

The Spirit's Power Indispensable By S. A. Keen

~Other Speakers S-Z: Classic Christian Writings:

"As the Father hath sent Me, so send I you...receive ye the Holy Ghost" (John 20:21-22).

It is very significant that Jesus, having given to His disciples their great commission, should link with it the command: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." It teaches that "the Pentecostal bestowment is an indispensable accompaniment of the believer in the accomplishment of his mission."

The magnitude of the mission of the child of God consists in this, that he is sent of Jesus to do just what Jesus was sent of the Father to do; that the work of Christ and the work of the Christian are one. Jesus was sent to save the world; so is the believer sent to do the same thing.

Jesus did His part by His wonderful life, His marvelous teachings, His notable works, and His atoning death. He has now left to His people their part, by preaching, testifying, and sacrificing, to complete the saving of the world. Because He has assigned this part to them, He implores them to receive the Holy Spirit.

Did you ever think, reader, that we are sent, each of us, into the world to do just what Jesus was sent to do -- that is, to save men? That is the mission of every Christian father, mother, son, daughter, husband, wife, Sunday-school teacher, minister, young and old, and because sent forth to this high calling, the Holy Spirit is promised to each and is indispensable to each, in order that he may serve a good service, and to execute the commission he is under.

Jesus, in order to render the service laid upon Him by the Father, was anointed with the Holy Spirit upon the banks of the Jordan. If Jesus, who was the God-man, needed the baptism with the Holy Spirit in order to do His work, how much more do we need the like bestowment in order to execute the mission He has laid upon us!

Adequate to Our Mission

The bestowment of the Holy Spirit is adequate to our mission. The anointing of the Holy Spirit was a necessity to the God-man and, having received it, He went forth in the power of the Spirit to work His miracles, to show the Father, to reveal truth, and to die on the cross. Through the agency of the Holy Spirit He accomplished the atonement. It is said: "Through the Eternal Spirit He offered Himself without spot to God" (Hebrews 9:14).

How presumptuous for us to attempt our mission without the anointing, when Jesus did not venture to enter upon His without the aid of the Spirit! How careful He was to guard His first disciples against venturing to their mission -- even after their commission was given, and the gospel message all ready for the mouth of its heralds -- without the anointing of the Holy Spirit! He said: "Tarry ye...until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49).

Yet how many ministers, teachers, missionaries, evangelists, workers have gone to their mission without this power to achieve it! The great blunder of the Church today is that so many are attempting to do God's work and to save souls without the power of the Holy Spirit. Then we wonder why, for so much giving and doing and going, there is so little fruit and so little salvation. If the column of the Church would halt a few moments, get on its knees, look up and receive the Holy Spirit, it would push on the campaign so successfully that it would be the surprise of this century.

Just in proportion as believing hearts are receiving this bestowment of the Holy Spirit, so is the salvation of the world advancing. This empowerment is right at our hearts. Jesus stands today as He has ever since the dispensation of the Holy Spirit was inaugurated, breathing upon His people -- ministry and laity -- saying, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost."

Yet we go on like Gehazi, depending on the prophet's staff instead of the prophet's power (2 Kings 4). Believers remain cold and worldly, sinners dead and indifferent, the Churches languish, and the people perish, because we prophesy, but do not cry: "Come, O wind!" The breath of the Spirit would turn our valleys of death into those of life, and great armies would stand up for God.

This bestowment of the Holy Spirit, while it is the source of spiritual character and spiritual enjoyment to the believer, is equally the source of spiritual power. Its power is fully adequate to all the demands of the high commission of the believer and the Church. No other endowments are adequate, however accessory to the work of the Church, without it.

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The Holy Spirit is the indispensable ally of the ministry and the Church. "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts" (Zechariah 4:6). John Wesley was devout, useful, exemplary, but he received this bestowment of the Holy Spirit, and then it was he rose into an efficiency which amazed his age. Thomas Chalmers received it, and the scholar, theologian, and preacher became an evangelistic wonder to his world and the Church of his day.

Moody received the power of the Holy Spirit and the layman, unlettered and uncultured, had the ministry of the world only too glad to sit at his feet and learn the art of soul winning. There are thousands of ministers, Sunday school teachers and Christian workers who were once toilsome and earnest, but without fruit. Today, although not more laborious or faithful, they are seeing glorious harvests on these heretofore barren fields because they have received the Holy Spirit.

Whatever the Church has to do, whether it be the saving of the impenitent, or the reclaiming of the backslidden, or the quickening of the unspiritual, or the entire sanctification of the spiritually hungry, the bestowment of the Holy Spirit is adequate to its accomplishment. Wherever this anointing is experienced, the whole work of salvation and spiritual edification is carried forward.

Available for Our Mission

The order, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," is a promise. God never commands what He does not promise to bestow. The Holy Spirit is the "Holy Spirit of promise" (Ephesians 1:13). He is called the promise of the Father (Luke 24:49). Whatever is of promise is by faith. The promises are given to be believed. So this promise may be believed, and hence we receive the Holy Spirit.

If this bestowment were on any other condition than faith, it would not be available to all. The only thing everybody can do under the atonement, is to believe, when sin is renounced and the soul is yielded up to God. Paul said to the Ephesians: "After that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise" (Ephesians 1:13). It not only succeeded their conversion as a definite bestowment, but succeeded to them in just the same way they had attained their justification, that is, by believing.

Jesus said to these disciples, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," when as yet they had not made any great advancement in experience, or achievement in extending the kingdom. He said it to them when they were the victims of misconceptions and inadequate apprehensions of the real nature of the kingdom of God. If they under these conditions could receive the Holy Spirit, as they did shortly after this promise was given them, how imminent and accessible He is to us!

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