

The  
Holy Spirit's Work  
in  
Salvation

A. W. Pink  
1935

*“He that hath an ear,  
let him hear what the Spirit  
saith unto the churches.”  
Revelation 3:22*



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This booklet is an excerpt from articles originally published in Mr. Pink's monthly journal, *Studies in the Scriptures* during 1934 and 1935. *Studies* is being reprinted serially by Mount Zion and is available by free subscription. All the articles on the Holy Spirit have been reprinted as a paperback, *The Holy Spirit*, also available from Mount Zion.

Each section in this booklet is taken from a related chapter in the book, *The Holy Spirit*, as follows:

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# The Holy Spirit's Work in Salvation

## 1. The Work of the Holy Spirit

We shall consider the Holy Spirit's special and saving work in the people of God, dwelling mainly upon the absolute necessity for the same. It should make it easier for the Christian reader to perceive the absoluteness of this necessity when we say that the whole work of the Spirit within the elect is to plant in the heart a hatred for and a loathing of *sin as sin*, and a love for and longing after *holiness as holiness*.

This is something which no human power can bring about. It is something which the most faithful preaching as such cannot produce. It is something which the mere circulating and reading of the Scripture does not impart. It is a miracle of *grace*, a Divine wonder, which none but God can or does perform.

### *Depraved Apart from the Spirit*

Of course if men are only partly depraved (which is really the belief today of the vast majority of preachers and their hearers, never having been experimentally taught by God *their own* depravity), if deep down in their hearts all men really love God, if they are so good-natured as to be easily persuaded to become Christians, then there is no need for the Holy Spirit to put forth His Almighty power and do for them what they are altogether incapable of doing for themselves. And again: if "being saved" consists merely in believing I am a lost sinner and on my way to Hell, and by simply believing that God loves me, that Christ died for me, and that He will save me now on the one condition that I "accept Him as my personal Savior" and "rest upon His finished work," then no supernatural operations of the Holy Spirit are required to induce and enable me to fulfill *that* condition—self-interest moves me to, and a decision of my will is all that is required.

But if, on the other hand, all men *hate* God (Joh 15:23, 25), and have minds which are “enmity against Him” (Rom 8:7), so that “there is none that seeketh after God” (Rom 3:11), preferring and determining to follow their own inclinations and pleasures; if instead of being disposed unto that which is good, “the heart of the sons of men is *fully* set in them to do evil” (Ecc 8:11); and if when the overtures of God’s mercy are made known to them and they are freely invited to avail themselves of the same, they “*all* with one consent begin to make excuse” (Luk 14:18)—then it is very evident that the invincible power and transforming operations of the Spirit are indispensably required if the heart of a sinner is thoroughly changed, so that rebellion gives place to submission, and hatred to love. This is why Christ said, “No man can come to Me, *except* the Father (by the Spirit) which hath sent Me *draw* him” (Joh 6:44).

Again—if the Lord Jesus Christ came here to uphold and enforce the high claims of God, rather than to lower or set them aside; if He declared that “strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto Life, and few there be that find it,” rather than pointing to a smooth and broad road which anyone would find it easy to tread; if the salvation which He has provided is a deliverance from sin and self-pleasing, from worldliness and indulging the lusts of the flesh (Gal 5:24, 6:14; Col 2:20), and the bestowing of a nature which desires and determines to live for *God’s* glory and please Him in *all* the details of our present lives—then it is clear beyond dispute that none but the Spirit of God can impart a *genuine* desire for *such* a salvation. And if instead of “accepting Christ” and “resting upon His finished work” be the sole condition of salvation,<sup>i</sup> He demands that the sinner throw down the weapons of his defiance, abandon every idol, unreservedly surrender himself and his life, and receive Him as His only Lord and Master,<sup>ii</sup> then nothing but a miracle of *grace* can enable any captive of Satan’s to meet *such* requirements.<sup>iii</sup>

### ***Objections to Depravity Proved False***

Against what has been said above it may be objected that no such hatred of God as we have affirmed exists in the hearts of the great majority of our fellow-creatures—that while there may be a few degenerates, who have sold themselves to the Devil and are thoroughly hardened in sin, yet the remainder of mankind *are* friendly disposed to God, as is evident by the countless millions who have some form or other of religion. To such an objector we

reply, The fact is, dear friend, that those to whom you refer are almost entirely ignorant of *the God of Scripture*: they have heard that He loves everybody, is benevolently inclined toward all His creatures, and is so easy-going that in return for their religious performances will wink at their sins. Of course, they have no hatred for such a “god” as this! But tell them something of the character of the true God: that *He hates* “all the workers of iniquity” (Psa 5:5), that He is **inexorably** just and **ineffably** holy, that He is an uncontrollable Sovereign, who “hath mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth” (Rom 9:18), and their **enmity** against Him will soon be manifested—an enmity which none but the Holy Spirit can overcome.

It may be objected again that so far from the gloomy picture which we have sketched above being accurate, the great majority of people *do* desire to be saved (from having to suffer a penalty for their sin), and they make more or less endeavor after their salvation. This is readily granted. There is in every human heart a desire for deliverance from misery and a longing after happiness and security, and those who come under the sound of God’s Word are *naturally* disposed to be delivered from the wrath to come and wish to be assured that Heaven will be their eternal dwelling-place—who *wants* to endure the everlasting burnings? But that desire and disposition is quite compatible and consistent with the greatest love to sin and most entire opposition of heart to that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord (Heb 12:14). But what the objector here refers to is a vastly different thing from desiring Heaven upon *God’s* terms, and being willing to tread the *only* path which leads there!

The instinct of self-preservation is sufficiently strong to move multitudes to undertake many performances and **penances** in the hope that thereby they shall escape Hell. The stronger men’s belief of the truth of Divine revelation, the more firmly they become convinced that there is a Day of Judgment, when they must appear before their Maker, and render an account of all their desires, thoughts, words and deeds, the most serious and sober will be their minds. Let conscience convict them of their misspent lives, and they are ready to turn over a new leaf; let them be persuaded that Christ stands ready as a “Fire-escape” and is willing to rescue them, though the world still claims their *hearts*, and thousands are ready to “believe in Him.” Yes, this is done by multitudes who still hate

the true character of the Savior, and reject with all their hearts the salvation which *He* has. Far, far different is this from an unregenerate person longing for deliverance *from self and sin*,<sup>iv</sup> and the impartation of that *holiness*<sup>v</sup> which Christ purchased for His people.

All around us are those willing to receive Christ as their Savior, who are altogether unwilling to surrender to Him as their Lord. They would like His peace, but they refuse His “yoke,” without which *His* peace cannot be found (Mat 11:29). They admire His promises, but have no heart for His precepts. They will rest upon His priestly work, but will not be subject to His kingly scepter. They will believe in a “Christ” who is suited to their own corrupt tastes or sentimental dreams, but they despise and reject the Christ of God. Like the multitudes of old, they want His loaves and fishes, but for His heart-searching, flesh-withering, sin-condemning teaching, they have no appetite. They approve of Him as the Healer of their bodies, but as the Healer of their depraved souls they desire Him not. And nothing but the miracle-working power of the Holy Spirit, can change this bias and bent in any soul.

It is just because modern Christendom has such an inadequate estimate of the fearful and universal effects which the Fall has wrought, that the imperative need for the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit is now so little realized. It is because such false conceptions of human depravity so widely prevail that, in most places, it is supposed all which is needed to save half of the community is to hire some popular evangelist and attractive singer. And the reason why so few *are* aware of the awful depths of human depravity, the terrible enmity of the **carnal** mind against God and the heart’s inbred and **inveterate** hatred of Him, is because *His* character is now so rarely declared from the pulpit. If the preachers would deliver the same type of messages as did Jeremiah in his degenerate age, or even as John the Baptist did, they would soon discover how their hearers were *really* affected toward God; and then they would perceive that unless the power of the Spirit attended their preaching they might as well be silent.



## 2. The Spirit Regenerating

*“According to His mercy He saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.” - Titus 3:5*

### ***Self-Regeneration Is Impossible***

The absolute necessity for the regenerating operation of the Holy Spirit in order for a sinner’s being converted to God lies in his being totally depraved. Fallen man is without the least degree of right disposition or principles from which holy exercises may proceed. He is completely under a contrary disposition: there is no right exercise of heart in him, but *every* motion of his will is corrupt and sinful. If this were not the case, there would be no need for him to be born again and made “a new creature.” If the sinner were not wholly corrupt he would submit to Christ without any supernatural operation of the Spirit; but fallen man is so completely sunk in corruption that he has not the faintest real desire for God, but is filled with enmity against Him (Rom 8:7). Therefore does Scripture affirm him to be “*dead* in trespasses and sins” (Eph 2:1).

“But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, to them which believe on His name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (Joh1:12, 13). The latter verse (v. 13) expounds the former (v. 12). There an explanation is given as to why any fallen descendant of Adam ever spiritually receives Christ as His Lord and Master, and savingly believes on His name.

“*Not of blood*” – First, it is not because grace runs in the blood—as the Jews supposed. Holiness is not transmitted from father to son. The child of the most pious parents is by nature equally as corrupt and is as far from God as is the offspring of **infidels**.

“*Nor of the will of the flesh*” – Second, it is not because of any natural willingness—as **Arminians** contend: “nor of the will of the flesh” refers to man in his natural and corrupt state. He is not regenerated by any instinct, choice, or exertion of his own; he does not by any personal endeavor contribute anything towards being born again; nor does he cooperate in the least degree with the efficient cause: instead, every inclination of his heart, every exercise of his will, is in direct opposition thereto.

“*Nor of the will of man*” – Third, the new birth is not brought about by the power and influence of others. No sinner is ever born again as the result of the persuasions and endeavors of preachers or

Christian workers.<sup>vi</sup> However **pious** and wise they are, and however earnestly and strenuously they exert themselves to bring others to holiness, they do in no degree produce the effect.

“If all the angels and saints in Heaven and all the godly on earth should join their wills and endeavors and unitedly exert all their powers to regenerate one sinner, they could not effect it; yea, they could do nothing toward it. It is an effect *infinitely* beyond the reach of finite wisdom and power: 1 Corinthians 3:6, 7” (S. Hopkins).

### ***Regeneration Is the Sole Work of the Spirit***

In regeneration one of God’s elect is the subject, and the Spirit of God is the sole agent. The subject of the new birth is wholly passive: he does not act, but is acted upon. The sovereign work of the Spirit in the soul precedes all holy exercises of heart—such as sorrow for sin, faith in Christ, love toward God. This great change is wrought in spite of all the opposition of the natural heart against God: “So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy” (Rom 9:16). This great change is not a gradual and protracted process, but is *instantaneous*: in an instant of time the favored subject of it passes from death unto life.

### ***Manifestations of Regeneration***

*Holiness in the heart* is the main and ultimate birth brought forth in regeneration, for to make us partakers of God’s holiness is the sum and scope of His gracious purpose toward us, both of His election (Eph 1:4), and of all His dealings afterward (Heb 12:10), without which “no man shall see the Lord” (Heb 12:14). Not that finite creatures can ever be partakers of the essential holiness that is in God, either by imputation, or much less by real **transubstantiation**. We can be no otherwise partakers of it than in the *image* thereof—“which after God (as pattern or prototype) is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph 4:24); “after the image of Him that created him” (Col 3:10).

Regeneration is the first discovery and manifestation of election and redemption to the persons for whom they were intended: “But after the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man *appeared*” (Tit 3:4); and *how* and *when* did it appear? “According to His mercy He saved us *by* the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit” (v. 5). “God’s eternal love, like a mighty river, had from everlasting run, as it were underground. When Christ came, it took its course through His heart, hiddenly ran through it, He bearing on the Cross the names of them whom God

had given Him; but was yet still hidden from us, and our knowledge of it. But the first breaking of it forth, and particular appearing of it in and to the persons, is when we are converted, and is as the first opening of a fountain” - Thomas Goodwin (1600-1679).

### ***In Summary***

The marvel of regeneration is the bringing of a soul out of spiritual death into spiritual life. It is a new creation, which is a bringing of something out of nothing. Moreover the new creation is a far greater wonder than is the old: in the first creation there was nothing to oppose, but in the new all the powers of sin and Satan are set against it. Regeneration is not like the changing of water into wine, but of contrary into contrary—of hearts of stone into flesh (Eze 36:26), of wolves into lambs (Isa 11:6). This is greater than any miracle Christ showed, and therefore did He tell His Apostles that, under the mighty endowment of the Holy Spirit, they should work “greater works” than He did (Joh14:12).

“Regeneration consists in a new, spiritual, supernatural, vital principle, or habit of grace infused into the soul, the mind, the will and affections, by the power of the Holy Spirit, disposing and enabling them in whom it is, unto spiritual, supernatural, vital actings and spiritual obedience” – John Owen (1616-1683).

The effect of the new birth is that the man born again loves spiritual things *as spiritual* and values spiritual blessings on account of their being purely spiritual. The spring of life from Christ enters into him, and is the spring of all his spiritual life, the root of all his graces, the perpetual source of every Divine principle within him. So says Christ: “But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life” (Joh4:14). This regeneration introduces the elect into a capacity for the enjoyments which are peculiar to the spiritual world, and makes the one alteration in their state before God which lasts forever. *All* our meetness for the heavenly state is wrought at our regeneration (Col 1:12, 13). Regeneration is one and the same in all saints. It admits of no increase or **diminution**. All grace and holiness are then imparted by the Spirit: His subsequent work is but to *draw it forth* into exercise and act.

### 3. The Spirit Quickening

*“It is the Spirit that quickeneth: the flesh profiteth nothing”*  
- John 6:63

We shall now confine ourselves to *the initial* operation of the Spirit within the elect of God. Different writers have employed the term “regeneration” with varying latitude: some restricting it unto a single act, others including the whole process by which one becomes a conscious child of God. This has hindered close accuracy of thought, and has introduced considerable confusion through the confounding of things which, though intimately related, are quite distinct. Not only has confusion of thought resulted from a loose use of terms, but serious divisions among professing saints have issued therefrom. We believe that much, if not all, of this would have been avoided had theologians discriminated more sharply and clearly between the principle of grace (spiritual life) which the Spirit first imparts unto the soul, and His consequent stirrings of that principle into exercise.

“For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth, even so the Son quickeneth whom He will” (Joh 5:21); “It is the Spirit that quickeneth: the flesh profiteth nothing” (Joh 6:63). All the Divine operations in the economy of salvation proceed from the Father, are through the Son, and are executed by the Spirit. Quickening is His *initial* work in the elect. It is that supernatural act by which He brings them out of the grave of spiritual death on to resurrection ground. By it He imparts a principle of grace and habit of holiness; it is the communication of the life of God to the soul. It is an act of creation (2Co 5:17). It is a Divine “workmanship” (Eph 2:10). All of these terms denote an act of Omnipotency. The origination of life is utterly impossible to the creature. He can receive life; he can nourish life; he can use and exert it; but he cannot create life.

This quickening by the Spirit is *instantaneous*: it is a Divine act, and not a process; it is wrought at once, and not gradually. In a moment of time the soul passes from death unto life. The soul which before was dead toward God, is now alive to Him. The soul which was completely under the domination of sin, is now set free; though the sinful nature itself is not removed nor rendered inoperative, yet the heart is no longer *en rapport* (in sympathy) with it. The Spirit of God finds the heart wholly corrupt and desperately

wicked, but by a miracle of grace He changes its bent, and this by implanting within it the imperishable seed of holiness. There is no medium between a carnal and a spiritual state: the one is what we were by nature, the other is what we become by grace, by the instantaneous and invincible operation of the Almighty Spirit.

### ***Only the Beginning***

Let it be pointed out in conclusion that the Spirit's quickening is only *the beginning* of God's work of grace in the soul. This does not wholly renew the heart at once: no indeed, the inner man needs to be "renewed day by day" (2Co 4:16). But from that small beginning, the work continues—God watering it "every moment" (Isa 27:3)—and goes on to perfection; that *is*, till the heart is made perfectly clean and holy, which is not accomplished till death. God continues to work in His elect, "both to will and to do of His good pleasure," they being as completely dependent upon the Spirit's influence for every right exercise of the will after, as for the first. "Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work within you *will finish it* until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phi 1:6).

## **4. The Spirit Enlightening**

*"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness,  
hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge  
of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.  
But we have this treasure in earthen vessels,  
that the excellency of the power may be of God,  
and not of us." – 2 Corinthians 4:6-7*

"It is true that many a carnal man is ravished to think that God loves him, and will save him; but in this case, it is not the true character of God which charms the heart: it is not *God* that is loved. Strictly speaking, he can only love himself, and self-love is the source of all his affections. Or, if we call it 'love' to God, it is of no other kind than sinners feel to one another: 'for sinners also love those that love them' (Luk 6:32). The carnal Israelites gave the fullest proof of their disaffection to the Divine character (in the wilderness), as exhibited by God Himself before their eyes, yet

were once full of this same kind of 'love' at the side of the Red Sea" (Joseph Bellamy).

My reader, the mere fact that your heart is thrilled with a belief *that God loves you*, is no proof whatever that God's *true* character would suit your taste had you right notions of it. The Galatians loved Paul while they considered him as the instrument of their conversion; but on further acquaintance with him, they turned his enemies, for his character, rightly understood, was not at all congenial to them. If God is "of purer eyes than to behold evil" and cannot but look upon sin with infinite detestation (Hab 1:13); if all those imaginations, affections, and actions which are so sweet to the taste of a carnal heart, are so infinitely **odious** in the eyes of God as to appear to Him worthy of the eternal pains of Hell, then it is utterly impossible for a carnal heart to see any beauty in the Divine character until it perceives its own character to be infinitely odious.

*There is no spiritual love for the true God until self be hated.* The one necessarily implies the other. I cannot look upon God as a lovely Being, without looking upon myself as infinitely vile and hateful. When Christ said to the Pharisees, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of Hell?" (Mat 23:33), those words determined His character in their eyes. And it implies a contradiction to suppose that Christ's character might appear lovely to them, *without* their own appearing odious, answerable to the import of His words. There was nothing in a Pharisee's heart to look upon his own character in such a detestable light, and therefore all the Savior's words and works could only exasperate them. The more they knew of Christ, the more they hated Him; as it was natural to approve of their own character, so it was natural to condemn His.

The Pharisees were completely under the power of "darkness," and so is every human being till the Spirit quickens him into newness of life. If the fault were not in the Pharisees, it must have been in Christ; and for them to own it was *not* in Christ, was to acknowledge they *were* "vipers" and worthy of eternal destruction. They could not look upon Him as *lovely*, until they looked upon themselves as *infinitely odious*; but *that* was diametrically opposite to every bias of their hearts. Their old heart, therefore, *must* be taken away, and a new heart be given them, or they would never view things in a true light. "Except a man be born again, he *cannot* see the kingdom of God" (Joh 3:3).

### ***Manifestations of Enlightenment***

By this “anointing” or enlightenment the quickened soul is enabled to perceive the true nature of sin—opposition against God, expressed in self-pleasing. By it he discerns the plague of his own heart, and finds that he is a moral leper, totally depraved, corrupt at the very center of his being. By it he detects the deceptions of Satan, which formerly made him believe that bitter was sweet, and sweet bitter. By it he apprehends the claims of God: that He is absolutely worthy of and infinitely entitled to be loved with all one’s heart, soul, and strength. By it he learns God’s *way of* salvation: that the path of practical holiness is the only one which leads to Heaven. By it he beholds the perfect suitability and sufficiency of Christ: that He is the only One who could meet all God’s claims upon him. By it he feels his own impotence unto all that is good, and presents himself as an empty vessel to be filled out of Christ’s fullness.

A Divine light now shines into the quickened soul. Before, he was “darkness,” but now is he “light in the Lord” (Eph 5:8). He now perceives that those things in which he once found pleasure, are loathsome and damnable. His former concepts of the world and its enjoyments, he now sees to be erroneous and ensnaring, and apprehends that no real happiness or contentment is to be found in any of them. That holiness of heart and strictness of life which before he criticized as needless preciseness or puritanical extreme, is now looked upon not only as absolutely necessary, but as most beautiful and blessed. Those moral and religious performances he once prided himself in and which he supposed merited the approval of God, he now regards as filthy rags. Those whom he once envied, he now pities. The company he once delighted in now sickens and saddens him. His whole outlook is completely changed.

Divine illumination, then, is the Holy Spirit imparting to the quickened soul accurate and spiritual views of Divine things. To hear and *understand* is peculiar to the “good-ground” hearer (Mat 13:23). None but the *real* “disciple” *knows* the Truth (Joh 8:31, 32). Even the Gospel is “hid” from the lost (2Co 4:4). But when a quickened soul is enlightened by the Spirit, he has a feeling realization of the excellence of the Divine character, the spirituality of God’s Law, the exceeding sinfulness of sin in general and of his own vileness in particular. It is a Divine work which capacitates the

soul to have real communion with God, to receive or take in spiritual objects, enjoy them, and live upon them.

## 5. The Spirit Convicting

*“The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the Spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it.” – Isaiah 40:7*

Though man in his natural estate is spiritually dead, that is, entirely destitute of any spark of *true holiness*, yet is he still a rational being and has a conscience by which he is capable of perceiving the difference between good and evil, and of discerning and feeling the force of moral obligation (Rom 1:32; 2:15). By having his sins clearly brought to his mind and conscience, he can be made to realize what his true condition is as a transgressor of the holy Law of God. This sight and sense of sin, when aroused from moral stupor, under the common operations of the Holy Spirit, is usually termed “conviction of sin;” and there can be no doubt that the views and feelings of men may be very clear and strong even while they are in an unregenerate state. Indeed, they do not differ in *kind* (though they do in degree), from what men will experience in the Day of Judgment, when their own consciences shall condemn them, and they shall stand guilty before God (Rom 3:19).

### *Not “Conviction of Sin”*

But there is nothing whatever in the kind of conviction of sin mentioned above which has any tendency to *change the heart* or make it better. No matter how clear or how strong such convictions are, there is nothing in them which approximates to those that the Spirit produces in those whom He quickens. Such convictions may be accompanied by the most alarming apprehensions of danger, the imagination may be filled with the most frightful images of terror, and Hell may seem almost uncovered to their terrified view. Very often, under the sound of the faithful preaching of Eternal Punishment, some are aroused from their lethargy and feelings of the utmost terror are awakened in their souls, while there is no real *spiritual* conviction of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. On the other hand, there may be deep and permanent spiritual convictions where the passions and the imagination are very little excited.



Solemn is it to realize that there are now in Hell multitudes of men and women who on earth were visited with deep conviction of sin, whose awakened conscience made them conscious of their rebellion against their Maker, who were made to feel something of the reality of the everlasting burnings, and the *justice* of God meting out such punishment to those who spurn His authority and trample His laws beneath their feet. How solemn to realize that many of those who experienced such convictions were aroused to flee from the wrath to come, and became very zealous and diligent in seeking to escape the torments of Hell, and who under the instinct of self-preservation took up with “religion” as offering the desired means of escape. And how unspeakably solemn to realize that many of those poor souls fell victim to men who spoke “smooth things,” assuring them that they were the objects of God’s love, and that nothing more was needed than to “receive Christ as your personal Savior.” How unspeakably solemn, we say, that such souls look to Christ merely as a *fire-escape*, who never—from a supernatural work of the Spirit in their hearts—surrendered to Christ as *Lord*.<sup>vii</sup>

Does the reader say, “Such statements as the above are most unsettling, and if dwelt upon would destroy my peace.” We answer, O that it *may* please God to use these pages to disturb some who have long enjoyed a *false* peace.<sup>viii</sup> Better far, dear reader, to be upset, yea, searched and terrified *now*, than die in the *false* comfort produced by Satan, and weep and wail for all eternity. If you are unwilling to be tested and searched, that is clear proof that you *lack* an “honest heart.” An “honest” heart desires to know the Truth. An “honest” heart hates pretense. An “honest” heart is fearful of being deceived. An “honest” heart welcomes the most searching diagnosis of its condition. An “honest” heart is humble and **tractable** – not proud, presumptuous, and self-confident. O how very few there are who *really* possess an “honest heart.”

### ***Characteristics of the Spirit’s True Conviction***

The “honest” heart will say, “If it is possible for an unregenerate soul to experience the convictions of sin you have depicted above, if one who is dead in trespasses and sins may, nevertheless, have a vivid and frightful anticipation of the wrath to come, and engage in such sincere and earnest endeavors to escape from the same, then how am I to **ascertain** whether *my* convictions have been of a different kind from theirs?” A very **pertinent** and a most important question, dear friend. In answering the same, let us first point out

that, *soul terrors of Hell* are not, in themselves, any proof of a *supernatural* work of God having been wrought in the heart: it is not horrifying alarms of the everlasting burnings felt in the heart which distinguishes the experience of quickened souls from that of the un-quickened; though such alarms *are felt* (in varying degrees) by both classes.

In His particular saving work of conviction, the Holy Spirit occupies the soul more with *sin itself*, than with punishment. This is an exercise of the mind to which fallen men are exceedingly averse: they had rather meditate on almost anything than upon their own wickedness: neither argument, entreaty, nor warning will induce them to do so; nor will Satan suffer one of his captives—till a mightier One comes and frees him—to dwell upon sin, its nature, and vileness. No, he constantly employs all his subtle arts to keep his victim from such occupation, and his temptations and delusions are mixed with the natural darkness and vanity of men's hearts so as to fortify them against convictions; so that he may keep "his goods *in peace*" (Luk 11:21).

### ***Summary of Differences in "Conviction"***

In summary, there is a very real and radical difference between that conviction of sin which many of the unregenerate experience under the common operations of the Spirit, and that conviction of sin which follows His work of quickening and enlightening the hearts of God's elect. We have pointed out that in the case of the latter, the conscience is occupied more with *sin itself*, than with its punishment; with the real *nature* of sin, as rebellion against God; with its exceeding sinfulness, as enmity against God; with the multitude of sins, every action being polluted; with the character and claims of God, as showing the awful **disparity** there is between Him and us. Where the soul has not only been made to perceive, but also to *feel*—to have a heart-horror and anguish over the same—there is good reason to believe that the work of Divine grace has been begun in the soul.

Many other contrasts may be given between that conviction which issues from the common operations of the Spirit in the unregenerate and His special work in the regenerate. The convictions of the former are generally light and uncertain, and of short duration, they are sudden frights which soon subside; whereas those of the latter are deep, **pungent** and lasting, being *repeated* more or less frequently throughout life. The former work is more

upon the emotions; the latter upon the judgment. The former diminishes in its clarity and efficacy, the latter grows in its intensity and power. The former arises from a consideration of God's justice; the latter are more intense when the heart is occupied with God's goodness. The former springs from a horrified sense of God's power; the latter issues from a reverent view of His holiness.

Unregenerate souls regard eternal punishment as the greatest evil, but the regenerate look upon *sin* as the worst thing there is. The former groan under conscience's **presages** of damnation; the latter mourn from a sense of their lack of holiness. The greatest longing of the one is to be assured of escape from the wrath to come; the supreme desire of the other is to be delivered from the burden of sin and conformed to the image of Christ. The former, while he may be convicted of many sins, still cherishes the conceit that he has some good points; the latter is painfully conscious that in his flesh there "dwelleth *no* good thing" (Rom 7:18), and that his best performances are defiled. The former greedily snatches at comfort, for assurance and peace are now regarded as the highest good; the latter fears that he has sinned beyond the hope of forgiveness, and is slow to believe the glad tidings of God's grace. The convictions of the former harden, those of the latter melt and lead to submission. (The above two paragraphs are condensed from the *Puritan*, Charnock.)

#### ***Means of the Spirit's Convicting: Use of the Law***

The great instrument which the Holy Spirit uses in this special work of conviction is *the law*, for that is the one rule which God has given whereby we are to judge of the moral good or evil of actions, and conviction is nothing more or less than the formal impression of sin by the law upon the conscience. Clear proof of this is found in the passages that follow. "By the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom 3:20): it is the design of all laws to impress the understanding with what is to be done, and consequently with man's deviation from them, and so absolutely necessary is the law for this discernment, the Apostle Paul declared, "I had not known sin but by the law" (Rom 7:7)—its real nature, as opposition to God; its inveterate enmity against Him; its unsuspected lustings within. "The law entered that sin might abound" (Rom 5:20): by deepening and widening the conviction of sin upon the conscience.

Here is the fulfillment of Deuteronomy 30:6, "The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart." The blessed Spirit uses the sharp knife

of the Law, pierces the conscience, and convicts of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. By this Divine operation the hardness of the heart is removed, and the iniquity of it laid open, the plague and corruption of it discovered, and all is made naked to the soul's view. The sinner is now exceedingly pained over his rebellions against God and is broken down before Him. "Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child: wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it" (Jer 30:6, 7)—such is, sooner or later, the experience of all God's quickened people.

## 6. The Spirit Comforting

*"Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden."*  
— Matthew 11:28

### *Several Sequential Steps*

The saving work of the Spirit in the heart of God's elect is a gradual and progressive one, conducting the soul step by step in the due method and order of the Gospel to Christ. Where there is no self-condemnation and humiliation, there can be no saving faith in the Lord Jesus: "Ye repented not afterward, *that ye might believe Him*" (Mat 21:32) was His own express affirmation. It is the burdensome sense of sin which prepares the soul for the Savior: "Come unto Me all ye that labor and are *heavy laden*" (Mat 11:28). Without conviction there can be no **contrition** and **compunction**: he that sees not his wickedness and guilt never mourns for it; he that feels not his filthiness and wretchedness never bewails it.

Never was there one tear of true repentance seen to drop from the eye of an unconvicted sinner. Equally true is it that without illumination there can be no conviction, for what is conviction but the application to the heart and conscience of the light which the Spirit has communicated to the mind and understanding: Acts 2:37. So, likewise, there can be no effectual illumination until there has been a Divine quickening, for a dead soul can neither see nor feel in a spiritual manner. In this order, then, the Spirit draws souls to Christ:

- 1) He brings them from death unto life (quickenings)
- 2) shines into their minds (enlightening)
- 3) applies the light to their consciences by effectual conviction (convicting)
- 4) wounds and breaks their hearts for sin in compunction (repentance), and then
- 5) moves the will to embrace Christ in the way of faith for salvation (faith).

These several steps are more distinctly discerned in some Christians than in others. They are more clearly to be traced in the *adult* convert, than in those who are brought to Christ in their youth. So, too, they are more easily perceived in such as are drawn to Him out of a state of *profaneness* than those who had the advantages of a *pious* education. Yet in them, too, after conversion, the exercises of their hearts—following a period of declension and backsliding—correspond thereto. But *in this order* the work of the Spirit is carried on, ordinarily, in all—however it may differ in point of clearness in the one and in the other. God is a God of order both in nature and in grace, though He be tied down to no hard and fast rules.<sup>ix</sup>

### ***Weaned from the World***

By His mighty work of illumination and conviction, with the humiliation which is wrought in the soul, the Spirit effectually weans the heart forever from the comfort, pleasure, satisfaction or joy that is to be found in sin, or in any creature, so that his soul can never be quiet and contented, happy or satisfied, till it finds the comfort of God in Christ. Once the soul is made to feel that sin is the greatest of all evils, it sours for him the things of the world, he has lost his deep relish for them forever, and nothing is now so desirable unto him as the favor of God. All creature comforts have been everlastingly marred and spoiled, and unless he finds comfort in the Lord there is none for him anywhere.

“Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her” (Hos 2:14). When God would win His church’s heart to Him, what does He do? He brings her into “*the wilderness*,” that is, into a place which is barren or devoid of all comforts and delights; and then and there He “speaks comfort to her.” Thus, too, He deals with the individual. A man who has been effectually convicted by the Spirit is like a man condemned to die: what pleasure would be derived from the beautiful flowers as a murderer was led through a lovely garden to

the place of execution! Nor can any Spirit-convicted sinner find contentment in anything till he is assured of the favor of Him whom he has so grievously offended. And none but *God* can “speak comfortably” to one so stricken.

### ***The Nature of the Spirit’s Comforting***

*Hosea 2:6 “Therefore, behold, I will **hedge up thy way with thorns**, and make a wall, that she shall not find her paths.*

*2:7-9 “And she shall follow after her lovers, but **she shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find them:** then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it better with me than now. For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal. Therefore will I return, and take away my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof, and will recover my wool and my flax given to cover her nakedness.*

*2:10-13 “And now will I **discover her lewdness** in the sight of her lovers, and none shall deliver her out of mine hand. I will also **cause all her mirth to cease**, her feast days, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts. And I will destroy her vines and her fig trees, whereof she hath said, These are my rewards that my lovers have given me: and I will make them a forest, and the beasts of the field shall eat them. And I will visit upon her the days of Baalim, wherein she burned incense to them, and she decked herself with her earrings and her jewels, and she went after her lovers, and forgot me, saith the LORD.*

*2:14-15 “Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and **bring her into the wilderness**, and speak comfortably unto her. And I will give her vineyards from thence, and the valley of **Achor** [‘trouble’] for a **door of hope**: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt.”*

“And I will give her vineyards *from thence*, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope” (Hos 2:15). Such is the comforting promise of God to the one whom He proposes to “allure” or win unto Himself.

*First*, He hedges up the sinner's way with "thorns" (Hos 2:6), piercing his conscience with the sharp arrows of conviction.

*Second*, He effectually battles all his attempts to drown his sorrows and find satisfaction again in his former lovers (v. 7).

*Third*, He discovers his spiritual nakedness, and makes all his mirth to cease (vv. 10, 11).

*Fourth*, He brings him into "the wilderness" (v. 14), making him feel his case is desperate indeed.

And then, *fifth*, when all hope is gone, when the poor sinner feels there is no salvation for him, "a door of hope" is opened for him even in "the valley of Achor" or "trouble," and what is that "door of hope" but the *mercy* of God!

It is by putting into his mind thoughts of God's mercy that the Spirit supports the fainting heart of the convicted sinner from sinking beneath **abject** despair. Now it is that the blessed Spirit helps his infirmities with "groanings that cannot be uttered," and in the midst of a thousand fears he is moved to cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

### ***No Place for a "Decision" to Be Saved***

One would naturally suppose that the good news of a free Savior and a full salvation would readily be embraced by a convicted sinner. One would think that, as soon as he heard the glad tidings, he could not forbear exclaiming, in a transport of joy, "This is the Savior I want! *His* salvation is every way suited to my wretchedness. What can I desire more? Here will I rest." But as a matter of fact this is not always the case, yea, it is rarely so. Instead, the stricken sinner, like the Hebrews in Egypt after Moses had been made manifest before them, is left to groan under the lash of his merciless taskmasters. Yet this arises from no defect in God's gracious provision, nor because of any inadequacy in the salvation which the Gospel presents, nor because of any distress in the sinner which the Gospel is incapable of relieving; but because the workings of self-righteousness hinder the sinner from seeing the fullness and glory of Divine grace.

Strange as it may sound to those who have but a superficial and **non-experimental** acquaintance with God's Truth, awakened souls are exceedingly backward from receiving comfort in the glorious Gospel of Christ. They think they are utterly unworthy and unfit to come to Christ just as they are, in all their vileness and filthiness. They imagine some **meetness** must be wrought in them before they

are qualified to believe the Gospel, that there must be certain holy dispositions in their hearts before they are entitled to conclude that Christ will receive them. They fear that they are not sufficiently humbled under a sense of sin, that they have not a suitable abhorrence of it, that their repentance is not deep enough; that they must have fervent breathings after Christ and pantings after holiness before they can be warranted to seek salvation with a well-grounded hope of success. All of which is the same thing as hugging the miseries of unbelief in order to obtain permission *to* believe.

Burdened with guilt and filled with terrifying apprehensions of eternal destruction, the convicted sinner yet experimentally ignorant of the perfect righteousness which the Gospel reveals for the justification of the ungodly, strives to obtain acceptance with God by his own labors, tears, and prayers. But as he becomes better acquainted with the high demands of the Law, the holiness of God, and the corruptions of his own heart, he reaches the point where he utterly despairs of being justified by his own strivings. “What *must* I do to be saved?” is now his agonized cry. Diligently searching God’s Word for light and help, he discovers that “faith” is the all-important thing needed, but exactly what faith is and how it is to be obtained, he is completely at a loss to ascertain. Well-meaning people, with more zeal than knowledge, urge him *to* “believe,” which is the one thing above all others he desires to do, but finds himself utterly *unable to* perform.

If saving faith were nothing more than a mere mental assent to the contents of John 3:16, then any man could make himself a true believer whenever he pleased—the supernatural enablement of the Holy Spirit would be quite unnecessary. But *saving* faith is very much more than a mental assenting to the contents of any verse of Scripture; and when a soul has been *Divinely* quickened and awakened to its awful state by nature, it is made to realize that no creature-act of faith, no resting on the bare letter of a text by a “decision” of his own will, can bring pardon and peace.<sup>x</sup> He is now made to realize that “faith” is *a Divine gift* (Eph 2:8, 9), and not a creature work; that it is wrought by “the *operation of God*” (Col 2:12), and not by the sinner himself. He is now made conscious of the fact that if ever he is to be saved, the same God who invites him to believe (Isa 45:22), yea, who *commands* him to believe (1Jo 3:23), must also *impart* faith to him (Eph 6:23).



Cannot you see, dear reader, that if a saving belief in Christ were the *easy* matter which the vast majority of preachers and evangelists of today *say* it is, that the work of the Spirit would be *quite unnecessary*? Ah, is there any wonder that the mighty power of the Spirit of God is now so rarely witnessed in Christendom?—He has been grieved, insulted, quenched, not only by the skepticism and worldliness of “Modernists,” but equally so by the creature-exalting free-willism and self-ability of man to “receive Christ as his personal Savior” of the “Fundamentalists”!! Oh, how very few today *really* believe those clear and emphatic words of Christ, “No man *can* come to Me, *except* the Father which hath sent Me (by His Spirit) *draw* him” (Joh 6:44).

Ah, my reader, when GOD truly takes a soul in hand, He brings him to *the end of himself*. He not only convicts him of the worthlessness of his own *works*, but He convinces him of the impotence of his will. He not only strips him of the filthy rags of his own self-righteousness, but He empties him of all self-sufficiency. He not only enables him to perceive that there is “no good thing” in him (Rom 7:18), but He also makes him feel he is “*without strength*” (Rom 5:6). Instead of concluding that he is the man whom God will save, he now fears that he is the man who must be *lost* forever. He is now brought down into the very dust and made to feel that he is no more able to savingly believe in Christ than he can climb up to Heaven.

We are well aware that what has been said above differs radically from the current preaching of this decadent age; but we will appeal to the experience of the Christian reader. Suppose you had just suffered a heavy financial reverse and were at your wits’ end to know how to make ends meet: bills are owing, your bank has closed, you look in vain for employment, and are filled with fears over future prospects. A preacher calls and rebukes your unbelief, bidding you lay hold of the promises of God. *That* is the very thing which you *desire* to do, but *can* you by an act of your own will? Or, a loved one is suddenly snatched from you: your heart is crushed, grief overwhelms you. A friend kindly bids you to, “Sorrow not even as others who have no hope.” Are you able by a “personal decision” to throw off your anguish and rejoice in the Lord? Ah, my reader, if a mature Christian can only “cast all his care” upon the Lord *by the Holy Spirit’s gracious enablement*, do you suppose that

a poor sinner who is yet “in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity” can lay hold of Christ by a mere act of his own will?

Just as to trust in the Lord with all his heart (Pro 3:6), to be anxious for nothing (Phi 4:6), to let the morrow take care of its own concerns (Mat 6:34), is the *desire* of every Christian, but “*how to perform* that which is good” he “finds *not*” (Rom 7:18), until the Holy Spirit is pleased to graciously grant the needed enablement. The one supreme yearning of the awakened and convicted sinner *is* to lay hold of Christ, but until the Spirit draws him *to* Christ, he finds he has no power to go out of himself, no ability to embrace what is **proffered** him in the Gospel. The fact is, my reader, that the heart of a sinner is as naturally indisposed for loving and appropriating the things of God, as the wood which Elijah laid on the altar was to ignite, when he had poured so much water upon it, as not only to saturate the wood, but also to fill the trench round about it (1Ki 18:33)—a *miracle* is required for the one as much as it was for the other.

The fact is that if souls were left to themselves—to their own “free will”—after they had been truly convicted of sin, *none* would ever savingly come to Christ! A further and distinct operation of the Spirit is still needed to actually “draw” the heart to close with Christ Himself. Were the sinner left to himself, he would sink in abject despair; he would fall victim to the malice of Satan. The Devil is far more powerful than we are, and never is his rage more stirred than when he fears he is about to lose one of his captives: see Mark 9:20. But blessed be His name, the Spirit does not desert the soul when His work is only half done. He who is “the Spirit of life” (Rom 8:2) to quicken the dead, He who is “the Spirit of truth” (Joh 16:13) to instruct the ignorant, is also “the Spirit *of faith*” (2Co 4:13) to enable us to savingly believe.

### ***How the Spirit Comforts***

And *how* does the Spirit work faith in the convicted sinner’s heart? By effectually testifying to him of the sufficiency of Christ for his every need; by assuring him of the Savior’s readiness to receive the vilest who come to Him. He effectually teaches him that no good qualifications need to be sought, no righteous acts performed, no penance endured in order to fit us for Christ. He reveals to the soul that conviction of sin, deep repenting, a sense of our utter helplessness, are *not* grounds of acceptance with Christ, but simply a consciousness of our spiritual wretchedness, rendering

relief in a way of *grace* truly welcome. *Repentance is needful not as inducing Christ to give, but as disposing us to receive.* The Spirit moves us to come to Christ in the very character in which alone He receives sinners—as vile, ruined, lost. Thus, from start to finish “Salvation is *of the Lord*” (Jon 2:9)—of the Father in ordaining it, of the Son in purchasing it, *of the Spirit* in applying it.

## 7. The Spirit Drawing

*“No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day.” – John 6:44*

As the Christian now loves God “because He *first* loved” him (1Jo 4:19), so he sought Christ, because Christ first sought him (Luk 19: 10). Before Christ seeks us, we are well content to lie fast asleep in the Devil’s arms, and therefore does the Lord say, “I am found of them that *sought Me not*” (Isa 65: 1). When the Spirit first applies the Word of Conviction, He finds the souls of all men as the angel found the world in Zechariah 1:11; “all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest.” What a strange silence and midnight stillness there is among the unsaved! “There is *none* that seeketh after God” (Rom 3:11).

It is because of failure to perceive the dreadful condition in which the natural man lies, that difficulty is experienced in seeing the imperative need for the Spirit’s *drawing power* if he is to be brought out of it. The natural man is so completely enslaved by sin and enchained by Satan that he is unable to take the first step toward Christ. He is so bent on having his own way and so averse to pleasing God, he is so *in love* with the things of this world and so out of love with holiness that nothing short of Omnipotence can produce a radical *change of heart* in him, so that he will come to hate the things he naturally loved, and love what he previously hated. The Spirit’s “drawing” is the freeing of the mind, the affections, and the will from the reigning power of depravity; it is His emancipating of the soul from the dominion of sin and Satan.

Prior to that deliverance, when the requirements of God are pressed upon the sinner, he in every case *rejects* them. It is not that he is averse from being saved from Hell—for none desire to go there—but that he is unwilling to “*forsake*” (Pro 28:13; Isa 55:7) his

idols—the things which hold the first place in his affections and interests. This is clearly brought out in our Lord’s parable of “The Great Supper.” When the call went forth, “Come for all things are now ready,” we are told, “they *all* with one consent began to make excuse” (Luk 14:18). The meaning of that term “excuse” is explained in what immediately follows: they preferred other things; they were unwilling to *deny* themselves; they would not relinquish the competitive objects—the things of time and sense (“a piece of ground,” “oxen,” “a wife”) were their all-absorbing concerns.

Had nothing more been done by “the Servant”—in this parable the Holy Spirit—all had *continued to* “make excuse” unto the end: that is, all had gone on cherishing their idols, and turning a deaf ear to the holy claims of God. But the Servant was commissioned to “bring in hither” (v. 21), yea, to “*compel* them to come in” (v. 23). It is a holy compulsion and not physical force which is there in view—the melting of the hard heart, the wooing and winning of the soul to Christ, the bestowing of faith, the imparting of a new nature, so that the hitherto despised One is now desired and sought after: “I *drew* them with cords of a man (using means and motives suited to a rational nature) with *bands of love*” (Hos 11:4). And again, God says of His people “with *loving-kindness have I drawn thee*” (Jer 31:10).

## 8. The Spirit Working Faith

*“Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing,  
that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.”  
– Romans 15:13*

The principal bond of union between Christ and His people is the Holy Spirit; but as the union is mutual, something is necessary on our part to complete it, and this is faith. Hence, Christ is said to dwell in our hearts “by faith” (Eph 3:17). Yet, let it be said emphatically, the faith which unites to Christ and saves the soul is not merely a natural act of the mind assenting to the Gospel, as it assents to any other truth upon reliable testimony, but is a supernatural act, an effect produced by the power of the Spirit of grace, and is such a persuasion of the truth concerning the Savior as calls forth exercises suited to its Object. The soul being quickened

and made alive spiritually, begins to act spiritually, “The soul is the life of the body, faith is the life of the soul, and Christ is the life of faith” (John Flavel).

Saving faith is a cordial approbation of Christ, an acceptance of Him in His entire character as Prophet, Priest, and King; it is entering into covenant with Him, receiving Him as Lord and Savior. When this is understood, it will appear to be a fit instrument for completing our union with Christ, for the union is thus formed by *mutual* consent.

Were people to perceive more clearly the implications and the precise character of saving faith, they would be the more readily convinced that it is “the gift of God,” an effect or fruit of the Spirit’s operations on the heart. Saving faith is a coming to Christ, and coming to Christ necessarily presupposes a forsaking of all that stands opposed to Him. It has been rightly said that, “true faith includes in it the renunciation of the flesh as well as the reception of the Savior; true faith admires the precepts of holiness as well as the glory of the Savior” (J. H. Thornwell, 1850). Not until these facts are recognized, enlarged upon, and emphasized by present-day preachers is there any real likelihood of the effectual exposure of the utter inadequacy of that *natural* “faith” which is all that thousands of empty professors possess.

### ***Saving Faith Is the Work of the Spirit***

“Now He which *stablisheth* us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God” (2Co 1:21). None but God (by His Spirit) can “stablish” the soul in all its parts—the understanding, the conscience, the affections, the will. The ground and reason why the Christian believes the Holy Scriptures to be the Word of God is neither the testimony nor the authority of the church (as Rome erroneously teaches), but rather the testimony and power of the Holy Spirit. Men may present arguments which will so convince the intellect as to cause a consent—but establish the soul and conscience so as to assure the heart of the Divine authorship of the Bible, they cannot. A spiritual faith must be imparted before the Word is made, in a *spiritual way*, its foundation and warrant.

In those in whom the Spirit works faith, He first blows down the building of human pretensions, demolishes the walls which were built with the untempered mortar of man’s own righteousness, and destroys the foundations which were laid in self-flattery and natural sufficiency, so that they are entirely shut up to Christ and God’s

free grace. Once awakened, instead of fondly imagining I am the man whom God will save, I am now convinced that I am the one who must be damned. So far from concluding I have any ability to even help save myself, I now know that I am “without strength” and no more able to receive Christ as my Lord and Savior than I can climb up to Heaven. Evident it is, then, that a mighty supernatural power is needed if I am to come to Him who “justifieth the ungodly.” None but the all-mighty Spirit can lift a stricken soul out of the gulf of despair and enable him to believe to the saving of his soul.

*To God the Holy Spirit be the glory of His sovereign grace in working faith in the heart of the writer and of each Christian reader. You have attained peace and joy in believing, but have you thanked that peace-bringer—“the Holy Spirit” (Rom 15:13)?*

*All that “joy unspeakable and full of glory” (1Pe 1:8) and that peace which “passeth all understanding” (Phi 4:7)—to whom is it ascribed? The Holy Spirit. It is particularly appropriated to Him: “peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom 14:17 and cf. 1Th 1:6).*

*Then let us render unto Him the praise which is His due.*



1. inexorably – unyielding, inflexible.
2. ineffably – incapable of being expressed in words.
3. enmity – deep-seated, often mutual hatred.
4. penances – acts of self-abasement or devotion performed to show sorrow for sin.
5. carnal – fleshly, physical appetites and desires.
6. inveterate – firmly and long established; deep-rooted.
7. infidels – those who disbelieve the inspiration of Scripture; those who are not Christians.
8. Arminians – those who hold the system of doctrine named after Dutch theologian Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609). Most modern Arminians teach man is not radically depraved and has a free will and that predestination is dependent upon God's foreknowledge of human choices.
9. pious – reverencing and honoring God in heart and in the practice of duties He has enjoined.
10. transubstantiation – the Roman Catholic doctrine holding that that bread and wine of the Mass are transformed into the body and blood of Jesus.
11. diminution – lessening or decreasing.
12. quickeneth – to make alive.
13. en rapport – being in agreement.
14. odious – hateful.
15. tractable – easily handled.
16. ascertain – make certain.
17. pertinent – having a clear decisive relevance to the matter in hand.
18. disparity – the fact of being unequal; difference.
19. pungent – piercing; sharp.
20. presages – an indication or warning of a future occurrence.
21. contrition – sincere remorse for wrongdoing.
22. compunction – grief or remorse proceeding from a sense of guilt.
23. profaneness – lack of reverence of sacred things.
24. Achor – the valley of trouble where Achan and his family were stoned (Joshua 7:1-26).
25. abject – being of the lowest, most miserable kind.
26. non-experimental – this is the British form our non-*experiential*.
27. meetness – fitness.
28. proffered – to present for acceptance or rejection; offer.
29. inducing – moving to a course of action by influence or persuasion.

**How the Holy Spirit Works in Salvation** is a concise summary of God's actual workings in salvation through the Holy Spirit, based on a thorough study of His Word. The reader will be greatly encouraged in the magnitude and beneficence of this work: bringing His children, who beforehand are bent in living a selfish life independent from God's final authority over them, to bow before the living and sovereign God as their Lord and King. There is a particular focus on the incredible deceitfulness and disservice of superficial profession of faith, wherein the unregenerate are given false assurance of salvation from hell at the end of life, while being supported in continuing a selfish lifestyle without Christ as Lord.

**Arthur W. Pink** was born in England in 1886, and born again of the Spirit of God in 1908. He pastored churches in Colorado, California, Kentucky, and South Carolina, before moving to Sydney Australia for a brief period, preaching and teaching. In 1934, at the age of 48, he returned to his native England, and took permanent residence in Scotland in 1940, until his death in 1952.

Most of his works, including *The Holy Spirit*, first appeared as articles in the monthly *Studies in the Scriptures* published from 1922 to 1953 (and currently republished serially by Mount Zion). Independent Bible study convinced him that much of modern evangelism was defective. When Puritan and reformed books were generally disregarded by the Church as a whole, he advanced the majority of their principles with untiring zeal. Familiar with the whole range of revelation, Mr. Pink was rarely sidetracked from the great themes of Scripture: grace, justification, and sanctification. Our generation owes him a great debt for the enduring light he has shed, by God's grace, on the Truth of the Holy Bible.



## **Chapel Library**

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<sup>i</sup> When Pink says, “And if instead of ‘accepting Christ’ and ‘resting upon His finished work’ be the sole condition of salvation . . . ,” he is not saying that trusting Christ and His finished work are not vital in conversion. He is contrasting modern “easy-believism” – a distorted, abbreviated version of the gospel which leaves out repentance – with the Biblical gospel that Jesus and the Apostles preached: “Repent ye, and believe the gospel” (Mar 1:15); “And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house, Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Act 20:20, 21).

Conversion to Christ consists of two elements: 1) repentance and 2) faith. *Repentance* comes from the Greek *metanoia*, which means “a change of mind.” *Faith* is the Greek *pistis*, which is the mental act of believing. Believing, the Greek *pisteuo*, includes understanding and committing oneself to the truth regarding Jesus Christ and His saving work as revealed in the Bible. Repentance and faith spring from the Holy Spirit’s work in the new birth and are inseparable: “repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Act 20:21). Saving faith is always accompanied by repentance and true repentance is always accompanied by faith. Opponents of calling men to repent when preaching the Gospel say that this adds “works” to salvation, which is by faith alone (Eph 2:8, 9). This is a misunderstanding of Scripture. God “commandeth all men every where to repent” (Act 17:30). Repentance, like faith, is a gift of the Holy Spirit: “Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities” (Act 3:26); “Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins” (Act 5:31); “Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life” (Act 11:18); “. . . if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth (2Ti 2:25). Sinners *must* repent; but even their repentance is a gift of God’s grace by the Holy Spirit.

<sup>ii</sup> The repenting sinner looks by faith to Jesus Christ as Lord *and* Savior, because this is the way the Scriptures and the Gospel present Him: “For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord” (Luk 2:11); “God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Act 2:36); “preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:)” (Act 10:36); “who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ” (Act 11:17); “But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved” (Act 15:11); “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Act 16:31); “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him” (Col 2:6), etc. Modern religionists often separate Christ’s being Savior from His Lordship; but

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this is destructive of the Gospel and Biblical Christianity. Saving faith believes the truths of Scripture regarding the Lord *and* Savior Jesus Christ, trusting Him alone to be the sinner's righteousness: "Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe" (Rom 3:22). The Scriptures and therefore Biblical preaching declare Jesus Lord and Savior: these must not be divided.

<sup>iii</sup> When Pink speaks of "conditions" or "requirements," he does not mean *meritorious* requirements for salvation. Neither repentance nor faith merit the favor of God, and no one "earns" salvation by them. Pink believed and taught that salvation is the free gift of God's grace through faith alone in Christ Jesus according to Scripture: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph 2:8-9).

<sup>iv</sup> Pink wants the reader to understand the difference between a desire to "escape from Hell," which is simply the desire to avoid the *punishment* for our sins, and the desire of a soul be free from *sin itself*: "Thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Mat 1:21). It is not wrong to fear Hell and desire to escape it: "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men" (2Co 5:11). But Biblical redemption is deliverance from *that* which sinks us in Hell: our sin.

<sup>v</sup> The "impartation of that holiness" is the work of the Holy Spirit.

<sup>vi</sup> Pink is not saying that preachers are not used of God to persuade men to believe in Christ. Paul "reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks" (Act 18:4); "And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God" (Act 19:8); "this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people" (Act 19:26); "I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness . . . To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me" (Act 28:16-18); "He expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus" (Act 28:23). Pink is saying that the preacher has no power in *himself* to convert men; the Holy Spirit opens the sinner's heart to the preacher's persuasion: "And a certain woman named Lydia . . . heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul" (Act 16:14).

<sup>vii</sup> Again Pink is addressing a great error in his day, which still abounds in ours. Modern preaching often urges sinners to "receive Christ as your personal Savior," while utterly ignoring the *Lordship* of Jesus Christ. The

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Apostle Paul declares that his preaching included “repentance toward God, and faith toward our *Lord Jesus Christ*” (Act 20:21).

<sup>viii</sup> Many today have been deluded into a false peace by the modern doctrine known as “the carnal Christian.” While it is true that all Christians can and do act carnally at times, the notion that there are two kinds of Christians – those who love and obey Christ and those who don’t – is false. The sinner born of God’s Spirit seeks to apply the Lordship of Christ in every area of his life: “And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” (Luk 6:46); “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him” (Col 2:6); “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me” (Joh 14:21); “And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (1Jo 2:3, 4). The “carnal Christian theory” falsely presumes that one can continue in a sinful, worldly life while confidently expecting to go to heaven.

<sup>ix</sup> Pink is telling us that while the Holy Spirit appears to follow a particular order in saving work, it is not always as clear in some as in others. He is not bound by formulas. After all, the new birth is a miracle which we cannot see except in the changes it produces in a sinner’s life. Whether adult or child, whether profane or raised in a Christian home, conversion will always be manifested in repentance and faith. While the order in which they appear may not always be easily distinguished, there is no saving faith without repentance and no true repentance without saving faith. Repentance is the turning away from sin as faith turns to Christ. They are the “two sides” of conversion: “For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God” (1Th 1:9).

<sup>x</sup> The difference between *dead* faith and *saving* faith follows: dead faith issues from the flesh and never repents nor truly believes that sinners are justified by faith alone in the resurrected Lord of glory. Dead faith contents itself that it has escaped Hell by an act of its own will, having “made a decision.” Saving faith is a gift from God, empowered by the Holy Spirit, which repents trusting the revelation of justification by faith alone in Jesus Christ and manifests itself in loving obedience to Him: “And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us” (1Jo 3:23, 24).