

FULLY FURNISHED

or

THE CHRISTIAN WORKER'S EQUIPMENT

by

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CHAPTER SIX

THE WORKER'S NEED

THE old Highlander was not far out when he said: "There are two things which the Church has forgotten - the personality of the Holy Spirit, and the personality of Satan."

Yea, we may go farther and say, in many cases the Holy Spirit is not so much forgotten as ignored, and spoken of in such words as those given by Dr. A. T. Pierson, in the following statement:-

"The most conspicuous preacher in Brooklyn in past years, and now unhappily conspicuous for his defection from the faith, has published these astounding words. They were the first indication to me that he was wandering from the truth his father had preached before him. He says: 'The Holy Spirit of God is a thin and shadowy effluence, proceeding from the Father and the Son, as the breath proceeds from the human body.' Think of that. It seems to me it comes very close to blasphemy. The Holy Ghost is a Person, just as much as the Father is, or as the Son is a Person. If you deny the personality of the Holy Ghost, practically you deny everything that the Bible reveals about the nature of the Most High God."

Deny the personality of the Holy Spirit, then follows inevitably the denial of the personality of Satan. What does the denial of the personality of the Holy Spirit, and the personality of Satan involve? The throwing overboard of all that we hold to be essential to salvation and sanctification. We have no hesitation in saying, that the cause of all the declension in spiritual life, is the departure from the truth, the truth as to the personality of the Holy Spirit, and as to the personality of Satan: for there is a triple consequence, a three-headed monstrosity in the denial of either the one truth or the other.

Let one deny the personality of Satan, and the account of the temptation by Satan in the garden of Eden is a myth. its insertion is a mistake, and the disobedience of Adam does not involve the human race. Thus the federal headship of Adam is gone, his act not being a representative one: and likewise such Scriptural statements as, "**By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned;**" "**In Adam all die;**" "**By one man's disobedience many were made sinners,**" are cut out by the knife of rationalism.

Following this, the natural depravity of man vanishes, and the words of Christ to Nicodemus, **“That which is born of the flesh is flesh,”** and **“Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God,”** are delusive and misleading.

When you have got rid of these two old-fashioned truths, you can argue away the sinfulness of sin till it becomes almost holiness, or at the worst a slight misfortune. The sacrifice of the Saviour is unnecessary, and therefore not vicarious, and to put it at its highest, is but a model of devotion, and an ideal of suffering martyrdom. The punishment of the sinner for sin is out of the question, for sin is not sin, Satan is not Satan, hell is not hell, justice is not justice, and punishment is not eternal, but these expressions are only figurative and mystical! Thus the denial of the personality of the devil, goes more or less (nay, very much more rather than less) with the following three things:

1. The identification and incrimination of the sinner in the fall of Adam.
2. The depravity of man, and his consequent departure from God.
3. The necessity and endlessness of future punishment.

As there is a triple consequence involved in denying the personality of Satan, so there is in denying the personality of the Holy Spirit.

First. The Divine inspiration of the Bible as the Word of God is gone; for holy men could not be moved by the Holy Spirit in writing, as there was no Holy Spirit to influence and direct them.

Second. The miraculous conception of Christ as to His manhood could not be. The words of the angel to Mary, . . . **“The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God”** (Luke 1:35), have no meaning; consequently, our Lord’s Sonship is destroyed and His Deity is gone.

Third. Christ’s death has no value for others, for He was only a man. His sacrifice was not an atonement for sin; neither was it substitutionary, but only virtuous, in that He suffered as a martyr.

As the triune leaf of the shamrock withers and dies, when it is plucked from the stem through which life and support are derived from the root, so the denial of the personality of the Spirit destroys the three truths already referred to. The Bible as the revelation of God is gone, hence we are in worse than Egyptian darkness; the Deity of Christ was assumed, therefore He was an impostor; and the death of Christ is valueless, for no mere man could atone for the sins of others.

Only as the Son of God could He bear the sins of many, hence we are forever lost. I wish to speak, however, not so much on the personality of the Spirit, as the enduement of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is spoken of in two ways in the New Testament.

Reference is made to His personality as taking the place of Christ, who promised **“another Comforter;”** while in other parts of the New Testament the Spirit’s power is referred to, meaning the influence He exerts.

Middleton, in his elaborate treatise on the Greek article, says, in referring to the personality and power of the Holy Spirit, that when the article is used, it refers invariably to the Person of the Holy Spirit, or to the Holy Spirit as a Person, and when the Holy Spirit is spoken of without the article, His gifts and influences are meant.

Rotherham makes this clearly understood in his comments on Acts 2:4, describing the disciples on the day of Pentecost: "And they were all filled with Holy Spirit, and began to be speaking with other kinds of tongues, just as the Spirit was giving unto them to be sounding forth." In the same chapter the distinction is seen-verses 32, 33. **"The same Jesus hath God raised up, whereof all we are witnesses! Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear."** The expressions, **"Filled with Holy Spirit,"** and **"Poured out this,"** speak of the influence and power of the Spirit; while the expressions, **"The promise of the Holy Spirit,"** and **"As the Spirit was giving,"** speak of the personality and presence of the Spirit.

Now, it is possible for us to recognize the personality of the Holy Spirit, to be born of the Holy Spirit, and yet not to have received as a definite and continuous experience, the enduement of the Spirit - the power of the Spirit resting upon us in service, just as it is possible for an employee to recognize his employer, and yet not to be fully under his sway, in the sense of having his interest wholly at heart.

In the Acts of the Apostles, there are those mentioned who were believers in Christ, and yet had not been empowered with the Holy Spirit.

They recognized the Spirit in a sense, for as sinners He had wrought upon them, and led them to Christ; because no man can call Jesus Lord but by the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 12:3). And as saints, He was indwelling them as God's seal upon them, for **"If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His"** (Romans 8:9). But as servants, He was not resting upon them.

For instance, there is the case of the Samaritans who had been brought to Christ through the preaching of Philip the evangelist, but who did not receive the enduement of the Spirit until the Apostles came and laid their hands upon them. Again, we have the case of Apollos, who knew only the baptism of John, but who was instructed by Aquila and Priscilla in the way of God more perfectly (Acts 18:24-28), and forthwith began to testify that Jesus was the Christ, namely, that He was exalted to baptize with the Holy Spirit. And no doubt he would witness, as Peter did, **"God hath made that same Jesus both Lord and Christ** - Lord, as Governor over the Church, and Christ, as the channel of blessing to and in the Church. Again, when Paul came to Ephesus, he questioned certain disciples there, **"Have ye received the Holy Spirit since ye believed?"** and they answered, **"We have not so much as heard if there be any Holy Spirit"** (or, that the Holy Spirit has been given, Acts 19:2).

Is it not sadly true to-day, that a large number - if not the majority - of believers, while as a matter of theory, they accept the truth that this dispensation is specially the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, still, as a matter of experience, they are living under the old dispensation?

In the old dispensation, the Spirit came upon men of God at intervals, but He did not indwell them. To this, Christ seems to refer, when He says of John the Baptist, “**He that is least in the kingdom of Heaven is greater than he**” (Matthew 11:11). Not greater as to character, but greater as to privilege. Yea, we may go farther and say, that we have greater privileges than the Lord Jesus Himself, looking at Him as the Man and the Servant of God, and recalling what He Himself says: “**Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father**” (John 14:(2)).

An honoured servant of Christ, in speaking regarding a mission that had been held at a seaside resort, said, “This mission, and missions generally, confirm me in an opinion I have long held, and to which I have given frequent expression, that the supreme want of the age is a new baptism of the Holy Ghost upon the Church, making the Church a better Church, holier, more Christ-like, a faithful witness to the truth, and a glorious missionary and soul-saving agency. The mission of missions would be a mission to the Church. That is the first thing. Matters will not be very much different until there be such a mission. Out of it, what missions to the world would come! And what an impression a purged, living, zealous, transformed, God-filled Church would make upon the world! The doctors and reformers are many, and the prescriptions and methods are numerous and varied, and there is a great deal of discussing and conferring. The wise and the learned speak through the press and in other ways. But what the Church really wants is God; the fulness of spiritual life; the baptism of the Holy Ghost. There will be little success, the paces of progress will be slow, until the Church gets on her knees, acknowledging her sins, and shortcomings, and unfaithfulness, and pleading with God to make her holy, and to fill her full of Himself.”

“The supreme want of the age is a new baptism of the Holy Spirit.”

We are sure that every child of God will say “**Amen**” to those words. The need of the baptism, or filling of the Spirit, is seen in many ways. We mention a few.

The need of the Holy Spirit is seen in many cases because the need is not felt.

As the Church at Laodicea was perfectly satisfied with itself, so there are Christians to-day who are perfectly satisfied with their lives and labours. It is an easy matter to sing, “I need Thee every hour,” but if the actions give the lie to the sentiment, where is the evidence of felt need?

Is the Lord wanted when His commands are not obeyed, or only partially so?

- When His orders are neglected?
- When His direction is not sought in prayer?
- When His claims are slighted?
- When we trust our methods, instead of His might?
- When we make our plans, instead of bringing the clean sheet of paper for Him to draw the plan, recognizing that our part is simply to go by it?
- Is there not too much effort in the Lord’s work, instead of the happy impulse of the Spirit?
- Is there not a good deal of Jacob action in our life, struggling in our own strength, unmindful unconscious, it may be - that we are rebelling against the Lord?

- Is there not an ignoring of God's Word in being influenced by the spirit of the age?

When there is an utter abandonment of self and its plans, and a crying unto the Lord - not a complimentary call - in felt want, then there is evidence of felt need.

The need of the Holy Spirit is manifest if we call to mind the fact, that many of God's people are being defeated in conflict with sin, with error, and with Satan, again and again.

- What was the cause of Israel's defeat at Ai? It was the Achan in the camp.
- What was the secret of victory over the Midianites? It was because Gideon was clothed with the Spirit the power of the Spirit was resting upon him: the Lord as the **"mighty Man of valor"** was with him.

Is there any Achan in the heart, the life, or the labour, that is spoiling us?

- The Achan of doubt will cripple faith, as we see in the case of the disciples who failed to expel the demon from the man brought to them.
- The Achan of worldliness will hinder holiness, as the sucker of the rose tree hinders its growth and flower.
- The Achan of selfishness will cause the pilgrim to stumble, as the rope across the footpath causes the passer-by to do, to his hurt.
- The Achan of fear will paralyze confidence, as the stroke of paralysis benumbs and renders useless the limb.
- The Achan of men-pleasing will mar communion, by hiding the Saviour's face, as the cloud hides the sun from view.
- The Achan of self-confidence will grieve and wound the Holy Spirit, as the thorn in the hand causes pain.
- The Achan of half-heartedness will produce an up-and-down experience-a zigzag walk.
- The Achan of pride will surely bring a fall, as Bunyan depicts Christian when he outran Faithful, and then looking round in self-glorification, came down to the ground.
- The Achan of jealousy will bring a snare, as a man who digs a pit for another, and falls into it himself.
- The Achan of the flesh will cause bondage of soul and bitterness of spirit, as David found to his sorrow and regret.
- The Achan of covetousness will eat as a canker; and
- The Achan of self will work untold mischief.

As a safeguard, we need to be clothed with the Spirit, or, as Paul puts it, to be **"in the Spirit,"** for **"if we live in the Spirit,"** we **"shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh."**

If we truly feel the need of the Spirit's power, the Achan of sin will be judged in the Lord's presence, and put to death.

The need of the Holy Spirit is self-evident, as we call to mind the worldly means that are adopted to carry on what is called the Lord's work, and the identification of Christians with such means, when they profess to believe otherwise.

What do we find advertised in the newspapers, and announced on church and chapel notice-boards? Such things as the following:

- "Theatrical,"
- "Tom Brown and the Fairies, in three acts,"
- "Ally Sloper,"
- "Comic Songs,"
- "Selections from Operas,"
- "Cinderella Dances,"
- "Fancy Dress Parties," &c.

Could Bunyan come to life, verily he would be astonished, and would have to revise his description of "*Vanity Fair*," and picture it as being in the Church, as he listened to the current teaching of many pulpits of to-day, which tone down the words and claims of Christ. [70]

The one thing that is blighting and blistering the life of the Church to-day, is the adopting of worldly means to carry on what is called the Lord's work; but the Lord is not in it, nor will He have anything to do with it.

Following upon the heels of this is the departure from the truth of God.

This is the reason the Church has so little power, and, like Samson in the lap of Delilah, has been robbed of her strength. The worldliness in the Church is the great barrier to the outflow of the blessing of Christ. This is why the Lord Jesus is outside the Church, instead of having His rightful place as Lord and Master.

In the name of God, we ask what there is in common between "Ally Sloper" (if it be not blasphemy to associate their names), and Jesus Christ and places erected for His worship?

- What harmony is there between comic melodies, and spiritual songs?
- What concord is there between "Comic Songs," and spiritual men?
- What likeness is there between Church entertainments, and the early Christians on their knees pleading with God?
- What resemblance is there between shows in churches, and the simple preaching of the Word of God?
- What agreement is there between gorgeous dresses, the "get-up" of the bazaar, and the Holy Spirit's words about modest apparel?

NONE!

These are distinctly opposed; and if men will seek to mix them, it will not be long ere that awful word - **Ichabod** (I Samuel 4:21 - **the glory is departed**) will be plainly visible to all. Perhaps the saddest feature is, that Christians who profess to be out of sympathy with these things, can yet identify themselves with theatrical amusements by going occasionally to oblige a friend, or by allowing their children to attend.

The need of the Holy Spirit is apparent, if we remember how the Word of God is ignored.

How can the Holy Spirit manifest His presence and power, when the Word He has inspired is ignored, and its authority questioned?

He cannot. It is an impossibility.

A friend of the writer - the late Dr. J. H. Brookes, of St. Louis - has thus described a kind of preaching which is popular:

“It seems to me more and more evident that the truth is not to win the field in our day; it will have a tremendous fight to hold its own against the ever-increasing odds with which it has to contend. If the battle were only with the world and the devil, there would be nothing to fear; but, unhappily, the fight must be carried on principally against professed friends. Insurrection rages within the citadel, and a **‘man’s foes are those of his own household.’** The Church itself is traitorous, and the worst enemy we have to dread. Annihilation, restoration, evolution, a mixture of Herbert Spencer, Darwin, and Jesus Christ - such is the stuff certain popular preachers are giving to their hearers, and editors of religious papers throw up their hats, and shout themselves hoarse, over the power and progress of the Church. Alas! nothing is more apparent to me, than that the professing body, with its false doctrines, its intense worldliness, its scarcely concealed iniquities, is on the rapids just above the Falls of Niagara, and the awful abyss is just below.”

Did Dr. Brookes’ mind alter after writing those words? Are things better?

Here is what he said on the subject in writing more recently:-

“The conflict between truth and error is waxing hotter on this side of the sea (in America), as it is in the mother country. Higher criticism, a denial of the inspiration of the Scriptures, future probationism, Annihilationism, contempt of the Atonement, ridicule of our Lord’s second coming, semi-Unitarianism, and semi-Universalism, even in so-called evangelical Churches, are pushing forward with a bolder front every day; and those who are contending earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints, are few and disheartened. But why should we be discouraged or surprised? We are plainly told by our Lord, and by the Holy Ghost, in the inspired writings, that in the last days there shall be difficult times, and we ought to know that just what we see around us, must be witnessed before the end shall come.”

Anyone who knows what is going on, and who has looked beneath the surface of Christendom, will confirm what Dr. Brookes says. And this comes about through man, in his conceit, consulting his own reason, instead of consulting and being influenced by the truth of God. Now, on the other hand, the Holy Spirit never fails to bless the truth, if it is faithfully and fully preached in prayerful dependence upon Himself. It was while Peter was speaking the Word in the house of Cornelius, that the Holy Spirit fell upon them that heard it. The secret of all the looseness of life among professing Christians, is, the lack of the truth being enforced and enjoined upon them, by those who profess to be the servants of God.

As a crooked ruler will make a crooked line, so crooked teaching will make crooked lives. **“Take heed to thyself,” “Take heed to the doctrine,”** said Paul, in writing to Timothy; and how better can we take heed to ourselves than by taking heed to the truth of God?

Do we fully believe the truth we preach to others, because we have proved it as truth in our own experience?

Could that be said of us which was said by Hume when he was twitted for going to hear an earnest preacher of his day: “I don’t believe all he says, but he does? and once a week at least, I like to hear a man who believes what he says. Why, whatever I think, that man preaches as though he felt the Lord Jesus Christ was at his elbow.”

Could the Lord say of us, as He did of the disciples in His memorable prayer, **“They have kept Thy word”**?

- To keep His words is to prove Our love to Him; **“If ye love Me, ye will keep My commandments.”**
- To keep His words is to show we know Him; **“Hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.”**
- To keep His words is to abide in His love **“If ye keep My commandments ye shall abide in My love, even as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.”**
- To keep the words of Christ is to prove our faithfulness to Him; **“I have kept the faith,”** Paul could say at the end of his ministry.
- To keep His words is to be blessed; **“Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of this book”** (Revelation 22:9) may be applied to all His words.
- To keep His Words is to have the protection and commendation which Christ bestowed upon the Church at Philadelphia; **“Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation”** (Revelation 3:8).

Are we keeping the truth?

Are we believing it?

Is the truth of God so precious to us that we count it our chief joy to hold fast the Word?

Or do we resemble the prophets of Jericho, who when they spoke one thing, believed another? and said to Elisha, **“Knowest thou not that the Lord will take away thy master?”** But when they discovered that Elijah was missing, suggested that they should go in search of him, proving that they did not expect the prophet’s translation, although they had talked about it.

The need of the Holy Spirit is painfully evident, if we note the difference between the early Christians, and the majority of professing Christians to-day.

One has said, in contrasting the early Church with the Christianity of to-day, “Is it not a solemn thought, that if the evangelist Luke were describing modern instead of primitive Christianity, he would have to vary the phraseology of Acts 4:32-35 somewhat as follows:- ‘And the multitude of them that professed were of hard heart and stony soul, and everyone said that all the things which he possessed were his own: and they had all things in the fashion.’

“And with great power gave they witness to the attractions of this world, and great selfishness was upon them all. And there were many among them that lacked love, for as many as were possessors of lands bought more, and sometimes gave a small part thereof for a public good, so their names were heralded in the newspapers, and distribution of praise was made to everyone according as he desired.”

As further illustrating the difference between modern and primitive Christianity, we quote from a writer in the Homiletic Review:-

“The Apostolic Church, as compared with the Church of our day, was poor in appliances. The sanctuaries that sinners had to come into, were close and crude, yet they came in and were converted. There was not much money for the diffusion of the Gospel, but somehow the Gospel was diffused. The ministers were inelegant, but somehow they marvelously impressed their congregations; their sermons were void of brilliancy, but one sermon then, converted three thousand men; and now it takes three thousand sermons to convert one man. You may have a flourishing congregation, a full and even crowded house, a first-class organist and presenter, an artistic choir and exquisite music, an influential and wealthy board of trustees, and a well-filled church treasury, and yet not have one particle of spiritual power. The house may be full of people, but if the people are not full of the Holy Ghost, saints will not grow in grace, and sinners will not be converted to God. When the whole Church was filled with the Holy Ghost, sinners were converted not by scores, but by thousands. Now the churches are filled with worldliness, not with the Holy Ghost, and conversions are infrequent; one church filled with the Holy Ghost could shake a city from one end to the other. One member of the church full of the Holy Ghost will be felt as a spiritual power and force to the farthest limit of the congregation.”

Such being the facts, we must admit that the Church needs an infilling of the Holy Spirit, for this alone is the cure for all the ills from which she is suffering.

~ end of chapter 6 ~

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