

The Mission of the Spirit

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In the promise of the Spirit, Jesus spoke of him as the Comforter.

John 14

¹⁶ I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever.

²⁶ The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost.

John 16

⁷ ...if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

It is by the Holy Spirit that the Lord comforts his disciples. Says Paul,

2 Corinthians 1

³ Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;

⁴ Who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

⁵ For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds by Christ.

Thus consolation abounds by the Holy Spirit which Christ sends. So his mission is:—

1. To Witness of Christ

John 15

²⁶ But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceeds from the Father, he shall testify of me.

This Spirit is given only to those who are Christ's.

Romans 8

⁹ If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his.

John 14

¹⁵ If ye love me, keep my commandments.

¹⁶ And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter...

¹⁷ Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it sees him not, neither knows him: but ye know him; for he dwells with you, and shall be in you.

¹⁸ I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

²³ ...If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

One part of the mission of the Holy Spirit, therefore, is to witness of the presence of God and of Christ with his disciples.

2. A Witness of Forgiveness

A Witness of the forgiveness of sins, and that thus we are the children of God.

Hebrews 10

¹⁵ The Holy Ghost also is a witness to us; for after that he had said before,

¹⁶ “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;” then he said,

¹⁷ “And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.”

Romans 8

¹⁶ The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.

3. An Earnest of Our Inheritance

Ephesians 1

¹³ ...you were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

¹⁴ Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

An earnest is “a part paid beforehand on a contract, as security for the whole.” God enters into covenant with men, and to those who will accept his Son, he promises an inheritance.

But the time is not yet come when the inheritance can be given; it is not yet redeemed. So until that time does come, until it is redeemed, he gives to his people the Holy Spirit as the earnest, the security of the inheritance.

Another definition is, that “an earnest gives assurance that more is coming of the same kind.” By receiving the Holy Spirit we become partakers of the divine nature, and by this “earnest” God gives assurance that more is coming of the same kind, even so much more, that, “when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.”

4. A Guide into the Truth

John 14

²⁶ But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

The Holy Spirit then is to teach us the things that Christ has said. And as the Spirit of Christ spoke the Old Testament as well as the New (*1 Peter* 1:10-12), this is to say that the Holy Spirit is to teach us the word of God. This is confirmed by John:

John 16

¹³ Howbeit when he the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth.

And as Jesus said, “Thy word is truth,” it is plain that the Spirit is to guide us into the word of God. Again,

John 16

¹⁵ He shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you.

The Holy Spirit therefore, as teacher of the word of God, as guide into the word of God, is to take these things of God and show them unto us, to show us their breadth of meaning, that we may know how to apply them to our lives and conform our ways to them. Compare these verses:

Psalm 119

¹⁸ Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.

Ephesians 1

¹⁷ That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

¹⁸ The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

Acts 26

¹⁸ To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

Just here is where those fail who claim sanctification. Even granting, for the sake of the argument (and for that reason only), that they have received the Holy Spirit,

- Instead of allowing him to fulfill his office of teacher of the word of God;
- Instead of having him take the things of the word of God, and show unto them;
- Instead of allowing him to guide them into the word of God;

They seek to make him the guide independent of the word of God; and not only that, but in many instances directly contrary to the plainly written word which he himself has spoken. Such spirit is not the Spirit of God, such is not his office; he is not divided against himself.

Again, this makes him the end instead of the means, which is to pervert the way of the Lord. In no single instance, in this connection, is he made the end; but in every instance he is set forth as the means by which we may reach the end which God has in view for us.

And again, to make him the guide independent of the

word, is to make him speak of (from) himself. But Christ plainly declares,

John 16

¹³ He shall not speak of [from] himself.

5. To Convince of Sin

John 14

⁸ And when he is come, he will convince the world of sin.

1 John 3

⁴ Sin is the transgression of the law.

And the Holy Spirit can convict no man of sin before God, except by the law of God,

Romans 3

²⁰ ...for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

And without conviction there can be no conversion. So the matter stands just thus: There can be no conversion without conviction; and there can be no conviction without the law; therefore, where the law of God is despised there can be no conversion; hence neither sanctification nor salvation, call it what they will.

6. To Convince of Righteousness

He shall convince the world

John 16

¹⁰ Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;

1 John 5

¹⁷ All unrighteousness is sin.

1 John 3

⁴ Sin is the transgression of the law.

Righteousness is the opposite of unrighteousness. And as unrighteousness is transgression of the law, righteousness is obedience to the law, but this only through the faith and merit of Christ. Therefore, in convincing of righteousness, the Holy

Spirit convince of obedience to the law of God, by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

7. To Convince of Judgment

He shall convince the world “of judgment.”

Romans 2

¹² As many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law;

¹⁶ In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

James 2

¹² So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.

As, therefore, in the Judgment men’s acts are to be compared with the law of God, the office of the Holy Spirit in convincing of judgment is to enable us to see the law of God as it is, that we may have our transgressions washed away by the blood of Christ, and that we may obey the law as we ought.

Thus His work is to convince us of judgment now while there is hope, that when we shall stand before the Judgment seat of Christ, our lives may be found in perfect harmony with the holy law of God, and that so we may stand in the judgment.

8. To Shed Abroad the Love of God

Romans 5

⁵ The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

This again points directly to the law of God, and to the keeping of that law:

1 John 5

³ For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous.

By all these evidences we see that the office of the Holy Spirit, in every instance in the life of the Christian, is to

spread the law and word of God before him, and to impress upon him the duty and knowledge of obedience.

Additional evidence of this point is given by Peter.

1 Peter 1

¹ Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the...

² Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience.

This teaches plainly that the Holy Spirit is given to us to teach us to obey the written word of God, and, that true sanctification of the Spirit is unto obedience to that written word.

9. As a Sanctifier

This also reveals to us another part of the mission of the Spirit. That is as the Sanctifier. A great deal is made nowadays of a certain kind of sanctification, but any sanctification that is not “unto obedience” to the law of God, is spurious sanctification; it is a deception and a snare. Christ prayed,

John 17

¹⁷ Sanctify them through the truth, [and then immediately added,] Thy word is truth.

This shows that sanctification is through the word of God, but it can only be through the word of God by the aid of the Spirit. The text quoted just above from Peter, tells of sanctification of the Spirit “unto obedience.” Here we have another text from Peter on the same subject:

1 Peter 1

²² Seeing ye have purified [sanctified] your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit.

Men are elect through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, but they are not sanctified until they have obeyed the truth, the word of God, through the Spirit. The truth of God cannot be obeyed except through the Holy Spirit.

The law of God is spiritual (*Romans* 7:14), the word of Christ is spirit (*John* 6:36), but man is carnal. Therefore

Romans 8

⁷ ...the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

⁸ So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

⁹ But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

The Holy Spirit is given to take away the carnal mind, and make us spiritually minded, that so we may discern the things of God (*1 Corinthians 2:9-16*), and thus he takes the things of God and shows them unto us.

Thus by the Spirit of God, we can know our duty in the truth of God and then we can obey that truth through the Spirit, and so we are sanctified through the truth.