WRIGHT (FRANK HALL) SERMONS, 1916

Title: Frank Hall Wright sermons
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Biographical Note:
Frank Hall Wright (1860-1922) was an evangelist in the western United States.

Scope and Contents:
The Frank Hall Wright Sermons are typed, bound sermons delivered by Wright at First Presbyterian Church of San Antonio in January 1916. These sermons were a component of special evangelistic services intended for both Christians and the general public.

Related Collections:
The Arthur Gray Jones papers at the Austin Seminary Archives include letters written by Frank Hall Wright to Arthur Gray Jones from 1915-1916.

Restrictions:
Materials are available by appointment only. Contact the archivist for details.

Preferred Citation: Frank Hall Wright sermons, 1916, Austin Seminary Archives, Stitt Library, Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary

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“Grieving the Holy Spirit,” January 13, 1916

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Grieving The Holy Spirit.

First of all the Holy Spirit is a person as much as Jesus Christ is a person. He will guide you. He is spoken of in the use of the pronoun "he". The Holy Spirit himself is a person. "He shall glorify me." He is given all the attributes of God. Divinity, eternity, unchangeable. Essentially the trinity are one, officially three. A Jewish girl once said to a Christian girl. "You worship three gods." The Christian girl said, "No I worship one God." The Jewish girl's name was Rosa. The Christian girl said, "Is that body Rosa?" "Is your soul Rosa?" "No." "Well which is Rosa, the body the mind or the soul?" Well Rosa could not say which one was Rosa. The body alone was not Rosa. Neither were the soul or the mind Rosa. The Christian girl had taken away every argument. There are a great many mysteries in the world. If you are going to wait until all the mysteries are solved before you decide to become a Christian you will never get there. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the father. Sent by the Father in the name of the Son. He is in the world. Has been ever since the day of the Pentecost. His work is to convince the world of sin. He builds up Christians. He is the one that is the comforter. He builds up doctrines and morals. Without the Spirit there could be no doctrines. Only through him do you understand the Bible. We need him. In this church if we want to see sinners con-
verted we must pray for the Holy Spirit. No body can be regenerated without the Holy Spirit. He is the one that builds the Christian, the one that seals the Christian. He tells us when to go and where not to go. A man can not preach everywhere. There is a place for every man. The Spirit of God will direct you. Every young preacher ought to be asked, "Have you received the Holy Ghost?" If they would have asked me that when I finished at the seminary, I would not have known what they meant. I had been examined. Passed the examination. It may have been a poor passing, but nevertheless I passed it. But if they would have asked me if I was filled with the Holy Spirit. I could not have told them. I would not have known. Jesus commanded the apostles to stay in Jerusalem until they received the Holy Ghost. They had been taught at the feet of Jesus Christ, but they were not fit to preach until they were filled with the Holy Spirit. I tell you if you have the love of Jesus Christ God the Spirit of God has taken possession of you and you will know it. One day a man brought one of his friends to a meeting and he worked with him until he grew tired, trying to bring him to Jesus. And the preacher worked with him. Then an old woman came in. She was the scrubwoman and she only knew one verse but who won him. She used that single verse. When I was a boy I didn't want to go to school, I said I would rather work in the field than go to school. Well I was allowed to work on the field. I sweated on that cotton field until I thought my sweat could have drowned me. And then I got to thinking of those other boys sitting in that nice cool school room.
I tell you I had to learn my lesson right there. There was once a slave who came to his master and said he had had a vision. He had seen the three letters, G P C, in the vision. And he came and said he believed it meant for him -- Go preach about Christ -- and his master told him he was wrong, it meant, — go pick cotton—. There was a difference in vision. If your call does not come from the voice of God you quit right there. No matter how you can preach, unless it comes from the providential dictation there is nothing in it. You have to get the call and you have to feel that you ought to go, and then you go. It don't say, "Sit ye". It says, "Go ye." If you feel called to preach you had better go do it. It is a terrible thing when the spirit of God is not in the church. One time I was having some meetings at a certain church, and we had had a grand revival. And I just wished we could have a communion service before I left that church. And I mentioned it to one of the elders. And he said, "Oh it is not time to have a communion service, I don't know if the elders and deacons would approve of it at this time." I said, "You get your wine and your bread and lets have one." Do you suppose I can't have a communion service because it is not time, or because the bread is not just right? It is the spirit of the thing that God looks at. We get so wrapped up in form until we get lost right in the church. What do you suppose the Lord cares for all that form... What do you suppose the Lord cares for solos and skyscrapers. You know that kind of singing, you can't tell a blooming word he says, There is nothing in any of it without the Spirit.
of God. I have had so much experience with backsliders, I tell you it's no wonder I ought to be a past master of backsliders. The Lord just harrowed my soul. It is terrible to have to preach to that kind of people. When we started out to preach we didn't have any church. We preached to Baptists, Methodists, Christians and everything else, out on the prairie. I tell you, if the Spirit calls you to go to a certain place you had better go, and if he tells you to keep away, you had better do it. One time we were way out away from anywhere. We had nothing to eat, the only water we had was out of a dirty little ditch where the cattle came to drink. I tell you I was hungry. The brother prayed about it. I didn't pray much then I was just starting out. I didn't see how we were going to have any chance to do anything in that place. But we had felt called to go. Finally a woman came along in a wagon, she had come twelve miles. And how that preacher did expound to her. He finally quit at about two o'clock. And O I was so hungry. We went up to a farm house after that and they gave us something to eat. But the beginning of our work, there with that woman. And before we were through they wanted us to build them a church. We didn't have any money to build churches. But they said, "You can't leave us now." I saw the power of the Spirit right down in that country. There were cut-throats and drunkards and every other kind of men around there. I have seen a murderer singing right out of the same book with the sheriff down there. Men who would just as well
kill a man as to look at one. And that very murderer was converted right down there. The Spirit of God was there. I know what God can do. Why don't we have the spirit? That is what I want to know. The salvation of souls depends on our receiving the Holy Ghost. Where do you stand? If we have not the Spirit we had just as well close up the doors of the church. You can come to church Sunday after Sunday but if the Spirit of God is not there you just as well quit right there. "Quench not the Spirit." Covetousness quenches the light in you. If God has laid it on you to confess, you had better not refuse. I went to the seminary and gave God three years chance on me. I was willing to give him three years. But I didn't want to be a preacher. I knew what that life meant. I knew what it meant to hang up a stocking and get maybe an apple and a stick of candy and a piece of dry corn bread in the bottom for a joke. But I went down to the seminary for the sense of duty. I didn't have to go. There was no one preaching to me. I did what they asked me to do in the seminary. They asked me to take a Sunday School class and I took it. But I hated for Sunday to come. I hated every boy in that class. I thought I would die in that first year. Among all those sanctimonious people. It just looked like it would kill me. The second year it was a little better, and the third year I was all right. Then the Lord had called me and I knew it. ------ I had to give up some pleasures. I loved to go to the theater. Not one of these little cheap ones. First class theaters up there in New York. It was quenching the little light I
had. It was the atmosphere of those places. You know how it is when you go to places like that. You come home and you can't pray. You quit going to Sunday School. You quit the church. "Quench not the Spirit". One night I was invited to a dance at the home of a rich iron man. That night one of my young seminary friends came to me and said, "Frank, this kind of a thing kind of sticks in your craw doesn't it?" I tell you the atmosphere was wrong. He said, "Let's quit it." And I quit dancing that night. I can see it now, I know why I quit dancing. It was the atmosphere. Something was wrong. It was certainly not consistent with me and with all that serious ministry for the Master to be found in such a place. It cost me something. I enjoyed having a good time. I was human just like any one else. One night one of my friends came to me after that and asked me to a supper. I told him I had quit that kind of a thing. He tried his best to persuade me. But I was not going to let him talk me into it. I was going to be consistent. What little religion I had I was not going to kill. I quit going to hear grand opera. I used to stand before that door by the hour to get a seat in the roost. I really loved the music. I tell you that is where you find the musical folks. Up there in the roost. There is a story about some women in a box. There came a sudden lull in the music and some one in a box cried out. "We fry ours in lard." They were talking about doughnuts. Not even thinking about the music. I could not have told you then why I quit. But I know now, it was the atmos-
phere of those places. If you are trying to be a Christian worker you need the Holy Ghost. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit."

You don't talk about grieving your enemy. You talk about grieving your friend. You grieve your mother, you grieve your loved ones. You grieve the Holy Spirit. He loves you. What peace he puts in us. Christian, are you grieving the Holy Spirit? Do you want power? Do you want to win souls? The Spirit of God is the source of power. I will give you an illustration I know. There was once a man who had a great big church. He had big congregations. And folks heard rumors about that preacher. And then the Sunday School went to pieces and the church went down. Then one of the elders went to the preacher and asked him what was the matter. He said, "Preacher you know what is the trouble. I charge you to tell what it is." And finally the preacher acknowledged it was a secret sin in his soul. He had fallen into a grievous sin. We see the effect right there. God's Spirit left him then and there. So far as work was concerned the power was gone that minute. "He that covereth his sin, shall not prosper." I expect him to love me. Not because I never do anything wrong. There are a great many things I do that are wrong, that I do not know are wrong. If live in a known sin God will not use me any more. I pray God to keep me faithful as long as I live. If a Christian sins, he will make that sin right. He will lie down in his sin. The Spirit of God was grieved away by that man's sin. I was at the meeting when that man was restored. It was in his own church. I saw him walking down the
aisle. He was broken in spirit. He was a good man, it was sad to see him fall in such a grievous sin. I don't care how eloquent the preacher, if without the Spirit his power is cut off. I preached the sermon that night. He asked his brethren to restore him. After the sermon, I asked the sinners to come up to the front. The Spirit of God fell on us right then and there. The first one that came was that preacher. Then his grandchild, then his own daughter. Then all his people came flocking to the kingdom of God. God set his seal of approval on that man right there. If you Christians have fallen in a sin that you know is a sin and are covering it up, you had better get right. When I was called to be an evangelist. Away from the Indians. I went up there with a six month's furlough in my pocket. I never came back for two years. I didn't know what was going to happen. I went trusting God. We held services in the chapel. Two weeks the chapel was filled with souls. And not a soul did I get. I said, "O Father what is the trouble?" I knew something was wrong. Was it because of me. Had I only gone up there because I thought it was a big call. Better than with the Indians? Then I asked the preacher, "Is there something you ought to tell me?" He said, "There is." I said, "Well when are you going to tell me?" But I left him without knowing what it was. He was weeping. The next morning he made his confession. The preacher got up with tears and made his confession. Then one of the elders confessed that he had not been as faithful as he ought to be. Another officer made his confession. They all started to talk and as the Spirit moved them. I saw the power of the Spirit displayed that very night.
Just think how close God is to us. Now where is the trouble? I don't know myself. I am preaching this sermon because I think I ought to. There was a young man at that meeting. He was a member of the church. But he was not living a good life. He sat back there in that meeting and said, "They will not get me." No of course we could not get him. There was no power in me. If the Spirit of God was not in him. I tell you what I saw when I went out of that meeting. That same young man down on his knees crying for God's mercy. The penitent preacher down beside him. The Lord got him right there. I don't care who you are what kind of a church member, until you get right, until the Spirit of God comes no sinner can be saved. I want to give you another illustration. It was in a big church. We preached four weeks and never had a revival. Didn't win a single soul. The folks came out to those meetings, but they just hated them. They were looking forward to a Washington party. A bid supper. And they just hoped those revival meetings would quit before the big day came. But if it didn't they were all going to put on their grand clothes come to the meeting and then go to that supper. O you grieve the Spirit so. I went home the day before the supper was to be, sad and disappointed. They were my friends I loved them. But the next night what did I see. The men were in a little anti room praying. They had called in all their five dollar tickets to the supper. They had decided to tend to the Lord's business. I tell you Christians get right with God. The Father that loves us wants us to get right. It may mean open
confession of your sins. If you are living in sin, ask God to forgive you and quit it.