

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

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In this day of religious sentimentalism and various other things not liblical, it may not be amiss to examine the teachings of the Word of God on this vital question. What do the Scriptures teach concerning the baptism of the Holy Spirit? Each of the evangelists in substantially the same language records John's statement that the Lord Jesus would "baptize in the Holy Spirit and in fire." The record in John's gospel varies slightly from the others—viz: Matt. 3:11, Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16, John 1:33, Luke, in the Acts 1:5, gives us the statement made by our Lord to his disciples after his resurrection. "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence."

It becomes evident that these statements must harmonize with each other. Here is a prophetic promise addressed by John to a mixed multitude, in which it is clearly set forth that character and position in the kingdom of God are to be secured as a result of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Without the benefits of this baptism there will be no kingdom; without the effects of this baptism personally realized there will be no spiritual children of Abraham. It is clear to the careful student that awakening and regeneration are to be secured only through the Holy Spirit as a result of the promised baptism. The Holy Spirit is recognized by John as essential. And the baptism of the Holy Spirit is in some way set forth as introductory to the kingdom of God declared to be "at hand."

Passing on to the promise of our Lord to the apostles we learn that as preliminary to their work of witnessing there was to come this baptism of the Holy Spirit—in which there was to be bestowed upon them as apostles, "power." Endowment of power was then to be one of the blessings consequent upon the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Now, if we combine these various passages it is seen that the baptism of the Holy Spirit was to be an inauguration of the kingdom of God among men by which all the conditions and blessings of the salvation brought by Jesus are to be made available and effective. The advent of the Holy Spirit is called then the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and not one or more blessings consequent upon that advent.

These statements concerning this baptism were then prophetic of the advent of the Holy Spirit and were fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. All are agreed that the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the day of Pentecost was the fulfillment of this prophecy made by John and by our Lord. Then Peter standing up with the eleven on that memorable day before the multitude declares that this was also the fulfillment of the prophecy uttered by Joel eight hundred years before. Now let us analyze the statements made by Peter as to the results and benefits of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He first declares that it is a blessing for all flesh. Then specially for the Jews, chap. 2:17-20. Then upon the whole world in the securing of salvation for the "whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord." Or, if we examine more carefully, it is that this baptism would result in conviction for all flesh and regeneration for those who call on the name of the Lord—and fitness for service for all those who would do the Lord's will.

Going back to the promise made by our Lord in Acts 1:8, we learn that he promised power to those to whom the Holy Spirit should come, or the power of the Holy Spirit coming upon them. Again it is to be noted that "being filled with the Holy Spirit is one of the results which followed this baptism. In connection, let us recall the promise of our Lord that when the Comforter should come he would abide with the disciples forever—John 14:16. Here let it be noted that nowhere in the New Testament—after the day of Pentecost—is anything said about the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Nowhere after that time is prayer offered for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Nowhere are Christians urged or invited either to pray for or expect a baptism of the Holy Spirit. The silence of the inspired writers is very significant and should be noted. Many of the blessings consequent upon the presence of the Holy Spirit are laid before Christians and they are urged to accept and use them, but everywhere the apostles recognize the Holy Spirit as an abiding presence and the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a completed fact. For eighteen hundred years the Holy Spirit has been in the world, convincing the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. For eighteen hundred years he has been regenerating every soul that looks to Jesus Christ for salvation. For eighteen hundred years his temple has been the redeemed soul and the local church—for eighteen hundred years he has bestowed all the power upon every Christian which that Christian would use. And this he will continue to do until the coming of our Lord the second time without sin unto salvation. The Holy Spirit cannot come, for he is here. He cannot be poured out, for he is now at work here in the world performing his most holy mission.

What, then, was the baptism of the Holy Spirit? It was his advent into the world bringing conviction, regeneration and sanctification. The language of Peter clearly shows that this is the truth. It was not then a blessing to be bestowed upon the believer subsequent to regeneration. He does and will bestow many such blessings—but no one of them is ever called the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The endowment of power was not then and is not now the baptism of Holy Spirit. Power is one of the results of that baptism, and the use of that power is dependent upon each Christian to-day.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is not then a possibility to-day, but the realization of his presence is a blessed possibility, and the use of his power is our high and holy privilege. The fitness for service and especial preparation for special service is ours to be desired and ours to be attained, but this is not the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The continued consciousness of fellowship with Jesus Christ our blessed Lord and a sense of abiding in him and he in us our high and holy privilege—but this is not the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Here let me emphasize that this is not a mere difference in the use of terms.

It is a difference in conception, a difference in the attitude of the soul—a difference in the conviction regarding the truth. Put into contrast, if you please, on the one hand, the Lord's injunction to the apostles to "tarry" at Jerusalem until they received the promise of the Father, viz, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, including, as it did, conviction, regeneration, power, consecration and holy living; and on the other hand Paul's prayer for the church in Ephesus that they "might be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward-man." Does Paul ask them to wait or tarry?

Does he seek or ask them to seek for some baptism of the Holy Spirit? No, not a hint of any such thing. He turns them to an entirely different condition of mind and body. What is it? Analyze the fourth, fifth and sixth chapters and see—the most intense activity both positive and negative, as conditions. A united church—a work-church—a pure church—their homes and hearts governed by the Spirit—and the individual equipped for service and going forth to service. The days for waiting and tarrying are past. Henceforth it is to be activity.

Two illustrations may help us to understand this truth. I sat in the parlor of the pastor's home. The daughter in the early morning came in and threw open the window-blinds. I said, "Maggie, what are you doing?" "Letting in God's sunlight," was the child's response. "Why did you not pray for sunlight," I asked. "God has put plenty of sunshine on the outside of the house," said Maggie, "and if we want it in here we must throw open the blinds and let it come in."

Maggie was right. Fault-finding, selfish, indolent, miserly, hypocritical, worldly Christian, throw open the shutters of your soul, and let the Holy Spirit fill your soul with his holy power and life-giving presence. Do not pray for him to come. He cannot come. He is here now, waiting for you to open and let him. He can not, in his fullness and perfection, ever come into such hearts as very many Christians have. He cannot come into many churches and fill them until they are emptied of so very many other things with which he has no fellowship. Do not pray for him to come, but give him room, and he will come in and bless you gloriously. If the soul is regenerated, he dwells in that soul, and will never leave it; but a distinction is to be made here between the Holy Spirit dwelling in the believer, and the Holy Spirit filling the believer. Neither of these is the baptism of the Holy Spirit, but both are results of that baptism. Our condition is similar in both conditions. It is not ours to seek his coming. By the Holy Spirit Jesus stands at the door and knocks. "If any man opens the door, he will come in and sup with him, and he with Jesus." In the name of the ascended Christ, brethren "open the door," and let him come in. Do not keep the door closed, and waste time and strength praying for him to come. He is here waiting to come and fill your soul with the sweetness and power of his holy presence.

Note the second illustration. I was on the electric street car the other day, and I noticed that when the motorman needed more power, he did not telegraph back to headquarters, but fully realizing that an abundance of power was provided, he simply turned the lever until he was able to use the power provided. The Holy Spirit is here—all power is here. The power that brooded over the chaos in the beginning, and brought order and beauty into place. That same power is here to bring order and beauty out of the chaos of sin and the ruins of death; but Christians are worldly, selfish, sordid—are not making connection with the power as they ought. They may be using some, but not all.

Oh, for united churches—working churches—pure churches—made up of regenerated souls who are equipped Christians, knowing the work of God, living lives of prayer—then will they not be led to pray for the baptism of the Holy Spirit—a prayer which cannot be granted—but they will realize the presence of the Holy Spirit; they will use his power; they will accomplish all God wants them to accomplish, and the kingdom of God will prevail everywhere. Brethren, the Holy Spirit knows what we need, and in that blessed word which he has inspired, neither by precept nor example has he taught any Christian since the day of Pentecost to pray for the coming or the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He has taught us to pray in the Spirit and with the Spirit. He has commanded us to be filled with the Spirit, and led by the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit. But in no single passage is there any information that such a thing as the baptism of the Spirit will be repeated. It cannot be. When we

are in the Spirit and the Spirit in us, then is our burial with Christ in baptism a Christian baptism, but otherwise it is not. The Holy Spirit personally then is ever with us—convicting the sinner, regenerating the believer; and ready to lead us, to fill us, to endue us with power, to teach us the word of truth, to guide us into the truth, to anoint us, to seal us as Christ's own, to reveal Christ to us; to comfort us in trial and strengthen us in temptation. These things are his blessed mission to us as a result of that presence he has graciously granted to Christians ever since the baptism on the day of Pentecost according to promise.

These words have been written not in a spirit of controversy but solely to set forth the teaching of God's word on this important question. Thoughtful Christians realize the deplorable lack of spirituality among churches and church members. The point of view taken by many implies that God is to be importuned to send the Holy Spirit so that this want of spirituality may be overcome and greater power secured. The implication is that God is withholding until we seek. The other point of view is that the Holy Spirit is here in all his fullness and has been ever since the day of Pentecost and that he is importuning us to open our hearts and let him fill us and grant us the power we need for our work. On that Christians, teachers and churches everywhere would realize how so many of us are sinning against God in this matter. How patiently God waits for us to give up our love of self and pleasure and gold and heresies, and accept the "love of the Spirit" that we may be blessed in our own souls and going forth to service bless others. No—a thousand times no. It is not the baptism of the Spirit we need to seek—but to arise in the power of that Holy Spirit already granted and ever present with us and putting away the sin from our hearts go forth filled with his presence to do his will—possessing the grace of God, knowing the love of God and overcoming the world. May God help us.—Standard.

Danger of Concession.

The world moves from one extreme to another. Like a ship, it goes on one tack, and then zigzags ahead on another, making headway on the whole. Staying too long on one tack, it loses all that it gains. So there are times of expansion in human thought, when we open the mind wide to embrace all that is coming toward it, and ages of contraction when we close the mind around our new material to make sure of it. The last generation has been one of enthusiastic reception of new fact and experience. But unless we sometimes close in upon these things, they will pass on and be lost. The same has to be closed and drawn, or the fish all escape. So, while we cannot but welcome all the open-eyedness of the world, and all the open-heartedness of it, there is danger of its becoming so open that nothing is saved. Mere openness becomes often mere emptiness.

Other times have seen belief made as difficult as possible, and our day has seen the revolt against this. We may rejoice that we live and have a part in making belief less difficult. But we need not close our eyes to indications that we may, for all our good intentions, lose as much as we gain. Having made faith rational to a man, you may, without impertinence, ask him what he is going to do about it. Conviction has suffered some discount, and respect for other people's convictions has appreciated, until we are in danger of dilettanteism, which has been well described as "an incapacity for affirmation."

Rough and angular and assertive as were our fathers' convictions, we may be excused for wondering whether they were not as good as our convictions, which we have tried to make as amiable and reduce as near to a minimum as possible. This is not to say one word in depreciation of the noble effort of our time, but we need to ask the question whether we have not done injustice to ourselves and to many a cherished belief. It is one thing to hold views for ourselves, and quite another to insist that other people hold them. Our duty toward them is best done by giving them liberty without inflicting on ourselves poverty. In the long run the world does not thank us for a "mush of concession," which hastens the conclusion of nothing. Heartily as we may have joined in simplifying the demands of Jesus, there is a limit to this process of minimizing things.

There is great danger that the man who believes the least shall come to be considered the normal man and the type of belief, and this catastrophe every thinking man will do his best to avert. We believe in the weak brother, but we do not believe that he should rule the community. Willing as never before to help him, we may insist that we shall not help him by coming down to his outfit in either faith or habits. The inevitable result of this is a weak social and spiritual life.

There are two classes of weak brethren; those who want patience and help to get up to where their stronger brethren are, and those who can see no millennium save in reducing their stronger brethren to their condition. This is "the millennium of Moab," as Dr. Bushnell calls it. It is one of our sorry experiences to find how much concession on our part some men will take without making a step farther for themselves. Spiritual poverty must make concessions if the world is to be better, not spiritual

richness. And while Master must use it, it demands noble anybody by parting

In such matters of terms of the present to pel in every age, to run unum, to lop off unbelief are not proving parallel with the grace; to discern cleanness of the law, and to plunimum we cannot courage weak faith ness, and with things to "bare essentials" are just the Essentials bloom out are unwilling to mutilate essentials would be as like a tree which never more essential for faith It is well for us to be likely to put disability equally well for us no ability of poverty in which is simply a con gives out a thin sound which none will be

A preacher who is utterance so that the and so that the man ing may not be trouble everybody. Let a man sure that it is convict him, and he might pre this attempt to make b believes the most in the

But it is in the Chris mizing is more visible, thinking, but everybody one sort and another, not prudes, and that th life, we often abdicate of all its fault-finding maintain, and even wh imagine no worse disast when he came home, sh had grown to be the san Such a discovery would goodness in the soul of b been harder than the fa fusion than he ever c thrown when the Christ may rail at character, b respects, after all. His the character of some m man-goes under, this m

Trying to carry our worldly person by being or jesting over some m corum and reverence. Ju we can be like it and most sickening things i onlooker. In his heart Christian, he had better companies. If he is a n ister, and not try to be a sense) and a hail-fellow is a man, this will all app any cloth, and in the lon unifier are greater than of everything else.

We may freely concede may freely meet the man agreeable, courteous, kin too much; but down in h concede any more, and a concessions. Phillips Bro of Scripture which are f sweetness by flippant jo having once heard, one world of this sort of th forever mistakenly doing but steadily forfeiting it cease to be Christians, w when we carter to what i are played in the pulpit, prayers. They will not even, perhaps, applaud w neath they wish we would

Concessions are to help, member this; and there ar of us nowadays without o make what there is no dem which are wrought by cha edness, may be attained w self-respect or the loweri School Times.

The Fam

Famine, there is a famin devours. The year of Indi parts, viz., four months of July to October, four of ou from November to Februar ing heat, and dismal unbro June. When the rain rains else. The heavens open, a down upon the earth, and t break up. The overflowing sodden roads meet the bulg become one vast bog, the h house of matted and tangled is drunk with rankness. TI