

Sabbath School Lesson #2 – The Holy Spirit: Working Behind the Scenes – 7-13 Jan 2017

Christ who breathed on His disciples saying, “Receive ye the Holy Spirit” (John 20:22), wants us to receive the same “Spirit of Christ” which was in all the prophets (1 Peter 1:11), because “if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His” (Romans 8:9), which Spirit is Christ Himself, as “the Lord is that Spirit” (2 Corinthians 3:17), for Christ being “the last Adam was made a quickening Spirit” (1 Corinthians 15:45) and “because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts” (Galatians 4:6), and for these reasons, let us have Christ; as Ellen White says, “It is not safe to catch the spirit from another. We want the Holy Spirit, which is Jesus Christ” {Lt66-1894 (April 10, 1894) par. 18}.

The memory text for this lesson reads: “He shall glorify Me: for he shall receive of Mine, and shall shew *it* unto you” (John 16:14). Those who hate to be reprov'd for their sins, hate the Holy Spirit, and if Christ were to bodily come to them, they would still reject Him for the same reason. The Spirit does not speak of itself. It is still possible for men to deny Christ and desire Barabbas the robber to be granted to them. Keep in mind, there is only one Spirit (Ephesians 4:4) who is shared by the Father and His Son and that is why Paul in Romans 8:9 interchanges “the Spirit” with “the Spirit of God” and “the Spirit of Christ” for he refers to one Spirit; the Spirit is not a separate Individual from God and Christ, but Their own Spirit.

“Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all the truth” (John 16:13). Jesus Christ is “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). Therefore the Spirit leads us into the truth by leading us into the knowledge of Christ. So Christ said, “He shall glorify Me; for he shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you” (John 16:14). This is the same that we read in 1 Corinthians 2:9-10: “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.” “The deep things” is a term that applies specially to the things of God. “O Lord, how great are Thy works! and Thy thoughts are very deep” (Psalm 92:5). “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!” (Romans 11:33). But Jesus said, “All things that the Father hath are Mine: therefore said I that He [the Spirit] shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you” (John 16:15). We understand, consequently “the deep things of God,” and His unsearchable judgments, are but “the unsearchable riches of Christ” (Ephesians 3:8).

“Wisdom crieth” “Turn you at My reproof; behold, I will pour out My Spirit unto you, I will make known My words unto you” (Proverbs 1:20,23). This Wisdom is but another name for Christ, “in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Colossians 2:3). He is “the power of God, and the wisdom of God” (1 Corinthians 1:24). Therefore the promise in the first chapter of Proverbs is identical with that recorded in the Gospel according to John that is the focus of our Lesson herein. Jesus promised His disciples His Spirit – that Holy Spirit makes known the things of God. It unfolds to us the meaning of the words of Christ.

The Lord tells us, “As the heavens are high above the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:9). But however deep and wonderful the ways and thoughts of God are, the Spirit is able to make us understand them; “for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God;” and “we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God” (1 Corinthians 2:10,12). We are told that God “made known His ways unto Moses, His acts unto the children of Israel” (Psalm 103:7). This was by means of His Spirit, for we read “Thou gavest also Thy good Spirit to instruct them” (Nehemiah 9:20).

This was not because they were so good, for the chapter which tells us this is filled with the record of their misdeeds; but God sends His Spirit to convince men of sin, in order that it may bestow righteousness upon them. As disobedient as the children of Israel were, the Spirit of God was ready to make them intimately acquainted with the words and ways of God, if they would but listen to His reproofs. We note that it is not in man to give to another an understanding of the words of God. The words of God are an expression of His thoughts, which are very deep; and only the Holy Spirit knows the deep things of God. The Spirit alone

can give an understanding of the truth of God. Men are used by the Spirit to open Scriptures and present them to their fellows; but only the Spirit of God itself can give an understanding of them. There is therefore no such thing on earth as a class of men possessing the sole right and power to deal out the truth to less favoured mortals. For God is no respecter of persons. In far greater measure than sinful men are willing to give good things to their own children, is God willing and able to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him (Luke 11:11-14).

The Holy Spirit is given to everyone who believes (John 7:39). And what must he believe? This: "He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6). The Spirit is given without stint to everyone who desires it, and who believes that God gives it. Therefore the poorest and humblest may understand the words of God as well as the greatest. No one can have a monopoly of the knowledge of God. Everybody can believe, and whoever believes shall understand. No self constituted priest is needed to stand between the soul and God, for the humblest soul may come boldly to the throne of God (Hebrews 4:16), through Christ the great High Priest, "who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way" (5:2). No man can hinder another from receiving the Spirit, and therefore no one can prevent another from finding and knowing God, if that other really desires to know Him. Then let the despondent ones, who have thought that they were too poor and ignorant to know God's truth for themselves, take courage. The promise is without exception, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5).

Christ's discourse in John 14-16 is many times misunderstood, particularly what He said about the Holy Spirit. Here Christ told His disciples that His Father will send them "another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever" (14:16), then He told them, "A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father" (16:16). Why did He say those words if He was going to send someone else? He spoke in the third person, for He returned in Spirit form to them. Apostles understood this, hence Paul would say, our "Lord is that Spirit" (2 Corinthians 3:17). He is able to comfort us in all our temptations because He was tempted just like us: "For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour [comfort] them that are tempted" (Hebrews 2:18). It is "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27). "Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4). Because Jesus has suffered being tempted, and comes to us in a different way than He ever did before, He can truly be called, "another Comforter." Jesus said, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you" (John 14:18).

The Holy Spirit was to come and convict the world of sin. "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John 16:8). "Unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities" (Acts 3:26). It is Jesus, after His resurrection, who comes to us to turn us from sin. Jesus Christ is that Comforter who knows what we are going through because He has been there Himself; the Comforter is not a different third Individual of the Godhead. Some may immediately say, 'Jesus called the Comforter 'he,' therefore he must be someone else.' It was common in Christ's day to speak of oneself in the third person. You find this style of writing throughout the New Testament. In John 5:19-22, Jesus spoke of Himself in the third person. And so, Christ refers to the Spirit of His very person as 'he.'

Speaking to His disciples, pointing to a future day, Christ said, "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. *At that day* ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you" (John 14:18-20). Even though the disciples were alive while Jesus spoke to them, His words were "because I live, ye *shall* live also." That the life they live will be His life. In these words Jesus was not referring to a mere physical or probationary life which everyone possesses. Neither was He referring to a life that only begins after our resurrection. He was referring to them obtaining a special kind of life, or a state of being, that is dependent on His resurrection and coming to them. According to Jesus' words in that dialogue (John 14:12-20), this state of being, or life, was to be available on the day when He comes to them and lives in them. He was referring to a life that begins on this earth in our mortal flesh upon receiving the Comforter. Let us allow His Spirit to live and work in us.