

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE COVENANT.

A Sermon

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DELIVERED BY

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On a Lord's-day Morning in 1856.

"And I will put my spirit within you."—Ezekiel xxxvi. 27.

THE Holy Spirit is the third Person in the covenant. We have considered "God in the Covenant;" and "Christ in the Covenant;"* and now, this morning, we have to consider the Holy Spirit in the covenant. For, remember, it is necessary that the Triune God should work out the salvation of the Lord's people, if they are to be saved at all; and it was absolutely requisite that, when the covenant was made, all that was necessary should be put into it; and, among the rest, the Holy Spirit, without whom all things done even by the Father and by Jesus Christ would be ineffectual, for he is needed as much as the Saviour of men, or the Father of spirits. In this age, when the Holy Spirit is too much forgotten, and but little honour is accorded to his sacred person, I feel that there is a deep responsibility upon me to endeavour to magnify his great and holy name. I almost tremble, this morning, in entering on so

* See *The New Park Street Pulpit*, No. 93, "God in the Covenant;" and No. 103, "Christ in the Covenant." Other Sermons by Mr. Spurgeon, on various aspects of THE COVENANT OF GRACE, are as follows:—*The New Park Street Pulpit*, No. 19, "David's Dying Song;" No. 212, "The New Heart;" No. 277, "The Blood of the Everlasting Covenant;" No. 238, "Free Grace;" No. 261, "The Necessity of the Spirit's Work;" *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, No. 456, "The Stony Heart Removed;" No. 517, "The Rainbow;" No. 714, "A Saviour Such as You Need;" No. 1,046, "Covenant Blessings;" No. 1,129, "The Heart of Flesh;" No. 1,186, "The Blood of the Covenant;" No. 1,289, "The Heart Full and the Mouth Closed;" No. 1,451, "The Covenant Pleaded;" No. 1,840, "The Bond of the Covenant;" No. 1,886, "God's Remembrance of His Covenant;" No. 1,921, "Cleansing: A Covenant Blessing;" No. 1,942, "Salt for Sacrifice;" No. 2,092, "God's Own Gospel Call;" No. 2,108, "Perseverance in Holiness;" No. 2,200, "The Covenant Promise of the Spirit;" No. 2,316, "Twelve Covenant Mercies;" No. 2,427, "The Ark of His Covenant;" No. 2,438, "Two Immutable Things;" and No. 2,506, "God's Law in Man's Heart." (All are single numbers, one penny each, except Nos. 456 and 1,046; which are twopence each. Lovers of THE COVENANT OF GRACE would do well to get the complete set, and circulate them far and wide. They would, in many cases, prove to be the most effective antidote to the poison of the so-called "New Theology.")

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profound a subject, for which I feel myself so insufficient. But, nevertheless, relying on the aid, the guidance, and the witness of the Holy Spirit himself, I venture upon an exposition of this text, "I will put my Spirit within you."

The Holy Spirit is given, in the covenant, to all the children of God, and received by each in due course; and yet, upon our Lord Jesus Christ did the Spirit first descend, and alighted upon him as our Covenant-head, "like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard; that went down to the skirts of his garments." The Father hath given the Holy Spirit without measure unto his Son; and from him, in measure, though still in abundance, do all "the brethren who dwell together in unity" (or union with Christ) partake of the Spirit. This holy anointing flows down from Jesus, the anointed One, to every part of his mystical body, to every individual member of his Church. The Lord's declaration concerning Christ was, "I have put my Spirit upon HIM;" and he said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon ME, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted." The Spirit was first poured upon Christ, and from him descends to all those who are in union with his adorable person. Let us bless the name of Christ if we are united to him; and let us look up to our covenant Head, expecting that from him will flow down the heavenly unction which shall anoint our souls.

My text is one of the unconditional promises of Scripture. There are many conditional promises in the Word of God, given to certain characters; although even these promises are in some sense unconditional, since the very condition of the promise is by some other promise secured as a gift; but this one has no condition whatever. It does not say, "I will put my Spirit within them, if they ask for him;" it says plainly, without any reservation or stipulation, "I will put my Spirit within them." The reason is obvious. Until the Spirit is put within us, we cannot feel our need of the Spirit, neither can we ask for or seek him; and, therefore, it is necessary that there should be an absolutely unconditional promise, made to all the elect children of God, that they should have given to them the waiting grace, the desiring grace, the seeking grace, the believing grace, which shall make them pant and hunger and thirst after Jesus. To every one who is, like Christ, "chosen of God, and precious," to every redeemed soul, however sunken in sin, however lost and ruined by the Fall, however much he may hate God and despise his Redeemer, this promise still holds good, "I will put my Spirit within you;" and, in due course, every one of them shall have that Spirit, who shall quicken them from the dead, lead them to seek pardon, induce them to trust in Christ, and adopt them into the living family of God.

The promise is also concerning an internal blessing to be bestowed: "I will put my Spirit *within* you." Remember, we have the Spirit of God in his written Word, and with every faithful minister of the gospel, the Spirit is likewise vouchsafed to us in the ordinances of Christ's Church. God is perpetually giving the Spirit

to us by these means. But it is in vain for us to hear of the Spirit, to talk of him, or to believe in him, unless we have a realization of his power within us; here, therefore, is the promise of such an internal blessing: "I will put my Spirit within you."

We come now to consider this promise in all its comprehensiveness; may the Holy Spirit himself assist us in so doing! We shall take the various works of the Holy Ghost, one by one, and shall remember that, in all the works which he performs, the Spirit is put in the covenant to be possessed by every believer.

I. In the first place, we are told by Christ, "IT IS THE SPIRIT THAT QUICKENETH."

Until he is pleased to breathe upon the soul, it is dead to any spiritual life. It is not until the Spirit, like some heavenly wind, breathes upon the dry bones, and puts life into them, that they can ever live. You may take a corpse, and dress it in all the garments of external decency; you may wash it with the water of morality; ay, you may bedeck it with the crown of profession, and put upon its brow a tiara of beauty, you may paint its cheeks until you make it like life itself. But remember, unless the spirit be there, corruption will ere long seize on the body. So, beloved, it is the Spirit who is the Quickener; you would have been as "dead in trespasses and sins" now as ever you were, if it had not been for the Holy Ghost, who made you alive. You were lying, not simply "cast out in the open field," but, worse than that, you were the very prey of mortality; corruption was your father, the worm was your mother and your sister; you were noxious in the nostrils of the Almighty. It was thus that the Saviour beheld you in all your loathsomeness, and said to you, "Live." In that moment, you were "begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Life entered into you at his bidding; then it was that the Spirit quickened you. The words of Jesus, so he told his disciples, "They are spirit, and they are life." You were made alive entirely through the might of the quickening Spirit.

"The Spirit, like some heavenly wind
Blows on the sons of flesh;
Creates a new—a heavenly mind,
And forms the man afresh."

If, then, you feel at any time death working in you, as doubtless you will, withering the bloom of your piety, chilling the fervour of your devotions, and quenching the ardour of your faith, remember that *he who first quickened you must keep you alive.* The Spirit of God is the sap that flowed into your poor, dry branch, because you were grafted into Christ; and as, by that sap, you were first made green with life, so it is by that sap alone you can ever bring forth fruit unto God. By the Spirit you drew your first breath, when you cried out for mercy, and from the same Spirit you must draw the breath to praise that mercy in hymns and anthems of joy. Having begun in the Spirit, you must be made perfect in the Spirit. "The flesh profiteth nothing;" the works of the law will not help

you; the thoughts and devices of your own hearts are of no avail. You would be cut off from Christ, you would be more depraved than you were before your conversion, you would be more corrupt than you were previous to your being regenerated,—“twice dead, plucked up by the roots,” if God the Holy Ghost were to withdraw from you. You must live in his life, trust in his power to sustain you, and seek of him fresh supplies, when the tide of your spiritual life is running low.

II. WE NEED THE HOLY SPIRIT, AS AN ASSISTANT SPIRIT, IN ALL THE DUTIES WE HAVE TO PERFORM.

The most common Christian duty is that of *prayer*; for the meanest child of God must be a praying child. Remember, then, that it is written, “The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what to pray for as we ought.” The Spirit of God is in the covenant, as the great aid to us in all our petitions to the throne of grace. Child of God, thou knowest not what to pray for; rely, then, on the Spirit, as the Inspirer of prayer, who will tell thee how to pray. Sometimes thou knowest not how to express what thou desirest; rely upon the Spirit, then, as the One who can touch thy lips with the “live coal from off the altar,” whereby thou shalt be able to pour out thy fervent wishes before the throne. Sometimes, even when thou hast life and power within thee, thou canst not express thine inward emotions; then rely upon that Spirit to interpret thy feelings, for he “maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” When, like Jacob, thou art wrestling with the angel, and art nearly thrown down, ask the Holy Spirit to nerve thine arms. The Holy Spirit is the chariot wheel of prayer. Prayer may be the chariot, the desire may draw it forth, but the Spirit is the very wheel whereby it moveth. He propels the desire, and causeth the chariot to roll swiftly on, and to bear to heaven the supplication of the saints, when the desire of the heart is “according to the will of God.”

Another duty, to which some of the children of God are called, is that of *preaching*; and here too we must have the Holy Spirit to enable us. Those whom God calls to preach the gospel are assisted with might from on high. He has said, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” It is a solemn thing to enter upon the work of the ministry. I will just make an observation here; for, in this place, there are young men, who are striving to enter into the ministry before they scarcely know the alphabet of the gospel; they set themselves up as preachers of God’s Word, when the first thing they ought to do is to join the infant class in a school, and learn to read properly. I know there are some, to whom God has given the desire thus to seek the glory of his name and the welfare of souls, and who humbly wait till he has opened the way; God bless them, and speed them! But—would you believe it?—a young man was baptized, and received into the church one Sunday,—and he positively went off to a College on the Monday or Tuesday, to ask if they would receive him! I asked him whether he had ever preached before, or addressed half-a-dozen Sunday scholars; he said, “No.” But what surprised me most was, that

he said he was called to the work before he was converted! It was a call from the devil, I verily believe;—not a call from God in the least degree. Take heed that ye touch not God's ark with unholy fingers. You may all preach if you can, but take care that you do not set yourselves up in the ministry, without having a solemn conviction that the Spirit from on high has set you apart; for, if you do, the blood of souls will be found in your skirts. Too many have rushed into the holy place, uncalled of God; who, if they could have rushed out of it on their dying beds, would have had eternal cause for gratitude. But they ran presumptuously, then preached unsent, and therefore unblessed; and, when dying, they felt a greater condemnation from the fact that they had taken on themselves an office to which God had never appointed them. Beware of doing that; but if God has called you, however little talent you may have, fear not anyone's frown or rebuke. If you have a solemn conviction in your souls that God has really ordained you to the work of the ministry, and if you have obtained a seal to your commission in the conversion of even one soul, let not death or hell stop you; go straight on, and never think you must have certain endowments to make a successful preacher. The only endowment necessary for success in the ministry is the endowment of the Holy Ghost. When preaching in the presence of a number of ministers, last Friday, I told the brethren there, when one of them asked how it was God had been pleased to bless me so much in this place, "There is not one of you whom God could not bless ten times as much, if you had ten times as much of the Spirit." For it is not any ability of the man,—it is not any human qualification,—it is simply the influence of God's Spirit that is necessary; and I have been delighted to find myself abused as ignorant, unlearned, and void of eloquence, all which I knew long before; but so much the better, for then all the glory belongs to God. Let men say what they please, I will always confess to the truth of it. I *am* a fool: "I have become a fool in glorying," if you please. I will take any opprobrious title that worldlings like to put upon me; but they cannot deny the fact that God blesses my ministry, that harlots have been saved, that drunkards have been reclaimed, that some of the most abandoned characters have been changed, and that God has wrought such a work in their midst as they never saw before in their lives. Therefore, give all the glory to his holy name. Cast as much reproach as you like on me, ye worldlings; the more honour shall there be to God, who worketh as he pleaseth, and with what instrument he chooseth, irrespective of man.

Again, dearly-beloved, whatever is your work, *whatever God has ordained you to do in this world, you are equally certain to have the assistance of the Holy Spirit in it.* If it be the teaching of an infant class in the Sabbath-school, do not think you cannot have the Holy Spirit. His succour shall be granted as freely to you as to the man who addresses a large assembly. Are you sitting down by the side of some poor dying woman? Believe that the Holy Spirit will come to you there, as much as if you were administering the sacred elements of the Lord's supper. Let your strength

for the lowliest work, as much as for the loftiest, be sought from God. Spiritual ploughman, sharpen thy ploughshare with the Spirit! Spiritual sower, dip thy seed in the Spirit, so shall it germinate; and ask the Spirit to give thee grace to scatter it, that it may fall into the right furrows! Spiritual warrior, whet thy sword with the Spirit; and ask the Spirit, whose Word is a two-edged sword, to strengthen thine arm to wield it!

III. The next point we advert to shall be that THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GIVEN TO THE CHILDREN OF GOD AS A SPIRIT OF REVELATION AND OF INSTRUCTION.

He brings us "out of darkness into marvellous light." By nature, we are ignorant, extremely so; but the Holy Spirit teaches the family of God, and makes them wise. "Ye have an unction from the Holy One," said the apostle John, "and ye know all things." Student in the school of Christ, wouldst thou be wise? Ask not the theologian to expound to thee his system of divinity; but, sitting down meekly at the feet of Jesus, ask that his Spirit may instruct thee; for I tell thee, student, though thou shouldst read the Bible many a year, and turn over its pages continually, thou wouldst not learn anything of its hidden mysteries without the Spirit. But mayhap, in a solitary moment of thy study, when suddenly enlightened by the Spirit, thou mayest learn a truth as swiftly as thou seest the lightning flash. Young people, are you labouring to understand the doctrine of election? It is the Holy Spirit alone who can reveal it to your heart, and make you comprehend it. Are you tugging and toiling at the doctrine of human depravity? The Holy Spirit must reveal to you the depth of wickedness of the human heart. Are you wanting to know the secret of the life of the believer, as he lives by the faith of the Son of God, and the mysterious fellowship with the Lord he enjoys? It must always be a mystery to you unless the Holy Spirit shall unfold it to your heart. Whenever thou readeest the Bible, cry to the Spirit, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." The Spirit gives eye-salve to the blind; and if thine eyes are not now open, seek the eye-salve, and so thou shalt see,—ay, and see so clearly that he, who has only learned in man's school, shall ask, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" Those who are taught of the Spirit often surpass those who are taught of man. I have met with an entirely uninstructed clod-hopper, in the country, who never went to school for one hour in his life, who yet knew more about the Holy Scriptures than many a clergyman trained at the University. I have been told that it is a common practice for men in Wales, while they are at work, breaking stones on the road, to discuss difficult points in theology, which many a divine cannot master: for this reason, that they humbly read the Scriptures, trusting only to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and believing that he will lead them into all truth; and he is pleased so to do. All other instruction is very well; Solomon says, "that the soul be without knowledge, it is not good;" we should all seek to know as much as can be known: but let us remember that, in the work of salvation, real knowledge must be obtained by the

teaching of the Holy Ghost; and if we would learn in the heart, and not merely in the head, we must be taught entirely by the Holy Spirit. What you learn from man, you can unlearn; but what you learn of the Spirit is fixed indelibly in your heart and conscience, and not even Satan himself can steal it from you. Go, ye ignorant ones, who often stagger at the truths of revelation; go, and ask the Spirit, for he is the Guide of benighted souls; ay, and the Guide of his own enlightened people too; for, without his aid, even when they have been "once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift," they would not understand all truth unless he led them into it.

IV. I desire further to mention that GOD WILL GIVE THE SPIRIT TO US AS A SPIRIT OF APPLICATION.

Thus it was that Jesus said to his disciples, "He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you."* To make the matter still more plain, our Lord added, "All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you." Let me remind you how frequently Jesus impressed on his disciples the fact that he spake to them the words of his Father: "My doctrine," said he, "is not mine, but his that sent me." And again, "The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." As Christ thus made known the will of God the Father to his people, so the Holy Ghost makes known to us the words of Christ. I could almost affirm that Christ's words would be of no use to us unless they were applied to us by the Holy Spirit. Beloved, we need the application to assure our hearts that they are our own, that they are intended for us, and that we have an interest in their blessedness; and we need the unction of the Spirit to make them bedew our hearts, and refresh our souls.

Did you ever have a promise applied to your heart? Do you understand what is meant by *application* as the exclusive work of the Spirit? It is, as Paul says the gospel came to the Thessalonians, "not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." Sometimes it cometh of a sudden; your heart may have been the scene of a thousand distracting thoughts, billow dashing against billow, till the tempest rose beyond your control. Anon, some text of Scripture, like a mighty fiat from the lips of Jesus, has stilled your troubled breast, and immediately there has been a great calm, and you have wondered whence it came. The sweet sentence has rung like music in your ears; like a wafer made of honey, it has moistened your tongue; like a charm, it has quelled your anxieties, while it has dwelt uppermost in your thoughts all the day long, reining in all your lawless passions and restless strivings. Perhaps it has continued in your mind for weeks; wherever you went, whatever you did,

* See *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, No. 465, "The Holy Spirit Glorifying Christ;" No. 2,382, "The Spirit's Chief Office;" and No. 2,213, "Honey in the Mouth!"—Mr. Spurgeon's *last* Sermon to the Members and Associates of the Pastors' College Evangelical Association, on April 24th, 1891.

you could not dislodge it, nor did you wish to do so, so sweet, so savoury was it to your soul. Have you not thought of such a text that it is the best in the Bible, the most precious in all the Scriptures? That was because it was so graciously applied to you.

Oh, how I love applied promises! I may read a thousand promises as they stand recorded on the pages of this Sacred Volume, and yet get nothing from them; my heart would not burn within me for all the richness of the store; but one promise, brought home to my soul by the Spirit's application, hath such marrow and fatness in it that it would be food enough for forty days for many of the Lord's Elijahs. How sweet it is, in the times of deep affliction, to have this promise applied to the heart: "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee"! Perhaps you say, "That is all enthusiasm." Of course it appears so to you, if, as natural men, ye discern not the things of the Spirit; but we are talking about spiritual things to spiritual men, and to them it is no mere enthusiasm, it is often a matter of life or death. I have known numerous cases where almost the only plank on which the poor troubled saint was able to float was just one text, of which, somehow or other, he had got so tight a grasp that nothing could take it away from him.

Nor is it only his Word which needs to be applied to us. "He shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you," may be referred likewise to our Saviour's precious blood. We sometimes sing,—

"There is a fountain filled with blood,"—

and we talk of bathing in it. Now, faith does not apply the blood to the soul; that is the work of the Spirit. True, I seek it by faith; but it is the Spirit who washes me in "the fountain opened . . . for sin and for uncleanness." It is the Spirit who receives of the things of Christ, and shows them unto me. You would never have a drop of blood sprinkled on your heart unless it was sprinkled by the hand of the Spirit. So, too, the robe of Christ's righteousness is entirely fitted on us by him. We are not invited to appropriate the obedience of Christ to ourselves; but the Spirit brings all *to us* which Christ has made *for us*. Ask, then, of the Spirit that you may have the Word applied, the blood applied, pardon applied, and grace applied, and you shall not ask in vain; for Jehovah hath said, "I will put my Spirit within you."

V. But now we have to mark another very important point. WE MUST RECEIVE THE SPIRIT AS A SANCTIFYING SPIRIT.

Perhaps this is one of the greatest works of the Holy Ghost,—sanctifying the soul. It is a great work to purge the soul from sin; it is greater than if one should wash a leopard till all his spots were obliterated, or an Ethiopian till his sable skin became white; for our sins are more than skin-deep,—they have entered into our very nature. Should we be outwardly washed white this morning, we should be black and polluted before to-morrow; and if all the spots were taken away to-day, they would grow again to-morrow, for we are black

all through. You may scrub the flesh, but it is black to the last; our sinfulness is a leprosy that lies deep within. But the Holy Spirit sanctifies the soul; he enters the heart, beginning the work of sanctification by conversion; he keeps possession of the heart, and preserves sanctification by perpetually pouring in fresh oil of grace, till at last he will perfect sanctification by making us pure and spotless, fit to dwell with the blest inhabitants of glory.

The way the Spirit sanctifies is this: first he reveals to the soul the evil of sin, and makes the soul hate it; he shows it to be a deadly evil, full of poison; and when the soul begins to hate it, the next thing the Spirit does is, to show it that the blood of Christ takes all the guilt away, and, from that very fact, to lead it to hate sin even more than it did when it first knew its blackness. The Spirit takes it to "the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel;" and there he tolls the death-knell of sin as he points to the blood of Christ, and says, "He shed this for you, that he might purchase you unto himself, to be one of his peculiar people, zealous of good works." Afterwards, the Holy Spirit may, at times, allow sin to break out in the heart of the child of God that it may be more strongly repressed by greater watchfulness in future; and when the heir of heaven indulges in sin, the Holy Spirit sends a sanctifying chastisement upon the soul, until, the heart being broken with grief, by the blueness of the wound, evil is cleansed away; and conscience, feeling uneasy, sends the heart to Christ, who removes the chastisement, and takes away the guilt.

Again, remember, believer, *all thy holiness is the work of the Holy Spirit*. Thou hast not a grace which the Spirit did not give thee; thou hast not a solitary virtue which he did not work in thee; thou hast no goodness which has not been given to thee by the Spirit; therefore, never boast of thy virtues or of thy graces. Hast thou now a sweet temper, whereas thou once wast passionate? Boast not of it; thou wilt be angry yet if the Spirit leaves thee. Art thou now pure, whereas thou wast once unclean? Boast not of thy purity, the seed of which was brought from heaven; it never grew within thy heart by nature; it is God's gift alone. Is unbelief prevailing against thee? Do thy lusts, thine evil passions, and thy corrupt desires, seem likely to master thee? Then I will not say, "Up, and at 'em!" but I will say,—Cry mightily unto God, that thou mayest be filled with the Holy Spirit, so shalt thou conquer at last, and become more than conqueror over all thy sins, seeing that the Lord hath engaged to put his Spirit "within you."

VI. When I have spoken of two more points, I shall conclude. THE SPIRIT OF GOD IS PROMISED TO THE HEIRS OF HEAVEN AS A DIRECTING SPIRIT, to guide them in the path of providence.

If you are ever in a position in which you know not what road to take, remember that your "strength is to sit still," and your wisdom is to wait for the directing voice of the Spirit, saying to you, "This is the way, walk ye in it." I trust I have proved this myself, and I am sure every child of God, who has been placed in difficulties, must have felt, at times, the reality and blessedness of this guidance.

And have you never prayed to him to direct you? If you have, did you ever find that you went wrong afterwards? I do not mean the sort of prayers that they present who ask counsel, but not of the Lord; "who walk to go down into Egypt, . . . to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh," and then ask God to bless them in a way that he never sanctioned. No; you must start fairly by renouncing every other trust. It is only thus that you can make proof of his promise, "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass." Take with you, then, child of God, an open confession; say, "Lord, I desire, like a sheet of water, to be moved by the breath of the Spirit; here I lie, 'passive in thy hand;' fain would I know no will but thine: show me thy will, O Lord! Teach me what to do, and what to refrain from doing."

To some of you, this may seem all fanaticism; you believe not that God the Holy Spirit ever guides men in the way they should take. So you may suppose, if you have never experienced his guidance. We have heard that, when one of our English travellers, in Africa, told the inhabitants of the intense cold that sometimes prevailed in his country, by which water became so hard that people could skate and walk upon it, the king threatened to put him to death if he told any more lies, for he had never felt or seen such things; and what one has never seen or felt is certainly fit subject for doubt and contradiction. But, with regard to the Lord's people, who tell you that they are led by the Spirit, I advise you to give heed to their sayings, and seek to make the trial for yourselves. It would be a good thing if you were just to go to God, as a child, in all your distresses. Remember that, as a solicitor whom you may safely consult, as a guide whose directions you may safely follow, as a friend on whose protection you may safely rely, the Holy Spirit is personally present in the Church of Christ, and with each of the disciples of Jesus; and there is no fee to pay but the fee of gratitude and praise, because he has directed you so well.

VII. Just once more,—THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL BE GIVEN TO GOD'S CHILDREN AS A COMFORTING SPIRIT.

This is peculiarly his office. Have you never felt that, immediately before a great and grievous trouble, you have had a most unaccountable season of joy? You scarcely knew why you were so happy or so tranquil, you seemed to be floating upon a very Sea of Elysium; there was not a breath of wind to ruffle your peaceful spirit, all was serene and calm. You were not agitated by the ordinary cares and anxieties of the world; your whole mind was absorbed in sacred meditation. By-and-by, the trouble comes, and you say, "Now I understand it all; I could not before comprehend the meaning of that grateful lull, that quiet happiness; but I see now that it was designed to prepare me for these trying circumstances. If I had been low and dispirited when this trouble burst upon me, it would have broken my heart. But now, thanks be to God, I can perceive through Jesus Christ how this 'light affliction, which is but for a moment,' worketh for me 'a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.'" But, mark you, I believe that it is worth while to have

the troubles in order to get the comfort of the Holy Spirit; it is worth while to endure the storm in order to realize the joys.

Sometimes, my heart has been shaken by obloquy, shame, and contempt; for many a brother minister, of whom I thought better things, has reviled me; and many a Christian has turned on his heel away from me, because I had been misrepresented to him, and he has hated me without a cause; but it has so happened that, at that very time, if the whole church had turned its back on me, and the whole world had hissed me, it would not have greatly moved me; for some bright ray of spiritual sunshine lit up my heart, and Jesus whispered to me those sweet words, "I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine." At such times, the consolations of the Spirit have been neither few nor small with me. O Christian, if I were able, I would bring thee yet further into the depths of this glorious passage; but, as I cannot, I must leave it with you. It is full of honey; only put it to your lips, and get the honey from it. "I will put my Spirit within you."

In winding up, let me add a remark or two. *Do you not see here the absolute certainty of the salvation of every believer?* Or rather, is it not absolutely certain that every member of the family of God's Israel must be saved? For it is written, "I will put my Spirit within you." Do you think that, when God puts his Spirit within men, they can possibly be damned? Can you think God puts his Spirit into them, and yet they perish, and are lost? You may think so if you please, sir; but I will tell you what God thinks: "I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes; and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." Sinners are far from God by wicked works, and they will not come unto him that they may have life; but when God says, "I will put my Spirit within you," he compels them to come to him.

What a vain pretence it is to profess to honour God by a doctrine that makes salvation depend on the will of man! If it were true, you might say to God, "We thank thee, O Lord, for what thou hast done; thou hast given us a great many things, and we offer thee thy meed of praise, which is justly due to thy name; but we think we deserve more, for the deciding point was in our free will." Beloved, do not any of you swerve from the free grace of God, for the babblings about man's free agency are neither more nor less than lies, right contrary to the truth of Christ, and the teachings of the Spirit.

How certain, then, is the salvation of every elect soul! It does not depend on the will of man; he is "made willing" in the day of God's power.* He shall be called at the set time, and his heart shall be effectually changed, that he may become a trophy of the Redeemer's power. That he was unwilling before, is no hindrance; for God giveth him the will, so that he is then of a willing mind. Thus, every heir of heaven must be saved, because the Spirit is put

* See *The New Park Street Pulpit*, No. 74, "A Willing People and an Immutable Leader,"—the very remarkable Sermon given by God to Mr. Spurgeon, in his sleep, during the night of Saturday, April 12th, 1856, and preached by him, the next morning, at New Park Street Chapel, Southwark.

within him, and thereby his disposition and affections are moulded according to the will of God.

Once more, *how useless is it for any persons to suppose that they can be saved without the Holy Spirit!* Ah, dear friends! men sometimes go very near to salvation without being saved; like the poor man who lay by the side of the pool of Bethesda, always close to the water, but never getting in. How many changes in outward character there are which very much resemble conversion; but, not having the Spirit in them, they fail after all! Death-bed repentances are often looked upon as very sincere, although too frequently, we fear, they are but *the first gnawings of the worm that never dies*. I have read, this week, an extraordinary anecdote, told by Dr. Campbell, of a woman who, many years ago, was condemned to death for murdering her child, and was hung in the Grass Market at Edinburgh. She very diligently improved the six weeks allowed her by the Scotch law, previous to her execution, and the ministers who were with her continually gave it as their opinion, that she died in the sure and certain hope of salvation. The appointed day came; she was hung; but, it being very rainy, and no awning having been prepared, those who had the charge of her execution were in a great hurry to complete it, and get under shelter, so she was cut down before the legal time, and, as the custom is, the body was given up to her friends to be buried. A coffin was provided, and she was removed in it to East Lothian, where her husband was going to bury her. They stopped at a public-house, on the road, to refresh themselves, when, to their great surprise and alarm, in rushed a boy, and said he heard a noise in the coffin. They went out, and found that the woman was alive; the vital powers had been suspended, but the life was not extinct, and the jolting of the cart had restored her circulation. After a few hours, she became quite well; they removed their residence, and went to another part of the country. But the sad part of the tale is this, that the woman was as bad a character afterwards as she ever was before, and, if anything, worse. She lived as openly in sin, and despised and hated religion even more than she had previously done. This is a most remarkable case. I believe that you would see that the great majority of those who profess to repent on their death-beds, if they could rise again from their graves, would live a life as profane and godless as ever. Rely on this; it is nothing but the grace of the Spirit of God that makes sure work of your souls. Unless he shall change you, you may be changed, but it will not be a change that will endure. Unless he shall put his hand to the work, the work will be marred, the pitcher spoiled on the wheel. Cry unto him, therefore, that he may give you the Holy Spirit, that you may have the evidence of a real conversion, and not a base counterfeit. Take heed, sirs, take heed! Natural fear, natural love, natural feelings, are not conversion. Conversion, in the first instance, and by all subsequent edification, must be the work of the Holy Spirit, and of him alone. Never rest comfortable, then, until you have the Holy Spirit's operations most surely effected in your hearts!