

GRIEVING THE HOLY SPIRIT

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A SERMON
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AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS

“And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.”
Ephesians 4:30

THERE is something very touching in this admonition, “Grieve not the holy Spirit of God.” It does not say, “Do not make Him angry.” A more delicate and tender term is used—“Grieve him not.” There are some men of so hard a character, that to make another angry does not give them much pain, and indeed, there are many of us who are scarcely to be moved by the information that another is angry with us, but where is the heart so hard that it is not moved when we know that we have caused others grief?—for grief is a sweet combination of anger and of love. It is anger, but all the gall is taken from it. Love sweetens the anger, and turns the edge of it, not against the person, but against the offense.

We all know how we use the two terms in contradistinction the one to the other. When I commit any offense, some friend who has but little patience, suddenly snaps asunder his forbearance and is angry with me. The same offense is observed by a loving father, and he is grieved. There is anger in his bosom, but he is angry and sins not, for he is angry against my sin, and yet there is love to neutralize and modify the anger towards me. Instead of wishing me ill as the punishment of my sin, he looks upon my sin itself as being the ill. He grieves to think that I am already injured, from the fact that I have sinned.

I say this is a heavenly compound, more precious than all the ointment of the merchants. There may be the bitterness of myrrh, but there is all the sweetness of frankincense in this sweet term “to grieve.” I am certain, my hearers, I do not flatter you when I declare that I am sure that the most of you would grieve, if you thought you were grieving anyone else. You, perhaps, would not care much if you had made anyone angry without a cause, but to grieve him, even though it were without a cause and without intention, would nevertheless cause you distress of heart, and you would not rest until this grief had subsided, till you had made some explanation or apology, and had done your best to allay the smart and take away the grief.

When we see anger in another, we at once begin to feel hostility. Anger begets anger, but grief begets pity, and pity is next akin to love, and we love those whom we have caused to grieve. Now, is not this a very sweet expression—“Grieve not the holy Spirit”? Of course the language is to be understood as speaking after the manner of men. The Holy Spirit of God knows no passion or suffering, but nevertheless, His emotion is here described in human language as being that of grief.

And is it not, I say, a tender and touching thing, that the Holy Spirit should direct His servant Paul to say to us, “Grieve not the holy Spirit.” Do not excite His loving anger, do not vex Him, do not cause Him to mourn? He is a dove, do not cause Him to mourn, because you have treated Him harshly and ungratefully.

Now, the purport of my sermon this morning will be to exhort you not to grieve the Spirit, but I shall divide it thus—first, I shall discourse *upon the love of the Spirit*, secondly, *upon the seal of the Spirit*, and then thirdly, *upon the grieving of the Spirit*.

I. The few words I have to say UPON THE LOVE OF THE SPIRIT will all be pressing forward to my great mark, stirring you up not to grieve the Spirit, for when we are persuaded that another loves us, we find at once a very potent reason why we should not grieve him.

The love of the Spirit!—how shall I tell it forth? Surely it needs a songster to sing it, for love is only to be spoken of in words of song. The love of the Spirit!—let me tell you of His early love to us. He

loved us without beginning. In the eternal covenant of grace, as I told you last Sabbath, He was one of the high contracting parties in the divine contract, whereby we are saved. All that can be said of the love of the Father, and of the love of the Son, may be said of the love of the Spirit—it is eternal, it is infinite, it is sovereign, it is everlasting, it is a love which cannot be dissolved, which cannot be decreased, a love which cannot be removed from those who are the objects of it.

Permit me, however, to refer you to His acts, rather than His attributes. Let me tell you of the love of the Spirit to you and to me. Oh how early was that love which He manifested towards us, even in our childhood!

My brethren, we can well remember how the Spirit was wont to strive with us. We went astray from the womb speaking lies, but how early did the Spirit of God stir up our conscience, and solemnly correct us on account of our youthful sins. How frequently since then has the Spirit wooed us! How often under the ministry has He compelled our hearts to melt, and the tear has run down our cheeks, and He has sweetly whispered in our ear, “My son, give me thy heart, go to thy chamber, shut thy door about thee, confess thy sins, and seek a Savior’s love and blood.”

Oh—but let us blush to tell it—how often have we done despite to Him! When we were in a state of unregeneracy, how we were wont to resist Him! We quenched the Spirit, He strove with us, but we strove against Him. But blessed be His dear name, and let Him have everlasting songs for it, He would not let us go! We would not be saved, but He would save us. We sought to thrust ourselves into the fire, but He sought to pluck us from the burning. We would dash ourselves from the precipice, but He wrestled with us and held us fast, He would not let us destroy our souls.

Oh, how we ill-treated Him, how we did set at nought His counsel! How did we scorn and scoff Him, how did we despise the ordinance which would lead us to Christ! How did we violate that holy cord which was gently drawing us to Jesus and His cross!

I am sure, my brethren, at the recollections of the persevering struggles of the Spirit with you, you must be stirred up to love Him. How often did He restrain you from sin, when you were about to plunge headlong into a course of vice! How often did He constrain you to good, when you would have neglected it! You, perhaps, would not have been in the way at all, and the Lord would not have met you, if it had not been for that sweet Spirit, who would not let you become a blasphemer, who would not suffer you to forsake the house of God, and would not permit you to become a regular attendant at the haunts of vice, but checked you, and held you in, as it were, with bit and bridle.

Though you were like a bullock, unaccustomed to the yoke, yet He would not let you have your way. Though you struggled against Him, yet He would not throw the reins upon your neck, but He said, “I will have him, I will have him against his will, I will change his heart, I will not let him go till I have made him a trophy of My mighty power to save.” And then think my brethren of the love of the Spirit after that—

*“Dost mind the time, the spot of land,
Where Jesus did thee meet?
Where He first took thee by the hand,
Thy Bridegroom’s love—how sweet!”*

Ah, then, in that blest hour, to memory dear, was it not the Holy Spirit who guided you to Jesus? Do you remember the love of the Spirit, when, after having quickened you, He took you aside, and showed you Jesus on the tree? Who was it that opened your blind eye to see a dying Savior? Who was it that opened your deaf ear to hear the voice of pardoning love? Who opened our clasped and palsied hand to receive the tokens of a Savior’s grace? Who was it that broke your hard heart and made a way for the Savior to enter and dwell therein?

Oh! it was that precious Spirit that selfsame Spirit, to whom you had done so much despite, whom in the days of your flesh you resisted! What a mercy it was that He did not say, “I will swear in my wrath

that they shall not enter into my rest, for they have vexed me, and I will take my everlasting flight from them,” or thus, “Ephraim is joined unto idols, I will let him alone!”

And since that time, my brethren, how sweetly has the Spirit proved His love to you and to me. It is not only in His first strivings, and then His divine quickenings, but in all the sequel, how much have we owed to His instruction. We have been dull scholars with the Word before us, plain and simple, so that he who runs may read, and he who reads may understand, yet how small a portion of His Word has our memory retained, how little progress have we made in the school of God’s grace!

We are but learners yet, unstable, weak, and apt to slide, but what a blessed instructor we have had! Has He not led us into many a truth, and taken of the things of Christ and applied them unto us? Oh! when I think how stupid I have been, I wonder that He has not given me up. When I think what a dolt I have been, when He would have taught me the things of the kingdom of God, I marvel that He should have had such patience with me.

Is it a wonder that Jesus should become a babe? Is it not an equal wonder that the Spirit of the living God should become a teacher of babes? It is a marvel that Jesus should lie in a manger, is it not an equal marvel that the Holy Spirit should become an usher in the sacred school, to teach fools, and make them wise? It was condescension that brought the Savior to the cross, but is it not equal condescension that brings the mighty Spirit of grace down to dwell with stubborn, unruly, wild asses’ colts, to teach them the mystery of the kingdom, and make them know the wonders of a Savior’s love?

Furthermore, my brethren, forget not how much we owe to the Spirit’s consolation, how much has He manifested His love to you in cherishing you in all your sicknesses, assisting you in all your labors, and comforting you in all your distresses. He has been a blessed Comforter to me I can testify, when every other comfort failed, when the promise itself seemed empty, when the ministry was void of power, it is then the Holy Spirit has proved a rich comfort unto my soul, and filled my poor heart with peace and joy in believing.

How many times would your heart have broken if the Spirit had not bound it up! How often has He who is your teacher become also your physician, has closed the wounds of your poor bleeding spirit, and has bound up those wounds with the court plaster of the promise, and so has stanchd the bleeding, and has given you back your spiritual health once more.

It does seem to me a marvel that the Holy Ghost should become a Comforter, for comforting is, to many minds, but an inferior work in the church, though really it is not so. To teach, to preach, to command with authority, how many are willing to do this because this is honorable work, but to sit down and bear with the infirmities of the creature, to enter into all the stratagems of unbelief, to find the soul a way of peace in the midst of seas of trouble—this is compassion like a God, that the Holy Spirit should stoop from heaven to become a Comforter of disconsolate spirits.

What! Must He Himself bring the cordial? must He wait upon His sick child and stand by his bed? must He make his bed for him in his affliction? must He carry him in his infirmity? must He breathe continually into him his very breath? Does the Holy Spirit become a waiting servant of the church? Does He become a lamp to enlighten? and does He become a staff on which we may lean? This, I say, should move us to love the Holy Spirit, for we have in all this abundant proofs of His love to us.

Stop not here, beloved, there are larger fields yet beyond, now that we are speaking of the love of the Spirit. Remember how much He loves us when He helps our infirmities. Nay, not only does He help our infirmities, but when we know not what to pray for as we ought He teaches us how to pray, and when “we ourselves groan within ourselves,” then the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered—groans as we should groan, but more audibly, so that our prayer, which else would have been silent, reaches the ears of Christ, and is then presented before His Father’s face.

To *help* our infirmities is a mighty instance of love. When God overcomes infirmity altogether, or removes it, there is something very noble, and grand, and sublime in the deed, when He permits the infirmity to remain and yet works with the infirmity, this is tender compassion indeed.

When the Savior heals the lame man you see His Godhead, but when He walks with the lame man, limping though his gait may be, when He sits with the beggar, when He talks with the publican, when He carries the babe in His bosom, then this helping of infirmities is a manifestation of love almost unequalled. Save Christ's bearing our infirmities upon the tree, and our sins in His own body, I know of no greater or more tender instance of divine love than when it is written, "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities."

Oh how much you owe to the Spirit when you have been on your knees in prayer! You know, my brethren, what it is to be dull and lifeless there, to groan for a word, and yet you cannot find it; to wish for a word and yet the very wish is languid; to long to have desires, and yet all the desire you have is a desire that you may be able to desire. Oh, have you not sometimes, when your desires have been kindled, longed to get a grip at the promise by the hands of faith?

"Oh," you have said, "if I could but plead the promise, all my necessities would be removed and all my sorrows would be allayed," but alas, the promise was beyond your reach. If you touched it with the tip of your finger, you could not grasp it as you desired, you could not plead it, and therefore you came away without the blessing.

But when the Spirit has helped our infirmities, how we have prayed! Why, there have been times when you and I have so grasped the knocker at the gate of mercy, and have let it fall with such tremendous force, that it seemed as if the very gate itself did shake and totter, there have been seasons when we have laid hold upon the angel, have overcome heaven by prayer, have declared we would not let JEHOVAH Himself go except He should bless us.

We have, and we say it without blasphemy, moved the arm that moves the world. We have brought down upon us the eyes that look upon the universe. All this we have done, not by our own strength, but by the might and by the power of the Spirit, and seeing He has so sweetly enabled us, though we have so often forgotten to thank Him, seeing that He has so graciously assisted us though we have often taken all the glory to ourselves instead of giving it to Him, must we not admire His love, and must it not be a fearful sin indeed to grieve the Holy Spirit by whom we are sealed?

Another token of the Spirit's love remains, namely, His indwelling in the saints. We sing in one of our hymns,

"Dost Thou not dwell in all the saints?"

We ask a question which can have but one answer. He does dwell in the heart of all God's redeemed and blood-washed people. And what a condescension is this, that He whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, dwells in your breast, my brother. That breast often covered with rags, may be a breast often agitated with anxious care and thought, a breast too often defiled with sin, and yet He dwells there. The little narrow heart of man, the Holy Spirit has made His palace. Though it is but a cottage, a very hovel, and all unholy and unclean, yet does the Holy Spirit condescend to make the heart of His people His continual abode.

Oh my friends, when I think how often you and I have let the devil in, I wonder the Spirit has not withdrawn from us. The final perseverance of the saints is one of the greatest miracles on record, in fact, it is the sum total of miracles. The perseverance of a saint for a single day is a multitude of miracles of mercy.

When you consider that the Spirit is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and yet He dwells in the heart where sin often intrudes, a heart out of which comes blasphemies, and murders, and all manner of evil thoughts, and concupiscence, what if sometimes He is grieved, and retires and leaves us to ourselves for a season? It is a marvel that He is there at all, for He must be daily grieved with these evil guests, these false traitors, these base intruders who thrust themselves into that little temple which He has honored with His presence, the temple of the heart of man.

I am afraid dear friends, we are too much in the habit of talking of the love of Jesus, without thinking of the love of the Holy Spirit. Now I would not wish to exalt one person of the Trinity above another,

but I do feel this, that because Jesus Christ was a man, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, and therefore there was something tangible in Him that can be seen with the eyes, and handled with the hands, therefore we more readily think of Him, and fix our love on Him, than we do upon the Spirit. But why should it be? Let us love Jesus with all our hearts and let us love the Holy Spirit too. Let us have songs for Him, gratitude for Him.

We do not forget Christ's cross, let us not forget the Spirit's operations. We do not forget what Jesus has done for us, let us always remember what the Spirit does in us. Why do you talk of the love, and grace, and tenderness, and faithfulness of Christ, why do you not say the like of the Spirit? Was ever love like His, that He should visit us? Was ever mercy like His, that He should bear with our ill manners, though constantly repeated by us? Was ever faithfulness like His, that multitudes of sins cannot drive Him away? Was ever power like His, that overcomes all our iniquities, and yet leads us safely on, though hosts of foes within and without would rob us of our Christian life?

***“Oh! the love of the Spirit I sing
By whom is redemption applied.”***

And unto His name be glory forever and ever.

II. This brings me to the second point. Here we have another reason why *we should not grieve the Spirit*. IT IS BY THE HOLY SPIRIT WE ARE SEALED.

“By whom we are sealed unto the day of redemption.” I shall be very brief here. The Spirit Himself is expressed as the seal, even as He Himself is directly said to be the pledge of our inheritance.

The sealing, I think, has a three-fold meaning. It is a sealing of *attestation* or confirmation. I want to know whether I am truly a child of God. The Spirit itself also bears witness with my spirit that I am born of God. I have the writings, the title-deeds of the inheritance that is to come—I want to know whether those are valid, or whether they are true, or whether they are mere counterfeits written out by that old scribe of hell, Master Presumption and Carnal Security.

How am I to know? I look for the seal. After that we have believed on the Son of God, the Father seals us as His children, by the gift of the Holy Ghost. “Now he which hath anointed us is God, who also hath sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.” No faith is genuine which does not bear the seal of the Spirit. No love, no hope can ever save us, except it is sealed with the Spirit of God, for whatever has not His seal upon it is spurious. Faith that is unsealed may be a poison, it may be presumption, but faith that is sealed by the Spirit is true, real, genuine faith.

Never be content, my dear hearers, unless you are sealed, unless you are sure by the inward witness and testimony of the Holy Ghost, that you have been begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. It is possible for a man to know infallibly that he is secure of heaven. He may not only hope so, but he may know it beyond a doubt, and he may know it thus—by being able with the eye of faith to see the seal, the broad stamp of the Holy Spirit set upon his own character and experience. It is a seal of attestation.

In the next place, it is a sealing of *appropriation*. When men put their mark upon an article, it is to show that it is their own. The farmer brands his tools that they may not be stolen. They are his. The shepherd marks his sheep that they may be recognized as belonging to his flock. The king himself puts his broad arrow upon everything that is his property.

So the Holy Spirit puts the broad arm of God upon the hearts of all His people. He seals us. “Thou shalt be mine,” saith the Lord, “in the day when I make up my jewels.” And then the Spirit puts God's seal upon us to signify that we are God's reserved inheritance—His peculiar people, the portion in which His soul delighteth.

But again, by sealing is meant *preservation*. Men seal up that which they wish to have preserved, and when a document is sealed it becomes valid henceforth. Now, it is by the Spirit of God that the Christian is sealed, that he is kept, he is preserved, sealed unto the day of redemption—sealed until

Christ comes fully to redeem the bodies of His saints by raising them from the dead, and fully to redeem the world by purging it from sin, and making it a kingdom unto Himself in righteousness. We shall hold on our way, we shall be saved. The chosen seed cannot be lost, they must be brought home at last, but how? By the sealing of the Spirit. Apart from that they perish, they are undone.

When the last general fire shall blaze out, everything that has not the seal of the Spirit on it shall be burned up. But the men upon whose forehead is the seal shall be preserved. They shall be safe “amid the wreck of matter, and the crash of worlds.” Their spirits, mounting above the flames shall dwell with Christ eternally, and with that same seal in their forehead upon Mount Zion, they shall sing the everlasting song of gratitude and praise. I say this is the second reason why we should love the Spirit and why we should not grieve Him.

III. I come now to the third part of my discourse, namely, THE GRIEVING OF THE SPIRIT.

How may we grieve Him—what will be the sad result of grieving Him—if we have grieved Him, how may we bring Him back again? *How may we grieve the Spirit?* I am now, mark you, speaking of those who love the Lord Jesus Christ. The Spirit of God is in your heart, and it is very, very easy indeed to grieve Him. Sin is as easy as it is wicked.

You may grieve Him by impure thoughts. He cannot bear sin. If you indulge in lascivious expressions, or if even you allow imagination to dote upon any lascivious act, or if your heart goes after covetousness, if you set your heart upon anything that is evil, the Spirit of God will be grieved, for thus I hear Him speaking of Himself. “I love this man, I want to have his heart, and yet he is entertaining these filthy lusts. His thoughts, instead of running after Me, and after Christ, and after the Father, are running after the temptations that are in the world through lust.” And then His Spirit is grieved. He sorrows in His soul because He knows what sorrow these things must bring to our souls.

We grieve Him yet more if we indulge in outward acts of sin. Then is He sometimes so grieved that He takes His flight for a season, for the dove will not dwell in our hearts if we take loathsome carrion in there. A cleanly being is the dove, and we must not strew the place which the dove frequents with filth and mire, if we do He will fly elsewhere. If we commit sin, if we openly bring disgrace upon our religion, if we tempt others to go into iniquity by our evil example, it is not long before the Holy Spirit will begin to grieve.

Again, if we neglect prayer, if our closet door is cob-webbed, if we forget to read the Scriptures, if the leaves of our Bible are almost stuck together by neglect, if we never seek to do any good in the world, if we live merely for ourselves and not for Christ, then the Holy Spirit will be grieved, for thus He saith, “They have forsaken me, they have left the fountain of waters, they have hewn unto themselves broken cisterns.”

I think I now see the Spirit of God grieving, when you are sitting down to read a novel and there is your Bible unread. Perhaps you take down some book of travels, and you forget that you have got a more precious book of travels in the Acts of the apostles and in the story of your blessed Lord and Master. You have no time for prayer, but the Spirit sees you very active about worldly things, and having many hours to spare for relaxation and amusement.

And then He is grieved because He sees that you love worldly things better than you love Him. His spirit is grieved within Him, take care that He does not go away from you, for it will be a pitiful thing for you if He leaves you to yourself.

Again, ingratitude tends to grieve Him. Nothing cuts a man to the heart more than, after having done his utmost for another, he turns around and repays him with ingratitude or insult. If we do not want to be thanked, at least we do love to know that there is thankfulness in the heart upon which we have conferred a boon, and when the Holy Spirit looks into our soul and sees little love to Christ, no gratitude to Him for all He has done for us, then He is grieved.

Again the Holy Spirit is exceedingly grieved by our unbelief. When we distrust the promise He has given and applied, when we doubt the power or the affection of our blessed Lord, then the Spirit says

within Himself, “They doubt My fidelity, they distrust My power, they say Jesus is not able to save unto the uttermost,” thus again is the Spirit grieved.

Oh, I wish the Spirit had an advocate here this morning that could speak in better terms than I can. I have a theme that overmasters me, I seem to grieve for Him, but I cannot make you grieve, nor tell out the grief I feel. In my own soul I keep saying, “Oh, this is just what you have done—you have grieved Him.” Let me make a full and frank confession before you all. I know that too often, I as well as you have grieved the Holy Spirit. Much within us has made that sacred dove to mourn, and my marvel is that He has not taken His flight from us and left us utterly to ourselves.

Now suppose the Holy Spirit is grieved, what is the effect produced upon us? When the Spirit is grieved first, He bears with us. He is grieved again, and again, and again and again, and still He bears with it all. But at last, His grief becomes so excessive, that He says, “I will suspend My operations, I will begone, I will leave life behind Me, but My own actual presence I will take away.”

And when the Spirit of God goes away from the soul and suspends all His operations, what a miserable state we are in. He suspends His instructions, we read the Word, we cannot understand it, we go to our commentaries, they cannot tell us the meaning, we fall on our knees and ask to be taught, but we get no answer, we learn nothing. He suspends His comfort, we used to dance like David before the ark, but now we sit like Job in the ash pit, and scrape our ulcers with a potsherd.

There was a time when His candle shone round about us, but now He is gone, He has left us in the black of darkness. Now He takes from us all spiritual power. Once we could do all things, now we can do nothing. We could slay the Philistines, and lay them heaps upon heaps, but now Delilah can deceive us, and our eyes are put out and we are made to grind in the mill.

We go preaching, and there is no pleasure in preaching, and no good follows it. We go to our tract distributing, and our Sunday school, we might almost as well be at home. There is the machinery there, but there is no love. There is the intention to do good, or perhaps not even that, but alas! there is no power to accomplish the intention. The Lord has withdrawn Himself, His light, His joy, His comfort, His spiritual power, all are gone. And then all our graces flag.

Our graces are much like the flower called the *Hydrangea*, when it has plenty of water it blooms, but as soon as moisture fails, the leaves drop down at once. And so when the Spirit goes away, faith shuts up its flowers, no perfume is exhaled. Then the fruit of our love begins to rot and drops from the tree, then the sweet buds of our hope become frostbitten and they die.

Oh, what a sad thing it is to lose the Spirit. Have you never, my brethren, been on your knees and have been conscious that the Spirit of God was not with you, and what awful work it has been to groan, and cry, and sigh, and yet go away again, and no light to shine upon the promises, not so much as a ray of light through the chink of the dungeon. All forsaken, forgotten, and forlorn, you are almost driven to despair. You sing with Cowper—

*“What peaceful hours I once enjoyed,
How sweet their memory still!
But they have left an aching void,
The world can never fill.*

*“Return, Thou sacred dove, return,
Sweet messenger of rest,
I hate the sins that made Thee mourn,
And drove Thee from my breast.*

*“The dearest idol I have known,
Whate’er that idol be,
Help me to tear it from its throne,
And worship only Thee.”*

Ah! sad enough it is to have the Spirit drawn from us. But my brethren, I am about to say something with the utmost charity, which perhaps, may look severe, but nevertheless, I must say it. The churches of the present day are very much in the position of those who have grieved the Spirit of God, for the Spirit deals with churches just as it does with individuals.

Of these late years how little has God wrought in the midst of His churches. Throughout England, at least some four or five years ago, an almost universal torpor had fallen upon the visible body of Christ. There was a little action, but it was spasmodic, there was no real vitality. Oh! how few sinners were brought to Christ, how empty had our places of worship become, our prayer meetings were dwindling away to nothing, and our church meetings were mere matters of farce.

You know right well that this is the case with many London churches to this day, and there be some that do not mourn about it. They go up to their accustomed place, and the minister prays, and the people either sleep with their eyes or else with their hearts, and they go out, and there is never a soul saved. The pool of baptism is seldom stirred, but the saddest part of all is this, the churches are willing to have it so. They are not earnest to get a revival of religion.

We have been doing something, the church at large has been doing something. I will not just now put my finger upon what the sin is, but there has been something done which has driven the Spirit of God from us. He is grieved and He is gone. He is present with us here, I thank His name, He is still visible in our midst. He has not left us. Though we have been as unworthy as others, yet has He given us a long outpouring of His presence.

These five years or more we have had a revival which is not to be exceeded by any revival upon the face of the earth. Without cries or shoutings, without fallings down or swooning, steadily God adds to this church numbers upon numbers, so that your minister's heart is ready to break with very joy when he thinks how manifestly the Spirit of God is with us.

But brethren, we must not be content with this, we want to see the Spirit poured out on all churches. Look at the great gatherings that there were in St. Paul's, and Westminster Abbey, and Exeter Hall, and other places, how was it that no good was done, or so very little? I have watched with anxious eye, and I have never from that day forth heard of but one conversion, and that in St. James' Hall, from all these services. Strange it seems. The blessing may have come in larger measure than we know, but not in so large a measure as we might have expected, if the Spirit of God had been present with all the ministers.

Oh would that we may live to see greater things than we have ever seen yet. Go home to your houses, humble yourselves before God, you members of Christ's church, and cry aloud that He will visit His church, and that He would open the windows of heaven and pour out His grace upon His thirsty hill of Zion, that nations may be born in a day, that sinners may be saved by thousands—that Zion may travail and may bring forth children.

Oh! there are signs and tokens of a coming revival. We have heard but lately of a good work among the Ragged School boys of St. Giles's, and our soul has been glad on account of that, and the news from Ireland comes to us like good tidings, not from a far country, but from a sister province of the kingdom. Let us cry aloud to the Holy Spirit, who is certainly grieved with His church, and let us purge our churches of everything that is contrary to His Word and to sound doctrine, and then the Spirit will return, and His power shall be manifest.

And now, in conclusion, there may be some of you here who have lost the visible presence of Christ with you, who have in fact so grieved the Spirit that He has gone. It is a mercy for you to know that the Spirit of God never leaves His people finally, He leaves them for chastisement, but not for damnation. He sometimes leaves them that they may get good by knowing their own weakness, but He will not leave them finally to perish.

Are you in a state of backsliding, declension, and coldness? Harken to me for a moment, and God bless the words. Brethren, stay not a moment in a condition so perilous, be not easy for a single second in the absence of the Holy Ghost. I beseech you, use every means by which that Spirit may be brought back to you.

Once more, let me tell you distinctly what the means are. Search out for the sin that has grieved the Spirit, give it up, slay that sin upon the spot, repent with tears and sighs, continue in prayer, and never rest satisfied until the Holy Ghost comes back to you. Frequent an earnest ministry, get much with earnest saints, but above all, be much in prayer to God, and let your daily cry be, "Return, return, O Holy Spirit return, and dwell in my soul." Oh! I beseech you be not content till that prayer is heard, for you have become weak as water, and faint and empty while the Spirit has been away from you.

Oh! it may be there are some here this morning with whom the Spirit has been striving during the past week. Oh, yield to Him, resist Him not, grieve Him not, but yield to Him. Is He saying to you now "Turn to Christ"? Listen to Him, obey Him, He moves you. Oh I beseech you do not despise Him. Have you resisted Him many a time, then take care you do not again, for there may come a last time when the Spirit may say, "I will go unto My rest, I will not return unto him, the ground is accursed, it shall be given up to barrenness."

Oh! hear the word of the Gospel, ere you separate, for the Spirit speaks effectually to you now in this short sentence—"Repent and be converted everyone of you, that your sins may be blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord," and hear this solemn sentence, "He that believeth in the Lord Jesus, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." May the Lord grant that we may not grieve the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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.