

THE TEACHING OF THE HOLY GHOST

NO. 315

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, MAY 13, 1860
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AT EXETER HALL, STRAND

“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”
John 14:26

THERE are many choice gifts comprehended in the covenant of grace, but the first and richest of them are these twain—the gift of Jesus Christ for us and the gift of the Holy Ghost to us. The first of these I trust we are not likely to undervalue. We delight to hear of that “unspeakable gift”—the Son of God, who bare our sins, and carried our sorrows, and endured our punishment in His own body on the tree. There is something so tangible in the cross, the nails, the vinegar, the spear, that we are not able to forget the Master, especially when so often we enjoy the delightful privilege of assembling around His table and breaking bread in remembrance of Him.

But the second great gift, by no means inferior to the first—the gift of the Holy Spirit to us—is so spiritual and we are so carnal, is so mysterious and we are so material, that we are very apt to forget its value, ay, and even to forget the gift altogether. And yet, my brethren, let us ever remember that Christ on the cross is of no value to us apart from the Holy Spirit in us. In vain that blood is flowing, unless the finger of the Spirit applies the blood to our conscience, in vain is that garment of righteousness wrought out, a garment without seam, woven from the top throughout, unless the Holy Spirit wraps it around us, and arrays us in its costly folds.

The river of the water of life cannot quench our thirst till the Spirit presents the goblet and lifts it to our lip. All the things that are in the paradise of God itself could never be blissful to us so long as we are dead souls, and dead souls we are until that heavenly wind comes from the four corners of the earth and breathes upon us slain, that we may live. We do not hesitate to say that we owe as much to God the Holy Ghost as we do to God the Son. Indeed, it were a high sin and misdemeanor to attempt to put one person of the Divine Trinity before another.

Thou, O Father, art the source of all grace, all love and mercy towards us. Thou, O Son, art the channel of Thy Father’s mercy, and without Thee Thy Father’s love could never flow to us. And Thou, O Spirit—Thou art He who enables us to receive that divine virtue which flows from the fountainhead, the Father, through Christ the channel, and by Thy means enters into our spirit, and there abides and brings forth its glorious fruit. Magnify, then, the Spirit, you who are partakers of it, praise, laud, and love His name always, for it is seemly to do so.

My work this morning is to set forth the work of the Holy Spirit, not as a Comforter or as a Quickener, or as a Sanctifier, but principally as a Teacher, although we shall have to touch upon these other points in passing.

The Holy Ghost is the great *Teacher* of the Father’s children. The Father begets us by His own will through the word of truth. Jesus Christ takes us into union with Himself, so that we become in a second sense the children of God. Then God the Holy Spirit breathes into us the “spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.”

Having given us that spirit of adoption, He trains us, becomes our great Educator, cleanses away our ignorance, and reveals one truth after another, until at last we comprehend with all saints what are the heights, and depths, and lengths, and breadths, and know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge,

and then the Spirit introduces the educated ones to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven.

Concerning this Teacher, these three things—first, *what He teaches*, secondly, *His methods of teaching*, and thirdly, *the nature and characteristics of that teaching*.

I. First then, WHAT THE HOLY SPIRIT TEACHES US.

And here indeed we have a wide field spread before us, for He teaches to God's people all that they *do* that is acceptable to the Father, and all that they *know* that is profitable to themselves.

1. I say that He teaches them *all that they do*. Now, there are some things which you and I can do naturally, when we are but children, without any teaching. Who ever taught a child to *cry*? It is natural to it. The first sign of its life is its shrill feeble cry of pain. Ever afterwards you need never send it to school to teach it to utter the cry of its grief, the well known expression of its little sorrows.

Ah, my brethren, but you and I, as spiritual infants, had to be taught to cry, for we could not even cry of ourselves, till we had received "the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." There are cryings and groanings which cannot be uttered in words and speech, simple as this language of the new nature seems to be. But even these feeblest groanings, sighings, cryings, tears, are marks of education. We must be taught to do this, or else we are not sufficient to do even these little things in and of ourselves.

Children, as we know, have to be taught to *speak*, and it is by degrees that they are able to pronounce first the shorter, and afterwards the longer words. We too, are taught to speak. We have none of us learned as yet the whole vocabulary of Canaan. I trust we are able to say some of the words, but we shall never be able to pronounce them all till we come into that land where we shall see Christ, and "shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

The sayings of the saints, when they are good and true, are the teachings of the Spirit. Marked you not that passage—"No man can *say* that Jesus is the Christ but by the Holy Ghost"? He may say as much in dead words, but the spirit's saying, the saying of the soul, he can never attain to, except as he is taught by the Holy Ghost.

Those first words which we ever used as Christians—"God be merciful to me a sinner," were taught us by the Holy Spirit, and that song which we shall sing before the throne—"Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever," shall but be the ripe fruit of that same tree of knowledge of good and evil, which the Holy Spirit hath planted in the soil of our hearts.

Further, as we are taught to cry and taught to speak by the Holy Spirit, so are all God's people taught to *walk* and *act* by Him. "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." We may take the best heed to our life, but we shall stumble or go astray unless He who first set us in the path shall guide us in it. "I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms." "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters." To stray is natural, to keep the path of right is spiritual. To err is human, to be holy is divine. To fall is the natural effect of evil, but to stand is the glorious effect of the Holy Spirit working in us, both to will and to do of His own good pleasure.

There was never yet a heavenly thought, never yet a hallowed deed, never yet a consecrated act acceptable to God by Jesus Christ, which was not worked in us by the Holy Ghost. You have worked all our works in us. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

Now as it is with the simple deeds of the Christian, his crying, his speaking, his walking, his acting—all these are teachings of the Holy Ghost—so is it with the higher efforts of his nature. The preaching of the Gospel, when it be done aright, is only accomplished through the power of the Holy Spirit.

That sermon which is based upon human genius is worthless, that sermon which has been obtained through human knowledge, and which has no other force in it than the force of logic or of oratory, is spent in vain. God works not by such tools as these. He cleanses not spirits by the water from broken

cisterns, neither does He save souls by thoughts which come from men's brains, apart from the divine influence which goes with them.

We might have all the learning of the sages of Greece, nay, better still, all the knowledge of the twelve apostles put together, and then we might have the tongue of a seraph, and the eyes and heart of a Savior, but apart from the Spirit of the living God, our preaching would yet be vain, and our hearers and ourselves would still abide in our sins.

To preach aright can only be accomplished by the Holy Spirit. There may be a thing called preaching that is of human energy, but God's ministers are taught of the Holy One, and when their word is blessed, either to saint or sinner, the blessing comes not of them, but of the Holy Ghost, and unto Him be all the glory, for it is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaks in you.

So is it with sacred song. Whose are the wings with which I mount towards the skies in sacred harmony and joy? They are Thy wings, O Holy Dove! Whose is the fire with which my spirit flames at times of hallowed consecration? Thine is the flame, O fiery Spirit! Thine. Whose is the tongue of fire which rested on the apostolic lip? Thine was that cleft tongue, Thou Holy One of Israel!

Whose is that dew which falls upon the withered blade, and makes it smile and live? Thine are those holy drops, Thou Dew of God, Thou art that womb of the morning from whence these beauties of holiness proceed. Thou hast worked all in us, and unto Thee would we give well-deserved thanks. So then all the doings of the Christian, both the little and the major doings, are all the teachings of the Holy Ghost.

2. But now further, all that the believer truly *knows* that is profitable to himself is taught him by the Holy Spirit. We may learn very much from the Word of God morally and mentally, but the Christian philosopher understands that there is a distinction between soul and spirit, that the mere natural soul or intellect of man may instruct itself well enough out of the Word of God, but that spiritual things are only to be spiritually discerned, and that until that third, higher principle—the spirit—is infused into us in regeneration, we have not even the capability or the possibility of knowing spiritual things.

Now it is this third, higher principle, of which the apostle speaks when he speaks of “body, soul, and spirit.” Mental philosophers declare there is no such thing as the third part—spirit. They can find a body and a soul, but no spirit. They are quite right—there is no such thing in natural men. That third principle—the spirit—is an infusion of the Holy Ghost at regeneration, and is not to be detected by mental philosophy, it is altogether a subtler thing, a thing too rare, too heavenly, to be described by Dugald Stewart, or Reid, or Brown, or any of those mighty men who could dissect the mind, but who could not understand the spirit.

Now, the Spirit of God first gives us a spirit, and then afterwards educates that spirit, and all that that spirit knows is taught it by the Holy Ghost. Perhaps the first thing that we learn is *sin*, He reproves us of sin. No man knows the exceeding sinfulness of sin, but by the Holy Ghost. You may punish a man, you may tell him of the wrath of God, and of hell, but you cannot make him know what an evil and a bitter thing sin is till the Holy Ghost has taught it to him. 'Tis an awful lesson indeed to learn, and when the Holy Spirit makes us sit down upon the stool of penitence, and begins to drill this great truth into us, that sin is damnation in the bud, that sin is hell in the germ, then when we begin to perceive it, we cry out, “Now I know how vile I am; my soul abhorreth itself in dust and ashes.”

No man, I repeat it, will ever know the sinfulness of sin by argument, by punishment, by moral discipline, or by any means apart from the education of the Holy Ghost. It is a truth beyond the reach of human intellect to know how base a thing sin is. The spirit alone, engrafted and given by the Holy Spirit—that spirit alone can learn the lesson, and only the Holy Ghost can teach it.

The next lesson the Spirit teaches us is *the total ruin, depravity, and helplessness of self*. Men pretend to know this by nature, but they do not know it, they can only speak the words of experience as parrots speak like men. But to know myself utterly lost and ruined, to know myself so lost, “that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing,” is a knowledge so distasteful, so hateful, so abominable

to the carnal intellect, that man would not learn it if he could, and if he has learned it, it is a clear proof that God the Holy Spirit has made him willing to see the truth, and willing to receive it.

When we sometimes hear great preachers telling us that there is something grand left in man yet, that when Adam fell he might have broken his little finger, but did not ruin himself entirely, that man is a grand being, in fact a noble creature, and that we are all wrong in telling men they are depraved, and thundering out the law of God at them—am I astonished that they should speak thus? Nay, my brethren, it is the language of the carnal mind the whole world over, and in every age.

No wonder that a man is eloquent upon this point, every man needs to be eloquent when he has to defend a lie. No wonder that glorious sentences have been uttered, and flowery periods poured forth from a cornucopia of eloquence upon this subject. A man need exhaust all logic and all rhetoric to defend a falsehood, and it is not a wonder that he seeks to do it, for man believes himself to be rich, and increased in goods, and to have need of nothing, till the Holy Ghost teaches him that he is naked, and poor, and miserable.

These lessons being learned, the Spirit proceeds to teach us further—*the nature and character of God*. God is to be heard in every wind, and seen in every cloud, but not all of God. God's goodness, and God's omnipotence, the world clearly manifests to us in the works of creation, but where do I read of His grace, where do I read of His mercy, or of His justice? There are lines which I cannot read in creation. Those must have quick ears indeed who can hear the notes of mercy or of grace whispering in the evening gale.

No, brethren, these parts of God's attributes are only revealed to us in this precious Book, and there they are so revealed that we cannot know them until the Spirit opens our eyes to perceive them.

To know the inflexibility of divine justice, and to see how God exacts punishment for every jot and tittle of sin, and yet to know that that full-justice does not eclipse His equally full-mercy, but that the two move around each other, without for a single instant coming into contact, or conflict, or casting the slightest shadow one or the other, to see how God is just and yet the justifier of the ungodly, and so to know God that my spirit loves His nature, appreciates His attributes, and desires to be like Him—this is a knowledge which astronomy cannot teach, which all the researches of the sciences can never give to us. We must be taught of God, if we ever learn of Him—we must be taught God, by God the Holy Ghost.

Oh that we may learn this lesson well, that we may be able to sing of His faithfulness, of His covenant love, of His immutability, of His boundless mercy, of His inflexible justice, that we may be able to talk to one another concerning that incomprehensible One, and may see Him even as a man sees his friend, and may come to walk with Him as Enoch did, all the days of our life! This indeed must be an education given to us by the Holy Ghost.

But not to tarry on these points, though they are prolific of thought, let us observe that the Holy Spirit specially teaches us *Jesus Christ*. It is the Holy Ghost who manifests the Savior to us in the glory of His person, the complex character of His manhood and of His deity, it is He who tells us of the love of His heart, of the power of His arm, of the clearness of His eye, the preciousness of His blood, and of the prevalence of His plea.

To know that Christ is my Redeemer is to know more than Plato could have taught me. To know that I am a member of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones, that my name is on His breast, and engraved on the palms of His hands, is to know more than the Universities of Oxford or Cambridge could teach to all their scholars, learn they never so well.

Not at the feet of Gamaliel did Paul learn to say—"He loved me, and gave himself for me." Not in the midst of the Rabbis, or at the feet of the members of the Sanhedrin, did Paul learn to cry—"Those things which I counted gain, I now count loss for Christ's sake." "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." No, this must have been taught as he himself confesses—"not of flesh and blood, but of the Holy Ghost."

I need only hint that it is also the Spirit who teaches us our *adoption*. Indeed, all the privileges of the new covenant, beginning from regeneration, running through redemption, justification, pardon, sanctification, adoption, preservation, continual safety, even unto an abundant entrance into the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ—all is the teaching of the Holy Spirit, and especially that last point, for, “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.”

He leads us into the truth of joys to come, carries our spirit upwards, and gives us

*“That inward calm within the breast,
The surest pledge of glorious rest,
Which for the church of God remains,
The end of cares, the end of pains.”*

II. And now I come to the second point, which is this—THE METHODS BY WHICH THE HOLY SPIRIT TEACHES GOD’S CHILDREN THESE PRECIOUS THINGS.

Here we must remark that we know nothing of the precise way of operation, because the Spirit is mysterious, we know not whence He cometh nor whither He goeth. But still, let us describe what we can perceive. And first, in teaching God’s people, one of the first things the Spirit does is to *excite interest* in their minds.

I frequently find that when men are being educated for the ministry, the hardest thing is to set them going. They are like bats on the ground, if once a bat gets on the earth he cannot fly until he creeps to the top of a stone and gets a little above the earth, and then he gets wing and can fly well enough. So there are many who have not got their energies aroused, they have talent but it is asleep, and we want a kind of railway-whistle to blow in their ears to make them start up and rub away the film from their eyes so that they may see.

Now, it is just so with men when the Spirit of God begins to teach them. He excites their interest in the things which He wishes them to learn, He shows them that these things have a personal bearing upon their soul’s present and eternal welfare. He so brings precious truth home, that what the man thought was utterly indifferent yesterday, he now begins to esteem inestimably precious. “Oh!” said he, “theology! of what use can it be to me?” But now the knowledge of Christ and Him crucified has become to him the most desirable and excellent of all the sciences. The Holy Spirit awakens his interest.

That done, He gives to the man *a teachable spirit*. There are men who will not learn. They profess that they want to know, but you never found the right way of teaching them. Teach them little by little, and they say—“Do you think I am a child?” Tell them a great deal at once and they say—“You have not the power to make me comprehend!” till I have been compelled sometimes to say to a man, when I have been trying to make him understand, and he has said “I cannot understand you,” “Well, sir, I am thankful it is not my duty to give you an understanding if you have none.”

Now, the Holy Spirit makes a man willing to learn in any shape. The disciple sits down at the feet of Christ, and let Christ speak as He may, and teach Him as He will, whether with the rod, or with a smile, he is quite willing to learn. Distasteful the lessons are, but the regenerated pupil loves to learn best the very things he once hated.

Cutting to his pride the doctrines of the Gospel each one of them may be, but for this very reason he loves them, for he cries, “Lord, humble me; Lord, bring me down; teach me those things that will make me cover my head with dust and ashes; show me my nothingness; teach me my emptiness; reveal to me my filthiness.” So that the Holy Spirit thus proceeds with His work—awakening interest, and enkindling a teachable spirit.

This done, the Holy Ghost in the next place *sets the truth in a clear light*. How hard it is sometimes to state a fact which you perfectly understand yourself, in such a way that another man may see it. It is

like the telescope, there are many persons who are disappointed with a telescope because whenever they walk into an observatory and put their eye to the glass, expecting to see the rings of Saturn, and the belts of Jupiter, they have said, "I can see nothing at all, a piece of glass, and a grain or two of dust is all I can see!" "But," says the astronomer when he comes, "I can see Saturn in all her glory."

Why cannot you? Because the focus does not suit the stranger's eye. By a little skill, the focus can be altered so that the observer may be able to see what he could not see before. So is it with language, it is a sort of telescope by which I enable another to see my thoughts, but I cannot always give him the right focus.

Now the Holy Spirit always gives the right focus to every truth. He sheds a light so strong and forcible upon the Word, that the spirit says, "Now I see it, now I understand it." For even here, in this precious Book, there are words which I have looked at a hundred times, but I could not understand them, till at some favored hour, the key word seemed as if it leaped up from the midst of the verse and said to me, "Look at the verse in my light," and at once I perceived—not always from a word in the verse itself, but sometimes in the context—I perceived the meaning which I could not see before. This too, is a part of the Spirit's training—to shed a light upon truth.

But the Spirit not only enlightens the truth, but He *enlightens the understanding*. 'Tis marvelous too, how the Holy Spirit does teach men who seemed as if they never could learn. I would not wish to say anything which my brother might be grieved at, but I do know some brethren, I won't say they are here today, but they are not out of the place—some brethren whose opinion I would not take in anything worldly on any account. If it were anything to do with pounds, shillings, and pence, anything where human judgment was concerned, I should not consult them, but those men have a deeper, truer, and more experiential knowledge of the Word of God, than many who preach it, because the Holy Spirit never tried to teach them grammar, and never meant to teach them business—never wanted to teach them astronomy, but He has taught them the Word of God, and they understand it.

Other teachers have labored to beat the elements of science into them but without success, for they are as thick and addled in their brains as they can well be, but the Holy Spirit has taught them the Word of God, and they are clear enough there.

I come in close contact with some young men. When we are taking our lessons for illustration out of the sciences, they seem to be all confused, and when I ask them a question to see if they have understood, they are lost, but mark you, when we come to read a chapter out of some old Puritan book—come to theology—those brethren give me the smartest and sharpest answers of the whole class.

When we once come to deal with things experiential and controversial, I find those men are able to double up their opponents and vanquish them at once, because they are deeply read in the Word of God. The Spirit has taught them the things of Christ, but He has not taught them anything else. I have perceived also, that when the Spirit of God has enlarged the understanding to receive Bible truth, that understanding becomes more capable of receiving other truths.

I heard, some time ago, from a brother minister, when we were comparing notes, the story of a man who had been the dullest creature that was known. He was not more than one grade above an idiot, but when he was converted to God, one of the first things he wanted to do was to read the Bible. They had a long, long task to teach him a verse, but he would learn it, he would master it. He stuck at it as hard as ever he could, till he was able to read, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the word was God."

That man was by and by asked to engage in prayer. At first he hardly put a sentence together. By and by he arrived at a considerable degree of fluency, because he would do it. He would not stand still, he said, in the prayer meeting and not have a word to say for his Master. He began to read his Bible much, and to pray with a great deal of profit and acceptableness to those who heard, and after awhile, he actually began to speak in the villages, and became sometime after an honored and acceptable pastor of one of our Baptist churches.

Had it not been for the Spirit of God first expanding the understanding to receive religious truth, that understanding might have been cramped, and fettered, and fast bolted to this very day, and the man might have been ever after an idiot, and so have gone down to his grave, while now he stands up to tell to sinners round, in burning language, the story of the cross of Christ. The Spirit teaches us by enlightening the understanding.

Lest I weary you, let me hurry on through the other points. He teaches us also by *refreshing the memory*. “He shall bring all things to your remembrance.” He puts all those old treasures into the ark of our soul, and when the time comes, He opens it and brings out these precious things in right good order, and shows them to us again and again.

He refreshes the memory and when this is done, He does better, He teaches us the Word, by *making us feel its effect*, and that, after all, is the best way of learning. You may try to teach a child the meaning of the term “sweetness,” but words will not avail, give him some honey and he will never forget it. You might seek to tell him of the glorious mountains, and the Alps, that pierce the clouds and send their snows peaks, like white-robed ambassadors up to the courts of heaven; take him there, let him see them, and he will never forget them. You might seek to paint to him the grandeur of the American continent, with its hills, and lakes, and rivers, such as the world saw not before, let him go and view it, and he will know more of the land than he could know by all your teaching when he sits at home.

So the Holy Spirit does not only tell us of Christ’s love, He sheds it abroad in the heart. He does not merely tell us of the sweetness of pardon, but He gives us a sense of no condemnation, and then we know all about it, better than we could have done by any teaching of words and thoughts.

He takes us into the banqueting house and waves the banner of love over us. He bids us visit the garden of nuts, and makes us lie among the lilies. He gives us that bundle of camphor, even our beloved, and bids us place it all night betwixt our breasts. He takes us to the cross of Christ, and He bids us put our finger into the print of the nails, and our hands into His side. and tells us not to be “faithless, but believing,” and so in the highest and most effectual manner He teaches us to profit.

III. But now I shall come to my third point, although I feel as if I wished my subject were somewhat less comprehensive, but indeed it is a fault which does not often happen—to have too much rather than too little to speak of, except when we come upon a topic where God is to be glorified, and here indeed our tongue must be like the pen of a ready writer, when we speak of the things that we have made touching the King.

I am now to speak to you about the CHARACTERISTICS AND NATURE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT’S TEACHING.

And first, I would remark that the Holy Ghost teaches sovereignty. He teaches *whom* He pleases. He takes the fool and makes him know the wonders of the dying love of Christ, to bring aspiring wisdom low and make the pride of man humble and abase itself.

And as the Spirit teaches whom He wills, so He teaches *when* He will. He has His own hours of instruction, and He will not be limited and bound by us. And then again He teaches *as* He wills—some by affliction, some by communion, some He teaches by the Word read, some by the Word spoken, some by neither, but directly by His own agency.

And so also the Holy Spirit is a sovereign in that He teaches in whatever degree He pleases. He will make one man learn much, while another comprehends but little. Some Christians wear their beards early—they come to a rapid and high degree of maturity and that on a sudden, while others creep but slowly to the goal, and are very long in reaching it.

Some Christians in early years understand more than others whose hairs have turned grey. The Holy Spirit is a sovereign. He does not have all His pupils in one class, and teach them all the same lesson by simultaneous instruction, but each man is in a separate class, each man learning a separate lesson. Some beginning at the end of the book, some at the beginning, and some in the middle—some learning one doctrine and some another, some going backwards and some forwards.

The Holy Spirit teaches sovereignly, and gives to every man according as He wills, but then, wherever He teaches at all, He teaches *effectually*. He never failed to make us learn yet. No scholar was ever turned out of the Spirit's school incorrigible. He teaches *all* His children, not some of them—"All thy children shall be taught of the LORD, and great shall be the peace of thy children,"—the last sentence being a proof that they have been effectually taught.

Never once did the Spirit bring home the truth to the heart and yet that heart fail to receive it. He has modes of touching the secret springs of life, and putting the truth into the very core of the being. He casts His healing mixtures into the fountain itself, and not into the streams. *We* instruct the ear, and the ear is far removed from the heart, He teaches the heart itself, and therefore His every word falls upon good soil, and brings forth good and abundant fruit—He teaches effectually.

Dear brother, do you feel yourself to be a great fool sometimes? Your great Schoolmaster will make a good scholar of you yet. He will so teach you, that you shall be able to enter the kingdom of heaven knowing as much as the brightest saints.

Teaching thus sovereignly and effectually, I may add, He teaches *infallibly*. *We* teach you errors through want of caution, sometimes through over zeal, and again through the weakness of our own mind. In the greatest preacher or teacher that ever lived there was some degree of error, and hence our hearers should always bring what we say to the law and the testimony, but the Holy Ghost never teaches error, if you have learned anything by the Spirit of God, it is pure, unadulterated, undiluted truth. Put yourself daily under His teaching, and you shall never learn a word amiss, nor a thought awry, but become infallibly taught, well taught in the whole truth as it is in Jesus.

Further, where the Spirit thus teaches infallibly, He teaches *continually*. Whom once He teaches, He never leaves till He has completed their education. On, and on, and on, however dull the scholar, however frail the memory, however vitiated the mind, He still continues with His gracious work till He has trained us up and made us "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."

Nor does He leave us till He has taught us completely, for as our text says, "He shall teach you all things." There is not a truth so high that it shall not yet be mastered, nor a doctrine so hard that it shall not yet be received. High up, high up, tower the heights of the hill of knowledge, but there, when there, your feet shall stand.

Weary may be the way, and weak your knees, but up thither you shall climb, and one day with your forehead bathed in the sunlight of heaven, your soul shall stand and look down on tempests, mists, and all earth's clouds and smoke, and see the Master face to face, and be like Him, and know Him as He is. This is the joy of the Christian, that he shall be completely taught, and that the Holy Spirit will never give him up till He has taught him all truth.

I fear however, that this morning I weary you. Such a theme as this will not be likely to be suitable to all minds. As I have already said, the spiritual mind alone receives spiritual things, and the doctrine of the Spirit's agency will never be very interesting to those who are entire strangers to it. I could not make another man understand the force of an electric shock unless he has felt it. It would not be likely at all that he would believe in those secret energies which move the world, unless he had some means of testing for himself.

And those of you, who never felt the Spirit's energy, are as much strangers to it as a stone would be. You are out of your element when you hear of the Spirit. You know nothing of His divine power, you have never been taught of Him, and therefore how you should be careful to know what truths He teaches?

I close therefore with this sorrowful reflection. Alas, alas, a thousand times alas, that there should be so many who know not their danger, who feel not their load, and in whose heart the light of the Holy Ghost has never shone! Is it your case, my dear hearer, this morning? I do not ask you whether you have been ever educated in the school of learning, that you may be, and you may have taken your degree and been first-class in honors, but you may still be as the wild ass's colt that knows nothing about these

things. Religion, and the truth of it, is not to be learned by the head. Years of reading, hours of assiduous study, will never make a man a Christian. “It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing.”

Oh! are you destitute of the Spirit of the living God? For oh! I charge you to remember this my hearer, if in your soul the mysterious and supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit has never been shed abroad, you are an utter stranger to all the things of God. The promises are not yours, heaven is not yours, you are on your road to the land of the dead, to the region of the corpse, where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched.

Oh that the Spirit of God may rest upon you now! Bethink you, you are absolutely dependent upon His influence. You are in God’s hand today to be saved or to be lost—not in your own hands, but in His. You are dead in sins, unless He quickens you, you must remain so. The moth beneath your finger is not more absolutely at your mercy than you are now at the mercy of God. Let Him but will to leave you as you are, and you are lost, but oh! if mercy speaks and says, “Let that man live,” you are saved.

I would that you could feel the weight of this tremendous doctrine of sovereignty. It is like the hammer of Thor, it may shake your heart however stout it be, and make your rocky soul tremble to its base.

***“Life, death, and hell, and worlds unknown,
Hang on His firm decree.”***

Your destiny hangs there now, and will you rebel against the God in whose hand your soul’s eternal fate now rests? Will you lift the puny hand of your rebellion against Him who alone can quicken you—without whose gracious energy you are dead, and must be destroyed? Will you go this day and sin against light and against knowledge? Will you go today and reject mercy which is proclaimed to you in Christ Jesus? If so, no fool was ever so mad as you are, to reject Him without whom you are dead, and lost, and ruined.

O that instead thereof there may be the sweet whisper of the Spirit saying, “Obey the divine command, believe on Christ and live!” Hear the voice of JEHOVAH, who cries, “This is the commandment that ye believe in Jesus Christ whom he hath sent.” Thus obedient, God says within Himself, “I have set my love upon him, therefore will I deliver him. I will set him on high because he hath known my name,” and you shall yet live to sing in heaven of that sovereignty which, when your soul trembled in the balances, decided for your salvation, and gave you light and joy unspeakable.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died on Calvary’s cross, “and whosoever believeth on him shall be saved.” “Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them who are disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense.”

Believe that record true, cast down your weapons, yield to the sovereignty of the Holy Ghost, and He shall assuredly prove to you that, in that very yielding, there was a proof that He had loved you, for He made you yield, He made you willing to bow before Him in the day of His power. May the Holy Spirit now rest on the word I have spoken, for Jesu’s sake!

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.