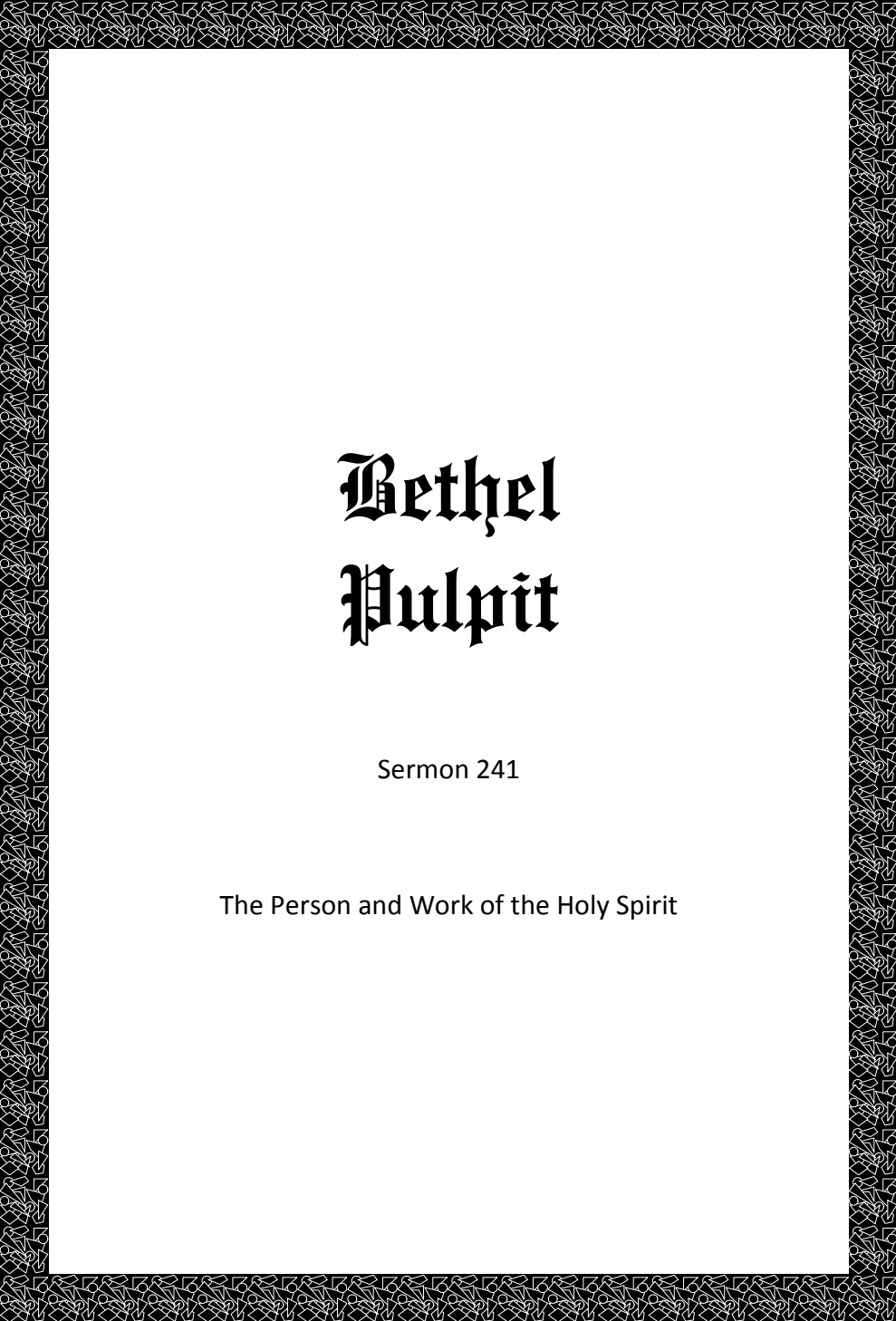




Bethel Pulpit

Sermon 241

The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit

**Sermon preached at Bethel Chapel, Luton,
by Mr. B. A. Ramsbottom,
on Lord's day morning, 31st July, 2005**

Text: *"He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall shew it unto you" (John 16. 14).*

These were some of the last words the Lord Jesus spoke before He went to Calvary to die. His beloved disciples were so sad, so sorrowful, because they knew their Lord and Master was soon to leave them. They could not altogether understand what was happening, but they knew it was something very sad, and so their hearts were troubled. In these very beautiful chapters, 14, 15 and 16, the Lord Jesus so kindly and tenderly and lovingly comforts them. He speaks such tender words, such gracious words to comfort them. And isn't it a mercy, beloved friends, that the Lord Jesus is eternally the same, "this same Jesus," "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever"? And He still has that loving, tender, sympathising heart, and He still knows and feels the troubles of His own followers, those of you here this morning with troubled hearts. Perhaps you feel no-one really knows and no-one really understands and no-one really sympathises, but this same Jesus, now risen, exalted, glorified, He knows and He understands and He cares.

So that is a wonderful encouragement to you to pray, whatever it is that is resting on you this morning, whatever is worrying you, bowing you down. "Casting *all* your care upon Him," not just some of it. Sometimes we have our care and we cast *some* of it on the Lord and we think we can manage it ourselves. "Casting *all your care* upon Him," leaving it there. Sometimes we cast our care on the Lord and then we find we have taken it back. "Casting all your care upon Him." And may you sweetly prove, "He careth for you."

As we meet week by week, we do not want it just to be dead and empty and formal, just like a lecture. We want these things to come right home, as if you are the only person in the chapel, as if the Lord is speaking personally to you. We want the Lord to seal the word home with power. We want to feel the gracious effect of it.

Well, here we have the dear Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ comforting His beloved disciples before He goes to the cross to die. No doubt all of you must have noticed this, that the special way in which the

Lord Jesus comforts them is by the promise of the Holy Spirit. It is not the only way He comforts them – He has some wonderful words of comfort – but the special thing is this promise of the coming of the Holy Spirit. That is what He is speaking about here for their comfort. And did you notice that wonderful word, the wonderful name that the Lord Jesus gives to the Holy Spirit – the Comforter? Because the Lord Jesus Himself is the Comforter. Some of you know that; you have proved it. But the Lord Jesus said, “I will pray the Father, and He shall give you *another Comforter*” – that is the Holy Spirit – “that He may abide with you for ever.”

Before coming immediately to this word, let me just say a few things about the Holy Spirit, especially to you young people and the children, the girls and boys, because this is a subject about which people so often are confused. There are really three things I want to say. First of all, the Holy Spirit is *a Person*, as much a person as you and me, as much a person as the Lord Jesus. Do not think of the Holy Spirit just as some *influence*. The Holy Spirit is a Person. God the Father is a Person. God the Son, the Lord Jesus, is a Person. God the Holy Spirit is a Person. The Trinity, three Persons in one God. Now that is the first thing.

The second thing is this. The Holy Spirit is a *divine Person*; the Holy Spirit is God. The Holy Spirit is just as much God as the Lord Jesus is God. The Holy Spirit is just as much God as God the Father is God. I am trying to speak as simply as I possibly can, because these things are important; they are vital; they are some of our foundation truths and beliefs, yet they are things that people are so ignorant about.

So three things: first of all, the Holy Spirit is a Person; secondly, the Holy Spirit is a divine Person, He is God; and the third thing, when the Lord Jesus says that the Holy Spirit will come, you must not think that the Holy Spirit only began to work after Jesus had died and risen again; you must not think this was the first time the Holy Spirit came into the world. The Holy Spirit was there when the world was created. The first sinner who was ever saved by grace, who ever went to heaven, Abel, it was the Holy Spirit working in his heart who taught him. It was the Holy Spirit who made the difference between Cain and Abel. Right through the Old Testament, every sinner saved by grace, it was the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart. When Joseph was tempted to sin and said, “How then can I do

this great wickedness, and sin against God?" it was the Holy Spirit who restrained him, the Holy Spirit who kept him. Let us be clear on that.

Why then, why does the Lord Jesus speak of the Holy Spirit *coming*? Well, after the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, the Holy Spirit came in a special way; His presence was with His church and people in a special way, His presence in the hearts of sinners in a special way, as the Old Testament saints had never really realised. They had never seen it clearly, never felt it clearly. Now the Holy Spirit is clearly going to come. He is going to come in power. He is going to display His greatness. And of course, the immediate fulfilment of this was on the Day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit in a special way descended from heaven to abide with His church, to dwell with them for ever.

So just one or two exceedingly simple things. There was a lot of talk a few years ago in politics about "back to basics," and I wonder sometimes if we take too much for granted, if we take it for granted our children, our young people know these things, and we should again and again spell them out and set them forth, because these things are vital.

Now one other thing before coming immediately to this text. You and I have as much religion, no more, no less than has been wrought in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Apart from the Holy Spirit's work in our hearts, we are nothing, we know nothing. It is only the Holy Spirit who can make a Christian. It is only the Holy Spirit who can open blind eyes, unstop deaf ears. It is only the Holy Spirit who can take the veil away from our eyes. It is only the Holy Spirit who can make the dead live. It is only the Holy Spirit who can use the Word with divine, almighty power in a sinner's heart. That is vital. We know nothing, we are nothing, apart from the Holy Spirit. And if the Holy Spirit is not present with us in our services, we may as well lock the doors and sell the buildings.

This is the emphasis of the Lord Jesus and this is the emphasis of the whole of the New Testament: the vital necessity for the work of the Holy Spirit. When you read your Bible at home, pray that the Holy Spirit will lead you in the truth, open your eyes, show you wondrous things in the Word. When you try to pray, seek the help of the Holy Spirit in prayer, because apart from the Holy Spirit's help, we cannot pray aright. And when you come to chapel, pray that the Holy Spirit will enable you to hear, enable me to preach, because unless the Holy Spirit uses the Word, then there is no profit. O how vital is the Holy Spirit's work! That is the

teaching of John chapter 14, chapter 15 and chapter 16, and a great part of the New Testament.

Now, coming to these words, the Lord Jesus speaking concerning the Holy Spirit's work. "He" – the Holy Spirit – "He shall glorify Me." Wherever the Holy Spirit works, Jesus is always glorified. That is the covenant office of the Holy Spirit, to glorify the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I do not know a lot that goes on in some of these other congregations and churches, but there are many claims, from what we gather, of marvellous manifestations of the Holy Spirit. Now are they right or are they wrong? I do not know, but this is always the test: if it is really the work of the Holy Spirit, then it will honour the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. In the services, in what is done, in the effect and in the lives of the people, it will honour the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. So that is it. If someone comes knocking at the door of your house and offers you a pamphlet or a book, you have a look at it and you are not so sure – is it good or it is bad? Well, does it give all the honour and glory to the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ? They will come knocking at your door sometimes. You say, "Do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God?" They say, "O yes." You say, "Do you believe that Jesus is God the Son?" Then it is, "Good morning," and they go away. Everything that is the work of the Holy Spirit will always give all the honour and all the glory to the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

But leaving people knocking at your door. You and me, that blessing you thought you had, was it the work of the Holy Spirit? That word, you felt it came with power. Was it the work of the Holy Spirit? Well, did it make Christ precious in your affections? Did it exalt Him? Did it put the crown on His head? Or did it puff you up with pride? Did it make you think a lot of yourself? To glorify Christ: this is the mark of the work, every work, of God the Holy Spirit.

Let us not be afraid to say that: God the Holy Spirit. You remember that was one of William Gadsby's controversies. Old George Greenhough the preacher, godly man that he was, was the one who was so kind to John Kershaw, but he did not like his pastor using that term. William Gadsby said, "I will give in to you on all kinds of things, George, but I will never give in to you on that: God the Holy Spirit." One day George Greenhough was preaching, and in meditating he had his three

divisions revealed to him: God the Father, and God the Son *and* God the Holy Spirit.

“He shall glorify Me.” Now there are three great works of the Holy Spirit, three special, great works of the Holy Spirit, and in each of them He glorifies Christ. Now the first, *the virgin birth*. We most firmly believe that the Lord Jesus Christ was born of a virgin. He had a true, earthly mother, Mary. He had no earthly father. When this was revealed to Mary, she said, “How shall this be?” Now this was the greatest of all the works of the Holy Spirit: the virgin birth. We are on sacred ground here. We can go no further than holy Scripture. Mary said, “How shall this be?” “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.” Now that was the greatest of all the works of the Holy Spirit, the virgin birth of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Didn’t the Holy Spirit glorify the Saviour in that, sanctifying His sacred humanity so that He was born without any taint of sin, and not only without any taint of sin, but completely impeccable? And impeccable means not just that Jesus did not sin, but it was impossible that He could sin. That is a great mystery. The Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ could be truly tempted, but it was impossible that He could sin. And the reason it was impossible for Him to sin, because His sacred human nature never had an existence separate from His divine Person. So those who are suggesting that though Jesus did not sin, it was possible He might have sinned, had He not been kept, they are suggesting that God Himself is capable of sin!

O this great work of the Holy Spirit in the conception of the Lord Jesus and the union of the human nature, body and soul of the Lord Jesus, with His divine Person! “Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness.” It is a mystery, beloved friends. “Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh.” The holy Word of God says, “without controversy,” yet there never has been a subject about which there has been more controversy. But there are two places where there is no controversy. One is in the holy Word of God and the other is in the heart of a sinner saved by grace. “The mystery of godliness.” Some of us have to say this: “I love the Incarnate Mystery, and there I fix my trust.”

“He” – the Holy Spirit – “shall glorify Me” – the Saviour. So first, the mysterious conception of the Lord Jesus and the virgin birth. Now second, *the inspiration of the Scriptures*. “Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” And because the Holy Ghost was in control, there is not the *slightest possibility* of there being any mistake in holy Scripture. Hold it fast, the inspiration of the Scriptures of truth. And in this the Holy Spirit glorified Christ. They glorify Christ from beginning to end. “Christ in all the Scriptures.” Didn’t the Lord Jesus say, “Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me”?

“He shall glorify Me.” The third great work of the Holy Spirit is *the work of grace in a sinner’s heart*. If you and I are ever to be saved, and if you and I are ever to reach heaven at last, then we must know the Holy Spirit’s work in our hearts. It begins in the new birth. “Ye *must* be born again.” The Holy Spirit implants divine life in your heart and then you are a newborn babe of grace. How do you know a newborn babe lives? Well, you can hear him cry. He hungers. “Ye must be born again” – the Holy Spirit’s work. There will be that hungering, and it will be after Christ; and there will be that crying, and it will be after Christ.

I believe that a lot of girls and boys and young people in their spiritual beginnings are tried and tempted by Satan that they do not know the work of the Holy Spirit. I remember that I was very tried on this point myself. But if you look at the previous verse, it is very clear that the covenant office of the Holy Spirit is not to speak of Himself, but to speak of Christ. “When He, the Spirit of truth, is come ... He shall not speak of Himself.” Our little hymn:

“The Holy Spirit omits to speak
Of what Himself has done,
And bids the enlightened sinner seek
Salvation in the Son.”

So if you know the work of the Holy Spirit in your heart, it will glorify Christ. Every movement of your soul towards Christ is the work of the Holy Spirit. Every time you feel the love of Christ, it is the work of the Holy Spirit. If you know repentance, that is the work of the Holy Spirit. If you have a soft heart, that is the work of the Holy Spirit. “He shall glorify Me.” It is the test of the work of grace in your heart and mine. Does it glorify the Saviour? Does it make Him attractive? Does it make Him

precious? Does it make you want Him? Does it draw your heart out after Him? Does it make you say, “Give me Christ, or else I die”? And, “He which hath begun a good work in you” – the Holy Spirit – “will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” O that work of the Holy Spirit in a believer’s heart, glorifying the Saviour, making Him precious, making Him attractive!

Now this is how He does it. “He shall glorify Me,” says the Lord Jesus, “for He shall receive of Mine, and shall shew it unto you.” That is what revelation is. It is the Holy Spirit showing us thing which we never knew by nature, which we never knew before. I do not want you to think of revelation as being something mystical or fanciful, though sometimes the revelations of the Holy Spirit are very wonderful. Revelation is the Holy Spirit showing you something that you did not know before, which you did not know by nature. Perhaps you have actually seen it: it might be someone at the seaside sitting on a deckchair and moving it nearer and nearer to the edge of a rock, and there is quite a steep fall and they just do not know it. Someone goes and says, “Have you realised ...?” It is a terrible shock. They are in that dreadful danger and if they pushed the deckchair a few inches further back they would possibly have been killed or seriously injured. It is a solemn shock. But they did not know they were in danger. This is the Holy Spirit’s work. You and I were in danger by nature, but we did not know it until the Holy Spirit showed us.

I believe there are some of you here and you see your danger: your sin, your shame, your guilt, eternity before you, your lost condition, but you cannot really see your salvation. Perhaps you tremble with all your heart to see it. It is the Holy Spirit’s work. Like the little prayer of the Highland maid: “Show me myself; show me Thyself.” That is the work of the Holy Spirit.

“He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall shew it unto you.” That is a saving revelation of the truth. Mr. Frank Gosden used to explain it beautifully like this. There might be something valuable hidden in this chapel, and no-one has the slightest idea where it is. It is not something you work out by mathematics, or something you need to be very clever to find out. If the person who had hidden this precious thing were to take you in the chapel and show you where he had hidden it – perhaps underneath the carpet or beneath a loose floorboard – it would not be complicated. It would be as easy now as it was hard before. And then if

he were to give it to you and say it were yours. I always thought Mr. Gosden's explanation was very simple on what divine revelation is.

Jesus said, "He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall shew it unto you." That is what I would like (wouldn't you?), for the Holy Spirit to show us the Saviour's love, for the Holy Spirit to show us the wonders of the Saviour's name, for the Holy Spirit to show us the righteousness of Jesus, for the Holy Spirit to show us that precious, sin-atoning blood, the fountain opened for sin. O but it is this: for the Holy Spirit to convince us of our interest in these things, for the Holy Spirit to apply them to our hearts, for the Holy Spirit to say, "This is all yours," for the Holy Spirit to make us feel these things.

Jesus says, "He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall shew it unto you." Has the Holy Spirit ever shown you any of the things of Jesus? Don't we long to be shown that wonderful love, that "having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end"? And don't we long to be shown that saving name of the Lord Jesus? "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Then as the Holy Spirit has solemnly shown us that sadly we have no righteousness of our own, yet God demands such a righteousness, to show us the glorious righteousness of Jesus, that holy, spotless, perfect life, and show us that this is given to a sinner and received by faith. What an exchange, our rags for the robe of Christ's righteousness! And, "No age can change its glorious hue; the robe of Christ is ever new." Then the wonders of the Saviour's precious, precious, sin-atoning blood, for the Holy Spirit to lead us to Calvary. That hymn of ours to the Holy Spirit:

"Conduct, blest Guide, Thy sinner-train
To Calvary, where the Lamb was slain,
And with us there abide;
Let us our loved Redeemer meet,
Weep o'er His piercèd hands and feet,
And view His wounded side."

For the Holy Spirit to show us these things and apply them to our hearts, assure us of our personal interest in them. So we might go on. The glorious offices of Christ: Prophet, Priest and King, Head of the church, the Shepherd of His people; to show us these things, the covenant of grace ordered in all things and sure; to be shown all these things, the divine

attributes, the Lord's faithfulness and His mercy and His goodness and His grace; and above all, for the Holy Spirit to reveal to us the glories of the Person of Immanuel.

“Hail, great Immanuel, all divine!
In Thee Thy Father's glories shine;
Thou brightest, sweetest, fairest One,
That eyes have seen or angels known.”

“He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall shew it unto you.” Beloved friends, I have tried to speak exceedingly simply to you this morning. We do not want to complicate the everlasting gospel, but these things I have tried to speak to you about are the deep things of God. They are the things that really matter, the things that are vital for your soul's salvation and mine.

“He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall shew it unto you.”