

WHAT a mistake it is to confine inspiration to particular times and occasions, to prophets and apostles and extraordinary messengers of God, and to call it enthusiasm when the common Christian looks and trusts *to be continually led and inspired* by the Spirit of God! For though all are not called to be prophets or apostles, yet all are called to be holy as God is holy, to be perfect as their heavenly Father is perfect. Now the holiness of the common Christian is not an occasional thing that begins and ends for such a time or place or action but is the holiness of that which is always alive and stirring in us, our thoughts and affections. If, therefore, these are always governing our lives, if we have no holiness but as this life of will and affection works in us, if we are all called to this inward holiness, then a perpetual, always existing operation of the Spirit of God within us is absolutely necessary. Perpetual inspiration, therefore, is as necessary to a life of holiness as the perpetual respiration of the air is necessary to animal life.

WILLIAM LAW

INTRODUCTION

THE extracts from William Law (1686–1761) which this little book offers deal with three great articles of our faith: the Spirit of God (days 1–8), the Spirit of Love (days 9–18), and the Spirit of Prayer (days 19–31).

The first of these is the subject of Law's last work—*An Humble, Earnest, and Affectionate Address to the Clergy* (1761). He tells them that for the raising of the church out of its fallen state there is but one thing needful—that the Holy Spirit should have the place in the church which He had in Adam before the Fall. With wonderful power he unfolds the great truth that the Holy Spirit does not *occasionally* dwell or work in the Christian but by His immediate and continual inspiration is ever working toward bringing him to the full knowledge and experience of the life of God. Nothing less than a ceasing from preaching in the power of human wisdom, he declares, and a bearing witness by the preacher to the spiritual experience of Christ in the heart, can restore the church to the place Christ gave it at Pentecost. The thoughts that are given in this little book appear to be just what the ministry and the church of our day need.

The second book from which extracts are given is *The Spirit of Love* (1752). In it the wonderful glory and power of love are set forth to prove that God's goodness

delights in making us partakers of the love and the happiness with which He is filled. He points out how our nature has fallen into a life of entire and utter selfishness and worldliness, and how nothing but the denial and the death of this self can fit us for receiving and acting out the love with which God, by His Holy Spirit, seeks to fill us. And we are pointed to our Lord Jesus as the Lamb of God, who calls us to learn from Him what the lowliness and the gentleness is which will prepare us for receiving the fullness of the divine love.

Then follows *The Spirit of Prayer* (1750), defined by him to be the spirit of man rising out of the vanity of time into the riches of eternity. In the course of his book, the terrible power of self, with the kingdom which it has established in the attractions and lusts of the world, is more fully exposed, and so the way paved for his showing how the heart can be prepared to make prayer, as a longing and unceasing hungering for God, the means of the full union and communion between the God of love and His creatures here upon earth.

I have only one more thought—a word of advice to every reader. Law repeatedly warns us against any delight in hearing or apprehending religious truth, except there be an entire denial of the world and a real death to self. It is only then that the Holy Spirit can do His blessed work and reveal Christ, not to the mind, but as an inborn life dwelling in the heart, and proving its truth by nothing less than a life like-minded to Christ.

Let my reader listen to loving counsel. Be not content with reading the daily portion and being satisfied that you know what it contains and what it means. You must do more than this. Take some of the words of expressions that are italicized; take them into your heart and meditate on them. Bring them in prayer to God, and yield yourself, in simple dependence and full obedience to the Holy Spirit, in the assurance that He will make the truth a living reality and a true blessing.

That God may teach His church and every reader the threefold blessing of the power of the Spirit of God, of the Spirit of Love, of the Spirit of Prayer, is my humble, loving prayer.

ANDREW MURRAY

A PRAYER

“Oh heavenly Father, infinite, fathomless depth of never-ceasing love, save me from myself, from the disorderly workings of my fallen, long-corrupted nature, and let my eyes see, my heart and spirit feel and find, my salvation in Christ Jesus.

“Oh God, who made me for Yourself to show forth Your goodness in me, manifest, I humbly beseech You, the life-giving power of Your holy nature within me; help me to such a true and living faith in You, such strength of hunger and thirst after the life, birth, and spirit of Your holy Jesus in my soul, that all that is within me may be turned from every inward thought or outward work that reveals not You, Your holy Jesus, and Your heavenly working in my soul.”

AMEN.

Day 1

The One Thing Needful

An Humble, Earnest, and Affectionate Address to the Clergy *was the dying legacy of William Law to the church. He had corrected the proofs of the greater part when he was taken away. He invites the clergy to its perusal with the assurance that he desires not to call their attention to anything but the one thing needful, the one thing essential, and alone available to our rising out of our fallen state and becoming, as we were at our creation, an holy offspring of God and real partakers of the divine nature.*

IF it be asked what this one thing is, *It is the Spirit of God brought again to His first power of life in us.*

“Everything else, however glorious and divine in outward appearance, everything that churches or reformations can do for us, is dead and helpless except so far as it is the direct work of the Spirit of God, breathing and living in it. The end and design of all that is written in Scripture is only to call us back from the spirit of Satan, the flesh, and the world, to be again under the *full dependence upon an obedience to the Spirit of God* who, out of free love and thirst after our souls, seeks to have His first power of life in us. All love and delight in Scripture which is merely human is but the self-love of fallen Adam, and can have no better a nature till it proceeds from the inspiration

The Secret of Inspiration

of God, quickening His own life and nature within us, which alone can bring forth a godly love. For if it be an immutable truth that ‘no man can call Jesus “Lord” but by the Holy Ghost,’ it must be a truth equally immutable that no one can have any Christlike disposition or power of goodness except so far as he is directly led and governed by the Holy Spirit.”

Let us remember that it is of little profit to know the meaning of what we read; the great question is whether we have taken the instruction to heart. Do we indeed believe that this is the one thing needful for the church and ourselves: the deep conviction that God’s one desire is that the Holy Spirit should have the place in us that He had in Adam before the Fall, so that the only thing that gives value to our religion is that it is the direct work of the Spirit of God.