

The Spirit of Christ

by Samuel Chadwick

The Spirit of Christ is the Spirit of God, and is the all-inclusive gift of the Father to His Son, and the crowning gift of the Son to His people.

Scripture: Isaiah 11:2, John 14:16, John 16:7, Acts 10:38, Ephesians 3:16, Philippians 2:5, Colossians 1:27, Hebrews 2:9

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Trinity Doctrine"

Description

Samuel Chadwick delves into the distinctive teaching of the New Testament that the Spirit of the Lord God is also the Spirit of Christ, emphasizing the association of the gift of the Spirit with the promise of the Messiah. He explores the indwelling Spirit and the indwelling Christ, highlighting the close intimacy expressed in interchangeable terms while maintaining the distinct personalities within the Trinity. Chadwick further discusses the Spirit's role in the earthly ministry of Jesus, revealing how Jesus depended on the Spirit for wisdom, power, and authority in His words and miracles, ultimately living and ministering through the Spirit of the Father and the Son.

Transcript

The Spirit of the Lord God is also the Spirit of Christ. This is the distinctive teaching of the New Testament. The progress of the Old Testament revelation of the Spirit finally associates the gift of the Spirit with the promise of the Messiah. "The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord." Jesus Christ claimed that in Him was fulfilled the Messianic prophecy of the Spirit. He opened His ministry at Nazareth with the announcement that the Spirit of the Lord was upon Him. The Synoptic Gospels reveal the Spirit as the unique power in the life of Jesus, and in St. John's Gospel He is in a unique sense the possession of the Christ, the Son of God. In the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles He is called the Spirit of Jesus, the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of Jesus Christ; and the Christian Benediction, like the Baptismal Formula, associates the Spirit with the Father and the Son. He is the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, the Lord the Spirit, and He is known by about twenty-five other Names in the New Testament, but He is the same Spirit. It is this multiplicity of names and functions that leads to so much confusion about the Spirit.

The Indwelling Spirit and the Indwelling Christ

There is confusion in some minds because the New Testament speaks of the indwelling Presence sometimes as the Spirit and at other times as Christ. St. Paul says emphatically, "Christ liveth in me," and

that Christ is in man the hope of glory; and yet with equal emphasis he tells us we are the Temples of the Holy Ghost. Does the Risen Lord live in us or is it the Spirit of Christ that dwells in our hearts? The perplexity arises from our imperfect conception of the Persons in the Trinity. With us personality is divisive and exclusive. Each is separate from the rest and must always be a separate personality. Personality in the Trinity is not exclusive but inclusive, not divisive but inherent. God was in Christ, and so also was the Spirit in each is All, and in All is each. The Spirit "proceedeth from the Father and the Son." The indwelling Presence of the Son is revealed and realized in the indwelling Presence of the Spirit. The great Temple Prayer of the Epistle to the Ephesians (3:14-19) includes all the Persons of the Trinity in the Temple of the human heart. The Spirit strengthens the inner man, the Son reveals the Divine love to the heart, and the infinite God fills the whole being with Divine fullness of love, blessedness, and power. As it pleased God that in His Son should dwell the fullness of the Godhead bodily, so it has pleased Him that in the dispensation of the Spirit there should dwell in Him the same fullness; and as in the Son the Father and Spirit were revealed, so in the Spirit are the Son and the Father made known in the soul.

It need not surprise us, therefore, if such close intimacy is expressed in terms that are identical and interchangeable, but the careful reader will observe that the personalities are always distinct. Most modern writers take the view that the Spirit is the New Testament designation for the Risen Christ, perpetuated by the influence of His Spirit in the world, but the New Testament Scriptures speak of the Holy Spirit as a Person, and never merely as an influence. They always speak of Him, and never of It. And the Person of the Christ is never confounded with the Person of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit did not become Christ in the incarnation, nor does Jesus become the Spirit at Pentecost. In one sense it is true that when the Spirit comes it is Jesus who comes again to dwell and rule in the hearts and lives of men, but though the Presence is identical, the Personalities are always distinct. Moberly has expressed the distinction perhaps as clearly as we may ever hope to get it when he says:

"It is not for an instant that the disciples are to have the presence of the Spirit instead of the Son. But to have the Spirit is to have the Son."

The Spirit in the Earthly Ministry of Our Lord

Our Lord said very little about the Holy Spirit during the greater part of His ministry. He confessed freely that He spake and wrought not in His own power, but except where necessity constrained Him to speak, He was silent concerning the Spirit by whom He taught and wrought. The explanation of His silence comes out when, on the eve of His departure, He begins to speak at length of the Paraclete, that should come when He had gone to the Father. The first word shot its revealing light through all the silent years. "Ye know Him, for He abideth with you." Just as seeing Him they had seen the Father, so in knowing Him they had known the Spirit. In Him was the fullness of the Godhead, and as through Him came the revelation of the Father, so by Him was the

All themes that lead us into the inter-relations of the Trinity are "hard to be uttered," but the things that are revealed are intended to be understood, and prayer opens the eyes of both mind and heart. It is no part of faith to shrink from a subject because it involves risk, and demands great caution, sustained attention, and delicate expression. The emphasis of modern theological thought has been for years upon the Kenosis, as stated in Philippians 2:5-7. It is contended that by reason of our Lord's self-emptying there remained nothing that distinguished Him essentially from other men. The contention overlooks the fact that there is a Pleroma as well as a Kenosis. Our Lord emptied Himself, but the Father gave to His self-emptying Son the fullness of His Spirit. He did not cease to be God, but He became in all things human, and was subject to

such conditions as were possible to human nature possessed of His Spirit. Through all the earthly life and ministry of our Lord He was indebted to the Presence and Power of the Holy Ghost.

The Spirit of Counsel and Might

Our Lord's life was mapped out for Him. He came to do the Father's Will, and that Will was unfolded and interpreted to Him by the Holy Spirit. He grew in wisdom as in stature, but it is difficult to mark the stages and boundaries of His knowledge. He was led of the Spirit, taught of the Spirit, and strengthened in the Spirit. He never said "Perhaps," never balanced probabilities, never made a mistake. His sagacity never erred, neither did His power fail, and for both He was constantly dependent upon the Spirit that was given without measure.

He spake the words of God as they were given to Him by the Spirit. Five times in St. John's Gospel our Lord claims to be speaking under authority:

"He whom God sendeth speaketh the word of God: for He giveth not the Spirit by measure" (3:34).

"Jesus therefore answered them, and said, My teaching is not Mine, but His that sent Me" (7:16).

"Jesus therefore said, When ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself. but as the Father taught Me, I speak these things" (8:28).

"Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I say unto you I speak not from Myself: but the Father abiding in Me doeth His works ... He that loveth Me not keepeth not My words: and the word which ye hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me" (14:10, 24).

The same is true of His ministry of power. His first text linked His ministry with the Messianic promise of the Spirit. He was Spirit-prepared, Spirit-called, Spirit-equipped, and Spirit-sent. He did nothing of Himself any more than for Himself. Speaking in the house of Cornelius, the Apostle Peter thus summarizes and accounts for the life of our Lord: "Even Jesus of Nazareth, how that God anointed Him with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him." His miracles were all wrought in the power of the Holy Ghost. Even His atoning death was by the Grace of God and through the Eternal Spirit (Heb. 2:9; 9:14), and it was by the same Spirit of power that God raised Him from the dead. From the incarnation to the resurrection, the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, were lived and wrought in and through and by the power of the Spirit of the Father and the Son. The Spirit of Christ is the Spirit of God. In Christ the Spirit of God becomes the Spirit of Man in "the Word made Flesh."

It is this truth, so immense in its significance, that is the distinctive revelation of the New Testament and the distinctive note in the life of the Church of Christ. For the Spirit of Pentecost is the Spirit of Christ. The Spirit He gives is the self-same Spirit that inspired, instructed, and animated His own life: His own, very own Spirit, which may be said to be His very self. He calls Him the Paraclete, and assures the distressed disciples that in that day they should know what He could not teach them, and do greater works than He had done. The Spirit is the all-inclusive gift of the Father to His Son, and the crowning gift of the Son to His people. In a deeper and fuller sense than we have yet realized, the Spirit of God is the Spirit of Christ, and it is in the Spirit of Christ we live the life which is life indeed. The fullness of God is in Christ, and Christ lives in men through His Spirit. He is Himself the gift. He brings all the blessings of Grace, and Wisdom, and Power, but He is the Blessor and the Blessing. There is in the soul a very true sense of a divinely real

Presence. The Spirit makes the Presence real. This is the crowning mystery and glory of Grace. The Christian religion is not a set of doctrines about Christ, neither is it a rule of life based upon the teaching and example of Christ. It is not even an earnest and sincere endeavor to live according to the mind and spirit of Christ. It is Life, and that Life is the Life of Christ. It is a continuation of the Life of the Risen Lord in His Body which is the Church, and in the sanctified believer. "Christ liveth in me" is the essence of the Christian religion as set forth in the New Testament. It is not a system, but a Presence; the Spirit of Christ indwelling the spirit of man.

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