

THE FAITH TO CONTEND FOR (5)

—R. K. Campbell

The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit in the Church

In our previous studies we have pointed out that the Bible presents to us the triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, three Divine Persons, one in essence, unity and action. We insist on the divine personality of God the Father and God the Son, but it is equally important that we learn from Scripture the divine personality of God the Holy Spirit and maintain this vital truth also.

The Bible speaks of the Holy Spirit as "He" and "Him" and as a Person that can be grieved, who loves, teaches, leads, calls and speaks (John 14:16, 17; 15:26; Eph. 4:30; Rom. 8:14; 15:30; Acts 13:1-2; Heb. 3:7). Such things cannot be said of a mere "influence" or of a "power." The Spirit of God is never spoken of as "it" but referred to by personal pronouns.

The fact that the Holy Spirit is presented several times in direct association with God the Father and God the Son proves His deity, His equal place in the Godhead, the triune God. (Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; Rev. 1:4). Omnipotence in creation, omniscience and omnipresence, which are divine attributes, are ascribed to the Holy Spirit in Psalm 104:30, 1 Corinthians 2:10-11 and Psalm 139:7-10.

The Holy Spirit is seen throughout the Bible as the Executor of the divine plans, as the active Agent and Power of the Godhead. He was active in the creation of the world and in all the old-testament activities.

The Spirit of God was actively associated with the birth, life, death and resurrection of Christ as many Scriptures declare. Now that Jesus Christ has been glorified and exalted in heaven as Head of the Church, He has sent forth the Holy Spirit in a new and fuller way. Christ sent the Spirit to *indwell* individuals who believe in Him and to indwell the Church, the "habitation of God in the Spirit" (Eph. 2:18-22) as He had promised before His death (John 14:12-18; 15:26; 16:7-15). This took place on the day of Pentecost as described in Acts 2. So the Apostle Peter declared: "This Jesus has God raised up, whereof all we are witnesses. Having therefore been exalted by the right hand of God, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured out this which ye behold and hear" (Acts 2:32-33).

The Lord had promised the disciples before His ascension to heaven that they should wait at Jerusalem and they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-5). Of this baptism the apostle Paul wrote the Corinthian believers: "For also in the power of one Spirit we have all been baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bondmen or free; and have all been given to drink of one Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13).

Thus this baptism of the Spirit took place once and for all on the birthday of the Church when believers in Christ were baptized and united by the Spirit of God into one body. Ephesians 1:22-23 tells us that the Church is Christ's body, so the true Church of the living God began on the day of Pentecost and continues today. As individuals are converted and saved by the Spirit of God, they are brought into this spiritual body of Christ, baptized by the one Spirit into one body. When we are saved, we participate in this baptism that took place at Pentecost.

We are not instructed to seek a pentecostal experience which took place once and for all at the birthday of the Church over 1900 years ago. We are exhorted to be "led by the Spirit," to "walk in the Spirit," to be "filled with the Spirit" and to have the "fruit of the Spirit," but we are never exhorted to seek the baptism of the Spirit, for this has already taken place and we are brought into it by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

We also learn from the Bible that the Spirit of God has formed a unity of believers in Christ which we are to keep. We are exhorted to endeavour "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, as ye have been also called in one hope of your calling" (Eph. 4:3-4). This unity of the Spirit then is the one body, divinely formed out of all converted believers in Christ. We are not told to *make* a unity by forming parties, organizations, agreements or unions of people, but to keep the divinely made unity. By His indwelling each one, the Spirit of God has made and is making one body of all believers, uniting them to Christ as Head and to one another.

The book of Acts and the Epistles show us that the Holy Spirit was the only divine Administrator in the Church established by God. There was no human head. The Spirit of God directed and worked through human instruments of His choosing, to whom He had given gifts for service. In the Bible we see the Holy Spirit as the only rightful "President" and "Leader" of a local church gathering. There were those who were leaders (always in the plural) who functioned under the divine Leader, the Holy Spirit. We read that "the manifestation of the Spirit is given for profit. For to one, by the Spirit, is given the word of wisdom; and to another the word of knowledge... All these things operates the one and the same Spirit, dividing to each in particular according as He pleases" (1 Cor. 12:7-11).

The Holy Spirit was given His sovereign place and right to work *whatsoever* He would and by *whomsoever* He would in the Church. There were no human arrangements in the functions of the early Church. There was liberty for the Spirit to work as the true Vicar or Viceregent of Christ on earth in carrying out the directions of the Church's only true Head in Heaven. A consideration of the 14th chapter of 1 Corinthians will give evidence of the foregoing, as also the book of Acts.

Now if all this was true in the Church of the Bible, why shouldn't this divine pattern be followed today? In recent centuries many throughout the world have endeavoured to give the Holy Spirit His sovereign rights and place in the Church and have tasted the blessings and liberty of the Holy Spirit in worship, edification and service. We believe the Person and work of the Holy Spirit in the Church is a vital tenet of the faith delivered to the saints which we are to contend for.

The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit in the Believer's Life

We shall briefly outline something of the work of the Holy Spirit in the individual believer's life. As a sinner "dead in trespasses and sins," we were quickened (made alive spiritually) by the Holy Spirit (John 6:63; Eph. 2:1). He convicted us of sin according to John 16:8-11, and we were born again (or anew) by the Spirit of God and given a new, sinless, divine nature (John 3:5-6; 1 John 3:9; 2 Pe. 1:4). We learn from Ephesians 1:13-14 that, "Having believed, ye have been sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the earnest of our inheritance to the redemption of the acquired possession." We are indwelt by the Holy Spirit which is God's seal of ownership upon His purchased possession. We have received the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. He witnesses with our Spirit that we are the children of God, and gives us assurance of salvation (Rom. 8:15-16). And through Christ we have "access by one Spirit unto the Father" (Eph. 2:18). The Holy Spirit is spoken of as the "anointing" which we have received, that teaches us all things, giving us divine illumination and understanding in the things of God (1 John 2:27).

It is by the Spirit of God that we are strengthened with might in the inner man. He empowers the new nature to carry out its desires (Eph. 3:16). He enables the believer to put to death, subdue, the deeds of the body, the old sinful nature (Rom. 8:13). We are enabled to pray by the Holy Spirit. He forms the desire in our hearts to pray and leads us in intercession. He also makes intercession for us when we know not what to pray for (Rom. 8:26; Eph. 6:18; Jude: 20). It is by the Spirit that we also worship God (Philip. 3:3). The Spirit of God is the "Comforter," which really means in the original Greek word, "One called alongside to help, to manage our affairs" (John 14:16-17). What a wonderful provision for the wilderness needs has been given us in the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Galatians 5:22-23 instructs us as to a nine-fold fruit of the Spirit which He would produce in a believer's life. This fruit is "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, self-control." These things characterized the life of Christ and the Spirit of God desires "that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh" (2 Cor. 4:11).

We also read of the "filling of the Spirit." This is in view of service, it is a special power for special needs or work as seen in Acts 6:3-5; 6:55; 11:24. In other cases we see it resulting in joy and praise as in Luke 1:41, 67; Acts 13:9. We also see the filling of the Spirit resulting in boldness in confession and testimony in Acts 2:4; 4:8-10, 31; 13:9.

For all these various activities in the believer's life, the Spirit of God must be ungrieved and not quenched (Eph. 4:30; 1 Th. 5:19). We can grieve the Spirit of God by evil things, such as bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, evil speaking, corrupt communication and an unforgiving spirit. These things are mentioned in Ephesians 4:29-32 in connection with grieving the Holy Spirit. We can quench the Spirit's promptings and not enjoy His gracious activities in our lives. We are enjoined to be led by the Holy Spirit and to walk and live in the Spirit (Gal. 5:18, 25). This means we must surrender to the Holy Spirit and let Him have His way in our lives. Then the blessedness of the life of Christ will be enjoyed in our hearts and seen in our lives.

Dear friends, how is it with you? Do you know anything of the work of the Holy Spirit of God in your heart and life? This is most important and we urge you to give serious thought and prayer to this wondrous subject of the Holy Spirit. Read the Scriptures and yield to the working of the Holy Spirit within you.

To be cont'd

THE OFFERINGS (17)

—H. L. Heijkoop

Lev. 7:11-18

In the previous issue we dealt with the peace-offering as it is presented in Leviticus 3. The present portion deals with the *law* of the peace-offering. When we considered the burnt-offering and the meal-offering, we also studied the laws of these offerings contained in chapter 6:8-23. The last part of that chapter deals with the law of the sin-offering and the beginning of the 7th chapter with the law of the trespass-offering. We notice therefore that the laws of the various offerings are differently arranged than the instructions for the offerings themselves.

In chapter 1 we had the burnt-offering, in chapter 2 the meal-offering, in chapter 3 the peace-offering, and in 4 and 5 the sin- and trespass-offerings. This order is very important. First we considered the glory of the Lord Jesus in the burnt-offering. Afterwards we looked at His pure Manhood in the meal-offering. Subsequently we saw how, on the basis of these first two offerings, we could have fellowship with God and with the Lord Jesus, a fellowship which was presented in the peace-offering. There is therefore an obvious necessity to purify ourselves, for we read in 1 John 3:3, "Everyone that has this hope in Him purifies himself, even as He is pure." We cannot be occupied with the glory of the Lord Jesus without purifying ourselves in God's presence, so that we become practically holy. That is the order in which God gave us the offerings.

But in the laws of the offerings we have to do with the practical application; for this reason we find a different order. First came the laws of the burnt- and of the meal-offerings, then follow those of sin- and the trespass-offerings, with the law of the peace-offering at the very end. In 1 Corinthians 11, we have the same order. True enough, we should always judge ourselves in the light of God — for only through self-judgment are we cleansed — but we must do this all the more thoroughly if we want to meet with each other at the Table of the Lord. The Corinthians had forgotten this and God's judgment had fallen upon several of them. The Word of God says, "if we judged ourselves, so were we not judged" (1 Cor. 11:31). This thought is presented in the order of the laws of the offerings. We notice from this how the truths of the New Testament are always foreshadowed in the types of the Old Testament.

We see here that there are different peace-offerings. Here the differences in the sacrifices are not the same as those presented in chapter 3. Those were differences of form but here the differences concern the various motives which might cause a person to bring a sacrifice. Verse 12 mentions a peace-offering brought for a thanksgiving, whereas verse 16 speaks of a vow, or a voluntary offering. Thus, it is not only important *what* we bring, but also *why* we bring it, the motive that leads us to sacrifice. I hope to return to this later on.

Earlier we mentioned the instruction of verses 12 and 13: a meal-offering had to be brought with every peace-offering. God does not want us only to be occupied with *the work* of the Lord Jesus but also with *His Person*. Certainly, His work is most beautiful, we saw this in the burnt-offering; but how much more glorious is the Person who was fit to accomplish this work! God's desire is that, while we take our place at the Lord's Table, we do not only think of the work of the Lord, but also of His Person: God wants us to bring our peace-offering with a meal-offering.

I do not want to go back to the meal-offering, for we have already covered that, but in verse 13 there is something special: a meal-offering with leaven. We remember from chapter 2 that leaven was never allowed to be present in the meal-offering, but here (as part of the meal-offering connected with the peace-offering of thanksgiving) leavened bread, *had to be* presented. It is not as if leaven was tolerated, it was *prescribed* in connection with the peace-offering itself. To understand this we must first of all realize what took place when such a thank-offering was brought. For this sacrifice, the people came together at the entrance of the tent of meeting, there they used this meal with God and with Aaron as type of the Lord Jesus. First of all, God received His portion — it was His bread, as we have seen in chapter 3. Then the priest received a separate part — as we will see later on. Finally anyone who was clean among the people could receive a part.

When we meet on Sunday morning the same thing takes place. Although the sacrifice we bring is unleavened — here I think of that which we see of the Person and the work of the Lord Jesus —, yet our *thoughts* and our *words* are never altogether clean. According to God's thought and the power of the Holy Spirit, the working of the evil in us is restrained, therefore leavened *bread* is mentioned here. Bread has been baked, and although baking immediately terminates the working of the leaven, we should never forget that leaven is contained in the bread. We may be ever so close to the Lord and perhaps we allow ourselves to be lead by the Holy Spirit, yet there remains frequently something of man in the

sacrifices we bring. Who among us could believe that he is a hundred percent pure and that he brings his sacrifices to God in a perfect way? Frequently we say something unintentionally that is not correct, or at least something that does not come from the Holy Spirit alone. It is good to be aware of this.

God gave us these instructions so that we might be aware of these things. When we approach God with our sacrifices, we should be aware of the things He has done for us. In the burnt-offering we saw what we have become through the finished work of the Lord Jesus. Now we have full liberty to enter into God's presence, for we have been made acceptable in the Beloved, so that God sees us in all the beauties of the Lord Jesus. Nevertheless from ourselves we were poor, lost sinners and we know very well what we are in practice. Therefore we are told here that leavened bread had to be sacrificed with the peace-offering just as bitter herbs had to be eaten with the passover. We may meditate on the wondrous beauty of these things.

Although this bread was not put upon the altar, yet it was presented to God. Of this bread it is expressly said, "Of it he shall present one out of the whole offering as a heave-offering to Jehovah" (v. 14). We see here that one part of the peace-offering had to be brought as a heave-offering, this was done by lifting it up towards God. Our expressing before God what we have become through the work of the Lord Jesus is regarded by Him as a heave-offering, which is something we may do every Sunday morning. What a wondrous thought this is, especially when we consider that this signifies that we present God His bread by lifting it up to Him as we have seen in chapter 3. These things God tells us in this portion, so that we may understand the significance of the things we do.

Now let us return to our chapter to look at some other things found there. First there is mention of a peace-offering brought as thanksgiving. We read of this in verse 15: "The flesh of the sacrifice of his peace-offering of thanksgiving shall be eaten the same day that it is presented; he shall not let any of it remain until the morning." I believe that the significance of this will become clear when we think of Luke 15. When the prodigal son had returned to his father, he was allowed to eat of the meal served in celebration of his return, but it was the father's feast which the son celebrated with his father; he enjoyed the father's gladness. This is in contrast with the oldest son who said, "To me hast thou never given a kid that I might make merry with my friends" (v. 29). He wanted to have a feast as well, but a feast with his friends in which there would be no place for his father. God, however, loves us too much than to give us a celebration of which He would not receive His portion. God shares our gladness; in actual fact, His joy is our joy. *He* has killed the fatted calf. That is what is expressed here.

When we come together on Sunday morning, the Holy Spirit directing our thoughts to the work of the Lord Jesus and to the grace of God, we must have very cold hearts if we are not full of thanksgiving. When we sing hymns and a spiritual brother, as the mouthpiece of the assembly, gives thanks, our hearts become warm and thanksgiving rises from our hearts to God and to the Lord Jesus; it is acceptable to God. It speaks of the glory of the Lord Jesus and it comes from our hearts. God gladly accepts such praise from us, while at the same time our hearts are fed with the Lord Jesus.

Is not it our experience, however, that this does not last very long? As I have already mentioned: when we are together, thanksgiving rises from our hearts but in most cases it has disappeared once we are back at home. At any rate, a few days later it is no longer there. However, God desires that we have fellowship with Him as well as with the work and the Person of the Lord Jesus, but God also desires truth in the heart of man. For this reason this sacrifice could only be eaten on the day it was presented. There is always a danger that things become a mere routine to us, rather than a fresh reality. Once I noticed how a brother had jotted down a few Bible verses besides several hymns in his hymn book. Because I knew that brother, I realized that he frequently read these verses. Perhaps they had originally been read after these particular hymns were sung, and likely they were then truly prompted by the Holy Spirit's leading and therefore quite suited to the hymns. But since then he often read those scriptures after one of these hymns had been sung. This, however, was no longer something that flowed from his heart, and consequently they must have lacked value before God. That God considers such a thing even impure, we find expressed in the words: "The flesh of the sacrifice of his peace-offering of thanksgiving shall be eaten the same day that it is presented; he shall not let any of it remain until the morning" (v. 15). The following day it is an impure thing: "The soul that eateth of it shall bear His iniquity."

In verse 16 we have something else, *there* there is mention of a vow or voluntary offering. To understand this it will be helpful to remember that in the New Testament we are told that when someone went to the temple, he could purchase an animal there. Now imagine that such an Israelite went to the temple. There he saw people buying animals and so he said to himself, "Come to think of it, I might buy one myself for I have much reason to bring an offering to God." That was certainly a good thing in the eyes of God, although it was a thing that welled up in his heart at *that* moment. The vow-offering on the other hand is quite different. The vow would not have been made at that very moment, but long before. In the heart of such an Israelite lived the desire to promise something to God as we so frequently find it in the Word of God. When finally the moment arrived, he went to the temple to bring the offering he so long had wanted to bring. The case of

the voluntary offering is somewhat similar. It speaks of someone going to the temple thinking, "I go there to bring an offering to God." We understand that this goes deeper than the peace-offering brought for a thank-offering.

Earlier we considered the case of our Sunday morning meeting. If I have been occupied with business matters until late Saturday, not having had time during the week to occupy myself truly with the Lord, I come on Sunday morning with an empty and cold heart. Isn't this often the case? If all of our readers say that it isn't so, then I suppose that I am the only one that has experienced this. Yet, the Holy Spirit can arouse something within me, for there are brothers and sisters who have come together with filled hearts. The Holy Spirit can use them to give out a hymn or to pray and thereby my heart becomes warm too, which then enables me to bring a peace-offering for a thanksgiving. These brothers will have taken time during the week to be occupied with the Lord. They have seen the beauties of the Lord and their hearts are filled with admiration and worship. Such brethren come on Sunday morning with full baskets, to use the type of Deuteronomy 26. Thus, the Holy Spirit can even from the beginning of the meeting use their hearts to bring sacrifices. We understand that their sacrifices will have a much greater depth to them. Therefore it is said that the remainder of the vow- or voluntary-offering shall also be eaten "on the morrow" (v. 16). The things which have been worked in my heart during the week, do not disappear as soon as I leave the meeting hall, they last longer. Also on the second day they may be eaten, i.e. as long as it remains a reality in the heart, and is connected with the Lord and His work upon the cross, and as long as God shares in it. All that time it is precious to God and it will be true spiritual food for the hearts and not just for the understanding.

Now, to continue our look at the peace-offering, on the day that someone was to bring his sacrifice, he came with his animal for sacrifice at the entrance of the tent of meeting, where he had to kill it. This means that he had to face the fact that the Lord had died. Then the priest sprinkled the blood upon the altar. This is connected with what I said about the eating of the sacrifice which must be seen in its relationship to the death of the Lord. His death must be a living reality in our hearts, for this reason the sacrifice had to be eaten on the same day or on the next day.

In verse 18 we see how important this is, "If any of the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace-offering be eaten at all on the third day, it shall not be accepted, it shall not be reckoned to him that hath presented it; it shall be an unclean thing, and the soul that eateth of it shall bear His iniquity." These are serious words for us too, let us consider them in the light of God! Is that which we offer really killed that same day? Is there truly spiritual worship and praise in our hearts? Are the hymns that we give out and the thoughts we express in agreement with that which lives in our hearts? If that is not the case, the Word calls it an unclean thing. What we express must be living in our hearts: the Lord's Person and His work must be living realities in our hearts.

One Sunday morning I was in a meeting where the singing was beautiful, all hymns were sung in full harmony and very precisely, a choir could not have improved upon it. Everyone was very careful to sing as well as they could. But what was spiritual in all of this? Having our minds occupied with the melody is not spiritual. The melody does not rise up to God, it is only a means whereby we can express the words of the hymn together. The best hymn is so good that, rather than drawing our attention to the singing, it causes us to be occupied with the thoughts expressed by the words, provided these words in turn express what lives in our hearts. The same holds true for the prayer of a brother who is the mouthpiece of the assembly. His prayer should express the worship and praise found in every heart.

To be cont'd