

THE FAMILY LIKENESS

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“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.”

Romans 8:14

WE shall do well to notice how much in this chapter is ascribed to the Holy Spirit. It is a chapter full of all good things, most instructive and consolatory. But perhaps one of its most notable points is this—that it so greatly magnifies the Holy Spirit. You observe in the second verse how it describes His gifts—that holy liberty which we now have from our former bondage—“the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.”

Then further on, in the sixth verse, it virtually ascribes all our true life to the same power, for it is the Spirit who works in us a spiritual mind—and the apostle tells us that “to be spiritually-minded is life and peace.” The quickening of the body is, in the eleventh verse, ascribed to the same agency, “He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.”

Meanwhile the true living that we have even here is traced to that same Spirit, “If ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.” No holy life is there, except as through the Spirit—sin is mortified. In the sixteenth verse, the Spirit is described as being “a witness with our spirit” that we are born of God. How many gracious offices does He undertake for us!

And as if that were not enough, in the twenty-sixth verse He is spoken of as “helping our infirmities” in prayer, teaching us what we should pray for as we ought and “making intercession for us, or in us, according to the will of God.” I am afraid we don’t render that honor to the blessed Spirit which He deserves. Our ministry is not deficient, I trust, in magnifying the Christ of God, but too often the Holy Spirit is not sufficiently honored and perhaps, this may be a reason why He does not do so many mighty works in the Christian church as He did at first.

This is the dispensation of the Spirit. He dwells in us. He dwells in the church. Let us honor Him. Let us grieve Him no more, but put ourselves beneath His guidance and wait for His blessing. Our text ascribes to the Holy Spirit leading. Those who have been quickened and made to live, and introduced, therefore, into the family of God, have one mark—one never-failing mark. They all have it, and none others ever have it. As many as are led by the Spirit, they are the sons of God, and all who are the sons of God are led by the Spirit of God.

Now it is to this leading of the Spirit rather than to the sonship, and all the blessed things that come out of that, that I shall direct your attention at this time.

And we shall notice first—

I. WHAT IS INTENDED BY A MAN’S BEING LED BY THE SPIRIT.

Every man is led by some spirit. There is an evil spirit in the world, and it leads the mass of mankind. He who says, “I am free and led by none,” is led by the spirit of pride and self-conceit. Under some form or another, the human mind subjects itself to some spiritual sway—and here we are told that those who are the sons of God are distinguished by this—that the leadership under which they move is that of the Holy Spirit.

I take this to mean, first, that *the Holy Spirit becomes the governing principle of our life*. Years ago we were led by the Spirit from the wilderness of our natural state. We had been called under the preaching of the Word, but vain were those calls. The Holy Spirit came and then the call of the preacher

became an effectual call to our own souls. The first active grace we ever exercised was by the leading of the Holy Spirit.

We were then for the first time recognized as the children of God, because then also for the first time we yielded ourselves up to the leadership of the Holy Ghost. And mark, from that day to this, every act of ours that has been heavenward, every thought of ours that has been towards God and His Christ, has been under the leadership of that same Spirit. He who gave us at first to live has kept us alive. He who guided our tottering footsteps to the cross-foot and there sealed our pardon, has led us along every step of the way, up every hill of difficulty, and down every valley of humiliation, even until this moment. And so it must be until we reach our journey's end.

There may be steps in that journey, alas! that it should be so! in which we are not led by the Spirit, but depart from under His power for a while, and the flesh becomes dominant. Oh! that those steps might never be thought of except with bitter regret and humiliation of spirit. But in every true step onward and heavenward between here and the pearl-gate we shall be led by the Spirit of God. We run when He draws. We are active when He makes us active. He makes us willing in the day of His power and then we work with Him because He works in us here, to will and to do of His own good pleasure.

Now, beloved, you may judge whether you are the sons of God then by asking yourselves this question, "Am I under the influence of the blessed Spirit? Has He led me from darkness into light—from self to the Savior? And has He continued to lead me onward and upward in the divine life, and am I leaning upon Him for all future power with which I shall fulfill my pilgrimage till I come to the celestial city?"

But opening up a little further this leadership, I would observe that when a man is said to be led, *there are four things implied in the thought*. The first one is very apparent, namely, *guidance*. If I select a pilot, I accept him to steer the vessel. If, on a dark moorland, I accept a guide who knows the way, I do not pretend to know it myself, but I put myself exactly under his guidance.

It is so with the child of God. He does not know. What he thinks he knows is usually his folly, if it be knowledge that has not been given to him by the Holy Spirit. But he who is under the guidance of the Holy Spirit takes Christ to be unto him wisdom, and expects to receive this wisdom through the Holy Spirit taking of the things of Christ and revealing them unto him.

He is not a teacher, but a disciple. He is not himself a guide, but one who is guided. He has put himself into the hands of another. Self-will does not believe this. Self-love is disgusted with the thought. I may, therefore, ask you, beloved, "Do you accept the Holy Spirit's guidance? Do you desire to be led, not according to your own will, but according to the will of the Most High? Are you desirous that the prayer of your Master should be your prayer, 'Not as I will, but as thou wilt'?" Guidance—we must accept that, or we are not led by Him.

But in the second place, there is *drawing* as well as guidance, for oftentimes when a person is led, especially if it be a weaker led by a stronger, there is a general impulse. I accept the map as my guide, but the map is not my leader. A leader gives me some degree of strength. He operates upon me gently and sweetly—impels me in the direction in which he would have me go.

There is a great difference between a guide and a leader—but still there is a measure of power given by a leader who leads in the way. And oh! brethren, I am sure you who know anything about the experience of children of God, will feel that you have not only had light from the blessed Spirit to show you the way, but you have had life and power to help you to run in the way, else you would have known the right way, but you would never have followed it—you would have seen the way of God's commandments, but you would never have run in them, unless He, the blessed Spirit, had enlarged your heart.

If there be obedience to the light received, that obedience is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. Not merely the knowledge and the acquiescence in the knowledge of God's will, but the power to carry out that will comes from Him, and from Him only. Now I think we may say that in leading, there is something more than guidance—drawing.

There comes in yet a third point. Under the idea of leadership is that of *government*. Moses was the leader of the children of Israel through the wilderness. He was, as a leader, their ruler—and if the idea of government does not always attach to being led, yet it certainly does in this case. The Holy Spirit will never guide us along a road in which we claim to be His equal, in which we claim to be still free, and to have no authority above us.

He is the spirit's regent, the Lord and Governor within the soul of every man in whom He resides and on whom He bestows His guidance. I will ask you, my dear brother, whether you do not acknowledge this to be the fact. You are often rebellious against the Spirit and you often grieve Him, but still, for all that, your heart desires—your renewed heart desires—fully to submit to the Holy Ghost.

I feel in my own heart a longing to be sensitive to every impulse of the blessed Spirit, to feel His breath not only when He comes like a hurricane, but also when He comes as a gentle zephyr. I would desire to be moved by the Spirit's faintest wish, and to have my soul cognizant of the Spirit's work within—pliable, malleable, so as to be easily molded, plastic beneath His divine touch. And you are not led by the Spirit unless it be your wish—unless you put yourself under His government as well as under His guidance.

And fourthly, this *being led implies acquiescence* in the government, and in the guidance, and in the drawing—for a person is not led unless he acquiesces in the drawing and runs when he is drawn. The Spirit of God never violates the free agency of man. It has been commonly laid to the charge of those who preach Calvinistic doctrine that we make it out that man is passive and that the will is nowhere.

I do not know who may have said so, but certainly the master theologians of our school have always endeavored carefully to show that the Holy Spirit works in us to will and to do, yet never so as to treat man as if he were not a free agent. God does not deal with man as with blocks of wood or stone. He deals with men as men. He has His will with them—His sovereign and ever blessed will, but He does not violate their will.

There is a casket—it is locked. Soon it is opened. Now he that made that casket opens it with a key and does not violate the lock, nor even the most delicate ward of the lock. It is only the thief that comes with his crowbar and rifles it, and violates its constitution. And so God knows how to put spiritual life, and grace, and obedience into the human heart without destroying the fact that it was a human heart and that it had a free choice.

He makes us willing in the day of His power. It is not that the day of His power is one of physical might, but of moral and spiritual might, so that we are made *willing* to do what once we would abhor to do. Now a man, then, whose religion leaves him passive cannot prove that he is a child of God because he is drawn by the Spirit, for it is as many as are led.

Now to be led means that you are willing to go. To be led means that, as you begin to feel the gentle drawing of the guide, you follow—not always with equal footsteps, but still with willing steps, desirous to go in the way He indicates. Beloved, is it so with you, or no? Do you yield to His guidance? Do you desire to submit to all His government? Do you wish to work with Him, and He with you—working out your own salvation—to will and to do according to His good pleasure? If so, you are one of the sons of God.

But now, secondly—

II. INTO WHAT DOES THE HOLY SPIRIT LEAD US?

It is a subject that would take many discourses. Therefore, very briefly, let us say He leads *us into the truth of the faith, into holiness of life, and into peacefulness of spirit*. You shall know His guidance. He leads us *into the truth of the faith*.

If any receives error, it is not by the teaching of the Holy Spirit. And if, on the other hand, any man shall be able to enter into the soul, and marrow, and essence of truth, flesh and blood have not revealed it unto him, but the Spirit of the living God has done so. Believe me, you have learned nothing if you have learnt it of the flesh. You may take a creed and suppose it to be perfection. You may also have it explained to you in the clearest manner, but if all your learning of Christian doctrine comes from that

catechism or creed, or the instruction of the minister—and if that Spirit of God has not sent it into your soul—you have learnt nothing aright yet.

We want to have truth burned into us, right into our very nature before we know it—for half of the things we think we believe we don't believe, and indeed, nothing is really grasped, truly laid hold of, by a living faith until the Holy Spirit leads us into the truth. Beloved, are you staggered by a doctrine of God's Word? Are you as yet a beginner in the divine mystery? Then wait upon the blessed Spirit with this prayer, "Open, thou, mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law, and what I know not, teach thou me."

At the same time I have said that the Spirit of God leads men *into holiness of life*. There have been occasions in which men have performed actions which were unjustifiable and have said that they were moved thereto by the Holy Spirit. Such men lie, for the pure and Holy Spirit could never be the author of sin. No suggestion of His was, or could be, otherwise than pure and heavenly.

I remember hearing of a brother who, one very cold winter, being very poor, felt it laid on his soul, he said, to remember that text, "All things are yours." It was one cold morning and there was no fire to warm himself by, nor for his little family, and this text came again and again, "All things are yours." And it rushed into his mind then that he might go to the woodstack of a neighboring farmer, and take just a few logs to put on his own hearth, for, "All things are yours."

He thought it was the Spirit and away he went to the woodstack, and was just about to select a few likely logs when this other text came into his mind, "Thou shalt not steal," and in a moment he dropped his purpose and felt ashamed that he should have imputed to the Holy Spirit what was inconsistent with the will of God.

Ah! your nature, wandering and vain, would be glad enough to try and get the patronage of the Holy Spirit to its vagaries, but it must not be. He is the Spirit of holiness, and He leads us in the right way—into the way everlasting—and let us not so insult His holy and blessed name by daring to lay any of our wanderings to Him. He leads us into holiness of life. No man ever goes wrong who is guided by the Spirit, and no man ever attains unto true holiness but as the result of the work of the Holy Ghost upon his understanding and his whole character.

But I say it again, that the Holy Spirit leads us *into peace of mind*, and so assuredly He does into a peace that is altogether independent of outward circumstances. He can give His children peace when the tempest lowers. They shall have peace when all others are at war. Their hearts shall not be troubled because they believe in God and rest in His grace. Peace with God.

The Spirit leads us to peace with our fellow creatures—peace with our own conscience. His ways are ways of peace. Wherever He conducts us, peace in the end shall be the sure result. When I meet with a very quarrelsome person and he says that he is led by the Spirit to fight, and to indulge a bad temper, and sharply to criticize and bitterly condemn, he may be led by *a* spirit, but certainly not by *the* Spirit of the ever blessed God.

The spirit that is in us lusts into envy, but the Spirit of God is first pure, and next peaceable. And if we are not peaceable, we are not led by the great peace-giving Spirit of God. There is room for much more, but I will not enlarge. These are, however, the main things into which He leads us.

Now, in the third place—

III. HOW DOES HE LEAD US?

In what way are the monitions of the Holy Spirit conveyed to those that are led by Him? How does He speak unto the sons of God? We are not to understand this of inspiration, or of dreams and visions, for if none were sons of God but those who receive these, surely many of the very best of the divine family would lose their title to sonship.

And I fear, on the other hand, that there are some who think they have seen visions and dreamed dreams, and have had remarkable manifestations, who are probably more the children of Bedlam than the children of Bethel. I rather consider that they have lost their senses than gained the graces of the Spirit. Certainly there are no things that more perplex us than the graces of many persons who think

themselves spoken to of God, but rather have a ringing in their ears, or a whispering in their heads, but nothing more. How does the Spirit of God then, lead His people?

I would reply, first of all, *by the Word*. This is the “more sure word of testimony, whereunto ye do well that ye do take heed as unto a lamp that shines in a dark place.” If any man would know the will of God by the Spirit, let him come to the Word that is written here—let him search this to know what is God’s mind, for, “holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Spirit.”

We are not to expect new revelation. The old is perfect and complete. There is a curse pronounced upon whosoever should add to it or take from it. Let us accept it as the complete mind of God so far, at any rate, as He sees fit to reveal it to us. The Holy Spirit speaks to us through the Word. But it is not through the bare letter of the Word, for in this He does not always speak.

Many an eye has glanced over the Word and seen none of the mind of the Spirit there. Ay, and many an eye of a true believer, too, has read and read again, and missed the glory of the passage, so that the Spirit does not always speak through the Word to us, or through the same word to the same person at all times, but He sheds a light over a certain part of the chapter, He illuminates it, lights it up, and then puts it to our souls with power.

And those who are Bereans and search the Scripture, shall come upon choice passages—words that shall make their hearts burn within them, texts that shall leap out of the page and embrace them, and whisper in their ear sweet loving words—and kiss them with the kisses of Christ’s lips over again. It is in the Word, opened up of the Spirit, that we get His joy and guidance.

Sometimes that will occur under the preaching of the Gospel when the Lord gives to His servants power to speak His mind and they are His mouth. Then it is that hearts made ready “receive with meekness the engrafted Word,” and hearts are guided, and led, and directed. It may not be, however, by a minister at all—it may be by the words read in some book in connection with an explanation, or it may be the Word itself, which, for some peculiar reason unknown to us (the work of the Spirit of God), may appear to us to be more full of meaning than ever it was before.

“But” says one, “I perceive that we learn God’s mind and are led by the Word of God as thus illuminated by the Holy Spirit. But suppose there are certain difficulties and I should want to know what is the proper course—how and in what way shall I learn the mind of the Spirit?” Brother, God does not treat us now altogether as little children, and give us, by Urim and Thummim, this or that direction. But He treats us as in a spiritual dispensation, somewhat more advanced than were His people under the legal types and ceremonies.

And He does not say, “This is the way: walk ye in it,” in so many words, but He does just this—if you distrust your own wisdom, go to Him in prayer and ask His guidance. You shall then take the question and consider it. That very consideration will be a help to you to go rightly, for haste is usually un wisdom. That consideration shall of itself assist you and you will then look at it in this light. If there be anything untruthful, then I cannot touch that. If there is anything unholy, then I cannot touch that. If my motive for such a course is purely selfish, then I feel I cannot do that.

But if it is a path of wisdom consistent with truth, and righteousness, and the glory of God, then, at any rate, it is not closed to me. And if there be two of the like kind—and here the difficulty will be—I will now go to God again and ask Him to do something over and above what He ordinarily does through His Word, namely, *direct me either by some providential circumstance, or by some advice that shall be tendered to me by a Christian friend, or by some direct impulse upon my will* to make me do that which He would have me to do.

Very few—none, I will venture to say—have ever gone wrong when they have thus consulted God and desired to be led aright. Something has occurred which has drifted them from the path they have chosen and has drifted them into the path that they would have chosen had they been possessed of the wisdom of the infinite.

Strangely, too, minds have been impelled to courses that did not seem to be wise, but they have turned out to be wise when those minds have humbly followed what they believed to be the impulse of

the Holy Spirit. But I am persuaded there are many occasions in a Christian's life when, if he waits upon God, God will as distinctly move and guide him as ever He did the prophets of old—and there shall be direct communication between the Holy Ghost and the believer's soul.

I am sure, unless I have been fearfully deceived, that I have often felt the motions of God's Spirit in that particular form. I have, by His grace, been enabled to obey them, and I here confess that, whenever any project has been carried out by this church and it has been successful, whenever we have attempted any new work for God, if anyone has said that I was wise in having suggested it, I can only reply that I never took the initiative. I have been the creature of the circumstances that God has put around me. I have been led and driven by a power superior to mine before which I have bowed—and if there has been any success resting upon the course I have followed, it is because I have waited always to be guided and have never wished to go before the cloud.

And you shall find that every man whose life has been happy before God will tell you that if at any moment there has been the wrong and the unhappiness, it has been when he has not sought counsel, and has been his own master, instead of waiting upon the Most High. I speak thus of myself only, for one knows one's own course best, and can speak with authority there. And sometimes the example of one Christian may be a help to others.

Wait on the Lord and keep His way, and He will establish you in due time. He has not closed the door of His counsel, but will still direct His people. Jesus is to this day The Wonderful, The Counselor, and you may seek guidance at His hands and find it too.

And now, once again, *what are the excellencies of being under such a leadership?* They are very many. *It supplies a great need.* We are as sheep going astray, and astray we shall always go till a good shepherd leads us. It is ennobling to have such a leader. Every man under a leader participates in some degree in the honorableness of him who leads him. How sweet it is to feel that the Holy Spirit leads you!

The greatest and wisest of men, Solomon himself—well, one would feel honor by sitting at the feet of so wise a man, but oh! the honor of being guided by the Spirit of God! The poor woman whom Cowper describes—

*“Yon cottager who weaves at her own door,
Pillow and bobbins all her little store,
Who knew—and knew no more—her Bible true,”*

and who waited upon God each day for guidance, was nobler far than Voltaire, who did guide himself, but who guided himself into a maze of doubt and darkness. Put your little hand into the hand of the great Father of all spirits, whose wisdom is infinite, and the compact ennoble you.

And *how elevating it is to be led by the Spirit.* To be led by the world is groveling. To be led by ambition is a poor foolish thing. To be led by the noblest of human spirits is, after all, only to rise to the level of man. But to be led by God! He never lowers the tone of thought in us, but elevates us and makes even our most common actions to be divine, seeing they are done in His might.

O dear brethren, if we are led by the Spirit of God, we are as high as the angels are in heaven, ay, higher than they, for unto none of them has He said that they are the sons of God. “Those who are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.”

Let us add *how safe this guidance is.* There are no errors where He leads—all our mistakes are ours. Our blunders in doctrine, and our follies in life, and our divergences from the paths of peace—these are our own. If we would but follow Him, our life would be clean, and pure, and perfect.

And *how blessed it is to have Him for a leader!* What happiness it gives! He comforts, He enlightens, He instructs, He sanctifies. To be near to Him is to be near to heaven. To be completely under His guidance is to be perpetually happy. Oh! happy people, whose God is the Lord, and whose leader is the Holy Ghost!

And now in closing, perhaps there are some here who will say—

IV. “HOW CAN I OBTAIN THIS BLESSING OF BEING LED OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD?”

The answer is, first, dear brother, you must *have* the Spirit of God. No man is led by the Spirit till he *has* the Spirit. “Ye must be born again.” Unrenewed men cannot be led by the Spirit. He never leads the flesh—it is enmity against God, and can never be otherwise. The old nature, it is not possible even for the Holy Holy Ghost to lead. It would perpetually turn to lust.

There must be a new nature. The Holy Spirit must create us anew in Christ Jesus—we must have the Spirit, or else we cannot be led by Him. It is your difficulty, then, O unrenewed men and women, that you must have the Spirit of God, or else vain will be your prayer to be led by the Spirit of God. The blessing is that He is already given to as many of you as believe in the name of Jesus Christ.

And this evening, if you have never believed before, may you be led to trust in the Son of God. But you must have the Spirit before you can be led by the Spirit. If again you say, “But how can I obtain this blessing?” I would say, “Distrust yourself now.” Up to this good hour you have been a self-made man—you have believed in self-reliance. There is some truth in that in a certain sense, but as before the living God there is no man who is less a man than he who trusts himself. You shall be as cursed as the heath in the desert which sees not when good comes. Your strength shall, by and by, utterly fail you. You are not wise, though you whisper to yourself that you are. The fact that you believe you are wise proves that you are a fool.

Can you believe this? It is a part of the work of the Gospel to make you empty. You cannot be full till you are. *You cannot be led by the Spirit till you are willing to be led*—and that will never be till, first of all, you see that you want leading. Oh! may He come and convince you of your folly, of your wandering, of your ignorance—and then laid low at His dear feet, Jesus Christ shall give you His Spirit and lead you in the way of His salvation. May this distrust happen to you tonight, if it never has done so before.

Then if you would still be guided, but feel that you are not led by the Spirit, I would say to you, dear brother, *consult the Word of God more than you do*. If you have the Spirit, but don’t feel that you are led by Him, but that, with desires to do right, you are often wrong—be a greater searcher of the Word of God. This is not the age in which the Bible is much read. I suppose there are more Bibles in England than any other book, but there are fewer Bible readers probably than of any other book.

And yet the Bible readers are more numerous than the Bible searchers. I hardly remember a passage that bids you read, but I do remember a passage that says, “Search the scriptures.” May we become students of the Word, desirous to know the meaning—and then we shall feel the Spirit of God instructing us through the Word and we shall be led by Him.

And add to this reading of the Scriptures *abundant prayer*. Again must I sorrow that there is so little prayer among us. God grant that prayer meetings may begin to be better attended, and that family prayer may be more regarded, and that private prayer may be more diligently and more spiritually maintained. We shall not be led as a church and as individuals by the Spirit of God if we get out of His way, and neglect His Word, and neglect to draw near to Him in prayer.

What is the reason why there are so many sects in the world? Surely it must be because we don’t follow the guidance of the Spirit of God. If we followed the Word of God and the will of God in all things, we should be very much more alike than we are. I do not think that even then we should all run in the same groove, for the road to heaven may be sufficiently wide to have several different paths in it, and yet they shall all be in the same way and in the same road.

But the great divergencies—surely they must have come from this—that the church did not want to be guided by the Spirit. She did not go to the Spirit’s book, nor go to the throne of grace to be guided—she followed first this saint and then the other, this learned doctor and then the other, and to this day you shall hear debates about all sorts of methods of working and human authorities as if that were of any consequence at all.

What has that to do with religion? This book, the Bible, and the Bible alone, is the religion of Protestants. And you shall have thrown before you the tenets of Independency, and the minutes of the

Wesleyan Conference, or some dogma of close communion or open communion of the Baptist church. To the dogs with it all!

What matters it all—what rules and regulations we may pass? The Word of God and the Spirit of God only should have power in the church of our Lord Jesus Christ, and happy will the day be when we shall dash down everything traditional, however venerable it may be, when we shall tear to pieces and utterly abhor all that came of wise, and learned, and good men, if it were contrary to the mind of the Spirit of God. I would that all Christians more fully in this respect were willing to be led by the Spirit of God.

But beloved brethren, there are some Christian people who don't want to know too much of their Master's will. There are some awkward texts in the Bible that some people don't like to read, because they know that certain learned doctors did not square them somehow or other with their creed, but that it was rather a twist and a squeeze, and they feel it was rather a wrench to the text, and so they don't often read it.

And certain ordinances too. Many Christian people have certain beliefs and traditions about them, but they never come to the Book of God to see what it says. And so with every ordinance, whatever it may be—baptism, confirmation, auricular confession—what you will, if the Spirit of God has not taught it, we know nothing of it.

But are we willing, all of us all round now, to learn what the Spirit of God would teach us, honestly and truly? Can all of us say, to whatever creed we belong, "I am a disciple at the feet of Jesus, and I desire to submit all my belief entirely to the instructions of the divine Spirit"? We ought to say this, and must, or we lack one mark of being the sons of God.

And when all through the Christian church this shall be the spirit, there will come a fusing—a separating between the precious and the vile, a casting away of all old beliefs and old traditions. I do not believe for a moment that the church will come to believe as I believe, or as you believe, my dear brother.

You will have something wrong to give up and I shall have something wrong to give up. We ought to desire to give up everything which is wrong and to learn everything which we do not know yet to be the truth, and which is the truth—may we all be brought there, kept there, held there—led by the Spirit, not tethered down by a creed, not tied hand and foot by a certain commentary, not made to say, "There, that is all I ever will believe under any circumstances," but led by the Spirit through His Word and through the enlightenment which He is sure to give to as many as put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Oh! that every sinner here were led to resign himself now to the Holy Spirit's will, for He would lead him to the cross at once! The Holy Ghost never leads a man into self-righteousness, never leads him to put his trust in sacraments, but leads him right away to the feet of Jesus. May the Holy Spirit there guide you and all of us, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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