

# INDEPENDENCE OF CHRISTIANITY

## NO. 149

A SERMON  
 DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, AUGUST 31, 1857  
 BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON  
 AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS

*“Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the LORD of Hosts.”  
 Zechariah 4:6*

GOD’S first and greatest object is His own glory. There was a time, before all time, when there was no day but the Ancient of days, when God dwelt alone in the magnificence of His sublime solitude. Whether He should create or not create was a question depending upon the answer to another question—Would it be to His honor or not?

He determined that He would glorify Himself by creating. But in creating, beyond all doubt, His motive was His glory. And since that time, He has ever ruled the earth and even blessed it with the same object in His infinite mind—His own glory and honor. Lesser motive for God to have were less than divine. It is the highest position to which you or I could attain, to live for God. And the very highest virtue of God is for Him to magnify Himself in all His greatness as the Infinite and the Eternal.

Whatever, then, God permits or does, He does with this one motive—His own glory. And even salvation, costly though it was and infinitely a benefit to us, had for its first object and for its grand result, the exaltation of the Being and of the attributes of the Supreme Ruler.

Now, as this is true in the general of the great acts of God, this is equally true in the minutiae of them. It is true that God has a church, that that church has been redeemed and will be preserved for His glory. And it is equally true that everything that is done to the church, in the church, or for the church, either with the permission or by the power of God, is for God’s glory, as well as for the church’s weal.

You will notice, in reading Scripture, that whenever God has blessed the church, He has secured Himself the glory of the blessing, though they have had the profit of it. Sometimes He has been pleased to redeem His people by might, but then He has so used the might and power that all the glory has come to Him, and His head alone has worn the crown.

Did He smite Egypt and lead forth His people with a strong hand and outstretched arm? The glory was not to the rod of Moses, but to the Almighty power which made the rod so potent. Did He lead His people through the wilderness and defend them from their enemies? Still, did He, by teaching the people their dependence upon Him, preserve to Himself all the glory? So that not Moses or Aaron amongst the priests or prophets could share the honor with Him.

And tell me, if you will, of slaughtered Anak and the destruction of the tribes of Canaan. Tell me of Israel’s possessing the promised land. Tell me of Philistines routed and laid heaps on heaps, of Midianites made to fall on each other. Tell me of kings and princes who fled apace and fell, until the ground was white, like the snow in Salmon. I will say of every one of these triumphs, “Sing ye to the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously.” And I will say at the end of every victory, “Crown Him, crown Him, for He has done it. And let His name be exalted and extolled, world without end.”

Sometimes, however, God chooses not to employ the agency of power. If He chooses to save by might and by power, it is that glory may be unto Him. And when He says, “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the LORD,” it is still with the same object and the same desire, that we may be led—

*“To give to the King of kings renown,  
 The Lord of Lords with glory crown.”*

God is jealous of His own honor. He will not suffer even His church to be delivered in such a way as to honor men more than God. He will take to Himself the throne without a rival. He will wear a crown that never head did wear and sway a sceptre that never hand has grasped. For as truly as He is God, the earth shall know that He, and He alone, has done it and unto Him shall be the glory.

Now, my object this morning will be to glorify God by showing to you, who love the Savior, that the preservation and the triumph of the church are both of them to be accomplished, not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of God, in order that all the honor might be to God and none of it to man. I shall divide my text very simply. It divides itself. First, *not by might*. Secondly, *nor by power*. Thirdly, *but by my Spirit*.

You will ask me whether there is any distinction to be drawn between these two words, “NOT BY MIGHT, NOR BY POWER.” I answer, yes. The best Hebrew scholars tell us that the “might,” in the first place, may be translated, “army.” The Septuagint does so translate it. It signifies power *collectedly*—the power of a number of men combined together.

The second word, “power,” signifies the prowess of a single individual, so that I might paraphrase my text thus—“Not by the combined might of men laboring to assist each other, nor by the separate might of any single hero, but by my Spirit, saith the LORD.” And now you will see the distinction, which is not without a difference.

To begin then, the preservation and the triumph of the church cannot be accomplished BY MIGHT—that is, not by might collectedly.

First, let us consider that collected might to represent *human armies*. The church, we affirm, can neither be preserved nor can its interests be promoted by human armies. We have all thought otherwise in our time and have foolishly said when a fresh territory was annexed to our empire, “Ah! what a providence that England has annexed Oude”—or taken to itself some other territory—“Now a door is opened for the Gospel. A Christian power will necessarily encourage Christianity, and seeing that a Christian power is at the head of the government, it will be likely that the natives will be induced to search into the authenticity of our revelation and so great results will follow. Who can tell but that at the point of the British bayonet, the Gospel will be carried, and that by the edge of the true sword of valiant men, Christ’s Gospel will be proclaimed?”

I have said so myself—and now I know I am a fool for my pains, and that Christ’s church has been also miserably befooled—for this I will assert, and prove, too, that the progress of the arms of a Christian nation is not the progress of Christianity, and that the spread of our empire, so far from being advantageous to the Gospel, I will hold and this day proclaim, has been hostile to it.

We will just confine our attention for a moment or two to India. I believe that British rule there has been useful in many ways. I shall not deny the civilizing influence of European society. Or that great things have been done for humanity. But I do assert and can prove it, that there would have been greater probability of the Gospel spreading in India if it had been let alone, than there has been ever since the domination of Great Britain.

You thought that when Christians, as you called them, had the land, they would favor religion. Now I will state a fact which ought to go through the length and breadth of the land. It does not rest on hearsay—I was informed of it a little while ago by a clergyman, upon whose memory the fact is vividly impressed.

A Sepoy in a certain regiment was converted to God by a missionary. He proposed to be baptized and become a Christian. Mark, not a Christian after our way and fashion, as a Baptist, or an Independent, or a Methodist, but a Christian according to the fashion of the Episcopalian church, established in this realm.

He was seen by the chaplain and was received as a Christian. What think you became of that Sepoy? Let the East India Company blush forever. He was stripped of his regimentals, dismissed from service, and sent home, because he had become a Christian! Ah! we dreamed that if they had the power, they would help us. Alas! the policy of greed cannot easily be made to assist the Kingdom of Christ.

But I have another string to my bow, I believe that the help of government would have been far worse than its opposition. I do regret that the Company sometimes discourages missionary enterprise. But I believe that, had they encouraged it, it would have been far worse still, for their encouragement would have been the greatest hindrance we could receive.

If I had tomorrow to go to India to preach the Gospel, I should pray to God, if such a thing could be, that He would give me a black face and make me like a Hindu—for otherwise I would feel that when I preached I should be regarded as one of the lords—one of the oppressors it may sometime be added—and I should not expect my congregation to listen to me as a man speaking to men, a brother to brother, a Christian full of love—but they would hear me, and only cavil at me, because even my white face would give me some appearance of superiority.

Why in England, our missionaries and our clergymen have assumed a kind of superiority and dignity over the people. They have called themselves clergy and the people laity—and the result has been that they have weakened their influence. I have thought it right to come amongst my fellow men and be a man among men, just one of themselves, their equal and their friend. And they have rallied around me and not refused to love me.

And I should not expect to be successful in preaching the Gospel, unless I might stand and feel that I am a brother, bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh. If I cannot stand before them thus, I cannot get at their hearts. Send me, then, to India as one of the dominant ruling race, and you give me a work I cannot accomplish when you tell me to evangelize its inhabitants.

In that day when John Williams fell in Erromanga, you wept, but it was a more hopeful day for Erromanga than the day when our missionaries in India first landed there. I had rather go to preach to the greatest savages that live, than I would go to preach in the place that is under British rule. Not for the fault of Britain, but simply because I, as a Briton, would be looked upon as one of the superiors, one of the lords, and that would take away much of my power to do good.

Now, will you just cast your eye upon the wide world? Did you ever hear of a nation under British rule being converted to God? Mr. Moffat and our great friend Dr. Livingstone have been laboring in Africa with great success and many have been converted. Did you ever hear of Kaffir tribes protected by England ever being converted?

It is only a people that have been left to themselves and preached to by men as men, that have been brought to God. For my part, I conceive that when an enterprise begins in martyrdom, it is none the less likely to succeed. But when conquerors begin to preach the Gospel to those they have conquered—it will not succeed—God will teach us that it is not by might. All swords that have ever flashed from scabbards have not aided Christ a single grain.

Mahommedan's religion might be sustained by scimitars, but Christians' religion must be sustained by love. The great crime of war can never promote the religion of peace. The battle and the garment rolled in blood are not a fitting prelude to "peace on earth, goodwill to men." And I do firmly hold that the slaughter of men—that bayonets, and swords, and guns, have never yet been, and never can be, promoters of the Gospel. The Gospel will proceed without them, but never through them. "Not by might."

Now don't be befooled again if you hear of the English conquering in China. Don't go down on your knees and thank God for it, and say it's such a heavenly thing for the spread of the Gospel—it just is not. Experience teaches you that, and if you look upon the map you will find I have stated only the truth—that where our arms have been victorious, the Gospel has been hindered rather than not.

So that where South Sea Islanders have bowed their knees and cast their idols to the bats, British Hindus have kept their idols. And where Bechuanas and Bushmen have turned unto the Lord, British Kaffirs have not been converted—not perhaps because they were British, but because the very fact of the missionary being a Briton, put him above them, and weakened his influence.

Hush your trumpet, O war—put away your gaudy trappings and your bloodstained drapery, if you think that the cannon with the cross upon it is really sanctified, and if you imagine that your banner has

become holy, you dream of a lie. God wants not you to help His cause. “It is not by armies, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the LORD.”

Now, understanding this word, “might,” in another sense, to signify *great corporations*, or as we say—denominations of men. Nowadays people get a queer notion in their head, and they form what they call a denomination. It is all wrong. There never ought to have been any denominations at all, for according to Scripture, every church is independent of every other.

There ought to have been as many separate churches as there were separate opinions, but denominations, which are the gathering up of those churches, I take it, ought not to have existed at all. They may do some good, but they do a world of mischief.

Now, when first a denomination starts it is very much opposed. Take, for instance, Methodism. How earnest were its first preachers, how indefatigably did they toil, and how incessantly were they persecuted. Yet what a harvest of souls God gave to them! What a great blessing was showered from the cloud that first started at Oxford, with those few young men preaching the everlasting Gospel!

Methodism goes on till it grows to be a most respectable kind of society. Its ramifications extend all over England and it has societies in every country—and now—God forbid I should say anything against Methodism—let those who like it believe it. I do not like it—but I do say now, when they have come to the greatest is the time when they are doing the least.

They will confess that the ancient power of Methodism has to a great degree failed. That power which once seemed to turn the world upside down and set the whole of the churches on fire with a divine light and life, is to a great degree quenched. Wars and rumors of wars are in their camp, till, what with new connections and old connections, reformed and confessional, and an infinite quantity of names, one does not know into how many fraternities they intend to divide themselves.

The fact is that just when the corporation began to be the greatest, God said, “Now then, you have done your work, to a great degree, it shall not be by you any longer. Not by might, not by your allied forces. You have said, “Our efforts will cover the earth with the Gospel.” “Now,” says God, “I will diminish you by thousands. I will take off your roll, year by year, as many as would make another denomination strong. And though you shall still exist, you shall have to weep and repent with bitterness, because of your departed zeal.”

It is just the same with every other denomination. When we Baptists were reckoned to be the poorest lot in the world and everybody sneered at us, we did far more good than we do now. There was far more pure doctrine and far better preaching than there is at the present time. But we began to be respectable—and just as we began to be respectable, we began to lose our power.

Every fresh Gothic Baptist chapel was a diminution of simplicity. And every fresh place where the minister become intellectual, as it was called, was just a loss of evangelical might. Till now, as a denomination, we are just as low as any other—and we need some of our old leaders again—just to preach the Word with demonstration and with power, and to overthrow all those grand conventionalisms which have tried to make the Baptist denomination respectable.

I pray to God I may never be called to preach to a much-applauded congregation. It would be a sad and evil day. To be despised, to be spit upon, to be caricatured, and to be jeered, is the highest honor that a Christian minister can have. And to be pampered, flattered, and applauded by men, is a poor, base thing that is not worth having.

If any come here and say, “They are not a respectable sort.” We reply, “We labor to preach to the poor.” But mark this, whenever a great denomination begins to get too great, God will cut away its horns and take away its glory, till the world shall say, “It is not by might nor by power.”

And now, I shall give one more application of the word “might.” It is so with one particular church, just as I have been observing. I tremble for the church of which I am the pastor. I never trembled for it when we were few—when we were earnest in prayer and devout in supplication—when it was a thing of contempt to go into “that miserable Baptist Chapel in Park Street.”

When we were despised and maligned and slandered. I never trembled for them then—God was blessing the ministry, souls were saved, and we walked together in the fear of the Lord and in love. But I tremble for it now—now that God has enlarged our borders and given us to count our members not by tens but by hundreds—now that we can say we are the largest Baptist church in England.

I tremble now, because now is just the time when we shall begin to say, “We are a great people.” “We shall do very much.” “We are a great agency.” “The world will look upon us and we will do a great deal.” If we ever say that, God will say, “Cursed is he that trusteth in man and maketh flesh his arm,” and He will hide the light of His countenance from us, so that our mountain that stands firm shall begin to shake.

O churches!—all of you here that are representatives of churches, carry you the tidings. O churches! take heed lest you trust in yourselves. Take heed lest you say, “We are a respectable body.” “We are a mighty number.” “We are a potent people.” Take heed lest you begin to glory in your own strength, for when that is done, “Ichabod” shall be written on your walls and your glory shall depart from you.

Remember that He who was with us when we were but few, must be with us now we are many, or else we must fail. And He who strengthened us when we were but as “little in Israel,” must be with us, now that we are like “the thousands of Manasseh,” or else it is all over with us and our day is past. “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit saith the LORD.”

## II. NOR BY POWER, that is, individual strength.

You know, beloved, that after all, the greatest works that have been done have been done by the ones. The hundreds do not often do much. The companies never do—it is the units—just the single individuals that after all are the power and the might. Take any parish in England where there is a well-regulated society for doing good—it is some young woman or some young man who is the very life of it.

Take any church—there are multitudes in it, but it is some two or three that do the work. Look on the Reformation. There might be many reformers, but there was but one Luther. There might be many teachers, but there was but one Calvin. Look upon the preachers of the last age—the mighty preachers who stirred up the churches.

There were many co-adjutors with them, but after all, it was not Whitefield’s friends, nor Wesley’s friends, but the men themselves that did it. Individual effort is, after all, the grand thing. A man alone can do more than a man with fifty men at his heels to fetter him. Committees are very seldom of much use, and bodies and societies sometimes are loss of strength instead of a gain.

It is said, that if Noah’s ark had had to be built by a company, they would not have laid the keel yet. And it is perhaps true. There is scarcely anything done by a body—it almost always fails—because what is many men’s business is just nobody’s business at all.

It is just the same with religion—the grand things must be done by the ones, the great works of God must be accomplished by single men. Look back through old history. Who delivered Israel from the Philistines? It was a solitary Samson. Who was it gathered the people together to rout the Midianites? It was one Gideon, who cried, “The sword of the LORD and of Gideon.”

Who was he that smote the enemy? It was one Shamgar with his ox goad, or it was an Elon, who with his dagger put an end to his country’s tyrant. Separate men—Davids with their slings and stones, have done more than armies could accomplish. “But” says God, “it is not even by individual might the Gospel is to be spread.”

Take individual might in different senses. Sometimes we may say, of this kind, it represents *learning*. We discover here and there certain great and mighty men in learning, that can take an infidel, strap him on to the dissecting board, and just anatomize him in a minute. They are great doctors of divinity, they have achieved the highest titles that can be given them at the universities.

They have read the Scriptures thoroughly, they are mighty theologians—they could dispute with John Owen and could entirely take the wind out of the sails of Calvin. They know a great deal, a very great deal. They can write most excellent reviews and are much gifted in philosophical disquisitions.

But did you ever hear, in the course of all your life, of any one of these being blessed by God to lead any great religious movement? Such a thing may have been, but I have forgotten all about it. There may have been such an occurrence, but I do not remember it. This I am sure of—the apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ had taken no degree, except it was a good degree of being excellent fishermen.

This I am certain of—that all through the ages, God has not often used men of any very great intellectual compass—they have not seemed to be men of profound learning. They have generally been men of determined will and strong principle, but not often of any very high intellectual attainments. Do I, therefore, rail at learning? O! no. God forbid, the more of that the better.

Let men be as wise as they can be and as learned as they can be, but still the fact remains and there is no one who can dispute it—that God has often taken the foolish things of this world to confound the wise, in order that men may see, “It is not by power, but by my Spirit, saith the LORD.”

I have the pleasure and happiness of being acquainted with a large number of the most eminent ministers in England. I have walked and talked with them, and spoken to them about the things of the kingdom, and with great pleasure, and if they were present they would not think me severe in what I am about to say.

Many of those at whose feet we have been prepared to sit as little children to hear their wisdom, confess as ministers, that when they reviewed their life, they felt that it has been unprofitable. They are learned men, but they would say with Owen, “I would give up all my talents to preach like Bunyan the tinker.”

They have wished that they could have achieved something else besides having attained a name for profound learning and research. My brethren, it is not their fault, they have labored well and earnestly. I find no fault whatever with them. It is God’s supremacy that stamps this upon them and makes them feel the force of it—that it must not be by power, and their very intellectual prowess, puts them out of the way—so that they are incapable of being used by God as a mass at least, though individuals may be, for any very great result in the church, because then it would seem to be by power.

“No, no,” says one, “if a man is not learned, that does not signify much, a man must be eloquent.” That is another mistake—it is not by power of *eloquence* that souls are saved. I believe every man that preaches the Gospel in his heart is eloquent. So I have used a wrong word. I mean, however, that great oratorical powers are very seldom made use of by God for any very great result. Not even here is God pleased to let it be seen to be by power.

You have heard of the preaching of Whitefield—did you ever read his sermons? If you did, you will say they were rather contemptible productions. There is nothing in them that I would think could have approached to oratory. It was only the man’s earnestness that made him eloquent. Have you heard any preacher who has been blessed by God to move the multitude? He has been eloquent, for he has spoken earnestly—but as to oratory there has been none of it.

I, for my own part, must eschew every pretension thereunto. I am certain I never think, when I come into this pulpit, “How shall I talk to this people in a grand fashion?” I think when I come up here, “I have got something to say, I will tell them it.” How I will tell them, it does not signify much to me. I shall find the words somehow or other I daresay, God helping me. But about any of the *graces* of eloquence or the words of oratory, I am utterly and quite in the dark—nor do I wish to imitate any who have been masters in it. I believe that the men whom we call eloquent, now they are dead, were laughed at in their day as poor bungling speakers. Now they are buried, they are canonized—but in their lives they were abused.

Now, my brethren, God, I do think, will generally cast a slur upon fine speaking and grand compositions, and so on, in order that He may show that it is not by individual power, but by His Spirit. I could stand here and point my finger in a certain circle around this place, and I could pause at such a chapel and say, “There is a man preaching there whose compositions are worthy to be read by the most intellectual of persons, but whose chapel contains this morning a hundred.”

I will point you to another of whose preaching we can say that it was the most faultless oratory to which we ever listened, but his congregation were nearly all of them asleep. We might point you to another, of whom we could say that there was the most chaste simplicity, the most extraordinary beauty in the compositions he delivered, but there has not been a soul known to be saved in the chapel for years.

Now, why is that? I think it is because God says, it is not by power, it shall not be by individual power. And I will say this, that whenever God is pleased to raise up a man by individual power to move the world, or to work any reform, He invariably selects a man whose faults and whose errors are so glaring and apparent to everyone that we are obliged to say, "I wonder that man should do it. Surely it must be of God, it could not be of that man."

No, there are some men who are too great for God's designs, their style is too excellent. If God blessed them, the world would cry—especially the literary world—it is their talent that God blesses. But God, on the other hand takes up some rough fellow, truly an earthen vessel, puts His treasure in him and just shakes the whole world.

People say, "We do not see how it is—it is not in the man certainly." The critic takes up his pen, dips it in gall, writes a most fearful character about the man. The man reads it and says, "It is true, and I am glad of it, for if it had not been true, God would not have used me. I glory in my infirmities, because Christ's own power rests on me. If I had not those infirmities, so much could not have done. But the very infirmities have insured against men's saying, 'It was the man.'"

I have often been delighted at some of my opponents. They have sneered at everything in me—from the crown of my head to the sole of my foot, I have been all over bruises and putrefying sores. Every word has been vulgarity, every action has been grotesque, the whole of it has been abominable and blasphemous. And I said, "Well that is delightful, now that is good."

And while some persons have said, "Now we must defend our minister," I have thought, "You had better leave it alone—it is much the best that it should be so. For suppose it is true—and it is, the most of it—there is all the more glory to God—for who can deny that the work is done?" And He is a great workman that can use bad tools and yet produce a fine piece of workmanship.

And if the conversion of hundreds of souls now present, if the sobriety of drunkards, if the chastity of harlots, if the salvation of men who have been swearers, blasphemers, thieves, and vagabonds from their youth up, is not a grand result, I do not know what is.

And if I have been the unwieldy, uncouth, unworthy tool employed in doing it, I bless God, for then you cannot honor me, but must give all the glory to Him, and to Him all the glory belongs. He will have it proved that, "It is not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the LORD."

**III.** And now to conclude lest I weary you. Whilst the progress and advance of the church are neither to be accomplished by the collected might of armies, corporations, nor churches, nor by the separate exertions of individuals, by the might neither of learning nor of eloquence, yet both the objects are to be accomplished BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD.

I was thinking, yesterday, my friends, what a magnificent change would come over the face of Christendom if God were on a sudden to pour out His Spirit as He did on the day of Pentecost. I was then sitting down meditating upon this sermon and I thought! oh, if God should pour His Spirit upon me, should I not leap from this place where I am now sitting, and on my knees begin to pray as I never did before?

And should I not go next Sabbath-day to a congregation who would feel a solemn awe about them! Every word I spoke would strike like arrows from the bow of God. And they themselves would feel that it was "none other than the house of God and the very gate of heaven!" Thousands would cry out, "What must I do to be saved?" And they would go away carrying the divine fire till the whole of this city would be kindled.

And then I had pictured to myself what would come over all the churches if they were in the same condition and all the people received that same Spirit. I had seen the minister from Monday morning till



Saturday night doing little or nothing—delivering his weekly lecture, attending one prayer meeting, and thinking himself hard worked.

I saw him, on a sudden, start from his couch, and go round to all the sick of his chapel, and I marked how he delivered a short address of comfort to the sick, with such holy gravity and such divine simplicity, that they lifted their heads from their pillows and began to sing, even in the agonies of death.

I thought I saw others of them girding up their loins and crying, “What am I doing?—Men are perishing and I am preaching to them but three times a week and am called to the work of the ministry.” I thought I read of all those ministers going into the open-air to preach next Monday night. I thought I saw the whole of them flying, like angels fly, to-and-fro through this land.

And then I thought I saw the deacons all full of the Spirit, too, and found them with all their powers doing everything in the fear of God. I found those who had been lords and rulers no longer seeking to be like Diotrephes. I saw the heavenly influence spread over every mind. I saw the vestries too small for the prayer meetings, and I saw the chapels crowded, and I heard the brethren, who year after year had prayed the same monotonous prayer, break forth in earnest burning words.

I saw the whole assembly melted in tears when the pastor addressed them and urged them to prayer. And I heard the brethren one by one as they rose up speak like men who had been with Jesus and had learned how to pray. They prayed as if they had heard Christ pray in Gethsemane—that prayer which was such as never man prayed.

And then I thought I saw all those members, and those deacons, and those pastors, going out into the world. And oh, I pictured what preaching there would be, what tract distributing, what alms giving, what holy living! And then I already thought I heard every house at vesper uttering its song and every cottage in the early morn sending up its prayer to heaven.

I thought I saw upon every ploughshare, “Consecrated to God,” and every bell upon the horses, “Holiness unto the Lord.” And then I thought I saw the different denominations rushing into each other’s arms. I saw the bishop doff his miter, and clasp his dissenting brother, and call him friend, and bid him preach in his cathedral.

And I thought I saw the stiff puritanical dissenter casting away his hatred of conformity and receiving the Church of England brother to his heart. I thought I saw baptized and unbaptized sitting at one table. I saw Presbyterian, Wesleyan, Independent, and Quaker agreeing in one thing—that Christ crucified was all—and clasping one another’s hands.

Ay, and then I thought I saw the angels coming down from heaven. And it was not long before I finished my daydream by hearing the shout—“Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!” It was a reverie, but it will be true some day. By the Spirit of God all this will be accomplished. How and by what means I know not, but I know the great agency must be the Holy Spirit.

And now, dear friends, let me counsel you. The grand thing the church wants in this time is God’s Holy Spirit. You all get up plans and say, “Now, if the church were altered a little bit, it would go on better.” You think if there were different ministers, or different church order, or something different, then all would be well.

No, dear friends, it is not there the mistake lies—it is that we don’t want more of the Spirit. It is as if you saw a locomotive engine upon a railway, and it would not go and they put up a driver and they said, “Now, that driver will do.” They try another and another. One proposes that such and such a wheel should be altered, but still it will not go.

Someone then bursts in amongst those who are conversing and says, “No, friends. The reason why it will not move is because there is no steam. You have no fire, you have no water in the boiler—that’s why it will not go. There may be some faults about it. It may want a bit of paint here and there, but it will go well enough with all those faults if you do but get the steam up.”

But now people are saying, “This must be altered and that must be altered,” but it would go no better unless God the Spirit should come to bless us. You may have the same ministers and they shall be a thousand times more useful for God, if God is pleased to bless them. You shall have the same deacons,



they shall be a thousand times more influential than they are now, when the Spirit is poured down upon them from on high.

That is the church's great want, and until that want be supplied, we may reform and reform, and still be just the same. We want the Holy Spirit and then whatever faults there may be in our organization, they can never materially impede the progress of Christianity, when once the Spirit of the Lord God is in our midst.

But I beseech you be earnest in praying for this. Do you know that there is no reason today why I should not have preached today so that every soul in the place was converted, if God the Holy Spirit had been pleased to manifest Himself? There is not any solitary shadow of a reason why every soul that has been within the sound of my lips should not have been converted by something said today, if God the Holy Spirit had been pleased to bless the word.

Now I will repeat—there is not a humble Primitive Methodist, nor a poor insignificant preacher of any sort on earth, but who, if he preaches the truth, God the Spirit may not make as useful in conversion as any of the great departed, who are now before God's throne. All we want is the Spirit of God.

Dear Christian friends, go home and pray for it. Give no rest until God reveals Himself. Do not tarry, where you are—do not be content to go on in your everlasting jog-trot as you have done. Do not be content with the mere round of formalities. Awake, O Zion. Awake, awake, awake! Put on your strength, O Jerusalem. Start you from your slumbers, arouse you from your lethargy, and cry unto God and say unto Him, "Awake, awake! Put on Your strength, O arm of the Lord, as in the ancient days." Then when He shall do it, you will find that while it is not by might, nor by power, it is by God's Spirit.

And now I conclude with a brief address that shall not occupy but a moment. Sinner, unconverted sinner, you have often tried to save yourself, but you have often failed. You have, by your own power and might, sought to curb your evil passions and licentious desires. With you, I lament that all your efforts have been unsuccessful. And I warn you—it will be unsuccessful—for you can never by your own might save yourself. With all the strength you have, you can never regenerate your own soul. You can never cause yourself to be born-again.

And though the new birth is absolutely necessary, it is absolutely impossible to you, unless God the Spirit shall do it. I pray for you that God the Spirit may convince you of sin, and if you are already convinced, I bid you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, for He has died for you, has washed away your sins. You are forgiven. Believe that. Be happy and go your way rejoicing. And God Almighty be with you until you die.

---

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