

# The Spirit in the World

by G. Campbell Morgan

---

*G. Campbell Morgan's sermon explores the expansive ministry of the Holy Spirit in the world, emphasizing His role in conviction, righteousness, and the ongoing struggle against evil.*

**Scripture:** Joel 2:28

**Topics:** "Conviction of Sin", "Holy Spirit's Ministry"

---

## Description

G. Campbell Morgan emphasizes the expansive ministry of the Holy Spirit beyond the Church, highlighting its prophetic fulfillment on Pentecost and its role in convicting the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He explains that the Spirit's work is to reveal truth to all humanity, striving with unbelievers while indwelling believers to maintain their union with Christ. Morgan also discusses the Spirit's restraining influence against evil, asserting that the Spirit's ministry is crucial for both the Church and the world, ultimately pointing to the necessity of preaching the Gospel for the Spirit's work to be realized. The sermon underscores the importance of recognizing the Spirit's active role in the world today.

---

## Transcript

THE ministry of the Spirit in the present age is by no means confined within the limits of the Church. Scripture very clearly reveals the intention as being far wider; and the history of the centuries proves the accomplishment to be in keeping with the intention.

There are three portions of Scripture which may be examined as throwing light on this subject. First, a prophetic utterance, the fulfilment of which Peter claimed as being accomplished on the Day of Pentecost; secondly, the express declaration of the Lord concerning the Spirit's ministry in the world; and, lastly, the teaching of Paul and John concerning the work of the Holy Spirit as opposed to the work of the spirit of evil. All these deal with a present ministry of the Spirit which in some sense is united to the work of the Church, but is also apart from and beyond it.

First, the prophecy: These are not drunken, as ye suppose; seeing it is but the third hour of the day; but this is that which hath been spoken by the prophet Joel"

And it shall be in the last days, saith God,

I will pour forth of My Spirit upon all flesh:

And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,

And your young men shall see visions,

And your old men shall dream dreams:

Yea and on My servants and on My handmaidens in

those days Will I pour forth of My Spirit; and they shall prophesy.

The term all flesh is an expression which is uniformly used in the Old Testament Scriptures with reference to the whole race. The exceptions are to be found repeatedly in the Pentateuch and once in the Book of Daniel where the expression all flesh refers not only to the human race but to everything having life. The sense of the phrase cannot be narrowed to anything smaller than the whole human family; and the statement here is clear and distinct--the utterance of the prophet long years before Pentecost, and the utterance of the apostle on the Day of Pentecost, claiming the fulfilment of the old prophecy, that the Spirit should be poured upon all flesh.

The link between the prophecy and its fulfilment is revealed in the Gospel of John: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us. The eternal Word took upon Him a nature common to the race, and therein wrought righteousness and accomplished redemption. Consequently, when He ascended on high to receive gifts for men, He received the Spirit, and by His outpouring upon disciples, the Church was formed. The Pentecostal effusion had, however, another and far wider significance. The Spirit was poured upon all flesh, so that the whole human race was thereby brought into a new relationship with Him as the result of the work of Jesus Christ. Just as the Word took the common flesh of humanity, and associated Himself with the whole race; so, as the result of the work He did while thus associated, the Spirit was poured not merely upon the company of disciples, but also upon all flesh. This is the larger outlook upon the mission of the Spirit. Let there be no minimizing of the value of this great statement.

There is, however, a distinct difference between the relationship that the Spirit bears to the believer and to the unbeliever. The Spirit is in the believer, and he by that indwelling is kept in union with Christ. The Spirit strives with the unbeliever as a Spirit of conviction, of reasoning, wooing him in patience to the way of God. The difference is most marked, yet the ministry of the Spirit is a ministry which touches all men.

Secondly, the declaration of Christ in the Paschal discourses: And He, when He is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on Me; of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye behold Me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this -world hath been judged. This is the first aspect of the ministry of the Spirit among men. He came not merely to reveal the things of Christ to the Church, but to convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. In the Authorized Version the word convict is rendered reprove. It is a word the inner thought of which is not revealed by the translation convict. Bishop Westcott, in his luminous exposition of the Gospel of John, says that this word has in it four shades of meaning: first, an authoritative examination of the facts; secondly, unquestionable proof; thirdly, decisive judgment; and, lastly, punitive power.

The mission of the Holy Spirit with men is that of revealing to them the truth on these subjects, in such a way that they shall be convinced that it is the truth. Concerning sin, men seek to excuse themselves, try to evade the facts; but when the Spirit deals with a man about sin, he cannot escape; and under His illumination man has the same clear vision of righteousness and judgment. Passing from the word itself to the subject, He . . . will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment, it is clear

that these three words cover the past, the present, and the future of the outlook of man as a sinner--the history of past sin, the present demand for righteousness, and the fear of future judgment. The Spirit takes these three cardinal facts, and places them in their true light, so that men may make no mistake concerning them. The Master declared the testimony the Spirit would bear on these subjects. . . . Of sin, because they believe not on Me; of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye behold Me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been fudged. That is the threefold revelation which the Spirit is giving to the world to-day, and it demands a closer examination.

Three persons are spoken of: Man, Christ, and Satan --Man in the realm of sin, Christ in the realm of righteousness, Satan in the realm of judgment. Observe next the inter-relation of these three: Man in his relationship to himself, to Christ, and to Satan; Christ in His relationship to Himself, to man, and to Satan; Satan in his relationship to himself, to man, and to Christ.

First, Man in his relationship to the three. Man's relationship to himself is that of a sinner having lost his life, whose sin ceases and is put away when he believes in Jesus. Man's relationship to Christ is that of a sinner for whom He has procured salvation, and through Whose triumph of righteousness man may himself do righteously. Man's relationship to Satan is that of a slave under the prince of this world, but from whose power he is set free, for this prince has been defeated.

Secondly, Christ in His relationship to the three. Christ's relationship to Himself is that of righteousness, for He declared His personal triumph when He said: I go to the Aether. His relationship to man is that of a Saviour, and therefore man's sin consists in refusal to believe on Him. Christ's relationship to Satan is that of Conqueror, for the prince of this world hath been judged.

Lastly, Satan in his relation to the three. Satan, concerning himself, is conquered--hath been judged--and is powerless; concerning man, is conquered--hath been judged--and therefore can no longer claim man's service ; concerning Christ, is conquered--hath been judged --and therefore even he must own Him King. There is no other outlook for evil than that of conquest.

Once again: He, when He is come, will convict the world in respect of sin . . . because they believe not on Me." With the coming of the Spirit upon all flesh, sin had a new centre. Henceforth sin consists in the refusal to accept the Divine provision of healing and power. No longer is the root-sin that of impurity, or drunkenness, or lust, or pride, or even law-breaking; the root sin is the refusal to believe on Jesus. If men will believe on Him, in that relationship to Christ which springs from belief, is to be found healing for wounds, and strength which issues in victory. The Spirit declares that the sin lies, not in the fact of passion, but in the refusal to let the Master, master the passion.

The Spirit has also come to reveal the truth about righteousness. If the revelation of sin be that of a new centre, the revelation of righteousness is, consequently, that of a new possibility. Of righteousness, because I go to the Father. In the height of that glory, which mortal eyes may by no means look upon, is God's perfect Man, the One Who said, I go to the Father. Not simply by virtue of His own righteousness did He go, but bearing into the presence of the Father the marks of that death on the Cross, by which He liberated His life, that it might become the force of renewal for man. The Spirit comes to bring to men the gospel of a new possibility of righteousness.

Lastly, the Spirit's revelation of judgment is concerned with a new exercise thereof. A common mistake, in quoting this passage, is that of adding the words to come after judgment. The confusion of thought which this reveals is obvious; for the judgment here referred to is not that which is to come, but that which is

already accomplished. The Judgment Day is not to be one of twenty-four hours, but of long duration, an age in itself, of which the closing event will be the final assize before the Great White Throne. That stupendous transaction will simply be the unfolding of the facts which are present to-day, because the prince of this world hath been judged. Righteousness has had its conflict with evil, and has won in the fight. The head of the enemy of the race has been bruised, even though the heel of the Victor was wounded in the process. The prince of this world hath been judged; and the things that must pass and perish are evil things and unrighteous things, while the things that cannot be shaken and that will remain are righteous things, pure things, and beautiful things, yea, all the things of God. Judgment is fixed, doom is marked, destiny is sealed, by the Cross of Jesus Christ. If men fling in their lot with things which are doomed and judged, then they must share the doom and judgment which have been passed upon them by the Cross of Calvary; but if they turn their backs upon doomed things, and lift their eyes toward the things that abide, the heavenly things where Christ is, the upper things, the conquering things, then for them judgment was borne upon the Cross, and they have entered into justification-life. Thus the ministry of the Spirit in the world to-day is that of revealing the truth concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment.

Thirdly, the teaching of Paul and John is clear that the Spirit has yet another ministry in the world to-day--that, namely, of hindering the full manifestation of sin. Paul and John in their Epistles give testimony to the fact that the Holy Spirit is the ever-present Force denying, hindering, thwarting, the outworking of evil. This is clearly revealed by comparison of certain of their writings.

. . . The man of sin . . . the son of perdition, he that opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God or that is worshipped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God. That is a description of antichrist as he will be. The mystery of lawlessness doth already work. . . . And then shall be revealed the lawless one. The apostle thus states that there is a mystery of iniquity, a mystery of lawlessness, at work among men, and that there is a day coming when that mystery will have a manifestation in an actual person, the lawless one will be revealed.

John, writing on this same theme, says: Who is the liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, even he that denieth the Father and the Son.--Every spirit which confesseth not Jesus is not of God: and this is the spirit of the antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it cometh; and now it is in the world already. This is practically the same teaching--namely, that there is a spirit of antichrist, a spirit of the mystery of lawlessness, in the world, and that at some period in the future it is to have a manifestation in a person. It is the spirit which denies God, not necessarily with the blatant blasphemy of public speech, but it may be with all cultured correctness of life. It is that which denies God, that which denies Christ.

Paul distinctly states that there is another force which holds this force of evil in check: And now ye know that which restraineth. . . . The mystery of lawlessness doth already work: only there is One that restraineth now, until He be taken out of the way. This is a plain declaration that the spirit of evil is at work, and also that there is a Force which restrains. He does not say it is the Holy Spirit. There has been a great deal of controversy about this particular passage, and attempts have been made to show that it had regard to the Roman power in the past. John, however, makes it clear Who the One that restraineth is: Hereby know ye the spirit of God: every spirit which confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit which confesseth not Jesus is not of God: and this is the spirit of the antichrist. Here the two things are placed in opposition,--the spirit of antichrist, which denies Jesus Christ and denies God; the Spirit of God, Who announces the Christ of God, and teaches men how to call Him Lord.

These two forces are still at work in the world,—the spirit of evil, the leaven that is undoing men everywhere; and the Spirit of God, Who restrains and holds in check the force of evil.

All the great forces which are antagonistic to God have been, thus hindered, restrained, checked, flung back upon themselves during the last nineteen hundred years.

The ministry of the Spirit is larger than His ministry in the Church; it is world-wide, and is always based upon the work of the Christ. Whether to the Church or to the world, the Spirit has no message but the message of Jesus Christ. To the man in the Church, and to the whole Church, He is revealing the Christ in new beauty and new glory. To the world He is revealing sin, righteousness, and judgment in their relation to the Christ. The Spirit is poured upon all flesh; and, in co-operation with the Church, He convinces of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. Therein lie the heart, the centre, and the responsibility of foreign missionary work. How shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent? The Holy Spirit is waiting in the far-distant places of the earth for the voice of anointed man to preach, in order that through that instrumentality He may carry on His work of convicting of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.

Beyond that, there is this other marvelous ministry which is too often lost sight of. By His presence in the world He is restraining the out-working of iniquity, and is checking, hindering, and driving back every attempted combination of the forces of evil for the swamping of the Church, and the hindering of the kingdom. The Spirit's restraining work will go forward until the moment has come when the number of the elect is complete. Then shall the Spirit be withdrawn when the Church is called away, in order that iniquity may be manifested and smitten to its final doom, and the glorious kingdom of our God be set up.

The only sense in which the Spirit is withdrawn is that which characterizes His special work in this age—that, namely, of conserving the Church and preventing the progress of evil to finality. He will carry on His work of striving with men as He did prior to the Deluge, but with results more glorious. This, however, is another subject and a part of prophetic study.

---

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/g-campbell-morgan/the-spirit-in-the-world/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**