

1 "The Indwelling Spirit"  
2 *Parochial and Plain Sermons* vol. II sermon 19  
3 St. John Henry Newman  
4 The Feast of Pentecost 1834

5 "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you."  
6 Romans viii. 9.

7 [Note 1] GOD the Son has graciously vouchsafed to reveal the Father to His creatures  
8 from without; God the Holy Ghost, by inward communications. Who can compare these  
9 separate works of condescension, either of them being beyond our understanding? We  
10 can but silently adore the Infinite Love which encompasses us on every side. The Son  
11 of God is called the Word, as declaring His glory throughout created nature, and  
12 impressing the evidence of it on every part of it. He has given us to read it in His works  
13 of goodness, holiness, and wisdom. He is the Living and Eternal Law of Truth and  
14 Perfection, that Image of God's unapproachable Attributes, which men have ever seen  
15 by glimpses on the face of the world, felt that it was sovereign, but knew not whether to  
16 say it was a fundamental Rule and self-existing Destiny, or the Offspring and Mirror of  
17 the Divine Will. Such has He been from the beginning, graciously sent forth from the  
18 Father to reflect His glory upon all things, distinct from Him, while mysteriously one with  
19 Him; and in due time visiting us with an infinitely deeper mercy, when for our redemption  
20 He humbled Himself to take upon Him that fallen nature which He had originally created  
21 after His own image.

22 The condescension of the Blessed Spirit is as incomprehensible as that of the Son. He  
23 has ever been the secret Presence of God within the Creation: a source of life amid the  
24 chaos, bringing out into form and order what was at first shapeless and void, and the  
25 voice of Truth in the hearts of all rational beings, tuning them into harmony with the  
26 intimations of God's Law, which were externally made to them. Hence He is especially  
27 called the "life-giving" Spirit; being (as it were) the Soul of universal nature, the Strength  
28 of man and beast, the Guide of faith, the Witness against sin, the inward Light of  
29 patriarchs and prophets, the Grace abiding in the Christian soul, and the Lord and Ruler  
30 of the Church. Therefore let us ever praise the Father Almighty, who is the first Source  
31 of all perfection, in and together with His Co-equal Son and Spirit, through whose  
32 gracious ministrations we have been given to see "what manner of love" it is wherewith  
33 the Father has loved us.

34 On this Festival I propose, as is suitable, to describe as scripturally as I can, the  
35 merciful office of God the Holy Ghost, towards us Christians; and I trust I may do so,  
36 with the sobriety and reverence which the subject demands.

37 The Holy Spirit has from the beginning pleaded with man. We read in the Book of  
38 Genesis, that, when evil began to prevail all over the earth before the flood, the Lord  
39 said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man;" [Gen. vi. 3.] implying that He had  
40 hitherto striven with his corruption. Again, when God took to Him a peculiar people, the  
41 Holy Spirit was pleased to be especially present with them. Nehemiah says, "Thou

42 gavest also Thy Good Spirit to instruct them," [Neh. ix. 20.] and Isaiah, "They rebelled  
43 and vexed His Holy Spirit." [Isa. lxiii. 10.] Further, He manifested Himself as the source  
44 of various gifts, intellectual and extraordinary, in the Prophets, and others. Thus at the  
45 time the Tabernacle was constructed, the Lord filled Bezaleel "with the Spirit of God, in  
46 wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to  
47 devise cunning works" [Exod. xxxi. 3, 4.] in metal, stone, and timber. At another time,  
48 when Moses was oppressed with his labours, Almighty God vouchsafed to "take of the  
49 Spirit" which was upon him, and to put it on seventy of the elders of Israel, that they  
50 might share the burden with him. "And it came to pass, that, when the Spirit rested upon  
51 them, they prophesied, and did not cease." [Numb. xi. 17, 25.] These texts will be  
52 sufficient to remind you of many others, in which the gifts of the Holy Ghost are spoken  
53 of under the Jewish covenant. These were great mercies; yet, great as they were, they  
54 are as nothing compared with that surpassing grace with which we Christians are  
55 honoured; that great privilege of receiving into our hearts, not the mere gifts of the Spirit,  
56 but His very presence, Himself, by a real not a figurative indwelling.

57 When our Lord entered upon His Ministry, He acted as though He were a mere man,  
58 needing grace, and received the consecration of the Holy Spirit for our sakes. He  
59 became the Christ, or Anointed, that the Spirit might be seen to come from God, and to  
60 pass from Him to us. And, therefore, the heavenly Gift is not simply called the Holy  
61 Ghost, or the Spirit of God, but the Spirit of Christ, that we might clearly understand, that  
62 He comes to us from and instead of Christ. Thus St. Paul says, "God hath sent forth the  
63 Spirit of His Son into your hearts;" and our Lord breathed on His Apostles, saying,  
64 "Receive ye the Holy Ghost;" and He says elsewhere to them, "If I depart, I will send  
65 Him unto you." [Gal. iv. 6. John xx. 22; xvi. 7.] Accordingly this "Holy Spirit of promise" is  
66 called "the earnest of our inheritance," "the seal and earnest of an Unseen Saviour;"  
67 [Eph. i. 14. 2 Cor. i. 22; v. 5.] being the present pledge of Him who is absent,—or rather  
68 more than a pledge, for an earnest is not a mere token which will be taken from us  
69 when it is fulfilled, as a pledge might be, but a something in advance of what is one day  
70 to be given in full.

71 This must be clearly understood; for it would seem to follow, that if so, the Comforter  
72 who has come instead of Christ, must have vouchsafed to come in the same sense in  
73 which Christ came; I mean, that He has come, not merely in the way of gifts, or of  
74 influences, or of operations, as He came to the Prophets, for then Christ's going away  
75 would be a loss, and not a gain, and the Spirit's presence would be a mere pledge, not  
76 an earnest; but He comes to us as Christ came, by a real and personal visitation. I do  
77 not say we could have inferred this thus clearly by the mere force of the above cited  
78 texts; but it being actually so revealed to us in other texts of Scripture, we are able to  
79 see that it may be legitimately deduced from these. We are able to see that the Saviour,  
80 when once He entered into this world, never so departed as to suffer things to be as  
81 before He came; for He still is with us, not in mere gifts, but by the substitution of His  
82 Spirit for Himself, and that, both in the Church and in the souls of individual Christians.

83 For instance, St. Paul says in the text, "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be  
84 that the Spirit of God *dwells in you*." Again, "He shall quicken even your mortal bodies by

85 His Spirit that *dwelleth* in you." "Know ye not that your body is the Temple of the Holy  
86 Ghost which is in you?" "Ye are the Temple of the Living God, as God hath said, I will  
87 dwell in them, and walk in them." The same Apostle clearly distinguishes between the  
88 indwelling of the Spirit, and His actual operations within us, when he says, "The love of  
89 God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us;" and again,  
90 "The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God."  
91 [Rom. viii. 9, 11. 1 Cor. vi. 19. 2 Cor. vi. 16. Rom. v. 5; viii. 16.]

92 Here let us observe, before proceeding, what indirect evidence is afforded us in these  
93 texts of the Divinity of the Holy Spirit. Who can be personally present at once with every  
94 Christian, but God Himself? Who but He, not merely ruling in the midst of the Church  
95 invisibly, as Michael might keep watch over Israel, or another Angel might be "the  
96 Prince of Persia,"—but really taking up His abode as one and the same in many  
97 separate hearts, so as to fulfil our Lord's words, that it was expedient that He should  
98 depart; Christ's bodily presence, which was limited to place, being exchanged for the  
99 manifold spiritual indwelling of the Comforter within us? This consideration suggests  
100 both the dignity of our Sanctifier, and the infinite preciousness of His Office towards us.

101 To proceed: The Holy Ghost, I have said, dwells in body and soul, as in a temple. Evil  
102 spirits indeed have power to possess sinners, but His indwelling is far more perfect; for  
103 He is all-knowing and omnipresent, He is able to search into all our thoughts, and  
104 penetrate into every motive of the heart. Therefore, He pervades us (if it may be so  
105 said) as light pervades a building, or as a sweet perfume the folds of some honourable  
106 robe; so that, in Scripture language, we are said to be in Him, and He in us. It is plain  
107 that such an inhabitation brings the Christian into a state altogether new and  
108 marvellous, far above the possession of mere gifts, exalts him inconceivably in the scale  
109 of beings, and gives him a place and an office which he had not before. In St. Peter's  
110 forcible language, he becomes "partaker of the Divine Nature," and has "power" or  
111 authority, as St. John says, "to become the son of God." Or, to use the words of St.  
112 Paul, "he is a new creation; old things are passed away, behold all things are become  
113 new." His rank is new; his parentage and service new. He is "of God," and "is not his  
114 own," "a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared  
115 unto every good work." [2 Pet. i. 4. John i. 12. 2 Cor. v. 17. 1 John iv. 4. 1 Cor. vi. 19,  
116 20. 2 Tim. ii. 21.]

117 This wonderful change from darkness to light, through the entrance of the Spirit into the  
118 soul, is called Regeneration, or the New Birth; a blessing which, before Christ's coming,  
119 not even Prophets and righteous men possessed, but which is now conveyed to all men  
120 freely through the Sacrament of Baptism. By nature we are children of wrath; the heart  
121 is sold under sin, possessed by evil spirits; and inherits death as its eternal portion. But  
122 by the coming of the Holy Ghost, all guilt and pollution are burned away as by fire, the  
123 devil is driven forth, sin, original and actual, is forgiven, and the whole man is  
124 consecrated to God. And this is the reason why He is called "the earnest" of that  
125 Saviour who died for us, and will one day give us the fulness of His own presence in  
126 heaven. Hence, too, He is our "seal unto the day of redemption;" for as the potter  
127 moulds the clay, so He impresses the Divine image on us members of the household of

128 God. And His work may truly be called Regeneration; for though the original nature of  
129 the soul is not destroyed, yet its past transgressions are pardoned once and for ever,  
130 and its source of evil stanch'd and gradually dried up by the pervading health and  
131 purity which has set up its abode in it. Instead of its own bitter waters, a spring of health  
132 and salvation is brought within it; not the mere streams of that fountain, "clear as  
133 crystal," which is before the Throne of God [Note 2], but, as our Lord says, "a well of  
134 water *in him*," in a man's heart, "springing up into everlasting life." Hence He elsewhere  
135 describes the heart as giving forth, not receiving, the streams of grace: "Out of his belly  
136 shall flow rivers of Living Water." St. John adds, "this spake He of the Spirit." [John iv.  
137 14; vii. 38, 39.]

138 Such is the inhabitation of the Holy Ghost within us, applying to us individually the  
139 precious cleansing of Christ's blood in all its manifold benefits. Such is the great  
140 doctrine, which we hold as a matter of faith, and without actual experience to verify it to  
141 us. Next, I must speak briefly concerning the manner in which the Gift of grace  
142 manifests itself in the regenerate soul; a subject which I do not willingly take up, and  
143 which no Christian perhaps is ever able to consider without some effort, feeling that he  
144 thereby endangers either his reverence towards God, or his humility, but which the  
145 errors of this day, and the confident tone of their advocates, oblige us to dwell upon, lest  
146 truth should suffer by our silence.

147 1. The heavenly gift of the Spirit fixes the eyes of our mind upon the Divine Author of  
148 our salvation. By nature we are blind and carnal; but the Holy Ghost by whom we are  
149 new-born, reveals to us the God of mercies, and bids us recognise and adore Him as  
150 our Father with a true heart. He impresses on us our Heavenly Father's image, which  
151 we lost when Adam fell, and disposes us to seek His presence by the very instinct of  
152 our new nature. He gives us back a portion of that freedom in willing and doing, of that  
153 uprightness and innocence, in which Adam was created. He unites us to all holy beings,  
154 as before we had relationship with evil. He restores for us that broken bond, which,  
155 proceeding from above, connects together into one blessed family all that is anywhere  
156 holy and eternal, and separates it off from the rebel world which comes to nought. Being  
157 then the sons of God, and one with Him, our souls mount up and cry to Him continually.  
158 This special characteristic of the regenerate soul is spoken of by St. Paul soon after the  
159 text. "Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." Nor are  
160 we left to utter these cries to Him, in any vague uncertain way of our own; but He who  
161 sent the Spirit to dwell in us habitually, gave us also a form of words to sanctify the  
162 separate acts of our minds. Christ left His sacred Prayer to be the peculiar possession  
163 of His people, and the voice of the Spirit. If we examine it, we shall find in it the  
164 substance of that doctrine, to which St. Paul has given a name in the passage just  
165 quoted. We begin it by using our privilege of calling on Almighty God in express words  
166 as "Our Father." We proceed, according to this beginning, in that waiting, trusting,  
167 adoring, resigned temper, which children ought to feel; looking towards Him, rather than  
168 thinking of ourselves; zealous for His honour rather than fearful about our safety; resting  
169 in His present help, not with eyes timorously glancing towards the future. His name, His  
170 kingdom, His will, are the great objects for the Christian to contemplate and make his  
171 portion, being stable and serene, and "complete in Him," as beseems one who has the

172 gracious presence of His Spirit within him. And, when he goes on to think of himself, he  
173 prays, that he may be enabled to have towards others what God has shown towards  
174 himself, a spirit of forgiveness and loving-kindness. Thus he pours himself out on all  
175 sides, first looking up to catch the heavenly gift, but, when he gains it, not keeping it to  
176 himself, but diffusing "rivers of living water" to the whole race of man, thinking of self as  
177 little as may be, and desiring ill and destruction to nothing but that principle of  
178 temptation and evil, which is rebellion against God;—lastly, ending, as he began, with  
179 the contemplation of His kingdom, power, and glory ever-lasting. This is the true "Abba,  
180 Father," which the Spirit of adoption utters within the Christian's heart, the infallible  
181 voice of Him who "maketh intercession for the Saints in God's way." And if he has at  
182 times, for instance, amid trial or affliction, special visitations and comfortings from the  
183 Spirit, "plaints unutterable" within him, yearnings after the life to come, or bright and  
184 passing gleams of God's eternal election, and deep stirrings of wonder and thankfulness  
185 thence following, he thinks too reverently of "the secret of the Lord," to betray (as it  
186 were) His confidence, and, by vaunting it to the world, to exaggerate it perchance into  
187 more than it was meant to convey: but he is silent, and ponders it as choice  
188 encouragement to his soul, meaning something, but he knows not how much.

189 2. The indwelling of the Holy Ghost raises the soul, not only to the thought of God, but  
190 of Christ also. St. John says, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son  
191 Jesus Christ." And our Lord Himself, "If a man love Me, he will keep My words; and My  
192 Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make our abode with him." [1 John  
193 i. 3. John xiv. 23.] Now, not to speak of other and higher ways in which these texts are  
194 fulfilled, one surely consists in that exercise of faith and love in the thought of the Father  
195 and Son, which the Gospel, and the Spirit revealing it, furnish to the Christian. The Spirit  
196 came especially to "glorify" Christ; and vouchsafes to be a shining light within the  
197 Church and the individual Christian, reflecting the Saviour of the world in all His  
198 perfections, all His offices, all His works. He came for the purpose of unfolding what was  
199 yet hidden, whilst Christ was on earth; and speaks on the house-tops what was  
200 delivered in closets, disclosing Him in the glories of His transfiguration, who once had  
201 no comeliness in His outward form, and was but a man of sorrows and acquainted with  
202 grief. First, He inspired the Holy Evangelists to record the life of Christ, and directed  
203 them which of His words and works to select, which to omit; next, He commented (as it  
204 were) upon these, and unfolded their meaning in the Apostolic Epistles. The birth, the  
205 life, the death and resurrection of Christ, has been the text which He has illuminated. He  
206 has made history to be doctrine; telling us plainly, whether by St. John or St. Paul, that  
207 Christ's conception and birth was the real Incarnation of the Eternal Word,—His life,  
208 "God manifest in the Flesh,"—His death and resurrection, the Atonement for sin, and  
209 the Justification of all believers. Nor was this all: he continued His sacred comment in  
210 the formation of the Church, superintending and overruling its human instruments, and  
211 bringing out our Saviour's words and works, and the Apostles' illustrations of them, into  
212 acts of obedience and permanent Ordinances, by the ministry of Saints and Martyrs.  
213 Lastly, He completes His gracious work by conveying this system of Truth, thus varied  
214 and expanded, to the heart of each individual Christian in whom He dwells. Thus He  
215 vouchsafes to edify the whole man in faith and holiness: "casting down imaginations  
216 and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into

217 captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." [2 Cor. x. 5.] By His wonder-working  
218 grace all things tend to perfection. Every faculty of the mind, every design, pursuit,  
219 subject of thought, is hallowed in its degree by the abiding vision of Christ, as Lord,  
220 Saviour, and Judge. All solemn, reverent, thankful, and devoted feelings, all that is  
221 noble, all that is choice in the regenerate soul, all that is self-denying in conduct, and  
222 zealous in action, is drawn forth and offered up by the Spirit as a living sacrifice to the  
223 Son of God. And, though the Christian is taught not to think of himself above his  
224 measure, and dare not boast, yet he is also taught that the consciousness of the sin  
225 which remains in him, and infects his best services, should not separate him from God,  
226 but lead him to Him who can save. He reasons with St. Peter, "To whom should he go?"  
227 and, without daring to decide, or being impatient to be told how far he is able to consider  
228 as his own every Gospel privilege in its fulness, he gazes on them all with deep thought  
229 as the Church's possession, joins her triumphant hymns in honour of Christ, and listens  
230 wistfully to her voice in inspired Scripture, the voice of the Bride calling upon and blest  
231 in the Beloved.

232 3. St. John adds, after speaking of "our fellowship with the Father and His Son:" "These  
233 things write we unto you, that your joy may be full." What is fulness of joy but *peace*?  
234 Joy is tumultuous only when it is not full; but peace is the privilege of those who are  
235 "filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." "Thou  
236 wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in  
237 Thee." [Isa. xxvi. 3.] It is peace, springing from trust and innocence, and then  
238 overflowing in love towards all around him. What is the effect of mere animal ease and  
239 enjoyment, but to make a man pleased with everything which happens? "A merry heart  
240 is a perpetual feast;" and such is peculiarly the blessing of a soul rejoicing in the faith  
241 and fear of God. He who is anxious, thinks of himself, is suspicious of danger, speaks  
242 hurriedly, and has no time for the interests of others; he who lives in peace is at leisure,  
243 wherever his lot is cast. Such is the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart, whether in Jew  
244 or Greek, bond or free. He Himself perchance in His mysterious nature, is the Eternal  
245 Love whereby the Father and the Son have dwelt in each other, as ancient writers have  
246 believed; and what He is in heaven, that He is abundantly on earth. He lives in the  
247 Christian's heart, as the never-failing fount of charity, which is the very sweetness of the  
248 living waters. For where He is, "there is liberty" from the tyranny of sin, from the dread,  
249 which the natural man feels, of an offended, unreconciled Creator. Doubt, gloom,  
250 impatience have been expelled; joy in the Gospel has taken their place, the hope of  
251 heaven and the harmony of a pure heart, the triumph of self-mastery, sober thoughts,  
252 and a contented mind. How can charity towards all men fail to follow, being the mere  
253 affectionateness of innocence and peace? Thus the Spirit of God creates in us the  
254 simplicity and warmth of heart which children have, nay, rather the perfections of His  
255 heavenly hosts, high and low being joined together in His mysterious work; for what are  
256 implicit trust, ardent love, abiding purity, but the mind both of little children and of the  
257 adoring Seraphim!

258 Thoughts, such as these, will affect us rightly, if they make us fear and be watchful,  
259 while we rejoice. They cannot surely do otherwise; for the mind of a Christian, as I have  
260 been attempting to describe it, is not so much what we have, as what we ought to have.

261 To look, indeed, after dwelling on it, upon the multitude of men who have been baptized  
262 in Christ's name, is too serious a matter, and we need not force ourselves to do so. We  
263 need not do so, further than to pray for them, and to protest and strive against what is  
264 evil among them; for as to the higher and more solemn thought, how persons, set apart  
265 individually and collectively, as Temples of Truth and Holiness, should become what  
266 they seem to be, and what their state is in consequence in God's sight, is a question  
267 which it is a great blessing to be allowed to put from us as not our concern. It is our  
268 concern only to look to ourselves, and to see that, as we have received the gift, we  
269 "grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption;"  
270 remembering that "if any man destroy the temple of God, him shall God destroy." This  
271 reflection and the recollection of our many backslidings, will ever keep us, please God,  
272 from judging others, or from priding ourselves on our privileges. Let us but consider how  
273 we have fallen from the light and grace of our Baptism. Were we now what that Holy  
274 Sacrament made us, we might ever "go on our way rejoicing;" but having sullied our  
275 heavenly garments, in one way or other, in a greater or less degree (God knoweth! and  
276 our own consciences too in a measure), alas! the Spirit of adoption has in part receded  
277 from us, and the sense of guilt, remorse, sorrow, and penitence must take His place.  
278 We must renew our confession, and seek afresh our absolution day by day, before we  
279 dare call upon God as "our Father," or offer up Psalms and Intercessions to Him. And,  
280 whatever pain and affliction meets us through life, we must take it as a merciful penance  
281 imposed by a Father upon erring children, to be borne meekly and thankfully, and as  
282 intended to remind us of the weight of that infinitely greater punishment, which was our  
283 desert by nature, and which Christ bore for us on the Cross.

284 Notes

285 1. The Feast of Pentecost.

286 2. Rev. iv. 6. Ps. xlvi. 4.