



# Without the Holy Spirit of God

*by brother Chadwick*

[EDITOR'S NOTE: Christianity was birthed in the Holy Spirit. Jesus our Lord taught it was essential to rely and wait for the power of the Spirit. We sadly see many abuses of Spirit-led living in modern Christendom but this should make us all the more hungry for the true manifestation. We are impotent without the infilling power of the Spirit. When we have God in the midst everything changes. We will not be able to stay quiet, we will speak boldly for our Lord that bought us with such a great price.<sup>1003</sup> The underground Church in China chooses their leadership from those who are the hungriest after God. Are you hungry for the living God? For His power displayed in your life?]

The Church knows quite well both the reason and the remedy for failure. The human resources of the Church were never so great. The opportunities of the Church were never so glorious. The need for the work of the Church was never so urgent. The crisis is momentous; and the Church staggers helplessly amid it all. When the ancient Church reproached God with sleeping at the post of duty, God

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<sup>1003</sup> 1 Corinthians 6:20

charged His people with being staggering drunk.<sup>1004</sup> The Church knows perfectly well what is the matter. The Church has lost the note of authority, the secret of wisdom, and the gift of power, through persistent and willful neglect of the Holy Spirit of God. Confusion and impotence are inevitable when the wisdom and resources of the world are substituted for the presence and power of the Spirit of God.

Proofs abound. The New Testament furnishes examples of Churches filled with the Spirit and Churches without the Spirit. The differences are obvious. The Church of which Apollos was minister had not so much as heard that the Spirit was given.<sup>1005</sup> The Church in our day has no such excuse. Ours is the sin of denial. He has been shut out from the place in which He is indispensable. Religion has been reconstructed without Him. There is no denial of the supernatural, but it is insisted that the supernatural must conform to natural law. It is admitted that truth is inspired, but its inspiration must develop along the lines of natural selection and growth. Religion cannot be allowed to have come upon any other lines than those of literature, philosophy, and ethics. The Christian religion has simply the honor of being less faulty than the rest. Jesus Christ must be accounted for in the same way.

#### CHRISTIAN BELIEVERS WITHOUT THE SPIRIT

The Church still has a theology of the Holy Spirit, but it has no living consciousness of His presence and power. Theology without experience is like faith without works: it is dead.<sup>1006</sup> The signs of death abound. Prayer-meetings have died out because men did not believe in the Holy Spirit. The liberty of prophesying has gone because men believe in investigation and not in inspiration. There is a dearth of conversions because faith about the new birth as a creative act of the Holy Spirit<sup>1007</sup> has lost its grip on intellect and heart. The experience of the Spirit Baptism is no longer preached and testified, because Christian experience, though it may have to begin in the Spirit, must be perfected in the wisdom of the flesh and the culture of

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<sup>1004</sup> Isaiah 51:17

<sup>1005</sup> Acts 19:2

<sup>1006</sup> James 2:17

<sup>1007</sup> John 3:6-7

the schools. Confusion and impotence are the inevitable results when the wisdom and resources of the world are substituted for the presence and power of the Spirit.

The cravings lost religious men represent must be met by the experience of Pentecost. Modernism and mysticism are also the products of a religion that is not baptized of the Holy Spirit. Sacerdotalism is another. These things flourish on impoverished soil and dunghills. They are the works of the flesh, and the product of spiritual death. The answer is in the demonstration of a supernatural religion, and the only way to a supernatural religion is in the abiding presence of the Spirit of God.

The Church is the creation of the Holy Spirit. It is a community of believers who owe their religious life from first to last to the Spirit. Apart from Him there can be neither Christian nor Church. The Christian religion is not institutional but experimental. It is not an ordained class, neither is it in ordinances and sacraments. It is not a fellowship of common interest in culture, virtue, or service. Membership is by spiritual birth.<sup>1008</sup> The roll of membership is kept in heaven. Christ is the gate.<sup>1009</sup> He knows them that are His, and they know Him.<sup>1010</sup> The church roll and the Lamb's book of life are not always identical. "Therefore I want you to know that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, 'Jesus be cursed,' and no one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit."<sup>1011</sup> And confession of the Lordship of Jesus Christ is the first condition of membership in His Church.<sup>1012</sup> The command to tarry in the city until there came clothing of power from on high<sup>1013</sup> proves that the one essential equipment of the Church is the gift of the Holy Spirit. Nothing else avails for the real work of the Church. For much that is undertaken by the Church He is not necessary. The Holy Spirit is no more needed to run bazaars, social clubs, institutions, and picnics, than He is to run a circus. Religious services and organized institutions do not

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<sup>1008</sup> John 3:3

<sup>1009</sup> John 10:7

<sup>1010</sup> John 10:14

<sup>1011</sup> 1 Corinthians 12:3

<sup>1012</sup> Romans 10:9

<sup>1013</sup> Luke 24:49

constitute a Christian Church, and these may flourish without the gift of Pentecostal fire.<sup>1014</sup>

## THE LIFE OF THE BODY OF CHRIST

The work of the Spirit in the Church is set forth in the promises of Jesus on the eve of His departure, and demonstrated in the Acts of the Apostles. The Gospels tells of “all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day He was taken up to heaven,”<sup>1015</sup> and the Acts of the Apostles tells of all that He continued to do and to teach after the day in which He was received up. The Holy Spirit is the active, administrative Agent of the glorified Son. He is the Paraclete, the Deputy, the acting Representative of the ascended Christ. His mission is to glorify Christ by perpetuating His character, establishing His kingdom, and accomplishing His redeeming purpose in the world. The Church is the body of Christ,<sup>1016</sup> and the Spirit is the Spirit of Christ.<sup>1017</sup> He fills the body, directs its movements, controls its members, inspires its wisdom, supplies its strength. He guides into the truth, sanctifies its agents, and empowers for witnessing.<sup>1018</sup> The work of the Church is to “minister the Spirit,”<sup>1019</sup> to speak His message, and transmit His power. He calls and distributes, controls and guides, inspires and strengthens.

The Spirit has never abdicated His authority nor relegated His power. Neither Pope nor Parliament, neither Conference nor Council is supreme in the Church of Christ. The Church that is man-managed instead of God-governed is doomed to failure. A ministry that is college trained but not Spirit-filled works no miracles. The Church that multiplies committees and neglects prayer may be fussy, noisy, enterprising, but it labors in vain<sup>1020</sup> and spends its strength for naught. It is possible to excel in mechanics and fail in dynamic. There is a superabundance of machinery; what is wanting is power. To run an organization needs no God. Man can supply the energy,

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<sup>1014</sup> Matthew 3:11

<sup>1015</sup> Acts 1:1-2

<sup>1016</sup> 1 Corinthians 12:27

<sup>1017</sup> Romans 8:9

<sup>1018</sup> Acts 1:8, Mark 13:11

<sup>1019</sup> 2 Corinthians 3:6

<sup>1020</sup> Psalm 127:1

enterprise, and enthusiasm for things human. The real work of a Church depends upon the power of the Spirit.

The Presence of the Spirit is vital and central to the work of the Church. Nothing else avails. Apart from Him wisdom becomes folly, and strength weakness. The Church is called to be a “spiritual house”<sup>1021</sup> and a holy priesthood. Only spiritual people can be its “living stones,”<sup>1022</sup> and only the Spirit-filled its priests. Scholarship is blind to spiritual truth till He reveals. Worship is idolatry till He inspires. Preaching is powerless if it be not a demonstration of His power. Prayer is vain unless He energizes. Human resources of learning and organization, wealth and enthusiasm, reform and philanthropy, are worse than useless if there be no Holy Spirit in them. The Church always fails at the point of self-confidence.

When the Church is run on the same lines as a circus, there may be crowds, but there is no Shekinah.<sup>1023</sup> That is why prayer is the test of faith and the secret of power. The Spirit of God travails in the prayer-life of the soul. Miracles are the direct work of His power, and without miracles the Church cannot live. The carnal can argue, but it is the Spirit that convicts. Education can civilize, but it is being born of the Spirit that saves. The energy of the flesh can run bazaars, organize amusements, and raise millions; but it is the presence of the Holy Spirit that makes a temple of the living God. The root-trouble of the present distress is that the Church has more faith in the world and the flesh<sup>1024</sup> than in the Holy Spirit, and things will get no better till we get back to His realized presence and power. The breath of the four winds would turn death into life and dry bones into mighty armies, but it only comes by prayer.

## RELIGIOUS FORM AND THE WAY OF THE SPIRIT

The Acts of the Apostles gives us an account of a Church destitute of the Spirit. The picture corresponds in many particulars with that of the Church in the Apocalypse that had lost its Christ. The Church in Laodicea was rich and respectable, prosperous and

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<sup>1021</sup> 1 Peter 2:5

<sup>1022</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1023</sup> The manifest presence of God (*see Exodus 13:20-22*).

<sup>1024</sup> 1 John 2:16

influential, complacent and confident, but was blind to the tragedy on the doorstep.<sup>1025</sup> Their worship was faultless in form and passionless in spirit. There was no heresy in their creed, but there was no fire in their souls. The Spirit of Christ was outside.<sup>1026</sup> Ephesus and Laodicea have much in common, for where Christ is dishonored there can be no Pentecost.

The Church at Ephesus had the advantage of a distinguished and brilliant preacher. He was a man of great scholarship, who had won distinction at a great university. No preacher can have too much learning, and the Bible gives due recognition to the fact that Apollos was “a learned man.”<sup>1027</sup> In addition to the wisdom of the schools he had, “a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures.” Some preachers have finished their ministerial training with the confession that they had learned less about their Bibles than about any other subject; but this man had been taught the Scriptures and “instructed in the way of the Lord.”<sup>1028</sup> His teaching was Scriptural, orthodox, careful. To scholarship he added passion. This accomplished scholar, Scriptural in doctrine and careful in exegesis, literally “boiled over in spirit.”<sup>1029</sup> Enthusiasm does not often accompany scholarship. It is bad form among cultured people. Religious fervor generally declines with the advance of education. Much learning has a tendency to make cold, dry preachers. This was a rare type of college-made preacher. His fervor survived success in study, and he came through his course intense and scholarly, fervent and accurate, faithful and accomplished, courageous and cultured.

It seems hardly credible that such a minister should lack the very things essential for the work of the Christian ministry. He had neither Gospel nor power. In his preaching there was no Cross, no Resurrection, no Pentecost. He preached Jesus, but he did not know Christ crucified. Peter the fisherman was worth a thousand of him. Eloquent, learned, Scriptural, impassioned, faithful and courageous, Apollos had no Gospel. Carefully trained, well-instructed, a courageous learner, and an effective teacher, he had no vision. Skilled

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<sup>1025</sup> Revelation 3:17

<sup>1026</sup> Revelation 3:20

<sup>1027</sup> Acts 18:24

<sup>1028</sup> Acts 18:25

<sup>1029</sup> Ibid. “Spoke with great fervor.”

in definition, powerful in debate, earnest in advocacy, he had no power. The colleges had given him of their best, but they left him ignorant of things vital and destitute of the Holy Spirit.

Like priests, like people.<sup>1030</sup> Like minister, like members. Truth comes through personality; and the level of a preacher's experience determines both the range and level of the sermon. It also determines the level to which he can help others. John's Baptism in the pulpit resulted in a corresponding religion in the pew. It was a cold-water Gospel and a cold-water piety. To Paul's keen eye there was something wanting. They were sternly devout, orderly, reverent; but it was not Christian worship and experience. Their heads were bowed and their faces gave evidence of discipline, but they were not radiant. Their lives were marked by strict integrity, for John's cold-water religion was severely moral. They were as fervent as they were upright, and as religious as they were conscientious. Their religion was marked by a spirit of deep penitence and godly fear. They were upright in life, fervent in religion, devout in spirit, faithful in service; and yet, without the Holy Spirit. Their religion was a strict, external observance; not an indwelling Presence. They lived by rule, not by illumination. God saves from within; they disciplined themselves from without. Religion to them was a joyless burden, for they carried their God on their backs instead of in their hearts.

#### THE DIFFERENCE HOLY SPIRIT FIRE MAKES

Pentecost transforms the preacher. The commonest bush ablaze with the presence of God becomes a miracle of glory. Under its influence the feeble become as David, and the choice mighty "like the angel of the Lord."<sup>1031</sup> The ministry energized by the Holy Spirit is marked by aggressive evangelism, social revolution, and persecution. Holy Spirit preaching led to the burning of the books of the magic art,<sup>1032</sup> and it stirred up the opposition of those who trafficked in the ruin of the people. Indifference to religion is impossible where the preacher is a flame of fire. To the Church, Pentecost brought light, power, joy. There came to each illumination of mind, assurance of

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<sup>1030</sup> Hosea 4:9

<sup>1031</sup> Zechariah 12:8

<sup>1032</sup> Acts 19:19

heart, intensity of love, fullness of power, exuberance of joy, No one needed to ask if they had received the Holy Spirit. Fire is self-evident. So is power! Even demons know the difference between the power of inspiration and the correctness of instruction. Secondhand gospels work no miracles. Uninspired devices end in defeat and shame. The only power that is adequate for Christian life and Christian work is the power of the Holy Spirit.

The work of God is not by might of man or by the power of men, but by His Spirit.<sup>1033</sup> It is by Him the truth convicts and converts, sanctifies and saves. The philosophies of men fail, but the Word of God in the demonstration of the Spirit<sup>1034</sup> prevails. Our wants are many and our faults innumerable, but they are all comprehended in our lack of the Holy Spirit. We want nothing but the fire.

The resources of the Church are in "God's provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ."<sup>1035</sup> The Spirit is more than the Minister of consolation. He is Christ without the limitations of the flesh and the material world. He can reveal what Christ could not speak. He has resources of power greater than those Christ could use, and He makes possible greater works than His. He is the Spirit of God, the Spirit of truth, the Spirit of witness, the Spirit of conviction, the Spirit of power, the Spirit of holiness, the Spirit of life, the Spirit of adoption, the Spirit of help, the Spirit of liberty, the Spirit of wisdom, the Spirit of revelation, the Spirit of promise, the Spirit of love, the Spirit of meekness, the Spirit of sound mind, the Spirit of grace, the Spirit of glory, and the Spirit of prophecy. It is for the Church to explore the resources of the Spirit. The resources of the world are futile. The resources of the Church within herself are inadequate. In the fullness of the Spirit there is abundance of wisdom, resources, and power; but a man-managed, world-incorporating, priest-pretending church can never save the world or fulfill the mission of Christ.<sup>1036</sup>

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<sup>1033</sup> Zechariah 4:6

<sup>1034</sup> 1 Corinthians 2:4

<sup>1035</sup> Philippians 1:19

<sup>1036</sup> Matthew 28:18-20