

The Heavenly Guest, The Holy Spirit

"Be filled with the Spirit"

(Ephes. 5:18)



NEW YORK
LOIZEAUX BROTHERS, BIBLE TRUTH DEPOT
1 East 13th Street

Price, Six Cts.

THE HEAVENLY GUEST,

THE HOLY SPIRIT.

‘A GODLY friend has been residing with me for a short time,” said a Christian, “and I assure you that he shed a holy influence over the whole house.”

This put me in mind of that divine person, the Holy Spirit, who dwells in the Christian. The Christian is a house, thought I, and the Holy Spirit is the divine Guest in that house.

What a thought, that God should dwell with man; yea, not only *with* man, but *in* man! And what a solemn consideration it is as to how I am treating that heavenly Guest!

I may have a visitor in my house, and he may keep to one room and I have no intercourse with him; yea, I may at times forget that he is there; or I may be in daily company and intercourse with that visitor, consult him on every subject, and be guided by his wisdom. What a difference!

So it may be with the Christian. He may be comparatively little influenced by the residence of that divine person; yea, he may forget that He dwells in him; or he may be daily, hourly, momentarily under His guidance and direction. Precious, solemn thought!

But let us look at this important subject step by step. Is it certain that the Holy Spirit is a divine

person, and that He dwells *in* us? or is it rather a divine *influence* exercised *upon* us?

Our Lord said, "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 show you things to come" (John 16: 13). Surely then this is a person; for He hears, and speaks, and guides. We might be guided by an influence; but an influence cannot hear, and it cannot speak: none but a *person* can do these things. Other passages are equally conclusive.

Then as to His dwelling in the Christian, Christ said, "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" (John 14: 16, 17).

Here it is "*shall be* in you," because the Holy Spirit was not then given, because the Lord Jesus was not yet glorified (John 7: 39); but at the ascension our Lord *was* glorified, and then on the day of Pentecost He sent down the Holy Spirit as a person. And He now dwells in the Christian: "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is *in* you?" (1 Cor. 6: 19).

The above passage in John 7: 39 is very important, because it shows that the Holy Spirit was about to be given in a way that up to that time He never had been given. He surely was at all times the source of the new life in those converted, and He surely influenced in various ways those quickened

but all this He could do, and did, without dwelling in them as a person. Our Lord is very explicit, that the Holy Spirit could not come in this new manner until He Himself went away (John 16: 7); and in chapter 7: 39 it is expressly said that "the Holy Ghost was not yet given:" though, of course, He was at that very time influencing many in various ways, as He always had done.

This, too, explains the difference between expressions in the Old Testament which we do not find in the New, and which, we may be bold to say, do not now apply to the Christian: such as psalm 51: 11, "Take not thy Holy Spirit from me;" because He is now *dwelling* in the believer, and because we have the plain promise that He shall "abide with you for ever" (John 14: 16).

This brings us back to the point we started with: The Christian is a house, or temple, in which the Holy Spirit, a divine person, surely dwells. Solemn thought! Do I really credit it? How am I treating that heavenly Guest? Am I submitting to His holy actings and seeking in all things to be guided by Him?

If some great person were to come and reside with any of us for a few days, how careful we should be that nothing should meet his eye or reach his ear that would in any way offend the most refined feeling! How *much more* careful we should be that nothing in our spirits, minds, affections, thoughts—to say nothing of our outward walk—should in any way grieve this holy and heavenly Guest within us!

And how sensitive must *He* be! how conscious of the least stain of sin! As one brought up in clean-

liness and refinement is pained and troubled by that which another, who is used to slovenly ways, heeds not, so our divine Guest must be grieved with the least thing that is inconsistent with purity.

And so we are exhorted: "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. 4: 30). How important then to know how we ought to behave ourselves in relation to this Holy One; to learn in what character, and for what purpose, He thus dwells in the Christian.

And this not as a mere doctrine. All Christians, I suppose, hold to the personality of the Holy Spirit, His Godhead, His descent at Pentecost, etc.; but surely all are not realizing the fact that a divine person is in each: as verily a person, and as surely dwelling in each, as ever we had a human visitor in any one of our houses.

But an inquirer may ask, Can a person, a being, dwell in a person? Yes, undoubtedly, when one is a spirit. When our Lord was on earth, some persons were possessed, or indwelt, by evil spirits, and these evil spirits *knew* the Lord Jesus, and *spoke* to Him, and they were cast out of their dwelling-places; and they asked permission in one case to go one way instead of being sent another (Mark 5: 12). These were beings surely, to know, to speak, and to be turned out of their houses; and they dwelt in men. So the Holy Spirit can, and does, as a person, dwell in the believer.

If we realized this, should we think as we do? speak as we do? act as we do? No; like the disciples, when walking together they could dispute who should be the greatest, but when in His presence

they were ashamed to name it (Mark 9: 33, 34); so, there are many things we engage in which we would not, surely, if we remembered this divine Guest.

But not only this. When Christ was on earth, the disciples carried to Him their questions, their troubles, and their desires, and He corrected their mistakes, and comforted their hearts. *Now* there is *another* Comforter here, with us, in us. Do we as readily expect His guidance, His teaching, and His comfort? Alas! no; for we have not fully realized that all this is true and available to us.

But it is important to know that, whether we realize it or not, it is a fact. The Holy Spirit *is* here as a person, with us, in us. But as what?—as Comforter, Counselor, Advocate, “PARACLETE.”* All this for us! How are we availing ourselves of this high privilege? Had we a difficult matter in hand, and could consult an eminent counselor, how readily we should leave it all in his hands, to carry it through for us. But we have more; we have a *divine* Counselor, ever present to help and guide.

Are we troubled about our salvation, and need assurance? It is “the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God” (Rom. 8: 16). In some it may be by means of a passage of Scripture that they are led to trust in the work of Christ in redemption, and are taught to credit that he that believeth hath everlasting life, and thus obtain peace and assurance; and this is surely of the Holy Spirit. But others cannot tell

* Literally, “one called to stand beside another.”

when they were converted, or point to any particular passage of Scripture as the means used of God; yet they are assured of salvation; they have the witness in themselves: the Spirit beareth witness with their spirit that they are children of God.

Is it prayer? We know not what to ask for but as the Holy Spirit shall teach us ("praying in the Holy Ghost," Jude 20): and He works in our hearts, making intercession for us with groanings which we cannot express (Rom. 8: 26).

Is it worship? We can render acceptable worship only by the guidance of the Holy Spirit. "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth" (John 4: 24). "We are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit:" or, as the editors read it, "worship by God's Spirit" (Phil. 3: 3). What a privilege! And yet, how it tells me that much I have taken for worship in myself was only bodily presence and formality. May God lead us to more true worship in the Holy Spirit!

Is it divine knowledge we want? It is only by the teaching of the Holy Spirit that we can obtain it, through the word of God. A natural man may be familiar with the words of Scripture and have a system of divinity; but he can have no *divine* knowledge: for "what man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man which is in him?" An animal cannot know what is passing through a man's mind, because he has not the man's spirit; "even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the spirit of God. Now we have received . . . the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God" (1 Cor. 2: 11, 12). So,

then, in being born of God (and this, too, is of the Holy Spirit, John 3: 5), we have a nature to which the Holy Spirit can communicate and give His guidance, and through which He can act. We have, each in his own measure, the capacity to understand divine truth.

And so we might go through all that pertains to the life and walk of a true Christian, and we should see that it is all by the indwelling and operations of this heavenly Guest. "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (Gal. 5: 25).

But we turn now to discover how and by what He is hindered in His operations in us.

Many Christians suppose that at conversion the old nature is changed into the new; or that, at least, the change has commenced; and they expect that it will gradually continue until there is no more of the old left, and then they will be fit for heaven. But alas, after many years they learn, by bitter experience, that the old nature is still there, and ready to act as ever. Now, the truth is, the old nature is not changed at all; but a new life and nature is imparted by the Spirit to the believer. It is called in John 3: 3 and 1 Peter 2: 2, *a new birth*; in 2 Corinthians 5: 17, and Galatians 6: 15, *a new creation*. But the old nature is still there also, and hence the hindrance and conflict. My flesh lusteth, or desireth, things contrary to the Spirit; and the Spirit has desires contrary to the flesh: "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh" (Gal. 5: 17).

A Christian, then, has in him both the old and the

new nature, and the great practical question is, How is he to regard and act towards them? Scripture answers that question. It declares that the Christian has died and is risen with Christ (Eph. 2: 5); that in God's sight he is no longer in the flesh (Rom. 8: 9). Thus, we are exhorted to *reckon* ourselves dead to sin, and alive to God (Rom. 6: 11); to put to death our "members which are upon the earth" (Col. 3: 5)—that is, to fully own that we have died with Christ, and no longer to feed the appetites of the old nature—to "make no provision for the flesh" (Rom. 13: 14), but keep it under—keep it in the grave, where God has put it—not allow it to have a voice. This, of course, can only be done by the power of the Holy Spirit; and this is one of the purposes for which He has been given us, namely that we should not do the things which our old nature would prompt us to do (Gal. 5: 17).*

The *body* should, of course, be distinguished from the flesh. The body of the Christian is for the Lord (1 Cor. 6: 13); a member of Christ (ver. 15); which we are exhorted to present "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, our reasonable service" (Rom. 12: 1); and which shall be quickened from the dead by His Spirit that dwelleth in us (Rom. 8: 11). But such things are never said of the flesh—the corrupt will and nature of fallen man: *this* is wholly condemned. "They that are Christ's have *crucified* the flesh, with the affections and lusts." So that the one born again can no longer live consistently in the indulgence of the flesh.

* It is generally admitted that this verse should be rendered, "That ye should not do those things which ye desire."

And this not merely as regards gross evil. In everything we should be guided by the Holy Spirit, and not by our flesh. We are apt to limit the term "flesh" to outward manifest evil; but as a natural man may be very moral and upright, amiable and charitable, so a Christian may be all this and yet not be led of the Spirit: for there is amiable and lovable flesh. See the case in Mark 10: 17-22.

And it is important to notice that while some passages of Scripture speak of the Holy Spirit as distinct from my spirit (such as "the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit," Rom. 8: 16), in other places the actings of the spiritual or "new man" cannot be separated from the acting of the Holy Spirit in me and by me: such as "praying in the Spirit;" "worship by God's Spirit;" "walk in the Spirit," etc. And this word *walk* would embrace all my outward ways; so that whatever I do contrary to the leading of the Holy Spirit *must* be of the flesh; for the "new man" will always and only be led of the Holy Spirit.

And not our outward ways only: there is such a thing as "bringing into captivity every *thought* to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10: 5). And knowing, as we surely do, the many vanities our thoughts are prone to fall into, what a mighty power must that be that can bring our very thoughts into the obedience of Christ! But the Holy Spirit is God, and you cannot limit His power. O fellow-Christian, let us be more subject, that we be more guided by Him!

But it may be objected that "if all this is so, then what the Christian says and does must be inspired; whereas we constantly find him making all sorts of

mistakes, even in doing that which is right to be done."

It is quite true that we find Christians making sad mistakes; but the explanation of this is, that in these mistakes they are *not* led of the Spirit, but *are* led of the flesh; though the two things may be closely associated: thus, I may begin to pray in the Spirit, but afterwards proceed in the flesh. I may not be conscious of this myself,—though I ought to be,—while it may be manifest to others. But even as led of the Spirit, Scripture does not say that we are inspired. We read that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God;" or, is God-inspired (2 Tim. 3: 16). This was God using holy men as instruments to write what He wished to convey to man; and while He *used* the minds of those men, yet it was *God's* message; and He could and did have His message conveyed precisely as He wished it, and thus gave us the Scriptures for the revelation of Himself, of His ways, and the guidance of His people at all times. Now, we are to be *guided by that Word and the Holy Spirit*. Thus, all are exhorted to "walk in the Spirit;" but it is *we* who are to walk, and we are men; and if we fail to submit to the Spirit, our walk is unsteady. Or, where there is gift for ministry, "if any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God: if any man minister let him do it as of the ability which God giveth" (1 Peter 4: 11). "If any man speak," "if any man minister," it ought to be, not as something from himself, but as the oracles of God (a very solemn word this); but in speaking or ministering we are always liable to make mistakes.

Thus, we are told *how* to speak and to minister. Gifts are given by the Lord (Eph. 4: 8-13), and Timothy is thus exhorted: "Neglect not the gift that is in thee . . . Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all" (1 Tim. 4: 14, 15). But in revelation it was *God* speaking, and was altogether distinct from man's being gifted, or stirring up his gift. He could use Paul, and his mind and circumstances; or He could use Balaam, even in opposition to himself and his wishes. Therefore, though the Christian is indwelt by the Holy Spirit,—and this is true of all, whether specially gifted or not,—yet it is the *man* who acts; and the "earthen vessel is always liable to err, and mar the testimony;—this is totally different from "inspiration."

Since the canon of Scripture was completed the Holy Spirit undoubtedly has given to one here, and another there, understanding for the *true* interpretation of portions of that Word, and given ability to put it forth to others. But they were *men*, and in putting it forth they may have more or less failed: it can never be appealed to as a test of truth, as the Scripture is.

But further: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness (or kindness), goodness, faith, meekness, temperance (or self-control)" (Gal. 5: 22, 23). Now, how is it that so many of God's dear children lack these fruits? Doubtless the great hindrance is that they have not dealt with the flesh as an enemy, but, like the Israelites in the land of Canaan, they have let the

old inhabitants live; and more than that, we often hear Christians making excuses for this. "I am naturally of a bad temper," says one; "I cannot altogether forget my station in life," says another; and so on. Well, the secret is, that if the flesh is not kept under foot, it will produce abundance of fruit; and this smothers and hinders the fruit of the Holy Spirit coming to perfection. Oh, that I might remember that the great hindrance is always in myself!

Then, as to joy and peace: doubtless many have been converted under a defective gospel, or have been brought up amid the mingling of law and gospel; and this has produced its fruits. Much must be unlearned, or set right, before the Holy Spirit can produce *His* fruit of "joy" and "peace." Some may have been led to search the Scriptures with no other instructor than the Holy Spirit, and they have believed the glorious gospel, and what God says about the eternal security of those who believe in Christ, and they have joy and peace: while many others may have heard a measure of truth from childhood, have believed it, know something of Scripture, but they have little or no settled joy and peace. Alas, how man spoils what he touches! Well, joy and peace are fruits of the Holy Spirit; and He will produce them in all who are born of God if they will but read the Scriptures and let Him be their teacher. "The kingdom of God is . . . RIGHTEOUSNESS, and PEACE, and JOY in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 14: 17).

But another objection presents itself. It has been said that the statement that all Christians are now

indwelt by the Holy Spirit is inconsistent with the cases recorded in the Acts of the Apostles: that there we find Christians who had not received the Holy Spirit; and they received Him only by the laying on of hands. While some have thought that the giving of the Holy Spirit, spoken of in the Gospel by John, was restricted to the times of the apostles.

Let us look at these cases in the Acts; and in doing so, let us keep in mind one of the great principles touching the giving of the Holy Spirit: we find it recorded in 1 Cor. 12: 13: "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." Mark those words—"baptized into one body:" therefore, though individually indwelt, we do not remain simply individual isolated Christians, but by the baptism of the Holy Spirit we are formed into "one body." So that each stands in a twofold position: he is an individual saint, indwelt by the Holy Spirit; and he is formed by the Spirit into a member of the one body.

In the case of the Samaritans (Acts 8: 15), it was divinely ordered that they should not receive the Holy Spirit independently of the apostles at Jerusalem. Thus a rupture in the Church in those very early days was prevented—the rivalry of Samaria with Jerusalem done away: see John 4: 19-24. The Holy Spirit was given with the laying on of the apostles' hands; and thus the baptism of the Holy Spirit was manifestly into the body.

Then the case of Paul (Acts 9: 17). As he was the instrument used of God to bring out the revelation of the Church, hid hitherto (Rom. 16: 25, 26),

it was important that he should be in a position to enforce his teaching with authority direct from God. (See Gal. 1.) Still, he too must be baptized into the "one body," and we find that he also received the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands, but *not the hands of an apostle*.

But in the case of the Gentiles (Acts 10: 44) it is different. The Jewish nation, as they had refused Christ, had also refused the testimony of the Holy Spirit (Acts 7: 51), and the days were come when some from all nations were to be gathered to the Lord. And here it is remarkable that the Holy Spirit is given, *not* by the laying on of hands, but *while Peter is speaking*. It may be that Cornelius and his household were divinely quickened individuals before this, but they were not acquainted with the power or value of Christ and His death for them; but on Peter's preaching they believed and at once received the Holy Spirit: thus marking out, as it would seem, the normal way in which God intended to deal with Gentiles. The apostle therefore asks the Gentiles of Galatia if they did not receive the Holy Spirit by the *hearing of faith* (Gal. 3: 2). Still, here too there is a visible link that the baptism was into the "one body," for Peter had a special revelation to go to these Gentiles. He also made known their case to the assembly at Jerusalem, and the apostles and brethren glorified God.

The case of John's disciples (Acts 19: 2-6) is still different. They were only acquainted with what John the Baptist had preached, and knew not even that the Spirit had come upon the disciples at Pentecost. The apostle makes known to them the truth

as to Jesus Christ, and they also are baptized into the one body: Paul lays his hands on them, and they receive the Holy Spirit.

These, then, are the cases recorded in the Acts after the day of Pentecost; and it is important to see that in each there is a connecting link with the then existing Church; the baptism of the Holy Spirit was *manifestly* into the "one body." But it should be remembered that during the Acts of the Apostles it was a peculiar *transition time*, which can never occur again. The Church had its beginning at Pentecost, but its standing and peculiar blessings were by many only gradually understood and enjoyed. There were the apostles at Jerusalem, with more or less of the Jewish rites and ceremonies, on the one hand; and the Gentiles being brought in on the other; still "one body"—one Church. The former phase was speedily but gradually to fade away—God gently leading believers out of Judaism, until all were absorbed in the light of full Church standing, in which there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free; but Christ is all and in all. *Now* we fall back upon the original announcement that "they that believe" shall receive the Holy Spirit (John 7: 37-39). And all through the Epistles it is spoken of as a recognized common blessing. "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit?" (1 Cor. 6: 19). "Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us" (1 John 3: 24). "After that ye believed [or, having believed] ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. 1: 13). See also Rom. 8: 9; Gal. 4: 6; Eph. 2: 18; Phil. 3: 3.

All these passages fully answer the objection that

the indwelling of the Holy Spirit was restricted to the time of the apostles. It was true of the Christians in all the assemblies, as these passages prove.

But let us never forget that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is into the one body, "and we have all been made to drink into one Spirit." We now see Christians divided into hundreds of parties; but this is man's doing and not God's. He forms into the one body; and we are exhorted to "endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit" (Eph. 4: 3). There are, alas, many other bonds of unity, but this is God's. "We have all been made to drink into one Spirit." Solemn thought! when man is seeking "his own" pleasure or supposed profit, rather than the glory of God in the manifestation of the one body which He has formed. There is one body—one Spirit. Then I cannot really be an isolated Christian. I *am* one with Christ as my head, and I *am* one with each of the members of His body; the poor as well as the rich; the ignorant as well as the learned; the rough as well as the polished. I may disown them; try to pass them by; shun them: shame on me if I do, unless they are associated with evil. But the fact remains; We *are* all baptized into the one body—we *have* all drank into one Spirit. These facts we cannot alter if we would.

Some have found difficulty in the unity for which our Lord prayed: "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; *that the world may believe that thou hast sent me*" (John 17: 21). They seek refuge in the unity of the "invisible" Church—in the relationship which grace has formed between all

the children of God. But the Lord prays for a *manifested* unity, "that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." The Father was in Him and He in the Father, and this manifested in Him a character which made all the world responsible to believe in Him. Thus are we also one in them, and wherever therefore there is a true Christian, this being one in the Father and in the Son will produce a character in him which will be the constant and manifest witness of Christ, and of Christ having been sent of God. None can gainsay the Christian *character*. In all nations, and among all classes of men it is one and the same.

That unity begets communion. John wrote his first epistle to the saints generally, declaring what he had seen and heard: "that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus 'Christ'" (1 John 1: 3); and, "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another" (chap. 1: 7). Christians talk of hidden oneness, which is true so far, but *fellowship* surely cannot be hidden and mystical; and we ought to have fellowship one with another. And Scripture declares that if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we shall have fellowship one with another.

It will not be a party-fellowship, for the Spirit does not form the children of God into parties. He forms *all* Christians into one body, and only one, and the true fellowship of the Spirit must therefore be on that principle possessing our souls, as well as in obedience to all that God has revealed to us by His Spirit.

But an important question will suggest itself to some who may have hitherto but little considered this subject: namely, "How is the guidance of the Holy Spirit to be obtained? Through the Lord's mercy I am a Christian. You say I am indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and you exhort me to be guided by that divine Person: but how is that guidance to be obtained? Am I to pray to the Holy Spirit to guide and control me—or what?"

The Christian is never told to pray to the Holy Spirit for guidance, nor is there any instance in the New Testament of such a prayer; any more than I am exhorted to pray to God to love the world, or to Christ to love His Church. Remember that the Holy Spirit has come *for the express purpose* of comforting and guiding the Christian; and the many exhortations we have clearly prove that what is needed on our part is *submission to His guidance*.

Of course the Holy Spirit is God; but we have no instance in the New Testament of prayer being addressed *to* the Holy Spirit as a distinct person. It is *by* Him that we rightly pray to God (and in this sense we do pray to the Holy Spirit), and to the Father, and to the Son. Thus the prayers mentioned in the Epistles are addressed to God, or the Father, or the Lord Jesus, to do something for us *by* the Holy Spirit. See for instance, Rom. 15: 13; Eph. 1: 17; 3: 16. Neither is it intelligent to pray for the Holy Spirit to *come*. He came at Pentecost, and He abides with us.

Still, prayer must be our constant occupation: "Pray without ceasing," is the exhortation; and no advance in the Christian life will ever bring us be-

yond this state of absolute dependence on God. Our blessed Lord spent an entire night in prayer (Luke 6: 12). How seldom do we thus devote a full hour! And yet if it was seasonable for that Holy One, how much more should it be prized by us! Let our first lesson then be DEPENDENCE going out in prayer.

The next thing is self-abnegation. Our Lord said, "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John 6: 38). So we must be content to have no will of our own, if we desire to give ourselves up to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The very first step we may be called to take may be to give up something which we fondly cherish; or to do something we naturally dislike and shrink from. Still let us remember that we cannot be led at the same time by the flesh and by the Spirit: we must make our choice. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Gal. 6: 7, 8). If we desire to please the flesh, then so far we renounce the leadings of the Holy Spirit. If we desire to be led of the Spirit, then the flesh must not be listened to. Like Paul at his conversion, when sent to preach the gospel to the heathen, he says, "Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood" (Gal. 1: 16), which might naturally have led him to prefer a ministry among his brethren, the Jews. So it must be with us; of what use for me to ask God to guide me by His Spirit, unless I am willing to follow that guidance, be it what it may? The Christian ought to have no

other will or desire than that which God would have towards him. Oh for more self-abnegation! Our blessed Lord came to do the will of His Father. Surely then we also should seek to do His will, and have no will of our own. May we be able truthfully to say,

“I bow me to Thy will, O God!
And all Thy ways adore,
And every day I live, I'd seek
To please *Thee* more and more.”

The next lesson is *obedience*. Our Lord said, “If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God” (John 7: 17). Most Christians would like to know the doctrines of the word of God; but to do His will is the only way. It is an important lesson to learn, that I have not simply to acquire truth, but I am also to *do* the truth (1 John 1: 6)—practice it. God gives me a little light, and says, Do this, or, Leave off that: here is Scripture for it. But I hesitate. It may call for a great sacrifice; or perhaps I want to know what else I may be required to do after that, and see all its consequences at once. But no: beyond the first step God may hide the path He has for me. Why? Because I must *do His will*, step by step, if I wish to be led. God's way is line upon line and precept upon precept; but we must not expect the second line or the second precept till we have learnt the first and have *obeyed* it. Then, but not till then, shall we be ready for the second. Much failure is with us all, surely, but if our aim and desire be to do His will, God will help and lead us on. And this does not produce uncertainty or distress in

souls, but the very contrary: confiding in Him, we simply go on. The uncertainty is with those who have more or less light and are not willing to follow it. The word is plain and positive that he that "will *do* his will shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God."

Again, "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be *full of light*" (Matt. 6: 22). Ah, here is the secret of our shortcomings, our dulness, our want of progress. Often and often our eye is not single; often and often we are not willing to do His will instead of our own. But we must not be deceived as to the result. The Word is very plain as to this. If we do God's will, then, though "*the world passeth away and the lust thereof; he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever*" (1 John 2: 17). If we do it not, "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is SIN" (James 4: 17). Solemn word this for God's saints!

But the obedient Christian is led on, and he is exhorted to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3: 18). And this, too, is of the Holy Spirit; for Christ said, "He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." "He will guide you into *all* truth." This, of course, is to be found in the WORD OF GOD; and hence we see the great importance of a careful and prayerful study of the holy Scriptures.

The word of God is now complete, and we must not expect the Holy Spirit to teach us anything not therein revealed. It was said, "He will show you things to come" (John 16: 13); but this was said before the New Testament was complete—before

the Epistles or the Revelation were written.* *Now* all is one complete whole: and if we should even see an angel descend from heaven, and he should preach to us any other gospel, he is accursed (Gal. 1: 8), and we, of course, must not regard it. We are told to try the spirits (1 John 4: 1), for many false and heretical men and teachings are gone forth into the world, denying the truth in various ways, and the only test of our faith, is *the word of God*.

The importance of this too is intensified as we approach the last days: for "the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils" (1 Tim. 4: 1); and what can keep the soul amid this but the word of God by the teaching of the Holy Spirit? I say "by the teaching of the Holy Spirit"—not because God may not use human teachers (for there are such: Eph. 4: 11) as a means to convey truth to us; but it must be by the divine power of the Holy Spirit to be really profitable to us. "They shall be all taught of God."

The Holy Spirit will never teach you one thing as the interpretation of a passage of Scripture, and me another. Of course we may, by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, *apply* Scripture in various ways—in preaching the gospel, etc.; but there is no conflicting *interpretation* of Scripture. As, when I write a letter, I have a definite meaning in the words I use, so God sent a definite message to man in what He

* The Holy Spirit now shows us things to come by giving us intelligence as to the still future events which are foretold in the Word.

wrote; and it is for us to discover what that message is. This we do by the teaching of the Holy Spirit—the same Spirit, mark, that guided the men to write what He wished. He knows exactly what message He intended to convey by what He caused them to write, and He alone can teach us what that is: but it is important to see that He certainly would not tell you it was one thing, and tell me it was something different.

Thus we are exhorted to think the same thoughts, and to speak the same thing (1 Cor. 1: 10; Phil. 1: 27). Whenever, then, I have an interpretation to a passage which other Christians (whom I know to be well taught in the Word) think to be wrong, I ought to weigh well my own judgment as before God. It is the same Spirit in them as in me, and there *must* be something of my own thoughts in my interpretation, or something of their own thoughts in their interpretation, or we should not differ. How careful, then, I ought to be, lest I should be wrong! How I ought to search the Word and compare and contrast the various parts! How I ought to seek to have no wish or will or opinion of *my own*, but be willing to be taught God's meaning only, though it might tear to shreds some fabric I had studiously woven! How I ought to pray for more light, and that *I and my fellow-Christians may see eye to eye!* But, having waited, and prayed, and searched, I must hold to what I believe God has taught me: still with humility, if others well-taught differ from me. May God grant that we, one and all, may be better instructed in His holy Word! “The Spirit is truth” (1 John 5: 6).

There is another thing too that highly sets forth the value of the word of God, namely, that it is by the Scriptures that we overcome the enemy, and this also is by the power of the Holy Spirit. We are exhorted to "take the helmet of salvation, and the SWORD OF THE SPIRIT, WHICH IS THE WORD OF GOD" (Eph. 6: 17). It was with this weapon that our Lord met Satan in the temptation: "It is written," He again and again repeated—quoting from the Scriptures. In all our conflicts it must be the same weapon: "The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

Thus may the Holy Scriptures be more and more precious in our eyes; and may we each seek to be a clean tablet on which the Holy Spirit may write His truth! each an "epistle of Christ . . . written, not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God" (2 Cor. 3: 3).

But the guidance of the Holy Spirit as it bears on our daily life is of great importance. It is a serious question as to whether I ought to expect the guidance of the Holy Spirit in all my ways; for I may not be looking for and expecting that which I ought constantly to possess. It is to be feared that the guidance of God is held in a loose way by most Christians. They *do* expect that He will guide them in a general sort of way; but they do not expect or seek His daily guidance in the various matters of life. A few passages of Scripture will help us here. God says, "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye. Be ye not as the horse or as the mule, which have no understanding, whose

mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee" (Ps. 32: 8, 9). "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord; and he delighteth in his way" (Ps. 37: 23). "The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord" (Prov. 16: 1). "Man's goings are of the Lord; how can a man then understand his own way?" (Prov. 20: 24). "In *all* thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Prov. 3: 6). These passages are from the Old Testament; and if in those days—when the Holy Spirit was not given as He now is—it was a proper thing for a man to be guided by God in *all* his ways, how much more is it now! And that it descends to our daily life a few passages will prove.

"Go to now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain. . . . Ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that" (James 4: 13-15). Here we see quite clearly that in our usual avocations we should seek guidance from God. And the reader will remember the exhortations to masters and servants, parents and children, rich and poor, as well as the details entered into, such as wages, the dress, the hair, etc., that nothing is below the attention of God: indeed, we are exhorted, "Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10: 31); and for this end we have the word of God and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, "Walk in the Spirit."

But how far are we conscious of this guidance? Do we really expect it in answer to prayer? And

do we consider seriously what in our path looks like a thwarting of circumstances? *For a Christian to be thwarted*, it means being held in with bit and bridle, as described in psalm 32. Though it is a blessed thing being held back from doing mischief, yet it is not being *led* by God—it is the very reverse of it. God would not let me be thwarted except it be to teach me some lesson I am not otherwise learning. The great thing is to recognize that God has *a voice* in all such thwartings, and I ought not to pass it by, but I ought to seek to learn why it is.

A glance at our Lord when down here will show what it is to be led of God. For instance: He went and sat by a well, intending to speak to a woman who would come to draw water, to whom He had a message of grace. He was not disappointed: the woman came. At another time He sent a disciple to the sea to catch a fish in whose mouth there should be a piece of money. He went, the fish was caught, and there was the money in its mouth! And so of other instances. He was never thwarted by God.

But you will say, Of course it was so, because He was God as well as man. Well; and we are speaking of the guidance of *God* for ourselves. What a privilege to be guided of God—to know that God is interested in every step I take—to know that there is One within me to suggest at all times the right step—the PARACLETE!

But we must hasten to sum up our subject in few words. It is important to see that the giving and operations of the Holy Spirit have various aspects. A few only can be named.

I. As to my *standing*, or relationship, with God.

Romans 8: 9 will explain this: "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." Mark the expression, "not in the flesh." It does not say that the flesh is not in us: we have already seen that at conversion our old nature is not changed into new: the flesh is still there: but our standing, or relationship, is altogether altered. Instead of God looking upon us as natural men and women,—children of the first Adam,—He now looks upon us as sons of God—in *Christ*. He views us in our spiritual existence, and the Spirit of God dwells in us. "Ye are not in the flesh." "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit" (1 Cor. 6: 17). "Ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. 1: 13. See, also, Eph. 4: 30; 2 Cor. 1: 22). God has set His seal on you, and He will never reverse it.

II. As to my *enjoyment* of this relationship.

Various passages will explain this: "The mind of the flesh is death; but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace"* (Rom. 8: 6). "Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty" (2 Cor. 3: 17). "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. 4: 6). These passages clearly prove that we ought to be in perfect peace as to conscience, and have the affection and be enjoying the happy liberty of sons. "We have peace with *God*" (Rom. 5: 1); "We also joy in *God*" (Rom. 5: 11); "I ascend to my Father and *your* Father, my God and *your* God."

* It is generally acknowledged that this is the right translation of this verse.

III. As to my *growth*.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the one great object before the Christian, and our growth should be in knowledge of and likeness to Him. Well, this too is of the Holy Spirit. Christ said, "He shall glorify *me*; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you" (John 16: 14). Thus Christ is the object before the soul; and the Holy Spirit is the power by which we grow in Him. Not a word in this tract is intended in any way to draw the eye off Christ. It is the Holy Spirit's special work to glorify Him; and the more I am led of the Spirit, the more I shall be occupied with Christ. CHRIST IS THE OBJECT: THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE POWER.

IV. As to my *inheritance*.

God has given us "the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts" (2 Cor. 1: 22). And this Spirit is "the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory" (Eph. 1: 14). "The Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you" (1 Peter 4: 14). It may be toil and trouble here; but look onward: the earnest is *in our hearts*; and the Spirit of glory resteth on us—we cannot desire to tarry here.

V. As to my *walk*.

"If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (Gal. 5: 25). We are sanctified by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 15: 16; 2 Thess. 2: 13; 1 Peter. 1: 2). The fruits of the Spirit are detailed in Galatians v.; and we are exhorted to "walk as children of light (for the fruit of the light* is in all goodness, and

* The Editors read "fruit of the light" here, instead of "fruit of the Spirit."

righteousness, and truth), proving what is acceptable unto the Lord" (Eph. 5: 8-10). What a motto for our walk: "In all goodness, and righteousness, and truth"! May we from this day forward bear more fruit to the well-pleasing of our Lord!

VI. As to my *service*.

"There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit." "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." The "Spirit divideth to every man severally as he will" (1 Cor. 12). Any gift I have is not to profit myself merely, but for the body of Christ generally. And we are exhorted to stir up the gift that is in us; for God hath given us the spirit of power, and of love, and of a wise discretion (2 Tim. 1: 6, 7). Thus equipped, we should go forth to any little service our Lord may call us to, truly thankful that He hath put such honor upon us. A cup of cold water is not forgotten by Him.

VII. As to my *relationship towards others*.

"By one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, . . . and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12: 13). "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4: 3). We *are* one body—indwelt by one Spirit. Use diligence, then, to keep and manifest this heaven-born unity. No unity will satisfy God but the unity of *the Spirit*; and this always in view of the whole body; for it is the Spirit that forms us into one body. Our love to the saints, too, must be "love in the Spirit" (Col. 1: 8; Rom. 15: 30).

In conclusion, let us once more turn to the Gospel

of John: "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4: 14). "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" (John 7: 38, 39). A well within, springing up for myself; rivers flowing out to others. O my soul, how little I know of this! How little springing up! How little flowing over! But I am straitened in myself, and not in God. He exhorts us to "BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT" (Eph. 5: 18). Dear fellow-believer, may this be true of us more than it has ever yet been! and it shall be for God's glory and for our blessing.

Thus may we ever remember our high and holy privilege—and our responsibility too—of being indwelt by that divine and heavenly Guest, the Holy Ghost.

