

## The Paraclete, or Comforter.

***John 14: 26; John 15: 26, 27; John 16: 7-14.***

Lecture 4 of 'The New Testament Doctrine of the Holy Spirit.'

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We enter on a sensibly different province of truth, relative to the Spirit of God, in the chapters of which a few verses have been read. It is no longer a question of the new birth, nor yet of the Holy Ghost as the power of fellowship with the source of grace — fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. Nor is it, again, the Holy Ghost as a power that flows from within outwards, giving the true testimony of a world-rejected but heavenly Lord before the hour comes for Him to show Himself, and them along with Him, to the world. These are the three subjects, as far as the Spirit of God is concerned, of John 3, 4 and 7.

What, then, is the great commanding truth which our Lord brings before us in the chapters now read? What is it that most prominently strikes the mind subject to the word of God, as one hears or reads these passages? There may be differences, and there are, in every one of these communications; but nevertheless they have, whether the fourteenth, fifteenth, or sixteenth chapters, one grand truth in common, which has not been presented in any part of the gospel before, of such immense value in itself, of such immensity, too, in its consequences, that we should in no way have been able to gather it from any of the previous communications of our Lord. The common principle in these chapters (14, 15 and 16) is this, — that it is not merely a source which imprints its own character on the new life that is given to the believer, nor a power working, whether inwardly or outwardly, and this in worship as well as testimony, but there is much more. We have the testimony of Christ strongly marked in these chapters; but there is another truth that rises above not only what we have had in the early part of John, but also which stands out in every one of these communications that come before us now. There is a divine person prominently brought before us. It is not merely a source or a power, but a person.

And the occasion evidently accounts for this difference. The Lord Jesus was leaving — that blessed person who had called them to Himself, who had been forming their hearts during His earthly ministry by revealing the Father to them. The scene was about to close in His death, wherein God should be infinitely glorified. As He says Himself, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God" — not merely the Father (the Father was glorified, but there is more conveyed in this truth, and another thought altogether) — "*God is glorified in him.*" Sin was against and before God; consequently, it was impossible for God to overlook it. The moral nature of God must break forth in all its strength and indignation against sin. Jesus, the Son of man, the rejected Christ, takes the sin upon Himself, and becomes responsible for the iniquities of His people. Hence, in the cross, God acquired a glory which He never had before, and which it was impossible that He should ever receive again. God was glorified infinitely, and for ever. The consequence is, that, from that moment right out into eternity, the grand, and at the same time precious, task lies before God of displaying, in every possible form, His estimate of the infinite suffering in which Jesus has glorified Him. The immediate result of that work was, that Jesus, being raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, takes His place at the right hand of God in heaven. Nothing else would have been for Him an adequate witness of the value of the cross. There are results which shall be accomplished in their day; there is no blessing that God ever

has given, or ever will give, apart from the cross of the Lord Jesus. But, at the same time, the cross has so perfectly met all God's justice, holiness, majesty, and love, all His character, in short, as well as His affections that God now has simply before Him, as far as Christ and those who receive Him are concerned, the happy task of gratifying,, His own nature to the full in the blessing according to all that is in His heart. This it is that alone accounts for all that He is now doing. In virtue of this, not only does He put Jesus at His own right hand, but sends forth the gospel — a thing He never did before — sends it to every creature. Thousands of years had rolled over this world (and God is the same God), yet had He never sent out such a message to man. There might be this gospel or that, good news to Abraham or to the children of Israel; but there never was the glad tidings of His grace spread abroad to every creature before. It was not God began to be love: Jesus Christ or His cross never produced love in God. It is the distinctive character of love in Him, that it is increase, uncaused, and unmoved by that which is outside itself. It is in His own nature. Love would be and was there if there had been no object of it, for objects do not make love; but at the same time, in the sovereignty of God, His love goes out: and to the neediest, the most deplorably guilty, the most distant from Himself, the most hostile, He can afford to show love. It is the cross of Christ which vindicates Him in so doing.

But this is not all. Jesus disappears from the world. It must be so. The world was not good enough for Him. Not even anything that God could do in it, no accomplishment of providence, no bestowal of the throne of David, nor yet the universal dominion of the Son of man over all nations, tribes, and tongues would have been a sufficient reward on God's part for the cross of the Lord Jesus. Accordingly, God takes Jesus to His own right hand in heavenly glory; and this, it is evident, gives occasion to the wonderful teaching of John 14. First of all, our Lord presents the certainty of His coming back again; for if He was going there, it was no abatement of His love. He went to prepare a place for them. As surely, therefore, as He went to the Father's house, He would come again, and receive them unto Himself; that where He was, they might be also. He had manifested the Father to them; He had shown Him here. They had known, or ought to have known, not only that the Father was in Him, but that He was in the Father. He was a divine person; He was the Son. This, of course, was in itself independent of His work; but at the same time, it gave infinite value to that work. Now, He goes farther, and shows that, during His absence in the Father's house, He makes a provision suitable to His love, and worthy of the cross — an unheard of blessing, transcending anything that had ever been known by man upon the earth before. He opens it thus: "If ye love me, keep my commandments." He would not have them spend their breath and affections in unavailing regrets for His absence, but prove their love in a real and substantial way — "keep my commandments." On the other hand, He would prove His love in a characteristically divine way. "And I," says He, "will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." Farther down He adds what makes the personality so very evident — "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name." Remark the words "will send in my name." It is not merely "will give;" for we can understand the giving of mere power; we can understand a divine source of blessing springing up within; we can understand infinite supplies of blessing flowing out. But here there is much more. It is unequivocally a divine person, "whom the Father," He says, "will send in my name; He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

On this let us for a few moments dwell, considering what it is, or rather whom, God has given to us — whom the Father has sent in the name of the Son, the Lord Jesus. I do not deny that the Holy Spirit is sometimes presented under the figure of being poured out, or that which is shed forth. It is familiar to all and unquestionable. In such figures the thought is clearly the profusion of the blessing, the rich

and lavish extent, if I may so say, of what God the Father is giving for the glory of His Son. But besides the riches of the gift, and the abundance of the grace, here we have an altogether different thought. Here we have distinctness and definiteness to the very last degree. And no wonder. It is a person — not merely power. It is no question of fulness of blessing only, but of a divine person. Accordingly the language employed seems intended of the Lord to enforce and point to this grand truth, which, alas! He knew would be so readily forgotten by the Church of God.

I admit also as certain, that by-and-by men here below shall receive another outpouring of the Holy Ghost. I admit the latter rain, even as the former. I admit the accomplishment of the beautiful type of Exodus 28, where the sound of the bells goes forth, not while the High Priest is within the holy place, not merely when He goes in, but also when He comes out again. And so, as one testimony was rendered when the High Priest went in, there will be another testimony of the Spirit when the High Priest comes forth once more. Just as when Jesus went into the heavens, there was the sound given forth by the power of the Spirit; so when He comes out again, there will be a new form and fulness of the Holy Spirit's blessing diffused upon all flesh, as it is said in the promise; the only difference being, that the future thing will surely not be for the same body that has received the first blessing of divine grace from the Holy Ghost, but, as we know, the ancient people of God shall be the object. God will revisit Israel in grace; not, of course, confining the blessing to Israel, but even as God now has been pleased to seek out of every nation under heaven, so, only more largely, will it be in the days of Christ's second coming and reign over the earth.

In all this it might seem that we are only on vague ground; and if this were all, we should be far from clear light as to the Spirit of God. Even so I know not that it would be lawful to speak of the influences of the Spirit as some now do. We are in the presence of an infinitely greater and commanding truth, but it is the very truth of which the Lord Himself speaks here. For indeed it is not a question simply of influences for the good of the soul, nor of springs of divine favour, nor of powers that flow in or flow out to any imaginable extent. Above and better than all this is the glorious fact, that now for the first time, and, as I fully believe, according to Scripture, for the only time, the personal presence of the Holy Ghost is known on the earth — the Holy Ghost actually come down from heaven, and here below as the fruit of redemption and of the Lord Jesus Christ's departure to heaven.

It is admitted fully that, along with this personal presence, there is a plentiful dispensing of power, as we have said. Nor do I doubt for a moment that by-and-by, when the Lord Jesus comes from heaven, there will be a larger effusion, a still more extensive spread of God's blessing all around; but where do we read of His *sending* the Spirit for that time? Where do we read of the Father sending the Comforter in the name of Christ the Son? In no other period. It is here, and now only. I mean not that these are the only Scriptures that refer to it, but that these are the only times and circumstances and conditions in which the word of God puts not only the gift of the Spirit and His outpouring, but the mission of the Spirit. It is a question here, I repeat, of His own personal descent from heaven; and nothing can be plainer from our Lord's own words, as will be proved as we pass on.

The key to all these statements lies in this: — the presence of the Comforter. That personal presence of the Holy Ghost, which is here spoken of, is intimately connected with, as it is founded on, His own personal absence after redemption. On the other hand, the bright day of the Lord that is coming will be marked, not by Christ's absence, but by His presence; not by His being in heaven, but by Himself coming to reign over the earth; and it has no such personal presence of the Spirit attached to it. Greater powers there may be in a certain way, — larger, if not deeper; but it will be another state of things altogether, and one of the most striking differences is found in a fact which may be passingly stated here; namely, that the Holy Ghost in that day will not lead a single person to worship God in the

holiest of all. This state of things ceases. The veil is no longer rent in the millennial day, when the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ shall be over the earth. Possibly such a statement as this may sound strong, and interfere rudely with doctrinal prejudices. To some theologians what could be more shocking to hear than that, after the work of redemption, there ever could be a recurrence to an earthly sanctuary, and a separating veil, and a human priesthood, and outward sacrifices over again? But in my judgment nothing is more certain, if indeed we bow to the Psalms and prophets, than such a state of things on earth under the millennial reign of the Lord. Gentile doctors may explain it — or rather attempt to explain it away — as they will; but there the fact stands before them in the word of God imperishably, in the prophetic word evidently unaccomplished. It is in Scripture very particularly bound up with this mark, that when that day does come, and God renews His dealings with His ancient people Israel, there is no Pentecost among the renewed feasts. There is the Passover, as well as the feast of Tabernacles; but there is no feast of weeks. This evidently falls in with what I have been saying, that there will be a most copious effusion of the Spirit; so that even some outward gifts, communicated on the day of Pentecost and afterwards, should be designated powers of the world to come. Why are they called "powers of the world to come"? Because they are a sample of that energy which will work in unhindered effects then, making the vast universe to know the mighty deliverance which the Saviour has accomplished for "all things," as well as for those that believe. The powers that were conferred by our Lord through the Holy Ghost, after He went up to heaven, are rightly therefore called "powers of the world to come," such as healing diseases, cleansing the lepers, raising the dead, giving the blind to see and the lame to walk, and the like, because they were expressions of that power which will be known far and wide in the great day of the Lord's reign, when He will heal all their diseases just as truly as He will pardon all their iniquities. Then He will bring in and unite both blessings. It is clear that this is altogether a different state of things from what we know now.

Accordingly, now there is this surpassing privilege that God gives to make known His exceeding value for and delight in the work of the Lord Jesus. How comes this? That work without doubt has in God's sight unending and infinite worth. How comes it that there should be now such an impressive and altogether divine estimate of it? The reason I believe to be this. The day that is coming will be the accomplishment of promise and prophecy. The time is arrived for making good what God positively brought out in that form of detailed blessing that was given to His people on earth. They were an earthly people; and accordingly the promises in their literal bearing regarded them as such. Hence it is, that when that day comes, it will be of that which God definitely put before them, it will be of the earthly people and the earth (and especially the land of Israel) as the centre of their fulfilment. But God never limited Himself merely to the accomplishment of what He has promised; and, in point of fact, so far from your getting at the depths of God's grace, by grasping at the promises, as people say, on the contrary, one only gets to the limits, so to speak, of that which was suited to a man on earth, or a people on the earth, or the earth itself; but as surely as the heavens are higher than the earth, so the grace that lay, as it were, unmoved in His own bosom, that which never was measured out in promise nor defined in prophecy, must be according to the depth of the goodness of God Himself. And therefore it is on one side that He retained this blessed reserve; not, of course, for the purpose of hiding it always, but nevertheless it was hidden from ages and generations — "hid in God," as He elsewhere says. Now on the other side the secret is hid no more, and this because God can freely act now. He has the world-rejected Christ at His own right hand; and at the very sight of Him as He comes there, if one may so say, fresh from the cross, as there He comes bringing all the value of redemption into His presence, God gives not according to the measure of an earthly people's need, or according to that which is suitable to this poor world, but what was worthy of Himself and of Christ. He gives what would be an honour in heaven itself. What can attest or prove this more than sending down the blessed

Spirit, who knew heaven so well, and could enter into and reciprocate all the feelings of God the Father about the Son and about redemption? Hence it is we enter with such fulness into this infinite blessing.

Accordingly, therefore, with all this weight of truth before us, these depths that were as yet unfathomed of divine grace, the Lord Jesus Christ speaks to His disciples. He would lead them into the counsels and reveal to them the mind of God the Father, the grace of the Saviour-God; but the means by which He pledges His name, and promises on His Father's part to more than make up for His own loss to the saints, is by the presence of "another Comforter." But I apprehend the word "Comforter" sometimes fails (perhaps to most fails) to give an adequate notion of what it is that our Lord Jesus really meant us to gather from thus speaking of the Holy Ghost. We might very naturally draw from it, that the term was in relation to sorrow, that it intimated a person who would console us in the midst of the distresses of this lower world. And, indeed, the Holy Ghost does console us and comfort us. But this is only a very small part of the functions here conveyed by the word "Paraclete." This is the expression, if one would give an English reproduction of that which is in point of fact the very word our Lord employed. But the meaning of that word "Paraclete" is not merely "Comforter," but one who is identified with our interests, one who undertakes all our cause, one who engages to see us through our difficulties, one who in every way becomes both our representative and the great personal agent that transacts all our business for us. This is the meaning of the Advocate or Paraclete or Comforter, whatever equivalent may be preferred. Manifestly, then, it has an incomparably larger bearing than either "advocate" on the one hand, or "comforter" on the other: it includes both, but takes in a great deal more than either. In point of fact it is One who is absolutely and infinitely competent to undertake for us whatever He could do in our favour, whatever was or might be the limit of our need, whatever our want in any difficulty, whatever the exigencies of God's grace for the blessing of our souls. Such the Holy Ghost is now; and how blessed it is to have such an One! But remark here, that it never was known before. I have already hinted, and indeed plainly expressed the conviction, that it will never be known again, fully allowing that there will be, as to extent, a larger outpouring of blessing in the world to come. But the personal presence of the Spirit here below as an answer to the glory of Christ at the right hand of God! . such a state of things never can be repeated. While the High Priest is above, the Spirit sent down gives a heavenly entrance into His glory as well as redemption; when the High Priest comes out for the earthly throne, the Spirit then poured out will give a testimony suited to the earth over which the Lord will reign.

If we bear this in mind, what a solemn impression is given as we look over Christendom! I have no doubt of the fact; but if it be so, it is a pregnant one, and full of serious reflections. It is always the great test-truth, if I may so express myself, which is the first to disappear, and, I think also, the last truth to be recovered, once it is lost; for it is invariably what most reflects God's glory. What can be, then, dearer to the Spirit, who is here to glorify the Son in glorifying the Father? And what should be of deeper moment to the saints? Wonder not if Satan strains every nerve and practises all his wiles to blot and misrepresent, to pervert or corrupt where he cannot destroy. If I judge Christendom by such a standard as this, what must be the sad conclusion? If one thing more than another ought now to characterize the children of God everywhere, what should it be according to these words of the Saviour? The presence, the personal presence, of the Holy Ghost; the certainty that this divine person is come to replace Himself. Granted that sense does not see Him, and that mind cannot enter in, as it is said here of the world. Evidently, if it were a question of either sense or mind, the world might be adequate. But contrariwise "the world seeth him not, neither knoweth him; nevertheless ye know him." We know Him, and know Him also to be present, first, on the simple word of the Lord Jesus; but, secondly, too, from the conscious enjoyment of the presence of the Holy Ghost.

I must begin by simply receiving Him on the word of the Lord; but when I do receive the truth into my soul, am I without the sense of His presence? Am I without the taste of the joy of the Holy Ghost being either in me or in the assembly of God? Surely our hearts can attest far otherwise. Therefore it is never confined simply to belief. "Know ye not," says the apostle, "know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?" That is, it is not merely a matter of faith. First of all, I do not doubt that a soul is brought into the blessing by the faith of Christ, and nothing else; but to leave no room for the enjoyment that is found in Him subsequently, to reduce all to a bare matter of acceptance on God's word of the Lord Jesus, would be indeed a poor witness on our part to the power of the indwelling Spirit, or to the revelation of the Saviour's grace. What would be thought of one who had nothing to assure him that his wife really was thus related to him, except the fact that her name was so entered in the registrar's office? It would be an extraordinary and a sorry pass to which things had come. And do you suppose that the Holy Ghost, a divine person sent down expressly to give us the power and joy and blessing and refreshment of the grace of God in the knowledge of Christ — do you suppose that this is less real for the new man, than the comfort of a companion that God has given a man for all that pertains to this present life? Far from us be such a thought; and therefore it is, I repeat, surely a matter to be noticed and weighed.

No doubt, if my soul, when awakened, only accepts the bare word of God in the gospel, and cares for, looks for, no more from Him who is here to glorify Christ, I must not wonder if I stop short of enjoyment which others taste; for the Holy Ghost resents such despite to His grace, such contentedness to know the least possible of Christ. There must be loss, if I will indeed be obstinate enough not to look for aught more. As far as it goes, it is in principle rationalistic, thus turning the very word of God into a mere letter; the heart refusing to go onward into the enjoyment of His blessed presence and power, simply because the gospel of salvation was believed on the word of the Lord. On the contrary, we find particular pains taken to show that individually there is a divine consciousness by the Spirit's power of our relationship to God; also, in the assembly of God, I am entitled not only to believe that He is there, but, believing, also to taste the sweet and mighty effects of His presence. Hence it is that in Romans 8, which refers to what concerns the soul's new standing in Christ, it is not merely said that the Holy Ghost dwells in me, a believer, but that He "beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." Does this mean no more than that a man believes the gospel? Matter of faith of course it is; and with this we must begin — with bare faith in God's testimony of His own grace to our souls — a faith that rests on nothing else on not a single emotion or experience of any kind, but God's word in the glad tidings of salvation by Christ. But suppose I settle down that this is all to which grace now entitles me, is this not a mistake on the other side almost as bad as to confound faith with feelings, or with experiences? Where faith is real, it leads into a deep experience, both for the soul and in the Church of God. However, this may suffice for the subject on which I am now treating. It seemed to me the more incumbent to refer to it, because the return from the ordinary muddle of inward evidences to simple faith exposes souls to limit everything as to the Holy Ghost to the bare word of the Lord. This is true as a ground-work; but we should look for more. And we must beware, in avoiding one error, not to fall into another and an opposite one. That the Lord sends me the word of life, I accept entirely as the starting-point of the Christian. It is a blessed and admirable thing that the Lord gives us to know, when hard pushed, it may be, by the adversary — to take the gospel on His naked word. But as surely as He who comes down and really dwells in us is a divine person — to suppose that He does not give the sensible enjoyment of His presence in our souls, and in the assembly of God, is a very great mistake indeed in my judgment.

First of all, then, the Lord prays the Father, as He says (for He takes a mediatorial place in this chapter), "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you

for ever." We are thus in presence of a grand truth as to the Holy Ghost. Not only was He given, but besides, when He comes, He abides for ever, as it is said, "that he may abide with you for ever." There is not a word about anybody else; it is the Christian that is in question here. Throughout these chapters of John we have invariably, as the anticipated basis, redemption accomplished on earth, and Christ exalted in heaven. These are accordingly the limits of the blessing here. It is not so much redemption indeed, in any of its manifold applications, but that truth as the ground of Christ's glorification on high, and of the Holy Ghost's coming down to the earth. Accordingly, here the Spirit is promised, not to be a visitor for a time, as the Lord Jesus was, but in contrast with that transient stay, "that he may abide with you for ever."

This at once leads one to feel how solemn is the sight which everywhere meets our eyes in Christendom. If there be one truth more than another that has been abandoned, it is this personal presence of the Holy Ghost. There is no adequate testimony to it whatever; and this is not said unadvisedly. I say it not merely of that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth, but of smaller cities that kings have built themselves to reign over, or those yet smaller cities their subjects love to reign over as rivals and an improvement upon both. I say it of the Protestant bodies, no matter what, no matter where, national or dissenting. It is a remarkable fact, that if you look at their confessions of faith, many of which were drawn up when men, no doubt, were far more simple and thoroughgoing than they are now — at the time of the Reformation, or at any subsequent great crisis — if there be one truth more especially absent from every one of these confessions that has come under my own observation, it is the testimony to this truth. You will find other truths: the necessity of being born again, the value of the work of Christ, the glory of His person as God and man. Not that they deny that the Holy Ghost is a divine person — surely they do not. But I am not speaking of His personality, or deity either, but of His personal mission to the earth, and of His presence now with Christians, both individually and collectively — the presence of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. Is it to be found anywhere acted on or confessed? Where is it set forth? I have never met with any approach to it, even in my reading; and of course I do not wish to give anyone the impression that I have not read a good deal upon the subject. I have searched diligently for it, and I have desired to learn what is really held by Christians universally; but never, in any one confession, creed, article of faith, or rule, have I discovered the smallest expression of that which is evidently the great characteristic truth of Christianity — that truth which ought to be continually sounding out, and continually in practice within the Church. Is it not, then, a solemn consideration that this, the glory of the Christian, the strength of the Church of God, and the especial privilege for which it was expedient that even Christ should go away, is never attested in any one system of Christendom known to me?

It will be said that there are excellent persons, and good preaching, etc., at any rate among orthodox persons. Is this denied? Does it supply the lack? Perhaps it may be urged by some that at least the society of Friends, or Quakers, as they are commonly called, do make a great deal of the Holy Ghost. They are the very class which, with all respect to themselves personally, are, in my judgment, and unwittingly on their own part, most ignorant of the truth of the Holy Ghost's presence. The reason is manifest why they are so thoroughly distant from, and so antagonistic to, the truth of the personal presence of the Holy Ghost. Their doctrine, which I surely ought to explain after having given so strong an opinion about that society, — Quaker doctrine is wholly inconsistent with the truth the Lord lays down here. They hold that the Spirit of God dwells in every man without exception; that, whether a Jew or a Turk, whether an infidel or a believer, not a single soul is without His indwelling. The consequence is that they cannot believe in any special personal presence of the Holy Ghost; for they conceive that as it has always been, so it is the essential means whereby he who makes a right use of it can be saved. Thus evidently along with this error goes another: they make justification to be gradual

and progressive, not complete by faith of Christ and His work, but in proportion as men follow the inward light. I do not speak of all the members of that society: no doubt gospel truth has penetrated among not a few of them; and there are those (I do not care to name such now) who have lately preached without as well as within them, and are much to be respected, and have been somewhat used of God to the conversion of souls. But what they received for their own souls, and preached to the blessing of others, was not the proper doctrine of the Friends as set forth in the remains of their founders or Barclay's *Apology*, but a certain measure of evangelical testimony which penetrated their enclosure, and was thence given out to others.

But as to this doctrine, the fundamental tenet of the Friends is, that the Holy Ghost is given to every man without exception, that he, making right use of that manifestation of the Spirit, may have his soul saved at last. Now is not this the very antithesis of the truth of God? For Scripture does not say that the Holy Ghost is given to every man in the world, but teaches that the manifestation of the Spirit is given only to every man in the Church. The Christian alone has the Holy Ghost. Not even the Old Testament saints knew this; nor will the millennial saints, as I believe, possess it as we do now, though there will be an outpouring on all flesh, we know. Even the people of Israel will not have Him as we now, blessed as they may be by- and-by, and endued with powers as extensive, and, indeed, outwardly transcending, I presume, anything ever known in the bosom of the Church. For the millennial day will see the most marvellous displays of divine power that have ever wrought among men permanently in this world. I doubt not at all that the efforts on which man so prides himself now, — his inventions, his electric telegraphs, his railways, his steamships, etc., will disappear from the world to give place to what will incomparably surpass them; for God will never allow that man is able to exceed Himself. He will not leave room for the delusion that a day of sin, self-will, shame — a day when Jesus is rejected and the Spirit slighted — is to furnish the due materials for the reign of His Son over a reconciled earth. Who that knows the character and word of God can admit the possibility that He will let Israel, under their Messiah, be indebted to the monuments of rebellious Gentiles, when He sets His people up, and causes the light to shine, and the glory of Jehovah to arise upon Zion? Impossible, to my mind, that God should make use of these effete means of man in that bright day. Just as Jericho of old must fall, and all the ancient centres of the holy land must give place, and God would mark out new ones for His people, so in the day that is coming, I am persuaded, the Holy Ghost will teach man how infinite is the power that He will put forth in the earth; for this will be the peculiarity of it: the Holy Ghost then will act on the earth and for the earth. Of course there will be no suspension of what He undertakes; but the display of the power will be suited to the Lord as then reigning over the world, and the objects the Holy Ghost will have in hand.

Now the Holy Ghost works after a different way, and to other ends. There was a great manifestation of power in apostolic days; but the great starting-point was the Holy Ghost sent down by Christ glorified at the right hand of God, and giving to souls vital association with Him who is there. This, too, ever goes on while Christ is on high. It is the heavenly One making us heavenly by the Holy Ghost, the divine link between Him and them upon the earth. This is what our passage speaks of here (and accordingly we have the believer contrasted with the world). He, says Christ, is "the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive." The false doctrine I have referred to insists strongly that the world does receive the Spirit, and that it is in no way peculiar to the believer in point of fact. Here, on the contrary, it is a special possession of the Spirit; it is His personal presence which only the Christian possesses, which the world cannot receive, "because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him." It is exclusively the privilege of the believer here below; "for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." Instead of merely giving them a transitory taste of blessedness, the Spirit dwells with them; and more than this, instead of merely dwelling *with* them, "he shall be *in* them." There is

this double truth, the dwelling *with* and also the being *in*. These two things are of importance. From the time that He comes down He dwells; yet not merely does He dwell with them as One outside of them, which is true in an assembly of saints, but He was to be *in* them. That He dwells with us is of immense moment for the believer to hold — that the Holy Ghost does not merely visit occasionally, but really *dwells* with us, and that we may look to Him, knowing that He really is here. But besides, as the Lord adds, He shall be in you, intimating that there would be the closest possible presence of the divine Spirit "in" as well as "with" those He was coming to; and this "for ever."

The effect is next shown. "I will not," says He emphatically, "leave you orphans" (that is, by His departure from them); "I will come to you." "Yet a little while and the world seeth me no more, but ye see me; because I live, ye shall live also." Is not the Holy Ghost forming us into a body, uniting the believer to Christ as the head? There is more than this. Community of nature is here taught; and not the unity of the body, as we have in the epistles of Paul. "Because I live, ye shall live also." Nothing can be more intimate than this. Further: "At that day," says He, showing the manner of it, "ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in me, and I in you." But "that day" is come. This again shows how totally this presence of the Holy Ghost differs from His outpouring in the millennium. Will this verse be true of the saints then? It is clear that nothing of the kind will appear. I do not deny that suited blessings will be given in the mercy and power of God; far from it. I do not deny that there will be divine goodness working in the people of God, the objects of His grace. Surely it must be so. But it is plain to me, that the state of things, taken as a whole, here described by the Lord, will be perfectly impossible in the millennium. "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." This is only applicable now. The basis on which it depends has been accomplished now, and now only. Christ has taken His place above, not merely in heaven, but, as He says, "in my Father." "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me" while He is there, and, at the same time, "I in you" while we are here. It is evident therefore that this (verse 20) is the decisive proof that our Lord makes the wondrous gift of which He speaks here contemporaneous with His presence in heaven. Then only is made good our association with Himself on high by the Holy Ghost sent down. When our Lord Jesus Christ leaves heaven, and takes the kingdom, all these elements will be changed, and there will be a new state of things in accordance with the new position which our Lord is to take. The Holy Ghost acts or is given always in relation to the place of Christ. During His personal absence there is the personal presence of the Holy Ghost; and as His own personal presence characterises the age to come when He returns again, the action of the Holy Ghost is necessarily modified by that new and fruitful fact.

On the latter verses I shall not dwell, having wished, first, to present as distinctly as possible the truth, and to this end comparing what now is with what has been, or may be in the days that are coming, so as to bring out the peculiarity of our blessing. Faith always enters into the present mind of God, His counsels and ways, from looking at Christ. Therefore it is that, where Christ's presence at the right hand of God in heaven is kept steadily before the soul, every thing falls into its place. Where this is not the great key-truth of our souls in relation to God as well as to the world, all is lost — I mean, all that is distinctive of us as Christians. Of course, there may be faith in Christ for the forgiveness of sins, and for a measure of peace with God; but I am not speaking of the soul's comfort, nor even of our being brought through this world and saved for ever and ever by Christ. My thought is of the glory of God, and of that which suits His affections; of that which is good and holy, full of strength and blessedness for the Christian in relationship with God. Assuredly none of these things can be, unless the eye of faith is guided, and continually fixed upon Christ where He is. To have the eye continually directed toward Him where He is secures the free work of the Holy Ghost in the soul; and hence it is you find that those who do not believe in the personal presence of the Holy Ghost here below have no right apprehension

of Christ Himself as the Head of the Church in heaven. They do not deny, nor so much as question in the least, that He is at the right hand of God. They formally proclaim that they believe in the Holy Ghost, the communion of saints, and so on. But it is no question now of repeating the words of a formulary; nor am I confining my remarks to any particular system, because, in my opinion, the dissenting societies are every one of them founded with aims and views wholly irrespective of the Holy Ghost's presence and operation in the assembly. Thus the present state of Christendom, in every form of it, whether national or dissenting, is founded on unbelief in the main distinctive truth of the Church, as far as the Holy Ghost is concerned.

This is of capital importance to impress on the children of God. The question is not whether or where they may have got good for their souls. The Spirit of God blesses in the midst, and often in spite, of these systems. There are those dear to Christ in every one of them; there are in all not only living members but ministers of Christ, as I firmly believe, wherever the grand foundations of Christ's person and work are acknowledged in any measure. But it is another thing altogether to say, "Am I where the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven can act freely, according to the intentions of the Lord and the word of God? Am I where He is believed to be present? Is the meeting, the assembly, of which I form a part, the expression of the presence of the Holy Ghost?" I do not speak of preaching now, nor even of meetings for instruction, whether in the form of lectures, or of reading the word of God together. All these things have their place; but there remains distinct the great central occasion where the Church, the members of Christ, gather round the name of the Lord Jesus. Now, on such occasions, is this leading truth before our souls, that we have One who is competent for every difficulty; One who cares for the glory of Christ; One who (for the love He bears Christ, and the value He sets on this work, and His grace toward us who, by His own power, have received Christ, and rest upon His work,) maintains our interests, looks after us, gives all our joys, helps us in our sorrows, fortifies us against the wiles of the devil, enables us to be simple, lowly, truthful, faithful, by His own grace, and deals with us by the word of God where we are letting slip either what is due to Christ's person, or to the truth of God?

Now, I maintain, that of all truths none can, as far as the Christian body on earth is concerned, take precedence of this for urgency and moment. The reason is quite simple. If men believed there was a divine person sent down from heaven, and that He was really present with us, to be looked to as directing the assembly, working by whom He would, do you think that this would not be the great prominent fact? I do not mean His merely operating; for the Holy Ghost may work in a Wesleyan chapel, or by an Anglican clergyman. I entirely admit that, without the operation of the Holy Ghost, none could be converted, or get any truth from the word of God. Thus the operation of the Spirit is like His own sovereign grace; or, as the Lord compared it, to the wind, blowing where it lists. This is altogether another thing from the recognition of the presence of the Holy Ghost, and His acting freely and sovereignly by such of the members as He is pleased to employ in the Christian assembly.

Do Christians believe that there is such a presence of the Spirit to be counted on? Surely the word of God is plain; and this is what the saints of God are called to own, and find their blessing in. Can this be fully known except where there is faith in it? I do not mean that every individual Christian has got a right measure of faith — perhaps not one of us has; we are all too feeble about this and every other truth. Therefore, of course, the assembly of God does not mean to claim all it desires for each of Christ's members. It is not that all have arrived at that fulness of confidence and simplicity of reliance on the presence of the Holy Ghost that becomes us, especially as this is, we may say, one of the highest truths, though after all a very simple truth; for, as is usual, the highest truths are apt to be most simple when seen. What, for instance, can be simpler than Christ at the right hand of God in heaven? Yet, after all, is it not the kernel of the mystery, the choicest blessing of God in Him? So I know

nothing plainer, yet profounder, than the presence of the Holy Ghost on earth — the answer to that great truth of Christ at the right hand of God. At the same time, however simple it may be, it is most weighty. Every Christian, no matter where, should be instructed in this great truth; and I conceive we have a serious charge from God to labour for the instruction of the children of God wherever we meet them, as they have received Christ, that they should really believe also in the presence of the Holy Ghost on earth. But holding this, I do not admit it to be of God that every one who is received should be required to possess previous understanding or exercised faith in His presence. There are many individual members of Christ who are but feeble in it, and do not enter into its preciousness in any appreciable degree. But so long as the meeting as a whole, is guided by the Spirit; so long as there is a recognition of His presence, without any known, fixed, or sanctioned hindrance to Him; so long as there are no human devices or rules of men, or other arrangements which interfere with the action of the Holy Ghost according to the word, there, I am persuaded, all children of God are bound to be, and may be, thoroughly happy. Possibly, no doubt, mistakes may be made — we are all liable to err; but our comfort here is to know that we have One present who is alone equal to the correction of all errors, and who, in His own grace, has come down from heaven for the express purpose of seeing to the saints. Therefore, we need never despair, no matter what the difficulties; we should never give up our soul's confidence that the Holy Ghost, who is present with and in us, will see to every hindrance and danger. Let our faith only be towards Him; let us only call on the name of the Lord; let us only be sure that He is here for the purpose — I will not say of honouring our faith, but, what is surer and better, for glorifying Christ. This can never fail. At the same time, if there be faith in His presence, as that which after all is the great thought of the meeting as a whole, though not necessarily of every member of it, divine power will be there. But unless the meeting be so far governed by this great truth, it is evident there may be all kinds of human rules brought in which contradict the action of the Holy Ghost there. Details as to this we find in the epistles, and some, at least, will come before us, as I trust, on another occasion. I only refer to the subject to connect it with John 14 passingly, as showing the all-importance of this great truth of the personal presence of the Holy Ghost.

Allow me to repeat my question here. Supposing a Protestant Christian, or any other you like, believed a divine person to be present, do you think all would not take shape and be governed by so immense a truth? If it were only an earthly sovereign among men, I should like to know whether you or I would be anxious to appear to take the lead in any place where the ruler might be there for the purpose? Is it too much to say, supposing the king passed through his dominions or entered any scene of his government, that the duty of a subject, even the highest, would be so much the more to pay him honour? At least such is my opinion. And I think nothing temporally is happier, speaking as a man now, than for a people to feel, and own, and respect the rights of the sovereign. I fear to too many it is a mere name, and that every trace of authority, even revealed truth, is coming to little better in these days — everything, both outward and inward. But wherever there is the real understanding and the right feeling of what the will of God is in the matter of earthly authority, it is manifest that no man or woman who had the sovereign in their own house — mark, even in their own house — could overlook such a fact, and behave as if he were not there.

But, beloved, when we think of the Church of God, it is not our own house, but God's; and what is due there? Surely, if anybody may act there in full right, it is One who is God. Accordingly it is too plain and palpable to be mistaken, that there is not, nor can be, faith in the presence of the Holy Ghost, without giving Him the place of precedence, and expecting His action in the various members according to Scripture. Indeed this is rarely pretended; for it is argued that in former days in the Church there were miracles, and apostles, and so on, but that *all is changed now*; so that these Scriptures are practically obsolete. Thus, when these people talk of the Holy Ghost, mostly they mean such great

powers and wonderful officers as once existed; but as for a divine person for the first time deigning to come down and to be present on earth, and to act in the midst of the assembled saints of God, — the assembly that comes together to worship the Lord, and take His supper, or any other of the acts of Christian worship or edification, it is not believed. And the proof that it is not believed is, that every arrangement is made by man to take care that the machinery shall work just as if He were not there. They hope that God will bless the means used, will work by the instruments they arbitrarily set up; but the object is to make all things go on thoroughly well to the evident ignoring of His own personal presence there. Now no man would act thus who had the thought even of an august human personage present. This would cause a change of tone. There would be a line of conduct entirely different from ordinary habits. No man would walk about his house so much at ease if he knew that the King was there; at least I should not admire the man who would, he would seem to me uncommonly full of himself. At the same time it is evident, that if there was the sense of a divine person present, all reverence, all the sense of His love, all that could be done to be subject to His direction there, would be the simple expression of one's faith.

Therefore it is, I feel, that owing so much as we do to the Lord, we need look well to it when we come together, that we act as those who believe in the presence of the Holy Ghost. Let us try our ways and deportments. Even small things betray how far we have faith in His real presence. Still more let us take heed if we venture on a hymn, or pray, or say a word, or whatever the act may be. The Lord grant that we may not bring into disrepute that precious truth which He has given to our souls! I am persuaded that no attacks, no reproaches from without, no persecution of enemies, no detraction of false brethren, no scorn of the world, can ever cast down those who have faith in the presence of the Holy Ghost. But of this I am equally sure, that our own practical unbelief, our delinquencies, our frequent grievous shortcomings, may and do open the door for the enemy; and these things more than any other circumstances are used of Satan to stumble such as are looking on in the present agitated and chaotic state of Christendom, anxiously looking out here and there to find some haven of rest in the midst of their trouble. And I do strongly press it on my brethren — for we all have a part, and, I do believe, not brothers only, but sisters also. I beseech them then to remember to what a place of dignity and responsibility they are called. Let them look well to it that their spirit, their very looks, their behaviour, their words, if indeed they do say anything, may never be inconsistent with faith in the presence of the Holy Ghost.

A very few words before I close on the other two chapters. The end of John 15 presents the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, in a slightly different way from John 14. "When the Comforter is come" — again I call your attention to the strong impression that it is a personal Being who comes — "When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me; and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning." The particular point that I apprehend is taught here is this — the heavenly character of the Holy Ghost's testimony. In chap. 14 the Spirit brings to remembrance what Jesus said; in chap. 15 He testifies of Christ Himself, and they testify because they have been with Him from the beginning. What the disciples saw, when they were with Him from the beginning, was, of course, the earthly side, and the Holy Ghost comes and gives His heavenly supplement. Thus, it is the Holy Ghost who comes from heaven, who knows the place and the glory of Christ, and who is sent expressly, not merely to help them in the remembrance of what they saw and heard upon earth, but to bring down, for the knowledge and joy of their souls, what He alone could tell them of the heavenly glory of Christ. In a word, therefore, we have the Holy Ghost here regarded as the bringer of fresh knowledge — of a new and heavenly testimony of Christ, they, of course, not losing the previous earthly testimony, in which the Holy Ghost indeed also strengthened them to bear witness of Christ.

In John 16 we have still more advance as to the Spirit of God. Our Lord had told them in chap. 14, that instead of sorrowing because He was going away, they ought to rejoice; a word of wondrous grace, because it shows how highly the Lord thinks of our love, and how He counts upon our unselfish delight in His own blessedness and glory. Surely it was a blessed transition for Him to step from the deepest sorrows and sufferings of the cross into the presence of God the Father in heaven! No wonder, therefore, that the Lord counts on their sense of all, and that they would rejoice because He was going to the Father, though a great loss in itself to them. But now He takes up the other side, and says they ought to rejoice for themselves, too, as it were. Sorrow had filled their heart; He says, "Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away." Chapter 14 says it is expedient for Him; the sixteenth chapter shows it is expedient for them; and for this reason, that if He did not go, the Comforter would not come — clearly proving what has been already stated, that there is a necessary absence of Christ from the earth in heaven in order for the Holy Ghost to descend. "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come; but if I depart I will send him unto you." Thus, we find the personal mission of the Holy Ghost, though in different connections, common to all these chapters. "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." Here we have, first of all, His relation to the world. The Holy Ghost, in most important respects, takes the place of the law. In the dealings with Israel the law was the great reprove; now it is the Holy Ghost, who, instead of being limited to a particular people, is come to reprove the world, no matter where, no matter in what state; it might be moral, or religious, or zealous for the law; but He reproves the world of sin — not merely of sins, but "of sin." It is the state here below of sin. Again, He convinces them, it is added, "of righteousness and of judgment." "Of sin" — not because they broke the law, but — "because they believe not on me; of righteousness" — not because I have kept the law for their righteousness, but — "because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more." Righteousness now is inseparable from Christ; He is the only righteousness that is valid for a soul in the sight of God. One does not speak of what may be of social worth, what has its place on earth, or among men here below — all this, of course, has its proper place; but now eternity comes into view, and accordingly Christ is the only life, or way of life. Hence, not to believe in Him is fatal, no matter what else there may be. So, again, no matter what apparent righteousness there may be, there is no other righteousness at all for God. And even so it is not as displayed here below, but Christ glorified at the right hand of God the Father. This is righteousness, that the Father had put the earth-rejected Christ there. In Christ, who Himself receives honour from the Father on high, do we find the righteousness we are made by grace. (See 2 Cor. 5)

Then there is another and very solemn addition to the verse — "and ye see me no more." The world has lost Christ. He came, and this not to judge, but to bring in blessing. He had all power, and could have introduced the kingdom, as far as His power and glory were concerned. But the state of the world in relation to God was such, that to have done so would have slighted sin, and slurred over the glory of God that had been totally compromised. Therefore, in point of fact, although the Messiah came, and there was no defect in Him — although man was responsible to receive Him, nevertheless, man being guilty before God, it was quite impossible, morally, that the kingdom could be established then. It would have been a denial of man's ruin and of God's glory, and neither could be on the part of Jesus. Therefore it is that Jesus never presents Himself, as has been observed in this gospel, as the Christ. Others may so speak of Him, but He never speaks of Himself as Messiah (save as acknowledging the truth when it was confessed); and for this simple reason, — in the gospel of John He has ever the consciousness of being a rejected Christ, yet withal God Himself, the Son. Hence, therefore, although He may be on earth, and accomplish prophecy, and others call Him Christ, the Son of David, and so on, yet He styles Himself the Son of man, who, in His own glory, is the only-begotten Son of God. There is everywhere the calm distinct sense of His own personal glory, which no rejection or shame

could possibly interfere with for a moment. Accordingly our characteristic and proper blessings are built upon His rejected but most glorious person (see Matt. 16), and are the answer to His glory as the exalted man in the resurrection power of the Son of God.

Thus, then, the Spirit of God takes a function at this present time towards the world, suitable to Him to whom He bears witness, making the Scriptures, as it were, the text on which He preaches of Christ. The world accordingly, not believing in Christ, is convicted of sin; and such, too, is His demonstration of righteousness and judgment. The righteousness is out of sight, and so slighted; the judgment, too, is not executed here below, where the world has its own way; but the cross as well as exaltation of Christ is the standing proof that the prince of this world is judged in God's sight. This world, as such, has never been worth a believing man's heed since the cross of Christ. Up to that time there had been long and gracious patience on God's part: since then God regards it as His enemy; it is what the intelligent saint knows to be the deadly enemy to God; and just as flesh found its character. so the world also; both were decided by the cross of Christ. To the world the Spirit keeps up this testimony; and how? Not according to the doctrine which supposes all the world to have the Spirit, but by the express contrary, by being outside the world. If the world believed in Christ, the Holy Ghost would dwell there; but, being unbelieving, the Holy Ghost is outside it; and consequently He is a reprover of the world, and not one who dwells in it as a Paraclete. Such alone He is among the saints of God.

Accordingly another point follows — how the Spirit deals with the disciples. This, being wholly different, is described in a new manner: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." The Holy Ghost will bring all things to remembrance. It is not merely testifying to Christ in His heavenly glory, but now there is no limit; it is Himself personally come, with and in the saints, as we saw. Accordingly He leads them into all truth. Here Christ says, "He shall not speak *of* himself." Bear in mind, this does not mean that the Spirit shall never speak *about* Himself. I suppose there are many who imagine such to be the meaning of the clause; but I must assure them that they are mistaken. The Holy Ghost speaks a great deal about Himself in the epistle to the Romans, in the epistles to the Corinthians, in the Ephesians, in the Galatians. I may say, that in almost all the epistles the Holy Ghost gives us a vast deal of instruction about Himself. This, then, is not the meaning at all, but that He does not speak from His own independent authority. He is acting in communion with the Father, and for the purpose of glorifying the Son. Accordingly this is what evidently falls in with the context — "He shall not speak of [or, from] himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak." He comes down to do honour to Christ: what He hears from the Father, as well as from the Son, this He tells us. He has on earth been pleased to take, if we may so say reverentially, a place subject to this design; even as the Son took a place here below subject to the Father. The Son was divine equally with the Father; nevertheless, He came simply to do His will as a servant on earth. So the Holy Ghost deigns now to be the servant of the Father's purposes and the Son's glory, even as the Son was the minister of the Father before.

Hence it is said, "Whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come." Nor is it merely to lead us into all the truth that Jesus had revealed before. There were things we could not then bear. Also, He speaks of "things to come" — an important word for souls that despise God's revelations of the future. It is not, I apprehend, merely that we have the revealed word of God, but, by virtue of His revelation now complete, and having the Holy Ghost Himself in us, the Church ought to be the interpreter of everything around in this world. There is nothing that the believer is not now competent by the Holy Ghost to understand, if he only use the word of God in the power of the Spirit. The Christian has, in a certain sense, a prophetic as well as a priestly place. He is called to

discern the times; he may read what passes in the world, and ought to do it. His senses, no doubt, may not be exercised to discern good and evil; and so he may be dull of hearing, as the apostle reproached the Hebrews; but I speak now of what, by virtue of the Holy Ghost, we are regarded here as competent for.

"He shall glorify me," says the Lord. Here we find the prime object now made most apparent, — whether it be revealing the truth, speaking what He hears, or showing things to come; this is the centre around which, so to speak, all His offices and His functions find their full operation. "He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." For this and other reasons, I believe, it is that we never hear, as far as I know, of the government or rule of the Holy Ghost. Among some it is a common expression, and commoner among intelligent Christians than any others; but I do not think the better of it for this. The fact is, we cannot coin or consecrate a phrase for the truth. The acknowledgment of the presence of the Holy Ghost is a truth of the gravest character; but presence and sovereign operations are not the same thing as rule. I believe I am subject to Scripture in this, as I certainly desire to speak also with all worthy respect of those whose language in this does not to my mind agree with the word of God. But I may observe that the reason seems to be, that the Spirit is making good the lordship of Christ: He is exalting Him, not glorifying Himself. Hence it is that the Spirit of God is never presented as ruling the Church. It is perfectly clear and sure He is the person who acts sovereignly. This I admit, and hold unqualifiedly; but when you speak of "government," you assert something else, which does seem to me not according to the exactness of truth, and which tends to displace the Lord from His rightful position, and to disorder the relation of the saints towards the Lord. The rejected Jesus is the one Lord in the official sense (for in another the Father and Spirit are, as being God). The Holy Ghost is present to maintain this, the will and truth of God. Hence He acts in the midst of the saints to exalt Christ before our eyes. The Spirit works in and with and by us; but the Lord Jesus is our Lord, and is so revealed of the Spirit to us, who, therefore, puts us in the position of subjection to Him. He has taken the place of glorifying Christ now, and imprints the character of His bondmen on us.

However, this is only by the way. My main object tonight is to leave the distinct, and, I trust, full impression that these words of the Saviour are intended to let fall on the heart, of the personal presence of the Holy Ghost sent down from Jesus Christ at the right hand of God the Father. May this precious truth not merely have increasingly a place in our hearts as individuals, but more than ever be prized in the assemblies of God on earth. The Lord keep a single soul from abandoning that truth, no matter what the difficulty, as well as from practically acknowledging any assembly where the Holy Ghost is not allowed His due place according to Scripture.