

SOME ASPECTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT'S WORK  
(John 14-16)

When our beloved Lord was about to leave this world, as to His physically manifested presence, He was pleased to encourage His people, and to reveal to them that which was expedient for them, and that which would "bring them together", as the word implies. He referred to the coming of the Holy Spirit to represent Him in their midst. I suppose that those of us who have tasted that the Lord is gracious are conscious that there are VARIOUS works of the Spirit of God, and that our appreciation of truth, and our joy of truth, are largely conditioned on a right view and a right enjoyment of the operation of the Spirit of God. In like manner it is evident that errors are frequently brought about by a misunderstanding of the work of the Spirit of God. The Lord Jesus made very clear in John 14-16 many portions of the manifold work of the

Spirit of God. For example in 14,16,17 He told them that Another Advocate would be sent to them, the Spirit of truth, and He added the words, He dwelleth with you and is in you. This was the Divine thought of an Advocate, One to dwell with and be in God's people. How we need to lay a stress upon such teaching. Salvation is not a mental effort to reach IT; and sanctification, too, is something more than a consciousness of IT. We know a Living Saviour in salvation, and a Living Indwelling Holy Spirit in the daily walk afterwards. Things, words, facts, - all these are not sufficient. Thanks be unto God for the reality of works accomplished long ago on our behalf. But we rejoice in a Living Lord Jesus Christ as the One Whom we came, if resting on His precious blood. And we would rejoice in a Living Holy Spirit at the PRESENT time, and in the stress on the Holy Spirit as known by God's people. "Ye know Him". Here is a priceless thought. Ye KNOW. A personal knowledge of the Spirit of God. In verse 26 His operations are more fully explained. "But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit 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". Observe two aspects:- He shall teach you, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you. This is deeply important. The work of the Spirit of God is here seen as a work of teaching, and that teaching is particularly linked with a bringing to remembrance of all things, - a bringing to remembrance of all things which Christ said. The Holy Spirit never contradicts Christ. Let us ponder Matt. 28. 19. A bringing to remembrance. I do think we need to have stress laid upon this. The Spirit of God did not come to bring about an INDEPENDENT WORK. We do not ignore His further guidance of the apostles in accord with John 16.12, but there is no setting aside of Christ's words. He came to bring to the remembrance what Christ had said. There are so many who bear the Name of the Name of the Lord Jesus who have forgotten this. They almost put on one side the words of the Lord Jesus in the days when He walked this earth, and they think that the work of the Holy Spirit is to supplant those words, and to abrogate temporarily those commandments. They hand over the Address on the Mount to others, and so forth. But the work of the Spirit of God is to bring to our remembrance the things which Christ said. The same stress we have seen at the end of Matthew's gospel - Go ye, make

disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have said unto you; and as John 15 puts it, "Ye are My friends if ye do whatsoever I command you". Relationship to the words of the Lord Jesus must be viewed as a very definite test for everything. "ALL things whatsoever I have said unto you". Thus we see the work of the Spirit of God. But if there are those who would bring the subsequent books of Scripture into contrast with the Gospels, and ignore the precious link, there are others who go still further in their attitude, and they almost seem to think that the work of the Spirit of God is to make believers personally independent of the Scriptures. This is deadly doctrine. The work of the Spirit of God is to bring to our remembrance what Christ has said. I know nothing more beautiful, from another standpoint also, than the relationship of the Father and the Son and of the Spirit. The Lord Jesus ever exalted the Father, and did ever those things that pleased the Father, The Spirit of God glorified Christ. Christ said, I can do nothing of Myself; and the Spirit of God is seen in the parable of Luke 14 where He goes forth in wondrous service to draw those who are to be brought unto the feast. A Marvellous view of a living affection is that of the love between the Persons of our Triune God, and the harmony of action.

Not only so. I believe we all realize our own weakness in remembering the truth. We often feel, "I wish I could ever think of a passage at the moment I need it, and be ready to answer the word that is suitable"; or "I wish when I have a difficulty I could know just which passage would suit my need". The work of the Spirit of God is to bring to our remembrance. This has a deeply important twofold thought. First of all it brings us to realize, beloved friends, the work of the Spirit of God on the MIND. We are to love the Lord with our mind. That is to be included in devotion to the Lord, as Luke 10.27 shows, and the Spirit of God works on the MIND to bring to your remembrance. This, beloved friends, is of the deepest importance. So many have brought the work of the Spirit of God largely into the sphere of the EMOTIONAL. But Christ lays stress on the work of the Spirit of God in connection with the right use of the mind. This is not unimportant. So many have disproportionately emphasized the Spirit of God in connection with their feel-

ings, until they have substituted feelings for the teaching of Scripture. They have said "I feel led to do this", or "I felt led by the Lord". And they have often gone diametrically AGAINST the Scriptures. They have trusted to feelings and imagined they were the leading of the Holy Spirit. I am not speaking of intentional sin: many children of God have been misled. Now the Spirit of God is not said in this passage to come and operate on our feelings. Christ's PARTICULAR stress in that He will bring to our remembrance the Truth, that He will deal with the believer by THE USE OF THE MIND TO THE GLORY OF GOD. We have said that those who are led by impulses and feelings often THINK they are led by the Spirit of God. But the mind is quite UNBALANCED. They will accept error quite as readily as truth, because they FEEL a certain indescribable emotion. We see this today in modern records of apparent revival. How often we have the feelings carrying men away that they accept all manner of error, and yet they think they are led by the Spirit of God, and oftentimes saved ones are quite at fault because they are expecting the Spirit of God to work largely on the lines of emotions. It is for THIS they are looking, and therefore the emotions are brought into undue prominence, and are placed ready for any mighty swayings. This gives the evil one a great opportunity. Prayerful testing is not present. Emotions are uppermost, and the first way that reaches them is regarded as probably from the Lord. There is a bias toward it, and if Satan is disguised as an angel of light, a proportion of truth will lull to sleep any thought of humble examination. But the Spirit of God has been revealed as particularly bringing to the REMEMBRANCE. So, when anyone says to you "Oh, I feel led, the Spirit of God has impressed this upon me", ask WHAT PART OF TRUTH He has brought to the remembrance that there may be the godly emotion on the line of that which He brings to remembrance. I would not say a word against godly emotion if it is first on the line of what the Spirit has brought to the remembrance from the testimony of the Truth. Emotion is precious when it is the handmaid of truth, but emotion is dangerous when it is apart from the power of the truth. Emotion must be wrapped up in truth, and then emotion is a power to the glory of God. Let the Spirit of God bring to the remembrance, and then let there be the godly emotion in setting forth that which is brought to the remembrance of the

words of Divine truth and power.

Not only so. By this precious statement we see how the Spirit of God in honouring the Scriptures lays a stress on our godly ACTIVITY. It is not that the Spirit of God gives us a fresh revelation. The normal thought is the Spirit of God will bring to your remembrance. Then there must be the KNOWLEDGE FIRST that there may be the bringing to remembrance. This is deeply important. How many dear children of God have rather thought the Spirit of God would relieve them from the strain of Bible study. But the Spirit of God is pleased to work on that which is accumulated in the mind through prayerful study. He is pleased to take that which is already in the mind. Now let us consider, beloved friends, that wonderful mind which God has given us. It is a precious gift. We rarely thank God enough for the mind. There are millions of things which you know. There are many things which if you said to me, I should at once recall them, though probably if you do not say them I should NEVER recall them to my mind throughout my earthly days. There are myriads of things which have happened in my experience, and yours, that unless someone recalls them, will probably remain for ever unrecalled, but the fact that you and I COULD recall them shows they are THERE. Now this has a deeply important bearing. We want to know how to act in emergencies. If we simply look to our own minds we shall NOT recall the right word of Scripture. I do not always know WHAT to recall to my mind that I may act in any important emergencies. In some things I have certain verses of Scripture ready to give an answer, but in other circumstances of life I do not know which verse to apply. I cannot read through the whole Bible to find the passage to act in a sudden difficulty. What I want is Someone who will bring to my remembrance the exactly suited verse which is there in the mind. But knowledge is not the only matter. There are many men who have a vast knowledge, but they are peculiarly deficient in being able to recollect just what they need. The Spirit of God will deal with our problem in this matter. But, beloved friends, the Spirit of God works on that which is THERE, in order to remind. If you say, I want the Spirit of God to lead me, then, beloved fellow believer, store your mind at once with the words of the TRUTH, that He may have something whereof to remind you. I grant that He can lead without, but the promise is, He will remind. Salvation is a

perfectly free gift, but THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH is not. It depends on much continued prayerful hard work. You must lovingly read through the whole Scripture. You must earnestly search through the whole Scripture. You must diligently learn verse after verse, with a joyous delight, if you would render to God that which the Holy Spirit is willing to use to remind you at the right moment of what you are to do, and what you are to say. He will remind you if you have the verse stored there. The Spirit of God will not break the promise. Here is a Divine arrangement. He cannot 'remind' you of what is NOT in the mind. He CAN teach apart from what is in the mind. He CAN make you open the Scripture at the passage you had not noticed before. He CAN go beyond the promise, but He cannot REMIND of what is not in the mind. THAT is the promise. Never would we restrict HIM. But we honour Him by expecting Him to work among the redeemed, on the line of that which Christ has revealed.

We go further, and in the fifteenth chapter, and the 26th verse, the Advocate is seen as testifying of Christ, and the 27th verse adds, "And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning". And thus we see the work of the Spirit of God is not only to remind, but also to lead God's dear people on the path of definite WITNESS. They are to own the truth, they are not to be ashamed of their rejected Lord. Acts 1 shows this as a principle, in another context, in whatever way we view it, 'tis precious true, we need the work of the Spirit of God for witness. The 16th chapter reminds us in the 7th verse that the Advocate comes to bring God's dear people TOGETHER. He convicts the world, but in verse 13, "Howbeit when He the Spirit of (the) Truth is come, He will guide YOU into all (the) truth, for He shall not speak from Himself, but whatsoever He shall have heard that shall He speak, and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of Mine, and shall shew it unto YOU". "When He the Spirit of Truth is come He will guide you into all truth". The Lord Jesus Christ had many things to say, but the disciples were not then able to bear them. Here we do have the reference to the FURTHER unveiling of the testimony of CHRIST in the epistles (Cf. Acts 1.1). One delights to see the further unveiling is of the things of Christ. The arrangements were not fresh to Him. I HAVE many things, I HAVE many

things to say to you. The Lord Jesus Christ does not say, There are many things which belong to a future dispensation. He does not say, I view you on Jewish ground, and therefore these must be reserved for the epistles, and for Paul, to reveal as ~~dragging~~ to a fresh idea altogether. He says I HAVE them. It is not that I cannot reveal them at the present time, but you cannot bear them now. It is the disciples' inability to bear that He brings out. But when the Spirit of truth came, the Spirit of truth took of these things of Christ, and His work was, and is, to lead into all the truth. Now the word 'lead' is the word 'Lead along the way'. It is a deeply important thought. Christ is the Way (John 14.6), and the Holy Spirit leads along the way. He does not drag, He does not force, He does not push. He leads. The work of the Spirit of God to the world is convicting, but to the children of God it is specially leading. Leading implies not only a Leader, but one willing to be led. At the present time we hear much about the leading of the Spirit. But the remarkable thing is this, that the expression "The leading of the Spirit" is so often brought forward in connection with emotion, for which the words of truth can never be thus brought forward. In other words, the leading of the Spirit is an expression today, used as if this was a substitute for the testimony of the Scripture, and many think that if they cannot give a Scriptural reason, it is sufficient to say, I am led. The Holy Spirit through Paul witnessed against this. In 1 Cor. 14 he says "If anyone among you seemeth to be spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord". The leading of the Spirit is never against the commandments of the Lord. There were those at Corinth who said, We are led of the Spirit to speak, and they broke the Lord's arrangements, - as to the silence of sisters, for example. They broke the Lord's arrangement on other points of assembly witness, and then they said, We are led. The Spirit of God never contradicts Himself. His work is to lead into all truth. How do you account for the following fact? I only wish we pained our hearts over it more. There are many meetings in this land where there is a stress on the leading of the Spirit, but if anyone were to propose there should be a pondering of the subject of baptism, and beliefs' relationship to that, there would be the proposal to keep THAT subject out, for fear of differences of opinion coming up, and the meetings can only be main-

tained by excluding 'controversial matters' as baptism. Many say We must avoid controversy, we will have the leading of the Spirit. How do you account for such a view of the Lord's own commands? Does the Spirit of truth lead to the ignoring of the truth? Beloved friends, this is a terrible travesty of the Spirit of God's leading. It is a terrible denial of His graciously revealed method. The Spirit of truth leads along the path into all truth. Oh how many dear children of God have been troubled over this verse, and it was not meant to trouble them, it was meant to encourage them. Have you not had believers come to you and say, I cannot understand it. Here are those who bear the Name of the Lord Jesus and they differ, but it is written, The Spirit of God will lead into all truth! They have missed the point. It is not, He HAS led you into all truth. It is, He WILL lead you - the goal is all the truth, with a view to all the truth. He will lead you with this in view. For He shall not speak of Himself, but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak. That which the Spirit of God emphasizes, and His WAY of emphasizing, alike are to lead along the path into all the truth. Here then is a deeply solemn thought; may it be precious to our hearts, as well as grasped by our understandings. There are those who come forward, - we have met them - and they say, I have the Spirit of God, and He leads me, and so I have reached the truth, Then they will sometimes, as we have seen in a conversational meeting, emphasize dangerous error, and add, The Spirit of God has led me, and I have the truth. But those who are truly led by the Spirit of God Who does not glorify Himself, will be characterized by humility. Pride is never a mark of being led by the Spirit of God, and the work of the Spirit of God is ever leading along the path, and the goal is all the truth. The promise is not broken because believers learn slowly, but the promise is to encourage believers to wish to learn more quickly. The promise is not changed because children of God differ, but the promise is to lead children of God to be bowed on their knees until they differ less. The Spirit of God is One, and He will lead along the path till the promise of Christ, with the prayer of Christ in the next chapter, will alike be fulfilled in their richest fulness, in the day soon to come. But meanwhile, as Christ puts it, HE shall receive of Mine, and shall announce to you. This has an important bearing

on another aspect of the truth. The Spirit of God's work is to make the things of Christ LIVING to us. I have read a word and felt no power in it. I have heard a word, and have felt the meaning of the speaker. The tone, the manner, the accompaniments, have made the word live. If you and I cling to the aspect of Scripture reading ONE moment, and the Spirit of God leading ANOTHER moment, we are missing much of the thought. There is a wondrous blending. The Spirit of God REMINDS. That word is precious. But our preparation is not the only work we have. I said just now we must store our hearts with the words of truth. Blessed be God, we desire thus to do. But I do not mean, Get out your Bibles for a mental study, and hope the Spirit of God will give a blessing in applying the truth some days afterwards. We want to humble ourselves now, and to seek and expect the work of the Spirit of God days afterwards to apply the truth, but we also want the Spirit of God with us when we are searching and when we are studying, to make the truth living AT ONCE. It is not enough to be Bible students. The Spirit of God takes the words of truth and will give the tone to them, and will give the accent to them to make those words LIVE in impressive power. Oh, beloved friends, the work of the Spirit of God is NOT instead of the Scriptures. The work of the Spirit of God is to APPLY the Scriptures. There are those who emphasize the words without the Spirit; there are those who lay stress on the Spirit without the words. But if we would remember our Lord's testimony, it is the work of the Spirit of God to apply the words. If we have the words without the power of the Spirit we will have all the apparatus without the electric current. If we have the thought of the Spirit of God without the words, we have the electric current with no apparatus to receive it. If by grace we have the Spirit of God working in the words, there is the living power which comes into the prepared apparatus, that there may be the life, the delight, the power, the heat, and the fulness of blessing, that we may know what to do with the light God gives, that we may feel the heat of the loving power of the Lord, and enter into the meaning of strength to serve, as the Spirit of God applies the Scripture in living power. Oh for grace to know this unveiling of the work of the Spirit of God today.

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