

of a Divine process, or the materialistic form which reduces it to an inevitable sequence of consequent upon antecedent), must, as the very condition of its existence, ignore the distinction between good and evil (except in their consequences, not in themselves), and must annihilate the idea of sin, which is not a *consequence*, but a *transgression*, of God's law. Let no philosophy be trusted, however tempting its promises, however great its apparent success, which does not distinctly recognize the two great correlative ideas of a personal God and a personal—that is, a free-willing—man. With these, its efforts, however feeble, may be true as far as they go; without these, its most brilliant seeming achievements are at the bottom a mockery and an imposture."



## The Witness of Pentecost to the Claims of Christ.

BY THE REV G. S. STREATFEILD, M.A.

THE question which meets us on the very threshold of our subject is this: Did Christ promise the Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit, as in the Gospels He is reported to have done? Or is this promise to be put down to the imaginative and inventive faculty of primitive Christianity, which, if we are to believe many of our modern writers, put so much into the lips of our Lord that never actually came from them? Few questions are more important in their bearing upon the great problem of this and every age—namely, the nature of our Lord's Person.

We will begin our inquiry by briefly considering the implicit belief of the early Church that Christ had definitely, before withdrawing from sensible intercourse with His disciples, promised an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This primitive tradition we have in its most detailed form in the Fourth Gospel. Even if this record stood alone, whatever date we might assign to the Gospel, the doubt could scarcely arise as to

its representing a primitive tradition; for we cannot suppose that the writer introduced it, and gave it a place of supreme importance, as a novelty. The very position that it occupies and the prominence assigned to it witness to the fact that this promise of Christ was rooted in the original belief of the Church.

As a matter of fact, however, we have this tradition in a much earlier form in the writings of St. Luke. The third Evangelist had given special pains to the work of collecting the memories of our Lord's ministry (i. 1, 2) from those who had been eyewitnesses of it. Amongst these recollections are the post-resurrection words recorded in xxiv. 49: "Behold, I send forth the promise of My Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city until ye be clothed with power from on high." When St. Luke resumes his task, and writes the annals of the primitive Church, he makes this promise a connecting-link between the earlier and the later treatise (Acts i. 4, 5, 8). The occasion on which these words were spoken is obviously the same as that noticed in the last chapter of his Gospel. And we observe that the tradition, as embodied in the Acts, emphasizes the fact that this was the repetition and renewal of a promise already given—"the promise of the Father, which, *said He*, ye heard from Me" (ver. 4). It is only natural to suppose that St. Luke here refers to an occasion anterior to the Passion, thus confirming the genuineness and truth of John xiv.-xvi. In perfect consistency with these words of the risen Lord recorded by St. Luke is the declaration of St. Peter on the day of Pentecost: "Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath poured forth this which ye see and hear" (Acts ii. 33; *cf.* xi. 15, 16).

It is very doubtful whether the Epistles contain any direct allusion to Christ's promise of the Holy Ghost. Some commentators have seen such an allusion in the expression used by St. Paul in Eph. i. 13, "the Holy Spirit of promise"; but, though the fact that St. Paul and St. Luke were companions lends colour to the suggestion, such an interpretation is very

doubtful. Since, however, there is no reference to this feature of our Lord's work in the first Epistle of St. John, which we confidently attribute to the writer of the Fourth Gospel,<sup>1</sup> we cannot be surprised at missing it in the other Epistles.

What, however, we do find is that the gift of the Holy Spirit is consistently presented to us throughout the Epistles as bound up with the glorification of Christ (see, *e.g.*, Rom. viii. 14 *et seq.*; 1 Cor. xii. 13 *et seq.*; Gal. iv. 6; Eph. iii. 16, 17, iv. 8; 1 Tim. iii. 16; Titus iii. 4-6; Heb. ii. 3, 4; 1 Pet. i. 11, 12).<sup>2</sup> Such passages (and the list is by no means exhaustive) may be regarded as in some sense connecting-links between the tradition as recorded by St. John at the close of the century, and as embodied in the memories collected by St. Luke at an earlier date.

We now turn to the Synoptists. It may at first sight seem strange that the promise so definite in St. John should be absent, or almost so, in the synoptic account of the Lord's ministry. We add *almost so*, because there are sayings attributed to our Lord by the Synoptists which harmonize with the primitive tradition of a definite promise (Matt. iv. 19, ix. 16, 17, x. 19, 20, xii. 28; Mark xiii. 11; Luke iv. 18, 19, xii. 11, 12, xvii. 20, xxi. 15).<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the promise of the Spirit is in the background of all the parables that illustrate, and the sayings that foreshadow, the growth of the Messianic kingdom. Throughout our Lord's ministry, as recorded in these Gospels, though the

<sup>1</sup> Such is the very general verdict of criticism. Some great scholars, including Baur and Hilgenfeld, have denied the identity of authorship; so, too, quite recently, Ernest F. Scott, in "The Fourth Gospel: its Purpose and Theology."

<sup>2</sup> The remarkable expression, τὸ ἐν αὐτοῖς πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ (1 Pet. i. 11), is explained by Dr. Hort as "the Messianic Spirit." Mr. Edghill, however, justly objects that "such an interpretation hardly does justice to the language of the Apostle or to the context in which it is found. We surely must include a reference to the historical Jesus; and if so, the phrase must either be taken as signifying *the Spirit which is in Christ*, or, perhaps, *the Spirit sent by Christ*, for the Spirit is regarded by St. Peter as the author of prophecy (Acts i. 16), and the sending of the Spirit is attributed by him to Christ (Acts ii. 33)."—"Evidential Value of Prophecy," p. 548.

<sup>3</sup> In the Fourth Gospel, as might be expected, we have more distinct references to the Pentecostal gift. Such are the declaration to the woman of Samaria (iv. 10, 14), the words spoken at Capernaum at the close of the discourse on the Bread of Life (vi. 62, 63), and the invitation given at the Feast of Tabernacles (vii. 37, 38). Cf. also i. 51 and iii. 8, 34.

actual promise is absent, there is a distinct and deepening consciousness on the part of Christ that His work would be crowned by a mighty spiritual agency, which should carry forward and universalize His own work of redemption. "Christ Himself and the Apostles were convinced that the religion which they were planting would in the ages to come have a greater destiny and a deeper meaning than it possessed at the time of its institution; they trusted to its spirit leading from one point of light to another and developing higher forces."<sup>1</sup> Professor Harnack would have been nearer the truth if he had written *the Spirit* instead of *its spirit*.

Nor, indeed, is there any real cause for astonishment that the synoptic record should be lacking in this respect. Not until late in His public ministry did our Lord speak openly even to His disciples of His death and resurrection. Not until their faith in Him as the Messiah was established did He dare to broach these mysteries. He ever taught as they were able to bear it. This of itself would create a presumption that Christ would bide His time, and wait for a fitting opportunity for each new development in His teaching. Since the coming of the Spirit could not be dissociated from his own departure, the fit time was not in the stress and strain of the last months of the ministry. Is it any wonder that He postponed the double announcement of His own departure and the Spirit's coming to the very last hours before the Passion?

And if, as doubtless will be the case, the question presents itself why this promise has not been introduced into the synoptic account of the Passion, we may meet the difficulty by two considerations. In the first place, we must remember how fragmentary are the only records that we have of the Saviour's life and ministry. What a mere fraction of His doings and sayings have come down to us! It is no biography in the modern sense of the word that we have in the Gospels. "All the recorded sayings of Christ, how long would they take to pronounce? With due gravity and emphasis they might take six hours—

<sup>1</sup> Professor Harnack, "What is Christianity?" p. 11.

hardly, perhaps, so much."<sup>1</sup> In the second place, and in closest possible connection with the fragmentary character of our knowledge, we must bear in mind that, in reading the synoptic narrative, we cannot claim to be in the presence of eyewitnesses. St. Mark may have seen, may even have been acquainted with, the Lord in the days of His flesh (Mark xiv. 51), but there is no reason to suppose that he had been the companion of the Apostles, or of the number of the seventy. There are, indeed, solid grounds for believing that the Gospel that goes by his name represents, in part at least, the oral teaching of St. Peter; but this is a very different thing from its having been written by an Apostle. Over the authorship of the First Gospel the greatest possible uncertainty rests; but it would be generally conceded that St. Matthew's relation to it was certainly no closer than that of St. Peter to the second. St. Luke, in the preface to his Gospel, distinguishes himself from the eyewitnesses whose reminiscences he has gathered.<sup>2</sup> When, therefore, we have considered the nature and authorship of the synoptic record, we can hardly feel surprise at any omission that may have been made in it.

We turn to the Fourth Gospel. The majority of those who maintain that it was written by the Apostle John, or, if not by him, by some other eyewitness,<sup>3</sup> incline to the belief that he wrote with a full knowledge of the synoptic narrative, and that one of the motives which prompted him to write was a desire to supplement the work of his brother Evangelists. Here, in the omission of the promise of the Spirit, would be, to his mind, a conspicuous gap, and he filled it. There is nothing in the least improbable in this hypothesis. On the contrary, it is a perfectly

<sup>1</sup> Professor Burkitt, "The Gospel History and its Transmission," p. 20.

<sup>2</sup> There is no real ground, quite the reverse, for the ancient tradition which makes St. Luke one of the Seventy of Luke x. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Even if the tradition that St. John died at an early date were to be trusted, the disciple who wrote the Gospel claimed to be an eyewitness (John xix. 35, xxi. 24; cf. xiii. 23, xx. 2). The evidence for the Gospel having been written by an eyewitness is immensely strong. See Bishop Lightfoot's "Biblical Essays," the Introduction to Bishop Westcott's "Commentary," and Dr. Sanday's writings on this Gospel.

reasonable and natural inference. The author of the Fourth Gospel, according to our view, wrote at first hand; and few parts of the Gospel show clearer traces of the eye and ear witness than the discourse which contains the promise of the Holy Spirit. There may be idealism here, as in other parts of the Gospel; but, to whatever extent the disciple, writing after sixty years of meditation on what he had heard, used his own language to clothe the thought of the Master, we may be confident that the substance of what has come down to us was not drawn from his own imagination, but was supplied by memory. The literary methods of the first century may have differed in many respects from those of the twentieth, but it surely ought to be inconceivable that one of our Lord's own disciples should not only have invented the discourse, but deliberately added a circumstantial setting to give his invention greater verisimilitude. Now, it is Thomas who speaks (xiv. 5), now, Philip (v. 8); at another time, Judas (not Iscariot) interrupts his Master (v. 22), the disciples whisper among themselves (xvi. 17), they comment, though ignorantly, on what they have heard (vers. 29, 30). Are we to believe that these notices of what took place, so naturally woven into the text, were the work of a Haggadist—in other words, of a spiritual romancer?<sup>1</sup> To believe the Gospel to be the work of an eyewitness, and to doubt that Christ gave a definite promise of the Spirit, seems to the present writer in the last degree unreasonable.

But, in regard to this promise, there is another line of proof as cogent (perhaps more so) as the testimony of early tradition. This is found in our Lord's claim to be the Messiah. It is true that there are those who deny this claim; but, unless belief in the historicity of the Gospels is completely abandoned, and their Central Figure reduced to a mere shadow, this is an impossible contention, and has been adopted by few writers of mark and standing.<sup>2</sup> Taking, then, Christ's belief that He was the

<sup>1</sup> There are writers who do not hesitate to maintain this view. Dr. Drummond, in "The Character and Authorship of the Fourth Gospel," defends this position.

<sup>2</sup> See, *e.g.*, Harnack, "What is Christianity?" p. 133 *et seq.*

Messiah of prophecy as a fact, we cannot for a moment doubt that, in virtue of the Messianic consciousness, He was fully convinced that His own work was to be associated with a manifestation of the Divine Spirit to which the earlier age offered no parallel. Psalmist after psalmist, prophet after prophet, had led the Jewish nation to expect that the coming of the Messiah would be accompanied by an extraordinary effusion of the Spirit. How, then, could Jesus see His own portrait in the Servant of the Lord without the conviction that He was inaugurating a new dispensation—nothing less than the dispensation of the Spirit? “Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. . . . He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him. . . . The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. . . . He bare the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors” (Isa. liii. 4-6, 12). But Jesus would not stop there. He would remember how the seer continues; He would read on: “Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord. Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thy habitations: lengthen thy cords and strengthen thy stakes; for thou shalt spread abroad on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall possess the nations, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited” (Isa. liv. 1-3). Ezekiel (xxxvi., xxxvii.), Jeremiah (xxxi.), Joel (ii.), prophesying of the Messianic age, predict a signal outpouring of the Spirit.

We pass to the Gospel narrative. Standing in the synagogue at Nazareth, Jesus read from Isaiah the great Messianic announcement of chap. lxi.: “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me because He anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He hath sent Me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord” (Luke

iv. 18, 19).<sup>1</sup> His comment upon the words He had read began thus: "To-day hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears." It was thus, then, that our Lord's Messianic consciousness expressed itself—namely, in the claim to have been anointed with the Spirit of God for His mission. This endowment of the Spirit was a part, and we may perhaps say the most essential part, of the Messianic ministry to the mind of Christ. If He believed Himself to be the Messiah, He believed in the coming of the Spirit to follow up and bless and fructify His own personal work. And if we can demonstrate, or show to be a practical certainty, that our Lord confidently anticipated a manifestation of spiritual power, we create a strong presumption, not to say more, that He made some distinct intimation to His disciples on the subject. And just as, at the right moment, He spake to them of His death and resurrection, so we may infer that there was some such occasion as that recorded by St. John (xiv.-xvi.) when He announced the coming of the Spirit.

Nor, indeed, can we think that our Lord's teaching on this subject took those who heard it altogether by surprise. Their deepening faith in the Lord's Messiahship would be a preparation for such an announcement. They, too, were students of the Old Testament, and knew that the outpouring of the Spirit was to be a notable feature of the Messianic kingdom.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the institution of the Holy Communion which had just taken place, with its unmistakable reference to the covenant foretold by Jeremiah,<sup>3</sup> would have led their thoughts in this

<sup>1</sup> See Isa. lxi. 1, 2, and *cf.* xlii. 1: "The servant is thus fitted for his ministry by the gift of Jehovah's Spirit, just as the plenitude of the same Spirit rests upon the Messianic King to enable Him to fulfil the tasks of His exalted office" (Edghill, "Evidential Value of Prophecy," p. 302).

<sup>2</sup> So, too, it will be remembered that part of John the Baptist's testimony to Jesus was that He should baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire (Matt. iii. 11). Recognizing in Jesus Israel's Messiah, he inferred that in Him the Messianic promises of the Spirit would be fulfilled.

<sup>3</sup> Jer. xxxi. 31. "This covenant is not only individual but spiritual. It is not an external act, such as the Egyptian deliverance, or even the Babylonian exodus, that effects this individual realization and appropriation of the covenant blessings. It is an 'inward writing,' and it lies in the operation of the Spirit."—Edghill, "The Evidential Value of Prophecy," p. 267; and *cf.* Ezek. xi. 19, 20.



direction, and the promise of the Holy Spirit when given might almost have appeared to them the natural development and sequel of much that they had already heard from their Master.

Before passing on to consider the fulfilment of this promise, we would again call attention to the catholicity of our Lord's outlook and teaching. This catholicity is expressed in many of His recorded sayings : “ Many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven ” (Matt. viii. 11; *cf.* Luke xiii. 29). “ The Gospel must first be preached unto all the nations ” (Mark xiii. 10). “ Wheresoever the Gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, that also which this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her ” (Mark xiv. 9). “ Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold : them also I must bring ; and they shall hear My voice, and they shall become one flock, one shepherd ” (John x. 16). “ I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Myself ” (John xii. 32).<sup>1</sup> The same truth is embodied in the parables of *the Draw-net, the Wheat and the Tares, the Mustard-seed, the Wedding Garment, the Great Supper, the Sheep and the Goats*. The absolute certainty with which Christ contemplated the advance of His kingdom is a measure of the confidence with which He anticipated the Spirit's coming. The words that He spoke to St. Peter and the other Apostles concerning His Church (Matt. xvi. 18) would, without a Pentecost to follow, completely lose their force, and they could not have been spoken without prevision of that event. Unless the Gospels are a tissue of invention, nothing is more certain than that Christ proclaimed a universal kingdom, a new Divine economy, on the lines, indeed, of the ancient theocracy, but far transcending it both in extent and spirituality. Can we resist the conviction that, in doing so, He was conscious of a dynamic power bound up with His mission to which the Pentecostal gift exactly corresponds ?

<sup>1</sup> It need hardly be pointed out that allusions to the universal character of the kingdom are frequent in our Lord's post-resurrection sayings.

So far it has been our aim to establish the fact that our Lord actually gave the promise of the Spirit. We have justified our belief that it was so by an appeal, on the one hand, to the New Testament, which records the unquestioning conviction of the primitive Church, and, on the other hand, to that Messianic consciousness which contemplated an outpouring of the Spirit as an essential element of the Messianic mission. On a future occasion we shall turn our attention to the fact of Pentecost, and attempt to correlate that fact with the prophetic and Messianic consciousness that expected and predicted it.



### Saint-Worship To-day in Asia Minor.

BY THE REV. G. E. WHITE, D.D.

THE religion of Jesus was early preached among the people of Asia Minor, even some of the Apostles sharing in the service. No less than ten books of the New Testament were first addressed to its inhabitants. Constantine the Great adopted Christianity as the religion of the whole community. The faith of the Gospel has never disappeared from this important arena of its youthful triumphs, and it is represented by millions of nominal Christians—members of the Armenian or Greek branches of the Oriental Church. Mohammedanism was introduced into the fair peninsula in its gradual conquest by Seljukian and Ottoman Turks about the time of greatest Norman activity in Western Europe. And yet to-day the common Anatolian—that is, native of Asia Minor—frequently offers his most earnest prayers in the name of saints, is an unquestioning believer in their effective intercession, and in the crises of life is quite as prone to worship at a sacred grave as in a church or mosque.

The people have a strong sense of sin as before God, and of helplessness in the affairs of life. The idea of sin emphasizes misfortune quite as much as guilt, but conscience is at work,