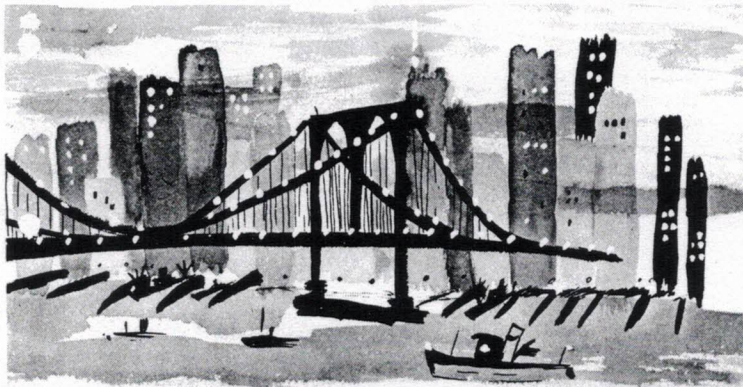


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"Watchman,
what of the night?"

The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will enquire, enquire ye: return, come. Isaiah 21:11-12

THE HOPE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH

"For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith."¹
This is the only place in the Bible where the phrase - "righteousness by faith" occurs. Its use in this text in connection with the Holy Spirit is not an accident. "By the power of the Holy Spirit the moral image of God is to be perfected in the character. We are to be wholly transformed into the likeness of Christ."² Righteousness by faith is founded in the promise of God,³ and because of this promise, we who believe, hope for its realization. "But hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for what we see not, then do we with patience wait for it."⁴

Long have we waited for this experience, and realization in our lives. Our spiritual forefathers were given the opportunity to realize this righteousness in the acceptance of the message in 1888. But they rejected it! And that rejection reads like this:-

All the universe of heaven witnessed the disgraceful treatment of Jesus Christ, *represented by the Holy Spirit*. Had Christ been before them [at Minneapolis], they would have treated Him in a manner similar to that in which the Jews treated Christ.⁵

The tragedy of Minneapolis, and the continuing travail is not an issue merely over words and phraseology - though this is involved for truth must be expressed accurately - the issue is over the very means by which righteousness by faith is to be received - "through the Spirit." Our problem is that we do not know ourselves, and we are not willing to confess that we are as we are, even when we are told plainly

in the Word of God what we are.

Our own spiritual state is well described for us by Paul. He wrote:

For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is in my flesh), dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.⁶

There is much discussion over these verses as to whether they apply to the converted man, or to the unconverted man. I realize that by introducing them into this thought paper, I run the risk of this question becoming so paramount in the minds of some readers that they will miss the whole point of this study in regard to the hope of righteousness by faith through the Holy Spirit. The real reason why these verses present this problem lies within the human heart of the reader. As for Paul, he recognized that it was necessary for him to die daily.⁷ The reason was simple - "His will and his desires every day conflicted with duty and the will of God. Instead of following inclination, he did God's will, however crucifying to his own nature."⁸ Knowing his own heart, it was not difficult for Paul to confess that in and of himself he could not do what he knew he ought to do. He recognized that while he delighted "in the law of God after the inward man" there was "another law" in his members warring against the law of his mind, bringing him into captivity to the law of sin which was in his members.⁹ This very fact we are most reluctant to confess. "Few believe that humanity has sunk so low as it has or that it is so thoroughly bad, so desperately opposed to God, as it is."¹⁰ The key is simply as Paul stated - In my flesh dwelleth no good thing, period!

While "the flesh of itself cannot act contrary to the will of God," nevertheless "the lower passions have their seat in the body and work through it."¹¹ These impulses and passions which have their seat in the body,¹² present the strongest

temptations to sin.¹³ These "inclinations of the natural heart" - this "bent to evil" - which is found in our common humanity as a result of the original transgression is "a force which, unaided [man] cannot resist."¹⁴ Though the will to do may be present, how to perform that which is good, no man can *in himself* find the answer, for he simply is not good, but basically evil. There is a law in his members warring against the law of his mind, bringing him into captivity to the law of sin.

Wretched men that we are, how and who shall deliver us from the body of this death? Paul gives the answer:

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. . . . And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin: but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Christ from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.¹⁵

A brief run-down of Romans 7:14-25 reveals that the word "I" occurs about thirty times, while the word, "Spirit" referring to the Holy Spirit does not occur once. In Romans 8:1-17, the word "Spirit" or "Holy Spirit" appears some fifteen times, and the word, "I" is absent. This is the difference - *I* am crucified - yet *I* live in the same body facing the same inclinations, *BUT* through the power of the Holy Spirit, "the *deeds* of the body" are mortified. The forces that have been so overwhelming now meet a power stronger than themselves - the power of the Holy Spirit.

Because we understand so little of the Spirit's work, we realize so little of the Spirit's power. The Holy Spirit is as selfless in His work *NOW* as was Jesus in His work to reveal the Father during His earthly ministry. Jesus declared that

He came from heaven not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him.¹⁶ It was the Father who was to be seen in all that was done. His Name was to be cleared of the libel which had been placed against Him by the enemy of all righteousness. Now no one can fully reveal another, and reveal himself at the same time. Thus the selfless life of Jesus was not understood by the men of that generation, neither did the majority wish to pattern their lives after the Example. Their response was simply - "Let Him be crucified!"

Of the work of the Holy Spirit, it is written:

Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.¹⁷

Because of the selflessness of the Holy Spirit, we face a more serious danger today with a greater liability than did the Jews of old. While they did not recognize nor accept Christ because He did not reveal Himself, so likewise we today with their example before us will commit a greater sin by failing to recognize the power and working of the Holy Spirit in its selfless ministry to the human heart as it seeks to implant truth where error has so long reigned. Our spiritual forefathers rejected the Holy Spirit at Minneapolis in 1888, and we have continued to do despite to that same Spirit in our failure to recognize just what happened at Minneapolis. But we have compounded the sin of our spiritual fathers by introducing the doctrines of Evangelical Babylon into our teachings instead of seeking pure and unadulterated truth through the Spirit of truth, which is in reality the righteousness of Christ.

Our situation as compared with the Jewish church or yesteryears is well summarized for us. Let us read, and take heed:-

When the Holy Spirit works the human agent, it does not ask us in what way it shall operate. Often it moves in unexpected ways. Christ did

not come as the Jews expected. He did not come in a manner to glorify them as a nation. His forerunner came to prepare the way for Him, by calling upon the people to repent of their sins, and be converted, and be baptized. Christ's message was, "The kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel." The Jews refused to receive Christ, because He did not come in accordance with their expectations. The ideas of finite men were held as infallible, because hoary with age.

This is the danger to which the church is now exposed, - that the inventions of finite men shall mark out the precise way for the Holy Spirit to come. Though they would not care to acknowledge it, some have already done this. And because the Spirit is to come, not to praise men or to build up their erroneous theories, but to reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment, many turn away from it. They are not willing to be deprived of the garments of their own self-righteousness. They are not willing to exchange their own righteousness, which is unrighteousness, for the righteousness of Christ, which is pure, unadulterated truth. The Holy Spirit flatters no man, neither does it work according to the devising of any man. Finite, sinful men are not to work the Holy Spirit. When it shall come as a reprove, through any human agent whom God shall choose, it is man's place to hear and obey its voice.¹⁸

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- ¹Galatians 5:5
²Ellen G. White, Testimonies to Ministers, p. 506
³Romans 8:29 ⁴Romans 8:24-25
⁵Ellen G. White, Special Testimonies, Series A, No. 6, p. 20
⁶Romans 7:14-19 ⁷I Corinthians 15:31
⁸Ellen G. White, Review & Herald, October 15, 1908
⁹Romans 7:22-23
¹⁰Ellen G. White, In His Presence, p. 163
¹¹Ellen G. White, Adventist Home, pp. 127-128
¹²Ellen G. White, Christ's Object Lessons, p. 346
¹³Ellen G. White, "Christ Tempted as We Are", p. 11
¹⁴Ellen G. White, Education, p. 29
¹⁵Romans 8:1-4, 10-13 ¹⁶John 6:38
¹⁷John 16:13-14
¹⁸Ellen G. White, Testimonies to Ministers, pp. 64-65

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