

THE FULNESS OF THE SPIRIT.

BY THE EDITOR.

It seems clear that the baptism of the Spirit and the filling of the Spirit are two different things. Christ alone can baptize with the Holy Ghost. As John said: "I indeed baptize you with water, but he that cometh after me shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost"—Therefore it is not our *duty* to be baptized in the Holy Ghost; we are not *commanded* to be baptized in the Holy Ghost; for the simple reason that this is something with which we can have nothing to do. But it is our duty to be filled with the Holy Ghost.

Let us go back to the day of Pentecost for an explanation of what we have said. The disciples were all assembled "with one accord in one place." They had a definite promise. "Ye shall be baptized in the Holy Ghost not many days hence." They began to plead this promise, and after ten days of continuous supplication, the Spirit came upon them and He "filled all the place where they were sitting." This was the baptism into the Spirit, and it came in answer to long continued prayer. Then it is said, and "*they were all filled* with the Holy Ghost." First the place was filled and then they were filled. Now do we not see that a well may be full of water, and yet the bucket which is let down into that well may not be filled—indeed, cannot be filled if it is already full of sand or stones? And do we not see that though the Holy Spirit should be given in such measure as to fill all the church, a Christian might not be filled with the Spirit if his heart were already occupied to the brim with the things of this world? Here is the practical side of the matter. "Be filled *in* the Spirit," the words of the apostle mean exactly. You must be *in the Spirit* first; and you are so if you are regenerate; but the Spirit must be *in you*; and it is not so unless you are consecrated. Do we not remember how Christ insists upon a twofold relation of the believer to himself in order to fruitfulness? "*Abide in me and I in you.*" A branch must be in the tree, closely and firmly joined to the trunk; but that is not sufficient. The tree must be in the branch, sending its sap and

nourishment into every fibre of that branch or there can be no fruit. "He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." So exactly is our relation to the Holy Spirit who is the invisible Christ in his church.

We are baptized in the Spirit once and for all on the day of Pentecost. As saith the apostle: "By one Spirit we have all been baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free." Rev. xii: 13.

Henceforth the present invisible Holy Ghost is the element in which the church lives and moves and has its being. As says the apostle again: "For ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit." By our regeneration we have been brought into a new sphere, and made to breathe a new atmosphere. But we know that one may be in the air, but if the air is not in him he is a dead man. His very life depends on his inhaling the atmosphere in which he is placed. Open all the windows, unclose all the ventilators and fill this room with air; but what will it avail unless one also opens his heart and is filled with the air. And even so, though the Spirit has been given without measure to the church, the power and purity and peace of each believer depends upon his personal relation to that Spirit.

"Be not drunken with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit." Eph 5:18

How can we obey this injunction? Let us name some essential conditions.

1. *The must be a surrendered will.* Here we begin at the very centre and hidden core of the man. It is of no use to surrender a few outposts of self—our time, our tastes, our conscience—while the stronghold of self-will is still unyielded. It is impossible to be filled with the Spirit unless there is first, absolute and unconditional surrender to Jesus Christ—"Lord, whoever you wish me to be, wherever you wish me to go, whatever you wish me to do!" This must be our sincere and unreserved confession, before we can share the fulness of the Spirit. Remember how Paul in the sixteenth chapter of Romans commands his brethren on this point, saying—"But God be thanked that ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you." That

form of doctrine, or that pattern of doctrine, *to which ye were delivered.*" Just as the molten iron obeys the mould in which it is cast, fitting into every minutest feature of that mould—so these Christians obeyed the divine pattern of Christ, crucified and risen, to the minutest particular. But there is an important condition to such obedience. We have seen a lot of old iron piled up at the foundery, waiting to be recast. It is of every kind of shape and pattern—round and square, straight and angular—and the first thing to be done is to melt it up get all its patterns destroyed, and the whole reduced to a pliable mass. Are we willing to have the plan of our lives broken up—the pleasing pattern of our future reduced and obliterated? It must be so, before we can be recast into the perfect mould. An earnest Christian tells how he began to pray the prayer, "Oh Lord, take me, and make me what thou wilt have me to be!" "Very soon I found that I must insert an intermediate clause," he said, "And so I learned to pray, "Oh Lord, take me and break me and make me.' The old self must be reduced before conformity to Christ can be effected.

"This is cruel and harsh" I hear some saying, "You make God to be a savage iconoclast whose greatest delight is in smashing our idols, and destroying our most cherished plans of life." Oh no! He will not break the old unless he can give us something far better in the new. Our Christ is infinitely kind, and he only asks us to yield our cherished idols in order that he may give us something infinitely better. Surely he takes no delight in crossing and thwarting our favorite plans. Think we that if we had a son who was obstinate and self-willed and disobedient; and that son should come to us some day and say, "Father, I have concluded to surrender my will and way to you. I am ready to do anything you command henceforth and obey you implicitly." Think we that we should say: "Now I will do my best to annoy and torment my son. He is very fond of reading and my first move shall be to take away his books and forbid him looking into one henceforth. He has great aversion to manual labor; and I will give him eight hours a day at the axe and the saw,"

what kind of a father would that be? More fiend than father," one would say. And be surer a hundred times, that our Christ will not pursue a like course with his disciples. Rather will he say, "Now I will show him how much better are my plans than his—how much more blessed obedience to my will than to his own."

It is the universal testimony of those who have lived surrendered lives that they have been led into unspeakably better plans and higher joys than they ever dreamed of before. There is no joy like being out and out for God. The Christian who cares to be only half-hearted for Christ, thereby consents to halve his joys and halve his knowledge and halve his peace. And the half which he gets is so meagre and unsatisfying that he has really less comfort in it than the whole-hearted worldling enjoys.

2. *There must be a surrendered person.* It cannot be without significance that the Scriptures make such explicit mention of the body in enjoying consecration: "I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service." How plain the significance of these words. Fleshly lusts and appetites must be kept under subjection. A holy restraint must be put on our natural desires. It is a "living sacrifice" which is enjoined. Not the aceticism which kills the body, but the discipline which sanctifies the body is the Scriptural rule. For we must remember that our mortal frames have an immortal destiny assigned to them.

"O mean may seem this house of clay
Yet 'twas the Lord's abode."

By wearing the vesture of our human flesh Christ has sanctified it forever. And now the commission is not—humiliate the body, lacerate the body—but glorify God in your body which is his.

We can only touch upon this subject and then urge the apostles' exhortation that we *present our bodies a living sacrifice.* The wearing of costly dresses, the adorning with gold and diamonds and precious stones, is not presenting the body as a living sacrifice. The loading of the table with sumptuous food and costly delicacies not pre-

sending the body a living sacrifice. The pampering of the carnal senses with wine or tobacco is not presenting the body a living sacrifice. Carnal indulgence of any kind is utterly hostile to the Spirit of God. Why should we dwell on what all must know and deeply realize. Therefore it is enough that we reiterate the apostle Peter's words: "Dearly beloved, I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul."

THE SEVEN EPISTLES IN THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION.

Introductory No. 1.

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HAVING finished his work of atonement by his death upon the cross, having convinced his disciples of the reality of his resurrection and given to his apostles his last personal instructions, the Lord ascended to heaven to send down the Holy Ghost, and to enter upon his priestly work of intercession. Immediately after his departure the apostles, having received the Holy Ghost, entered upon their work. The gospel was preached and churches were gathered. In the course of time all the apostles died except John. It was more than fifty years after Pentecost and near the close of the century, that it pleased the Father to give to the Son a revelation to be made known to the churches, and he made it known to them through the beloved apostle.

Why was this revelation made? What was there in the internal or external condition of his church that would lead him there to address it, so many years after his ascension? It was its failure to keep his commandments and to abide in his grace, for had it been faithful, obedient to him, and doing his will, his message to it, if he had spoken at all, would have been one of praise and encouragement, not of rebuke and warning. He had seen from heaven the loss of the first love, the worldliness, the false doctrine, the lukewarmness and consequent divisions and strifes among his children. He had heard the complaints of the apostles that they could not fulfill

their ministry, and prepare the church for his return; and the time had now come that he himself must speak, and give to the churches his last words of monition and warning. He would show to them what he had found in them worthy of praise and of blame; he would set before them the purpose for which he had chosen them, and hold up before them the hope of his return as the great incentive to faithfulness. But if his rebukes were ineffectual, his calls to repentance unheard, then he must punish them with sore judgments and purge them as with fire.

Then it was the internal and spiritual condition of his church, its departure from his right ways, that determined the nature and form of the Lord's last revelation to it. Its part, brief as it was, had been long enough to show how rankly the tares were growing among the wheat, and so served as the ground of his present reproof, and also of his predictions as to the future. If his children repented not, the germs of evil would rapidly grow, iniquity would abound, and only through judgments, tribulation, persecution, martyrdom, could God purify them, and make them ready for his Son.

But how far, and in what way, should the Lord who foresaw that his admonitions would not work repentance, make known to the church its sad future? Should it be in plain words which all who read could understand? Should he clearly foretell its history and the successive steps of its decline and also of his dealings with it? This has never been God's way; he does not make prophecy to be history. An outline of the future which all could read and comprehend, would be regarded as the fixed divine decree, as fated and inevitable; and so all would feel themselves exonerated from responsibility and guiltless whatever might come to pass. God speaks to free moral agents, and therefore the predictions of judgments in the scriptures are always conditional; timely repentance will avert them.

It is on this ground that the Lord, speaking to his church of its future begins by rebukes of its present sins, and calls it to repentance. but in foresight of its unrepentance, he veils under symbols or symbolic actings what that future will be, and what he is about to do. The