

to the Master we love? Is there any here to whom the Master says not. "I have this against thee that thou did'st leave thy first love?"

Let us look for a moment at the cause of our joy at the first. It was the knowledge of forgiveness; that our sins were washed away in the precious blood of Christ. What marred our peace? It was the coming in again of those sins from which we had been made free! In some unguarded moment we did or said something that belonged to the old life, not to the new. We came back to the Saviour and were graciously forgiven, but another slip came and our life grew to be a series of departures from God and reconciliations to Him, and, in some cases, a growing coldness that settled down over the life like a cold Atlantic fog on the sunshine of a day in June. Is this the best God has for those who trust in him? Is His peace like everything else in the world, evanescent, passing away? Did he not say, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, *not* as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled?" How can we appropriate this parting gift and obey this dying command?

Is it possible to live in unbroken fellowship with God? We all know what His peace is, but to many it is here to-day and gone to-morrow. In Isaiah 48: 18. The Lord says, "O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments then had thy peace been as a river and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea, following one another in unbroken succession." But our peace does not flow with steady, irresistible current; nor does our righteousness follow on without a break, like the constantly recurring waves of the sea and in long weariness we cry "who is sufficient for these things."

Dear Sisters, believe me, the secret of the whole matter lies in the fact that we have received only the first half of the salvation of God. Did Christ bring to us a salvation of forgiveness alone? "He saved us by the washing of regeneration and *renewing of the Holy Ghost.*" "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" It is a salvation out of the old life and into the new. First, is a forgiven past, then a purified present. Each is a gift and is given only to the prayer of faith.

It is true that we have asked for and received the forgiveness, but have we also asked for and received the cleansing? Christ was "set forth for the remission of sins that are past" but His salvation

covers more than that. He gives power to renovate the life and save us from the commission of those sins which have been blotted out. When our past is cleansed, the promise is given us of a clean future to follow. It is the same gospel that began with John The Baptist who preached the baptism of "repentance for the remission of sins," and that "they should bring forth fruits meet for repentance." Our Lord came saying "repent" and the sermon on the mount is His commentary on the life that ought to follow repentance. We all appropriate the forgiveness by faith, but fail so fully to appropriate the life because we think this depends largely upon ourselves and do not apprehend that this also is received alone by faith, "not of works lest any man should boast." John's special message was that one mightier than He was coming after him who should baptize with the Holy Ghost. Everywhere John preached that his baptism which symbolized forgiveness was preparatory and incomplete. It needed the mightier baptism by the coming One whose special Mission was to endue with the Holy Spirit. So in Christ's last words, recorded in Acts 1: 5. He says, "John indeed baptized you in water, but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence," and He "charged them not to depart from Jerusalem but to wait for the promise of the Father"; saying, "ye shall receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you." It was useless for them to do anything without this power. Everywhere through the Acts we find that those who had been baptized in acknowledgment of the remission of their sins immediately needed to receive the Holy Spirit in order to live aright; they could not keep themselves pure, they needed the power from on high. We all know that when our hearts are cleansed and purified by the precious blood of Christ. We need the Holy Spirit's abiding power to keep us clean; but my enquiry to-day is "have we all by a definite act of faith appropriated the power to live aright, as we have the forgiveness of "sins that are past" "The just shall *live* by faith." Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. This comes first, but immediately we read "By whom also we have access unto the grace wherein we *stand,*" and the whole 8th of Romans deals with our living "by faith in the Spirit of life who has made us free from the law of sin and death." It is not for those who live by their own striving to do right or as Paul