

The Spirit's Ministry



J. Glenn Gould

The Spirit's Ministry

By

J. Glenn Gould



Printed in U. S. A.
1941

NAZARENE PUBLISHING HOUSE
2923 Troost Ave., Kansas City, Mo.

INTRODUCTION

It was my privilege to hear Dr. J. Glenn Gould, the editor-in-chief of our Nazarene Church School Periodicals, deliver two addresses on the Holy Spirit at the convention in Texarkana, in January, 1941, and immediately joined in with P. H. Lunn of the Nazarene Publishing House in asking that Dr. Gould prepare these addresses for publication. I felt immediately that Dr. Gould in these addresses qualifies as a scribe "instructed unto the kingdom of heaven" in that he brings forth out of his treasure "things new and old." And I agreed with Mr. Lunn that here is needed truth presented in a new and interesting form, and that many who were not able to hear the word spoken should be given the blessing that will surely come from reading. It is a joy to find that Dr. Gould has complied with our requests and is giving these unusual messages to the printer that we all may read them.

The author of these addresses is a strong preacher and a great writer. He is qualified for his task in a very eminent degree. The truth he sets forth is one of the most vital connected with our holy religion. Men of our Master's time were inclined to reject the Son while professing to honor the Father. Men of our day are inclined to neglect the Holy Spirit while yet professing to honor the Son. But we cannot truly honor the Father and the Son ex-

cept by receiving the Holy Spirit in dispensational fullness.

The truth contained in these messages has been preached by our fathers, but we and our children need to hear it again. The pulpit is not long silent on any theme until the pulpit ceases to know that theme and be moved by it. But repetition demands vitality as well as theoretical substance, and I think all readers of this book will find this quality outstanding.

I commend both the book and the author to all with whom a word from me may be supposed to matter. I know the man is a true man of God and that his book is sound scripturally and logically. Everyone can read this book with the assurance that whatever he finds therein can be trusted as true light that leads to God and to the best in Christian experience and life.

May God grant that the pages of this book may be in truth leaves from the tree of life for the healing of the multitudes!

JAMES B. CHAPMAN, *General Superintendent,*
Church of the Nazarene.

March 7, 1941

THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT

The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God (Romans 8: 16).

There is no more distinctive and meaningful teaching in our Christian faith than this concerning the Spirit's witness to the hearts of believers. The Word of God teaches it too clearly to be mistaken. If there were no passage other than the one now before us, we would have evidence too clear to be gainsaid. "The Spirit itself [himself] beareth witness [along] with our spirit, that we are the children of God." It is plainly asserted here that one important function, or ministry, of the Holy Spirit is this of giving inner certainty to the hearts of believers. We may *know* that we are born of God through the inner assurance wrought in the soul by God's Spirit. A kindred passage appears in Paul's letter to the Galatians, "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Galatians 4: 6). His language here is almost identical with Romans 8: 15, where he asserts that "Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." There are many other passages that deal with the same truth. But these are sufficient to demonstrate that God's Word does in-

deed teach that the Holy Spirit is the "Spirit of adoption," who breathes into the regenerate soul the language of sonship—"Abba, Father."

Despite the vast importance of this Christian teaching, there have been a number of periods in the course of the Christian centuries when it was so obscured as virtually to be lost to the church. Every revival of the faith has involved a rediscovery of this truth. Indeed, it may be said truly that revivals have been stimulated, if not instigated, by the clear proclamation of the doctrine of the witness of the Spirit. Emphasis upon it was an outstanding characteristic of the Wesleyan revival in the eighteenth century. We have laid such stress upon Mr. Wesley's contribution to the revival of the truth of Christian perfection as to have almost overlooked his equally significant emphasis upon the Spirit's witness.

It hardly need be argued that every sincere seeker after God craves just the sort of inner assurance that is promised by the Word of God in its teaching concerning the witness of the Spirit. Here is a matter affecting vitally one's present and eternal salvation. It is unthinkable that matters of such moment should be left in the realm of conjecture. On the contrary, the Word assures us that one may be saved through faith in Christ and *know* by the Spirit's inner witness that he is so saved. In the words of Charles Wesley's great hymn:

"His Spirit answers to the blood,
And tells me I am born of God."

CONFUSION IN MANY MINDS

Despite the clear voice of God's Word respecting the Spirit's witness, there has been a vast amount of tragic confusion concerning it in many earnest minds. Some have entertained preconceptions concerning the exact nature of the witness, based usually upon the spectacular experience of someone else. They have heard other persons, undoubtedly sincere, relate the striking phenomena which attended their conversion or sanctification experiences and have come to the conclusion that only an experience attended by such extraordinary manifestations as that would be thoroughly convincing. It may have been an audible voice that was heard speaking from heaven, or a rare and lovely vision, or a particular and peculiar physical sensation, or any one of a hundred other varieties of arresting spiritual experience. Concluding that something of this sort was the sure mark of the Spirit's witness, they have made the mistake of seeking a certain witness rather than seeking the grace and favor of God through Christ. Their resultant attitude is essentially one of skepticism which dictates to the Spirit the type of assurance one is willing to receive, rather than an attitude of faith that commits all to the will of God, including the question of the type of witness it may please God to grant. And because they were unable to bring the infinite God to human terms, they have gone away disappointed and defeated, if not disillusioned and cynical.

There is no uniformity whatever observed by the Holy Spirit in His performance of His witnessing ministry. Here, as in all of His creative activity, God is a God of infinite variety. One's native temperament, as well as many other modifying factors, has a vital bearing upon the precise character of the Spirit's inner witness. The one thing supremely noteworthy is that the soul that seeks God with true heart, whether the object of his quest be pardon or inner purity, if he come sincerely and in faith, will hear from God, and the resultant witness of the Spirit will be wholly satisfying.

WHAT IS THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT?

It seems very clear that this experience of inner assurance is made up of three distinct phases. That is, they are logically distinct, though the seeker's experience of them may seem to be instantaneous. They are (1) the witness of the seeker's own heart; (2) the witness of God's Word; and (3) the inner illumination of the Holy Spirit. Let us consider them in this order.

1. The first definite stage at which an earnest, true-hearted seeker arrives in his approach to God is the point at which he knows in the depths of his soul that he has done everything within his own power to bring himself to God. If he is a sinner seeking pardon, he reaches the point where his repentance is deep and thorough; his confession of guilt and need complete and utterly humble; his efforts to atone for past offenses have been carried

as far as it is physically possible to carry them. There is a place where one is as low before the presence of the outraged mercy of God as it is possible for one to be. If death were upon one, or the judgment itself were set, there is nothing more that one could do to bring himself to God. The bitter herbs of repentance are not pleasant to the taste; but, mingled with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth, they may be eaten resolutely by the seeking soul. And when one has reached that place, one's inmost soul knows it full well. The assurance that one has done the last thing required of him is the witness of one's own heart.

The believer who seeks "the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ" must pass through a similar valley of humiliation. There can be no perfect consecration to the whole will of God until there has been a sincere repentance for the double-mindedness and wilfulness and stubbornness and love of the world, all of which are marks of an un-sanctified heart. The soul's sorrow for its *inward sin* must be as deep and moving as was its sorrow for its *outward sins*. The one is just as loathsome in the sight of God as the other, and is just as effectual a bar to the perfect enjoyment of God's grace and favor. But in approaching the throne of God with this deeper need, there is a point where the seeker knows that his sorrow and repentance for his heart depravity have reached their uttermost depths; where his consecration to the will of God is complete and final; possessions, time, talents, am-

bitions, hopes, wishes, loved ones and friends, all yielded forever to Christ; the vast unknown future placed daringly and yet confidently in God's hands, for Him to control and reveal as and when it pleases Him so to do; one's dearest Isaac bound and placed on the altar, and the knife upraised without thought of any intervening divine hand, so that it may be said of us, as of Abraham, that by faith we actually offered him up to God. One knows beyond question in such an hour that his sacrifice is complete; there is nothing he could add to it, and nothing he would take from it. And in that glorious instant the seeker has the witness of his own heart that every condition it is humanly possible to meet has been met.

2. The second phase of this experience of assurance is the witness of God's own Word. Men do business with God on the basis of acceptance of and faith in His promises. Who has not heard exhortations about altars of prayer that amounted to a repetition of "Let's believe God! Let's believe God!" But how can anyone "believe God" except by believing what God has said? It is by this avenue that a seeker approaches God. Only thus can anyone deal with God intelligently. Now how does this work out in practical experience?

Here is a typical promise made to guilty sinners, "If we confess our sins, he [God] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Many thousands of repentant, confessing sinners have found grace and favor

in God's sight by casting themselves headlong on that promise. Its condition is plainly stated: "If we confess . . ." A full confession, with no attempted concealment from God, a confession which involves repentance, restitution, and forsaking of the practices of sin, will place any seeker on ground where through Christ he may claim the benefits of that promise for himself. The certainty of a complete confession is the witness of one's own heart, as noted above. Whereupon, faith in the unfailing promise of God gives one the assurance of God's Word. God, who cannot lie, has said that for every confessing sinner there is instant forgiveness. Since *God* has said it, it must indeed be true. Therefore one dares to take his stand squarely on the promise, believing God's Word implicitly. Regardless of one's immediate emotional reactions, God instantly forgives, and the confessing, believing sinner in that moment becomes a forgiven child of God. In the expression we have heard so often, "feeling or no feeling" the eternal Word of God cannot fail.

The approach of an unsanctified believer to the grace of full salvation is similarly along "the promise way." Here is a typical word from God, selected from the same chapter in which appears the promise dealt with earlier, "If we walk in the light as he [God] is in the light, we have fellowship one with another [we and God], and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." That is a glorious assurance; and many a person who today is enjoying the fullness of God came by that road.

To walk in the light is to offer God instant, implicit obedience; to die to self and selfish considerations and live only to Christ. It means a whole-hearted consenting to the will of God—a consent that comes from the very depths of the soul. It means to make a perfect consecration, presenting one's body a living sacrifice. The seeker's own heart *knows* when he has reached that point of perfect consent and obedience. Having met that condition, faith will enable one to step out on the promise; declaring that simply because God's promise cannot fail, the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, does indeed cleanse from all sin. That phase of the assurance rests upon no tide of emotion within the soul, but simply upon the immutability of God's Word.

3. The third phase of the experience of assurance is the inner illumination of the Holy Ghost. It may come to one as an increasing persuasion and consciousness of the Spirit's presence. It may come as a sudden, startling inner experience. It may be accompanied by overwhelming tides of blessings that will move one to ecstatic shouts of praise; or as a rich and blessed tenderness that can be expressed adequately only in tears of holy joy; or in a sense of inner peace and calm, the Sabbath of rest within after the labors of a wilderness wandering. It may follow faith so closely in time as to be practically instantaneous; or it may follow after by some minutes, hours, days, or even weeks. It may be consequent upon a particular perseverance in faith that God's promise does not fail; or upon the perform-

ance of some vow which puts the sincerity of one's consecration to particular test. But for the soul that has the witness of his own heart (and has not drawn back), and the witness of God's Word (in which his faith has not wavered), *this inner assurance will come and will not tarry.*

I recall the experience of a woman who sought God most earnestly for a holy heart, reaching at length the first and second phases of this experience of assurance. She knew that she had done the last thing within her power and declared her faith that the blood of Jesus Christ did indeed cleanse her then and there from all sin; all of this without any inwrought assurance of the Holy Ghost. It so happened that one point of particular conflict in her consecration concerned the opposition of her mother to this way of holiness; and it was only after real struggle that she gave God her consent to witness at the first opportunity to her mother. Home from the service she went, walking by faith and not by sight. The next morning she went to her mother's home and, summoning all her moral courage and praying God for strength, bore faithful witness to the fact that the night before God had sanctified her soul. Instantly with the performance of that act of obedience the presence of the blessed Spirit flooded her soul and the inner persuasion of the Holy Ghost was hers.

It should be noted, further, that this passage in Romans 8:16, properly rendered, reads, "The

Spirit himself beareth witness *along with our spirit.*” The seeker’s own spirit bears one phase of the witness, while the Holy Spirit bears a corroborating witness. This element of sequence which we have been endeavoring to bring out, namely, first the witness of the seeker’s spirit, then the witness of the Holy Spirit, is further set forth in Galatians 4:6, “*Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts . . .*” It is to a work *already done* that the Spirit bears His witness. While these phases of the experience of assurance in many cases follow each other so closely as to be practically identical, there is necessarily this element of sequence in the experience.

An eminent evangelist was returning home after a prolonged absence. He notified his family that he would arrive on the nine o’clock train on a certain morning and the family would eat breakfast together. The mother and children arose early that morning and were getting everything in readiness for breakfast before going to meet the train, when the door opened and the returning father entered the room. He had discovered that he could make better connections than he expected, and had arrived on the midnight train, spending the night in the guestroom of the home. He had been there all night, but had waited until morning to manifest his presence. It is frequently thus in God’s dealings with us.

ARE ALL OF THESE PHASES OF THE WITNESS
ALWAYS PRESENT IN THE DAY BY DAY
EXPERIENCE OF THE CHILD OF GOD?

What a fertile source of misunderstanding this is! Many a soul has achieved wonderful victory in his struggle at an altar of prayer, only to be swept off his feet by the accusations of the adversary in his first experience of inner heaviness. If there is any point where young Christians need instruction, it is here.

The three phases of this experience of assurance are not always present *to the same degree*. The inner illumination may not always consciously be present. Peter describes experiences of "heaviness through manifold temptation" which seem plainly to imply a clouding of one's sky and a consequent emotional depression. Such experiences do not mean that the blessed Spirit has withdrawn, but only that our apprehension of His presence is for the moment less clear. Joseph H. Smith has made the important distinction that, while one may not always be conscious of the Spirit's presence, he can always be confident of His presence.

On the other hand, the witness of one's own heart and of God's faithful Word are fixed and constant, waiting only to be invoked by the trusting soul. A poor woman, accompanied by her little boy, drifted into a rescue mission in one of our larger cities one night and responded to the altar call. There a wise worker dealt with her, explain-

ing how to repent and come to Christ by faith in His Word. She turned in a New Testament to an appropriate promise, having the eager seeker read it for herself. God did not fail in the performance of His promise; for the seeker's faith touched God, and a rare and holy joy filled her soul. The worker marked the promise which had proved so fruitful, turned down a corner of the page, and gave the Testament to the woman, with the admonition to read it frequently, especially that promise. The woman, happy in her newfound experience, made her way to her humble quarters, accompanied by her little boy, who had been a wondering observer of all that had occurred. She was afraid to go to sleep lest she lose this wonderful joy. But at length, overcome by sheer weariness, she fell asleep; and in the morning she awakened to discover that her joy was gone. She burst into tears, awakening her little son with her sobbing. "What's the matter, Mama?" he cried. "Oh, the joy I found last night has gone," she said. Moved by some sure instinct, the little lad ran to get the Testament and, turning to the marked promise, cried triumphantly, "Why, Mama, it reads just the same!" That is the very heart of the matter. However passing and untrustworthy feelings may be, the promise never changes. On it we may stand confidently and its assurance our trusting hearts may invoke as we will.

This is the Christian's experience of assurance. Whether it be pardon or cleansing for which we ap-

proach God and seek to appropriate His grace through Christ Jesus our Lord, it is our privilege to enjoy the clear witness to our standing with God. And that witness will be found to come to the soul along the lines we have been pointing out. Let us purpose never to live beneath the level of our highest privileges in Christ.

THE ANOINTING OF THE SPIRIT

And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:4).

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 spake the word of God with boldness (Acts 4:31).

There is a striking similarity between these two texts of scripture. They record, in language that is almost identical, two outpourings of the Holy Spirit upon groups of Christian believers; outpourings which were accompanied by remarkable phenomena. A superficial reading of the Acts of the Apostles might lead one to believe that these two passages are the records of identical experiences.

A little attention to their contexts, however, reveals the fact that their import differs widely. The first is the account of the marvelous pentecostal experience, in which one hundred and twenty believers were filled with the Holy Ghost and sent forth to preach Jesus as Lord with a passion and sense of conviction more compelling than men had ever witnessed before. The second is the record of an anointing of the Holy Spirit upon the Jerusalem church, resulting in a remarkable renewal of power, zeal and boldness. Opposition to "the way"

was crystallizing among the leaders of the Jews, and Peter and John had lately been released by the authorities with the warning to preach no more in this name. They went at once to "their own company" and repeated these warnings. Whereupon, the church went to prayer that God would fortify their courage to meet this new threat. The second of these texts records the amazing answer of God to this earnest season of prayer. With energy renewed, they went forth to speak "the word of God with boldness."

LET US LOOK AT THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN SANCTIFICATION

It was John the Baptist who first described the gift of the Spirit as a baptism "with the Holy Ghost and fire." He amplified his teaching (see Matthew 3:11, 12) with the use of a most arresting analogy. He appealed to the common threshing floor for illustration of the Spirit's cleansing work in men's hearts. His work would be to separate the grain from the chaff of human personality. Our blessed Lord, fan in hand, would "thoroughly purge his floor." It would be a purging most faithfully done; and once the separation was complete, He would garner the wheat; but the chaff would be consumed with "unquenchable fire." It is the purging fire of Pentecost that is anticipated by that forceful language.

On the Day of Pentecost it was precisely this that occurred. In the second chapter of the Acts the outward drama of this experience is quite con-

spicuous; so conspicuous, indeed, that many have concluded that these phenomena were the all-important factors. The clearest testimony to the inner work of the Spirit on that day, however, is to be found in the testimony of Simon Peter in Acts 15: 8, 9, given years after the pentecostal outpouring. No mention is made of sound of rushing wind, or visible tongues of fire, or the gift of foreign languages. These were merely the passing aspects of the remarkable experience. The two abiding elements were these: heart purity, wrought by faith, and the fullness of the Holy Ghost.

It is the fact of this twofold inner experience that gives Pentecost its continuing significance for the Church of Christ. Not alone in the Upper Room at Jerusalem was the cleansing, infilling Spirit thus outpoured. God repeated this remarkable outpouring in Samaria (Acts 8: 14, 15), in Damascus (Acts 9: 17, 18), in Cæsarea (Acts 10: 44), in Ephesus (Acts 19: 6); indeed, wherever the Christian message has been faithfully proclaimed. God's purpose for His Church is still unchanged. In this day of our Lord men may be sanctified and filled with the Spirit as clearly and definitely as were the first century believers.

God intends this shall be a once-for-all experience. One who has received the Spirit's fullness may draw back and grieve the blessed Spirit until He withdraws Himself. Indeed, there is no state of grace from which a man may not fall. But it is God's will that His sanctified children live so de-

votedly and obediently that the fullness of the Holy Spirit may abide constantly, in life's dark and difficult hours as well as in the easier sunlit ways.

FULLNESS AND POWER

Granting that the fullness of the Spirit's presence is a constant, abiding factor in the daily experience of a sanctified soul, why is it that the flow of spiritual energy in the life is so variable a factor as it seems to be? Every Christian who enjoys the fullness of the blessing knows that there are periods of heaviness and depression when one is forced to walk by faith rather than by sight. Every preacher knows that there are times when preaching is laborious, and the chariot wheels drag heavily; while there are other times when preaching is a rare delight and gracious results are much more easily realized. What is the difference?

It seems to me that the answer is to be found in the fact that fullness and power are not identical. The fullness of the Holy Ghost is necessary to spiritual power, in the sense that there can be no spiritual power in a life that is consciously drawing back from the baptism with the Holy Ghost. But one may enjoy the fullness of the Holy Ghost without being constantly the center of spiritual energy and power. It seems very evident that this was true in the lives of the first century Christians in Jerusalem. And if a sanctified man will analyze his own experience, he will discover that it is equally true in his life. Indeed, no human frame could stand the

constant flow of spiritual energy which God frequently pours into the soul.

What, then, is spiritual power? It may be defined as *fullness under pressure*. Spiritual power is that which results when a soul who enjoys the fullness of the Holy Spirit is wrought upon by the pressure which God is free to place upon such a soul. Let us illustrate by appeal to a principle in hydro-dynamics, a principle that is becoming increasingly familiar, the hydraulic brake. Most automobiles are so equipped today. The hydraulic brake consists of a master cylinder located under the brake pedal, connected by metal tubing to a secondary cylinder in the brake assembly of each wheel. The system is so adjusted that pressure applied at the master cylinder transmits energy to each of the secondary cylinders; energy which appears in the form of braking power. But here is the thing of utmost significance: the efficiency of the system depends entirely upon keeping the mechanism filled with hydraulic brake fluid. If the level of fluid is not maintained, the application of pressure will have no result. In a car that is mechanically perfect, the system is ready constantly, awaiting only the application of pedal pressure to develop its necessary power. This analogy suggests faintly the relationship between fullness and power which exists in the soul of a sanctified man. God cannot use a personality that is not filled with the Holy Ghost. Soul emptiness is a fatal bar to the accomplishment of God's holy purposes in

one and through one. But fullness is not itself power, however necessary thereto it may be. Power results, as we have already observed, when that fullness is placed under pressure.

WHAT IS THE PRESSURE THAT PRODUCES POWER?

It may be some temptation over which one has triumphed by the strength of God. It may be some sorrow through which one has come; not overwhelmed by it, but rising above it nobly. It may be some singular trial from which there is no escape, but which God transmutes into a token of mercy and grace. Something of this sort was Paul's experience of the thorn. (See 2 Corinthians 12:7-10.) Here was something that was plainly most difficult to bear. Three times he besought God for deliverance. But God had something for him that was better than deliverance out of his affliction. It was deliverance in the midst of affliction. In result, the apostle reaped a harvest of grace that would have been denied him if God had permitted him to take the easier way. There is a note of rare triumph in his shout, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

God's pressure upon the soul may be a burden of desire placed upon the spirit by the Holy Ghost. Saint Paul visited Athens without any definite plan for preaching the gospel there. But a few days in this pagan city changed his plan. "His spirit was stirred within him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry." Many another person, wholly

yielded to God, has observed the spiritual dearth in his community and has gone before the throne with such a burden for the lost that it was possible for the Holy Spirit to grant a revival.

It may assume the form of a growing consciousness that new demands are being imposed upon one's spiritual resources, demands which cannot be met adequately without a fresh accession of divine power. It was a situation similar to this which drove the Jerusalem church to prayer (Acts 4:23-31). This tide of opposition and persecution was mounting, and the enemies of Christ were becoming bolder in their antagonism. Was the infant church to grow weak in spirit in the face of these new hazards? Instead, they went to God with a cry for renewed spiritual energy to meet this increasing threat; and God answered marvelously.

Still another of the methods by which God exerts pressure upon a sanctified soul is by moving one to stir himself up to lay hold on God. God's saints have long recognized the necessity of frequent anointings of the Spirit—anointings with "fresh oil," when the soul will experience a renewal and quickening of all its spiritual energies. We may call it "keeping blest," or "keeping the glory down" on our hearts, or by any other of a score of different expressions. But whatever it is called, the *fact* is of the utmost importance. Without it we are well on our way to a teaching and preaching and professing of holiness which will have significance for neither God nor man.

WHAT IS THE OUTWARD EXPRESSION OF POWER?

In this situation in Jerusalem it was a renewal of boldness and holy zeal. Those saints were undaunted by the threats of the Sanhedrin. "Lord, behold their threatenings," they cried, "and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus." There was no drawing back in that prayer, but only a cry for the strength necessary to go forward. God's response was immediate, "and they spake the word of God with boldness."

Another of these outward expressions is a burden for the lost. One must always carry a deep concern for the lost; but there is a difference between a concern and a burden. A burden for the lost must move one to travail of soul that sons and daughters may be born into the kingdom. This is God's own analogy and we should not shrink from it. But no one could possibly bear such a burden constantly; and those who say they do are only revealing the fact that they do not understand the real meaning of a burden for the lost. The fact that one cannot always bear such a burden does not mean that one should never bear it. Indeed, for every sanctified soul there must be seasons when the cry for souls must rise from the depths of the heart, inwrought by the Spirit who helpeth our infirmities. The result will be spiritual awakenings and revivals of religion.

Still another outward expression of power is a vision and faith to dare for God. Paul, waiting at Troas for guidance as to his next move, with every door to further service in Asia closed, heard God speak through the lips of a Macedonian. In that hour of vision God granted His servant courage and strength to blaze a new trail for the blessed gospel. It was a trail that led to difficulty and opposition, physical suffering and imprisonment; and if Paul had not had such clear assurance before starting forth, he might have had occasion to reproach himself. As it was, he was able to sing in the midst of testing, sustained by the quickening, reassuring grace of God. It was equally so with Harmon Schmelzenbach when he plunged into the heart of Swaziland, determined to hew out a kingdom for the Lord Jesus. It was so with Wesley when he found the doors of the established church one by one closing against him and dared to go out into the unconsecrated fields to proclaim Christ. It was so with the beloved founders of our own church, when they turned their backs upon the ease and security which could have been theirs for the price of a bit of compromise, to go out under the stars and erect a new spiritual empire. If our movement is to go forward in the future as it has done in the past, there must be a constant emphasis upon the anointings and pressures of the Holy Spirit which are so essential to power in our spiritual lives.

We are living in critical times. They are critical for the world; but they are even more critical for

the Church. It is now about one generation since our movement in its larger phases was launched. Of what significance is one generation? In studying the second chapter of the Revelation recently I was struck by the letter to the church at Ephesus, especially that indictment, "Thou hast left thy first love." That word of warning was spoken approximately thirty years after the marvelous revival under the ministry of Saint Paul, related in Acts 19. Thirty years are roughly one generation. What a startling thing it is that in the first century when the Christian faith enjoyed its pristine vigor, while it was still carried forward by the ministry of apostles, one generation should have brought so outstanding a church as Ephesus to the point where it would merit the indictment of Revelation 2: 4! And if a generation could bring about such fateful changes in a church then, why cannot a drift equally dangerous hold us in its grip?

There is only one safety. It is to be found in an uncompromising loyalty to the truth of full salvation; but more, it is to be found in a clear, sure enjoyment of the grace of heart holiness; but more, there must be a constant renewal of spiritual energy; frequent anointings from the gracious hand of God; such a mighty pressure of the Spirit of God upon us that seasons of power and glory will not be uncommon among us; saintliness will still be in flower; and our sons and daughters will come into the kingdom by the same rugged route their fathers and mothers traversed.

THE GUIDANCE OF THE SPIRIT

It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us . . .
(Acts 15: 28, Authorized Version).

We have, therefore, decided, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit . . . (Acts 15: 28, Twentieth Century New Testament).

Here, in an almost casual manner, is revealed one of the secrets of the power of the apostolic church. Beyond Pentecost and indeed as an essential feature of God's plan for making Pentecost a continuing and determining factor in the work of the Church, there was granted to those first century Christians the leadership of the Holy Spirit. There is a constant ministry which the blessed Spirit is pleased to carry forward, not only among first century Christians, but also among us of the twentieth century.

The setting of this scripture is most familiar to Bible readers. The first council of the Christian Church was meeting in Jerusalem. The first campaign for the evangelization of regions predominantly Gentile had just been concluded, and the increasingly Gentile complexion of the infant church was becoming a matter of serious concern to the founding fathers in Jerusalem. Was this movement, which in its inception had been exclusively

Jewish, to become eventually a movement predominantly Gentile? It was fear of that possibility that moved certain zealots among the Jews to insist that "except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved" (Acts 15:1).

Here was an issue which, in Paul's judgment, struck at the very heart of his gospel that Jesus Christ was all-sufficient and that faith in Him alone was the condition of salvation. So far as the particulars of this contest are concerned, the whole issue seems strangely remote from us today. But the underlying principles are as important now as they were in the first century. In one of its aspects, the issue was this: Is the Christian movement to be confined within the rotting wineskin of Judaism, as other movements have been, and to their undoing; or is the Christian gospel world-wide in its appeal and efficacy? More vitally still the issue might be stated, Are "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" the sole requirements for salvation, or must a Gentile believer add to them the works of the law and become a proselyte to the Jewish faith? This was the question before the council. The sessions were presided over by James—not an apostle, but "the Lord's brother." It was he who delivered the judgment of the assembly—a pronouncement in favor of Gentile freedom which effectually removed the threat of narrow Jewish control of the church and launched this movement on its way to world conquest.

It is clearly evident, moreover—and this is the thing we want particularly to note—that the Holy Spirit was present and participated in the council. It is not likely that a seat was made for Him at the council table, such as is made for Elijah at the Jewish Passover observance. Yet He was present and His will was the dominant factor in the formulation of the council's findings. I have called James' allusion to the Spirit's presence "casual," and so it is. No defense is attempted for his claim that the Holy Ghost was present, for none is needed. It is evident that everyone present was conscious also of the presence of the Spirit. What a wonderful way to conduct church business and adjust differences! Under conditions such as these there is no occasion for anxiety as to the outcome of any issue, or the settlement of any question of difference, or the selection of leaders. The final judgment of this council was arrived at under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and in His judgment the others present concurred.

WHAT ARE THE PECULIAR OFFICES OF THE SPIRIT IN RESPECT TO CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE?

Here is a question of the utmost importance, for every person who has made an effort to serve God has received in generous measure the rich ministries of the Holy Spirit. Yet, despite its fundamental importance, it is amazing the amount of confusion there is in many earnest minds concerning it. Let us consider it.

1. There are certain *basic functions* which are the peculiar work of the Spirit in every Christian life. One of these is *awakening*, that experience by which a sinner becomes disquieted in his life of sin. It may begin with a sense of vague uneasiness; a feeling that all is not well with him. A restlessness takes hold of one which makes indulgences formerly enjoyed seem drab and boresome. One's taste for sin loses its zest, and the soul begins to recoil in revulsion from practices that were carried on formerly without a scruple. Such an experience is the groundwork of conviction, and is due entirely to the faithful ministry of the Holy Spirit. Intercessory prayer on the part of one's loved ones and Christian friends may have made possible the Spirit's awakening ministry, but the actual awakening is indeed the work of the Spirit of God.

Another of these basic ministries of the Spirit is *conviction*. In the grip of conviction, the soul feels itself to be desperately in need of God. There is a sense of imminent danger—the danger of being lost forever from God and hope. There is a sense of sin-weariness that makes one turn in disgust from evil practices even before actual repentance has been undertaken. The growing power of conviction creates a hunger to know Christ and the favor of God through Christ; a hunger that becomes a consuming passion. Here again it is prevailing prayer that makes possible this work of God in the soul; but the work itself is due to the faithful ministry of the Spirit.

A third phase of the Spirit's basic functions is that of *witnessing* to the newly converted soul that he is born of God. We have noticed in some detail elsewhere in this booklet the significance of this ministry. It need be repeated only that it is the work of the Holy Ghost to witness along with our own spirits that we are the children of God.

2. There are, however, certain *deeper functions* in the Spirit's ministry to the hearts of believers. It is His responsibility to apply the cleansing of the blood of Christ to hearts that are wholly yielded and consecrated to God. We are purged from inbred corruption by the cleansing efficacy of the blood of Christ, that is true. But it is equally true that we are cleansed by the baptism with the Holy Ghost and fire. These are not two distinct experiences, but represent simply two parallel expressions of the same basic truth. The shed blood of Christ is the ocean of provision through which our personal cleansing is made possible. But the application of those sanctifying benefits to the soul is the peculiar responsibility of the Holy Spirit.

There is a further phase to this deeper ministry of the Spirit to believers. It is He who fills with His presence the heart that has been cleansed and made ready for His incoming; not as an experience distinct from cleansing, but as an essential part of that glorious experience. The experience of entire sanctification is (negatively) a purging from all carnal dross, and (positively) a filling with the Holy Ghost. In this dispensation the Shekinah of God's

presence dwells not in tabernacle or temple made with hands, but in the temple of the human spirit. And each phase of this blessed work is the peculiar responsibility of the Holy Spirit.

3. The matter does not end here, however; for there are certain *progressive functions* in the lives of God's saints which are a part of the official ministry of the Holy Spirit. He is to be the *Comforter* of God's people. There is some merit in the use of this term in the Authorized Version of John's Gospel; for a very rich and blessed phase of the Spirit's ministry is to lift God's people up when otherwise they would be cast down. His is not only a comforting ministry, but also a chiding ministry. He deals with us faithfully, even though His rebukes may grieve us.

He is, furthermore, a *Teacher*; One who takes the things of Christ and reveals them unto us. Whence came Peter's amazing grasp of redemptional truth in his pentecostal discourse? It was the result of insight granted him by the Holy Spirit. Saint Paul frankly declares that he received his gospel by revelation to his soul—another tribute to the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit.

But it is as *Guide* that the Spirit exercises His most blessed and useful ministry in the lives of God's saints. It would be a wonderful thing if along with the experience of perfect love men received also the insight and judgment and knowledge so essential to a life that is lived in the fullness of the blessing. It is a fact, however, that there are

many things that one must learn by dint of difficult experience. Saint Paul suggests, for instance, that patience is not something that one receives at a moment of crisis, as one would receive a blood transfusion; but is the result of meeting and overcoming difficulty. "Tribulation worketh patience." Contentment, too, is a frame of mind which must be cultivated deliberately. "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." So is it with the judgments we must formulate, the decisions we must make, and the attitudes we must assume as we endeavor to live holy lives.

WHAT IS SPIRIT GUIDANCE?

We must recognize, of course, that not all that is attributed to the guidance of the Spirit is actually from Him. In New England there is a religious society whose corporate name is "The Holy Ghost and Us Society." It requires more than such incorporation, however, to assure one of the actual guidance of the Spirit. Over the years we have heard many fantastic things attributed to the leadership of the Holy Ghost; things that were obviously the result of erratic judgment rather than the wisdom of the Spirit. How easy it is to put one's own stubborn opinion beyond the realm of debate by the assertion, "God told me so"!

There is such a thing, however—and despite perversions—as being led by the Spirit. Paul emphasized its possibility in Romans 8:14, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the

sons of God." The experience of the Antioch church in the matter of sending Paul and Barnabas forth as missionaries bears clear testimony to the fact that the Spirit has a mind for the work of God and can give that mind expression. The experience of Paul, Silas and Luke at Troas is another significant episode. (See Acts 16: 6-10.) Here was the Spirit leading first by His thwartings and then by His constraints. Without question, He can direct His saints.

HOW WILL THE SPIRIT GUIDE ME?

It is absolutely essential to the Spirit's guidance in our lives that we possess Him in His fullness, and be wholly yielded to His mind. Self-will or stubbornness or pride of opinion will defeat tragically His attempts to direct our lives and activities. One who would enjoy the guidance of the Spirit must first come to grips with his inner need of cleansing from selfishness and sin. Only then can one take the Spirit by the hand and be led by Him.

But granted His fullness as an abiding, sanctifying presence, He will guide by His promptings and thwartings. Open doors are a frequent token of His will. But closed doors are equally significant in the matter of ascertaining the mind of the Spirit. Luke tells how Paul and his companions "were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia." How that negative leading was rendered articulate is not indicated. It may have been that insuperable obstacles arose which led to the con-

clusion that the Spirit was pointing elsewhere. In the same passage it is stated that when they "assayed to go into Bithynia . . . the Spirit suffered them not." One should pay earnest heed to the thwartings of the Holy Spirit as well as to His promptings.

The Spirit leads by inner revelation and constraint. There are seasons in life when the Spirit sees fit to grant a strange inner compulsion that will direct one in the way God would have him go. If such definitive leading is essential, God will grant it. Once in my life I have had it so clear as to be unimpeachable. I did not know why God led so definitely; but in time the reason was made clear. Without that positive assurance I would have been overwhelmed; but having it, I found an anchor for the hour of storm.

The usual leading of the Spirit will be by the guidance of one's sanctified judgment. There are times when it seems one can get no clear word from the Lord; yet decisions have to be made. How shall one proceed? By seeking earnestly the help and guidance of the Lord in prayer, then arising and using the very best sense God has given one. For the man who is holy and humble in heart the leadings of the Lord will prove unfailing in such an hour, though they may be exercised through his own faculty of judgment.

Here is an amazing, yet vital, partnership. "The Holy Ghost and us"! It is this progressive ministry

of the Spirit which we so greatly need. A sanctified life is more than simply the period of life that remains to one after he has made a second trip to the altar. Nay, rather, it is a taking of the Holy Spirit by the hand and an adventuring out into the vast unknown future with Him as guide. There is nothing more positively thrilling than that noble prospect; and it is within the will of God for every man who will resolutely take "the way."

