

***No. 44***

# *Living Water*

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Editor: Mark Lemon

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## THE SPIRIT OF LIFE AND THE COMFORTER

**John 4: 7-15, 28, 29**

**14: 15-18**

**16: 9 & 10**

In this occasion I thought we might look together at the service and activities of the Holy Spirit. In John chapter 4 we have the Holy Spirit as springing up to satisfy a need and then to enable a person to walk as superior to things around.

The Lord says, “if thou knewest the gift of God”, which conveys something of the infinitude and blessedness of what was given. That would encourage us today. The Lord speaks of “living water” and “a fountain of water, springing up into eternal life”. Immediately the woman is put in touch with a living system of things that for us is centred in a risen and glorified Lord. That is the blessing that the believer comes into immediately on trusting Christ.

It is amazing what the Lord presents to this woman in John 4 about worship and the gift of the Spirit. The Lord begins that way and touches her in her affections and then He touches the moral side. That had to be dealt with but it is what the Lord presented to her that made her long for what she had not got—the “living water”.

The Lord says: “whosoever drinks of the water”. That involves that we participate in this great matter that the Lord is bringing in, in view of refreshment and life in the believer. There is no growth without it. It is a marvellous thing to come to Christ and know that our sins are forgiven but let us realise the resources in the Spirit to connect us with the Man who is in the glory, to engage us with Him and to meet our need, because we do have needs as christians. We read, “Whosoever drinks of the water which I shall give him shall never thirst for ever”. Think of the greatness of what we have in the gift of the Holy Spirit. The believer is actually set apart by the gift of the Spirit. It is a question for each one of us as to how full we each are of the Holy Spirit. We need to realise that the Spirit is not given by measure. The more desire there is in us, the more we will get.

This woman in John 4 was proof of the working out of the scripture that says, “greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world” (1 John 4:4). She came out of the city under the domination of Satan but she went back saying “Come, see a man”. She was just absorbed with the greatness of Christ. Think of her history. She had five husbands and “he whom now thou hast is not thy husband” yet she goes out and testifies to these men. Why should they listen to her? Because she is in the good of this gift. There is an immediate effect. Her testimony is effective.

In John 14 and 16, we have the Holy Spirit as the Comforter. It is wonderful that

the Lord should be so concerned as to how His own were going to get on in the time of His absence. The Lord said that He would “beg the Father, and he will give you another Comforter”. In a sense the Lord is still a Comforter, but there is another Comforter in the Spirit, One who would look after our matters down here while the Lord takes up all that is necessary for us where He is in glory. The word translated “comfort” includes counsel. So the comfort of the Holy Spirit would help us in our walk here.

If the Lord Jesus was actually here with us we would lean on Him and find our resource in Him but, in this precious gift that He has given, there is as much resource for the Christian today as there would be if the Lord Jesus was Himself here. The Lord says, “It is profitable that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Comforter will not come to you”. It brings out the greatness of the gift of the Holy Spirit. It is His presence that enables the believer to walk here in the absence of Christ. Our Lord is not here but the Spirit is here within us and He would testify to the glory of Christ where He is and assure us of His love for us. Then, too, “the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given to us” (Romans 5:5). Think of how limitless it all is!

The Lord says here, “I will not leave you orphans”. The disciples would feel as bereft as an orphan in the absence of Christ but the Spirit brings the testimony that “we are children of God”. Another striking thing in this passage is, “that he may be with you for ever”. Think of that! It is not a question of our state. “the gifts and the calling of God are not subject to repentance” (Romans 11:29). The Spirit is given to the believer and He is with us for ever. He will go back with the assembly to glory and right throughout eternity He will be with us.

It is a beautiful title, “the Comforter”. Many believers are suffering severely in their bodies at the present time and the Spirit would bring His comfort and sustaining grace to such. He would assure them of the love of Christ. There is always an outlet upwards! We have a ‘double portion’ in that way. The service of the Lord Jesus is undiminished and we have another Comforter in the service of the Spirit as well. How blessed that Divine Persons are available to serve those who come to Christ. This is where faith comes in. We have trusted Christ for our soul salvation; are we prepared to trust the Spirit in view of the matters of our life here?

It is a great matter to rely on the Spirit for support. In the book of Genesis we see a figure of it in Rebecca in the way in which she says, “I will go with the man”. We see the power that was available in the provision the servant had in the camels and so on to carry her right through to Isaac himself. It typifies another aspect of the Spirit’s service in guiding the church to Christ and occupying her with Christ. We see examples of the Holy Spirit’s service in this way in the Acts of the

Apostles. Stephen must have known during that address to the Council that it was going to end in his death but he had an outlook; he got a view of Christ in glory. That would be one aspect of being filled with the Spirit, that a person's view is fixed on Christ on high.

Then we find another aspect of the Spirit's service with Philip. The Spirit directed him. We need to realise that the Spirit is not just an influence but a real Person. The Spirit spoke to Philip, telling him to join the chariot of the Ethiopian eunuch. Philip was moving under the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit. He was a man full of the Holy Spirit.

Later in Acts we read: "And having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia, having come down to Mysia..." (Acts 16:6 & 7). Paul and those with him were so close to the Spirit that they could be directed by Him in this way. It was a wonderful day at the beginning of the dispensation with the Spirit moving in testimony and the gospel being brought to the Gentiles. The power is undiminished on the part of the Holy Spirit but what weakness we see with ourselves! Maybe the lack of power with me is because I do not allow the Spirit to operate in my life. Maybe what should be taking place in me is being diluted by the effects of the world. We lose power as we are engaged by the god of this world.

We do see the power of the Holy Spirit working in blessing in our day. There are areas of the world where Christ is being received by great numbers of people. In China, Africa and South America it seems that there is a great movement of the Spirit. That is one way in which the Spirit operates to fill out what it says in the passage we read, "He shall glorify me".

Then again we read of the Spirit, "He does not speak from himself". He is the living link with the realm where Christ is. For nearly two thousand years the Spirit of God has been glorifying Christ here. He is still speaking: "He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies" (Revelation 2:7).

The Holy Spirit is the "Spirit of truth, he shall guide you into all the truth". The Spirit opens up to us the deep things of God: "Things which eye has not seen, and ear not heard, and which have not come into man's heart, which God has prepared for them that love him, but God has revealed to us by his Spirit" (1 Corinthians 2:9, 10). There is a great range within the Spirit's resource that He will open up to the believer. He is the earnest of the inheritance. We are "heirs of God, and Christ's joint heirs". Now, heirs have an inheritance. Do we realise what the inheritance is? The Spirit would give us the joy of it now. He would bring us into the joy of sonship.

*David McIntyre*

*Extracts from a reading in Glasgow, September 2000.*

## THE LOVE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

**Romans** 5: 1-2 & 5-6  
8: 12-17  
**Galatians** 5: 22-25  
**John** 16: 7 & 13-16

I wish to draw attention to the love of the Spirit of God. Although there is only one direct reference in the bible to the love of the Spirit, in Romans 15:30, “But I beseech you, brethren, by the love of the Spirit”, I believe the scriptures which we have read provide evidence of His love.

In Romans 5 the writer is addressing persons who are justified on the principle of faith in the Lord Jesus and His finished work. When first we put our trust in the Lord Jesus we are concerned with our own needs as sinners, but our needs can only be met because the requirements of God’s holiness and righteousness have been met by Jesus at the cross. The resurrection of Jesus is the evidence that the work has been completed to the full satisfaction of a holy God and the question of sin and sins settled to God’s glory. Forgiveness and justification are available to all, but are bestowed only upon those who have come the way of repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

As newly-converted believers we may not understand much, but having put our trust in the Lord Jesus we then learn that in the eyes of God we are justified, that is, we are counted as righteous. God no longer looks at us in our sins, because they have been put away by Jesus. Then it says, “by whom we have also access by faith into this favour in which we stand, and we boast in hope of the glory of God” (Romans 5:2). How wonderful to be in God’s favour!

Then Romans 5:5 speaks of the love of God being shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit which has been given to us. When we receive the Holy Spirit the first thing He does is to give us assurance of the forgiveness of sins and then He makes us conscious of God’s love toward us. He loves to fill our hearts with God’s love, because the Holy Spirit is one of the Persons of the Godhead.

The love of God was displayed at the cross and now is radiant in Jesus at God’s right hand in heaven but the inward conscious sense that God loves us is what the Holy Spirit sheds abroad in our hearts. Then we have peace, knowing that the judgment due to us was borne at the cross and that God’s love is now free to bless. As you are conscious of this then be assured that you have received the Holy Spirit. It is a proof of the indwelling Spirit.

We next read from Romans chapter 8 but chapters 6 and 7 intervene and believers have to learn what is taught in these chapters before arriving in their souls at chapter 8.

Romans 6 opens with "...should we continue in sin that grace may abound?" The world and all that marks it is a great system of sin and God has provided wonderful resources that believers should not be held in bondage by it, so that we may enjoy the blessings which He has secured for us through our Lord Jesus. We need to be free from the sin system which is going on to judgment.

In verse 14 it we read "For sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under law but under grace". This is based on the death of our Lord Jesus. Having been baptised unto His death we learn to reckon ourselves dead with Him. "Knowing this, that our old man has been crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be annulled, that we should no longer serve sin." Our old man is what we are according to the old nature. The old man is still with us but God has finished with it in the death of Christ and by faith we can so reckon ourselves dead with Him.

We may think that, when we trust in the Lord Jesus and our sins are forgiven, everything will be plain sailing. However we find that the sin which had dominion over us in our unconverted days does not fall away all at once. Who is here to help us? God has given the Holy Spirit to help us. The Lord Jesus is on high as our great high priest in the presence of God and also as intercessor. If we fail, He is there to intercede for us. God has made tremendous provision for the believer, so that we should be set free from the dominion of sin, and God has in mind that we might enjoy eternal life. "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord"

Now chapter 7 of Romans shows us that as we become aware of the power of sin and desire to do what is right, then we may try to do things in our own power and discover only failure. We may try to meet sin and temptations by fulfilling the legal requirement of the ten commandments. There is no deliverance on the basis of what is legal. God is finished with the law as far as blessing is concerned. God has been glorified regarding the law by our Lord Jesus. He is the One who fulfilled it and made it honourable, but we are set free from the legal commandment by the death of Christ, that we should be married to another. Christ is the new Husband.

In the struggle to practise what is right we find that we are powerless because of what is within. Perhaps someone is going through this struggle. We read, "I do not practise the good that I will" (Romans 7:19). Oh, you have tried hard and have found there is no strength in yourself. Then you realise that you are married



to another, and your resource is in Him, Jesus Christ our Lord. He alone can deliver you.

Now we come to Romans 8 where we find the answer to the flesh. The flesh is our fallen nature, as corrupted by sin, and it is what hinders us from entering into the things of God. The scripture says, "But ye are not in flesh but in Spirit, if indeed God's Spirit dwell in you" (Romans 8:9). Flesh has been condemned. "God has condemned sin in the flesh" (Romans 8:3). The man of offence has been removed in the death of Christ. There is no betterment for the flesh so God has ended it. It has been said, 'what could not be mended God has ended'. He ended it in the death of Christ.

The answer to the flesh is the indwelling Spirit. Do we still find wrong thoughts arising in our hearts? Well, we do, but before God we are not in flesh but in spirit, if God's Spirit dwell in us. We are not in flesh, but the flesh is still in us and it will be until the day that the Lord takes us to be with Himself. The indwelling Spirit should control our lives, not the flesh.

Some of us may take a long time to realise the wonderful resource we have in the Spirit of God. Consider the tests which Israel passed through during 40 years in the wilderness. The brazen serpent came near the end of those 40 years and is the type of the death of Christ which indicates God's condemnation of sin in the flesh and the finish of that order of man altogether. Then we have the reference to "Rise up well, sing unto it" (Numbers 21:17) showing, in figure, their arrival at the recognition of God's Spirit.

We have been given a Spirit of adoption. In Chapter 8 it is not exactly God's love towards us but rather that there is awakened in us a response towards God by the Spirit "whereby we cry Abba, Father". That is the affectionate outgoing of the heart towards God the Father as under the power of the Holy Spirit, in the consciousness that we have been adopted as sons into the divine family. So that, by the Spirit, God is now finding an answer, and as many as are led by the Spirit of God these are the sons of God. We "have not received a spirit of bondage", but we have received a Spirit that brings us into liberty in the presence of God and the entrance into the greatness of His thoughts in blessing.

He then "bears witness with our spirit, that we are children of God". And if we are children we are also heirs. All that we actually possess now is the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit; everything else lies in the realm of faith. We look forward to the day when we will enter into the actuality of what we have in faith now. In Hebrews 11 there is a list of persons of faith of the Old Testament. What did they have? "They were strangers and sojourners on the earth" (Hebrews 11:13). Abraham had nothing here but a tent and an altar. His altar was his communion with God and his tent was a temporary dwelling place. That is all we

have here because we await our abode “eternal in the heavens” (2 Corinthians 5:1).

The Spirit of God is with us here and when the church goes to be with Christ in heaven then the Spirit will go with the church. I am not saying He may not continue to operate in the world—He is a divine Person, and cannot be limited—but He does not dwell in the world; He dwells in believers, in the assembly. The Lord Jesus says, He will “be with you for ever” (John 14:16).

Romans deals with us in our responsible lives down here on earth and so does Galatians. The Galatians were in danger of returning to Judaism and Judaism is a formal and legal system of worship but there is nothing formal about divine things and there is nothing for God in what is formal. If the old order could have satisfied God He would not have brought in what is new in christianity. There would have been no need for Jesus to die. Now God is looking for an answer in fruit from the believer.

Galatians 5 sets out the things which mark the flesh. We do not need to be told about these things. We know them in ourselves and the newspapers are full of them. And, “the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the works of the flesh are manifest”. “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace....” and so on. You will note that the first character of the fruit is love. I believe that every thing else is dependent upon that. We see fruit for God in perfection in our Lord Jesus. The love to man of our Saviour God has been expressed perfectly in Jesus, amongst men, and supremely at the cross. What love He had for His disciples whom He gathered round Him and then there is His constant, present love. Which of us would be in this room tonight if it had not been for the love of Jesus and for His love made known in our hearts by the Holy Spirit?

Joy is something that is in fairly short supply in this world. You do get transient joy; scripture speaks about “the temporary pleasure of sin” (Hebrews 11:25) which does not last. Divinely given joy does last; it will last eternally. For us it is by the Spirit.

Then there is peace. It is not exactly the peace we read of in Romans 5, which is peace towards God, but it is peace practically in our experience down here. There would be fewer divisions among believers if there was peace. There would be no divisions if love was in full flow. I am not saying that evil should not be dealt with. Where there is evil it can be dealt with righteously and God glorified in it, then peace can be maintained in righteousness and joy can be maintained.

The next feature is “long-suffering”. How much need there is for long-suffering.. How impatient we become. Think of the long-suffering of God! Waiting for us as sinners in the first place, then waiting for us making progress in the truth and waiting for us bringing forth fruit for His glory. How great is the long-suffering

of God! Think of the long-suffering of Jesus; how He bore with His disciples, constantly showing them love. They did not understand when He was about to go to the cross although He had often told them! Now think of His long-suffering as He waits for His bride to be with Himself in heavenly glory.

Kindness. The kindness of our Saviour God has appeared. These are practical features which should appear as the fruit of the Spirit. We do not have power in ourselves and it is not the fruit of what is natural. It is only as we make way for the Spirit of God that He will serve us in love in view of these things being so. It is not presented as our fruit but it is produced in us as the fruit of the Spirit.

The list continues, “Goodness, fidelity, meekness and self-control. Against such things there is no law”. “But they that are of the Christ have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts. If we live by the Spirit, let us walk also by the Spirit”. We enjoy the blessings from God by the Spirit, but we are tested whether this fruit is in evidence as we go through this scene and try to work out things in our local companies, in our business lives, and perhaps at school.

So, someone at school may suffer taunts and jeering but, if they accept it in a spirit of meekness and self-control, that has its own effect. This is true in whatever circumstances a believer may find himself or herself; though not everyone we come into contact with may be positively affected by such testimony, yet it is all fruit for God.

Then there is the testimony of our Lord Jesus. We sometimes think that testimony is preaching. Well, preaching may be part of testimony but there will be no real testimony, however well we may preach, if there is not consistency with the preaching. People take more account of what we are than of what we say. So, if we live by the Spirit and enjoy spiritual things, let us walk also by the Spirit. That is, the control of our lives should be handed over to the Spirit of God so that practical fruit may be in evidence.

In John’s gospel, the Lord Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit as the Comforter who was coming to be with His disciples in His absence. No doubt many wish they had been with Jesus here on the earth; it was a wonderful time but the Lord said, “Verily, verily, I say to you, He that believes on me, the works which I do shall he do also, and he shall do greater than these, because I go to the Father” (John 14:12). He also says: “It is profitable for you that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Comforter will not come to you”. We might have thought it better if Jesus had remained here but He gives us to understand how much value He puts on the presence of the Comforter with the saints.

Then the Lord speaks of the Spirit of Truth— “But when he is come, the Spirit of truth, he shall guide you into all the truth”. We should be conscious that it is the Spirit who guides and leads us into God’s thoughts. The truth of God is in the

scriptures; in its full expression it is in our Lord Jesus, but we do need a guide to give us understanding and to preserve us from bringing in our own thoughts and hence falling into error. The Spirit of God is the safeguard, as we are dependent upon Him.

It says, “for he shall not speak from himself; but whatsoever he shall hear he shall speak; and he will announce to you what is coming”. The Spirit of Truth brings communications from heaven to earth; it says that He will, “receive of mine and shall announce it to you”. The Holy Spirit delights to speak to us of Jesus and His glory; He also speaks of the Father’s things because the Lord goes on to say, “All things that the Father has are mine; on account of this I have said that he receives of mine and shall announce it to you”.

The Father has put all things in the hand of the Son administratively. The blessed Spirit conveys to us the fulness and blessedness of what God has in mind for us. He also delights to tell of the exaltation of our Lord Jesus, who has been given “a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow” (Philippians 2 v 9). Every knee does not bow now, but the Spirit delights to bring His glory near, that our knees may bow now. Thus we are made to understand how much we are dependent on the love of the Spirit of God in this His present untiring service.

I close with that verse, “A little while and ye do not behold me; and again a little while and ye shall see me, because I go away to the Father”. There is not much longer left. I believe that the Spirit of God is indicating that the Lord Jesus is coming very soon. Therefore may we be maintained in our links with divine Persons, in the conscious sense of the love of our Lord Jesus Christ and of the love of the Holy Spirit in His service to us.

The glory of the eternal scene is shortly to be ushered in for the believers of this dispensation. This world will have a dreadful time when the church goes. Evil is held in check at the present time by the presence of the Spirit of God in the assembly of God but when that restraint is gone, what will this scene be like? But for those who trust in our Lord Jesus a glorious moment lies ahead when we are raptured to be with Himself. We look forward to seeing Him face to face and to His public vindication as the answer to His sufferings. There is an answer to sufferings; if we partake in the sufferings, we will partake in the glory with Him (Romans 8:17).

May each of us be maintained in fidelity to the Lord as we await His coming to receive us to Himself.

*Don Macphail*

*An address at Worthing, February 2000.*

## “TO WHOM SHALL WE GO?”

**“From that time many of his disciples went away back and walked no more with him. Jesus therefore said to the twelve, Will ye also go away? Simon Peter answered him, Lord to whom shall we go? Thou hast words of life eternal; and we have believed and known that thou art the holy one of God”**  
(John 6:66-69)

To whom, Lord, shall we go? For Thou hast sought us,  
Cleansed us and claimed us by Thy precious blood.  
How can we go away? For Thou hast taught us  
That we have all in Thee, O Son of God.

To whom, Lord, shall we go? For who so tender  
To help and heal and meet our every need?  
To Thee we yield our hearts in full surrender—  
O blessed Saviour, we are Thine indeed!

We cannot go away, for as we hear Thee  
Words of eternal life so richly flow.  
Thou holy One of God, we would be near Thee—  
O Jesus, Lord, to whom then shall we go?

*Walter Brown*

(This poem was suggested by the French hymn ‘A qui donc irions-nous?’)

## UNBOUNDED LOVE

O Lord Thy love’s unbounded,  
So vast, so full, so free!  
But how imperfect, faltering,  
How small my love to Thee!  
Compare my love with Thine, Lord,  
How feeble does it seem!  
Thy love is like an ocean,  
But mine a tiny stream.

How little do I fathom  
That wondrous depth of grace,  
Which brought Thee down from Heaven  
On earth to take a place—  
To be the lowly Jesus,  
(Oh blessed beauteous name!)  
To bow Thy head so meekly,  
To bear that cross of shame!

How feeble is the answer  
To all Thy present love!  
Thy patient loving service  
As Advocate above!  
'Midst all my folly, weakness,  
Forgetfulness of Thee,  
Thy love still, like a banner,  
Protect, o'ershadows me.

Release my heart then, Jesus,  
From all that's here below,  
That thus each hindrance banished,  
My love towards Thee may flow,  
And then with deeper meaning,  
My song shall rise to Thee—  
O Lord, Thy love's unbounded  
So vast, so full, so free!

*T. W.*

(This poem was written as a result of pondering the opening lines of the hymn by J. N. Darby:

'O Lord, Thy love's unbounded,  
So vast, so full, so free'.)

## THE WEAVER

My life is but a weaving  
Between my Lord and me;  
I cannot choose the colours,  
He worketh steadily.

Oft-times He weaveth sorrow,  
And I in foolish pride,  
Forget He sees the upper,  
And I, the underside.

Not till the loom is silent,  
And the shuttles cease to fly,  
Shall God unroll the canvas  
And explain the reason why

The dark threads are as needful,  
In the Weaver's skilful hand,  
As the threads of gold and silver  
In the pattern He has planned.

*Anon.*

## A SYRIAN SHEPHERD SPEAKS ABOUT THE 23rd PSALM

It was out of the shepherd life of my country that there came long ago that sweetest song ever written, the twenty-third Psalm. So many things in the life of my people (the same even now as in the days of old) have been woven into the words of the Bible.

It is all a simple shepherd psalm. It runs through the round of shepherd life from first word to last: "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want". That is the opening strain of music: in that chord is sounded the keynote which is never lost till the melody dies away at the song's end. "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures", that is, there is nourishment and rest. "He leadeth me beside the still waters", there is refreshment. You think here in the western world of quietly flowing streams, and get only another picture of rest. But streams are few in that shepherd country, and the shepherds do not rely on them. To the shepherd "the

still waters” are wells and cisterns, and he leads his sheep to these still waters not for rest but to bring up water to quench their thirst.

The varied needs of the sheep and the many-sided care of the shepherd are pictured with skill in the short sentences of the psalm. Each is distinct and adds something too precious to be merged and lost.

“He restoreth my soul”, that word “soul” means ‘the life of one’s self’ in the Hebrew writings. There are private fields and gardens and vineyards in the shepherd country and, if a sheep stray into them and is caught there, it is forfeited to the owner of the land. So, “He restoreth my soul” means the shepherd brings me back and rescues my life from forbidden and fatal places. He ‘Restores me when wandering’ as the hymn puts it.

“He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness, for His name’s sake”. Often I have roamed through the shepherd country in my youth and watched how hard it is to choose the right path for the sheep. One way leads to a precipice, another to a place where the sheep cannot find the way back; the shepherd was always going ahead, leading them in the right paths, proud of his good name as a shepherd.

Some paths that are right paths lead through places that have deadly perils. “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death” is the way the psalm touches this fact in shepherd life. This way of naming the valley is very true to our country. I remember one near my home called the ‘valley of robbers’ and another ‘the ravine of the raven’. “The valley of the shadow of death” is a name drawn from my country’s old custom. And so is the phrase “Thy rod and Thy staff”, for the shepherds carry a weapon for defence and one for guidance. Ah you should see the sheep huddle near the shepherd to understand the words, “they comfort me”. The shepherd’s call ‘Ta-a-a, Ho-o-o’ and the answering patter of feet as the sheep hurry to him are fit sounds to be chosen out of the noisy world to show what comfort the Lord gives to souls that heed His voice; those sounds have been heard in my country this day as they were the day this shepherd psalm was written!

“Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.” This is not speaking of an indoor banquet but of the operation of the shepherd’s highest skill and heroism. There is no higher task of the shepherd in my country than to go from time to time to study places and examine the grass and find a good and safe feeding-place for his sheep. All his skill, and often great heroism, are called for. There are many poisonous plants in the grass and the shepherd must find and avoid them. A cousin of mine once lost three hundred sheep by a mistake in this



hard task. Then there are vipers' holes and the reptiles bite the noses of the sheep if they be not driven away. Then round the feeding-ground which the shepherd thus prepares, in holes and caves in the hillsides, there are jackals, wolves, hyenas, and maybe tigers, too, and the bravery and skill of the shepherd are at the highest point in closing up these dens with stones, or slaying the wild beasts with his long-bladed knife. Of nothing do you hear shepherds speaking more proudly than of their achievements in this part of their care of flocks. And now do you not see the shepherd figure in that line, "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies"? It speaks of the shepherd's greatest devotion to the sheep.

As the psalm goes on we are presented with a beautiful picture at the end of the day. The psalm has sung of the whole round of the day's wanderings, all the needs of the sheep, all the care of the shepherd. Now the psalm closes with the last scene of the day. At the door of the sheepfold the shepherd stands and the 'rodding' of the sheep takes place. The shepherd stands, turning his body to let the sheep pass; he is the door, as Christ said of Himself. With his rod he holds back the sheep while he inspects them one by one as they pass into the fold. He has the horn filled with olive oil, and he has cedar-tar, and he anoints a knee bruised on the rocks, or a side scratched by thorns. And here comes one that is not bruised, but is simply worn and exhausted; he bathes its face and head with the refreshing olive oil, and he takes the large two-handled cup and dips it brimming full from the vessels of water provided for that purpose and he lets the weary sheep drink. There is nothing finer in the psalm than this. God's care is not for the wounded only but for the worn and weary also. "He anointeth my head with oil, my cup runneth over."

Then, when the day is gone, and the sheep are snug within the fold, what contentment, what rest under the starry sky! Then comes the thought of deepest repose and comfort: "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life", as they have through all the wanderings of the day now ended.

The song dies away as the heart that God has watched and tended breathes these grateful words "I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever". The song ends and the sheep are at rest, safe in the Good Shepherd's fold. What a picture of the care of the Lord for each one of His own.

*Faduel Moghabghab*

## **THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

The question, “Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?” asked by Paul in Acts 19 would possibly perplex a number of christians today. For while being able to say as a creed ‘I believe... in the Holy Ghost’, they might have to confess ignorance as to whether they had received Him or not.

Yet the distinctive feature of christianity is the presence on earth of God the Holy Ghost. This is what distinguishes believers today from those of previous times, that they have received the gift of the Spirit.

### **The ground upon which the believer receives the Spirit**

The work of redemption was necessary before the Holy Spirit could be received. Many New Testament scriptures teach us this. First, historically, the Holy Spirit did not come until Jesus had died and had risen and had been glorified (See Acts 2). When the work of redemption had been accomplished and Jesus was exalted then the Holy Spirit came (John 7:39).

Then, doctrinally, we are taught in Galatians 3:13 & 14 that “Christ hath redeemed us... that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith”. Romans 8 tells how sin was condemned in Christ’s sacrifice for sin upon the cross so that the believer might have a new power of life by receiving the Spirit.

It is interesting to note that in the teaching of John’s gospel that first the cross is presented in chapter 3 and then the “living water”, which is the Spirit as power, is spoken of in chapter 4.

It is because the work of Christ has so perfectly met all that we were as sinners and removed it in God’s account that the Holy Spirit can be given to us. For the Spirit of God is holy and must have a holy dwelling place. Paul could tell the Corinthians that once they were marked by all kinds of evil, but, he adds, “ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified.” (1 Corinthians 6:11).

The Spirit of God is given, then, on the ground of redemption and it is only as redeemed that we can receive the Holy Ghost.

### **The manner of receiving the Holy Spirit**

A few historical examples may serve to show the method of God’s ways and the epistles will confirm and regulate our thoughts. We can remember how that little company of believers received the Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). Then, in the power of that same Spirit, Peter preaches to the concerned multitude and at the end of the chapter we read how definite was God’s message: “Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38).

This sets before us the normal manner of receiving the Spirit. A sincere acceptance of the word is followed by the reception of the Holy Spirit. Peter alludes to this gift of the Holy Spirit as the proper portion of all who had obeyed God, that is by believing on the Lord Jesus (Acts 5: 31 & 32).

Two interesting exceptions are also found. In Acts 8 Philip preaches in Samaria, and many believed, and “there was great joy in that city”. But although they had believed and had been baptised God in His infinite wisdom did not at once give them the Holy Spirit.

Jerusalem and Samaria had long been at enmity and God was about to break down the wall of partition. The apostles from Jerusalem are to go down and recognise God’s work in Samaria and by prayer and fully identifying themselves with them the Spirit is given. The exceptional nature of this incident is clearly shown in verse 16, where the scripture records that though they had been baptised they had not received the Spirit. Samaria is no longer to be independent of those in Jerusalem and Jewish pride is to be abandoned.

The other exceptional case is found in Acts 10, where Peter preaches to Cornelius and those gathered with him. Here the doubts in the hearts of those who accompanied Peter, as to whether gentiles were to be received, had to be dispelled and Peter himself gains additional assurance. It was no small departure from Jewish precedent for one that was a Jew to “keep company, or come unto one of another nation” (Acts 10:28). Hence nothing but a divine proof would have been enough to satisfy a pious Jewish mind that to do so was not unlawful.

God had already shown Peter that those national distinctions were to be annulled and that no man was to be regarded as unclean or common. God now regards man favourably through the Lord Jesus Christ.

But others beside Peter had to learn that same wonderful lesson. Hence, while Peter was still speaking, “the Holy Ghost fell on all of them which heard the word”. His presence was evidenced by marvellous gifts and then they were baptised. In recounting the matter Peter suitably asks: “What was I, that I could withstand God?” God had received them and sealed them as His. Peter and those with him recognise God’s work.

There is another incident in Acts 19. Those at Ephesus had not, properly speaking, heard the gospel. They knew only the baptism of John. Paul explains to them the difference between what they had heard and what christianity had brought to pass and they are baptised and receive the Spirit

In his epistle to the Ephesians, writing to them some time after, Paul says, “In whom ye also trusted, after that ye had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise”. This suggests the next part of the subject.

## **The principle upon which the Holy Spirit is received**

This is given in Galatians 3. It is not on the ground of our merit, or doing anything, that is, on the principle of “works of law” that the Spirit of God is received. It is not a question of attainment. The Spirit is received by “faith” (Galatians 3:2). Of this we saw an illustration in Acts 2 where “gladly received the word” described those who had received blessing. So in Acts 10 “The Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word”, and the verse already quoted from Ephesians 1 “after that ye believed, ye were sealed”. John 7:39 also teaches us the same thing: “This spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive”.

The believer then it is who receives the gift of the Spirit. We stretch out our hand of faith and accept God’s gracious offer. God touches us, so to speak, and seals us as His own by giving us the Holy Spirit.

*Malcolm Biggs*

## **LIFE, COMMUNION AND POWER BY THE HOLY SPIRIT**

### **John 15**

The power and action of the Holy Spirit are presented to us in the word in three distinct ways: He communicates life to us; He dwells in us; He distributes gifts to each one as He pleases. Thus we have life, communion, and gifts. As regards these last, there are gifts of the Spirit that are independent of the life of the Spirit: Balaam and Saul offer us examples of this. The Spirit of life is a Spirit of communion as well as of power. As the Spirit of communion, He is given to disciples only, to those who possess life. They have communion with God, the source of which is the Holy Spirit, who communicates to us the knowledge of the things of Christ, makes them living in our hearts and thus becomes in us a fountain of water springing up into eternal life.

We find three kinds of assurance in the word of God:

1. assurance of faith (Hebrews 10:22)—when faith rests on what God says to us and the Spirit seals these truths in our hearts;
2. assurance of hope (Hebrews 6:11)—when we have the inward sense, by the Spirit, of the certainty of the promises made to us, and the enjoyment of those things in hope;
3. assurance of understanding (Colossians 2:2)—when we know God’s counsel, and understand how God has regulated and ordered all things for the glory of His Son and the manifestation of His character...

But the Holy Spirit leads us further still. He places us in the love of God, who is the source of all wisdom. The smallest of God’s children is put there on the same footing as the one who is most advanced in the Scriptures. The summing up of every experience that we have of God is that He is love. The more one goes on the more one understands that God is love. We are brought by the Holy Spirit into such intimacy with God that we can even fathom the deep things of God. God loves the Son. The Holy Spirit gives us insight into all the relationships of the Father with the Son. The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which has been given to us.

It is as a Spirit of communion that the Holy Spirit is spoken of at the end of John’s gospel. He is called the Comforter there. In chapter 14 verse 16, Christ is presented as Mediator to obtain the Holy Spirit for us. In chapter 15 verse 26 He sends Him to us Himself. In chapter 14 verse 26 the Father sends Him. This Spirit is the means of our communion with God. He gives us to know that this Jesus who washed the feet of the disciples, ate with them, and lived with them, is one with the Father and that we are one with Him. He gives us to know that we are children of God, that we are one in Jesus with the Father. Our communion is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. We are brought not only into the certainty that God loves us but into the knowledge of the relations of the Father with the Son and also into the relationship of children of God with one another.

As a Spirit of gifts, the Holy Spirit acts towards the church by means of us, to communicate certain things to other persons. As a Spirit of communion He is in all the children of God; He belongs to them all. Casting out demons is less important than having one’s name written in heaven.

The Holy Spirit belongs to all the children of God. He is a Spirit of truth. The truths that He gives us to know are the channels of communion with God. It is enough to know one of these truths—that Jesus is the Christ—in order to be saved. A soul that knows Christ only a very little, and is faithful, is further on than one who, knowing more of the truth, is unfaithful. We may find pleasure

and joy in hearing the word explained but this joy is nothing if the word is not made good in us and we do not have habitual communion with the Lord. We may be joyful in knowing that Christ is our Shepherd but what use is that, if we do not follow Him? That is why we are often very weak, in spite of our knowledge: it is that we do not make good what we know...

As for us whose privilege it is to know these truths, let us never say it is enough for us to know that we are saved. To refuse to open our eyes to the treasures that are heaped up for us in the Father's house is ungratefulness for the grace that brings us in there. This communion always make us humble, because it places us in the presence of God; now in that presence, not even Satan himself could be proud.

*J. N. Darby*

## THE HOLY SPIRIT

**“If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His” . Romans 8:9**

I want to ask everyone a plain question: Do you know the Holy Ghost? What do you know of His office, His work, His indwelling, His fellowship and His power? Few truths of the christian religion are so often obscured and spoiled by false doctrine as the truth about the Holy Ghost.

Firstly let us look at the importance attached to the work of the Holy Ghost in Scripture.

I find it hard to know where to begin and where to leave off. So often is the Holy Ghost mentioned in the New Testament, that my difficulty is not so much the discovery of evidence as the selection. Fifteen times in the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans Paul speaks of God the Spirit. In fact the place which the Holy Ghost holds in the minds of most professing christians bears no proportion to the place which He holds in the Word.

Thomas Goodwin (1704) could say: “There is a general omission in the saints of God, in their not giving the Holy Ghost that glory that is due to His Person, and for His great work in us. He is a Person in the Godhead, equal with the Father and the Son. The work He doth for us, in its kind, is as great as those of the Father or the Son.

I shall not spend much time in proving the divinity and personality of the Holy Ghost. I am utterly at a loss to understand how any honest-minded reader of the Bible can fail to see them. Above all, I am unable to comprehend how any unprejudiced reader of the Bible can regard the Spirit as nothing more than “an

influence or principle”. We find it written in the New Testament that the Holy Ghost was “seen descending in a bodily shape” (Luke 3:22). He commanded disciples to do acts, and lifted them through the air by His own power (Acts 8:29-39). He sent forth the first preachers to the Gentiles (Acts 13:2). He spake to the churches (Revelation 2:7). He maketh intercession (Romans 8:26). He searcheth all things, teacheth all things and guideth into all truth (1 Corinthians 2:10; John 14:26; 16:13). He is another Comforter distinct from Christ (John 14:16). He has personal affections ascribed to Him (Isaiah 63:10; Ephesians 4:30; Romans 15:30). He has a mind, will, and power (Romans 8:27; 1 Corinthians 12:11; Romans 15:13). He has baptism administered in His name together with the Father and the Son (Matthew 28:19). And whosoever shall blaspheme Him hath never forgiveness, and is in danger of eternal damnation (Mark 3:29).

I make no comment on these passages. They speak for themselves. But I would point out two things. Firstly, let us note that in every step of the grand work of man’s redemption the Bible assigns a prominent place to the Holy Ghost. It is written that when our Lord was conceived of the virgin Mary, “the Holy Ghost came upon her, and the power of the Highest overshadowed her” (Luke 1:35). What do you think of the earthly ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ? You know that none ever did what He did, lived as He lived, and spake as He spake. Well, it is written that the Spirit “descended from heaven like a dove and abode upon Him”, that “God anointed Him with the Holy Ghost”, that “the Father gave not the Spirit by measure”, and that He was “full of the Holy Ghost” (John 1:32; Acts 10:38; John 3:34; Luke 4:1).

What do you think of the vicarious sacrifice of Christ on the cross? Its value is simply unspeakable. Well, it is written, “who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God” (Hebrews 9:14). When we come to the resurrection it is written that “He was put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit” (1 Peter 3:18).

What do you think of the mission of the apostles to preach the Gospel? They were obliged to tarry at Jerusalem and “wait for the promise of the Father”. They were unfit to go forth till they were “filled with the Holy Ghost”, upon the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:4; 2:4). Then in the writing of the Scriptures we are told that, “Holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Peter 1:21). “The things which we speak” says Paul, “we speak in the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth” (1 Corinthians 2:13).

What do you think of the whole dispensation under which we Christians live? You know its privileges as far exceed those of the Jews as twilight is exceeded by noonday. Well, we are especially told that it is the “ministration of the Spirit” (2 Corinthians 3:8).

I place all these scriptures before you as matter for private meditation and pass on to the other general remark I promised to make.

I ask you then to note carefully, that whatever christians have, are, and enjoy, in contra-distinction to the worldly and unconverted, they owe to the agency of God the Holy Ghost. By Him they are first called, quickened, and made alive. Of Him they are born again, and made new creatures. By Him they are convinced of sin, guided into all truth and led to Christ. By Him they are sealed unto the day of redemption. He dwells in them as His living temple. He witnesses with their spirits, gives them the spirit of adoption, makes them to cry “Abba Father”, and makes intercession for them. By Him they are sanctified. By Him the love of God is shed abroad in their hearts. Through His power they abound in hope. Through Him they wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. Through Him they mortify the deeds of their bodies. In a word, all that believers have from grace to glory, —all that they are from the first moment they believe to the day they depart to be with Christ, all may be traced to the work of God the Holy Ghost. (John 6:63; 3:8; 16:8, 10; Ephesians 4:30; 1 Corinthians 6:19; Romans 8:13, 16, 26; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Romans 5:5; 15:13; Galatians 5:5; Romans 8:1, 13)

Before I pass on let me entreat all to make sure that they hold sound doctrine concerning the work of the Holy Ghost. Give Him the honour due unto His name. Give Him the place and the dignity which Scripture assigns to Him. Settle it in your minds that the work of all three Persons in the blessed Trinity is absolutely and equally needful to the salvation of every saved soul. The election of God the Father, and the atoning blood of God the Son, are the foundation stones of our faith. But from them must never be separated the applicatory work of God the Holy Ghost. The Father chooses, the Son mediates, absolves, justifies, and intercedes, the Holy Ghost applies the whole work to man’s soul. Always together in Scripture, never separated in Scripture, let the offices of the three Persons in the Trinity never be wrenched asunder and disjoined in your christianity.

### **Secondly, let us consider the necessity of the work of the Holy Ghost to man’s salvation.**

The necessity of the work of the Holy Ghost arises from the total corruption of human nature. We are all by nature “dead in sins” (Ephesians 2:1). However shrewd and clever in the things of this world, we are all dead towards God. The eyes of our understanding are blinded. We see nothing aright. Our wills, affections, and inclinations are alienated from Him who made us. “The carnal mind is enmity against God” (Romans 8:7). We have naturally neither faith, nor



fear, nor love, nor holiness. In short, left to ourselves, we should never be saved.

Without the Holy Ghost no man ever turns to God, believes, repents, and obeys. Intellectual training and secular education make no true christians. Acquaintance with fine arts and science leads no one to heaven. The most zealous efforts of believers cannot make men christians. The ablest scriptural reasoning has no effect on the mind; the most fervent pulpit eloquence will not move the heart; the naked truth alone will not lead the will. We who preach know this well by painful experience. We can show men the fountain of living waters, but we cannot make them drink. We see many a one hearing hundreds of sermons full of gospel truth, without the slightest result. We learn by such cases as these that nothing will make a christian but the introduction into the heart of a new nature, a new principle, and a Divine seed from above.

What is it then that man needs? We need to be “born again”: and this new birth we must receive of the Holy Ghost. The Spirit of life must quicken us. The Spirit must renew us. The Spirit must take away from us the heart of stone. A new being must be called into existence. Without all this we cannot be saved. Here lies the main part of our need of the Holy Ghost. “Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3).

Without the work of the Holy Ghost no man could ever be fit to dwell with God in another world. A fitness of some kind we must have. The pardon of our sins, unless accompanied by the gift of a nature in harmony with that of God Himself, is insufficient. We need a character for heaven, as well as a title, and this character we must receive from the Holy Ghost.

The Spirit must wean our affections from things below, and teach us to set them on things above. The Spirit must teach us to be submissive to the will of God. The Spirit must write the law of God on our inward man. The Spirit must transform us by the daily renewing of our minds, and implant in us the image of Him whose servants we profess to be. Here lies the other great part of our need of the Holy Ghost’s work. We need sanctification no less than justification.

The love of sin must be taken from us, as well as the guilt of sin removed; the desire of pleasing God must be implanted in us, as well as the fear of God’s judgment taken away; a love to holiness must be engrafted, as well as a dread of punishment removed. Heaven itself would be no heaven to us if we entered it without a new heart. The society of saints and angels could give us no happiness in heaven, unless the love of holy company had been first shed abroad in our hearts upon earth.

To use the words of Owen, ‘When God designed the great and glorious work of recovering fallen man and saving sinners, He appointed in His infinite wisdom two great means. The one was the giving of His Son for them; and the other was

the giving of his Spirit unto them. And hereby was way made for the manifestation of the glory of the whole blessed Trinity’.

**Finally, let us consider the mark and evidences by which the presence of the Holy Ghost in a man’s heart may be known.**

Last as this point comes in order, it is anything but last in importance. The presence of the Holy Ghost in a man’s heart can only be known by the fruits and effects He produces. Mysterious and invisible to mortal eye as His operations are, they always lead to certain visible and tangible results. Just as you know the compass-needle to be magnetized by its turning to the north, —just as you know there is life in a tree by its sap, buds, leaves and fruits, just so you may know the Spirit to be in a man’s heart by the influence He exercises over his thoughts, affections, opinions, habits, and life. I lay this down broadly and unhesitatingly. I see it clearly marked out in our Lord Jesus Christ’s words: “Every tree is known by his own fruit” (Luke 6:44).

Where the Holy Ghost is, there will always be deep conviction of sin, and true repentance for it. It is His special office to convince of sin. (John 16:8). He shows the exceeding holiness of God. He teaches the exceeding corruption and infirmity of our nature. He strips us of our blind self-righteousness. He opens our eyes to our awful guilt, folly and danger. He fills the heart with sorrow, contrition, and abhorrence for sin, as the abominable thing which God hateth. He that knows nothing of all this, and saunters carelessly through life, thoughtless about sin, and indifferent and unconcerned about his soul is a dead man before God. He has not the Spirit of Christ.

Where the Holy Ghost is, there will always be active faith in Jesus Christ, as the only Saviour. It is His special office to testify of Christ, to take of the things of Christ and show them to us. (John 16:15). He leads the soul which feels its sin to Jesus and the atonement made by His blood. He shows the soul that Christ has suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God. He makes us see a beautiful fitness in Christ’s finished work of redemption to meet our spiritual necessities.

Where the Holy Ghost is, there will always be holiness of life and conversation. He is the Spirit of holiness. (Romans 1:4). He is the sanctifying Spirit. He takes away the hard, carnal, worldly heart of man, and puts in its place a tender, conscientious, spiritual heart, delighting in the law of God. He makes a man turn his face towards God, and desire above all to please Him, and turn his back on the fashion of this world, and no longer make that fashion his god. He sows in a man’s heart the blessed seeds of “love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance,” and causes these seeds to spring up and bear pleasant fruit (Galatians 5:22). He that lacketh these things, and knows

nothing of daily practical godliness, is dead before God. He has not the Spirit of Christ.

Where the Holy Ghost is, there will always be the habit of earnest private prayer. He is the Spirit of grace and supplication (Zechariah 12:10). He works in the heart as the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father. He makes a man feel that he must cry to God, and speak to God. He makes it as natural to a man to pray as it is to an infant to breathe; with this one difference, that the infant breathes without an effort, and the new-born soul prays with much conflict and strife. He that knows nothing of real, living, fervent, private prayer, and is content with some old form, or with no prayer at all, is dead before God. He has not the Spirit of Christ.

Finally, where the Holy Ghost is, there will always be love and reverence for God's Word. He shows man a fulness, and depth, and wisdom, and sufficiency, in the Holy Scripture, which is utterly hid from a natural man's eyes. He draws him to the Word with an irresistible force, as the light and lantern, and manna, and sword, which are essential to a safe journey through this world. If the man cannot read He makes him love to hear: if he cannot hear He makes him love to meditate. But to the word the Spirit always leads him. He that sees no special beauty in God's Bible, and takes no pleasure in reading, hearing and understanding it, is dead before God. He has not the Spirit of Christ.

I place these five grand marks of the Spirit's presence before you and confidently claim attention to them. I believe they will bear inspection. I am not afraid of their being searched, criticized, and cross-examined. Repentance toward God, faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, holiness of heart and life, habits of real private prayer, love and reverence toward God's Word; these are the real proofs of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in a man's soul. Where He is, these marks will be seen. Where He is not, these marks will be lacking.

I grant freely that the leadings of the Spirit, in some minute details, are not always uniform. The paths over which He conducts souls are not always precisely one and the same. The experience that true christians pass through is often somewhat various. This only I maintain, that the main road into which the Spirit leads people, and the final results which He at length produces, are always alike. In all true christians, the five great marks I have already mentioned will always be found.

I grant freely that the degree and depth of the work of the Spirit in the heart may vary exceedingly. There is weak faith and strong faith, weak love and strong love, a bright hope and a dim hope, a feeble obedience to Christ's will, and a close following of the Lord. This only I maintain, that the main outlines of character in all who have the Spirit, perfectly correspond. Life is life, whether

strong or feeble. The infant in arms, though weak and dependent, is as real and true a representative of the great family of Adam as the strongest man alive.

Now in conclusion let me give a parting word of exhortation to all who have received the Spirit of Christ. That exhortation shall consist of three simple things.

For one thing, be thankful for the Spirit. Whence came all these feelings in your heart? To what do you owe that sense of sin, and that drawing towards Christ, and that hunger and thirst after righteousness, and that taste for the Bible and prayer, which, with all your doubts and infirmities, you find within your soul? Did these things come of nature? Oh, no! Did you learn these things in the schools of this world? Oh, no: no! They are all of grace. Grace sowed them, grace watered them, grace began them, grace has kept them up. Learn to be more thankful. Praise God more every day you live: praise Him more in private, praise Him more in public, praise Him in your own family, praise Him above all in your own heart. This is the way to be in tune for heaven. The anthem there will be, "What hath God wrought?"

For another thing be filled with the Spirit. Seek to be more and more under His blessed influence. Strive to have every thought, and word, and action, and habit, brought under obedience to the leadings of the Holy Ghost. Grieve Him not by inconsistencies and conformity to the world. Quench Him not by trifling with little infirmities and small besetting sins. Seek rather to have Him ruling and reigning more completely over you every week that you live. Pray that you may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ. This is the way to do good to the world. An eminent christian is a North Foreland Light-house, seen far and wide by others, and doing good to myriads, whom he never knows. This is the way to enjoy much inward comfort in this world, to have bright assurance in death, to leave broad evidences behind us and at last to receive a great crown.

Finally, pray daily for more way to be given to the Holy Ghost in the church of God. Where He is, there will be life, health, growth, and fruitfulness. Where He is not, all will be dead, tame, formal, sleepy, and cold.

*J C Ryle (Abridged)*