

The Power of the Holy Spirit

by R.A. Torrey

The Holy Spirit has power to reveal Jesus Christ, convict the world of sin, regenerate men, give abiding satisfaction, set us free, strengthen the believer, and lead us into a holy life.

Scripture: Psalm 62:11, John 14:26, John 15:26, John 16:8-11, Acts 1:8, Romans 8:2, 1 Corinthians 3:21, Galatians 5:22-23, Ephesians 3:16, Titus 3:5

Topics: "The Holy Spirit", "Empowerment in Christ"

Description

R.A. Torrey emphasizes the transformative power of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer, explaining that the Holy Spirit imparts God's power to individuals, enabling them to live victoriously and serve effectively. He highlights that understanding and claiming the Holy Spirit's work is essential for experiencing the fullness of God's power, which includes revealing Christ, convicting of sin, renewing lives, and guiding believers in truth and prayer. Torrey stresses the importance of the Word of God as the instrument through which the Holy Spirit operates, and he encourages believers to rely on the Spirit for strength, guidance, and the manifestation of Christlike character.

Transcript

"Power belongeth unto God." The Holy Spirit is the person who imparts to the individual believer the power that belongs to God. This is the Holy Spirit's work in the believer, to take what belongs to God and make it ours. All the manifold power of God belongs to the children of God as their birthright in Christ. "All things are your's" (1 Cor. 3:21). But all that belongs to us as our birthright in Christ becomes ours in actual and experimental possession through the Holy Spirit's work in us as individuals. To the extent that we understand and claim for ourselves the Holy Spirit's work, to that extent do we obtain for ourselves the fullness of power in Christian life and service that God has provided for us in Christ. A very large portion of the church knows and claims for itself a very small part of that which God has made possible for them in Christ, because they know so very little of what the Holy Spirit can do for us, and longs to do for us. Let us study the Word, then, to find out what the Holy Spirit has power to do in men.

We shall not go far before we discover that the same work which we see ascribed in one place to the power of the Word of God is in other places ascribed to the Holy Spirit. The explanation to this is simple. The Word of God is the instrument through which the Holy Spirit does his work. The Word of God is "the sword of the Spirit" (Eph. 6:17). The Word of God is also the seed the Spirit sows and quickens (Luke 8:11; 1 Peter 1:23). The Word of God is the instrument of all the manifold operations of the Holy Spirit, as

seen in Chapter 1.

If, therefore, we wish the Holy Spirit to do His work in our hearts, we must study the Word. If we wish Him to do His work in the hearts of others, we must give them the Word. But the bare Word will not do the work alone. The Spirit must Himself use the Word. It is when the Spirit Himself uses His own sword that it manifests its real temper, keenness and power. God's work is accomplished by the Word and the Spirit, or rather by the Spirit through the Word. The secret of effectual living is knowing the power of the Spirit through the Word. The secret of effectual service is using the Word in the power of the Spirit. There are some who seek to magnify the Spirit but neglect the Word. This will not do at all. Fanaticism, baseless enthusiasm, wildfire are the result. Others seek to magnify the Word, but largely ignore the Spirit. Neither will this do. It leads to dead orthodoxy, truth without life and power. The true course is to recognize the instrumental power of the Word through which the Holy Spirit works, and the living, personal power of the Holy Spirit who acts through the Word.

But let us come directly to the consideration of our subject: What has the Holy Spirit power to do?

1. Turn to I Corinthians 12:3,

"Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, But by the Holy Ghost"

The Holy Spirit has power to reveal Jesus Christ and His glory to man. When Jesus spoke of The Spirit's coming, He said: "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" (John 15:26). And it is only as He does testify of Christ that men will ever come to a true knowledge of Christ. You send men to the Word to get a knowledge of Christ; but it is only as the Spirit takes the Word and illuminates it, that men ever get a real living knowledge of Christ. "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." If you wish men to get a true knowledge of Jesus Christ, such a view that they will believe on Him and be saved, you must seek for them the testimony of the Holy Spirit. Neither your testimony nor that of the Word alone, will suffice, though it is your testimony, or that of the Word, which the Spirit uses.

But unless your testimony is taken up by the Holy Spirit and He Himself testifies, they will not believe. It was not merely Peter's words about Christ that convinced the Jews at Pentecost. It was the Spirit Himself bearing witness. If you wish men to see the truth about Jesus, do not depend upon your own powers of exposition and persuasion, but cast yourself upon the Holy Ghost and seek His testimony. If you wish yourself to know Jesus with a true and living knowledge, seek the witness of the Spirit through the Word. Many a man has a correct doctrinal conception of Christ, through a study of the Word, long before he has a true personal knowledge of Christ through the testimony of the living Spirit.

2. Now let us turn to John 16:8-11:

"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."

The Holy Spirit has power to convict the world of sin. This is closely connected with the preceding; for, it is by showing Jesus and His glory and His righteousness, that the Holy Spirit convicts of sin, and of righteousness and of judgment. Note the sin of which the Holy Spirit convicts, "Of sin, because they

believe not on Me." It was so at Pentecost, as we see in Acts 2:36, 37. You can never convict any man of sin because that is the work of the Holy Spirit. You can reason and reason, and you will fail. The Holy Spirit can do it very quickly. Did you never have this experience? You have shown a man passage after passage of Scripture, and he was unmoved, and you have wondered why the man did not break down. Suddenly it has occurred to you, "Why, I am not looking in my helplessness to the mighty Spirit of God to convict this man of sin, but I am trying the man of sin myself." Then you have cast yourself upon the Spirit of God for Him to do the work, and conviction came. The Spirit can convince the most careless, as experience has proven again and again.

But it is through us that the Spirit produces conviction. In John 16:7, 8, we read, "...I will send Him unto you. And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." It was the Spirit who was sent to Peter and the rest, who convicted the three thousand through Peter and the others on the day of Pentecost. It is ours to preach the Word and to look to the Holy Spirit to produce conviction (See Acts 2:4-37).

3. In Titus 3:5, we read,

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

The Holy Spirit has power to renew men or to make men new, to regenerate. Regeneration is the Holy Spirit's work. He can take a man dead in trespasses and sins, and make him alive. He can take a man whose mind is blind to the truth of God, whose will is at enmity with God and set on sin, whose affections are corrupt and vile, and transform that man, impart to him God's nature, so that he thinks God's thoughts, wills what God wills, loves what God loves, and hates what God hates.

I never despair of any man when I think of the power of the Holy Spirit to make new, as I have seen it manifested again and again in the most hardened and hopeless cases. It is through us that the Holy Spirit regenerates others (I Cor. 4:15). As we have seen in Chapter 1, the Word has power to regenerate; but it is not the bare Word, but the Word made a living thing in the heart by the power of the Holy Spirit. No amount of preaching, no matter how orthodox it is, and no amount of mere study of the Word will regenerate, unless the Holy Spirit works. Just as we are utterly dependent on the work of Christ for us in justification, so we are utterly dependent upon the work of the Holy Spirit in us in regeneration.

When one is born of the Spirit, the Spirit takes up His own abode in him (I Cor. 3:16; 6:19). The Holy Spirit dwells in everyone who belongs to Christ (Ro. 8:9). We may not have surrendered our lives very fully to this indwelling Spirit; we may be very far from being "full of the Spirit"; we may be very imperfect Christians, but, if we have been born again, the Spirit dwells in us, just as Paul said to the Corinthians, who were certainly very far from perfect Christians, that He did in them. What a glorious thought it is that the Holy Spirit dwells in me! But it is also a very solemn thought. If my body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, I certainly ought not to defile it, as many professed Christians do. Bearing in mind that our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit would solve many problems that perplex young Christians.

4. We find a further thought about the power of the Holy Spirit in John 4:14,

"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"

You may not see at first that this verse has anything to do with the Holy Spirit, but compare John 7:37, 39, and it will be evident that the water here means the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, then, has power to give abiding and everlasting satisfaction. The world can never satisfy. Of every worldly joy it must be said, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again." But the Holy Spirit has power to satisfy every longing of the soul. The Holy Spirit and He alone can satisfy the human heart. If you give yourself up to the Holy Spirit's inflowing, or rather upspringing, in your heart, you will never thirst. You will not long for the theater, or the ballroom, or the card party, or worldly gain, or honor. Oh, with what joy unutterable and satisfaction indescribable the Holy Spirit has poured forth His living water in many souls! Have you this living fountain within? Is the spring unchoked? Is it springing up into everlasting life? In Romans 8:2, we read,

"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

The Holy Spirit has power to set us free from the law of sin and death. What the law of sin and death is we see in the preceding chapter (Romans 7:9-24). Read this description carefully. We all know this law of sin and death. We have all been in bondage to it. Some of us are still in bondage to it, but we do not need to be. God has provided a way of escape. That way is by the Holy Spirit's power. When we give up the hopeless struggle of trying to overcome the law of sin and death, of trying to live right in our own strength, in the power of the flesh; and in utter helplessness surrender to the Holy Spirit to do all for us; when we live after Him and walk in His blessed power; then He sets us free from the law of sin and death.

There are many professed Christians today living in Romans 7. Some go so far as to maintain that this is the normal Christian life, that one must live this life of constant defeat. This would be true, if we were left to ourselves; for in ourselves we are "carnal, sold under sin." But we are not left to ourselves. The Holy Spirit undertakes for us what we have failed to do ourselves (Romans 8:2-4). In Romans 8 we have the picture of the true Christian life, the life that is possible to us, and that God expects from each one of us; the life where not merely the commandment comes, as in chapter 7, but where the mighty Spirit comes also, and works obedience and victory. The flesh is still in us, but we are not in the flesh (Romans 8:12,13, compare v.9). We do not live after it. We "live after the Spirit." We, "through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body." We "walk in the Spirit,"; and do "not fulfill the lust of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16). It is our privilege, in the Spirit's power, to get daily, hourly, and constant victory over the flesh and over sin. But the victory is not in ourselves, not in any strength of our own. Left to ourselves, deserted of the Spirit of God, we would be as helpless as ever. It is all in the Spirit's power. If we try to take one step in our own strength, we shall fail.

Has the Holy Spirit set you free from the law of sin and death? Will you let Him do it now? simply give up all self-effort to be free from "the law of sin and death", to give up sinning; believe in the divine power of the Holy Spirit to set you free; and cast yourself upon Him to do it. He will do it. Then you can triumphantly cry with Paul, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death" (Rom. 8:2, R.V.).

6. We find a closely allied but larger thought about the Holy Spirit's power in Ephesians 3:16, R.V.,

"That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, that ye may be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inward man."

The Holy Spirit strengthens the believer with power in the inward man. The result in this strengthening is seen in verses 17 to 19. Here the power of the Spirit manifests itself not merely in giving us victory over sin, but (a) in Christ's dwelling in our hearts; (b) our being "rooted and grounded in love"; (c) our being made "strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to

know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge..." (Ephesians 3:18, 19). It all ultimates in our being "filled unto all the fullness of God."

7. We find a still further thought about the Holy Spirit's power in Romans 8:14, R.V.,

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God."

The Holy Spirit has power to lead us into a holy life, a life as "sons of God", a godlike life. Not merely does the Holy Spirit gives us power to live a holy life, a life well-pleasing to God when we have discovered what that life is: He takes us by the hand, as it were, and leads us into that life. Our whole part is simply to surrender ourselves utterly to Him to lead and to mould us. Those who do this are not merely God's offspring, which all men are (Acts 17:28); neither are we merely God's children: "These are sons of God."

8. Further down in the chapter there is a new thought. Romans 8:16, R.V.,

"The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."

The Holy Spirit bears witness with the spirit of the believer that he is a child of God. Note that Paul does not say that the Spirit bears witness to our spirit, but with it--"together with our spirit," is the exact force of the words used. That is, there are two who bears witness to our sonship: First, our spirit bears witness that we are children of God; second, the Holy Spirit bears witness together with our spirit that we are children of God.

How does the Holy Spirit bear His testimony to this fact? Galatians 4:6 answers this question, "And because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (R.V.). The Holy Spirit Himself enters into our hearts and cries, "Abba, Father." Note the order of the Spirit's work in Romans 8:2,4,13,14,16. It is only when "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (v.2), and so "the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled" in me "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (v.4), and I "through the Spirit of God do mortify the deeds of the body" (v. 13), and when I am surrendered to the Spirit's leading (v.14), it is then, and only then, that I can expect verse 16 to be realized in my experience, and that I have the clear assurance of sonship that comes from the Spirit of God testifying together with my spirit, that I am a child of God. There are many seeking this testimony of the Holy Spirit in the wrong place; namely, as a condition of their surrendering wholly to God, and confessing the crucified and risen Lord as their Saviour and Lord. The testimony of the Holy Spirit to our sonship comes after all this is done.

9. An exceedingly important thought about the Holy Spirit's power is found in Galatians 5:22,23,

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

The Holy Spirit brings forth in the believer Christlike graces of character (Compare Romans 5:5; 14:17; 15:13). All real beauty of character, all real Christlikeness in us, is the Holy Spirit's work. It is His "fruit." He bears it; not we. Note that these graces are not said to be the fruits of the Spirit; they are the "fruit." There is a unity of origin running all through the multiplicity of manifestation; and not some of these graces, but all, will appear in everyone in whom the Holy Spirit is given full control.

It is a beautiful life that is set forth in these verses. Every word is worthy of earnest study and profound meditation: "Love," "joy," "peace," "longsuffering," "gentleness," "goodness," "faith," "meekness,"

"self-control." Is not this the life we all long for, the Christ life? Is it not natural to us, and it is not attainable by an effort of the "flesh," or nature. The life that is natural for us is set forth in the three preceding verses (19-21). But when the indwelling Spirit is given full control in the one He inhabits; when we are brought to realize the utter badness of the flesh, and give up in helpless despair of ever attaining to anything really good in its power; when, in other words, we come to the end of self, and just give over the whole work of making us what we ought to be to the indwelling HOLY SPIRIT, then, and only then, these holy graces of character are His "fruit."

Do you wish these graces in your character and life? Renounce self utterly, and all its strivings after holiness; and let the Holy Spirit, who dwells in you, take full control and bear His own glorious fruit. We get the same essential truth from another point of view in Galatians 2:20 (R.V., Am. App.), "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself up for me."

Settle it clearly and forever that the flesh can never bear this fruit, that you can never attain these things by your own effort, that they are "the fruit of the Spirit." We hear a good deal in these days about "ethical culture," which usually means a cultivation of the flesh until it bears the fruit of the Spirit. It cannot be done, until thorns can be made to bear figs, and a bramblebush, grapes (Matt. 12:33, Luke 6:44). We hear also a good deal about "character building." That is all very well, if you let the Holy Spirit do the building, and then it is not so much building as fruit-bearing. (See, however, II Pet. 1:5-7.) We hear also about "cultivating graces of character," but we must always bear in mind that the way to cultivate true graces of character is by submitting ourselves utterly to the Spirit to do His work. This is "sanctification of the Spirit" (I Pet. 1:2; II Thess. 2:13).

We turn now to the Holy Spirit in a different direction.

10. John 16:13, R.V.:

"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall guide you into all the truth: for He shall not speak from Himself; but what things soever He shall hear, these shall He speak: and He shall declare unto you the things that are to come."

The Holy Spirit has power to guide the believer "into all the truth." This promise was made in the first instance to the apostles, but the apostles themselves applied it to all believers (I John 2:20, 27). It is the privilege of each of us to be "taught of God." Each believer is independent of human teachers. "Ye need not that any man teach you." This does not mean, of course, that we may not learn much from others, who are taught by the Holy Spirit. If John had thought that, he would never have written this epistle to teach others. The man who is most fully taught of God is the very one who will be most ready to listen to what God has taught others. Much less does it mean that when we are taught of God we are independent of the Word of God. For the Word is the very place where the Spirit leads His pupils, and the instrument through which He teaches them (John 6:63; Eph. 6:17; Eph. 5:18, 19; Comp. Col. 3:16). But, while we may learn much from men, we are not dependent upon them. We have a divine teacher, the Holy Spirit.

We shall never truly know the truth until we are thus taught. No amount of mere human teaching, no matter who our teachers may be, will give us a correct apprehension of the truth. Not even a diligent study of the Word, either in the English or original languages, will give us a real understanding of the truth. We must be taught of the Holy Spirit. And we may be thus taught, each one of us. The one who is thus taught, even if he does not know a word of Greek or Hebrew, will understand the truth of God better than the one

who knows the Greek, the Hebrew, and all "the cognate languages," and is not taught of the Spirit. The Spirit will guide the one He teaches "into all the truth," not in a day, or in a week, or in a year, but step by step.

There are two especial lines of the Spirit's teaching mentioned. (a) "He shall declare unto you the things that are to come." Many say we can know nothing of the future, that all our thoughts on that subject are guesswork. Anyone taught of the Spirit knows better than that. (b) "He shall glorify me [i.e., Christ]: for He shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you." This is the Holy Spirit's especial line, with the believer as well as the unbeliever, to declare unto them the things of Christ and glorify Him.

Many fear to emphasize the truth about the Holy Spirit, lest Christ be disparaged. But no one magnifies Christ as the Holy Spirit does. We will never understand Christ, nor see His glory, until the Holy Spirit interprets Him to us. The mere listening to sermons and lectures, the mere study of the word even, will never give you to see the things of Christ. The Holy Spirit must show you, and He is willing to do it. He is longing to do it. I suppose the Holy Spirit's inmost desire is to reveal Jesus Christ to men. Let Him do it. Christ is so different when the Holy Spirit glorifies Him by taking of the things of Christ and showing them unto us.

11. Turning to John 14:26, R.V., we find again the Holy Spirit's power to teach, but with an added thought,

"But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you."

The Holy Spirit has power to bring to remembrance the words of Christ. This promise was made primarily to the apostles, and is the guarantee of the accuracy of their report of what Jesus said. But the Holy Spirit does a similar work with each believer who expects it of Him and looks to Him to do it. He brings to mind the teachings of Christ, and the words of Christ, just when we need them, for either the necessities of our own life or of our service.

How many of us could tell of occasions when we were in great distress of soul, of great questioning concerning our duty, or great extremity as to what to say to one whom we were trying to lead to Christ, or to help; and just the scripture we needed, some passage we had not thought of for a long time, and, perhaps, never thought of in this connection, was brought to mind. It was the Holy Spirit who did this, and He is ready to do it even more, when we expect it of Him.

It is without significance, that in the next verse after making this great promise, Jesus says: "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give unto you"? Look to the Holy Spirit to bring the right words to remembrance at the right time, and you will have peace. This is the way to remember Scripture, just when you need it, and just the Scripture you need.

12. Closely akin to what has been said in the two preceding sections is the power of the Holy Spirit as seen in I Corinthians 2:10-14, R.V.:

"But unto us God revealed them through the Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all thing, yea, the deep things of God. For who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of a man, which is in him? even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God. But we received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is from God; that we might know the things that were freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; combining

spiritual things with spiritual words. Now the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged".

In these verses we have a twofold work of the Spirit: (a) The Holy Spirit reveals to us the deep things of God, which are hidden from and are foolishness to the natural man. It is pre-eminently to the apostles that He does this, but we cannot limit this work of the Spirit to them. (b) The Holy Spirit interprets His own revelation, or imparts power to discern, know, and appreciate what He has taught.

Not only is the Holy Spirit the author of Revelation--the written Word of God. He is also the interpreter of what He has revealed. How much more interesting and helpful any deep book becomes when we have the author of the book right at hand to interpret it to us! This is what we always may have when we study the Bible. The author-- the Holy Spirit-- is right at hand to interpret. To understand the book we must look to Him. Then the darkest places become clear. We need to pray often with the psalmist, "Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wonderous things out of thy law" (Psa. 119:18).

It is not enough that we have the objective revelation in the written Word; we must also have the inward illumination of the Holy spirit to enable us to comprehend it. It is a great mistake to try to comprehend a spiritual revelation with the natural understanding. It is the foolish attempt to do this that has landed so many in the bog of higher criticism. A man with no aesthetic sense might as well expect to appreciate the Sistine Madonna, because he is not color blind, as an unspiritual man to understand the Bible, simply because he understands the laws of grammar of the vocabulary of the language in which the Bible was written. I would as soon think of setting a man to teach art merely because he understood paints, as to set him to teach the Bible merely because he understood Greek or Hebrew.

We all need to recognize the utter insufficiency and worthlessness of our own righteousness, which is the lesson of the opening chapters of the epistle to the Romans, but also the utter insufficiency and worthlessness in the things of God, in our own wisdom, which is the lesson of the first epistle to the Corinthians, especially the first to the third chapters (see e.g. I Cor. 1:19-21, 26, 27).

The Jews had a revelation by the Spirit but they failed to depend upon Him to interpret it to them, so they went astray. The whole evangelical church realizes the utter insufficiency of man's righteousness, theoretically at least. Now it needs to be taught, and made to feel, the utter insufficiency of man's wisdom. that is perhaps the lesson this nineteenth century of overweening intellectual conceit needs most of any.

To understand God's Word, we must empty ourselves utterly of our own wisdom and rest in utter dependence upon the Spirit of God to interpret it for us (Matt. 11:25). When we put away our own righteousness, then, and only then, we get the righteousness of God (Phil. 3:4-7, 9; rom. 10:13). When we put away our own wisdom, then, and only then, we get the wisdom of God (Matt. 11:25; I Cor. 3:18; I Cor. 1:25-28). When we put away our own strength, then, and only then, we get the strength of God (Is. 40:29; II Cor. 12:9; I Cor. 1:27,28). Emptying must precede filling- self poured out that Christ may be poured in. We must be daily taught of the Spirit to understand the Word.

I cannot depend today on the fact that the Spirit taught me yesterday. Each new contact with the Word must be in the power of the Spirit. That the Holy Spirit once illumined our mind to grasp a certain passage is not enough. He must do so each time we confront that passage.

Andrew Murray has put this truth well. He says, "Each time you come to the Word in study, in hearing a sermon or reading a religious book, there ought to be as distinct as your intercourse with the external

means, a definite act or self-abnegation, denying your own wisdom and yielding yourself in faith to the divine teacher" (The Spirit of Christ, p. 221).

13. The Holy Spirit has not only power to teach us the truth, but also to impart power to us in communicating that truth to others. We see this brought out again and again.

"And I, brethren, when I came unto you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."- I Cor. 2:1-5, R.V.

"Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost" (I Thess. 1:5).

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you" (Acts 1:8).

The Holy Spirit enables the believer to communicate to others in "power" the truth he himself has been taught. We not only need the Holy Spirit to reveal the truth in the first place; and the Holy Spirit in the second place to interpret to us as individuals the truth He has revealed; but in the third place we also need the Holy Spirit to enable us to effectually communicate to others the truth He Himself has interpreted to us. We need Him all along the line. One great cause of real failure in the ministry, even when there is seeming success, and not only in the ministry but in all forms of service by Christian men and women, is from the attempt to teach by "enticing words of man's wisdom," i.e., by the arts of human logic, rhetoric or eloquence, what the Holy Spirit has taught us. What is needed is Holy Ghost power, "demonstration of the Spirit and of power."

There are three causes of failure of Christian work. First, some other message is taught than the message which the Holy Spirit has revealed in the Word. Men preach science, art, philosophy, sociology, history, experience, etc., etc., and not the simple Word of God as found in the Holy Spirit's Book-- the Bible. Second, the Spirit-taught message, the Bible, is studied and sought to be comprehended by the natural understanding, i.e., without the Spirit's illumination. Third, the Spirit-given message, the Word, the Bible, studied and comprehended under the Holy Spirit's illumination, is given out to others with "enticing words of man's wisdom" and not "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." We need, we are absolutely dependent upon, the Holy Spirit all along the line. He must teach us how to speak as well as what to speak. He must be the power as well as the message.

14. The Holy Spirit has power to teach us how to pray. In Jude 20, R.V., we read,

"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit."

Again in Ephesians, 6:18, R.V.,

"Praying at all seasons in the Spirit."

The Holy Spirit guides the believer in prayer. The disciples did not know how to pray as they ought, so they came to Jesus and said, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1). "We know not how to pray as we ought," but we have another helper right at hand to help us (John 14:16, 17). "The Spirit also helpeth our infirmity" (Romans 8:26 R.V.). He teacheth us to pray. True prayer is prayer "in the Spirit," i.e., the prayer in which the Spirit inspires and directs. When we come into God's presence to pray, we should recognize

our infirmity, our ignorance of what we should pray for or how we should pray, and, in the consciousness of our utter inability to pray aright, look up to the Holy Spirit and cast ourselves utterly upon Him to direct our prayers, to lead out our desires, and guide our utterance of them. Rushing heedlessly into God's presence, and asking the first thing that comes into our minds, or that some thoughtless one asks us to pray for, is not "praying in the Holy Ghost," and is not true prayer. We must wait for the Holy Spirit, and surrender ourselves to the Holy Spirit. The prayer that God and the Holy Spirit inspires is the prayer that God the Father answers. From Romans 8:26, 27, we learn that the longings which the Holy Spirit begets in our hearts are often too deep for utterance; too deep, apparently, for clear and definite comprehension on the part of the believer himself, in whom the Holy Spirit is working. God Himself must "search the heart," to know "what is the mind of the Spirit" in these unuttered and unutterable longings. But God does know "what is the mind of the Spirit." He does know what those Spirit-given longings mean, even if we do not, and these longings are "according to the will of God," and He grants them. So it comes that He is "able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us" (Ephesians 3:20). There are other times when the Spirit's leadings in prayer are so plain that we 'pray with the Spirit and with the understanding also' (I Cor. 14:15).

15. The Holy Spirit has also power to lead out our hearts in acceptable thanksgiving to God. Paul says,

"...Be filled with the Spirit; speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father." Ephesians 5:18-20, R.V.

Not only does the Spirit teach us to pray, He also teaches us to render thanks. One of the most prominent characteristics of the "Spirit-filled life" is thanksgiving. True thanksgiving is "to God, even the Father," "in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ," "in the Holy Spirit."

16. The Holy Spirit has power to inspire in the heart of the believer in Christ worship that is acceptable to God.

"For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God, and glory in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." Phil. 3:3, R.V.

Prayer is not worship, thanksgiving is not worship. Worship is a definite act of the creature in relation to God. Worship is bowing before God in adoring acknowledgment and contemplation of Himself. Someone has said, "In our prayers we are taken up with our needs; in our thanksgiving we are taken up with our blessings; in our worship we are taken up with Himself." There is no true and acceptable worship except that which the Holy Spirit prompts and directs. "Such doth the Father seek to be His worshipers" (John 4:23, R.V.).

The flesh seeks to enter every sphere of life. It has its worship as well as its lust. The worship which the flesh prompts is an abomination to God. Not all earnest and honest worship is worship in the Spirit. A man may be very honest and very earnest in his worship, and still not have submitted himself to the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the matter, and so his worship is in the flesh. Even where there is great loyalty to the letter of the Word, worship may not be "in the Spirit," i.e., inspired and directed by Him. To worship aright we must "have no confidence in the flesh." We must recognize the utter inability of the flesh, i.e., our natural self as contrasted with the divine Spirit who dwells in and should mould everything in the believer, to worship acceptably. We must realize also the danger there is that the flesh, self, intrude itself into our worship. In utter self-distrust and self-abnegation we must cast ourselves upon the Holy Spirit to lead us

aright in our worship. Just as we must renounce any merit in ourselves, and cast ourselves utterly upon Christ and His work for us for justification; just so we must renounce any capacity for good in ourselves, and cast ourselves utterly upon the Holy Spirit, and His work in us, in living, praying, thanking, and worshiping, and all else we are to do.

17. Let us next consider the Holy Spirit's power as a guide. In Acts 13:2-4, we read:

"As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Seperate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus."

The Holy Spirit calls men and sends them forth to definite lines of work. The Holy Spirit not only calls men in a general way into Christian work, but He also selects the specific work and paints it out. "Shall I go to China, to Africa, to India?" many a one is asking, and many another ought to ask. You cannot rightly settle that question for yourselves, neither can any other man settle it rightly for you. Not every Christian man is called to China or Africa or any other foreign field. God alone knows whether He wishes you to go to any of these places. He is willing to show you.

How does the Holy Spirit call? The passage before us does not tell. It is presumably purposely silent on this point, lest, perhaps, we think that He must always call precisely the same way. There is nothing to indicate that He spoke by an audible voice, much less that He made His will known in any of the fantastic ways in which some profess to discern His leadings, e.g., by some twitching of the body, or by opening the Bible at random, and putting the finger on a passage that may be construed into some entirely different meaning than that which the inspired writer intended by it. But the important point is that He made His will clearly known. He is as willing to make His will clearly known to us today. The great need in Christian work today is men and women whom the Holy Spirit calls and sends forth. We have plenty of men and women whom men have called and sent forth; we have far too many who have called themselves. There are many today who object strenuously to being sent forth by men, by any organization of any kind, who are, what is immeasurably worse than that, sent forth by themselves, not by God. How shall we receive the Holy Spirit's call? By desiring it, seeking it, waiting upon the Lord for it, and expecting it. "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted," the record reveals.

Many a man is saying, in self-justification for staying out of the ministry, or for staying home from the foreign field: "I have never had a call." How do you know that? Have you been listening for it? God speaks often in a still small voice. Only the listening ear can catch it. Have you definitely offered yourself to God to send you where He will? While no man ought to go to China or Africa unless he is clearly and definitely called, he ought to definitely offer himself to God for this work, and be ready for a call, and listening sharply that he may hear it when it comes. No educated Christian man or woman has a right to rest easy out of the foreign field until they have definitely offered themselves to God for that work, and it is clear no call from God has come. Indeed, a man needs no more definite call to Africa than to Boston, or New York, or Chicago.

18. We learn something further about the Holy Spirit's power to guide in Acts 8:27-29. First, we have the story of Philip:

"And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to

worship, Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet. Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot."

Second, the second word is about Paul and his missionary party:

"And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden of the Holy Spirit to speak the Word in Asia; and when they were come over against Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia; and the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not." --Acts 16:6, 7, R.V.

The Holy Spirit guides in the details of daily life and service as to where to go and where not to go, what to do and what not to do. It is possible for us to have the unerring guidance of the Holy Spirit at every turn in our lives. For example, in personal work it is manifestly not God's intention that we speak to everyone we meet. There are some to whom we ought not to speak. Time spent on them would be time taken from work which would be more to the glory of God. Doubtless Philip met many as he journeyed toward Gaza, before he met the one of whom the Spirit said: "God near and join thyself to this chariot." In the same way is He ready to guide us in all the affairs of life: business, study, social life--everything. We can have God's wisdom, if we will, at every turn of life. There is no promise more plain and explicit than James 1:5: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." How shall we gain this wisdom? James 1:5-7 answers. Here are really five steps.

First: That we lack wisdom. We must be conscious of and fully admit our own inability to decide wisely. Not only the sinfulness but the wisdom of the flesh must be renounced.

Second: We must really desire to know God's way, and be willing to do God's will. This is implied in the asking, if the asking be sincere. This is a point of fundamental importance. Here we find the reason why men oft times do not know God's will, and have not the Spirit's guidance. They are not really willing to do whatever the Spirit leads. It is the "meek" whom He guides in judgment, and the meek to whom "He will teach His way" (Psalm 25:9). It is he who "willeth to do His will" who "shall know" (John 7:17, R.V.).

Third: We must ask, definitely ask guidance.

Forth: We must confidently expect guidance. "Let him ask in faith, nothing doubting" (vss. 6 and 7, R.V.).

Fifth: We must follow step by step as the guidance comes. Just how it will come no one can tell. But it will come. It may come with only a step made clear at a time. That is all that we need to know--the next step. Many are in darkness because they do not know what God will have them to do next week, or next month, or next year. Do you know the next step? That is enough. Take it, and then He will show you the next. (See Numbers 9:17-23). God's guidance is clear guidance (I John 1:5). Many are tortured by leadings which they fear may be from God, but which they are not sure about. You have a right, as God's child, to be sure. Go to God and say: "Here I am, heavenly Father; I am willing to do Thy will, but make it clear. If this is Thy will, I will do it; but make it clear if it is." He will do it, if it is His will and you are willing to do it. You need not and ought not to do that thing until He does make it clear. We have no right to dictate to God how He shall give His guidance, as, e.g. by "shutting up every other way," or by a sign, or by letting us put a finger on a text. It is ours to seek and expect wisdom, but it is not ours to dictate how it shall be given (I Cor. 12:11).

19. In one more direction has the Holy Spirit power. Read Acts 4:31; 13:9, 10,

"And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spoke the Word of God with boldness."

The Holy Spirit has power to give us boldness in testimony for Christ. Many are naturally timid. They long to do something for Christ, but they are afraid. The Holy Spirit can make you bold if you will look to Him and trust Him to do it. It was He who turned the craven Peter into the one who fearlessly faced the Sanhedrin and rebuked their sin. (See Acts 4:8-12.)

Two things are manifest from what has been said about the power of the Holy Spirit in the believer: First, how utterly dependent we are upon the Holy Spirit at every turn of Christian life and service. Second, how perfect is the provision for life and service that God has made, and what the fullness of privilege that is open to the humblest believer, through the Holy Spirit's work. It is not so much what we are by nature either intellectually, morally, spiritually, or even physically that is important; but what the Holy Spirit can do for us, and what we will let Him do. The Holy Spirit often takes the one who gives the least natural promise and uses him far more than those who give the greatest natural promise. Christian life is not to be lived in the realm of natural temperament, and Christian work is not to be done in the power of natural endowment but Christian life is to be lived in the realm of the Spirit, and Christian work is to be done in the power of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Spirit is eagerly desirous to do for each of us His whole work. He will do for each of us all we will let Him do

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