

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE COVENANT

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“And I will put my spirit within you.”
Ezekiel 36:27

THE Holy Spirit is the third person in the covenant. We have considered “God in the Covenant” and “Christ in the Covenant” [See sermons #93, God in the Covenant and #103 Christ in the Covenant. Other sermons by Mr. Spurgeon, on various aspects of The Covenant of Grace, are as follows: #19, David’s Dying Song; #212, The New Heart; #277, The Blood of the Everlasting Covenant; #233, Free Grace; #251, The Necessity of the Spirit’s Work; #456, The Stony Heart Removed; #517, The Rainbow; #714, A Saviour Such as You Need; #1046, Covenant Blessings; #1129, The Heart of Flesh; #1186, The Blood of the Covenant; #1289, The Heart Full and the Mouth Closed; #1451, The Covenant Pleaded; #1840, The Bond of the Covenant; #1886, God’s Remembrance of His Covenant; #1921, Cleansing: A Covenant Blessing; #1942, Salt for Sacrifice; #2092, God’s Own Gospel Call; #2108, Perseverance in Holiness; #2200, The Covenant Promise of the Spirit; #2316, Twelve Covenant Mercies; #2427, The Ark of His Covenant; #2438, Two Immutable Things and #2506, God’s Law in Man’s Heart] 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 Savior of men or the Father of spirits.

In this age, when the Holy Spirit is too much forgotten, and but little honor is accorded to His sacred person, I feel that there is a deep responsibility upon me to endeavor to magnify His great and holy name. I almost tremble, this morning, in entering on so 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 has 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 Savior 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 fervor of your devotions, and quenching the ardor 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, you know not what to pray for—rely, then, on the Spirit, as the Inspirer of prayer, who will tell you how to pray. Sometimes you know not how to express what you desire—rely upon the Spirit, then, as the One who can touch your lips with the “live coal from off the altar,” whereby you shall be able to pour out your fervent wishes before the throne of God.

Sometimes even when you have life and power within you, you cannot express your inward emotions—then rely upon that Spirit to interpret your feelings, for He “maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” When, like Jacob, you are wrestling with the angel, and are nearly thrown down, ask the Holy Spirit to nerve your 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 moves. He propels the desire, and causes 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 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 you 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 on 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 unblest. 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, you worldlings—the more honor shall there be to God, who works as He pleases, and with what instrument He chooses, 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 succor 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 your ploughshare with the Spirit! Spiritual sower, dip your seed in the Spirit, so shall it germinate—and ask the Spirit to give you grace to scatter it, that it may fall into the right furrows! Spiritual warrior, whet your sword with the Spirit, and ask the Spirit, whose Word is a two-edged sword, to strengthen your 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, would you be wise? Ask not the theologian to expound to you his system of divinity, but sitting down meekly at the feet of Jesus, ask that His Spirit may instruct you. For I tell you, student, though you should read the Bible many a year and turn over its pages continually, you would not learn anything of its hidden mysteries without the Spirit.

But mayhap, in a solitary moment of your study, when suddenly enlightened by the Spirit, you may learn a truth as swiftly as you see the lightning flash. Young people, are you laboring 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 will always be a mystery to you unless the Holy Spirit shall unfold it to your heart.

Whenever you read 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 your eyes are not now open, seek the eye-salve, and so you shall 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, you 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.” [See sermons #465, The Holy Spirit Glorifying Christ; #2213, Honey in the Mouth—Mr. Spurgeon’s last sermon to the Members and Associates of the Pastors’ College Evangelical Association, on April 24, 1891 and #2382, The Spirit’s Chief Office]

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 comes 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.

But soon 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 day—reining in all your lawless passions and restless strivings.

Perhaps it has continued in your mind for weeks. Wherever you went, whatever you did, you could not dislodge it, nor did you wish to do so, so sweet, so savory was it to your soul. Have you not thought of such a text as that as 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, has 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, you 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 Savior’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 to 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 has 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 would be black and polluted before tomorrow. And if all the spots were taken away today, they would grow again tomorrow, 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 your holiness is the work of the Holy Spirit*. You have not a grace which the Spirit did not give you. You have not a solitary virtue which He did not work in you. You have no goodness which has not been given to you by the Spirit. Therefore, never boast of your virtues or of your graces.

Have you now a sweet temper, whereas you once were passionate? Boast not of it—you will be angry if the Spirit leaves you. Are you now pure, whereas you were once unclean? Boast not of your purity, the seed of which was brought from heaven—it never grew within your heart by nature—it is God’s gift alone. Is unbelief prevailing against you? Do your lusts, your evil passions, and your corrupt desires seem likely to master you? Then I will not say, “Up, and at ‘em!” but I will say—Cry mightily unto God that you may be filled with the Holy Spirit—so shall you conquer at last and become more than conqueror over all your sins—seeing that the Lord has 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 Your hands.’ Fain would I know no will but Yours. Show me Your 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 travelers, 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 ever felt, 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,’ works for me, ‘a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.’” But mark you, I believe that it is worthwhile to have the troubles in order to get the comfort of the Holy Spirit—it is worthwhile 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 you 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 pretense it is to profess to honor God by a doctrine that makes salvation depend on the will of man! If it were true, you might say to God, “We thank You, O Lord, for what You have done—You have given us a great many things, and we offer You Your meed of praise, which is justly due to Your 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. [See sermon #74, A Willing People and an Immutable Leader—the remarkable sermon given by God to Mr. Spurgeon in his sleep, during the night of Saturday, April 12, 1856, and was preached by him the next morning, at New Park Street Chapel, Southwark]

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 gives 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 within him, and thereby his disposition and affections are molded 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!

Deathbed repentances are often looked upon as very sincere, although too frequently, we fear, they are but *the first gnawing 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 moved 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 moved 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 deathbeds, 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!

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.