

The Holy Spirit in the Covenant

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon teaches that the Holy Spirit is the essential third Person of the Covenant, who indwells, sanctifies, guides, and comforts believers, making salvation and spiritual growth possible.

Scripture: Ezekiel 36:27, John 16:14, Isaiah 61:1, Hebrews 10:22, Romans 8:9, 2 Corinthians 1:22, 1 Thessalonians 1:5, Psalm 23:4

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Covenant Theology", "Sanctification"

Description

In this profound sermon, C.H. Spurgeon explores the vital role of the Holy Spirit within the Covenant of grace. He emphasizes the Spirit's work in applying salvation, sanctifying the believer, guiding through providence, and providing comfort in trials. Spurgeon passionately calls believers to recognize and rely on the Spirit's power for true spiritual life and growth. This message highlights the indispensable presence of the Holy Spirit in the Christian experience.

Transcript

"And I will put My Spirit within you." Ezekiel 36:27.

THE Holy Spirit is the third Person in the Covenant. We have considered "God in the Covenant" and "Christ in the

Covenant" [See Sermons #93 and 103, Volume 2—GOD IN THE COVENANT and CHRIST IN THE COVENANT.] and now, this morning, we have to consider the Holy Spirit in the Covenant. For, remember, it is necessary that the Triune God should work out the salvation of the Lord's people if they are to be saved at all. And it was absolutely requisite that when the Covenant was made, all that was necessary should be put into it and, among the rest, the Holy Spirit, without whom all things done even by the Father and by Jesus Christ would be ineffectual, for He is needed as much as the Savior of men, or the Father of spirits. In this age, when the Holy Spirit is too much forgotten, and but little honor is accorded to His sacred Person, I feel that there is a deep responsibility upon me to endeavor to magnify His great and holy name. I almost tremble, this morning, in entering on so profound a subject, for which I feel myself so insufficient. But, nevertheless, relying on the aid, the guidance and the witness of the Holy Spirit, Himself, I venture upon an exposition of this text, "I will put My Spirit within you."

The Holy Spirit is given, in the Covenant, to all the children of God and received by each in due course. And yet upon our Lord Jesus Christ did the Spirit first descend and alighted upon Him as our Covenant

Head, "like the precious ointment upon the head that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard; that went down to the skirts of his garments." The Father has given the Holy Spirit without measure unto His Son—and from Him, in measure, though still in abundance, do all "the brethren who dwell together in unity" (or union with Christ) partake of the Spirit. This holy anointing flows down from Jesus, the Anointed One, to every part of His mystical body, to every individual member of His Church. The Lord's declaration concerning Christ was, "I have put My Spirit upon HIM." And He said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon ME, because He has anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the broken-hearted." The Spirit was first poured upon Christ and from Him descends to all those who are in union with His adorable Person. Let us bless the name of Christ if we are united to Him—and let us look up to our Covenant Head, expecting that from Him will flow down the heavenly unction which shall anoint our souls!

Those who are taught of the Spirit often surpass those who are taught of man. I have met with an entirely uninstructed clod-hopper in the country who never went to school for one hour in his life—who yet knew more about the Holy Scriptures than many a clergyman trained at the University! I have been told that it is a common practice for men in Wales, while they are at work breaking stones on the road, to discuss difficult points in theology which many a Divine cannot master! How? Because they humbly read the Scriptures, trusting only to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, believing that He will lead them into all Truth—and He is pleased so to do. All other instruction is very well. Solomon says "that the soul be without knowledge, it is not good." We should all seek to know as much as can be known, but let us remember that in the work of salvation real knowledge must be obtained by the teaching of the Holy Spirit. And if we would learn in the heart and not merely in the head, we must be taught entirely by the Holy Spirit. What you learn from man, you can unlearn—but what you learn of the Spirit is fixed indelibly in your heart and conscience—and not even Satan himself can steal it from you. Go, you ignorant ones, who often stagger at the Truths of Revelation—go and ask the Spirit, for He is the Guide of benighted souls! Yes, and the Guide of His own enlightened people, too, for without His aid, even when they have been "once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift," they would not understand all Truths of God unless He led them into it.

IV. I desire further to mention that GOD WILL GIVE THE SPIRIT TO US AS A SPIRIT OF APPLICATION.

Thus it was that Jesus said to His disciples, "He shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto

you." To make the matter still more plain, our Lord added, "All things that the Father has are Mine: therefore said I, that He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you." Let me remind you how frequently Jesus impressed on His disciples the fact that He spoke to them the words of His Father—"My Doctrine," said He, "is not Mine, but His that sent Me." And again, "The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of Myself: but the Father that dwells in Me, He does the works." As Christ thus made known the will of God the Father to His people, so the Holy Spirit makes known to us the words of Christ. I could almost affirm that Christ's words would be of no use to us unless they were applied to us by the Holy Spirit! Beloved, we need the application to assure our hearts that they are our own, that they are intended for us and that we have an interest in their blessedness! And we need the unction of the Spirit to make them bedew our hearts and refresh our souls.

Did you ever have a promise applied to your heart? Do you understand what is meant by application as the exclusive work of the Spirit? It is as Paul says the Gospel came to the Thessalonians, "not in word

only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance." Sometimes it comes all of a sudden—your heart may have been the scene of a thousand distracting thoughts, billow dashing against billow till the tempest rose beyond your control. But soon some text of Scripture, like a mighty fiat from the lips of Jesus, has stilled your troubled breast and immediately there has been a great calm—and you have wondered from where it came. The sweet sentence has rung like music in your ears. Like a wafer made of honey it has moistened your tongue. Like a charm it has quelled your anxieties while it has dwelt uppermost in your thoughts all day—reining in all your lawless passions and restless strivings. Perhaps it has continued in your mind for weeks! Wherever you went, whatever you did, you could not dislodge it nor did you wish to do so, so sweet, so savory was it to your soul. Have you not thought of such a text as that as the best in the Bible, the most precious in all the Scriptures? That was because it was so graciously applied to you!

Oh, how I love applied promises! I may read a thousand promises as they stand recorded on the pages of this Sacred Volume and yet get nothing from them. My heart would not burn within me for all the richness of the store—but one promise brought home to my soul by the Spirit's application has such marrow and fatness in it that it would be food

enough for forty days for many of the Lord's Elijahs! How sweet it is, in the times of deep affliction, to have this promise applied to the heart—"When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you: when you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon you"! Perhaps you say, "That is all enthusiasm." Of course it appears so to you, if, as natural men you discern not the things of the Spirit! But we are talking about spiritual things to spiritual men and to them it is no mere enthusiasm—it is often a matter of life or death. I have known numerous cases where almost the only plank on which the poor troubled saint was able to float was just one text of which, somehow or other, he had got so tight a grasp that nothing could take it away from him! Nor is it only His Word which needs to be applied to us. "He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you," may be referred, likewise, to our Savior's precious blood. We sometimes sing—

"There is a Fountain filled with blood"—and we talk of bathing in it. Now faith does not apply the blood to the soul—that is the work of the Spirit. True, I seek it by faith, but it is the Spirit who washes me in "the fountain opened...for sin and for uncleanness." It is the Spirit who receives of the things of Christ and shows them to me. You would never have a drop of blood sprinkled on your heart unless it was sprinkled by the hand of the Spirit. So, too, the robe of Christ's righteousness is entirely fitted on us by Him. We are not invited to appropriate the obedience of Christ to ourselves—but the Spirit brings all to us which Christ has made for us. Ask, then, of the Spirit, that you may have the Word applied, the blood applied, pardon applied and Grace applied—and you shall not ask in vain—for Jehovah has said, "I will put My Spirit within you."

V. But now we have to mark another very important point. WE MUST RECEIVE THE SPIRIT AS A SANCTIFYING SPIRIT.

Perhaps this is one of the greatest works of the Holy Spirit—sanctifying the soul. It is a great work to purge the soul from sin. It is greater than if one should wash a leopard till all his spots were obliterated, or an Ethiopian till his sable skin became white, for our sins are more than skin-deep—they have entered into our very nature! Should we be outwardly washed white this morning, we would be black and polluted before tomorrow! And if all the spots were taken away today, they would grow again tomorrow, for we are black all through! You may scrub the flesh, but it is black to the last—our sinfulness is a leprosy that lies

deep within. But the Holy Spirit sanctifies the soul. He enters the heart, beginning the work of sanctification by conversion. He keeps possession of the heart and preserves sanctification by perpetually pouring in fresh oil of Grace till at last He will perfect sanctification by making us pure and spotless, fit to dwell with the blest inhabitants of Glory!

The way the Spirit sanctifies is this—first He reveals to the soul the evil of sin and makes the soul hate it. He shows it to be a deadly evil, full of poison—and when the soul begins to hate it, the next thing the Spirit does is to show it that the blood of Christ takes all the guilt away and, from that very fact, to lead it to hate sin even more than it did when it first knew its blackness. The Spirit takes it to "the blood of sprinkling, that speaks better things than that of Abel." And there He tolls the death-knell of sin as He points to the blood of Christ and says, "He shed this for you, that He might purchase you unto Himself to be one of His peculiar people, zealous of good works." Afterwards, the Holy Spirit may, at times, allow sin to break out in the heart of the child of God that it may be more strongly repressed by greater watchfulness in the future. And when the heir of Heaven indulges in sin, the Holy Spirit sends a sanctifying chastisement upon the soul until the heart, being broken with grief by the blueness of the wound, evil is cleansed away and Conscience, feeling uneasy, sends the heart to Christ who removes the chastisement and takes away the guilt!

Again, remember Believer, all your holiness is the work of the Holy Spirit You have not a Grace which the Spirit did not give you! You have not a solitary virtue which He did not work in you. You have no goodness which has not been given to you by the Spirit. Therefore, never boast of your virtues or of your Graces. Have you now a sweet temper, whereas you once were passionate? Boast not of it—you will be angry if the Spirit leaves you. Are you now pure, whereas you were once unclean? Boast not of your purity, the seed of which was brought from Heaven—it never grew within your heart by nature—it is God's gift. Is unbelief prevailing against you? Do your lusts, your evil passions and your corrupt desires seem likely to master you? Then I will not say, "Up, and at 'em!" but I will say—Cry mightily unto God that you may be filled with the Holy Spirit—so shall you conquer at last and become more than conqueror over all your sins—seeing that the Lord has engaged to put His Spirit "within you."

VI. When I have spoken of two more points, I shall conclude. THE SPIRIT OF GOD IS PROMISED TO THE HEIRS OF HEAVEN AS A DIRECTING SPIRIT to guide them in the path of Providence.

If you are ever in a position in which you know not what road to take, remember that your "strength is to sit still," and your wisdom is to wait for the directing voice of the Spirit saying to you, "This is the way, walk you in it." I trust I have proved this myself and I am sure every child of God who has been placed in difficulties must have felt, at times, the reality and blessedness of this guidance. And have you never prayed to Him to direct you? If you have, did you ever find that you went wrong afterwards? I do not mean the sort of prayers that they present who ask counsel, but not of the Lord—"who walk to go down into Egypt..to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh," and then ask God to bless them in a way that He never sanctioned. No, you must start fairly by renouncing every other trust. It is only thus that you can make proof of His promise, "Commit your way unto the Lord; trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass." Take with you, then, child of God, an open confession. Say, "Lord, I desire, like a sheet of water, to be moved by the breath of the Spirit. Here I lie, 'passive in Your hands.' Gladly would I know no will but Yours. Show me Your will,

Lord! Teach me what to do and what to refrain from doing."

To some of you this may seem all fanaticism. You believe not that God the Holy Spirit ever guides men in the way they should take. So you may suppose if you have never experienced His guidance. We have heard that when one of our English travelers in Africa told the inhabitants of the intense cold that sometimes prevailed in his country, by which water became so hard that people could skate and walk upon it, the king threatened to put him to death if he told anymore lies, for he had never felt or seen such things. And what one has never seen or felt is certainly fit subject for doubt and contradiction. But with regard to the Lord's people who tell you that they are led by the Spirit, I advise you to give heed to their sayings and seek to make the trial for yourselves! It would be a good thing if you were just to go to God, as a child, in all your distresses. Remember that as a Solicitor whom you may safely consult, as a Guide whose directions you may safely follow, as a Friend on whose protection you may safely rely, the Holy Spirit is personally present in the Church of Christ and with each of the disciples of Jesus! And there is no fee to pay but the fee of gratitude and praise, because He has directed you so well!

VII. Just once more—THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL BE GIVEN TO GOD'S CHILDREN AS A COMFORTING SPIRIT.

This is peculiarly His office. Have you ever felt, immediately before a great and grievous trouble, you have had a most unaccountable season of joy? You scarcely knew why you were so happy or so tranquil. You seemed to be floating upon a very Sea of Elysium—there was not a breath of wind to ruffle your peaceful spirit, all was serene and calm. You were not agitated by the ordinary cares and anxieties of the world. Your whole mind was absorbed in sacred meditation. By-and-by, the trouble comes and you say, "Now I understand it all. I could not, before, comprehend the meaning of that grateful lull, that quiet happiness, but I see now that it was designed to prepare me for these trying circumstances. If

I had been low and dispirited when this trouble burst upon me, it would have broken my heart. But now, thanks be to God, I can perceive through Jesus Christ how this 'light affliction, which is but for a moment,' works for me, 'a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.'" But, mark you, I believe that it is worthwhile to have the troubles in order to get the comfort of the Holy Spirit—it is worthwhile to endure the storm in order to realize the joys!

Sometimes my heart has been shaken by disgrace, shame and contempt, for many a brother minister, of whom I thought better things, has reviled me—and many a Christian has turned on his heels away from me because I had been misrepresented to him and he has hated me without a cause. But it has so happened that at that very time, if the whole Church had turned its back on me and the whole world had hissed me, it would not have greatly moved me, for some bright ray of spiritual sunshine lit up my heart and Jesus whispered to me those sweet words, "I am My Beloved's, and My Beloved is Mine." At such times the consolations of the Spirit have been neither few nor small with me! O Christian, if I were able, I would bring you yet further into the depths of this glorious passage but, as I cannot, I must leave it with you. It is full of honey—only put it to your lips and get the honey from it. "I will put My Spirit within you."

What a vainpretense it is to profess to honor God by a Doctrine that makes salvation depend on the will of man! If it were true, you might say to God, "We thank You, O Lord, for what You have done—You have given us a great many things and we offer You Your wages of praise, which are justly due to Your name, but we think we deserve more, for the deciding point was in our free will." Beloved, do not any of you swerve from the free Grace of God, for the babblings about man's free agency are neither more nor less than lies, right contrary to the Truth of Christ and the teachings of the Spirit.

How certain, then, is the salvation of every elect soul! It does not depend on the will of man—he is "made willing"

heart shall be effectually changed, that he may become a trophy of the Redeemer's power. That he was unwilling before is no hindrance, for God gives him the will, so that he is then of a willing mind. Thus, every heir of Heaven must be saved because the Spirit is put within him and thereby his disposition and affections are molded according to the will of God!

Once more, how useless is it for any persons to suppose that they can be saved without the Holy Spirit! Ah, dear Friends, men sometimes go very near to salvation without being saved—like the poor man who lay by the side of the pool of Bethesda, always close to the water, but never getting in. How many changes in outward character there are which very much resemble conversion but, not having the Spirit in them, they fail after all! Deathbed repentances are often looked upon as very sincere, although too frequently, we fear, they are but the first gnawing of the worm that never dies. I have read, this week, an extraordinary anecdote, told by Dr. Campbell, of a woman who, many years ago, was condemned to death for murdering her child and was hung in the Grass Market at Edinburgh. She very diligently improved the six weeks allowed her by the Scottish law, previous to her execution, and the ministers who were with her continually gave it as their opinion that she died in the sure and certain hope of salvation. The appointed day came. She was hung, but it being very rainy, and no awning having been prepared, those who had the charge of her execution were in a great hurry to complete it and get under shelter—so she was cut down before the legal time and, as the custom is, the body was given up to her friends to be buried. A coffin was provided and she was moved in it to East Lothian where her husband was going to bury her. They stopped at a public-house on the road, to refresh themselves, when, to their great surprise and alarm, in rushed a boy and said he heard a noise in the coffin! They went out and found that the woman was alive! The vital powers had been suspended, but the life was not extinct and the jolting of the cart had restored her circulation. After a few hours she became quite well. They moved their residence and went to another part of the country. But the sad part of the tale is that the woman was as bad a character afterwards as she ever was before and, if anything, worse. She lived as openly in sin and despised and hated religion even more than she had previously done.

This is a most remarkable case. I believe that you would see that the great majority of those who profess to repent on their deathbeds, if they could rise again from their graves, would live a life as profane and godless as ever. Rely on this— it is nothing but the Grace of the Spirit of God that makes sure work of your souls. Unless He shall change you, you may be changed, but it will not be a change that will endure! Unless He shall put His hand to the work, the work will be marred, the pitcher spoiled on the wheel. Cry unto Him, therefore, that He may give you the Holy Spirit, that you may have the evidence of a real conversion and not a base counterfeit! Take heed, Sirs, take heed! Natural fear, natural love, natural feelings are not conversion! Conversion, in the first instance, and by all subsequent edification, must be the work of the Holy Spirit and of Him alone! Never rest comfortable, then, until you have the Holy Spirit's operations most surely effected in your hearts!

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