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THE HOLY SPIRIT CONVINCING THE WORLD OF SIN, RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND JUDGMENT

George Whitefield (1714-1770)

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“And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.”

—John 16:8

These words contain part of a gracious promise, which the blessed Jesus was pleased to make to His weeping and sorrowful disciples. The time was now drawing near, in which the Son of man was first to be lifted upon the Cross, and afterwards to heaven. Kind, wondrous kind! Had this merciful High priest been to His disciples, during the time of His tabernacling amongst them. He had compassion on their infirmities, answered for them when assaulted by their enemies, and set them right when out of the way either in principle or practice. He neither called nor used them as servants, but as friends; and He revealed His secrets to them from time to time. He opened their understandings that they might understand the scriptures; explained to them the hidden mysteries of the kingdom of God, when He spoke to others in parables; Nay, He became the servant of them all, and even condescended to wash their feet. The thoughts of parting with so dear and loving a master as this, especially for a long season, must needs affect them much.

When on a certain occasion He intended to be absent from them only for a night; we are told, He was obliged to constrain them to leave Him; no wonder then, that when He now informed them He must entirely go away, and that the Pharisees in His absence would put them out of their synagogues, and excommunicate them—yea, that the time should come, that whosoever killed them, would think they did God service (a prophecy, one would imagine, in a especial manner designed for the suffering ministers of this generation). No wonder, I say, considering all this that we are told, verse 6. Sorrow had filled their hearts; “Because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your hearts.” The expression is very emphatic; their hearts were so full of concern that they were ready to burst.

In order, therefore, to reconcile them to this mournful dispensation, our dear and compassionate Redeemer shows them the necessity He lay under to leave them, “Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away”: As though He had said, “Think not my dear disciples, that I leave you out of anger; No, it is for your sakes, for your profit that I go away: For if I go not away, if I die, not upon the Cross for your sins, and rise again for your justification, and ascend into heaven to make intercession, and plead My merits before My Father’s throne, the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, will not—cannot come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you.” And, that they might know what He was to do, “When he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.”

The Person referred to in the words of the text, is plainly the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, and the promise was first made to our Lord’s apostles. But though it was primarily made to them, and was literally and remarkably fulfilled at the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Ghost came down as a mighty rushing wind, and also when three thousand were pricked to the heart by Peter’s preaching; yet, as the apostles were the representatives of the whole body of believers, we must infer, that this promise must be looked upon as spoken to us, our children, and to as many as the Lord our God shall call. My design from these words is to show the manner in which the Holy Ghost generally works upon the hearts of those, who, through grace, are made vessels of mercy, and translated from the kingdom of darkness—into the kingdom of God’s dear Son.

I say, generally: for as God is a sovereign agent, His sacred Spirit bloweth not only on whom, but when and how it listeth. Therefore, far be it from me to confine the Almighty to one way of acting; or to say, that all undergo an equal degree of conviction; No, there is a holy variety in God’s methods of calling home His elect. But this we may affirm assuredly, that, wherever there is a work of true conviction and conversion wrought upon a sinner’s heart, the Holy Ghost, whether by a greater or less degree of inward soul-trouble, does that which our Lord Jesus told the disciples, in the words of the text, that He should do when He came. If any of you ridicule inward religion, or think, there is no such thing as our feeling or receiving the Holy Ghost—I fear my preaching will be quite foolishness to you, and that you will understand me no more than if I spoke to you in an unknown tongue. But as the promise in the text is made to the world, and as I know it will be fulfilling till time shall be no more, I shall proceed to explain the general way whereby the Holy Ghost works upon every converted sinner’s heart; and I hope that the Lord, even whilst I am speaking, will be pleased to fulfill it in many of your hearts. “And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.”

The word which we translate “reprove,” ought to be rendered convince; and in the original it implies a conviction by way of argumentation, and coming with a power upon the mind equal to a demonstration. A great many scoffers of these last days, will ask such as they term pretenders to the Spirit, how they feel the Spirit, and how they know the Spirit? They might as well ask how they know, and how they feel the sun when it shines upon the body? For with equal power and demonstration does the Spirit of God work upon and convince the soul.

1. The Holy Spirit Convinces of Sin.

And, first, He convinces of sin; and generally of some enormous sin, the worst perhaps the convicted person ever was guilty of. Thus, when our Lord was conversing with the woman of Samaria, He convinced her first of adultery: “Woman, go call thy husband. The woman answered, and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: for thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast, is not thy husband; in this saidst thou truly” (Joh 4:16-18). With this, there went such a powerful conviction of all her other actual sins, that soon after, she, “left her water pot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, Come, and see a man that told me all things that ever I did: Is not this the Christ?” (Joh 4:28-29). Thus our Lord also dealt with the persecutor Saul: He convinced him first of the horrid sin of persecution; “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?” (Act 9:4). Such a sense of all his other sins, probably at the same time revived in his mind, that immediately he died; that is, died to all his false confidences, and was thrown into such an agony of soul that he continued three days, and neither did eat or drink. This is the method the Spirit of God generally takes in dealing with sinners; He first convinces them of some heinous actual sin, and at the same time brings them in battle-array before them: “When he is come, he will reprove the world of sin.”

And was it ever thus with you, my dear hearers? (For I must question you as I go along, because I intend, by the divine help, to preach not only to your heads, but your hearts.) Did the Spirit of God ever bring all your sins thus to remembrance, and make you to cry out to God, “thou writest bitter things against me” (Job 13:26)? Did your actual sins ever appear before you, as though drawn in a map? If not, you have great reason (unless you were sanctified from the womb) to suspect that you are not convicted, much more not converted, and that the promise of the text was never yet fulfilled in your hearts. Far-

ther: When the Comforter comes into a sinner's heart, though it generally convinces the sinner of his actual sin first, yet it leads him to see and bewail his original sin--the fountain from which all these polluted streams do flow.

Though everything in the earth, air and water; everything both without and within, concur to prove the truth of that assertion in the scripture, "in Adam we all have died" (1Co 15:22); yet most are so hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, that notwithstanding they may give an assent to the truth of the proposition in their heads--yet they never felt it really in their hearts. Nay, some in words professedly deny it, though their works too plainly prove them to be degenerate sons of a degenerate father. But when the Comforter, the Spirit of God, arrests a sinner, and convinces him of sin, all carnal reasoning against original corruption, every proud and high imagination, which exalteth itself against that doctrine, is immediately thrown down; and he is made to cry out, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom 7:24). He now finds that concupiscence is sin; and does not so much bewail his actual sins, as the inward perverseness of his heart, which he now finds not only to be an enemy to, but also direct enmity against God.

And did the Comforter, my dear friends ever come with such a convincing power as this into your hearts? Were you ever made to see and feel that in your flesh dwelleth no good thing; that you are conceived and born in sin; that you are by nature children of wrath; that God would be just if He damned you, though you never committed an actual sin in your lives? So often as you have been at church and sacrament, did you ever feelingly confess that there was no health in you; that the remembrance of your original and actual sins was grievous unto you, and the burden of them intolerable? If not, you have been only offering to God vain oblations; you never yet prayed in your lives; the Comforter never yet came effectually into your souls: consequently you are not in the faith properly so called; No, you are at present in a state of death and damnation!

Again, the Comforter, when He comes effectually to work upon a sinner, not only convinces him of the sin of his nature, and the sin of his life, but also the sin of his duties. We all naturally are legalists, thinking to be justified by the works of the law. When somewhat awakened by the terrors of the Lord, we immediately, like the Pharisees of old, go about to establish our own righteousness, and think we shall find acceptance with God, if we seek it with tears; finding ourselves damned by nature and our actual sins, we then think to recommend ourselves to God by our duties, and hope, by our doings of one kind or another, to inherit eternal life. But, whenever the Comforter comes into the heart, He convinces the soul of these false rests, and makes the sinner to see that all his righteousness is but filthy rags: that his best works are but so many splendid sins; and that, for the most pompous services he deserves a doom no better than of the unprofitable servant, to be thrown into outer darkness, where is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth (Mat 25:30).

And was this degree of conviction ever wrought in any of your souls? Did the Comforter ever come into your hearts, so as to make you sick of your duties, as well as your sins? Were you ever with the great apostle of the Gentiles made to abhor your own righteousness which is by the law, and acknowledge that you deserve to be damned, though you should give all your goods to feed the poor? Were you made to feel, that your very repentance needed to be repented of, and that everything in yourselves is but dung and dross? And that all the arguments you can fetch for mercy, must be out of the heart and the pure unmerited love of God? Were you ever made to lie at the feet of sovereign grace, and to say, Lord, if thou wilt, thou mayest save me; if not, thou mayest justly damn me; I have nothing to plead, I can in no wise justify myself in thy sight; my best performances, I see will condemn me, and all I have to depend upon is thy free grace? What say you? Was this ever, or is this now, the habitual language of your hearts? You have been frequently at the temple; but did you ever approach it in the temper of the poor publican; and, after you have done all, acknowledge that you have done nothing; and upon a feeling experimental sense of your own unworthiness and sinfulness in every way, smite upon your breast, and say, "God be merciful to us sinners?" (Luk 18:13). If you never were thus minded, the Comforter never yet effectually came into your souls--you are out of Christ; and if God should require your souls in that condition, He would be no better to you than a consuming fire.

But there is a fourth sin, of which the Comforter, when He comes convinces the soul, and which alone (it is very remarkable) our Lord mentions as though it was the only sin worth mentioning; for indeed it is the root of all other sins whatsoever--it is the reigning as well as the damning sin of the world. And what now do you imagine that sin may be? It is the cursed sin, that root of all other evils--I mean the sin of unbelief; "Of sin because they believe not on me." But does the Christian world or any of you that hear me this day want the Holy Ghost to convince you of unbelief? Are there any infidels here? Yes, (O that I had not too great reason to think so) I fear most are such: Not indeed such infidels as professedly deny the Lord that bought us (though I fear too many even of such monsters are in every country;) but I mean such unbelievers, as have no more faith in Christ than the devils themselves. Perhaps you may think you believe, because you repeat the creed, or subscribe to a confession of faith; because you go to church or meeting, receive the sacrament, and are taken into full communion. These are blessed privileges, but all this may be done, without our being true believers. And I know not how to detect your false hypocritical faith better than by putting to you this question: How long have you believed? Would not most of you say, as long as we can remember, we never did disbelieve. Then this is a certain sign that you have no true faith at all--no, not so much as a grain of mustard seed--for if you believe now (unless you were sanctified from your infancy, which is the case of some), you must know that there was a time in which you did not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; and the Holy Ghost, if ever you received Him, convinced you of this. Eternal Truth has declared, "when he is come he will convince the world of sin, because they believe not on me." None of us believe by nature; but after the Holy Ghost

has convinced us of our natures, the sin of our lives, and duties—in order to convince us of our utter inability to save ourselves, and that we must be beholden to God, as for everything else so for faith (without which it is impossible to please, or be saved by Christ)—He convinces us also that we have no faith. “Dost thou believe on the Son of God?” (Joh 9:35), is the grand question which the Holy Ghost now puts to the soul. At the same time He works with such power and demonstrations that the soul sees, and is obliged to confess that it has no faith.

This is a thing little thought of by most who call themselves believers. They dream they are Christians because they live in a Christian country; if they were born Turks, they would have believed on Mahomet; for what is that which men commonly call faith, but an outward consent to the established religion? But do not thus deceive your own selves—true faith is quite another thing. Ask yourselves, therefore, whether or not the Holy Ghost ever powerfully convinced you of the sin of unbelief? You are perhaps so devout (you may imagine) as to get a catalogue of sins, which you look over and confess in a formal manner, as often as you go to the holy sacrament: But among all your sins, did you ever once confess and bewail that damning sin of unbelief? Were you ever made to cry out, Lord, give me faith; Lord, give me to believe on thee—O that I had faith! O that I could believe! If you never were thus distressed, at least, if you never saw and felt, that you had no faith, it is a certain sign that the Holy Ghost the Comforter, never came into and worked savingly upon your souls.

But it is not odd that the Holy Ghost should be called a Comforter, when it is plain by the experience of all God’s children, that this work of conviction is usually attended with sore inward conflicts, and a great deal of soul-trouble? I answer; the Holy Ghost may well be termed a Comforter, even in this work; because it is the only way to, and ends in, true solid comfort. Blessed are they that are thus convicted by Him—for they shall be comforted. Nay, not only so, but there is present comfort, even in the midst of these convictions: The soul secretly rejoices in the sight of its own misery, blesses God for bringing it out of darkness into light, and looks forward with a comfortable prospect of future deliverances, knowing, that, “though sorrow may endure for a night, joy will come in the morning” (Psa 30:5). Thus it is that the Holy Ghost convinces the soul of sin.

And, if so, how wretched are they mistaken, that blend the light of the Spirit with the light of conscience, as all those do, who say, that Christ lighteth every man that cometh into the world, and that light, if improved, will bring us to Jesus Christ? If such doctrine be true, the promise in the text was needless: our Lord’s apostles had already that light; the world hereafter to be convinced had that light; and, if that was sufficient to bring them to Christ, why was it expedient that Christ should go away to heaven, to send down the Holy Ghost to do this for them? Alas! All have not this Spirit—it is the special gift of God, and, without this special gift, we can never come to Christ. The light of conscience will accuse or convince us of any common sin; but the light of natural conscience never did—never will—and never can convince us of unbelief. If it could, how comes it to pass, that not one of the heathen, who improved the light of nature in such an eminent degree, was ever convinced of unbelief? No, natural conscience cannot effect this; it is the peculiar property of the Holy Ghost the Comforter: “When he is come, he will reprove [or convince] the world of sin, of righteousness, and judgment.”

2. The Holy Spirit Convinces of Righteousness.

We have heard how He convinces of sin. We come now to show, secondly, What is the righteousness, of which the Comforter convinces the world?

By the word righteousness, in some places of scripture, we are to understand that common justice which we ought to practice between man and man; as when Paul is said to reason of temperance and righteousness before a trembling Felix. But here (as in a multitude of other places in holy writ) we are to understand by the word righteousness, the active and passive obedience of the dear Lord Jesus; even that perfect, personal, and all-sufficient righteousness, which He has wrought out for that world which the Spirit is to convince. “Of righteousness, [says our Lord] because I go to the Father, and ye see me no more.” This is one argument that the Holy Spirit makes use of to prove Christ’s righteousness, because He is gone to the Father, and we see Him no more. For had He not wrought out a sufficient righteousness, the Father would have sent him back, as not having done what He undertook; and we should have seen Him again.

Oh the righteousness of Christ! It so comforts my soul, that I must be excused if I mention it in almost all my discourses. I would not, if I could help it, have one sermon without it. Whatever infidels may object, or Arminians sophistically argue against an imputed righteousness; yet whoever know themselves and God, must acknowledge, that “Jesus Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, [and perfect justification in the sight of God,] to everyone that believeth” (Rom 10:4), and that we are to be made the righteousness of God in him (2 Co 5:21). This and this only, a poor sinner can lay hold of, as a sure anchor of his hope. Whatever other scheme of salvation men may lay, I acknowledge I can see no other foundation whereon to build my hopes of salvation, but on the rock of Christ’s personal righteousness, imputed to my soul. Many, I believe, have a rational conviction of, and agree with me in this. But rational convictions if rested in avail but little; it must be a spiritual, experimental conviction of the truth which is saving. And therefore, our Lord says, when the Holy Ghost comes in the day of His power, it convinces of this righteousness, of the reality, completeness, and sufficiency of it, to save a poor sinner.

We have seen how the Holy Ghost convinces the sinner of the sin of his nature, life, duties, and of the sin of unbelief; and what then must the poor creature do? He must, he must inevitably despair, if there be no hope but in himself. When there-

fore the Spirit has hunted the sinner out of all his false rests and hiding places, taken off the pitiful fig leaves of his own works, and driven him out of the trees of the garden, (his outward reformations) and placed him naked before the bar of a sovereign, holy, just, and sin-avenging God; then, then it is, when the soul, having the sentence of death within itself because of unbelief, has a sweet display of Christ's righteousness made to it by the Holy Spirit of God. Here it is that He begins more immediately to act in the quality of a Comforter, and to convince the soul so powerfully of the reality and all-sufficiency of Christ's righteousness, that the soul is immediately set a hungering and thirsting after it.

Now the sinner begins to see, that though he has destroyed himself, yet in Christ is his help; that, though he has no righteousness of his own to recommend him, there is a fullness of grace, a fullness of truth, a fullness of righteousness in the dear Lord Jesus, which, if once imputed to him, would make him happy forever and ever. None can tell, but those happy souls who have experienced it, with what demonstration of the Spirit this conviction comes. O how amiable, as well as all-sufficient, does the blessed Jesus now appear! With what new eyes does the soul now see the Lord its righteousness! Brethren, it is unutterable. If you were never thus convinced of Christ's righteousness in your own souls, though you may believe it doctrinally, it will avail you nothing; if the Comforter never came savingly into your souls--then you are comfortless indeed. But, what will this righteousness avail, if the soul has it not in possession?

3. The Holy Spirit Convinces of Judgment.

Thirdly, the next thing therefore the Comforter, when He comes, convinces the soul of, is judgment. By the word judgment, I understand that well-grounded peace that settled judgment, which the soul forms of itself, when it is enabled by the Spirit of God to lay hold on Christ's righteousness, which I believe it always does, when convinced in the manner before mentioned. "Of judgment, (says our Lord) because the prince of this world is judged"; the soul, being enabled to lay hold on Christ's perfect righteousness by a lively faith, has a conviction wrought in it by the Holy Spirit, that the "prince of this world is judged." The soul being now justified by faith, has peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and can triumphantly say, it is Christ that justifies me, who is he that condemns me? The strong man armed is now cast out; my soul is in a true peace; the prince of this world will come and accuse, but he has now no share in me. The blessed Spirit which I have received, and whereby I am enabled to apply Christ's righteousness to my poor soul powerfully convinces me of this: Why should I fear? Or of what shall I be afraid, since God's Spirit witnesses with my spirit, that I am a child of God (Rom 8:16)? The Lord is ascended up on high; He has led captivity captive; He has received the Holy Ghost the Comforter, that best of gifts for men: and that Comforter is come into my heart: He is faithful that hath promised: I, even I, am powerfully, rationally, spiritually convicted of sin, righteousness, and judgment. By this I know the prince of this world is judged.

Thus, I say, may we suppose that soul to triumph, in which the promise of the text is happily fulfilled. And though, at the beginning of this discourse, I said, most had never experienced anything of this, and that therefore this preaching must be foolishness to such; yet I doubt not that there are some few happy souls, who, through grace, have been enabled to follow me step by step; and notwithstanding the Holy Ghost might not directly work in the same order as I have described, and perhaps they cannot exactly say the time when, yet they have a well-grounded confidence that the work is done, and that they have really been convinced of sin, righteousness, and judgment, in some way, or at some time or another.

And now what shall I say to you? O thank God, thank the Lord Jesus, thank the ever blessed Trinity, for this unspeakable gift: for you would never have been thus highly favored, had not He who first spoke darkness into light, loved you with an everlasting love, and enlightened you by His Holy Spirit, and that too, not on account of any good thing foreseen in you, but for His own name's sake.

Be humble therefore, O believers be humble. Look at the rock from whence you have been hewn. Extol free grace: admire electing love, which alone has made you to differ from the rest of your brethren. Has God brought you into light? Walk as becometh the children of light. Provoke not the Holy Spirit to depart from you: for though He hath sealed you to the day of redemption, and you know that the prince of this world is judged; yet as you backslide, grow lukewarm, or forget your first love, the Lord will visit your offenses with the rod of affliction, and your sin with spiritual scourges. Be not therefore high minded, but fear. Rejoice, but let it be with trembling. As the elect of God, put on not only humbleness of mind, but bowels of compassion; and pray, O pray for your unconverted brethren!

Help me, help me now, O children of God, and hold up my hands, as Aaron and Hur once held up the hands of Moses. Pray whilst I am preaching, that the Lord may enable me to say. This day is the promise in the text fulfilled in some poor sinners' hearts. Cry mightily to God, and, with the cords of a holy violence, pull down blessings on your neighbour's heads. Christ yet lives and reigns in heaven. The residue of the Spirit is yet in His hand, and a plentiful effusion of it is promised in the latter days of the church. And O that the Holy Ghost, the blessed Comforter, would now come down, and convince those that are Christless among you, "of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment!" O that you were once made willing to be convinced!

But perhaps you had rather be filled with wine than with the Spirit, and are daily chasing that Holy Ghost from your souls. What shall I say for you to God? "Father, forgive them, for they know not what to do" (Luk 23:34). What shall I say from God to you? Why? "that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself" (2 Co 5:19); therefore, I beseech you, as in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. Do not go away contradicting and blaspheming. I know Satan would have you be

gone. Many of you may be uneasy, and are ready to cry out, "What a weariness is it!" (Mal 1:13). But I will not let you go: I have wrestled with God for my hearers in private, and I must wrestle with you here in public. Though of myself I can do nothing, and you can no more by your own power come to and believe on Christ, than Lazarus could come forth from the grave; yet who know but God may beget some of you again to a lively hope by this foolishness of preaching, and that you may be some of that world, which the Comforter is to convince "of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment!"

Poor Christless souls! Do you know what a condition you are in? Why, you are lying in the wicked one, the devil; he rules in, he walks and dwells in you—unless you dwell in Christ and the Comforter is come into your hearts. And will you contentedly lie in that wicked one the devil? What wages will he give you? Eternal death! O that you would come to Christ! The free gift of God through Him is eternal life (Rom 5:15). He will accept of you even now, if you will believe in Him. The Comforter may yet come into your hearts, even yours. All that are now his living temples, were once lying in the wicked one as well as you. This blessed gift, this Holy Ghost, the blessed Jesus received even for the rebellious. I see you may be affected: but are your passions only a little wrought upon, or are your souls really touched with a lively sense of the heinousness of your sins—your want of faith, and the preciousness of the righteousness of Jesus Christ? If so, I hope the Lord has been gracious, and that the Comforter is coming into your hearts.

Oh, do not stifle these convictions! Do not go away, and straightway forget what manner of doctrine you have heard, and thereby show that these are only common workings of a few transient convictions, floating upon the surface of your hearts. Beg of God that you may be sincere (for He alone can make you so) and that you may indeed desire the promise of the text to be fulfilled in your souls. Who knows but the Lord may be gracious? Remember you have no plea but sovereign mercy; but for your encouragements also, remember it is the world, such as you are, to whom the Comforter is to come, and whom He is able to convince. Wait therefore at Wisdom's gates. The bare probability of having a door of mercy opened, is enough to keep you striving. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, the chief of them (1Ti 1:15). You know not but He came to save you. Do not go and quarrel with God's decrees, and say, if I am reprobate, I shall be damned; if I am elected, I shall be saved; and therefore I will do nothing.

What have you to do with God's decrees? Secret things belong to Him; it is your business to give "all diligence to make your calling and election sure" (2 Pe 1:10). If there are but few who find the way that leads to life, do you strive to some of them. You know not but you may be in the number of those few, and that you're striving may be the means which God intends to bless, to give you an entrance in. If you do not act thus, you are not sincere; and, if you do, who knows but you may find mercy? For though after you have done all that you can, God may justly cut you off, yet never was a single person damned who did all that he could. Though therefore your hands are withered, stretch them out; though you are impotent, sick, and lame, come lie at the pool. Who knows but by and by, the Lord Jesus may have compassion on you, and send you the Comforter to convince you of sin, righteousness, and of judgment?

He is a God full of compassion and long-suffering, otherwise you and I had been long since lifting up our eyes in torments. But still He is patient with us! Oh Christless sinners, you are alive, and who knows but God intends to bring you to repentance? Could my prayers or tears effect it, you should have valleys of the one, and floods of the other. My heart is touched with a sense of your condition. May our merciful High Priest now send down the Comforter and make you sensible of it also! O the love of Christ! It constrains me to beseech you to come to Him; what do you reject, if you reject Christ—the Lord of glory! Sinners, give the dear Redeemer lodging in your hearts, your whole hearts. Indeed He is worthy. He made you and not you yourselves. You are not your own; give Christ then your bodies and souls, which are His (1Co 6:19-20)! Is it not enough to melt you down, to think that the high and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity, should condescend to invite you by His ministers? How soon can He frown you to hell? And how know you but He may this very instant, if you do not hear His voice? Did any yet harden their hearts against Christ and prosper? Come then do not send me sorrowful away; do not let me have reason to cry out, Oh "my leanness, my leanness" (Isa 24:16)!

Do not let me go weeping into my closet, and say, "Lord they will not believe my report; Lord, I have called them, and they will not answer; I am unto them as a very pleasant song, and as one that plays upon a pleasant instrument; but their hearts are running after the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life." Would you be willing that I should give such an account of you, or make such a prayer before God? And yet I must not only do so here, but appear in judgment against you hereafter—unless you will come to Christ. Once more, therefore, I entreat you to come. What objections have you to make?

Behold, I stand here in the name of God, to answer all that you can offer. But I know no one can come, unless the Father draw him (Joh 6:44): I will therefore address me to my God, and intercede with Him to send the Comforter into your hearts. O blessed Jesus, who are a God whose compassions fail not, and in whom all the promises are yea and amen (2Co 1:20); thou that sittest between the cherubims, show thyself amongst us. Let us now see thy outgoings! O let us now taste that thou art gracious, and reveal thy mighty arm! Get thyself the victory in these poor sinner's hearts. Let not the word spoken prove like water spilt upon the ground. Send down, send down, O great High Priest, the Holy Spirit, to convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. So will we give thanks and praise to thee O Father, thee O Son, and thee O blessed Spirit; to whom as three Persons, but one God, be ascribed, by angels and archangels, by cherubim and seraphim, and all the heavenly hosts, all possible power, might, majesty, and dominion, now and forever more. Amen, Amen, Amen.

Christ the Saviour

1 Tim. 1:15; Rom. 5:12

*When Adam by transgression fell,
and conscious, fled his Maker's face,
linked in clandestine league with hell,
he ruined all his future race:
the seeds of evil once brought in,
increased and filled the world with sin.*

*But lo! the Second Adam came,
the serpent's subtle head to bruise;
he cancels his malicious claim,
and disappoints his devilish views;
ransoms poor prisoners with his blood,
and brings the sinner back to God.*

*To understand these things aright,
this grand distinction should be known:
though all are sinners in God's sight,
there are but few so in their own.
To such as these our Lord was sent;
they're only sinners who repent.*

*What comfort can a Saviour bring
to those who never felt their woe?*

*A sinner is a sacred thing;
the Holy Ghost has made him so.
New life from him we must receive,
before for sin we rightly grieve.*

*This faithful saying let us own,
well worthy 'tis to be believed,
that Christ into the world came down,
that sinners might by him be saved.
Sinners are high in his esteem,
and sinners highly value him.*

—Joseph Hart (1712-1768)

Person and Power of the Spirit

John 6:31; 16:13

*Holy Ghost, we look to thee;
Raise the dead; the captive free;
From the mighty take the prey,
Teach the weak to watch and pray.*

*Now, dear Lord, the heavens rend;
Make some haughty rebel bend;
Life, and light, and truth impart,
To some careless sinner's heart.*

*If it be thy holy will,
Now thy gracious word fulfill;
Quicken souls, and make them cry,
"Jesus, save me, or I die."*

*[Nor thy mourning saints forget;
Thy sweet unction still repeat;
Daily lead us unto Christ,
As our Prophet, King, and Priest.]*

*Thine it is the church to bless,
And to comfort in distress;
Trembling, helpless souls to guide,
Safe to Jesus' wounded side.*

*Out of self to Jesus lead!
For and in us intercede;*

*Guide us down to death,
and there Banish all our guilt and fear.*

*There and then support the mind;
May we be to death resigned;
And with an immortal song,
Haste to join the heavenly throng.*

