

Concluding Exhortations and Commandments (4): “Quench not the Spirit”

Introduction:

In the concluding section of 1 Thessalonians, there are a series of exhortations and commandments. Some of them are rather tersely stated, but have far-reaching implications and application. It is so with verse 19, which will (begin to?) address today. This is the twelfth directive the Lord has given to us in this passage, which reads,

12. “Do not quench the Spirit”

We will consider this command by first addressing the object of the command, that being “the Spirit.” Then secondly we will understand what is meant by the expression, “do not quench” the Spirit. We will conclude with several practical words of instruction in keeping this commandment.

I. “Do not quench *the Spirit*.”

Of course the apostle intended by the word, “Spirit”, to mean the Holy Spirit. Now I thought that it would be good for us due to the mention of the Holy Spirit in our text, that we take some time to give special attention to this third person of the Blessed Holy Trinity. This would be good for us for we probably do not give direct attention to Him, as we should.

Who is the Holy Spirit? He is the third Person of the Holy Trinity. This has been held and promoted as we understand the matter today, since the earliest days of the Christian era. The ancient Apostles’ Creed, dating to the fourth century AD states the matter:

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth...
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
Whom did the Holy Spirit conceive...
I believe in the Holy Spirit,

The Holy Spirit is “of one substance, power, and eternity” with God the Father and God the Son. There is but one God, whose essence is “undivided.” All three persons of the Holy Trinity are “infinite, without beginning, therefore but one God, who is not to be divided in nature and being.” The Holy Spirit, therefore, should be the object of our faith and worship. We should render to Him that which we owe and offer to our God, for He is God.

In the Holy Scriptures the Holy Spirit is normally mentioned in the third place when all three persons of the Trinity are mentioned. And so, usually it is God the Father first, followed by God the Son, and then the Holy Spirit. Our Lord Jesus first spoke of Him in terms that set forth our Christian understanding of the Holy Spirit as the third person in the Blessed Holy Trinity. The words of our Lord are recorded in this way:

“Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but *the blasphemy against the Spirit* will not be forgiven men. ³²Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.” (Matt 12:31f)

Blasphemy is a crime that can only be committed against God. I cannot blaspheme you; you cannot blaspheme me. Only God can be blasphemed. Here, the Lord Jesus speaks of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit is God.

A. The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament

Christians who have been informed by New Testament revelation may see the person of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. The Holy Spirit is mentioned throughout both Testaments, going back as far as the second verse of the Holy Bible:

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ²The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And *the Spirit of God* was hovering over the face of the waters. (Gen 1:1f)

And yet, even though the Spirit of God is mentioned here and in many other places of the Old Testament, the Jews did not view the Holy Spirit as a distinct Person of the Holy Trinity, because they did not recognize the Holy Trinity throughout their history. The Jews view the use of the term, the Holy Spirit, as referring to the power of Yahweh (i.e. Jehovah). The Holy Spirit is understood by the Jews to be a force, not a person.

Actually the words, Holy Spirit, are used only three times in the Old Testament. It is in **Psalm 51:11**, in which king David prays, “Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your *Holy Spirit* from me.” And then it is used twice more in Isaiah, both in the same context. **Isaiah 63:10** and **11** read:

¹⁰But they rebelled and grieved His *Holy Spirit*; so He turned Himself against them as an enemy, And He fought against them. ¹¹Then he remembered the days of old, Moses and his people, saying: “Where is He who brought them up out of the sea with the shepherd of His flock? Where is He who put His *Holy Spirit* within them?”

Of course the word “Spirit” is used in hundreds of places in the Old Testament, many of which, we would argue, refer to the person of the Holy Spirit. But the term, Holy Spirit, is found only in those three places.

But the Jews have never regarded the Spirit as a distinct person. Here are the comments of one Jewish source:

The “Holy Spirit” in Judaism generally refers to the divine aspect of prophecy and wisdom. It also refers to the divine force, quality, and influence of the Most High God, over the universe or over his creatures, in given contexts...

In Judaism, God is One, the idea of God as a duality or trinity among Gentiles may be *Shituf* (or “not purely monotheistic”). The term *Ruach HaKodesh* (Holy Spirit) is found frequently in Talmudic and Midrashic literature. In some cases it signifies prophetic inspiration, while in others it is used as a hypostatization or a metonym for God. The Rabbinic “Holy Spirit” has a certain degree of personification, but it remains, “a quality belonging to God, one of his attributes” and not, as in mainstream Christianity, representative of “any metaphysical divisions in the Godhead.”

In Judaism, the references to *The Spirit of God*, the Holy Spirit of YHVH, abound, however it has rejected any idea of The Eternal God as being either dual or triune.¹

The Jewish understanding of God and their failure and refusal to acknowledge or recognize the Holy Spirit as a person, should influence how Christians regard the Jewish religion. There are efforts among Christians today to have “fellowship” with Jews over the common belief in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But we need to remember they are not Trinitarian and the Lord Jesus Himself declared that if you fail to honor the Son, you do not honor the Father (John 5:23). A Trinitarian understanding of the godhead is essential for any true fellowship between people of faith.

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holy_Spirit_%28Judaism%29

We are to give equal regard to each of the persons of the Holy Trinity, including the Holy Spirit. Here are the words of **Thomas Watson** from his book, *A Body of Divinity*. And I find myself always referring to it, for I find it such a rich resource. He wrote concerning this matter:

If there be one God subsisting in three persons, then let us give equal reverence to all the persons in the Trinity. There is not more or less in the Trinity; the Father is not more God than the Son and Holy Ghost. There is an order in the Godhead, but no degrees; one person has not a majority or supereminence above another, therefore we must give equal worship to all the persons. “That all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father” (John 5:23). Adore Unity in Trinity.

And then he wrote with respect to obedience to God:

Obey all the persons in the blessed Trinity; for all of them are God. Obey God the Father. Christ himself, as man, obeyed God the Father, John 4:34, much more must we. Deut. 27:10.

Obey God the Son. “Kiss the Son, lest he be angry”, Psa. 2:12. Kiss him with a kiss of obedience. Christ's commands are not grievous, 1 John 5:3. Whatever he commands is for our interest and benefit. Oh then kiss the Son! Why do the elders throw down their crowns at the feet of Christ, and fall down before the Lamb? Rev. 4:10, 11. To testify their subjection, and to profess their readiness to serve and obey him.

Obey God the Holy Ghost. Our souls are breathed into us by the glorious Spirit. “The Spirit of God has made me”, Job 33:4. Our souls are adorned by the blessed Spirit. Every grace is a divine spark lighted in the soul by the Holy Ghost. Nay, more, the Spirit of God sanctified Christ's human nature; he united it with the divine, and fitted the man Christ to be our Mediator. Well then does this third person in the Trinity, the Holy Ghost, deserve to be obeyed; for he is God, and this tribute of homage and obedience is due to him from us.

Amen to those words of **Thomas Watson**.

Now let us consider the following conclusions that we may draw from Scripture regarding the Holy Spirit: that *the Holy Spirit is a person* is amply clear from Scripture. Some, like the Jehovah Witnesses, believe the Holy Spirit to be merely the force or power of God, just as the Jewish religion teaches. But there are attributes of personhood attributed to the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures. The Holy Spirit *speaks* (Mark 11:13; Acts 13:2; 21:11; 1 Tim. 4:1; Heb. 3:7; 10:15). The Holy Spirit *reveals* (Luke 2:26 and 1 Peter 1:11). The Holy Spirit *guides* into all truth (John 16:13). He *teaches* (Luke 12:12, John 14:26). The Holy Spirit *provides comfort*, He *counsels*, *helps*, and *loves* the believer (John 14:6, 26; 15:26; 16:7; Rom. 15:30; James 4:5). The Holy Spirit *encourages* others (Acts 9:31) and *warns* people (1 Tim. 4:1). The Holy Spirit *appoints* people to spiritual office (Acts 13:2; 20:28). The Holy Spirit *may be grieved* (Isa. 63:10; Eph. 4:30). He *may be lied* to (Acts 5:3). The Holy Spirit may be *resisted* (Acts 7:31) and He may even be *blasphemed* as we read in our Lord's words in Matthew 12:31 and 32.

Other personal qualities are ascribed to the Holy Spirit. He has *understanding* or *wisdom*. He exercises His *will*. He exercises *power*. We see these attributes or qualities of the Holy Spirit in a number of places (Cf. Isa. 11:2; 1 Cor. 2:10-11; John 3:8; Micah 3:8, Acts 10:38; Rom. 15:13; Eph. 3:16). We could multiply the scriptural evidence of these things.

On occasion when the Holy Spirit was speaking, He used personal pronouns to describe Himself, thereby showing His personhood. We read in Acts 10:19-20:

“While Peter thought about the vision, *the Spirit said to him*, ‘Behold, three men are seeking you. Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting nothing; for *I* have sent them.’”

And so He uses the first person singular pronoun to describe Himself; only a person can do that. And then in Acts 13:2 we read of the Holy Spirit calling and separating Christian missionaries to their work. “As they

ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate *to Me* Barnabas and Saul for the work to which *I have called them*." Again, we see the personhood, the personality, by the use of that first person singular pronoun.

That *the Holy Spirit is God* is also amply clear from Scripture, not only is He a person, but He is God. There are a number of ways we can show forth the divinity of the Holy Spirit. First, consider the many names of the Holy Spirit that closely associate, we would say, identify the Holy Spirit with God: He is the Old Testament identified as:

- "Spirit of God" (Gen. 1:2, *et. al.*)
- "the Spirit of Yahweh" (we generally use the English word, Jehovah) (Judges 3:10 *et. al.*),
- "The Spirit of the Lord God" (Isa. 61:1)
- God's "good Spirit" (Neh. 9:20)
- God's "Holy Spirit" (Psa. 51:11)
- Yahweh's "Holy Spirit" (Isa. 63:10f)
- "the Spirit of wisdom and understanding" (Isa. 11:2)
- "the Spirit of counsel and of power" (Isa. 11:2)
- "the Spirit of the knowledge and of the fear of the Lord" (Isa. 11:2)
- "the Spirit of grace and supplication" (Zech. 12:10)

When we turn to the New Testament, we see the Holy Spirit called by a variety of names, again, all associating the Holy Spirit with God Himself.

- "the Spirit of God" (Matt. 3:16 *et. al.*)
- "the Spirit of the Living God" (2 Cor. 3:3)
- "the seven-fold Spirit of God" (Rev. 1:4; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6)
- "the Spirit of your Father" (Matt. 10:20)
- "the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead" (Rom. 8:11)
- "the Spirit of His Son" (Gal. 4:6)
- "the Spirit of Christ" (Rom. 8:9; 1 Pet. 1:11);
- "the Spirit of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:19)
- "the Holy Spirit" (Luke 11:13);
- "the Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. 1:13);
- "the eternal Spirit" (Heb. 9:14);
- "the Spirit of truth" (John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13)
- "the Spirit of sonship (or adoption)" (Rom. 8:15)
- "the Spirit of life" (Rev. 11:11)
- "The Spirit of grace" (Heb. 10:29)
- "the Spirit of wisdom and revelation" (Eph. 1:17)
- "the Spirit of the glory and of God" (1 Pet. 4:4)
- "the Counsellor [or Comforter]" (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7). (Of course the Lord Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as another Comforter, one like unto Himself.)

All of these descriptions and titles so associate the Holy Spirit with God or the attributes of God that one would conclude that they are strong evidence of the deity of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is set alongside God the Father and God the Son in a manner that shows His separateness from them as a person, but His equality with them in the one essence of the godhead. And so, He is indeed God. And so, we might site these verses:

Matthew 3:16. "When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him."

1 Corinthians 12:4. “There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. ⁶And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all.”

It seems there the Trinity is expressed all with view to the spiritual gifts given to Christians. “Diversities” attributed to the Spirit, the “differences” of outworkings, attributed to the Lord Jesus, and then activities themselves, God the Father working all in all.

2 Corinthians 13:14. “The grace of the *Lord Jesus Christ*, and the love of *God* (i.e. Father), and the communion of the *Holy Spirit* be with you all. Amen.”

Ephesians 2:18. “For through *Him* (Jesus) we both have access by one *Spirit* to the *Father*.”

Ephesians 4:4-6. “There is one body and one *Spirit*, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; ⁵one *Lord*, one faith, one baptism; ⁶*one God and Father* of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”

1 Peter 1:2. “Elect according to the foreknowledge of *God the Father*, in sanctification of *the Spirit*, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of *Jesus Christ*: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.”

Perhaps one of the clearest statements in Scripture of both the personhood and the divinity of the Holy Spirit is the baptismal formula that the Lord Jesus declared should be observed when baptizing disciples. The Lord Jesus speaks of the Holy Spirit as placed into the singular “name” of God. We read:

Matthew 28:19. “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name (singular name, not names) of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” There we see the personhood of the Holy Spirit, alongside the Father and the Son, and we see an equality of the persons within the godhead.

In addition, when the Holy Spirit is described in the Bible, He is shown to have attributes that can only belong to God. We read that:

(1) The Holy Spirit is *eternal* in these verses:

Hebrews 9:14. “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through *the eternal Spirit* offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”

John 14:16. “And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you *forever*”

(2) The Holy Spirit is *omnipresent* as seen in:

Psalms 139:7-10. “Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? ⁸If I ascend into heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in hell (Sheol), behold, You are there. ⁹If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, ¹⁰even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me.”

(3) The Holy Spirit is *omnipotent*, all-powerful, as revealed in these passages:

Psalms 104:30. “You (God) send forth Your Spirit, they are created; and You renew the face of the earth.” The Holy Spirit is doing the creating, as sent forth by God.

Romans 15:19. “In mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.” The power of the Holy Spirit is taking salvation to the peoples of the world.

(4) And then we see that the Holy Spirit is *omniscient*, that is, all-knowing, as taught in:

Isaiah 40:13f. “Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD, Or *as* His counsellor has taught Him? ¹⁴With whom did He take counsel, and who instructed Him, and taught Him in the path of justice? Who taught Him knowledge, and showed Him the way of understanding?” The rhetorical questions demand the answer, “No one.” Why? Because the Holy Spirit is omniscient-- all knowing.

1 Corinthians 2:10f. “But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. ¹¹For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.” How can that be? He is omniscient.

(5) Lastly, we see the Holy Spirit as *sovereign* in His authority in:

John 3:8. “The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.” And so, we see the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit in bringing about the new birth in the people whom the Father has chosen to be recipients of salvation.

And so, these attributes of His eternal nature, His omnipresence, omnipotence, omniscience, and sovereignty, are those that can only belong to God. The Holy Spirit is God.

But perhaps one of the clearest and most certain assertions of the Holy Scriptures is in the book of Acts. Peter directly identified the Holy Spirit as God when he confronted Ananias and his wife, Sapphira, for lying to the Holy Spirit. We read in Acts 5:1-5:

“But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession. ²And he kept back part of the proceeds, his wife also being aware of it, and brought a certain part and laid it at the apostles’ feet. ³But Peter said, ‘Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to *the Holy Spirit* and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? ⁴While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? *You have not lied to men but to God.*’ ⁵Then Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last. So great fear came upon all those who heard these things.”

And so, Peter first declared that Satan had filled his heart to lie to the Holy Spirit. And then Peter said, “You have not lied to men but God.” Clearly in this context Peter was declaring that the Holy Spirit is God.

Aside from these biblical descriptions of the Holy Spirit being a divine person, the third person of the Blessed Holy Trinity, we might consider this fact: that throughout the Holy Scriptures the Holy Spirit is said to do works that can only be understood to be divine works, the work that God alone could do. And so we read, for example, that He creates, He regenerates, He resurrects, He exercises divine authority in Christ’s church, He affected Mary’s virginal conception, He inspired the Scriptures, He convicts the world of sin, He invites men to come to Christ, He comes upon and indwells believers, He does works of righteousness, He induces believers in their perceptions of who Jesus is, He produces holy fruit in the believer. These are works of God and God alone. And so we see, the Holy Spirit being the blessed third person of the Holy Trinity.

Let us next consider the command:

II. “Do not quench the Spirit.”

A casual consideration of this command may lead to a wrong conclusion. Some Arminians take this verse to argue for their twisted understanding of the free will of man. They say that this verse supports their view that man’s “free” will is able to thwart the purposes of God. “Man is able to ‘quench the Spirit;’ although the Holy Spirit desires to bless people, they can prevent Him from doing so.” But this is a wrong conclusion of what this verse teaches or suggests. The Holy Spirit is God, therefore, everything that is said in the Scriptures with respect to the deity, is true of Him. His power is unabated. His purposes cannot be thwarted.

His dominion is an everlasting dominion,
And His kingdom is from generation to generation.
All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing;
He does according to His will in the army of heaven
And among the inhabitants of the earth.
No one can restrain His hand
Or say to Him, “What have You done?” (Dan. 4:34f)

And so, when we are commanded, “Do not quench the Spirit,” it does not imply that we can overcome the will of the Spirit, that our ability is able to over frustrate God’s ability.

We might further say that when we are commanded, “Do not quench the Spirit”, it is not that we can “quench” the Spirit Himself, but rather, it speaks of our ability to forfeit the grace that the Holy Spirit gives to people. To “quench” suggests the idea of extinguishing a fire. The Greek word is used elsewhere as putting out fire. Positively it is said of our ability to withstand the devil. Paul wrote,

Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness,¹⁵ and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;¹⁶ above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to **quench** all the **fiery** darts of the wicked one. (Eph. 6:14-16).

This same idea to “quench” is used negatively with respect to our Lord Jesus. It is said of Him,

“Behold! My Servant whom I have chosen,
My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased!
I will put My Spirit upon Him,
And He will declare justice to the Gentiles.
¹⁹He will not quarrel nor cry out,
Nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets.
²⁰A bruised reed He will not break,
And **smoking flax He will not quench**,
Till He sends forth justice to victory;
²¹And in His name Gentiles will trust.” (Matt. 12:18-21, quoting Isa. 42:1ff)

In our text, which reads, “Do not quench the Spirit”, it prohibits us from putting out the “fire” that the Holy Spirit imparts to people.

The ministry of the Holy Spirit is frequently associated with fire. At the onset of the ministry of our Lord Jesus, John the Baptist said of Him, “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. **He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire**” (Mat 3:11). When the risen and enthroned King Jesus poured out the Holy Spirit upon His people on the Day of Pentecost, we read,

“When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. ²And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house

where they were sitting. ³*Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them.* ⁴And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Acts 2:1ff)

Fire is a metaphor of the gifts of grace that the Holy Spirit gives to people. With fire there is light and heat. The Holy Spirit ignites the light of knowledge of the Lord's will and ways. The Holy Spirit enflames the devotion and commitment of His people to do great exploits. **John Gill** (1697-1771) expressed well the meaning of "Do not quench the Spirit":

By which is meant, not the person of the Spirit, but either the graces of the spirit, which may be compared to light, and fire, and heat, to which the allusion is in the text; such as faith, which is a light in the soul, a seeing of the Son, and an evidence of things not seen; and love, which gives a vehement flame, which many waters cannot quench; and zeal, which is the boiling up of love, the fervency of it; and spiritual knowledge, which is also light, and of an increasing nature, and are all graces of the spirit: and though these cannot be totally extinguished, and utterly put out and lost, yet they may be greatly damped; the light of faith may become dim; and the flame of love be abated, and that wax cold; the heat of zeal may pass into lukewarmness, and an indifference of spirit; and the light of knowledge seem to decline instead of increasing; and all through indulging some sin or sins, by keeping ill company, and by neglecting the ordinances of God, prayer, preaching, and other institutions of the Gospel; wherefore such an exhortation is necessary to quicken saints, and stir them up to the use of those means, whereby those graces are cherished and preserved in their lively exercise; though rather the gifts of the Spirit are intended.

Matthew Henry (1662-1714) put it this way:

As fire is put out by withdrawing fuel, so we quench the Spirit if we do not stir up our spirits, and all that is within us, to comply with the motions of the good Spirit; and as fire is quenched by pouring water, or putting a great quantity of dirt upon it, so we must be careful not to quench the Holy Spirit by indulging carnal lusts and affections, or minding only earthly things.

There was an 18th century pastor in Scotland named **Thomas Boston** (1676-1732). He gave a very thorough exposition of this verse and set forth its implications.² Here is a summary of some of what he presented:

I. To give some distinctions of quenching the Spirit.

1. There is a total and a partial quenching of the Spirit. A total quenching is when the Spirit is quite extinguished, his motions and impressions on the soul quite erased so as there remains not one spark among the ashes. Thus King Saul and other graceless men (i.e. those without saving grace) have quenched the Spirit, and this ends in giving them up to the lusts of their own hearts. "My Spirit will not always strive with the men" (Gen. 6:3).

A partial quenching is, when the Spirit is weakened, the force and vigour of his motions and impressions abated, and the fire brought to a very spark. Thus the godly can be guilty of quenching the Spirit.

2. There is a wilful and a weak quenching of the Spirit. The wilful quenching is when men resolutely set themselves to put out the holy fire, being resolved not to part with their lusts, they go on in opposition to their light, and strangle their uneasy consciences, and murder their convictions, that they may sin without control. "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did."

² Thomas Boston, *Complete Works of Thomas Boston*, vol. 3 (Richard Owen Roberts, 1980), pp. 129-149.

A weak quenching I call that which flows rather from weakness than wickedness, rather from carelessness than design. This is called grieving of the Spirit (Eph. 6:30).

3. There is a quenching of the Spirit in ourselves, or in others. The Spirit may be quenched in ourselves by ourselves. God sometimes kindles the holy fire in our hearts, and miserable, we put it out. For though we cannot kindle, we can extinguish it. Though we cannot open the door, we can shut it.

We may quench the Spirit in others, even as one may put out a fire in another person's house. "But woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for neither do you go in yourselves, neither allow them that are entering to go in." Thus ministers can quench the Spirit in people and people in ministers ... by discouraging, vexing, and oppressing them in what is good and holy, by which means their knees are enfeebled and their hands weakened in following the Lord in the way of duty.

II. To show how the Spirit is quenched. This holy fire is quenched,

1. By doing violence to it, as when one puts his foot on the fire or casts water on it; or blows out a candle. So there is a doing violence to the Spirit, and thus the Spirit is quenched by sins of commission, especially such as are done with a high hand (i.e. intentional), and opposition to light.

2. The fire of the Spirit is quenched by the neglecting of it, as when one does not supply fuel to the fire, it will go out, though no violence is done to it. So the Spirit is quenched by neglecting his motions, not cherishing them, not walking in the light while we have it.

III. To give reasons why we should not quench the Spirit.

1. Because it is holy fire, and therefore it ought to be kept carefully, and it is dangerous to meddle with it. It is fire from heaven, not the fire of God's anger, but of his Spirit.

2. Because we can do nothing without it. "Without me", says Jesus, "you can do nothing." So far as the Spirit goes away, all true light and heat go with him, and then the soul remains as in a state of death, in darkness, cold and stiff. When the wind ceases, how can the ship sail?

3. Because when once quenched we cannot rekindle it. We have no command over the Spirit, "we cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes" (John 3:8). Were it the fire in our own hearths, though it were extinguished, we might kindle it again. But it is from heaven and we have no command there.

4. Because the quenching of this fire, is the raising of another (fire) tending to the consuming of the soul. This is a fire of corruption within us. When the Spirit departed from Saul he went to the devil. And some people never come to a height in wickedness until the Spirit of the Lord has been at work with them, and they have quenched his motions.

Question: How shall I know that the Spirit has been at work in my soul, that any of the holy fire has been kindled in my heart, that so I may know what to do? **Answer,**

1. The holy fire has light with it. Is there a new light let into your soul from the word, that is promising. But know that there are different degrees of that light. O quench not the Spirit, improve the golden spot of time and walk softly for the light is easily put out.

2. The holy fire has a burning heat with it. And this also is of different degrees. Some have the satisfaction to see the holy fire take hold of their corruptions, as that however masterful at other times, yet that fire brought them down, and made them fall to ashes. Some lusts that have long held them under they have got subdued.

With some there may be only an unusual, but weak warmth in the heart after Christ and religion. They have a desire for him. Truly this is very little, but every thing must have a beginning.

Some may find no sensible warmth in their breasts after him, but there is uneasiness in their conscience, as by a spark falling from a candle on a person's hand. They have a sort of uneasiness with respect to their soul's case, a secret dissatisfaction with their state. This is very little, but it may be the beginning of good.

Consider also, that however little it be Satan will think it worth pains to rob you of it. "When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart" (Matt. 13:19).

Finally, consider that the kingdom of God in a soul often has a very small beginning. Hence it is compared "to a grain of mustard seed, which indeed is the least of all seeds."

Exhortation: I shall show how the Spirit may be quenched by you in your own souls. There are many ways to do this. You should be aware of them all.

1. By unwatchfulness. Hence the exhortation, "Be watchful and strengthen the things that remain, that are ready to die" (Rev. 3:2). The holy fire will go out if it is not watched. A careless disposition of mind will soon make an empty soul.

2. By neglect of duties. If a man neglects the means of grace, how can he think his soul will prosper?

3. By not complying with holy motions in his heart. It is a dangerous business to sit still, when the Lord. By a secret working on the soul, may be calling one to rise.

4. Sins against light do in a special manner quench the Spirit. They waste the conscience, erase good impressions from the heart, defile the soul, and provoke the Spirit to depart.

5. Fleshly lusts have a special malignant influence this way. "Dearly beloved, I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul" (1 Pet. 2:11).

6. Inordinate care and love to the world.

7. Backsliding and returning to former sins. If men will go back to the same courses, which have before injured their souls, and will play with the serpent that has so often bit them, what can they expect but that the Spirit will be quenched.

8. Lastly, the entertaining of any one lust or idol, of jealousy will do it. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Psa. 66:18).

Exhortation: Know how we may nourish and cherish this holy fire.

1. Be diligent in duties. Let no opportunity for communion with God slip. There is the duty of Christian conversation with the brethren. There is the duty of secret prayer.

2. Watch your hearts and labour to keep up a tender frame of spirit. "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 4:23).

3. Be universally tender in your walk. One leak in a ship will sink it, and one sin indulged will ruin the soul's case.

4. Make religion (i.e. the Christian faith) your business, your main work and design in the world. "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" (Matt. 16:26).

5. Let religion (i.e. the Christian faith) be woven into the whole of your conversation in the world. “In all your ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct your paths.”

6. Beware of doing anything with a doubting conscience, doubting whether it be lawful or not.

7. Be still pressing forward in religion (i.e. the Christian faith and life). Sit not down on any measure attained, but be still labouring for more.

8. Trade with your talents, improving them for God, however few they be. If a person have but a little fire, yet if it get air and be blown up, it may make a break fire.

9. Be careful and tender of good motions. Rough handling of a spark will make it go out, when wise management would make much out of it.

10. Lastly, entertain lively hopes of increasing your stock. When the heart grows hopeless, the hands will hang down and the knees be feeble.

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to God our Savior, Who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen. (Jude 24f)
