

**THE OFFICES OF THE HOLY
SPIRIT: FOUR SERMONS,
PREACHED BEFORE THE
UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE**

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The Offices of the Holy Spirit: Four Sermons, Preached Before the University of Cambridge by
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SERMON I.

ROMANS VIII. 9.

If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

ON a remote occasion, similar to the present, I endeavoured to set forth, in this place, the Law; and on a subsequent occasion, the Gospel. These two subjects, taken together, form a whole, so far as relates to Christianity as a system. But for the full development of our holy religion, *in its spiritual operations and practical results*, the office of the Holy Spirit should be separately and distinctly considered. This part, therefore, it is now my intention to supply. But, in entering on a subject so deeply mysterious as this, I may well ask, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Besides, in reference to it, there is a still further ground of discouragement, arising from the opposition which the subject itself meets with in the

human mind. To a person who has never experienced any thing of a work of grace upon his own heart, the work of the Spirit appears to be little better than an enthusiastic conceit; and when pressed upon his conscience as a matter to be experienced at the peril of his soul, it excites, I had almost said, a feeling of indignation, inasmuch as it requires of him a greater degree of submission to God than he is willing to yield, and a closer intercourse with God than he has any inclination to attain.

I think this admits of an easy illustration. It is an indisputable fact, that we are, by nature, altogether alienated from the life of God. Now we all feel, that, when alienated from a fellow-creature, however we may bear with him in a crowd, we are indisposed to have much personal intercourse with him alone. So also we feel in reference to God. We can hear of him at a distance, and not be disturbed; but, by reason of our alienation from him, we are averse to be brought into very near communion with him. We can bear with a display of his perfections *in the universe*, because, though we see him *as our Creator*, he is not sufficiently near us to exercise any material

control over us: but when he is brought nigh to us *in the Law*, as *our Governor*, we feel somewhat of a painful constraint, because of our responsibility to him, and the account we must one day give of ourselves to him at his tribunal. Let him then be brought still nearer to us *in the Gospel*, as *our incarnate and suffering God*, and our inquietude is proportionably increased; because we are made to realize more deeply the terrors of his wrath which demanded such a sacrifice, and the personal obligation which lies upon us to surrender up ourselves unreservedly to him. But, in the offices and operations of the Holy Spirit, we are led to view him, not merely as *God, in the universe*, displaying himself *around us*; or as *God, in his church*, declaring his will to us; or as *God, in our nature*, interposing for us; but as *God, in our hearts*, dwelling and operating *in us*: and this brings him into such immediate contact with us, and requires of us such a minute attention to all our ways, that we shrink back from every part of the subject, and, for the pacifying of our own minds, cast reflections upon it, as visionary, unintelligible, absurd. I do not mean to say that there is in the minds of men a distinct consciousness of such a pro-

cess, but only that there is in reality such a process in the human mind, though men are not exactly aware of it. Men do not like to have God too near to them; and the nearer he is brought to them, the more they show their aversion to that which is the means of presenting him to their minds. Under such circumstances, I scarcely know how to enter upon the work which I have undertaken. Indeed I am strongly reminded of the feelings of St. Paul himself, when, in reference to his ministrations at Corinth, he said, "I was among you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling."* Yet, from so interesting a subject, especially whilst I judge it necessary to complete the plan which I had originally proposed, I dare not draw back. The importance of it will plead my apology, if any apology be required, for "declaring to you the whole counsel of God." Indeed, we need go no further than to the words of my text, to see the inconceivable importance of the subject which I am bringing before you. What! "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his!" What can this mean? Who is this "Spirit?" What

* 1 Cor. ii. 3.

is it to "have" him? Why is the having him so indispensable to my welfare? What must I do in order that I may get possession of him? And what must become of me, if I possess him not? I say, to any man that has the least concern about his soul, these thoughts must force themselves with an overwhelming power upon his mind. And it is in the hope that God may in his tender mercy make use of me, for the exciting and the satisfying of these inquiries, that I now address myself to this deep and comprehensive subject. But let me entreat, not only your candour, (for of that I am, from long and uniform experience, well assured,) but your prayers also, that God may enable me so to speak, as to approve myself to him; and enable you so to hear, that you may derive eternal benefit to your souls; so that both "I who sow, and you who reap, may rejoice together in heaven for evermore."

For the unfolding of the subject, I shall endeavour to show, distinctly and separately, in my four discourses,—

- I. Who is that Spirit whom all of us, as Christians, are expected to possess.

- II. Why the possessing of that Spirit is indispensable to our being Christ's accepted followers.
- III. What that Spirit will work in us in order that we may be Christ's.
- IV. What he will work in us when we are Christ's.

And, whilst I speak, may "the word go forth with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven," and "come in demonstration of the Spirit and of power"* to the hearts of all who hear me.

I. Who is that Spirit whom all of us, as Christians, are expected to possess? The Holy Spirit here spoken of, is the Third Person of the ever-blessed Trinity. As such he is set forth in the ordinance of baptism, which is administered in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.† And as such he is addressed in that benediction uttered by St. Paul, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen."‡

* 1 Pet. i. 12. 1 Cor. ii. 4.

† Matt. xxviii. 19.

‡ 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

In both these passages his distinct personality is recognised, and his proper Deity acknowledged. Had he been a mere *quality*, as some have imagined, it is not to be conceived that his name would have been united with that of the Father and of the Son in these solemn acts of worship. But, in fact, the whole Scriptures bear witness to him as *God*, equally with the Father and the Son. Ananias, "in lying to the Holy Ghost, lied unto *God*."* And we, in being his temples, are the temples of the living *God*.† But, whilst in his essential Godhead he is equal with the Father and the Son, in his office he is inferior to them both, and acts, if I may so say, a subordinate part under the Gospel dispensation. And this accounts for his being called *The Spirit of the Father*,‡ and *The Spirit of the Son*,§ under which latter designation we are at this time called more particularly to consider him.

My text says, "If any man have not *the Spirit of Christ*, he is none of his." Now it is of importance to ascertain why this name is given to the Holy Spirit. I conceive that

* Acts v. 3, 4.

† Matt. x. 20. John xv. 26.

‡ 1 Cor. iii. 17, with vi. 16.

§ Gal. iv. 6.