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MURRAY
on the
HOLY
SPIRIT

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Publisher's note:

This new edition from Whitaker House is a combination of extracts from several of Andrew Murray's shorter works, *Love Made Perfect*, *Out of His Fullness*, and *Within: The Kingdom of God Is Within You*. The text has been updated for the modern reader.

Words, expressions, and sentence structure have been revised for clarity and readability.

All Scripture quotations are taken from the King James Version (KJV) of the Holy Bible.

ANDREW MURRAY ON THE HOLY SPIRIT

ISBN: 0-88368-846-8

Printed in the United States of America

© 1998 by Whitaker House

Whitaker House
30 Hunt Valley Circle
New Kensington, PA 15068
www.whitakerhouse.com

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Murray, Andrew, 1828–1917.

Andrew Murray on the Holy Spirit / Andrew Murray.

p. cm.

ISBN 0-88368-846-8

I. Holy Spirit. I. Title: On the Holy Spirit. II. Title.

BT121.3 .M87 2002

231'.3—dc21

2002012165

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1



The Kingdom of God

1

The Kingdom of God



*Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not
receive the kingdom of God as a little child,
he shall not enter therein.*

—Mark 10:15

When Christians gather for a convention in a new place, the first meeting is often a difficult one. Most of the people are strangers to each other. An atmosphere of prayer and love has hardly yet been created. There is uncertainty as to whether everyone understands the purpose of the meeting. But rest assured, the Father in heaven can melt many hearts into one. By His Holy Spirit, the Father can make them all of

one heart and one mind in seeking His glory, in trusting His mighty power, and in looking to Him alone for a blessing.

We must look to God at all times, not only for what each one needs for himself, but also as members of one body, with the fervent prayer that there may be a blessing for all. Let us unite ourselves before God as a company of His own dear children, full of love for each other and with the confident assurance that He will bless us.

A Prayer

Our Father, melt our hearts into one by Your Holy Spirit. You know the need of each one; let Your Word meet it. May Your children know what their God has for them and what they may expect Him to do for them.

Look closely at our text verse in Mark 10:15: “Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.” Read that verse again. As you begin reading this book, look forward to all that you are going to learn, and try to take your right place before God. I think this word of the Lord Jesus will guide you exactly to where you ought to be. It will tell you what

God asks of you if you are to enter His kingdom and live in it: you must receive it into your heart as a little child would.

There are two things you need to know to enter into the enjoyment of a full salvation: the wonderful blessing God has for you and the wonderful way in which you are to become a possessor of it. These two things will be the focus of this chapter.

My text verse has four simple expressions that we need to understand if we are to enter into its meaning and power. We must ask the following questions:

1. What is the kingdom of God?
2. What does it mean to enter the kingdom?
3. What does it mean to receive the kingdom?
4. What does it mean to receive it as a little child?

What the Kingdom Is

First, what is the kingdom of God? You know that John the Baptist preached that the kingdom of God, or the kingdom of heaven, had

come. During the Old Testament times, it had been spoken of and promised and hoped for, but it had not come. During the life of Christ on earth, there were great signs of its coming and its nearness, but it had not yet come in power. Christ foretold what it would be when He said, *"The kingdom of God is within you"* (Luke 17:21), and another time, *"There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom"* (Matt. 16:28).

On the Day of Pentecost, that word was fulfilled. The Holy Spirit brought the kingdom of God from heaven and into the hearts of the disciples. Then the disciples went forth and preached the Gospel of the kingdom, not as if it were coming, but as if it had come.

It is not difficult now to answer the question, What is the kingdom of God? It is that spiritual state in which the life of God and of heaven is made accessible to men, and they enter into its enjoyment here on earth. If we ask what the signs of it are, we find the answer in the wondrous change that took place in the lives of the disciples.

The King's Presence

The first sign of a kingdom is the presence of its king. With the Holy Spirit, Christ came

down to be with His disciples as truly as when He was with them in the flesh. The Spirit was also nearer to the disciples than Christ could be in the flesh. The abiding nearness and fellowship of Christ, and of God the Father through Him, is the very central blessing of the kingdom.

This experience was what the Holy Spirit made real at Pentecost. The disciples had their Lord with them as consciously as the angels in heaven have Him. His presence put heaven all around them and in them. When a believer is given a full entrance into the kingdom, he has the presence of God and Christ as the *“good part, which shall not be taken away”* (Luke 10:42).

The King's Rule

Another sign of a kingdom is the rule of its king. We read, *“His kingdom ruleth over all”* (Ps. 103:19). Before Pentecost, the disciples could not love or be humble, could not trust or be bold. But when the kingdom came, the dominion of God prevailed, God's presence through the Holy Spirit gained the victory, sin was overcome, and the will of God was done in them as it is in heaven. When Jesus taught them to pray, *“Thy kingdom come. Thy*

will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10), He promised this.

As the kingdom came down with the Holy Spirit, the promise was fulfilled. And our entering into the kingdom means our being brought into a life in which God rules over all, His will is truly and joyfully done, and all the blessedness that reigns in heaven finds its counterpart here below. As it is written, "*For the kingdom of God is...righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*" (Rom. 14:17).

Power

A third mark of a kingdom is power. "*The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power*" (1 Cor. 4:20). Just think of the work those simple fishermen dared to undertake and were able to accomplish. Think of the weapon with which they had to do their work—the despised Gospel of the crucified Nazarene. Think of all that God brought about through them, and see how the coming of the kingdom brought a new power from heaven. By this power, feeble men were made mighty through God, and the slaves of Satan were made God's holy children.

Believers, it is this kingdom of God come from heaven that I preach. I come to tell you

that a life in the presence, the will, and the power of God has been opened up; that men have been given the opportunity to enter into it and live in it; and that you, too, can enter in.

Perhaps some of you are confessing the feebleness of your Christian lives and the failure of all your efforts to make it better. You have believed in Jesus as your Savior, but you know nothing about an entrance into the kingdom as it came in power. I urge you to begin today. Believe that here on earth you can live such a life in the kingdom. Believe that Christ's death brought about such a wonderful and complete redemption and that the coming down of the Holy Spirit—nothing less than the glorified Christ coming in the Spirit—brought down the heavenly life in such reality that we can be “*endued with power from on high*” (Luke 24:49), just as the first disciples were.

If you will hold fast and believe that there is a kingdom of heaven on earth, your desire will be stirred to become a partaker of its blessedness. As I show you how you may do this, your hope will begin to see that this life is also for you. And you will be prepared to accept all that Jesus has to teach us in His Word.

Entering the Kingdom

What does it mean to enter the kingdom of God? This is our second question. You know the meaning of the word *enter*. It is most commonly used in Scripture to denote the entrance of the children of Israel into the Land of Promise and the believer's entrance by faith into the rest that God provides.

Entrance. The word simply means "coming into full possession or enjoyment." When Christ spoke of entering the kingdom of God, this is just what He meant and just what we long for with regard to the kingdom. The word does not refer to heaven or to our entering heaven when we die. Rather, it speaks of the kingdom of heaven upon earth and our entering into it in power as the disciples did at Pentecost.

There are many Christians who are content with having only a heaven after death. The promise of living in a kingdom of heaven here on earth has no attraction for them nor wakens any response in them. They cannot understand what this means. But there are many individuals in whom the longing has been awakened for something better and who would gladly know what it means, what it entails, to enter the kingdom.

As I said, *entrance* means “coming into full possession.” Just think of the blessings of the kingdom: God’s manifested presence is with us without ceasing; God’s blessed rule and dominion are established over us, so that His heavenly will is done in us and by us; God’s mighty power descends upon us, so that through us Christ can do His work of saving souls. Even now, you can enter into a life in which these blessings are your daily experience. That life has been prepared for you and is promised to you; it is waiting for you. You can enter it even now by faith.

As an army conquers and enters a city, so do many souls struggle and fight and seek to take the kingdom by violence. And they fail, because we can only enter by faith. As Joshua brought Israel into the Land of Promise, as Jericho fell without a blow being struck, so too does our Lord Jesus wait to bring us into the good land. It was He who, from heaven, gave the disciples their abundant entrance into the kingdom; it is He who, still by His Holy Spirit, will lead each one of us in. Because of our faith in Him, He brings us in.

You may want to know what this faith is and how it works. Know what our Lord tells us about receiving the kingdom.

Receiving the Kingdom

Our third question is, What does it mean to receive the kingdom? What is the difference between the two expressions our Lord uses, “entering the kingdom” and “receiving the kingdom”? You can see that He made the latter, receiving, the condition of the former, entering. The one is active: I enter in and take possession. The other is passive: I receive.

These words give expression to the great truth that, before I can enter the kingdom, it must first enter into me. Before I can possess its privileges and powers, it must first possess me, with all my powers and being. I must, in subjection and surrender, in poverty and emptiness, receive the kingdom into my heart before I am fit to be entrusted with all the power and glory it offers me. What is dark and evil within me must first be cast out; what is of God must fill my being. Only what is born of God alone can inherit the kingdom and its heavenly life. There must be a heavenly nature before there can be a heavenly position.

The message here is very simple: receive the kingdom. It implies that there is One

who gives and another who accepts. So many people have heard of the blessed life of the kingdom and the wonderful joy it gives, yet they have never thought that it must be received from the living God Himself. What we need is to be brought to such consciousness of our utter ignorance and helplessness that we feel we cannot grasp or comprehend this wonderful salvation that is offered. We are to come into contact with the Father in heaven and, as a heavenly gift, receive from Him the kingdom in power.

And this is not something that we have to persuade Him to give us. Instead, it is the child's portion that actually belongs to us and that He wants to see us enjoy. As we believe this, and as we look up to the everlasting God who is infinitely ready and able to give the kingdom in its power to our very hearts, our hearts will take courage and begin to expect that the kingdom with its blessings can indeed enter us.

Then our reception of it will become so simple. When we see the God who has promised, in His infinite love, to enter into us and to be everything in us, we will understand that our place is simply to rest in what He will do, to claim His great gift of the Spirit who

brings the kingdom into us, and to wait in patient dependence for Him to do His mighty work. He desires to enter into our hearts, just as the sun with its light and life seeks to enter into every little flower and every blade of grass. Once we accept Him, our daily position will be that of counting on God to reveal and work in us all that He has for us.

You may be inclined to ask, "If the receiving is so simple, why is it still so difficult, and why do so few really find what they seek?" The answer is, The whole thing is so simple, but we are not simple. The simplicity of the thing is its difficulty, because we have lost our simplicity. This is what Jesus taught in the words that He spoke and what I must still speak of: *"Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein."*

Becoming like Children

Finally, what does it mean to receive the kingdom of heaven as little children would? Do we have any illustration of this in nature? Yes. How do princes become heirs to the throne? They receive kingdoms by being born as little children. They are born to it. And so we must be born by the Holy Spirit into the

disposition of heart, the childlike simplicity, that will receive the kingdom as a little child.

When a little child receives a kingdom, he does so as a feeble, helpless little thing. As he grows up and hears of what is coming to him, he does so in simple trustfulness and gladness. In a similar manner, Jesus calls us to become little children and, as such, to receive the kingdom.

Oh, how difficult it is for men and women, with their wills and their strength and their wisdom, with all the power of self and the “*old man*” (Rom. 6:6), to become like little children! It is impossible. And yet, without this we cannot enter the kingdom and its heavenly life. We can know about the kingdom, we may taste some of its powers, we may work for it and often rejoice in it, but we cannot enter in fully and entirely until we become like little children. “*With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible*” (Matt. 19:26).

There are some things we can do to become like children. We can yield to the teaching of God’s Spirit when He convicts us of our pride and self-reliance. We can confess our self-will and self-effort. We can pray and strive for the childlike spirit. We can go as far as Peter and

the disciples did before Pentecost. But only the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God's Son, the Spirit who cries, "*Abba, Father*" (Gal. 4:6), the Spirit who claims and expects and receives all from God alone, can give the little-child nature that enters into the kingdom. He is within you, as the Spirit of Christ, to bring this about. He gives the grace to become like a little child, and so He prepares the heart to receive from heaven His fullness, as He brings the kingdom in heavenly power.

How may you become like a little child? How can you lose all your strength and wisdom, your will and life, and be as a little, newborn child? "Oh, I wish I knew how!" you cry. Look to Jesus! As a babe in Bethlehem, He was born heir to the kingdom of David. He grew up to manhood, and then, giving up His will in Gethsemane when He cried, "*Abba, Father*" (Mark 14:36), He gave up His life and was laid in the dark grave in the helplessness of death. From there He arose as the "*firstborn from the dead*" (Col. 1:18), born again out of the dead to the throne of glory.

In the feebleness of the grave, Christ gained His throne. We need to die with Christ; that is the way to be delivered from the old man and self, the way to receive the heavenly life

as a little child, and so to enter the kingdom. The feebleness of Bethlehem and the manger, of Calvary and the grave, was Christ's way to enter the kingdom. And the way for us is no different.

As we seek to humble ourselves and renounce all wishes and all hopes of being or doing good by our own powers, God's Spirit will cause the power of Christ's death and victory over sin to work in us. As we yield all our human abilities and energies in the confession that they are nothing but sinful and worthy of death, we will die with Him, and with Him we will be raised in "*newness of life*" (Rom. 6:4). This new life will be the little child that receives the kingdom.

The Life of Power

Oh, how little we see the kingdom of God come in power among God's children! Begin by asking yourself such questions as, How is it with me? Am I proving, in my own experience and to others, that the kingdom of God has come and that a child of God can enter in and live in all the blessedness of its heavenly life? Have I, through the Holy Spirit, received the kingdom into my heart so that the presence and power of God manifested in

me and Himself working out His will in me and through me are indeed the strength and joy of my religion? Let nothing less than the possession of this satisfy you. Let this be your one desire.

To this end, let us hold fast to two things. The first is the unspeakable blessedness, the divine possibility, the absolute certainty of the kingdom of God in power being the privilege of God's people. Our hearts are meant to be the very dwelling places of God. The Holy Spirit is meant to be in us and through us so that all the action of the heart, all that is done by it, is done by the Holy Spirit inspiring it. The kingdom of heaven has come to earth and can be set up within us in such power that the presence, the will, and the power of God will be our life and joy. It is more than the mind can grasp: let us believe it. Our wonderworking God will make it true.

The other thing is this: let us believe that all that is needed to be in full possession of these blessings is what the Holy Spirit, who is already in us, will bring about. He will cause us to be like little children before God. He will enable us as such to receive the kingdom from the Father. He will lead us and bring us

in so that we enter into the kingdom and the heavenly life it gives.

Can you not therefore say, “Lord, nothing less than this can satisfy me. I want to live my life fully in Your kingdom. I yield myself, I yield self with all its life, to You”? In the faith of the Holy Spirit, I say, “Here I am as a little child. Father, in the gift of Your Spirit in Pentecostal power, let me receive the kingdom as a little child.”