



When The Holy Ghost Is Come

Chapter 19 – THE SHEATHED SWORD: A LAW OF THE SPIRIT

"Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you."

Just as the moss and the oak are higher in the order of creation than the clod of clay and the rock, the bird and beast than the moss and the oak, the man than the bird and the beast, so the spiritual man is a higher being than the natural man. The sons of God are a new order of being. The Christian is a "new creation." Just as there are laws governing the life of the plant, and other and higher laws than that of the bird and beast, so there are higher laws for man, and still higher for the Christian. It was with regard to one of these higher laws that govern the heavenly life of the Christian that Jesus said to Peter, "Put up thy sword."

Jesus said to Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world; if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight." The natural man is a fighter. It is the law of his carnal nature. He fights with fist and sword, tongue and wit. His kingdom is of this world, and he fights for it with such weapons as this world furnishes. The Christian is a citizen of Heaven, and is subject to its law, which is universal, wholehearted love. In his kingdom he conquers not by fighting, but by submitting. When an enemy takes his coat, he overcomes him, not by going to law, but by generously giving him his cloak also. When his enemy compels him to go a mile with him, he vanquishes the enemy by cheerfully going two miles with him. When he is smitten on one cheek, he wins his foe by meekly turning the other cheek. This is the law of the new life from Heaven, and only by recognising and obeying it can that new life be sustained and passed on to others. This is the narrow way which leads to life eternal, "and few there be that find it," or, finding it, are willing to walk in it.

A Russian peasant, Sutajeff, could get no help from the religious teachers of his village, so he learned to read, and while studying the Bible he found this narrow way, and walked gladly in it. One night neighbours of his stole some of his grain, but in their haste or carelessness they left a



bag. He found it, and ran after them to restore it, "for," said he, "fellows who have to steal must be hard up." And by this Christ like spirit he saved both himself and them, for he kept the spirit of love in his own heart, and they were converted and became his most ardent disciples.

A beggar woman, to whom he gave lodging, stole the bedding and ran away with it. She was pursued by the neighbours, and was just about to be put in prison when Sutajeff appeared, became her advocate, secured her acquittal, and gave her food and money for her journey.

He recognised the law of his new life and gladly obeyed it, and so was not overcome of evil, but persistently and triumphantly overcame evil with good (Romans xii. 21).

This is the spirit and method of Jesus; and by men filled with this spirit and following this method He will yet win the world.

He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many. His spirit is not one of self-seeking, but of self-sacrifice. Some mysterious majesty of His presence or voice so awed and overcame His foes that they went back and fell to the ground before Him in the Garden of His agony, but He meekly submitted Himself to them; and when Peter laid to with his sword, and cut off the ear of the high priest's servant, Jesus said to him, "Put up thy sword into the sheath; the cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?"

This was the spirit of Isaac. When he digged a well, the Philistines strove with his servants for it; so he digged another; and when they strove for that, he removed and digged yet another, "and for that they strove not: and he called the name of it Rehoboth" (margin, room): "and he said, For now the Lord hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land.... And the Lord appeared unto him the same night, and said, I am the God of Abraham, thy father: fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed" (Genesis xxvi. 22, 24).

This was the spirit of David, when Saul was hunting for his life; twice David could have slain him, and when urged to do so, he said, "As the Lord liveth, the Lord shall smite him; or his day shall



come to die; or he shall descend into battle and perish. The Lord forbid that I should stretch forth my hand against the Lord's anointed" (1 Samuel xxvi. 10, 11).

This was the spirit of Paul. He says, "Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat" (1 Cor. iv. 12, 13). "The servant of the Lord must not strive," wrote Paul to Timothy, "but be gentle unto all men." This is the spirit of our King, this is the law of His Kingdom.

Is this your spirit? When you are reviled, bemeaned and slandered, and are tempted to retort, He says to you, "Put up thy sword into the sheath." When you are wronged and ill treated, and men ride rough-shod over you, and you feel it but just to smite back, He says, "Put up thy sword into the sheath." "Live peaceably with all men." Your weapons are not carnal, but spiritual, now that you belong to Him, and have your citizenship in Heaven. If you fight with the sword; if you retort and smite back when you are wronged, you quench the Spirit; you get out of the narrow way, and your new life from Heaven will perish.

An Officer went to a hard Corps, and after a while found that his predecessor was sending back to friends for money which his own Corps much needed. He felt it to be an injustice, and, losing sight of the Spirit of Jesus, he made a complaint about it, and the money was returned. But he got lean in his soul. He had quenched the Spirit. He had broken the law of the Kingdom. He had not only refused to give his cloak, but had fought for and secured the return of the coat. He had lost the smile of Jesus, and his poor heart was sad and heavy within him. He came to me with anxious inquiry as to what I thought of his action. I had to admit that the other man had transgressed, and that the money ought to be returned, but that he should have been more grieved over the un-christ like spirit of his brother than over the loss of the five dollars, and that like Sutajeff he should have said, "Poor fellow! he must be hard up; I will send him five dollars myself. He has taken my coat, he shall have my cloak too." When I told him that story, he came to himself very quickly, and was soon back in the narrow way and rejoicing in the smile of Jesus once again.



"But will not people walk over us, if we do not stand up for our rights?" you ask. I do not argue that you are not to stand up for your rights; but that you are to stand up for your higher rather than your lower rights, the rights of your heavenly life rather than your earthly life, and that you are to stand up for your rights in the way and spirit of Jesus rather than in the way and spirit of the world.

If men wrong you intentionally, they wrong themselves far worse than they wrong you; and if you have the spirit of Jesus in your heart you will pity them more than you pity yourself. They nailed Jesus to the cross and hung Him up to die; they gave Him gall and vinegar to drink; they cast votes for His seamless robe, and divided His garments between them, while the crowd wagged their heads at Him and mocked Him. Great was the injustice and wrong they were inflicting upon Him, but He was not filled with anger, only pity. He thought not of the wrong done Him, but of the wrong they did themselves, and their sin against His Heavenly Father, and He prayed not for judgment upon them, but that they might be forgiven, and He won them, and is winning and will win the world. Bless God!

"By mercy and truth iniquity is purged," wrote Solomon. "Put up thy sword into the sheath, "and take mercy and truth for your weapons, and God will be with you and for you, and great shall be your victory and joy. Hallelujah!

"HAVE YE RECEIVED THE HOLY GHOST SINCE YE BELIEVED?"