

thing is clear beyond all others: the strongest and best British influence in China will be due to the Spirit and power of Christ. The more we can give to China of the everlasting Gospel the wider and more lasting will be the results to that wonderful country.

An August Relationship

The recent return of Whitsunday reminds us of the way in which St. Peter described the action of Ananias and Sapphira. He said that it was "a lie to the Holy Ghost." The entire matter seemed at first to be simply between them and the Church, but the Apostle showed that God also was affected by their deception. A well-known writer has, therefore, put the matter very plainly in these words:—

"All this makes things very big and very terrible. God becomes a very immediate presence, and life is revealed as a matter of grave and solemn responsibility. When Ananias told this lie he smote the Lord as truly as did the military officer who struck the Saviour with the palm of his hand. It would be a momentous moral safeguard if we could consistently realize this in our daily life. God is present in every human drama, whether the actors be many or few. The searching standard of judgment must always be this. "What will this purpose do to the Lord? What am I doing? In this design am I offering God homage or insult? Will he receive obeisance or a blow? Let us be sure that in everything we are dealing with the Holy Ghost."

The Source of Strength

The more the Church grapples with the problems that are ever confronting her, the more she realizes her own weakness. This is true also of the individual. Our only hope and strength and victory is in God's Indwelling Spirit. He is the Source of Strength. In our failures and discouragements it is well we should read again one of the greatest chapters in the New Testament, in which is found the clearest revelation of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8). There are two important things in the second verse: the first is, "Life in Christ Jesus," and the second, the Spirit in us as the power of that life. To impart life was the beginning of God's ways with our souls. Till then we were dead—alive to every worldly object, but dead to God. Now by His grace the Spirit has laid hold of our hearts, and there has been the communication to us of Divine life. As we were born into natural life, so are we born absolutely anew. Except a man be born anew he cannot see or enter into the Kingdom of God. Nothing can be more important than this. "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men." These two things, life and light, are bound up together, and as surely as there is life so there is light in the soul. Apart from life there is no real conviction of sin in the soul. That is where the first part of the Epistle to the Romans comes in. It lays the foundation in righteousness of all God's ways of grace with the sinner, in setting forth His Son to be the propitiation, that every question of what troubled us (our sins) might be gone into and settled for His glory. Then there is God's acceptance of Christ's finished work in raising Him from the dead, the glorious proof given to the believer that our sins which He bore on the Cross are gone for ever. "When He had by Himself purged our sins, He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Then, as we see from Romans 5:12 on to chap-

ter 8, we find the deeper question raised, not of the sins, but of the root that produced them. Just as we needed the conviction of our sins to know forgiveness, so we needed the conviction of self in its entire evil and absence of strength, that we might be brought at last to give up the vain struggle to make anything of it, and to bow to the judgment of all we are as well as of what we have done, and to see that judgment executed when God condemned sin in the flesh in the death of His Son.

We began by receiving His life, but then we needed to know His work for forgiveness and liberty, that we might enter into and realize our privileges. Here we find the elements that go to make up our position in Christ: "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." We are in Christ risen from the dead, passed beyond every question of sins and sin, the judgment of God, and the power of Satan. We have our new place in Christ and in all that He is as man before God, and in the Spirit as the power of that new place. That is the position of every child of God. For it is not everything that we are in Christ, for inseparably connected with it as the power of this position, is the fact that the Holy Ghost dwells in us.

The two parts of His work come before us in the testimony borne to His Glory in St. John 1:29: "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," and then verse 32: "John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him. . . . The same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." When we go to St. John 7:39, we read that "the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." This shows how entirely distinct a thing the gift of the Spirit is now in Christianity. He was not given while Jesus was here, or before that. Jesus is glorified now, and the Holy Ghost is given as He never was before; so we cannot look back to the Old Testament for it. In ch. 14:16 it is said: "He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever." This is entirely distinct from being born of the Spirit. The unbeliever has to be born of the Spirit, but it is only in the believer that He can dwell. Then, again, the Lord says: "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you." So great and inestimable is the blessing that it is better for us that He is gone, that He is glorified, for He has sent His Spirit to dwell in us always and never to leave us. And then we see what He does. "He will guide you into all the truth. He shall take of Mine and show it unto you." In Acts the great fact is that God the Holy Ghost has come. Ever since then His dwelling-place has been here upon earth and in the believer. Now we may ask: When does the believer receive the Holy Ghost? Let us recall Acts 10, where St. Peter was sent to Cornelius, and was to tell him words whereby he and all his house should be saved. We read in v. 43: "Whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins. While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word." So we see that the Holy Ghost taking His place in us is connected with the remission of sins. The moment we receive the remission of our sins, that moment the Holy Ghost takes up His dwelling in us. "In whom also after that ye believed (that is, the 'gospel of your salvation') ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. 1:13). The ray that convicted us of our sins revealed to us the Person of our Saviour, and became life in our soul. And when the testimony to His finished work is believed, the Holy Ghost dwells in

us—come from the glory to be the power of Christ's life in us as well as a Divine Person dwelling in us.

Thus we have the first great fact of our deliverance; the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made us free (v. 2). We carry the flesh in us still; it has undergone no change; the two natures remain with us, each having its own character, as the last verse of Romans 7, coming after the deliverance is reached, states. But now we are entitled to reckon ourselves dead to the old, and no longer in the flesh, but in Christ, and in the Spirit given to dwell in us and to be the power of the believer's walk; and through the Spirit we are enabled to keep the evil nature within us in the place of death. Secondly, we are free by the new range of objects presented to us (ch 8:5). The flesh finds its objects in the world, and it is a sphere perfectly suited to it. But there is a sphere of things suited to the new nature, "the things of the Spirit," or else we should be like fish out of water. The Holy Ghost takes of the things of Christ and shows them to us. He is not merely the power of the life we have received in Christ Jesus, but He also communicates to us the things of that life—of its new relationships, new joys, and new objects where Christ is. We look at unseen things. We have our mind on things above; our citizenship is there. Therein we find the immense practical power of our deliverance; we are as delivered persons free to enjoy the things that the Spirit thus ministers to us. And thus we prove the immense formative power of an object, adequate to fill and absorb the heart. We see the power of the same principle in earthly things. He who seeks money is avaricious, he who seeks fame is ambitious. But how different when the object is Divine! When Christ was here the Spirit descended on Him in the form of a dove, and now that same blessed Spirit directs our hearts to where He is, to the One that will fill them for eternity. Is He not an adequate Object? Can He not satisfy now? He delights to do it if we will only let Him. Are we allowing the Spirit to take of the things of Christ and form our hearts by the Son of God as our object, like Noah with his one window up above; or are we trying to break a hole in the side, to be interested and to find our objects in a judged world? The Holy Spirit will never depart from us, but we may grieve Him, and then all communion and joy and power cease. There is no heart more miserable than one who has tasted of what Christ is as an Object, and turns away to be occupied with the things of the world.

Altho' my feet have walk'd thro' mire unshod,
And He is whiter than the shining snows,
I cannot teach my soul to hide from God:
Because He knows.

I never touch the truth of any sin
But in my heart a sheltering pity grows;
And hath not Heaven view'd it from within?
The Maker knows.

We spirits wander thro' a lonely land:
Dumb phantoms all with hands that cannot close.
Our cry goes up: the gulfs of space are spann'd,
And Something knows.

My outer courts tell ghostly tales of death,
That road down which no lighted window glows:
Within my shrine a sovereign whisper saith,
"Be still: He knows."
Frederick Langbridge.