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## **THE PROMISED GIFT**

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Author Of:  
Inbred Sin  
Old Wine In New Bottles  
A Living Sacrifice  
A Clean Heart  
Saved And Kept  
The Vine And The Branches  
Commentary On St. Luke  
Commentary On St. John

1906  
The Christian Witness Co.  
156 W. Washington St., Chicago, Ill.

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Digital Edition 11/03/2003  
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## PREFACE

The author puts forth this little volume with a great degree of diffidence, in view of the fact that there are so many other larger volumes on this subject written by those who are wise and more experienced in these things.

But he has felt a great soul pressure as he has meditated on this theme, which he has been unable to resist. Consequently another volume has been issued when he had fully resolved to quit the business of writing books.

The favor that his other little books on devotion have met and the souls who have testified to spiritual uplifting through these books, has given him the confidence to try it again.

These books have been given to the cause without any financial remuneration. They have been a pure labor of love, and if they do no further good, he has the assurance in his heart that they have all been intended to glorify God and help men.

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## 01 -- A REMARKABLE UTTERANCE

One of the most remarkable utterances of Him who "spake as man never spake," was, "If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?"

This passage of scripture is like a great mansion house on a lofty eminence out of whose windows the whole country may be swept in all directions by the eye of those who love grand views.

We do not know of any passage of the same length in the New Testament that contains so much sound doctrine. The more one studies it the more profound its depths appear. Notice some of its clear teachings.

1. It is the connecting link between the Old and New Testaments.

The GREAT promise of The Old Testament was the gift of The Holy Ghost. There were many promises given under the Old Dispensation, but the gift of The Holy Ghost was not only the highest, but it was that to which all the dispensations pointed as their climax. Consequently Jesus calls it in his last address before He left his disciples, "THE Promise of The Father." In this promise all the others were swallowed up. It was the center to which they all converged. As surely as the dispensation of four thousand years under God, the Father, prepared the way for and culminated in the short dispensation of thirty-three years under The Son, so surely they both were the grand preparation for The promise of The Father, the great and crowning blessing, not only of this, the Dispensation of The Holy Spirit under which we live, but of our holy religion, for all time, until His people shall be glorified.

That this was THE Promise of The Father under the Old Dispensation may clearly be seen in the predictions of the prophets.

Ezekiel gives it thus, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean. From all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them" (Ezek. 36:25-27). Here the Promise of the Father is alluded to in the phrase, "I will put my spirit within you." Isaiah says, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty and floods upon the dry ground" (Isa. 44:3). Joel says, "It shall come to pass afterwards, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh" (Joel 2:28). Zechariah says, "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications" (Zech. 12:10).

God, the Father, was speaking through these and other prophets all along under the Old Dispensation, foretelling this wonderful gift. It was also symbolized in the types and imagery of The Old Testament.

The Old Dispensation was passing away, but this promise was yet unfulfilled. In its closing hours the last prophet came. He was a fiery man like Elijah of old. His name was John. He made a great stir among the people. He commanded them to forsake their sins and be baptized. But he was not the one who Should bring the GREAT GIFT. He prophesied that it was yet to be given saying, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to bear He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire" (Matt. 3:11). This he prophesied concerning Jesus, who was to be the Great Baptizer.

And now Jesus had come. About a year after John made this great statement, Jesus having in the meantime called his disciples, begins to instruct them preparatory to their reception of THE gift. This seems to be the first lesson He gave them on this subject under the familiar figure of a parent, feeding a hungry child. He tells them that The Father is more willing to give them The Holy Ghost than they could possibly be to feed their hungry children.

Thus Jesus binds together both dispensations by urging The Promise of the Old as a living experience of the New.

Thus He teaches us that the Bible is not two separate volumes, one of which is to be considered of less account, but one grand volume, whose parts are not to be separated but preserved and revered in its entirety.

2. In this passage Jesus clearly states the doctrine of The Holy Trinity.

Some people affect inability to see this doctrine in the word of God. But here we have the three persons of the Trinity clearly and distinctly referred to.

Jesus, the Second Person, declares that God, the First Person, will give the Holy Spirit, the Third Person, to those who ask. Could the three persons be more clearly distinguished?

3. Jesus here manifests himself as a holiness preacher. At the close of a service at a camp meeting, the writer was approached by a party who offered this objection, "You emphasize holiness a great deal. Why did not Jesus preach upon the subject?" Our reply was that it was the very subject that he especially emphasized. It was his theme not only in this passage, but all through His ministry.

In His first sermon he declared in the most beautiful promise on record, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." He also said, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness." In the same sermon He also said, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." When the Scribe asked Him what the great commandment of the law was, He replied that it was the law of perfect love, viz.: "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart." He rebuked the Pharisees for their lack of holiness by saying "that they made the outside of the cup and platter clean but within were full of uncleanness." He likened them in their heart corruption to whited sepulchers. They had hearts as unclean as sepulchers while they had an outward ceremonial appearance as pure as a whitewashed sepulcher. Then He told these apparently holy people that God made the inside of man as truly as the outside and required that it be pure. He prayed just before going to Gethsemane and Calvary that these disciples should become holy. "Sanctify them through thy truth," is the central petition of His great prayer recorded in the seventeenth chapter of John's Gospel. His great talk before His crucifixion was that the Comforter would come to them to abide. (See the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth chapters of John.) On the last day, that great Day of the Feast, He stood up and cried (so anxious was He that all should hear it), "If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture saith, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." St. John adds an explanation thus, "This spake He of The Spirit which they, that believe on Him should receive" (John 7:38-39). In the parable of The Vine and the Branches, he said, "Every branch in me that bringeth forth fruit, He purgeth (cleanseth, R. V.) it, that it may bring forth more fruit."

Who will say that Jesus did not make a specialty of holiness in His preaching? And if He did how can his preachers do anything less? We have often noticed that the cry against making a specialty of this does not come from those who are very earnest in persuading men to receive The Spirit. God has given us but one book and that makes a specialty of holiness, for it is a treatise on

that subject. It tells of a holy heaven and that holiness is the specialty which will admit us. It also says that the way to it is a holy way. If the ministry were not ordained of God to show His people how to be ready to exchange worlds at any time, and to be constantly urging it upon them, we are at a loss to know what God has put them in the work for.

4. Jesus here urges young converts to seek The Holy Spirit. The question will suggest itself to some who read this, Were the disciples regenerate men at this time? It may seem an uncalled for digression to take up this question at this point, but it is an important one, and right here may be just the proper place to take it up.

We are certain that it will not be controverted by any one, that Jesus called these disciples from that little band, who were the disciples of John, the Baptist. These were the converts of John. This may be seen by the following passage, "The next day John seeth Jesus coming to him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Again in verse 35: "Again the next day after, John stood and two of his disciples, and looking upon Jesus as he walked he saith, Behold the Lamb of God." One of these two disciples was Andrew. The two then brought Peter to Jesus. Then others of John's disciples came to Jesus and the twelve were called to be His disciples. Had these men become regenerate men during their discipleship with John in the six months of his preaching? We believe they had. John was preaching as clear and emphatic a gospel of regeneration as any of our modern pulpits preach or can preach. We believe he was preaching a more stalwart kind of religion than a large mass of the pulpits preach today. We shall reserve the discussion of just what he preached for another chapter.

Let us see just what Jesus had been preaching. He had been preaching, "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 4:17). He had been insisting that men must be regenerated in order to see the kingdom of God. He told Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again he can not see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). So regeneration was not a doctrine unpreached and unexperienced until Pentecost as some have imagined. Do you suppose that Jesus would have been so emphatic with Nicodemus and allowed his disciples to get along without the new birth? Who believes that Jesus would have allowed these men to preach the gospel and cast out devils and yet be without the experience that he declared that Nicodemus, the great doctor of the law, must have. Jesus had also been telling men that their sins were forgiven, as they trusted him. He said to the paralytic, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee" (Mark 2:5). Could he have allowed his gospel to be preached by his disciples and they yet unforgiven when he was in the business of forgiving men's sins? It is harder to believe these men were unsaved than to believe that they were saved.

Again, who that is candid is ready to believe that Jesus was with his disciples the three years before Pentecost, and was unable or unwilling to have them saved when he was urging salvation on others?

The people who take the ground that these men were unregenerate, must believe that Jesus employed unsaved men to preach the gospel which they themselves had failed to experience. One passage is sufficient to explode the unscriptural notion that they were not renewed men until Pentecost. Although we might give many others. We quote it and then leave this point for the time being. In the seventeenth chapter of John, verse twelve, He says of his disciples, "Those whom thou gavest me I have kept and none of them is lost." They were therefore saved. If a person is

given by God The Father to His beloved Son, and is not lost but is kept by Jesus himself, we must conclude that he is saved. What other proof would a candid man need of the regeneration of these men?

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## 02 -- A REMARKABLE UTTERANCE (CONTINUED)

How sadly mistaken are those people who say that it discourages young converts to urge them to seek the grace of entire sanctification. Such statements reveal ignorance of spiritual life on the part of the objector, which gives rise to this strange notion. No man who is really converted is afraid of getting too much of the salvation of God.

It did not confuse the converts of Jesus then, and it does not now. No doubt it would prove very confusing to man-made converts, for manmade converts need God's salvation. It never discourages a man who has something good to tell him that he can have more of it, or something better.

We have great sympathy for those people who do not want any more religion, for we are certain that they have a poor kind, or they would want more. It follows as a logical conclusion, that if we do not want any more we have no religion worth having now. We advise people who are discouraged by being offered more, to get rid of the kind of religion that they have and get a kind that is so good that they will want all they can get of it, and will want all the hindrances to it removed. It never discourages a man who has one dollar to be told that he can have another. It never discourages the man clearly converted to tell him that he has seen only the smallest part of what God has in store for him.

Jesus therefore tells these saved men that they are eligible under certain conditions to the gift of The Holy Ghost.

We notice that the apostles also urged this upon young converts. Paul writes to the Thessalonians who had been converted less than a year, and who were enjoying salvation, calling their attention to the fact that "This is the will of God, your sanctification." He also adds, "God hath not called us unto uncleanness but unto holiness." He also closes the Epistle praying, "The God of peace, Himself, sanctify you wholly." Peter also says to the children of God, "As obedient children not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance, but as he which hath called you is holy so be ye also holy, for it is written, be ye holy for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:14-16). In our 'holiness ministry of a score of years we have never seen a young convert for this cause discouraged, but we have seen some who might have been saved from backsliding if some one had only instructed them concerning this "More excellent way."

John Wesley probably had under his care more converts than any man since the Christian Era began. He is good authority on this subject. He says in a letter to Thomas Rankin, first superintendent of American Methodism, "I have been thinking lately a good deal on one point, wherein, perhaps we have all been wanting. We have not made it a rule, as soon as ever persons are justified to remind them of 'going on to perfection.' Whereas this is the very time preferable to

all others. They have then the simplicity of little children; and they are fervent in spirit ready to cut off a right hand or to pluck out the right eye. But if we once allow this fervor to subside, we shall find it hard enough to bring them again even to the point."

5. This remarkable passage shows Jesus exhorting young preachers to obtain this gift. He had just a little previous to this, ordained them, and has sent them out to preach the gospel and heal the sick and cast out devils. Healing was practiced by the Apostles before Pentecost, therefore the gift of healing is not entire sanctification, nor one of its results, and is not of so much importance. So the assertion of some that Pentecost was simply the gift of power to work miracles is a mistake. The disciples did this before Pentecost. They did some good work before they received the gift of The Holy Ghost at Pentecost, but how much greater works afterwards! Jesus was so desirous that His preachers should receive this gift, that He prayed for their sanctification before He went through Gethsemane and Calvary and after his resurrection, urged them to receive The Holy Ghost, and in his farewell address told them not to leave Jerusalem without it.

We ought therefore to be most intensely interested that our young preachers should at once come to this blessed crisis of experience. After all has been said, that can be, as to the importance of education and culture, the gift of The Holy Ghost is the chief and absolute essential for the furnishing of the ministry that it may be what God intended.

Where we have one theological seminary we ought to have a dozen Pentecostal Seminaries to teach and explain the doctrine and to be held sacred, as the places where the ministry tarry until they have realized the gift. With the odds that the disciples had against them, they needed something more than education to fit them for their life work. And with the great forces that are arrayed against the cause of God today, can we get along with less than the equipment they had? The Methodist bodies have all of them very appropriately demanded of their candidates for ordination, a solemn promise to seek this gift. Would that it had become something more than a mere form, as in so many cases.

6. Jesus teaches that the great petition of truly regenerate persons is for The Gift of The Holy Ghost. It is interesting here to note the connection of this verse with the preceding verses (Luke 11:1-10). This is the most important passage in relation to the doctrine of prayer in the whole Bible. Here the Great Teacher, in answer to the request of His disciples, teaches them how to pray. He says more as to the nature of prayer than in any other of His recorded utterances.

First He gives the form of prayer, commencing with the well-known words, "Our Father which art in heaven."

He then gives a parable teaching the spirit of perseverance which we should exercise in prayer. He likens the perseverance which we need to exercise, to that of a man who routs one of his friends from his bed at midnight, to aid him in entertaining another friend, who has come to him in his journey and must be fed. Then He closes this address on prayer with a most unique illustration of a loving parent feeding his hungry child. And declares that much more does the Father delight to give The Holy Spirit to those who ask Him.

We have then in this passage the form, the persistence in asking and the great blessing that all true prayer will lead to in the experience of one who is truly regenerate. That great blessing is The Gift of The Holy Spirit. The prayers of all people who remain regenerate for any length of time will culminate in this blessing.

In other words, as the true children of God, we will not only use the form, persevere in mighty faith, but we will make The Gift of The Holy Spirit our great petition. It is just as natural for a truly saved man to pray for The Gift of The Spirit, as for a hungry child to ask for food.

There is begotten in the heart of every believer as intense a desire for The Gift, as there is in a healthy child intense desire for food. A man who does not want this gift is either not regenerate or is in a spiritually dying condition. God intends that a saved man shall never be satisfied until he has received this gift.

We do not wish to be understood that every convert prays definitely or specifically for this gift, in just so many words. Hungry children cry for food long before they know the name of it. There are thousands of God's dear children who are like a child crying for that which his soul craves, even when they have never heard any preaching or testimony to the effect that it may be theirs in realization. In many a heart, that has never heard a sermon on holiness, there is this undefined want. The Holy Spirit is ever urging such people to pray for satisfaction of soul.

No one yet heard a sincere soul pray, "O, Lord, make me almost right." Such a prayer would be a burlesque. A truly saved man prays for a heart free from everything wrong. No man can be a Christian and pray for anything less.

Why does a Christian thus pray? Because he has been born of The Spirit and his life is under the tutorship of The Spirit, who inspires this prayer as well as his heart hunger. Here is the philosophy of what we are maintaining. All true prayer is inspired by The Spirit. "For we know not what we should pray for as we ought but The Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which can not be uttered" (Rom. 8:26). He inspires within us the prayers He designs to answer.

Hence many sincere Christians have been led into the experience of this great gift without a human teacher. They were determined to have a satisfying religion. Cost what it might, they persevered, blindly, eagerly, persistently and successfully, until they got as many loaves as they needed to satisfy them and to feed their neighbors, as did the man in the parable. And we have known people who so felt their need of receiving from the Master enough to feed their perishing neighbors and friends that like the man in the midnight hour they persisted through, asked, sought and knocked until the Master gave them the soul food they needed. Let no man call this fanaticism, for honest souls without any human teacher have read their Bibles and prayed through and received the gift. No one can blame a hungry soul for thus praying, when they are so hungry, and their Bibles tell them that God has a satisfying portion. And certainly no one dares blame Him who gave it. Let us be careful then how we criticize.



Shall we criticize the Word of God that promises soul satisfaction? Shall we criticize The Spirit, who has created such a hunger? Or shall we criticize Him who answered the prayer? And yet thousands of professed Christians are looking on such experience as fanaticism.

We have known of many such cases where people had this experience and did not even know the Bible name for it. When some one came along and preached on the subject, they were glad to hear the name of their experience. They liked it all the better when they knew the name. As some one says before that they were like a person eating honey in the dark. They were glad to know that the name of it was honey. A case of this kind came under the writer's own observation, which is so good that he cannot forbear relating it, and for the truth of which he can vouch.

A good, aged German sister had lost eleven children. It is a pathetic sight to look upon that row of eleven graves in the cemetery.

She was a member of a church that puts no emphasis upon experimental religion. Nevertheless this honest soul had persevered in her praying until she knew that her sins were forgiven.

Heartbroken, she had one day gone to 'her place of secret prayer, asking God if she should ever see her children in heaven. Led by the prayer inspiring Spirit, she had yielded herself in a complete consecration to God, although she did not understand the terms that define that experience. The result was that she received the Baptism with The Holy Spirit.

She had gone into the place of secret prayer in sorrow. She came out with holy laughter.

The hired man supposing she had become insane was so frightened that he ran a mile in stocking feet to get her husband home, telling him "Your wife has become crazy."

When they arrived at the house she was still laughing. They did not know what to think of it.

On Sunday the preacher discoursed on the woman at the well of Samaria and the well of living waters that Jesus said he would put in believers. He had much to say about the joy of salvation -- the happiness that true religion will afford. There are many preachers who tell of the wonderful peace and joy of religion. They are obliged to give it a good recommendation or they would lose their job, for they seem to have taken up preaching as a job. But there is a hungry, disappointed church all around, who have not proved it to be true, for very few seem to preach it as if they expected the people to have the joy of salvation or had it themselves. They do not tell them of The Indwelling Comforter, the joy producer.

When he had finished his discourse, our good sister walked up to the front of the church and said to him, "Brother, I have got it."

"Got what?"

"The living waters which you preached about," was the reply.

"The living waters!" was the astonished rejoinder.

"Yes."

The preacher was astonished, abashed and dumbfounded, to find that the good woman had obtained what he had preached about.

How much sermonizing there is at which the preachers would be astonished if it became experimental.

The preacher recovered a little from his astonishment and embarrassment, and said to his wife, "Let us take her to the parsonage."

So they each took her by the hand and led her to their home. When they got there, to add to their astonishment the Lord blessed her again. This was too much for them and they said, "Well, you have something that we have not."

As the woman day after day insisted that she was still possessed of the "Living Waters" ecclesiasticism became much disturbed for some reason. The carnal mind is enmity against God, says the apostle. And we suppose for the same reason it is enmity against everything that God does. The result was that the preacher sent to another part of the State for some of the leading preachers to reason with the sister and convince her that she had no experience and that all that she had experienced was a delusion.

Not being able to convince her they expelled her from the church. Expelled her for obtaining what the minister had preached about! Like the man cured of blindness she knew what she had. When a truth is once clearly seen we can never unsee it.

A few months afterwards God sent an evangelist with a tabernacle to this town. The good sister went to hear him and one day when he preached on the subject of holiness as she sat and drank in the word, she saw that holiness was the very experience that she had received and had always called it the "Living Waters." When she heard the name she appreciated it all the more.

Now it would be absurd to say that this sister had been persuaded to seek this experience by "Some of these fanatics" (as some people call them) who preach holiness. She obtained it by going to God with her heart need. If any one was to be blamed it was not the woman. Will any one undertake to say that the Lord is to be held responsible or criticized for it? [\*The writer can bring many witnesses to vouch for the truth of this incident.] Jesus said, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled." A genuinely regenerate soul has implanted in his nature a hunger and thirst after righteousness, such as a man without spiritual life never has. This is a mark of the new birth -- a desire for holiness. Let no one suppose himself a child of God who is without it.

And such a soul will be filled. This is the promise of Jesus. "Every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself." He either has a pure heart or is seeking it.

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### 03 -- FOR THE CHILDREN OF GOD ONLY

It is affirmed by a certain class of religionists that the gift of The Holy Ghost is the same as the experience of regeneration and that the disciples at Pentecost were just converted.

We object to this objection, as simply made to dodge the necessity of receiving the gift as a second work of grace. We believe we can sustain our objection by the plain word of God. If we cannot, we desire that what we say will be corrected by some Bible student, and we sincerely affirm that we are open to conviction on this most important subject.

These men had been regenerated by the preaching of John the Baptist, as the human instrument. They had been baptized by John without doubt, for they were the disciples of John when Jesus called them. Their baptism meant that they had experienced what their master, John, had been preaching. Certainly Jesus would not have called them, if they had merely pretended to have experienced what John preached. He would not have called hypocrites to be his disciples.

It remains then for us to discover what doctrines and experience were preached by John in his six months' ministry.

(1) John preached repentance. St. Mark says, "John did baptize in the wilderness and preach the baptism of repentance" (Mark 1:4). We know this was evangelical repentance, for Matthew tells us that it meant abandonment of sin, in these words: "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance" (Matt. 3:8). This preacher of righteousness required a life of righteousness. Do gospel preachers of today make any greater requirements? Do they preach a more stalwart repentance? No.

(2) John preached that sin must be confessed. "Then went out to him all Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region round about Jordan and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins" (Matt. 3:5-6). Confession of sins was then and is now a condition of acceptance with God. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper. But he that confesseth and forsaketh shall find mercy" (Prov. 28:13).

(3) John preached faith in Jesus as necessary to salvation. In the third chapter of the Gospel of St. John, verse 36, we shall see by careful study that John the Baptist and not John the Evangelist is speaking. This may be seen by referring to verses 23-27. He says in verse 36, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." That is, John was preaching that every one who believed on Jesus had everlasting life.

A quarter of a century later we find St. Paul on one of his preaching tours at Ephesus commenting on the preaching of John, asking twelve men whom he found there this question: "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" They replied a good deal as many might reply in

Christian churches today, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." And when he asked them unto what they had been baptized and they had replied "Unto John's baptism," Paul began to show them what John preached in these words, "John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying that they should believe on him that should come after" him, that is, on Christ Jesus." Here we see that John was preaching that we must believe on Jesus in order to be saved. Do Gospel preachers preach anything else as a condition of salvation today? Nay, verily.

(4) John preached the remission (or forgiveness) of sins. "John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins" (Mark 1:4). This is the very same experience that Peter preached to sinners, when three thousand were converted.

(5) John preached regeneration. This is a theological term and is used to denote the experience of the new birth. It is the same requirement which Jesus made of Nicodemus, when he said, "Ye must be born again." It means the new, eternal life coming into the dead soul, whereby a man becomes a new creature. We read in John 3:36, a passage already alluded to, which is the language of John the Baptist and not John the writer, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life" -- not, he will have it at some future day, but he has it now. It is a present experience. Gospel preachers offer nothing grander to penitent sinners today.

(6) John preached that we may know we are saved now and do not have to wait until we die, to know it. There are many preachers under this dispensation who do not preach that we may know this. There are many professed Christians who only indulge a hope of salvation.

But John came to tell men they could have a salvation of which they could have a consciousness. Zacharias, the father of John, when filled with the Holy Ghost (and hence uttered the truth) said of John's mission that he had come to "Give the KNOWLEDGE OF SALVATION to his people by the remission of their sins" (Luke 1:77). Thus we see that John preached repentance, confession of sin, faith, pardon, regeneration and assurance -- the same doctrines that we preach to sinners today. Will any candid man say that these men who left John to follow Jesus were unsaved, unregenerate men? Had not John been getting them ready to be the disciples of Jesus? And did not Jesus declare later that they belonged to God at the time they were given to Him -- not by John, but by The Father? Jesus realized that the Father had been preparing them for Him, simply using John as the instrument. In the seventeenth chapter of John, verse nine, he says of their transference to himself from John, "Them which thou hast given me; for they are thine." A few verses later he says, "They are not of the world even as I am not of the world." They were as separate and distinct from the world as he was. What more could they have, or must they have or become, to be all that the Bible requires to be a child of God? Nothing.

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#### 04 -- FOR THE CHILDREN OF GOD ONLY (CONTINUED)

Having shown from the word of God with sufficient proofs to convince any candid man that these men were regenerate at this time, we now take up the illustration of Jesus. Either they were regenerate or the illustration of Jesus is without point or adaptation. Where can an instance be found where his illustrations were not as clear as the noon day?

He is here showing the delight of a parent in feeding a hungry child. This appeals to the finest and tenderest feelings of a parent. "If ye being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give The Holy Spirit to them that ask him." The point of the illustration is, You are God's children and if you are delighted in giving food to your children, how much more delighted is The Father to give The Holy Spirit to his children, which ye are. To understand that these men were unsaved men at this time, would spoil the illustration of Jesus and make it meaningless. He says, "Your Heavenly Father." He recognizes the fact that they are of the family of God -- His children.

We know that right here the Universalist says that we are all by nature the children of God, because He created us. But this is not true. To be sure God created us. He also created the brutes about us. But if that is the only claim We have to sonship, it is a very weak one. But St. John says we are "Born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh or the will of man," but by receiving Jesus. Paul says we are "By nature the children of wrath." Without the new birth we can never call God, father, except on the level of brutes whom God has never recognized as his children, for they have not His nature. How beautiful and appropriate and encouraging then, this illustration of Jesus becomes when we understand Him as talking to the children of God. How meaningless it would have been to them if they had been still the children of the wicked one! God will give The Spirit to His children with as much delight as you feed your children. It was the disciples and not the unsaved world about them to whom Jesus taught the prayer, "Our Father which art in heaven." He told the disciples to call God their Father. This was an unheard of thing. No one had ever thought of calling him Father before this. Now He announces the fact that these men might call him Father. But this announcement never was made to an unsaved man.

Dr. A. J. Gordon in his great work entitled *The Ministry of The Spirit*, notes the fact that there is the same error touching the ministry of The Spirit that Universalists have fallen into as regards the ministry of Jesus. Universalism affirms that men may become sons of God unconsciously when they assert that all men are sons of God by natural birth. Modern Zinzendorfianism asserts that the gift of The Holy Spirit is the same as regeneration which is nothing more than the old error of Universalism applied to the ministry of The Spirit, asserting that we obtain the gift of the Spirit unconsciously; that we are entirely sanctified at that time when we are not seeking it and do not realize it.

The objection is sometimes raised that in teaching that the disciples were regenerated by The Holy Spirit, we are teaching that they were without The Spirit until the day of Pentecost.

This is not true. They were regenerate before Pentecost. No man can be regenerate without having The Spirit in a measure, but not as "The gift," as Paul calls it, "The Fullness of The Blessing."

Jesus clearly shows this to the disciples before Pentecost thus, "Even The Spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive because is seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him; but ye know Him, for He dwelleth with you and shall be in you" (John 14:17). Here it will be noticed that The Spirit was dwelling, "With them," and they knew Him, while the unsaved world knew Him not. Quite a

difference between them and the world about them! But the time was coming when He should be "In them." Comment on this verse seems unnecessary.

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## 05 -- THE SPECIAL WORK OF THE SPIRIT

The offices of The Spirit are many. He is carrying on the work of redemption in this world. Therefore He has been well styled "The Executive of The Godhead." Among His offices are the works of enlightening, convicting, regenerating, witnessing, sanctifying, indwelling, striving and comforting.

But He has one work greater than all others and to which all others are either subsidiary or the result, and that is to purify the heart from all sin. There is a disposition in some quarters to magnify the results of His special work in cleansing to the belittling or ignoring of that special work of cleansing. Empowering is the result of His cleansing and filling and many people magnify it above cleansing.

The next great work that He accomplishes in the heart of the believer to whom He has witnessed to His sonship, is to convict of indwelling sin in order to induce him to seek cleansing from it.

The battle ground today is not as to a second work of grace. That has been clearly proved and conceded. The question now is, as to the nature of that work. The storm center is over the sin question.

Quite a company of people are declaring that the only thing accomplished in him who receives the gift of The Spirit is empowering for service. But that the carnal nature must remain in us until death, although it may be kept in subjection by a good degree of watchfulness. This is a denial of the special work of holiness and a magnifying of one of its results. This is the essence of Keswickianism. Dr. Daniel Steele has pointed out very clearly that the very name of The Holy Spirit indicates His special work.

He is The Holy Spirit while that term holy is not given to the other persons of the Trinity when we speak of them -- not because they are not holy, but He is called The Holy Spirit because it is His special office to make us holy. This is the great point towards which all the dispensations trend and He is on earth for that special purpose. We are "elect of God through sanctification of The Spirit," says Peter (Ch. 1:2).

That the cleansing of the heart from all the corruption and derangement which it has inherited from the fall of man is the special work of The Spirit when He is received as The Gift, is seen in the terms used to denote this experience.

This "second work" is called "The Baptism with The Holy Spirit." The word baptism means cleansing. Consultation of any standard dictionary will show this. How astonishing then that intelligent men will persist in teaching that the Baptism with The Spirit means only empowering.

Empowering is the result that always follows to a greater or less degree when the soul is baptized. But it is the result and not the experience itself.

Brother Moody received the baptism under the exhortation of two godly women who taught, professed and lived the blessing of a clean heart. It gave him great empowering. He himself taught that Christians should obtain it as empowering for service. We have yet to hear of any person who ever obtained it under his preaching or teaching. As far as we have had any experience or observation, no one was ever known to receive this as power for service, seeking it as such. But thousands have received power for service by seeking and obtaining the blessing of entire sanctification.

We doubt if there is a case on record of any one ever receiving the baptism who sought it as a means of obtaining power. There is too much of selfishness and self-importance wrapped up in the idea of most persons, who thus seek. This baptism will kill that thing out of the heart, and The Spirit will not cater to the self life that seeks power rather than purity.

Another term much used by the people who talk thus is "the fullness." Their teaching is that we may obtain the fullness when we are baptized with The Spirit, which is true. But it cannot be true that we obtain the "Fullness" with the old nature still remaining. This is a contradiction of terms. It is impossible to be filled with The Holy Spirit and have any other spirit in us at the same time. How absurd to thus use terms. Is a bottle full of water if there is something else there at the same time? Is a heart filled with The Spirit if there be any of the old carnal nature, which "Is enmity with God," at the same time? Can The Holy Spirit fill a heart and have anything contrary to Himself there at the same time? Such statements are self-contradictory.

We must conclude therefore that while there are other offices of The Spirit in the tutelage which He assumes over the soul, yet the great work, which He performs in The Baptism, from the very definition of the word is entire sanctification or the cleansing of the heart from "The Carnal Mind," or in other words, the defilement and trend towards evil which we all have inherited. If words teach or have any meaning, this is what they mean when we use these terms.

We might point out here that to teach the indwelling of The Spirit in a sinful heart, with sin suppressed is a wrong state of things. It is an impure condition, even if sin be hidden or suppressed. We cannot believe that The Spirit, the source of all purity, can consent to dwell in any such temple.

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## 06 -- NOT A GRADUAL PROCESS

There are some people who believe that the heart is cleansed from its native depravity by a gradual process, called "Growth In Grace." It is expressed by some in the phrase "Dying more and more daily to sin."

This is a very delusive theory, as it entirely mistakes the nature and object of growth, which is not to destroy but to add to that which already exists. Growth adds quantity but never quality. A piece of cloth may be in need of washing and if we add more cloth there will be no less dirt in the fabric. What we need is subtraction of the dirt. Nothing in either nature or grace ever becomes clean by growth.

**THERE ARE NO WITNESSES TO THIS DECEPTIVE THEORY.** Many people say they believe we become clean in heart by growth, but no one as yet has testified in any age of the church that he has arrived at the state of entire sanctification by growth in grace.

As we saw in the last chapter that the special work of The Spirit is to entirely sanctify the soul, therefore this work must be done in the soul according to the way The Spirit works. For He is the only Sanctifier. If the gift of The Spirit is gradual then we are sanctified gradually. But if the gift of The Spirit is an instantaneous work then the entire sanctification of the heart is not a gradual work. It only remains for us to see whether the reception of this gift is a growth or an instantaneous impartation.

This illustration of Jesus about the parent giving food to the hungry child settles this question, for Jesus meant something always by His illustrations. This false notion would make the illustration of Jesus meaningless.

He does not say, What man is there among you, if his son ask bread will he say, "My dear son, you must grow into it or grow bigger before you can have it."

A good earthly parent gives the food to his child **WHEN THAT CHILD ASKS ARIGHT** -- not at some future time. Thus Jesus teaches us that God wants to give us the soul satisfying gift when we need it -- not at some other time. He will not put off those that really hunger and thirst. He will fill them. He will not tantalize them and put them off and thus tease them. No; He loves us more than we love our children. And the desire for the fullness of salvation was not put in our hearts to tease or worry us. What a picture some people have in their minds of the great and good God! He is not cruel, but He gives at once to those who yield completely to him. We assert that entire sanctification is not a gradual gift for two reasons.

1. It is to be asked for. Where are we told that it is to be grown into? "To them that ask Him," says Jesus. A child will not ask very earnestly for a gift that he is to receive only after a process of years. Nor will a Christian plead very importunately for that which he expects gradually. It is contrary to the laws of the human mind. And he who bids us ask, is the Creator of the human mind and heart. Will a man be very importunate in prayer for something which he believes is already gradually taking place within him! To show the absurdity of this idea, it is only necessary to state it. If there ever was any one in Scriptural history or since who strove mightily, and wrestled with great faith for a gradual blessing and finally triumphed, we have never heard of such a case. If children cry importunately for bread to the parent without any expectation of getting it at present, we have never heard of such children.

2. To grow into a gift is an absurdity for it is a contradiction of terms. Who ever heard of a person growing into a gift! A gift is something to be received and not grown into. Did you grow



into your Christmas present or did you receive it? It seems almost trivial to thus write, but it shows the weakness of this popular error.

All salvation is obtained by faith, not attained by growth. Notice the distinction between the words, obtain and attain. We obtain by faith. We attain by seeking to work out, stretch up to, etc. Faith is the hand that reaches out and takes the gift at once. When Peter declared that their hearts were "purified by faith at Pentecost" (Acts 15:9), he forever settled this question. Peter was there when the work of Pentecost took place and we prefer this statement of one who had it to ten thousand who have not received it, no matter what their theory may be?

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## 07 -- POWER FOR SERVICE

We have already alluded to this subject in a previous chapter. We want to say here what we could not say exactly at that place.

"Power for service" is a very popular expression. It is exceedingly taking. It is the shibboleth of a certain school of teachers. They make this the chief work of The Spirit, whereas the Scripture does not. Jesus made it in His teaching the result of the sanctifying baptism. He said, "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." The Revised Version translates it "When the Holy Ghost is come upon you." This empowering is not The Holy Spirit himself nor the special work of The Spirit; it is rather the result of The Spirit coming into the heart and destroying that great hindrance to power -- the carnal mind and indwelling the believer and working out through all his being.

There is no gift of power independent of and separate from His own presence in the heart. And He manifests His fullness only in holy lives and living. Hence the greatest power in the world is the power of a holy life. How many people are caught and bewitched with the idea of a mysterious endowment that will throw a spell over the utterances of the tongue and sway the multitude without any reference to the character of the person speaking. Hence many have sought for the gift of power to speak and electrify and move without regard to holy living. Many want to be Simpsons or Spurgeons, or great soul savers who do not want a holy heart. Paul says, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels and have not love I am become as a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal."

A holy life has more power than all the oratory of this world. A holy man, back of a sermon or testimony has more real power than all the orators and eloquence of the world. This is the power God wants us to have. This is the real power. This is within the reach of all. It is better then to seek that which we can have, than eloquence of tongue which God grants to but few.

We have never yet heard of any one who obtained the gift of power independent of the entire sanctification of the heart. We have never heard of any one, who ignored holiness and sought the baptism of power, who received either. This half truth has switched many off the track --

seeking a mysterious power instead of seeking a holy life, the greatest power on earth to move men.

Nice words, oratorical periods, and human eloquence never yet saved men. A holy heart on the other hand transforms small talents into electric conductors of Holy Ghost power. He wants the glass of the globes clear and then He will come in and shine out. But how few care to have the glass cleaned. They want the shining through uncleanness.

It is possible, therefore, to get whole congregations to the altar seeking power, who would not come at all for a clean heart, by which the old self life, that great hindrance to power, is removed.

It puffs up the pride to think of becoming of so much consequence to the work of God that all men will see and admire our great doings. Much of the cry for power is the selfish desire of the unsanctified heart.

Some one says that many seek The Holy Spirit for what they can get out of Him and not for His own sake or for the sake of being right, a good deal like a man marries his housekeeper, not for love, but because it is cheaper than to pay her wages.

When we become all that God wants us to be, He will give us all the power He wants us to have. And He says emphatically in His word that He wants us to be holy. We turn now to this wonderful illustration of Jesus.

When the child is hungry, if the parent gives it food, it becomes stronger to do the bidding of the parent. But the child never comes to the parent for food that it may be stronger to do errands for the parent.

We never hear a child say, "Father, give me bread or an egg or a fish that I may be stronger to run errands for you." No. It asks for the food to supply the hunger of its nature, and the food, however, makes it stronger. And a child of God really regenerate as we have shown, never comes to God saying, "I want The Holy Spirit that I may do better work for Thee." But a really regenerate man comes that the deep longings of his nature, to be pure, to be like his Father, which are implanted in the soul by The Holy Spirit, may be satisfied by that Spirit. When that sinful temper has been purified and the carnal mind cast out, then that child of God is stronger and is qualified to do his Father's bidding, holiness is the desire of the soul of a really converted man. before all desire for power. And when he has that, he has power. When we get the fever all out of the blood and the ever upspringing well of living waters in the soul, then "Rivers of water" flow out of the holy life just as Jesus said should be the case (See John 7:38). Get the gift and there will be no trouble with the result -- power.

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08 -- A DEFINITE EXPERIENCE

The gift of The Holy Spirit is a definite experience received by a definite act of faith, as truly as is the experience of conversion. It produces a crisis in the experience of the individual who receives it.

As we have before remarked it is not attained by a process requiring a protracted time, but is obtained by simple faith.

There is a great deal of indefiniteness in the prayers and longings to which we hear people give expression.

There is a great deal of mere sentiment about "A deeper work of grace," "Getting nearer to God," being "More faithful," "Seeking a deeper work of grace," etc.

These are neither Scriptural expressions nor Scriptural experiences. If we carefully study the Word we shall find that those who prayed and received spiritual experiences made definite requests. They aimed at something definite in their prayers.

The Publican did not pray to be better, but he prayed for God to have mercy and forgive him. That man went down to his house with a definite experience. He was JUSTIFIED. His sins were all forgiven. David did not pray for more religion or to be made better. He prayed for a clean heart. The disciples in the upper room tarried and prayed for ten days -- not for power, or a deeper work of grace, but for "THE promise of the Father." This was a definite prayer and it received a definite answer. So definite was it that when it was received, Peter used the definite pronoun to describe it, saying, "THIS is THAT which was spoken by the prophet Joel." It was something definite. If it had been more religion, how would they have known how much more it was or how could they tell any one else how much it was? Faith has to have something definite to lay hold upon. It is very difficult, it seems to us, to exercise faith for more religion unless we have some idea of how much more we want.

When we hear people pray for more religion we wonder what kind they have now. If they have a false religion or a mean religion the more they have of it the worse off they will be. Sometimes it would be a curse to have any more of the kind they now have on hand. And if they now have the right kind of religion it may mean so little an increase as to amount to nothing.

Some say they want "A deeper work of grace." This, too, is too indefinite to mean much of anything. They may have it deeper, but not as deep as they ought to go. We may want to be better and yet not want to be as good as we ought to be.

The comparative degree is a very indefinite degree. But the superlative degree means something. When the soul says I want to be at my best for God and want the best thing He has for me -- that means something. But how few want to be completely swallowed up in the will of God. They want to make a few mental reservations.

They want to be better if it is not going to cost too much. They want more religion if there is to be no cross bearing with it. But if they must let Benjamin go down to Egypt or yield up their Isaac to be sacrificed, then they do not want to go into it as deep as that. They are willing to have

more religion of their kind if they are not required to smash their idols. They are willing to have a deeper work of grace if it does not go so deed as to kill the "Old Man."

They are willing to get more religion if they can get it cheap.

We may get nearer to God and not get as near as we ought. Multitudes are singing, "Nearer my God to Thee," who mean nothing but a pretty sentiment that makes them feel good for the two minutes that they are sinning. That hymn, "Nearer my God to Thee," is very popular with a lot of worldly Christians who have religion as a kind of life preserver to be used only in time of emergency and not for every day. It is one of the marks of the emasculated standards of the day that this hymn that was written by a Unitarian and has not a word of Jesus Christ or the atonement or salvation in it should have been allowed in the Hymnals of the "Orthodox Churches" and become popular with masses of professed Christians.

We may have something better than approximating towards God. Jesus said. "If any man love me, he will keep my words and my Father will love him and we will come unto him and make our abode with him" (John 14:23).

To have the Father and Son dwell in us is better than getting nearer to God.

Again we hear people say, "I want to be more faithful." To be more faithful implies that we have not been faithful -- that we have been unfaithful.

In contrast to these human modifications of duty, notice how uncompromising and definite the commands of God are; such as "Be ye holy," "Be ye therefore perfect," "Covet earnestly the Best gifts."

A speaker at a college commencement said to the students, "Do not read good books. Do not read better books. Read only the best books." He meant that life was too short to fritter away on merely good books. There is time for only the best. In like manner we would say, Life is too short merely to be good or better when we may be holy and at our best for God.

The illustration of Jesus comes in again, to help us in our thinking at this point. Notice the definiteness of the asking. "If a son ask bread" or "A fish," or "An egg." If he asks bread he will get that definite thing that he asks for. So likewise if he ask an egg or a fish. He will obtain not something else, but that which he asks, is the teaching of Jesus. In other words, if we ask for The GIFT of The Spirit, God will not give us more religion or a deeper work of Grace, but the Gift of The Holy Ghost.

Then when we have received this definite blessing by definitely asking we are not to call it "A Great Blessing" or "More Religion," but call it just what we asked for. How many have received this blessing and then have hid their light under the bushel of indefinite testimony and as the result the light has become dimmed or has gone out.

If you have asked for bread and have been blessed, call it bread now that you have it.

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## 09 -- NOT FOR SALE

The very term, The Gift of The Holy Spirit, ought to be sufficient to teach every one that it cannot be bought. Yet multitudes are trying to buy it.

"How much more shall your Heavenly Father give The Holy Spirit to them that ask him," said Jesus. He is to be asked for -- not hired or bought.

There are people who start back in horror at the story of Simon Magus, who offered Peter money for the power to impart The Holy Spirit to others at the revival in Samaria. They think, how mercenary Simon was to offer money for such a purpose! There are some who seem to think that money is the key that will open every closed door and obtain for its possessor every treasure. Hence it has come to be a fact that they expect to purchase their way into heaven.

There are many different ways whereby men seek to obtain salvation by offering a price for it.

Some attempt to buy The Holy Spirit by their good works, their faithfulness, consecration, penance, mortification of the body, etc. Any way that men expect to obtain this blessing except as a gift is an attempt to buy it.

This is God's highest gift to His children. He will give it freely to those who ask Him, but He will sell it to no one. The parent feeds the child and takes care of it, not because the child earns its board, but because it is his child. The parent gives to the child because of its needs. Our Heavenly Father gives this gift because we are His children and because it is the greatest need of the children. Peter said to the council, "And we are His witnesses of these things; and so also is The Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey Him" (Acts 5:32).

God never sells His best to any one.

There are things too sacred to buy or sell. We are willing to give them to our best friends, but we would sell them to no one.

The faithful love of the mother is cheerfully given to her household. What drudgery she cheerfully takes up every day! What weariness and sleeplessness she gladly endures! What self-denial she practices for those she loves. Would she go out to sell all that for a stranger? Would money buy it? By no means. Money cannot buy love. It would be an insult to attempt to buy it. True love is above and beyond all price. Money cannot, with all its power, reach up to the best things.

Our Heavenly Father is independent. We have nothing to give Him that He needs. He is not in business for gain. The sooner some people act in harmony with this principle the sooner they will begin to advance in divine things.

For there is a class of people who think they are buying the sanctification of their hearts by offering their consecration as the price. They think that entire consecration will bring entire sanctification. But this is not true. They begin to feel as if they had put the Lord under obligation in entirely consecrating themselves to Him. It is true that entire consecration is putting ourselves on believing ground for this blessing, but being "on believing ground and believing are no more the same than being on farming ground is farming. This is the reason many are mystified. They say, "My consecration is complete. I do not know of anything more that I can do. But I do not receive the blessing." Of course not. They have not thrown away their unbelief and taken the gift by simple faith. But they are arrogating to themselves a good deal of merit, as much as to say, "I have paid a big price and have merited the blessing. The Lord owes it to me."

Think of the disciples to whom Jesus was to give the kingdom of heaven and who had left two or three boats and a few nets and a business in a small lake, boasting of their great consecration!

Reader, if you owned the whole world and gave it all up to God the Gift of The Holy Ghost would be worth more than the whole world even if it had been made of solid gold. Quit putting so high an estimate on your doings and the few straws that you have given to God. If you want the gift you must take it as a GIFT.

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## 10 -- IT IS NOT DANGEROUS

Paul speaking to the Corinthians of remaining a while at Ephesus before he came to see them says, "For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries" (1 Cor. 16:9). This is true of every great, open door, whether of duty or privilege. About every open door there are many adversaries, who will do all they can to shut the door or keep us from entering.

Where was ever a good work going on, that there were not adversaries? Have not all good men, who have been engaged in any great work, been called to endure the fiercest opposition? Where was there ever a man who sought to save his soul that was not opposed and hindered by adversaries, sometimes of his own household? John Bunyan represents his Pilgrim as opposed by those of his own household who thought him mad when he sought to escape from the city of destruction. Over the door to this greatest and richest gift that God has to bestow, adversaries have sought to frighten away the hungry children of God by writing "Dangerous doctrine," "Fanaticism," "Absurdity," "Lunacy." But, thank God, some people have been through the door and found that these warnings are themselves absurd.

It was so in the days of Caleb and Joshua. The ten spies reported to the people that it was dangerous to go over into Canaan, because there were the giants of the land and the walled cities. But Caleb and Joshua had seen the land and had their eyes on the almighty power of their God.

Some people really think that if they receive this gift they will be taken right home to heaven and they do not seem to want to go. We have heard people say, "If I should become holy I would be too good for this world and would go right up to heaven." It seems they are afraid of going to heaven.

The world has always misunderstood its best people and considered them out of their mind. The devil likes to have it understood that this is a fatal gift and that if one receives it his usefulness is impaired and the church and world will have no further need or use for him.

So Joseph was called a dreamer; Elijah a troubler in Israel; Jeremiah a pessimist; Jesus and Paul were considered beside themselves.

At Pentecost they said the recipients of this grace were intoxicated. In the middle ages they called them "Mystics." John the Baptist, who was full of The Holy Ghost, so that even the wicked King Herod knew him to be a holy man, was said to be possessed of the devil. When Jesus came they said the same thing of Him. He was "Holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners," and yet when He was arrested they came out against Him with swords and staves, as if He were dangerous.

As long as Satan can get men to misunderstand the nature of this, their highest privilege, he is satisfied. Men are being frightened away from the doctrine and experience of holiness by the terms, "Sinless perfection" and the misrepresentation, "They say they cannot sin," until it is supposed that a man has an unsound mind to profess to have received this best gift that God has for His children. But it is not dangerous to be good. God will give us nothing that will harm us.

Hear what Jesus says on this point in this marvelous illustration. He evidently foresaw how the carnal mind would act. "If a son ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone?" Would you give your children anything that would hurt them? If you would not give your children anything to hurt them would God treat His children worse than you treat your children? Would a kind father give a child a stone when he asked for bread? Would he give him a serpent when he asked for a fish? Would he give him a scorpion when he asked for an egg? How absurd! And yet many are accusing God of these very dangerous things.

What shall we say of a preacher who had taken his ordination vows affirming that he expected at some time to receive this gift and that he was "Groaning after it," and yet refuse to seek it lest he become a fanatic. Was it not really a suspicion that his Heavenly Father was cruel or unwise?

So-called children of God fearing to ask for His greatest gift lest they be injured by it! Fearing their reputation will suffer; that they may be ostracized or their minds impaired.

No! No! A thousand times, no! This gift is not a stone without nourishment. It is the nutriment that every true Christian hungers for. It is not a stone -- hard, unpalatable and indigestible. It is not a serpent to poison us with his venom. It is not a scorpion to sting us to death. Shame on those who thus insult The Holy Spirit! Such misrepresentation is satanic.

This is the best thing that a loving Father can give His hungry children, not only nourishing but cleansing, illuminating, comforting and invigorating.

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## 11 -- THE BLESSER HIMSELF

The gifts bestowed by The Spirit are spoken of by the Apostle in Hebrews (2:4). But these are not the same as The Gift of The Spirit Himself.

There are thousands who profess to be Christians and refer to The Holy Spirit as "It."

The ignorance displayed by the converts mentioned in Acts 19th chapter is still displayed by thousands in the modern church. They seem to think of The Holy Spirit as an influence or an emotional experience. It is hardly too much to say that like those disciples of John they "Have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost."

A new and last dispensation began on the day of Pentecost. That day which marked the pouring out of The Spirit on all flesh that would receive Him. Jesus was on earth in a brief ministry of about three years. He was then the central figure and administrator. But when He went away, He said He would send another, even The Holy Spirit to take His place and reveal Himself more fully than when He was on earth. That person has come -- the blessed Spirit -- to take charge of the spiritual kingdom on earth. Hence this dispensation is called The Dispensation of The Holy Ghost.

He is treated much in this dispensation as Jesus was when He was on earth. He is despised and rejected of men as Jesus was. Men esteem him of little importance as they did Jesus. Much religion is carried on that has no more use for the Holy Spirit than the religionists of Jesus' day had for Him.

One of the many ways in which some slight Him is to refer to Him as simply an influence. Therefore they are willing to get along without His indwelling.

Men attempt to preach and perform duty relying on human wisdom and strength and utterance more than on Him.

But Jesus said, He is a person. In John (16:7-8) Jesus says of The Holy Spirit, "If I depart I will send HIM unto you and when HE is come, HE will reprove the world of sin." And again in the thirteenth and fourteenth verses, He says, "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 shall show you things to come. HE shall glorify me: for HE shall receive of mine and shall show it unto you."

Here it will be seen that the personal pronouns "HE" and "HIM" are used nine times. The Spirit is the central figure of this dispensation. And no one can be a strong, abiding Christian in this day who undertakes to slight Him.



He says, "Ye are the temples of The Holy Spirit." Paul says to the Corinthians, "Know ye not that ye are the temples of God and The Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor. 3:16). Not an influence, but a person dwells in the soul that has received this gift. He is the person who convicts, regenerates and sanctifies in order that He may come to dwell in the heart, which HE claims for His abode.

Some people want Him just for the help He gives and the graces He brings with Him. Others want Him for His own priceless self. He is to The Spirit of man what bread is to the hungry child.

Dr. S. A. Keen used to tell of a man who went away from home to California during "The gold fever" and remained away a long time. He prospered greatly and sent home to his family many Costly gifts. After a time, they wrote him that his gifts were very fine and that they appreciated them very highly, but they were more anxious to see him and urged him to come home.

There are some people who seem to think more of what The Spirit gives than of having Him as an abiding Comforter. Charles Wesley says:

"Thy gifts, alas! cannot suffice,  
Unless thyself be given;  
Thy presence makes my paradise,  
And where thou art is heaven."

Some want the gifts of tongues, or healing or eloquence or power for their own gratification. But there are others who desire to have Him as the Abiding Comforter.

Some, as we have had occasion to remark before, want Him in order to give them "Power for service" merely. But others are willing to have Him in the temple of the heart, for eternal worship and communion.

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## 12 -- OUR SPECIALTY

It is often said, "I believe in holiness, but I do not believe in making a specialty of it." This criticism is often raised against those who preach holiness that they are specialists. As if it were a crime to make a specialty of holiness. If it is no sin or misdemeanor to be a specialist on other subjects, why this stigma as regards the most important thing in this world or any other world?

We understand that in this age a man best succeeds in that to which he gives special attention. It is no sin to be a specialist in either the professions or trades and why is it not commendable in the great business of life which is preparation for eternity?

Those who offer this objection admit that there is an experience called holiness or entire sanctification. They make no argument against the doctrine, but for some reason think it should not be made a specialty.

TO BE AT OUR BEST WE OUGHT TO MAKE A SPECIALTY OF SOMETHING, AND WE CAN DO NO BETTER THAN TO MAKE A SPECIALTY OF THE BEST THING THERE IS.

The Apostle tells us to "follow peace with all men and that sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14). That which a man follows in life is his special calling. We suppose that those who object to holiness as a specialty, do it on the ground that to make it a specialty is to neglect other vital interests. Herein lies their mistake. Those who think making a specialty of holiness is to neglect other vital doctrines and experiences show both their ignorance of the experience and of its special advocacy.

There is no church in which the charge is made more against certain preachers and teachers, that they neglect other vital doctrines, than The Methodist Episcopal Church. But those unfortunately who make this criticism betray their ignorance of the whole matter. In fact holiness is the main wheel that moves all the system and preserves a beautiful unity of all the parts of our holy religion. It radiates out into the whole life and every department of Christian and church life, and gives every part its due proportion. Mr. Wesley said where the doctrine was preached constantly, explicitly and emphatically the work of God prospered in all its branches. The Board of Bishops, who are supposed to be good authority on the subject and to know just what they are talking about, said in their Episcopal address in 1824, "Holiness is the main cord that binds us together. Relax this, and you loosen the whole system. This will appear more evident if we call to mind the original design of Methodism. It was to raise up and preserve a holy people. This was the principal object which Mr. Wesley, who under God, was the great founder of our order, had in view. To this end all the doctrines believed and preached by the Methodists tend." These words are worth pondering by all Methodists who stigmatize their brethren for making" a specialty of holiness.

Such an experience as entire sanctification once realized will make its possessor a specialist indeed. We should be inclined to disbelieve in this doctrine to which the Bible gives chief place and which its professors declare is so wondrous, if they acted as if they had a trifling affair on their hands who possessed it. Jesus once said, "No man also having drunk old wine desireth new, for he saith the old is better" (Luke 5:39) Those who taste the Pentecostal wine are spoiled for all other kinds.

When the merchantman seeking goodly pearls found and invested his all in "The pearl of great price" he made his fortune in one investment. His whole life and interest were in that pearl. "We have an idea that he cared more to talk about that than anything else. He could afford to be called a specialist or anything else as long as he possessed the pearl.

Let us again look at this illustration of Jesus in the light of this truth and see how significant it is. "If his son shall ask bread." A hungry child is a specialist on the subject of food. Hunger and thirst are the strongest propensities of the physical nature. Let a healthy man be denied his proper

food for a few hours beyond the usual time and he becomes a decided specialist on the subject. Let the lack of food be prolonged still further and he becomes a more decided specialist on the food question. Let the abstinence be prolonged a little further and there is danger that he will become a brute or a madman, who can think of nothing else in his waking hours and dream of nothing else except food. A hungry child is a specialist on the subject of food and the more you put him off the more of a specialist he becomes.

Every truly regenerated person is a child of God and just as hungry for holiness as a healthy child for bread. It is a mistake to say that it is the people who have received the gift of The Holy Spirit who are the specialists. A truly regenerate child of God has an intense special longing after all the fullness of God. And Jesus pronounced a blessing on such specialists, saying, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness."

We have seen people take crying children in their arms and try to divert their minds to other things. We have seen them take them to the door and point to the moon in the sky and say, "Moony, Moony; see the moon," to take away their attention, but it was only momentary. The cry soon returned. We have seen preachers try to entertain their hungry congregations by discourses on the sciences, the Milky way, the moon and astronomy and so forth.

It diverted but a little while and there came the old cry in the soul for The Bread which God designs for all His hungry people -- The Gift of The Holy Ghost. They asked bread, they received a stone, if not a serpent of false doctrine or a scorpion of error. But Our Heavenly Father has bread for His children, even if they do not obtain it in the weekly distribution. He has a great storehouse accessible all through the week.

If we are called one idea people for making the most we can of the greatest thing, we can afford to be so-called. We had better be known for association with one great idea than for a thousand little ones, for there are many very trivial things on which people are frittering away their time, energy and talent.

We remember the old fable told by Aesop of the lioness and the fox. The latter boasted to the lioness that she had four whelps while the lioness had but one. "It is true," said the lioness, "but mine is a lion."

So we feel. If it be true that it is a great idea we are willing to be known for our adherence to it. If we are as small as a barnacle we had rather be known as adhering to some grand old battleship than some rotten old log.

This one "idea" is so great that it takes in all of Life's duties, and privileges. It heightens all of life's joys, assuages its sorrows, fits us to live, keeps us prepared to die; it will keep us out of hell and be our permit into heaven, and when we get there, it will make no difference whether we were known for anything else on earth or not.

There are many things which we neglect that we shall never regret. But we shall certainly regret if we are neglecters of this. The man who does not believe in making a specialty of holiness

while active in every day life will be glad to make it a specialty in the hour of death. We have never know a specialist on holiness sorry on his death bed on that account.

God has given us but one book and that makes a specialty of holiness. It is called the Holy Bible. There is but one Holy Spirit and His specialty is to make men holy. We should be afraid to stigmatize His work as some do. God has prepared but one heaven and that is holy. And we confess to a desire to make it our special life work to get there. God has made but one way to that heaven and He calls it "The way of holiness." It is the grand trunk line. If we wanted to go to New York we should make a specialty of the road that goes to New York. As we want to go to heaven we are making a specialty of the road that goes there. We are in love with the sentiment of the poet:

"The way the holy prophets went,  
The road that leads from banishment,  
The King's highway of holiness,  
I'll go for all His paths are peace."

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### 13 -- HE LOVES TO BESTOW IT

The more we study this wonderful illustration of Jesus the more we see in it. An increasing number of lessons come out of it.

In addition to the lessons already noted we find this, God loves to give this gift to His children. This is a truth that needs emphasis because so many seem to think He has to be entreated with great vehemence. They think we must agonize in order to get personal attention.

He appeals to our love for our children to show us that He delights to give The Spirit to His children.

How delightful it is to the heart of a loving parent to furnish food for his offspring. A good parent enjoys feeding his children as much as he does to eat himself.

Jesus says that God delights even more, to give The Holy Spirit to His children. He is Fatherhood in an unlimited measure. Shall we undertake to say that we are more kind to our children than He to His? Shall we say that He has to be teased to satisfy the cravings of His children, when we delight to satisfy our children? O, that we could get all the children of God to see that God really loves to bestow this gift! that His infinite heart is set on doing it! If they realized how He loves to give, would real Christians look on this as a duty to be feared and shunned?

If we catch the significance of this great truth we will no longer be tempted to think or say, "It is not for me." If the real meaning of this illustration gets into our souls we will no longer be excusing ourselves with the thought, "This gift was only for the Apostles of old."

If men really got a fair understanding of this illustration of Jesus we would not hear any more such talk as some pulpits render that "No one ever received The Spirit since Pentecost."

God loves to bestow the Gift. Stop your objecting! God loves to bestow The Gift, go to rejoicing! It is Your Heavenly Father who loves to bestow it -- not a stranger, but one that loves you. He knows how much you need it and has made arrangements for you to have it.

See how much He has done to make it possible for you to receive it. Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Gethsemane and Pentecost all prove that you may have this gift. All the dispensations of God in His dealings with this world were for the end and object that you might have it.

How difficult still it is to make men see that God has set His heart on the reception of this Gift by His church! Will we delight to feed our children and dishonor God by doubting Him here? Will we make our love for our offspring appear greater than His love for His children?

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#### 14 -- BEFORE WE DIE

A great school of religious thought teaches that we cannot receive the sin-consuming Spirit until the hour and article of death.

Thousands of sincere believers have imbibed this error and are struggling with inbred sin, when they might be free.

We find nothing in this wonderful illustration of Jesus to sustain any such dogma. Nor do we find anything anywhere in the Scriptures that teaches it.

Earthly parents do not allow their hungry children to go unsatisfied when they have the power to satisfy their needs. Every real Christian has this desire for purity of heart implanted by The Spirit. It is a sure token that such a soul is born of God. Did God implant that desire to mock us? to tease us? Surely not. And yet it is mockery if God does not propose to feed us when we are hungry.

Does a good parent tantalize his children by constantly stimulating the appetite and then not feeding them. If ye being earthly would not do that, do you mean to accuse your Heavenly Father of that of which you would not be guilty? Yet this is the real meaning of that doctrine.

How does The Father deal with us in this matter? By constantly urging this gift upon us. He does this in His word in various languages. Sometimes He says, "Be filled with The Spirit," or "Eat ye that which is good and let your soul delight itself in fatness," or "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled," or (in another place) "God is able to make all grace abound toward you." These and other commands and promises too numerous to quote, together with the thirsting of the deathless nature within us make this matter too apparent to every one who loves God, it seems to us, to doubt that He wants to feed His hungry children with a satisfying portion here in this world.

Is it not a caricature on Him, who is more tender and loving than the most doting parent that ever felt his heart respond to the needy cry of his child, to represent Him as having awakened desires that He does not intend to satisfy when we need it.

If the command "Be filled with The Spirit" given to God's children is only for the hour of death, why may not the command "Thou shalt not steal" be relegated to the same hour? And why not all the commandments? If we can take our time for one commandment, why not for all? But all God's commandments are in the present tense.

Away with this old heathenish theology that God seeks to tantalize His children! This illustration of Jesus explodes that heresy.

The heathen mythology taught that a wicked king by the name of Tantulus was, after death, doomed to the awful punishment, in the lost world, of ever seeing before him the most luxurious viands which fled from his grasp. While he was burning up with thirst a cup of water was before him which always slipped away from his reach. And this was his eternal doom. From his name Tantulus, we get the word TANTALIZE.

Are we willing to believe that Our Heavenly Father is seeking to tantalize His children with this hungering within and these commands and promises without?

Thank God we need make no mistake in this matter. Jesus makes it clear in this wonderful illustration. And did not the same Holy Spirit fill a good man, Zacharias, and lead him to say years before Jesus began to preach, "That we being delivered out of the hand of all our enemies might serve Him in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life" (See Luke 1:74-75).

Zacharias was filled with The Spirit, so was his son, John the Baptist; so was Elizabeth, and the disciples at Pentecost and the converts at Samaria and countless multitudes since.

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## 15 -- FOR SPECIAL WORK AND WORKERS ONLY

One way in which unbelief seeks to hide its weakness on this subject is to assert that the Gift is for special work and workers only -- for preachers or missionaries, or church officers. It was all right for prophets and Apostles, but not for every-day people, who mingle in very ordinary affairs.

This is not only the language of unbelief, but of ignorance of the word of God. We may say of such what Jesus said to those of Emmaus, that they are "Slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken."

Jesus says that this is the gift for any child of God who asks for it. The Lord has no pets or favorites except those who do His will without regard to rank or station. If you are a child of God and ask aright He will as surely bestow the Gift upon you as upon those of Pentecost.

What saith the Scripture on this point? Hear Peter as he explains it on the day of Pentecost, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel: and it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy" (Acts 2:16-18).

Notice this gift is not to be reserved for a few, but it is for the servants and handmaids of God, sons and daughters, old men and young men are to be its recipients. All ages and both sexes are to possess it.

A careful study will show that at Pentecost even, others besides the twelve Apostles received the gift. There were the one hundred and twenty and the women and Mary, the mother of Jesus. And how many of that five hundred that Jesus met after His resurrection received it there we do not know (See Acts 1:13-14).

This error that only a few can be possessed of the Gift evidently arises from the fact that so many think that the power to work miracles was the special gift of Pentecost. That is not true, for the disciples had the power to heal the sick and cast out devils before Pentecost. It gave them no more miraculous power than they had before. We have already shown in another chapter, that the work of The Spirit, which He is in this world to carry on in a special manner, is not imparting miraculous power, but cleansing the heart and establishing the graces of love, joy and peace in their fullness.

He comes here into the heart to enable us to glorify God, not by working the wonders of legerdemain, like the magicians of Egypt, but to so fill us that we can glorify God by the greatest of miracles -- a holy heart and life in the midst of a wicked world.

This work He proposes to do in the hearts of the laity as well as the clergy. It requires just as much power to enable right living as power to preach with unction. Of what use to inspire men to tell the people how to live right if He will not inspire and help the people so to live?

According to Jesus the great result of Pentecost is not miracle working power for a few, but witnessing power for all -- even the humblest. He does not say a word about what men call the marvelous in connection with Pentecost, but He does say it was given to enable them to be efficient witnesses. Hear Him! "Ye shall receive power after that The Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be WITNESSES unto me" (Acts 1:8). He does not even mention preaching here, because while He calls some to preach He calls all to be witnesses.

We are glad Jesus did not say, "Ye are my orators," or "My statesmen," or "My scholars." But He calls all, both the ministry and laity to be witnesses. It is a sad day when it is not expected that the truth uttered by the pulpit shall be witnessed to by the pew. And it will be equally sad when it is supposed that only the laity are to be witnesses and the pulpit may be excused.

No preacher has any right to be in the pulpit who has not experienced the truths which he voices publicly.

Every Christian needs this Gift, on the farm, in the workshop, in the kitchen, at the desk, behind the counter, in the nursery, in all the avocations of life, in public and in private, to enable him to live aright and to give unction to his testimony, as much as the disciples needed it at Pentecost. It may be said that their need was urgent at that time, when beginning a new dispensation in order that they might get Christianity established, but is it not just as necessary to keep Christianity established? And is there not a crying need in these times for the Gift that will keep us saved and give power to our testimony? Was there ever any more need of it than today?

Until the time comes that God's people have a bubbling over experience that will attract the attention of men as it did at Pentecost, the cause of God will continue to go halting and limping. Jesus Christ needs samples to show to this world more than He needs costly cathedrals, mitered priesthood, elaborate rituals or polished orators.

Holy living is what the world is most in need of at this time. We have seen an ordinary kerosene lamp on the headlight of a locomotive send its rays hundreds of yards ahead illuminating the pathway. The secret of its power was the reflector behind it. We have seen a very ordinary testimony, broken and limping in its language, illuminate the way to heaven and make that way so attractive that multitudes wanted to go too. It was the holy life behind, that made the testimony so powerful. God gives every one, the privilege of having such a life and such a testimony, whether priest or layman. And He expects us all to be witnesses, but we are not fully qualified until we have been to "The Upper Room."

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## 16 -- THE ARGUMENT OF JESUS

One of the most accurate definitions of the carnal mind is that given by the inspired writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews. He calls it "An evil heart of unbelief" (Heb. 3:12).

The natural heart of man is averse to the things of God. It hates the light. It is not difficult to make men believe in the existence of God or that He has revealed His will, or in the fallen nature of man even, but that He will save us from all sin and make us clean and pure in heart is a doctrine that the evil nature of man resents.

Man has become so steeped in sin and so helplessly enslaved by it, and has tried in vain so many times to break his chains, by his own feeble strength, that he has settled back in despair, and estimates the ability of God by his own feeble strength. He has tacitly come to believe that Divine power would be as weak in the matter as his own strength.

Hence the great work of revelation is to create in man confidence in the truth that God can and will save from all sin. So great is the task of convincing man that God means what He says, that after six thousand years of revelation, only a comparatively few people really read the plain statements of the Bible as to the salvation of the soul without modifying them or explaining them away.



Most of the commentaries, that have been written on the Bible, have been written from the standpoint that we must sin and that we cannot be delivered from all sin in this life. Adam Clarke, the great scholar, who was equally great in spiritual things, stands almost alone as a commentator, who declares entire deliverance from all sin.

More than this, so great is this unbelief that God has condescended to come down to our level in certain particulars, just as He allowed Israel to send the ten spies into the promised land.

He condescends to reason with man on the subject, or at least to invite man to reason on the matter. He might justly have passed us by, because of our unbelief that throws the lie in His face. But He says, "Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson they shall be as wool" (Isa. 1:18).

Not content with offering to reason with human stubbornness and unbelief He goes farther. Hear it ye who are as willfully stubborn to believe in entire cleansing in this age! He actually puts himself on oath on the subject. Think of it! Hear Him through the lips of Zacharias, His servant, thus, "The oath which He sware unto our father Abraham, that He would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life" (Luke 1:73-75). What condescension! But men today are as slow of heart as ever to believe in the truths of salvation.

D. L. Moody first called attention to the "Much mores" of Romans 5. Five times in that wonderful chapter does Paul use that phrase in advancing his unanswerable arguments to the caviling Jews as he proves the superiority of the gospel to the dispensation of the law. But Jesus in this wonderful illustration turns His argument with these words of irresistible logic, "HOW MUCH MORE." "If you earthly parents will provide for the physical hunger of your children, HOW MUCH MORE will your Heavenly Father provide for the spiritual hunger of His children?"

Hear it ye cavers and objectors! Ye fighters and opposers! Ye men with your pride of learning! Ye men of big heads and little hearts! Jesus says, "How much more." It ought to drive us all to our knees in shame and contrition that we ever even hinted at or had a suggestion to doubt in any of the recesses of our hearts. Hear it! Jesus says He is more willing to give the cleansing, penetrating abiding Spirit to us than we are to feed our children! Hear it ye REDEEMED and never cease to praise Him who uttered it!

If there is any form of argument, proof of reasoning that has been omitted to give credence to the great fact that God waits to cleanse the heart from all its defilement, we cannot conceive what it can be. And yet thousands are called by the name of Jesus and profess His religion and yet are without this best Gift of God.

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## 17 -- ASKING AND RECEIVING

One of the great mysteries of the gospel to the natural man is its simplicity, especially in the manner in which its benefits are obtained.

God has made it so simple that the humblest can obtain it, and at the same time the wisest are puzzled by its depths and stumble over its terms. The wisest philosopher cannot obtain it any easier than a child, and often times his wisdom stands in his way, because it is not obtained by reasoning, or philosophical research. This is a great stumbling block to the carnal mind. Men want to see into it before they embrace it, instead of taking it on trust. This is the reason that the doctrine of the new birth so staggers the worldling. This is the reason that the doctrine of entire sanctification so bewilders the carnal professor of religion. The worldling says he cannot comprehend the new birth. The opposer of the second work of grace finds the same difficulty in seeing into it and goes away and says it is not Scriptural, when others accept it in the divine way and are enjoying its benefits.

All would be willing to have The Gift if they could buy it. But God does not keep it for sale. The pride some men exhibit in alluding to themselves as "self-made men" is an illustration that man loves to make his own salvation and wants God to come to his terms in the matter.

If the way were not narrow it would be more popular. But it is so narrow that all candidates have to strip off all self-righteousness and self-sufficiency. Men cannot enter this way with the blare of trumpets and a triumphal display. The man who goes in it has to admit his dependence and unworthiness and come to the divine terms. Although these terms are simple yet men make hard work of it, because they try to bring God to their terms.

That is the reason that most people who seek salvation usually have a hard time trying to get it in their way. That is the reason so many have a hard time seeking the Gift of The Holy Spirit.

"My thoughts are not your thoughts; neither are your ways my ways" (Isa. 55:8). Man's way is to do something great -- make some great effort of some kind. God's way is that man shall ask and receive by simple faith.

We often hear people talk about Wrestling Jacob and how he wrestled all night to get the blessing. But they forget that his wrestling did not bring the blessing. After he had threshed his strength all out and could wrestle no more then he obtained the blessing. Perhaps the Lord had to let us all wrestle it out until we found that we could do nothing and then we had to trust.

The terms of obtaining the Gift are two-fold.

1. We must ask. It must be made a subject of request -- just as the hungry child asks definitely for food. Anything that is worth having is worth the asking. Jesus says, He will give The Holy Spirit to them that ASK HIM. Have you asked him?

2. We must ask in faith, or in other words we must receive it, for faith is the hand of the soul that reaches out for the gift. God has given us the power to reach out -- in other words, the power to believe. A gift is not a gift until we take it. No one can make us a present until we are willing to receive it. Many people are asking God for this gift and at the same time keep their hands behind them when it is offered. Let us remember that faith is the act of receiving. We may see this taught wonderfully in the first chapter of the Gospel of St. John. He tells us in the twelfth

verse how to become regenerated, in these words, "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." Here we find that by a receptive act of faith we become regenerate. In the sixteenth verse He tells us how we obtain the fullness of The Spirit, "And of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace." The fullness is received just as was the new birth -- by faith.

How many people are asking but doing no receiving?

Bishop Edwards, of the United Brethren Church, had been seeking this grace for many years in vain. At last in despair he said, "Lord, why do I not receive it? Thou hast said, 'Ask and receive,' and I have been asking for many years." He stopped a moment and then said, "Thou hast said 'ask and receive.' I have done a great deal of asking, but no receiving. Lord I receive the gift." That moment the gift was bestowed and that moment was the turning point of his life to which he ever afterwards referred as a crisis in his life. God has given you the power to receive. Now put your will into it and tell God that you do receive the Holy Comforter. Amen.

"Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,  
And lighten with celestial fire.  
Thou the anointing Spirit art,  
Who dost Thy sevenfold gifts impart.  
Thy blessed unction from above  
Is comfort, life, and fire of love.

Enable with perpetual light  
The dullness of our blinded sight;  
Anoint and cheer our soiled face  
With the abundance of Thy grace;  
Keep far our foes, give peace at home;  
Where Thou art Guide no ill can come.

Teach us to know the Father, Son,  
And Thee of both to be but one;  
That through the ages all along,  
This may be our endless song:  
Praise to Thy eternal merit,  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."

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THE END