

Concerning the Spirit

by G. Campbell Morgan

G. Campbell Morgan's sermon explores the multifaceted role of the Holy Spirit in the life of believers and the Church, emphasizing its significance in personal transformation and mission.

Scripture: Matthew 10:20, Matthew 12:28, Matthew 28:19, Mark 3:29, Luke 11:13, John 3:5-8, John 4:13-14, John 14:16-20, John 16:7-15, Acts 1:8

Topics: "The Holy Spirit", "Empowerment for Ministry"

Description

G. Campbell Morgan emphasizes the significance of the Holy Spirit in the life of believers, highlighting that it is not the individual who speaks, but the Spirit of God that empowers them. He discusses the relationship between the Spirit and the Kingdom of God, the necessity of being born of the Spirit for salvation, and the Spirit's role in guiding, teaching, and comforting believers. Morgan also warns against blaspheming the Holy Spirit, which is an unforgivable sin, and stresses the importance of the Spirit in the ministry of Jesus and the work of His disciples. Ultimately, he presents the Holy Spirit as a constant presence that enables believers to fulfill their calling and experience the fullness of life in Christ.

Transcript

"For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you" (Matthew 10:20)

"But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you" (Matthew 12:28).

"Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come" (Matthew 12:31-32).

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 28:19).

"But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation" (Mark 3:29).

"For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The LORD said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool" (Mark 12:36).

"But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost" (Mark 13:11).

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16).

"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" (Luke 11:13).

"And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven. And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say" (Luke 12:10-12).

"I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled? But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" (Luke 12:49-50).

"And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49).

"For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence" (Acts 1:5).

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

"Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit" (John 3:5-8).

"Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:13-14)

"In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified)" (John 7:37-39).

"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you" (John 14:16-20).

"These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:25-26).

"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning" (John 15:26-27)

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. I have yet 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 himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you" (John 16:7-15).

"Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained" (John 20:21-23).

ANY ONE thus tabulating the words of CHRIST concerning the Spirit, as they are recorded by the four evangelists, will be inevitably impressed by certain facts which need to be stated as introductory to our study.

First there is no systematic instruction concerning the existence of the Spirit; but nevertheless there are certain assumptions, revealed in references to the Spirit, which sufficiently indicate our Lord's thought in this matter.

Secondly, in our Lord's public ministry His references to the Holy Spirit, while comparatively few, were nevertheless awe-inspiring and arresting.

Thirdly, on the eve of His departure He gave to the inner circle of His disciples comprehensive teaching, not on the existence or nature of the Spirit, but concerning the work of the Spirit during the Christian era.

The material at our disposal, then, in these Gospel narratives, for discovering the teaching of our Lord, is

First, the references during His public ministry; and

Secondly, the particular teaching given to His own disciples prior to His departure.

Bearing in mind the first of these three facts, namely, the absence of systematic teaching concerning the nature of the Spirit, we will examine, first, the general teaching of His public ministry; and secondly, the particular teaching of the Paschal discourses.

The words in the former class were spoken not at one time, nor systematically; but at different times, and incidentally, in the course of our Lord's public ministry.

An examination of the fourfold Gospel narrative shows that Matthew recorded four references by CHRIST to the Holy Spirit, Mark four, Luke seven, and John four. Some of these references of the Lord are recorded by more than one of the evangelists.

Having first set these out as separate statements, in chronological order as far as possible with regard to the ministry of our Lord, we will build thereon our estimate of values.

The first reference to the Spirit in the ministry of our Lord was one revealing the relation of the Spirit to the Kingdom of GOD, and to the Master's ministry in regard to that Kingdom. This is not the first reference to the Spirit in the narratives, but the first in CHRIST's own words; and, so far as the records preserve the words to us, this was made in His conversation with Nicodemus.

During His first Judean ministry - a ministry of which we have no record in Matthew, Mark, or Luke; a ministry to which John alone refers - while He was still in Jerusalem, Nicodemus came to Him, a seeker after truth, an honest soul to whom it was possible for Him to speak of deeper things.

We are, of course, familiar with the intimate connection between the ending of the second chapter and the beginning of the third chapter in John's Gospel. The last statement of the second chapter is this: "Many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men" (John 2:23-24) and the next chapter commences, "There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews" (John 3:1) to whom He did commit His heart, and to whom He could speak as to a man of absolute honesty and sincerity.

To him, therefore, our Lord declared the relation of the work of the Spirit to the establishment of the Kingdom of GOD in the heart of man; and ultimately, of course, in the world. He told this man, to his utter amazement, that no man could enter into the Kingdom save by a new birth, a new beginning; not by process of personal reformation, but by the process of regeneration from above.

In that great declaration He made the first recorded reference to the Spirit of GOD.

Man must be born of water and of the Spirit; that is, a man must not only take the step which John indicated in his preaching of repentance; he must also be introduced to the Kingdom, to see it, to be in it, by the regeneration of the Spirit of GOD.

It is full of interest that in that first recorded reference to the Spirit our Lord not only recognized, but definitely declared, the mystery of the theme. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8) and the "so" links the man who hears the wind to the man who is born of the Spirit.

The new-born soul is related to the Spirit precisely as a man is related to the wind which he hears, and the fact of which he knows, but the source and goal of which are hidden from him. He knows the fact though he cannot explain the mystery. Thus upon the very threshold of His public ministry, so far from giving any systematic teaching as to the nature of the Spirit of GOD, our Lord told this seeking soul, and men for all time, that there is a mystery not revealed; but that there are facts that demonstrate the profounder fact of the being and the activity of the Spirit of GOD.

Next comes a group of references showing the relation of the Spirit of GOD to personal life. Of these the first is that to which, in another application, reference has been already made.

In the story of the interview with Nicodemus is the word of JESUS concerning the Spirit, which shows that personal Christianity, which is personal realization of the establishment of the Kingdom of GOD, is the result of the regeneration of the Holy Spirit.

The next in order of time occurred just after He had left Jerusalem, and while He was on His way to Galilee to commence the ministry recorded by Matthew, Mark, and Luke. He halted at Samaria; and there, under a figure of speech, He made His next reference to the Spirit, as He said to the woman of Samaria, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14).

That this statement referred to the activity of the Spirit is proved by the next reference, where, in interpretation of the figure of the running rivers of water we have the inspired word following, "this spake He of the Spirit" (John 7:39).

Thus, under a figure of speech, not by the declaration of a doctrine, but by the suggestion of an illustration, our Lord revealed the fact that when a man is by the Spirit born, the result is that he finds perfect satisfaction; in his life there is no longer the thirst that agonizes for something never found; but the springing, laughing, living water, that brings him perpetual satisfaction.

We find the record of the next reference in the seventh chapter of John, although our Lord said it long after the Galilean ministry, in the second Judean ministry, and when He was back again in Jerusalem. On the last day of the feast, when the priests were no longer carrying the water in the golden vessels and pouring it forth upon the ground, symbolizing the day of the Spirit, towards the dawning of which the prophets had looked; on the last day of the feast He said, "If any man

thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." The thought is identical with that of the fourth chapter; but He went further now, and said, "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7:38).

Thus speaking of the Spirit He declared that the true secret of influence in the world is that of the indwelling and outflowing Spirit through the life of man; that influence in the world is to be created by the effluence of the Spirit of GOD from the life of the man born of the Spirit, and satisfied with the Spirit.

It was then, after the visit to Jerusalem, but still in the second Judean ministry, while on tour, that He uttered the word, which Luke alone records, in relation to prayer: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" (Luke 11:13)

In that group of references we have His teaching concerning the relation of the Spirit to individual and personal life;

That man needs to be born of the Spirit in order to enter into the Kingdom of GOD;

That being born of the Spirit, the Spirit of GOD becomes in such a man a well of water springing up, and he never thirsts;

That the Spirit of GOD then becomes through him the rushing of rivers of water, fertilizing deserts, and satisfying the thirst of other people; and finally

That the Spirit of GOD is given to a man; who asks for Him.

In the next place we have a group of references showing the relation of the Spirit to CHRIST's own work.

The first is a word which He spoke in the midst of the Galilean ministry. It is chronicled by Matthew. He was contending with the Pharisees. They had said that He cast out devils by Beelzebub, and He replied, "And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you" (Matthew 12:27-28).

In that word, which was incidental, it is perfectly clear that our Lord intended to declare that all His activity in the interests of the Kingdom of GOD, in the exorcism of devils, was activity in cooperation with the Spirit.

Then in that great soliloquy of Luke, a soliloquy that broke from His heart in the midst of the second Judean ministry, He declared His purpose in the words: "I am come to send fire on the earth" (Luke 12:49).

In the light of other Scriptures we know that this was a declaration that the ultimate meaning of His ministry was, in some way, not then to be disclosed to men, not then to be explained, for men could not understand; but in some way to give the Spirit of GOD, and make Him available to all men, as a fire for purity, as a fire for energy; but He declared that He was unable to fulfill that greater mission until He Himself had passed through the passion-baptism towards which His face was set, and without which His work could never be completed.

In a passing allusion He declared that when David wrote his psalm long ago, he wrote in the Spirit; that in the psalm, which the rulers and interpreters of the age were unable to explain, the psalm in which David spoke of Messiah and said, "The Lord said to my Lord" (Mark 12:36, 37), he wrote in the Spirit.

To whom was he referring? said JESUS; and they replied, To Messiah, to CHRIST; and His question to them was, "David therefore himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he then his son?" It was His challenging question to these men as to His own Person. They could give Him no answer. Thus here CHRIST referred to the action of the Spirit long before as inspiring the prophetic songs that set forth the fact of His own Person, and the meaning of His own ministry.

Going back now to the Galilean ministry, we find that in Galilee He first uttered those words of solemn warning in which He declared that the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is the sin that has no forgiveness. These words we can never read without an almost appalling sense of awe possessing the soul.

Both Matthew and Mark record that declaration of CHRIST in Galilee, and Luke states that He repeated this warning in the course of the second Judean ministry (Matthew 12:31, 32).

Thus the solemn words, - whatever their import may be, - concerning the Spirit of GOD, belong both to the early Galilean ministry, and to the later Judean ministry; and in each case were uttered in close connection with that criticism of the Pharisees in which they tried to account for the action of the Lord as being due to the influence of devils.

Our Lord did not say that these men had committed the unpardonable sin, but they had approached very near; for when a man says of such a CHRIST that He works by the power of Satan, he is coming very near

to definite and final rejection of that CHRIST; and such rejection is the sin against the Holy Ghost, because the ministry of the Holy Spirit is that of cooperating with CHRIST in the casting out of devils, in the revelation of the Father, in the establishment of the Kingdom, by the remaking and the perfecting of men. And if a man shall resist that CHRIST, and refuse Him, that is the one and only sin that has no forgiveness; for, as CHRIST said, it is eternal sin, the age-abiding sin, the sin from which there can be no escape; the sin therefore which cannot be forgiven.

Then there is another group of Scriptures, showing the relation of the Spirit to the work of the disciples.

Three times over, once in the Galilean ministry, and finally in the last visit to Jerusalem itself, our Lord said practically the same thing to His disciples. He told them that in the day of persecution, when they should be arraigned and imprisoned and beaten and buffeted even to death, they were never to be anxious about their defense; for, said He, the Spirit of your Father within you shall speak, the Spirit of GOD will teach you what to say, the Spirit of GOD will speak through you (Matthew 10:20; Mark 13:11; Luke 12:12).

Then we have a group of references after the resurrection.

In every phase of His great commission to His disciples there was some reference to the Spirit. Mark, Luke, and John tell the story of the events of the first day of resurrection in the upper room.

The commission recorded by Matthew was uttered in Galilee long after, at a private gathering of the risen Lord with the saints. Each teaches us some phase of the commission. Mark recorded His words: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16) and the baptism is of course the baptism of the Spirit, and not of water. Water baptism is the sign and symbol of the spiritual fact; but the regenerating baptism is that of the Spirit.

John wrote of that anticipative breathing when our Lord said, "Receive ye the Spirit" (John 20:22), in order to the ministry which shall bring the forgiveness of sins to men. It was a prophetic breathing; they did not receive the Spirit of GOD then, for Luke tells how, immediately following, our Lord told them to tarry until the Spirit came; and in the final word in Luke we find the promise of the coming of the Spirit. (Luke 24:49).

Then in Matthew's account of the appointed meeting in Galilee we have our Lord's reference to the Spirit in the great commission, when He said, "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 28:19), thus by reference to the Spirit indicating the union of the Spirit with the Father and the Son.

Once again, forty days after resurrection, two other references to the Spirit are found in Acts 1:5, 8, showing the relation of the disciples to the Spirit, and the Spirit to the disciples for work. He promised the baptism of the Spirit "not many days hence"; and then declared that the coming of the Spirit to them would bring them power for the accomplishment of His work.

Thus we have seen, by the grouping of these references of CHRIST under different headings, that our Lord revealed

The relation of the Spirit to the Kingdom of GOD,

The relation of the Spirit to the personal life of the individual,

The relation of the Spirit to His own work, and

The relation of the Spirit to the work of His disciples immediately, and to the end of the present dispensation.

Looking back over these passages of Scripture it is again evident that there was no attempt on the part of the Lord at systematic teaching. That in itself is a matter of supreme importance. It is a dangerous thing in doctrinal teaching to argue from silence. Yet there is a value in observing the things about which CHRIST said practically nothing. When we find Him silent on some great matters we may be content to be silent on that subject too.

We are always in danger of losing the supreme value of this whole fact of the ministry of the Holy Spirit when we are eager and anxious to state systematically, or even theologically, all the facts concerning the Spirit of GOD, and the relation of the Spirit of GOD to the Trinity; topics on which no final word can be said. And it is infinitely better that we should ever abide in this matter where CHRIST left the subject, for on the subject of the nature of the Spirit of GOD He made no advance upon that first mystic, suggestive, and beautiful word spoken to Nicodemus: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth" (John 3:8).

The fact we know, but all the mystery of it we do not know, nor can we! But knowing the fact, we postpone, at least for the present, the attempt to understand the mystery, and obeying the fact we find the great force serving our purpose, and accomplishing our end. Is that not the law of the wind?

Dr. Jowett, when he wanted to preach upon this very passage, went down to Tynemouth, and sat by an old sailor, a real sailor, a man who had spent many years upon a sailing vessel; and said to him, "Do you know anything about the wind?"

"Yes, sir, know a lot about the wind."

"Well, will you explain to me the phenomenon of the wind?"

"I don't know what you mean, sir."

"Well, how do you explain the wind: what do you know about it?"

"No, sir, I don't know anything about the wind; but know the wind, and can hoist a sail!"

That is the whole philosophy of this teaching. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof" - we know the fact; "but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth" - that is the mystery; but knowing the fact we hoist the sail, and the fact becomes the force that drives our vessel across the lake, though when we get to the other side we know no more about the mystery of it than we did when we started; but our vessel has been carried over; "so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

The man born of the Spirit comes to recognition of the blowing of the wind, a voice in the soul, a vision before the eye, a new touch of power upon the life; and, in effect, he says, Whence, I cannot tell; whither I know not; what I cannot discover; but I will hoist the sail; I will act upon the impulse suggested; and immediately the force of the Spirit enters into the life, and presently he arrives at the desired haven, because recognizing the mystery, and knowing the fact, he has been obedient to the law of the fact, and the fact has been a force cooperative with his life.

To my own mind, that great silence of JESUS, that recognition of mystery, is in itself one of the most wonderful things in all His teaching concerning the Spirit.

Yet let us gather these three definite values from this collection of passages:

The assumption of the Being of the Spirit;

The suggestion of the nature of the Spirit; and

The revelation of relationship.

What is this assumption of Being? JESUS assumed the Being of the Spirit of GOD, and the terms of His references preclude our imagining that He thought only of an influence. Listen to His terms: "The Spirit of your Father" (Matthew 10:20); That may leave us a little in doubt. Listen again: "The Spirit of God" (Matthew 12:28); and even there we may imagine that there is nothing very definite. But listen again: "The Spirit"; and that word was used in such connection as to leave no possibility of doubt that He was thinking of a Person; He was thinking of intelligence, of emotion, and of volition, and therefore of the sum and substance of these things, which is personality.

His references to the Spirit were references always to activities; the regenerative activity, by which a man is born from above; the gift of speech, by which men take no trouble to make a defense, but have words to speak given them at the moment; the activity of exorcism, whereby through the word of CHRIST the devil is compelled to leave a man, and the man is healed, and that for the establishment of the Kingdom of GOD. CHRIST spoke of the Spirit by such terms as recognized His Being as a Person, and as One active in the universe of GOD.

These references of CHRIST also suggest the nature of the Spirit. He spoke of "The Spirit," and that suggests the nature. Does it also present a difficulty? Can any one define Spirit? Let us simply say as we did in considering our Lord's declaration that GOD is a Spirit; that Spirit is freedom from the limitations of space and time. That is at least a hint as to nature.

But He also spoke of "The Spirit of God"; and in our Lord's use of the word "GOD," is the thought of might, of majesty, of absolute supremacy, and final sovereignty; and when He said "The Spirit of God," it is evident that He thought of the Spirit as related to these attributes. That again is a gleam of light upon the nature of the Spirit.

Put once again He spoke of "the Spirit of your Father."

In our study on the teaching of CHRIST concerning GOD, we pointed out that He only used two names of GOD definitely; one GOD, and the other Father; and hence the meaning and value of the Pauline and Petrine expression, "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Now notice that in reference to the Spirit He used the same two words in order to give us an idea of the nature of the Spirit: the "Spirit of God," and the "Spirit of the Father." So that everything we think of, when we think of GOD as GOD, we may bring over into our thinking concerning the nature of the Spirit: all the ability to sustain, all the tender solicitude for welfare, all thought of love and passion and strength which we conceive as in GOD, we may think of as in the Spirit of GOD.

However, our Lord's favorite designation, if we may judge by the number of times He made use of it, was "The Holy Spirit." He clearly thought of the Spirit as holy in nature; the Spirit of purity and of right, the Holy Spirit.

These references do not constitute systematic teaching; they only afford suggestions, but they are suggestions which, when gathered together, and allowed to create an impression upon the mind, bring us very near to an understanding of the nature of the Spirit. "The Spirit of God"; "The Spirit of the Father"; "The Holy Spirit."

And finally, these references are a revelation of relations.

They show that the Spirit is one with GOD, in His Being; and in His activity; for they indicate that CHRIST regard the Spirit as working with GOD and for Him; and that He Himself wrought in the power of the Spirit.

These references by our Lord also show that He thought of the Spirit of GOD as the One Who gives life to men, new life to men, enabling them to see the vision of His glory, communicating to them the virtue whereby they will be able to win the victory, themselves submitted to the King, becoming workers with the King for the bringing in of His Kingdom.

If tempted to say that all this leaves the matter very much in the realm of mystery, remember that we have only been considering the more public and incidental references of our Lord to the Spirit.

We now turn to the special teaching of the Lord concerning the Holy Spirit, given to His disciples. It is necessary that we should recognize that it was special teaching, and that in at least three ways; as to those to whom it was given, as to the time at which it was given, and as to the scope of the teaching itself.

All the words of the Paschal discourses were spoken to the disciples only; and it is a most significant fact that, according to this record, they contain no word concerning the coming or ministry of the Spirit until Judas was excluded from the company.

In the early portion of the Paschal celebration he was present. He was even there when our Lord washed the disciples' feet; but ere a word passed the lips of CHRIST concerning the mission of the Spirit, he had been excluded.

The teaching was special also as to the time at which it was given; these words are among the very last things He said. The shadow of the Cross was most evidently over the feast. The disciples were strangely perplexed and perturbed, utterly unable to understand their Master. This indeed had been so from that hour when at Caesarea Philippi He had first spoken to them of the Cross. Restlessness was rife so far as they were concerned. He alone was quiet, calm, and dignified.

Finally, the teaching was special in its scope. It was specific teaching on the work of the Spirit in relation to His own disciples.

These special words, spoken to the inner circle, are as devoid of systematic teaching concerning the existence and nature of the Spirit as were the incidental references during the public ministry. Over the whole of these instructions, also, we may write that word "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8).

Observe also that this teaching was intermixed with other matters, and closely related thereto.

These Paschal discourses contain four distinct paragraphs on the coming and work of the Spirit; and it will be helpful to notice at once the setting of these references. During the observance of the Paschal feast our Lord had risen, and had washed the feet of the disciples, instructing them on the duty of love expressed in service. After that Judas was excluded, and the Lord spoke more particularly on the subject of His approaching departure. As He did so He was interrupted; first by the troubled question of Peter, "Whither goest Thou?" (John 13:36); next by the protesting enquiry of Thomas, "Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?" (14:5); then by the great cry of Philip, "Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us" (14:8). In the course of His answer to Philip, for the first time He promised the Paraclete (14:16, 17).

Continuing His discourse, He spoke of the relation of obedience to love, told them how the expression of love to Him was that of loyalty; and in conclusion He again spoke of the ministry of the Paraclete, and immediately gave them His word of peace (John 14:26, 27).

Then leaving the upper room in the midst of the discourses, it is not certain where they went. Some believe that the words concerning the vine were spoken as they walked over the brook Kidron towards Gethsemane. Others believe that they went specially to the Temple, and that in the silence of the night these words were uttered in the presence of that golden vine which was one of the glories of the Temple. Of these things we are not sure; but it is perfectly certain that under the figure of the vine He spoke to them of the new relationship which presently would exist between them and Himself; and emphasized the possibility of service under the figure of fruit-bearing; and in this connection He again spoke of the Paraclete (John 15:26, 27).

He then told them of trials and persecutions awaiting them, and in that connection uttered His final word about the Paraclete (John 16:7-14); and then completed His discourse, and uttered the great intercessory prayer. Thus He dealt with their need in the days so rapidly approaching, when He, as to bodily presence, should no longer be with them. He recognized their loneliness; their duty to Him; their coming responsibilities in service; the suffering and persecution that such service and such life would bring; and He linked each of these things with the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Their loneliness was to be cancelled by the coming of the Paraclete.

Their duty to Him was to be made possible of fulfillment by the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Their fruitfulness in service was to be ensured by the ministry of the Spirit.

Their suffering was to be endured in the strength of their fellowship with that Spirit. There are three things to note in a survey of this teaching:

First, to observe the meaning of our Lord's references to the Spirit;

Secondly, to attend to His special teaching concerning the relation of the Spirit to His own disciples; and

Finally, to make a deduction of values for our help.

In these discourses our Lord referred to the Spirit in three ways. He spoke of Him as the "Comforter," as "the Spirit of truth," and as "the Holy Spirit."

Instead of "Comforter" let us employ the anglicized form of the Greek word, Paraclete. He used that term in each one of these declarations, and it is remarkable that these are the only occasions where the word is used in the New Testament, except once when, in the first letter of John, it is used of CHRIST Himself.

The word in itself is an inclusive and final revelation of all the truth He desired to teach them as to the relation of the Spirit to their lives and ministry, when as to bodily presence He would be unseen.

The word Paraclete simply means, One called to the side of. That opens the way for an understanding of the suggestiveness of the word. It is a word quite common in all Greek literature, but to be found in the Greek version of the Old Testament. In Greek literature its sense is always that of an advocate, that is, one who takes up the cause of another, and defends it.

Whence then came our word "Comforter"? It has been suggested that the word "Comforter" is used in its true, old sense of One Who strengthens. That is rather an apology for, than an explanation of, the employment of the word. Undoubtedly to use it in that sense would be absolutely accurate. But we owe the presence of the word "Comforter" to the Greek Church, which insisted upon it that the great sense of value in our Lord's use of the word was not so much that the Holy Spirit was to come as an Advocate, as that He was to come to console, and in that sense to comfort the souls of the disciples.

Now it is of great importance that we should admit the element of truth in that statement, and yet let us see what this really means. The first time our Lord used the word He coupled with it a very simple word, one of those words we are very apt to hurry over when we are reading, but which gives a key to the situation.

He said, "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you" - not a Comforter, but "another Comforter" (John 14:16). And if, as is so often the case in exposition of this kind, it seems as though we were laying undue stress upon an unimportant word, yet ponder it carefully. The word "another" here is of a particular nature and character. It is alios, not heteros; and consequently the word another does not indicate a different quality, but a similarity of quality, and a distinction of Person. The value of the use of the word "another" is that it presupposes a previous Comforter; and thus in His use of the word Paraclete, our Lord suggested that His own work in the case of these men might be designated by that term. He had been the Paraclete.

He had been the One summoned to their side. He had been with them; they had been with Him; in fellowship with Him they had seen more deeply into the things of GOD, they had heard the voices with which they had been unfamiliar until He came and spoke to them; in His presence they had known courage and strength; with Him they had felt that they could dare everything; but their trouble was that He was going.

Under these circumstances He said, I will send you another Paraclete; Another to stand by your side, Another to take exactly the same place that I have filled in your lives during these past three years, Another to be the Advocate of GOD with you.

I think if we compare the way in which JESUS used the word Paraclete with John's use of it in his letter, we may be helped to an understanding of its value. Said John, "We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (I John 2:1). The risen CHRIST stands as our Advocate with GOD in the high places of the heavens; and the Spirit dwells with us as His Advocate, in the life and service of the earth.

As CHRIST pleads the cause of man in Heaven, so the Spirit pleads the cause of GOD on earth. He is the Advocate.

It has been objected that our word "Comforter" has absolutely no place in the thought of the word Paraclete. I differ from that view entirely. If the thought be that of an advocate, as one who pleads a cause, there is involved in that idea the very essence of comfort. My advocate, in that sense, is the man who has knowledge superior to mine; all of which he places at my disposal, so that I can repose in the things he knows, and remit to him all the questions that would be of difficulty to me.

There is in this fact all comfort to me; that the Spirit of GOD has this as His office; all His knowledge of GOD is at my disposal, all the will of GOD He will reveal to me, all the way of GOD He will manifest to me. That is comfort indeed.

Another descriptive phrase of which the Lord made use was, "the Spirit of truth."

Truth is the source from which the Spirit comes to fulfill His ministry;

Truth is the characteristic of the Spirit Himself;

Truth is the effort of the Spirit in the life of the believer;

Truth is the result produced, wherever the soul yields to the ministry of the Spirit.

The phrase, of truth, suggests truth in its simplicity and its finality. Bengel wrote most impressively about it when he declared that truth is the only fact that cannot be falsified. There may be false knowledge, false hope, false faith, false love, but never false truth. Thus the description, "the Spirit of truth," is the simple and final word, revealing the deepest fact of the character of the Spirit.

He made use of another phrase, "the Holy Spirit," revealing the character of the Spirit, revealing therefore the nature of the inspiration of the Spirit in the life of the soul, revealing also the character of the energy which the Spirit will communicate. The word holy in itself suggests awfulness or distance; and in its use, an awe-inspiring purity.

By these terms, without any attempt at doctrinal statement or systematic teaching concerning the nature of the Spirit, the Lord revealed at once the new relation of the Spirit to believing souls; and the character of the Spirit. Who was coming into such new relationship.

We turn to the special teaching of our Lord; and notice two things,

First, that He made a definite promise that the Spirit was to come; and

Secondly, that He revealed the purpose of the coming.

He promised an advent of the Spirit. Every paragraph refers to this. The Spirit was to be given, the Spirit was to be sent, the Spirit was to come. This use of terms is very difficult to explain. Although we believe in the immanence of the Spirit of GOD in all life, and that there is a sense in which those terms that indicate space, and time, cannot be used of essential Deity, we are at once confronted by them through all this teaching of JESUS, in which He spoke of the Spirit as being given, as being sent, and as coming. They are figures of speech, and our Lord was referring to the fact that after His departure there would be a new method adopted in the economy of GOD on the part of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit had not been unknown in human history prior to the coming of CHRIST.

Men had been taught that the Spirit had been specially associated with the cosmos from that hour of Creation which the first page of Genesis records - accomplished by the brooding of the Spirit over the darkness. In the Old Testament men spoke of the Spirit, and a ministry of the Spirit was constantly referred to. Yet CHRIST now definitely said to His disciples that there was to be a coming, a sending, a giving. All of which indicated the fact that there was to be a new method of spiritual ministry, resulting from His presence and His work, and contributory to the carrying on of the consciousness of that presence, and the continuity of that work.

He first declared that the Spirit should be given by the Father, and the word given there does not mean sent, but assigned; given by the Father to His disciples in answer to His own prayer. "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give [assign] you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever" (John 14:16).

Here is the suggestion of a difference from anything that had been revealed in the economy of the Old Testament. There we read of the Spirit clothing Himself with a man, clothing a man with Himself; coming to inspire men for special work, the singing of a song, the weaving of a fabric, the working in gold for the perfecting of the Tabernacle. The suggestion throughout is of special wisdom and illumination and power for special occasions. But now, said CHRIST, My Father, in answer to My asking, will give you the Spirit to abide with you forever; that is a new method of the Spirit, the perpetual superseding the occasional; the Spirit no longer to be, in the case of His disciples, One Who came with a flash and a light, a vision and a glory, but One Who remained in close, personal, perpetual relationship.

Then our Lord said that He should be sent by the Father in the name of the Son; a little later He said He should be sent by the Son from the Father; and later still He declared that He should be sent by the Son; and the last reference to the new advent of the Spirit is one that speaks of the Spirit as neither given nor sent, but coming of Himself.

These statements seem to be almost mutually destructive. As a matter of fact these very terms about an advent of the Spirit, or a new method of the Spirit in the history of men, involve a sense of sacred and mystic relationships, which we can never finally explain or understand; given by the Father; sent by the Father; sent by the Son from the Father; sent by the Son without reference to the Father; coming of Himself. But whatever the mystery of the method, the fact is patent that our Lord declared to this group of men in these Paschal discourses that they were, approaching a new era of spiritual power, and spiritual relationship, in which the Spirit of GOD should no longer make Himself known as a Visitor, upon occasion, for a purpose; but that He should be a perpetual Presence, a perpetual Power in the life of believers.

He was perfectly clear, all through these discourses, as to the special purpose of this new method and manifestation.

The purpose of the Spirit's advent as regards the Son would be first to make His Presence known. This is taught in the first paragraph. I am going away, your hearts are filled with sorrow, I will not leave you desolate, I will not leave you orphans, I will not leave you lonely. In the first paragraph there is a strange merging of two ideas, I will send another Paraclete . . . will come to you; so that the Another would not be Another in the consciousness of the disciples; but Another Who would make them conscious of the fact of the presence of CHRIST.

The teaching of the second paragraph in this application; is that the Spirit would bring to their remembrance His past teaching.

The third paragraph teaches that He would bear witness of Him, that is, explain Him. That declaration is put into close connection with the fact that the world had hated Him, but the Spirit would bear witness of Him, and reveal the truth concerning Him, in the presence of the world's hatred.

The teaching of the fourth paragraph is that the Spirit would make Him the center of the world's religious consciousness, convicting men of sin, of righteousness, of judgment, all in relation to Himself: "Of sin, because they believe not on Me; of righteousness, because I go to the Father; of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged." Finally the Lord declared that the Spirit would come to glorify Him in His own disciples.

The purposes of the coming of the Spirit as to the disciples we have already seen incidentally. Let us now state them definitely.

He came first to disannul orphanhood, to take away the sense of loneliness, to make desolateness impossible; and all this entirely and only by creating the consciousness of CHRIST.

A great many people are making the supreme mistake of expecting a consciousness of the Spirit; yet that which the Spirit creates is not a consciousness of Himself, but a consciousness of CHRIST. Upon this the Lord was most explicit from beginning to end; the Spirit shall not speak of Himself, or concerning Himself; so that the test of the measure of our fellowship with the Spirit is not our knowledge of the Spirit, but our knowledge of the CHRIST Whom the Spirit reveals. He came secondly to recall to the disciples the words of past commandments; thirdly to cooperate with them in their witness to CHRIST; and finally to guide them into all the truth.

The purpose of the coming of the Spirit as to the world was that of conviction, that is, interpretation, discerning judgment, illumination on the great cardinal matters of religious experience. Wherever there is a true religious experience in the history of a man, these are the cardinal matters: sin, righteousness, judgment; sin as a fact, however it may be explained; righteousness as a great ideal, however unattainable it may be; judgment as a terrific necessity, however much it may be denied.

The ministry of the Spirit in the world is to put CHRIST at the center of all these cardinal matters of which the world becomes conscious when it comes to religious awakening of any kind. Sin in the presence of the presented CHRIST becomes refusal to believe in Him: righteousness is demonstrated as possible to men because of the triumph of the CHRIST; and judgment is revealed as already accomplished by the CHRIST in His conflict with evil. The Spirit was to come to make these things real in the consciousness of the world.

The Spirit can only fulfill this ministry as the Church is in true fellowship with Him. That also is another value of this whole teaching; but taking for granted that the Church is at the disposal of her Lord to carry the message, and to deliver it, then it is in the power of the Spirit that CHRIST is demonstrated, and conviction comes to the mind of the world.

Our deduction of values may be briefly stated.

The first is that of a new sense of the mystery of the whole subject. And after a careful study of these passages, that which arrests our attention is the strange and mystic sense of trinity in unity. Does the mathematician affirm that this is a contradiction of terms? He is quite right; and yet here it is; a merging of activities, the Son asking, the Father sending; the Son sending, the Spirit coming; and yet a unity of

activity, the unseen GOD revealed in the Son, the Son not known by men, for "no one knoweth the Son, save the Father"; the unknown Son revealed by the ministry of the Spirit. The unseen Spirit exercises a ministry of revelation from the Father through the Son to the disciples; yet never makes Himself the consciousness of the disciples; but centralizing their consciousness in the CHRIST, through Him they have consciousness of the Father, and know the presence and power of the Spirit.

Secondly, the office of the Spirit is here revealed as that of the Medium of union between the CHRIST and His people; the Medium of vision whereby they see the CHRIST as they had never seen Him before; the Medium of energy, enabling them to obey the light as it comes; the Medium of consolation, for by the very strength and purity of His advocacy, constraining to obedience, the heart is filled with a tense of comfort.

The final value is to be found in an understanding of the present fact. JESUS said, "'And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever" (John 14:16).

In this connection let us recognize the fact that this word for "pray" is never used save in John's Gospel, and is never used of any prayer other than the prayer of CHRIST. It is one that suggests familiarity, equality, and perfect right. It has been suggested that it means, "I will enquire of the Father"; but even that might convey the idea of some measure of ignorance. The word really conveys the thought of the turning to the Father of One Who asks no gift from Him, but who indicates to Him, in perfect fellowship of purpose and power, the gift that He would bestow upon His people.

When did He pray that prayer? The great intercessory prayer in the seventeenth chapter of John immediately follows these discourses; but there is not a single reference to the Holy Spirit therein from beginning to end. The prayer for the Spirit was not a prayer offered definitely, in our sense of praying; it was the prayer of His own triumphant presence in Heaven. So Peter surely understood the word of CHRIST, when on the day of Pentecost he delivered his first message, and declared when men asked "What meaneth this?" that this outpouring of the Spirit, and the manifestations following thereupon, had resulted from the presence of the Man of Nazareth at the right hand of GOD, "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear" (Acts 2:33).

The thought of JESUS was that the Spirit would be given in new fashion to men, not in answer to their praying, not because of their worthiness, but as the great gift which He Himself would bestow as the result of the completion of His own mission, and by the way of His passion.

And so the Spirit was given in that new sense, and He has never been withdrawn. The upper room on the day of Pentecost, when the tongues of fire were seen, was not more the shrine of the Spirit than are the places of Christian assembly to-day; and there came to these men a gift no more real and definite than is ours, if we are indeed the Lord's own disciples.

Then let us ever remember that the Spirit is with us; to disannul all orphanhood, to give a clear consciousness of the living CHRIST, to strengthen for witness bearing, to make strong in the midst of suffering, and to realize within men all the purposes of their Lord.

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