

A.B. Simpson:**I.****What is it to Walk in the Spirit?**

Generally, it may be said, it is to maintain the habit of dependence upon the Holy Ghost for our entire life; spirit, soul and body. We know what it is at times to enjoy His conscious presence. We live in the Spirit, we have felt the touch of His quickening life, now let us walk in the Spirit. Let us abide in this fellowship. Let us lean continually upon His strength, and drink unceasingly from His life, a babe from its mother's breast. But more particularly.

1. To walk in the Spirit is to recognize the Spirit as present and abiding in us. How often, after we have asked His presence, we treat Him as if He had deceived us, and cry to Him as if He were afar off! Let us recognize Him as having come, and address Him as a present and indwelling friend. He will always meet our recognition, and speak to us as the ancient presence, not from the mount, or the pillar of fire, but from the tabernacle, and from the holy of holies in our inmost heart.

2. It means to trust Him and count upon Him in the emergencies of life, to regard Him as one who has undertaken our cause and expects to be called upon in every time of need, and will unfailingly be found faithful and all-sufficient in every crisis. The very name Paraclete means one that we can always call upon and find at our side. We must trust the Holy Spirit, and expect Him to respond to our need as implicitly as we expect the air to answer the opening of our lungs, and the sunrise to meet us in the morning. And yet how many treat the Holy Spirit as if He were a capricious and most unreliable friend! How many of our prayers are despairing groans or scolding reflections on His love and faithfulness!

It was for this that Moses lost the Promised Land; instead of quietly speaking to the rock and expecting its waters to flow forth to meet his call, he struck it with hasty and unbelieving violence and spake as one who did not fully trust the love and faithfulness of God. There is no need that we should strike the rock, or cry, like Baal's priests to the distant heavens for help. Let us gently and implicitly claim the love that is always in advance even of our prayer. Let us speak in the whisper of childlike trust to that bosom which is ever ready to pour its fullness into our empty hearts, and lo! the waters will gush forth, and the desert of our sorrows, doubts, and fears will blossom as the rose.

3. We must consult the Holy Spirit if we would walk in the Spirit. We shall often find that the things that seem most easy will fail and disappoint us when we rely upon their apparent probability and the mere promise of outward circumstances, and we shall also find where we commit our way unto Him, and acknowledge Him in all our ways, that He will so direct our paths that the things which seemed most difficult and improbable, will become the easiest and the most successful. He would teach us thus to trust in Him with all our heart, and lean not unto our own understanding; in all our ways to acknowledge Him and He will direct our steps.

The chief condition of His Almighty power is that we shall first have His omniscient wisdom. He is given to us as our wonderful Counselor and also as our Mighty God. And I have never taken Him as my Counselor and obeyed His guidance without finding that He followed it up as the Mighty One with His omnipotent working. The reason we do not more frequently find His power is because we try to turn it into the channels of our own wisdom instead of getting His mind, working in His will, and even knowing that we must have His effectual working. How blessed that that wonderful Counselor is always a child, and that His guidance offered to each of us is as simple, as accessible as the hand of a little child.

So let us walk in the Spirit, trusting His guiding hand, and committing all our ways to His wisdom and love

4. If we would walk in the Spirit we must obey Him when He does speak, and we must remember that the first part of obedience is to hearken. It is not enough to say we have done all we knew, we ought to know, and we may know, for He has said that we shall know His voice, and if we do not it must be that we are to blame, or else God is responsible for our mistake. But this cannot be.

If we will be still and suppress our own impulses and clamorous desires, and will meet Him with a heart surrendered to His will and guidance, we shall know His way. "The meek will He guide in judgment, and the meek will He teach His way." The soul that walks in the Spirit will therefore be a hearkening spirit, watching daily at His doors, and longing to know His very commandments; and when we understand His voice we will implicitly obey it. The minding of the Spirit is life and peace. The very condition of His continual presence is

obedience. "The Holy Spirit whom God hath given to them that obey Him." The secret of every cloud that has fallen upon the soul will probably be found in some neglected voice of our Monitor. He is waiting and has been waiting for us at that point where we have refused to follow, and when we step in His will we shall find Him there.

5. Walking in the Spirit implies that we shall keep step with the Holy Ghost, and that our obedience shall be so prompt that we shall never find ourselves a step behind Him, and following Him at a distance which we may find it hard to recover.

On our great railroads there are certain trains which run upon the highest possible schedule of time. The itinerary is so arranged that there is no margin allowed on which to overtake lost time, so that should the train be late, it is scarcely possible to overtake the interval lost. God has drawn the plan of our life on such a scale that there are no minutes left blank, and if we lose one, the next has no margin to afford for its recovery. All that we can crowd into the future will be needed for the future itself, and therefore if we lose a step there is danger that we shall continue to be a step behind, and it will require the same exertion to keep up even a step behind as it would to walk abreast of God every moment.

Yonder mill-race needs just as much water to run at low as at high tide. The very same quantity of water, if kept up to the level of the wheel, will run all the ponderous machinery as that which on a lower level only wastes itself in fretting wavelets among the rocks of the torrent bed. And so it is just as easy for our spiritual life to move at the maximum as at the minimum if we only start at the right level, and so guard the moments that we shall not lose our headway, or get behind God. The secret of this one blessing is instant obedience and walking by the moment with Him in the fullness of His blessed will. Let us not disappoint Him. Let us not come short of all the good pleasure of His goodness. His thought for us is always best; His commandments "for our good always;" His schedule of our life-journey planned by unerring wisdom and unutterable love.

He has given us a gentle, patient Guide, who is willing to go with us all the way, and come into the minutest steppings of our life. Let us take heed that we grieve Him not away nor miss aught of His gentle will. Let us be sensitive to His touch, responsive to His whisper, obedient to His commandments, and able ever to say "He hath not left me alone, for I did always those things which please Him."

II.

Some of the Blessings of thus Walking in the Spirit.

1. It will secure us a complete and delightful deliverance from sin. The expulsive power of His presence will drive out the presence of evil. "If we walk in the Spirit we shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." Our life shall thus be transformed from a defensive warfare, in which we are always attacking evil, to a glorious consciousness of God only, which shall exclude the evil from our thought as well as from our life. We shall not have to constantly clear the sunken rocks from our channel, but on the high and full torrent of the Divine life we shall rise far above every obstruction and move, as in Ezekiel's vision, in a river of life which shall be above the ankles, and above the loins, a river to swim in, carrying us by its own substantial fullness.

2. Such a walk will give a delightful serenity, tranquility, and steadfastness to our whole life. We shall not be at the bidding of impulses or circumstances, but shall move on in the majestic order of the Divine will, carried above the vicissitudes of failure and outward change, and fulfilling, like the stars in their courses, the full circle of His will for our life.

3. Such a walk will enable us to meet the providences of God as they come to us in victory, and to maintain the perfect harmony between our inward life and the outward leadings of His own. We have some beautiful examples of the transcendent importance of this walking in the Spirit, in connection with the conjunctures of circumstances on which so much often hangs. There never was a moment in human history on which more depended than that when the infant Christ was first brought into the Temple. What an honor and privilege it was to be there and catch the first glimpse of His blessed face, and even hold in the embrace of human arms the Gift of ages! Yet that was the honor of two aged pilgrims who were walking in the Spirit. Simeon and Anna, led of the Holy Ghost, came in at that very moment into the Temple. Led of God unerringly, and walking step by step with Him, they were enabled to meet Him in this glorious opportunity, and be the first heralds of His coming. No wonder the aged Simeon, as he took him in his arms, could ask no more on earth: "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation."

Only less important was the crisis in the apostolic church when the gospel was to be preached for the first time to a new circle of disciples. The man chosen to carry the glad tidings to the Samaritans and the Gentiles, and to

be the pioneer of Christianity among all the myriad tribes of the heathen world in that great progression of which the churches of Christendom to-day form the outcome, was a humble disciple, whom God could trust to walk in the Spirit and obey the slightest intimation of His will. It was Philip, the humble deacon. Already he had been sent to Samaria to preach the gospel in that city, no doubt in obedience to a similar Divine message. But, in the very height of his successful work in that city, the command suddenly comes to him to leave his work and go down to the desert of the South.

To most persons it would have seemed a misleading, a mistake, a neglect of providential duty, a waste of precious time, and an arresting of the great work in Samaria. But Philip immediately obeyed, and at every step of his journey he waited for new directions, and in due time the path was made plain. The first fruits of the heathen world were waiting at that very moment for his direction; and there on the cross-roads of life, at the fitting moment, the Spirit brought those two men together, and the words were spoken in that chariot by the way, which changed the destiny of a life, and the course of a Dispensation, which opened the gospel to the whole world, and sent that Ethiopian prince to his home, to be, in all probability, the founder of many of those mighty churches, which for the next four centuries made Northern Africa the most important seat of ancient Christianity.

Yet, when his work with the eunuch was accomplished, the command was as distinct, to leave his new convert in the hands of the Lord, and follow on at the unknown leading of the same blessed Spirit that had brought them together." "The Spirit caught away Philip," we are told, "and the eunuch saw him no more." These are but some instances of the blessedness of this heavenly walk. Shall we trust our unseen Guide, and as we step out into the mysterious and momentous future, shall we walk more humbly, simply, instantly, and obediently in the companionship of His guiding hand?