

The Covenant Promise of the Spirit

A Sermon Delivered on Lord's-Day Morning, April 12th, 1891, by
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"And I will put my spirit within you."—Ezekiel 36:27.

No preface is needed; and the largeness of our subject forbids our wasting time in beating about the bush. I shall try to do two things this morning: first, I would *commend the text*; and secondly, I would in some measure *expound the text*.

I. First, as for **THE COMMENDATION OF THE TEXT**, the tongues of men and of angels might fail. To call it a golden sentence would be much too commonplace: to liken it to a pearl of great price would be too poor a comparison. We cannot feel, much less speak, too much in praise of the great God who has put this clause into the covenant of His grace. In that covenant every sentence is more precious than heaven and earth; and this line is not the least among His choice words of promise: "I will put my spirit within you."

I would begin by saying that it is *a gracious word*. It was spoken to a graceless people, to a people who had followed "their own way," and refused the way of God; a people who had already provoked something more than ordinary anger in the Judge of all the earth; for He Himself said (verse 18), "I poured my fury upon them." These people, even under chastisement, caused the holy name of God to be profaned among the heathen, whither they went. They had been highly favoured, but they abused their privileges, and behaved worse than those who never knew the Lord. They sinned wantonly, willfully, wickedly, proudly and presumptuously; and by this they greatly provoked the Lord. Yet to them He made such a promise as this—"I will put my spirit within you." Surely, where sin abounded grace did much more abound.

Clearly this is a word of grace, for the law saith nothing of this kind. Turn to the law of Moses, and see if there be any word spoken therein concerning the putting of the Spirit within men to cause them to walk in God's statutes. The law proclaims the statutes; but the gospel alone promises the spirit by which the statutes will be obeyed. The law commands and makes us know what God requires of us; but the gospel goes further, and inclines us to obey the will of the Lord, and enables us practically to walk in His ways. Under the dominion of grace the Lord worketh in us to will and to do of His own good pleasure.

So great a boon as this could never come to any man by merit. A man might so act as to deserve a reward of a certain kind, in measure suited to His commendable action; but the Holy Spirit can never be the wage of human service: the idea verges upon blasphemy. Can any man deserve that Christ should die for him? Who would dream of such a thing? Can any man deserve that the Holy Ghost should dwell in him, and work holiness in him? The greatness of the blessing lifts it high above the range of merit, and we see that if the Holy Ghost be bestowed, it must be by an act of divine grace—grace infinite in bounty, exceeding all that we could have imagined. "Sovereign grace o'er sin abounding" is here seen in clearest light. "I will put my spirit within you" is a promise that drops with graces as the honeycomb with honey. Listen to the divine music that pours from this word of

love. I hear the soft melody of grace, grace, grace, and nothing else but grace. Glory be to God, who gives to sinners the indwelling of His Spirit.

Note, next, that *it is a divine word*: "I will put my spirit within you." Who but the Lord could speak after this fashion? Can one man put the Spirit of God within another? Could all the church combined breathe the Spirit of God into a single sinner's heart? To put any good thing into the deceitful heart of man is a great achievement; but to put the Spirit of God into the heart, truly this is the finger of God. Nay, here I may say, the Lord has made bare His arm, and displayed the fullness of His mighty power. To put the Spirit of God into our nature is a work peculiar to the Godhead, and to do this within the nature of a free agent, such as man, is marvelous. Who but Jehovah, the God of Israel, can speak after this royal style, and, beyond all dispute, declare, "I will put my spirit within you?" Men must always surround their resolves with conditions and uncertainties; but since omnipotence is at the back of every promise of God, He speaks like a king; yea, in a style which is only fit for the eternal God. He purposes and promises, and He as surely performs. Sure, then, is this sacred saying, "I will put my spirit within you." Sure, because divine. O sinner, if we poor creatures had the saving of you, we should break down in the attempt; but, behold the Lord Himself comes on the scene, and the work is done! All the difficulties are removed by this one sentence, "I will put my spirit within you." We have wrought with our spirit, we have wept over you, 'and we have entreated you; but we have failed. Lo, there cometh One into the matter who will not fail, with whom nothing is impossible; and He begins His work by saying, "I will put my spirit within you." The word is of grace and of God; regard it, then, as a pledge from the God of grace.

To me there is much charm in the further thought that *this is an individual and personal word*. The Lord means, "I will put my spirit within you": that is to say, within *you*, as individuals. "I will put my spirit within you" one by one. This must be so since the connection requires it. We read in verse 26, "A new heart also will I give you." Now, a new heart can only be given to one person. Each man needs a heart of his own, and each man must have a new heart for himself. "And a new spirit will I put within you." Within each one this must be done. "And I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh"—these are all personal, individual operations of grace. God deals with men one by one in the solemn matters of eternity, sin, and salvation. We are born one by one, and we die one by one: even so we must be born again one by one, and each one for himself must receive the Spirit of God. Without this a man has nothing. He cannot be caused to walk in God's statutes except by the infusion of grace into him as an individual. I think I see among my hearers a lone man, or woman, who feels himself, or herself, to be all alone in the world, and therefore hopeless. You can believe that God will do great things for a nation, but how shall the solitary be thought of? You are an odd person, one that could not be written down in any list; peculiar sinner, with constitutional tendencies all your own. Thus saith God, "I will put my spirit within *you*"; within *your* heart—even *yours*. My dear hearers, you who have long been seeking salvation, but have not known the power of the Spirit—this is what you need. You have been striving in the energy of the flesh, but you have not understood where your true strength lieth. God saith to you, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord"; and again, "I will put my spirit within you." Oh, that this word might be spoken of the Lord to that young man who is ready to despair; to that sorrowful woman who has been looking into herself

for power to pray and believe! You are without strength or hope in and of yourself; but this meets your case in all points. "I will put my spirit within you"—within you as an individual. Enquire of the Lord for it. Lift up your heart in prayer to God, and ask Him to pour upon you the Spirit of grace and of supplications. Plead with the Lord, saying, "Let thy good Spirit lead me. Even me." Cry, "Pass me not, my gracious Father; but in me fulfill this wondrous word of thine, 'I will put my spirit within you.'"

Note, next, that *this is a separating word*. I do not know whether you will see this readily; but it must be so: this word separates a man from his fellows. Men by nature are of another spirit from that of God, and they are under subjection to that evil spirit, the Prince of the power of the air. When the Lord comes to gather out His own, fetching them out from among the heathen, He effects the separation by doing according to this word, "I will put my spirit within you." This done, the individual becomes a new man. Those who have the Spirit are not of the world, nor like the world; and they soon have to come out from among the ungodly, and to be separate; for difference of nature creates conflict. God's Spirit will not dwell with the evil spirit: you cannot have fellowship with Christ and with Belial; with the kingdom' of heaven and with this world. I wish that the people of God would again wake up to the truth that to gather out a people from among men is the great purpose of the present dispensation. It is still true, as James said at the Jerusalem Council, "Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name." We are not to remain clinging to the old wreck with the expectation that we shall pump the water out of her and get her safe into port. No; the cry is very different—"Take to the lifeboat! Take to the lifeboat!" You are to quit the wreck, and then you are to carry away from the sinking mass that which God will save. You must be separate from the old wreck, lest it suck you down to sure destruction. Your only hope of doing good to the world is by yourselves being "not of the world," even as Christ was not of the world. For you to go down to the world's level will neither be good for it nor for you. That which happened in the days of Noah will be repeated; for when the sons of God entered into alliance with the daughters of men, and there was a league between the two races, the Lord could not endure the evil mixture, but drew up the sluices of the lower deep and swept the earth with a destroying flood. Surely, in that last day of destruction, when the world is overwhelmed with fire, it will be because the church of God shall have degenerated, and the distinctions between the righteous and the wicked shall have been broken down. The Spirit of God, wherever He comes, doth speedily make and reveal the difference between Israel and Egypt; and in proportion as His active energy is felt, there will be an ever-widening gulf between those who are led of the Spirit and those who are under the dominion of the flesh. The possession of the Spirit will make you, my hearer, quite another sort of man from what you now are, and then you will be actuated by motives which the world will not appreciate; for the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Then you will act, and speak, and think, and feel in such a way, that this evil world will misunderstand and condemn you. Since the carnal mind knoweth not the things that are of God—for those things are spiritually discerned—it will not approve your objects and designs. Do not expect it to be your friend. The spirit that makes you to be the seed of the woman is not the spirit of the world. The seed of the serpent will hiss at you, and bruise your heel. Your Master said, "Because ye are not of this world, but I have chosen you out of the world; therefore the world hateth you." It is a separating word this. Has it separated you? Has the Holy Spirit called you alone and

blessed you? Do you differ from your old companions? Have you a life they do not understand? If not, may God in mercy put into you that most heavenly deposit, of which He speaks in our text: "I will put my spirit within you"!

But now notice, *that it is a very uniting word*. It separates from the world, but it joins to God. Note how it runs: "I will put *my* Spirit within *you*." It is not merely *a* spirit, or *the* spirit, but *my* spirit. Now when God's own Spirit comes to reside within our mortal bodies, how near akin we are to the Most High! "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?" Does not this make a man sublime? Have you never stood in awe of your own selves, O ye believers? Have you enough regarded even this poor body, as being sanctified and dedicated, and elevated into a sacred condition, by being set apart to be the temple of the Holy Ghost? Thus are we brought into the closest union with God that we can well conceive of. Thus is the Lord our light and our life; while our spirit is subordinated to the divine Spirit. "I will put my spirit within you"—then God Himself dwelleth in you. The Spirit of Him that raised up Christ from the dead is in you. With Christ in God your life is hid, and the Spirit seals you, anoints you, and abides in you. By the Spirit we have access to the Father; by the Spirit we perceive our adoption, and learn to cry, "Abba, Father"; by the Spirit we are made partakers of the divine nature, and have communion with the thrice holy Lord.

I cannot help adding here that *it is a very condescending word*—"I will put my spirit within you." Is it really so, that the Spirit of God who displays the power and energetic force of God, by whom God's Word is carried into effect—that the Spirit who of old moved upon the face of the waters, and brought order and life from chaos and death—can it be so that He will deign to sojourn in men? God in our nature is a very wonderful conception! God in the babe at Bethlehem, God in the carpenter of Nazareth, God in the "man of sorrows," God in the Crucified, God in Him who was buried in the tomb—this is all marvelous. The incarnation is an infinite mystery of love; but we believe it. Yet, if it were possible to compare one illimitable wonder with another, I should say that God's dwelling in His people and that repeated ten thousand times over, is more marvelous. That the Holy Ghost should dwell in millions of redeemed men and women is a miracle not surpassed by that of our Lord's espousal of human nature. For our Lord's body was perfectly pure, and the Godhead, while it dwells with His holy manhood, does at least dwell with a perfect and sinless nature; but the Holy Spirit bows Himself to dwell in sinful men; to dwell in men who, after their conversion, still find the flesh warring against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; men who are not perfect, though they strive to be so; men who have to lament their shortcomings, and even to confess with shame a measure of unbelief. "I will put my spirit within you" means the abiding of the Holy Spirit in our imperfect nature. Wonder of wonders! Yet is it as surely a fact as it is a wonder. Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, you have the Spirit of God, for "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." You could not bear the suspicion that you are not His; and therefore, as surely as you are Christ's, you have His Spirit abiding in you. The Saviour has gone away on purpose that the Comforter might be given to dwell in you, and He does dwell in you. Is it not so? If it be so, admire this condescending God, and worship and praise His name. Sweetly submit to His rule in all things. Grieve not the Spirit of God. Watch carefully that nothing comes within you that may defile the temple of God. Let the faintest monition of the Holy Spirit be law to you. It was a holy mystery that the presence of the Lord was specially within the veil of the Tabernacle, and that the

Lord God spake by Urim and Thummim to His people; it is an equally sacred marvel that now the Holy Ghost dwells in our spirits and abides within our nature and speaks to us whatsoever He hears of the Father. By divine impressions that the opened ear can apprehend, and the tender heart can receive, He speaketh still. God grant us to know His still small voice so as to listen to it with reverent humility and loving joy: then shall we know the meaning of these words, "I will put my spirit within you."

Nor have I yet done with commending my text, for I must not fail to remind you that *it is a very spiritual word*. "I will put my spirit within you" has nothing to do with our wearing a peculiar garb—that would be a matter of little worth. It has nothing to do with affectations of speech—those might readily become a deceptive peculiarity. Our text has nothing to do with outward rites and ceremonies; but goes much further and deeper. It is an instructive symbol when the Lord teaches us our death with Christ by burial in baptism: it is to our great profit that He ordains bread and wine to be tokens of our communion in the body and blood of His dear Son; but these are only outward things, and if they are unattended with the Holy Spirit they fail of their design. There is something infinitely greater in this promise—"I will put my spirit within you." I cannot give you the whole force of the Hebrew, as to the words "within you," unless I paraphrase them a little, and read "I will put my spirit in the midst of you." The sacred deposit is put deep down in our life's secret place. God puts His Spirit not upon the surface of the man, but into the center of his being. The promise means—"I will put my spirit in your bowels, in your hearts, in the very soul of you." This is an intensely spiritual matter, without admixturing of anything material and visible. It is spiritual, you see, because it is the Spirit that is given; and He is given internally within our spirit. It is true the Spirit operates upon the external life, but it is through the secret and internal life, and of that inward operation our text speaks. This is what we so greatly require. Do you know what it is to attend a service and hear God's truth faithfully preached, and yet you are forced to say, "Somehow or other it did not enter into me; I did not feel the unction and taste the savor of it"? "I will put my spirit within you," is what you need. Do you not read your Bibles, and even pray, and do not both devotional exercises become too much external acts? "I will put my spirit *within* you" meets this evil. The good Spirit fires your heart; he penetrates your mind; he saturates your soul; he touches the secret and vital springs of your existence. Blessed Word! I love my text. I love it better than I can speak of it.

Observe once more that *this Word is a very effectual one*. "I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them." The Spirit is operative—first upon the inner life, in causing you to love the law of the Lord; and then it moves you openly to keep His statutes concerning Himself, and His judgments between you and your fellowmen. Obedience, if a man should be flogged to it, would be of little worth; but obedience springing out of a life within, this is a priceless breastplate of jewels. If you have a lantern, you cannot make it shine by polishing the glass outside, you must put a candle within it: and this is what God does, He puts the light of the Spirit within us, and then our light shines. He puts His Spirit so deep down into the heart, that the whole nature feels it: it works upward, like a spring from the bottom of a well. It is, moreover, so deeply implanted that there is no removing it. If it were in the memory, you might forget it; if it were in the intellect, you might err in it; but "within you" it touches the whole man, and has dominion over you without fear of failure. When the very kernel of your nature is quickened into holiness, practical godliness is effectually

secured. Blessed is he who knows by experience our Lord's words—"The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

If I should fail in expounding the text, I hope I have so fully commended it to you, that you will turn it over and meditate upon it yourselves, and so get a home-born exposition of it. The key of the text is within its own self; for if the Lord gives you the Spirit, you will then understand his words—"I will put my spirit within you."

II. But now I must work upon **THE EXPOSITION OF THE TEXT**. I trust the Holy Spirit will aid me therein. Let me show you how the good Spirit manifests the fact that He dwells in men. I have to be very brief on a theme that might require a great length of time; and can only mention a part of His ways and workings.

One of the first effects of the Spirit of God being put within us is *quicken*ing. We are dead by nature to all heavenly and spiritual things; but when the Spirit of God comes, then we begin to live. The man visited of the Spirit begins to feel; the terrors of God make him tremble, the love of Christ makes him weep. He begins to fear, and he begins to hope: a great deal of the first and a very little of the second, it may be. He learns spiritually to sorrow: he is grieved that he has sinned, and that he cannot cease from sinning. He begins to desire that which once he despised: he specially desires to find the way of pardon, and reconciliation with God. Ah, dear hearers! I cannot make you feel, I cannot make you sorrow for sin, I cannot make you desire eternal life; but it is all done as soon as this is fulfilled by the Lord, "I will put my spirit within you." The quickening Spirit brings life to the dead in trespasses and sins.

This life of the Spirit shows itself by causing the man to pray. The cry is the distinctive mark of the living child. He begins to cry in broken accents, "God be merciful to me." At the same time that he pleads, he feels the soft relentings of repentance. He has a new mind towards sin, and he grieves that he should have grieved his God. With this comes faith; perhaps feeble and trembling, only a touch of the hem of the Saviour's robe; but still Jesus is his only hope and his sole trust. To Him he looks for pardon and salvation. He dares to believe that Christ can save even him. Then has life come into the soul when trust in Jesus spring up in the heart.

Remember, dear friends, that as the Holy Spirit gives quickening at the first, so He must revive and strengthen it. Whenever you become dull and faint, cry for the Holy Spirit. Whenever you cannot feel in devotion as you wish to feel, and are unable to rise to any heights of communion with God, plead my text in faith, and beg the Lord to do as He hath said, namely, "I will put my spirit within you." Go to God with this covenant clause, even if you have to confess, "Lord, I am like a log, I am a helpless lump of weakness. Unless thou come and quicken me I cannot live to Thee." Plead importunately the promise, "I will put my spirit within you." All the life of the flesh will gender corruption; all the energy that comes of mere excitement will die down into the black ashes of disappointment; the Holy Ghost alone is the life of the regenerated heart. Have you the Spirit? and if you have Him within you, have you only a small measure of His life, and do you wish for more? Then go still where you went at first. There is only one river of the water of life: draw from its floods. You will be lively enough, and bright enough, and strong enough, and happy enough when the Holy Spirit is mighty within your soul.

When the Holy Spirit enters, after quickening He gives *enlighten*ing. We cannot make men see the truth, they are so blind; but when the Lord puts His Spirit within them their

eyes are opened. At first they may see rather hazily; but still they do see. As the light increases, and the eye is strengthened, they see more and more clearly. What a mercy it is to see Christ, to look unto Him, and so to be lightened! By the Spirit, souls see things in their reality: they see the actual truth of them, and perceive that they are facts. The Spirit of God illuminates every believer, so that he sees still more marvelous things out of God's law; but this never happens unless the Spirit opens his eyes. The apostle speaks of being brought "out of darkness into His marvelous light"; and it is a marvelous light, indeed, to come to the blind and dead. Marvelous because it reveals truth with clearness. It reveals marvelous things in a marvelous way. If hills and mountains, if rocks and stones were suddenly to be full of eyes, it would be a strange thing in the earth, but not more marvelous than for you and me by the illumination of the Holy Spirit to see spiritual things. When you cannot make people see the truth, do not grow angry with them, but cry, "Lord, put thy spirit within them." When you get into a puzzle over the Word of the Lord, do not give up in despair, but believingly cry, "Lord, put thy Spirit within me." Here lies the only true light of the soul. Depend upon it, all that you can see by any light except the Spirit of God you do not spiritually see. If you only see intellectually, or rationally, you do not see to salvation. Unless intellect and reason have received heavenly light, you may see, and yet not see; even as Israel of old. Indeed, your boasted clear sight may aggravate your ruin, like that of the Pharisees, of whom our Lord said, "But now ye say, We see, therefore your sin remaineth." O lord, grant us the Spirit within, for our soul's illumination!

The Spirit also works *conviction*. Conviction is more forcible than illumination: it is the setting of a truth before the eye of the soul, so as to make it powerful upon the conscience. I speak to many here who know what conviction means; still I will explain it from my own experience. I knew what sin meant by my reading, and yet I never knew sin in its heinousness and horror, till I found myself bitten by it as by a fiery serpent, and felt its poison boiling in my veins. When the Holy Ghost made sin to appear sin, then was I overwhelmed with the sight, and I would fain have fled from myself to escape the intolerable vision. A naked sin stripped of all excuse, and set in the light of truth, is a worse sight than to see the devil himself. When I saw sin as an offence against a just and holy God, committed by such a proud and yet insignificant creature as myself, then was I alarmed. Sirs, did you ever see and feel yourselves to be sinners? "Oh, yes," you say, "we are sinners." O sirs, do you mean it? Do you know what it means? Many of you are no more sinners in your own estimation than you are Hottentots. The beggar who exhibits a sham sore knows not disease; if he did he would have enough of it without pretences. To kneel down and say, "Lord, have mercy upon us miserable sinners," and then to get up and feel yourself a very decent sort of body, worthy of commendation, is to mock Almighty God. It is by no means a common thing to get hold of a real sinner, one who is truly so in his own esteem; and it is as pleasant as it is rare, for you can bring to the real sinner the real Saviour, and He will welcome him. I do not wonder that Hart said:

"A sinner is a sacred thing,
The Holy Ghost hath made him so."

The point of contact between a sinner and Christ is sin. The Lord Jesus gave Himself for our sins. He never gave Himself for our righteousnesses. He comes to heal the sick, and the point He looks to is our sickness. When a physician is called in he has no patience with things apart from his calling. "Tut, tut!" he cries, "I do not care about your furniture,

nor the number of your cows, nor what income tax you pay, nor what politics you admire; I have come to see a sick man about his disease, and if you will not let me deal with it I will be gone." When a sinner's corruptions are loathsome to himself, when his guilt is foul in his own nostrils, when he fears the death that will come of it, then he is really convinced by the Holy Spirit; and no one ever knows sin as his own personal ruin till the Holy Spirit shows it to him. Conviction as to the Lord Jesus comes in the same way. We do not know Christ as our Saviour till the Holy Spirit is put within us. Our Lord says—"He shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you," and you never see the things of the Lord Jesus till the Holy Ghost shows them to you. To know Jesus Christ as your Saviour, as one who died for you in particular, is a knowledge that only the Holy Spirit imparts. To apprehend present salvation, as your own personally, comes by your being convinced of it by the Spirit. Oh, to be convinced of righteousness, and convinced of acceptance in the Beloved! This conviction cometh only of Him that hath called you, even of Him of whom the Lord saith, "I will put my Spirit within you."

Furthermore, the Holy Spirit comes into us for *purification*. "I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." When the Spirit comes, He infuses a new life, and that new life is a fountain of holiness. The new nature cannot sin, because it is born of God, and "it is a living and incorruptible seed." This life produces good fruit, and good fruit only. The Holy Ghost is the life of holiness. At the same time, the coming of the Holy Ghost into the soul gives a mortal stab to the power of sin. The old man is not absolutely dead, but it is crucified with Christ. It is under sentence, and before the eye of the law it is dead; but as a man nailed to a cross may linger long, but yet he cannot live, so the power of evil dies hard, but die it must. Sin is an executed criminal: those nails that fasten it to the cross will hold it fast till no breath remains in it. God the Holy Ghost gives the power of sin its death wound. The old nature struggles in its dying agonies, but it is doomed, and die it must. But you never will overcome sin by your own power, nor by any energy short of that of the Holy Spirit. Resolves may bind it, as Samson was bound with cords; but sin will snap the cords asunder. The Holy Spirit lays the axe at the root of sin, and fall it must. The Holy Ghost within a man is "the Spirit of judgment, the Spirit of burning." Do you know Him in that character? As the Spirit of judgment, the Holy Spirit pronounces sentence on sin, and it goes out with the brand of Cain upon it. He does more: He delivers sin over to burning. He executes the death penalty on that which He has judged. How many of our sins have we had to burn alive! and it has cost us no small pain to do it. Sin must be got out of us by fire, if no gentler means will serve; and the Spirit of God is a consuming fire. Truly, "our God is a consuming fire." They paraphrase it, "God out of Christ is a consuming fire"; but that is not Scripture: it is, "*our* God," our covenant God, who is a consuming fire to refine us from sin. Has not the Lord said, "I will purely purge away all thy dross, and take away all thy sin"? This is what the Spirit does, and it is by no means easy work for the flesh, which would spare many a flattering sin if it could.

The Holy Spirit bedews the soul with purity till He saturates it. Oh, to have a heart saturated with holy influences till it shall be as Gideon's fleece, which held so much dew that Gideon could wring out a bowl full from it! Oh, that our whole nature were filled with the Spirit of God; that we were sanctified wholly, body, soul, and spirit! Sanctification is the result of the Holy Spirit being put within us.

Next, the Holy Ghost acts in the heart as the Spirit of *preservation*. Where He dwells men do not go back unto perdition. He works in them a watchfulness against temptation day by day. He works in them to wrestle against sin. Rather than sin a believer would die ten thousand deaths. He works in believers union to Christ, which is the source and guarantee of acceptable fruitfulness. He creates in the saints those holy things that glorify God, and bless the sons of men. All true fruit is the fruit of the Spirit. Every true prayer must be "praying in the Holy Ghost." He helpeth our infirmities in prayer. Even the hearing of the Word of the Lord is of the Spirit, for John says, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice." Everything that comes of the man, or is kept alive in the man, is first infused and then sustained and perfected of the Spirit. "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing." We never go an inch towards heaven in any other power than that of the Holy Ghost. We do not even stand fast and remain steadfast except as we are upheld by the Holy Spirit. The vineyard which the Lord hath planted He also preserves; as it is written, "I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." Did I hear that young man say, "I should like to become a Christian, but I fear I should not hold out? How am I to be preserved?" A very proper inquiry for "He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved." Temporary Christians are no Christians: only the believer who continues to believe will enter heaven. How, then, can we hold on in such a world as this? Here is the answer. "I will put my spirit within you." When a city has been captured in war, those who formerly possessed it seek to win it back again; but the king who captured it sends a garrison to live within the walls, and he said to the captain, "Take care of this city that I have conquered, and let not the enemy take it again." So the Holy Ghost is the garrison of God within our redeemed humanity, and he will keep us to the end. "May the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." For preservation, then, we look to the Holy Spirit.

Lest I weary you, I will be very brief upon the next point: the Holy Spirit within us is for *guidance*. The Holy Spirit is given to lead us into all truth. Truth is like a vast grotto, and the Holy Spirit brings torches, and shows us all the splendour of the roof; and since the passage seems intricate, He knows the way, and He lead us into the deep things of God. He opens up to us one truth after another, by His light and by His guidance, and thus we are "taught of the Lord." He is also our practical guide to heaven, helping and directing us on the upward journey. I wish Christian people oftener inquired of the Holy Ghost as to guidance in their daily life. Know ye not that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? You need not always be running to this friend and to that to get direction: wait upon the Lord in silence, sit still in quiet before the oracle of God. Use the judgment God has given you; but when that suffices not, resort to Him whom Mr. Bunyan calls "the Lord High Secretary," who lives within, who is infinitely wise, and who can guide you by making you to "hear a voice behind you saying, This is the way, walk ye in it." The Holy Ghost will guide you in life; He will guide you in death; and He will guide you to glory. He will guard you from modern error, and from ancient error, too. He will guide you in a way that you know not; and through the darkness He will lead you in a way you have not seen: these things will He do unto you, and not forsake you.

Oh, this precious text! I seem to have before me a great cabinet full of jewels rich and rare. May God the Holy Ghost Himself come and hand these out to you, and may you be adorned with them all the days of your life!

Last of all, "I will put my spirit within you," that is, by way of *consolation*, for His choice name is "The Comforter." Our God would not have His children unhappy, and therefore, He Himself, in the third Person of the blessed Trinity, has undertaken the office of Comforter. Why does your face such mournful colours wear? God can comfort you. You that are under the burden of sin; it is true no man can help you into peace, but the Holy Ghost can. O God, to every seeker here who has failed to final rest, grant Thy Holy Spirit! Put Thy Spirit within him, and he will rest in Jesus. And you dear people of God, who are worried, remember that worry and the Holy Ghost are very contradictory one to another. "I will put my spirit within you" means that you shall become gentle, peaceful, resigned, and acquiescent in the divine will. Then you will have faith in God that all is well. That text with which I began my prayer this morning was brought home to my heart this week. Our dearly beloved friend Adolph Saphir passed away last Saturday, and his wife died three or four days before him. When my dear brother, Dr. Sinclair Patterson, went to see him, the beloved Saphir said to him, "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." Nobody would have quoted that passage but Saphir, the Biblical student the lover of the word, the lover of the God of Israel. "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." His dear wife is gone, and he himself is ill; but "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." This is a deep well of overflowing comfort, if you understand it well. God's promise is light as well as his promise, and the Holy Spirit makes us know this. God's word and will and way are all light to his people, and in him is no darkness at all for them. God himself is purely and only light. What if there be darkness in me, there is no darkness in him; and his Spirit causes me to fly to him! What if there be darkness in my family, there is no darkness in my covenant God, and his Spirit makes me rest in him. What if there be darkness in me by reason of my failing strength, there is no failing in him, and there is no darkness in him: his Spirit assures me of this. David says—"God my exceeding joy"; and such He is to us. "Yea, mine own God is he"! Can you say, "My God, my God"? Do you want anything more? Can you conceive of anything beyond your God? Omnipotent to work all forever! Infinite to give! Faithful to remember! He is all that is good. Light only: "in him is no darkness at all." I have all light, yea, all things, when I have my God. The Holy Spirit makes us apprehend this when He is put within us. Holy Comforter, abide with us, for then we enjoy the light of heaven. Then are we always peaceful and even joyful; for we walk in unclouded light. In Him our happiness sometimes rises into great waves of delight, as if it leaped up to the glory. The Lord make this text your own—"I will put my Spirit within you." Amen.

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