

CONSUMED IN *Christ*

VISITATION OF THE SPIRIT

From the Book "Rees Howell's Intercessor"

From the time of special dedication on March 29, 1936, when so many of the College, both staff and students, laid their lives on the altar as intercessors, the Spirit was at work in the College. The climax and consummation came in the New Year of 1937. It was the "Pentecost" of the College, from which they emerged, not a loosely-linked company of consecrated individuals, but a body in the full sense of the term, a living integrated organism, instinct with one life and one purpose. Dr. Kingsley C. Priddy, M.B., BS., D.T.M. & H., a member of the staff and now Headmaster of the School, gives the following account of those days:

"In the Christmas vacation of 1936 much time was given to prayer. As we approached the New Year of 1937 there was an increasing consciousness of God's presence. The first outward sign that He was working in a new way was when one of the staff broke down in prayer, confessing her sense of need and crying to the Holy Spirit to meet her. Then we heard how the Holy Ghost had so manifested Himself in the glory of His Divine Person to some of the girl students, that they wept before Him for hours—broken at the corruption of their own hearts revealed in the light of His holiness.

“An awful sense of God’s nearness began to steal over the whole College. There was a solemn expectancy. We were reminded of the 120 in the Upper Room before the day of Pentecost. Like them, we only wanted to spend our time ‘in prayer and supplication’—conscious that God’s hand was upon us—conscious that He was about to do something. God was there; yet we felt we were still waiting for Him to come. And in the days that followed, He came.

“He did not come like a rushing mighty wind but gradually the Person of the Holy Ghost filled our thoughts, His presence filled all of the place, and His light seemed to penetrate all the hidden recesses of our hearts. He was speaking through the Director in every meeting, but it was in the quiet of our own rooms that He revealed Himself to many of us. We felt the Holy Spirit had been a real Person to us before; as far as we knew we had received Him; and some of us had known much of His operations in and through our lives. But now the revelation His Person was so tremendous that all our previous experiences seemed as nothing. There was no visible apparition, but He made Himself so real to our spiritual eyes that it was a “face to face” experience. And when we saw Him, we knew we had never really seen Him before. We said like Job, ‘I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth Thee’; and like him we cried, ‘Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes.’

“In the light of His purity, it was not so much *sin* we saw as *self*. We saw pride and self motives underlying everything we had ever done. Lust and self-pity were discovered in places where we had never suspected them.

And we had to confess we knew nothing of the Holy Ghost as an indwelling person. That our bodies were meant to be the temples of the Holy Ghost we knew, but when He pressed the question, 'Who is living in your body?' we could not say that He was. We would have done so once, but now we had seen Him. In His nature He was just like Jesus; He would never live for self, but always for others. We were people who had left all to follow the Savior, and had forsaken all we had this world's goods to enter a life of faith , and as far as we knew we had surrendered our lives entirely to the One who died for us. But He showed us. 'There is all the difference in the world between your surrendered life My hands, and I living My life in your body.' We read the Acts afresh, and found we were reading not the acts of the apostles, but the acts of the Holy Ghost. The bodies of Peter and the others had become His temples. The Holy Ghost as a divine Person lived in the bodies of the apostles, even as the Savior had lived His earthly life in the body that was born in Bethlehem. And all that the Holy Spirit asked of us was our wills and our bodies. 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice... (Rom. 12: 1). It seemed as though we had never seen that Scripture before. He made it clear that He was not asking for service but for a sacrifice. 'Our God is a consuming fire' and if God the Holy Ghost took possession of these bodies, then His life was going to consume all that there was of ours. We had often sung 'I want to be like Jesus', but when we had the offer from a Person who is just like the Savior to come and live that life daily and hourly in us, we found how unreal we had been. How much there was in us that still wanted to live our own lives -- that shrank

from this 'sentence of death'! We now began to see the meaning of the Savior's words in Luke 9:24, 'For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for My sake, the same shall save it.'

"Why had He manifested Himself to us in this way? He made that quite clear. It was because there was a work to be done in the world today that only He could do (John 16:8). No wonder the Master told His disciples not to move from Jerusalem until they had received 'the promise of the Father'. But when He had come, they would be His witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

"Many of us on the previous March 29 had put all on the altar for the sake of giving the Gospel to every creature. We had become willing to be any cog in the machinery that God needed to put that through in our generation. But now the Holy Ghost said, as Jehovah had said to Moses, "I am come down to do it." And we knew that He was as almighty as He was holy.

"As those days of visitation went on, we were just prostrate at His feet. We had thought that there was some virtue in our surrender, that we, with thousands of others, would be the people to evangelize the world in this generation. But now HE had come, and we were out of it—except in so far as our bodies would become the temples in which He would dwell and through which He would work. He said, 'I have not come to give you joy, or peace, or victory. I have not come to give you any blessing at all. You will find all that you need in Jesus.

But I have come to put you to the cross, so that I may live in your body for the sake of a lost world' (Col. 3:3; II Cor. 4:10; Gal. 2:20).

He warned us that the trials before this task was through would be so great, and the attacks of Satan so fierce, that 'flesh and blood' would never be able to hold out. He showed us that on the eve of the Crucifixion, when the real clash came with the powers of darkness, it was only the Savior who stood. We saw every one of the disciples fail in that hour – in spite of all their surrenders, their vows and their devotion to the Master. And looking into the future years – the darkness of the last days of this age, the final contest between heaven and hell for the kingdoms of this world – we could see only One Person who was 'sufficient for these things', and He was the glorious Third Person of the Godhead in those whom He was able to indwell.

“One by one He met us. One by one we broke in tears and contrition before Him. From one after another rose the cry as it did from Isaiah, when he too 'saw the Lord', 'Woe is me for I am undone...unclean...' One by one our wills were broken; we yielded on His own unconditional terms. To one by one there came the glorious realization – He had entered; and the wonder of our privilege just overwhelmed us.

“The personal experience was great – we were new people. His Word became new. So often we had had to water down the Word to the level of our experience. But now the Person in us would insist on bringing our experience up to the level of His Word. We understood that crucifixion was a slow death, and that He would have much to deal with in us before He would really be free to do His work through us. But one thing we knew – He had come and He could never fail.

“But far greater than anything His visitation could mean to us personally, was what it was going to mean to the world. We saw Him as the One to whom ‘the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance.’ On our faces before Him we could only say from awed hearts, ‘Holy Ghost. You have come to rock the world.’ There was no excitement or enthusiasm of the flesh in those days. When His power had come upon us after March 29 we had been carried away, and were singing and shouting our praises. But in these days we were so awed by the holy majesty of His Person that we hardly dared raise our voices in the meetings. Even the grounds outside seemed filled with His presence. Walking around together we would suddenly be conscious that we were speaking in whispers. The late hours came, but no one thought of bed – for God was there. It seemed to be a foretaste of the Holy City – ‘There shall be no night there.’ 2.0 and 3.0 a.m. often seemed just like midday as we communed together, prayed with some who were ‘coming through’, or waited before God in the quietness of our hearts.

“His visitation lasted for some three weeks in this special sense, although, praise God, He came to ‘abide’, and has continued with us ever since. But no one has a monopoly of the Holy Ghost. He is God, and whatever our experience of Him, He is far greater than all we can know of Him. Whatever we know of His gifts, His manifestations and His anointing, He is greater than all those. In whatever way He has manifested Himself to us, we also recognize His mighty working in and through others. Increasingly we look to the Holy Ghost Himself, poured out on all, as Joel prophesied, as the only One by whom the Vision He

has shown us can be fulfilled, through His prepared channels in all parts of the world.”

Through this falling of the fire upon the sacrifice, the Spirit had sealed to Himself a company of intercessors for every creature. Tutors and school teachers, doctors and nurses, domestic and office workers, gardeners and mechanics, their duties were varied, but their commission one. Many of the students themselves remained on as part of this praying and working company. There are times in God’s dealings with His servants when He sets apart for Himself, not just individuals, but companies, baptized, as it were, by one Spirit into one body for one God-appointed purpose, and this was now one of them.