

YOU WILL
RECEIVE
POWER

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WILLIAM LAW



WHITAKER
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All Scripture quotations are taken from the King James Version of the Holy Bible.

YOU WILL RECEIVE POWER

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CONTENTS

1. The Spirit of True Religion.....	7
2. The Inspiration of the Spirit	15
3. God within Us.....	26
4. Entire Dependence upon the Spirit	35
5. Reason and Religion	45
6. The Light of the Spirit	55
7. Denying Oneself before God.....	66
8. The Keys to Knowing God	77
9. The One Essential Thing.....	88
10. The New Birth and the Church	101
11. The Spirit of God and the Spirit of This World	113
12. The Inward and Outward Churches.....	123
13. Christian Ministry.....	132
14. How to Be in the Truth.....	141
15. Returning to God.....	155
16. Regaining Our Original Holiness.....	165
About the Author.....	172

1

THE SPIRIT OF TRUE RELIGION

I can think of one thing that is a common concern among all Christians and that should be carefully examined by them. I am sure that if it were either neglected, overlooked, or mistaken by them, there would be some sad consequences. This is something that is essential to Christian salvation. I use the words *essential to salvation* because I would not turn my own thoughts, or call the attention of Christians, to anything but the one necessary and essential thing. It is only available as we rise out of our fallen state and become, as we were at our creation, the holy offspring of God and the real partakers of the divine nature.

What is this one thing? It is the renewal of the original life and power of the Spirit of God in us. Nothing else is needed by us, nothing else is intended for us, either by the Law, the Prophets, or the

Gospel. Nothing else can make sinful man become a godly creature again. Everything else, no matter what it is—however glorious and divine in outward appearance—is dead and helpless unless it has the Spirit of God breathing and living in it. All Scripture bears full witness to this truth. No angel, no person, no church, no reformation can do anything for us without the Spirit of God.

Everything written in the Bible was written only to call us back from the spirit of Satan, the flesh, and the world, to be again fully dependent upon and obedient to the Spirit of God. Out of love and thirst for our souls, the Holy Spirit seeks to have His original power of life in us. When this is done, all that the Scriptures can do for us is also done.

Read whatever doctrine of Scripture you will, and it will leave you as poor and empty and unreformed as it found you, unless it has turned you wholly and solely to the Spirit of God. Delight in whatever passage of Scripture you can find, and your delight will be nothing unless it has strengthened your union with and dependence upon Him. For when delight in matters of Scripture is a delight that is merely human, it is only the self-love of fallen man. It can have no better nature than this until it proceeds from the inspiration of God, awakening His own life and nature within us, which alone can bring forth a godly love in us.

Because it is an immutable truth that “*no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost*” (1 Corinthians 12:3), it must be an equally immutable truth that no one can have a Christlike mind or the power of goodness unless he is led and governed by the Holy Spirit. Allow me to explain what I mean by this.

Goodness Is in God Alone

All possible goodness, whether named or nameless, was in God from all eternity. Therefore, for all eternity it must be inseparable

from Him; it can be nowhere but where God is. Before God created anything, there was only One who was good. Likewise, even after God created the innumerable hosts of blessed and holy and heavenly beings, there was and still is only One who is good, and He is God. (See Matthew 19:17.)

All that can be called goodness, holiness, or heavenly inclinations in us is not our own, nor can it be considered the result of any of our own powers. Rather, all that is called divine goodness and virtue in us is nothing but the goodness of God manifesting itself according to how our created nature is able to receive it. This is the unalterable relationship between the Creator and the creature. Forever and ever, goodness can only belong to God. It is as essential to Him and inseparable from Him as His own unity.

God could not make the creature to be great and glorious in itself; this is as impossible as it would be for God to create beings who are not dependent upon Him. “*The heavens,*” said David, “*declare the glory of God*” (Psalm 19:1), and no creature can declare any other glory but that of God. If we wish to say that a divine or heavenly creature shows forth its own natural power, it might as well be said that the earth shows forth its own handiwork. (See Psalm 19:1.)

True Religion Depends upon God

However, all that is divine, great, and glorious in us is only a reflection of the greatness, glory, majesty, and blessedness of God dwelling in us and giving forth His own triune life, light, and love. As much as we are able to receive these things, we may infallibly see the true ground and nature of all true faith, including when and how we may fulfill all our duties to God. Man’s true religion is in rendering to God all that is God’s, and in continually acknowledging that everything he is, has, and enjoys is from God.

This is the one true religion of all intelligent beings, whether in heaven or on earth, for they all have the same relationship to God. Although the various members of God's creation are different in many ways, the same standard of behavior toward God is required of them all. What is this one relationship that is the ground of all true religion and is the same between God and all intelligent creatures? It is a total and unalterable dependence upon God; it is continually receiving directly from God every kind and degree of goodness, blessing, and happiness that ever could be found.

The highest angel has nothing of its own that it can offer to God—no more light, love, purity, perfection, or glorious hallelujahs that spring from itself or its own powers, than the poorest creature upon earth. If this angel were to claim that a spark of wisdom, goodness, or excellence came from or belonged to itself, its place in heaven would be lost as surely as Lucifer lost his.

But the angels are ever abiding flames of pure love, always ascending up to and uniting with God, because the wisdom, power, glory, majesty, love, and goodness of God alone are all that they see and know. Songs of praise to their heavenly Father are their ravishing delight, because they know and feel that the breath and Spirit of their heavenly Father sings and rejoices in them. Their adoration never ceases because they never cease to acknowledge the *all* of God—the entirety of God in the whole creation. This is the one religion of heaven, and nothing else is the truth of religion on earth.

The Power and Presence of God

The matter is really very simple. The benefit that we receive from faith is the power and presence of God living and working in our beings. Because this is the unchangeable blessedness that may be gained from faith in God, we must receive all our religious

goodness wholly and solely from God's direct operation in our hearts. No one can possibly have more of what is good and blessed in religion by any use of his own natural powers. This is because the creature cannot take God's blessings by its own power any more after its creation than it could before it was created.

If truth forces us to believe that the natural powers of created man could only come from the power of God, the same truth should surely force us to confess that we can only be comforted, enlightened, and blessed by the things in which God operates directly. Peace, joy, goodness, and rest can be had in no other way, nor by any other thing, than in and by God.

God's Creatures Seek Him

We often hear it said that religion does a glorious work in the heart of man. But if the work is not begun, continued, and completed by the living operation of God in man, it can have no truth, goodness, or divine blessing in it. Why? Because nothing can truly seek God except that which comes from God. Nothing can truly find God as its good except that which has the nature of God living in it. Therefore, we cannot perform any religious service with any truth, goodness, or blessing in it unless we do so by the divine nature that lives and breathes in us.

All true religion is, or brings forth, an essential union and communion of the spirit of the creature with the Spirit of the Creator. God in us, and we in God—one life, one light, one love. The Spirit of God first sows the seed of divine union in the soul of a man. Then, afterward, faith revives the seed, raises it up, and brings it forth to a fullness of life in God.

Allow me to illustrate this further. The beginning of life for an animal must first come from the breath of this world. As long as the animal is alive, it maintains an essential union with the breath

of this world. In a similar manner, divine faith, hope, love, and willing submission to God are the breath of the religious life. As long as they are genuine, they unite God and the creature in the same living and essential manner as the breath of an animal unites it with the breath of this world.

Now, no animal could begin to breathe with the breath of this world unless its breath came from the air of this world. Likewise, no creature—whether angel or man—could begin to be religious or breathe forth faith, love, and a desire for God, unless a living seed of these divine virtues was first brought forth in him by the Spirit of God. Remember, a tree or plant can only grow and bear fruit by the same power that first gave birth to the seed. In the same way, faith, hope, and love for God can only grow and bear fruit by the power that first planted the seed of them in the soul.

The Holy Spirit plants the seeds of divine faith, hope, and love in the soul, but He also continually waters and cares for them. Such inspiration is vital to the continuance of a truly godly life. Therefore, divine inspiration is inseparable from true religion. If you were to take away inspiration, or if it were to cease, then no religious acts or feelings would give forth anything that is godly or divine. Created beings can offer nothing to God in return except what they have first received from Him. Therefore, if we are to offer to God all our divine inclinations and aspirations, we must have the divine and godly nature living and breathing in us.

Can anything reflect light before it has received light? Or can any other light be reflected than that which is received? Can any creature experience earthly emotions before it has an earthly nature? This is as likely as someone experiencing divine affections before partaking of the divine nature. It simply cannot be done!

Selfish and Vain Religion

A religious faith that is uninspired—a hope or love that does not proceed from the direct working of the divine nature within us—can do no more divine good to our souls and can no more unite them with the goodness of God, than a hunger after earthly food can feed us with the immortal Bread of Heaven. All that the natural or uninspired man does in the church has no more of the truth or power of divine worship in it than that which he does in the field or the shop through a desire for more money.

This is because all the acts of natural man, whether relating to matters of religion or to the world, are equally selfish, and there is no possibility of their being otherwise. Self-love, self-esteem, self-seeking, and living wholly to oneself are all that is or possibly can be in the natural man. Man cannot be any better, nor can he act any higher above this nature, than any beast. No creature can be in a better or higher state than this until something supernatural is found in it, and this supernatural something is called the Word or Spirit or Inspiration of God. This alone can give man the first good thought about God. The Holy Spirit of God is the only force that can cause man to have more heavenly desires than fleshly ones.

A religion that is not wholly built upon this supernatural ground, but instead stands solely upon the powers, reasonings, and conclusions of the natural, uninspired man, does not have even a hint of true religion in it. Instead, it is nothing, in the same sense that an idol is nothing because it has none of what it is alleged to have. Along the same lines, the work of religion has no divine good in it until it brings forth and keeps up an essential union of the spirit of man with the Spirit of God. This essential union cannot be formed unless there is love on both sides. More explicitly, it is not merely love, but it is love that has the same divine nature on both sides.

Love Brought to Us by the Spirit

No one, therefore, can reach God with his love or have union with Him by it besides the person who is inspired by the one Spirit of love—the Spirit with which God loved Himself from all eternity, before there were any created beings. Infinite hosts of newly created heavenly beings could not begin any new kind of love for God, nor could they begin to love Him at all if His own Holy Spirit of love had not been brought to life in them.

This love, with which God loved Himself from all eternity and which was then in God alone, is the only love in us that can draw us to God. We can have no power to cleave to Him, to will what He wills, or to adore the divine nature, except by partaking of that eternal Spirit of love.

Therefore, the continual, direct inspiration or operation of the Holy Spirit is the only possible ground for our continual love for God. Concerning this inspired love, and no other, John said, “*He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God*” (1 John 4:16). If it were any other love, brought forth by any other thing but the Spirit of God breathing His own love in us, then John’s words cannot be true. But we know that “*every word of God is pure*” (Proverbs 30:5) and that His “*word is truth*” (John 17:17).