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The  
POWER  
of the  
SPIRIT

By William Law

From his work entitled,  
*An Affectionate Address to the Clergy*

Published 1761.

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## Foreword

In writing various forewords by the kind request of authors, I have never felt so honored as by now being asked to write one on a book by William Law. The reason is that it was an epoch in my life, about thirty years ago, when a friend gave me *Wholly for God*, extracts from William Law's writings compiled by Andrew Murray. I too, like Dave Hunt, was nicely and delightedly "caught" by the fact that it was an Andrew Murray production, who, though not quite my prime favorite as with Dave, certainly meant to me that it would be a reliable book on the Life in the Spirit. But I had no idea what I was getting into! As soon as I started, I found Law difficult to follow. His magnificent English was in the longer and more involved sentences of his generation; but that was a triviality compared to the tremendous inward insights I began to have. Here at last was a writer who took me to ultimate foundations and a totality of understanding which I had long been seeking. I drank and have been drinking ever since.

I found there were two William Laws: the one who wrote that classic *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*, but who at that stage did not know more than a Christ to be imitated rather than the Christ imparted; and for that reason John Wesley always had a negative opinion of Law, because Wesley only knew him as the author of that legalistic book in Wesley's unenlightened and Holy Club days. But then Law tells many times in his other writings how he later met with the works of Jacob Boehme, the cobbler of Gorlitz, Germany ("the blessed Behmen" as Law called him). Through Boehme the midday sun of God's revelation in Christ shone into Law; and while Boehme, as an illiterate shoemaker, could not put his inner insights into coherent German (and his translators into English have the same difficulty), William Law could and did reproduce the essence of Boehme in Law's matchless *Spirit of Love* and *Spirit of Prayer* (recently published in England by James Clarke).

I had not previously read this one, *The Power of the Spirit*, which I am so glad Dave Hunt has now produced for us. I go all the way with it. It is a magnificent uncompromising declaration of the only and absolute basis to and meaning of True Life. What that basis is readers will soon find out. It is equally a ruthless yet necessary tearing away of the false and subtle forms of what we fallen humans pretend to be life, and often in its most religious and "Christian" clothing. It is glorious to see the only foundation of all truth driven home to our hearts and minds in inescapable hammer blows of living logic. In a way this book is a *preparatio evangelica*, preparing the way for the more detailed expositions of the very structure of eternal truth, as Law sees it in its Biblical basis, though in such expositions, as Dave Hunt says, we do not have completely to follow any man.

Norman P. Grubb

## Introduction

In a day when numerous church leaders are advocating a substantial revision of basic Biblical teachings, it would seem worthwhile to review earlier Christian writings, particularly those which evidence a special insight into the same controversial concepts which are being set forth today. Unless Christianity is truly rooted in unchangeable realities, it is self-delusion to perpetuate its hold upon subsequent generations by periodic revisions. If truth does indeed exist, then it must be absolute and unchanging. Consequently, contemporary terminology must still convey the same basic truths, or it has become error.

William Law's writings, published over a 40-year span during the early 1700's, declare with an irresistible power and logic that Christianity is indeed founded upon unchangeable truth. He demonstrates, with a clarity equaled by few others, that Scripture concerns itself with the inescapable reality of man's essential dependence upon an immutable God; and that the gospel of Christ calls men to the only relationship with God that is possible within the order of His creation. With remarkable insight he focuses an eternal framework of reality upon problems that many present-day writers consider to be uniquely contemporary. In characteristic fashion he brushes superficial considerations aside, striking at the root of issues with an impartiality which administers its rebuke to Fundamentalism and Modernism alike.

His first few publications were written in answer to radical ideas set forth by the "avant garde" of his own day, among them a Church of England bishop, and are generally considered to have thoroughly vanquished his opponents. If Law were living today, there is little question that he would have added his clear thoughts to the *Honest To God*, "God Is Dead," and "Religionless Christianity" controversies, as well as to other similar issues. It would be interesting to know what he would have contributed. But in another sense, it is perhaps more instructive to see how apropos his writings of 200 years ago prove to be in these present matters.

Those who suggest that God is of late being edged out of the universe and human affairs should read Law's incisive indictment of his own generation for having already done this. They should read also his exposé of the hypocritical persistence in empty forms of religion which attempts to obscure this practical atheism. He would say that present writers who deal with this same fact are right in admitting to the truth of the obvious, but wrong in claiming it to be something new or peculiar to this generation. He would say that modern man is patently *not* getting along just as well without God, unless that be defined as meaning high divorce and illegitimacy rates, a restless youth in frequent riots, and a persistence of the same old frustrations, emptiness, and purposelessness to which great thinkers have confessed down through the years. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's claim that we can now get along quite well without God in human affairs and even in ethics and religion is shown by Law as simply not in accordance with the facts of life. He would show us that man can never "come of age" in the sense that he no longer needs God, unless he never needed Him in the first place. And he would powerfully persuade men that the only answer to current problems is to get back to a proper relationship with the unchangeable and ever-loving Creator.

Who could read *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*, Law's classic first published in 1728, without seeing the basic fallacy in Bonhoeffer's claim that man is "come of age"? Though civilization has made remarkable advances in certain areas, it is plain enough that in morals or in the basic ingredients of life such as peace, happiness, and good will among men, we are no more "come of age" than the ancients. The scientists' ability to manipulate the nucleus of the atom has only rendered more conspicuous and alarming man's continued inability to control his own inner

self. And who would dare boast that the twentieth century has produced a profounder philosophy than did the Greeks, or finer art than that of the Renaissance? Moreover, the high consumption of tranquilizers—an evidence of increasing anxiety and neuroses—can hardly belong to a generation that has worked out its own salvation. These things are plain enough. But when one reads *A Serious Call*, the conclusion that we are today far from "of age and are a most restless, uncertain, and ungodly generation is pressed upon us with overwhelming force.

The proponents of a "religionless Christianity" would find Law's writings of 200 years ago to be still instructive today. With a sharper perspective than most modern writers, he goes to the core of issues that are being widely raised at the present time, showing that God must be in *all* of life. He skillfully lays bare the false pietism which, selfishly concerned with one's own needs, largely ignores the needs of others and avoids God's claims in most areas of life. Law would agree with Bonhoeffer in much that he says, and with the valid objections of Bishop Robinson and others to mere religiosity; but his persuasive logic would reveal that these considerations are founded upon the plainest teaching of Scripture, and his thoughtful handling of the subject would prevent a Robinson from representing that these are now concepts lately developed by a particular school of theologians. Law shows that Scripture demands the consistent projection of man's true relationship with God into every circumstance of life, thus sanctifying the secular, rather than the secularization of society replacing an outdated Christianity.

He escaped the proud delusion of many current writers who seek a "contemporary" framework for truth, thereby exposing themselves to the inevitable condemnation of future generations, who will in their own eyes be more modern than today's advanced thinkers. He clearly showed that this approach to religion is no better than the rankest superstition, though often proposed by the most sophisticated. He shunned this broad road to a relativistic philosophy that falls victim to its own vanity, and thus fosters a futile faith in "new" concepts which must inevitably become "old." Not only is this to Law's credit, but it ought to be a most powerful persuasive, calling men back to the unchangeable realities of which he wrote.

Law would agree with those who condemn a *deus ex machina* or "god of the gaps"; but then he would show that this is not the God of Scripture, but rather a false god men have imagined to rule the "unknown" in the universe, and, as such, deserves to be unmasked by man's expanding knowledge. His clear logic shows that true faith in the God of creation is not derived as a "hypothesis" to explain what we do not yet know, but is rather founded solidly in reason upon the basis of what we do know. And that expanding knowledge in an age of science only heightens reason's demands that God must be the author of a universe which is seen to be increasingly orderly and marvelous in its minutest details.

There is another debate today involving the so-called Pentecostal phenomenon, which is manifesting itself in all denominations on a world-wide scale heretofore unprecedented. The participants have labeled it a "charismatic renewal," while their opponents have done much speaking and writing of a critical nature, seeking to alert Christians to what are considered dangers and extremes. What William Law had to say is, I believe, a very important contribution to this present discussion. He would rebuke the pride, lack of love, and inconsistencies in both camps, and would seemingly take sides with neither extreme. But he would unquestionably maintain a Scriptural basis for the present full display and vitality of New Testament Christianity. To the mainline denominational adherent he would press home the necessity of the sovereignty and power of the Holy Spirit for today; and upon the Pentecostal he would impress the fact that the power of the Spirit is bestowed primarily to enable one to witness and to live a holy life. And his very delineation of that life would bring Conviction of sin and a sense of falling short to both Fundamentalist and Pentecostal.

Here was a man peculiarly gifted of God and burdened with a special message for the Church. It is my own conviction that the Church has missed a great deal during the many years that his writings have been either out of print or available only in such a form as did not easily commend itself to the modern reader. I have sought to remedy this by reorganizing and paraphrasing his writings into a more readable form, but at the same time keeping enough of his own style and mannerisms so as to be able to present his arguments in their best context and original vigor. A few words have necessarily been changed here and there for the sake of clarification, and in the course of condensation some gaps have been filled in—I trust, helpfully. In this process it is inevitable that some of my own interpretations of what he had in mind have crept in here and there. However, I can assure the reader that these instances have been kept at a minimum.

Perhaps my favorite Christian writer is Andrew Murray, and my interest in William Law was aroused by the frequent quotations of him in Murray's writings. Indeed, Dr. Murray brought several volumes of Law's works back into print through his own publishers in the late nineteenth century. It will be of interest to present readers, many of whom hold Murray to be without peer, to know what he had to say of William Law. The main source of material for this present volume has been taken from Andrew Murray's edition of Law's *An Affectionate Address to the Clergy*, first published in 1761, which Dr. Murray brought back into print in 1896 under the title *The Power of the Spirit*. Here are some of Murray's comments taken from his introduction:

First of all, let me say that, as in publishing the former volume, so now in issuing this, I only do so because I do not know where to find anywhere else the same clear and powerful statement of the truth which the Church needs at the present day. I have tried to read or consult every book I knew of that treats of the work of the Holy Spirit, and nowhere have I met with anything that brings the truth of our dependence upon the continual leading of the Spirit, and the assurance that that leading can be enjoyed without interruption, so home to the heart as the teaching of the present volume. It is because I believe that teaching to be entirely scriptural, and to supply what many are looking for, that I venture to recommend it.

Into that portion of truth which he had received, Law appears to me to have had an insight such as is given to few. I confess that in all my reading I have never found anyone who has so helped me in understanding the Scripture truth of the work of the Holy Spirit. And it is because I know of no one who has put certain aspects of needed truth with the same clearness, that I cannot but think that he is a messenger from God to call His Church to give the blessed Spirit the place of honor that belongs to Him.

As I have studied this *Address to the Clergy*, I have thought I learnt to understand better than ever before what the relation is which the work of the Holy Spirit bears to the Father and the Son, as well as to the Church and the believer.

In some respects no two men differ more than John Calvin and William Law. And yet no one reminds me more of Calvin than Law. I have nowhere met a teacher who, from another side [than Calvin's] has so opened up the same truth of the glory of God

and our absolute dependence upon Him, as Law. Often the thought has come to me of seeing Calvin and Law in heaven, side by side, in deepest prostration, special witnesses to that absolute dependence which alone can bring God the glory due to His name.

I cannot say how much I owe to this volume of Law. I ask the help of all who learn to value the book to bring it to the notice of those who preach the Gospel. I beg of my brethren in the ministry to give it no cursory perusal. I am confident that a patient and prayerful study will bring a rich blessing.

It is my conviction that Andrew Murray has not been unduly high in his praise of this volume by Law. And although, like Murray, I cannot agree with all of Law's teachings, I too believe all included herein to be soundly based upon Scripture. Furthermore, the nature of Law's writings is

such that, though profoundly instructive and deeply challenging to the most spiritual, they are at the same time presented so plainly and logically as to impress their arguments with irresistible force and clarity upon Christian and non-Christian alike. Although this present volume is taken primarily from Andrew Murray's edition of *The Power of the Spirit*, I have drawn also upon several of Law's other books, including *A Serious Call*, as well as a number of his private letters, weaving together appropriate thoughts from his major works to enrich them for the present reader.

Dave Hunt

Lausanne, Switzerland

February, 1967

## Chapter 1

### The Indwelling Spirit of God Essential to Salvation

"There is but one that is good, and that is God." This was true when God had as yet created nothing; and this truth has not changed after He has created innumerable hosts of blessed and holy heavenly beings. Therefore, any goodness in the creature can be nothing but the one goodness of God manifesting a birth and discovery of itself as the created nature is fitted to receive it. No creature could produce of itself that which is good and blessed any more than it could create itself. "The heavens," said David, "declare the glory of God"; and no creature, any more than the heavens, can declare any other glory. As well might it be said that the firmament shows forth its own handiwork, as that any man shows forth his own goodness.

The Spirit of the triune God, breathed into Adam at his creation, was that alone which made him a holy creature in the image and likeness of God. A new birth of this Spirit of God in man is as necessary to make fallen man alive again unto God as it was to make Adam at first in the image and likeness of God. And a constant flow of this divine life by the Spirit is as necessary to man's continuance in his redeemed state as light and moisture are to the continued life of a plant. A religion that is not wholly built upon this supernatural ground, but which stands to any degree upon human powers, reasonings, and conclusions, has not so much as the shadow of truth in it. Such religion leaves man with mere empty forms and images that can no more restore divine life to his soul than an idol of clay or wood could create another Adam.

True Christianity is nothing but the continual dependence upon God through Christ for all life, light, and virtue; and the false religion of Satan is to seek that goodness from any other source. So the true child of God acknowledges that "no man can receive anything except it be given him from above." All goodness comes from God just as surely as all life comes from God. The highest angel has no more of his own that he can offer unto God than the poorest creature upon earth. Were an angel to imagine that the smallest degree of wisdom, goodness, or excellence came from or belonged to himself, his place in heaven would be lost as surely as Lucifer lost his. But songs of praise to their heavenly Father are the angels' ravishing delight, because they never cease to acknowledge God as the source of all good in themselves and in the whole creation. This is the one religion of heaven, and nothing else is the truth of religion upon earth.

Man's fall from his first state brought a separation from God and thus from the life, light, and virtue which is in Him. Man's salvation can therefore only be effected by a reconciling union of his spirit with the Spirit of the Creator. "Be ye reconciled to God," wrote Paul. Nor can this reconciliation be accomplished by man's own efforts, but it must by its very nature be a gift from God. No angel or man could begin to show any love, faith, or desire toward God, without a living seed of these divine affections being first formed within him by the Spirit of God. And as a tree or plant can grow and bear fruit only by the same power that first gave birth to the seed from which it sprang, so faith, hope, and love toward God can grow and fructify only by the same power that created the first seed of them in the soul. Therefore the continuous inspiration and working of the Holy Spirit in the spirit of man is no less essential to that salvation which God has provided through Jesus Christ than the new birth itself.



Read whatever chapter of Scripture you will, and be ever so delighted with it—yet it will leave you as poor, as empty and unchanged as it found you unless it has turned you wholly and solely to the Spirit of God, and brought you into full union with and dependence upon Him. For delight in matters of Scripture can be nothing but the carnal emotion of a fallen Adam-nature unless this delight finds its source in the inspiration of God as He quickens His own life and nature within the heart. Nothing less than this union with God by the power of His Holy Spirit is intended by the Law, the Prophets, or the Gospel. Both Old and New Testaments bear full witness to this truth, calling men back from the spirit of Satan, the flesh, and the world, to be indwelt and possessed by the Holy Spirit of God, who alone can be the fulfiller of all that to which the Scriptures testify.

Take away this inspiration of the Holy Spirit, *or suppose it to cease for a moment*, then no religious acts or affections can give forth anything that is godly or divine. The creature can offer nothing to God but that which it has first received from Him; and it must of all necessity have the divine and godly nature both born and living in it to render acceptable worship to God. Anything less than this is the abominable worship of the flesh, seeking to present to God that which comes from carnal self. Can anything reflect light before it has first received it? Can any other light be reflected than that which has been received? Neither can any created being have godly affections except as the divine nature dwells and operates in it. If the *man* Christ Jesus said, "I can of mine own self do nothing," how much more is this certain for us. We cannot then love God except with His own Holy love brought to life in us. Of this inspired love, and no other, John says "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God." Suppose it to be any other love, brought forth by any other spirit than the Holy Spirit of God breathing His own love in us, and it cannot be true that he who dwells in such love dwells in God.

No man can remain in the goodness of his redeemed state but by continuing in that vital relationship to God that begins at his conversion; which is the same as saying that the continual inspiration and empowering of the Holy Spirit within the redeemed heart is vital and necessary to the salvation given us in Christ. Every branch of a tree, though ever so richly brought forth, must wither and die from the moment it ceases to have a life union with the root. To this truth—grounded as absolutely in the spiritual as in the natural—our Lord appeals as an illustration of the necessity of His constant indwelling and continuous working in the redeemed soul of man. "I am the vine," He said, "ye are the branches; as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, no more can ye except ye abide in me. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a withered branch, for without me ye can do nothing." This is nothing less than what Paul meant when he said, "The life that I now live is no more I, but Christ that liveth in me."

This divine life in man can never be in him but as a growth of life in and from God. Hence it is that resisting the Spirit, quenching the Spirit, grieving the Spirit gives growth to every evil that reigns in a fallen creation and leaves men and churches an easy and inevitable prey to the world, the flesh, and the devil. Nothing but obedience to the Spirit, walking in the Spirit, trusting Him for continual inspiration can possibly keep men from being sinners or idolaters in all that they do. For everything in the life or religion of man that has not the Spirit of God for its source, direction, and end is but earthly, sensual, or devilish.

There is nothing wise, or holy, or just, except the perfect will of God. This is as strictly true as to say that nothing is infinite and eternal but God. No beings therefore, whether in heaven or upon earth, can be wise, holy, or just but so far as they conform to this will of God. It is conformity to God's will that gives virtue and perfection to the highest services of angels in heaven; and it is conformity to the same will that makes the ordinary actions of men upon earth an acceptable

service to God. The whole nature of virtue consists in conforming to the will of God; the whole nature of sin in declining from it. Whether it be the most glorious angelic being or the lowliest of creeping things, all creation is subject to that selfsame will of God that designed and planned its functions. If therefore you would show yourself not to be a rebel from the order of creation, you must act as do those beings both above and below you: it must be your great desire that God's will may be done by you on earth, as it is done in heaven. It must be the settled purpose and intention of your heart to will nothing, design nothing, do nothing, but so far as there is reason to believe that it is the will of God.

It is as great rebellion against God to think that your will may ever rightly differ from His as it would be to boast in His universe that you have not received the power of willing from Him. You are therefore to consider yourself as a being that has no other business in the world but to be that which God requires you to be; to have no desires, to seek no self-ends, but to fill that place and act that part which the divine pleasure has ordained. To think that you are your own, or at your own disposal, is as absurd as to think that you created yourself. It is as plain and necessary a first principle to believe that you are thus God's, and are to act and suffer all in a thankful resignation to His pleasure, as to believe that in Him you "live and move and have your being."

Now this is the Christian's true state with relation to God, since one cannot be said so much as to believe in Him unless one believes Him to be of infinite love and wisdom. When a man has that confident inner assurance that God's will for his life is the design of an infinite wisdom and love, it will be as necessary, while in the possession of this faith, to be thankful and pleased with everything that God chooses as it would be to wish his own happiness. For what more could be asked than that every circumstance of life be the choice of an infinite wisdom and love? Whenever a man allows himself to have anxieties, fears, or complaints, he must consider his behavior as either a denial of the wisdom of God or as a confession that he is out of His will. To be always in a thankful state of heart before God is not to be considered a *high* plane of spirituality but rather the *normal* attitude of one who believes that "all things work together for good to them that love God, who are the called according to His purpose." If one cannot thank and praise God as well in calamities and sufferings as in prosperity and happiness, how can such an attitude be called a real trust in God at all? For to thank God only for pleasant incidents in life is no more a proper act of piety than to believe only what can be verified with the senses would be an act of faith.

It is as certain that nothing happens by chance to the trusting, obedient child of God as that the world itself was not made by chance. A Christian, then, has fully as much reason to "rejoice evermore and in everything give thanks" as he has to think that everything directed by infinite wisdom and love is perfect. This state of heart is not grounded upon a pride in human abilities to analyze every incident of life, but rather upon a simple, childlike faith in God. To accept with joy and thanksgiving all that comes upon us is not cheating or soothing ourselves into any false contentment or imaginary happiness, but is a satisfaction grounded upon as great a certainty as the being and attributes of God. If we are right in believing that "God is love," we cannot carry our opinions of conformity and resignation to the divine will too high. Indeed, we can rest content in the full assurance that nothing harms or destroys us but the wrong use of that liberty of choice which God has entrusted to us. Hence the vital necessity, both for our salvation and for our eternal well-being, of placing ourselves completely under the power and control of the Holy Spirit, allowing Him to live through us that very purpose for which God at first created us, and for which we were redeemed when, like lost sheep, we had gone astray.

Is it not the utmost in self-seeking folly to look upon God's plan of salvation as having our rescue from judgment as its ultimate goal? Rather, it is to rescue us from rebellion against the will of

God and to bring us into conformity with His eternal purposes in Christ Jesus. Because God is infinite in wisdom and love, this conformity to His will is our highest good, blessing, and joy. Thus one who rejects Christ's salvation willfully consigns himself to empty despair and eternal separation from God's wise and loving purposes. For to reject God's perfect will is to destroy oneself. This is the very death which Adam and Eve brought upon themselves and the human race by their disobedience. Gospel salvation restores man to a willing submission to all God's designs. To maintain otherwise is to say that a man can be reconciled to God and at the same time nurture within his heart a rebellion against the divine will. This position is such a rejection of the sovereignty of God, and in reality, of God Himself, as to lead to no other end than a practical atheism in daily life, though faith in God be ever so loudly professed with the lips.

A lack of this complete submission to the will of God, and a failure to realize that our salvation can only be worked out by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit forming the very life of Christ within the redeemed heart, has placed the Christian church today in the same apostasy that characterized the Jewish nation. And it has occurred for one and the same reason. The Jews refused Him who was the substance and fulfilling of all that was taught in their Law and Prophets. The Christian church is in a fallen state for the same rejection of the Holy Spirit, who was given to be the power and fulfilling of all that was promised by the gospel. And just as the Pharisees' rejection of Christ was under a profession of faith in the Messianic Scriptures, so church leaders today reject the demonstration and power of the Holy Spirit in the name of sound doctrine.

The Holy Spirit's coming was no less to fulfill the gospel than Christ's coming was the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets. As all types and figures in the Law were but empty shadows without the coming of Christ, so the New Testament is but dead letter without the Holy Spirit in redeemed men as the living power of a full salvation. This is clear from these words, "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you. But if I go away, I will send him unto you." Without the cross and resurrection, Christ could not have "gone away." These antecedent events made possible His ascension, for it was "by his own blood that he entered into the presence of God for us." Thus the coming of the Holy Spirit, being the fruit of Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension, is essential to the fulfillment of the salvation Christ procured.

Where the Holy Spirit is not honored as the one through whom the whole life and power of gospel salvation is to be effected, it is no wonder that Christians have no more of the reality of the gospel than the Jews had of the purity of the Law. It could not be otherwise than that the same lusts and vices which prospered among apostate Jews should break forth with as much strength in fallen Christendom. For the New Testament without the coming of the Holy Spirit in power over self, sin, and the devil is no better a help to heaven than the Old Testament without the coming of the Messiah. Need any more be said to demonstrate the truth that the one thing absolutely essential to man's salvation is the Spirit of God living and working in the spirit of man? And while we still cling to a religion that does not acknowledge this, it is a full proof that we are not yet in that redeemed state of union with God which is intended by the gospel.

## Chapter 2

### The Gospel A Ministration of the Spirit

The truth and perfection of the gospel could not be realized until it became solely a ministration of the Holy Spirit. Though instructed in heavenly truths from Christ Himself and enabled to work miracles in His name, nevertheless the apostles were not yet qualified to know and teach the mysteries of His kingdom. There was a still higher dispensation to come which they could never have part in from an outward instruction, even from the lips of Christ Himself. Only when He, being glorified, should come again in the fullness and power of the Spirit, breaking open the death and darkness of their hearts with light and life from heaven, could they experience in themselves all that He had promised to them while He was with them in the flesh. "I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go away," said Christ, thus teaching the need of a higher and more blessed state than they could know through His bodily presence with them. For He adds, "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come." Therefore the real comfort and blessing of Christ to His followers could not be had except through something more than His physical presence and verbal instruction, wonderful as these must have been to those privileged few.

Before His crucifixion Christ carefully explained to His disciples the necessity of His outward teaching and guidance being changed into the inspiration and operation of His Spirit resident within their souls. He commanded them not to bear witness to the world of what they humanly knew of His birth, life, teachings, death, resurrection—but to wait at Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high. "Ye shall receive power," He said, "after the Holy Ghost is come upon you. And *then* shall ye bear Witness unto me, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and unto the utmost part of the earth." Only then could the apostles be "able ministers, not of the letter but of the spirit, for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life."

"John truly baptized with water," said Christ, "but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence." "And in that day," He had said earlier, "ye shall know that I am in you. Only then could they be His witnesses and gospel ambassadors. As salvation is in its whole nature the inward birth and life of Christ in the believer, so nothing but this "new creature in Christ" can bear true witness to the realities of redemption. Therefore a man, however expert in all Scripture doctrines or learning, can only talk about the gospel as of any tale he has been told, until the life of Christ has been brought forth, verified, fulfilled, and enjoyed through the power of the Holy Spirit in his soul. No one can know the truth of salvation by a mere rational consent to that which is historically said of Christ. Only by an inward experience of His cross, death, and resurrection can the saving power of the gospel be known. For the reality of Christ's redemption is not in fleshly, finite, outward things—much less in verbal descriptions of them—but is a birth, a life, a spiritual operation, which as truly belongs to God alone as does His creative power.

"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation." are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus." These passages infer that nothing can redeem man except that same power which first created him. There is no fruit of salvation but what must be described in the words, "Yet not I, but Christ that liveth in me." And if this total reliance upon the Holy Spirit for every thought, word, and deed while He manifests the very works and words of Christ through the members of His body be judged unreasonable—as some would affirm—then the only sober, orthodox Christian is he who, in order to avoid this excess, declares, "Yet not Christ's Spirit living in me, but my own

limited power sets the standard of my life." How can such a man be said to believe Christ's words, "Without me ye can do nothing"?

Since all that we are to be and do is by that very Spirit of Christ living within us, then every true Christian must say with Paul, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Christ has promised, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do because I go unto my Father." So he who places any hope or trust for salvation in a mere intellectual assent to doctrinal opinions has no more scriptural faith than he who looks for redemption to an image of stone. Every society of Christians which rejects the present operations of the Holy Spirit can produce nothing better than a religion of self-effort, despite its great zeal for all sound Scripture doctrines. Moreover, a fleshly, earthly, overbearing pride in their own definitions and doctrines of words will by degrees creep up to the same height among such Christians, and become that same carnal wisdom, doing those very same things which they decry in pompous hypocrites. Nor can it possibly be otherwise.

A letter-learned zeal has but one nature wherever it is, and can only do that for Christians which it did for Jews. As in ancient times it brought forth scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites, and crucifiers of Christ; as it afterwards brought forth heresies, schisms, popes, papal decrees, images, and anathemas; so in Protestant churches it will do the same things, only under different names. The empty idolatry of Rome will show itself even without crucifixes and indulgences. Images of wood and clay will only be exchanged for images of doctrines. Grace, works, imputed sin, imputed righteousness, and election will all have their worshipping advocates, dividing the body of Christ in their very zeal to defend their, own good opinions about Scripture doctrines. And so great will be the blindness thus generated that every kind of gossip, slander, and hatred will be pursued by brother against brother, all of it done in the name of Him who prayed that we might be one.

This must be the case throughout all Christendom until men and churches firmly adhere to this one Scripture truth: that our salvation is in the life of Jesus Christ in us. All else is mere babel—no matter what the sect or division, or the zealous sincerity of those who strive and contend over Scripture words. On the other hand, this truth of truths fully possessed brings God and man together, puts an end to every "Lo, here," and "Lo, there," and turns the whole faith of man to a Christ who can be a Saviour to him only as He is essentially born in the inmost depths of his being through the power of the Holy Spirit. To this man alone all Scripture gives daily edification. The words of Christ and His apostles fall like a fire into his soul. And what is it that they kindle there? Not notions, not itching ears, nor rambling desires after new doctrines and new expounders of them; but a holy frame of love, to be always obediently attentive to that Christ and His Holy Spirit within him, which alone can make of him all that which the words of Christ and His apostles have taught.

By what other means is there any possibility of being like-minded with Christ in anything that He taught, or having the truth of one Christian virtue, but by the nature and Spirit of Christ living within? Memorize our Saviour's divine sermon from the mount, agree with every part of it, yet the time of practicing it will never come until the Holy Spirit has formed Christ in the heart. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," is a divine truth; but it will do no divine good, unless received as saying neither more nor less than, "Blessed are they that are born again of the Spirit, for they alone can see God." For no blessedness, either of truth or life, can be found either in men or angels except where the Spirit of God has become the very life of their existence. Let a man memorize all of the epistles in the New Testament letter-perfect, yet he will never know their real truth until he has himself become "an epistle of Christ, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God in the fleshly table of the heart."

Proudly trusting in his doctrinal knowledge, the scholarly theologian calls this faith in the Holy Spirit enthusiastic literalism. In his rejection of any spiritual reality beyond an intellectual comprehension of words and opinions, he blinds his mind to the realization that the woes pronounced by Christ against scribes, Pharisees, and hypocrites are equally as great a condemnation *today* of every appearance and show of religion that the natural mind can grasp and the natural man practice. For he that does not look to the Spirit of God for all goodness and virtue must therefore look to some other source for *some* goodness and virtue. Yet whether one looks to his own religious self, learned in Scripture doctrines, or to Satan, his religion is equally an abomination to God.

Our divine Master compares the religion of the learned Pharisees to "whited sepulchres, outwardly beautiful, but inwardly full of dead men's bones." How was it that a religion so serious in its restraints, so beautiful in its outward form and practices, and commanding such reverence from all that beheld it, was yet charged by Truth itself with being "inwardly full of hypocrisy and iniquity"? It was only for this one reason: because it was a religion of *self*. Wherever self has power and keeps up its own interests, even in teaching or defending sound Scripture doctrines, there is that very same Pharisee still alive whom Christ with so much severity of language constantly condemned. The reason for such heavy condemnation is that *self* is the root and sum total of all sin. Every sin that can be named is centered in it. Self is nothing else but the creature broken off from God: the power of Satan living and working in us the sad continuance of that first turning from God, which was the whole fall of our first parents.

Therefore it must be added that a religion of self, carried on under the banner of Christ—whether it contend for Scripture doctrines or for worldly glory and prosperity—has more of a diabolical nature than that of the Jewish Pharisees. The highest and last working of the mystery of iniquity is this living for self, Satan, and the world under cover of a lip-profession of denying self, of being crucified with Christ, of being led by His Spirit, of being set with Him in heavenly places. Those who boast of their heavenly position in Christ, while living to self, stand in the fullest opposition to the gospel though they contend loudly in words for all orthodox doctrines. A "positional" relationship to Christ that does not transform one's life is the greatest possible denial of Christ's words, "I am the (true) vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." How can a branch be a living part of this True Vine without manifesting the life of Christ? There are varying measures of fruit and faith, it is true; but what more abominable blasphemy could be manifest than seeking to justify by Scripture the self-life of this old Adam-nature, while at the same time professing saving faith in the gospel words, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me!"

"If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." Could words be plainer? But popular Christianity puts a loose construction upon these words, considering them as only applying to certain times and particular actions in life. Thus one finds religious leaders who, as to their doctrine, are as clear as crystal, but equally cold and hard. They may preach a sermon on the love of Christ, adhering strictly to the words of Scripture; and soon after manifest anything but the Spirit of love in their lives. Many Christians are careful to observe certain times, places, and rituals of worship; but when the service of the church is over, they are but like those that profess no regard for religion. In their manner of life, in the way they spend their time and money, in their cares and worries, fears and pleasures, indulgences and diversions, it is often impossible to distinguish professing Christians from the rankest unbelievers, until they once again unite to sing of their love and devotion to Jesus. Little wonder that the skeptic makes such false standard-bearers the object of his scorn and jest, because he sees that their devotion goes no deeper than the words they use in song and prayer. How can this be called Christianity, when such a manner of life finds its proper condemnation in every page of the New Testament?

Nothing could be more scriptural than praying to God in the name of Jesus Christ and through the power of the Holy Spirit. Yet as surely as the Christian is thus to pray, so surely he is thus to live. For "whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, all is to be done in the name of Jesus Christ and to the glory of God." If therefore we desire to live unto God, it is necessary to bring our whole life under His will, and to make His glory the sole end and measure of all we say and do. For if Christianity has not changed a man in the ordinary course and conduct of his life, what has it done for him; and what can be the meaning of the Scripture which says, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things have passed away, behold all things have become new"? Indeed, nothing more absurd can be imagined than wise, sublime, heavenly prayers and times of devotion added to a life of vanity and folly. At best, such a man could only be said to sing and pray like a Christian, and live like an atheist. How could such religion demonstrate any hope of real salvation to the man who has been enlightened enough to know that self is the root and substance of all sin?

Our blessed Saviour and His apostles were wholly taken up with truth that relates to common life. They call us to deny self, to take up our cross daily, and to differ in every desire and way of life from the spirit of the world: to renounce all of its goods, to fear none of its evils, to reject its joys, and place no value on its pleasures. We are to walk the narrow path of life as pilgrims, in frequent fastings and never-ceasing prayers, in holy fear and godly aspirations, as those who are not of this world but citizens of heaven. We are to seek the blessedness of mourning, to live in a humble poverty of spirit, to forsake the pride and vanity of riches and earthly position, to reject the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, to receive no honor from man or the world, to take no thought for the morrow. We are to live in the profoundest submission to God's will, to rejoice in sufferings, to bear injuries and insults, to forgive and bless our enemies, to love all men as God loves them. We are to give up ourselves wholly to God and His kingdom, presenting our bodies a living sacrifice, as those that are temples of the Holy Spirit. This is the common devotion which our blessed Saviour taught in order to make it the common life of all Christians—for if these things are to be practiced, they must be made parts of our common life; they can have no place elsewhere.

Yet how can any man live such a life in his own strength? This life that the Scripture sets as the standard of Christian conduct is nothing less than the perfect will of God, living to His glory in all we are and do. It is the very life of Christ, which He lived here upon this earth; as impossible for any other man to live as it is true that He was the only begotten, virgin-born Son of God. But this is the life that Scripture offers to the sinner, if words have any meaning at all. No fuller proof is needed that the one and only sufficiency for the Christian life is the power of the Holy Spirit; not as a doctrine, but as a living person, who manifests through us the very life of Jesus Christ. The full necessity for the gospel to be a ministration of the Holy Spirit is founded in the very nature of the salvation which it offers to fallen man. And those who deny in word or deed a total submission to Christ, and the manifestation of His life in us through the infilling and power of the Holy Spirit, lay another foundation than that which Paul laid, which is "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

## Chapter 3

### Worship of the Letter A Denial of the Spirit

The Holy Scriptures are the divinely inspired Word of God, and therefore to be fully believed, highly revered, and strictly obeyed. Since faith comes from hearing the Word of God, and “the just live by faith,” we must ever remember that the basis of the Christian life is a constant meditation upon and simple acceptance of all that the Bible would say to us. But as Christ’s work of redemption in the flesh was only preparatory to His future indwelling us by the Spirit, so the written doctrines of Scripture are only a means to all that inward teaching and powerful working of Christ’s Spirit within us. As we must beware of neglecting the Word of God, so also we must beware of resting in the mere letter without expecting through the indwelling Holy Spirit a real and living experience of all that Scripture holds out to our faith. Nothing of divine love, life, or goodness can have birth or place in us but by inspiration and power of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. So they who imagine these virtues can be acquired by studying the letter of the gospels and epistles are under the same deception as the Jews that Christ said would not come to Him because they thought eternal life was in and by the Old Testament Scriptures alone.

The Bible should be revered as doing all that words can do to bring us to God—that is, to point the way. But the life-giving power of Christ does not reside in Greek and Hebrew syntax, but in the quickening of the Holy Spirit: for *“the gospel is not in word only, but in power and in much assurance of the Holy Spirit.”* What folly to ascribe to the letter of Scripture that power which the words themselves most plainly tell us is solely in the quickening Spirit of God! Yet Scripture has suffered this very perversion of teaching at the hands of those who claim to uphold most ardently its infallible inspiration. Thus many profess a sound doctrinal understanding of the letter of Scripture, but at the same time they reject the very work of the Holy Spirit in their hearts and lives to which the plainest meaning of the Scriptures they so zealously study and guard would point them!

This basic error is much encouraged by the pitiful reasoning of great Bible scholars and preachers who affirm that God no longer communicates with men except through the words of Scripture: and who, on the grounds of a completed canon, deny the reality of the Holy Spirit’s inspiration and communion presently active in the soul and spirit of man. Let us put their doctrine into the letter of the text, which will best show how true or false it is. Our Lord says, “It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you.” That is, it is expedient that I discontinue teaching in audible words, that you may have the written page to look at with your eyes: for if I go away, I will send written words which shall lead you into such a truth of doctrine as you could not have while they were only spoken from my mouth. These will be the heavenly Comforter abiding with you—the most supreme illumination you can receive from me. According to these teachers, the fellowship Jesus offers is nothing so extreme as the reality of the Holy Spirit actually manifesting Christ to our spirits and His works in our lives; rather it is the wonderful, heavenly, sublime communion between our intellects and the letter of Scripture.

What can this intellectual approach bring to the study of Scripture except that which the most wicked scholar could also boast through a knowledge of Greek and his natural memory? A historical, intellectual or grammatical learning of the words of Scripture can do no more towards



removing the fleshly nature and its works from the soul of man than the same human knowledge of mathematics or literature. What more is then needed to prove that though the Scriptures are now complete, yet a completeness of words is not sufficient for our salvation? “The things of God knoweth no man, but by the Spirit of God.” Without the present inspiration of the Spirit, a man’s knowledge of the letter of Scripture can be no more than ideas in his head. We need the same powerful working of the Holy Spirit today that made the apostles living examples of all they were inspired to write. In no other way can we know the reality of Christ’s redemption which the early Christians daily experienced.

Yet Bible scholars are generally looked upon as having a divine knowledge when they are as ready at chapter and verse of Scripture as the learned philosopher is at every page of Plato or Aristotle. On the basis of a prescribed religious education, the clergyman is thought to be fully qualified to engage in that ministry for which the apostles had to receive an endowment of power from on high. This scholarly worship of the letter has greatly opposed the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and blinded men to the living reality which the gospel holds out to those who believe. The manner in which Greek and Hebrew scholarship is admired and sought after in the church would lead one to believe that a man has all the divine life and reality of a Paul if he can only say his epistles by heart. What could such a man truly be said to have, except the letter of the gospel without the Spirit? And what would be the advantage if he knew this letter in the original Greek, and had thoroughly mastered all the niceties of grammar and shades of ancient meanings? Such a man, while more thoroughly grounded in the letter, must remain just as empty of the reality of the gospel, unless he knows in his own experience the immediate inspiration and quickening power of the Holy Spirit.

Judas Iscariot knew Jesus Christ, and all that He said and did from the beginning of His ministry to His crucifixion. He knew what it was to be at the Lord’s table, and to partake of the bread and wine fresh from the hand of the Saviour and under His blessing. Yet with much more truth it may be said that he knew nothing of all this, and had no better knowledge of Christ than a Pontius Pilate or a Barabbas. And all knowledge of Christ except that which is from the divine inspiration of the indwelling Holy Spirit is as poor and profitless as was Judas’ knowledge.

Peter’s acknowledgment of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, did not come from a mere outward knowledge of the words Christ spoke and the miracles He had done, but from that divine inspiration for which we here contend. Is not this what Christ meant when He said, “Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven”? In like manner Paul wrote, “Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.” Flesh and blood may say to Christ, “Hail Master,” and betray Him with a kiss; but no one can call Jesus Lord except by the Holy Spirit.

What fuller argument is needed for this divine inspiration as being beyond the poor power of mere words, than the self-evident fact that the natural man is everywhere in the church singing of his love for Jesus and calling Him Lord with his lips, while betraying Him to the world with his life! Nor could this lukewarm apostasy masquerade under the banner of Christ, except that our worship of the letter of the gospel has denied its power. Men are more concerned about proving who has the right doctrinal interpretation of Scripture than they are concerned with whether or not the reality of the gospel is being demonstrated in their daily lives. And all because we assume that the Holy Spirit, having finished His inspiration of apostles and prophets for the writing of Scripture, now withholds that same necessary inspiration and illumination from those who today read these holy truths.

Since calling Jesus Lord must be more than mere words, what could so fully oppose the Holy Spirit as that worship of the letter of Scripture that is so prevalent among Christians today? When

this empty, powerless knowledge of the letter of spiritual truth is held to be the possession of the truth itself, then darkness, delusion, and death overshadow Christendom. For gospel Christianity is in its whole nature a ministration of the Spirit: it has but one life, and that is the life of God by the divine nature brought to birth and power in the believing heart. It has but one light, and that is the Lamb of God. Whatever is not of and from this life and governed by the Holy Spirit in possession of the heart, call it by what high name you will, is no more a part of the gospel state nor will better influence man's final end than a similar learned knowledge of secular history.

“Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” What is God's kingdom in heaven, but the manifestation of what God is and does in His heavenly creatures? How is His will done there, except that His Holy Spirit is the life, the power, and mover of all that live in heaven? We daily read this prayer, and yet (for the sake of sound doctrine, it is supposed) preach and write against all that is prayed for in it. Nothing less than the manifestation of the life of Christ through mortal flesh in the power of His Holy Spirit can do that which we pray may be done. Where can God's kingdom reign? Only where every other power but His ceases to be. How can His will be done? Only as the Spirit that wills in God also wills in the creature.

What then can a learned knowledge of literature and language and oratorical abilities perform in this kingdom? Just as much as they can do towards the resurrection of the dead; for all that is to be done in this heavenly kingdom is nothing less than resurrection into divine life from the death of sin. Therefore the power which gave eyes to the blind, cleansed the lepers, cast out devils, and raised the dead can and must alone do all that is to be done in this gospel Kingdom of God. Every smallest work of grace must be as solely done by God as the greatest miracle, because in every work of grace is the same overcoming of nature and sin as when the dead are raised to life. A letter-learned zeal, far from making any man a partaker of the divine nature, only confirms him in his own fallen state: for his proud glorying in the letter blinds him to his emptiness and lack of reality in the Holy Spirit. One can be so proud of his doctrinal soundness that the Holy Spirit cannot convict him of the unsoundness of his life.

Vain men give to one another a special recognition as having great power and position in this heavenly kingdom by virtue of a proficient learning in languages and Biblical history, or skill in doctrinal analysis. If the faith of illiterate fishermen did more for the establishment of the church in a few years than centuries of prodigious scholarship, one may readily understand that a trust in the wisdom of men and the letter of Scripture has caused the church to fall from its first gospel state in much the way that Adam fell through eating of the same tree of knowledge. The Bible teacher and religious leader who gain and hold a church position through intellectual attainments and oratorical skills can be said to differ from lesser men only as the serpent differed from the other beasts of the field—in that it was more subtle. And the old Serpent has elevated many of his servants through this same subtlety into places of authority and influence within that which pretends to be the Church of Christ.

In this fallen state of the Church today, Bible scholars are everywhere given over to the self-assuming workings of their own natural intellectual powers. Preachers and teachers come forth to play the orator with gospel mysteries as though the kingdom of God were a kingdom of words, and not as it is in reality the inward work of the Triune God in the soul and spirit of man. Paul said that his gospel was *not* in word only, but in the power of the Holy Spirit. But these men profess to preach the same gospel as Paul, while denying that same power of the Holy Spirit that he knew; and the gospel in their mouths has become a play upon words, so that they are always studying new ways to present them. They maintain a form of godliness while denying the power thereof. The truth has become in their hands no longer the piercing sword of the Spirit of Truth,

but the persuasion of cleverly fashioned phrases. In this way the living Word of God has died in the hands of those who profess to be its dearest friends.

Nor do such men always handle the Word of God with apparent deception or obvious unbelief. They are often most careful to “rightly divide the word of truth,” and frequently foremost in pointing out doctrinal errors held by others less astute in the Scriptures. This very consciousness of being sound in the letter of doctrine has blinded them to the need of a real and constant working of the Holy Spirit in their daily lives. The kingdom of God has become to them and to their disciples, not a matter of practical righteousness, triumphant peace and boundless, overflowing joy in the Holy Spirit; but that kingdom consists for them in doctrinal teachings and new-found phrases about these things. Such a false kingdom of creeds can only be maintained and extended by defining and disputing the meaning of words. And so the apostle’s warning is manifested to be true, that “the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.”

Jesus said, “The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.” As soon as any man makes a dead letter out of Christ’s words, he can no longer know the living experience of that which Christ taught. When Scripture creates a hunger and thirst to be filled and blessed with His divine nature through the Holy Spirit, then the letter kills not, but leads directly to life.

All the truths and doctrines of Scripture have but one errand; to call men to the Christ who said, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you.” This risen Christ, “who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption,” must live His life in us and be our all, or His words only make an outward sound upon our ears and a passing image in our minds, while our hearts remain empty of His life and power. The one thing taught and meant by all that is so variously said in Scripture is, “He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life,” “but the wrath of God abideth on him.” If the living Word, who is Christ Himself, is not living as Lord and Master in the depths of our spirit now, then those outward words He spoke can only condemn us in that coming day; and the more familiar we have been with the letter of doctrine, the greater will be our judgment for having neglected that reality which these words continually held out to us in the truths we professed with our lips but denied with our lives.

The letter of Scripture has so long been the province of intellect and reason that the difference between opinions about words and a living divine knowledge is all but lost in the professing Church. And if any awakened Christian suggests that something more dynamic and vital may be known of God in daily experience than that which every scholar can know of words and ideas, immediately the cry of “enthusiast” is raised after him, whether he be a priest or one of the laity. Such an accusation could have some justification only if it could first be proved that the apostle’s text ought to be thus read, “The Spirit killeth, but the letter giveth life.”

To justify the lack within his own heart of the fire of the Holy Spirit, the well-read theologian explains that the ancient way of knowing the things of God, taught and practiced by apostles and early Christians, is not for this present age. Primitive Christians indeed needed to have the fullness of the Holy Spirit’s manifestation given to every man—but this was only for a time, until the completeness of the written canon of Scripture should give scholarship sufficient words to study and teach. Behold the folly of human reasoning! For as soon as this first power and illumination of the Spirit of God as a present work among men is denied for today, then nothing is left but the fleshly work and carnal wisdom of the old man. And the Church of Christ has become a kingdom of scribes and Pharisees.

Christ said to those who sought after the letter, “In them (the Scriptures) ye think ye have eternal life; but these are they which testify of me: and ye will not come to me that ye might have life.”

To come to the Scriptures and to know all the letter of them is of no avail unless through them we are led to the crucified Saviour to receive life from Him. Christ Himself, brought to life in us through the new birth, is our whole redemption, justification, and hope of glory. This is the one thing said and meant by Christ, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

All the New Testament with one voice testifies that every true Christian must be indwelt by the same Holy Spirit as were the first Christians. And in none of the New Testament can a verse be found to show that Christ intended the gifts, workings and power of the Holy Spirit to diminish in the Church; indeed, He Himself said, "Verily, verily I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater. . ."

Now as surely as Christ never told His disciples to tarry at Jerusalem until the power of education or learning should come upon them, so surely did He not refer to the completed letter of Scripture when He said, "He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever;" and "He will guide you into all truth." The letter of Scripture can only direct to the doing of that which it cannot perform, and give notice of a living reality that it cannot supply. It is the coming of Christ Himself as the fulfiller of the Law and the Prophets; and of His Holy Spirit, as the fulfiller and powerful inward and outward working of Christ's gospel, that alone can give the possession and life of all that to which the Scriptures direct us.

## Chapter 4

### The Wisdom of this World Denies the Spirit

How does the learned expert in the letter of Scripture doctrines view these words of Jesus: "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes"? Why, he bends every effort to become as wise in worldly wisdom as human learning can make him, as though he were determined to be anything but that simple child of faith to whom the Father reveals the mysteries of the gospel. Thus he shuts himself and others out of the heavenly kingdom, turning from the tree of life to feed on that tree of sin and death that was called in the garden, the tree of knowledge. As soon as any man trusts to intellectual abilities, skill in languages, or human wisdom as the true means of edification and divine knowledge, he gives himself up to certain delusion. He has sold his birthright in the gospel state of spiritual illumination for a name, to make a noise with the sounding brass and tinkling cymbals of the natural man.

"My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom," said Paul, "but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." Did Paul thereby make way for ignorance and darkness to extinguish the light of truth, and thus rob the Church of all its strongholds, leaving it defenseless against skepticism's attacks? Rather, had this not been his testimony he could not have said to his converts, "I have begotten you through the gospel," and "your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God!" Again he said, "Though ye have 10,000 instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers." Thousands stand ready to split doctrinal hairs and instruct others in the fine meaning of Scripture words—but there are so few through whom the Holy Spirit can work to bring men to new birth in the kingdom of God.

"I preach the gospel," said Paul, "but not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ...which is a stumblingblock to the Jew and foolishness to the educated Greek...should be made of none effect." Now, if this Paul had thereafter written volumes of theological treatises, whose meaning was obscure except to those of great intellect and scholarship, could anyone say that he was still determined to know nothing but Christ and Him crucified, preached not with wisdom of words, but in the power of the Holy Spirit alone? And if such scholarly learning and complex theological systems had been offered to men as a true explanation of the way into the kingdom of God, must this not have been called Paul's recantation of all that he had taught of being crucified with Christ and counting all other knowledge as dung in order to know the power of His resurrection?

What folly, then, for scholars to run hither and thither in an effort to consult the best minds upon the subject of the gospel. All of this might have been known to be mere delusion and lost labor, had these men but remembered or regarded even one saying either of Christ or His apostles concerning the Holy Spirit and His operations. "The things of God," says Paul, "knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." Is not this decisive upon the matter? Is not this proof enough that not human learning, nor anything in man, except the Spirit of God dwelling and working in him, can make him know the reality of the new creation in which "all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ"? Whoever is wholly given up to a denial of self that he might take up the cross and follow Christ, has the will and mind of Christ. To this man the world, death, and hell are overcome in him as they were overcome in Christ. To him Christ has become

the resurrection and the life. And he knows with Paul that all other knowledge will be cast away as dung when the risen Christ enters into the hearts of men to set up His heavenly kingdom there.

"Every good gift and every perfect gift cometh from above," says James. But does not he in reality deny this, who seeks for the highest gift of knowledge in Greek grammars and institutions of human learning here below? Again, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God." James does not say, let him ask it of this great theologian or that. Many men seek after qualifications to be pastors of Christ's sheep by chasing after the wisdom of learned religious scholars. These scholars' glorious names are great in the present religious world, but we do not read of them in the gospel any more than we do of the profound Aristotle or the divine Cicero. Yet they expect these men to do for them what the whole college of apostles could do for no one.

If now it has been found indeed true that wisdom of words, natural genius, and imaginations are necessary helps in preaching the gospel, then how poorly did the Apostle Paul preach, who specifically denounced these things. But alas, they stand in the same opposition to one another as self-denial and self-gratification. To know the truth of gospel salvation is to know that man's natural wisdom is to be equally sacrificed with man's natural folly. They are but one and the same thing, only called sometimes by one name, and sometimes by the other. For man's intellectual faculties are, by the fall, in a much worse state than his animal appetites, and require of him much greater self-denial. To believe this, no more need be known than these two things: (1) That our salvation consists wholly in being saved from ourselves, or that which we are by nature; and (2) That nothing could be our salvation but such a humility of God manifested in human nature as is beyond all expression except in the God-man Christ Jesus.

Hence the first unalterable call of this Saviour to fallen man: "Except a man denies himself, forsakes all that he has, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." And the Saviour adds, "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart." What a light is here for those who desire and love the light! Self is the whole evil of fallen nature; self-denial is our capacity of being saved; humility is our Saviour—that self-denial and humility which are found in Christ alone, who must be in us, or we cannot have and know this salvation. This is every man's short lesson of life, and he that has learned it well is scholar enough. Yet how many have studied the words of Scripture for a lifetime, without receiving that humility of Christ which produces the very mind of Christ and turns fallen man into a son of God! Academic degrees they hold in plenty from the best centers of religious learning—but know so little of the Spirit of Christ! What a paradox to see the professed Church of the Lamb filled with great numbers of champion disputants, who from age to age have been up in arms to support and defend a set of opinions, doctrines, and practices, all of which may be most cordially embraced without demanding the least degree of self-denial, and most firmly held fast without bestowing the least degree of humility!

Why is it that we see Bible scholars equally pleased with and contending for the errors and absurdities of every system of theology under which they happen to have taken their education? Because natural genius and human wisdom can feed on no other food than the deceptive fruit of that ancient tree of knowledge. What a gross ignorance, both of man's need and Christ's salvation, to run to Greek and Hebrew schools to learn how to put off Adam and to put on Christ! How absurd to seek to be wise in scholarship concerning the letter of Scripture in order to obey Christ's command that we must become like a little child to enter into His kingdom! How came the learned Greeks by their pride and vanity, and inability to come under the humility of the cross? It was because the false glory of their own cultivated abilities blinded them in the same way that a letter-learned knowledge blinded Jewish scribes and Pharisees. And so it often is in the Church today. What is the source of all this spiritual blindness, which from age to age thus

mistakes and defeats all the gracious designs of God towards fallen mankind? Look at the origin of the first sin, and you see it all. Had Eve desired no knowledge but that which came from God, Paradise had still been the habitation of her and of all her offspring. If Christians had desired no knowledge but that which comes alone from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the Church had been a kingdom of God and communion of saints to this present day. Christians would have known no master but Christ, nor would anything else be considered possible to effect salvation except dying to self that the Christ of God might be formed in us, making children of God out of the fallen sons of Adam.

But now corruption, sin, death, and every evil of the world have entered into the Church, the spouse of Christ, just as they entered into Eve, the spouse of Adam, in Paradise. And in the very same way, and from the same cause: namely, a desire for knowledge other than that which comes from the inspiration of the Spirit of God alone. This desire is the serpent's voice in every man, doing everything to him and in him which Satanic deception did to Eve in the garden. It carries on the first deceit, it shows and recommends to him that same beautiful tree of human wisdom, self-will, and self-esteem springing up within him, which Eve saw in the garden. And this love of human wisdom and knowledge so blinds man, that he cannot see that he is eating of the same forbidden fruit and keeping up in himself all the death and separation from God which the first hunger for knowledge brought forth. "God made man upright," said Solomon, "but they have sought out many inventions."

Let then the clever architect of words, the opinion-broker, the worshipper of human reason, and every zealous builder of religious systems be told that the thirst and pride of being learnedly wise in the things of God is keeping him grossly ignorant of divine truth. Let every man heed the warning that the "wisdom of the world" which Paul cast from him is nothing other than Eve's old serpent come to birth within him, and does no better work in the Church of Christ than the thirst after wisdom did in the Paradise of God. "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth," is the only attitude by which any man ever did or ever can attain divine knowledge and divine goodness. To knock at any other door than this is like asking life of that which is itself dead, or praying to him for bread who has nothing but stones to give.

Now strange as all this may seem to the ardent student of religious schools and opinions, yet it is saying no more nor anything else than that which Christ said in these words, "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Have learned orators, Scripture logicians, and scholarly experts in the grammatical powers of Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic phrases and idioms, by raising themselves high in these attainments, sunk down from themselves into Christ's little children of the kingdom of God? Then it may be also said that he who is laboring, scheming, and fighting for all the riches and possessions he can acquire in this world is the very man that has left all to follow Christ, and who "labors not for the meat that perishes." Show me a scholar full of academic learning as the Vatican is of books, and he will be just as likely to give all that he has for the gospel pearl as he would be if he were as rich as Midas.

Let no one here imagine that I am writing against all human literature, arts, and sciences, or that I wish the world to be without them. I am no more an enemy of them than of the common useful labors of life. It is the application to the things of the Spirit of God of the same methods of learning and wisdom used by worldly scholars in earthly pursuits that I charge with folly and mischief. And in this I have all learned Christendom, both popish and Protestant, on my side. For they both agree in charging each other with a bad and false gospel state, because of that which their great learning and logic has produced for them. Thus he who condemns the blindness and error of popish logic and criticism has all the learned Protestant world with him: and he who lays

the same charge to Protestant learning has a much larger kingdom of popish scholars logically and learnedly affirming the same thing. So that the simple child of faith who flees both popish and Protestant human learning as a source of death and destruction is so far from being an ignorant fanatic that he is in reality substantiated by all the church learning in the world.

Is it not time to seek a better ground to stand upon than such scholarship as this? Consider first of all that true deliverance from sin is nowhere to be found for fallen man, but in these two points: (1) A total childlike faith in gospel salvation through the death and resurrection of Christ for man; and (2) A total resignation to, and sole dependence upon, the continual operation of the Holy Spirit in man. Through Him, Christ becomes our never-ceasing light, teacher, guide, and living power whereby we can walk in all the ways of virtue in which He Himself walked in the flesh. All beside this, call it by what name you will, is but dead work, a vain labor of the old man to re-create himself. For nothing else is meant or taught by the gospel, but a total dying to self (called taking up the cross to follow Christ) that a new creature (called Christ in us) may be born into the purity and perfection of a vital life-union with God.

Let the Christian world forget or depart from this true gospel salvation; let anything else be trusted but the cross of Christ and the Spirit of Christ; and then, though churches and preachers and prayers and sacraments are everywhere in plenty, nothing can come of them but a Christian kingdom of pagan vices, along with a mouth-professed belief in the Apostles' Creed and the communion of saints. To this sad truth all Christendom both at home and abroad bears full witness. Who need be told that no corruption or depravity of human nature, no kind of pride, wrath, envy, malice, and self-love; no sort of hypocrisy, falseness, cursing, gossip, perjury, and cheating; no wantonness of lust in every kind of debauchery, foolish jesting, and worldly entertainment, is any less common all over Christendom, both popish and Protestant, than towns and villages. What vanity, then, to count progress in terms of numbers of new and lofty cathedrals, chapels, sanctuaries, mission stations, and multiplied new membership lists, when there is no change in this undeniable departure of men's hearts from the living God. Yea, let the whole world be converted to Christianity of this kind, and let every citizen be a member of some Protestant or Catholic church and mouth the creed every Lord's day; and no more would have been accomplished toward bringing the kingdom of God among men than if they had all joined this or that philosophical society or social fraternity.

As an illustration of the truth of which I speak, let me here relate to you a little piece of history which a friend, Academicus, has given of himself:

When I had taken my degrees in the university, I consulted several great divines to put me in a method of studying divinity. It would take half a day to tell you the work which my learned friends suggested.

One told me that Hebrew words are all; that when the Old Testament is read thus, it becomes an open book. He recommended to me a cart load of lexicons, critics, and commentators upon the Hebrew Bible. Another solemnly said that the Greek Bible is the best, that it corrects the Hebrew in many places; and he referred me to a large number of books learnedly written in defense of this suggestion.

Several friends of high repute and leadership in the church told me that church history is the main matter, that I must begin with the first Fathers and follow them through every age, not forgetting to diligently study the lives of the Roman emperors, as striking great light into the state of the church in their times. Then I must have recourse to all the councils held, and the canons made in every age; which would enable me to see with my own eyes the great corruptions of the Council of Trent.

Another, who is not very fond of ancient matters, but wholly bent upon rational Christianity, tells me I need go back no further than the Reformation; that Calvin and Cranmer were very great men;



that Chillingworth and Locke ought always to lie upon my table; that I must get an entire set of those learned volumes written against popery in King James' reign; and also be well versed in all the discourses which Mr. Boyle's and Lady Moyer's lectures have produced. And then, he promised, I would be a match for our greatest enemies, which he warned me are popish priests and modern deists.

My tutor is very liturgical. He desired me of all things to get all the collections that I can of the ancient liturgies, and all the authors that treat of such matters, who, says he, are very learned and very numerous. He has been many years making observations upon them, and is now clear as to the exact times when certain little particles got entrance into the liturgies, and others were by degrees dropped. He has a friend abroad in search of ancient MSS Liturgies: for by the by, said he with great concern, I have some suspicion that our sacrament of the Lord's Supper is essentially defective for lack of having a little water mixed with the wine.

Another learned friend told me that the Clementine Constitution is the book of books; and that all that lies loose and scattered in the New Testament stands there in its true order and form. And though he will not say that Dr. Clarke and Mr. Whiston are in the right, yet it might be useful to me to read all the Arian and Socinian writers, provided I stood upon my guard and did it with caution.

The last person I consulted advised me to get all the histories of the rise and progress of heresies, and of the lives and characters of heretics. These histories, so he said, contract the matter, bring truth and error close in view, and I should find all that collected in a few pages which would have cost me some years to get together. He also desired me to be well versed in all the casuistical writers and chief theologians, for they debate matters to the bottom, dissect every virtue and every vice, and show how near they may come together without touching. And this knowledge, he said, might be very useful when I come to be a parish priest.

Following the advice of all these counselors as well as I could, I lighted my candle early in the morning and put it out late at night. I had been thus laboring for some years, till Rusticus, at my first acquaintance with him, seeing my way of life, said to me, 'Had you lived about seventeen hundred years ago, you had stood just in the same place as I stand now. I cannot read, and therefore,' says he, 'hall these hundreds of thousands of doctrine and disputing books which these seventeen hundred years have produced stand not in my way; they are the same thing to me as if they had never been. And had you lived at the time mentioned, you had just escaped them all, as I do now, because though you are a very good reader, there were then none of them to be read. Could you therefore be content to be one of the primitive Christians, who lived before these writings, and who were as good disciples of Christ as any that have been since, you may spare all this labor.'

It is not easy for me, says Academicus, to tell you how much good I received from this simple instruction of honest Rusticus. What project was it, to be grasping after the knowledge of all the opinions, doctrines, disputes, heresies, schisms, and decrees which seventeen hundred years had brought forth through all the extent of the Christian world! What project this, in order to learn the reality of the power of Christ as a deliverer from the evil and earthly flesh and blood, and death and hell, and to become a preacher of a new birth and life from above! For as this is the divine work of Christ, so he only is a true and able pastor who can bear a faithful testimony to this divine work of Christ in his own soul.

How plain it should have been for me to see that all this labyrinth of learned enquiry into such a dark, thorny wilderness of notions, facts, and opinions could signify no more to me now, to my own salvation, to my interest in Christ and obtaining the Holy Spirit of God, than if I had lived before it had any beginning. But the blind appetite for learning gave me no leisure to apprehend so clear a truth.

Books of divinity, indeed, I have not done with; but will esteem none to be such but those that make known to my heart the inward power and redemption of Jesus Christ, through the indwelling and working of the Holy Spirit. Nor will I seek for anything even from such books, but that which I ask of God in prayer: how more to abhor and resist the evil that is in my own nature, and how to better obtain the full outworking of the divine life brought forth by a supernatural birth within me. All besides this is waste and folly.

In the first apostolic church, the wisdom of words was no more sought after than friendship with the world which is enmity with God. In that new-born church, the tree of life, which grew in the midst of Paradise, took root and grew up again, spreading glory and virtue as men fed upon it. In the present church, the tree of life is hissed at as the visionary food of extremists, and the tree of death, called the tree of knowledge, has the eyes and hearts of priests and people, and is thought to do as much good to Christians as it did evil to the first inhabitants of Paradise. The simplicity indeed both of the gospel doctrines and letter has acquired the shine of worldly wisdom and methods; for these latter are now thought as powerful a means of getting men of the world to turn to God as they were formerly proven to be the power of darkness that turned men from God to the world. And so it must sadly be said that the gospel which can give life only when ministered by the Spirit, has become the province of scholarship in the letter, which can only bring death.

## Chapter 5

### The Holy Spirit's Continuous Inspiration

"The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." Without the present illumination of the Holy Spirit, the Word of God must remain a dead letter to every man, no matter how intelligent or well-educated he may be. The things of God "are spiritually discerned," and therefore "the natural man receiveth them not, but God reveals them unto us by his Spirit." This is telling us in the plainest terms that it is just as essential for the Holy Spirit to reveal the truth of Scripture to the reader today as it was necessary for Him to inspire the writers thereof in their day. For without the same inspiration and power of the Holy Spirit, it is no more possible for man in any age to experience the reality that is promised in Scripture, than it would have been possible for "holy men of God" to write the Scriptures without being "moved by the Holy Ghost." Therefore to say that because we now have all the writings of Scripture complete we no longer need the miraculous inspiration of the Spirit among men as in former days, is a degree of blindness as great as any that can be charged upon the scribes and Pharisees. Nor can we possibly escape their same errors; for in denying the present inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we have made Scripture the province of the letter-learned scribe.

The Holy Scriptures are an infallible history of God's dealings with men, and also an infallible guide for the seeking heart to that salvation which a Holy God offers to sinners. But the Scriptures themselves can go no further than to direct men to a relationship with God which only the Holy Spirit can give, since there is a vast difference between the Holy Spirit's actual workings in the heart of man, and reports about these workings. This is plain from the words of our Lord, "When the Comforter is come, He will guide you into all truth, for he shall take of mine and show it unto you; and he shall teach you all things." Therefore the Scriptures should only be read in an attitude of prayer, trusting to the inward working of the Holy Spirit to make their truths a living reality within us.

Jesus Christ, who is the one and only Saviour of mankind, said, "I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me." What a delusion, however, for any man to think that he has this life from God and is on this straight and narrow way, simply because he makes a mental assent to these words or preaches eloquently in their favor. "I know you not," says Christ to those who have not been born through this seed of the Word being brought to life within them by the Holy Spirit. Since a birth is only the beginning of life, the Word of God through which we are begotten becomes the necessary food that nourishes the Christian. Even so the Holy Spirit must continue His work within those who are born of the Spirit, illuminating and applying the Word to men's hearts for Christian growth.

Christ's words to Nicodemus tell us plainly that none may have eternal life except those who are born from above. This is a full proof that the continual inspiration of the Holy Spirit is essential; for we are born of the Spirit to the end that we might live and walk in the Spirit. "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit," wrote Paul; "for as many as are led of the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Are we not here plainly taught that to be led of the Spirit is just as vital as to be born of the Spirit? Therefore the necessity of a continual inspiration by the Holy Spirit, as the only possible power and preservation of a divine life in man, stands upon the same ground as the new birth.

Poor and miserable that man who strives with all the sophistry of human wit and learning to be delivered from the immediate, continual operation and government of the Spirit of God. He does not consider that where God is not, there is the Devil; and where the Spirit rules not, there all is the work of the flesh, though nothing be talked of but spiritual and Christian matters. I say talked of, for the best ability of the natural man can go no further than talk and notions and opinions about Scripture words and doctrines. In these he may be a great scholar, an acute teacher, a dramatic orator, a moving preacher, and know everything of Scripture except the Spirit and power.

How much is it to be lamented that from one end of learned Christendom to the other little is thought of as the true and proper means of attaining divine knowledge, but that which every natural, selfish, proud, vain-glorious worldly man can do. The Scriptures are studied much as the arts and sciences, as though a learned comprehension of doctrines is everything, and the present inspiration of the Holy Spirit is nothing. Where is the divinity student who was ever taught to think of partaking of the light of the gospel in any other way than by doing with the Scriptures that which he does with pagan writers, whether poets, orators, or comedians: namely, exercise his logic, rhetoric, and critical skill in analyzing and expounding upon them? Having done these things, he is thought by himself and often by others to have a sufficiency of divine apostolic knowledge. So that there are Christian leaders in abundance who have become experts in the doctrine of the Holy Spirit without experiencing His leading and power in their lives.

What wonder, then, if it should sometimes happen that the very same vain and corrupt natural writing abilities that raise one man to be a poet laureate should set another in a divinity chair. Paul said that he determined not to preach with the wisdom of human learning and skill or oratory; yet this same natural wisdom is the chief object of Christian circles, especially by those who seek positions of leadership in the church. And the very "demonstration and power of the Holy Spirit" which Paul said made his preaching effective is not only uncultivated and unknown by pastors and teachers, but more lamentable, those who claim to stand the most strongly for the truth of all that Paul wrote, deny and decry any thought of a manifestation of this power such as he experienced in his day. Need any more than this be known to explain why the Church of Christ today is in a fallen and apostate condition?

Paul said, "My preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." Who then could be a greater enemy of the gospel than those leaders and shepherds of the flock, who write and preach against the manifest power of the Holy Spirit as if it were as much to be avoided in our day as Paul said it was vital in his own. For without this continual inspiration and powerful working of the Spirit, we are left, as Paul said, to a faith that stands upon conflicting opinions about the letter of Scripture zealously interpreted by man's own wisdom. Indeed, the diligent proclamation of the gospel has become just so much vanity of words, unless the Holy Spirit is presently manifesting the reality of that Christianity to which the New Testament bears such full witness.

This failure to look solely to the inward illumination of the Holy Spirit has left the Church in weakness and confusion. Many who most fervently summon their logic and reason to contend that the Scriptures give a true account of the miraculous works of God in the days of the holy apostles, use the same natural reasoning powers in an attempt to prove from Scripture a denial of the miraculous power of God in the present day. Should not the Church rather tremble at the apostle's warning? "Beware lest that also come upon you which was spoken of by the prophets, saying, Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish, for I work a work in your day, which ye will in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you!"

The fruits of the Spirit, so often mentioned in Scripture, are not things different or separate from the Spirit; and if the Spirit be not dwelling and working in us, His fruits must be as absent from us as He is. If there is not granted by God a "divine encounter" and the inner realization that the fruits and gifts of the Spirit proceed from His present workings in our hearts, then how could we know that they are of the Spirit? For the fruits of the Spirit are living, and can only be living in us as the Spirit manifests Himself through us. And since the "manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit thereby," how can any deny such present workings of the Holy Spirit in the church, unless they also deny His presence?

"Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us." Here is a sure statement that there is no higher proof of our being indwelt by the risen Christ than the inward working in our hearts and lives of His Holy Spirit as a present reality which can be recognized by every child of God. For John was not inspired to write, "Hereby you will know that you are saved, because these words on the page tell you so"—although it is our faith in these promises of God that brings us into the gospel kingdom. But John was inspired to hold out to every believer the promise of that witness of the Spirit in the heart which he himself had from God. Thereby we receive that same conscious assurance that John's words are inspired by the Spirit which he had when he was moved by the Holy Spirit to write them. Thus the witness that we are the sons of God comes not from just the truth of Scripture, which we believe; but from a present reality of the indwelling Spirit, of which it can be said, "he that believeth on the Son of God has the witness in himself."

Clearly the same quickening, revealing, inspiring power of the Holy Spirit which worked in those who wrote the Scriptures must work no less a quickening revelation in the reader of today, or the things of God that Scripture teaches can no longer be known. For everything that can be seen, known, heard, tasted, or felt must be manifested by itself and not by another. Only light can manifest light, and only heat can make heat known. Yet it would be more possible to break these physical laws than for anything but divine inspiration to make known the truth in the divinely inspired Scriptures.

There is therefore no degree of delusion higher than that which is evidenced by those who profess to teach from the divinely inspired Scriptures that the immediate, continual illumination and working of the Spirit in men's hearts ceased when the canon of Scripture was complete. To deny the present prophetic gift in the Church is to deny also that very manifestation of Christ today to His own which the Scriptures teach is the only means to the reality of gospel Christianity. Is this not a denial of the very heart and power of the Christian faith? The fulfillment of Christ's promise, "I will manifest myself to you," brought the power of His presence through the Holy Spirit into the early church. "And with great power the apostles gave witness of the resurrection, and believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women." Christ was surely living His life through these early members of the church who were aptly described as "these who have turned the world upside down." We need faith to expect as real a fulfillment of Christ's promise for today!

## Chapter 6

### The Church A Habitation of the Spirit

Through all Scripture nothing else is aimed at or intended for man's salvation but a new birth into the divine life; nor anything hinted at as having the least power to produce it, except the life-giving Holy Spirit of God. How gross then is the blindness which cannot see that the divine life is nothing else than a birth of the divine nature within, giving life to the man who is dead in sin. But as this truth has been lost or given up, vain learning and worldly spirit have come into possession of the gospel and set up kingdoms of strife and division. For what end? Why, as is loudly protested by each faction, that the unity of the church may not be lost! And how many various groups of professing Christians are there today, each of whom in opposition to countless others says that the only way for this unity to be scripturally expressed would be for all others to espouse its particular Scripture interpretation.

On what basis are these various divisions established? They could never be upon the basis of life and light and love, for Christ is not divided; and that which is truly from Him must ever be in harmony and unity with itself, no matter in whom it be found. But these divisions are upon the basis of doctrines and opinions that men have devised from the words of Scripture. What higher proof can be found that human reasoning about the letter of Scripture still kills, and only the Spirit can give life! And what better evidence of the truth that Adam and Eve died through eating of this ancient tree of knowledge, than in the present day to see their offspring still choking to death on its deceitful fruit?

Christian leaders are everywhere pursuing a learned, academic knowledge of Scripture words as the surest way to divine life. This is but proof that Satan has succeeded in tempting the most religious of men to eat eagerly of this ancient tree of knowledge. And in spite of this obvious truth, so manifest in Scripture, men continue to multiply systems of notions and opinions about doctrines. For what? Why, so that words and forms might do for the church today what could be done to the first church only by being born of, baptized in, and filled with the Holy Spirit. An outward profession of Christianity is now thought sufficient, and even the letter of doctrine is often compromised; while the manifestation of the life of Christ in redeemed men through the indwelling Holy Spirit is ignored and even warned against as fanaticism.

Picture to yourself our Lord coming again to do for the Christian world cumbered with much learning what He did to poor Martha cumbered with much serving, who had thereby neglected that good part that Mary had chosen. Can one imagine that the great theologians and teachers of today would hasten to meet Him with their Greek lexicons, scholarly degrees and historical and scientific harmonies of the Scriptures, as full proof that Mary's good part had been chosen by them and their protégés? Or the brilliant compromisers with their newly formulated composite creeds? Or shall we suppose that the Pope, surrounded by his cardinals, would come from Rome, richly laden with his papal bulls, his indulgences all categorized, and various degrees and fine shades of sins all enumerated, as infallible proofs of his being born again from above and solely devoted to the one thing needful? Much less could anyone imagine either the gaudy pageantry of a high mass in a Romish cathedral, or the learned, scholarly, seminary-trained oratory, choirs, organs, and vestments of Protestantism as equally declaring the simplicity of Christ's promise, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them!"

Is the spirit, life, purity, and divine simplicity of gospel truth any less eluded, lost, and destroyed by the Protestant's worship of letters and learning, than by Romish images of wood, gold, or clay that are set forth as the supposed means of exciting devotion? O vainest of all vain projects, to argue that the one is better than the other. For what is Christianity but Christ living His resurrected life through the members of His body which is the Church? What can this Church be but that which it is and has from Christ the head by His Spirit ministering to each member of the body as He wills it? He is a King, who has all power in heaven and earth; and the reality and power of His kingdom are not like the outward organization and display of earthly kingdoms; but it must have its highest authority and reality in the hearts of men. Away, then, with the projects of popish pomp, and the pagan learning and fleshly methods of Protestants; they are no more wise contrivances than a high tower of Babel to provide a way to heaven!

The first and main doctrine that Christ and His apostles had to tell the Jews was that "the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Here is proof enough that the Law and the Prophets and the temple were not that kingdom, though given by God's commandment. But why, when they were thus appointed of God? Because they consisted of worldly things, carnal ordinances, and had only types and figures and shadows of a kingdom of God that was to come. Of this true kingdom Christ said, "My kingdom is not of this world." As proof of that, He adds, "If it was of this world, then would my servants fight." Which was the same as to say that it was so different in kind, and so superior in nature to any kingdom of this world, that no sort of worldly power could either help or hinder it. And what more could professing Christians do to show that they are not yet in that true heavenly kingdom than to set about to build their own kingdoms of strife and division?

What was this kingdom that Christ set up in the world, but which is not of this world? It was His reign in the hearts of men; for after His resurrection and ascension, He was with them and in them by His Spirit. And this is how He taught it: "Because I live, ye shall live also. In that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in me, and I in you." This was the kingdom of God come to them. And to the children of this kingdom, says the almighty King, "When they bring you before magistrates and powers, take no thought how or what ye shall answer, or what ye shall say unto them, for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which is in you." This is the truth of the kingdom of God come unto men, and this is the birthright privilege of all that are living members in it—to be delivered from their own natural spirit which they had from Adam, from the spirit and wisdom of this world; and through the whole course of their lives to say and do and be only that which the Spirit of their Father wills and works in them.

Has not this kingdom gone away from us, and are we not left comfortless if, instead of this Spirit of our Father working and active in His Church today, we have been left to the learning and oratory of experts in doctrine and words without power, the letter without the Spirit? How poor and wretched are we without the reality of the "life of Jesus manifest in our mortal flesh!" Had it not been better for us to be still under types of figures, sacrificing bulls and goats by divine appointment? What condemnation to profess a religion that must be Spirit and life, while devoting genius and learning to the fleshly pursuit of the dead letter, denying for today that same powerful moving of the Holy Spirit that marked the first church!

Behold the wisdom of the Greek and the carnality of the Jew come to life again in that which professes to be the body of Christ. For where the Spirit of God is not the continual, immediate dynamic of divine life in man, the church itself is carnal and worldly. To fully prove this, no further evidence is required than the numberless proud contenders in every part of Christendom for this or that school of doctrine and letters and opinions. All men or churches pretending to act for the glory of God from opinions which their logic and learning have collected from Scripture,

or what a Calvin, Luther, or some smaller name has told them to be right or wrong—all such are but where the apostles were, when "by the way there was a strife among them who should be the greatest." How ever much they may boast of their great zeal for truth and the glory of God, their own notorious behavior towards one another is proof enough that the great strife among them is which shall be the greatest sect or have the largest number of followers—a strife from the same root as that of the carnal Pharisees, who crucified Christ to preserve their own great office in Israel.

Man needs to be saved from his own wisdom as much as from his own righteousness, for they produce one and the same corruption. Nothing saves a man from his own righteousness, but that which delivers him from his own wisdom. The Jew that was most of all set against the gospel, and unable to receive it, was he that trusted in his own righteousness based upon religious systems and learning. This is the man who is rich, not in goods and money, but in doctrine and knowledge; for whom it is as hard to enter into the kingdom of heaven as for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. The professed Christian who, trusting in his letter-learned knowledge of Scripture denies the continuing manifestation and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, receives from his knowledge of the gospel only that which the Pharisee got by the law; namely, to be further from the reality of the kingdom of God than publicans and harlots. The vain repetition of "Hail Mary's" for imagined indulgences has no more produced Mary's humility and purity of life than has Protestantism's oft-quoted "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done" been the voice of a people yielded to God. Nor could these worshippers remain long blind to their hypocrisy if they did not rest so fully in a religion of words and ritual divorced from life.

How is it that the Spirit describes the gospel Church as driven into a wilderness? It is because man's own natural light, man's own conceited righteousness, his serpentine subtlety, self-love, sensual spirit, and worldly ambitions have seized the mysteries of salvation that came down from heaven, and built them up into a kingdom of envious strife and contention for learned glory, spiritual merchandise, and worldly power. This is the beast, the whore, and the dragon that have governed and will govern in every private Christian and public church until, dead to all that is of self, they turn to the life-giving Holy Spirit of God. Not to a God that they have only heard of with their ears from the words of Scripture, and whom they have professed with their mouths; but to a God of life, light, and power who has taken up residence in the depth of their being. For God is only our God by a birth of His own divine nature within us. Nothing can seek the kingdom of God, or hunger and thirst after His righteousness; nothing can cry, "Abba Father," or pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done;" nothing can say of Christ, "My Lord and my God," except that which is born of God, and is the divine nature itself living in us. Nothing but God in man can live a godly life in man.

What now is become of the true Church, or where must the man go who desires to be a living member of it? He need go to no particular place, because wherever he is, that which is to save him and that which he is to be saved from are always with him. Self is all the evil that he has, and God is all the goodness that he can ever have; but self and God are always with him. Death to self is the only entrance into the Church of the living God; and nothing but God can give this death, and that alone through the inward work of the cross of Christ by His Spirit made real in the soul. This is that faith of the redeemed which, though it has nothing but the same Spirit and life to which all Scripture bears witness, yet must by the wisdom of this world be called madness, and decried by illustrious divines as leading to fanaticism. Now fancy to yourself a young rabbi-doctor laughing at Paul's circumcision of the heart," and then you see that very same Christian orthodoxy which at this day condemns as mystic madness the literal inward working life of Christ in the soul.



The true Church has no members but those of whom it can be said, "Christ in you, the hope of glory." And no man is outside the Church except as he is described in these terms, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his"—clearly showing that there are those who are Christ's, and there are those who are not, and in the plainest terms giving us the difference between the two. Just as when John says, "He that has the Son of God has life, and he that has not the Son of God has not life."

Consider all the mysteries of the incarnate, suffering, dying, risen, ascended Son of God. Marvel at the price that He paid for our redemption. Rejoice in the cleansing we have and all the life that we receive from Him. And know that these all have their infinite value, their high glory and amazing greatness in this: that nothing less than these supernatural mysteries of a redeeming God-man could create a new creature out of Adam's death and make him a living temple inhabited by the Spirit of God.

All that Christ was, did, and suffered, dying in the flesh and ascending into heaven, was for the sole end to purchase for all His followers a new birth, new life, and new light in and by the Holy Spirit of God living in them. And thus He expressed the triumph of the cross and resurrection in these words, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age." When those for whom these words are true meet together in His name, Christ is in their midst. And as they obey His commandments, His love rests upon them, they are loved of the Father, and are built together into that Church which is through all ages to be "an habitation of God through the Spirit."

## Chapter 7

### The True Unity of the Spirit

Scripture speaks of the natural man to whom the things of God are mere foolishness. But though the worldly-minded man cannot know the things of God, yet he can know their names, and learn to say that which the saints have spoken about them. He can make profession of them, be eloquent in their praise, and set them forth in such a desirable view as shall make them quite agreeable to the children of worldly wisdom. This natural man, having gotten into the church, and taken church power, has turned the things of God into the things of this world. Had this man been kept out of the church, she would have kept her first purity to this day; for the fallen state is nothing else than her fall into the hands of the natural man of this world.

Many reformations have taken place throughout church history; but truth forces one to say that they have been in large part so many runaway births of one and the same mother Babylon. Call anything a reformation except a full departure from the wisdom of this world, or anything salvation but the divine nature, Spirit, and works of Christ living within; then be there papist or Protestant, reformation or no reformation, no more will be signified than when a Sadducee turns Pharisee, or a Pharisee turns publican. When Christ is living, willing, and working in a man, then he is in His Church; for whatever Christ is, that must they also be who are His. Without this, it matters not what the church or denomination. To all but this new creature, Christ says, "Depart from me ye workers of iniquity." And to every virtue that worldly wisdom puts on, Christ says, "Get thee behind me Satan, for thou art an offense unto me."

Creeds, canons, articles of religion, stately churches, learned priests singing, preaching, and praying in the best contrived form of words, can no more raise a dead sinner into a living saint than a fine system of light and colors can cause a blind man to see. Yet divisions have everywhere taken place in the church because men have made important distinctions to depend upon such marks of worldly wisdom as could signify nothing to our salvation. On this ground it is that the apostle said, "Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing." On the same basis it must be said that popery is nothing, and Protestantism is nothing, because neither can make a sinner into a new creature in Christ Jesus. Therefore call nothing your salvation but the formation of Christ in you by the power of the Holy Spirit, and nothing His Church except those who are "a habitation of God through the Spirit." This is the only way not to be deceived with the cry about churches, reformations, and divisions.

Christ said, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Suppose it had been said, "Ye cannot serve God and Baal." Could a worshipper of Baal be less so by joining this or that division among professing Christians? Neither can a worshipper of worldly wisdom and possessions become a worshipper of God by giving himself this or that name common in Christendom. If Christ had said to His disciples, "Labor to be rich, indulge yourselves, be conformed to this world, enjoy its pleasures and seek its honors," nothing more need have been done to prove their faithfulness to such a master than popish and Protestant churches have been doing for centuries. Behold the Mammon-god that sits and reigns in men's hearts, while they build their glorious churches and barriers between one another, striving for fleshly honors and distinctions under a profession of following in the footsteps of the Lamb.

As nothing except the Spirit of Christ living, dwelling, and working in men's minds and hearts is the inward Church; so only that outward behavior of the words and works which Christ showed

among men, practiced today in the daily form and manner of life, marks out the member of the church which He set up in this world. Inwardly, nothing was found in Christ but the will of God, a perpetual regard to His glory, and one continual desire for the salvation of all mankind. When this Spirit is in us, then are we inwardly one with Christ, and united to God through Him. Then it can be truly said, "Our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." Then, and then only, does the indwelling Spirit bear full witness to us of the truth of Christ's words, "In that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in me, and I in you." The outward manifestation of this inner reality is the manner of life that daily bears full witness to the presence of Christ in His body, which is the Church.

Outwardly Christ exercised only love, kindness, and compassion to the souls and bodies of men. Nothing was visible in the outward form of His life, but humility and lowliness of state. He lived in a contented disregard of all worldly riches, power, ease, or pleasure; in a continual meekness, gentleness, patience, and resignation, being resigned not only to the will of God, but to the haughty powers of the world, to the perverseness and contradiction of all the evil and malice of men, and to all the hardships and troubles of human life. This character of Christ has not changed. He is "the same yesterday, today, and forever." John wrote, "He that says he abides in him ought to walk as he walked." Therefore this same outward behavior of Christ, thus separate from and contrary to the spirit, wisdom, and way of this world, is that very manner of life that He even now outwardly manifests through all who have become the true inward members of His Church. And whoever in the Spirit of Christ practices the outward exercise of these virtues also lives daily in the highest perfection of church unity, and is the true inward and outward member of Christ's body, or Church, in this world.

For as Christ was God and man met together in one person for no other end but to fully restore the union that was lost between God and man; so true ecumenism can be nothing else than the unity of this or that man or number of men with God through the redeeming blood and resurrection power of Christ. The blood of His cross is the only ground for peace with God and good will among men. It is only through first being united with God in Christ that men can be truly united with one another. It is in Christ alone that "one new man is created in God's kingdom. And therefore it must be the whole truth that nothing else marks anyone as a true member of the one Church of Christ, but solely his conformity to and union with the inward Spirit and outward practice of Christ's life and behavior in this world. These are in the one fold under one Shepherd, though the sheep are scattered, feeding in valleys or on mountains ever so distant from one another. In this Church there is no condemnation, and outside of it there is no salvation.

Let men under human agreements or reformations succeed in daily gathering together into one and the same place, joining in one and the same form of creeds, prayers, and praises offered to God. Unless these words are breathed by the one Spirit of Christ in them, they are empty phrases that must sooner or later be exposed as contrivances of men. Any failure to live as Christ lived, and love as Christ loved, is truly a breaking of that church unity which makes us one with Christ as our Head and unites us with men as the members of His body.

That true church unity consists in our walking as Christ walked fully appears from these plain words of our Lord Himself; "Ye are not of this world, as I am not of this world, but I have chosen you out of the world." Therefore to have that same Spirit that Christ had, which is contrary to the world, is the one necessary and full proof of our being His, of our belonging to Him, and being one with Him. Again, "Abide in me, and I in you. If ye abide in me, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a withered branch...for without me ye can do nothing." The one true proof of our being living

members of Christ's Church on earth is our being inwardly of the Spirit and outwardly of the behavior which Christ manifested while in the world.

Every aversion to being inwardly all love and outwardly all meekness, gentleness, and courtesy in words and actions toward every creature for whom Christ died, loving our neighbors as ourselves, proves our opposition to the unifying Spirit of Christ. "This is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you; and by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples." Therefore the true and sufficient outward mark of Church membership is found in any man only where Christ's loving behavior to all men is outwardly evidenced in his daily life. According to Paul, the identifying mark of Christ's cross is not a crucifix religiously displayed, but "the life of Jesus manifest in mortal flesh." These and other like passages of Christ and His apostles (although quite overlooked by most defenders of ecumenism) are the only places that bring home the reality of church unity.

"No man can call Jesus Lord, but by the Holy Spirit." Therefore nothing can be a divine service even in the Church which has Christ for its Lord except as the Holy Spirit is its beginner and finisher. For if it be certain that no one can acknowledge Christ as his Lord but by the Holy Spirit, then it must be equally certain that no one can serve or worship God through Christ the Lord in any other way than by the power of the same Holy Spirit. Thus saith the apostle, "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." And consequently if not His, he can perform no divine service to Him. Nor can any worship we perform cease to be carnal and become divine except by the power and presence of Christ dwelling in our souls through His Holy Spirit, without which we cannot cry in truth and reality, "Abba Father."

This spirituality of true Christianity was preached to the world by Christ and His disciples under the name of the kingdom of God. In this new dispensation of the Spirit, which is free from veils, shadows, and figures of good things to come, God Himself is manifested among men. But He is not thundering from the mountain, nor speaking from between the cherubim; nor is He found in an earthly sanctuary made with hands. He now lives in us and rules over us as the essential light of our lives, as an indwelling word of power, as a life-giving Spirit, forming us by a new birth to become spiritual sacrifices to God through that new and living way which Christ has consecrated for us through the rent veil.

True Christian worship is an attitude of the heart which is inwardly attentive to God. It listens to the voice of His ever-speaking Word, watches the movings of His ever-sanctifying Spirit within us, waits and longs in the spirit of prayer, faith, hope, love, and resignation to His will. The only power of life over death or of righteousness over sin is that which is now opened up to us through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, inwardly quickening and reviving in man the image and likeness of the Son in whom God is well pleased. Christianity is nothing else than living unto God in the power of Christ as He lives in us. Herein lies the only basis for the "unity of the Spirit" that makes men one "in the bond of peace." For we are in harmony with one another when our only desire is to have performed fully within the temple of our hearts that perfect will which is always being performed in His own temple in heaven.

This has been said in order to demonstrate fully that church unity is not a matter that depends upon any human agreements or organization, but is complete or defective in such degree as we live in unity with, or contrary to, the inward Spirit and outward example of Christ. For no union signifies anything to our salvation but union with God through Christ; and nothing unites us to Christ or to one another but His Holy Spirit dwelling and working inwardly and outwardly in us as it did in Him. This is the only church unity that concerns the conscience; and when we are in

this unity, we are in union with Christ and with everyone who is united to Him, however separated from us by human enclosures.

In the present fallen state of things, every church distinction is but a reflection of the fleshly wisdom of the worldly-minded man who has so long been building carnal religious systems with the things of God. Divisive factions, under a pretense of serving Christ, act for their own glory by that same spirit which keeps the selfish, partial man solely attached to his own will. All that needs to be removed from every church or Christian society in order to make it part of that "demonstration of the wisdom and power of God" that the true Church is intended to be, is this self-seeking spirit of worldly wisdom. This is the evil root at which the reforming axe should have been laid. Nor can this spirit ever be overcome except by turning the hearts of all redeemed souls to an inward adoration and total dependence upon the supernatural power of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Under this light I am neither Protestant nor papist, according to the common acceptance of the words. I cannot consider myself as belonging only to one society of Christians as distinct from all others. It would be as hurtful to me as any worldly partiality. And therefore as the corruptions and imperfections which some way or other are to be found in all churches hinder not my communion with that under which my lot is fallen, so neither do they hinder my being in full union and hearty fellowship with all that is Christian, holy, and good in every other church division.

We are exhorted by Scripture, "Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is." Therefore I join in the public church assemblies, not because of the purity or perfection of that which is found there, but because of that which is intended by them. Fallen as these church assemblies are from that first spiritual state, I reverence them as the remains of all that was once the glory of a revived church, and I hope will be a gain; namely, the ministration of the Spirit rather than the dead letter. And I seek to exercise the Spirit of Christ's love toward whatever good remains.

As I know that God and Christ and holy angels stand thus disposed toward all that is good in all men and in all churches, notwithstanding that the mixture in them is like that of tares growing up with the wheat; so I am not afraid, but am humbly desirous, of living and dying in an attitude of love toward every man in whatever division of the church he may be. And it is this disposition of love and good will toward the whole Church that keeps alive in my heart the continual prayer that Christ prayed, "that they all might be one."

## Chapter 8

### Christ Lives In Us By His Spirit

"Lo I am always with you," says the holy Jesus, even unto the end of the age." How is He with us? Not outwardly, as every seeing man knows. And not literally within, says the learned theologian, calling this mythology. Inwardly, yes, says the good evangelical holding fast to this idea as sound doctrine, while solemnly warning that too enthusiastic an attempt to find a literal application in our lives leads to every kind of fanaticism and extremism. "Unrealistic idealism," says the man of the world, who has sought in vain for practical evidence that Christ is living in those who espouse this belief.

How shall the faith of the common Christian find any comfort and reality in these words of Christ's promise? Only upon the basis of a willingness wholeheartedly to obey His commandments. Then he will experience the miracle that Christ is him and with him as the vine is with and in he branch! Christ says, "If a man love me, he will keep my commandments, and my Father will him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him...and in that day ye shall know that I am in you...and I will manifest myself to you." And if these words mean what they seem to say, then simple faith should find through these promises the reality of a new and heavenly life while we are in this present world but not of it.

Again, Christ after His glorification in heaven, says, "Behold I stand at the door and knock." He does not say, "Behold ye have me in the Scriptures." This was the mistake of the Pharisees, for which Christ reproved them. He does not leave us to follow mere principles or doctrines, good as these may be, but comes to us still in His glorious person! Now what is the door at which Christ, at the right hand of God in heaven, knocks? Surely it is the heart, at which Christ is always present. "If any man hear my voice," says Christ, "and opens the door (that is, opens his heart to me), I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me. Surely this supping within the heart must mean more than the supper of physical bread and wine, of which even a Judas could partake. That could only be an outward symbol of the inward blessed nourishment with which the believing soul should be feasted. But now the glorified Son of God promises, as a creating Spirit, to enter into us, quickening and raising up His own heavenly nature and life in us. Behold the last finishing work of a redeeming Saviour—entered into the heart that opens to Him—bringing forth the joy, the blessing, and perfection of that first life of God in the soul, which was lost by Adam's fall.

This continual knocking of Christ at the door of the heart is always with us, but there must be an opening of the heart to it; and though it is always there, yet it is only felt and found by those who are attentive to it, depend upon and humbly wait for it. Now let anyone tell me how he can believe anything of this voice of Christ, how he can listen to it, hear or obey it, but by such a faith as keeps him habitually turned to an immediate, constant inspiration of the Spirit of Christ within him. Or how any heathenish, profane person can more thoroughly blaspheme this presence and power of Christ in the soul, or more effectively turn others from it, than the sound Scripture scholar who warns against that simple faith which expects for today no less of the reality and power of the Holy Spirit's manifestations than the early disciples knew and experienced. No less does he make void these words of Christ, who professes this faith with his lips while denying the indwelling Saviour with his life.

Herein lies the idolatrous abuse of all God's outward dispensations: they are taken for the thing itself. The Pharisee rested so thoroughly in the law, that he rejected the Saviour to whom the law directed him. The sound evangelical thinks that when he has mastered the letter of the gospel, he thereby knows its truth and power. And thus, while claiming allegiance to Paul's doctrine, he knows little of Paul's spiritual experience which caused him to say, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Vanity of vanities to engage in theological discussions about various Scripture interpretations that leave men's lives unchanged. Never did Christ say, "By their doctrine ye shall know them," but "by their fruits ye shall know them." I do not here despise sound doctrine, for we are exhorted to it. I only say what James said, "That faith without works is dead." And how can men stand so firmly for sound doctrine while evidencing so little of its reality in their lives? Simply because they now imagine that the power of God rests no longer in the Spirit, but in the literal words themselves. The absence of the powerful manifestation of the Spirit of God that Paul knew gives these men little concern, because they are so certain that they are using Paul's words. That which the learned Jews did with the outward letter of their law, the same do learned Christians with the outward letter of their gospel.

Why did the Jewish religionists so furiously and obstinately cry out against Christ, "Away with him, let him be crucified"? It was because their letter-learned ears, their worldly spirit, their carnal minds, and temple orthodoxy would not bear to hear of an inward Saviour, of being born again of His Spirit, of His dwelling in them and they in Him. To have their law of ordinances and their temple pomp sunk into such a fulfilling Saviour as this, was such enthusiastic fanaticism to their ears, such emotionalism, as forced their sober, rational theology to call Christ Beelzebub and His doctrine blasphemy; and all for the sake of Moses and rabbinic orthodoxy. And is the true Christ of the gospel any less blasphemed or less crucified by that Christian theology which rejects an inward Christ other than in word and doctrine, and denies as a real life experience the infilling and empowering of the Holy Spirit, by which the life and works of Christ manifest themselves through the fruits and gifts of the Spirit in the members of the Church which is His body?

Is not that which rejects a real life experience of the fullness of the Spirit as extremism the very same old Jewish wisdom sprung up in Christian theology which said of Christ when teaching these things, "He is mad; why hear ye him?" Our blessed Lord in a parable sets forth the blind Jews as saying of Him, "We will not have this man to reign over us." The sober-minded Christian scholar, in his fear of fanaticism, has none of this Jewish blindness; he only says of Christ, "We will not have Him reign within us." And all for the sake of keeping clear of the power of the Spirit, while all the time professing his allegiance to the letter of what Paul said, "Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." And so Paul's words are remarkably fulfilled in these who judge the Jewish rabbis for their rejection of a Christ come in the flesh, and thereby condemn themselves for the same rejection of this Christ who would come by His Spirit into their fleshly hearts to manifest His risen life in them.

Take away everything from Christ which evangelical orthodoxy calls emotionalism and fanaticism; suppose Him not to be the baptizer with the Spirit and fire; suppose Him not to be the very life of our life, manifesting Himself in and through us by His very works and words, overflowing from the Christian by His Spirit in rivers of living water—and then you have as sure a rejection of Christ and His redemption as ever Jewish rabbi made. Suppose the comfort and power of the Holy Spirit to be no more real in daily experience than our cathedrals are in the third heavens. Imagine that sound Scripture doctrines and orthodox creeds, if held earnestly enough, will make a rock in every nation for Christ's Church to stand upon. And then you have that very outward Messiah and that very outward kingdom which the carnal Jew dreamed of, and

for the sake of which the spiritual Christ was then nailed to the cross, and is still crucified by the new risen Pharisee in the Christian church.

Let every man whom this concerns lay it to heart. Time and the things of time will soon have an end; and he that in time trusts to anything but the Spirit and power of God working in his heart will be ill fitted to enter into eternity. God must be all in all in us here, or we cannot be His hereafter. What self-deception to expect to be in His heavenly kingdom in eternity, when we have resisted His claim to reign as Lord in our hearts here and now! Time works only for eternity; and poverty eternal must as certainly follow him who dies fully stuffed with sound doctrine, as him who dies full of worldly riches. The folly of thinking to have any divine truth but that which the Holy Spirit teaches, or to make ourselves rich in knowledge toward God by heaps of Scripture words and religious opinions crowded into our minds, will leave us as dreadfully cheated as that rich builder of barns in the Gospel to whom it was said, "Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee: and then, whose shall all these things be?" So is every man that treasures up a religious learning that comes not wholly from the Spirit of God.

It is to no purpose to object that many who believe in the infilling and manifestations of the Holy Spirit within and through the members of His body are everywhere acting in the wildest manner, under the pretense of being called and led by the Spirit. Whether it be so or not is a matter I meddle not with; nor is the truth I am upon in the least affected by it. I do not begin to doubt about the necessity, the truth, and perfection of gospel Christianity when told that whole nations and churches have, under a pretense of regard to it, committed all the sins of the heathen world. So I give not up the necessity and truth of looking wholly to the Spirit of God and Christ within me as my only inspirer and worker of all that can be good in me because spiritual pride, fleshly lusts, or Satan himself have led people into all the heights of self-glory and self-seeking under a pretense of being inspired by and filled with the Holy Spirit.

Keep close to this truth that salvation is an inward life of Christ in the soul, in spite of all the specious arguments men may call upon in their attempts to prove that Scripture opposes it. Seek for no life, no power, and no good, except in the awakening of all these by the Holy Spirit filling your heart with Christ: and then so much as you have of this inward Christ living in you, so much you have of real salvation. Look now to anything else as gospel Christianity or godliness or service except a strict, unerring conformity to the life and Spirit of Christ, and then though every day was full of burnt offerings, yet you would only be like those religionists who drew near to God with their lips, but their heart was far from Him. For the heart is always far from God, unless the Spirit of Christ be alive and reigning within it. But no one has the living Spirit of Christ but he who in all his conversation walks as He walked. For "he that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk even as he walked." And to reject this is to profess the presence of Christ within our hearts, while denying to His Spirit the power and right to produce His life in us!

To seek therefore to be always under the inspiration and guidance of God's Holy Spirit, and to act alone in His will and power, is not emotional enthusiasm. It is as sober and humble a thought, and as suitable to our state, as to think of renouncing the devil and the world. But to look for salvation in anything else than the Spirit of God within us is to be as carnally minded as the Jews were when their hearts were wholly set upon a fleshly Messiah. They looked for a King who would subdue all their outward enemies, not recognizing the enemy self, who is the great and supreme opposer of God and all good, residing in every heart since Adam's fall. The real salvation that is needed by every man must have its greatest work within his own heart. For as the soul and spirit of man were at the first breathed forth from God Himself, and cannot be blessed but by having the life of God within: so nothing can bring the life of God into the death



of fallen man, but only the Spirit of God. Upon this ground I stand in the utmost certainty, looking wholly to the Spirit of God for an inward redemption and full salvation through the indwelling Christ, from all the inward evil that is in my fallen nature.

## Chapter 9

### Natural Reason Opposes the Spirit

Some have complained that my writings oppose the use of natural reason. If so, then the same complaint must be made against our Lord for saying, "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, take up the cross, and follow me." For how can a man deny himself without denying his reason, unless reason be no part of him? How great is the folly proposed by those who allow the denying of self to be good doctrine, but boggle and cry out at the denying of reason as quite bad. For how can a man deny himself, except by denying that which is the life and spirit and power of self? And what else could this be, if not man's reason? For if man were not a rational creature, he could not be called upon to deny himself.

What makes a man a sinner? Nothing but the power and working of his own will in independence from God. And what does his will follow in determining its choice, if not his own natural reason? Did not Satan appeal to Eve's reason, in enticing her to eat of the forbidden fruit? And therefore, if our natural reason is not to be denied, we must keep up and follow that which works all sin in us. For no man could be responsible or judged of God any more than the beasts, except that his carnality has all its evil from his intelligent nature, reason being the life and power of it. "For the carnal mind is at enmity against God; it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." And what is the carnal mind, if it is not our natural reason?

Our blessed Lord said, "Not my will, but thine be done." And had not this been the form of His whole life, He could not have lived without sin. To deny our own will thus that God's will may be done in us is the height of our calling; and as far as we are kept by the Spirit of God from our own will, so far we are kept from sin. But who can separate his own will from his natural reason? For it is reason that gives self-direction and power to man's will. And without the corruption of natural reason enticing it, man's will would have no reason to do ought but yield to the will of God. For it is our reason which justifies self in its independent disobedience; and it is this above all which must be denied for man to be a servant of God. Without this full denial of natural reason, there can be no true faith, for the man who believes only that which his reason can establish has no more faith than he who believes only that which any of his five senses can verify. Nor could we ever experience and know the realities of God's eternal kingdom, except by denying our reason; for those things are by their very nature infinite, but our own reasoning powers are limited.

Hard as this may seem to unregenerate nature, yet it is truth firmly established in Scripture, that this full denial of our own natural will, including our own natural reason, is the only possible way for divine knowledge, divine light, and divine goodness to have any place or power of birth in us. All religious knowledge that comes to us through the gateway of our own natural reason, great as men may consider it, is only great in vanity, emptiness, and self-deceiving folly. For all the evil and corruption of our fallen nature consists in this; it is an awakened life of our own will, under the power of natural reason, plotting and justifying its rebellion against the will of God. Especially do the workings of this carnal mind, or natural reason, which is the same thing, oppose within us this call of Christ, "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

Whether this self broken off from God reasons and contends in favor of or against various Scripture words and doctrines, the same evil state of fallen nature, the same death and separation

from God, the same corrupt desires of flesh and blood will be equally strengthened and inflamed by the one as by the other. The astute reasoner on doctrinal matters, who is mending church opinions here and fixing heresies there, forgets all the while that a carnal self and natural reason have the doing of all that is done by this learned zeal, and are as busy and active in him as in the reasoning agnostic or scheming worldling. Bad logic in defense of transubstantiation, or better reasonings against it, signify no more toward the casting of Satan out of our souls than a bad or better taste for art. Hence it is that papists and Protestants, for the sake of their different excellent opinions, zealously hate, fight, and kill one another as enemies; while at the same time, as to the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, they are in the highest union and communion with one another. Hence also it is that Christendom, full of the nicest, most carefully reasoned decisions about faith, grace, works, heresies, and excommunications, is yet full of all those evil dispositions which prevailed in the heathen world when none of these religious opinions were yet known.

All that I have here said is neither more nor less than Paul meant when he declared, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them . . . but as many as are led of the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." What higher proof, then, can a man give that he is that very natural man cut off from God, living to self, than to deny the necessity of abandoning self with its natural reason to the lordship of Christ and the fullness of His Spirit! For where self or the natural man is become great in religious learning, the more firmly will he be fixed in the religion of proving himself to be right, rather than in surrendering to the will of God. But where self is wholly denied to take up the cross in following Christ, there nothing can be called heresy, schism, or wickedness, but the lack of loving God with one's whole heart, and one's neighbor as oneself. Nor can anything be called truth, life, or salvation but the Spirit and power of Christ living and manifesting Himself in mortal flesh.

Does not God call men to use their natural reason when he says, "Come now and let us reason together"? Indeed He does call men to a proper use of their reason, but not to an improper one. But in order more fully to answer my accusers, see here what I have said in the plainest words more than twenty-four years ago, which doctrine I have maintained in all that I have written since.

You shall see reason possessed of all that belongs to it. I will grant that it can assist the soul and spirit just as it can assist the body; that it has the same power and virtue in the spiritual as in the natural world; that it communicates as much of the one as of the other, and is of the same use and importance in the one as in the other. Would you ask more?

Now in the physical realm, clearly man's senses, *not* his reason, are his only means of having so much as he has or can have from the physical world about him. For to reason about a thing can no more communicate to the body the reality or possession thereof, than to dream about it. Reasoning is no more smelling, tasting, seeing, touching, or hearing a thing than word descriptions are any of these, because this is all the closer reason can get to reality—mere ideas and word descriptions in the mind.

And reason is thus helpless in the spiritual realm; it is neither seeing, tasting, touching, smelling, nor hearing the things of the Spirit of God. There is a sensibility of the soul and spirit of man that must experience the reality of these spiritual things. And to think that reasoning about God from Scripture words is to know Him, is just as sensible as to think that reasoning about food is the same as to eat it.

Reason may direct us to take away a cover from our eyes, or open our window shutters when we need light, but it can never see. Just so in the spiritual; reason can direct us to repent of that which is hindering our relationship with God, but it cannot substitute its thoughts about God for the experience of His love that can only be known by the soul and spirit of man. As a man does not

become full of food by reasoning about a large feast, nor can he communicate light and warmth to his body by filling his head with ever so many thoughts of the sun: so no man can become religious by reasoning about religion, nor can he become Christlike by meditating earnestly upon the words of Jesus, or spending his days in contemplation of the life that Jesus lived upon this earth, or the place He now has at the right hand of God. Reason may view through its own eyes what is done—whether in the physical or spiritual realms—but it cannot bring the experience of these realities either to man's body or to his soul.

If instead of giving food to a starving man, you should teach him to seek for relief by attending to clear ideas of the nature of bread, and different ways of making it, he would be left to die in the lack of sustenance. So the religion of reasoning leaves the soul to perish in the lack of that good which it has been reasoning about. And yet as a man may have the benefit of food much assisted by the right use of his reason, though reason has not the good of food in it, so a man may have the good of Christianity much assisted and secured to him by the right use of his reason, though reason has not the good of spiritual reality in it. And as it would be great folly and perverseness to accuse a man as an enemy to the true use of reasoning about food, because he declares that reason is not food nor can supply the place of it; so is it equally such to accuse a man of being an enemy to the use of reasoning in the spiritual realm, because he declares that reasoning is neither light, life, nor love, nor can supply the place of any of them in the soul or spirit of man.

We have no spiritual need except for a restoration of the divine nature in us. And if this be true, then nothing can be our salvation except that which brings us into a right relationship with God, making us partakers of the divine nature in such a manner and degree as we need. But to reason about life cannot communicate it to the soul, nor can a religion of rational notions and opinions logically deduced from Scripture words bring the reality of the gospel into our lives. Do we not see sinners of all sorts, and men under the power of every corrupt passion, equally zealous for such a religion? How is it then that Christian leaders spend so much time reasoning about Scripture doctrines, and yet remain so blind to the obvious fact that filling the head with right notions of Christ can never give to the heart the reality of His Spirit and life? For logical reasoning about Scripture words and doctrines will do no more to remove pride, hypocrisy, envy, or malice from the soul of man, than logical reasoning about geometry. The one leaves man as empty of the life of God in Christ as the other.

Yet the church is filled with professing Christians whose faith has never gone beyond a conviction that the words of Scripture are true. They believe in the Christ of the Bible, but do not know Him personally. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is sound doctrine to their minds, but their lives are empty of His manifest power either to overcome the power of sin within, or to convert others to Christ. Though many are zealous to preach the gospel, yet instead of bringing men to Christ, they seek to reason them into a trust in their own learned opinions about Scripture doctrines. In contrast to Paul, their gospel is in word only, without the demonstration and power of the Spirit. Nor can they see their need of the Holy Spirit to fill them with Christ, and then to overflow through them in rivers of living water to others, because reason tells them that they are sound in the letter of doctrine.

Is it not true that God must be all in all, that in Him we live and move and have our being, and that He can give us no salvation from our fallen nature but in such degree as He communicates Himself to us? Then it is known with the utmost certainty that to put a religious trust in our own reasonings about doctrines and Scripture words and our ability thus to persuade others, has a more foolish nature than the same idolatry that puts a religious trust in the sun, a departed saint, or a graven image. But the truth of the whole matter lies here: as the Word manifested in the flesh is the one mediator or restorer of union between God and man, so to seeing eyes it must be evident that nothing but this one mediatorial nature of Christ, essentially brought to life in our souls, can be our salvation. For that which made the man Christ Jesus the delight of His Father can alone be our deliverance from self and natural reason.

If a wrong use of natural reason prevents the professing Christian from experiencing the reality of the gospel, much more does the skeptic's use of reason perpetuate in himself that dreadful death to God and the kingdom of heaven which entered into the race at Adam's fall. And nothing but a faith that is willing to go beyond the limits of human reasoning can give any fallen man power to become again a son of God. For to live by faith is to live in the kingdom of God; while to believe only that which reason can verify is to live as a heathen under the power of the kingdom of darkness. Proud men may imagine that their superior reasoning abilities prevent them from being so naive as to share that simple faith of fishermen disciples. Scripture, however, declares that their "minds are darkened through the ignorance that is in them, being separated from the life of God...for Satan has blinded the minds of those who believe not."

To the end of the world, this will be the unalterable difference between faith in God and reasoning about the things of God; they can never change their place. That which they were and did to the first man, that they will be and do to the last. Failure to discern the difference between a rational understanding of truth and the faith which appropriates it has brought the darkness and death of the world into the church to this day. It matters not how much the revelations and precepts of God are increased since the first simple command given to Adam, for no more is offered our reasoning faculty by the whole Bible than by that single precept. And the benefit of all Scripture is lost to us as soon as we make human reason the measure of the validity and necessity of its commands, just as the benefit of that first precept was lost in the same way. Yet an equal poverty of soul must eternally torment that man who is satisfied merely to reason about eternal life, while remaining without the real possession and power of the indwelling Son of God manifest in his daily experience.

"Hath God indeed said ye shall not eat of every tree in the garden?" This was the beginning of reasoning about the things of God. What it was and did then it will always be and do. Its nature and fruits will never be better nor any other to the end of the world. And though in these last ages man's natural reason has passed through all schools of quibbling and has arrived at its utmost height of art, subtlety, and precision of arguments; yet as to divine matters it stands just where it stood when it first learned that specious logic from the serpent which improved the understanding of Eve at the cost of cutting her off from her Creator. And at this day it can see no deeper into the things of God, can be no wiser, give no better judgment about them, than the conclusion which it first made; namely, that death could not be in a tree which was "so good for food, so pleasant to behold, and so much to be desired for knowledge."

God does not demand a faith that is unreasonable—but He does demand a faith that goes beyond the limits of human reason. And thus there is a point where faith and reason divide the human race into two kinds of men fully distinct from each other. The faithful through every age are the children of God, and sure heirs of His redemption through Jesus Christ. Those who trust in reason alone are of the seed of the serpent, and real heirs of that confusion which happened to the first builders of the tower of Babel. To live by faith is to be truly and fully in covenant with God; to reject that which reason cannot verify is to be merely and solely in compact with ourselves, with our own vanity and blindness, and with Satan who first led the race into this sad state.

To live by faith is to live in humility, in patience, long-suffering, obedience, resignation, absolute trust and dependence upon God, with all that is temporal and earthly under our feet. To oppose the gospel by reasoning is to be a prey of the old serpent, eating dust with him, groveling in the mire of earthly passions, devoured with pride, embittered with envy and regrets, tools and dupes of our carnal self, tossed up with false hopes, cast down with vain fears, slaves to all the good and evil things of this world. So likewise does that man resist the Spirit who reasons in favor of the gospel and thinks thereby to gain eternal life. Defining words and ideas, dissecting doctrines

and opinions, setting all orthodox arguments upon their best legs, and refining church creeds, he reasons about a life he has never experienced and a Saviour he does not really know, till death puts the full end to all the wonders of the ideal fabric he thinks he has woven.

## Chapter 10

### The Unpardonable Sin Against the Holy Spirit

Let every man who has a regard for his soul take great care to beware of that sin against the Holy Spirit that Christ said "hath never forgiveness, neither in this life, nor in that life which is to come." And why did He say that a sin against the Father or Son would be forgiven, but that against the Holy Spirit would never be forgiven? Clearly not because the Holy Spirit is more worthy or higher in nature than the Father and the Son, but because the work of the Spirit within the human heart is the last and highest manifestation of the Holy Trinity in and to fallen man. Many weak things have been conjectured and published to the world about the sin against the Holy Ghost, whereas the whole nature of it lies in this—that it is a sinning or rebellion against the last and highest dispensation of God for the full redemption of man.

He that resists this ministration of the Spirit resists all that the Holy Trinity can do to restore and revive the first life of God in the soul, and so commits the unpardonable sin, because there remains no further or higher power of redemption from it. For no sin is pardonable because of that which it is in itself, but because there is some power or authority that can forgive it; nor can any sin be unpardonable, except that it has withstood or turned from that which was its last and highest remedy. Hence it is that resisting the Holy Spirit is the sin of all sins that prevents the work of redemption and in the highest degree separates man from all union with God. And how can we possibly avoid this sin of resisting the Holy Spirit but by continually waiting for, trusting in, and solely attending to that which the Spirit of God wills, works, and manifests within us?

What was it that caused the Pharisees to commit this sin, saying that Beelezebub was the one who worked through Christ? Simply because the Son of God demonstrated a reality of power and life for which they only professed the letter of Scripture words. Could it be this same jealous rage against an experience exceeding their own orthodox opinions that causes learned adherents of the letter to decry as fanaticism any real manifestation of the Holy Spirit's presence? In their contention for doctrinal correctness, they deny for today what Paul deemed essential in his day of the Holy Spirit's "*demonstration* and power;" and must therefore explain away all such as mere emotionalism, or worse, the deceptive work of a seducing spirit. Are these religious leaders of today not in danger of committing the same blasphemy against the Holy Spirit for which Christ so severely condemned the Pharisees?

To turn from the inward redeeming work of the Holy Spirit in our souls, and to deny His Outward manifestations and power in the ministry of the Church, is to turn from all true knowledge of God. Let a man admit ever so many logical demonstrations of God's Being and existence from the witness of the created universe, and memorize all the testimony of Scripture. Yet he must remain without any real knowledge of God until the Holy Spirit's quickening power manifests the risen Christ as life, light, love, and goodness essentially found, vitally felt, and adored in his soul. This is the one knowledge of God that is eternal life and it is that knowledge of which Christ says, "No one knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son reveals him . . . and this is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." Therefore, this knowledge can be found only in that man in whom Christ is living; for so it is that Christ, who is the express image of the invisible God, reveals the Father.

Since none belong to God but those who are led by the Spirit of God—and all are reprobates in whom the Spirit of Christ is not living—what all-important essential of gospel salvation is the continual, immediate guidance, unction, and teaching of His Holy Spirit in redeemed man! How then can one more profanely sin against the Holy Spirit, or more expressly turn men from God to Satan, than by denying a faith and hope that look solely to the Spirit's continual operations for all that can be holy and good in man? And here let men beware of setting a standard of life lower than Christ's, and through denying to the Holy Spirit His full redeeming work in their hearts, limiting His power in men's lives in the present day to less than full authority and triumph. "Not my will, but thine be done" is not only a submission to the lordship of Christ, but in truth a belief that He will work His good pleasure in us—and thus is the faith that overcomes the world.

That which is here taught is the whole objective to which all Scripture directs us. For the most learned knowledge of the Bible is but empty and fails of its only purpose, until it brings us into that essential union with God that is so solemnly urged upon us by all Scripture words. A refusal to give ourselves to this work of God's Spirit within us is a sin from which there can be no salvation, no matter how sound our knowledge of every Scripture doctrine. For without this life of God in our souls conforming us to the image of Christ by the control of the Holy Spirit, we are still dead to God and under the power of Satan, who is the god of this world, and in whom the whole world lies in wickedness.

"When he, the Spirit of Truth is come, he will lead you into all Truth," said the Lord. Can any man then be in the truth, who resists the leading of the Holy Spirit? Impossible, says the Scripture, despite all the reasonings of men who would compromise the gospel. To present our bodies a living sacrifice to God is our reasonable service, said Paul; yet Christian leaders imply that such a standard of holiness is unreasonable because it demands our all, just as when Peter, full of human love for Christ, advised Him to avoid His sufferings. But our Lord rejected him with a "Get thee behind me, Satan," and only gave this reason for that seemingly harsh statement: "For thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men." A plain proof that whatsoever is not of and from the Holy Spirit of God in us, however plausible it may outwardly seem to men, is yet in itself nothing else but the power of Satan working in us his ancient and persistent rebellion against the will of God.

Christ "through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot unto God." And thus will the Holy Spirit work the same submission to the will of God in those who are Christ's, even that willingness to take up the cross and follow Him. "I am crucified with Christ," Paul said. And had he not yielded to and trusted in this sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit in his own heart and life, he could have never said in truth, "Nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." But without this he could have known no salvation, nor can any man who is not willing thus to yield to the work of God in his heart through the eternal Spirit. Such a man has rejected the salvation that God offers, and for this sin there is no pardon, either in this life or in the one to come.

The apostle said of himself, "By the grace of God I am what I am." So every wise disputer about Scripture doctrines, and every professing Christian not looking solely to the Spirit of God to be everything in and to him may as truly say of himself, "Through my turning and trusting to something else than the grace of God and the inspiration of His Spirit, I am what I am." And for this sin there is no possible salvation. For what makes any man incapable of finding that which Paul knew when he said, "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me"? Just his refusal to allow Christ's Spirit to live through him, and his choosing fleshly reason rather than to be such a fool for Christ as to renounce all that He renounced, and to seek no more earthly honor and praise than He sought. Christ said, "Except a man deny himself and take up his cross and follow me, he cannot be my disciple." And this path can be known and followed only when we



say like Christ, "I delight to do thy will, O my God...I can of mine own self do nothing...the words I speak, I speak not of myself, but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works."

Here and here alone lies the Christian's full and certain power of overcoming self, the devil, and the world. But Christians seeking and turning to anything else except to be led and inspired only by the one Spirit of God and Christ, will bring forth a Christendom that in the sight of God will have no other name than a spiritual Babylon, a spiritual Egypt, a Sodom, a scarlet whore, a devouring beast, and red dragon. For all these names belong to all men, however learned, and to all churches, whether greater or less, in which the spirit of this world has any share of power. This was the great sin of the Church, even within the apostolic age, which grieved the Holy Spirit and brought about her fall into an apostasy and corruption that Paul foretold before his martyrdom, and which has largely gripped the Church ever since.

Therefore all human reformations finding their root in ecclesiastic learning or doctrinal decisions will signify little or nothing until, willing to die to self, to their own will, and their own wisdom, men seek for no redeeming power but from that Spirit of God which converted heathen, publicans, harlots, and Jews into a holy apostolic Church at the first. Then and only then will the Church today be a proof of the wisdom and power of God that has made fallen men once more His own, and works in them His will to His glory.

"*Beware,*" said Paul to the religious leaders of his day, "lest that come upon you which was spoken of by the prophets, saying, Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish, for I work a work in your day, which ye will in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you." The great work of God being done today, the miracle of miracles, is the same as in apostolic times—the transformation of fallen men into children of God, through whom the words and works of Christ are manifest by His Spirit. Let us beware, lest by limiting in our minds that work which we think God is doing or can do today, we despise His real work, and thereby resist and blaspheme the Holy Spirit, and thus commit the unpardonable sin.

Some men preach as though Christ said, "By their doctrine ye shall know them"; others write as though He said, "By their gifts ye shall know them." But faithful disciples have recorded that our Lord said, "By their fruits ye shall know them." Keep close to this truth as a divine guide from the Saviour! Know that where the fruit of the Spirit is manifest in mortal flesh—that love, joy, peace, humility, patience, gentleness, and goodness which belong to Christ alone—*there* is the Holy Spirit triumphantly at work in a sinner saved by grace. To resist this work of the Holy Spirit uniting us to God, enthroning Christ in our hearts, manifesting through us His life and works, is to reject the whole end of the gospel; and thus is that unpardonable sin for which there is no further redemption.

## Chapter 11

### The Baptism with the Holy Spirit

Had Adam not known the truth and fullness of a divine life from his Creator, then his fall and redemption are equally empty terms about nothing. And what can he be fallen from or redeemed to if mere words have the power of it? Tell me why that burning and shining light, that man who was more than a prophet, should come with his water baptism of repentance; and why the Son of God, Creator of all things, should come with His baptism in the Spirit and with fire, if man neither needed nor could receive a better life or light than that which the letter of Scripture could give?

The fall of divinely created Adam under the power of sin, Satan, and hell extinguished that heavenly fire and Spirit which had been his first union with God. Only a renewal of this fire and Spirit from heaven can make fallen men once more in the image of God. If the Son of God took the likeness of our sinful flesh upon Himself, that His Holy nature might come within us: what a poverty of reason it is to sit at the feet of a master orator, lettered genius, or Greek scholar who preaches words about the gospel, but who has not himself experienced the power of the Holy Spirit by which alone this divine nature can be made effective in man.

Behold your state, ye ministers, that wait at Christian altars, but who deny this Spirit baptism and fire from above. You have priesthood and an altar not fit to be named with that which in Jewish days had a holy fire from God descending upon it. That fire from heaven made priest and sacrifice acceptable to God, though only type and pledge of the inward celestial fire which Christ would kindle into a never-ceasing flame in the living temples of His Spirit-born children of the New Covenant. Complain then no more of atheists, infidels, and similar open enemies of the gospel; for while you label a Spirit baptism as fanaticism and deny a present faith in this heavenly fire kindled into the same essential life in us as in apostles and early Christians, you do that infidel work within the church which these skeptics do on the outside of it. And through a learned fear of having the same thing done to your earthly reason which was done to Enoch when God took him, you will admit no higher a regeneration, no more reality of a birth of Christ in your souls, than a letter-learned assent to words and doctrine can give.

Our Lord has said, "The kingdom of God is within you." That is, the heavenly fire and Spirit which are the effective power of the true kingdom and manifestation of God must have their real fruit and dominion within the spirit and soul. In truth, where else can it be? Earthly kings in all ages have proven the hypocrisy of outward professions of allegiance which have often given cover to a rebellious heart. Shall our Lord be pleased with the emptiness of lip profession in His kingdom? Indeed, none shall be in that new creation except those who are themselves new creatures in Christ Jesus, with a new heart and new life. Then let this be told every minister of the gospel as a truth from God: that until heavenly fire and Spirit have a fullness of birth and power within you, you can rise no higher by your most eminent learning and zeal than to be elegant and logical orators and reasoners about words.

Again Christ said, "I will come unto you and manifest myself unto you...in that day ye shall know that I am in you ...and the works that I do shall ye do also and greater." Suppose that these promises are not literally true, that Christ can only manifest Himself through the letter of sound doctrine. Say that the heavenly power of the Holy Spirit, which Christ promised would flow in rivers of living water from the inner being of those who believe, is only the force of logically

arranged words, clever oratory, and acute reasonings. Then your converts will be as good disciples of Christ and as absolutely dead to the kingdom of heaven as a corpse is dead to the kingdoms of this earth, though its coffin be filled with learned and detailed histories of them all.

What a betrayal of faith and contradiction of reason, to preach the necessity of being living members of the body of Christ, and yet to deny in the name of sound doctrine a real and living manifestation of the power of that life in us. “You were dead in trespasses,” said Paul—“but now you have been made alive.” And he taught that this life will manifest itself in our mortal flesh. “It pleased God to reveal his Son in me,” said the great apostle, and who could deny that this was made abundantly evident each day he lived. “My little children, I travail in birth until Christ is formed you,” he wrote to those at Galatia. Could anyone believe then that Paul expected their lives to be less Christ like than his, or to manifest less of the power of the Holy Spirit than that which worked so mightily through him? Not from these words: “Be ye followers of me even as I am of Christ; those things that ye have both learned and received and seen and heard in me, do them all, and the God of peace will be with you.” This was to be the evidence in his converts that they had truly believed in that Christ and received the same Holy Spirit that he knew as his inward life and had preached to them.

Clearly this birth of Christ in the soul and spirit of man involves a complete inward transformation, wherein “old things have passed away, and behold all things are new.” As a tree is known by its fruit, so the true Christian is known by the life of Jesus being manifest in and through him to the world around. Plainly the child of God is to be as much like Christ after his new birth as his old, natural life resembled earthly Adam’s. Yet logic, learning, and criticism are almost everywhere set in high places to pronounce and prove from Scripture truth that to expect a real and recognizable experience of this Spirit baptism and fire of Christ in the soul is an extreme that leads to madness and error. What wonder, then, if the old life of sinful Adam in worldliness and lusts of the flesh, pride, deceit, hypocrisy, gossip, envy, divisions, and contentions should continually manifest its power among professing Christians!

Can any honest heart deny that sacraments, church prayers, and well-read sermons leave multitudes of learned and unlearned, men and women, priests and people, as unaltered in their self-will, self-pity, and self-indulgence as they leave children unchanged in their childish follies? It matters not what religious name is given to the old earthly man of Adam’s bestial flesh and blood, whether he zealously contend for every sound Protestant doctrine, or popish dogmas, or Jewish feast days—or for various political parties. Under all these names the unregenerate, natural man has but one and the same nature, without any other difference but that which time and place, education, complexion, hypocrisy, and worldly wisdom may make in him. By such a man, whether he be papist or Protestant, the gospel is only kept as a book, and all that is within it is only so much condemnation to the keeper, just as the Pharisee zealously preserved the Books of the Law and Prophets, only to be more fully condemned by them. The coming of Christ to live by His Spirit in the hearts of redeemed men is God’s full answer and only salvation from this false religion of self-effort.

Woe to every man who ignores the testimony of the holy messenger from God, that Elias who prepared the way of the Lord! “I indeed baptize you with water, but he that cometh after me, whose shoe’s latchet I am not worthy to unloose, he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.” Suppose that this which John the Baptist said of Christ is not our faith, that we do not receive it as the Word of God in which we are firmly to stand. Then be as expert in doctrine as we will, we have made as sure and solemn a rejection of the truth as did those blind rabbis who received not the testimony of John.

A fire and Spirit baptism from above was the news which John published to the world when he proclaimed that the kingdom of God was at hand. When Christ appeared to His disciples forty days, talking of this kingdom, He promised this same baptism in the Spirit, saying that it was essential, or they could not be His witnesses in power. And if this fire and Spirit from above has not baptized us into a birth of the life of God in our souls, we have not found that blessing and the kingdom of God to which both John and Christ bore witness. But if—still worse—we are so bewitched through a blind worship of the dead letter of doctrine as to become writers and preachers against this inward heavenly fire and Spirit, we are at one with those to whom our Lord said, “Woe unto you scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites, who shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.”

A divine love, as the blossom and fragrance in every fruit of the Spirit, is that which above all marks those who have entered into this baptism which Christ gives. There is nothing that so much exalts our Lord to His true place in our hearts as this heavenly love. It cleanses and purifies like a holy fire, and all selfish desires fall away before it. Everything that is good and holy grows out of it, and it becomes a continual source of all virtue and pious practices. This love flows out towards all of God’s creatures because they are His, the creation of His goodness. For when we love God with all our hearts, with all our souls, and with all our strength, we shall necessarily love those beings that are created by Him to be the objects of His own eternal love. If I hate or despise any man in the world, I hate that which God cannot hate, and despise that which He loves. And can I think that the heavenly fire of God’s love burns in my heart, while I hate that which was created in His image and exists only by the continuance of His love towards it?

The impossibility of this is plainly stated by John: “If any man says he loves God, and hates his brother, he is a liar.”

Since it was the sins of the world that made the Son of God become a compassionate, suffering Advocate for all mankind, no one is of the Spirit of Christ except he that has the utmost compassion for sinners. There is no greater sign of your own baptism in the Spirit than when you find yourself all love and compassion towards them that are very weak and sinful, and especially towards those who oppose or misuse you. “He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.” Nor is there greater reason for repentance than when you find yourself angry and offended at the behavior of others. A man naturally fancies that it is his own exceeding love of virtue that makes him unable to bear with those that lack it. And when he abhors one man, despises another, and cannot bear the fellowship of a third, he supposes it all to be proof of his own high sense of virtue, his love of God, and just hatred of sin. And yet one would think that a man needed no other cure for this attitude of heart than this one reflection: if this had been the spirit of the Son of God, if His hatred of sin had been of this sort, there had been no redemption for sinners.

Though God hates sin, He loves the sinner. We must then set ourselves against sin as we do against sickness and disease, by showing love and tender compassion to those who suffer from it. This therefore we may take for a certain rule, that the more the divine nature and life of Jesus is manifest in us, and the higher our sense of righteousness and virtue, the more we shall pity and love those who are suffering from the blindness, disease, and death of sin. The sight of such people then, instead of raising in us a haughty contempt or holier-than-thou indignation, will rather fill us with such tenderness and compassion as when we see the miseries of a dread disease. Such is the holy flame of divine love that kindles upon those who offer themselves as a sacrifice unto God and are truly filled with His Spirit.

Would you know the mysteries of nature, the relation and connection between the visible and the invisible, how the things of time proceed from and depend upon the powers of eternity? Would you know the mysteries of grace and salvation, the intimate, heavenly communion of the soul

with its Creator and Redeemer? Then you must know, in the power of the Spirit, that divine love of Christ passing all temporal knowledge, which began and carries on all that works in truth and life for eternity. Would you go forth as a faithful and effective witness of gospel truths? Tarry then until this fire of divine love has had its perfect work within you. For without a real birth of this divine love in the depths of your soul, be as learned and polite as you will, your heart is but the dark heart of fallen Adam, and your knowledge of eternal truth will be no better than that of murdering Cain. For everything is murder but that which love does.

As in former ages, so today the great battle between good and evil involves essentially the lies of Satan in opposition to the truth as it is in Jesus. The hearts and minds of those who are truly baptized in the Spirit have been gripped by the truth, and their words and works are a “manifestation of the truth that powerfully affects every man’s conscience in the sight of God.” For, said Christ, “The Spirit of Truth will lead you into all truth, and you will thereby be liberated.” Those who are thus set free by the Son of God are free indeed from the bondage of sin, and delivered from the dead letter of the law to serve God with joy and gladness in the power of the Holy Spirit. This is the man who has entered into the truth as it is in Jesus.

To be in the truth as it is in Jesus is to be free from the blindness and delusion of your own natural reason, and free from forms, doctrines, and opinions which others would impose upon you. This truth sets man free from the veil of earthly opinions and shadows of God’s earlier dispensations, which would never have begun but that they might end in a Christ spiritually revealed and essentially formed in the soul. So that now, in this last dispensation of God, nothing is to be thought of, trusted to, or sought after, but God’s immediate, continual working in the soul by His Holy Spirit. For this Christ who came in the flesh is now come by His Spirit to manifest His life in our flesh through the quickening again of that first lost life of God in the soul.

“As truly as John baptized with water,” said Christ to His disciples after His resurrection, “you shall in a few days be baptized in the Holy Spirit.” Though they had been baptized in water, had followed Christ with zeal, and had heard His doctrines from His lips and done wonders in His name, the disciples yet stood only near the kingdom of God and preached it to be close at hand. Therefore they were commanded to stand still and not act as His ministers in His new glorified state till they were endued with power from on high. This power they then received when the Holy Ghost with His cloven tongues of fire came down upon them, filling them with all the fullness of God, enthroning Christ in their hearts, by which they became the illuminated instruments that were to diffuse the light of His gospel and kingdom over all the world.

On that day began gospel Christianity, as thoroughly distinct from all that was before it as life is from death, because it was the ministration of the Holy Spirit bringing the life, light, and love of Christ into the dead spirits of men. Its ministers, who were men not of word only but of power, called the world to nothing but gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, to look for nothing but spiritual blessings, to trust and hope and pray for nothing but the life of the risen Christ active and ruling in them as the living power of this newly-opened kingdom of God. No one could join himself to them or have any part with them but by dying to the wisdom and light of the flesh that he might be baptized in and live by the Spirit through faith in Jesus Christ who had thus called him to His kingdom and glory. For the truth and power of Christianity is the Spirit of Christ living and working in it; and where this Spirit is not the life of the church, there the outward form is but like the outward carcass left behind by a departed soul.

When Jesus, the last Adam, was glorified at the right hand of the Father in heaven as Lord and Christ, His heavenly resurrected life in the comfort, power, and presence of the Holy Spirit was the gift which He gave to His followers whom He had left upon earth. The Holy Spirit’s descent

on the day of Pentecost marked the beginning of a new and miraculous power of salvation in the human spirit that was as different from all previous dispensations of God which had pointed to it as the possession of a thing differs from the desire to have it. Hence the apostles were new men, enlightened with new light, inflamed with new love, living in the daily experience of a new kingdom come down from heaven. They preached not some absent or distant thing, but Jesus Christ as the wisdom and power of God, present and enthroned within their hearts, manifesting His words and works through their mortal flesh: and ready though the life-giving Spirit to be communicated as a new birth from above to all who would repent and believe in Him. It was to the manifest miracle in them of this new life and indwelling Spirit, bringing certain, immediate deliverance from the power of sin, possessing and governing by gifts and graces of a heavenly life, that men were then called.

“This that you see and hear is for you and your children, and as many as the Lord our God shall call,” are the words that first drew men to true Christianity. And the preachers of it bore witness, not to a thing that they had heard or read about or apprehended in their minds—but to a power of salvation, a renewal of life, a birth of heaven, a flaming divine love, a sanctification of the Spirit which they themselves had received and continually experienced. Sinners of all sorts that felt the burden of their evil nature were in a state of fitness to receive these glad tidings. And the Lord added daily to the Church those who were being saved, until soon there was a multitude of believers, living in love and joy of the Holy Ghost, a witness to heavenly beings of the wisdom and power of God.

When, however, that baptism in the Spirit was no longer preached or believed, the heavenly fire being extinguished in the Church, Christianity lost its first glory and appeared no longer as a divine life awakened and displayed among men. Instead of the gifts and graces of Christ by the manifestation and power of the Holy Spirit, heathenish learning and temporal power and carnal strife after earthly honor became the sad mark of an apostate body of water-baptized religionists. Only when men are called again to that same manifest presence of the risen Christ that was “seen and heard” in the first disciples; only then can there be a revival of that first life and light and love. Once again multitudes will be baptized in the Holy Spirit, having submitted themselves to Christ as Lord enthroned in their hearts. Then His divine love, as a heavenly fire, will burn up the dross, purify every motive, and illuminate living sacrifices as a light of witness to a full salvation in a world of darkness and sin.

## Chapter 12

### True Wisdom and Knowledge Alone by the Spirit

When the holy Church of the living God, which is the pillar and ground of the truth among men, was first set up, it was the apostle's boast that all worldly wisdom or learning was nothing. "Where," said he, "is the wise, the scribe, the disputer of this world? Has not God made the wisdom of this world foolish?" But now it is the aim of all churches to be full of the worldly wise, the scribes, the disputers, and learned scholars, who sit to analyze and teach the letter of Holy Scripture in the power of human wisdom. From a Church once aflame with heavenly love, now division, bitterness, envy, pride, strife, hatred, and persecution break forth with as much strength in learned Christendom as ever they did from a religion of pagan idolatry set up by Satan. And thus it must be, so long as there is any trust in wisdom or knowledge that is not wholly from the Spirit of God.

But, says the well-read scribe of today, must there then be no learning or scholarship, no erudition in the Christian church? Must there be nothing thought of or gained by the gospel besides salvation? Must its ministers know nothing and teach nothing but such salvation doctrines as Christ and His apostles taught? Nothing but the full denial of self, poverty of spirit, meekness, humility, unwearied patience, a never-ceasing love, an absolute renunciation of the pomps and vanities of the world, a full dependence upon our heavenly Father? Must there be no joy or rejoicing but in the Holy Ghost, no wisdom but that which God gives, no walking but as Christ walked? One can go to extremes, says the scribe, in such a sole reliance upon the Holy Spirit that the Church is thereby left defenseless against the learned attacks of scholarly skeptics and atheists.

My answer to this is, Happy, thrice happy are they who are only thus learned in the gospel, and who through all their lives seek nothing for themselves or others but to be taught of God. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, who own no master but Christ, no teacher but His Holy Spirit, and who are as unable to join with the contenders after worldly wisdom as with those who "labor for the wind and give their money for that which is not bread." Happy are they who know that a life of total submission to Christ and absolute dependence upon the Holy Spirit is the only choice that enlightened reason can make. Indeed, it is to the honor of this life of faith that none can neglect it except those who are so inconsiderate of their own destiny as to fail to weigh all their actions in light of what God, reason, eternity, and their own happiness require of them.

To look anywhere for wisdom except in the leading of the Holy Spirit is to give oneself up to darkness. Nor is this valid only for those who consider themselves called to serve God in the capacity of a pastor or priest or preacher. Would a man neglect his own happiness because he did not feel called of God to preach the same to others? Will a man have no regard for his own health unless he is a doctor engaged in caring for the public health? Yet it is more unreasonable for any man to neglect a full compliance with the call of our Lord to love as He loved and to walk as He walked simply because he is not a bishop or an apostle.

All in man that is not by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit can only be ignorance and folly; and he in whom the law, the prophets, and the gospel are fulfilled is the only well-educated man and

is one of the first-rate scholars in the world. But who is he that has this true wisdom from above? Who is he in whom all is known and fulfilled that is in the law, the prophets, and the gospel? The lip of truth has told us that it is he and he alone who "loves God with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his mind, with all his strength, and his neighbor as himself."

This is the man that is all wisdom, all light, and who has entered into possession of all that is meant by the mysteries contained in the Scriptures. And where this divine love is lacking, a diabolical self sits in its place, be there a great wit, a shining critic, a poet laureate, a man of science, or a learned philosopher.

"A new commandment," said Christ, "I give unto you, that ye love one another as I have loved you." The newness of this precept did not consist in the fact that men were commanded to love one another, for this was an old precept both of Moses' Law and of nature. But it was new in this respect, that it was to imitate a new and until then unheard-of example of love: it was to love others as Christ has loved us. "And by this," said our Lord, "shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have this love one to another." Now if men are to know that we are the disciples of Christ by our thus loving one another according to His new example of love, then it is certain that if we are void of this love, we make it plainly known unto men that we are not His disciples, that we do not have His wisdom, His mind, nor are taught of Him.

If we would have the mind of Christ, if He is to be our wisdom, then we should often consider the reasons on which the duty of love is founded. We are to love our neighbors, that is all mankind, not because they are wise, holy, virtuous or well-behaved, for all mankind neither ever was nor ever will be so. Therefore it is certain that the reason for our being obliged to love them cannot be founded in their virtue. Again we are sure that the merit of persons is not the reason for our being obliged to love them, because we are commanded to pay the highest instances of love to our worst enemies; we are to love and bless and pray for those who most injuriously treat us. God loves, not because we are wise, and good, and holy, but in pity to us, because we need this happiness. He loves us in order to make us good. Our love therefore must take this same course, not looking for or requiring any merit in our brethren, but pitying their disorders and wishing them all the good that they need and are capable of receiving. And if the lack of this heavenly love be so serious a defect as Paul has said, that it renders our greatest virtues but empty sounds and tinkling cymbals, how highly does it concern us to be sure at all times that the Spirit of love is filling our lives.

The greatest idea that we can frame of God is a conception of Him as a being of infinite love and goodness, using an infinite wisdom and power for the common good and happiness of all His creatures. The highest notion that we can form of a man who is created in the image of God is a conception of him as nearly like God in this respect as he can be; using all his finite faculties for the common good of all his fellow creatures, lovingly desiring that they may all have the happiness for which God has created them. The man who thus lives in harmony with God's love and God's will for himself and mankind is the only man who is truly wise; and any intelligence less than this is not worthy of the high names by which it is often called among men of learning. What could be emptier than the scholarship which sets itself up as great in Scripture interpretation, yet lacks this love which our Lord said is the very essence of all the teaching so variously contained in the law and the prophets!

One of Christ's would-be followers said, "Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father." Our Lord's answer was, "Let the dead bury their dead; follow thou me." Another said, "let me first go bid them farewell that are at home in my house." Jesus answered, "No man having put his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God." Now let it be supposed that a third had said, "Lord, I have left my Greek grammar at home, and some learned commentaries full of



logic and eloquence; suffer me first to go back for them, lest losing the light which I had from them, I might mistake the depth and truth of thy heavenly doctrines, or be less able to prove and preach them powerfully to others." Would not such a request as this have had a folly and absurdity in it not chargeable upon those two other requests which Christ rejected? Yet what better thing does the general approach throughout Christendom to the gospel of Christ have to say for itself than this? And how can a scholarly learning about the letter of Scripture be called true wisdom or knowledge so long as that love toward God and neighbor is neglected, which is so plainly stated to be the essence of all that which Scripture has to teach.

Who can fail to realize his absolute need of the Holy Spirit to be the sole means by which the divine love demanded by Christ of His disciples has any hope of being worked out in his life? For when He says, "as I have loved you, so you are to love one another," He makes it plain that His love is the standard and rule by which our actions are to be judged. And what man could hope to have this love by his own power—much less by the greatness of his learning about this love from the description of it given in Scripture. Clearly nothing less than a birth of this love in the heart can make us that which, as His disciples, we are to be.

If love is not the breath of your life, the spirit that forms and governs everything that proceeds from you, everything that has your labor, your allowance, and consent—you are cut off from the creative power of God, you are dead while you live, and your nature and works can have no other breath but that which is called pride, wrath, envy, hypocrisy, hatred, revenge, and self-exaltation under the power of Satan and his kingdom of darkness. Nothing can possibly save you from being the certain prey of these evil passions of fallen nature through the whole course of your life but a birth of that love which is God Himself, His light and Spirit within you. "Love is the fulfilling of the law"; and whatsoever is not of love is therefore contrary to the law, and the greatest of sin. Could any man be considered truly wise who remains in this state of corruption through rejecting that remedy which God offers in our Lord Jesus Christ?

Now since divine love can have no beginning but from a birth of the divine nature in us, therefore says John, "We love him because he first loved us." For as His Holy Spirit must first be a gift to us or born in us, and only then can we worship God in spirit and in truth, so His love must of all necessity be a gift to us, or born in us, and then we have that of God in us which alone can love Him with His own love. A truth absolutely asserted in these words: "Love is of God, and he that loveth is born of God."

Let this be my excuse to the learned world for owning no school of wisdom or knowledge but where the one lesson is divine love, and the one teacher the Spirit of God: "For though I understand all mysteries and all knowledge and have not love, I am nothing." Is it not a vain work to be probing and searching for that which Paul says can only leave us poor and empty, and to neglect this divine love which we must have at all cost if we are to be anything in God's kingdom? But what school of divinity turns its students first of all to this heavenly love? Nay, far from putting their scholarship under this one essential rule, they gather to themselves the fruit of that ancient tree of knowledge that Eve saw was so much desired to make her wise." No marvel then that those thus educated prove themselves to be the children of Eve, still under the power of that same satanic deception.

Believe me then, great scholar, that all you have gained of wisdom or learning without this divine love to God and man being the power of your life, will stand you in as much stead and fill you with as high heavenly comfort at the hour of death as all the long dreams which night after night have filled your sleep. Until a man knows this with as much fullness of conviction as he knows the vanity of a dream, he has his full proof that he is not yet in the light of truth, not yet taught of God, nor like-minded with Christ. As Paul prayed for the Ephesians that they might be

strengthened with might by the Spirit in their inner man unto the indwelling of Christ by faith, in order for them to be rooted and grounded in this divine love, so we know with certainty that only the Holy Spirit of God, who alone is Love, can fill us with that love that He has required of His children. And as this love passes all knowledge, we know that it is not acquired by gaining a scholarly knowledge of it, but by the power of the living God through His indwelling Spirit in our hearts. Hence Christ's prayer to the Father for His disciples: "That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them and I in them."

Show me a man whose heart has no desire or prayer in it but to love God with his whole soul and spirit, and his neighbor as himself, and then you have shown me the man who knows Christ and is known of Him—the best and wisest man in the world, in whom the first heavenly wisdom and goodness are come to life. In this man all that came from the old serpent is trodden under his feet. Nothing of self, pride, wrath, envy, covetousness, or worldly wisdom can have the least abode in him, because that love which fulfills the whole law and prophets, and which is Christ come to birth and life in him, is the source and power of his every thought, word, and deed. And if he has no share or part with foolish errors, cannot be tossed about with every wind of doctrine, it is because to be always governed by this love is the same thing as to be always taught of God.

## Chapter 13

### Self and Its Pride Oppose the Spirit

All the vices of fallen angels and men have their root in the proud atheism of self, which has rejected God as its only life and power. Men are dead to God because they are living to self. Self-love, self-esteem, and self-seeking are the essence and the life of pride; and the Devil, the father of pride, is never absent from these passions, nor without an influence in them. Without a death to self, there is no escape from Satan's power over us. Wherever self-abilities are allowed a share in Christian service or worship, there the satanic spirit of pride has its power in the Church.

On the other hand, all the virtues of the heavenly life are the virtues of humility. Not a joy or glory or praise of the redeemed but has its birth in humility. It is humility alone that makes the impassable gulf between heaven and hell. No angels are in heaven but because humility is in all their breath; no devils are in hell but because the fire of pride has corrupted their whole life. Humility places man in that posture before God of an open heart, thankfully receiving the inward breathings of divine life and light and love. Pride shuts every man up to himself, bringing a death to all that is of God. "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God."

Herein lies the great struggle for eternal life: pride and humility are the two master powers, the two kingdoms in strife for the eternal possession of man. Every son of Adam is in the service of self, regardless of education or position in life, until a humility that comes solely from heaven has become his redemption through the indwelling Christ. Until then, all will be done by the right hand only that the left hand may know it. Nor can humility be cultivated through a sound head-knowledge of Scripture words and doctrines. The only true humility which the world has ever seen is that of the meek and lowly Lamb of God: and no man can have the least degree of this humility, except from the redeeming life of Christ. He only fights the good fight of faith whose strife is that the self-idolatrous nature which he received from Adam may be brought to death through the power of the cross, that Christ's own supernatural humility may come to life within him.

The enemies to man's rising out of the fall of Adam are many. But the supreme enemy, called Antichrist, is self-exaltation. There has been much speculation to see where and what Antichrist is or by what marks he may be recognized. To know with certainty what he is not, one need only read this short description which Christ gives of Himself: "I can do nothing of myself; I came not to do my own will; I seek not my own glory; I am meek and lowly of heart." Now if this be Christ, then self-exaltation, being in the highest and fullest opposition, must be that spirit of Antichrist that opposes and withstands the whole nature and Spirit of Christ. And although that particular man who is to be the ultimate embodiment of this spirit may not be yet upon the earth; nevertheless, no man need look any further than his own heart to find the same Antichrist which John said was "already in the world" in his own day. What therefore has everyone so much to fear, to renounce and abhor, as every inward breathing of self-exaltation, and every outward work that proceeds from it?

Now at what things shall a man look to see that working of self from which pride gains its power to hinder the birth and life of the humble Jesus in his soul? Shall he call the pomps and vanities of the world the highest works of self-adoration? Shall he look at the thirst for riches and honor to see the pride that has the most of Antichrist in it? By no means. These are shameful enough

marks of the vain heart of man; yet, comparatively speaking, they are but the skin-deep follies of that pride which the fall of man has begotten and brought forth within him. To discover the deepest root and iron strength of pride and self-exaltation, one must enter into the secret chamber of man's soul, where the Spirit of God, who alone gives humility and meek submission, was denied through Adam's sin, thus bringing that death which came upon all men, for all have sinned. Satan's own spirit of self-exaltation became the strong man that kept charge of the house, till a stronger than he should regain possession.

Here in man's innermost being, self had its awful birth, and established its throne, reigning over a kingdom of secret pride, of which all outward pomp and vanities are but its childish, transitory playthings. "It is not those things from without that defile a man," said Christ, "but out of the heart comes all the evil of man's defilement." The inward strong man of pride, the diabolical self, has his higher works within; he dwells in the strength of the heart, and here every power and faculty of the soul offers continual incense to him. Memory is the faithful repository of all the fine things that self has ever done, and lest any of them should be lost or forgotten, memory is continually setting them before self's eyes. Man's intellect has all the world before it, yet goes after nothing but as self sends it, ever seeking new projects to enlarge its dominion. Imagination, as the last and truest support of self, lays unseen worlds at his feet, and crowns him with secret revenges and fancied honors. This is that satanic, natural self that must be denied and crucified, or there can be no disciple of Christ. There is no plainer interpretation than this that can be put upon the words of Jesus, "Except a man deny self, and take up the cross and follow me, he cannot be my disciple."

So great is the blindness which pride brings to the soul, that helpless creatures feel exalted because of natural abilities that are given them by God, and boast of such things as though they were their own. No man has the power to do anything, except by a life that every moment is loaned to him from God: he has no more power of his own to breathe or move a hand than to stop the earth or extinguish the sun. This is the dependent, helpless poverty of man's state, which is a good reason for humility. Since it is God who "gives to all men life, and breath and all that we possess; to ascribe glory to ourselves for these things is to be guilty both of stealing and lying. For pride takes to ourselves those things which only belong to God, and in denying the truth of our helpless dependence upon Him, we pretend to be something that we are not.

What is the result of this pride which blinds us to our true condition? We reason ourselves into all kinds of misery, making our lives the tools of unnecessary desires. Seeking after imaginary happiness, creating to ourselves a thousand unnatural needs, amusing our hearts with false hopes and insatiable passions, envying one another, we bring distress of every sort upon ourselves. Let any man but look back upon his own life and see what jealous ambitions, what vain thoughts, what desires have taken up the greater part of his life! Let him consider how foolish he has been in his words and manner of living, how often he has rejected reason to follow lust and passion, how seldom he has been able to please himself, and how often he has been displeased with others; how soon he has changed his mind, hated what he had formerly loved, and loved what he had formerly hated: how often he has been angry over trifles, pleased and displeased with the very same things, and so often changed from one vain entertainment or project to another! When any man honestly considers his life in this way, he will then realize that nothing is so unbecoming in any man as self-exaltation and pride. Perhaps there are very few people in the world who would not rather choose to die than to have all their secret thoughts, lusts, follies, errors of judgment, vanities, false motives, uneasiness, hatred, envies, and corruptions made known to the world. And shall pride be entertained in a heart thus conscious of its own miserable condition and behavior?

It is not only the lust for possessions and the distinctions of life that nourish pride, but even devotions and charities, strivings after humility and goodness expose man to fresh and strong temptations of this evil spirit of self-exaltation. Every good thought, every good action, exposes one to the assaults of vanity and self-satisfaction. None have more occasion to be afraid of the approaches of pride than those who have made some advances in a pious life: for pride can grow as well upon virtues as upon vices, and can even praise itself while using words that seem to be praising God.

Now what is it in the human soul that most of all hinders the death of this old man? What is it that above all strengthens and exalts the life of self, and makes it the master and governor of all the powers of the heart and soul? It is the imagined genius of self-will, the glory of learning, and the conceit of natural reason. These are the master builders of pride's temple in the heart of man, and like faithful priests they keep up the daily worship of the false god, self. Whereas man ought to be the temple of the living God, self sits there in the natural man, obsessed with his imagined abilities, and fiercely jealous of his own independent interests.

Let it be clearly understood that all these magnificent corruptions of the natural man have their origin in his miserable fall from the life of God in his soul. Self-love, self-exaltation, self-will, and all the other partners of a natural reason would have had no more place among men than blindness, ignorance, and sickness, had man continued as he was created in the image of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Everything that then dwelt in him or came from him would have expressed only so much of God, and nothing of himself, and would have manifested nothing inwardly or outwardly but the heavenly powers of his triune Creator. Man would then have had no more self-conscious realization of his own goodness than of his own creating power upon beholding the animals and trees about him or the stars above.

Had that been man's perfect state without the fall, then consider how unreasonable and odious it must be for poor, sinful creatures to take delight in their own imagined greatness, while the highest and most glorious sons of heaven seek no other occupation than that of glorifying God alone. Pride is only the disorder of the fallen world, and has no place among other beings. It can only subsist where ignorance and sensuality, lies and falsehood, lusts and impurity, reign. If man will boast of anything as his own, he must boast of his misery and sin, for there is nothing else but this that is his own property or his own doing. Let a man, when he is most delighted with himself, but contemplate our blessed Lord stretched out and nailed upon the cross; and then let him consider how absurd it must be for a heart full of pride and self-esteem to pray to God by virtue of the sufferings and death of the meek and lowly One.

It is man's dreadful fall from the life of God in his soul that has given birth to self and the deceit of pride. These are the great enemies of man and God, because they oppose the Spirit of God, through whose gracious work in the heart alone man can receive eternal life. And when the lusts of the flesh have had their last day, and the pride of life has only a dead body to inhabit, the soul of man which remains will know at last that it has nothing of its own, nothing that can say "I do this, or I possess that." Then all that man has or does, will either be the glory of God manifested in him, or the power of hell in full possession of his soul. The time of man's playing with words and intellect, of grasping after positions among men or of amusing himself with the foolish toys of this vain world, can last no longer than he is able to eat and drink with the creatures of this world. When the time comes that he must take his leave of earthly treasure and honors, then all the stately structures which genius, learning, and proud imagination have painted before his own eyes or those of others must bear full witness to Solomon's "vanity of vanities, all is vanity."

That humility which is despised by men now, and is so contrary to the spirit of this world, will then be known to be the root of that faith which overcomes the world, the flesh, and the devil. He

who dares to be poor and contemptible in the eyes of this present evil world in order to approve himself to God; who resists and rejects all human glory; who opposes the clamor of his passions; meekly bears all injuries and wrongs; and dares to wait for his reward until the invisible hand of God gives to every one his proper place: that one will be found to be the man of true wisdom in the coming day. He is the good soldier of Jesus Christ, who has fought the good fight of faith. Yet it cannot have been in his own strength or wisdom, but only as he has embraced the death of Christ as the crucifixion of his own devilish self, and, through the power of the Holy Spirit, has known the indwelling life of the meek and lowly Lamb of God in his soul.

## Chapter 14

### Reformation and Revival by the Spirit

In the darkest ages of Romish superstition, a martial spirit of zeal and glory for the gospel broke forth. Kings, cardinals, bishops, monks, and friars led the sheep of Christ, pilgrims, penitents, and sinners of all kinds, to proceed in battle array to drive the Turks from the land of Palestine and the old earthly Jerusalem. These bloodthirsty expeditions were called holy wars because they were organized to fight for the Holy Land. They were also called Crusades because crosses and crucifixes made the greatest glitter among the sharpened instruments of human murder. Thus under the banner of the Cross went forth an army of church wolves to destroy the lives of those whom the Lamb of God died on the cross to save.

The light which later broke out at the Reformation abhorred the bloody, superstitious zeal of these Catholic heroes. But what followed from this new risen, reforming light? Why, wars, if possible still more diabolical. Christian kingdoms with bloodthirsty piety destroying, devouring, and burning one another for the sake of that which was called Protestantism and popery. Who can help seeing that Satan the prince of the powers of darkness had here a much greater triumph over Christendom than in all the Crusades that went before? For all that was then done by such high-spirited fighters was not so much done against gospel light, because not one in a thousand of those holy warriors was allowed to see what was in the gospel. But now with the Bible opened in everyone's hands, papists and Protestants alike made havoc of every divine virtue that belonged to Christ. For there is not a virtue of gospel goodness but has its deathblow from wars and fightings among Christians.

A glorious Alexander in the heathen world is a shame and reproach to the human race. But the same Alexander now become a hero of the church, making the same ravage from country to country with Christian soldiers, has more thanks from the Devil than twenty pagan Alexanders could ever have. Imagine a duelist fasting and confessing his sins to God today because he is engaged to light his brother tomorrow, and then you have a picture in miniature of the great piety that begins and ends the wars all over heavenly Christendom. For what is the difference between the proud duelist who, because he will not suffer an affront, meets his adversary with sword and pistol behind a hedge or house, and two kingdoms with their regiments slaughtering one another in the field of battle? It is the difference between the murder of one man and the murder of a hundred thousand.

Fancy to yourself Christ, the Lamb of God, after His divine sermon on the mount, putting Himself at the head of a bloodthirsty army; or coming down from the cross to wreak vengeance upon that taunting mob of crucifiers! But if this be too blasphemous an absurdity to be supposed, what follows but that the Christian who acts in the destroying fury of war acts in full opposition to the whole gospel and Spirit of Christ. For such an one can no more be led by His Spirit or be one with Him than those His enemies who, led by traitor Judas, came forth with swords and staves to take Him. Yet as kingdoms meet in unholy war, priests and bishops on both sides denounce the opposing armies and pretend to call down upon each the help of God to defeat the other.

To make men kill men is meat and drink to that roaring Adversary who goes about seeking whom he may devour. And to engage the followers of the meek and lowly Lamb of God in murderous war against their fellows is a triumph that brings unspeakable joy to Satan and his kingdom of darkness. But to make Christians hate and fight one another for the sake of good Scripture doctrines is our Adversary's greatest triumph over the highest mark which Christ has set upon those whom He has purchased by His blood. "This commandment I give unto you," said our Lord, "that ye love one another even as I have loved you; and by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have this love one to another." This love and unity among Christians is the great proof of the power and truth of Christ's gospel that the world still waits to see displayed. And though many apparent reformations have taken place throughout history, truth forces one to admit that rather than kindling the heavenly fire of the Spirit of love in the church, they have mostly added new contentions and doctrinal disputes to deepen the darkness overshadowing Christendom.

Though they restrain themselves from lifting a sword against their fellows, those professing Christians who hate a brother in their hearts are an abomination to God when they meet to worship the holy Jesus in their churches and cathedrals. Their prayers and hymns of praise are as great blasphemy as if Cain had offered a sacrifice of thanksgiving to God for helping him to murder his brother. "He that hateth his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him." What virtue, then, lies in refraining from the use of swords, while striving with words, arguing doctrines, setting up that shameless animosity that is so evident throughout learned Christendom today? Can this kind of warfare be thought any more a testimony to the world of the meekness of the Lamb of God, or greater proof that He is living His life of love in them, than a battle that only uses weapons more likely to shed blood? Neither can the "unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" be demonstrated by envy, criticism, gossip, unkind thoughts and words, or setting up this school of logical doctrine against that.

Let the history of the church and her wars, and the many divisions and factions, enmity and suspicion, prevailing at the present day among those who yet claim to follow Christ—let these, I say, testify whether I have been too harsh in condemning a learned adherence to words without the power of the Holy Spirit. History has proven again and again the solemn truth taught by the apostle: "The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life." You may see a man drowned in tears at beholding and kissing a wooden crucifix, and the same man condemning another as a wicked heretic for only honoring the cross by being daily baptized into the death of Christ. Such is the blindness and corruption of opinion zeal.

If here you see only a form of godliness denying the power, and there you see superficial holiness, crafty piety, haughty sanctity, partiality, envious and quarrelsome orthodoxy, all these are only so many proper fruits and forms of a religion founded upon the dead letter. Through this door the spirit of the world gained entrance to the Church, bringing the apostasy and degeneracy that is with us today. Nor is this worldly spirit merely a sin among sins, but it constitutes a real state of death to the kingdom and life of God in our souls. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. The world passeth away and the lusts thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever."

Hold this therefore as a certain truth, that the heresy of all heresies is a worldly spirit. It is the greatest blindness and darkness of our nature, and keeps us in the grossest ignorance of God and eternal life. It can know nothing, feel nothing, taste nothing, or delight in nothing but with earthly senses and after an earthly appetite. Thus it is that the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, which are of the world, now flourish in the church, though seldom recognized because they now wear religious clothes and perform divine service.



This worldly spirit is the great net with which the Devil becomes a fisher of men; and every son of man, no matter how religious in outward forms and observances, is in this net until set free by the Spirit of Christ. Of all things therefore detest the spirit of this world, or you must live and die an utter stranger to all that is divine and heavenly. But do not look to or trust in any religious creed or ritual, nor in any human efforts at virtue to deliver you from the spirit of this world, or then you will only overcome one form of worldliness and lust by cleaving to another. For nothing renounces or can possibly overcome the spirit of the world but solely the Spirit of Christ. And herein lies the only hope for true revival and reformation in the Church—a total denial of self and the wisdom of man, to look wholly to the Holy Spirit to manifest once more the life and works of Christ through living members of His body upon this earth.

Seek for no revival through reformation of creeds, dogmas, and outward religious forms. Hearing ears and seeing eyes will readily discern that neither godliness, humility, love, nor any other virtue has any goodness in it but as it springs in and from the heart; nor is pride, wrath, envy, or any other vice truly renounced except as its power and place in the heart is destroyed. Herein lies the vanity and deception of outward reformations and apparent revivals that do not spring from the work of the Holy Spirit deep within the spirit of man. Everything short of a new heart and new spirit in and through the power of Christ dwelling vitally in a new man may be fully shown to be self-delusion and self-destruction. The chief aim of all religious instruction therefore must be to turn men to an inward reconciliation with God, to make such outward sounds with the gospel as may reach and break up the fallow ground in the heart. All outward instruction should be only to bring men to an entire faith in, and absolute dependence upon, the continual power and operation of the Spirit of God in them.

For as only they are Christians who are born again of the Spirit, so nothing should be taught to Christians but as a work of the Holy Spirit, nor anything sought but by the power of the Spirit, as well in hearing as in teaching. It is owing to the lack of this that there is so much preaching and hearing, and so little benefit either in the pulpit or the pew. Pastors and preachers for the most part come forth in the power of human qualifications, and are more or less full of themselves and trusting to their own ability according as they are more or less proficient in science, literature, language, and rhetoric. A specified education and acquired degrees are the measure of a minister's qualifications, while that endowment with power from on high that made apostles out of fishermen is scarcely known and often explained away. This is a root cause of the great apostasy in Christendom. Again I say, this was the door at which the whole spirit of the world entered into possession of the Christian church and by which it holds its present power.

Preachers unfortunately labor mainly to display logic and eloquence or to arouse emotions; and the hearers, by regarding such accomplishments, go away just as much helped to be new creatures in Christ Jesus as by hearing a cause of great equity well pleaded at the bar. Preacher and people both trust to a power in themselves: the one in an ability to persuade powerfully, the other in an ability to act according to that which they hear. And so the natural man goes on preaching, and the natural man goes on hearing of the things of God, and little more is accomplished than an occasional flurry of emotionalism or fleshly resolve.

Those who teach and preach must first be partakers of the fullness of the gospel by the Spirit. All things must first be set right in oneself before instruction can be given to others that God will bless. As revival is the work of the Spirit, so that work must manifest its reality and power in one heart before it can spread to others. "That which you see and hear is for you," must still be the message for today, and this demands a living demonstration in men wholly given to God. Let God have but a few who will walk in the Spirit and demonstration of a full salvation and revival has begun. Until your faith and submission to the Holy Spirit are a practical demonstration in

daily living of the life of Christ manifest through you, there is little purpose in agonizing for revival in the lives of others. Look only to the Spirit, have no confidence in the flesh, yield yourself first of all in faith to be the living proof of His saving grace and power. This is the only firm foundation for any revival of true Christianity in the church.

The only fruitful minister will be he who himself stands in a full dependence on the Spirit of God, as having no good power in himself, yet having proven the triumph of the cross over self and sin in his own life. Knowing his own sin and inability to live true Christianity apart from the inspiration and power of the Holy Spirit, he also knows the utter vanity and futility of words without this same manifest presence of the Spirit convincing of the truth as he speaks to men prepared of God. Thus having sought and obtained that endowment with power from on high, he calls others not to their own strength or rational abilities, but to a full hope and faith of having all that they need from God alone. For as God is all that the fallen soul needs, so nothing but the Spirit of God can communicate Himself to man's soul in a revival or restoration of divine life.

The loss of the light and Spirit of God in his soul took from Adam his first crown of glory, stripped him more naked than the beasts, left him a prey to devils, and abandoned him in the jaws of eternal death. Nothing, therefore, can have the least share of power towards man's redemption but the light and Spirit of God coming to birth in him as they did in his first glorious creation. Revival and true reformation have come only where the light and Spirit of God dwell and rule. Hence it is that the kingdom our Lord preached is heavenly, for it has the nature of no worldly thing, serves no worldly ends, is helped by no worldly power or wisdom, and receives nothing from man but the full denial of himself. This kingdom of heaven brought into the soul by the new birth stands upon nothing that is finite or transitory, has no existence but in that working power of God that created and upholds heaven and earth, and is a kingdom of God within man and of men united to God through the continual inspiration and power of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

This is the kingdom into which Christ Jesus said none could enter but by the new birth, and none can continue to be alive in it but by being led of the Spirit, and in which not a thought or desire or action can be allowed to have any part but as it is a fruit of the Spirit. Only when this gospel of the kingdom is preached again in the power of the Holy Spirit and honored by the leaders of Christ's sheep, can the Church again be that virgin spouse of Christ which she was at the beginning. "If any man," says Paul, "will be wise, let him become a fool in this world." This allows no exception; it is a maxim as universal and unalterable as that which says, "If any man will follow Christ, let him deny himself." When self is denied to take up the cross, there is an end to worldly wisdom with its reliance upon fleshly methods and superficial piety. The gospel is again preached not with the wisdom of words but in the demonstration and power of the Holy Spirit. When total reliance is placed upon the Spirit of God to do His work in the spirit of man the flame of divine love again consumes living sacrifices devoted wholly to God, and men "have all things common" because they are "all one in Christ Jesus."

To think of this operation of the Holy Spirit as only an assistance to revival or as meeting an occasional need is as short of the truth as to say that Christ shall only assist the resurrection of our bodies. Not a spark of any divine virtue can arise in us, except it be brought forth by that same power which alone can call our dead bodies out of the dust and darkness of the grave. The plain proof of this is in the teaching of Christ and all Scripture that man is "dead in trespasses and sins," and that "they who hear the voice of the Son of God shall live." The question of our salvation is plainly taught to be as much a matter of life and death as is the resurrection of our bodies; and therefore the one is as totally dependent upon the power of God and beyond the poor abilities of preachers and listeners as is the other. It is this power of the Spirit that Paul wants us

to know as operating within our hearts as he expresses this prayer: "That ye might know the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead." This is the power of the Spirit of Holiness, bringing life out of death, by which alone revival and reformation can be effected in truth.

## Chapter 15

### Victory Over Sin Through the Power of the Spirit

Many are the marks which the learned have given us of the true Church: but be that as it may, no man, whether learned or unlearned, can be in the Church unless he is dead unto sin and alive unto righteousness. This cannot be more plainly told us than in these words of our Lord, "He that committeth sin is the servant of sin." But surely that servant of sin cannot at the same time be the servant of Christ, for our Lord said, "No man can serve two masters." Nor can he be that new creature who dwells in Christ, and Christ in him, for John said, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin." To suppose a man to be born again from above who is yet under a necessity of continuing to sin, is as absurd as to suppose that the true Christian is only to have so much of the nature of Christ alive in him as is consistent with that much power of Satan still controlling him. If the word "saint," used of Christians in the Bible, does not mean a man that avoids all evil and is holy in all his conversation, then saint and no saint would have only such difference as one carnal man will always have from another.

"If the Son shall make you free," says Christ, "ye shall be free indeed." This is only saying that the man in whom Christ lives is set free from being the servant of sin. The indwelling Christ reigns as Lord in his heart, and the old slave-master sin has no more dominion over him. But if this is hindered from being literally true in experience for the faithful follower of Christ, then it must be because both the willing and working of the Spirit of God within him are too weak to overcome that which the Devil wills and works in him. All this blasphemous absurdity denies or debases Christ's victory over sin and death; yet in the name of sound doctrine from books and pulpits, issues forth the teaching that the Christian can never stop sinning as long as he lives. Could any stronger encouragement than this be given to Christendom to sleep on securely under the power of sin? Can this destructive teaching bring any hope or desire of doing God's will on earth as it is done in heaven? Sound doctrine indeed that renders meaningless and impossible the command to be holy as He who has called us is holy, or to walk as He walked!

The pleader for imperfection supports himself by saying that no man in the world, Christ excepted, was ever without sin. And so say I too, and with the apostle I also add, "that if we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar." But then it is as true to say that we make Him a liar if we deny the possibility of our ever being freed from a necessity of sinning in this life. For the same Word of God says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." But surely he that is left under a necessity of sinning as long as he lives can no more be said to be cleansed of all unrighteousness than a man who must be a leper to his dying day can be described as cured from all his leprosy. And to what purpose does John specifically say, "These things write I unto you, that ye sin not," if we must of necessity continue to sin? As surely as a dead man is done with sinning in this world, so all teaching that we must continue to sin denies that the cross work of Christ was done in order that "we being dead unto sin might live unto righteousness."

"I am the true vine," said Christ, "and ye are the branches." The life and Spirit of the vine is the life and spirit of its branches. For this reason, John proclaimed that everyone who says he abides in Christ "ought himself also to walk as he walked." A branch can only lack the life and goodness of the vine if it is broken off from the vine and therefore a withered branch fit for the

fire. But if the branches abide in the vine, then Christ says, “Ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.” Say that this new creature who is in such union and communion, with Christ in him and he in Christ, as the vine is in the branches and the branches in the vine, say that he must be a servant of sin as long as he lives in this world, and then your absurdity will be as great as if you had said that Christ in us must partake of our corruption.

For the sake of humility, it is supposed, the sound evangelical who abhors the pride of seeking after perfection says of himself and all men, “We are poor, blind, imperfect creatures. All our natural faculties are perverted, corrupted, and out of their right state. Therefore nothing that is perfect can come from us or be done by us.” Truth enough! And the very same truth as when the apostle says, “The natural man knoweth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him.” This is the man that we all are by nature. But what Scripture ever spoke of or required any perfection from this man, any more than it requires the flesh to reform itself? What a poorly instructed preacher must he be who considers this old natural man as the new creature in Christ, and therefore rejects Christian perfection because this old man cannot attain to it! What greater blindness than to appeal to our fallen state as a proof of a weakness and corruption which we must have when we are redeemed from it? Is this any wiser than saying that sin and corruption must be there where Christ is, because it is there where He is not? Or that because Christ came into the world to save sinners, therefore those that He saves must continue to sin?

If the “just live by faith,” how can any man live a just life when he is told by illustrious divines that he must continue to sin? Where shall he find faith in such teaching as this to “walk worthy of the calling wherewith he is called,” unless he be called to continually sin? And if it is pleaded that he is not to continually sin, but only to sin at certain times and in certain places, then what Scripture describes this proper amount of sin in which the Christian is to indulge the old nature? Satan is the father of lies, and though his power was broken at the cross, he lies to men about Christ’s victory and denies his own defeat. Could Satan himself have devised a more clever lie to keep those enslaved who could have triumph and freedom in Christ than this doctrine that is everywhere preached, that the Christian is not really dead to sin nor free from sin, but must serve sin as long as he lives? Faith must grasp a better promise than this for victory, or it will never overcome the world!

Our Lord has said this absolute truth, that unless we are born again from above, there is no possible entrance into the kingdom of God. What this new birth is in us and what we get by it is expressly told us by His beloved apostle, saying, “That which is born of God sinneth not.” This is as true and unalterable as to say, “That which is born of the Devil can do nothing else but add sin to sin.” And he can only be doing the Devil’s work who teaches this new creature in Christ that he must continue in sin that grace may abound. But we say with Paul, “God forbid!”

To what end do we pray that “this day may we fall into no sin,” if no such day can be had? But if sinning can be made to cease in us for one hour, or for one day, such could only be accomplished by that which can do the same tomorrow. What benefit in praying that God’s “will be done on earth as it is in heaven,” if the earth as long as it lasts must have as many sinners living in disobedience to the will of God as it has men upon it? How vainly does the church pray for the baptized person “that he may have power and strength to have victory, and to triumph against the world, the flesh and the Devil,” if at the same time we are to believe that Christians as long as they live must in some degree or other follow and be led by the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life?

How can this folly of doctrine find such ready agreement on all sides? It is because the church is no longer “an habitation of God through the Spirit,” in which nothing is intended and sought

after but spiritual power and spiritual life. The baptism in the Spirit is no longer sought or believed in, and the manifestations of the Holy Spirit are feared and preached against, lest in desiring them we should give entrance to the manifestations of seducing spirits. The church is dependent instead upon worldly power, fleshly learning, and carnal wisdom in gospel matters. Consequently the imperfections of the old man in worldliness, gossip, self-seeking, irritability, pride, anger, envy, strife, criticism, and division all must abound as in any other human society. And therefore the best sons of the church must find doctrines that excuse them for that lack of loving others as themselves, that lack of surrender to the lordship of Christ in everything, and that lack of blessing and power—in short, the lack of all the virtues that once marked the true Church. Neither priest nor people will tolerate the scriptural teaching of victory over sin, since to do so would condemn themselves; but at all costs the life of the old man must be defended, and exhortations to a life filled and constantly inspired and empowered by the Holy Spirit are dismissed as tending to extremism.

To further justify the life of self and old Adam being perpetuated under the guise of gospel Christianity, the false doctrine of imputation has been put forth. Under this teaching Scripture does not deal with realities but with mere fiction. These are called “spiritual truths” by the imputation scholars, by which they mean to say that there need be no relationship between doctrine and daily experience. So they speak of “positional” truth as being unrelated to “practical” matters, and our sure “standing” in heaven as being a thing entirely apart from our sinful “state” upon earth. Thus the fact that a man may be anything but loving and Christ-like in his home does not reflect badly upon his learned sermons about love, since sound doctrine must at all costs be held in our heads for salvation, but it is not expected to be lived out in our lives. Such teaching could hardly be further removed from Christ’s doctrine of a life union between the True Vine and its branches.

“As in Adam all die,” says the text. Is not this the same as saying that all men have their fallen nature because born of Adam? Say this does not follow and then the matter will stand thus: “In Adam all die,” but why, or how? Not, of course, because men have the evil of a mortal fallen nature from Adam, but merely by God’s imputation of it to them. But such imputation of Adam’s sinful state to his children when they had it not by natural birth is quite blasphemous, and makes a mockery of the cross of Christ. God’s love then gives His Son to help man out of a sinful state which he did not have in himself but which was only imputed to him. Salvation is an empty word about nothing, and God’s grace a mere fiction.

Take now the other part of the text: “in Christ shall all be made alive.” Is it not an equal mockery of truth to say that those who believe are not made alive by a birth of that to which Adam died, brought to life again in them, but are only accounted as if they were alive by the imputation of Christ’s life to them? Could John have testified that dead Lazarus was raised to life again if he had only been accounted as alive by having life imputed to him, but had in reality been left to rot in the grave? After cleansing a leper our Lord said to him, “Go show thyself to the priest.” But if instead of cleansing him He had bid him go to the priest to be accounted as a clean man by the imputation of another’s cleanness to him, had he not still been under all the evil of his old leprosy? So it is with the righteousness of Christ only outwardly imputed to us and not inwardly born within us: it is a deceptive fiction that runs counter to all that our Lord and His apostles have said of the true nature of our salvation.

We need Christ’s righteousness within because by our natural birth we are inwardly full of evil. Therefore Christ said, “Except a man be born again, he cannot see or enter into the kingdom of God.” Does not this place all in a birth? But a birth and a mere outward imputation are inconsistent with one another. “I am the vine,” said Christ, “ye are the branches.” These two

statements by our Lord plainly affirm the absolute necessity of a new birth from above that is as truly within us and part of us as the life of the vine is really in the branches. No teaching could be more carefully calculated to reject the false notion of a righteousness merely imputed to us, that has no more to do with our own life experience after it is imputed than a thousand years before. That which is not ours by a birth of itself in us, but is only imputed to us, whether of sin or righteousness, is no more than a mere calling that ours which is not ours.

Paul says, “Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” He does not say a Christ who is outwardly imputed to him, but quite the contrary—a Christ who lives in him. If Christ’s holy nature be not a birth in us but only spiritually imputed to us, then no virtue or power of a holy life can have any more reality in us than in the devils, but are only outwardly imputed to us and not to them, only called ours and not called theirs. Thus, “Be ye holy, for I am holy . . . be ye perfect as your Father which is in heaven is perfect . . . thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,” and other like commands are but vain exhortations to do and be that which is not within our sphere, but rather inconsistent with it. These virtues are in their whole nature nothing less than the very righteousness of Christ. And unless Christ is truly and essentially born in us, we can have no more of any Christian virtue than the empty outward sounds of it. For neither man nor angel ever did or can thus love God with all his heart, be holy as God is holy, but because through the Holy Spirit born and living in him he partakes of the divine nature. And neither scripturally nor logically would it do one whit more good to impute an outward righteousness to man who is still left under the power of sin, than to call a beast a Newtonian philosopher by having Sir Isaac’s system outwardly imputed to it.

Oh, the sweetness of God’s election, cries out the learned preacher. Oh, the sweetness of God’s reprobation, might the hellish Satan as well say, could he believe that God had made him a free gift of such myriads and myriads of men of all nations, tongues and languages from the beginning to the end of the world, and reserved so small a number for Himself. This is the blessed fruit of the imputation doctrine! And so it is that men deny the true victory Christ would give over sin, by describing it as a mere imputation of His righteousness to those who yet live to self. There is no surer way than this to defeat the gospel and to turn the grace of God into lasciviousness.

Though I have placed great emphasis elsewhere upon a sincere intention to obey every precept of the gospel, and though one could scarcely be called a true Christian without this willing submission to Christ as Lord of all, yet this is not sufficient in itself for victory over sin. Men of great will power may, by purposeful determination, produce many outward works of seeming virtue in the power of self-will, while totally lacking the Holy Spirit’s willing and working within them that love which is essential. All man’s outward good works are only like his outward good words—he is not good because he is frequent in the use of them. They bring no goodness into him nor are they of any worth in themselves, except as they proceed from the life of Christ manifest through him. True virtue must be solely the work and fruit of that Holy Spirit of love without which Paul says we are nothing. For it is the Spirit of God alone who can be the power of any good work either in man or in angel.

Every stirring within the heart of man towards good is but the voice of Christ by His Holy Spirit calling, “Follow me.” But what does a man generally do when he feels this call within? He turns all his thoughts outwards, away from the knocking of Christ’s Spirit at his heart, and in self-determination runs after this or that religious leader to learn some rule of outward conduct to follow in his own strength. He is at the beck of every new opinion, and thinks only of finding the truth by resting in this or that method, doctrine, or society of Christians. Could he find a man that did not want to have him of his party and opinion, but that turned him from himself and the

teaching of man to God, not as historically read of in books or preached of in this or that society, but to a God essentially living and working in his soul, him he might call a man of God as leading him from himself to God. For had he an hundred creeds all memorized and in practice, if they were anything else but an hundred calls to a Christ come in the Spirit to live in his innermost being as his life and only light, it would be a hundred times better for him to be without them all. Man's blindness and misery lies in this, that he has lost the knowledge of God as essentially living within him; and by falling under the power of an earthly bestial life, thinks only of God as living in some other world, and so seeks only by notions, opinions, doctrines, and theology to set up an image of an absent God instead of worshiping the God of life and power in whom he lives, moves, and has his being. Christ and His apostles taught nothing but death and denial of self, and the impossibility of having any one divine virtue except through the miracle of a new nature, born "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." And this new birth though faith in Christ is as real and as much a Creative act of God as our first birth in Adam.

As surely as you must say "not my will, but thine be done" to become a true follower of Christ, so surely you must turn from your own strength to His Spirit to be the doer of His will in you. Those who think that church systems, rules and orders, creeds and opinions, can do that for men today which the Spirit of Christ alone could do for the first Christians, have turned from the true faith and are building a religion of self effort, which can no more make any man godly than his own power could bring life out of death. For the real problem is the death of sin in man's soul, and nothing but the resurrection power of God in Christ by His Holy Spirit can give the needed life.

"If a man love me, he will keep my commandments . . . and this is my commandment, that ye love one another even as I have loved you . . . yea, love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, pray for them that despitefully use and persecute you, that ye may be the children of your Father who is in heaven." Every word here is a clear call to the new birth which alone can make children of God out of the children of fallen Adam. There is no other nature or Spirit that can breathe forth this universal love and benevolence, but that same which laying aside its own glory came down from heaven to forgive, to love, to save, and to die for a whole world of enemies and sinners. This is the Spirit of Christ that must as essentially live and breathe in you as it did in Him, or all exhortations to do as He did and to walk as He walked and to love as He loved are but in vain.

When the Spirit of Christ is the Spirit that rules in the heart, there are no longer any hard sayings in the gospel; but all that the heavenly Christ taught is as meat and drink eagerly accepted. There is no other joy than walking as He walked, and saying, loving, and doing that which He said, loved, and did. And how could it be otherwise? Ask then no more where you shall go or what you shall do to gain victory over self and sin; for you can have this victory only in Jesus, nor to any greater degree than as His nature and Spirit are born within you. For to be in heart and soul and spirit that man who loves as Christ loves and walks as Christ walks, and yet not to have the Spirit of Christ within, is surely too absurd for any to believe. Yet this is not only the command, but the promise of Scripture; and its fulfillment is wonderfully true though the power of the Holy Spirit for all those who believe and receive.

See how Paul describes the true Church: "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, *that henceforth we should not serve sin.*" Therefore the true



Church has no members but those who are the living members of the body of Christ, baptized into Him and into His death, new creatures that henceforth are no longer the servants of sin. Away then with any councils of Trent, or Synod of Dort, or theological definitions of doctrine that describe the members of the true Church in other terms than these: "Being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness and the end everlasting life." These are the sons of God because they are "led of the Spirit." Victory is theirs because "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made them free from the law of sin and death."

## Chapter 16

### Faith and Works Are One in the Spirit

Clear and evident as the distinction is between a mere notion about a particular thing and the real possession and enjoyment of it, large numbers of Christians seem quite insensible of any other perception or knowledge of divine things except through such ideas of them as a man can form from the letter of Scripture. The chief objects of religious knowledge, good and evil, life and death, are plainly an inward and present state of our soul and spirit, just as seeing and hearing are in us. And as no man can get or lose his seeing or hearing, or have less or more of them by any ideas or notions that he forms about them, just so it is with that which is the power of life and good, of death and evil in us; notions and ideas have no real effect upon these.

Yet no other knowledge is sought after or esteemed of any value in the church, for the most part, than that which is an intellectual grasp of religious truth in the mind. Thus as soon as a man of speculation can verbally demonstrate that which he calls the being and attributes of God, he thinks, and others also think, that he truly knows God. But what excuse can be made for such an imagination when Scripture has so plainly told him that to know God is eternal life? That is, to know God is to have the power, the life, and the Spirit of God manifested in him, and this is eternal life. "No man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son reveals him." This revelation of God to man is through the birth of the Son in the human spirit, forming a new creature in Christ who alone has living knowledge of God.

Again, another man forming an opinion of faith from the letter of Scripture straightway imagines that he is in the faith. Sad delusion! For to know that we are in the faith is to know that Christ is in us of a truth: it is to know the power of His life, His sufferings, His death, His resurrection and ascension, made good in our souls. These ideas, opinions, and learned treatises about the things of God, so far from bringing men into His kingdom, often instead keep them on the outside through the satanic delusion that when one understands the words about a thing, then he has the thing itself.

To be in the faith is to have done with all notions and opinions about it, because it is found and felt by its living power and fruits within us which are righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. But when Scripture describes the kingdom of God within us in this manner it is only describing Christ. He alone can be our righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. For if the kingdom of God is anything else than a birth of the divine nature within, forming Christ in us as our hope of glory, it could not be our victory, it could not overcome the world, the flesh, and the Devil. Every faith that is not Christ in us is but a dead faith of mental assent to words without life.

How trifling, therefore, is that learning which sets up imagined differences between faith and its works, between a justification by faith and justification by works. Is there any meaningful distinction between Christ as a Redeemer and His redeeming works? Can we have one without the other? Then faith and its works, which are nothing else but Christ in us, must be as strictly one as Christ is one. They can no more be two things than our Saviour and our salvation are two different things in us. And is not this the uniqueness of Christianity, that Christ does not offer to men a way of life, nor a creed, to be attempted in one's own strength, but He said, "I am the way,

I am the truth, I am the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me." Our faith is in a Person who lives and works in us, and thus this faith cannot be separated from its works, because the one who lives in us "neither slumbers nor sleeps."

No salvation would ever have been ascribed to faith but because it is in the strictest sense Christ Himself the power and wisdom of God living and working in redeemed men. It never would have been said of faith that every power of the world, the flesh, and the Devil must yield to it but because our salvation is that very Christ living within us, without whom we can do nothing. For if without Christ we can do nothing, and yet all things are possible to him who believes, can there be a fuller demonstration that true faith results in nothing less than Christ born and living within us? And how else can this Christ be known to be in you than by His works being manifest through you? If there are no works, then Christ must be absent, and without Christ, there can be no works. Therefore all the learned volumes written about the fine distinctions between faith and its works are as absurd as though they had been written about the difference between a thing and itself, or between the life of Christ and its living operations within us.

This would be more than clear to all Christians were it not for the blind believism which imagines faith to consist of a mere idea rightly affirmed with the lips, but knows nothing of a real faith that possesses within the heart. So men imagine that to believe in Jesus Christ is something that can be done apart from obeying Him, because they do not know Him as the Lord who reigns and lives within. As well imagine that a command is only to be believed but not obeyed, or that a tree is not known by its fruit. "I will show you my faith by my works," said the apostle; and if this is the only way faith can be shown, then any faith which is not thus one with its works is no faith at all.

James said, "As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." Most pointedly this Scripture makes clear that devoutness and piety do not consist in a mere right understanding of these things that a man may profess without the fruits thereof, for works cannot be separated from its faith, or James could show his faith alone without its works. He only is the devout man who lives no longer to his own will or the way and spirit of the world, but to the will of God alone. He who considers God in everything, serves God in everything, who makes every moment of his daily life a real part of God's will on earth by doing everything in the name of Christ; he alone can be called the pious man. For if a man say he has faith, but does not evidence a life that produces the works of God, James tells us most emphatically that "faith alone" cannot save him.

Julius is in attendance at every religious service and often testifies to his faith. All the parish suppose Julius to be seriously ill if he is not at church. But if you were to ask him why he spends the rest of his time by selfish design, why he lives so much like those about him who profess no interest in God or religion, why he is ready for every vain entertainment and diversion, why he is constantly trying to acquire for himself and so little concerned to give to the poor, he would have nothing to answer. If you were to ask him why he gives himself up to an idle gossiping conversation, why he lives in foolish friendships for some persons and allows himself foolish hatreds and resentments against others when he is to love everyone as himself, why he never fully puts his conversation, his time, and his income under the rules of the gospel—he would have no more to say for himself than the most ungodly person. For the whole tenor of Scripture lies as directly against the life he lives as against debauchery and murder. He that lives such a course of worldliness and selfish folly lives no more according to the commandments of Jesus Christ the Lord than he that lives in gluttony and perversion. Julius has read and studied the New Testament from beginning to end, yet seems willfully ignorant that his whole course of life is condemned in every page of it. And his life of self-will and disregard to the commandments of

the Lord of glory is made all the more abominable to God because Julius religiously recites each day that heavenly, sublime prayer that Christ communicated to His disciples, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." Julius' claim to faith is not substantiated at all by his works.

How does it happen that the lives of even the better sort of church members are thus strangely contrary to the plainest principles of basic Christianity? And how is it that they yet profess so firmly to be in the faith? They have neither ignorance nor inability to excuse them. It is primarily for the lack of a sincere intention to live in accordance with the prayers they pray and the faith they profess, that such an incongruous mixture of sinful folly and professed devotion to Christ fills the lives of so many who call themselves Christians. It is for lack of this simple intention that you see clergymen given to pride, covetousness, and worldliness; and the people in their congregations living lives that are seldom more, and often less Christ-like than are the lives of friends and neighbors who never come near a church. Without an honest, determined purpose of heart, Daniel could never have been the man of God that he was; and without this sincere intention to deny self and take up the cross to follow Christ in the course of daily life, the early church would never have been a fellowship of saints and glorious martyrs. So it is that for lack of this basic intention to surrender all to Christ, the church today is an open fraud of mere lip profession to that faith and divine love that once burned as a fire from heaven in those who "turned the world upside down."

If you will but stop to ask yourself why your brand of Christianity is hardly recognizable as related to that which primitive Christians knew, your own heart will tell you that it is primarily because you never thoroughly intended to live as they lived and to die as they died. You sing of your devotion to the same Lord, and profess to believe the same New Testament doctrines as the early disciples. You have the same promises from the Lord of the fullness of the Spirit, the divine nature, and all that pertains to life and godliness. You would never hope to get to heaven through a faith any different than theirs, but you have believed Satan's lie that it is possible to have the same faith as the first Christians without manifesting the same works as they. And if you are honest you will admit that this lie has been gladly received because you have not really had the heart intention to walk as Jesus walked. Did you but have this intention to please God in all your actions, as being the happiest and best choice for life in this world, you would then find yourself as unwilling to deny Christ with your life as you are now unwilling to deny Him with your lips. And would you but add to this intention a simple faith in the promises of God in Christ, you would find yourself living in the same denial of self and as contrary to the world as fishermen apostles did in their day.

Let a clergyman but have this basic purpose of heart to submit in every detail of life to the leading of the Holy Spirit, and he will converse as if he had been brought up at the feet of the Apostle Paul. He would no more engage in foolish jesting than he would engage in fornication, for the apostle says that neither is to be so much as once named among the saints. He will no more seek to be of reputation or popular in the church than he would desire to parade in a laced suit; and he will feel within himself no more desire for compliments after a sermon than for a race horse in his pulpit. Let him but intend to please God in all his actions as the happiest and best thing in the world, and then he will know that there is nothing noble in a clergyman but a burning desire and fervent zeal for the salvation of the souls of men, nor anything poor in his profession but idleness and a worldly spirit. And when this is the condition of his heart his love for each one in his parish will daily grow larger, since he will have learned the great value of souls by coming so often into the presence of God in fervent prayer on their behalf.

Again, let a businessman but have this honest intention and it will make him a saint in his office. His everyday business will be a course of wise and reasonable actions made holy to God by being done in obedience to His will. He will daily consider not what methods and applications will soonest make him richer and greater than his competitors, but what methods and manner of life can make worldly business most acceptable to God and make the pursuit of commerce a life of holiness, devotion, and piety. When he truly intends to please God in all his ways, he will find it as unthinkable to stop short of the highest godliness of life as he would find it impossible to spend the day idly in bed while at the same time intending to work diligently at his office. So that a man who does not thus conduct his business affairs, or live his life in whatever sphere it may be in holiness and obedience to the will of God, can hardly be said to have within his heart the sincere intention to do so. And yet without this intention, who can be shown to be a follower of Jesus Christ?

The man who has this consecration of heart is not satisfied to do what is allowable or what God may pardon us for having done, but he hastens and aspires after all that is commendable and praiseworthy. He does not ask whether God will forgive the folly of our lives, the madness of our pleasure, the vanity of our expenses, the careless consumption of our time; but he aspires after all that with which God is most pleased and flees all else. He will not look to the lives of Christians about him as either an excuse or an example; but he will look into the Scriptures, and make every doctrine, parable, precept, or instruction a law to himself. He will bring the same diligent preparation and purposeful planning to bear in the Christian life that the world makes use of in the pursuit of every profession. He will be temperate in all things, because an inspired apostle has said, "All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." He will have but one rule for charity and that will be to spend all that he can that way, because the Judge of the quick and the dead has said that all that is so given is loaned to Him and He will repay.

Nor let anyone look upon this as an imaginary description of Christianity that appears fine in theory but cannot be put into practice. It is so far from being imaginary and impracticable that it has been the whole course of life for countless Christians in all ages, because they knew that the Lord whom they dearly loved was satisfied with nothing less. And it is so far from being impossible today that any true Christians will find it impossible for them to do otherwise than live this life, so long as they sincerely intend to please God in all their actions and trust Him for the power to do so. This basic intent will, in the power of God's Holy Spirit, carry them to the utmost height of godliness and charity, and they will find themselves unable to stop short of it. in light of the promises of God for victory and power over the world, the flesh, and the Devil, no one can fail to "walk worthy of the profession he has called us to" except that man who doubts our Lord's provision and is not so much a Christian as to intend to please God in all that he is and does. Were this not the case, then every command to walk as He walked and to be holy as He is holy is but an unreasonable exhortation to an impossible standard.

You will perhaps insist that all people fall short of the perfection of the gospel, and therefore you feel justified in your failings. But this is saying nothing to the purpose. For the question is not whether gospel perfection can be fully attained, but whether you come as near it as a sincere intention and careful diligence can carry you through faith in Christ. If your defects in piety, humility, and charity are owing to your negligence and lack of sincere intention to be as eminent in these virtues as the saving life of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit can make a redeemed sinner, then you have left yourself without excuse. And may it not be that you have stopped short of the terms of the gospel? Can you really call yourself a follower of Christ without at least intending to follow Him all the way?

It is as easy for every person to know whether he intends to please God in all his actions as for any servant to know whether this be his intention toward an earthly master. And he who lacks this intention to obey Christ fully can no more plead any weakness or infirmity as his excuse for disobedience than the man that hid his talent in the earth could plead his lack of strength to keep it out of that hole which he himself had dug. We are warned that "strait is the gate and narrow the way that leads to life, and few there be that find it." We are urged to "strive to enter in at the strait gate" to "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling." In view of these and other similar scriptures, every man ought to so purpose to lay hold of the promises of the gospel as to live here and now only that life which he is sure will bring him the utmost satisfaction when at last he stands at the judgment.

Only those who are truly new creatures in Christ will find their place through the new birth in God's new heavens and new earth. And of all such Paul said, "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Can a man who has this saving faith then fail to manifest those works which the Scripture so plainly tells us are the direct consequence of the new creation? James says it cannot be, for "Faith without works is dead." But equally to the point: that man who does not so much as intend to manifest in all his ways these works which God has ordained for him has denied the very faith which he otherwise professes.

"It is God that works in you both to will and to do his good pleasure." Thus the apostle is inspired to describe that salvation which we are to work out in our daily lives. This working of God's will within us is by the Holy Spirit who indwells each believer; and it is nothing less than the manifestation of the life of Christ in our mortal flesh for proof of which we have so carefully presented many scriptures. This life is by faith; true faith produces life. "It is no more I, but Christ living in me . . . and this life I now live is by faith"; so said the apostle. This is the life imparted by the Holy Spirit, and maintained by Him. And in this life, faith and works are one reality in the power of the Holy Spirit.

As the Holy Spirit who works in us "to will and to do his good pleasure" is one infinite God, so faith and works are one, and neither can exist without the other. Works without faith is the dead and unacceptable offering of sinful flesh; and faith without works is a fraud, a false profession of that which is dead because it does not have the life of God in it; and this is proven by the lack of the fruit of the Spirit. God holds out to our faith the blessing and power of the Holy Spirit as our all in all, filling us with the life of Christ, causing us to overflow with rivers of living water. And any man who embraces these promises is in the hands of God, and the good works ordained of God will be manifest in him. For Jesus said, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater."