy Ghost, regarding him as an impersonal emanation or influence streaming from God, or as only another name for the Father, who can just as well without Him reach and transfigure their sin-stained souls, through the blood of the Lamb that taketh away the sin of the world.

To human reason this looks very plausible. But Christian experience, especially in its advanced stages, has proved it to be fallacious. We must believe in the Holy Ghost as the indispensable agent in the production of spiritual life, both in its incipiency and in its FULLNESS. There is a sense in which he is now the most important active factor in the production of Christian character. The work of the Father in the gift of the Son, the work of the Son in pouring out His own blood as a sin-offering, are completed past acts.

But the work of the Spirit in each individual believer is incomplete. They very greatly mistake who suppose that He fully accomplished His mission to our world on the day of Pentecost, or, at the farthest, when He had inspired the last word of the New Testament; and that He then withdrew, leaving the Church under the reign of fixed spiritual laws. Such a creed as this chills the soul and deadens all the fires of faith and love. Let the entire Church come to a full realization that the Comforter came to abide, and that He is now descending in personal pentecosts as certainly and as demonstrably in the consciousness of every perfect believer as He did in the upper room in Jerusalem: then will the glory of the dispensation of the Spirit begin to be generally seen, and "the Executive of the Godhead" receive fitting honour.

"To have faith in Christ and not to have faith in the Spirit seems to be a great contradiction: yet we submit it for the judgment of candid inquirers whether this very contradiction is not strikingly exhibited in the case of almost all who profess to be followers of Christ. To know the Father, we must know the Son; to know Christ, we must know the Spirit." [Love Revealed." George Bowen] This is our privilege: "Ye know Him." "He shall testify of Me." We suspect that much of the repugnance among good Christian people to an instantaneous sanctification comes from a sort of naturalistic view of the kingdom of grace left to the operation of fixed laws in the absence of the King.

They forget that the King has left in His stead a personal successor and viceregent, clothed with omnipotent power. "The day of Pentecost was a pattern day. All the days of this dispensation should have been like it, or should have exceeded it. But alas! the Church has fallen down to the state in which it was before this blessing had been bestowed, and it is necessary, for us to ask Christ to begin over again. We, of course, in respect to knowledge -- intellectual knowledge of spiritual things -- are far in advance of the point where the disciples were before the Pentecost.

But it should be borne in mind that when truths have once been fully revealed and made a part of orthodoxy, the holding of them does not necessarily imply any operation of the Spirit of God. We deceive ourselves, doubtless, in this way, imagining that because we have the whole Scriptures, and are conversant with all its great truths, the Spirit of God is necessarily working in us. We need the baptism of the Spirit as much as the apostles did at the time of Christ's resurrection." [Love Revealed] That was not a mere dash of rhetoric which fell from the pen of John Fletcher, when he spoke of the Pentecost as the opening of "the kingdom of the Holy Ghost."

He has the signet ring of our glorified King Jesus, and reigns over the family on earth as the Son of Man reigns over the family above. He has not shut himself up as an impersonal force in the tomb of uniform law, but he walks through the earth, a glorious personality, with the keys of divine power attached to His girdle, and with the rod of empire in His right hand. He works miracles in the realm of spirit, as did

Immanuel in the realm of matter. The new Creator of the soul performs a greater work than the original Creator of man, inasmuch as the former works upon material which is capable of an eternal resistance to His plastic touch, while in matter there was no such antagonism.

In that sublime formula of worship, the Te Deum Laudamus, which has dropped from the lips of dying sires to living sons for fifteen centuries, there is found this sentence, referring to the work of Christ in opening the dispensation of the Spirit: "When Thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, Thou didst open the kingdom of heaven to all believers." To make the Church realize the presence of "The Executive of the Godhead," there must be more praying in the Holy Ghost, more preaching with the demonstration of the Spirit, more singing with the Spirit, and testifying as the Spirit giveth utterance, with the attesting fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, and peace.

There must be more faith in the Holy Spirit as "the greatest gift that man could wish, or that heaven can send." We belie His presence when in our fruitless lives we present Him as a barren tree, with no golden fruit to attract and feed hungry souls. This poor, blind world, which apprehends only sensible things, physical causes and effects, must be lifted up by the lever of sanctified character from the low plane of naturalism, to apprehend the presence of the supernatural on earth, the standing miracle of Christianity -- the Holy Spirit dwelling in human hearts and transfiguring human lives.

How glorious will be that era when the brief credo, "I believe in the Holy Ghost," has descended from the head into the heart of the Church, or has ascended from an intellectual assent into assured knowledge. "But ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you and shall be in you" (John xiv. 17). Then, and not till then, will Jesus, the glorified Bridegroom, have the entire heart of His bride, for then will the Spirit, the Bridegroom's looking glass, fully unveil His loveliness to her eyes as the chief among ten thousand.

"He shall glorify Me; for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you." How cheering the thought that this period of intense spiritual illumination and power is not fixed by the decree of God in the distant future, but that it may be inaugurated in our own day by a simple, all surrendering faith in Christ's promise of the Comforter. The spiritual hunger of the Church eagerly devours every year nearly a million of tracts issued from the Willard Tract Repository alone, on the fulness of the Spirit as the Comforter and Sanctifier.

Scores of periodicals setting forth entire sanctification from sin, not by death, but by the Holy Ghost, are springing up in all Protestant lands, and even in foreign missions. These are indications of the dawn of that returning day of Pentecost, when the Spirit shall be poured out in His fulness upon all who "know the exceeding greatness of Christ's power to us-ward who believe." The eastern sky has streaks of light betokening the sunrise of a day power. Christians of every name, lone watchers on the mountain-tops, now see the edge of the ascending disc, and are shouting to the inhabitants of the dark valleys below to awake and arise, and behold the splendors of the King of day.

Reader, the perfect restoration of the reign of the Spirit over the Church involves your personal co-operation, and the entire consecration of your heart; your victory over the world, your crucifixion with Christ, the entire cleansing of your heart, and the transformation of your body into "the temple of the Holy Ghost," -- "an habitation of God through the Spirit." Are you ready to be nailed to the Cross? By the "you" I mean the old self-life.

"Come Holy Spirit! from the height

Of heaven send down Thy blessed light!

Come Father of the friendless poor!
Giver of gifts, and Light of hearts,
Come with that unction which imparts
Such consolations as endure.
"Where Thou art, Lord, there is no ill,
For evil's self Thy light can kill:
O let that light upon us rise!
Lord, heal our wounds, and cleanse our stains,
Fountain of grace! and with Thy rains
Our barren spirits fertilize."

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