

THE NEW LIFE IN CHRIST JESUS

by

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CHAPTER SIX

THE SPIRIT-CONTROLLED LIFE

TEXT: “Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:14).

LET us think of the Holy Spirit and the inner life of the believer. There is an inner life; an inner life so deep, so truly inner, that no one knows it but God and ourselves. It is a life of which, in its deeper depths, we never speak to our dearest friends. There are defeats there, there are victories there—heart-surgings, heartaches that we cannot put into words—we can only go with them before God, and the Spirit, who helpeth our infirmities, can make intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

Now, we are to think of the Holy Spirit as indwelling the believer:

THE UPSPRINGING FOUNTAIN WITHIN

What a wonderful symbol it is! How apart from all other instructions, it speaks of the constant renewal of the spiritual life. You know the contrast was with Jacob’s well, which was very deep, and out of which water must be laboriously drawn. When our Lord spoke to the woman about this living water, this water which was not down in the bottom of the well, but was upspringing, she asked a question: **“Whence hast thou this water? Thou hast nothing to draw with and the well is deep.”**

What a contrast, what a picture of the average Christian life!

Somehow, if we are Christians at all, we get on; we manage to get through the day after a fashion, but it is just like that poor woman, laboriously drawing water out of Jacob’s well. We draw it up just a little at a time, and some of us with a sense that we have nothing to draw with, and there is a constant effort to be spiritual; and over against that our Lord puts the picture of a fountain that springs up of its own lovely energy, and throws its crystal flood into the clear air and dances and sparkles there in the sunlight, and then flows away to be kissed by the sun back again into the azure blue.

Now the Christian life, the true spiritual life in Christ's conception of it, is a life which has within it the source and renewal of its freshness and vigor and power. An upspringing fountain constantly fed from a higher source, coming down that it may ascend again.

Here is a little springlet in the valley half afraid that it may dry up; and the spring up on the mountain says: "No, you shall not dry up, for I am renewing your abundance all the time."

What a contrast with the average life! Here is the plentitude of divine power, the omnipotent Spirit of God, Who has not only taken up his abode in us, but wishes to be in the believer a living vital force, constantly renewed, himself the unwasting Source.

Now, is our Christian life like that, or do we have to painfully draw it with a creaking windlass out of Jacob's well till our backs ache? Which is it? There is the contrast.

SOURCE HIGHER THAN ITSELF

And, too, the inlet must be kept open and the outlet must be kept open.

There are two sins which Christians commit against the Spirit. We are said to grieve the Spirit, and we are told some of the things which grieve Him. **"Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and evil speaking be put from you with all malice."**

Now are you allowing a little bitter feeling toward somebody in your heart? Bitterness! Wrath! Anger! Perhaps we do not care much about that. We say, "The Lord knows I was born with a hot temper; I am made up that way, but it is just a flash and all over in a minute." All over with you, perhaps, but is it all over with the heart you have wounded? Anger! Malice! Envy! Ah, my friends, all these things which we allow in ourselves, defended, petted, kept there, are but stones that choke the inlet and prevent the upspringing of the fountain.

And then we are told not to quench the Spirit; not to say "No" to the Spirit, but to let the Spirit have His way. To say "No" when the Spirit says, "Pray, serve, give," is to choke the outlet, and the fountain does not flow. Now

JUST A FEW PROPOSITIONS

Do not imagine that your Jacob's well experience proves that you have not the fountain within you. In other words, don't imagine, if you are a believer on the Lord Jesus Christ that you have not the Spirit within. Every believer of the Lord Jesus Christ is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. You have not to intercede for Him, you have not to seek Him, you have but to take account of the fact that you have Him already. **"What?"** says Paul in the sixth chapter of 1 Corinthians, **"Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?"** And remember, the apostle is addressing there a people whom he has just described as **"carnal"**—running after human leaders—babes in Christ, to these he says, **"What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?"**

Now, when that fact is received by faith, without waiting for feeling, you have taken a long step toward better things. If you really believe that the Holy Spirit of God dwells in your mortal body, a transformation of life has begun.

WHAT THE UPSPRINGING FOUNTAIN DOES

First, the Spirit indwells the believer that he may give victory over the old self-life. A mightier power has come in and while the old, evil life of the flesh is there, omnipotence is holding it in the place of death and we may be free from the dominion of it. Not by good resolutions, not by struggling to keep a law, but by divine power within, to which we have yielded our whole being. Ah, it is a deep truth that old John Newton uttered when he said, "I hear a great deal of talk about the pope, but the pope who troubles me most is Pope John Newton." Now, the Spirit of God is there to govern, to control, to keep that self life in the place of death and to give us victory as we walk in the Spirit.

And secondly, He is there to make real the things of Christ. "**He shall receive of mine,**" as the promise was, "**and show it unto you.**" Now that does not mean "exhibit," but "make actual" to us the things of Christ.

And thirdly, He is here to make real to you the Fatherhood of God. You realize that God is your Father by the Holy Spirit. And when you pray to God you are not merely praying to a Creator, to one who laid the foundations of the earth and who keeps the planets in their courses, but you are praying to your Father in heaven; and just as you go to an earthly father with your needs, wanting help and counsel, just so you may go to your heavenly Father. So, because the Spirit of sonship dwells in you, you realize the Fatherhood of God. Furthermore, the Spirit will take up every one of the blessings which we have in Christ and give us possession of them. And when He is ungrieved and unquenched, He is doing that. That is the life in the Spirit.

And then he takes up the problems, the difficulties that we have to do within our lives and settles them for us according to the will of God; so that the outer life is the unforced expression of an inner life which is pure and clean and high, and full of love and tenderness, looking about with the eyes of love on all humanity, watching for opportunities to put out the helping hand and to lift up the downtrodden and oppressed.

The whole problem lies, not in self-effort, not in painfully drawing water out of Jacob's well—that is going back to the law; to what the apostle calls the "**beggarly elements of the world**"; to elementary things—and not going on to the fulness of what God has for us. Which is it to be hereafter? The upspringing fountain, or Jacob's well?

~ end of chapter 6 ~

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