

Andrew Murray:

I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may be with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive; for it beholdeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: ye know Him, for He abideth with you, and shall be in you ' John 14:16, 17.

'He shall be in you.' In these simple words our Lord announces that wonderful mystery of the Spirit's indwelling which was to be the fruit and the crown of His redeeming work. It was for this man had been created. It was for this, God's mastery within the heart, the Spirit had striven in vain with men through the past ages. It was for this Jesus had lived and was about to die. Without this the Father's purpose and His own work would fail of their accomplishment. For want of this the intercourse of the Blessed Master with the disciples had effected so little. He had hardly ever ventured to mention it to them, because He knew they would not understand it. But now, on the last night, when it was but a little time, He discloses the Divine Secret that, when He left them, their loss would be compensated by a greater blessing than His bodily presence. Another would come in His stead, to abide with them for ever, and to dwell in them. Dwelling in them, He would prepare them to receive Himself their Lord, and the Father, within them too. 'He shall be in you.'

Our Father has given us a twofold revelation of Himself. In His Son He reveals His Holy Image, and setting him before men invites them to become like Him by receiving Him into their heart and life. In His Spirit He sends forth His Divine Power, to enter into us, and from within prepare us for receiving the Son and the Father. The dispensation of the Spirit is the dispensation of the inner life. In the dispensation of the Word, or the Son, beginning as it did with the creation of man in God's image, continued as it was through all the preparatory stages down to Christ's appearing, in the flesh, all was more external and preparatory. There were at times special and mighty workings of the Spirit; but the indwelling was unknown; man had not yet become an habitation of God in the Spirit. Now first, this was to be attained. The eternal life was to become the very life of man, hiding itself within his very being and consciousness, and clothing itself in the forms of a human will and life. Just as it is through the Spirit that God is what He is; just as in the Father and the Son, the Spirit is the principle in which their personality has its root and consciousness, so this Spirit of the Divine life is now to be in us, in the deepest sense of the word, the principle of our life, the root of our personality too, the very life of our being and consciousness. He is to be one with us in the absoluteness of a Divine immanence, dwelling in us, even as the Father in the Son, and the Son in the Father. Let us bow in holy reverence to worship and adore, and to receive the mighty blessing.

If we would enter into the full understanding and experience of what our Blessed Lord here promises, we must above everything remember that what He speaks of is a Divine indwelling. Wherever God dwells He hides Himself. In nature He hides Himself; most men see Him not there. In meeting His saints of old He mostly hid Himself under some manifestation in human weakness, so that it was often only after He was gone that they said, Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not. 'The Blessed Son came to reveal God, and yet He came as a root out of a dry ground, without form or comeliness; even His own disciples were at times offended at Him. Men always expect the kingdom of God to come with observation ; they know not that it is a hidden mystery, to be received only as, in His own self-revealing power, God makes Himself known in hearts surrendered and prepared for Him. Christians are always ready, when the promise of the Spirit occupies them, to form some conception as to how His leading can be known in their thoughts; how His quickening will affect their feelings; how His sanctifying can be recognised in their will and conduct. They need to be reminded that deeper than mind and feeling and will, deeper than the soul, where these have their seat, in the depths of the spirit that came from God, there comes the Holy Spirit to dwell.

This indwelling is therefore first of all, and all through, to be recognised by faith. Even when I cannot see the least evidence of His working, I am quietly and reverently to believe that He dwells in me. In that faith I am restfully and trustfully to count upon His working ,and to wait for it. In that faith I must very distinctly deny my own wisdom and strength, and in childlike self-abnegation depend upon Him to work. His first workings may be so feeble and hidden that I can hardly recognise them as coming from Him; they may appear to be nothing more than the voice of conscience, or the familiar sound of some Bible truth. Here is the time for faith to hold fast the Master's promise and the Father's gift, and to trust that the Spirit is within and will guide. In that faith let me continually yield up my whole being to His rule and mastery; let me be faithful to what appears the nearest to His voice; in such faith and such faithfulness my soul will be prepared for knowing His voice better. Out of the hidden depths His power will move to take possession of mind and will, and the indwelling in the hidden recesses of the heart will grow into a being filled with His fulness.

Faith is the one faculty of our spiritual nature by which we can recognise the Divine, in whatever low and

unlikely appearances it clothes itself. And if this be true of the Father in His glory as God, and the Son as the manifestation of the Father, how much more must it be true of the Spirit, the unseen Divine life-power come to clothe itself, and hide itself away, within our weakness ? Oh! let us cultivate and exercise much our faith in the Father, whose one gift through the Son is this, the Spirit in our hearts. And in the Son too, whose whole Person and Work and Glory centre in the gift of the Indwelling Spirit. And so let our faith grow strong in the unseen, sometimes unfelt Divine Presence of this Mighty Power, this living Person, who has descended into our weakness, and hidden Himself in our littleness, to fit us for becoming the dwelling of the Father and the Son. Let our adoring worship of our glorified Lord ever seek to catch the wondrous answer He gives to every prayer, as the seal of our acceptance, as the promise of deeper knowledge of our God, of closer fellowship and richer blessedness: The Holy Spirit dwelleth in you.

The deep importance of a right apprehension of the indwelling of the Spirit is evident from the place it occupies in our Lord's farewell discourse. In this and the two following chapters, He speaks of the Spirit more directly as Teacher, I as Witness, as representing and glorifying Himself, as convincing the world. At the same time, He connects this, and He says of His and the Father's indwelling, of the union of the Vine and the branches, of the Peace and Joy and Power in Prayer which His disciples would have, with 'that day,' the time of the Spirit's coming. But, before all this, as its one condition and only source, He places the promise, 'the Spirit shall be in you.' It avails little that we know all that the Spirit can do for us, or that we confess our entire dependence on Him, unless we clearly realize, and place first, what the Master gave the first place ; that it is as the indwelling Spirit alone that He can be our Teacher or our Strength. As the Church, as the believer, accepts our Lord's, ' He shall be in you,' and lives under the control of this faith, our true relation to the Blessed Spirit will be restored. He will take charge and inspire; He will mightily fill and bless the being given up to Him as His abode.

A careful study of the epistles will confirm this, In writing to the Corinthians, Paul had to reprove them for sad and terrible sins, and yet he says to all, including the feeblest and most unfaithful believer, 'Know ye not that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?' Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost ?' He is sure that if this were believed, if to this truth were given the place God meant it to have, it would not only be the motive, but the power of a new and holy life. To the backsliding Galatians, he has no mightier plea to address than this : they had received the Spirit by the preaching of faith; God had sent forth the Spirit of His Son into their hearts ; they had their life by the Spirit in them ; if they could but understand and believe this, they would also walk in the Spirit.

It is this teaching the Church of Christ needs in our days. I am deeply persuaded that very few of us realize aright to what extent believers are ignorant of this aspect of the truth concerning the Holy Spirit, or to what an extent this is the cause of their feebleness in holy walk and work. There may be a great deal of praying for the Holy Spirit's working, there may be great correctness in our confession, both in preaching and prayer, of entire and absolute dependence on Him; but unless His personal, continual, Divine indwelling be acknowledged and experienced, we must not be surprised if there be continual failure. The Holy Dove wants his resting place free from all intrusion and disturbance. God wants entire possession of His temple. Jesus wants His home all to Himself. He cannot do His work there, He cannot rule and reveal Himself and His love as He would, unless the whole home, the whole inner being, be possessed and filled by the Holy Spirit. Let us consent to this. As the meaning of the indwelling dawns upon us in its full extent and claims, as we accept it as a Divine reality to be carried out and maintained by nothing less than an Almighty Power, as we bow low in emptiness and surrender, in faith and adoration, to accept the promise and live on it, ' He shall be in you,' the Father will, for Jesus' sake, delight to fulfil it in our experience, and we shall know that the beginning, and the secret, and the power of the life of a true disciple is, the Indwelling Spirit.

Blessed Lord Jesus! my soul doth bless Thee for Thy precious word : The Spirit shall be in you. In deep humility I now once again accept it, and ask Thee to teach me its full and blessed meaning.

I ask for myself and all God's children that we may see how near Thy love would come to us, how entirely and most intimately Thou wouldst give Thyself to us. Nothing can satisfy Thee but to have Thy abode within us, to dwell in us as the life of our life. To this end Thou hast sent forth, from Thy glory, Thy Holy Spirit into our hearts, to be the power that lives and acts in our inmost being, and to give in us the revelation of Thyself. O holy Saviour! bring Thy Church to see this truth that has been so much hid and lost, to experience it, and to bear witness to it in power. May the joyful sound be heard throughout her borders, that every true believer has the indwelling and the leading of Thy Spirit. And teach me, my Lord! the life of faith, that goes out of self, to wait on Thee, as in Thy Spirit Thou dost Thy work within me. May my life from hour to hour be in the holy, humble consciousness : Christ's Spirit dwelleth in me. In humility and silence I bow before this holy mystery, my God ! my Lord Jesus ! Thine own Spirit dwells in me. Amen.