

PRAYER: THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT



*God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son
into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.
—Galatians 4:6*

We know what "Abba, Father" meant in the mouth of Christ at Gethsemane. It was the entire surrender of Himself to death, so that the holy will of God's love in the redemption of sinners might be accomplished. In His prayer, He was ready for any sacrifice, even the yielding of His life. In that prayer, the heart of Him whose place is at the right hand of God is revealed to us, with the wonderful power of intercession that He exercises there, and the power to pour down the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit has been bestowed by the Father to breathe the very Spirit of His Son into our hearts. Our Lord desires us to yield ourselves as wholly to God as He did—to pray as He did, that God's will of love would be done on earth at any cost. As God's love is revealed in His desire for the salvation of souls, so also the desire of Jesus was made plain when He gave Himself for them. And He now asks that the same love would fill His people, too, so that they give themselves wholly to the work of intercession and, at any cost, pray down God's love upon the perishing world.

Lest anyone should begin to think that this is beyond his reach, the Holy Spirit of Jesus is actually given into our hearts so that we may pray in His likeness, in His name, and in His power. It is the man who yields himself wholly to the leading of the Holy Spirit who will feel urged, by the compulsion of a divine love, to surrender himself completely to a life of continual intercession, because he knows that it is God who is working in Him.

Now we can understand how Christ could give such unlimited promises of answer to prayer to His disciples: they were first going to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Now we understand how God can give such a high place to intercession in the fulfillment of His purpose of redemption. It is the Holy Spirit who breathes God's own desire into us and enables us to intercede for souls.

"*Abba, Father!*" Grant that by Your Holy Spirit there may be maintained in us the unceasing intercession of love for the souls for whom Christ died. Give to Your children the vision of the blessedness and power that come to those who yield themselves to this high calling. Amen.