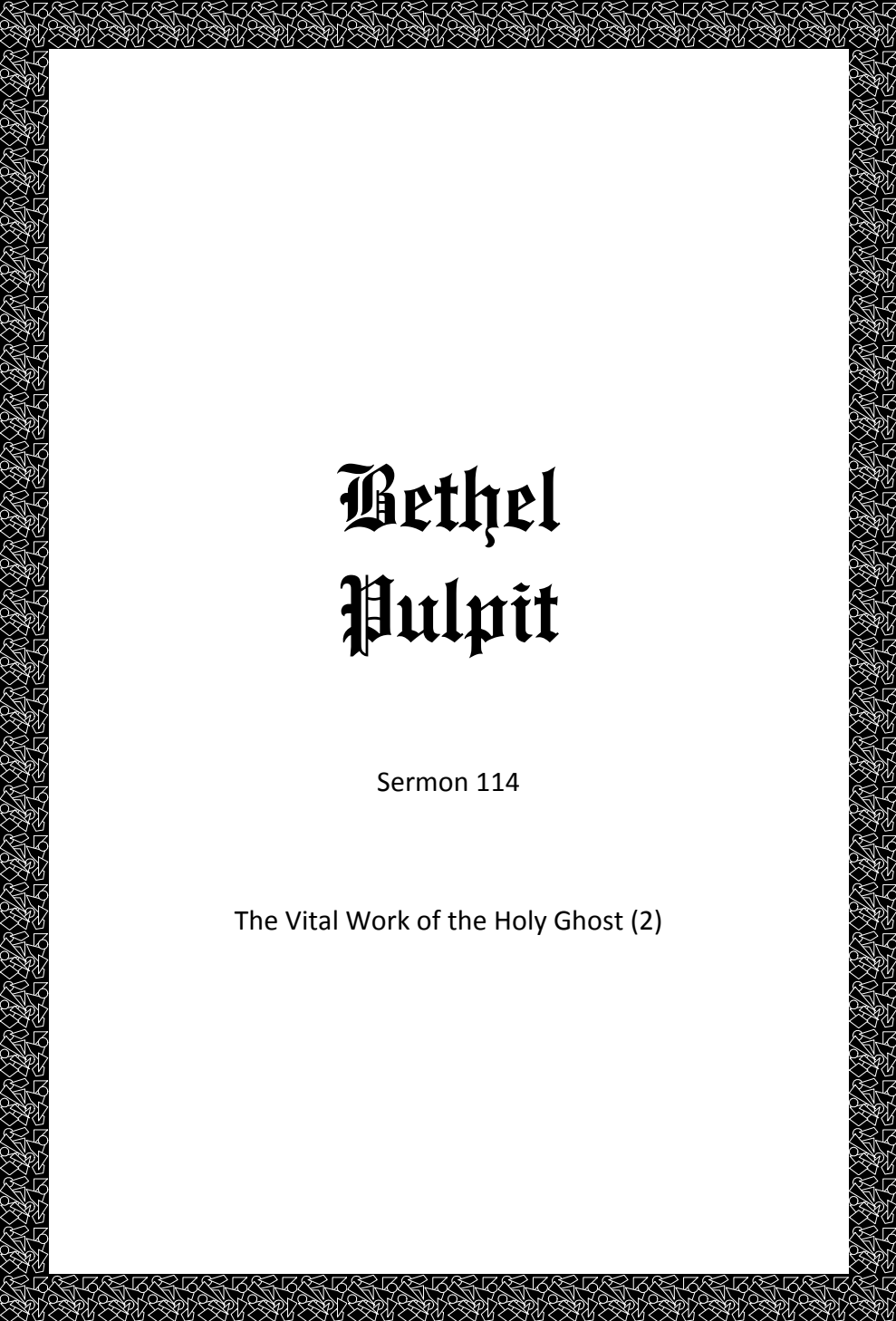




Bethel Pulpit

Sermon 114

The Vital Work of the Holy Ghost (2)

**Sermon preached at Bethel Chapel, Luton,
by Mr. B. A. Ramsbottom,
on Lord's day evening, 2nd October, 1994**

Text: *"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).*

Perhaps some of you have been thinking over this morning's sermon. I hope many of you have. But perhaps with some of you there has been this great, this vital question: "Do I really know the work of the Holy Ghost? I realise its importance, how vital it is. I realise that without it my religion is wrong. But do I *really* know the gracious leading and teaching of the Holy Ghost?"

Many of us have been tried on this point. I go back to my spiritual beginnings when I was sorely tried on this very point. I felt I knew something concerning the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I could not deny it. I knew something of the atonement, of the preciousness of His Person. I knew something of the wonders of His love. But I was so tried and tempted that I did not know anything of the Holy Ghost's work. Now the Lord showed me this, that the Holy Ghost shall not speak of Himself. "He shall not speak of Himself." In other words, according to the economy of the covenant of grace, the work of the Holy Ghost is not to speak of Himself, to exalt Himself, to draw attention to Himself, but as the Saviour went on to say, "He shall glorify *Me*: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall shew it unto you." That broke the snare. In a word it is this: if you and I know anything of the beauty and glory and suitability of the Lord Jesus, it is the Holy Ghost's work in our heart. It never came by nature. Satan did not do it. And the very reason why we are tried about knowing much about the Holy Ghost is because of this covenant appointment: "He shall not speak of Himself." Joseph Hart puts it very beautifully:

"That blessed Spirit omits to speak
Of what Himself has done,
And bids the enlightened sinner seek
Salvation in the Son."

To come to points, every drawing you find to the Saviour, every time your affections go out after Him, every time you seek after Him, every time you see any beauty in Him that you should desire Him, then it is the Holy Ghost's teaching. To sum it all up:

“The soul that with sincere desires
Seeks after Jesus' love,
That soul the Holy Ghost inspires
With breathings from above.”

“The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things.” The vital hallmark of the Holy Ghost's work is this: “He shall glorify Me.” If you find these workings and exercises in your heart and they are glorifying the Saviour, they are from the Holy Ghost. But if you find them and they are glorifying the flesh or something base and allowing sin, you watch them. They never came from heaven. You can try this with any preacher you hear. Does he seek to glorify Christ and put the crown on His head? Does he seek to abase the creature? You can put it to this test if someone comes knocking at your door with some new doctrine, or someone lends you a book or gives you a pamphlet. Is it of God or is it not? Is it of God or is it some other spirit? Well, if it is the Spirit of God, it will always glorify Christ. You will find the echo to it in your own spirit.

We read of the Holy Spirit: “When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me.” That is, He comes as a witness and He bears witness to the truth. He bears witness to the truth of salvation. He bears witness to the truth of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. “He shall testify of Me.” So in our prayers to be graciously taught, that is just what we want. We want the Holy Spirit to come and testify of the Lord Jesus to us, bear witness to Him, bear witness to His Person, His love, His great salvation, and to bear that personal witness with your spirit and mine that we have an interest in the Saviour's love, that we are born of God. That sealing work the old divines used to speak of, the Holy Ghost bearing witness, testifying of Christ, sealing the truth in your heart. So I hope there are many here who value the Holy Spirit's teaching and many of you who are seeking it, praying for it. You young people, you can ask

for nothing better than that, that the Holy Spirit might teach you. “That which I see not teach Thou me.”

“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things.” He will teach you how to pray. What a wonderful thing when the Holy Spirit teaches us to pray! Then we truly can pray. He will teach us to believe. “O,” you say, “that is strange doctrine in 1994, that sinners need to be *taught* how to believe, taught by the Holy Ghost!” Well, this has been the witness of the church of God down the ages. It is certainly the witness of Scripture, however much today people make believing on the Son of God an easy thing. Joseph Hart said that only He who made the world can make a believer. He shall teach you to believe, teach you to repent.

“He shall teach you all things.” Sometimes, of course, it will be in providence. You will say, “Lord, what is Thy will? If it be so, tell me; if it be not so, tell me. Is this the way I should go, or should it be that? What about this choice? What about this decision?” “He shall teach you all things.” There is nothing too great for you to seek the Holy Spirit’s teaching in and there is nothing too small. O that we might be taught the way we must go, the Holy Spirit kindly teaching us, showing us the way we have to go. Not this way; it is dishonouring to the Lord. Not that way; it will do you no good. Certainly not this way which seems right to a man, but the end thereof is the ways of death. But, “This is the way, walk ye in it.”

“He shall teach you all things” – in providence and in grace. As you read the Scriptures, seek the teaching of the Holy Spirit. Do not just read them; do not just try to understand them yourself. Pray that the Holy Spirit might teach you, that the Word might be a lamp to your feet and a light to your path. “Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law.” Do not dictate to the Holy Spirit, but ask Him to teach you, especially those things in which you feel to come short; to open your blind eyes, to enlighten your understanding, to take you by the hand and lead you, especially to lead you out of the world and out of formality, out of yourself, to the Lord Jesus.

“He shall glorify Me,” says the Saviour, “for He shall receive of Mine, and shall shew it unto you.” This is the way to learn the truth, as the Holy Spirit shows you the Saviour’s love and shows you His Person, His

sacred humanity, His Godhead, His precious offices; as He shows you Gethsemane, Calvary, the precious blood; as He shows you a glorious righteousness; as He shows you that all-prevailing intercession; and then as He shows you your own personal interest in these things. “He shall teach you all things.” You know what follows afterwards: “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you.” Beautiful words, aren’t they! “Peace by His cross has Jesus made.” But the Holy Spirit, as He teaches the people of God, reveals to them that sacred peace in Jesus, where it is to be found, and He sheds it abroad in their hearts.

“The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things.” Now you notice this beautiful title that the Lord Jesus gives to the Holy Ghost: the Comforter. I think it is a lovely title, the Comforter. I do not like these new Bibles which translate it, *the Helper* – “the Helper, which is the Holy Spirit.” *The Comforter*. Really at this time the immediate disciples of the Lord Jesus were full of sorrow, and well they might be, because their Lord and Master had told them He was going to leave them. But then He said, “I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.” I know that had a reference to the resurrection and those wonderful meetings. But especially it speaks of the coming of the Holy Ghost the divine Comforter. Why, the Lord Jesus says, “I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever,” the implication being there that the Lord Jesus is a Comforter. Well, He is, beloved friends, isn’t He? He is a Comforter. We have proved it, tried it. But He says, “I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever.” The Comforter, the heavenly Paraclete, the Advocate.

“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things.” Now that means one thing to you and me: that if the Holy Ghost is going to have dealings with us in salvation, in the new birth, and then in leading us, then in instructing us, then in teaching us, if His gracious office in this teaching is the Comforter, then He is going to bless us with that comfort we need. Let me put it very simply. If there is a man here and he is a teacher of chemistry and he is going to teach you, then you expect it will be something about chemistry, don’t you? If this man is a historian and he is going to teach you, then you expect it is going to be something about history. This is just common sense. Well, here we are told that the church is to have a glorious

Teacher to teach them all things. Who is He? Well, He is the Comforter. O what a beautiful title the Lord Jesus give Him! He is the Comforter. So in His teaching we are to expect this glorious comfort, this heavenly comfort, this divine comfort.

“The Comforter ... He shall teach you all things.” Well did the Lord Jesus in love to His dear people know how often they would be sad and cast down and in trouble and that they would need this heavenly comfort. “Whom the Father will send in My name.” And then in the next chapter the Lord Jesus says, “The Comforter ... whom I will send unto you.” I believe when the Lord Jesus spoke this word it was not just to His immediate disciples. It was to all His beloved people to the end of time. It seems as if in these wonderful chapters sometimes spoken of as the holy of holies, sometimes as the inner sanctuary, John 14, 15 and 16, the heart of the Lord Jesus just before He suffered overflowed with love to His people. And I believe He saw all their needs and all their sorrows right to the end of time. He saw your sorrows, He saw mine, even this evening, and as His heart overflowed with love, with what affection did He recommend the Holy Ghost, the divine Comforter, to His church. Spiritual comfort, providential comfort, for sorrow of soul, sorrow of circumstance, sorrow of body, sorrow in the church of God, sorrow in your business, sorrow in your family. “The Comforter.” You see, He is true, almighty God, and He has that gracious wisdom and wonderful understanding. But how tender His love, and He knows your sorrow, and He knows how to comfort.

“The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things.” How does the Holy Ghost comfort the people of God? Well, of course, this is a vast subject, an inexhaustible subject, but it is a beautiful subject to those of you who are tried and cast down. Well, here is one who is sad, sorrowful, tried, tempted because of a sense of sin and guilt and unfitness and eternity before. And the Holy Ghost, the divine Comforter, breathes comfort where distress abounds. He breathes it, and He leads that soul to Calvary where the Lamb was slain. That is a good prayer to the Holy Ghost:

“Conduct blest Guide, Thy sinner-train
To Calvary, where the Lamb was slain,
And with us there abide.”

This is where the church of God finds sweet consolation in the gospel as the Holy Ghost, the divine Comforter, leads them forth to Calvary, there to view mercy's streams in streams of blood. Why, the apostle speaks of "the comfort of the Holy Ghost," and that is it, when the Holy Ghost leads you to Jesus, leads you to Calvary, reveals the precious blood, shows you atonement made, seals it in your heart, sheds abroad the dear Saviour's love, and then you know the answer to the question: "Are the consolations of God small?"

"The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost ... He shall teach you all things." O but how does He comfort? Sometimes by a blessed sense of God's presence. There you are in your trouble, your sorrow, your need, and the holy Comforter blesses you with the sweet assurance that the Lord is there with you. You feel His kind presence, His love, His nearness, a refuge, a strength, a very present help in time of trouble. "Even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me."

"The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost ... He shall teach you all things." How does He comfort the people of God in their sorrows? Sometimes by dropping a sweet promise in their hearts. "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness." You will know the difference between just reading a scripture and when the Holy Spirit of God applies it, brings it with sweet, bedewing power in your heart. You know that heavenly comfort, because there is a gracious effect.

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost ... He shall teach you all things." How many of you are there here this evening standing in need of this heavenly comfort? The best of friends might try to comfort you. It does not avail. Even if the queen should send a message of comfort, that would not avail. But let the Holy Spirit breathe that sweet comfort in your heart and then "ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem." O His ability to comfort, the sovereign way in which He performs it! What an encouragement it was to the Lord's immediate disciples! "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever." "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." "When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father,

even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me.”

“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things.” Then the Lord Jesus adds something very beautiful, very remarkable, very precious: “And bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” As it refers to the immediate disciples, they loved to hear the Saviour’s voice. At present in John 14, 15 and 16, He was speaking these unspeakably blessed words. But the disciples were sad. They realised their memories were only finite, how weak they were, how many things they were liable to forget. But there was this clear promise that when the Saviour had ascended to heaven, and as a result of His ascension and intercession the Holy Ghost the Comforter had come in His name, He would bring back to their memory those wonderful things He had said to them. What a joy that was to them, what a resting place! How many people sometimes have been with a loved one who is dying and speaking precious things and they long to remember it all, but they are afraid of forgetting. How pleased they are if they find someone has been listening, perhaps in the other room, and jotted it all down! They are so pleased to have the record. How much more so with these precious words of the Lord Jesus!

“The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost ... shall ... bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” There is one point here – I do not want to labour it – there were those to whom He was speaking at this time, who were called especially to write some of the books of the New Testament. This promise of verse 26 was literally fulfilled in their case as they wrote the gospel or the epistle. “He shall ... bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you.” Well, it is still the same today. Sometimes I have heard this expression at Bethel (I cannot remember whether I used it or some of you used it): speaking of the Holy Ghost as the divine Remembrancer. Well, He is.

“The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost ... He shall ... bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” Of course, this has a bearing on preaching. How does the poor preacher manage to preach? Well, the Holy Ghost brings to his remembrance these things that the Saviour has said unto him. Sometimes something completely

unexpected drops into the preacher's mind, into his heart, even as he is preaching. We want more and yet more of this in our preaching, the sacred influence of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, bringing to our remembrance those things which *He* would have us speak, which *He* would have us tell, that there might be a separating of the precious from the vile, not just in the way most people interpret it, sinners from saints, the precious from the vile, but the preacher's own vile words from the precious words of the Holy Ghost. That is separating the precious from the vile.

"He shall ... bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." Of course, what a wonderful fulfilment of this there is concerning preaching! It may be the minister has been in heaven for many years and something he has spoken in simplicity on some occasion, the Holy Ghost brings it to the remembrance of someone who was there, and O the effect of it! I had that twice particularly powerfully in my own life, two sermons I heard and I am not even certain whether I had any spiritual interest – at least when I heard one of those sermons. But in later years how it kept coming back! I could even see the minister saying it, hear the minister saying it. O the powerful effect! And at the time it left me completely unmoved, completely untouched. This is one thing for Sabbath school teachers; it is one thing for parents; it is one thing concerning all these people who at present keep slipping in and out of our chapel. They perhaps come once and we never see them again, but may it be with some of them on a dying bed that the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, brings to their remembrance the things they heard in Bethel Chapel.

I do not think I have ever told any of you this, but four or five years ago I had a most strange letter which came from Germany and it was most strangely addressed. I do not know how it ever found the chapel. But it was from a person who said she had been an inmate of the Three Counties Hospital near Stotfold. She must have escaped and she came to Luton and wandered round the town and came in the chapel. She wrote from Germany and spoke of some of the things. The letter was so muddled, so confused, but, "Who can tell?" May there be an exercise of prayer concerning it.

"The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost ... shall ... bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." That was

what J. C. Philpot thought was the best point about Sabbath schools. He put it like this. In his day so many were emigrating to America or the backwoods of Australia. He said, "I believe many an aged man has been separated from the means of grace, having spent a life in sin, and the Holy Ghost will perhaps bring back a hymn he learnt in the Sabbath school and seal it home savingly."

"The Holy Ghost ... shall ... bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." Remember that case with John Flavel, the Puritan. Without going into all the details, there was a young boy heard him preach and it was the time soon after the Pilgrim Fathers, and the family emigrated across the sea to America. He forgot all about religion, all about God, until he was over one hundred years of age, and then it was as if he could see his old pastor there warning sinners of the wrath to come. There was a saving effect. Though he was such an aged man, he lived a number of years which proved the reality of his Christian profession. We believe in the complete sovereignty of the Holy Ghost. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." Though a person may hear one sermon here, or perhaps even just hear a hymn being sung, the Holy Ghost can bring it to their remembrance, perhaps on a dying bed or perhaps even before.

"The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost ... shall ... bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." How many of you, dearly beloved friends, in days past have been so tried and tempted and tormented about giving your little testimony before the church! What if your mind should be a blank? What if you should not be able to say anything? What if you should forget? And you walked out to the letter, you can bear witness to it tonight, we can bear witness to it tonight, the Holy Ghost was your kind Remembrancer and He was faithful to His promise. He did not leave you; He did not forsake you; He brought all things to your remembrance whatsoever the Lord Jesus had said to you and done for you. And you were able to tell it out, weren't you?

"With wonder we attend,
While they the sinner's Friend,
With tears of holy joy, extol."

And He is still the same.

He shall “bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” But then there are those times in your spiritual experience, perhaps you are feeling downcast, perhaps you are feeling sad, and suddenly the Holy Spirit brings to your remembrance some verse you once read, or some blessing you had, or the days of your spiritual youth, or that word He dropped in your heart, or that answer to your prayer, or that sermon you heard, or that conversation with a godly person. How do you know it is the Holy Ghost, the Comforter? By the gracious effect, and you “bring forth the old because of the new.” O this vital, precious aspect of the gracious, glorious work of the Spirit of God, teaching you all things, comforting you! But do not forget this, do not leave it out: bringing all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you.

And then just one last, very beautiful, sacred aspect of it. I mean this: when the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ was here upon earth, He said some glorious things, and there are those times when the Holy Ghost takes these glorious things that the Lord Jesus spoke and He brings them to your remembrance graciously, savingly. Then you “enjoy a gospel day, and heaven begun below.” There are many of them. Let me just name one or two. Here you are, so tried and tempted and exercised and burdened about your soul. Am I wrong after all? And the Holy Spirit brings this to your remembrance that Christ said: “Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.” Then you have an anchor ground there. Or it may be again you are feeling so tried and tempted and weary with your sin, and then perhaps suddenly, unexpectedly, perhaps very gently like the dew, or perhaps more powerfully, the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, brings this to your remembrance that Christ spoke: “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Or it may be you are very tried and tempted about your last end. How will it be in the swellings of Jordan? And the Holy Ghost brings this to your remembrance: “In My Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” Then there is the sweet assurance when the Holy Ghost brings it to your remembrance. O but sometimes your heart will be tossed and torn and tormented like the stormy ocean, and then the Holy Ghost kindly brings to your remembrance the dear Saviour saying, “Peace, be still.... And there was a great calm.” And He breathes that peace in your heart.

When He gives peace, who can give sorrow? “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

He shall “bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” But one thing, one blessed thing the Saviour said, and God’s people love to have it brought to their remembrance, is this. O go back to Calvary by faith and see the Lord of glory dying, and then before He bows His head in death, hear Him crying with a loud voice, “It is finished.” And if the Holy Ghost brings that back to your remembrance tonight, then you will go on your way rejoicing.

“‘It is finished,’ said the Lord,
In His dying minute;
Holy Ghost, repeat the word,
Full salvation’s in it.”

“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.” May God add His blessing.

(The morning sermon on the same text was published last month.)