

# The Work of the Holy Spirit

by J.C. Philpot

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*J.C. Philpot's sermon emphasizes the vital role of the Holy Spirit in imparting truth for genuine spiritual life and salvation.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 25:5, Psalm 119:160, John 1:14, John 16:13, John 17:17, Romans 5:1, Romans 15:4, Ephesians 6:17, 2 Thessalonians 2:10, 2 Thessalonians 2:13, James 1:18

**Topics:** "Holy Spirit", "True Salvation"

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## Description

J.C. Philpot emphasizes the vital role of the Holy Spirit in quickening the soul to spiritual life, revealing that mere religious practices and orthodoxy do not guarantee true salvation. He warns against being content with a form of godliness without the vital possession of truth through divine teaching. Philpot illustrates through biblical examples how graceless professors of the truth can be deceived, stressing that the new man of grace is uniquely designed to receive and live by the truth imparted by the Spirit. He highlights the indispensable nature of truth in regeneration, justification, sanctification, and salvation, showing that all blessings and graces flow from and are sustained by the truth of God.

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## Transcript

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Until the Blessed Spirit quickens the soul into spiritual life, we know nothing really or rightly of the truth as it is in Jesus. We may be strictly orthodox in doctrine, may abhor infidelity and error, may be shocked at profanity and irreverence, may be scrupulously attentive to every relative duty, may repeat, with undeviating regularity, our prayers and devotions; and may seem to ourselves and to others exceedingly religious; when, in the sight of a heart-searching God, we are still dead in trespasses and sins. The world is full of such exceedingly religious people. Every church and every chapel can produce samples in abundance of such "devout and honorable" men and women.

No! we may come much nearer the mark than this, for these runners are indeed a long way off the very starting-place, and yet we may still be very far from the kingdom of heaven. We may have a form of godliness in a profession of truth, may have been suckled and bred up from childhood in a sound creed, may have learned the doctrines of grace in theory and as a religious system, may be convinced in our conscience of their substantial agreement with the oracles of God, may contend for them in argument, and

prove them by texts, may sit under the sound of the gospel with pleasure, or even preach it with eloquence and fervor; and yet know nothing of the truth savingly and experimentally, by divine teaching and divine testimony.

Does the Scripture afford us no example of both these characters? Who more religious, more strict, scrupulous, and orthodox than the Pharisee of old? He sat in Moses' seat, as the teacher of the people; he tithed his mint, anise, and cummin with the most scrupulous care; he strained his very drink, that no gnat or unclean worm might unawares pollute him; he prayed and fasted rigidly and regularly; and seemed to himself and to others the prime favorite of heaven. But what was he really and truly? What was he in the sight of God? According to the Lord's own testimony, a hypocrite, a viper, a whited sepulcher, ripening himself for the damnation of hell! And was there no Saul among the prophets? no Zedekiah, the son of Chenaanah, with a "Thus says the Lord" in his mouth? (2 Chron. 18:10.) no Hananiah, with a declared message from God? (Jer. 28:2.) Did not these men come with a profession of the truth, and claim to be servants of the Most High?

And was there no Demas, nor Diotrephes, nor Alexander in the New Testament? Who were those against whom holy John, fervent Jude, and earnest Peter warned the churches so strongly? Who were those "spots in their feasts of charity, feeding themselves without fear?" Who were those "clouds without water, carried about with winds;" those "trees whose fruit withered, twice dead, plucked up by the roots?"--who else but graceless professors of the truth? It is not then, the form, the letter, the mere outside, the bare shell and husk of truth, that makes or manifests the Christian; but the vital possession of it as a divinely bestowed gift and treasure.

But bearing this in mind as a solemn warning against trifling with the truth of God, or being satisfied with a mere formal recognition of it, let us proceed to see what a blessing truth is when we are put into the vital possession of it.

If we look at the work of the Spirit on the heart, we shall see how, in all his sacred dealings and gracious movements, he invariably employs truth as his grand instrument. Does he pierce and wound? It is by the truth; for the "sword of the Spirit is the word of God," and that we know is "the word of truth." (Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12; 2 Cor. 6:7.) If he mercifully heal, if he kindly bless, it is still by means of truth; for the promise is, "Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth." And when he thus comes, it is as a Comforter, according to those gracious words, "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceeds from the Father, he shall testify of me."

In fact, if we look at the new man of grace that the blessed Spirit begets and brings forth in the heart, we shall see that all his members and faculties are formed and adapted to a living reception of the truth. As the eye is adapted to light; as the ear to sound; as the lungs to the pure air that fills them with every breath; as the heart to the vital blood which it propels through every bounding artery, so is the new man of grace fitted and adapted to the truth of God. And as these vital organs perform their peculiar functions only as they receive the impressions which these external agents produce upon them, so the organs of the new man of grace only act as truth is impressed upon them by the power of the blessed Spirit. Has, then, the new man of grace eyes? It is to see the truth. (Eph. 1:18, 19.) Has he ears? It is to hear the truth. (Isa. 55:3; Luke 9:44.) Has he hands? It is to lay hold of and embrace the truth. (Prov. 4:13; Isa. 27:5; Heb. 6:18.) Has he feet? It is that he may walk in the truth. (Psalm 119:45; Luke 1:6; 3 John 4.) Has he a mouth? ("Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.") It is that he may feed upon the truth, the living truth, yes, upon His flesh who is truth itself. (John 6:35; 14:6.)

Without truth there is no regeneration; for it is by "the word of truth "that we are begotten and born again. (James 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23.) Without truth there is no justification; for we are justified by faith, which faith consists in crediting God's truth, and so, gives peace with God. (Rom. 4:20-24; 5:1.) Without the truth there is no sanctification; for the Lord himself says, "Sanctify them through your truth: your word is truth." And without the truth there is no salvation; for "God has chosen us to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." (2 Thess. 2:13.)

And as the truth is the instrumental cause of all these blessings, the divinely-appointed means whereby they become manifested mercies, so truth enters into and is received by all the graces of the Spirit as they come forth into living exercise. Thus, without the truth, there is no faith; for the work of faith is to believe the truth. What is all the difference between faith and delusion? That faith believes God's truth, and delusion credits Satan's lies. "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." Without truth there is no hope; for the province of hope is to anchor in the truth. "That by two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us; which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters into that within the veil." The two immutable things in which hope anchors are God's word and God's wrath; in other words, the pledged veracity and faithfulness of him who cannot lie. This made holy David say, "I have hoped in your word." "They that go down into the pit," said good King Hezekiah, "cannot hope for your truth." No! it is "the living, the living who praise you as I do this day." And it is "through patience and comfort of the Scriptures," that is, the consolation which the truth of God revealed in the Scriptures affords, "that we have hope." (Rom. 15:4.) Without truth there is no love, for it is by "the love of the truth" that the saved are distinguished from the lost. "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved." And it is only as we speak "the truth in love that we grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ." Thus "the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;" and this is the Person of the Son of God, for "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

How holy men of old sighed and cried for an experimental knowledge of God's truth! "Lead me in your truth;" "Send out your light and your truth;" "O prepare mercy and truth which may preserve me." And when the Son of God came in the flesh, and thus brought down truth into visible manifestation, how those who were born of God beheld his glory, "the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth!" How dear also to God himself in his truth! Thus he is said to have "magnified his word above all his name;" that is, exalted and glorified his revealed truth above all his other attributes and perfections. Now, if truth be so precious in itself, so precious to God, so precious to all the saints of God, should it not be also precious to us? It will be so if we have the mind of Christ, and his Spirit dwell in us. But as a love of holiness necessarily includes as well as implies a hatred of, and a fleeing from sin, so will a love of truth contain in it a hatred of, and a fleeing from, error. Indifference never yet was counted a mark of love, whether human or divine. Warmth, zeal, earnestness, devotedness, are not only sure marks of love, but are so intimately interwoven with its very essence, that they cannot be separated from it.

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