

# THE HOLY SPIRIT—THE GREAT TEACHER

## NO. 50

A SERMON  
 DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, NOVEMBER 18, 1855,  
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 AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

*“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth:  
 for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak:  
 and he will show you things to come.”*

*John 16:13.*

THIS generation has gradually, and almost imperceptibly, become to a great extent a godless generation. One of the diseases of the present generation of mankind is their secret but deep-seated godlessness, by which they have so far departed from the knowledge of God. Science has discovered to us second causes and hence, many have too much forgotten the first Great Cause, the Author of all. They have been able so far to pry into secrets, that the great axiom of the existence of a God, has been too much neglected. Even among professing Christians, while there is a great amount of religion, there is too little godliness. There is much external formalism, but too little inward acknowledgment of God, too little living on God, living with God, and relying upon God. Hence arises the sad fact that when you enter many of our places of worship, you will certainly hear the name of God mentioned, but except in the benediction, you would scarcely know there was a Trinity. In many places dedicated to JEHOVAH, the name of Jesus is too often kept in the background. The Holy Spirit is almost entirely neglected and very little is said concerning His sacred influence. Even religious men have become to a large degree godless in this age. We sadly require more preaching regarding God. More preaching of those things which look not so much at the creature to be saved, as at God the Great One to be praised. My firm conviction is that in proportion as we have more regard for the sacred Godhead, the wondrous Trinity in Unity, shall we see a greater display of God's power and a more glorious manifestation of His might in our churches. May God send us a Christ-exalting, Spirit-loving ministry. Men who shall proclaim God the Holy Spirit in all His offices and shall extol God the Savior as the author and finisher of our faith, not neglecting that Great God, the Father of His people, who, before all worlds, elected us in Christ His Son, justified us through His righteousness, and will inevitably preserve us and gather us together in one, in the consummation of all things at the last great day.

Our text has regard to God the Holy Spirit. Of Him we shall speak and Him only, if His sweet influence shall rest upon us.

The disciples had been instructed by Christ concerning certain elementary doctrines, but Jesus did not teach His disciples more than what we should call the A B C of religion. He gives His reasons for this in the twelfth verse, “I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now.” His disciples were not possessors of the Spirit. They had the Spirit as far as the work of conversion was concerned, but not as to the matters of bright illumination, profound instruction, prophecy, and inspiration. He says, “I am now about to depart and when I go from you, I will send the Comforter unto you. You cannot bear these things, now. Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth.” The same promise that He made to His apostles, stands good to all His children, and in reviewing it, we shall take it as our portion and heritage, and shall not consider ourselves intruders upon the manor of the apostles, or upon their exclusive rights and prerogatives. For we conceive that Jesus says even to us, “When he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth.”

Dwelling exclusively upon our text, we have five things to say. First of all, here is *an attainment mentioned*—a knowledge of all truth. Secondly, here is *a difficulty suggested*—which is that we need

guidance into all truth. Thirdly, here is *a person provided*, “When he, the Spirit shall come, he shall guide you into all truth.” Fourthly, here is *a manner hinted at*, “He shall guide you into all truth.” Fifthly, here is *a sign given as to the working of the Spirit*—we may know whether He works, by His “guiding us into *all truth*”—into all of *one thing*. Not *truths*, but *truth*.

I. Here is AN ATTAINMENT MENTIONED, which is a knowledge of all truth.

We know that some conceive doctrinal knowledge to be of very little importance and of no practical use. We do not think so. We believe the science of Christ crucified and a judgment of the teachings of Scripture to be exceedingly valuable. We think it is right that the Christian ministry should not only be awakening, but instructing. Not merely awakening, but enlightening—that it should appeal not only to the passions but to the understanding. We are far from thinking doctrinal knowledge to be of secondary importance. We believe it to be one of the first things in the Christian life, to know the truth and then to practice it. We scarcely need this morning to tell you how desirable it is for us to be well-taught in things of the kingdom.

First of all, *nature itself* (when it has been sanctified by grace) *gives us a strong desire to know all truth*. The natural man separates himself and intermeddles with all knowledge. God has put an instinct in him by which he is rendered unsatisfied if he cannot probe a mystery to its bottom. He can never be content until he can unriddle secrets. What we call curiosity is something given us of God impelling us to search into the knowledge of natural things. That curiosity, sanctified by the Spirit, is also brought to bear in matters of heavenly science and celestial wisdom. “Bless the Lord,” said David, “O my soul, and *all that is within me*, bless his holy name!” If there is a curiosity within us, it ought to be employed and developed in a search after truth. “All that is within me,” sanctified by the Spirit, should be developed and verily, the Christian feels an intense longing to bury his ignorance and receive wisdom. If he, when in his natural estate, panted for terrestrial knowledge, how much more ardent is the wish to unravel, if possible, the sacred mysteries of God’s Word!

A true Christian is always intently reading and searching the Scripture that he may be able to certify himself as to its main and cardinal truths. I do not think much of that man who does not wish to understand doctrines. I cannot conceive him to be in a right position when he thinks it does not matter whether he believes a lie or truth, whether he is heretic or orthodox, whether he received the Word of God as it is written, or as it is diluted and misconstrued by man. God’s Word will ever be to a Christian a source of great anxiety. A sacred instinct within will lead him to pry into it. He will seek to understand it. Oh! there are some who forget this—men who purposely abstain from mentioning what are called high doctrines, because they think if they should mention high doctrines they would be dangerous. So they keep them back. Foolish men! They do not know anything of human nature, for if they did understand a grain’s worth of humanity, they would know that the hiding of these things compels men to search them out. From the fact that they do not mention them, they drive men to places where these and these only, are preached. They say, “If I preach election and predestination, and these dark things, people will all go straight away and become Antinomians.” I am not so sure if they were to be called Antinomians, it would hurt them much, but hear me, oh, you ministers that conceal these truths, that is the way to make them Antinomians, by silencing these doctrines. Curiosity is strong—if you tell them they must not pluck the truth, they will be sure to do it. But if you give it to them as you find it in God’s Word, they will not seek to “wrest” it. Enlightened men *will* have the truth and if they see election in Scripture, they will say, “*It is there* and I will find it out. If I cannot get it in one place, I will get it in another.” The true Christian has an inward longing and anxiety after it. He is hungry and thirsty after the word of righteousness, and he must and will feed on this bread of heaven, or at all hazards he will leave the husks which unsound divines would offer him.

Not only is this attainment to be desired because nature teaches us so, but a knowledge of all truth is *very essential for our comfort*. I believe that many persons have been distressed half their lives from the fact that they had not clear views of truth. Many poor souls, for instance, under conviction, abide three or four times as long in sorrow of mind as they would require to do if they had someone to instruct them

in the great matter of justification. So there are believers who are often troubling themselves about falling away, but if they knew in their soul the great consolation that we are kept by the grace of God through faith unto salvation, they would be no more troubled about it. So have I found some distressed about the unpardonable sin, but God instructs us in that doctrine and shows us that no conscience that is really awakened ever can commit that sin. But that when it is committed, God gives us up to a seared conscience, so that we never fear or tremble afterwards—all that distress would be alleviated. Depend on this, the more you know of God's truth—all things else being equal—the more comfortable you will be as a Christian. Nothing can give a greater light on your path than a clear understanding of divine things. It is a mangle-mangled Gospel too commonly preached which causes the downcast faces of Christians. Give me the congregation whose faces are bright with joy, let their eyes glisten at the sound of the Gospel, then will I believe that it is God's own words they are receiving. Instead thereof, you will often see melancholy congregations whose visages are not much different from the bitter countenance of poor creatures swallowing medicine, because the word spoken terrifies them by its legality, instead of comforting them by its grace. We love a cheerful Gospel and we think "all the truth" will tend to comfort the Christian.

"Comfort again?" says another, "always comfort." Ah, but there is another reason why we prize truth, because we believe that a true knowledge of all the truth *will keep us very much out of danger*. No doctrine is so calculated to preserve a man from sin as the doctrine of the grace of God. Those who have called it a licentious doctrine did not know anything at all about it. Poor ignorant things, they little knew that their own vile stuff was the most licentious doctrine under heaven. If they knew the grace of God in truth, they would soon see that there was no preservative from lying like a knowledge that we are elect of God from the foundation of the world. There is nothing like a belief in my eternal perseverance and the immutability of my Father's affection, which can keep me near to Him from a motive of simple gratitude. Nothing makes a man so virtuous as belief of truth. A lying doctrine will soon beget a lying practice. A man cannot have an erroneous belief without by-and-by having an erroneous life. I believe the one thing naturally begets the other. Keep near God's truth. Keep near His Word. Keep the head right and especially keep your heart right with regard to truth, and your feet will not go far astray.

Again, I also hold that this attainment to the knowledge of all truth is very desirable for *the usefulness which it will give us in the world at large*. We should not be selfish. We should always consider whether a thing will be beneficial to others. A knowledge of all truth will make us very serviceable in this world. We shall be skillful physicians who know how to take the poor distressed soul aside, to put a finger on his eye and take the scale off for him, that heaven's light may comfort him. There will be no character, however perplexing may be its peculiar phase, but we shall be able to speak to it and comfort it. He who holds the truth is usually the most useful man. As a good Presbyterian brother said to me the other day, "I know God has blessed you exceedingly in gathering in souls, but it is an extraordinary fact that nearly all the men I know—with scarcely an exception—who have been made useful in gathering in souls, have held the great doctrines of the grace of God." Almost every man whom God has blessed to the building up of the church in prosperity, and around whom the people have rallied, has been a man who has held firmly to free grace from first to last, through the finished salvation of Christ. Do you think you need have errors in your doctrine to make you useful? We have some who preach Calvinism during the first part of the sermon and finish up with Arminianism, because they think that will make them useful. Useful nonsense! That is all it is. A man, if he cannot be useful with the truth, cannot be useful with an error. There is enough in the pure doctrine of God without introducing heresies to preach to sinners.

As far as I know, I never felt hampered or cramped in addressing the ungodly in my life. I can speak with as much fervency and yet not in the same style as those who hold the contrary views of God's truth. Those who hold God's Word, never need add something untrue in speaking to men. The sturdy truth of God touches every chord in every man's heart. If we can, by God's grace, put our hand inside a man's

heart, we want nothing but that whole truth to move him thoroughly and to stir him up. There is nothing like the real truth and the whole truth to make a man useful.

**II.** Now, again—here is a DIFFICULTY SUGGESTED, and that is that we require a guide to conduct us into all truth.

The difficulty is that truth is not so easy to discover. There is no man born in this world by nature who has the truth in his heart. There is no creature that ever was fashioned, since the fall, who has a knowledge of truth innate and natural. It has been disputed by many philosophers whether there are such things as innate ideas at all. But it is of no use disputing as to whether there are any innate ideas of truth. There are none such. There are ideas of everything that is wrong and evil, but in us—that is our flesh—there dwells no *good* thing. We are born in sin and shaped in iniquity. In sin did our mother conceive us. There is nothing good in us and no tendency to righteousness. Then since we are not born with the truth, we have the task of searching for it. If we are to be blest by being eminently useful as Christian men, we must be well-instructed in matters of revelation. But here is the difficulty—that we cannot follow without a guide the winding paths of truth. Why this?

First, because of *the very great intricacy of truth itself*. Truth itself is no easy thing to discover. Those who fancy they know everything and constantly dogmatize with the spirit of, “We are the men, and wisdom will die with us,” of course see no difficulties whatever in the system they hold. But I believe the most earnest student of Scripture will find things in the Bible which puzzle him. However earnestly he reads it, he will see some mysteries too deep for him to understand. He will cry out, “Truth! I cannot find you. I know not where you are, you are beyond me. I cannot fully view you.” Truth is a path so narrow that two can scarcely walk together in it. We usually tread the narrow way in single file—two men can seldom walk arm in arm in the truth. We believe the same truth in the main, but we cannot walk together in the path, it is too narrow. The way of truth is very difficult. If you step an inch aside on the right, you are in a dangerous error. And if you swerve a little to the left, you are equally in the mire. On the one hand, there is a huge precipice and on the other a deep morass, and unless you keep to the true line, to the breadth of a hair, you will go astray. Truth is a narrow path indeed. It is a path the eagle’s eye has not seen and a depth the diver has not visited. It is like the veins of metal in a mine—it is often of excessive thinness and moreover, it runs not in one continued layer. Lose it once and you may dig for miles and not discover it again. The eye must perpetually watch the direction of the lode. Grains of truth are like the grains of gold in the rivers of Australia—they must be shaken by the hand of patience and washed in the stream of honesty, or the fine gold will be mingled with sand. Truth is often mingled with error and it is hard to distinguish it. But we bless God He has said, “When the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth”

Another reason why we need a guide is *the invidiousness of error*. It busily steals upon us, and if I may so describe our position, we are often like we were on Thursday night in that tremendous fog. Most of us were feeling for ourselves and wondering where on earth we were. We could scarcely see an inch before us. We came to a place where there were three turnings. We thought we knew the old spot. There was the lamppost and now we must take a sharp turn to the left. But not so. We ought to have gone a little to the right. We have been so often to the same place that we think we know every flagstone, and there’s our friend’s shop over the way. It is dark, but we think we must be quite right, and all the while we are quite wrong and find ourselves half-a-mile out of the way. So it is with matters of truth. We think, surely this is the right path, and the voice of the evil one whispers, “That is the way, walk you in it.” You do so and you find, to your great dismay, that instead of the path of truth, you have been walking in the paths of unrighteousness and erroneous doctrines. The way of life is a labyrinth. The grassiest paths and the most bewitching are the farthest away from right. The most enticing are those which are garnished with wrested truths. I believe there is not a counterfeit coin in the world so much like a genuine one, as some errors are like the truth. One is base metal, the other is true gold! Still, in externals they differ very little.

We also need a guide, because *we are so prone to go astray*. Why, if the path of heaven were as straight as Bunyan pictures it, with no turning to the right hand or left—and no doubt it is—we are so prone to go astray that we should go to the right to the Mountains of Destruction, or to the left in the dark Wood of Desolation. David says, “I have gone astray like a lost sheep.” That means very often, for if a sheep is put into a field twenty times, if it does not get out twenty-one times, it will be because it cannot, because the place is hurdled up and it cannot find a hole in the hedge. If grace did not guide a man, he would go astray, though there were signposts all the way to heaven. Let it be written, “Miklat, Miklat, the way to refuge,” he would turn aside and the avenger of blood would overtake him. If some guide did not, like the angels in Sodom, put his hand on his shoulders and cry, “Escape. Escape for your life! Look not behind you. Stay not in all the plain,” These, then, are the reasons why we need a guide.

### III. In the third place, here is A PERSON PROVIDED.

This is none other than God and this God is none other than a person. This person is, “He, the Spirit,” the “Spirit of truth.” Not an influence or an emanation but actually a person. “When the Spirit of truth is come, he shall guide you into all truth.” Now, we wish you to look at this guide to consider how adapted He is to us.

In the first place, He is *infallible*. He knows everything and cannot lead us astray. If I pin my sleeve to another man’s coat, he may lead me part of the way rightly, but by-and-by he will go wrong himself, and I shall be led astray with him. But if I give myself to the Holy Spirit and ask His guidance, there is no fear of my wandering.

Again, we rejoice in this Spirit because He is *ever-present*. We fall into a difficulty sometimes. We say, “Oh! if I could take this to my minister, he would explain it, but I live so far off and am not able to see him.” That perplexes us and we turn the text round and round and cannot make anything out of it. We look at the commentators. We take down pious Thomas Scott and, as usual, he says nothing about it if it is a dark passage. Then we go to holy Matthew Henry and if it is an easy Scripture, he is sure to explain it. But if it is a text hard to be understood, it is likely enough, of course, left in its own gloom. And even Dr. Gill himself the most consistent of commentators—when he comes to a hard passage—he manifestly avoids it in some degree. But when we have no commentator or minister, we have still the Holy Spirit. And let me tell you a little secret—whenever you cannot understand a text, open your Bible, bend your knee, and pray over that text. And if it does not split into atoms and open itself, try again. If prayer does not explain it, it is one of the things God did not intend you to know and you may be content to be ignorant of it. Prayer is the key that opens the cabinets of mystery. Prayer and faith are sacred picklocks that can open secrets and obtain great treasures. There is no college for holy education like that of the blessed Spirit, for He is an ever-present tutor to whom we have only to bend the knee and He is at our side—the great expositor of truth.

But there is one thing about the suitability of this guide which is remarkable. I do not know whether it has struck you—the Holy Spirit can “guide us *into* a truth.” Now, man can guide us *to* a truth, but it is only the Holy Spirit who can “guide us *into* a truth.” “When He, the Spirit of truth, shall come, He shall guide you *into*”—mark that word, “all truth.” Now, for instance, it is a long while before you can lead some people to the doctrine of election. But when you have made them see its correctness, you have not led them “into” it. You may show them that it is plainly stated in Scripture, but they will turn away and hate it. You take them to another great truth, but they have been brought up in a different fashion and though they cannot answer your arguments, they say, “The man is right, perhaps,” and they whisper—but so low that conscience itself cannot hear, “but it is so contrary to my prejudices that I cannot receive it.” After you have led them *to* the truth and they see it is true, how hard it is to lead them *into* it! There are many of my hearers who are brought *to* the truth of their depravity, but they are not brought *into* it and made to feel it. Some of you are brought to know the truth that God keeps us from day to day, but you rarely get into it, so as to live in continual dependence upon God the Holy Spirit and draw fresh supplies from Him. The thing is to get inside it. A Christian should do with truth as a snail does with his shell—live inside it, as well as carry it on his back, and bear it perpetually about with him. The Holy

Spirit, it is said, shall lead us into all truth. You may be brought to a chamber where there is an abundance of gold and silver, but you will be no richer unless you effect an entrance. It is the Spirit's work to unbar the two-leaved gates and bring us into a truth, so that we may get inside it, and as dear old Rowland Hill said, "Not only hold the truth, but have the truth hold us."

**IV.** Fourthly, here is A METHOD SUGGESTED, "He shall guide you into all truth."

Now I must have an illustration. I must compare truth to some cave or grotto that you have heard of, with wondrous stalactites hanging from the roof and others starting from the floor. A cavern, glittering with spar and abounding in marvels. Before entering the cavern, you inquire for a guide, who comes with his lighted torch. He conducts you down to a considerable depth and you find yourself in the midst of the cave. He leads you through different chambers. Here he points to a little stream rushing from amid the rocks and indicates its rise and progress. There he points to some peculiar rock and tells you its name. Then he takes you into a large natural hall, tells you how many persons once feasted in it, and so on. Truth is a grand series of caverns. It is our glory to have so great and wise a conductor. Imagine that we are coming to the darkness of it. He is a light shining in the midst of us to guide us and by the light He shows us wondrous things. In three ways the Holy Spirit teaches us—by suggestion, direction, and illumination.

First, he guides us into all truth *by suggesting it*. There are thoughts that dwell in our minds that were not born there, but which were exotics brought from heaven and put there by the Spirit. It is not a fancy that angels whisper into our ears and that devils do the same—both good and evil spirits hold converse with men and some of us have known it. We have had strange thoughts which were not the offspring of our souls, but which came from angelic visitants. And direct temptations and evil insinuations have we had which were not brewed in our own souls, but which came from the poisonous cauldron of hell. So the Spirit does speak in men's ears, sometimes in the darkness of the night. In ages gone by, He spoke in dreams and visions, but now He speaks by His Word. Have you not at times had unaccountably in the middle of your business, a thought concerning God and heavenly things, and could not tell whence it came? Have you not been reading or studying the Scripture, but a text came across your mind and you could not help it? Though you even put it down, it was like cork in water and would swim up again to the top of your mind. Well, that good thought was put there by the Spirit. He often guides His people into all truth by suggesting, just as the guide in the grotto does with his torch. He does not say a word, perhaps, but He walks into a passage Himself and you follow Him. So the Spirit suggests a thought and your heart follows it up. Well can I remember the manner in which I learned the doctrines of grace in a single instant. Born, as all of us are by nature, an Arminian, I still believed the old things I had heard continually from the pulpit and did not see the grace of God. I remember sitting one day in the house of God and hearing a sermon as dry as possible and as worthless as all such sermons are, when a thought struck my mind—how came I to be converted? I prayed, thought I. Then I thought, how came I to pray? I was induced to pray by reading the Scriptures. How came I to read the Scriptures? Why did I read them and what led me to them? And then, in a moment, I saw that God was at the bottom of all and that He was the author of faith, and then the whole doctrine opened up to me, from which I have not departed.

But sometimes He leads us *by direction*. The guide points and says, "There, gentlemen, go along that particular path, that is the way." So the Spirit gives a direction and tendency to our thoughts. Not suggesting a new one, but letting a particular thought when it starts take such-and-such a direction. Not so much putting a boat on the stream as steering it when it is there. When our thoughts are considering sacred things, He leads us into a more excellent channel from that in which we started. Time after time have you commenced a meditation on a certain doctrine and unaccountably you were gradually led away into another, and you saw how one doctrine leaned on another, as is the case with the stones in the arch of a bridge, all hanging on the keystone of Jesus Christ crucified. You were brought to see these things not by a new idea suggested, but by direction given to your thoughts.

But perhaps the best way in which the Holy Spirit leads us into all truth is by *illumination*. He illuminates the Bible. Now, have any of you an illuminated Bible at home? “No,” says one, “I have a Morocco Bible. I have a Polyglot Bible. I have a marginal reference Bible.” Ah! that is all very well, but have you an illuminated Bible? “Yes, I have a large family Bible with pictures in it. There is a picture of John the Baptist baptizing Christ by pouring water on His head and many other nonsensical things.” But that is not what I mean—have you an illuminated Bible? “Yes, I have a Bible with splendid engravings in it.” Yes. I know you may have, but have you an illuminated Bible? “I don’t understand what you mean by an, ‘illuminated Bible.’” Well, it is the Christian who has an illuminated Bible. He does not buy it originally illuminated, but when he reads it—

*“A glory gilds the sacred page,  
Majestic like the sun.  
Which gives a light to every age,  
It gives, but borrows none.”*

There is nothing like reading an illuminated Bible, beloved. You may read to all eternity and never learn anything by it unless it is illuminated by the Spirit, and then the words shine forth like stars. The book seems made of gold leaf. Every single letter glitters like a diamond. Oh, it is a blessed thing to read an illuminated Bible lit up by the radiance of the Holy Spirit. Have you read the Bible and studied it, my brother, and yet have your eyes been unenlightened? Go and say, “O Lord, gild the Bible for me. I want an expounded Bible. Illuminate it. Shine upon it, for I cannot read it to profit unless You enlighten me.” Blind men may read the Bible with their fingers, but blind souls cannot. We need a light to read the Bible by, there is no reading it in the dark. Thus the Holy Spirit leads us into all truth, by suggesting ideas, by directing our thoughts, and by illuminating the Scriptures when we read them.

**V. The last thing is AN EVIDENCE.**

The question arises, How may I know whether I am enlightened by the Spirit’s influence and led into all truth? First, you may know the Spirit’s influence by its *unity*—He guides us into all *truth*. Secondly, by its *universality*—He guides us into *all* truth.

First, if you are judging a minister, whether he has the Holy Spirit in him or not, you may know him in the first place, by *the constant unity of his testimony*. A man cannot be enlightened by the Holy Spirit who preaches yea and nay. The Spirit never says one thing, at one time and another thing at another time. There are indeed many good men who say both yea and nay, but still their contrary testimonies are not both from God the Spirit, for God the Spirit cannot witness to black and white, to a falsehood and to truth. It has been always held as a first principle that truth is one thing. But some persons say, “I find one thing in one part of the Bible and another thing in another, and though it contradicts itself, I must believe it.” All quite right, brother, *if it did contradict itself*, but the fault is not in the wood, but in the carpenter. Many carpenters do not understand dove-tailing, so there are many preachers who do not understand dove-tailing. It is very nice work and it is not easily learned—it takes some apprenticeship to make all doctrines square together. Some preachers preach very good Calvinism for half-an-hour and the next quarter-of-an hour Arminianism. If they are Calvinists, let them stick to it. If they are Arminians, let them stick to it—let their preaching be all of one piece. Don’t let them pile up things only to kick them all down again. Let us have one thing woven from the top throughout and let us not rend it. How did Solomon know the true mother of the child? “Cut it in halves,” he said. The woman who was not the mother did not care, as long as the other did not get the whole, and she consented. “Ah,” said the true mother, “give her the living child. Let her have it, rather than cut it in halves.” So the true child of God would say, “I give it up, let my opponent conquer. I do not want to have the truth cut in halves. I would rather be all wrong than have the Word altered to my taste.” We do not want to have a divided Bible. No, we claim the whole living child or none at all. We may rest assured of this, that until we get rid of our linsey-woolsey doctrine and cease to sow mingled seed, we shall not have a blessing. An

enlightened mind cannot believe a Gospel which denies itself. It must be one thing or the other. One thing cannot contradict another and yet it and its opposite be equally true. You may know the Spirit's influence, then, by the unity of its testimony.

And you may know it by its *universality*. The true child of God will not be led into some truth but into all truth. When first he starts, he will not know half the truth. He will believe it, but not understand it. He will have the germ of it, but not the sum total in all its breadth and length. There is nothing like learning by experience. A man cannot set up for a theologian in a week. Certain doctrines take years to develop themselves. Like the aloe that takes a hundred years to be dressed, there be some truths that must lie long in the heart before they really come out and make themselves appear so that we can speak of them as that we do know, and testify of that which we have seen. The Spirit will gradually lead us into all truth. For instance, if it be true that Jesus Christ is to reign upon the earth personally for a thousand years, as I am inclined to believe it is, if I am under the Spirit, that will be more and more opened to me until I with confidence declare it. Some men begin very timidly. A man says, at first, "I know we are justified by faith and have peace with God, but so many have cried out against eternal justification that I am afraid of it." But he is gradually enlightened and led to see that in the same hour when all his debts were paid, a full discharge was given—that in the moment when his sin was cancelled, every elect soul was justified in God's mind, though they were not justified in their own minds till afterwards. The Spirit shall lead you into all truth.

Now, what are the practical inferences from this great doctrine? The first is with reference to the Christian who is afraid of his own ignorance. How many are there who are just enlightened and have tasted of heavenly things, who are afraid they are too ignorant to be saved! Beloved, God the Holy Spirit can teach anyone, however illiterate, however uninstructed. I have known some men who were almost idiots before conversion, but they afterwards had their faculties wonderfully developed. Some time ago there was a man who was so ignorant that he could not read and he never spoke anything like grammar in his life, unless by mistake. And moreover, he was considered to be what the people in his neighborhood called "daft." But when he was converted, the first thing he did was to pray. He stammered out a few words and in a little time his powers of speaking began to develop themselves. Then he thought he would like to read the Scriptures and after long, long months of labor, he learned to read. And what was the next thing? He thought he could preach—and he did preach a little in his own homely way, in his house. Then he thought, "I must read a few more books." And so his mind expanded, until, I believe he is at the present day a useful minister, settled in a country village, laboring for God. It needs but little intellect to be taught of God. If you feel your ignorance, do not despair. Go to the Spirit—the great Teacher—and ask His sacred influence and it shall come to pass that He "shall guide you into all truth."

Another inference is this—whenever any of our brethren do not understand the truth, let us take a hint as to the best way of dealing with them. Do not let us controvert with them. I have heard many controversies, but never heard of any good from one of them. We have had controversies with certain men called Secularists and very strong arguments have been brought against them. But I believe that the day of judgment shall declare that a very small amount of good was ever done by contending with these men. Better leave them alone, where there is no fuel, the fire goes out, and he that debates with them puts wood upon the fire. So with regard to baptism. It is of no avail to quarrel with our Paedo-Baptist friends. If we simply pray for them that the God of truth may lead them to see the true doctrine, they will come to it far more easily than by discussions. Few men are taught by controversy, for—

***"A man convinced against his will, is of the same opinion still."***

Pray for them that the Spirit of truth may lead them "into all truth." Do not be angry with your brother, but pray for him. Cry, "Lord! open You his eyes that he may behold wondrous things out of Your law."

Lastly, we speak to some of you who know nothing about the Spirit of truth, nor about the truth itself. It may be that some of you are saying, “We care not much which of you are right, we are happily indifferent to it.” Ah! but poor sinner, if you knew the gift of God and who it was that spoke the truth, you would not say, “I care not for it”. If you did know how essential the truth is to your salvation, you would not talk so. If you did know that the truth of God is—that you are a worthless sinner, but if you believe, then God from all eternity, apart from all your merits, loved you and bought you with the Redeemer’s blood and justified you in the forum of heaven—and will by-and-by justify you in the forum of your conscience through the Holy Spirit by faith. If you did know that there is a heaven for you beyond the chance of a failure, a crown for you, the luster of which can never be dimmed—then you would say, “Indeed the truth is precious to my soul!” Why, my ungodly hearers, these men of error want to take away the truth, which alone can save you, the only Gospel that can deliver you from hell. They deny the great truths of free grace, those fundamental doctrines which alone can snatch a sinner from hell. And even though you do not feel interest in them now, I still would say you ought to desire to see them promoted.

May God give you grace to know the truth in your hearts! May the Spirit “guide you into all truth!” For if you do not know the truth here, recollect there will be a sorrowful learning of it in the dark chambers of the pit, where the only light shall be the flames of hell! May you here know the truth! And the truth shall make you free—and if the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed, for He says, “I am the way, the truth, the life.” Believe on Jesus, you chief of sinners. Trust His love and mercy, and you are saved, for God the Spirit gives faith and eternal life.

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Taken from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software. 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).