

A Gospel Promise

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

"And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments, and do them." [Ezekiel 36:27](#).

THE blessing here promised is one of the most essential that men can need, or that God can give. Without this blessing, all the other benefits of the Covenant would be null and void. It is vain to have a Savior if we have not spiritual power to believe in Him! Of what use is it to us that there should be provided precious promises if we have no faith worked in us by the Holy Spirit whereby we can grasp those promises, plead them in prayer and obtain their fulfillment? Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord, but holiness grows not in any human heart by nature. Therefore, without the Spirit of God, who is the Author of holiness, no man could ever become an heir of immortality, or enter into the rest which remains for the people of God! The Holy Spirit is needed for the very least form of spiritual life and is equally necessary for its highest development. Without the Holy Spirit, we cannot go through the first gate—and without the Spirit we cannot pass the last. No man can say in his heart that Jesus is the Christ but by the Holy Spirit—much less can any man attain to the perfection which is necessary to Heaven except through the work and power of the Spirit of the living God!

I am always apprehensive lest by any means in my ministry I should even seem to obscure this blessed and indispensable agency of the Holy Spirit. Oh, if the Spirit of God is not honored—if He takes offense at our neglect—if He withdraw from us—of what use will be our congregations? Of what use our earnestness, even if we could maintain it? To what purpose your assembling for prayer if you had not any wish to gather? Without Him, we can do nothing! He breathes all the animation into the Christian Church! Jesus is gone from us into Heaven, but He continues to reign and rule in our midst by His Vicegerent, the Holy Spirit! Let us honor Him. Let us rely upon Him. Let us earnestly seek Him. Let it be ours to declare Him, those of us who have to speak, and yours to receive Him, those of you who have to hear!

I. WHO IS THIS SPIRIT?

He is spoken of in this text and often elsewhere. It is very necessary that we should talk over the commonplaces of the Gospel and the simplicities of the Word of God. I do not doubt but that there are some here who do not understand the Doctrine of the Divine Trinity. I have been annoyed—I would have been amused but for the sadness of the reflection—at the ignorance of some who have come in here and learned, for the first time, the

most elementary Truths of the Gospel. They know them, now, and rejoice in them! They are even able to teach others. But when they first came, though not uneducated people, but well versed in some other matters—they had no more knowledge of the plan of Salvation, or even of the plain and simple fundamental Truths of the Gospel of Jesus—than if they had come here from the center of China, or some region into which our Bible had never been carried! Let it then be understood that the Holy Spirit, of whom we so often speak, is a Person. He is not a mere influence. We speak of "the influences of the Holy Spirit," and very properly so, but those influences proceed from a Person who works upon the minds of men by His influence. It is right to pray for the influences of the Holy Spirit, but it is not right to think of the Holy Spirit, Himself, as though He were an influence, for He is a Person!

Actions are ascribed to Him which could not be ascribed to influences. He is said to be grieved, to be vexed, to have despise done unto Him. Wonderful things are ascribed to Him, which influences could not accomplish! The Spirit of God brooded over this earth when it was as yet without form and void—and darkness was upon the face of the deep. He brought order out of confusion. He garnished the heavens. The beauty of the Tabernacle is attributed to the skill that He Inspired. Or, turning to the holier Tabernacle of our Savior's body, it was formed and fashioned by the power of the Ho-

ly Spirit! The holy Thing that was born of Mary was not born of natural generation, but by the energy of the Holy One of Israel. Not an influence, but a Person was the agent! And when our Lord was raised again from the dead, His Resurrection is ascribed in Scripture to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit worked many signs and wonders in the early Church. He enabled the Apostles to speak with many tongues. Through Him they had power to work many miracles. He even gave commandment to separate Paul and Barnabas for the work whereunto He had called them. And still, Beloved, He is in the Church and we have fellowship with Him! We commune with Him! We can bear our witness that He makes intercession for us with groans that cannot be uttered, that He helps our infirmities and performs for us a thousand offices of love which make us feel, experimentally and consciously, that the agent of such things is a very Person!

He is, moreover, God—truly God! Never let us think lightly of the Holy Spirit, as though He were in any secondary sense, Divine. In your Baptism the three names were put together. You were baptized into the triple name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Take care that the three Persons be always associated in your minds with equal affection and with equal awe! The Benediction, which so constantly concludes our worship, gives to each His place— "May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of the Father, and the fellowship or communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all." The Holy Spirit, then, is Divine! We do not now attempt to prove that which it is our business at present dogmatically to assert. The thing is capable of abundant proof from Holy Writ. Let it suffice that we teach you the fact. How is it that the Father is God, that the Son is God and that the Holy Spirit

is God—and yet that there are not three Gods, but one God? I cannot tell you. I know it is so, for so it is revealed—but how it is so, it is not for us to guess because it is not revealed or explained. Our understanding can adventure as far as the testimony and no farther! Many attempts have been made by Divines to find parallels in Nature to the Unity and the Trinity of God, but they all seem to me, to fail. Perhaps the very best one is that of St. Patrick, who, when preaching to the Irish and wishing to explain this matter, plucked a shamrock and showed them its three leaves all in one—three, yet one. Yet there are flaws and faults even in that illustration! It does not meet the case. It is a Doctrine to be emphatically asserted as it is expounded in that Athanasian Creed, the soundness of whose teaching I do not question, for I believe it all, though I shrink with horror from the abominable anathema which asserts that a man who hesitates to endorse it, will, "without doubt perish everlastingly."

It is a matter to be reverently accepted as it stands in the Word of God and to be faithfully studied as it has been understood by the most scrupulous and intelligent Christians of succeeding generations. We are not to think of the Father as though anything could detract from the homage due to Him as originally and essentially Divine, nor of the only begotten Son of the Father as though He were not "God over all, blessed forever," nor of the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son, as though He had not all the attributes of Deity! We must abide by this, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is one Jehovah." But we must still hold to it that in three Persons He is to be worshipped, though He is but One in His essence. Understand, then, you who know but little of the Doctrines of the Gospel, that you must worship the Holy Spirit and exercise your faith on Him as God! Lay particular stress upon this, because it is written, "Whoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world nor in the world to come." Such awful sanctity surrounds the Spirit of God! As I think of Him, I seem to see Sinai in a blaze with a bound set around about—and I hear a Voice that says to me, "Draw not near here, for this is holy ground."

That unpardonable sin against the Holy Spirit, I know not what it is—in vain might I assay to define it. It stands like a beacon, as if God saw that an ungodly and stiff-necked generation would vex the Holy Spirit and venture far in blasphemy! Therefore, while all manner of blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, the sin against the Holy Spirit shall never be forgiven. Take heed you do not harden your heart, lest you should commit it! I do not believe you have. I know you have not if you desire to be saved. I am sure you have not if you are willing to come and put your trust in Jesus Christ. Still, I admonish you to take care and treat with reverence the very thought of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, the Instructor of your souls. Your second question will be—

II. HOW DOES HE FULFILL THIS PROMISE?

We understand by these words that those who formerly loved sin shall be made to love righteousness. That those who found it hard, at one time, to break off their evil ways, shall

be induced to run with alacrity in the way of God's Commandments. Now this is a great thing to be promised and a very great thing to be obtained! By no human power could it

be brought to pass. As easily might the Blackamoor change his skin to whiteness, or the leopard get rid of his spots, as could the man who is accustomed to do evil reverse the entire current of his habits and instincts—and learn to do well! The Divine Power that first fashioned the soul of man must re-mold it. Only the Creator who made the instrument can re-tune it, or restore its harmony! No unskillful hands can mend it. People sometimes quibble at the Doctrine of Human Impotence, but I can assure you that the actual evidence is far more convincing than the abstract theory! The practical pastoral experience that some of us have had would soon convince anyone that there is ample evidence of its truthfulness. We meet with those who have been a little awakened at our Prayer Meetings and revival services. What, do you think, is the first thing we have to concern about them? Why, some of them have never been in the habit of thinking about their souls, before, and the moment they do begin to think, like a lad introduced into a carpenter's shop who has never seen tools, before, they cut themselves with every tool they attempt to handle! These poor souls never were introduced to the spiritual world. Self-examination is a novelty to them. If they think of sin, it drives them to despair! Or if they think of mercy, that drives them to presumption! Whatever Truth of God we put before them, they misuse and pervert it. They do not seem to have the sense or the wit to use any Truth in a right way! You may teach the young enquirer with much earnestness, but you will find it difficult to guide him.

For instance, if he seems resolved to despair, you shall try to comfort him and use as many arguments as you can, but he will despair if he has made up his mind to do it! Some of these remind me of certain game that sportsmen try to hunt out of their holes. It seems in vain to send the ferret after them. When I have used arguments to get them out of one hole, they take refuge in another! And when I have stopped up scores of holes and have said to myself, "I shall have you now— you cannot answer that!" Suddenly they seem to have found out quite another branch of lies and delusions. They are gone from me and all my work is lost! Ah, then it is that the pastor feels that he must have the power of the Holy Spirit to help him, or else even the awakened and anxious sinner will evade conversion, put away from himself eternal life and perish in his sin! Yes, Brothers and Sisters, experience will often prove more than controversy is prone to allow of the necessity of work of the Holy Spirit! And if in merely dealing with the elementary lessons of religion we find such palpable evidence of human inability, how much more is this the case in the matter of making a lover of sin become a lover of holiness? You may show him the proprieties of morality. You may lay before him the inevitable results of sin. You may charm him with the rewards of virtue, but the adder is too deaf for all your charming—and when you have charmed, and charmed, and charmed again—he still retains his venom and is still an adder!

But how does the Holy Spirit effect this? He operates, it is true, in many ways. He does it often by His quickening power. The Holy Spirit is the Author of all spiritual life. Speak of regeneration, the Holy Spirit is the Regenerator. No man can receive that Divine Life which comes into him at the new birth except by the Spirit of God. We are raised from our death in sin into a new and holy life by the working of the Holy Spirit, and by that alone. Now, if someone here, hitherto incapable of a holy life, or of serving God right because of his natural depravity, should be quickened by the Holy Spirit, what a change would be at once worked upon him! What the spiritually dead man cannot do, the spiritually enlivened man can readily perform. How the Spirit quickens we know not. "The wind blows where it will, and you hear the sound thereof, but cannot tell from where it comes, or where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit." The effects are visible enough. You soon perceive that the man who was callous, without feeling, without emotion, becomes tender of conscience, eager in desires and sensitive in his anxieties. He becomes, in fact, a living man, though he was steeped in death before!

The Holy Spirit continues to make a man practically new by the illumination He bestows. The man is blind—the Holy Spirit touches his eye with heavenly eye-salve and he begins to see. The sinner, with the Bible in his hand, though anxious to understand it in a measure, makes a sorry muddle of its Doctrines and precepts apart from the instructions of that blessed Commentator—the Holy Spirit! The Bible is full of the Light of God, but the heart of man is very dark. To what purpose is the Scripture opened to the understanding if the eyes of the understanding are covered with a thick film? It is the Holy Spirit who irradiates the Truth of God which He has revealed broadcast over every object that lies in our path. In reading the Bible to find comfort and direction, take care to lift up your hearts to Him who wrote it! As an author best understands his own books, so will the Spirit, who Inspired the volume, let you at once into the secret meaning of that which the pens of Inspired men have recorded. Wait upon God for instruction—His instruction is sure to lead you to holiness, for He instructs you in the evil of sin! He lets you see its heinousness, its demerit, its ingratitude and infamy. He instructs you in the beauty of holiness and shows you the example of your Master. He teaches you the Law of God and writes it upon the fleshly tablets of your heart. In this way, as an Illuminator as well as a Quickener, He makes us run in the ways of God's statutes!

Moreover, the Holy Spirit operates as a Comforter. Many men are wretched by reason of their sins, yet unwilling to renounce them. We have known people continue in present transgression because they are utterly hopeless of ever being forgiven their misdeeds in the past. But when the Spirit of God breathes holy comfort into the desponding sinner's mind, he then says to himself, "I will not fling myself away after all. It is not meet that I, who have a better destiny before me, should live like those who have resolved to follow their own lusts, reckless of consequences—those who have made a covenant with Hell and a league with

death! No, a thousand times no! If God does all this for me, and brings His dear Son to me, and tells me of pardons bought with blood, then away shall go my old sins and henceforth it shall be my joy to serve with all my might the Heavenly Friend who has been so kind to me." The Holy Spirit is always to His people the Comforter. Are any of you sad? Does that sadness make you unbelieving? Does the unbelief act upon you as a temptation to sin? Go to the Comforter to take away the root of the mischief! So shall you run in the way of God's Commandments because He has enlarged your heart and guided your footsteps!

The Holy Spirit also operates in the hearts of some as an Intercessor, helping their prayers. Some of you are downcast and desponding because you cannot pray. "Oh," you think, "if I could but pray!" What strange ideas possess people's mind as to praying! One who took my hand the other day said to me, "I wish I could pray as you do, Sir, but pray I cannot." Poor soul, when I saw his tears and heard his cries to God, very broken as they were, I wished that I could pray as he did, then! What is the use of fit words, fine sentences, fluent speech? These seem to me full often to be such deceitful acquirements that I would gladly dispense with them, if I might stammer out my soul's desires and feel myself to be all the more sincere because I lacked expression to clothe my thought! Oh, no—the Lord does not require your long addresses! A groan, a sigh, a sob that seems to swell in your soul and become too big to find a way of escape—that is prayer! When you cannot pray, remember the Spirit also helps our infirmities. It is His office to utter groans for us which we cannot utter. And by enabling the man to pray, He enables the man to be holy, for prayer is a mainstay of holiness. To draw near to God, the Fountain of all perfection, is to be helped against besetting sin—and the blessed Helper in prayer also becomes, in this respect, a Help to us in the paths of righteousness.

I do hope that any of you who have been saying, "I cannot do this," and, "I cannot do that," will understand that it is quite true that you cannot—but it is equally true that the Holy Spirit can help you to do all things! You can do everything through His almighty aid! Wait upon Him with earnest desires and say to Him, "Come, Holy Spirit, help a poor feeble worm. Help me to mourn my sin. Help me to look to Jesus with the eyes of faith. Help me to give up my sins. Help me when I am tempted, that I may withstand the subtle arts of Satan. Help me to overcome my bad temper, to get rid of the pride and naughtiness of my heart. Kill my sloth. Take away my disposition to put off and procrastinate. Enable me to decide for Christ right now and to come, all guilty as I am, and wash in the Fountain of His precious blood, that I may be saved." I tell you it is the Holy Spirit's office to do this! He is never so happy, if I may use such a phrase concerning the ever-blessed One, as when He is thus, by His quickening, His illuminating, His comforting influences, bringing poor guilty souls to Jesus and, by Him, to the paths of holiness!

Furthermore, one of the Holy Spirit's proper offices is to sanctify the people of God. Jesus Christ gives us a justifying righteousness which is imputed to us—the Holy Spirit gives

us a sanctifying righteousness which is imparted to us. The blessed Jesus brings to us His own righteousness and clothes us with it. The Holy Spirit works in us a personal conformity to the will of God in our hearts, productive of fruit in our lives as a sequel to that obedience even unto death, wherewith Christ made satisfaction for our offenses and discharged the high obligation of that obedience we owed. This holiness is not the holiness of Christ, as some vainly say, but it is a personal holiness worked in us by the operation of the Holy Spirit. You, dear Hearers, have perhaps said to yourselves, "I cannot be saved because I am not holy." The truth is you cannot be holy because you are not saved—being saved comes first! Holiness is never the root—it is always the fruit! It is not the cause, it is the effect! You must come to Jesus as you are and trust Him—and then He will give you the Holy Spirit to work in you the new heart, the new desire—and to make you a new creature. You say, "I cannot make myself holy." That is true. You ought to do so, but the power is gone and alas, the will likewise! But if God has given you the will,

He points you to Him with whom the power is rested, namely, the Holy Spirit, who will dwell in you and sanctify you through the Word of Truth and the application of the precious blood and water which flowed from the side of Christ.

Nor must I omit to notice that one of the Spirit's great works is to dwell in His people. The Holy Spirit dwells in every believer in Christ! He has never been absent from him since he became a disciple. We may invoke His Presence as we sing—

"Come Holy Spirit, heavenly dove, With all Your quickening powers."

But that is a prayer for His special manifestation. The Holy Spirit is here. He lives in the Church. He has come as a Comforter who shall abide with us forever. He dwells in the bodies of His people—God is in His Temple. And, mark you, it is by this indwelling that the holiness of the Believer is kept up. If the Holy Spirit left him, he would return, like a dog to his vomit, but because the Holy Spirit looks out of these eyes and throbs in this hear and moves these hands, when the man is freely obedient to the Divine Power, the man is kept in the paths of integrity and his end is everlasting life! To gather up all these thoughts in one, whatever offices the Holy Spirit sustains to God's people, the result of all these offices will be to keep the man from going back to his old ways and to cause him to walk in God's statutes, and to keep God's judgments and do them! Do you wish, then, to be saved from sin and to be made holy? Look to the wounds of the bleeding Savior and remember that He has promised to give you the Holy Spirit, by whom you shall be made holy and kept in holiness till you stand hereafter without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, before the Eternal Throne! In closing, I want to—

III. SAY A FEW GOOD AND COMFORTABLE WORDS TO SOME OF YOU WHO MAY BE ANXIOUS TO POSSESS THIS SPIRIT OF GOD IN YOUR HEARTS.

"Ah," complains one, "the Holy Spirit would never look on me!" Why do you have such a thought? Do you think to honor Him by such reflections? Far rather do you shame yourself.

Know you not that He has looked on many such as you are and they are alive to tell of His condescending love? Will you look to Jesus? Will you cast yourself upon the Great Surety who has deigned to become the Scapegoat for sinners? If so, the Holy Spirit has looked on you! The first desire you have towards God comes from Him! These inward strivings which you feel now (tenderly do I wish that you may not stifle or quench them) come from Him! That fear, that anxiety, that longing may be and I trust they are, the initiative of a blessed work of the Holy Spirit within your soul! Judge not of the Holy Spirit as though He were reluctant. Nehemiah spoke of the Spirit of God as "the Good Spirit." So He is! He is the very essence of goodness, taking goodness in the sense of benevolence. He is good to men, full of generous love towards them. We read of "the love of the Spirit." Sweet words! What must it be to appreciate them and to prove their meaning! The love of the Spirit! I marvel that the Spirit of God should come down into the valley of dry bones. I wonder that He should have contact with such corruption as ours and make us live! I am surprised that He has not left us long ago, dullards as we are in His school, yet He patiently teaches us. It is amazing to me that He should dwell in such poor temples as our clay bodies. Still, He does. He condescendingly abides with us. You speak of the love of Jesus in coming down to earth and enduring all its misery and shame—you cannot speak too well of that—but do not forget that the Holy Spirit has been abiding here these 1,800 years and still the dispensation of His government lasts—He is still waiting and striving, persuading, preciously illuminating, grandly quickening! Thus He will continue to do until the Lord Jesus, Himself, shall descend from Heaven with a shout and the dispensation of the Holy Spirit shall be perfected in the world to come! The Holy Spirit, then, is a good Spirit, and that should encourage you to go to Him with a full confidence in His Person and works.

He is sometimes called, "the free Spirit." David says, "Uphold me with Your free Spirit." He is not bound by our bondage. He is not retrained, thank God, by the restriction of our desires. He is not withheld, even though our inability and our iniquity entangle us. He waits not for man, neither tarries He for the sons of men. As the dew comes in the morning on the dumb grass that cannot speak for it. As the stiff breeze blows over the silent mountains that cannot ask for it. And as on the sea, which cannot lift up its billows until the wind shall stir them, which comes unsought, unasked—even so is the Spirit's advent! So freely in real truth does He come. Oh, you vilest of sinners, you outcast, you who are turned off by those who once loved you—the Holy Spirit can even come to you! He is a free Spirit—not even your sins can withhold Him! He can conquer your desperate depravity and come to reign and rule in your breast where devils have held a carnival these many years!

I adore the power of God that He exerts over the minds of men, inasmuch as that while I stand here to preach to you, willing or not willing as you may be to heed His message, my Lord and Master will have His own way! What though you may be in the most unfit state to attend to the Gospel call—though you may have come to ridicule the preacher, or catch

him tripping in his speech, or it may be you have designed to spend a merry hour—the Divine Fiat is mightier than your fitful mood! How often has the Eternal Archer shot His arrows through and through the scorners and left them as though they were dead, and then, having touched them with His life-giving finger, He has said, "Live!" The change has been worked, though they knew nothing of it at the time! The Lord, according to His good pleasure, has done the work and thus can this blessed free Spirit effect His purpose. Oh, my beloved Brothers and Sisters, pray for the unsaved! Pray for sinners, you who can pray! Full often have I thought what a blessed thing it is that the Spirit of God can obtain admission where we cannot. There is a house that is closed and barred against the Gospel. The squire of the parish, perhaps, says that any of his servants going to the Meeting House, he will discharge. He will take care that he will have none of this Methodism anywhere in his district! Very well, Sir, if you propose to keep it out, you will need to have a great many watchmen, for, you know, if there is a sweet perfume in your house, you must use your diligence to keep it hermetically sealed, or else it will escape and diffuse its odor through every room by degrees! The name of Jesus Christ is "like ointment poured forth"—it has a wonderful diffusiveness about it!

Ere long the squire will discover that one of his servants has caught the sweet infection. Gladly would he turn her away, were she not such a good nurse-girl that he cannot afford to lose her! And I have noticed that there is a Divine contagion in the Grace of God that brings salvation. In families, neighborhoods, townships and great cities it will spread with strange rapidity! One or two conversions, like drops of rain, portend a shower! I knew a man who burned all the Bibles he had in his house—at least he thought he had burned them all—but he had two daughters who kept their books secreted under their pillows. When he found it out, he was mad with rage. What he was going to do, I do not know. His wife told him at length that she was of their mind and took their part. "Ah, well," he said, "it is a nuisance that I cannot live without being pestered with this religion." Yes, and by the Grace of God they shall not "live without being pestered." If they will not come and hear the Word from the minister, they shall hear it somehow else! A tract shall find him over whose head a sermon flies—and half a sentence shall break a rock in pieces where appeals from the pulpit might have been of no use! Have good courage, then, you who seek the salvation of others, and you that are afar off from God, yourselves—do not despair for the Spirit of God is a free Spirit—He can come even to you!

Very powerful, too, is the Spirit of God, as well as good and free. There is no form of human obstinacy which He cannot overcome. Some operations of the Holy Spirit may be resisted and defeated. This I say without feeling that I cast any slur upon His Deity. A man, though he may be ever so strong, need not put out all his strength, and when he puts out only a little of his strength a child may be able to overcome him. He may, perhaps, intend that it should be so. So the Holy Spirit, in His common operations is vexed, and grieved,

and quenched by the ungodly. Quite otherwise when He comes to "the exceeding greatness of His power to us who believe," or when the Lord makes bare His arm in the eyes of all the people—then the Spirit comes as a Spirit of Irresistible Power! Who shall stay His hand, or say unto Him, "What are You doing?" See how Saul of Tarsus, foaming at the mouth against the Church of God, cries, "What must I do to be saved? Who are You, Lord?" Soon he rises up to be led by the hand for three days in brokenness of heart to seek for the Light of God's Countenance! How quickly can God turn the most fierce persecutors into the most earnest preachers of the Gospel! Be of good heart, dear Friends, for God's cause in the world! We shall see yet greater things if we do but ask for them in faith and faithfully expect them.

If God does not raise up good men in the colleges to preach the Gospel, He will find them in the warehouses and offices of our merchants. Or failing these, He will call them from the dregs of the population—it may be even from the dens and kens of thieves if nowhere else! Who knows but He may provoke us to jealousy by a people of a strange tongue. My Master knew how to find Luther among the monks and to fish out some of the bravest Reformers from among the idolatrous priests! And He can do the same again! The Church may come to a very bad tide, but there never shall be such a bad tide but the Church, like a galley with oars, shall be able to float! She shall not strike on the rocks. Have hope, you soldiers of Christ! While the ministry of the Holy Spirit can be invoked, never whisper of despair! Oh, Sinner, have hope for yourself, willful and wicked as you may have been! If you cannot amend your ways and change your heart, He can do it for you! The iron bands of habit He can snap. The adamant net of lasciviousness He can break in pieces! From the

degrading abominations of drunkenness He can extricate you! All the charms of worldliness He can dissolve! He can set you free, though you are now a captive fast in the inner prison with your feet in the stocks! While the Holy Spirit lives, while Jesus intercedes, while the Father is willing to receive prodigals, let no one despair! Grace makes the most worthless creatures welcome to the most inestimable blessings! What Paul said to saints I venture to say to sinners, "Covet earnestly the best gifts." Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: JOHN 14:21-31.

In this "sacred farewell" talk of our Lord's, He gives us many a Revelation of the soul's way of communion with Him.

21, 22. He who has My commandments, and keeps them, he it is who loves Me: and he who loves Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him. Judas said unto Him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself unto us, and not unto the world? Many a time have we asked that question with great admiration of the special Sovereign Grace of God, that He should manifest Himself to us, and not to the world. It is an unanswerable question. It is, "even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight."

23. Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man loves Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him. Where the Grace of God has created love between us and Christ, there is a window through which Christ can manifest Himself to us. Why He gave us that love, we do not know, but when He has given us that love He will not deny us communion with Himself.

24-26. He that loves Me not, keeps not My sayings: and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me. These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. The Holy Spirit does not teach us any new Doctrine! Fix that in your minds, for in the present age we have numbers of persons who talk about being inspired with the Holy Spirit, and who come with all kinds of crudities and fooleries. Believe them not! The Holy Spirit says no other and no more than the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, said, "He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said to you." The canon of Revelation is closed! None can add to it without a curse. Do not accept any testimony that would add to it. Keep to what is here found and pray the Holy Spirit to lead you into the clear understanding of it.

27, 28. Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world gives, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. You have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If you loved Me, you would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for My Father is greater than I. Christ had, Himself, less than the Father in His state of humiliation. And now He is returning to the Father to be re-clothed with honor and majesty. Should we not rejoice in that?

29-31. And now I have told you before it comes to pass, that when it is come to pass, you might believe. Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world comes, and has nothing in Me. But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go. And He went to His death bravely determined to do the Father's will, though it meant the drinking up of that bitter cup which made His very soul to tremble within Him! God give us such love to Christ as Christ had to the Father!