

The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit in the Epistle of St. James.

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THE Epistle of St. James, intensely interesting from its practical subjects, its wholly Judæo-Christian point of view, the unique, vivid, and powerful simplicity of its style, the almost classical character of its language, its striking figures of speech, and the close resemblance of its teaching to that of the earlier part of our Lord's ministry, as recorded by St. Matthew, becomes especially fascinating when taken in connection with its date. It then appears to be the first of all the New Testament writings, and consequently the earliest example of Christian literature.

St. James, the brother of Our Lord, suffered martyrdom in either A.D. 63 or 68, according as we follow Josephus or Hegesippus. His Epistle must, therefore, have been written before the fall of Jerusalem. But it would also appear that it was written before the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans (A.D. 58), as the character of the many parallels between these two letters points to St. Paul having drawn ideas and phrases from St. James and elaborated them for his own purposes.¹ The same consideration applies to 1 and 2 Corinthians (A.D. 57) and 1 Thessalonians (A.D. 52). Our Epistle, therefore, may be attributed to a date anterior to any extant epistle of St. Paul. Still earlier was the Council of Jerusalem (A.D. 50 or 51), at which the status of Gentile converts was discussed (Acts xv.). But the Epistle of St. James contains no reference to Gentile believers—an important omission, from which it almost certainly follows that he wrote prior to the date of

¹ Compare Rom. ii. 5 with Jas. v. 3; Rom. ii. 13 with Jas. i. 22; Rom. ii. 25 with Jas. ii. 11; Rom. iv. 1-5 with Jas. ii. 21-23; Rom. v. 3-5 with Jas. i. 2-4; Rom. vii. 23 with Jas. iv. 1; Rom. viii. 21, 23 with Jas. i. 18, 28; Rom. xiv. 4, 22 with Jas. iv. 2 and ii. 18. Also 1 Cor. i. 27 with Jas. ii. 5; 1 Cor. ii. 14 with Jas. iii. 15; 1 Cor. iii. 18 with Jas. i. 26; 1 Cor. vi. 9 with Jas. i. 16; 2 Cor. vi. 7 with Jas. i. 18; 1 Thess. v. 23 with Jas. i. 4.

the Council and to the emergence of the controversy about circumcision (Acts xv. 1, 5).

From these considerations we may conclude that this Epistle, alone amongst the New Testament writings, was composed before A.D. 50; nor is there anything to show that it was not written much earlier in the decade A.D. 40-50. It may safely be taken as the earliest of the books of the New Testament.

Any doctrinal indications, therefore, which may be given by St. James possess a special interest as coming from a period so near the time of our Lord. There is one passage, and one only, in his Epistle, bearing on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit (chap. iv. 5): "Ἡ δοκεῖτε ὅτι κενῶς ἡ γραφή λέγει· Πρὸς φθόνον ἐπιποθεῖ τὸ πνεῦμα ὃ κατώκισεν ἐν ἡμῖν.¹ The words must be taken in connection with those that immediately precede: "Whosoever would be a friend of the world becomes thereby an enemy of God. Or think ye that the Scripture saith without meaning, Jealously yearneth the Spirit which He hath implanted in you?"

It will be seen that in this difficult passage we take τὸ πνεῦμα as the subject to ἐπιποθεῖ and not as its object, and read κατώκισεν rather than κατώκησεν; the latter point, however, being of little moment. The meaning, then, will be that the Scripture says not without purpose that the Spirit which He (God) made to dwell in us jealously yearns for the entire devotion of the heart. The Old Testament reference here is, of course, not literally exact. There seems to be a reference to the Θεός ζηλωτής of Exod. xx. 5: "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God." There are also the kindred expressions in Deut. xxxii. 16: "They provoked Him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations provoked they Him to anger"; and ver. 19: "The provoking of His sons and of His daughters"; so ver. 21: "They have moved Me to jealousy with that which is not God" (cf. 1 Cor. x. 22). Other similar passages are Exod. xxxiv. 14, 15, "The Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God," and

¹ The reading followed is that adopted and maintained in the learned work of Professor J. B. Mayor on this Epistle. Published in 1892, this work has behind it the critical labours of Tischendorf, Westcott, and Hort. So Alford, but not Wordsworth.

Zech. viii. 2, "I was jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I was jealous for her with great fury." And for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the Jewish nation, see Isa. lxiii. 8-16—a passage in which the thought is parallel to that in St. James.

On the one hand, then, we have the picture of the actual condition of the Churches of the Twelve Tribes of St. James's day, which had, by some time subsequent to the year 40, so fallen back from the state of holy love and self-denial in which we find them living in Acts ii. 44-47, and iv. 32-35, when all were together and had all things common, and each possessor of lands or houses or goods, sold his possessions for the support of the rest, as to need the severe rebuke of St. James: "Whence come wars and whence come fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your pleasures that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and covet" (marg., "are jealous"), "and cannot obtain: ye fight and war: ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss (*κακῶς*), that ye may spend it in your pleasures. Ye adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?" (R.V.) A sad declension, indeed, in ten or fifteen years, and fatal to the widespread opinion of to-day, as to the comparative perfection of the primitive Church.

On the other hand, there is the appeal of St. James to the fact that God has already put His Spirit into them; that He is the true Husband of His people, and consequently the indwelling Spirit is jealous with a Divine jealousy that no part of the Church's devotion shall be transferred to the evil world, but that there shall be a full consecration to God of the abode in which He dwells, and which is no other than the heart of His people.

It is plain that the term *μοιχαλίδες*, or adulterous spouses of the Lord, as figuring their worldly and carnal life, leads up at once to the idea of *φθόνος*, the "jealousy" of ver. 5. Nothing is commoner in the Old Testament than the idea that Israel is the married wife of Jehovah, and that all defection from Him is spiritual adultery. In the New Testament the still more

brilliant image of the spiritual union betwixt Christ and the Church takes the place of the former one. The Bride, which is the Church, is the Lamb's wife. And even the individual Christian is said (in Rom. vii. 2-4) to stand in the same relation to the Lord. *μοιχαλίδες* may therefore be taken, in full accordance with St. Paul's usage, as relating to sinful individuals, as well as sinful Churches.

It only remains to observe that *πρὸς φθόνον* is an adverbial expression, equivalent to *φθονερῶς*. The Holy Spirit "jealously" longs for the sanctification of His Temple.

Having thus, so far as possible, determined the true character and meaning of the passage, we may proceed to examine its doctrinal features. We shall note as we do so that this early, Jacobean doctrine of the Holy Spirit contains distinct indications placing it in line with the most advanced teaching in later books of the New Testament.

1. In the first place, it plainly implies the personality of the Holy Ghost. The word *ἐπιποθεῖ* ("desires") can only be properly employed of a person; and the same must be said of *φθόνος* ("jealousy") in even a higher degree. Here, then, we obtain, by anticipation, an answer to the controversies and errors of later times on the question of the true nature of the Spirit. In the Apostolic period there was a true apprehension of the being and character of the Third Person; but just as the nature of Christ was, in the succeeding centuries, viewed through a mist of vagueness, until the heresies of the fourth century called forth greater clearness of conception and of definition from the Council of Nicæa, so the heretical tenets of Macedonius and the Pneumatomachi led to the great work of St. Basil, "De Spiritu Sancto," and to further theological inquiry from his illustrious successors, the Gregories and others, until, under St. Chrysostom and St. Augustine, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit reached its penultimate form, and Sabellian and Semi-arian errors received a final check. But here, in the pages of St. James, we meet with the Divine personality of the Spirit as unequivocally implied as it is accurately defined in the Creed of Athanasius.

2. Again, the love of the Holy Spirit for man is expressed in this passage in terms exceeding in force and vividness those employed in any other passage of the New Testament. St. James uses the same word, "desire," that is afterwards used by St. Paul in Phil. i. 8, to convey his intense personal love for the Philippians, and by St. Peter, in 1 Pet. ii. 2, in his admonition to the scattered believers to desire the pure milk of God's Word. And the "jealousy" with which the Blessed Spirit is said to desire the exclusive possession of Christian hearts necessarily implies a love on His part that craves for a similar response from its object. With this we may compare "the love of the Spirit" (Rom. xv. 30) and "the fellowship of the Spirit" in Phil. ii. 1.

3. Further, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in believers is stated in brief but unmistakable terms. "The Spirit which He made to dwell in us" may be compared with the glowing words of our Lord in St. John vii. 37 *et seq.* The "rivers of living water" which are to flow forth from the believer are first given by Christ to him who by faith draws near to drink (*cf.* John iv. 14). And, again, in John xiv. 17, our Lord declares the indwelling of the Spirit in His people: "He dwelleth with you and is in you."¹

St. Paul, too, is rich in various aspects of the Spirit's indwelling, as in Rom. viii. 11, "His Spirit that dwelleth in you"; 1 Cor. iii. 16, "The Spirit of God dwelleth in you," collectively, as the temple of God; 1 Cor. iv. 19, "Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost," individually, as separate believers; Gal. iv. 6, "God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts," a passage entirely parallel to St. James; and other like passages. But although the Evangelist St. John and St. Paul in his Epistles develop the doctrine more fully than St. James does, the doctrine itself is by no writer stated with greater directness.

4. The reading we have adopted is *κατώκισεν* ("made to dwell"), in preference to *κατώκησεν* ("took up His dwelling").

¹ The present, *ἔστι*, appears a more probable reading than *ἔσται*. So Westcott.

It must be granted that the latter has the support of a majority of manuscripts and versions. If we read *κατώκισεν*, the subject must be *ὁ θεός*, and *δ* will be the object—"the Spirit which He" (God) "made to dwell in us." This reading suggests the temporal mission of the Spirit, "whom I will send unto you from the Father." The glad obedience and co-operation of the Blessed Spirit with the Father and the Son in His coming to dwell in grace in the Church is a subject for adoring reflection. The reading *κατώκησεν* would display the voluntary action of the Spirit as distinguished from His mission.

5. The antithesis between the Holy Spirit and the powers of the world, and the struggle between them, is forcibly stated by St. James: "Whosoever, therefore, makes it his object (*βουληθῆ*) to be a friend of the world, thereby becomes (*καθίσταται*, "is constituted") the enemy of God. Or (*ἢ* indicates the only alternative) the Scripture has no meaning (*κενώσ ἡ γραφή λέγει*) when it says, "The Spirit which He made to dwell in us jealously yearns for the entire devotion of the heart."

The Spirit, then, is the cause of every good desire or purpose in us, and resists the tendency of our fallen nature to ally itself with the evil that is in the world. We shall at once recall the counterpart to this teaching in St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians (chap. v. 16-18), where the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit are placed in strong contrast, and the lusting or tendency of the Spirit is put in undying opposition to that of the flesh. So, in Eph. iv. 30, all false, corrupt, and dishonourable conduct is said to "grieve the Holy Spirit of God."

6. The claim of God to full consecration on the part of the Christian is followed by a statement that an increase of grace will be granted proportionate to the urgency and completeness of that claim. "But He giveth more grace." That is, while it is true that the Holy Spirit, with a longing desire amounting to passion, yearns for the absolute surrender of the heart to God, thus making a claim upon us which our feeble and unworthy nature is unable of itself to satisfy, yet the more jealously He loves us and the more intolerant He is that our love should be

shared between Him and the world, the greater is the grace with which He aids and strengthens our weak endeavours to yield ourselves to Him, and with which He rewards our compliance with His demands. As there is no limit to the consecration that He seeks, so there is none to the sanctification that He grants.

It is a marvellous depth of love and grace that is revealed in this reading of the passage. And when, as we have said, we remember the early date of the Epistle and realize the intensity of conviction as to the Holy Ghost that is displayed in this passage, we must feel that in the first days—the years succeeding the Pentecostal illapse of the Spirit—there prevailed among at least the Jewish believers a persuasion of the personality of the Holy Ghost, His close relationship both in being and mission with the other Persons of the Trinity, His love for the members of the Church redeemed by Christ, His inhabitation of them in Divine power, and His resolve to win and possess them entirely for God, and to bestow upon them all needful grace and strength to enable them to realize the end and object of their calling, which we may well long and pray may be revived in our own days as the preliminary to a great and far-reaching work of grace in the modern Church.



Higher Criticism and Historical Criticism.

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IN their division of the Pentateuch into its supposed sources the Higher Critics rely on a number of difficulties in the historical narrative. Thus, in his edition of Deuteronomy, Dr. Driver sets out a number of real or supposed discrepancies in nine paragraphs.¹ It is proposed carefully to investigate the

¹ "Deuteronomy," pp. xxxv, xxxvi.