

Grieve Not the Holy Spirit

Daily my heart is cleaving more closely to Christ and getting more detached from earthly objects. The weaning process is going on. I find the closer I get to the heart of Infinite Love—the nearer to the Son of Righteousness—the more sensitively do I feel, to my heart's deepest core, everything that is contrary in spirit, word or action to the law of love.

If we do, indeed, get nearer to the Son of Righteousness, we cannot help but see with greater vividness everything that is unrighteous and unlovely. And then the sight of the eyes will affect the heart.

What must the sufferings of the Savior have been during His sojourn on earth! How continuously must His gentle, pure spirit have been lacerated! I have seldom had such a perception of what the keenness of His sufferings must have been, as since I have been pursuing the above train of thought. It appears as though His entire stay on earth, from childhood to His expiring groan on the cross, must have been one continuous crucifixion.

So it is for us when we are one with Him. But others do not always perceive or understand our heightened sensitivity.

“Do you feel such things?” someone once asked me, after having been the means of subjecting me to a humiliation which, had it not been for its religious association, would have branded him as exceedingly uncourteous. From his manner in proposing this inquiry, I presume he thought my professions of deadness to the world involved a deadness of all the finer sensibilities of the soul.

His misperception may have been based on his observation of the way those who are truly sanctified in body, soul and spirit endure woundings of the spirit—with a lamb-like,

uncomplaining temper. They receive with only slight outward manifestations of pain things that before would have been avenged or in some way resented. In imitation of their divine Redeemer, they, "as a sheep dumb before her shearers," open not their mouths.

But if this silent submission has been regarded as an intimation that the uncomplaining one does not feel or has not been wounded—how greatly the reverse is the fact!

He *has* been wounded, and far more deeply wounded than your oft-blunted sensibilities can imagine. He retires noiselessly because He whom he serves has said, "The servant of the Lord must not strive."

God Will Avenge

You may never again on earth hear about your unloving words and actions, but are they untold? It is true they may never be breathed in mortal ear, but shall they remain unrevealed? No! "Their angels do always behold the face of My Father" (Matt. 18:10, KJV).

An unseen messenger was standing by, and, as you gave the causeless offense, that winged messenger went with speed and told it directly to the ear of God. And will the triune God hear it, and take cognizance of the act? Yes! And He will avenge. True as God is true, retribution awaits you.

"Vengeance is mine," saith the Lord (Rom. 12:19). "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matt. 18:6).

It is a meek and quiet spirit with whom you have contended, and since God gave that spirit it is of great price in His sight. It ought to have been of great price in your sight as well.

Do you persecute Christ?

Christ's persecutors are not always those who are of the world.

Perhaps you are an erring child of God. Your wife, your husband, your child, your brother or sister, or perchance some friend with whom you have been closely affiliated has entered into the enjoyment of perfect love. You have witnessed his increasing deadness to the world. Things that, at one time, he could enjoy in common with yourself, now pain his heart, while from the depths of his soul, he cries out to God, "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity" (Ps. 119:37).

Following Christ, the Light of Life, his soul is becoming more and more conformed to His image. He loves the things God loves and hates the things He hates.

How uneasy these marked preferences have made you! Because you cannot get him to see as you see and do as you do, with how many unkind allusions have you pained the loving heart of that gentle one, whom, in defiance of yourself, you cannot help but love and admire!

Conscience tells you that you are wrong, and you know it. Still you persist. Your opposition, perhaps, may be merely fitful—yet you continue to oppose, and as the occasion arises, you infer, by your unloving allusions and by silent action and innuendo, that you *intend* to offend that gentle, loving heart, whose every pulsation is in unison with God for your good.

O, do so no more, not only because "their angels do always behold the face of their Father," but because you are sinning against your own soul's best interest! God is love. Every unloving look, word or action is an abhorrence to Him.

"By the love of the Spirit," I beseech you, "grieve not the Spirit" (see Eph. 4:30). Would a dear friend, however intent on your good, abide with you, if the feelings of his sensitive

heart were continually being attacked by oft-repeated assaults? So the Spirit will not always strive.

Recognize that you are in danger. Seven other spirits worse than the first may enter. And what will you do, should that fearful hour come upon you without the aid of the Spirit whom you have grieved away? Let him that standeth take heed lest he fall.

Be assured, by one who knows, that the restiveness you feel when the stricter forms of piety are presented before you is most evidently indicative of the remains of the carnal mind. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit" (Gal. 5:17).

If you yield to it, you sin against God. For in sinning against His people, you sin against Christ as though He were here in person. By the light of a truly Christian example, you have been reproved. Acknowledge your error, and seek a holy heart.

Phoebe Palmer (1807-1874) was a forerunner of both the Holiness and the Pentecostal/charismatic movements. This selection is adapted from Incidental Illustrations of the Economy of Salvation by Phoebe Palmer. Published by Henry V. Degen, Boston, 1855.