

REMARKS ON THE PRESENCE OF THE HOLY GHOST IN THE CHRISTIAN.

I desire to make a few remarks of a practical tendency and of deep interest, on the effects of the presence of the Holy Ghost in the Christian.

The Spirit of God, as dwelling in us, may be considered in two aspects : for He unites us to the Lord Jesus, so that His presence is intimately connected with *life*, that life which is in Jesus. (John xiv. 19, 20 ; Gal. ii. 20.) "He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit ;" and further, His presence is that of God in the soul. The scripture, speaking of Him in the first of these characters (which is sometimes linked to the second), says (Rom. viii. 2, 9, 10), that the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus frees us from the law of sin ; so that the Spirit is *life* because of righteousness. It is, however, also said (ver. 9), "if so be that the *Spirit of God* dwell in you ;" and then His indwelling and action are blended, since (inasmuch as both are manifested by the formation of the character of Christ in the soul) "the Spirit of God" becomes "the Spirit of Christ." The "Christ in you" of verse 10, expresses the idea more clearly, especially as the apostle adds, "if Christ be in you, the Spirit is *life*." But in verse 16 the Holy Ghost is carefully distinguished from the Christian, for "He beareth witness *with* our spirit." In verses 26 and 27 the two characters of the presence of the Spirit are there remarkably

shewn out in their mutual connections: for "the mind of the Spirit," known to God, who searches the heart, is the life of the Spirit in the saint. But, on the other hand, "the Spirit helpeth our infirmities," and "maketh intercession for the saints, according to the will of God." The reason of all this is simple. On the one hand, the Spirit is there and acts with power according to the mind of Christ; on the other hand, and in consequence of this operation, the affections, thoughts, and works, are produced, which are those of the Spirit; but yet they are also ours, because we are partakers of them with Christ, "our life" (Col. iii. 2, 3), for "God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life."

But the effect of the second aspect of the presence of the Holy Ghost is yet more important. The Spirit is the Spirit of God; He is God, and is, therefore, the revelation of the presence and power of God in the soul—a revelation known *through* and *in* a new nature which is of Him. Consequently, that which is in the nature and character of God is developed where God dwells, i. e., in the soul of the saint; not only is it produced in the new man, the creation of God, but it fills the soul, because God is there, and there is communion with Him. For instance, the new nature loves, and this love is a proof that one is "born of God," and knows God. But this is not all; there is, moreover, the in-dwelling of the Holy Ghost—that

is to say, the presence of God who communicates this new nature to us. Therefore we read (Rom. v. 5) "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us." We are loved—we know it, and have the proof of it in the gift of the precious Saviour, and in His death for us (ver. 6-8). But there is something more ; the perfect and infinite love shed abroad in our hearts (poor vessels as they are), and the Holy Spirit, who is God, is there (and is free to be there, because we are purified by the blood of Christ)—He is there to fill these vessels with that which is divine—the love of God. It is also added (ver. 11) that we joy in God. Therefore, looking at the presence of the Spirit as demonstration of power in the soul, the apostle John affirms that "hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us." (1 John iii. 24.) But, as this might be applied merely to the varied energy of the Spirit in the soul, it is stated, further on, that "love is made perfect in us," namely, the love of God to us. Here it is no longer a question of us, of our affections, of our thoughts ; but the soul is filled with the fulness of God, which leaves no room for anything else ; there is no discord in the heart, to spoil the essential character of divine love. God, complete in Himself, excludes all that is contrary to Himself, otherwise He would be no longer Himself.

To avoid *mysticism* (the enemy's corruption of these truths) the Holy Ghost adds by the same

pen, "herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us" (1 John iv. 10); and the proof of this is based on that which is above all human thought and knowledge, namely, on the acts of God Himself in Christ. On the other hand, the presence of the Spirit is not given him as the proof of God's dwelling in us, two things which are identical, but it is written, "hereby know we that *we dwell in Him*, and He in us, because He hath given us *of His Spirit*." This presence of God in love not only fills our narrow souls, but places us *in Him* who is infinite in love. United to Christ by the Holy Ghost, one in life with Him, and the Spirit acting in us, "we dwell in God, and God in us." Therefore it is said that "God has given us of His Spirit;" that is to say, God, in virtue of His presence and of His power, makes us morally partakers of His nature and character, by the Holy Ghost in us, whilst giving us the enjoyment of communion with Himself, and at the same time introducing us into His fulness.

I would here just point out the distinctive characters of the Epistles of Paul, Peter, and John. Paul was raised up in an extraordinary manner for the especial purpose of communicating to the Church the order, method, and sovereignty of the divine operations; and to reveal the place which the Church holds in the midst of this, inasmuch as she is united to Christ, and is the marvellous object of the counsels of God in grace; as the apostle says (Eph. ii. 7), "that in the ages to come He

might shew the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus," or by His dealings with regard to the Church : the wisdom of God, the righteousness of His ways, and the counsels of His grace on this subject, are largely and (as all revelation) perfectly set forth in the writings of Paul. John takes up another point, that of the communication of the divine nature, what that nature is, and, consequently, what God is, whether in His living manifestations in Christ, or in the life which He communicates to others. Without this community of nature communion were impossible ; for darkness can have no fellowship with light. But, as we have already seen, the apostle goes still further : we dwell in God, and God in us, by the Holy Ghost ; and thus, as far as we are capable of it, we enjoy what God is in Himself, and become the manifestation of Him (the limit to this manifestation being only in the vessel in which God has taken up His abode). How great are the varied riches of the goodness of God ! This communion with Him, which raises us as far as possible towards the fulness of Him who reveals Himself in us, is certainly something very sweet and precious ; but the tenderness of God toward us, poor pilgrims on the earth, and His faithful love, so needed in our weakness to carry us onward to the goal, are not less so.

The testimony of Peter, in his first epistle, treats of that which God is for the pilgrim, and of what the latter should be for God. The resurrec-

tion of the Messiah has set the pilgrim on his road, and thereon are presented the faithfulness of God, and the encouragement which His power gives to our hope by this resurrection of Christ, the son of the living God, though rejected of men; and lastly, the apostle speaks of the walk, the worship and the service that flows from it.

John presents to us that which is most exalted in communion, or rather in the nature of communion; consequently, he does not touch on the subject of the Church, as an object of divine counsels, but of the divine nature.

Paul treats of that which is perfect, not in respect of communion, but of counsel. In his writings God is glorified more especially as the object of faith, though he speaks of communion too. (Romans v. 5.) Where, in the same chapter (ver. 11), he speaks of God as the one in whom the Christian is to glory, he places Him before and not as in us—as the object for faith to lay hold of, and not as dwelling in the heart.

This divine and infinite blessing—this love perfected in us, communicated by the presence of the Holy Ghost, and realized by our dwelling in God and He in us—has led some to think that, when this point is attained, the flesh can exist in us no longer; but this is to confound the vessel with the treasure placed in it, and of which it has the enjoyment. We are in the body which still awaits its redemption; only, God can dwell in it, because of the sprinkling of the blood by faith. This sprink-

ling does not correct the flesh, but only renders testimony both to the perfection of the expected redemption and to the love to which we owe it.

When in real enjoyment of God, we may for a moment lose sight of the existence of the flesh, because then the soul (which is finite) is filled with that which is infinite. But even in these moments of blessedness one cannot doubt but that the flesh is an obstacle to the larger and more intelligent action of love. Paul, caught up into the third heaven (a privilege which the flesh would have used to puff him up with, and which made a thorn needful), is a proof to us that grace does not change the flesh. Alas! even the joy of which we are speaking, without watchful dependence upon Christ, gives dangerous occasions of action to the flesh, because there is so much littleness in us, that, forgetting who gives the joy, we lean on the feeling of the joy, instead of dwelling in Christ, the Fountain-head of it. Nevertheless, it is certain that the love of God, made perfect in us, is a reality, and the Christian is called to know God, and to enjoy Him as dwelling in Him.

I have but one more remark to make.

When we are full of the love of God, we enjoy it with a power that hinders our seeing anything, especially the objects of the goodness of God, save with the eye of divine love. But where there is a real knowledge of the existence and nature of this love of God, the walk will also be characterized by

faith in that love, even though the heart may not realize the whole power of it ; and, thus, we shall dwell in God and He in us. But since this fulness of joy can only be realized by the action of the Spirit, it is easy to understand that, if grieved, He will become a Spirit of reproof, judging the ingratitude with which such love, as the love of God, is requited, instead of filling the heart with that love ; though it is impossible for Him to cast a doubt upon it. It is evident that the love made perfect in us is the work of God ; and this it is which forms the joy—the whole of the state. That which the Holy Ghost sheds abroad in our hearts is the love of God ; and this love, powerful in our hearts, cannot but show itself externally.

May God bless these few remarks to the reader ! May it please Him to realize in us the things of which I speak on the subject of revelation, and may He so bless as that the truth may have its full weight on the soul ; so that we may know, with all the beloved Church of Christ, what it is to have the Holy Ghost dwelling in us according to the power of the love of God !



FAITH'S IVORY PALACES.

By-and-by all the Lord's garments will smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia, by reason of the greetings of His people. God will have anointed Him to the throne "with the oil of gladness ;" and

they will welcome Him out of their "ivory palaces." (See Psalm xlv.)

That dear woman, whose memorial is in the gospel all the world over, began this greeting while Jesus was still in humiliation (faith in her overlooking the flesh, the disallowance of men, and even the cross itself, in the sight of the resurrection and the kingdom).

Beautiful and precious faith! a faith that could talk of life in the midst of death, of glories and crowns in the face of degradation and scorn, and which thus raised and gladdened the heart of Jesus when full of approaching paschal sorrows.

Against the day of His burying she had kept that ointment. She knew Him as appointed to death, but she knew Him as appointed to resurrection also. And she comes in the faith of "the sufferings of Christ and the glories that were to follow," to make Him glad out of her ivory palace. (Matt. xxvi.)

Love did an acceptable service afterwards. It came to bury the dead. It brought its spices to the tomb. It wept with them that wept. It died with Jesus. "Let us also go," it said, "that we may die with Him." But this was not faith. Faith looked beyond the grave; love looked into it.

Different measures of light will separate disciples from each other, but not from their common Master. This woman, Mary, the sister of Lazarus, was not at the tomb afterwards. Her richer knowledge of Christ kept her apart from such a

journey and such a task. She could not have been there. Faith, or light and knowledge, forbade her. But Magdalene and others are there, and the angels and the Lord of angels will meet them there, though Mary cannot.*

Oh the sweet and sure truth which all this illustrates in days of distraction like these! Disciples are now separated, through divers measures of light and knowledge, like these women of faith and love; but those who, though in the place where faith would not have them, are yet where love had sent them, shall know something of heaven and of the presence of Jesus.

Well to know the meltings of pity over sorrow according to love, and well to know the gladdening of hope over sorrow according to faith. But the spices of the women at the tomb were but as grave-clothes; the box of spikenard of the woman of Bethany was an ivory palace. Faith used it in anticipation. The humbled Jesus was then to faith the anointed King, and faith was saying, "while the king sitteth at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof." (Cant. i. 12.)

I may add, the wise men of the east had ivory palaces for the Babe at Bethlehem, their faith treating Him as the King of the Jews, the enthroned God of Psalm xlv. Beautiful faith that was indeed, and somewhat kindred with hers who

* I am aware that some distinguish this woman from the Mary of John xii. 1-8. It may be so, but it makes no difference as to my purpose in referring to it here. If different, neither the one nor the other, we may be sure, was at the sepulchre.

anointed the despised Galilean at Bethany. They greeted the Babe, she the Lamb appointed for the slaughter, out of her ivory palace. (Matt. ii.)

It will be an easy thing to greet Jesus in the day of glory. All will do it then. (Psalm xlv. 8.) But to have done it thus at the opening and close of His humiliation, at Bethlehem and at Bethany, was excellent faith indeed.

THE ENDLESS SONG.

Oh! the joy of the salvation
 We possess around the throne!
 Countless thoughts of admiration
 Mingling, leave that joy but one.

Hark! Ten thousand voices, crying,
 "Lamb of God!" with one accord:
 Thousand thousand saints replying,
 Bursts, at once, the echoing chord!

Long, with free and glad devotion,
 Universal praise prevails,
 Till, blest fruit of deep emotion,
 Voice by voice in silence fails.

Now, in wondrous adoration—
 Dwelling on His matchless love,
 Sway'd with power of that salvation,
 Silence fills the courts above.

Then, their richest thoughts unfolding,
 Each to each, with joy divine,
 Heavenly converse blissful holding,
 Tells, how bright His glories shine.

Some, on God's high glories dwelling,
 Brightly beaming in His face;
 Some, His first-born greatness telling,
 Ord'ring all things in their place:

These, of Godhead's counsels deep
 Him th' Accomplisher proclaim;
 These, how Jesu's self could weep—
 Of Godhead's love the Witness came!

All, on love surpassing rest,
That clothed in flesh the great I AM :—
Till, from a heart divinely prest,
Bursts forth at length the loud exclaim,

“Praise the Lamb !” At once awaking,
The gather'd hosts their voices throng ;
Loud and wide—each tongue partaking—
Rolls renew'd the endless song !

Grateful incense—this, ascending,
Rises to the Father's throne ;
Every knee to Christ is bending—
All the mind in heaven is one.

All the Father's counsels, claiming
Equal honours to the Son,
All the Son's effulgence beaming—
Glory of His Father's throne.

By the Spirit all-pervading,
Radiant hosts unnumber'd round,
Breathing glory never-fading,
Echo back the blissful sound !

Joyful now the wide creation
Rests, in undisturb'd repose ;
Blest in Jesu's full salvation,
Sorrow now, nor thraldon knows !

Rich the streams of bounty flowing,
Common blessings from above,
Life, and holy joy bestowing,
Tell of God's unwearied love.

Hark ! the heavenly notes again !
Loudly swells the air-borne praise :
Throughout creation's vault, “Amen,
Amen !” responsive joy doth raise !



UNTO HIM THAT LOVED US, AND WASHED US FROM OUR
SINS IN HIS OWN BLOOD, AND HATH MADE US KINGS
AND PRIESTS UNTO GOD AND HIS FATHER ; TO
HIM BE GLORY AND DOMINION FOR
EVER AND EVER.

AMEN !

Rev. i. 5, 6.