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## LOVE OF THE SPIRIT

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## THE GOSPEL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT'S LOVE

Horatius Bonar

**Does the Holy Spirit love us? There can be but one answer to this question. Yes! He does.**

As truly as the Father loveth us, as truly as the Son loveth us, so truly does the Spirit love us. The grace or free love which a sinner needs, and which has been revealed and sealed to us through the Seed of the woman, the "Word made flesh," belongs equally to Father, Son, and Spirit. That love which we believe to be in God must be the same in each Person of the Godhead, else the Godhead would be divided; one Person at variance with the others, or, at least, less loving than the others: which is impossible.

Twice over it is written, God is love (1 John 4:8,16); and this applies to each Person of the Godhead. The Father is love; the Son is love; the Spirit is love. The Trinity is a Trinity of Love.

When it is said, "God is a Spirit" (John 4:24), the words refer to each Person. If we lose sight of the love of one, we shall lose sight of the love of all. That which is the glory of Jehovah, is the glory of each of the three Persons. Let us beware of misrepresenting the Trinity by believing in unequal love, a love that is not equally large and free in each.

When it is said, “God is light” (1 John 1:5), we know that these words are true of the whole three Persons; not merely of the Father or of the Son. The Father is light; the Son is light; the Spirit is light. As of *light*, so of *love*; and he who would doubt that the Spirit is *love*, must needs also doubt that the Spirit is *light*. That which is written of God, is written of the Spirit of God. That “name” which God has proclaimed as His, belongs to the Spirit as certainly as to the Father and the Son,— “The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands” (Exo 34:6). Shall we rob the Holy Spirit of that blessed name? His personality claims it; and the gracious characteristics which go to make up the name, are as much those of the Spirit as those of the Father and the Son. The personality of the Spirit requires that what is thus written of one should be applicable to all. We are wont to say of the three Persons, “They are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.” If so, then the love which we affirm of the *whole* we must affirm of *each*. They must be equal in love, as well as in “power and glory.”

Let not the old question of unbelief come in “How can these things be?” We cannot “find out the Almighty unto perfection” (Job 11:7); but shall this inability of ours lead to doubt? Shall it not rather lead to faith? Shall we rob the Spirit of His love, because we cannot understand the deep wonders of Godhead? Shall we not rather say, If there be love in God at all, there must be love in the Spirit? For to Him it is given to carry out in human hearts the purposes of redeeming love, in striving, awakening, drawing, convincing, quickening, comforting; so that it is impossible to suppose that His love can be less warm, less tender, less large, less personal than the love of the Father and the Son.

Laying aside the disputes of intellectual pride, the questionings of vain human reason, the puzzling suggestions of unhumiliated self-righteousness, the fond endeavours to comprehend the hidden things of God, the stubborn determination not to believe unless we see “signs and wonders” (John 4:48), let us recognize in that simple formula, God is love the foundation of our faith as to the Spirit’s gracious character, and the solution of all our perplexities as to His personal and ineffable love. *True, He did not take flesh for us; He did not become poor for us; He did not die for us; He did not weep for us the human tears which the Son of God wept over Jerusalem; but none the less does He love us; and none the less is His work for us and in us the work of love,—love without bounds, or change, or end.*

We are baptized “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (Matt 28:19). That threefold name is love; or rather, that one name in its threefold connection with the three Persons, unfolds itself as the expression of the threefold love of Father, Son, and Spirit. The name thus named upon us is the divine declaration and pledge to us of “the love of the Spirit.” Our baptism says, not only, “God the Father loveth us,” not only, “God the Son loveth us”; but also, “God the Spirit loveth us.” We are baptized into the love of the Spirit.

Perhaps much of our slow progress in the walk of faith is to be traced to our overlooking the love of the Spirit. We do not deal with Him, for strength and advancement, as one who really loveth us, and longs to bless us, and delights to help our infirmities (Rom 8:26). We regard Him as cold, or distant, or austere; we do not trust Him for His grace, nor realize how much He is in earnest in His dealings with us. More childlike confidence in Him and in His love would help us on mightily. Let us not *grieve* Him, nor *vex* Him, nor *quench* Him by our untrustfulness, by disbelieving or doubting the riches of His grace, the abundance of His loving-kindness.

**He is no mere “influence,” but a living “Personality”; and there is a vast difference between these two things. An “influence” cannot love us, and we cannot love an “influence.” If there is to be love, there must be personality; and, in this case, it must be the personality of love.** The fresh breath of spring is an influence, but not a personality. It cannot love us nor call on us to love it. The voice of that which we call “nature” is an influence, but not a personality. There can be no mutual love between it and us. But a being with a soul is a personality, not an influence; and the love of man or woman is a personal thing, a true and real affection—one eye looking into another, and one heart touching its fellow. So is it with the love of the Spirit. There is a

personality about Him passing all the personalities of earth,—passing all the personalities of men or angels; and it is this divine personality that makes His love so precious and so suitable, as well as so true and real. There is no reality of love like that of the Spirit. It has nothing in common with the coldness or distance of a mere “influence.” It comes closely home to a human heart, because it is the love of Him who formed the heart, and who is seeking to make it His abode for ever.

The proofs of His love are abundant. They are divine proofs; and, therefore, assuredly true. It is God who has given them to us, that no doubt of the Spirit’s love may ever enter our minds. They are spread over all Scripture, in different forms and aspects. While the Bible was meant to be specially the revelation of the Son of God, it is also the revelation of the Holy Spirit. He reveals Himself while revealing Christ. He utters His own love while showing us the love of the Father and the Son.

**The thoughts of the Spirit are thoughts of love.** The apostle uses the words, “the *mind* of the Spirit,” in connection with His gracious intercession (Rom 8:26,27); and we know that intercession implies *love*. The “groanings that cannot be uttered” are awakened in us by the Spirit in His love. He thinks of us; and His thoughts are “precious” (Psa 139:17). Yes; He thinks of us; and His thoughts are thoughts of peace (Jer 29:11). The Bible is filled with the thoughts of the Spirit; and they are love. They breathe in every page of Scripture; for holy men of God “spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”

**The ways of the Spirit are the ways of love.** His manifold dealings with the sons of men, in “opening hearts” (Acts 16:14), teaching, sanctifying, chastening, are the dealings of love,—love which many waters cannot quench, and which the floods cannot drown. The faintest touch of His hand is the touch of love. The gentlest whisper of His voice is the whisper of love. All His dealings from day to day, whether of cheer or of chastisement, whether of warning or of welcome, are those of love. In a thousand ways He beckons us to come to the Cross; He draws us, unconsciously and imperceptibly, but irresistibly, away from sin and self to God and heaven. He has not, indeed, human tears to shed, like the son of God when he wept over Jerusalem; but not the less are His yearnings true and tender, and all His ways toward us are ways of unutterable compassion (see Gen 6:3; Psa 51:11,12; Isa 55:8). He is “very pitiful, and of tender mercy.”

**The works of the Spirit are the works of love.** When He “garnished the heavens” (Job 26:13), it was the work of love. When he moved upon the face of the deep (Gen 1:2), it was in love. When He came upon holy men of old, it was in love. When He wrote the Scriptures, it was in love,—love to us. When He anointed Jesus of Nazareth to preach the gospel to the poor, it was in love to us. When He fulfills His office of “guiding into all truth,” it is in love. When He opens eyes and hearts, it is in love. When He chastens, it is in love. When He comforts, it is in love. When He sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts, it is in love. When He, as one with the Father and the Son, wrote the seven epistles of the Revelation, it was in love,—as the close of each of them shows: “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches” (Rev 2:7). His works in the soul of man, in regenerating, upholding, and perfecting, are the works of love,—love like that of Christ, “that passeth knowledge”: love to the chief of sinners; love to those who have vexed and resisted and quenched Him; love which says, “How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel?” (Hosea 11:8).

**The words of the Spirit are the words of love.** That which we call “the word of God” is specially the Spirit’s word: and it overflows with love; love which, while it condemns the sin, presents pardon to the sinner; love which, while it spreads out before us “the exceeding sinfulness of sin,” proclaims aloud, to the guiltiest of the guilty, free forgiveness and “deliverance from the wrath to come.” The gospel of Christ contains in it the good news of the Spirit’s love. “He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost” (Matt 3:11) are the words in which is described the fitting out of men for preaching the good news; and in this baptism we have the manifestation of the Spirit’s love. He baptizes because He loves. He sends out men to tell of His love; and the baptism with which He baptizes them is to fit them for this message of love. By this baptism the words of love are put into their lips; and these words are truly those of the Spirit Himself, from whatever lips they may come, by whatever

pen they may be written down. They are the words of sincerity and truth. He means what He says when He sends out His servants with the language of love upon their tongues.

**Hear some of His words of grace,—grace as boundless and as suitable as that of the Father and the Son; grace which has lost none of its largeness or freeness by the lapse of ages or the desperate resistance of human hearts:—** “Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies” (Psa 103:3,4); “O Lord, I will praise thee: though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away” (Isa 12:1); “Seek ye the Lord while He may be found” (Isa 55:6); “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Isa 1:18); “As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked” (Eze 33:11); “I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love” (Hosea 11:4); “Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity” (Micah 7:18); “The Lord is good; a stronghold in the day of trouble” (Nahum 1:7); “How great is His goodness” (Zech 9:17). These are the Spirit’s own words; and He writes them as the witness for God, the revealer of the divine character, the Unfolder of the love of Father, Son, and Spirit. They are the words of the Spirit, spoken before the Son of God came into the world to reveal and to embody in Himself the love of God to man. The New Testament is yet more abundant in its utterances of love: and in every one of them the Spirit has His part: till all is summed up in the wondrous words which time cannot weaken, and which long use cannot make stale: “The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Rev 22:17).

The Holy Spirit is no mere mechanical agent in the great work of a sinner’s deliverance, and of the Church’s upbuilding, obediently doing the work appointed to Him. “I delight to do Thy will” is as true of the Spirit as the Son. He loves the sinner; therefore He lays hold of him. He pities his misery; therefore He stretches out the hand of help. He has no pleasure in his death; therefore He puts forth His saving power. He is longsuffering and patient; therefore He strives with him day by day; and though “vexed,” “resisted,” “grieved,” and “quenched,” He refuses to retire from, or give up, any sinner on this side of eternity. The extent to which we resist Him, and the amount of His forbearing love, we cannot know. This only we may say, that our stubbornness is something infinitely fearful and malignant, while His patient grace passeth all understanding.

We are little alive to the injury we do to ourselves by any misunderstanding as to the mind and the work of the Spirit. The injustice which we do to Him is great; and the wrong which we inflict upon ourselves is no less so. No mistakes as to the Spirit’s gracious character can be trivial or harmless. To regard Him as “austere,” or “hard,” or inaccessible, or needing to be persuaded to do His work in us, is to treat Him as at variance with the Father and the Son; slow to carry out the great purpose of divine love, in which purpose the three Persons of the Godhead are equally concerned. To raise questions as to the riches of His grace is to misread Scripture, and to put a dark and false construction upon His testimony for Christ, as well as upon His dealings with the sons of men,—His dealings with those who have been saved, as well as with those who are lost. For what do the saved ones not owe to His love; and what would that love not have done for the lost, had they not stubbornly set it at nought to the last! “How often would I have gathered thy children” were the words which accompanied the tears of the Son of God over the rebellious city; and they are words equally expressive of the Spirit’s feelings toward the stout-hearted of every age and nation.

Imperfect views of the Spirit’s character may not be regarded by some as serious or fatal, but it is hardly possible that they can be entertained without exercising a darkening and deadening influence upon the soul: not in the same way as defective views of Christ’s work affect us, but still with a most evil result both upon the conscience and the heart,—as if there were something in the Spirit which repelled us, whatever there might be in Christ to attract us; as if the light which the Cross throws upon the love of the Spirit were not quite in harmony with that which it reveals of the love of Christ; as if the Spirit were not always as ready with His help as is the Son.

*All wrong thoughts of God, whether of Father, Son, or Spirit, must cast a shadow over the soul that entertains them. In some cases the shadow may not be so deep and cold as in others; but never can it be a trifle. And it is this that furnishes the proper answer to the flippant question so often asked, Does it really matter what a man believes? All defective views of God's character tell upon the life of the soul and the peace of the conscience. We must think right thoughts of God if we would worship Him as He desires to be worshipped; if we would live the life He wishes us to live, and enjoy the peace which He has provided for us.*

The want of stable *peace*, of which so many complain, may arise from imperfect views of the Spirit's love. True, our peace comes from the work of the Substitute upon the cross, from the blood of the one sacrifice, from the sinbearing of Him who has made peace by the blood of the cross. But it is the Holy Spirit who glorifies Christ to us, and takes the scales from our eyes. If then we doubt His love, can we expect Him to reveal the Son in our hearts? Are we not thrusting Him away, and hindering that view of the peace-making which He only can give? **Trust His love**, and He will make known the Peacemaker to you. **Trust His love**, and He will show the precious blood by which the guiltiest conscience is purged, and the peace which passeth all understanding is imparted. He is the Spirit of peace, and His work is the work of peace. His office is to make known to us the Prince of Peace. Can there be peace without the recognition of the Holy Spirit's love? Can there fail to be peace when this is recognized and acted on? Doubts as to the love of the Spirit must inevitably intercept the peace which the peace-making cross presents to us.

Perhaps the want of faith, which we often mourn over, may arise from our not realizing the Spirit's love. "Faith [no doubt] cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God": yet it is the Holy Spirit who shines upon the word; it is He who gives the seeing eye and the hearing ear. Under the pressure of unbelief, have we fled to Him and appealed to His love? "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief," may be as aptly a cry to the Spirit as to the Son of God. He helpeth our infirmities; and in the infirmity of our faith He will most assuredly succour us. It is through Him that we become strong in faith; and He *loves* to impart the needed strength. He giveth to all men, liberally, and upbraideth not. Yet in our dealings with Him regarding faith, let us remember that He does not operate in some mystical or miraculous way, as if imparting to us a new faculty called faith; but by taking of the things of Christ and showing them to us; so touching our faculties by His mighty yet invisible hand, that, ere we are aware, these disordered souls of ours begin to work aright, and these dull eyes of ours begin to see what was all along before them, but what they never had perceived, "the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord." **Thus He works in us, often slowly and imperceptibly, but with divine power, making us to understand the gospel and to draw out of it that light and life which it contains for the dead and the dark. Looking at the cross, under the Spirit's enlightenment, we grow in faith. For never does He produce or increase faith in us without keeping our eye steadfastly fixed upon the great redeeming work of the incarnate Son. He is not the Spirit of unbelief or bondage, but of faith and liberty; and His desire is that we should be delivered from unbelief and bondage.** He loves us too well to be indifferent to our remaining in distance or in distrust. He longs to see us children of faith, not of unbelief; to make us strong in faith; to remove whatever from within or without hinders its growth. Trust His love for the increase of faith; for deliverance from the evil heart of unbelief; for revealing to you the bright object of faith,—Christ, and "God in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing unto men their trespasses." As truth is the foundation of faith, so, as "the Spirit of truth," He guides us out of error into truth, and thus leads us out of unbelief into faith; making us to see that the root of what we called our want of faith, was not that we were believing the right thing in a wrong way (as is so often said), but that we were *not believing the right thing*, but something else which could not bring rest to us in what way soever we might believe it.

*Perhaps our want of joy may arise from our over-looking the love of the Spirit. Peace is one thing; joy is something more,— "joy unspeakable and full of glory." Assuredly He is the Spirit of joy, and as such delights to impart His joy. He who, by the lips of His Apostle, said, "Rejoice in the Lord always," wants to see you a joyful man. Will you trust Him for this? Will you rest in His love for this gift? Do not say, Joy is a secondary thing: a man may be a Christian without joy; some of the best of God's people have gone mourning all their days. These are poor excuses for not possessing what God wants you to possess, and what would make you ten times more*

useful to all around. God wishes you to be joyful. Your testimony to God is imperfect without joy. Cultivate joy; and in order to do so effectually, take firmer hold of the Spirit's power, and rest more implicitly in His *love*. He loves you too well to wish you to be gloomy. Be filled with the Spirit and you will be filled with joy. Joy is a great help in living a holy and consistent life. Holiness is joy, and joy is holiness. Accept the Spirit's love for both of these.

**The “seal of the Spirit” (Eph 1:13); the “witness of the Spirit” (Rom 8:16); the “indwelling” of the Spirit (Rom 8:11); the “inworking” of the Spirit (Eph 1:19); the “help” of the Spirit (Rom 8:26); the “liberty” of the Spirit (2 Cor 3:17); the “strengthening” of the Spirit (Eph 3:16); the “fulness” of the Spirit (Eph 5:18); the “teaching” of the Spirit (John 14:26); the “baptism” of the Spirit (Mark 1:8);—all these are most closely connected with the “love of the Spirit”; and he who would separate them from that love, would rob them of all their meaning and power and consolation.**

It is the loving Spirit that *seals*, and *witnesses*, and *indwells*, and *inworks*, and *helps*, and *liberates*, and *strengthens*, and *teaches*, and *baptizes*. So that in seeking these blessings we must ever remember that we are dealing with one whose love anticipates our longings, and on whose side there exists no hindrance to our possessing them all. Nowhere in Scripture has God led us to suppose that the Holy Spirit would be awaiting to us in any time of need, or that we could be beforehand with Him in any desire of ours for any spiritual blessing. “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?” (Luke 11:13).

In our day, when that which is miraculous or supernatural is suspected or scorned, it is not easy even to gain a hearing for such truths. The Holy Spirit, we may say, is discarded as the most incredible part of the supernatural and impersonal. He Himself is regarded as an airy nothing, or as mist; and His direct and divine agency is treated as the dream of diseased enthusiasm. The removal of the supernatural from religion means specially the removal of the Spirit. To retain Him personally in our theology is considered to be retaining the most incredible part of the supernatural,—the most visionary article in our creed.

Hence the need of bringing fully into view both His personality and His character. That modern unbelief should dislike the whole subject, and treat it as incompatible with reason, and therefore incapable of proof, as being wholly beyond the range of our senses, need not surprise us: nor would we attempt to meet Rationalism on its own ground. But what we say is this: Our information regarding the Holy Spirit must come wholly from revelation; and the question is, Does the Bible bear us out in the above statements? It certainly does *seem* to contain the doctrine we have been affirming. Its Author evidently meant us to accept that doctrine as true. If that doctrine *cannot* be true, it must be *honestly* struck out of the Bible; not by explaining texts away, or misinterpreting whole chapters, but by boldly affirming that Scripture is inaccurate. The words regarding the Spirit are too plain to be diluted into unmeaning figures. He who inspired the Bible has used language that cannot be mistaken. He has not left us in any doubt as to what He intended. Hence the quarrel of unbelief is a quarrel with revelation, and more specially with the Author of revelation. This is the real point at issue in these days, in the controversy with Rationalism.

**The doctrine of the Holy Spirit's person and work must stand or fall with the Bible.** If it is incredible, then Scripture has utterly deceived us, and the God who made us has given us a book, as the revelation of divine truth, which contains what no man ought to believe or can believe. If the innumerable references to the Spirit be mere figures of speech,—Orientalisms,—meaning nothing real, then to accept them as literal, and to believe in a *personal* Spirit, must be pure fanaticism; and as to such a thing as the love of the Spirit, only visionaries or mystics would accept it.

*Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure; and the Word of God is true and real. Heaven and earth may pass away, but one jot or one tittle of what is written in Scripture cannot. What God has made known to us*

*concerning the Spirit,—His wisdom, love, holiness, and power, remains unaltered throughout the ages; as true to us in these last days as it was in the beginning.*

That the Holy Spirit is the producer in the human heart of everything that God calls religion, is beyond question to any one who accepts Bible statements as divinely true. He begins, carries on, and consummates in us all spiritual feeling, all spiritual worship, all spiritual life and energy. Nor can there be anything more hollow and unreal than religion without the Holy Spirit. That which is external and superficial,—which manifests itself in dress, and music, and routine service,—may flourish without Him; nay, *can only flourish in His absence*. But the deep and the real must be His work from first to last. The love of the Spirit is absolutely necessary to a religion of love, and liberty, and joy. *Religiousness* is at every man's command. Any man may get it up in a day; but *religion* cometh from above, and is the product of the Spirit dwelling and working in the heart.

The bustle of the present day hinders our discernment of this difference; nay, it grieves the Spirit provoking Him utterly to depart; thus leaving us with a hollowness of heart which yields no rest nor satisfaction, and which cannot be acceptable to God. "The Spirit of God," says Melancthon, "loves retirement and silence; it is then He penetrates into our hearts. The Bride of Christ does not take her stand in the streets and cross ways, but she leads her spouse into the house of her mother" (Song 8:2).

"The gifts of the Holy Ghost"! This is the Church's heritage (Acts 2:38,39). How far she has claimed it or used it is a serious question; but that this gift was meant for her in all ages is beyond a doubt. The whole book of the Acts of the Apostles is evidence of this. "My Spirit remaineth among you," is a promise for the Church as truly as for Israel (Hag 2:5).

From the beginning it has been so; and the holy men raised up by God to speak His words or do His works were men "filled with the Holy Spirit" (Exo 31:2). It is this Spirit that has been the life of the Church. When He came, all was life; when He departed, all was death. Nothing was lacking so long as He was in the midst, and when He left nothing could compensate for His withdrawal. When He was present, the Church was the garden of the Lord; when He forsook her, every herb and flower of that garden withered.

Even in Old Testament days it was so; but since Pentecost, more largely and more powerfully. The indwelling and inworking Spirit, who is the promise of the Father and gift of the Son, is that which belongs to the Church of every age, little as she may have claimed or welcomed her peculiar glory.

"The gift" and "the gifts" are, both of them, expressions used in connection with the Spirit (Acts 8:20-10:45). He is *one*, yet *manifold*; called "the seven Spirits of God," and "the seven lamps of fire," and the "seven eyes," and the "seven horns" (Rev 3:1; 4:5; 5:6). He is not only spoken of in connection with each saint, but with the body, the Church universal, which is the "habitation of God, through the Spirit" (Eph 2:22); "the temple of the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor 3:16; 6:19); and, as such, possessor of His love.

Such is the manifold fulness of the Spirit which as the gift of Christ, is the property of the whole Church of God. That fulness is not only the fulness of peace, and wisdom, and holiness, but of *love*. It is given her, not for herself only, but for the world out of which she has been called. She is to shine in the light of this love upon a dark earth. She is to pour out of the fulness which she receives upon a parched and needy world; out of her are to flow rivers of living water (John 7:38). Great is the world's need; but not greater than the provided supply: for the fountain of love, out of which the Church receives and pours this living water, is inexhaustible and divine.

The love of the Spirit is, like that of the Son, a love that passeth knowledge, a fountain whose waters fail not: "A pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb" (Rev 22:1).

In the possession of this heavenly gift,—of these sevenfold gifts,—the Church is unspeakably rich, whatever her outward condition may be. Enjoying the fulness of this abiding Spirit, she manifests her character as the witness for Christ and as the light of the world. These gifts of the ascended Christ (Eph 4:8) made her what she was meant to be in the midst of the world's evil and of the powers of darkness, "a burning and shining light." In the power of such gifts she went forth to do battle with the idolatries and immoralities of heathendom. Boldly entering the cities of classic fame, she took possession of pagan temples and Jewish synagogues; and thousands everywhere, through apostolic preaching gathered round the throne.

It was not the gift of miracle, of healing, or of tongues, that did the work. These were not subordinate things, and in many places never used by the apostles. These were not "the best gifts" which we are commanded to covet (1 Cor 12:31). **It was the fulness of spiritual power, possessed and exercised by holy men, awakening, quickening, sanctifying, that wrought the mighty changes which history records.** It is well that we should look back to Pentecost, with wistful eyes, longing for a ministry of Pentecostal power, as the only remedy for the unbelief of the last days. But mere physical miracles are not the desirable things. The gifts of the Spirit, the Church's inalienable inheritance, are quite apart from bodily manifestations; and they remain with us still. But do we claim them? Do we use them? Do we not trust in other strength? Do we not lean on learning, on science, on talent, as if by these we were to fight and overcome? And, in so doing, do we not mistake our true position, and character, and mission? Nay, do we not grieve and quench the Spirit?

**Yet, the love of the Spirit is unquenchable.** He is unwilling to depart. He despises not the day of small things; but He bids us look beyond and above them. Formalism, routine, and external religion, the excitements of mysticism,—these are poor substitutes for the life, and glow, and energy of the Holy Spirit. Nothing but His own presence can avail to lift us out of the unreal religiousness into which we have fallen; to transform creeds into realities, and the bodily bowing of the head, or bending of the knee, into spiritual worship; turning the "dim religious light" into the sunshine of a heavenly noon; drawing out of our hymnals the deep heart-music of divine and blessed song; delivering us alike from Rationalism and Ritualism, from a hollow externalism, and from an impulsive and unreasoning fanaticism. *It is His presence only that can vitalize ordinances; clothe ministry with power; unite the broken Church; fill the void of aching hearts; impart to service, liberty and gladness; ward off error; and make us mighty;—filling our sanctuaries with living worshippers, and sending forth men of might to preach the everlasting gospel; and to proclaim, as in primitive days, the Christ that has come, and the Christ that is to come again.*

**He has come, in His love, to quicken the dead in sin;** and He is daily moving upon the face of the waters,—bringing life out of death. Nor is His arm shortened, that it cannot save.

**He has come, in His love, to give light for darkness.** Nor is there any human heart too dark for Him to illumine. He lights up souls. He lights up Churches. He lights up lands, making them that sit in darkness to see a great light.

**He has come, in His love, to gather in the wanderers, far and near.** No strayed one has gone too far into the wilderness for Him to follow and to bring back. The "ends of the earth" form the vast region into which His love has gone forth to seek, and find, and save.

**He has come, in His love, to guide the doubting heart.** He takes lovingly and gently the hand of the perplexed and inquiring, and leads them into the way of peace. He knows all their troubles and fears, so that they need not fear being misunderstood. He teaches their ignorance and shows them their mistakes, and points their eye to the cross.

**He has come, in His love, to bind up the broken-hearted.** His name is the Comforter, and His consolations are as abundant as they are everlasting. "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people," are the words which he has written down for every sorrowful one (Isa 40:1). In all trial, bereavement, pain, sorrow, let us realize the love of the Spirit. That love comes out most brightly and most tenderly in the day of mourning. In the chamber of



sickness or of death, let us find strength and peace in the presence, companionship, and sympathy of the gracious Spirit.

**He has come down, in His love, to seek after the backslider.** From a heart that once owned Him, He has been driven out, and He has retired sorrowfully. But He has not ceased to desire a return to His old abode. He still pities, and yearns, and beseeches. “Turn, ye backsliding children, for I am married unto you,” are His words of longing and pity.

**He has come, in His love, even to the mis-believing and the deluded,** seeking to remove the mists with which a rebellious intellect has compassed itself about; and to lead them out into life, and love, and day. They are groping for an idea; and He brings them into contact with a Person, even God Himself. They are crying vaguely for knowledge; and He presents to them the wisdom deposited in the Person of the Word made flesh. They are in search of sympathy for their wounded hearts; and He places Himself before them in the fulness of His all-sympathizing love. They are asking for a creed of certainty and perfection, on which their faith may rest; He offers Himself to them as a living and unerring Teacher,—the Author of an infallible Book, all whose pages sparkle with the love of its loving Author. They crave beauty in worship, something to please the eye,—aesthetic beauty, as they call it! He draws the eye to Him who is “the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely.”

**He has come, in His love, to build up His own.** He seeks to fill, with His holy presence, the soul into which He has come. He wants, not a part of the man, but the whole,—body, soul, and spirit,—the entire being, that it may be altogether conformed to Himself. He has come to His temples, and His purpose is to make them in reality, what they are in name, the “habitation of God, the temples of the Holy Ghost.”

This article is available in booklet format.

## THE COMMUNION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN HIS LOVE

John Owen

*The first and general work of the Holy Spirit is to bring to mind the words and promises of Christ. (John 14:26).*

There are two promises in this verse. There is the promise of the Spirit’s teaching, which I will deal with under his work of anointing believers, and there is the promise of ‘bringing to remembrance all things that Jesus said’.

The work of bringing to remembrance things that Jesus said is the first general promise concerning the Spirit’s work as comforter.

This promise first concerned the apostles. Christ promised his apostles that the Holy Spirit would bring back to their minds, by a direct work of almighty power, the things that he had said to them, so that by his inspiration they might be enabled to write and preach them for the good and benefit of his church (II Pet. 1:21). The apostles had forgotten much of what Christ had said to them, or might possibly do so. And what they did remember by their natural ability was not a sufficient foundation for them to write an infallible rule of faith for the church. It would be by this work of the Spirit that they would be enabled to write such an infallible rule of faith.

This promise of bringing to remembrance all the things that Jesus had spoken is also for the comfort of believers. Christ had been speaking to his disciples to comfort them by giving them precious promises of his

help and strength in this life. He told them of the love of the Father, of the glory he was providing for them, which was full of unspeakable joy. 'But,' Christ says, 'I know how unable you are to make use of these things for your own comfort. The Spirit, therefore, will bring them back to your minds in their full strength, so that you will find that comfort in them which I intended.' And this is one reason why it was necessary for believers that Christ's bodily absence should be more than made up for by the presence of the Spirit. While he was with them, what little effect his promises had on their hearts! But when the Spirit came, how full of joy did he make all things to them. He brings the promises of Christ to our minds and hearts to comfort us, to bring us the joy of them and that far beyond the joy the disciples found in them when Christ spoke to them on earth. The gracious influences of the promises were then restrained so that the dispensation of the Spirit might be seen to be more glorious than that of the giving of the law.

Christ told the disciples that the effect of the Holy Spirit's work in bringing things to their remembrance would be peace (John 14:27). They would be freed from worried, anxious minds and fearful hearts. It is stupid to rely on our natural abilities to remember the promises of Christ. But when the Comforter undertakes the work, then all is well. Our Saviour Christ, then, left to his Spirit the powerful effect of his promises which he personally gave his apostles in their great distress. We may therefore see where all the spiritual comfort we have in this world comes from, and so we may have fellowship with the Holy Spirit in this his work.

**The Holy Spirit does his work powerfully.** A believer may be in the saddest and darkest condition imaginable. Even so, the Holy Spirit is able to break through all this and bring to mind the promises of Christ. By this work, the Holy Spirit enables Christians to sit in dungeons, rejoice in flames and glory in troubles. If he brings to mind the promises of Christ for our comfort, neither Satan nor man, neither sin nor the world, nor even death itself shall take away our comfort. Saints who have communion with the Holy Spirit know this only too well. Sometimes the heavens are black over them, and the earth trembles under them. Disasters and distresses appear which are so full of horror and darkness that they are tempted to give up in despair. So how greatly are their spirits revived when the Holy Spirit brings the words of Christ to their minds for their comfort and joy. Thus, believers are not dependent on outward circumstances for their happiness, for they have the inward and powerfully effective work of the Holy Spirit, to whom they give themselves up by faith.

**The Holy Spirit does his work sovereignly.** The Holy Spirit distributes to everyone as he wills. So the believer may at one time be full of joy and, at another, full of distress. Every promise at one time brings great joy when troubles are great and heavy; yet at another time, when only suffering a little, he finds no joy in the promises, however much he seeks for it. The reason is simple. The Holy Spirit distributes as he wills. So there are no rules or course of procedure given to us to follow in order to get peace and joy in the promises. In this way, faith learns to wait on the sovereign will and pleasure of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit works freely and without payment. Because much of the comfort which comes by the promises depends on the sovereign will of the Holy Spirit, so we find that comfort comes unexpectedly when the heart has every reason in the world to expect distress and sorrow. This is often the first means of restoring a backsliding soul who might justly be expecting to be utterly cast off.

The life and soul of all our comforts are treasured up in the promises of Christ. They are the breasts from which we suck the milk of godly comfort. Who does not know how powerless these promises are in the bare letter, even though we may meditate long on them, as well as how unexpectedly they burst in on the soul, bringing great comfort and joy. Faith deals especially with the Holy Spirit. Faith considers the promises themselves, looks up to the Spirit and waits for the Spirit to bring life and comfort into them. No sooner does the soul begin to feel the life of a promise warming his heart, freeing him from fear, worries and troubles, than it may know, and it ought to know, that the Holy Spirit is doing his work. This will add to the believer's joy and lead him into deeper fellowship with the Holy Spirit.

## ***THE SECOND GENERAL WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IS TO GLORIFY CHRIST (John 16:14)***

If the work of the Spirit is to glorify Christ, then we may see what sort of a spirit that is who sets himself up in the place of Christ, calling himself 'the vicar of Christ' or 'another Christ'. The work of the Comforter is to glorify Christ. So any spirit that claims to be of Christ and does not seek to glorify that Christ who spoke to his apostles is clearly a false spirit.

But how will the Comforter glorify Christ? 'He,' says Christ, 'shall take of mine.' What these things are is told us in the next verse. 'All things that the Father has are mine, therefore I said he shall take of mine.' Christ is not speaking of the essence and essential properties of the Father and the Son, but he is speaking of the grace which is brought to us by the Father and the Son. This is what Christ calls 'my things', because they are the 'things' purchased by his mediation. They are also the 'things of the Father', because in his eternal love, he has provided them to be brought to us by the blood of his Son. They are the fruits of his election. 'These,' said Christ, 'the Comforter shall receive. They shall be committed to him so that he may bring them to you for your good and for your comfort in trouble. So he shall show, declare and make them known to you.' As Comforter, he reveals to the souls of sinners the good things of the covenant of grace, which the Father has provided and the Son has purchased. He shows to us mercy, grace, forgiveness, righteousness and acceptance with God. It is vital to know that these are the things of Christ which he has procured for us. They are shown to us for our comfort and establishment. These things the Holy Spirit effectively conveys to the souls of believers, and makes them known to them for their own good; that they were originally from the Father, prepared from eternity in his love and good will; that they were purchased for them by Christ and laid up for them in the covenant of grace for their use. In this way, Christ is magnified and glorified in their hearts and they then fully realise what a glorious Saviour and Redeemer he is. It is by the work of the Holy Spirit that a believer glorifies and honours Christ for the eternal redemption he has purchased for him. 'No-one can say that Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Spirit' (I Cor. 12:3).

## ***THE THIRD GENERAL WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IS TO 'POUR THE LOVE OF GOD INTO OUR HEARTS' (Rom. 5:5)***

That it is the love of God to us and not our love to God which is here meant is clear from the context. The love of God is either the love of his purpose to do us good or the love of acceptance and approval by him. Both these are called the love of God in Scripture. Now, how can these be poured into our hearts? This can be done only by giving us a spiritual understanding of them. God pours the Holy Spirit abundantly on us and he pours out the love of God into our hearts. That is, the Holy Spirit so persuades us that God loves us that our souls are filled with joy and comfort. This is his work and he does it effectively. To persuade a poor, sinful soul that God in Jesus Christ loves him, delights in him, is well pleased with him and only has thoughts of kindness towards him is an inexpressible mercy.

This is the special work of the Holy Spirit and by this special work we have communion with the Father in his love, which is poured into our hearts. So not only do we rejoice in and glorify the Holy Spirit who does this work, but in the Father also, whose love it is. It is the same in respect of the Son, in taking the things of Christ and showing them to us. What we have of heaven in this world lies in this work of the Holy Spirit who loves us.

## ***THE FOURTH GENERAL WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IS TO BEAR WITNESS WITH OUR SPIRITS THAT WE ARE THE CHILDREN OF GOD (Rom. 8:16)***

Sometimes the soul wonders whether it is a child of God or not, because so much of the old nature still remains. So the soul brings out all the evidences to prove its claim to be a true child of God. To support this claim, the Holy Spirit comes and bears witness that the claim is true.

The picture is that of judicial proceedings in a court of law. The judge being seated, the person concerned lays his claim, produces his evidences and pleads his case. Then a person of known and approved integrity comes into the court and testifies on behalf of the claimant. This stops the mouth of all the adversaries and fills the man that pleaded with joy and satisfaction. It is the same with the believer. The soul, by the power of his own conscience, is brought before the law of God. There the soul puts in his plea that he is a true child of God, that he does indeed belong to God's family, and to prove this, he produces all his evidences, everything by which faith gives him a right and title to God. Satan, in the meantime, opposes with all his might. Sin and the law add their opposition also. Many flaws are found in his evidences. The truth of them all is questioned and the soul is left in doubt as to whether he is a child of God or not. Then the Comforter comes and by a word of promise or in some other way, overwhelms the heart with a sure persuasion, putting down all objections, showing that his plea is good and that he is indeed a child of God. And therefore the Holy Spirit is said to 'witness with our spirits that we are children of God.'

At the same time, he enables us to show our love to the Father by acts of obedience to his will, which is called 'crying Abba, Father' (Gal. 4:6). But as the Holy Spirit works sovereignly of his own will and pleasure, the believer may be kept in doubt for a long time. The law sometimes seems to prevail, sin and Satan to rejoice and the poor soul is filled with dread about his inheritance. Perhaps by his own witness, from his faith, sanctification and previous experience, he keeps up his claim with some life and comfort. But the work is not done, the conquest is not fully won, until the Spirit, who works freely and effectively, when and how he wills, comes in with his testimony also. Clothing his power with his promise, he makes all parties concerned listen to him and so puts an end to the whole dispute.

In this, he gives us holy fellowship with himself. The soul knows his voice when he speaks. There is something too great in that voice to be only the voice of some created power. When the Lord Jesus Christ at one word stilled the storm, all who were with him knew there was divine power at work (Matt. 8:25, 27). And when the Holy Spirit with one word stills the storms in the soul, bringing calm and assurance, then the soul knows by experience that divine power is present and so rejoices in that presence.

***THE FIFTH GENERAL WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IS HIS WORK IN SEALING US (Eph. 1:13; 4:30)***

To seal something is to impart the image of the seal to the thing sealed. The character of the seal is stamped on the things sealed. In this sense, the effective communication of the image of God to us should be our sealing. The Spirit in believers, really communicating the image of God in righteousness and true holiness to the soul, seals us. To have the stamp of the Holy Spirit as an evidence to the soul that he has been accepted by God is to be sealed by the Spirit. In this sense, Christ is said to be sealed by God (John 6:27). He had impressed on him the power, wisdom and majesty of God.

'Sealing' confirms or ratifies any grant or conveyance made in writing. In such cases, men set their seals to make good and confirm their grants. When this is done, the grants are irrevocable. Sealing also confirms the testimony that is given by anyone of the truth of anything. This is what the Jews did. When anyone had given true witness to any thing or matter and it was received by the judges, they instantly set their seals to it, to confirm it in judgment. So it is said that he who receives the testimony of Christ 'sets to his seal that God is true' (AV) or 'has certified that God is true' (John 3:33). The promise is the great grant and conveyance of life and salvation in Christ to the souls of believers. That we may have full assurance of the truth and the irrevocability of the promise, God gives us the Spirit to satisfy our hearts of it. So the Spirit is said to seal us by assuring our hearts of those promises and the faithfulness of the God who promised. But though many expositors take this line, I do not see how this accords with the true meaning of the word. It is not said that the promise is sealed, but that we are sealed. And when we seal a deed or grant to anyone, we do not say the man is sealed, but that the deed or grant is sealed.

Sealing denotes possession and assurance of being kept safe. The object sealed is separated out from unsealed objects. Men set their seals on that which they possess and desire to keep safe for themselves. So quite clearly, in this sense, the servants of God are said to be sealed. They are marked with God's mark as his special ones (Ezek. 9:4). So believers are sealed when they are marked for God to be the heirs of the purchased possession and to be kept safe to the day of redemption. Now if this is what is meant, it does not denote the giving of assurance in the heart, but of giving security to the person. The Father gives the elect into the hands of Christ to be redeemed. Christ having redeemed them, in due time they are called by the Spirit and marked for God, and so they give themselves up to the care of the Father.

We are sealed for the day of redemption when, from the stamp, image and character of the Spirit upon our souls, we have a fresh awareness of the love of God given to us, with an assured persuasion of our being accepted by God.

So the Holy Spirit communicates to us his own likeness, which is also the image of the Father and the Son (II Cor. 3:18). In this work of his, the Holy Spirit brings us into fellowship with himself. Our likeness to him gives us boldness with him. We look for his works. We pray for his fruits, and when any effect of grace, any awareness of the image of Christ implanted in us persuades and assures us that we are separated and set apart for God, then we have communion with the Holy Spirit in his work of sealing.

***THE SIXTH WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IS HIS BEING AN 'EARNEST' OF 'DEPOSIT' OR 'GUARANTEE' (II Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Eph. 1:13, 14)***

From these verses, we learn that the Spirit himself is the 'earnest, deposit or guarantee'. Each of these words denotes a pledge. A pledge is that property which anyone gives or leaves in the safe keeping of another, to assure him that he will give him, or pay him all that he has promised at some future date. But that which is meant by 'earnest, deposit or guarantee' here is a part of that which is to come. An 'earnest' is part of the price of anything, or part of any grant given beforehand to assure the person to whom it is given that at the appointed time he shall receive the promised whole.

For a thing to be an 'earnest, deposit or guarantee', it must be part of the whole. It must be of the same kind and nature with the whole, just as if we have some money as an 'earnest, deposit or guarantee' that the whole amount will be paid later.

It must be a guarantee of a promise. First, the whole is promised, then the 'earnest' is given as a deposit or guarantee that the promise will be fulfilled. The Holy Spirit is this 'earnest'. God gives us the promise of eternal life. To guarantee this to us, he gives us his Spirit. So the Spirit is the 'earnest, the deposit, the guarantee' of the full inheritance that is promised and purchased.

The Holy Spirit is an 'earnest, deposit and guarantee' on God's part, because God gives him as the best part of the inheritance itself, and because the Holy Spirit is of the same kind and nature as the whole inheritance, as an 'earnest' ought to be. The full inheritance promised is the fulness of the Spirit in the enjoyment of God. When that Spirit which is given to us in this world has perfectly taken away all sin and sorrow and has made us able to enjoy the glory of God in his presence, that is the full inheritance promised. So that the Spirit given to us to make us fit for the enjoyment of God in some measure whilst we are here is the 'earnest or guarantee' of the whole.

God does this to assure us of the inheritance and to guarantee it to us. Having given us his Word, promises, covenant, oath, the revelation of his faithfulness and his immutability as guarantees, all of which exist outside us, he also graciously gives us his Spirit to dwell within us, so that we may have all the security and guarantee of which we are capable (Isa. 59:21). What more can be done? He has given us his Holy Spirit. In him we have the first-fruits of glory, the utmost pledge of his love, the earnest or guarantee of the whole.

The Holy Spirit is also the 'earnest, deposit or guarantee' on the part of believers because he gives them an awareness of the love of God for them. The Holy Spirit makes known to believers their acceptance with God, that he is their Father and will deal with them as with children and so, consequently, the inheritance will be theirs. He sends his Spirit into their hearts, 'crying Abba, Father' (Gal. 4:6). And what inference do believers draw from this? 'Now we are not servants, but sons, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ' (Gal. 4:7; Rom. 8:17). So as children of God, we have a right to the inheritance. Of this the Holy Spirit assures us.

The Holy Spirit acquaints believers with their inheritance (I Cor. 2:9, 10). As the 'earnest' is the part of the whole, so by the 'earnest' we get a foretaste of the whole. By the Holy Spirit, then, we get a foretaste of the fulness of that glory which God has prepared for those that love him and the more communion we have with the Holy Spirit as an 'earnest', the more we taste of that heavenly glory that awaits us.

***THE SEVENTH GENERAL WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IS TO ANOINT BELIEVERS (II Cor. 1:21; I John 2:20, 27)***

Of the many endowments of Christ which he had from the Spirit with which he was anointed, wisdom, counsel and understanding are the chief things (Isa. 11:2, 3). On account of this, all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are said to be in him (Col. 2:3). So the anointing of believers is associated with teaching (I John. 2:20, 27). The work of the 'anointing' is to teach us. The Spirit who anoints us is therefore the Spirit of wisdom, of counsel, of knowledge and understanding in the fear of the Lord. So the great promise of the Comforter was that he should 'teach us' (John 14:26). Christ promised that the Comforter would 'guide us into all truth' (John 16:13). This teaching us the mind and will of God in the way in which we are taught it by the Spirit our Comforter is the chief part of our anointing by him.

The Spirit teaches by conviction and illumination. So the Spirit teaches the world by the preaching of the Word as promised (John 16:8).

The Spirit teaches by sanctification. He opens blind eyes, gives new understanding, shines into our hearts to give us the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ and enables us to receive spiritual things in a spiritual light (I Cor. 2:13). He gives a saving knowledge of the mystery of the gospel. All this is common to believers.

The Spirit teaches by comforting. He makes sweet, useful and joyful to the soul that which he, as the Spirit of sanctification, reveals of the mind and will of God. Here the oil of the Spirit is called the 'oil of gladness', because he brings joy and gladness with his teaching. And the name of Christ is experienced as sweet 'ointment poured forth', that causes souls to run after him with joy and delight (Song 1:3). We see it in daily experience that very many have little taste and relish in their souls for these truths which they believe for salvation. But when we are taught by this 'anointing', how sweet is everything we learn of God!

The Spirit teaches us of the love of God in Christ. He makes every gospel truth like well-refined wine to our souls and the good things of the gospel to be a rich feast of good things. He gives us joy and gladness of heart with all that we know of God, which is the great way of keeping the soul close to the truth. By this anointing, the soul is kept from being seduced into error. Truth will readily be exchanged for error when no more sweetness and joy is to be found in it than is to be found in the error. When we find any of the good truths of the gospel coming home to our souls with power, giving us gladness of heart and transforming us into the image and likeness of it, the Holy Spirit is then at his work. He is pouring out his oil.

The Spirit is also the 'Spirit of supplication' (Zech. 12:10). It is he who enables us to pray rightly and effectively.

Our prayers may be considered as a spiritual duty required by God. So they are wrought in us by the Spirit of sanctification, who helps us to perform all our duties by exalting all the faculties of the soul.

Our prayers may be considered as a means of keeping up communion with God. The soul is never more lifted up with the love of God than when by the Spirit it is taken into communion with God in prayer. This is the work of the Spirit as comforter.

Here, then, is the wisdom of faith. Faith looks for and meets with the Comforter in all these works of his. Let us not, then, lose their sweetness by remaining in the dark about them, nor fall short of the response required of us in gratitude.

## THE LOVE OF THE SPIRIT

C.R. Vaughan

*“Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in your prayers to God for me.”—Rom. 15:30*

***The absolute dependence of a sinner for regeneration, and of the regenerate soul for the exercise, the comfort, and the availability of his regenerate gifts, on the influences of the Holy Spirit, will be taken as something of a discouragement unless guarded from misapprehension of the real truth involved in the case.***

The sinner frequently makes it an excuse for his idleness, and his refusal to use the means of grace. It is often cited by the enemies of the evangelical faith of Christians, as an argument against the doctrine of grace, that it cuts the nerves of energy and logically discounts the value of all human effort. But this objection in the mouth of a sinner only lies in his mind so long as his view of his own necessities is dull and incompetent. Just let his mind wake up to the real nature of the facts in the case; let him realize the peril of his position; and he will no longer make his dependence on the Spirit an excuse for inaction. Nay, more, just in proportion as his own efforts fail to give him relief, and he feels his need of help, he will only be all the more solicitous to gain any help he can find. He then finds out that his dependence on the Spirit, so far from warranting his inactivity, was the very thing to rouse him to action by placing help in his reach when his own exertions had failed. The difference in the matter is, that in the first case he did not understand his dependence, nor realize his own infirmity, and in the advanced portion of his experience he did fully comprehend both. *The objection in the lips of a speculative opponent of the doctrine of grace springs from the same root—the ignorance of the real necessities of a sinful soul. When he denies the dependence of such a soul on the influences of the Spirit, he consistently denies the actual ruin of a fallen moral nature. As long as this is done, no matter by whom or on what pretext, there is no prospect of a gospel salvation.*

The same feeling is sometimes found measurably discouraging the Christian. Whenever it does, it is due to careless living, and the consequent darkening of the gospel ideas before eyes dimmed by sin. The influence of the Spirit is the very provision made in the covenant to give success to prayer, to develop the whole series of the regenerate graces, and to unseal the gladness and comfort of the gospel; and, therefore, instead of being a discouragement to the feeble or back-slidden Christian, is the very thing which warrants him to hope, and animates him to energy in seeking for the restoration of his peace. It is equally advantageous to the eager and watchful Christian, yearning after stronger graces and more assured hope; for if the Spirit was not available for his help in seeking these ends, it would be vain to desire or expect them. To break down all this feeling of discouragement, and to replace it by the feeling properly excited by the offices of the Holy Ghost, we design to open one single consideration, which in itself alone is sufficient to accomplish this purpose, and to lead both the regenerate and the unregenerate soul to find encouragement instead of discouragement in their dependence on

the Holy Ghost. We pass by the consideration of the official work assigned to him in the economy of redemption, and his zeal for the glory of the Godhead; we pass all references to his power or his faithfulness, although all these are powerful inducements to confide in him. We simply fix attention on the **love of the Spirit**; his infinite and tender personal affections towards the sinners of the human race; his great pity and compassion towards the victims of their sin; his delight in his work of bringing them to pardon, to peace, to the rest of heaven, and to the whole manifestation of the unsearchable riches, the freedom, and the resolute tenacity of his grace towards them.

**1. Love is the emphatic attribute of God;** it is that quality in his character which under one of its manifestations leads him to distribute good, not for any increase to his own blessedness, already perfect, but simply to widen the range of happiness in other beings beside himself. This attribute is so masterly an element in his infinitely complete being that it defines his nature and gives him his name, “God is love.” It was this which prompted him to create; it was, at least, one of his ends; it is this that regulates his whole plan of creation, his whole policy of administration. Like all his other attributes, it is literally infinite in its strength, in its tenderness, in its patience, in its bounteous fertility, in its eagerness to bless. The large-hearted spirit of a benevolent man is a noble quality. The love in the heart of a great angel is a still higher form of the sweet and magnanimous feeling. As you rise in the conception of intellectual and moral being, this quality, an essential constituent of moral excellence, expands proportionally on the view. But in God it exists in the highest degree it can possibly reach; love cannot exist, nor any other conceivable excellence, in a higher or more perfect form than it exists in God; in him it is literally infinite. This lovely quality in him overpasses every conceivable or possible modification of it in any other being, actual or possible, as far as the infinite passes beyond the finite. God is love, and the Spirit is God; and our first step in the effort to form some notion of the love of the Spirit places us face to face with the fact that love in its illimitable and divine degree is his intrinsic, essential, and unchangeable attribute.

**2. The love of God takes on its most wonderful and peculiar form in its application to sinners.** He is infinitely holy; a sinner is a being morally polluted. To him this pollution is an essential horror and disgust. He is infinitely just; a sinner as a breaker of law is criminal, a being on whom justice has a claim, a claim to punish his criminal conduct; and God is bound by eternal rightness to do justice, no matter what justice may demand. Yet the loving-kindness of the just and holy one goes out upon sinners. The impulse is altogether what the impulse of love always is, to do them good. The instinctive feeling which springs up in a sinning soul is dread of God, because he is just, a being whose judgment must be graduated by the nature of the fact before him, and who must therefore seek to requite an evil with a result naturally and justly answerable to it. Such a result is necessarily the opposite of a benefit to the transgressor. This seems to present an issue on which a collision ensues between his love seeking a benefit to the sinner and his justice prohibiting it. But when the love of God takes on that peculiar modification which is called grace, the very thing which distinguishes it from every other modification of divine benignity is sin. How it could be brought into harmony with the claims of justice and holiness is the great wonder in the divine nature. This is that, as then, unknown and inconceivable mystery in the just and holy one, whose sudden display in the day of Adam’s fall confounded the murderous archangel, and filled all heaven with wonder and delight—. That God should love sinners and let loose on them all the tides of that infinite quality in his nature—on those who were an offence to his holiness, and the objects of his inflexibly righteous and true justice—this was the mystery of mysteries. Yet it was done, and it was so done that no claim of justice was sacrificed, no demand of holiness failed of full contentment. **The redemption from the claims of justice was committed to the love of the Son; and we know how a dying Saviour redeemed us from the curse of the law, by being made a curse for us. The redemption from the inward power and pollution of sin in the soul was committed to the love of the Spirit. The love of the Father shone glorious in the proposal and contrivance of the whole wondrous plan.** The grand sum of all the marvelous policy was this wonderful assurance to sinners of the human family, that the love of the whole Godhead, the love of the Father, the love of the Son, and the love of Spirit, the whole energy of an infinite attribute of love, was now turned loose, free from every restraint, armed with infinite power, and fully supported by infinite holiness, justice, and truth, to walk all the wards of the sin-sick soul, to save sinners at its own will. The love of the Son, the Paraclete for sin,



confronts the miseries of guilt; the love of the Spirit, the Paraclete for all inward wants, confronts all the weakness and the wickedness in the soul. If, therefore, any sinner, seeking for peace and assured safety, is discouraged by the strength of the evil within him, and is dreaming of first accomplishing some preliminary purification within himself ere he will be fit to ground any appeal for help, let him endeavor to take in the meaning of the offices and the loving-tenderness of the Holy Spirit, who has charge of that work. It is only necessary to appeal to his power as the agent of the royal Saviour. If, therefore, any discouraged Christian, oppressed by conscious sins; by unbelief; by a hard heart; by a quick temper; by an unmastered overeagerness after worldly good; by any sin, is yet anxious to overcome these faults, let him not dream that he must wait to get the better of them before he applies for the grace of the Spirit; let him come at once for the grace to overcome them. If any eager Christian soul, sick of the infirmities, the weak graces, the mutilated comforts, the ineffective prayers, the whole imperfect service of his low and feeble spiritual development, desires to attain unto better things, let him at once renew his courage, and appeal to the Comforter. His infinite and most tender love has been put in charge of all the inward work needful to the healing of a sinful soul.

**3. The love of the Spirit is displayed in a more or less effective way,** literally upon all sinners in restraining the natural growth of their depravity and in thus limiting the desolating effects of it. He exerts a restraint upon every heathen soul, sufficient at least to preserve the moral element in human nature from being utterly eclipsed, and to make society, civilization, domestic life, and civil law possible. Sin is a powerful energy; it works towards all its natural results with a swift, relentless determination. It corrupts and breaks the force of the instinctive moral sentiments; it inflames the passions; it pollutes the whole nature of the sinning actor. Through this evil influence on himself it affects all the relations of the man—his social, domestic, business, and political relations. A certain amount of good moral sentiments, a sense of moral obligation, a perception of truth, honor, and justice, are necessary to bind the social structure together and make it workable, to make homes possible and trade possible, and all the interchanges and connections between men possible. But for the secret restraints of the Holy Spirit sin would have long ago broken up all human associations, and not only ruined civilization, but swept the human race from the face of the earth in the torrents of their own vices and crimes. To the love of the Spirit it is due that any man enjoys every benefit, every joy, every right, every comfort which the old and vast heathen peoples have ever possessed. To it it is due that there is such a thing as a respectable man, a being with any effective moral ideas, to be found anywhere. He alone prevents the utter depravation and ruin of the moral element in human nature, and preserves the mighty interests which are conditioned upon its preservation in some sufficient degree of serviceable working order.

**4. The love of the Spirit is still more wonderfully displayed in his dealings with sinners generally under the gospel dispensation.** The two great agencies in the conversion of sinners are, the truth revealed in the gospel, and the concurrent influences of the Holy Spirit. The truth alone is powerless to save; the Spirit, as a rule, only operates in connection with the truth. But wherever the truth comes the Spirit comes. Wherever the truth is neglected or repudiated the Spirit ceases to strive. But on whatever ear the truth falls the Spirit makes his way into the conscience and the heart. If he ever suspends his influence in connection with the truth, it is because the truth has been abused, and his own incitements to obey it have been presumptuously resisted. The glad tidings never fell on the ear of harlot, or gambler, or thief, or murderer, that the Holy Spirit did not enter, or endeavor to enter, the darkened and crime-haunted heart. He is always resisted, met at the threshold and rudely rebuffed. Satan and his satellites, viewless and unsuspected, are always leading on the unholy soul, quickening its evil impulses, stimulating its passions, obscuring the influence of healthful views, laying snares for the willing feet, mocking at suggestions of danger. Gaily the victim advances, seeing nothing but pleasant things in his lawless career. But the loving Spirit steps across his path, and lays his gentle hand on the deluded wanderer. Instantly blows are struck at him. The tempting angels put forth all their skill and cunning. The poor foolish lover of his own wild will pulls back from the loving hand of the Deliverer. But he will not yield; he makes his way in; and there, amid the darkness and the stench of excited carnal passions, his resolute tenderness, for days, and weeks, and months, and sometimes for years together, struggles for a foothold. Sometimes he will yield and go his way; sometimes to return and renew the conflict; and only at the last will he take his final flight, and abandon Ephraim to his idols. **What a scene is this conflict of the Holy Spirit with the unholy passions of a**

**human heart and the watchful angels of the abyss! What wickedness on one side; what grace on the other! What infinite love; what sweet pity; what eager compassion; what heroic patience; what resolute fortitude; what divine lovingkindness, does the love of the Spirit yield in this strife with and for an unconverted sinner!** Yet this he shows in greater or less degree to every sinner to whom the gospel message comes. He shows it even to those who, he knows, will fight him to the bitter end. He shows the infinite love of his sweet compassion, not only to those who will yield to him, but to those who will go on in their sins, and down into the pit at last. No. words can tell the tale of the love of the Spirit, even to the most unholy and reckless of disobedient men.

**5. But the love of the Spirit takes on its sweetest and most charming form in his dealings with those whom he resolves to regenerate and save.** All without exception resist him; some he abandons to their own devices after a long and desperate conflict; but some he determines to conquer. Not because they are better or more worthy, but solely because of his own sovereign and distinguishing grace, because for reasons in his own wise and sovereign counsels his love burns for them into a higher and an intenser flame! He puts forth his strength; he rouses their fears, and intensifies their convictions of their sin until resistance is overmastered. He teaches them to pray in passionate earnestness; he makes them keenly desire his aid now, and to find the way to Christ. He gives them experimental knowledge of their own perversity, blindness, hardness of heart, and their helplessness in the dreadful strait. He keeps them under lights which reveal the delusions under which they have hitherto lived and acted. He overwhelms them by such a consciousness of their guilt, danger, and need of a Saviour, as to prepare them to appreciate the deliverance and the Deliverer offered to them. He breaks down all their self-righteous excuses. He then makes plain the way of salvation; he leads them to Jesus; he gives them the faith which is the fruit of the Spirit, and they pass within the muniments of the covenant of life. *This act of regeneration is the first step in this peculiar manifestation of the love of the Spirit to the saints.* Now comes the highest and most impressive of all its wonderful displays. It is called the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. It is always shown to every regenerate soul; it is begun in the act of regeneration which opens the way to his permanent occupation of the soul now pledged to eternal life by the act of faith in the Saviour. Until then his entry into the unholy heart, and his contact with all its pollutions, has been at will, not under the bond of any covenant engagement, most freely entered, most binding when made. He was free to leave as he was to enter before the terms of mercy were closed. The offer is, *Believe*, and thou *Shalt* be saved; and when the regenerate soul puts forth the act of faith the covenant is closed, and that happy spirit stands in new and invincible relations with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. **The promise to faith is a pledge of an absolute salvation, a salvation from sin as well as from its consequences. Its sacred assurance is, Sin shall not have dominion over you. This is not a pledge that all sin shall be destroyed at once and the soul made perfectly holy. If that were so, there would be no place for the peculiar display of the love of the Spirit to the saints; for he would then have a holy and a pleasant place to occupy. The promise secures a full conquest over all sin in the end, but only that sin shall not be master in the progress towards the end. Sin shall not have dominion; but this implies that sin shall still have a standing, and exert an influence, until the end of the natural life puts a period to the presence and the mischiefs of moral evil.**

It will be impossible for us to appreciate suitably the unsearchable love of the Holy Spirit as involved in his indwelling in the saints, until we can form some conception of the state of a regenerate soul, in which the law of grace in the mind is perpetually confronted by the law of sin in the members. It is a scene of conflict, not of peace; a scene of evil as well as good, for the grace given is living grace, and the remaining sin is real sin, a power broken, but not destroyed; weakened, but still formidable; wounded, but still capable of long and desperate strife even against the Spirit of the living God. Into that chequered scene in every regenerate heart that holy agent enters to make good the pledge of the covenant, sin shall not have the mastery. He enters it not as a wayfarer who turneth to tarry but a night. *He enters it to dwell there; he enters it as his home; he enters it as his workshop, the chosen place where his wonderful achievements are to be accomplished. He enters it under a covenant promise, more durable than the everlasting hills, to stay there and never to abandon it, until his work is done and the covenant with the believer is fulfilled.* If he left, all would be undone. But the bond and security of his holding his place is the strongest that can be conceived; the faithfulness and the pledged veracity and

honor of the whole Godhood, Father, Son, and Spirit. His love and zeal rejoice to confirm the grand guarantees of the covenant and the divine integrity. The very throne and life of the sovereign and immortal God stand not on a firmer basis, or under a more absolute assurance, than the permanence of the Spirit's indwelling in the regenerate human heart.

But to appreciate the love, the faithfulness, and the delight of the Spirit in his work, we must comprehend the place where he dwells, and the nature of his activity in it. As already said, the power of sin is broken, but the evil still abides. It is there, with all the elements and particular evils which sin involves, just as it was before. The lusts of the eye and the pride of life still linger, weakened, but not destroyed; the new law is infused, a new energy is created in opposition to these evils, and a perpetual collision is inaugurated. But sin is still there, and sin is an infinite offence to a holy being, even when lying quiet and inactive; it is far more so when stirred into activity. Just as a foul pool shows nauseous to sight, and emits its odors slowly and faintly when in repose, but becomes far more offensive to eye and nostril when stirred out of its stillness. The Holy Spirit goes into a regenerate heart to dwell in the midst of sin, in habitual presence, and often in fierce activity. The Scripture symbols of a sinful heart are absolutely fearful: darkness, stony hardness, a cage of unclean birds, a den of serpents, a lonely cottage in the stillness of a desert, within whose swept and garnished walls, eight devils, supreme in wickedness, are holding an infernal revel, and making the midnight wilderness hideous with their appalling and malicious glee. This is the home of the Holy Spirit. By his side within the dreadful walls that "new man" he has created in Christ Jesus stands confronting the awful array in the armed attitude of watchful war—war to the belt-knife. See the pale, resolute face of the spiritual man, crossed often by pangs of mortal fear, or wrenched with agony at some sly serpent bite, or pierced by some devil's poisoned arrow or fiery dart, or anon stupefied and stiffened by some foul blast of air, or the touch of some foul wing, as the unclean birds slip through the shadows. Ah! can he win; can he come safe out of such a scene? Look at the grand figure at his side. The Spirit of the living God is dwelling with him and is in him; he is on guard. He is sitting in the fined posture of one who has come to stay. He kindles a gentle light, which qualifies the murky darkness, and shows the lurking figures of the hostile forces. His glorious face beams with serene peace, and kindles with infinite loving tenderness, as he supplies all needed strength and comfort to the tried and wearied soldier at his side. Now and then his mighty hand is stretched forth, and a stroke of sword or hammer falls on some over-insolent intruder, and at the touch the devils crouch and whine, the serpents writhe and twist, and the foul birds droop wing or slumber. Now and then he pours a fresher and a stronger grant of grace into his weary charge, and then songs in the night ring cheerily in the beleaguered fortress of the regenerate soul.

So it goes until the end; but the victory is assured by the presence of the divine indwelling Spirit. In one sense his perils are great; in another his safety is absolute. In one sense his trials are awful; in another his blessedness is unspeakable. His danger is in himself; for these vultures, serpents, and devils, which the poverty of human thought and words compel us to represent as in him, but distinct from him, are his own unholy energies and passions. His safety is in the blood and righteousness of Jesus, in the fatherhood and faithfulness of the Father, and in the presence and love of the Holy Ghost. But this scene of the Spirit on guard in a regenerate heart compels the question, if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear? The same awful company are in his heart, but no indwelling Spirit of grace is found there to oppose and subdue the deadly mischief. The answer to the question asked can only be, they will appear the ruined victims of the infernal garrison; they will appear on the left hand of the judgment throne; they will appear in the long line of the devil's captives, moving down to the iron gates; they will appear in the final scene riding on the waves of the lake of fire; for they have grieved and repelled the Holy Spirit, and he did not dwell in them. **But his victorious love will finally exterminate the birds, and serpents, and devils of an unholy heart, and the soul, delivered by the love of the Spirit, will appear on the right hand of the Judge, on the highway to the gates of pearl, in the long procession of the King's ransomed, and on the sweet fields by the river of life forever. All their fitness for this high destiny will be due to the love of the Spirit; their title to it, to the love of the Son; their opportunity for gaining both title and fitness, to the love of the Father. Salvation is all of grace.**

**6. The love of the Spirit is also powerfully illustrated by that delight in all his official work, in all its general and special acts in the regenerate soul, which is assured by that love itself.** Love delights in its own exercises and its own offices. It would seem that such a constant dwelling in such a devil-haunted cottage in a wilderness, as we have just described, might afford room for the exhibition of the faithfulness and power of the Holy Spirit, but could hardly allow of his finding any delight in it. Perhaps this will account for the general recognition of the fidelity and strength of the Spirit, and the equally general scanty recognition of his love, the unspeakable tenderness and freedom of his grace. But we are emphatically assured of his love; and this certifies that his delight in fulfilling the will and counsel of the Godhead in his work in the saints is fully equal to the delight which the Son found in doing his part, and the Father in his. Although the Holy Comforter finds an amount of offence, which no mortal mind can conceive, in the pollutions of a soul only partially purified, yet, in spite of all, his loving heart finds an infinite complacency and delight in the work which he enters that heart to do. He is there on a mission of cleansing and healing; and *he delights* to do it. He is there to accomplish the grandest enterprise of the counsels of God; and *he delights* to accomplish it. He is there to defeat the malignant counsels of the kingdom of darkness; and *he delights* to do it. He is there to save millions of immortal spirits from an unimaginable ruin for eternal ages; and he glories in the mighty undertaking. *He delights* in the exercise of his glorious energies, in the indulgence of his infinite tenderness, in every part and specialty of his glorious office. *He delights* to awaken and arrest sinners as they are dancing along, devil-led, on the primrose path to the everlasting bonfire. *He delights* in raising the dead soul to life by his regenerating grace, as Jesus delighted his own sad, loving heart in raising Lazarus, and in turning the sorrows of the Bethany home, which he loved so dearly, into songs of rejoicing. *He delights* in teaching the dim eyes of his children to see all the things of Christ. *He rejoices* to seal, anoint, testify, lead, intercede, and give the earnest of the Spirit. *He delights* in all his work. He is never idle; never reluctant; never churlish in doing it. He is the Comforter, and delights in comforting; he is the universal Paraclete of his people, and delights for them to call him to their side in any of their times of need.

*The love of the Spirit gives the full assurance of the absolute freedom and completeness of our access to the gracious influences of the Spirit.* It is just as free an access as we have to the unsearchable riches of the love and redemption work of the Saviour himself. The symbols of both are the wide, free winds of heaven, sweeping every inch of ground in a continent, stirring every leaf in the forests, and every blade of grass in the fields; and second, the water, covering two-thirds or more of the planet in its oceans, piercing every section with its running streams, every nook in wood or mountain with its springs and falling rains, and entering as a principal factor into the composition of well-nigh everything that exists—vegetable, mineral, or animal. These are the symbols of the love and free grace of the blessed Spirit. This love on his part stands side by side with the command of the Father, and the pleading love of the Son, and unites with these in giving the grand assurance to every needy sinner, and especially to every yearning Christian heart, touching that wide and welcome privilege they have to appeal for any grant of faith, hope, clear vision, holy affections, of guidance, strength, patience, love, comfort; for any grace they may need. No regenerate sinner need want for any comfort in life or death; no unregenerate sinner need stay in the peril or bond of his sin for a single hour, since we all have such free access to the power and the tender love of the Spirit. That love is so marked with every high and winning quality of love in its infinite and unsurpassable form; it is a love so distinguished by its tenderness, by its infinite sweetness, by its grand energy, by its absolute fidelity and trustworthiness, by its tender, unweariable patience, by its wise and resolute faithfulness to every interest entrusted to it, by its zeal and fervor, by its boundless power, by its delight in all its work, by its complacency in all its glorious results—that there is really no excuse for any poverty or slackness of either strength or comfort in the gifts of the Spirit. He is so necessary to us, to our trust in the Son, to our confidence in the Father, to our reliance on himself; he is so essential to our success in prayer, to our understanding and compliance with the terms of mercy, to the guarantees of our hope, to the soundness of our graces; he is so important to our safety in temptation, to our comfort in affliction, to our satisfaction in life, to our usefulness in service, to our support in death; in a word, so vast and absolute is our dependence on the influences of the Holy Ghost that we need every possible encouragement to go to him. That encouragement is given by this wonderful love of the Spirit in as complete a degree as need be hoped or desired. Infinite love, and infinite delight in his work, discount all fear of refusal in appealing for his grace.

## THE LOVE OF THE SPIRIT

Dr. M'Crie

**By the 'love of the Spirit' I understand that love which the third person of the Godhead has displayed in the economy of redemption.** Some indeed are of opinion that it refers to that brotherly love which is the production of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of believers, and binds them together as members of the same mystical body, so as to feel a deep interest in one another's welfare. Even though it should be allowed that this was the more immediate meaning of the word in this passage, we might still take occasion from it to speak of that love which is the spring of all the Spirit's operations. We judge of the qualities of a fountain from the waters which it sends forth, and of a tree from its fruits. 'The fruit of the Spirit is love;' and what must be the love resident in and flowing from that divine Person, who is the author of every affectionate feeling toward God or toward man! But I apprehend the connection in which the words stand fully justifies the other interpretation 'I beseech you from regard to what the Lord has done for you, and the love which the Holy Spirit has shewn to you, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me.'

We often speak of the love of the Father in not sparing His Son, and the love of the Son in giving himself for us; and we do well, for we cannot speak of them too often, nor with too much fervour of gratitude and admiration. But the love of the Spirit is more rarely the topic of public discourse or private converse, and there is reason to fear that it is too little in our thoughts, for 'out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.' May not this deficiency have a hurtful effect upon Christian experience? God draws His children to himself 'by the cords of love,' meaning His own love; but if one of the threads in 'this threefold cord' be relaxed, must not the influence of divine love upon our hearts be weakened and impaired? If we are deficient in this part of Christian exercise, it assuredly does not arise from any defect in the proofs and illustration of love on the part of this divine Agent. The subject seems entitled to our particular attention. Let us then, trusting to the aid of the Spirit, without whom we can neither speak nor hear aright, contemplate the manifestations of the love of the Holy Spirit.

**Contemplate then the manifestations of the love of the Spirit.** The work of redemption, or of recovering man from the ruin into which he had fallen by his transgression, is to be traced to the spontaneous and boundless love of God. This wonderful love is held forth as exerted in distinct acts by the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. To the Father we ascribe, agreeably to the analogy of the word, the purpose and superintendence of the plan of redemption, to the Son its purchase, and to the Spirit its application. The love from which the Spirit acts is equally divine with that from which the Father and Son act; indeed it is the same, for the love of God, like His will, is one. 'There is none good but one, that is God;' and this epithet is repeatedly applied to the third Person in an absolute sense: 'Thou gavest them thy good Spirit' 'Thy Spirit is good.' The love of the Spirit is eternal, unchangeable, sovereign, independent; and in its breadth, and length, and depth, and height, it passeth knowledge.

*1. The Holy Spirit displayed His love in, the readiness with which He undertook His mission and work.* We speak of the covenant of grace as made between the Father and Son, because, in contemplation of the Son's assuming human nature, there was an engagement and a promise, a work and reward. But we must not overlook the concurrence of the blessed Spirit, and the delight which He took in the prospect of His work of grace and power. As the Son was sent by the Father, so the Spirit is sent by the Father and the Son, and on this account is called economically their Spirit; but He was as free and cheerful in undertaking and engaging in His work as He

who said, 'Lo I come, to do thy will, O my God.' When Jesus was about to leave His disciples He said, 'I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Comforter; if I go not away the Comforter will not come, but if I depart, I will send him unto you.' Observe, He is not only said to be 'sent,' to intimate the established order of the economy of grace, and the certainty of the gift, but He is said to 'come,' in order to point out His willingness to engage in the work. When He is come, He shall 'convince the world.' Hence the prayer of the Old Testament Church: 'Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out' (Cant. iv. 16.) And hence on the day of Pentecost, 'Suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty rushing wind and there appeared unto them cloven tongues as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.' These were the emblems of the 'love of the Spirit,' in its ardour, impetuosity and irresistible power. And as He was voluntary in undertaking, so He is sovereign in carrying on His work, 'dividing severally to every man as He will.' When we pray the Father to give us the Holy Spirit, we should remember that He whom we ask to dwell in us is a free and independent agent. 'Uphold me with Thy free Spirit' (Ps. li. 12).

2. *The Love of the Spirit appeared in dictating the Scriptures.* Saints in every age have loved the Word of God, and from the time that it was first committed to writing, they have not ceased to take the highest delight in reading and meditating on its contents. In the Bible they find their meat and their drink, the life and the health of their souls. They could not live without it, and having it they can be contented with a slender portion. Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever; for they are the rejoicing of my heart' (Ps. cxix. 9). The longest psalm that ever David composed is entirely occupied in expressing his esteem for the written law; there are few of his spiritual songs in which he does not commend it; and remember, brethren, his Bible was a small one compared with ours.

All Scripture was given by inspiration, or dictated to the sacred penmen by the Spirit. 'Prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost;' and as they spake they wrote. This is true, not only of prophecy strictly so called, or the prediction of future events, but of all the contents of His inspired volume, whether given in the form of doctrine, reproof, exhortation, promise, or even history. Hence the formula used in quoting from any of the books of the Old Testament, 'The Holy Ghost saith,' whatever prophet was the penman Mark xii. 36; Acts xxviii. 25; Heb. iii. 7, and ix. 8). Even those parts of Scripture which proceeded immediately from the mouth of the Redeemer Himself, come to us through the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, who brought them to the remembrance of the evangelist; and to each of the letters which Christ ordered His servant John to send to the seven Churches of Asia is subjoined the same admonition: 'He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.'

Would you have a sensible sign and proof of the love of the Spirit? Here it is. Could there be a greater proof of love than the giving of this Book, so stored with everything that is necessary, and able to make wise to salvation the most simple? **There are three distinguishing gifts of God—the gift of His Son, the gift of His Spirit, and the gift of His Word—and as to each of them we may say, 'herein is love.'** Without the Scriptures, you would have been sitting in the region and shadow of death. Without the Scriptures, you would have known nothing of the plan of mercy and way of salvation; you would never have heard of the love of God, of the person, the undertaking, the incarnation, the sacrifice, the sufferings and glory of Christ; you would never have heard of remission of sins, of peace with God, of the adoption of children, of the inheritance laid up in heaven. If then at any time you have felt your consciences pacified, your difficulties cleared up, your fears dissipated, your minds fortified against temptation, strengthened for duty, or comforted in tribulation, your faith increased, your hope quickened, your love inflamed, your patience promoted, by anything contained in this precious volume—think, oh! think, of the 'love of the Spirit.' Christian children, who have been taught the first principles of the oracles of God, think of the love of the Spirit. Christian young men, who from your earliest years have known the Scriptures, think on the love of the Spirit. Christian fathers, who are strong because the Word of God abideth in you, think on the love of the Spirit:

3. *The love of the Spirit was manifested in preparing and endowing the human, nature of the Saviour.* All the operations of the divine Spirit in forming those holy men who were raised up for carrying on the work of God

under the Old Testament, such as Moses and David and Solomon, Isaiah, Zerubbabel, and Joshua, who were eminently furnished with gifts and graces for the faithful and wise discharge of their important functions, were nothing compared with this. In the miraculous conception, the Spirit 'created a new thing in the earth,' bringing 'a clean thing out of an unclean,' and from a corrupt, mass forming a body which was without the least taint of, or tendency to, sin, and thus fitted for becoming the immaculate and blessed body of the Son of God. 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing, which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.' This was the beginning of those miracles of love which were wrought with such heavenly profusion and prodigality during our Saviour's abode on earth. According to ancient predictions, the Spirit descended upon and dwelt in that holy nature which he had formed: 'The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.' And the miracle which accompanied our Lord's baptism held forth emblematically the source, and nature, and design of this unction. 'The heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending, like a dove' (the emblem of love) 'and lighting upon him.' In the glorious person of the Redeemer next to the grace of union, which is the effect of the assumption of human nature by the Son of God, the grace of unction is the most wonderful object of contemplation. 'Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my Spirit upon him.' If the oil poured on the head of Aaron, which descended to the skirts of his garment, was precious, how much more precious was this heavenly oil which was poured on the Head, and was to descend to the meanest and least member of the mystical body; for God gave not the Spirit by measure to Him, and He was given to be imparted to all that believe on Him. 'Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.' This was the holy anointing oil which was poured on His sacrifice; and as it was through the Eternal Spirit that He offered himself without spot to God, so was He 'justified in the Spirit' by his resurrection from the dead.

*4. The love of the Spirit is shewn in the first visit which He pays to the soul of a sinner, when He comes to take possession of it.* When He first enters the place of his future residence, he finds it in a very wretched and repulsive condition. The sinner himself, habituated to his own impurity, can form no conception of the disgust which this heavenly visitant must feel on approaching it, and is apt to wonder at the strong terms in which He has described it. No dungeon, at once dark and cold and filthy—no lazar who from the sole of the foot to the crown of the head is covered with wounds and bruises and putrifying sores—no corpse which has lain for days in the earth is half so loathsome to the senses as such a soul is to the Holy Spirit, who is 'of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity.' He finds the heart dead to all that is good, yet alive to all that is evil; the mind filled with ignorance of God, and enmity to Him; the whole man as proud as poor, as obstinate as foolish, as impenitent as guilty. His first approaches are shunned, His overtures rejected, His convictions stifled, His entreaties despised. Yet He perseveres in His gracious design, until He has conquered all opposition, won the soul to Jesus Christ, and formed the heart for a habitation to himself—'the temple of the living God!'

*5. The love of this blessed agent is farther seen in keeping possession of the soul.* There is more love displayed in this, than in taking possession of the soul at first. We expect nothing but resistance and hostility from an enemy, but 'he that hath friends, should shew himself friendly.' Is this then what the saint evinces to his merciful deliverer? Alas! no. How often has the Holy Spirit reason to say, 'Is this thy kindness to thy friend?' Who but the blessed Guest himself can tell what indignities and provocations He meets with from the time that He takes up His habitation in the heart of a believer? We can scarcely read the history of the unbelieving, ungrateful, and rebellious conduct of the Israelites in the wilderness without being provoked; yet it is a true picture of our own conduct: 'He gave them his good Spirit to instruct them, but they rebelled, and vexed his Holy Spirit.' And how often do professing Christians and genuine saints themselves rebel, and vex and grieve the Spirit by their slowness of heart to understand and believe the word which He hath spoken, and brought to their remembrance, by despising the hidden manna with which He has fed their souls, by indulging the wish to return to spiritual Sodom and Egypt, by calling in question those promises which He has sealed on their hearts, by quenching His motions, and acting contrary to those principles which He has implanted within them! On these accounts He is provoked to withhold His sensible and comforting influence, and threatens to withdraw

from them. And yet He abides with them. 'How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together.' 'Many waters cannot quench his love, neither can the floods drown it.'

## TENDERNESS OF SPIRIT

G.D. Watson

It is much easier to convince a human soul of its natural impurity than to convince it of its natural hardness, and utter destitution of heavenly and divine tenderness of Spirit. The very essence of the Gospel is a divinely imparted tenderness and sweetness of Spirit. Without this, even the strongest religious life is a misrepresentation of the true Christ-life. Even among intensely religious people, nothing is more rare to find than a continuous, all-pervading spirit of tenderness.

**1. Tenderness of spirit is preeminently divine.** It is not the delicacy and soft sensibility of a mere gentle make-up of body and mind, which some persons naturally possess in a high degree. Neither is it the tenderness of mind and manner, which results from high culture and beautiful social training, though these are very valuable in life. But it is a supernatural work throughout the whole spiritual being. It is an exquisite interior fountain of God's own sweetness and tenderness of nature, opened up in the inner spirit to such a degree that it completely inundates the soul. It overflows all the mental faculties, saturating with its sweet waters the manners, expressions, words, and tones of the voice. Tenderness of spirit mellows the will, softening the judgments, melting the affections, refining the manners, and moulding the whole being after the image of Him Who was infinitely meek and lowly in heart. It cannot be borrowed, or put on for special occasions. It is emphatically supernatural, and must flow out incessantly from the inner fountains of the life, and resembles having every atom of our being soaked in sweet oil.

**2. Deep tenderness of spirit is the very soul and marrow of the Christ-life.** Without it, the most vigorous life of righteousness, and zeal, and good works, and rigid purity of morals, and missionary reform, and profuse liberality, and ascetic self-denial, and the most blameless conduct, utterly fail to measure up to the Christ-life unveiled in the New Testament. It is impossible to see the infinite excellence and necessity of real heavenly tenderness of spirit unless it is specially revealed to us by the Holy Ghost. It takes a direct revelation from God to enable us to discern what is the very marrow and fatness of Christ's character, the inexpressible tenderness and gentleness of His nature which is always the heart inside of the heart, the soul within the soul, of the Christ-life.

What specific gravity is to the planet, what beauty is to the rainbow, what perfume is to the rose, what marrow is to the bone, what rhythm is to poetry, what sublimity is to the ocean, what the pulse is to the heart, what harmony is to music, what heat is to a human body, all this and much more is what tenderness of spirit is to religion. Without tenderness of spirit the most intensely righteous, religious life is like the image of God without His beauty and attractiveness. It is possible to be very religious, and staunch, and persevering in all Christian duties, even to be sanctified, and be a brave defender and preacher of holiness, to be mathematically orthodox, and blameless in outward life, and very zealous in good works, and yet to be greatly lacking in tenderness of spirit, that all-subduing, all melting love, which is the very cream and quintessence of Heaven, and which incessantly streamed out from the eyes and voice of the blessed Jesus.

Many religious people seem loaded with good fruits, but the fruit tastes green; it lacks flavor and October mellowness. There is a touch of vinegar in their sanctity. Their very purity has an icy coldness to it. They seem to have a baptism on them, but it is not composed of those sweet spices of cinnamon, and calamus, and cassia,



which God told Moses to compound, as a fragrant type of the real sweetness of the Holy Spirit. Their testimonies are straight and definite, but they lack the melting quality. Their prayers are intelligent and strong and pointed, but they lack the heart-piercing pathos of the dying Jesus. The summer heat in them is lacking. They preach eloquently and explain with utmost nicety what is actual and original sin, and what is pardon and purity, but they lack the burning flame, that interior furnace of throbbing love, that sighs and weeps, and breaks down under the shivering heat of all-consuming love.

**3. This all-pervading tenderness of spirit is not a novitiate grace. It is not a product of April but of October.** It is not the sap that flows up in the grape vine in early spring, but it is the sweet wine, the pure, unfermented juice of the grape, which is crushed out under the mighty squeeze of the winepress. Real tenderness of spirit can never be known except through great suffering. Nothing but the winepress of sorrow can yield it, and it matters not what shape the trial may be, whether an unutterable sorrow for sin, or extreme poverty, or great physical pain, or relentless persecution, or the wear and tear of a thousand daily annoyances, or the agony of unrequited love, or life-long loneliness, or heart-breaking disappointment. These or any other forms of sorrow only constitute the shape of the wine-press, but the result may be the same, and that is the sweetness of heavenly wine from the grapes of crushed, red hearts. There is no saintly character recorded in the Bible or outside of it who did not pass through the wine-press to reach universal tenderness and sweetness of spirit.

It is in connection with Job's manifold and strange sufferings that he says, "God had made his heart soft." It is said that the illustrious Jenny Lind never could melt the hearts of her hearers with her inimitable singing, until her own heart had been crushed with sorrow.

Madame Guyon says that while we are purified from sin by the blood of Jesus yet the attributes and constitution of our nature must be utterly broken under the manifold cross of suffering, to render us divine-like in our feelings and sympathies. And Paul says the weight of glory that will weigh us down, depends on the afflictions through which we pass to work out that result.

We often come across Christians who are bright and clever, and strong, and righteous; in fact a little too bright, and a little too clever, like preternatural brilliance in a black eye, which precedes insanity. There seems so much of self in their strength, and their very righteousness is severe and critical. They have everything to make them saints, except the crushing weight of an unspeakable crucifixion, which would grind them into a supernatural tenderness and limitless charity for others. But if they are of the real elect, God has a wine-press prepared for them, through which they will some day pass, which will turn the metallic hardness of their nature into gentle love which Christ always brings forth at the last of the feast.

**4. Divine tenderness of spirit has a behavior to it which is superhuman and heavenly.** It instinctively avoids wounding the feelings of others by talking on unpleasant things, wrangling in an argumentative way, by referring to painful and mortifying subjects. It carries its point by ceasing to contend, and wins its opponent by seeming to let him have his way. It cannot scold, or scowl, or threaten; it has lost the power of quarreling. It instinctively buries and forgets all bad things. People who live in hot climates bury their dead very soon after death; in like manner tenderness of spirit lives in the torrid zone of God's love, and quickly buries all putrid things out of its sight.

No scene in the Bible opens up a greater vista into the tenderness of the spirit of Jesus, than where He stooped and wrote on the ground, as if His modest and loving heart did not want to hear the horrible account of evil. As we gaze on the soul of Jesus at that time, we see infinite politeness, both toward the accused and accusers; not a trace of unkindness, or severity to either party. His whole manner and speech and disposition filled the whole air, as with a very sea of refinement, gentleness and inexpressible sweetness of spirit.

This and similar acts of Jesus are like an opening between mountains, through which we look far off on an outspreading silver sea of love, whose every undulation presents a new phase of unspeakable tenderness toward the poor sinner He came to save. Tenderness of spirit makes its home in the bosom of Jesus; and from that holy castle looks out upon all other creatures, good and bad, through the hopeful, pleading medium of the heart that was pierced on the cross. Tenderness of spirit is in divine sympathy with the poor and down-trodden and unfortunate and hated classes of mankind.

It feels for the poor Chinaman and the Negro, or any that are the common butt of worldly scorn. Whenever it hears any of these spoken of in a harsh and bitter way, it feels a dagger pierce its own heart and a tear of sympathy comes to its eye, and a piercing silent prayer ascends from it to that God Who hears the sighing of the prisoner, and the cries of the unfortunate. It feels all things from God's standpoint, and lives but to receive and transmit the spotless sympathies and affections of Jesus. It understands the words of the Holy Ghost, "Be ye tender hearted forgiving one another." Tenderness must be in the very nature, and forgiveness is but the behavior of that nature. All worked in us by the "living Holy Spirit."

## THE SUPERLATIVE EXCELLENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

C.H. Spurgeon

*"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you"—John 16:7.*

### ***The Presence of the Comforter Is Much Better Than the Physical Presence of Christ***

We have imagined that the bodily presence of Christ would make us blessed and confer innumerable gifts; but according to our text, the presence of the Holy Ghost working in the church is more necessary for the church. If you think for a moment, the physical presence of Christ on the earth, however good it might be for the church, would in our present condition involve many inconveniences that are avoided by His presence through the Holy Spirit. Christ, being most truly man, must as to His manhood inhabit a certain place. Thus, to get to Christ, it would be necessary for us to travel to His place of residence. Imagine everyone in the world having to travel from the ends of the earth to visit the Lord Jesus Christ in the city of Jerusalem. While all might joyfully make the journey, yet as they could not all live where they could every morning see Christ, they must be content with every now and then getting a glimpse of Him. But the Holy Spirit dwells everywhere, and if we wish to apply to the Holy Spirit, we have no need to move an inch. Jesus Christ could be present in only one congregation in the world, but the Holy Spirit is everywhere. Through the Holy Spirit, Christ keeps His promise, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20). Christ could not keep that promise according to the flesh; but through the Holy Spirit, we sweetly enjoy His presence and hope to do so until the world's end.

Imagine the difficulty of gaining access to Christ. There are only twenty-four hours in the day, and if our Lord never slept, what are twenty-four hours for the supervision of a church that covers the earth? How could millions of believers all receive immediate personal comfort, either from His lips or from the smiles of His face? What could one man do by His personal presence, even though that one man were incarnate Deity? What could He do in one day for the comfort of all of these? We could hardly expect to have our turn once in the year. But we can now see Jesus every hour and every moment of every hour. As often as you bow the knee, His Spirit can commune with you and bless you. Wherever and whenever, the Spirit waits to be gracious, and your sighs and cries climb up to Christ in heaven and return with answers of peace. The presence of the Spirit makes

Christ accessible to every saint at all times. Not to a few choice favorites, but to every believing man and woman, the Holy Ghost is always accessible.

We should consider that Christ's presence in the flesh upon the earth would involve another difficulty. Of course, since every word that Christ would have spoken from the time of the apostles until now would have been inspired, busy scribes would be always taking down Christ's words. If in the short course of three years our Savior managed to do and say so much that one of the Evangelists informs us that if all had been written, the world itself could not have contained the books that would have been written, I ask you to imagine what a mass of literature the church would have acquired if she had preserved all the words of Christ. The Word of God would have consisted of innumerable volumes of the sayings and deeds of the Lord Jesus Christ. Not even the studious could have read all the Lord's teachings. But now we have a book that is finished within a narrow compass with not another line to be added to it. The canon of revelation is sealed up forever; and the poorest believer, going with a humble soul to that book and looking up to Jesus Christ, may comprehend the doctrines of grace and understand with all saints what are the heights and depths and know the love of Christ that passes knowledge. So then, as precious as the physical presence of Christ might be, it is infinitely better for the church's good that Christ should be present by His Spirit.

Yet more, if Jesus Christ were still present with His church in the flesh, the life of faith would not have such room. The more there is visible to the eye, the less room for faith; the least faith the most show. The more faith grows, the less it needs outward helps; and when faith shows her true character and is divorced from sense and sight, she wants absolutely nothing to rest upon but the invisible power of God. Faith rests upon the invisible pillars of God's truth and faithfulness, needing nothing to shore or buttress her. The presence of Christ Jesus here in bodily flesh would be the bringing back of the saints to the life of sight and, in a measure, would spoil the simplicity of naked trust. You remember the Apostle Paul says, "Henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more" (2 Cor. 5:16).

To the skeptic who should ask us, "Why do you believe in Christ?;" if Jesus had remained upon the earth, we could always give an easy answer: "There He is." There would be very little room for faith's holy adherence to the Word of God and no opportunity for her to glorify God. But now, the fact that we have nothing visible to point to that carnal minds can understand makes the path of faith more truly congenial with its noble character. "Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees, and looks to that alone;" which she could hardly do if she could look upon the visible person of a present Savior. What a happy day it will be when faith enjoys the full fruition of her hopes in the triumphant advent of her Lord; but His absence alone can train and educate her to the needed point of spiritual refinement.

Furthermore, the presence of Jesus Christ on earth would materially affect the character of God's great battle against error and sin. Suppose that persecuting tyrants had their arms dried up or that all men who opposed Christ were suddenly devoured by fire. It would be a battle between physical greatness and moral evil—a warfare in which only spiritual force is employed on the side of right. But now that Christ has gone, the fight is all between spirit and spirit, between the Holy Spirit and Satan, between truth and error, between the earnestness of believers and the infatuation of unbelievers. Now the fight is fair. We have no miracle on our side—the Holy Spirit is enough. We call no fire from heaven; no earthquake shakes the ground beneath our foe's feet. Physical force is left to our enemies; we do not ask for it. Why? Because by the divine working, we can vanquish error without it. In the name of the Holy One of Israel, in whose cause we have been enlisted—by His might we are enough, without miracles and signs and wonders. The absence of the physical Savior makes it a spiritual conflict of spirit of the noblest and sublimest order.

Only this one further remark—that the personal presence of Christ did not produce very great results in His disciples until the Spirit was poured forth from on high. Christ was their Teacher—how much did they learn? There is Philip—Christ has to say to him, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me,

Philip?” (John 14:9). The disciples were puzzled by questions that little children can now answer. You can see that at the end of their three years of training with Christ they had made but slender progress. Christ is not only their Teacher but also their Comforter, yet how frequently Christ could not console them because of their unbelief. After giving that delightful discourse that we have been reading, He found them sleeping for sorrow. In this very chapter, when He is trying to comfort them, He adds, “But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart” (John 16:6). Christ’s object was to foster the graces of His disciples, but where are their graces? Here is Peter—he has not even the grace of courage and consistency but denies his Master while the rest forsake and fly. Even then the Spirit of Christ was not infused into the disciples. They scarcely knew the truths that their Master taught, and they were far enough from imbibing His heavenly Spirit.

Even the disciples’ endowments were slender. It is true they once worked miracles and preached, but with what success? Do you ever hear of Peter winning three thousand sinners under a sermon till the Holy Spirit came? Even the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ, considered only as to its immediate fruits, was not to be compared with ministries after the descent of the Spirit. “He came unto his own, and his own received him not” (John 1:11). His great work as a Redeemer was a complete triumph from beginning to end; but as a Teacher, since the Spirit of God was only upon Him and not upon the people, His words were rejected, His entreaties were despised, and His warnings unheeded by the great multitudes. The mighty blessing came when the words of Joel were fulfilled: “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit” (Joel 2:28-29). That was the blessing so rich and so rare that it was indeed expedient that Jesus Christ should go that the Holy Spirit might descend.

### *The Presence of the Comforter Is Superlatively Valuable*

While the presence of Christ was most precious, the presence of the Holy Spirit is dearly shown to be of more practical value for the church. Consider, then, that the presence of the Comforter is superlatively valuable. We may gather this first from the effects that were seen upon the day of Pentecost. On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit sounded the alarm of war. The soldiers were hardly prepared for it; they were a frail group, having only this virtue—that they were content to wait until power was given to them. They sat still in the upper room. That mighty sound was heard across Jerusalem and filled the place where they were sitting. Here was a prediction of what the Spirit of God was to be to the church.

The Holy Spirit is to come mysteriously upon the church according to the sovereign will of God; but when He comes like the wind, it is to purge the moral atmosphere and to quicken the pulse of all who breathe spiritually. This is a blessing indeed, a treasure that the church greatly needs. I would that this rushing mighty wind would come upon His church with an irresistible force that should carry everything before it—the force of truth, but of more than truth, the force of God driving truth home upon the heart and conscience of men. I would that you and I could breathe this wind and receive its invigorating influence, that we might be made champions of God and of His truth. Oh, that it would drive away our mists of doubt and clouds of error. Come, sacred wind, our nation needs You—the whole world requires You. The foul odors that brood over this deadly calm would fly if Your divine lightnings enlightened the world and set the moral atmosphere in commotion. Come, Holy Spirit, come. We can do nothing without You; but if we have Your wind, we spread our sail and speed on toward glory.

Then the Spirit came as fire. A fire-shower accompanied the rushing mighty wind. What a blessing this is to the church! The church needs fire to inspire her ministers, to give zeal and energy to all her members. Having this fire, she burns her way to success. The world meets her with an evil fire, but she confronts the world with the fire of souls aglow with the love of Jesus Christ. She trusts not the eloquence and wisdom of her preachers, but trusts to the divine fire that clothes them with energy. She knows that men are irresistible when they are filled with hallowed enthusiasm sent from God. Her cry is, “Come, holy fire, abide upon our pastors and teachers!

Rest upon every one of us!” This fire is a blessing Christ did not bring us in person, but one that He now gives through His Spirit to the church.

Then there came from the fire-shower a descent of tongues. This, too, is the privilege of the church. When the Lord gave the apostles various tongues, He did, as it were, give them the keys of the various kingdoms. “Go;” He said, ‘Judea is not my only dominion, go and unlock the gates of every empire, here are the keys, you can speak every language.’ Although we can no longer speak with every man in his own tongue, we have the keys of the whole world if we have the Spirit of God with us. You have the keys of human hearts if the Spirit of God speaks through you. There is power about the gospel, when the Spirit is with us, little dreamed of by those who call it the foolishness of men. I am persuaded that the results that have followed the ministry in our lifetime are trivial and insignificant compared with what they would be if the Spirit of God were more mightily at work. There is no reason, in the nature of the gospel or the power of the Spirit, why a whole congregation should not be converted under one sermon. The success given on the day of Pentecost was only the first fruits, not the harvest. We have been accustomed to look on Pentecost as a great and wonderful display of divine power not to be equalled again. Believe me, it is to be exceeded. I stand not upon Pentecost as upon a towering mountain, wondering at my height, but I look at Pentecost as a little rising knoll from which I am to look up to mountains that are far loftier. You must expect greater things, pray for greater things, long for greater things. Here is our nation, sunk in stolid ignorance of the gospel. How is she to be made sober and sanctified to God? “Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.” Where is the sword that shall find her heart? “Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts” (Zech. 4:6).

The one thing, then, that we need is the Spirit of God. Do not say that we need money; we shall have it soon enough when the Spirit touches men’s hearts. Do not say that we need buildings, churches, and programs. All these have their place, but the main need of the church is the Spirit and men into whom the Spirit may be poured. If there were only one prayer that I might pray before I die, it should be this: “Lord, send Your church men filled with the Holy Ghost and with fire.” Give to any denomination such men, and its progress will be mighty. Send it college gentlemen of great refinement but of little fire and grace, and straightway that denomination must decline. The preacher may be rustic, simple, and unmannered, but if the Holy Ghost is upon him, none of his adversaries shall stand against him; his word shall be with power to the shaking of the gates of hell. Did I not say that the Spirit of God is of superlative importance to the church and that the day of Pentecost seems to tell us this?

Here is another thought that should make the Spirit very dear to you—that without the Holy Spirit, no good thing ever did or ever can come into your heart no sigh of repentance, no cry of faith, no glance of love, no tear of hallowed sorrow. Your heart can never beat with life divine except by the Spirit. You are not capable of the smallest degree of spiritual emotion, much less spiritual action, apart from the Holy Ghost. You were absolutely dead for God until the Holy Ghost came and raised you from the grave. There is nothing good in you today that was not put there. The flowers of Christ are all exotics—“In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing” (Rom. 7:18). “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one” (Job 14:4). Everything must come from Christ, and Christ gives nothing to men except through the Spirit of all grace. Prize, then, the Spirit as the channel of all good that comes to you.

Further, no good thing can come out of you apart from the Spirit. It may be in your life, yet it lies dormant unless God works in you to will and to do of His own good pleasure. Do you desire to preach? How can you unless the Holy Ghost touches your tongue? Do you desire to pray? Alas, what dull work it is unless the Spirit makes intercession for you! Do you desire to conquer sin? Would you be holy? Do you desire to rise to superlative heights of spirituality? Are you wanting to be full of zeal and ardor for the Master’s cause? You cannot without the Spirit “Without me ye can do nothing.” O branch of the vine, you can have no fruit without the sap! O child of God, you have no life apart from the life that God gives you through His Spirit! Did I not say that the Holy Spirit is superlatively precious?

If these things are so, let us view the mysterious Spirit with deep awe and reverence. Let us so reverence Him as not to grieve or provoke Him to anger by our sin. Let us not quench Him in one of His faintest motions in our soul. Let us foster every suggestion and be ready to obey every prompting. If the Holy Spirit is indeed so mighty, let us do nothing without Him. Let us begin no project and carry on no enterprise and conclude no transaction without seeking His blessing. Tremble in His presence, put off your shoes, for the place where you stand is holy ground. Let us confess our entire weakness apart from Him and then, depending upon Him alone, have this as our prayer, "Open my heart and my whole being to Your incoming, and uphold me with Your free spirit when I shall have received that spirit in my inward being."

In the next place, as a practical remark, let us take courage today. When we look at the great ones of the earth, we see them on the side of the false and not of the truth. Where are the kings and mighty men? Are they not against the Lord of Hosts? Where are the gold and silver, architecture, wisdom, and eloquence? Are they not banded against the Lord of Hosts? What then! Shall we be discouraged? Our fathers were not. They bore their testimony in the stocks and in the prisons, but they refused to fear. Like John Bunyan, they learned to rot in dungeons, but they did not learn to play the coward. They suffered, and they testified that they were not discouraged. Why? Because they knew that the Spirit of God is mighty and will prevail. Better to have a small church of poor men and the Spirit of God with them than to have a hierarchy of kings without the Holy Spirit, for this is not merely the cord of strength, but it is strength itself. Where the Spirit of God is, there is liberty and power.

We have only to seek for that which God has promised to give, and we can do wonders. God will give the Holy Spirit to them who ask. Wake up to earnest prayer. Cry aloud to God to let His bare arm be seen. Learn the power of prayer. Give the Covenant Angel no rest till He speaks the word and the Spirit works mightily among the sons of men. Prayer is work adapted to each of you who are in Christ. You may not preach or teach, but you can pray, and your private prayer, unknown to men, shall be registered in heaven. Those silent but earnest cries of yours shall bring down a blessing. I love to hear friends praying with the groaning that cannot be uttered, "Lord, send the Spirit! Send the Spirit, Lord! Work! Work! Work!"

I am persuaded we only need more prayer, constant prayer, Spirit-led prayer, and there would be no limit to the blessing. Cry aloud and spare not. Give Him no rest till He sends His Spirit once again to stir the waters and brood over this dark world till light and life shall come. Cry day and night, O ye elect of God, for He will answer you speedily. The time of battle draws near. Now for the sword of the Lord and of Gideon! Now for the old might and majesty of ancient days! Now for the shaking of the walls of Jericho, even though we have no better weapons than rams' horns! Now for the coming of the Holy Spirit with such might and power that as Noah's flood covered the mountain tops, Jehovah's flood of glory shall cover the highest summits of sin and iniquity, and the Lord God Omnipotent shall reign over the whole world.

## THE SPIRIT IN US

Horatius Bonar

In Christ dwells all the fulness of Godhead bodily. He has the Holy Spirit for us, and this Spirit He gives freely and plenteously; for that which we receive is "grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." The early saints were "filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 13:52), and we are to be "filled with the Spirit" (Eph 5:18), for it is the Holy Ghost Himself, not certain influences that are given unto us (Rom 5:5). He falls on us (Acts 8:16; 11:15); He is shed forth on us (Acts 2:33); He is poured out on us (Eze 39:29; Acts 10:45); we are baptized with the Holy Ghost (Acts 11:16). He is the earnest of our inheritance (Eph 1:14); He seals us (Eph 1:13), imprinting on us the divine image and superscription; He teaches (1 Cor 2:13); He reveals (1 Cor 2:10);

He reproveth (John 16:8); He strengthens (Eph 3:16); He makes us fruitful (Gal 5:22); He searches (1 Cor 2:10); He strives (Gen 6:3); He sanctifies (1 Cor 6:11); He leads (Rom 8:14; Psa 143:3); He instructs (Neh 9:20); He speaks (1 Tim 4:1; Rev 2:7); He demonstrates (or proves) (1 Cor 2:4); He intercedes (Rom 8:26); He quickens (Rom 8:11); He gives utterance (Acts 2:4); He creates (Psa 104:30); He comforts (John 14:26); He sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts (Rom 5:5); He renews (Titus 3:5). He is the Spirit of holiness (Rom 1:4), the Spirit of wisdom and understanding (Isa 11:2; Eph 1:17), the Spirit of truth (John 14:17), the Spirit of knowledge (Isa 11:2), the Spirit of grace (Heb 10:29), the Spirit of glory (1 Peter 4:14), the Spirit of our God (1 Cor 6:11), the Spirit of the living God (2 Cor 3:3), the good Spirit (Neh 9:20), the Spirit of Christ (1 Peter 1:11), the Spirit of adoption (Rom 8:15), the Spirit of life (Rev 11:11), and the Spirit of His Son (Gal 4:6).

Such is the Holy Spirit by whom we are sanctified (2 Thess 2:13), “the eternal Spirit” by whom “Christ offered Himself without spot to God” (Heb 9:14). Such is the Holy Spirit by whom we are “sealed unto the day of redemption” (Eph 4:30), the Spirit who makes us His habitation (Eph 2:22), who dwelleth in us (2 Tim 1:14), by whom we are kept looking *to* and looking *for* Christ and by whom we are made to “abound in hope” (Rom 15:13).

On the right receiving and entertaining of this heavenly Guest, much of a holy life depends. Let us bid Him welcome—not vexing, nor resisting, nor grieving, nor quenching Him, but loving Him and delighting in His love (“the love of the Spirit,” Rom 15:30), so that our life may be a living in the Spirit (Gal 5:25), a walking in the Spirit (Gal 5:16), a praying in the Spirit (Jude 20). While distinguishing Christ’s work *for* us and the Spirit’s work *in* us, and so preserving our conscious pardon unbroken, yet let us not separate the two by any interval; but allowing both to do their work, let us “follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Heb 12:14), keeping our hearts in “the fellowship of the Spirit” (Phil 2:1), and delighting ourselves in “the communion of the Holy Ghost” (2 Cor 13:14).

The double form of expression, bringing out the mutual or reciprocal indwelling of Christ and of the Spirit in us, is worthy of special note. Christ in us (Col 1:27) is the one side; we in Christ is the other (2 Cor 5:17; Gal 2:20). The Holy Spirit in us (Rom 8:9) is the one aspect; we live in the Spirit (Gal 5:25) is the other. Nay, further, this twofold expression is used of Godhead also, in these remarkable words: “Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God” (1 John 4:15).

It would seem as if no figure, however strong and full, could adequately express the closeness of contact, the nearness of relationship, the entire oneness into which we are brought, in receiving the divine testimony to the person and work of the Son of God. Are we not then most strongly committed to a life of holiness, as well as furnished with all the supplies needful for carrying it out? With such a fulness of strength and life at our disposal, what a responsibility is ours! “What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness!” And if to all this we add the prospects presented to us, the hope of the advent and the kingdom and the glory, we shall feel ourselves compassed on every side with the motives, materials and appliances best fitted for making us what we are meant to be, “a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people” (1 Peter 2:9), “zealous of good works” here (Titus 2:14), and possessors of “glory and honor, and immortality” hereafter (Rom 2:7).

