

"HE SHALL GIVE YOU ANOTHER COMFORTER."

– APRIL 30. – JOHN 14:15-27. –

CONTINUING his discourse to his troubled disciples at the time of his instituting the Memorial of his own death, our Lord not only promised to come again and receive them to himself in due time, but additionally he promised the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, during the interim of his absence. Since he was about to lay down the human nature he could no longer be with them as the man Christ Jesus – in his resurrection he would become again a spirit being like unto the Father, and could no more be seen by his disciples than the Father could be seen by them, until the time would come when the entire Church, complete, would be "changed," made "like him" (and like the Father) and see him, and be with him, and share his glory. His resurrection "change" made necessary either the leaving of his disciples alone, without any help or aid during the Gospel age, or else that help be granted them in some other manner. The few occasions on which our Lord appeared to his disciples after his resurrection, for a few moments each, were miraculous manifestations, simply for the purpose of assuring them that he was no longer dead, and that having risen from the dead he was no longer controlled by human conditions. Hence, as a part of the lesson, the flesh bodies in which he manifested himself appeared miraculously and disappeared likewise – he came and went as the wind. – John 3:8; Luke 24:26,31; Acts 1:3,4.

The holy spirit would be another Comforter, but the comfort would be of the same kind. Indeed, our word "comfort" does not properly represent the thought of the text, which rather is, to strengthen, to sustain: the holy spirit would not be merely a consoler of woes, a soother of fears, in the sense of our word comfort, but it would quicken their understandings, strengthen their zeal, and energize them for doing and enduring such things as divine providence might permit to come upon them for their correction in righteousness,

and in order to make them "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light."

The holy spirit or holy influence that should come to the Church and abide with it through the age, to supervise and direct in the interest of the faithful, was to be a representative of both the Father and the Son. Indeed, the thought that the holy spirit is the representative [R2455 : page 92] of the Lord Jesus with the Church is so strongly put that sometimes the Lord himself and his spirit or influence are spoken of interchangeably; as for instance, when he said to them, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age." (Matt. 28:20.) And again, "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you [through the holy spirit]." And again, "In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I [through the holy spirit] in you, ...and I will manifest myself to him [through the holy spirit]...And we [the Father and the Son] will come unto him, and make our abode with him [through the holy spirit]." – Vss. 18,20,23.

Thus it is that those who receive the holy spirit, the spirit of the truth, the spirit of love, the spirit of the Father, the spirit of Christ, are enabled to *see* Jesus, and have a new life begun in them. (Vs. 19.) They *see* with the eyes of their understanding, and do not [R2456 : page 92] walk in darkness. They *hear* the voice of the Lord, saying, "This is the way; walk ye in it." They *taste* the good Word of God, and realize that he is very gracious. They *feel* the love of God shed abroad in their hearts, producing in them love for the brethren and all the good fruits of the spirit – meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, brotherly-kindness, love. – Isa. 30:21; 1 Pet. 2:3; Rom. 5:5; Col. 3:12,13.

These experiences, however, are promised conditionally – they are not promised to those who have never heard of the grace of God, but to those who have heard, to "as many as the Lord our God shall call," who, hearing his commandments, are moved by responsive love to do them. Such have the Father's love, such have the love of the Son,

and such shall have the fellowship both of the Father and the Son through the medium or channel of the holy spirit. This is declared in the 15th and 16th verses, and again in the 21st, 23d and 24th. Not only are faith and obedience of the heart necessary, before any can come into the spirit-begotten condition, but a continuance and growth in faith and in obedience are necessary in order to a continuance and growth in the spirit of holiness, or the holy spirit, the spirit of fellowship with the Father and with the Son.

It is one thing to have a begetting of the spirit, and quite another matter to attain to that condition urged by the Apostle, saying, "Be *filled* with the spirit." (Eph. 5:18.) The measure of our filling will correspond with the measure of our emptying of the spirit of selfwill, and filling with the spirit of faith and obedience. And altho the obedience cannot do otherwise than manifest itself in the daily life, nevertheless it is the obedience of the *intention*, of the *will*, of the *heart*, that the Lord regards in his consecrated people, and not merely the control of the earthen vessel. Hence, some whose hearts are thoroughly loyal to the Lord may be pleasing to him, while not the most pleasing to some of those with whom they come in contact; while others, "highly esteemed amongst men" because of outward moralities, may be an "abomination" in the sight of God, because of coldness or dishonesty of heart. (Luke 16:15.) Nevertheless, he that hath the new hope in him, and the new spirit, will seek to purify himself, not only in his thoughts, but also in his words and deeds and all his affairs, inward and outward. – 1 John 3:3.

It should not be overlooked that, altho the holy spirit, like all other favors, is of the Father, it, like all others of his gifts, comes to us through the Son, and not by any direct relationship between the Father and us. As we saw in our previous lesson that our prayers addressed to the Father are to be answered by the Son, – "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son: If ye shall ask anything in my name I will do it;" – so we see in this lesson that the gift of the holy spirit comes to us, not because of

any direct relationship between the Father and us, but at the instance of our Lord Jesus. "*I* will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter" – at my request and my account the Father will do this for you. (Vs. 16.) The same thought is again expressed in vs. 26, "The holy spirit whom the Father will send in my name."

The lesson to us here is, that our only standing before the Father as yet is a *reckoned one* – in Christ, as members of his body, – our Lord Jesus represents the Father to us and represents us to the Father. The comfort and strength of the holy spirit imparted to us is the Father's, the spirit of truth, all of which emanates from the Father: it reaches us not directly, but only through our Lord and Head, Jesus. In a word, we have no standing whatever with the Father, and will not have any, until by his grace, through our Lord Jesus, we shall have been "made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light," and by the "change" of the first resurrection shall be perfected in his likeness, which is the divine likeness: then and thereafter, being actually perfect, and not merely reckonedly perfect, we may have an individual standing with the Father, but not before.

Hence it is that if any one lose his relationship to Christ through the loss of his faith in the precious blood, or through the loss of the holy spirit, through wilful sin, such an one falls out of the protection, the care, the covering of Jesus, the Mediator of the New Covenant, – and falls into the hands of the living God, – which means a judgment according to facts and works; and to all imperfect creatures this means death. (Heb. 10:31.) Hence also the exhortation of the Scriptures, that we abide in him, that we remain under **[R2456 : page 93]** the blood of sprinkling, that we abide in his love. – John 15:4,6,10; 1 John 2:24-29.

Our Lord pointedly declares that he who does not seek to please him by conforming to his instructions, thereby manifests that he does not love him. (Vss. 23,24.) Surely there can be no better test of love than devotion, and no better test of devotion than obedience. Our enlightened consciences render hearty assent to the Master's words,

and with the Apostle we exclaim, "The love of Christ constraineth us, for we thus judge that, if one died for all, then all were dead, and that he died for all, that they who live [justified and begotten to newness of life] should henceforth not live unto themselves, but unto him who died for us, and rose again." – 2 Cor. 5:14,15.

The Master pointed out to us distinctly that in keeping his sayings we are not merely pleasing and obeying him, but that he is in all this matter the mouthpiece of Jehovah, the Father, and consequently that in pleasing and obeying him we are pleasing and obeying the Father. This much he could tell them while still with them, but he had many things that he desired to make known to them, and that were necessary for them to know, but that they could not receive as yet, because the holy spirit had not yet come upon them, and could not until after the ransom sacrifice had been made at Calvary and offered in the Holy of Holies, after he ascended up on high, there to appear in the presence of God for us. – John 7:39; Heb. 9:24.

Our Lord's assurance is that this Comforter or strengthener, the holy spirit of the Father, sent on account of and at the instance of Jesus our Redeemer, Mediator and Head, will be our instructor – using various instrumentalities for bringing the instruction to us – the Word of truth, the writings of the apostles, and the various helps and agencies which the Lord, through the holy spirit, has and shall from time to time, as needed, provide to his flock.

How beautiful, how consoling to their troubled hearts, and how refreshing to ours, is the legacy of love and peace left to us by our dear Redeemer, as expressed in the 27th verse! "Peace I leave with you, *my peace* I give unto you; not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." This peace and joy which surpasseth human understanding, was not given to the world, nor is it given to the nominal Christian professor, nor to the formalist and ritualist, however zealous they may be. It is intended for and can be had only by those who receive riches of grace through the holy

spirit – those who by obedience to the truth and its spirit grow up into Christ their living Head in all things. Such have peace, deep and abiding, and ever increasing proportionately as they come to comprehend with all saints through faith and obedience the riches of divine grace – the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of the love of God.

This is not worldly peace, not the peace of indifference and carelessness, not the peace of sloth, not the peace of self-indulgence, not the peace of fatalism; but it is the peace of Christ – "my peace." Looking back we can see that the Master preserved his peace with God under all conditions. It is a peace which implicitly trusts to the divine wisdom, love, justice and power, a peace which remembers the gracious promise made to the Lord's faithful – that nothing shall be any means hurt his faithful, and that all things shall work together for good to them that love God. This peace can accept by faith whatever divine providence permits, and can look through its tears with joyful expectancy for the ultimate blessings which the Master has promised, and of which the present peace and joy are merely foretastes.
