

The Holy Spirit-James Smith

The Holy Spirit.

1. HIS NAME AND PERSONALITY.

The name "Holy Ghost," or "Holy Spirit," occurs in the New Testament ninety-three times. In the Acts alone He is mentioned over fifty times; and in the eighth of Romans there are seventeen references. These facts clearly prove that He occupies a conspicuous place in the present dispensation, which is in truth the dispensation of "the ministration of the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3:8). In the Gospels we see the ministry of Jesus; in the Acts we have the ministry of the Holy Ghost. Does He receive equal prominence in the acts of the Church to-day? How much we hear about "church work," "evangelistic work," "mission work," &c., but how little about the "Spirit's work." His Name reveals His actual relationship to man redeemed. In the name Father we see the parent from whom we have wandered. In the name Jesus we see the Saviour by whom we are reconciled. In the name Holy Spirit we see the atmosphere in which our spirits are to live, and move, and have their being (Acts 17:28). He, like the air we breathe, comes into continual and indispensable contact with our inner man, supplying our souls with the life and spirit which were in Christ Jesus (Ezek. 37:5-10). The name "Holy Spirit" carries with it the idea of a holy, moving, vitalising breath. At Pentecost this mighty breath came down like rushing wind, bringing the soul-bracing atmosphere of the very "presence of God" in and around the waiting disciples (Acts 2:1-4). He comes, too, like the fragrant breath from some beautiful and fruitful garden, that makes us feel the reality of much that is yet unseen; and so through hope, satisfying every spiritual sense in the new nature, and giving days of Heaven upon earth. In this light the apostolic benediction (2 Cor. 13:14) is full of blessed meaning.

1. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ—"Humiliation and death."
2. The love of God—"Justification and life."
3. The communion of the Holy Ghost—"Assimilation and fellowship."
4. Be with you all—"Privilege and responsibility."

Likeness, then, is indispensable to communion. What communion hath light with darkness, or Christ with Belial? None. Because there is no likeness. But by the Holy Ghost we are made like the Father, for we are changed into the same image by the Spirit of God (2 Cor. 3:18). And so our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ (1 John 1:3). The presence of the Holy Spirit is therefore as necessary to our spiritual life as the air is to our physical life. Without this we can no more rejoice in the love of God than we could rejoice in the warmth of the sun without the medium of the atmosphere.

Now, a word about His personality. That the Holy Spirit is a person is commonly believed, but most imperfectly realised. The frequent use of the personal pronoun when He is referred to clearly implies that He is a person (John 16:13, 14). And all through Scripture acts and attributes are attributed to Him which could not be predicated of any mere influence or emanation (Acts 5:3). And however unfathomable the mystery, the fact remains that this mighty, holy being, whose presence is as a spiritual soul-moving breath, is a Person. And that Person is called God (Acts 5:3, 4). His individuality ought to be as distinctly recognised as that of the Father or the Son. The devil knows that so long as this truth is forgotten and neglected the kingdom of Christ will make but slow progress, as He is the direct agent between Christ and the sinful souls of men. As a Person, then, what kind of treatment is He receiving at the hands of men? (Acts 7:51-53).

2. THE SUFFERINGS OF THE SPIRIT.

How, and in what way, does the Holy Spirit suffer at the hands of men? He is being—

1. Blasphemed by the presumption of men (Matt. 12:31, 32). If we compare verse 24 with verse 28 the sin here spoken of will be plainly seen. They said, "This fellow casteth out devils by Beelzebub." Jesus said, "I cast out devils by the Spirit of God." Therefore they attributed the Spirit's work to the work of the devil, and so blasphemed the Holy Ghost. And how much better is it to attribute the work of the Holy Ghost to "mere excitement" or the cleverness of a preacher?
2. Insulted by the pride of men. In Hebrews 10:29 we read of those who in their pride of heart "have trodden under foot the Son of God, and have counted the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and (so) have done despite unto the Spirit of grace." To deny the

divinity of Christ and the preciousness of the Blood is to despise the testimony of the Holy Spirit and to insult Him to His face. Those who do without the Blood have to do without the Spirit (1 John 5:8).

3. Vexed by the disobedience of men. "In love and pity He (God) redeemed them, but they rebelled and vexed His Holy Spirit" (Isa. 63:9, 10). Think of redeemed ones rebelling and vexing the Holy One. How often, when He reveals some unexpected ugliness within, instead of being thankful for the discovery, the proud heart rebels and refuses to confess. Thus the Holy Spirit is vexed, and cannot give the blessing He would because of our stubbornness of will.

4. Resisted by the unbelief of men. "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost, as your fathers did" (Acts 7:51). "They could not enter in because of unbelief" (Heb. 3:19). In doubting the Word of God, the Spirit of God is resisted, for the Word is His sword. If the Holy Ghost is to have full possession of the Canaan land of the heart, to make a clear riddance of every evil beast (lust), and all that would pollute the holy mount, then the promises of God must be believed or the Spirit will be resisted.

5. Tempted by the insincerity of men. "How is it that ye have agreed to tempt the Spirit of the Lord?" (Acts 5:1-9). Ananias and Sapphira in seeking to deceive their brethren, tempted and lied against the Holy Ghost. A man is guilty of this when he pretends to his brethren that he is wholly devoted to God, and at the same time indulging in secret sin. Oh, beware of being more holy before men than you are before God, and of tempting the Holy Ghost—yes, tempting Him to leave you self-deceived. "Create a clean heart within me, O God" (Psa. 51:10).

6. Quenched by the prejudice of men. "Quench not the Spirit; despise not prophesyings" (1 Thess. 5:19, 20). It seems to me that what is forbidden here is a very common sin, that of treating with indifference the message of God, because perhaps the messenger is not exactly after our own heart. This secret prejudice, which is frequently the result of sectarianism, may be unknown to our fellows, but it is known and felt by the Holy Ghost, and hangs like a veil between His influence and the soul.

7. Grieved by the frivolity of men. "Grieve not the Spirit" (Eph. 4:30). This solemn exhortation lies between these other two: "Let your communication be good to the use of edifying" (v. 29), and "Let bitterness and evil speaking be put away" (v. 31). How often is the Spirit grieved by the light and unprofitable conversation of Christians; grieved, because He wishes to teach us to profit. He cannot join in the unprofitable talk, much less in the evil speaking. The Holy Ghost cannot afford to trifle. Why should we? Let a watch be put at the door of our lips. Men filled with the Holy Spirit are solemn men.

3. THE RECEIVING OF THE SPIRIT.

The gift of the Spirit is as much a promise of Christ as salvation is (John 15:26), and should be as definitely enjoyed. We receive the adoption of sons (Gal. 4:5) by receiving Christ, and believing that He has given us the right to become sons according to His promise (John 1:12), and in the same way He has given us the right to receive the Holy Ghost, and to become sons endued with power. Let us notice several conditions indicated in Scripture on which the Holy Spirit is given and received—

1. Condition of forgiveness. "Repent and be baptised... for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). The Spirit may be received without being baptised (Acts 10:47), but not without being forgiven. This Holy Dove cannot dwell among unclean birds. Christ's first dealing with the temple was to cleanse it (Matt. 21:12); and the Spirit's first dealing with the sinner is to convince of sin (John 16:8).

2. Condition of sonship. "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth His Spirit into your hearts" (Gal. 4:6). Why this "because?" Every son should resemble his father. So He sent forth His Spirit that they might be changed into His image (2 Cor. 3:18). It is one thing to claim the relationship, but quite another thing to claim the likeness. And yet the likeness is but the outward evidence of the relationship.

3. Condition of felt need. I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the ground (Isa. 44:3). He giveth power to the faint (Isa. 40:29). Upon those who seek the Holy Ghost as men dying of thirst God will pour Him forth in floods. But those who can live without Him are not likely to have Him.

4. Condition of faith. This spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive (John 7:39). In Galatians 3:13, 14 we have: (1) A fact stated, "Christ hath redeemed us." (2) A purpose declared, "That we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." How strange that the fact is so generally believed, while the purpose is almost wholly ignored.

5. Condition of obedience. "The Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey Him" (Acts 5:32). According to the measure of our willingness and readiness to do God's will may we expect the help of the Holy Spirit. In the matter of will every child should be able to say "I and my father are one." If this is not so, there must be disobedience in heart.

6. Condition of waiting. "Tarry until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). Wait for the promise of the Father (Acts 1:4). The disciples waited, and the filling came. There are some that seem to read these passages: "Work until ye be endued;" "Work for the promise of the Father." They are afraid to wait lest all should go wrong, as if God could not do without their fussy restlessness.

7. Condition of prayer. "Your Heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him" (Luke 11:13). It was while Jesus was praying that the Heaven was opened and the Holy Ghost descended (Luke 3:21). It was when the disciples had prayed that they were all filled with the Holy Ghost (Acts 4:31). It was when Solomon had made an end of praying that the fire and the glory filled the house (2 Chron. 7:1).

4. THE INDWELLING OF THE SPIRIT.

David prayed, "Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me" (Psa. 51:11). All who, like David, wish to live wholly for God find that the continual indwelling of the Spirit is an indispensable necessity. Without this even a Samson is weak as other men. It is the purpose of Christ not only to give us the Spirit, but that He should abide with us for ever (John 14:16). In the texts which speak of His indwelling, various expressive and suggestive figures are used.

1. As a factor in a house. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His" (Rom. 8:9). Where the Master is rejected the factor will not dwell. The Spirit takes possession of the heart for Christ, so that Christ dwelleth in our hearts by His Spirit. The Spirit occupies till He comes. And every house (heart) thus occupied is occupied all for Christ. He must keep the key of every door. He must have the use of all the furniture. The world knoweth Him not, but ye know Him, for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you (John 14:17).

2. As a spring in a well. "The water that I shall give shall be in him a well of water springing up" (John 4:14). Man's heart by nature is like a well filled with rottenness. Cleansing must precede usefulness. This living spring within fills and satisfies the whole being. The well is deep, for the spring is in God (Psa. 87:7).

3. As a river in a fountain. "Out of his inner man shall flow rivers of living water. This spake He of the Spirit" (John 7:38, 39). The blessing is not confined to the well, but flows out like refreshing streams. The Spirit dwelling in us is to be as an unfailing fountain to others. But the outflow will only be in proportion to the springing up within. Spring up, O well!

4. As the sap in the tree. "He shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit which dwelleth in you" (Rom. 8:11). It is the upspringing of the vital sap that quickens the seemingly dead and worthless tree into life and beauty, making it fat and flourishing. So doth the Holy Ghost vitalise the whole man. The mortal bodies of Moses and Stephen were quickened when their faces shone. Many of God's saints are living witnesses to the proof of this as a present experience, and as a foretaste of resurrection glory. "The trees of the Lord are full of sap" (Psa. 104:16; see John 15).

5. As the waters in the sea. "Be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18). The Holy Spirit is to fill our whole man, as the waters fill the sea. Entering into and filling every crevice, flooding every gulf and chasm, cleansing what is filthy, and covering all that is unseemly, so may He flow into every detail of our life. And just as in the sea there is room enough for the exercise of every living thing, so in the Spirit there is ample scope for every power in man.

6. As the strength in the body. "I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord" (Micah 3:8). A strong man does not put off and on his strength as occasions require. He carries it with him and in him. He simply uses it, and every part of his body is filled with it. He is literally filled with power. It is the steam that worketh in the engine to will and to do. "It is God that worketh in you." A man, no matter how strong he may be intellectually or morally, who has not the "power of the Spirit" is, spiritually, but as a helpless corpse.

7. As the glory in the temple. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor. 3:16). "Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor. 6:19). The glory in the temple was as the treasure in the earthen vessel. Before the glory came Solomon was everything, but afterwards he was nothing. The presence of the glory was the symbol of Divine ownership and occupancy. And so the building became "The Temple of God." Likewise ye are the temple of God, owned and occupied for the glory of His Name. What agreement hath the temple of God with idols? See that ye defile not this temple, "for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (1 Cor. 3:17)

5. IN THE SPIRIT.

Having received the Spirit, and having Him indwelling and filling us, our life is now to be lived "in the Spirit." That is, under His guiding, ever present, almighty overshadowing influence, like the Israelites under the pillar of cloud. From Scripture we observe there are certain privileges and blessings which can only be enjoyed by those who are "in the Spirit." We mention the following—

1. God is to be worshipped. We worship God in the Spirit (Phil. 3:3). God is a Spirit, and our spirit must worship Him (John 4:24). But that is not all, our spirit must worship in the Spirit of God, or as in the Revised Version, "Who worship in the Spirit of God." We may be serious and solemn in our worship, and yet not be in the Spirit; and if not in the Spirit, then no acceptable worship is given. All such worshippers, no matter how earnest, worship they know not what. In all the churches as well as in Athens, how many there are of whom it might be said, "They are too superstitious."

2. God's voice is heard and His glory witnessed.

I was in the Spirit, and heard behind me a great voice,... and saw the Son of Man clothed in glory" (Rev. 1:10-18). Those who are continually in the Spirit are continually enraptured with the glory of the Lord. Those not in the Spirit may talk fluently about the "voice" and the "glory," but to their own hearts it is all unreal. In the Spirit we hear not the still small voice only as of one speaking from afar and heard with difficulty, but "a great voice as of a trumpet," about which there can be no doubt.

3. Heavenly things are understood. "Come up hither, and I will show you things,... and immediately I was in the Spirit" (Rev. 4:1, 2). We cannot understand the things of God but by the Spirit of God, for they are spiritually discerned. Then if God would show thee,... immediately you must be in the Spirit. The book of the Revelation of Jesus may be divided into four sections. The first beginning at chap. 1:10; second at chap. 4:2; third at chap. 17:3; fourth at chap. 21:10. At each of these changes in the scene of Revelation, John reminds us that he was "in the Spirit." How else could he understand the great mysteries? How else can we? Is our not being in the Spirit not the chief reason why "the things to come" are so little understood? Paul undoubtedly understood the unspeakable words he heard in Paradise, although it was impossible for him to utter them (2 Cor. 12:4). Every one who is in the Spirit is unspeakably above those who are not.

4. Man's helplessness and God's power are seen.

"The Lord carried me in the Spirit, and set me in the valley of bones;... so I prophesied and they stood up" (Ezek. 37:1-10). It was while he was in the Spirit that he saw how dead and dry the bones were, and when he prophesied so successfully. Those in the Spirit see the need as others cannot, and so have no faith in the mere human remedies, but speak the word as God has commanded (vs. 7-10), and so witness the quickening power of the almighty breath.

5. Divine strength and comfort are enjoyed. "Behold I go bound in the Spirit," bonds and afflictions abide me, but none of these things move me (Acts 20:22-24). When in the Spirit a man is dwelling in the holy calm and undisturbable element of Heaven, and made strong in the midst of otherwise crushing circumstances. The peace of God keeps his heart. "God is our refuge, we will not fear though the earth be removed. There is a river, the streams whereof make glad" (Psa. 46:1-4).

6. Is the proof of His indwelling in us. "Ye are in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you" (Rom. 8:9). If the Spirit of God is not abiding in us we cannot live in the Spirit. It is easy to preach the theory of the Spirit's indwelling, but living in the Spirit is the practical manifestation of it. He does not come to dwell in us as a candle under a bushel, or as a helpless invalid whose presence cannot be seen or felt outside, but as a mighty life-quickener and a spiritual wonder-worker, whose presence cannot be hid.

7. All service is to be rendered. "Look ye out men full of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 6:3). Even for the work of an almoner this was needed. Paul's preaching was in demonstration of the Spirit (1 Cor. 2:4); "Apollos taught, being fervent in the Spirit" (Acts 18:25); all prayer is to be in the Spirit (Eph. 6:18); to be in the Spirit is to be in immediate touch with God, and not to be in direct contact with God is to be out of fellowship, and consequently fruitless (John 15:6).

6. THE BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT.

There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism (Eph. 4:5). Yet the Scriptures clearly teach—

1. A baptism with water (Acts 8:38).

2. A baptism with the Holy Ghost (Matt. 3:11).

3. A baptism into Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:3).

Which is the one baptism? The first two without the latter would be insufficient. Is the one baptism not the baptism into Christ? (Gal. 3:27). And is not the water baptism the earthly witness, and the Holy Ghost baptism the heavenly witness of this great one baptism? So that by these two witnesses (human and Divine) the great mystical truth of our spiritual union with Christ is established. By the

Spirit we are first baptised into Christ, and then by Christ we are baptised with the Spirit. Let us notice for a moment what this baptism into Christ implies—

1. It implies DEATH. "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptised into Jesus Christ were baptised into His death?" (Rom. 6:3). This is no mere figure of speech, but a solemn spiritual reality. "I am dead, nevertheless I live, yet not I" (Gal. 2:20).
2. It implies BURIAL. "We are buried with Him by baptism into death" (Rom. 6:4). This is not only a burial into water, but into death, into the death of Christ. The death of self must in reality take place before it will yield to the burial, for so long as it lives it will love to be seen of men.
3. It implies RESURRECTION. "Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him" (Col. 2:12). There can be no resurrection without death. To be risen with Christ is the proof that we have died in Him. Read Philippians 3:10 in its reverse order.
4. It implies LIKENESS. "For as many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27). If we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection. Our likeness to His resurrection will just be according to the measure of our likeness in His death.
5. It implies UNITY. By one Spirit are we all baptised into one Body. All baptised into Christ are members of the one Body, and so are all one in Him. We may not readily be one in creed, but all believers are one in Christ.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit, like conversion, is not experienced by all in the same way. To some the assurance has come suddenly, to others it has been a gradual revelation. Some can tell the very day and place when the power fell on them like a mantle from Heaven; others can only say, "Once I was weak, now am I strong." (**ED COMMENT: WHILE I BASICALLY AGREE WITH HIS STATEMENT, ONE NEEDS TO KEEP IN MIND THAT EVERY BELIEVER HAS ALL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT THEY WILL EVER RECEIVE THE MOMENT THEY ARE BORN AGAIN. IN PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION WE BEGIN TO APPROPRIATE MORE OF HIS POWER AND INFLUENCE. STATED ANOTHER WAY, WE HAVE ALL OF THE SPIRIT THE MOMENT OF OUR NEW BIRTH BUT THE SPIRIT DOES NOT HAVE ALL OF US AND THAT WILL BE A LIFETIME WORK THAT VARIES FOR EACH PERSON. Romans 8:9 MAKES IT CRYSTAL CLEAR THAT EVERY GENUINE BELIEVER HAS THE HOLY SPIRIT. IF HE OR SHE DOES NOT, THEN THEY ARE NOT TRULY BORN AGAIN!**) And how many more seem to be content to know nothing at all about it as a present, personal, precious possession.

With regard to this baptism we might notice—

1. The Baptiser. "He shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 3:11). To Him alone we must look for this mighty definite blessing. This great gift is the fruit of His humiliation and death. And for the glory of His own Name He is as willing to baptise the saint as to save the sinner.
2. The Promise. "Ye shall be baptised with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 1:5). "Ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost,... for the promise is to you" (Acts 2:38, 39). This promise, "He shall baptise," is just as good, and ought to be as surely experienced as "He shall save." And, moreover, this promise is but the second part of the great salvation. It was not enough that the sons of Aaron were washed, they had also to be anointed.
3. The Fulfilment. "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel" (Acts 2:16). Now they were perfectly assured that the great promise was fulfilled in their own experience. Peter testified that the "Holy Ghost fell on them as on us at the beginning" (Acts 2:15). John also writes: "Ye have an unction from the Holy One." Paul speaks of the "renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us abundantly" (Titus 3:6). Every ambassador for Christ should be able to bear witness, like Christ, that "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me" (Luke 4:18).
4. The Necessity. "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" (Acts 19:2). The need of this gift, and the necessity of knowing that we have received it, are alike plainly implied here. We know that "No man can call Jesus Lord but by the Spirit;" but something very different is evidently meant here, and that something is of vital importance to every believer." Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them." Have you received?
5. The Condition. "Thou lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee" (Psa. 45:7). This love and hate is the fruit of a perfectly honest heart before God. If God is loved with the whole heart, then sin will be hated with the whole heart. The priests of old had to be cleansed before anointed, and this order has never been changed. If thy head would lack no anointing, then thy heart must harbour no sin. "I will take you from among the heathen, and will bring you into your own land; then will I sprinkle clean water (typical of the Holy Ghost) upon you" (Ezek. 36). Separation and restoration preceded the holy sprinkling.
6. The Evidence. "Approving ourselves as the ministers of God... by the Holy Ghost" (2 Cor. 6:4-6). The presence and power of the Holy Ghost is the insignia by which a man is known to be a minister of God. If this is lacking he can only speak as one not having authority. That is like the scribes: "Not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth" (2 Cor. 10:18).

7. The Result. How marvellous are the results of the baptism of the Holy Ghost, as recorded in the Acts alone, when "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." Who can reckon the results since the apostles' days? What are the results without this endowment?

7. THE BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT: ITS EFFECTS.

DISCLAIMER - I believe that is only one baptism and that occurs when you are born again (1Co 12:13). Thereafter there can and hopefully will be many fillings of the Holy Spirit, even continually during the day as we keep short accounts and confess and repent so that we do not grieve or quench Him!

When a man is baptised with the Holy Ghost the effect will be very marked (first) upon the inner experience of the man himself. There will be a deeper humility, because of a deeper sense of helplessness and unworthiness. A more holy sobriety, because there will be a keener consciousness of how easily the Spirit may be grieved. There will be that calm earnestness that flows out of a true and solemn heart, in which the living Word of God burns as a fire. Not the enthusiasm of a pompous harangue of eloquent words, but the glowing respirations of a soul filled with the presence and power of God. This anointing is not put upon man's flesh (the old self-seeking nature), for that would only minister to his pride, but upon the mitred head of the consecrated new creature in Christ Jesus, that no flesh should glory in His presence. The Spirit was not given until Christ was glorified, and until we are prepared to glorify Him at any cost we need not expect this baptism of the Spirit. And, doubtless, this is the chief reason why so many are without this great gift. Christ is not exalted to the throne of their heart.

The following are a few of the more prominent results that are sure to follow this spiritual baptism—

1. General amazement. "They were all amazed, saying one to another, What meaneth this?" (Acts 2:7-12). Here was something that they could not deny, yet they could not understand it. The natural man cannot discern these things; he is blind to these till born from above by the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 2:10-16). When a man is baptised with the Holy Ghost his speech and his preaching will not be with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. If the Spirit is there He will demonstrate His own presence.

2. Glory to God. "The Spirit of God resteth upon you; on your part He is glorified" (1 Peter 4:14). The reproach of the world is sure to assail when the Spirit of God resteth upon us But let us count it all joy, for God will be glorified. He is always glorified in the case of those who have received this anointing. Before, self was exalted and God dishonoured; now, self has fallen, like Dagon, and God is enthroned. And when He is truly glorified in us He will be surely glorified through us.

3. Continual fellowship. "The anointing which ye have received abideth in you" (1 John 2:27). "He shall abide with you for ever" (John 14:6). Our fellowship with the Father and the Son will be real and continual if we abide in full communion with the Holy Ghost. But, alas! how often the soul is self-excommunicated from this blessed fellowship through pride and unbelief. Samuel anointed David, and the Spirit of the Lord came upon him from that day onward (1 Sam. 16:12). Is there such a day in your experience?

4. Holy boldness. "When they saw the boldness of Peter and John they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13). This clearly implies that Jesus Himself was bold. Did they not say of Him "We know that Thou art true, and carest for no man?" (Mark 12:14). Gideon was very bold when he went and threw down the altar of Baal. "The Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he blew a trumpet" (Judges 6:30-34). When a man is baptised with the Spirit he cannot but blow the trumpet. Peter and John filled with the Spirit, said: "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20). How does this accord with those who will not speak unless they are paid for it?

5. Powerful testimony. "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and with great power gave the apostles witness" (Acts 4:31-33). The Spirit of the Lord came upon Jesus, and they wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth. "For His word was with power" (Luke 4:32). Stephen was full of the Holy Ghost, and they were not able to resist the Spirit by which he spake (Acts 6:5-10). Micah says, "I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord." What to do? For when God fills a vessel He means to use it. "To a clare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin" (Micah 3:8). Oh I how much this power is needed to-day, to declare the whole counsel of God, keeping back nothing. The Holy Ghost Himself is the great witness, and we are to testify with Him (John 15:26, 27; Acts 5:32). Our power for God then will just be in proportion as we are co-workers together with the Holy Ghost. Having the same motives in view, and acting in the same faithful and unselfish manner (John 16:13).

6. Mighty works. The Spirit of the Lord came upon Samson, and he rent a lion as he would have rent a kid (Judges 14:16). When we are filled with the Spirit, the lion difficulties which would have frightened and turned us back before, now become as kids in our hands. Jesus said: "Greater works than these shall ye do because I go unto My Father. If I go not, the Comforter (the Holy Ghost) will not come." But He has gone, and the Holy Ghost has come, and mighty works do show themselves in all who have this baptism,

while those who serve without Him keep planning and scheming and beating the air.

7. Silent influence. "God, thy God, hath anointed thee. All thy garments smell of myrrh" (Psa. 45:7, 8). Garments of fragrance cover the anointed ones. This influence is not put on for special occasions. Notice that it is all thy garments, so that we are shamefully naked without them. It is good to pray, "Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us," but it is surely better just to put on thy beautiful garments, O captive daughter of Zion! The Old Testament is filled with what we should do, the aim of the New is to show us what we should be. All fruitfulness and power for God is the result, not of what we do, but of what we are.

8. THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT.

This is the age of spiritual power. A Christian or a Church destitute of this is behind the age. When Christ ascended to perpetuate His work in Heaven the Holy Ghost descended to perpetuate His work on earth. And He did not come as a helpless infant. No. The atoning work was done. And so He came at once in all His glorious majesty "as a rushing mighty wind," the symbol of power to any degree. And it is the will of God that the Church should live and abide in this Pentecostal, spiritual storm. But, alas! how she has spread her snow-white sails to catch the wind of man's favour more than God's, and so she has been bereft of her propelling power. Does it not seem as if the time were at hand when Christianity and Christians will be tested, not by their professions, however great or eloquent, but by their spiritual power alone? The ministerial market may be overstocked with men, but there is no possibility of overstocking the market with this. Holy Ghost power is in great demand everywhere, and every Christian should possess it. This power is—

1. Needed. "Tarry ye until ye be endued with power" (Luke 24:49). No use going without it. None knew better than Christ what the disciples really needed to fit them for their life-work. The same work will always need the same fitness, "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord." By His Spirit's power through the consecrated heart and life must the work be done. Wait on this as the sailor waits for the moving breeze. David had to wait for the moving on the tops of the trees before he could stir. If he stirred before the moving he stirred without God (2 Sam. 5:24; 1 Cor. 4:19, 20).

2. Promised. "Ye shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you" (Acts 1:8); and we know that the waiting disciples had this promise fulfilled in their experience. Paul also testified to Timothy that "God hath given to us the Spirit of Power" (2 Tim. 1:7). What good has Calvary done you unless you have come into personal relationship with that awful death? What power has Pentecost brought you unless you have come into personal relationship with the Holy Ghost? The power of the Spirit ought to be as real to us as the forgiveness of our sins.

3. Life-giving. "The Spirit giveth life" (2 Cor. 3:6). "It is the Spirit that quickeneth" (John 6:63). "You hath He quickened" (Eph. 2:1). He not only quickens from the dead, but also gives that "abundance of life," without which no lively testimony can be borne for Christ. It is out of "the abundance" of the heart the mouth speaketh. If the heart is not full there will be no running over, and if there is no overflowing it is clear that we have more need to get than to give.

4. Sufficient. We must depend upon the power of the Holy Spirit alone for success in work for God, just as we trust exclusively to the Blood of Christ for acceptance with God. The power of the Spirit is sufficient: 1. For our inward life. "Strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man" (Eph. 3:16). It is the inner or new man that the Holy Ghost daily renews and strengthens, and uses for the glory of God. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he" in reality before God. 2. For our outward testimony. Paul says: "I was with you in weakness, and my preaching was in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (1 Cor. 2:3, 4). So that our weakness is our highest fitness for the power of God. "They spake as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4). And they that so speak never speak in vain. It is as true to-day as it was of old that holy men speak with power as they are moved by the Holy Ghost (2 Peter 1:21).

5. Cannot be purchased. Simon offered money, saying, Give me also this power (Acts 8:18). Doubtless there are many in these days who are earnestly coveting this best gift, but who seem to forget that this power is the gift of God, and cannot be purchased with education, or with eloquence, or with earnestness, nor even with much work and prayer. It is to be received, but cannot be bought any more than the wind.

6. Cannot be imitated. The anointing oil, which was a type of the Holy Spirit, was not to be imitated. No substitute could ever be accepted for this (Exod. 30:33). Any amount of zeal or earnestness will never stand instead of the power of the Holy Ghost. It is easy to imitate the earnestness of a man endued with this power, but the power itself none can copy. Men may thunder while yet there is no quickening and searching fire. The tongue of fire is not in the thunder, but in the lightning.

7. May be lost. The power of the Spirit was upon Samson, but he sinned, and slept, and wist not that the Lord was departed from him. And so he "shaked" himself in vain (Judges 16:20). And what a poor man he was without the power. None seem so utterly helpless as those who were once endued with spiritual power. Without this power a man may shake himself, but it is only himself

that he shakes. We have known those whose power used to make thousands tremble, but whose testimony now reminds us of the withered branch. In Numbers 11:17 we see, in the message of God to His servant Moses, how God may take the Spirit that is upon one and put it upon another. Many a one, as well as Uzziah, has been marvellously helped till he was strong. But when he became strong in his own strength the Spirit of Power departed. And where is the usefulness of a powerless Christian? Like savourless salt, they are good for nothing.

9. THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT.

Jesus Christ is the gift of God to the world (John 3:16), and in this gift is everything the sinful world can need for acceptance and peace with God. The Holy Ghost is the gift of both Father and Son to every believer, and in this gift is included all that the Christian can need for life, work, and testimony. For the gifts of the Spirit are great and manifold. They are—

1. Very diversified. In 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 there are nine different gifts specified, and these are represented as given to as many different individuals. All these various gifts were in operation in the days of the infant Church, and were all the outcome of the working of "One Spirit." Mark, these are not natural gifts, but spiritual; not the development of a something good from within, but the implantation of a new spiritual faculty from without, and that by the hand of the omnipotent Spirit of God.
2. Sovereignly bestowed. "The Spirit divideth to every man severally as He will" (1 Cor. 12:11). The building up of the holy temple—the Church—is the work of the Spirit (Eph. 2:22). And surely He knows best upon what part to bestow any particular gift or grace. Therefore, as spiritual stones, we must be entirely submissive to His holy will, allowing Him to have the fashioning and fitting; believing that He is both able and willing to make the greatest possible use of every one committed to His will.
3. For the profit of all. "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal" (1 Cor. 12:7). All (i. e., the whole body or Church) is to be profited by the Spirit's gifts and revelations to every man. Every believer ought to be a profitable member of the body of Christ. For this end the common manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man. And being convinced that we have the Spirit within us, we may be assured that Almighty sufficiency (Mark 9:23) is within our reach, so that we need not always be groaning out "unprofitable servants" as if that were an attainment in grace.
4. To be earnestly desired. "Covet earnestly the best gifts" (1 Cor. 12:31). "Desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy" (1 Cor. 14:1). "Covet to prophesy" (v. 39). Paul mentions prophecy as the gift to be most earnestly sought. The reason for this is very explicitly stated in verses 22-25. That the unlearned and unbelieving may be convinced and converted and bear testimony to the truth, so that God may be glorified. The apostle's whole soul was set on this. It is no vain thing to covet even "the best gift" if we seek only the glory of God, for no good thing will He withhold from them that love Him.
5. Suited to each possessor. "Every man hath his proper gift of God: one after this manner, and another after that" (1 Cor. 7:7). Not only is it true that every man hath his gift, but the gift every man hath is his own proper gift, exactly suited to himself, and becoming in him. I have no gift, say some; but what saith the Scripture? "Every man hath." Perhaps you have not the gift of your eminent friend, but you have your own gift. Yes, and your own proper gift too. But what is it? Search and see
6. To be carefully used. "Neglect not the gift that is in thee" (1 Tim. 4:14). How many hide their precious talents in the earth as useless, because they are not the same as others? (Matt. 25:18). What if your ear would refuse to hear because it is not an eye? Many complain of their leanness and fruitlessness, and no wonder, when they are imitating the gifts of others, and neglecting their own. And so the whole body suffers loss by their one part lacking (Eph. 4:16). Be content to be nothing but what God means you to be, then you shall be all that God wishes you to be.
7. To be constantly improved. "Stir up the gift of God which is in thee" (2 Tim. 1:6). The gift may be in thee as a smouldering fire, but must be stirred up and kept brightly burning. All the resources of our being must be directed to, and concentrated on, the development of this heavenly gift. "Striving according to His working, which worketh in me mightily" (Col. 1:29). What can you do best for God? Then stir up that gift, and you will have power both with God and men.

10. THE TEACHING OF THE SPIRIT.

Man needs not only a Divine Saviour, but also a Divine Teacher. The Holy Spirit has come to teach us just as really as the Lord Jesus came to save us. We must trust Him to do His work in us, as we trust the Lord to do His work for us. Notice—

1. The characteristics of this Teacher. He is—

1. INDISPENSABLE. "The things of God knoweth no man" (1 Cor. 2:11); "Neither can he know them" (v. 14); "His ways are past finding out" (Rom. 11:33). Seeing, then, that man in his natural state is totally incapable of himself to know God, or the things of God, he must have a teacher; for no man can know God except he is taught of God, and this the Holy Ghost alone can do.

2. INFALLIBLE. "The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1 Cor. 2:10); "Who hath directed the Spirit, or hath taught Him?" (Isa. 40:13). If we despise this Teacher in vain we seek for spiritual wisdom. We never repent of nor even forget what we have learned of Him. "My Spirit is upon thee, and My words shall not depart out of thy mouth" (Isa. 59:21).

3. ALL-SUFFICIENT. "The anointing abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you" (1 John 2:27) The Lord hath ordained pastors and teachers for the perfecting of the saints, and we must esteem them highly for their work's sake. Although such teachers are abundantly needed in these days, still "ye need not that any man teach you." "He shall teach you all things" (John 14:26); "He will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13). Who is better able to explain a book than the one who wrote it?

4. UNASSUMING. "He shall not speak of Himself" (John 16:13). He hides Himself that He might all the more glorify Christ. In this He is an example to all teachers. If the Great Teacher Himself is so unassuming, how should the scholar appear?

2. The methods of His teaching. He teaches by—

1. ENLIGHTENING THE MIND. "That God may give you the Spirit of wisdom; the eyes of your understanding being enlightened" (Eph. 1:17, 18); "Satan hath blinded the mind" (2 Cor 4:4); "Darkness hath blinded his eyes" (1 John 2:11). Unless the eyes of the understanding are enlightened by the Holy Ghost, man's best effort is but teaching the blind.

2. POINTING TO THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST. "He will convince the world of sin" (John 16:18). How does He do this? "I will pour the Spirit of grace,... and they shall look upon Me" (Zech. 12:10). And while looking on Him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn and be in bitterness. The kind and thoughtful mother convinces the child of its guilt by quietly pointing to the mischief done.

3. QUICKENING THE UNDERSTANDING. "The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon and make him of quick understanding" (Isa. 11:2, 3). Quick to discern the mind and will of God and to take pleasure in doing it. His will should be to our mind and heart what the sweet smell is to our sense, a positive, sensible delight.

4. COMPARING THINGS THAT ARE SPIRITUAL. "The Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (1 Cor. 2:13). He compares the spiritual things of the Old Testament with those of the New. He expounds spiritual things to those only who are spiritual, because they are spiritually discerned. There will always be ample proof for those things taught by the Spirit, as He compares one spiritual thing with another. But believe not every spirit, as some are always comparing spiritual things with the reasonable, the temporal, and the natural, instead of spiritual.

5. REVEALING HIDDEN THINGS. "It was revealed unto Simeon by the Holy Ghost" (Luke 2:26); "He shall receive of Mine, and show it unto you" (John 16:14); "Eye hath not seen;... but He hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit" (1 Cor. 2:9, 10). The deep things of God are being constantly unveiled before the enraptured vision of those who humbly sit at the feet of this Great Teacher come from God.

6. RECALLING FORGOTTEN THINGS. "He shall bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26); "The words of Christ which have been hidden in the heart" (Psa. 119:11). Although presently forgotten they are not lost. They are as weapons laid past for the Holy Spirit, and in due time He will bring them. If the message you wish to deliver is only an address framed in the head, and a burden on the memory, you cannot expect the Spirit's help; but if it is a burden on the heart, fear not.

7. HINDERING SELFISH THINGS. "Paul and Silas were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach in Asia. They assayed to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered them not" (Acts 16:6, 7); "It is not in man to direct his steps; commit thy ways unto the Lord, and He shall bring it to pass" (Isa 37:5). It is one thing to form plans, and then ask His guidance; it is quite another thing to trust Him to form the plans. The hindrances of the Holy Spirit are but part of His helps.

3. The attitudes of the taught. He teaches—

1. WHILE WE OBEY. "The Lord said unto Philip, Arise and go, and he arose and went. Then the Spirit said, Go near" (Acts 26:28). He was in the way of the Lord when the Spirit taught him. The disobedient need not expect the special ministry of the Holy Ghost. Soul-winners are always Spirit-taught workers.

2. WHILE WE MEDITATE. "While Peter thought the Spirit said" (Acts 10:19); it is in the calm waters that the image is clearly reflected. How many hear of those things which are true, honest, and of good report, but don't think on these things?" (Phil. 4:8). Reflection is a positive necessity for growth in grace and usefulness. "Meditate upon these things that thy profiting may appear unto all" (1 Tim. 4:15). Read Psalm 119:99.

3. WHILE WE SERVE. "As they ministered to the Lord, the Holy Ghost said" (Acts 13:2). He who serves with his eye on his Master will be guided by the Master's eye. The Spirit rejoices to guide and instruct the willing heart. And in our most active moments, if we are still submissive to Him, we will be wisely taught.

4. WHILE WE WAIT. "Simeon was waiting for the consolation of Israel when the Holy Ghost revealed to him" (Luke 2:26). "If the blessing tarry, wait for it." If the promise has been believed the answer will surely come. But it will prove vain waiting unless there is a well-grounded expectation (Ruth 3:18).

5. WHILE WE LISTEN. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith" (Rev. 2:7). The Lord saves every believing soul, the Spirit speaks to every open ear. The Spirit of prayer is better than times of prayer. So the Spirit of understanding is better than all commentaries (good as they are). Every Christian might be as Bezaleel, filled with wisdom and understanding (Exod. 31:2). Daniel was taught of the Spirit, and so could read and interpret the Divine handwriting. "Covet earnestly the best gift. "

11. THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT.

In these studies much has been already indicated regarding the Spirit's work. But we might look at the various aspects in a more connected way.

The work of the Spirit in connection with the life of Christ was clearly manifest, and should be recognised with equal distinctness in the life of every Christian. With regard to His incarnation, it is said, "The power of the Highest shall overshadow thee" (Luke 1:35), and "that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 1:20). At His baptism the Holy Ghost descended upon Him. Here we have both conception and anointing, which are very distinct. Then He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, and returned in the power of the Spirit (Luke 4:1-14). The secret temptation always precedes the coming forth in power. Then He preached in the Spirit, and they wondered at His gracious words (Luke 4:18-32). He cast out devils by the Spirit (Matt. 12:28), and at last offered Himself through the eternal Spirit (Heb. 9:14). From different Scriptures we learn some of the active aspects of His work. The Holy Spirit—

1. Strives. "My Spirit shall not always strive with man" (Gen. 6:3). This striving evidently implies that man by nature is opposed to the Spirit of God. "My ways are not your ways, nor My thoughts your thoughts." The Spirit strives because He is resisted, as Jacob resisted the angel at the brook, and may be finally resisted as in the days of Noah.

2. Convinces. "He will convince the world of sin" (John 14:8). Conviction is the first object of His striving. He labours to make the sinner sensible of his guilt. This is exactly what the sinner does not seek to know, but rather to hide. He seeks to press home to the heart and conscience the truth regarding our state in the sight of God.

3. Quickens. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth" (John 6:63). "Except a man be born of the Spirit" (John 3:5, 6). Although a man is made deeply conscious of his guilty state he is still as helpless as the child unborn, or as the dead in the grave. But the Spirit is promised to them that ask Him (Luke 11:13). The life-giving touch is His. He quickens into life man's dormant spirit, so that it awakens up, asserts its power, and rules the man. He becomes "a new creature" (2 Cor. 5:17).

4. Seals. "After ye believed ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit" (Eph. 1:13). "Grieve not the Spirit whereby ye are sealed" (chap. 4:30). The bargain is struck the moment we trust in Christ, and then the seal of ownership is set upon us as His property. Ye are not your own, ye are bought, therefore glorify God.

5. Reveals. (1) The love of God by shedding it abroad in our hearts (Rom. 5:5). (2) The things of Christ (John 16:14). (3) The things God hath prepared (1 Cor. 2:10). (4) The way into truth (John 16:13). (5) The valley of need (Ezek. 37:1). He only can make us see the spiritual death that exists. (6) The suffering Saviour (Zech. 12:10). (7) The path of service (Acts 8:29).

6. Witnesses. "The Spirit beareth witness with our spirit" (Rom. 8:16). Our quickened spirit testifies that we are the children of God, and God's Spirit corroborates this testimony. We are witnesses of these things. So is also the Holy Ghost (Acts 5:32). This is the witness that cannot lie: "A faithful witness delivereth souls" (Prov. 14:25).

7. Intercedes. "God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father" (Gal. 4:6). The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities and maketh intercession for us (Rom. 8:26, 27). The sphere of His advocacy is within the soul of man. The Spirit of prayer is little understood. Contrast the Holy Spirit's "unutterable groanings" with the frivolous prayers of many. No wonder that our petitions are so seldom answered when the Spirit's groanings are so little heeded. Holy Ghost prayers are as "God going up with a shout."

8. Calls. "The Holy Ghost said, Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them" (Acts 13:2). "Called of God," as was Aaron, is true of every real servant of God. Separate Me, said the Holy Spirit, as if to teach us that only those who have been wholly set apart and consecrated to Him can be used by Him. Christian worker, think of this important truth.

9. Ordains. "Take heed unto yourselves, and to the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers" (Acts 20:28). Every man is ordained an overseer over himself by the Holy Ghost, but those who attempt to feed the flock without being ordained by the Spirit will be but clouds without water. This is the ordination that will glorify God in fruit-bearing (John 15:16).

10. Commissions. "The Lord God and His Spirit hath sent me" (Isa. 48:16). "And they being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed" (Acts 13:4). The Holy Ghost is the Lord of the harvest. Pray ye Him to thrust forth labourers (Matt. 9:38). For when He sends them out a harvest is sure to be gathered, for such are "able ministers" (2 Cor. 3:6; see 1 Cor. 12:11).

11. Invites. "The Spirit says, Come" (Rev. 22:17). In this the Spirit and the "Bride" are co-workers together. They unite in inviting the "bright and Morning Star." This is the night. But the night is far spent, the day is at hand. And so the Spirit works, and waits, and longs with us in this world of darkness till Jesus comes, and the shadows flee away.

12. Leads. "If ye be led of the Spirit ye are not under the law" (Gal. 5:18). "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:14). Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness (Luke 4:1). This was in itself a proof of Christ's Sonship. Those who are under the law, however earnest and active in religious work, are not led by the Spirit. All God's sons are to be divinely guided. "He will guide you."

13. Comforts. "He shall give you another Comforter, even the Spirit of truth" (John 14:16). "They had rest in the comfort of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 9:31). He who dwells with us for ever (John 14:16) knows as none other can the nature of our troubles, the real depth of our need, the very comfort that is wanted, and the best time and way to administer the succour and apply the things of Christ. Eliezer comforted Rebekah with the things of Isaac, "And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and gave them to Rebekah" (Gen. 24:53).

14. Overcomes. "When the enemy shall come in like a flood the Spirit of the Lord shall put him to flight" (Isa. 59:19, margin). "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord" (Zech. 4:6). "We have no power nor might, but our eyes are upon Thee" (2 Chron. 20:12). It is when opposition comes in like a deluge that we are apt to summon our own forces, or else to give up in despair. Then is the time to trust, to fix the eye on the overcoming One.

12. THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT.

There is evidently a difference between the work of the Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit. The work of the Spirit may be regarded as the direct result of the Spirit's active energy, the fruit as the outcome of His indwelling presence. In Galatians 5:19-22 we see the works of the flesh contrasted with the fruit of the Spirit. The works of the flesh are the natural outcome of an active evil principle within. The fruit of the Spirit does not spring from anything naturally in us, but is the result of the new life begotten in us by the Holy Ghost and maintained by His continued abiding. "In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." The fruit of the Spirit is not spoken of in the plural as the works of the flesh are. This signifies the oneness of the fruit. Every grace mentioned is but part of a whole, so that no Christian is complete unless he is characterised by all these nine graces (Gal. 5:22). The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, truth (Eph. 5:9). What is fruit? Fruit is—

1. An evidence of death. "Except a corn of wheat die it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12:24). I am crucified, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ. This new life alone can bring forth fruit to the glory of God. We conclude, then, that one reason why so many Christians are fruitless is that self has not died, and so they abide alone.

2. The necessity of grace. "Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away" (John 15:2). I shall dig about it, "and if it bear fruit well, and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down" (Luke 13:9). The branch was in the vine, the fig-tree was in the vineyard, both in the place of grace and privilege. To maintain this high privilege fruit must be found. The fruitless cannot long enjoy the privileges of the fruitful; sooner or later they will sink into the place of the withered branch. Fruitlessness and favour cannot live together, there must be a divorce.

3. The manifestation of character. "The tree is known by its fruit" (Matt. 12:33). "Ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be My disciples" (John 15:8). They showed them the fruit of the land (Num. 13:26) just to prove the character of the land. Fruit then manifests: (1) The character of the tree. (2) Of the men. (3) Of the land. By their fruits ye shall know them, not by their appearance. If the Holy Spirit dwell in us, the fruit of the Spirit must be witnessed through us. There are no figs on thistles, nor grapes on thorns (Matt. 7:16).

4. The result of abundance of life. "From Me is thy fruit found" (Hosea 14:8). I am come that ye might have life more abundantly (John 10:10). Fruit can only come where there is life to spare, where there is more than what is needed for self-support. The fruit of the Spirit in us is the result of floods upon the dry ground. The soul itself must first be abundantly satisfied before fruit will be found. The well must be full before it can run over.

5. The outcome of steadfast abiding. "As the branch cannot bear fruit except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in Me" (John 15:4). "Bring forth with patience" (Luke 8:15). The tree that is not rooted will as a consequence be fruitless. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that ye being rooted and grounded in love may be able" (Eph. 3:17, 18). In Colossians 2 the order is—Rooted and abounding with thanksgiving (Col. 2:7). Be not driven about, like a rootless, fruitless branch. Abide in Me.

6. Something for the good of others. "He sent His servants that they might receive the fruits." (Matt. 21:34). Fruit is not for the good of the tree. Although it is the good of the tree. The fruit of the Spirit is in all "goodness." That they may see your good works, and glorify your Father (Matt. 5:16). If we seek fruit merely for our own name we dishonour the Father. Remember Jesus said, "My Father is the Husbandman." Many pine away for want of this fruit (Lam. 4:9).

7. The object of the Master's search. "Behold I come seeking fruit" (Luke 13:7). Behold, the Husbandman waiteth for the fruit of the earth, and hath long patience (James 5:7). Bring forth fruit unto God (Rom. 7:4). The fruit of the Spirit in us is what the blessed Lord seeks from us. He is a patient Husbandman. How long has He waited? Until the early and latter rain. The early rain of conversion and the latter of consecration.

8. The natural method of propagation. "God said, Let the earth bring forth, the fruit tree, yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself" (Gen. 1:11). The seed is in the fruit. If there is no fruit there is no seed. If then the fruit of the Spirit is not manifest in our lives, we are a positive hindrance to the extension of the kingdom of God. May "God Almighty make thee fruitful" (Gen. 28:3). "Fruitful in every good work" (Col. 1:10). Beware of thorns which choke (Mark 4:7).