

365 DAILY DEVOTIONAL SELECTIONS

WALKING WITH
GOD
Day by Day



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Walking with God Day by Day

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PUBLISHER'S FOREWORD

It is impossible to grow spiritually without spending time in God's Word, the Holy Bible. Hearing Scripture on Sundays and occasionally in between is not enough—we need to feed on it regularly for ourselves.

Godly pastors and authors can greatly assist us in such an endeavor. One of these, Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899-1981), minister of Westminster Chapel in London for thirty years, was one of the twentieth century's leading voices in evangelical doctrine and preaching. His numerous books (many of them published after his homegoing) have brought profound spiritual encouragement to literally millions of readers around the world over the years.

Lloyd-Jones had been perhaps the most distinguished medical doctor in all of England. Early in his career, however, he left the medical profession to pursue a "higher calling," namely, the "cure of souls." He is noted for his penetrating diagnosis of the human condition and his persuasive proclamation of the Gospel as the only sufficient answer. This present volume is a valuable continuation of that ministry.

Walking with God Day by Day is a daily devotional sharing short excerpts from many of Dr. Lloyd-Jones's books. The selections are encouraging, enlightening, and challenging. All who use this volume will acquire a greater grasp of biblical truth (concerning salvation, the Gospel, revival, the kingdom of God, knowing God, the victory of faith, and much more) and will learn how to grow closer to Christ with increasing faith.

It is our prayer that these brief readings from the works of Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones will nurture and equip you in your walk with Christ.

The Publisher

January

NEW LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

FROM

God the Holy Spirit

January 1

NAMES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me.

ISAIAH 61:1

The best way to approach the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is to notice the names or the descriptive titles given to this blessed Person.

First of all, there are the many names that relate Him to the Father. Let me enumerate some of them: “the Spirit of God” (Genesis 1:2); “the Spirit of the Lord” (Luke 4:18); “the Spirit of our God” (1 Corinthians 6:11). Another is “the Spirit of the Lord GOD,” which is in Isaiah 61:1. Our Lord speaks, in Matthew 10:20, of “the Spirit of your Father,” while Paul refers to “the Spirit of the living God” (2 Corinthians 3:3). “My Spirit,” says God in Genesis 6:3, and the psalmist asks, “Whither shall I go from thy spirit?” (Psalm 139:7). He is referred to as His Spirit—God’s Spirit—in Numbers 11:29; and Paul, in Romans 8:11, uses the phrase “the Spirit of him [God the Father] that raised up Jesus from the dead.” All these are descriptive titles referring to the Holy Spirit in terms of His relationship to the Father.

In the second group are the titles that relate the Holy Spirit to the Son. First, “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” (Romans 8:9), which is a most important phrase. The word “Spirit” here refers to the Holy Spirit. In Philippians 1:19, Paul speaks about “the Spirit of Jesus Christ,” and in Galatians 4:6 he says, “God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son.” Finally He is referred to as “the Spirit of the Lord” (Acts 5:9).

The third group comprises the direct or personal titles, and first and foremost here, of course, is the name *Holy Spirit* or *Holy Ghost*. Some people are confused by those two terms, but they mean exactly the same thing. The English language is a hybrid that has borrowed from other languages, and “Ghost” is an old Anglo-Saxon word, while “Spirit” is derived from the Latin *spiritus*.

✎ A THOUGHT TO PONDER ✎

Notice the names or the descriptive titles given to the Holy Spirit.

January 2

WHY IS THE HOLY SPIRIT CALLED HOLY?

But ye have an unction from the Holy One.

1 JOHN 2:20

Why is the Holy Spirit called holy? Surely, the explanation is that it is His special work to produce holiness and order in all that He does in the application of Christ's work of salvation. His objective is to produce holiness, and He does that in nature and creation, as well as in human beings. But His ultimate work is to make us a holy people, holy as the children of God. It is also probable that He is described as the Holy Spirit in order to differentiate Him from the other spirits—the evil spirits. That is why we are told to test the spirits and to prove them and to know whether they are of God or not (1 John 4:1).

Then the next great question is the personality or the personhood of the Spirit. The personhood of the Holy Spirit is not only forgotten by those whom we describe as liberals or modernists in their theology, but we ourselves are often guilty of precisely the same thing. I have heard most orthodox people referring to the Holy Spirit and His work as “it” and “its” influence and so on, as if the Holy Spirit were nothing but an influence or a power. And hymns, too, frequently make the same mistake. There is a confusion about the Holy Spirit, and I am sure there is a sense in which many of us find it a little more difficult to conceive of the third person in the blessed Holy Trinity than to conceive of the Father or the Son.

Why is there this tendency to think of Him as a force or an influence or an emanation? There are a number of answers to that question, but they are not good reasons. His work seems to be impersonal because it is a kind of mystical and secret work. He produces graces and fruits; He gives us gifts, and He gives us various powers. And because of that, we tend to think of Him as if He were some influence. I am sure that this is a great part of the explanation.

✎ A THOUGHT TO PONDER ✎

His special work is to produce holiness.

From God the Holy Spirit, p. 8.

January 3

THE PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost . . .

2 CORINTHIANS 13:14

The Holy Spirit is identified with the Father and the Son in such a way as to indicate personality.

There are two great arguments here. The first is the baptismal formula: “baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (Matthew 28:19). Here He is associated with the Father and the Son in a way that of necessity points to His personality.

The second argument is based on the apostolic benediction in 2 Corinthians 13:14: “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost . . .” Obviously the Holy Spirit is a person in line with the person of the Father and of the Son.

A most interesting way we can prove the personality of the Spirit is by showing that He is identified with us, with Christians, in a way that indicates that He is a person. In Acts 15:28 we read, “For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things.” This was a decision arrived at by members of the early church, and as they were persons, so He must be a person. You cannot say, “It seemed good to a power and to us,” because the power would be working in us. But here is someone outside us—“It seemed good to *him* and to *us*.”

Personal qualities are ascribed to the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures. He is said, for example, to have knowledge. Paul argues, “For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God” (1 Corinthians 2:11).

✎ A THOUGHT TO PONDER ✎

The Spirit is identified with us, with Christians, in a way that indicates that He is a person.

January 4

THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS A MIND

*And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what
is the mind of the Spirit.*

ROMANS 8:27

The Holy Spirit clearly has a mind. In Romans 8:27 we read, “the mind of the Spirit”—this is in connection with prayer. He is also the one who loves, because we read that “the fruit of the Spirit is love” (Galatians 5:22); and it is His function to shed abroad the love of God in our hearts (Romans 5:5). And, likewise, we know He is capable of grief, because in Ephesians 4:30 we are warned not to “grieve” the Holy Spirit.

The ultimate doctrine about the Spirit, from the practical, experiential standpoint, is that my body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, so that whatever I do, wherever I go, the Holy Spirit is with me. I know nothing that so promotes sanctification and holiness as the realization of that. If only we realized, always, that in anything we do with our bodies, the Holy Spirit is involved! Remember also that Paul teaches that in the context of a warning against fornication. He writes, “Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you . . .?” (1 Corinthians 6:19). That is why fornication should be unthinkable in a Christian. God is in us, in the Holy Spirit: not an influence, not a power, but a *person* whom we can grieve.

I am going through these details not out of an academic interest, nor because I happen to have a theological type of mind. No, I am concerned about these things, as I am a man trying myself to live the Christian life, and as I am called of God to be a pastor of souls, and I feel the responsibility for the souls and conduct and behavior of others. Wherever you are, wherever you go, if you are a Christian the Holy Spirit is in you; and if you really want to enjoy the blessings of salvation, you do so by knowing that your body is His temple.

A THOUGHT TO PONDER

If you are a Christian, the Holy Spirit is in you.

January 5

THE SPIRIT PROHIBITED THEM

He shall testify of me.

JOHN 15:26

Actions are ascribed to the Spirit that can only be performed by a person. For instance, in 1 Corinthians 2:10 we are told that “the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.” He *searches*—that is the action of a person. We are also told clearly that He *speaks*. In Revelation 2:7 we read, “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” Then He also *makes intercession* for us. “We know not what we should pray for as we ought,” says Paul in Romans 8:26, “but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”

He also *bears testimony*. Our Lord said, “He shall testify of me” (John 15:26). He bears testimony to the Lord. Only a person can do that. Then we are told, again by our Lord, “He will guide you into all truth” (John 16:13). Indeed, even in the Old Testament we are told that He teaches and instructs in the truth: “Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them” (Nehemiah 9:20).

Another personal action of His is found in Acts 16:6-7 where we are told, “Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the regions of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, after they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.” Again, this is surely a very significant and relevant statement. All Paul’s companions wanted to go and preach in Asia, but the Spirit prohibited them. Then they wanted to go into Bithynia, and again He would not allow them. That is a definite action by the Holy Spirit Himself, and it is proof positive that He is a person.

❧ A THOUGHT TO PONDER ❧

Actions are ascribed to the Spirit that can only be performed by a person.

January 6

THE COMFORTER

It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you.

JOHN 16:7

The very office to which the Holy Spirit was appointed is personal. He is described as *the Comforter* (“another Comforter,” says our Lord in John 14:16), and a comforter is one who stands by our side and helps us. The same word is sometimes translated *advocate*. So our Lord was saying in effect, “As I have been with you during these three years, as I have taught you and guided you, and as I have sent you out on your missions, I will not leave you comfortless. I am going to send you another Comforter. You must not be troubled; you are not going to be left as orphans.” The Holy Spirit is one who takes the place of our Lord. He is within us to lead us and guide us, and that is why our Lord was even able to say, “It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you” (John 16:7). Obviously this is a personal office.

Another big proof of the personality of the Holy Spirit is that, according to the teaching of the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit is susceptible to personal treatment. In other words, we are told that we can do certain things to the Spirit and that He reacts as only a person can react.

First, we are told that the Holy Spirit can be *lied to*. In the terrible case of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5, notice what Peter said: “Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?” (verse 3). Ananias and Sapphira had declared that they had given everything, but Peter charged them with having lied to the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is not an influence therefore, not some vague power, but clearly a person. Second, we are told that we can *blaspheme* against the Holy Spirit (Matthew 12:31-32). Third, we see that He can be *insulted* (Hebrews 10:29). Finally, He can be *grieved* (Ephesians 4:30).

✎ A THOUGHT TO PONDER ✎

The Holy Spirit is susceptible to personal treatment.

January 7

THE HOLY SPIRIT'S DEITY

*Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. . . .
And there are diversities of operations,
but it is the same God which worketh all in all.*

1 CORINTHIANS 12:4, 6

We must demonstrate the Holy Spirit's deity. This is a vital part of the doctrine of the Trinity. It is only Christians who believe this doctrine; all other religions fail to do so, as do all errors and heresies. The Trinity is the key that unlocks all truth. So we must look at the evidence.

The Scripture itself specifically asserts the deity of the Spirit. I take you back to that terrible incident with Ananias and Sapphira. After asking, "Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?" Peter continued, "Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God" (Acts 5:3-4). "The terrible thing that you have done," said Peter in effect, "is that you have not only been lying to men; you thought that you were just lying to us, the apostles, and to the other Christians, but no, you have been lying to *God*." And just previously he had said that Ananias had lied to the Holy Spirit. So clearly that is a specific statement that the Holy Spirit is God.

But we also find that the Spirit's *name* is coupled with the name of God, and this not only establishes His personality but His Deity. This is seen in the baptismal formula, in the apostolic benediction, and also in 1 Corinthians 12, where Paul writes, "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. . . . And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all" (verses 4, 6). At one point we are told it is the Spirit who does this, and the next moment we are told that it is God—the same God who works all and in all, and He is the Spirit. Therefore the Spirit is God—His deity is proved.

✎ A THOUGHT TO PONDER ✎

Scripture specifically asserts the deity of the Spirit.

January 8

THE HOLY SPIRIT'S DIVINE DEEDS

The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.

JOB 33:4

Certain things are done by the Spirit that we are told in the Scriptures can only be done by God. First of all, *creation*. In Genesis 1:2 we read, “The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.” There it is at the very beginning. Job says it also: “The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.” This is the creative work of the Holy Spirit, again a proof of His deity. And we must remember also that His is the special operation that we describe as *regeneration*. John 3:7 establishes that once and forever: “Ye must be born again.” “Except a man be born of water *and of the Spirit . . .*” (John 3:5). This is the action of the Spirit; He gives the rebirth. Original creation and the new creation are both the special work of the Spirit. “It is the spirit that quickeneth,” says our Lord again (John 6:63).

The work of *inspiration* is also the work of the Spirit. “No prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation,” says Peter; “. . . holy men of God spake as they were moved”—carried along, driven; it does not matter which translation you use—“by the Holy Ghost” (2 Peter 1:20-21). All the Scriptures were written in that way: The Holy Spirit inspired and controlled the writers in an infallible manner. So we have our doctrine of the infallibility of the Scriptures, and it is proof positive to us that He is God. It is God alone who can give the truth and inspire men in their record of the truth.

The work of *resurrection* is also attributed to Him. Very often people are surprised by this. But it is to be found quite clearly in Romans 8:11: “But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.” So we arrive at this—that the Holy Spirit is a person and a divine person.

✎ A THOUGHT TO PONDER ✎

The Holy Spirit is a person and a divine person.

January 9

SUBORDINATION

He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.

JOHN 16:14

The Scriptures teach that the Spirit is subordinate to the Father and to the Son. That is what is meant in John 16:13. Our Lord says, “He shall not speak of himself,” which means that He does not speak from Himself—He is given what to speak. And indeed His work, we are told, is to glorify Christ (John 16:14). The Spirit does not glorify Himself; He glorifies the Son.

Is this not wonderful? Here is the subordination. Here is the division of the work. The Son says that He has come to glorify the Father, and the Spirit’s work is to glorify the Son. Each one reflects the glory of the other. Thus we look into the mystery of this amazing doctrine of the blessed Trinity: “He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you” (John 16:14). This is, to me, one of the most amazing and remarkable things about the biblical doctrine of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit seems to hide Himself and to conceal Himself. He is always, as it were, putting the focus on the Son, and that is why I believe, and I believe profoundly, that the best test of all as to whether we have received the Spirit is to ask ourselves, what do we think of, and what do we know about, the Son? Is the Son real to us? That is the work of the Spirit. He is glorified indirectly; He is always pointing us to the Son.

Yes, we must realize that He dwells within us, but His work in dwelling within us is to glorify the Son, and to bring to us that blessed knowledge of the Son and of His wondrous love to us. It is He who strengthens us with might in the inner man (Ephesians 3:16-19), that we may know this love of Christ.

✿ A THOUGHT TO PONDER ✿

The Spirit does not glorify Himself; He glorifies the Son.

January 10

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE CREATION OF THE WORLD

And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

GENESIS 1:2

We are going to remind ourselves of what we are told in the Scriptures about the activity of the Holy Spirit before the Day of Pentecost.

First of all, we start at the very *creation of the world*. The second verse in the Bible says, “And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.” He was operative in the creation of the world. God the Father has made everything through the Son by the Holy Spirit. The blessed Trinity is operative in the whole work, always, but the labor is divided up. And, of course, you will remember that the Holy Spirit is especially involved in connection with the creation of man.

The second is the work of the Holy Spirit in *sustaining or maintaining the creation*. Now there are many statements about this; I shall simply quote two. In Isaiah 40:7 we read, “The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it.” But still more strikingly, in Psalm 104 you will find a magnificent description of creation that is perhaps unsurpassed anywhere in the Bible. The psalmist makes the point that if the Lord withholds Himself or His power or His Spirit from creation, it all begins to droop and to wane, to perish and to die. If He puts His Spirit back again, it all revives. It is the Holy Spirit who sustains creation. Now you will find statements in the Scripture that say that the Son does that, and the answer is, of course, that the Son does it through the Holy Spirit. So the Holy Spirit has been active from the commencement in sustaining and maintaining the universe.

✎ A THOUGHT TO PONDER ✎

The Son sustains creation through the Holy Spirit.

January 11

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND COMMON GRACE

*That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that
cometh into the world.*

JOHN 1:9

It is the Holy Spirit who is responsible for what is called *common grace*. Let me give you some definitions of what that means. Common grace is the term applied to those general blessings that God imparts to all men and women indiscriminately as He pleases—not only to His own people, but to all men and women, according to His own will. Or, again, common grace means those general operations of the Holy Spirit in which, without renewing the heart, He exercises a moral influence whereby sin is restrained, order is maintained in social life, and civil righteousness is promoted. That is the general definition. The Holy Spirit has been operative in this world from the very beginning, and He has had His influence and His effect upon men and women who are not saved and who have gone to perdition. While they were in this life and world they came under these general, non-saving operations of the Holy Spirit. That is what we mean by common grace.

Now, how does the Holy Spirit do this? Well, there are various answers to that question. You will remember that we are told in the prologue of John's Gospel about "the true Light, which lighteth every man" (John 1:9). It does not matter how you translate that verse. "... the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," says the King James Version; "the Light that lighteth every man was coming into the world," says another. This light [that Christ puts in every person] is a kind of natural light, natural understanding. It is the light that is in the conscience, and there is that light of conscience in every person born into this world. Now that is one of the operations of the Holy Spirit in what is called common grace. It is a light that comes from Christ, because He is the Head of the human race, but it is the Holy Spirit who puts that light into everyone who is born.

✎ A THOUGHT TO PONDER ✎

Common grace is the term applied to those general blessings that God imparts to all men and women indiscriminately.

From God the Holy Spirit, p. 24.

January 12

THE HOUSE OF CORNELIUS

*And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them,
as on us at the beginning.*

ACTS 11:15

You can say that the Day of Pentecost was the day of public inauguration of the Church as the Body of Christ. There was something new there that had never been before. There is a sense in which you can speak of the Church in the Old Testament, yes, but it is not the same as the Church was subsequent to the Day of Pentecost.

Look at what happened in the house of Cornelius. Peter, of course, as a Jew would obviously have found it very difficult to believe that Gentiles could really come into this unity. That was why the vision was given to him as he was there on the top of the house. As he was praying he saw a great sheet coming down with clean and unclean animals and birds upon it, and he heard God's voice telling him to kill and eat. God said, "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common" (Acts 10:15). But is there not a further suggestion that even that vision was not enough? Certainly it was enough to take Peter to the house of Cornelius and to preach as he did. But even while Peter was preaching, the Holy Spirit descended upon Cornelius and his household. And Peter and the Jews were amazed at this. They could not quite understand it, but they had to face the facts as they heard these other people speak with tongues and magnify God. "They of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 10:45).

The thing that Peter later emphasized was that while he was speaking, the Holy Spirit descended upon them: "And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning" (Acts 11:15). Now you see what was happening. God was declaring that the Church was to consist of Jews and Gentiles.

✎ A THOUGHT TO PONDER ✎

God was declaring that the Church was to consist of Jews and Gentiles.

January 13

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PENTECOST

*Would God that all the LORD's people were prophets, and
that the LORD would put his spirit upon them!*

NUMBERS 11:29

The great purpose of Pentecost is to give the final proof of the fact that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God and the Savior of the world. That is declared. The second thing is the great inauguration of the Church as His Body; and third, it is a proof of the fact that the various people who are added to the Church are members of the Body. Also, in the Old Testament we are told that the Holy Spirit was with men or that He came upon them. He worked upon them from without, as it were, and what David even said, you remember, was, "Take not thy holy spirit from me" (Psalm 51:11), as if the Holy Spirit was *with* him—that is the Old Testament terminology. The New Testament terminology is *in, within*; He works from within, and He abides. In the Old Testament He came upon men and left them. He comes, in the New Testament, because we are members of the Body of Christ and because the Spirit comes from Christ through the whole Body. Because we are members of the Body, the Spirit abides in us—perfectly; and that, it seems to me, is the essence of the teaching with regard to this matter.

On the Day of Pentecost the rushing mighty wind and the cloven tongues as of fire especially emphasized, not the filling with the Spirit, but the baptizing into the unity of the Body, the inauguration of the Church. That is why you have the special phenomena. The cloven tongues of fire were never repeated. The walls were shaken on another occasion, but this particular sound, this noise, the gathering together of the special phenomena places a uniqueness upon the event of the Day of Pentecost that has never been repeated. The filling with the Spirit is something that can be, and often is, repeated, but that is not the vital thing that happened at Pentecost. What is emphasized at Pentecost is that the Church became Christ's Body, and the Spirit was given to fill the Body.

🎨 A THOUGHT TO PONDER 🎨

Pentecost inaugurated the Church as Christ's Body.

January 14

THE WORD OF GOD AND THE SPIRIT

*Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible,
by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.*

1 PETER 1:23

In order to do His work, *the Spirit uses the Word of God*. First, He reveals, through the Word, the great love of God to sinners in general: “God . . . for his great love wherewith he loved us . . .” (Ephesians 2:4) and so on.

Second, *He presents and offers salvation in Christ*; through His people, He states the facts about Christ. That is the business of preachers of the Gospel. It is to give the record of the life, the death, the resurrection, and the resurrection appearances of our Lord. What is preaching? It is proclaiming these facts about Christ. Not only that—it is an explanation of the fact, the meaning of the facts, how these facts constitute salvation and are the cause, the means, of salvation. So in the preaching of the Word in the power of the Holy Spirit, these facts and their interpretation are presented.

Then *the Holy Spirit calls us to repentance*. He calls everyone to repentance, all men and women everywhere, because of these facts, because of “that man whom he hath ordained,” by whom the whole world is going to be judged in righteousness (Acts 17:31).

And finally *the Holy Spirit calls us to faith in Christ*. Take again those words of Paul in his farewell message to the church at Ephesus. What did Paul testify? What did he preach? It was “repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:21). He called men and women to faith in Christ in order that they might obtain forgiveness of sins and inherit eternal life. That was the way in which our Lord commissioned Paul on the road to Damascus. He said that He was going to send him to the people and to the Gentiles “to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me” (Acts 26:18).

🐉 A THOUGHT TO PONDER 🐉

The Spirit uses the Word of God.

From *God the Holy Spirit*, pp. 51-52.

January 15

REGENERATION

... that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

JOHN 3:6

What is regeneration? It is the implanting of a principle of new spiritual life and a radical change in the governing disposition of the soul. The important thing to grasp is the whole idea of *disposition*. In addition to the faculties of our souls, there is something at the back of them that governs them all, and that is what we refer to as our disposition. Take two men. They have the same faculties, but one lives a good life, one lives a bad life. What makes the difference? The answer is that the good man has a good disposition, and this good disposition, this thing that is behind the faculties and governs them and uses them, urges him to use his faculties in the direction of goodness. The other man has an evil disposition; so he urges the same faculties in an entirely different direction. That is what one means by disposition.

When you come to think of it, and when you analyze yourself, your life and your whole conduct and behavior and that of other people, you will see at once that these dispositions are, of course, of tremendous importance. They are the condition, if you like, that determines what we do and what we are.

There is in every person a disposition that seems to determine the kind of person he or she is. It is this that directs the faculties and the abilities so that one person is artistic and the other scientific and so on. I am making this point to show that what happens in regeneration is that God so operates upon us in the Holy Spirit that this fundamental disposition of ours is changed. He puts a holy principle, a seed of new spiritual life, into this disposition that determines what I am and how I behave and how I use and employ my faculties.

✎ A THOUGHT TO PONDER ✎

Regeneration is a radical change in the governing disposition of the soul.

January 16

A SEED OF LIFE

Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

JOHN 3:3

The change in my disposition does not mean that I have a greater intellect now than I had before. No, I have exactly the same intellect, the same mind. But because the disposition governing it is changed, my mind is operating in a different realm and in a different way, and it seems to be a new mind. And it is exactly the same with the feelings. A man who used to hate the Gospel now loves it. A woman who hated the Lord Jesus Christ now loves Him. And likewise with the will: The will earlier resisted, it was obstinate and rebellious; but now it desires, it is anxious, it is concerned about the Gospel.

The next thing that we say is that it is a change that is instantaneous. Now do you see the importance of differentiating between generation and coming to birth? Generation, by definition, is always an instantaneous act. There is a moment, a flash, in which the germ of life enters, impregnates; that is one instantaneous action. In other words, there are no intermediate stages in regeneration. Life is either implanted or it is not; it cannot be partly implanted. It is not gradual. When I say that it is instantaneous, I am not referring to our consciousness of it, but to the thing itself, as it is done by God. The consciousness, of course, comes into the realm of time, whereas this act of germination is timeless, and that is why it is immediate.

So the next thing is that generation, the implanting of this seed of life and the change of the disposition, happens in the subconscious, or, if you prefer, in the unconscious. Our Lord explained that fully to Nicodemus (John 3). It is a secret, inscrutable operation that cannot be directly perceived by us; indeed, we cannot even fully understand it. The first thing we know about it is that it has happened, because we are conscious of something different, but that means that we do not understand it and that we really cannot arrive at its secret.

✎ A THOUGHT TO PONDER ✎

The will earlier resisted, it was obstinate and rebellious; but now it is concerned about the Gospel.

January 17

THE NEW BIRTH

No man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

JOHN 10:29

If you are regenerate, you will remain regenerate. It seems to me that this is absolutely inevitable because regeneration is the work of God. Yet there are those who seem to think that people can be born again as the result of believing the truth, and then if they backslide or fall into sin or deny the truth, they lose their regeneration, but if they come back again and believe again, then they are regenerate again—as if one can be born again and die and be born again and die an endless number of times! How important doctrine is! How important it is that we should be clear as to what the Scripture teaches about these things! It tells us that regeneration is the work of God Himself in the depths of the soul and that He does it in such a way that it is permanent. “No man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand” (John 10:29).

“I am persuaded,” says Paul, and let us notice this, “I am persuaded”—he is certain—“that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38-39). And when Paul says that, he is expounding regeneration. It is not merely the relationship between us—it is because He has put this life in me that nothing can separate me from Him. And when we come to deal with the mystical union that follows directly from this, we see how still more inevitable this must be. This is a permanent work, and nothing can ever bring it to an end.

Regenerate people cannot go on sinning because they are born of God (1 John 3:9). They may backslide temporarily, but if they are born of God they will come back. It is as certain as that they have been born again. This is the way to test whether or not someone is born again.

A THOUGHT TO PONDER

Regeneration is the work of God Himself in the depths of the soul, and it is permanent.

From God the Holy Spirit, pp. 93-94.

January 18

IN CHRIST

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:22

Paul draws a contrast between the union of the unbeliever with Adam and the union of the believer with Christ. This is the great argument in Romans 5, which is repeated in 1 Corinthians 15:22, 49. In Romans 5 the whole argument is that death passed on to all people because of Adam. Why? Because of their relationship to Adam; that is the whole doctrine of original sin. We are all condemned in Adam because of Adam's sin. He was our representative, he was our federal head; and not only that, we are bound to him, we were in the loins of Adam when he fell. In Adam all died. In Christ all shall be made alive again. That is it. The relationship of the believer to Christ is the same sort of union and relationship as that old relationship of the whole of Adam's posterity to Adam. We are all born in Adam, and we are related, we are joined in that way. Yes, but being born again, we are in the same sort of relationship to Christ.

Regeneration and union must never be separated. You cannot be born again without being in Christ; you are born again because you are in Christ. The moment you are in Him you are born again, and you cannot regard your regeneration as something separate and think that union is something you will eventually arrive at. Not at all! Regeneration and union must always be considered together and at the same time because the one depends upon the other and leads to the other; they are mutually self-supporting.

There is nothing that so strengthens my faith and fills me with a longing to be pure as He is pure and to live even as He did in this world as the realization of what I am and who I am because I am a Christian. I am a child of God, and I am in Christ.

🐉 A THOUGHT TO PONDER 🐉

Regeneration and union must never be separated.

January 19

A VITAL UNION

And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.

JOHN 1:16

We are joined to Christ in a union with Him by means of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in us. It is a vital union because our spiritual life is drawn directly from the Lord Jesus Christ. We are sustained by Him through the indwelling Holy Spirit. There is nothing more important in the Christian life than to realize that our union with Christ is a vital one. It is a living thing. It is not something mechanical or conceptual; it is not a thought or an idea; it is really a vital, spiritual union.

“And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace” (John 1:16). That says it all. That is our relationship to Him, says John; something of His fullness and of His life is passing into us, and we are receiving it.

The trouble with all of us is that we do not realize the truth of these things. But this is the truth given by the Lord Himself. It is His prayer for His people that they may know the meaning of this vital, spiritual relationship. And He does not hesitate to compare it with the relationship that subsists between the Father and Himself: As the Father is in Him, so He is in us, and we are in Him. But consider the statement of this truth that is made by the apostle Paul in Galatians 2:20: “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” There is nothing greater than that, and what it does teach is that this is a life-giving relationship; it is a union of life. “Not I, but Christ liveth in me.” And then Paul goes on to say, “And the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”

❧ A THOUGHT TO PONDER ❧

Our union with Christ is a vital, spiritual union.

January 20

OUR FELLOWSHIP IN HIS SUFFERINGS

That I may know . . . the fellowship of his sufferings.

PHILIPPIANS 3:10

I would now like to emphasize our fellowship in Christ's sufferings, and our fellowship even in His death. Paul says in Philippians 3:10, "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death." What great thoughts! We must work them out, think them out, and pray them out.

Paul put it another way in Colossians 1:24: "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church." I do not pretend to understand that fully, but I do know that there is no higher statement of the doctrine of the union of the believer with His Lord. The apostle interprets his own sufferings in the flesh and in the body as, in a sense, filling up what remains of the sufferings and the afflictions of Christ Himself. Paul is bearing that in his own flesh. The result of the mystical union is that he enters into this mystical fellowship of the sufferings of Christ. There were people living in the Middle Ages of whom it is said that they so meditated upon and contemplated their Lord and all that He had done for them that some of them even developed in their physical hands the imprint of nails, the *stigmata*. It is not impossible. Such things do happen.

But all I am concerned to emphasize is that the more deeply we realize the truth about this union between us and our Lord, the more we shall know something of the fellowship of His sufferings. In this world He was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief" (Isaiah 53:3). That was because of the sin of the world. And because He saw the enmity of the human heart against His Father, it hurt Him, it grieved Him, and He suffered. There is no more delicate test of our relationship to Him and our union with Him than the extent to which you and I know something of His suffering.

✠ A THOUGHT TO PONDER ✠

The result of the mystical union is mystical fellowship with the sufferings of Christ.

January 21

TEMPORARY CONVERSION

*But he that received the seed into stony places,
the same is he that . . . is offended.*

MATTHEW 13:20-21

Our Lord, because of the danger of a “temporary something” happening, was constantly dealing with this and seemed to be repelling people. Indeed, they charged Him with making discipleship impossible. Take that great sixth chapter of John where the people were running after Him and hanging onto His words because of the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand, and our Lord seemed to be trying deliberately to repel them.

Take also the parable in Matthew 13—the Parable of the Sower—and our Lord’s own exposition of it. Notice particularly verses 20-21: “But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.” But notice what our Lord says about this same man: he “anon with joy receiveth it [the Word].” That is what I mean by temporary conversion. He seems to have received the Word, he is full of joy, but he has no root in him, and that is why he ends up with nothing at all. Now that is our Lord’s own teaching; there is the possibility of this very joyful “conversion,” and yet there is nothing there in a vital, living sense, and it proves temporary.

Paul speaks in 1 Timothy 1:19-20 of “holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck.” Now that is very serious teaching. He says the same thing in 2 Timothy 2. There is such a thing as temporary conversion, temporary believers, but they are not true believers. That is why it is so vital that we should know the biblical teaching as to what conversion really is.

✎ A THOUGHT TO PONDER ✎

There is the possibility of a joyful conversion proving to be temporary.

January 22

FAITH AND REASON

Unto you therefore which believe he is precious.

1 PETER 2:7

What is the relationship between faith and reason? The best answer I can give is that faith is not a matter of reason. Some people teach that it is. They say that if only men and women would use their minds, they would be bound to become Christians; they can reason themselves into Christianity. But that is thoroughly unscriptural. They cannot because the natural man's or woman's reason is also fallen. Not only that, there are supernatural and miraculous elements in faith to which reason cannot attain. So true faith is not entirely a matter of reason. Indeed, I would quote to you the statement of the great Blaise Pascal, perhaps the greatest mathematician that the world has ever known and who had an evangelical conversion. He said that the supreme achievement of reason is to teach us that there is an end to reason.

So what about faith and reason? Well, faith is not mere reason, but on the other hand, neither is it contrary to reason. It is not unreasonable; it is not irrational. That is the charge that is brought against us.

"Ah," people say, "but what you're teaching is a kind of irrationality. You say that faith isn't a matter of reason. Well then, is it opposed to reason?"

No, it is not. It is not reason; neither is it contrary to reason. What is it then? It is *supra-reason*. It means that our reason brings us to the point where we realize that reason is not enough, and at that point we have nothing to do but submit ourselves to revelation. And that is faith. Faith is accepting this revelation.

More and more I like to think of it like this: Faith means that I deliberately shut myself down to this Book, the Bible. I refuse to philosophize. I refuse to ask certain questions. People are always asking them. They want to understand the doctrine of the Trinity. You cannot. You will never understand it. It is too great. So you accept it; and you stop asking questions.

🎨 A THOUGHT TO PONDER 🎨

Reason brings us to the point where we realize that reason is not enough, and at that point we submit ourselves to revelation.

From *God the Holy Spirit*, pp. 147-148.

January 23

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God.

ROMANS 5:1

Justification is opposed to condemnation, and nobody can bring an accusation because it is God who declares people just.

Justification is legal and forensic, and as you go on with the Scriptures you will find this in other places: “But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Corinthians 6:11). And in Galatians 2:16 there is a statement that is parallel to those in Romans: “Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.” Galatians is the great epistle that gave Martin Luther his liberty. His famous commentary on the epistle to the Galatians is a book that you should read, and the more you go on with it, the more you will enjoy it. Do not be put off by his polemic against the Roman Catholics. He had to do that because you must show what is wrong as well as what is right. People do not like that today, but Luther had to do it, and I think we must do it in our age and generation.

God makes a legal declaration that all the demands of the law upon us, as a condition of life, are fully satisfied with regard to all who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. We are no longer in a state of condemnation: “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God” (Romans 5:1). “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1). Why? Because God has declared it. He is the Lawgiver, and He says that Christ has satisfied the law. “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth” (Romans 10:4).

✎ A THOUGHT TO PONDER ✎

God is the Lawgiver, and He says that Christ has satisfied the law.

January 24

JUSTIFICATION AND SANCTIFICATION

But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.

1 CORINTHIANS 1:30

Let me show you the essential difference between justification and sanctification. Look at it like this: Justification is an act of God the Father; sanctification is essentially the work of God the Holy Spirit. There is this division of work in the blessed Persons of the Trinity. It is the Father who declares righteous and just. It is the Holy Spirit who sanctifies.

Second, justification takes place outside us, as in a tribunal; sanctification takes place within us, in our inner life. I stand in the court when I am justified, and the judge pronounces that I am free; it is a statement about me, outside me. But sanctification is something that is worked and takes place within.

Third, justification removes the guilt of sin; sanctification removes the pollution of sin and renews us in the image of God.

And therefore, last, by definition justification is a once-and-for-all act. It is never to be repeated because it cannot be repeated and never needs to be repeated. It is not a process but a declaration that we are pronounced just once and forever, by God. Sanctification, on the other hand, is a continuous process. We continue to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord until we are perfect beyond the veil.

So there is nothing quite so erroneous and confusing and unscriptural as to mistake the essential difference between justification and sanctification. That is the whole trouble with Roman Catholic teaching and all Catholic piety. If you confuse sanctification with justification, you will be doubtful as to whether you are justified or not. If you bring in your state and condition and sin that you may commit, then you are querying your justification. But if you realize that justification is forensic, external, and declaratory, you know that you are justified whatever may be true about you.

✎ A THOUGHT TO PONDER ✎

Justification removes the guilt of sin; sanctification removes the pollution of sin.

January 25

THE PROOFS OF ADOPTION

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

GALATIANS 3:26

What are the proofs that any one of us can have that we have been adopted? Well, *you can find the scriptural proof*. “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.” Also in 1 Peter 1:3-6 you find it again: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations.” We are the inheritance—that is, the children of God. This is for all of us who believe in Christ.

The second way of assurance is that *we are given “the Spirit of adoption*, whereby we cry, Abba, Father” (Romans 8:15); “we receive the adoption of sons” (Galatians 4:5). You can be assured of the fact that you have received adoption because you know that the Holy Spirit is dwelling within you. We have His testimony to our spirits that we are the children of God.

And then last of all I would offer the fact that *we are led by the Spirit*. This is Paul’s argument: “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Romans 8:14). Paul does not say, “As many as are actively acting as peacemakers or who are loving their enemies . . .” No! “As many as are led by the Spirit of God”; those who subject themselves to His leading and who rejoice in being led by Him—they are the sons of God.

✿ A THOUGHT TO PONDER ✿

You can be assured of the fact that you have received adoption because you know that the Holy Spirit is dwelling within you.

January 26

THE RESULTS OF ADOPTION

I . . . will be your God, and ye shall be my people.

LEVITICUS 26:12

The first result of our adoption I shall mention is that if we have the spirit of adoption, *we have lost “the spirit of bondage again to fear”* (Romans 8:15). Positively, in the second place, *we have been given a spirit of liberty*. In other words, we are no longer afraid of the law and its condemnation; we are no longer afraid of death; we are enjoying something of the glorious liberty of the children of God. Third, *we receive this spirit of adoption through the indwelling Spirit*.

But then in addition there are these results: Because we have been adopted into God’s family, *we are entitled to bear His name*. We can say that we are the children of God. We are members of the household of God. We belong to God’s family. God’s name is upon us. He has said, “I . . . will be your God, and ye shall be my people” (Leviticus 26:12). We are His people. Peter applies to Christians what God said to the nation of Israel of old: “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light; which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy” (1 Peter 2:9-10).

What else? Well, the fifth benefit is that *we enjoy the present protection and consolation that God alone can give, and the provision that He makes for His children*. “Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered” (Luke 12:7); nothing can happen to us apart from Him.

The next benefit, at first, is not so pleasurable—*fatherly chastisements*. That is the whole argument of the first half of Hebrews 12: “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth” (verse 6). He chastises His children, but not those who are not His children.

✎ A THOUGHT TO PONDER ✎

We are members of the household of God. We belong to God’s family.

January 27

BECOMING HOLY

Be not conformed to this world.

ROMANS 12:2

The Scriptures place great emphasis on our part in sanctification, on what you and I have to do. What is the point of the mighty arguments of Paul and the apostles in their letters if sanctification is something that I am to receive? Why the exhortations?

Here is one exhortation from the apostle Peter: “Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul” (1 Peter 2:11). Do you notice what he says? We do not receive our sanctification and are then delivered from these things. No; he tells us to abstain from them and to keep ourselves from them. And the tragedy is that so many people are spending their lives waiting to receive something, and in the meantime they are not abstaining from these fleshly lusts.

Take a statement from Paul: “Let him that stole steal no more” (Ephesians 4:28). That is what he is to do. He is not to wait to receive something; he is commanded to give up stealing. What can be more specific than that? And people who are guilty of foolish talking and jesting and other unseemly things are not to do them (Ephesians 5:4). “Be not conformed to this world” (Romans 12:2). You do not wait to receive something; if up to this moment you have been conforming to the world, you must stop.

People have often come to me about this and said, “You know, I’ve been trying so hard, but I can’t get this experience.” To which the reply is that the Scripture commands you to abstain: “Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded” (James 4:8). And I repeat that these injunctions are quite pointless and a sheer waste of ink if sanctification is something that I can receive. If it is, we would surely be told, “You need not worry about this question of sin—you can receive your sanctification in one act, and all you do then is to maintain it and abide in it.” But this is most certainly not the New Testament teaching.

✎ A THOUGHT TO PONDER ✎

The Scriptures place great emphasis on our part in sanctification.

January 28

IS SANCTIFICATION AN EXPERIENCE?

We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory.

2 CORINTHIANS 3:18

Is sanctification an experience? There are large numbers of stories about people who have had marvelous experiences, of people, for example, who had a bad temper or something like that. I accept the experiences without any hesitation at all. Thank God, I am able to testify to some such experiences in my own life. So what of them? Well, here is my answer. First and foremost, there is no evidence at all in the New Testament that this kind of experience means sanctification. It may be a part of sanctification, it may greatly aid sanctification, but it is not sanctification in and of itself. We must not base our doctrine on experiences but on the teaching of the Word of God.

The teaching of the Scripture is that “We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory” (2 Corinthians 3:18). Sanctification is a growth, a development; it is a going forward. But it seems to me that the main trouble with this teaching about experience is that it confuses two things that are different, and the two things are these various experiences that we get in the Christian life and the grace of God in sanctification.

Sanctification is not an experience—it is a condition. It is my relationship to God: I am “changed into the same image [of Jesus Christ] from glory to glory” (2 Corinthians 3:18). Sanctification involves experiences and is helped by them, but in itself it is not an experience. Sanctification is that process of growth and development that starts the moment we are saved, the moment we are justified, the moment we are regenerated. The experiences are not the process of growth, but they do help and stimulate it.

✎ A THOUGHT TO PONDER ✎

We must not base our doctrine on experiences but on the teaching of the Word of God.

January 29

FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT

... *in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.*

1 CORINTHIANS 2:4

What does it mean to be *filled* with the Holy Spirit? Clearly there are two things at any rate that go with this term. It is something that happens that gives authority and power and the ability for service and witness. The apostles were given it at the very beginning, and the result was that they began to speak with other tongues, and Peter, filled with the Spirit, preached his sermon. Then again, after they had prayed, they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the Word of God with boldness. And when Paul was confronted by the opposition of that clever man, the magician Elymas, he was filled especially with the Spirit in order to pronounce a judgment, and the judgment fell upon the man. So it is clear that the filling with the Spirit happens for the sake of service; it gives us power and authority for service.

Let me emphasize this. This filling is an absolute necessity for true service. Even our Lord Himself did not enter upon His ministry until the Holy Spirit had descended upon Him. He even told the disciples, whom He had been training for three years, who had been with Him in the inner circle, who had seen His miracles and heard all His words, who had seen Him dead and buried and risen again, even these exceptional men with their exceptional opportunities He told to stay where they were, not to start upon any ministry, not to attempt to witness to Him, until they had received the power that the Holy Spirit would give them.

This is something, therefore, that is vital to our witness. It was the whole secret of the ministry of the apostle Paul. He did not preach with enticing words of human wisdom, but preached, he said, “in demonstration of the Spirit and of power” (1 Corinthians 2:4). He was filled with the Spirit for his task.

✎ A THOUGHT TO PONDER ✎

The filling with the Spirit happens for the sake of service.

January 30

THE IN-FILLING OF THE SPIRIT

*Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but
be filled with the Spirit.*

EPHESIANS 5:18

The in-filling of the Spirit is essential to true Christian quality in our life. That is why we are commanded to be filled with the Spirit. It is a command to every single Christian: “Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.” We are exhorted to be filled with the Spirit. And this is commanded in order that our graces may grow, in order that the fruit of the Spirit may develop in us and may be evident to all. It is as we are filled with this life that the fruit and the graces of this life will be manifest. Indeed, the filling of the Spirit is essential to a true act of worship. Did you notice how Paul uses that commandment of his in that very connection? He says, “Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit”—and then goes on at once—“speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and our Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

So the way to test whether we are filled with the Spirit is to ask, Are we full of thankfulness? Are we full of the spirit of praise, of thanksgiving, of worship and adoration?

What is a revival? It is God pouring out His Spirit. It is this tremendous filling that happens to numbers of people at the same time. You need not wait for a revival to get it; each of us is individually commanded to seek it and to have it and indeed to make sure it is there. But at times of revival God, as it were, fills a number of people together; they almost describe it as the Spirit *falling* upon them. That is a revival, and that is the greatest need of the Church today.

✎ A THOUGHT TO PONDER ✎

“Be filled with the Spirit” is a command to every single Christian.

January 31

THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

*But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit,
dividing to every man severally as he will.*

1 CORINTHIANS 12:11

There are some principles about the subject of spiritual gifts that stand out clearly in the biblical teaching. The first is that *spiritual gifts must be differentiated from natural gifts*. We all have natural gifts, but the spiritual gift that any one of us may possess is something separate from and entirely different from this. It is a gift that is given directly to us by the Holy Spirit. Some people have fallen into the error of thinking that a spiritual gift really means a person's natural gift taken hold of by the Holy Spirit and heightened so that it becomes a spiritual gift. But that is not what Scripture would have us believe. A spiritual gift is something new, something different.

The second principle is that *these gifts are bestowed upon us by the Holy Spirit in a sovereign manner*. This is emphasized very clearly in 1 Corinthians 12; notice verse 11, for instance: "But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will." "As *he* will." It is He who decides and not us. He decides what particular gift to give to a particular person. Verse 7 enforces the same point: "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." It is a gift, it is given, it is something that comes entirely from the Holy Spirit.

Third, *each Christian is given and therefore has some gift*: "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." The clear implication there is that every single Christian is given some particular gift. So from this we deduce that every true member of the Body of Christ, every true Christian, who has been baptized into the Body of Christ by this one Spirit, has some particular spiritual gift.

The fourth principle taught in 1 Corinthians 12, obviously, is that *the gifts differ in value*; see verses 14-30.

✿ A THOUGHT TO PONDER ✿

Every single Christian is given some particular gift.