

HIS INDWELLING PRESENCE

Intimate Studies in the Things of the Spirit

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CHAPTER THREE

HIS INCOMING—OUR SALVATION

“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” (Acts 2:33).

As Jesus drew toward the close of His ministry, conscious that He had accomplished His mission, able to say to His Father, **“I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do,”** then it was that He began to speak definitely and expectantly of Another coming to take His place in the world. Very evidently He could not “come” until Jesus’ work was finished. There must be a completed Salvation; then He would come to carry it on—carry it on by carrying it in, into the personal lives of men, to the meeting of their inmost, utmost need.

So Luke refers to his Gospel as a narrative **“of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up”** (Acts 1:1,2), the Book of Acts being an account of its continuance by the Holy Spirit from the day of His coming down according to promise.

To see clearly the place of the Spirit in the plan of Salvation, we must see the relation of His coming to both the coming and going of the Son. Of the coming of the two the very same language is used, indicating a closely correlated purpose. The Father **“sent”** the Son to be the Saviour (John 3:17; 5:37; 6:29; 7:28, 29; 8:42, etc.). Likewise the Spirit; He was **“sent”** by the Son (John 15:26; 16:7), also by and from the Father (John 14:26; 15:26). The Father **“gave”** the Son (Isaiah 9:6; John 3:16, etc.). Likewise the Spirit; He was **“given,”** He was **“the gift”** (Luke 11:13; John 14:16; Acts 2:38, etc.). (The word “come,” or “came,” is most frequent—many references).

Again, the two gifts are timed to the unfolding of the Father’s plan. Of the Son it is said, **“When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son . . . to redeem . . . that we might receive the adoption of sons”** (Galatians 4:4, 5). And when He had accomplished redemption, and men by believing upon Him could be brought as sons into His family, then **“God sent forth the Spirit of His Son”** (Galatians 4:6) to make this an experimental reality.

While Jesus was still with us, therefore, the giving of the Spirit was still future, both as an act of the Father and as an experience of believers. On one occasion John finds it needful, in recording the teaching of Jesus, to add the parenthetical explanation:

“But this He spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified” (John 7:39).

When, however, the day of Pentecost had come, and believers experienced the gift of the Spirit, Peter makes explanation by tracing it to the fact that Jesus has been **“by the right hand of God exalted”** and has **“received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost”** (Acts 2:33). The set time for the sending of the Spirit had come.

Jesus had said to His followers: **“Wait for the promise of the Father.”** While they waited, He went—went to the throne, there to claim the promise on their behalf.

“The promise of the Father.” When? and to whom? Ah, we are being admitted into one of the mysteries of eternity. Back yonder, in the eternal counsels of redemption, the Father solemnly covenanted with the Son that if He would come and give Himself to redeem the race, He, the Father, would give eternal life to all who should believe upon Him (read again John 5 and 6). And more, He would give to all such the Holy Spirit as a personal, indwelling presence, to abide with them forever.

Has the Father ever broken His covenanted promise to His own Son? Has anyone ever believed upon Him and failed to receive eternal life? Such a thing is utterly impossible. The God of the universe is pledged to answer every man’s faith with the gift of life (read again John 6:39, 40).

Has anyone ever believed upon the Son and failed to receive the Spirit? Such a thing is utterly impossible. It is the covenanted **“promise of the Father,”** the answer He is pledged to make to every man’s faith in His Son. **“Let God be true, but every man a liar.”**

I. His Incoming

What do the Scriptures tell us as to the Holy Spirit’s coming—His Incoming, to dwell in believers? When does He come in? and why? We know just when the Son was **“given,”** when He was **“sent,”** historically, to be the Saviour of men. We know also when and on what conditions the Son comes, experimentally, into the lives of men. Do we know as much concerning the Holy Spirit? when, historically, He was **“sent”**? when, experimentally, He is **“given”** to any individual? On the authority of God’s Word we do.

1. HISTORICALLY AND DISPENSATIONALLY, HE WAS GIVEN—SENT—ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST.

Jesus makes the transition from His own ministry to the dispensation of the Spirit in the closing scene with His disciples, as recorded by Luke:

“And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith He, ye have heard of Me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence” (Acts 1:4, 5).

The set time for the sending of the Spirit was just at hand. They were to tarry for it, the appointed yearly feast in the Jewish calendar. Yet this particular year it was God's chosen time above all other years. For just as precisely as Jesus had died on the day of the annual Passover, and risen again the third day in fulfillment of the Feast of First Fruits, so was the Holy Spirit given in exact fulfillment of the Feast of Weeks, seven full weeks intervening, on the fiftieth day—therefore called "Pentecost."

The actual happening of the poured-out Spirit, Peter explained, as we have already noted, by the fact that Jesus had ascended to glory, had presented His finished work, had claimed and received for His followers **"the promise of the Father,"** for which He bade them tarry. Henceforth believers are born into the riches, blessings and benefits of a fulfilled Feast of Pentecost—the Spirit **"given"** and **"sent"** in a sense never before true.

A noteworthy feature of the event, for our study, is the recorded fact: **"They were ALL filled with the Holy Ghost."**

Was there not some one of the company that failed of the experience? No, not one. And why? Because the gift of the Spirit is in the covenant. If His giving were selective, due to something in one believer which another lacked, then we might expect one or more to be left out. But by covenant right every believer is as truly entitled to the gift of the Spirit as to the gift of eternal life. Hence

2. PERSONALLY AND INDIVIDUALLY, HE IS GIVEN— COMES IN—WHEN WE BELIEVE UPON THE SON.

"He that believeth on Me"—and with these words Jesus proceeds to depict an outflowing life of blessing, such as the Spirit alone can produce, a life He expected of every believer and of which the believer could fail only by repressing and restraining the Spirit (read John 7:37, 38). Then follows the inspired notation: **"But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive"** (vs. 39). Believe—on the Son: receive—the Spirit. The one follows the other. When the dispensational progress, noted above, had removed the one limitation— **"not yet"**—then the receiving becomes the immediate sequel of believing.

"And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Galatians 4:6).

Here is a specified reason—**"because."** What is the ground upon which God rests the sending forth of His Spirit into any individual's heart? It is simply that he has believed upon the Son, already **"sent forth"** to be the Saviour, and has become a son. God acknowledges the fact of faith by giving him the mark of sonship, the Holy Spirit. Addressing the body of believers in Galatia, Paul declares to them the fact that God HATH sent forth the Spirit into their hearts, indiscriminately—the perfect tense of a past, accomplished fact.

"And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Romans 5:5).

Appealing to common Christian experience Paul declares the Spirit is “**given unto us,**” alone making possible the realization of the love of God in our hearts.

“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His” (Romans 8:9).

Paul is making it impossible for any believer to excuse a fleshly life by disclaiming to be “**in the Spirit.**” Why, says he, if you haven’t the Spirit you aren’t a Christian at all. Here, as elsewhere, he appeals to the Spirit’s presence in the believer as the fundamental fact of Christian life and experience. The Holy Spirit is the hallmark of the sons of God, His recognition and official stamp of genuine saving faith in His Son.

No one, since the Spirit was dispensationally given, has ever seen a believer who did not possess that Spirit. Such a person does not exist. It is an impossibility. God’s immediate answer to saving faith is the giving of the Spirit in regenerating power and as an indwelling presence. Hence Peter’s answer, on the Day of Pentecost, to the people who, seeing what had taken place, desired the same blessing for themselves. What could they do to receive the Spirit? Listen!

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call” (Acts 2:38, 39).

Note the two words, familiar to this discussion, “**gift**” and “**promise.**” God’s Spirit has become a gift, in which is enfolded the gift of eternal life; He is also the promise which our glorified Christ has “**received of the Father**” (Acts 2:33). The promise is for all, old and young, near and far; the gift to be received by repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, evidenced by the definite step of baptism as an outward sign and testimony. Do this and “**Ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.**” Some three thousand, we read, responded, and as surely received the gift of the Spirit as the one hundred and twenty who were sharers in the spectacle of His original outpouring.

This is further proved and illustrated by the exceptional experience of disciples at Ephesus “Acts 19:1-7. Paul, coming to their company, questions the reality of their Christian standing: “**Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?**” (Acts 19:2). It then develops that they are not Christians at all; that they have not so much as heard of the Holy Spirit; Apollos had taught them only the ministry of John the Baptist, baptizing them as his disciples (vv. 2, 3). When they were instructed to believe upon Christ Jesus (vs. 4) and “**were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus**” (vs. 5), they too received the Spirit. They had met the simple condition of repentance and saving faith.

The longed-for experiences that unfold from the gracious purposes of the Spirit’s indwelling presence may not as yet be ours, but His initial Incoming, key to all else, is an accomplished fact.

Because we have believed upon His Son, God HAS sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts.

II. Our Salvation

A complete presentation of the plan and operation of Salvation involves the combined ministry of Father, Son, and Spirit. That no one could be saved apart from the work of the Spirit should be self-evident. **“By the grace of God He (Christ) tasted death for every man.”** Yet every man is not saved. Why? The answer lies in the work of the Spirit, who supplements and applies the work of the Son. The unsaved have not made room for Him in their lives.

What Christ did for us, the Spirit does in us. His is a personal application of the potencies of saving grace. To accomplish this He *in*-comes us. A complete survey of the Spirit’s work in securing our salvation yields the following:

1. HE CONVICTS.

“And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, be-cause they believe not on Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged” (John 16:8-11).

“When He is come.” **“Come”** is one of the three great words of the dispensation of the Spirit—**“come”** because He is **“sent”** and **“given.”** But where has He come? He has come in. He was always in the world, but now His base of operations is the heart of the believer—**“by His Spirit in the inner man.”**

From this His chosen home-base He convicts the unbelieving world **“of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.”** Not in general, but specifically with reference to the saving work of Christ. The Spirit’s work rests upon the Son’s work. Not sin in general, though He has much to say of this, but the sin of not believing upon Him. The sin of excluding Him precludes the remedy for all sin. Righteousness—where is it to be found? Him whom men adjudged a sinner, God has declared righteous in that He has received Him back into His presence. Judgment? In the death and victorious resurrection of our Lord, judgment was passed upon **“the prince of this world.”** All who continue to serve him are living under a condemned system and must meet the same ultimate judgment.

On the day of Pentecost, when the Spirit had come, Peter’s message centered wholly in the person and work of Christ; the Spirit used it to convict the hearts of hearers. **“Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart.”** Whenever Christ is preached, the hearts into which the Spirit has come, realizing His purpose to convict, should give themselves to believing, expectant prayer, to the end that His work be unhindered.

2. HE REGENERATES.

“Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5).

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Titus 3:5).

The new birth is peculiarly the office of the Spirit in Salvation. Like begets like. To enter His kingdom we must have a nature suited to life in the kingdom. This the Spirit imparts. **“The water of regeneration.”** Regeneration is the act of the Spirit whereby He cleanses away the corruption of death, the state common to all sin, by quickening us with His own newness of life.

“Water” also refers to the Spirit’s instrument in this work—the Word. **“Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you”** (John 15:3; see also Ephesians 5:26). Through the gracious words of our Lord to the sin-laden woman of Samaria the Spirit caused her not only to drink but also to experience a satisfying fountain within her hitherto thirsty soul.

“Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever shall drink 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 4:13, 14).

3. HE ANOINTS.

“Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts” (II Corinthians 1:21, 22).

While water is the symbol of the Spirit’s work in cleansing and quickening, oil is the symbol of Himself, in living presence. The oil in the candlestick emblemizes Him who, incoming, begets the abiding life. Thus, while He cleanses with new life, He anoints with Himself.

“HATH anointed us,” the perfect tense of an accomplished fact. So also John: **“But ye HAVE an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things”** (1 John 2:20). So always in the New Testament. Were we not anointed we could not qualify as **“priests unto God.”** His Anointing—the Holy Spirit—**“abides in us”** in a wonderful teaching ministry (1 John 2:27). Through Him we are endowed with the mind of Christ, that we may know the things that are freely given to us of God. The anointing, then, is the Incoming of the Spirit, in abiding presence. Hence the uniform appeal of the epistles to the ever-existent fact, ignorance of which is inexcusable, recognition of which begets a devoted life:

“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? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

4. HE BAPTIZES.

“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit” (I Corinthians 12:13).

Baptism with the Spirit is doubtless more misunderstood and misrepresented than any other phase of the Spirit's work, largely due to failure to adhere to the terms of Scripture. Baptism is an initial rite. It betokens our standing in the Christian life. It is therefore related to our salvation, as distinguishable from both sanctification and service.

In the experience of the first believers, they were bidden to wait for the promise of the Father (a dispensational necessity since Jesus was not yet glorified), with the assurance that they should be baptized with the Spirit not many days hence. The day of Pentecost came. The Spirit descended upon each believer. The Church had her birth. How? By each believer receiving the Spirit, being united to Christ by His Spirit, sharing in His life and sharing that life each with the other. Two things were effected: His mystical Body was formed and they were baptized into it.

Of their experience it is recorded that **"They were all filled with the Holy Ghost."** They all, through days of prayer and yieldedness of life, had met the conditions for being filled as well as baptized. This, however, is no warrant for concluding that the one is the same as the other or confusing the one with the other. Would to God that all who are baptized with the Spirit were also filled with the Spirit, and that at the very same time, as at Pentecost. How well it might be so! How seldom it is so!

That the two are different experiences is evident from the following:

(1) Believers are told that we **"all"** are baptized, that it is a past experience, common to true believers. But this statement is made to the Corinthians, among whom the most sensual sins of the early Church had made their appearance. If baptism with the Spirit betokens an advanced experience in the Christian life, the sins of these Corinthians belied Paul's statement that we **"all"** have entered into such a state. So also do the lives of the many believers down through the centuries. Since it is stated of all believers, irrespective of unworthiness of life and in spite of it, baptism of the Spirit must refer to POSITION, which we all have, complete in Him, rather than CONDITION, in which we continually come short.

(2) Believers are exhorted to **"be filled,"** but never to **"be baptized."** We challenge any one to turn to the epistles, which contain the Spirit's instructions as to how the Christian life is to be lived, and find a single exhortation to be baptized with the Spirit, a single intimation that we have any duty in the matter, a single suggestion that it is still future in our experience. Such a reference does not exist. The reason is evident. Baptism with the Spirit takes place at the New Birth; is a sovereignly bestowed benefit, bringing us into the Body of Christ, into the family of God; has to do with salvation rather than any future experience of sanctification; is never in the realm of duty, but is something He sees to the instant we believe upon the Son. Instead of ever seeking the baptism with the Spirit (seeking the fullness of the Spirit is quite another matter) we should be ever thanking Him that He has thus baptized us into His Body.

5. HE SEALS.

"After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise" (Ephesians 1:13).

“The Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption” (Ephesians 4:30).

“Believed . . . sealed,” and that by the **“Spirit of promise,”** sent by the Father in fidelity to His promise to seal everyone who believes upon His Son, that they may be made secure in the salvation into which He has brought them.

In the administration of salvation the Trinity are engaged in a blessed co-operative work, ministering to the security of the saints (Read again Ephesians 1:1-14). Said Jesus: **“I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father’s hand”** (John 10:28, 29). We are **“given”** by the Father to the Son, and the Son gives to us life that is eternal. The Son is secure in His possession; we are secure in our possession—the Holy Spirit makes it doubly sure. Underneath is the hand of the Son; above is the hand of the Father: this supernatural hand-clasp is secure in the sealing of the Spirit. Do we question the security? The Spirit is Himself the seal. How can He fail?

There are at least three uses to which we put the seal, which embody this work of the Spirit in making our salvation secure to us, and to Him—for He has as much at stake as we.

(1) *The stamping of a document by an authorized official*—in oriental lands the king used his signet ring—thus declaring that the transaction contained in the document was complete, settled, not to be undone, irrevocable.

(2) *The branding of property, such as cattle or logs, as the mark of ownership.* Cattle may wander far and mingle freely upon the range, but the owner claims them and separates them by means of the brand in the body. In the great timber belts logs of many owners may mix in floating down stream, only to be separated into their respective booms in accordance with the brand upon them.

(3) *The sealing of a package or car for transportation, guaranteeing safe conveyance and delivery intact at destination.*

In the above there is embodied a past, present and future reference, which is most suggestive of the Spirit’s far-reaching work in our salvation.

6. HE “EARNESTS.”

“Which [that Holy Spirit of promise] is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory” (Ephesians 1:14).

We may be permitted to coin the verb out of a desire to convey the Spirit’s active interest in assuring to us, through His present ministry in our lives, the full and final benefits of salvation—in complete redemption. The Father has fulfilled His promise; the Spirit is prosecuting His present work in our hearts, in pledge and prospect of that glorious consummation.

The reference is to the practice, common today as of old, of an initial payment in making a purchase. Such payment served both to bind the transaction and to pledge the final payment in full. As the “**earnest**” of such purpose, it was termed “*earnest-money*.”

Even now we who “**have the first-fruits of the Spirit**,” imperfect and incomplete though they be, find in them His solemn pledge of the day when He will leave nothing undone in carrying our salvation to completion—when He will possess His purchased possession in fully consummated redemption.

- Then we will have a body like unto His glorious body (Philippians 3:20, 21);
- Then we will be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is (I John 3:2);
- Then He will come to be glorified and wondered at in all His saints (II Thessalonians 1:10);
- Then He will present us to Himself devoid of spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but holy and without blemish (Ephesians 5:27).

7. HE WITNESSES.

“The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ” (Romans 8:16, 17).

We are not left to imagine that we are saved, to hope that we are saved, or even to make the claim for ourselves, all of which might be in the nature of presumption on our part.

Instead, the blessed Spirit, on His part, takes up His abode in our hearts, there to bear witness that it is actually so. And His witness is true. In this He is but carrying out His own provision that **“at the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.”** His Spirit unites with our spirit in the testimony that it is true.

The third witness is His own Word which declares that we who have believed “**have passed out of death into life**” (John 5:24).

In scanning the Spirit’s Incoming for our Salvation we detect a three-tense aspect which may be stated thus:

1. Through His REGENERATION work we have a *PAST salvation*, perfect in Him.
2. Through His SEALING work we have a *PRESENT salvation*, secured to us day by day, by the seal of His own presence.
3. Through His EARNEST work we have a *FUTURE salvation*, assured to us by His pre-payment.

By His WITNESSING within He continually imparts to all His work, past, present, future, a glorious sense of reality, by which we KNOW it to be so.

III. The Exhortation

Scripture has one grave warning as to our attitude toward the Spirit's purposed work for our salvation: **"Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost"** (Acts 7:51).

Resisting the Spirit—this is the solemn explanation of why anyone is found in unbelief today. No one can remain unsaved except by withstanding the tender yearnings of the Holy Spirit.

Dear reader, if you are unsaved, this is the reason. Christ died for you—for you as much as for any person who was ever saved. The loving Spirit has many times called this fact to your attention, pressing it home to your heart; but you resisted Him. Change your attitude, cease to resist, and He will bring the Saviour of the world into your life to be your own personal Saviour. Consider well, hear and heed the appeal from the glory of Him who has become a life-giving Spirit:

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me" (Revelation 3:20).

When Holman Hunt had completed his matchless picture of Christ standing, with pierced hand uplifted, knocking at the door, a friend remonstrated that he had omitted something, that the door had no latch for opening it.

"No," said Mr. Hunt, "I have not left anything out; this door can be opened only from within."

One day a father, accompanied by his little boy, visited an art gallery, especially intent upon viewing Holman Hunt's painting. As they gazed upon the compassionate face and pleading posture of our blessed Lord, the boy stood absorbed in wrapt intensity of interest. Then to his father he whispered: "Father, Father, did He get in?"

Dear reader, this very day you can change your attitude and know His In-coming. Cease to resist or refuse. Joyously believe and receive. Does He get in?

~ end of chapter 3 ~

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