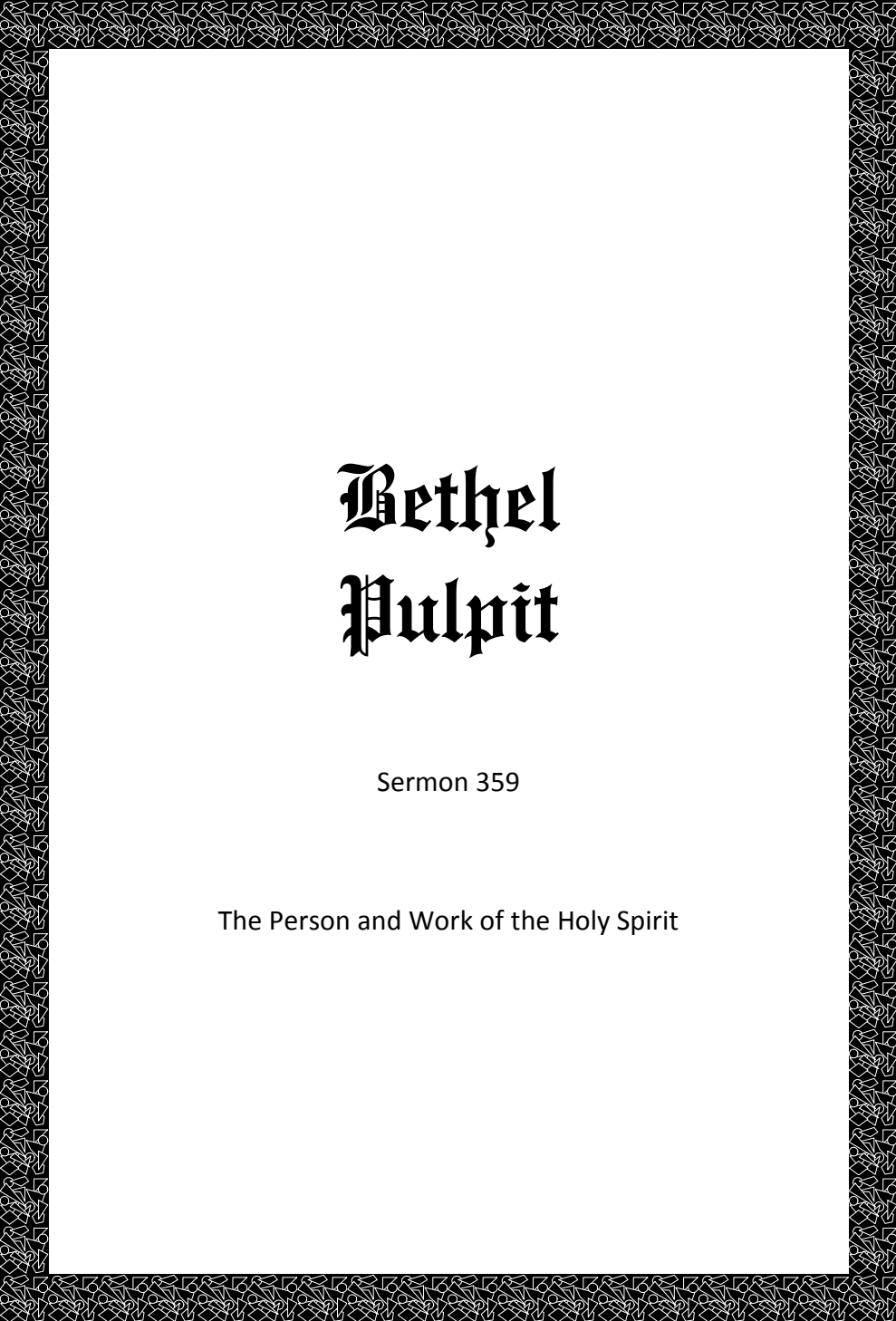




Bethel Pulpit

Sermon 359

The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit

**Sermon preached at Bethel Chapel, Luton,
by Mr. B. A. Ramsbottom,
on Lord's day morning, 24th May, 2015 (Whit Sunday)**

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

This beautiful chapter and the two that come before have been described as *the inner sanctuary* – the Lord Jesus speaking loving, comforting words to His immediate disciples before His death on the cross. Their hearts were filled with sorrow, because they knew that He was going to leave them. There were many things they could not understand, but their hearts were sad, and the Lord Jesus told them that it was expedient that He should go away. It was necessary following His sin-atonement death and glorious resurrection that He should no longer remain on earth, He should return to heaven.

Now they could not understand it, but then He beautifully opened up the sending of the Holy Spirit, the divine Comforter, looking forward to that glorious Day of Pentecost. Of course, not that the Holy Spirit did not exist before Pentecost. He did; just as the Lord Jesus existed long before His incarnation at Bethlehem. And not to say that the Holy Spirit never worked in the hearts of the godly in the Old Testament, for He did. But there was going to be a special presence of the Holy Spirit in the church, and there was going to be a wonderful display of His power on the Day of Pentecost, and afterwards in all those remarkable happenings in the Acts of the Apostles, as it was explained, "These that have turned the world upside down." Some people have said the Acts of the Apostles really should be "the Acts of the Holy Spirit."

Now today is the Day of Pentecost, and what so often we call Whit Sunday. Years ago in our chapels, sermons were preached on Whit Sunday on the Holy Spirit, just as in December they were preached on the birth of the Lord Jesus, Good Friday His death, and Easter Sunday His glorious resurrection. And why this seems to have disappeared – you younger ones cannot remember, but there was not a fixed bank holiday weekend. It was a movable holiday like Easter is, and it always coincided with the Day of Pentecost.

But we do well to be reminded of the Person and work of the Holy Spirit, because apart from that, beloved friends, you and I know nothing personally, nothing savingly. If ever we are to know the truth, if ever we are to know ourselves, if ever we are to know Christ, if ever we are to be prepared for heaven, it is the Holy Spirit's work. And if ever there is going to be any effect of the preaching of the gospel, that too must be the Holy Spirit's work, when the preaching comes not "in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." In mercy may it be something like that even today, the Holy Spirit's sacred influence felt in our midst and upon our hearts, and our meeting together under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

"He," says the Lord Jesus, "He shall glorify Me." Now you young people and children, I would that you might be clear who the Holy Spirit is. Two things are important for us each to remember. First of all, the Holy Spirit is a Person – not just an influence – a Person. He speaks; He acts; He loves; He can be loved; He can be prayed to; He can be grieved. So we might go on. The Holy Spirit is a Person. Secondly, the Holy Spirit is a divine Person. He is almighty – Almighty God, equal with the Father; Almighty God, equal with the Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Now never forget who the Holy Spirit is – this glorious Person, this divine, almighty Person, One in the Godhead, Father and Son and Holy Ghost.

Well, *the Person* of the Holy Spirit. But here we have His work, and the Lord Jesus says, whatever the work of the Holy Spirit is, it will always glorify Christ. Now that is always the hallmark of the Holy Spirit's work. "He" – the Holy Spirit – "shall glorify Me." There are three great works of the Holy Spirit. In each of them He is almighty, He is gracious. In each of them He glorifies Christ.

"He shall glorify Me." And the greatest of all: the Holy Spirit's mysterious work in *the conception of the sacred humanity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*. Now this is a mystery. We tread on holy ground here. We approach with reverence. "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." We cannot understand it, but we believe it. The virgin birth – we can come no nearer than this: "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." O how was it possible that

the Son of God could ever become a real Man without ceasing to be Almighty God, become a real Man without partaking of the sin of the Adam fall? Almighty Wisdom drew the plan, and the Holy Spirit most sacredly fulfilled it in the virgin birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We come no nearer than that, but we worship, and we adore, and we see the vital necessity of it. But how the Holy Spirit glorified the Son of God!

“He shall glorify Me.” The second great work of the Holy Spirit is *the inspiration of the Scriptures*, and from beginning to end Christ is glorified in them. What a wonderful gift the Scriptures of truth! “Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” It is an infallible Book. There is no possibility of any mistake being in it. Perhaps some of you younger ones at times find things hard to understand, and perhaps at school, hospital, college, people argue with you. But there is a foundation here: if the Holy Spirit should condescend to provide a Book for poor, lost, ruined mortals, is it possible that He could ever permit the slightest mistake to creep in? We have here what one of our English Prime Ministers described as “the impregnable rock of holy Scripture,” and it *is* an impregnable rock, because it is the work of the Holy Spirit.

“He shall glorify Me.” And the third great work of the Holy Spirit is *the work of grace in a sinner’s heart*. Apart from this, beloved friends, we know nothing personally and savingly, and apart from this, we are lost eternally. But in the purpose of God in the covenant of grace, all those that the Father chose, all those that the Son redeemed, the appointed time comes when the Holy Spirit quickens them into newness of life in the new birth, and that is vital, whatever religion we may have or not have. “Ye *must* be born again” – the vital necessity of the Holy Spirit’s work in the new birth; otherwise we are left to perish in our sins. May it be a question with you this morning before you go home: do you know anything of the Holy Spirit’s work in your heart?

“Am I quickened by His Spirit;
Live a life of faith and prayer?
Trusting wholly to His merit;
Casting on Him all my care?”

“He shall glorify Me” in the new birth, in all His gracious teaching, in blessing with life where all was death before. And what is it? Teaching the sinner his danger, lost through the Fall and through personal sin,

appointed to die, to meet his Maker, to give an account, unable to fit and prepare himself, the need for forgiveness, for the Holy Spirit's work. And in all this He glorifies the Saviour because He is teaching the sinner that in his lost, ruined case he can do nothing, no hope for him, no salvation, no heaven, short of an interest in Christ and Him crucified.

"He shall glorify Me." And then as He leads the sinner to Christ, and makes Christ known, and enables the sinner to look to Christ, teaches him to pray, gives him a soft heart, blesses him with repentance, gives him faith, it is all the Holy Spirit's work. The old hymn:

"And every virtue we possess,
And every conquest won,
And every thought of holiness,
Are His alone."

"He shall glorify Me" – making Christ precious to the soul, and "the work begun is carried on." The sinner is led and taught by the Spirit of God, led in prayer, led under the preaching of the gospel, blessed with faith, given grace to believe. "He which hath begun a good work in you" – that is the Holy Spirit – "will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." And it is all of mercy; it is all the work of freest grace.

But this is the mark of it: "He shall glorify Me." Now I just want to linger here a moment. I believe that many a young believer is tried and tempted whether he really knows anything or whether he knows much of the Holy Spirit's work in his heart. He knows a few things. He knows Christ is precious; he knows Christ is his only hope; he knows he feels a little love in his heart towards Christ; he believes Christ is the Object of his first desire; but he wonders if he really knows the Holy Spirit's work. Well, there is a reason for it, and the Lord Jesus most beautifully explains it in the preceding verse: "When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself." In the economy of grace the Holy Spirit does not glorify Himself. He does not speak of Himself. As we sometimes sing,

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

Which means this: if you are brought really to feel your need of a Saviour and cannot do without Him, that is the Holy Spirit's work. If there is any attraction in Christ, any drawing to Him, that is the Holy Spirit's work. If Christ means anything to you, if He is the Chiefest among ten thousand and the altogether lovely, this is the Holy Spirit's work. So if Christ means everything to you, do not let Satan tempt you with unbelief and tempt you that you are a stranger to the work of the Holy Spirit.

“He shall glorify Me.” This is always the mark of real religion; this is always the mark of the Holy Spirit's work. So there is a pair of balances here to weigh things up. If someone lends you a book and you are not sure – is it right or is it wrong? Some things seem good; some things are not. Does it glorify Christ? and if it glorifies Christ, does it abase you? Does it lay the sinner low? I think you will find all other false religion does not really glorify Christ and does not abase the sinner. Or if you are in a conversation with someone, or if you hear a minister for the first time, does his preaching glorify Christ? Does it lay the sinner low? Does it lead you out of self to the Saviour? This is the great mark of real religion; it is the great mark of the Holy Spirit's work.

And so it is in your heart. If you feel you have had a word from the Lord, if you feel you have had a true experience, if you feel you have really been blessed, and then Satan tempts you and unbelief comes in: was it real or was it not? Well, what was its effect? Did it lift you up and make you to be great, or did it make you feel a helpless sinner at the feet of the Saviour? Did it make Christ attractive to you? O it is the great point with any real religion. Satan can do all kinds of things as he tempts and plagues the people of God in unbelief, but Satan will never draw you to Christ; Satan will never make Christ attractive to you; Satan will never glorify the Saviour in your affections. There is solid ground here. “*He*” – the Holy Spirit – “shall glorify Me” – the incarnate Son of God.

“He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall shew it unto you.” So the Holy Spirit's work is continued in a sinner's heart in teaching him – in teaching him many things through the Word of God, through the preaching, in answer to prayer, in providence, in guiding, in leading, but especially concerning Christ.

He shall take of the things of Jesus. “He shall take of Mine, and shall shew it unto you.” I remember myself years ago as a young believer

being tempted on one point. I felt that I did know the Saviour. The great point was now I longed to know Him more, and I could see it was the Lord's work to reveal Christ at first and make Him precious, but then I seemed to have got in this state: well, how could I go on? How could I learn more about Christ? How could I see more of His beauties? It seemed to be hidden from me, and it was a very, very simple word that delivered me with power: "They shall be all taught of God." What does that mean? It is not to go on and search things and find them out for yourself and so go on. It is divine teaching, the Holy Spirit's teaching, and this is promised to all the Lord's children.

What a word is that: the Lord says, "They shall all know Me" – all of them – "from the least of them unto the greatest." "They shall be all taught of God." Now this is it: the Holy Spirit taking of the things of Jesus and showing them to us. That is what a revelation of Christ is. Some people seem to think of dreams and visionary things. That is what a revelation of Christ is: the Holy Spirit graciously, kindly taking these things of Jesus and showing them to you.

What are these things of Jesus that the Holy Spirit shows to a seeking, longing, needy sinner? Well, especially the Person of Christ.

"Show us that loving Man
That rules the courts of bliss,
The Lord of Hosts, the Mighty God,
The eternal Prince of Peace."

"He shall receive of Mine, and shall shew it unto you" – the things of Jesus shown unto you. His wonderful love, the love that took Him to the cross – He will show it to you. His sin-atonement sufferings, the preciousness of His sin-atonement blood – He will show it to you. Your forgiveness, your cleansing in the open fountain – He will show it unto you. The Saviour's glorious righteousness: "By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." You have not any righteousness of your own and you need a righteousness to stand before the throne in the great day. The Saviour's righteousness – the Holy Spirit will take it and He will show it to you. His glorious resurrection: "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." He will show it unto you, these precious things of Jesus. His all-prevailing intercession in heaven: "This Man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.

Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.” Now He will show these things to you. That wonderful fulness that dwells in Christ, a fulness of grace and love and mercy, whatever you need in all your emptiness and weakness and sin, for “It pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell.” And the Holy Spirit will take of this and show it to you.

But beloved friends, before this He will show you something else: that is your need of a Saviour. He will show you something of what you are and who you are. He will show you that one day you have to die. “It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.” He will show you your helplessness to fit and prepare yourself for heaven. He will show you the vital importance of these things. And then He shall glorify the Saviour. He is glorifying the Saviour in teaching you your need, but this is a glorious promise to those of you here this morning whom He *has* shown your sin and your guilt and your need: “He shall take of Mine, and shall shew it unto you.” These wonderful things – the Person, the finished work of Christ, His love, His righteousness, His blood, His power to save, His death, resurrection, exaltation. He will *show* you these things. But especially He will show you the suitability of the Saviour and the suitability of these precious things of the Saviour, their suitability to meet your deepest need – everything you could ask for, everything you seek, everything you need, all there treasured up in Christ, the Pearl of great price. And as He shows you these things, He will show you how blessedly suitable they are to meet your deepest need.

“He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall shew it unto you.” And this is the vital point: He will show you your personal interest in them; He will show you all these things belong to you. Now there is a promise here, beloved friends, for you to plead and to look for the fulfilment. O that we might know this great and gracious work of the Holy Spirit in our midst and attending the preaching of the everlasting gospel. Only so will it do any good. Only so will it affect your hearts. And above all, nothing but the Holy Spirit bringing these things right where you are, like the Good Samaritan when he came right where the poor, wounded man was and he poured the oil and the wine right into his wounds. That is how the Holy Spirit will come, and then it will be this: Christ everything, yourself nothing. O but what a hope! There is salvation

in it; there is heaven in it. O that we might know that glorious and gracious fulfilment, the Day of Pentecost, all that happened on the Day of Pentecost.

Speaking carefully and reverently, if you read Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost, in your natural mind you would perhaps say it was not a specially-good sermon. There was not anything outstanding about it. But O the effect of it! Three thousand people pricked in their hearts and saved by grace that day! What was it? Not Peter's eloquence or ability or reasoning; the power of the Holy Spirit that day as He glorified Christ in salvation and the dear Saviour saw of the travail of His soul and was satisfied, and there was rejoicing in heaven. O in our little measure may we again know something of the blessings of Pentecost! We do not want just to be left to come and to go, and to go and come, and then suddenly eternity to come upon us. O to know these things. May the Lord blessedly perform them here.

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

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Whatever prompts the soul to pride,
Or gives us room to boast,
Except in Jesus crucified,
Is not the Holy Ghost.

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

He never moves a man to say,
"Thank God, I'm made so good,"
But turns his eye another way,
To Jesus and His blood.

Great are the graces He confers,
But all in Jesus' name;
He gladly dictates, gladly hears,
"Salvation to the Lamb."

J. Hart