

A Desperate Companionship

DURING THE JEWISH ECONOMY, the influence of God's Spirit had been seen in a marked manner, but not in full. For ages prayers had been offered for the fulfilment of God's promise to impart His Spirit, and not one of these earnest supplications had been forgotten.

Christ determined that when He ascended from this earth He would bestow a gift on those who had believed on Him and those who should believe on Him. What gift could He bestow rich enough to signalize and grace His ascension to the mediatorial throne? It must be worthy of His greatness and His royalty. He determined to give His representative, the third person of the Godhead. This gift could not be excelled. He would give all gifts in one, and therefore the divine Spirit, converting, enlightening, sanctifying, would be His donation.

Standing near His trial, condemnation, and crucifixion, Christ said: "I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you. And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world can not receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him; but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

This is a wonderful announcement. Christ longed to be in a position where He could accomplish the most important work by few and simple means. The plan of redemption is comprehensive; but its parts are few, and each part depends on the other, while all work together with the utmost simplicity and in entire harmony. Christ is represented by the Holy Spirit; and when this Spirit is appreciated, when those controlled by the Spirit communicate to others the energy with which they are imbued, an invisible chord is touched which electrifies the whole. Would that we could all understand how boundless are the divine resources!

But the time had now come. The Spirit had been

waiting for the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. For ten days the disciples offered their petitions for the outpouring of the Spirit, and Christ in heaven added His intercession. This was the occasion of His ascension and inauguration, a jubilee in heaven. He had ascended on high, leading captivity captive, and He now claimed the gift of the Spirit, that He might pour it out upon His disciples.

The Spirit was given as Christ had promised, and like a rushing mighty wind it fell upon those assembled, filling the whole house. It came with a fulness and power, as if for ages it had been restrained, but was now being poured forth upon the church, to be communicated to the world.

What followed this outpouring?—Thousands were converted in a day. In Christ's day many heard the Gospel, but they did not become sufficiently interested to search for the pearl of great price. But on the day of Pentecost three thousand were converted by the preaching of the Gospel. A wonderful communication was made that day between heaven and earth. Those who witnessed this scene had recently witnessed in the same city the crucifixion of the world's Redeemer. But how little those who beheld Him hanging on the cross understood what His death meant! How few realized that "God so loved the world, that He gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life!"

On the day of Pentecost, Christ's witnesses proclaimed the truth, telling men the wonderful news of salvation through Christ. And as a flaming two-edged sword the truth flashed conviction into human hearts. Men were brought under Christ's control. The glad tidings were carried to the uttermost bounds of the inhabited world. The church beheld converts flocking to her from all directions. The altar of the cross, which sanctifies the gift, was rebuilt. Believers were reconverted. Sinners united with Christians in seeking the pearl of great price. The prophecy was fulfilled, the weak "shall be as David," and David "as the angel of the Lord." Every Christian saw in his brother the divine similitude of benevolence and love. One interest prevailed. One object swallowed up all others. Every

pulse beat in healthy concert. The only ambition of the believers was to see who could reveal most perfectly the likeness of Christ's character, who could do the most for the enlargement of His kingdom. "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul." The Spirit of Christ animated the whole congregation; for they had found the pearl of great price. {Signs of the Times, December 1, 1898.}

The lapse of time has wrought no change in Christ's parting promise to send the Holy Spirit as His representative. It is not because of any restriction on the part of God that the riches of His grace do not flow earthward to men. If the fulfillment of the promise is not seen as it might be, it is because the promise is not appreciated as it should be. If all were willing, all would be filled with the Spirit. Wherever the need of the Holy Spirit is a matter little thought of, there is seen spiritual drought, spiritual darkness, spiritual declension and death. Whenever minor matters occupy the attention, the divine power which is necessary for the growth and prosperity of the church, and which would bring all other blessings in its train, is lacking, though offered in infinite plenitude. {The Acts of the Apostles, Pg 50.}

It is not essential for us to be able to define just what the Holy Spirit is. Christ tells us that the Spirit is the Comforter, "the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father." It is plainly declared regarding the Holy

Spirit that, in His work of guiding men into all truth, "He shall not speak of Himself." John 15:26; 16:13.

The nature of the Holy Spirit is a mystery. Men cannot explain it, because the Lord has not revealed it to them. Men having fanciful views may bring together passages of Scripture and put a human construction on them, but the acceptance of these views will not strengthen the church. Regarding such mysteries, which are too deep for human understanding, silence is golden. {The Acts of the Apostles, Pg. 51-52.}

And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. But there shall not an hair of your head perish. Luke 21:16-19

Christ shows that without the controlling power of the Spirit of God humanity is a terrible power for evil. Unbelief, hatred of reproof, will stir up satanic influences. Principalities and powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual wickedness in high places, will unite in a desperate companionship. They will be leagued against God in the person of His saints. By misrepresentation and falsehood they will demoralize both men and women who to all appearances believe the truth. False witnesses will not be wanting in this terrible work.... {Selected Messages, Book 3, 416.} ■

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