

*The Work
of the
Holy Spirit*

HOWARD WINTERS

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of the
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The Work of the Holy Spirit

HOWARD WINTERS

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DEDICATED
TO
CLAYTON WINTERS
My Brother In The Flesh And In The Lord)

A
Tremendous Teacher
Of Christian Principles
Who Never Ceases To Challenge My
Thinking

Howard Winters - 1978

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INTRODUCTION

When I first read the manuscript of this book, the reaction of King James upon being presented a copy of the translation which now bears his name came to mind: "In the name of God let it go forth among the people." Emotionalism has long dominated the ranks of denominationalism; but now, as a direct result of a departure from the revealed truth of the gospel recorded in the word of God, it is also having a field day in the church of our Lord. Such error must be met and defeated; and the author has done an outstanding job in doing so in the following pages.

The author, Howard Winters, cut his religious teeth on emotionalism mingled with superstition. I remember well how he was urged on in his first sermon efforts by the shouts of "Hallelujah" and "Amen" from his Pentecostal brethren. He was truly "carried away with the spirit," of whatever sort it may have been.

But because of the influence of the word of God in his life, Howard has moved from this humble (though erroneous) beginning to become one of the more scholarly and influential voices for truth and righteousness in our great brotherhood. He has a working knowledge of almost any religious subject that one might wish to discuss; and it is impossible for him to meet the demands made on his time for meetings, articles, lectureships, etc.

The author has served among churches of Christ in East Tennessee and North and South Carolina for the past 30 years. In addition to his work with local congregations, he serves as editor of *Carolina Christian*, owns and operates Win-More Publications, and has authored a number of other tracts and booklets.

Howard is married to the former Minnie Bowers, and they have three children: Susie, Timmy, and Jimmy.

I commend to you the following book for the good which I believe it can do. It is a logical and Scriptural approach to a very

difficult subject. I think it is the best thing that I have had the opportunity to read on the Holy Spirit and His work. I pray for it a wide distribution.

Clayton Winters

PREFACE

Two and a half years ago I published my booklet entitled *The Holy Spirit — His Indwelling and Work*. The booklet has been received far beyond anything I could have hoped for (and that with no promotion or advertising), and brethren who have used it still proclaim its worth and usefulness (perhaps overinflating my ego). However, the material in that booklet was not prepared as a book, but rather as eight articles for *First Century Christian*, a monthly journal that was then being published in Memphis, Tennessee, but which has now ceased publication. The response was so great and so many requests came to me to publish the articles in a more permanent form that I readily consented. And the reception given the booklet has given me no reason to regret that decision.

Nevertheless I have not been completely satisfied with the effort for the following reasons: (1) Even though I reworked the articles into chapters, it does not have the continuity that should characterize a book; (2) the contents are too brief — a tremendous subject not adequately covered; (3) its briefness, questions about the work of the Spirit not covered, points up the need for a larger work; (4) the controversy over the work of the Spirit, which at the time of publication I thought was subsiding, continues to rage; (5) I have continued to study and write on the subject; (6) I have a burning in my bones to say more about the Holy Spirit and His work. Hence I have prepared the present volume, which incorporates most, though not all, of the previous booklet. While I certainly have not exhausted the subject, and more might yet be said, I am more satisfied with the arrangement of the present book than with the previous one, mainly because it has more design to it. It was written as a book rather than as disjointed articles. Its contents should, therefore, bear more readily upon the subject.

The following is lifted from the foreword of the previous book

because it is still pertinent:

“From the inception of the Restoration Movement a vast amount of study has been given to the Holy Spirit, His indwelling and work. But in the early days of the movement (in fact until the second half of the 20th century), the greater concern was with how He works in conversion. There was general agreement among the leading proponents of New Testament Christianity that in the conversion and sanctification of sinners the Holy Spirit works through, and only through, the word of truth. As far as I am able to determine, there has never been a major dissenting voice raised against this conclusion.

“But beginning soon after 1950 (there had been a sprinkling of this teaching for a hundred years previous to this date but it had never become an issue), some began to emphasize the idea that the Holy Spirit indwells Christians personally, literally, and actually — that is, apart from and in addition to the word of God. This new emphasis gained rapid momentum, partly because of the growing existential philosophy in our culture, partly because it seemed to make the practice of Christianity more spiritual, and partly because of the expanding Pentecostal movement. As it grew, more and more things were ascribed to the Spirit working directly in or through the individual. Once the concept of a personal, literal indwelling was accepted, it was found that there were no logical limits to what could be ascribed to Him. What He did in or through one, whether simply illuminating the understanding, filling the heart with peace, joy, and love, personally leading from one street corner to another for more effective teaching, putting the words into one’s mouth when he gets up to preach (one preacher even ascribed the length of his sermons to the work of the Spirit), or speaking in tongues or performing other miracles, was a matter of degree and not of a fundamental difference. There was simply nowhere to draw the line and say, ‘Thus far and no farther.’

“As the emphasis continued to intensify, many of the stalwart defenders of the faith, such as Foy E. Wallace, Jr., Guy N. Woods, and Franklin Camp, sounded a warning that the teaching and practice connected with the concept of a personal indwelling would lead to the abandonment of the word of God as the sole source of authority in religious matters. Guy N. Woods and Foy E. Wallace, Jr., contended that in whatever sense the Holy Spirit dwells in and works through Christians, He does so in precisely the

same manner in which He converts sinners — that is, through the word of God. Franklin Camp went even further by saying that all the passages dealing with the indwelling of the Spirit (and consequently the work that is said to be done as a result of that indwelling) have to do with the miraculous. The conflict in the views of these men and those who claimed a personal indwelling forcefully pointed up the seriousness of the matter and as a result there was a renewed interest in the study of the Holy Spirit and His work. In the past quarter of a century a number of studies have made their appearance in the brotherhood, some setting forth one view and some the other, and some trying to harmonize and reconcile the two.” The controversy is not settled yet, and may not be for many years to come.

While I think I have said some things that need to be said, and I think I have proven by the Scriptures themselves that the Holy Spirit indwells and works through Christians now indirectly, that is, through inspired truth, I am not egotistical enough to think that what I have said will end all strife. In fact, the opposite may be true: what I have said may cause more controversy than it settles. But I do know one thing: my deepest desire is to do good, and only good, for the cause of Christ. I know my limitations (perhaps even better than those who will be pleased to point them out). And the only claim I make for this book, and the only basis upon which I feel justified in asking for it an honest reading, is that it has come from a sincere heart, one that wants nothing more in this world than to know, believe, and obey the truth. And so with fear and trembling (because of circumstances that none could feel as forcefully as I) I offer to the world another book on *The Work of the Holy Spirit*.

CHAPTER 1

THE NATURAL MAN AND THE SPIRITUAL MAN

In 1 Corinthians, chapters 1 and 2, Paul discusses two men, namely, the natural man and the spiritual man. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ." (1 Cor. 2:14-16.) The natural man does not know the things of God; the spiritual man does. To have a clear concept of the work of the Holy Spirit (in the revelation of God's will to man) it is necessary for us to see who these two men are and the distinction Paul makes in them.

THE WILL OF GOD

For man to be pleasing to God he must know and do the will of God. But man by his own power and reason and learning cannot penetrate the mind of God — he cannot know God or His will until God in some manner makes His will known to him. God does not think as man thinks. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isa. 55:8, 9.) Nor is it in the power of man to discover the ways of God. "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." (Jer. 10:23.) Man cannot know what is in the mind of God until God makes it known to him. "For what man knoweth the things of man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." (1 Cor. 2:11.) Thus if man knows anything about God, about His will, about His plans, promises, and purposes, He

must learn it from the Spirit, not from his own mental resources. The natural man, therefore, who has nothing but his own means (which Paul calls the wisdom of man, 1 Cor. 2:5), cannot know (or learn) the will of God — he cannot know it because he does not have a revelation of the Spirit. Only the Spirit of God can make known the will of God (which Paul calls the wisdom of God in a mystery, 1 Cor. 2:7). Thus before man can know God's will the Holy Spirit must reveal it to him (and when it is revealed it ceases to be a mystery). The men through whom the Spirit makes the revelation are called by Paul spiritual men.

The will of God must be learned by revelation, not by human wisdom. It is the function of the Holy Spirit to make known the will of God. He does so by revelation. That is why it is impossible for man, by his own mental resources and unaided by divine revelation, to know the mind of God.

HUMAN WISDOM

It should be understood, however, that the Scriptures have never had any argument with sound reason or true science. At times theories pertaining to Scriptures and theories advanced as sound reason and science do conflict. But the conflict pertains to the theories, not to pure Scripture or true science. When one has the truth of Scripture and the facts of science he has complete harmony. We must therefore make a sharp distinction between the Scriptures and religious theories and between sound reason and true science and the theories that are advanced as reason and science.

This principle is also true when it is applied to human learning and divine revelation. When human learning and wisdom are properly used (and their proper use in religion is to study and understand the revelation delivered by the Spirit), the Bible has no argument with them. In fact, it encourages them; wherever the Scriptures have gone and in any degree been believed and practiced, educational standards have mushroomed. There is therefore no problem between reason and revelation. When each is in its proper sphere, they are complementary. The problem comes when man tries to substitute the former for the latter, when he uses the intellect, with its systematic reasoning and logic, to try to find out the ways and means of God or to find a naturalistic explanation for that which God has done. This danger lurks

especially in the fundamental concepts of modern scholarship. For lack of a better term, these concepts might be summed up as an attitude of intellectual pride — the attitude that says that the unaided human intellect is sufficient to learn all it needs to know. When this is the case, the product of the human mind is accepted instead of the word of God — human wisdom is substituted for divine revelation.

But this is precisely the attitude Paul faced with the Greek philosophers in 1 Corinthians 1 and 2. A few of his statements are: “For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. . . . For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. . . . And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. . . . And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.” (1 Cor. 1:19, 21; 2:1, 4.) Paul thus draws a sharp contrast between human wisdom and divine revelation. He is not saying that human wisdom does not have a place in God’s scheme of things — to so understand him would be to totally misunderstand him; he is saying, however, that it is not the function of human wisdom, regardless of how advanced it might be, to arrive at the will of God. God’s will can be known only by the revelation of the Spirit.

The Greeks loved wisdom, and they had advanced in it far beyond any people of the ancient world. Their philosophers were learned in all the sophisticated forms of reason. Some of them spent their time in nothing but hearing and telling some new thing (Acts 17:21). The Jews required a sign, a miracle, a manifestation of the power of God, but the Greeks sought after wisdom, sought to correctly arrive at all conclusions by the exercise of the mind. They thus sought to learn by human wisdom the will and ways of God. Anything that could not be logically reasoned out by their standard mental procedures could not be accepted. The cross of Christ, because they could see no logic in it, was therefore foolishness to them. God’s revelation and their philosophical reasoning reached an absolute impasse in the cross. They (as all men must) had to make a choice: to retain the all-sufficiency of their reason would be to reject revelation; to accept revelation would be to deny the all-sufficiency of human reason.

And now in our own time we live in a similar atmosphere. In our culture we are totally sold on the value of education — on training the human mind to its highest level, on honing it to its sharpest edge. And one would be naive indeed to question its value, its legitimacy, or even its necessity. I know of no one who is truly anti-intellectual (the intellectuals often call the nonintellectuals anti-intellectual, but their indictment is not sustained by the facts), and certainly nothing said here should be so interpreted. Nor should anything said be understood as being opposed to academic learning *per se* or to the proper use of the human mind, either trained or untrained. What I am warning against is the replacement of revelation by human wisdom. And this is the distinction made by Paul in 1 Corinthians 1 and 2.

We have advanced so far in our learning that we stand in danger of intellectual pride (scientism). The power of the mind and the process of human reason so appeals to us that we may easily convince ourselves that every problem and difficulty can be solved and every question answered by our own mental processes. The intellect is thus considered the guiding star to contentment, peace of mind, happiness, and whatever salvation man stands in need of. Anything that cannot be reasoned out and fully understood by the total process of reasoning cannot be accepted. To suggest to one who has come to so trust the intellect that he accept the Bible teaching (which can be proven by the process of reason to be the word of God) without him being able to reason independently to the conclusions it teaches is considered an affront to intellectual achievement. In fact, many have gone so far already that to accept the Bible, as it is in truth the revelation of God's will, something above and beyond the power of the mind to arrive at unaided, is to deny their scholarship. Revelation is not an acceptable alternative.

Let me illustrate: The Bible clearly teaches that God is the Creator of all things that are. Creation is the Scriptural revelation of origin, the way the Bible reveals that all things came to be (Heb. 11:3). But man in his intellectual pride, sold on the power of the intellect to meet his every need, is unwilling to accept creation as a possible explanation — creation is rejected because, if true, it would subjugate the mind to God. Thus the self-proclaimed judges of scholarship (and sadly to say, many of them are professors of religion and even some are members of the Lord's church) claim one cannot be a real scholar and believe in origin by a divine

Creator. Those, therefore, who seek to be recognized as scholars (and Christians should care little for such recognition, except as their occupation may demand it) are thrown into the position of having their scholarship denied by their peers or else rejecting the Bible as a revelation of God. It seems that the vast majority (thank God, not all!) choose the latter. Their intellectual pride will not permit them to bear the shame and ridicule heaped upon them. They choose to maintain their intellectual status by accepting the unreasonable, unscientific, unproved, and unprovable theory of evolution and denying the Biblical account of creation. (Theistic evolutionists claim to believe both evolution and the Bible, but in the end they accept evolution and make a mockery of the Bible.)

With this prevailing atmosphere we need to fully grasp the lesson taught by Paul in 1 Corinthians 1 and 2: namely, the will of God cannot be learned by human wisdom; it must come by divine revelation.

REVELATION

But what is revelation and why is it necessary? Perhaps we can best answer by quoting the words of Paul: "Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints." (Col. 1:25, 26.) The revelation is the mystery made known. The word "mystery," as is used here by Paul and elsewhere when it refers to the revelation of God, according to Vine ". . . denotes, not the mysterious (as with the Eng. word), but that which, being outside the range of unassisted natural apprehension, can be made known only by Divine revelation, and is made known in a manner and at a time appointed by God, and to those only who are illumined by His Spirit. In the ordinary sense a mystery implies knowledge withheld; its Scriptural significance is truth revealed. Hence the terms especially associated with the subject are 'made known,' 'manifested,' 'revealed,' 'preached,' 'understand,' 'dispensation.'" Revelation is therefore the mystery (that which is in the mind of God and unknown to man) revealed — it is God manifesting His will to man. In Scriptural terminology we can speak of "the mystery revealed" but, strictly speaking, once revealed it is no longer a mystery; it is a revelation.

The purpose of revelation was to communicate the will of God to man. Paul wrote, "For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit." (Eph. 3:1-5.) Paul had been given the dispensation of the grace of God — the commission from God to reveal and preach the gospel to the Gentiles. He had received the gospel (which was a mystery before it was revealed) from God by revelation. He wrote that revelation so the Ephesians might understand both what he wrote and that what he wrote was the mystery being revealed. The mystery (gospel) had not been revealed in ages past — it had remained a mystery. But it was now revealed to the apostles and prophets by the Spirit, and Paul was writing that revelation so that all could understand, believe, and obey to the saving of their souls from sin. But no man could have known the will of God until He disclosed it by revelation. Paul goes on to say, "Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Eph. 3:7-11.)

But our major concern here is the method of revelation. How did God make His will known to man? Did He do so by man's own power of reason? Did He permit man to draw conclusions from His acts in history? Did He just stamp His approval upon the conclusions developed by man? Or did He reveal His will to man in some direct way? In short, did revelation come as a result of man's own wisdom and learning or by a miraculous intervention of God? While God may have used to some degree man's reason, the acts of history, and the process of development, the Bible teaches that His revelation was made known through the Holy Spirit. It originated

with God. It was made known by the Spirit. But it in no way depended upon the wisdom or will of man. God, therefore, revealed to man what he had no other means of knowing or learning.

The Holy Spirit was the means or the method of revelation. It is not revealed in all cases just how the Spirit made known to chosen men (usually called prophets) the will of God, but it was always done by or through the Spirit by supernatural means. While not everything that was said had to be revealed supernaturally, the prophets always claimed to speak the words given to them by God Himself. This is summed up by Jeremiah: "Then the Lord put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth." (Jer. 1:9. See also Jer. 38:21; Ez. 1:3, 4; Micah 1:1, etc.) Not only did the prophets claim to speak God's word, God claimed to speak His word through His prophets. Take for example Moses' words foretelling the coming of Christ. "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him." (Deut. 18:18, 19.) Thus in some manner God gave His spokesmen words and the words contained the revelation of His will. Whatever method was employed (dreams, visions, symbols, words, etc.) the contents of the message always came from a higher source than the spokesman himself — it came from God and was revealed by the Spirit.

Peter said: "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved [carried or borne along] by the Holy Ghost." (2 Pet. 1:20, 21.) The prophets were thus borne along by the Spirit. That is, they were passive, contributing nothing to the revelation. Of course the prophets were active in the sense of reception and proclamation (or writing) of the message, but as far as its contents were concerned they were absolutely passive. The revelation itself came from God, and no true prophet ever claimed that any part of it originated with him. It was the Spirit's function to reveal to man that which had its origin in the mind of God.

It was impossible for man by his own wisdom and knowledge to learn what was in the mind of God. "For who hath known the

mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?" (Rom. 11:34.) "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." (1 Cor. 2:11.) How, then, can man ever know the mind of God? That question brings us to the work of the Holy Spirit in the scheme of human redemption. Paul said of all Spirit-directed men: "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual." (1 Cor. 2:12, 13.) To state the conclusion briefly, the function of the Holy Spirit was to take the contents of the divine mind and by some means convey them to the human mind. But how did He accomplish this? He did so through revelation. He put the will of God (the contents of the divine mind) into words, and by words, which were familiar to man, He was able to convey to the human mind the thoughts of God. Thus the word of God is the revelation of the will of God. Revelation is therefore the method used by the Holy Spirit to bring to man the saving truth of God. (Other truth may be learned by human wisdom, but saving truth can be known only by divine revelation.) The revelation was delivered by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

INSPIRATION

And that brings us to the subject of inspiration. What is it and what part does it play in making known the revelation of God's will?

The word "inspiration" appears only one time in the New Testament Scriptures (although the idea is there in scores of passages), and even then it is a part of a whole clause that is translated from a single Greek word. Paul wrote, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Tim. 3:16, 17.) The Greek word from which "inspiration" comes (*theopneustos*) is translated into the whole clause "is given by inspiration of God." The word means "breathed out from God" or "God breathed." When a balloon is punctured or a tire goes flat, the air is breathed out. In the same

manner the Scriptures are God breathed. The English word "inspire" does not denote the same idea as the Greek word. The English word means to "inhale." The Greek word means to "exhale." The word "inhale" may suggest to the mind that God breathed into something, but the Greek strongly affirms that the Scriptures came out from God. Having come out from God, they are, therefore, the revelation of God's will — the word breathed out from Him. Thus the Biblical concept of inspiration is that the Scriptures originated with God, came out from God, and that the men through which they were delivered had absolutely nothing to do with choosing their contents.

We can therefore say that inspiration is the method of revelation — God breathing out His will through Spirit-inspired men. Inspiration is therefore an integral part of the total process of revelation. It is not totally accurate to say, as some do, "Revelation plus inspiration equals the Bible." The truth can be more nearly stated by saying revelation by inspiration equals the Bible. Inspiration is the method by which revelation was delivered — it is a part of the total process. Or as *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia* says: "What gives it its place among the modes of revelation is, however, specifically the culminating one of these Divine operations, which we call 'inspiration'; that is to say, the action of the Spirit of God in so 'bearing' its human authors in their work of producing Scripture, is that in these Scriptures they speak, not out of themselves, but 'from God.' It is this act by virtue of which the Scriptures may properly be called 'God-breathed.'"

But how did the Holy Spirit deliver the revelation? He did it through men. It was His function to take the contents of the divine mind and convey them to the human mind. But how did He accomplish this task? He did it through revelation. He put the will of God into words, and by those words, given through chosen men, he conveyed the thoughts of God. Thus the revelation was delivered through men. We sometimes call them inspired men, but in actual fact it was the words they used that were inspired, not the men *per se*. If the men themselves had been inspired, all their actions as well as all their words would have been perfect. But this is not the case.

John Mark is an example of a messenger of truth who made a serious mistake in his practice. Barnabas and Saul had chosen him to travel with them on their first missionary journey (Acts 12:25;

13:5). But for some reason (the details are not given) he left the work when they reached Pamphylia. Paul considered this such a grave matter that he refused to take Mark along on his second journey. The record is extremely interesting: "And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do. And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark. But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus; And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God." (Acts 15:36-40.) This same Mark who made such a grave error in conduct is widely believed to be the instrument used by the Holy Spirit to write the Gospel According to Mark. Does the fact that he erred in life argue against his producing an infallible book? Not in the least when it is understood that Mark was responsible for his own actions while the Holy Spirit was responsible for the message delivered through him.

But there is another clear-cut case in the New Testament to illustrate this. Peter, whose words have never been questioned by Christians (there have been a few who questioned whether he wrote 2 Peter or not, but no question at all has ever been raised about his words when they are known to be his, and when 2 Peter is accepted as genuine there is then no question about its inspiration), was severely rebuked by Paul at Antioch because he participated in the separation of Jewish and Gentile Christians. The inspired account reads: "But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?" (Gal. 2:11-14.) Peter, therefore, erred in his practice, but this does not

argue against the fact that the Holy Spirit used him through which to deliver an infallible revelation. The infallibility was in his words, not in his practice (except when a practice was used by the Holy Spirit as an example of revelation).

This brings us to another crucial point, namely, how did the Holy Spirit choose the words and present the revelation through the personalities, experiences, and vocabularies of the men through whom it was delivered without verbally dictating the words to them? It seems conclusive that He did so by choosing what the men had, and by using that and nothing more. On one end was the mind of God. On the other end was the mind of man. The function of the Holy Spirit was to convey the will of God (the contents of the divine mind) to the minds of men. To do so, He could have used the total dictionary for His selection of words. But rather than do that, He selected them from the vocabulary of the men chosen. The chosen men thus spoke in their own vocabulary (using their own experience and personality), but the words used were chosen by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit thus chose their methods, knowledge, experience, action, and words to teach men the will of God. Rather than selecting from all the words available, the Spirit selected only from the vocabulary of the men chosen to deliver the message.

When Mark wrote his book, he was being directed by the Spirit — the Spirit was using Mark and all that he had to put at the Spirit's disposal to reveal God's will to man. But when Mark turned back from the work in Pamphylia he was acting on his own. And the only way the Spirit chose to use that act was as an example for us not to follow. When Peter spoke on Pentecost and on other occasions, and when he wrote his epistles, he spoke as the Spirit gave him utterance — the Spirit was using what Peter had to reveal heaven's message. But when he separated himself from the Gentile Christians and led others to do so, he was not under the direction of the Spirit. Thus his words, not his practice, or at least not in this particular case, were inspired.

The very fact that the Holy Spirit selected words only from each man's vocabulary accounts for the difference in each writer's style and method of writing. The Spirit, rather than selecting from the total number of words available (and this is also true of personality and experience), selected only from the vocabulary of the writer — He used only what the writer had, including personality and experience. But regardless of what words were

chosen or whether the writer was limited in learning or a profound logician, they were selected, in the final analysis, by the Holy Spirit and not by the men themselves. Consequently the product was the revelation of God's will. The men spoke only as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:21).

The conclusion is simple: chosen men were directed (inspired) by the Holy Spirit to deliver the message they had received by revelation. Inspiration is therefore the method used by the Holy Spirit in directing chosen spokesmen to deliver the revelation — the revelation which pointed lost man to the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world. The final form of that revelation is the inspired Scriptures. This, then, brings us to the fundamental point of this chapter, namely, the men through whom the revelation came.

THE NATURAL AND THE SPIRITUAL MAN

Paul concludes his contrast of the wisdom of this world and the revelation of God by saying: "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ." (1 Cor. 2:14-16.) Here the spiritual man is set in opposition to the natural man, and if we can discover who the natural man is we can then know that the spiritual man is his exact opposite.

But who is the natural man? Many answers have been given to this question. Some say that he is the sinner, the one unregenerated by the direct operation of the Holy Spirit. According to this view, he is a natural man because the Lord has not given him a spiritual heart. If this should be the correct view, then the spiritual man is a Christian, any Christian, all Christians, those who are born again.

D.R. Dungan, in his classical work entitled *Hermeneutics*, takes the position that the Greek word for natural (*psuchikos*) should be translated carnal or sensual. Hence the natural man, according to him, is the carnally minded man (pp. 17-24). This would mean that the spiritual man is the spiritually minded man — one who is always open to receive and do the will of God.

In my conception, neither of these views can be sustained by

the Scriptures. But how can we determine who the natural man is? The only logical and Scriptural way to settle the matter is to go to the context: for no Biblical problem is ever settled properly until it is settled contextually. The context, for all practical purposes in this study, starts with verse 18 of chapter 1 and runs through verse 16 of chapter 2. The statement concerning the natural and the spiritual men is the conclusion drawn from the total context.

The whole context (1 Cor. 1:18-2:16) can be divided into two sections: the first (1 Cor. 1:18-31) shows that man cannot know God's will by his own power of reason; the second shows that all knowledge of the will of God must come by divine revelation (1 Cor. 2:1-16). We shall now take a brief look at each of these sections.

First, man cannot know God's will by his own intellectual processes of reasoning. To prove this Paul draws a sharp contrast between the wisdom of man and the power (knowledge or revelation) of God. Observe a few of his statements:

"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God." (V. 18.) Here is the contrast: the preaching of the cross is foolishness when viewed by man's wisdom. All the mental exercises of all the philosophers who ever lived could not conceive of such a plan to save. "But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." (V. 24.) The very means by which God had chosen to save the world appeared foolish to man's wisdom — he could not construct a syllogism that would arrive at such an unseemly conclusion; therefore it was foolish. But Paul asked, "Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" (V. 20.)

"For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." (V. 21.) It was by God's wisdom that the world by its wisdom could not know Him — in the wisdom of God man would have to depend upon revelation to know the will of God.

"Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men." (V. 25.) There is nothing foolish about God, but that which appears foolish to the natural man (that which would have deflated man's intellectual ego, the scheme of redemption, the cross of Christ) is the wisdom of God

— it is far beyond anything that man could have conceived by his own mental powers.

“But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are.” (Vv. 27, 28.)

All these are simply emphasizing the fact that man by his own intellectual achievements, regardless of how wise or how learned he may become, is totally helpless in arriving at the will of God by his own learning and philosophy.

Second, since it is impossible for man by his own power of reason to discover the things of God, all knowledge of the will of God must come by divine revelation. There is no other way for man to know the mind of God (vv. 11, 12). Let us follow Paul as he now develops this thought:

“And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.” (Vv. 1, 2.) Paul does not mean that his speech lacked excellency or wisdom (it was probably characterized by both); he means that such wisdom was not the source of what he had preached. He preached Christ crucified, a thing he had already shown to be foolishness in the eyes of the world.

His preaching was neither in nor by the wisdom of men. “And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.” (Vv. 4, 5.)

The wisdom by which he spoke was from above. “Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.” (vv. 6-8.)

Man by all his wisdom, even with the centuries of accumulated knowledge, could never have conceived the scheme of redemption

as it is revealed by God in the Christian system. "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." (V. 9.) This is a quotation from Isaiah 64:4, a prophecy of the blessings of salvation which were to come in Christ, which blessings were revealed by the Holy Spirit through the apostles. This is confirmed by the next verse, where Paul says that the unthought-of, the unseen, the unconceived blessing had been revealed to them by the Spirit. "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." (V. 10.)

Thus man can know the will of God only as it is revealed to him. "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." (V. 11.)

What the apostles delivered was not, therefore, the product of their own mind nor the systematic arrangements of their own views: it was the revelation of God's will made known to them through the Spirit. "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual." (Vv. 12, 13.)

It is at this point, after he had established the fact that the will of God cannot be known by human wisdom but must come by divine revelation, that Paul draws his conclusion concerning the natural man and the spiritual man. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ." (Vv. 14-16.)

Contextually, then, the natural man is the man without revelation, a man who has no means of determining the will of God except by his own intellectual powers — he is any man who is not an instrument of revelation. He does not know God because he has no revelation from God. The natural man, then, is the uninspired man, the man through whom the Holy Spirit does not

reveal the things of God.

Now that we see the natural man is the uninspired man there is no difficulty in seeing that the spiritual man, since he is the exact opposite of the natural man, is an inspired man. He is the man through whom the revelation is delivered — the instrument used by the Holy Spirit to make known God's will to man. This is what Paul had in mind when he wrote to the Corinthians saying, "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord." (1 Cor. 14:37.) A spiritual man would know what was and what was not the commandments of God: for he would be an instrument through which such commands were delivered. Thus contextually the natural man is the man without revelation — that is, he is not an instrument through which revelation is delivered; the spiritual man is the one with revelation — the one through whom the Holy Spirit reveals the will of God. The natural man has nothing but human wisdom to guide him. And by human wisdom alone it is impossible to know the will of God. The spiritual man, on the other hand, is the receiver and deliverer of revelation — he can know the things of God because they have been revealed to him.

It should be noted here that while we have revelation delivered to us today in a different form — it is in the written word rather than in living men (inspired or spiritual men) — the principle remains the same: man cannot know the will of God by his own wisdom; he must depend upon revelation. And that revelation is found only in the inspired Scriptures.

It has not been my purpose here to indict human wisdom *per se*. It is one of man's most valuable assets when it is properly used. And its proper use is to learn, apply, and follow the revealed will of God. What I have tried to do is to show that Paul taught the absolute impossibility of arriving at a knowledge of the will of God by human wisdom, reason, and logic, regardless of how advanced in learning the intellect may be. God has no argument with learning. In fact, I believe that it is God's will for all of us to learn all we are capable of learning. But one may get all the degrees offered by all the institutions of higher learning in the world; he may advance in technology to the point where he can level the mountains, bridge the seas, dry up marshes, water the deserts, harness the atom, and explore the outer reaches of space; yet if he is to know the will of God he must do so by means of

revelation. This is God's way of reminding us that the Creator is superior to the creature, that the intellect must be brought into subjection to His will. We must let Christ be our wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption (1 Cor. 1:30). Or, as Paul put it, "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." (2 Cor. 10:5.)

To make known the revelation, by which men can know the will of God, is the function of the Holy Spirit. He revealed and delivered the revelation through chosen men. The chosen men were the apostles of Christ (and those on whom the apostles laid their hands and imparted some specific gift). Our attention is now turned to the Holy Spirit and the apostles of Christ.

CHAPTER 2

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE APOSTLES OF CHRIST

A misconception of the Holy Spirit and His work leads to all kinds of error — indeed it may ultimately be the fundamental error underlying all other errors. And this is especially true of the failure to comprehend the Biblical teaching concerning the work of the Holy Spirit through the apostles of Christ. No one can properly understand the new covenant without at least a partial understanding of the apostles' role in its revelation, delivery, and confirmation. There is an old story, told here in poetic form, that forcefully illustrates this:

*'Tis told that when our Savior left this world
To sit again in majesty above,
He met the angel Gabriel up there,
Who questioned Him in rev'rence and in love.*

*"Dear Master," asked the angel, bowing low,
"Hast thou completed thy great sacrifice?"*

*"Yes, Gabriel," said Jesus; "That is true;
I've borne the agony; I've paid the price!"*

*"Before I left, I organized a group
Of my disciples, taught and trained by me,
Commissioned and commanded to proclaim
To all mankind salvation, full and free!"*

*"But, Master, can it be that thou hast left
To ordinary men from common clans
Thy kingdom's purposes? Suppose they fail!"
Our Lord replied: "I have no other plans!"*

During His earthly ministry Jesus chose 12 men to represent Him on earth when He ascended back to heaven. They were to receive the baptismal measure of the Holy Spirit, and by this means were to reveal the truth and speak for the Lord on all

matters pertaining to faith and practice. His will was revealed through them. They spoke for Him. They were His ambassadors. What they bound on earth was to be (in fact, was already) bound in heaven (cf. Matt. 16:16-19). They are therefore an integral and imperative link in the revelation of God's will to man. In short, the Holy Spirit revealed God's will to man through the apostles of Christ. But in order to see the thrust of this, we need to get a broader Biblical perspective of the function of the apostles under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

THE PROMISES MADE

Jesus made many promises to His chosen apostles, but we are concerned here only with the ones directly pertaining to the reception of the Holy Spirit and what resulted therefrom. We will take a look at these under the four following headings:

1. Baptism of the Holy Spirit. John the Baptist was the first in the New Testament to point out the fact that the coming Savior would give something extraordinary to His disciples. He said, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." (Matt. 3:11.) Here two baptisms are mentioned: one with fire and the other with the Holy Spirit. Whatever else we may learn from this verse, we should first observe that Christ alone was the administrator of both the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the baptism in fire. No one else was ever authorized to administer either of these. Thus only Christ baptizes in the Spirit, and, as we shall see, He baptized only those He had chosen as His apostles and sent on a special mission to the world (He also baptized the household of Cornelius in Acts 10, but this was done for the benefit of the apostles). The baptism in fire is another matter, but even so, only Christ could administer it too. I believe this has reference to the eternal punishment of those who reject the message of Christ. Christ alone has the right to determine when and who is to be lost forever — He alone can destroy the soul in hell. Thus He alone baptizes in fire.

The promise of Holy Spirit baptism was received on the day of Pentecost, as is recorded in Acts 2. Keep this in mind when we study the promises received.

2. Keys of the kingdom. In connection with the baptism of the

Holy Spirit Christ promised the apostles the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Jesus said, "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be boud in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Matt. 16:19.) While this statement was spoken to Peter alone, the principle involved certainly applies to all the apostles. The keys were symbols of authority, the authority that was delegated to the apostles by Christ. No one else, then or now, was given this authority — it was something peculiar to the apostles. Their mission, the reason they were chosen, called, and sent, was to authoritatively represent Christ on earth after He ascended back to heaven — they were His spokesmen in the establishment and propagation of Christianity. Or as Paul put it, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." (2 Cor. 5:20.)

No one but the apostles of Christ was ever given the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Their mission and function were unique.

3. Judges. The function of the apostles in the Christian system is summed up in the following words: "And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Matt. 19:28.) The context will show that the "ye which have followed me" were the apostles. "In the regeneration" can hardly bear any meaning but the period of time (the Christian age) when men would be regenerated or born again. "The regeneration" is the exact time "when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory." Christ took His seat on the right hand of God when He ascended back to heaven (Acts 7:56; Heb. 1:1-3) and will remain there until His second coming (1 Cor. 15:24-28). Thus "the regeneration" is the time between Christ's ascension and His coming again. But in the regeneration (the Christian age) the apostles were to sit on 12 thrones, judging the 12 tribes of Israel (the 12 tribes of Israel obviously means the spiritual Israel of God or Christians, not the literal 12 tribes of ancient and fleshly Israel). The thrones are simply symbols of authority. The apostles were thus to be the judges (exercising the authority delegated to them by Christ) of spiritual matters during the time the Christian system would be in effect. They were to reveal heaven's decisions on all matters of faith.

In the sense Jesus used the term in Matthew 19:28, the apostles of Christ are the only judges in the Christian dispensation. They are the ones through whom Christ gave His law or gospel. They are the deliverers of heaven's verdict on all matters pertaining to right and wrong to the followers of Christ.

4. Reveal all truth. The Holy Spirit was given to the apostles to reveal to them, and through them to the world, the will of God. This is the primary function of both the Spirit and the apostles, and it is clearly shown by three statements made by Jesus to them: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." (John 14:26.) "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning." (John 15:26, 27.) "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." (John 16:13, 14.) All of these statements taken together simply state that the Holy Spirit was to reveal the truth, all the truth, to and through the apostles (and, of course, those chosen by the apostles to receive special gifts, especially the gift of inspiration). This was the Lord's method of making His will known. The apostles were thus instruments in the revelation of God's will to men. They made known to men what the Holy Spirit revealed to them.

As long as the apostles lived the Spirit continued to speak through them. The word of God was in living men. However, in the very nature of things the apostles would sooner or later have to put off the tabernacle of clay — their flesh would return to the dust and their spirits to God. To prepare for the time when no apostles would be living on the earth, the Holy Spirit guided them to write down the message they had received. What they wrote became the New Testament. And when they died, the message ceased to be in living men but was contained in an inspired Book, the Bible. It is precisely the same message as before, spoken by the same authority, and having the same power. The only difference is that it was in the men while they lived but is now in the Book after they died. It is still the apostles' doctrine (Acts 2:42) and it

still says that by which all men are to be judged. Thus we can say that the apostles through the Holy Spirit still reveal the truth. They are still the only authoritative spokesmen for Christ. Heaven's will is now revealed through inspired words.

THE PROMISE RECEIVED

After His resurrection, Jesus showed Himself alive to His chosen apostles (and unto a few others) for a period of 40 days. During this time He gave them many instructions and insights concerning the approaching kingdom. He told them, "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." (Acts 1:5.) This is simply to remind them that the promise He had previously made to them was to be fulfilled shortly — the baptism of the Holy Ghost would be received not many days hence, not many days in the future. The apostles fully realized this when the Holy Spirit was given to them on the next Pentecost day.

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they [the apostles] were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." (Acts 2:1-4.) Under the power and direction of the Holy Spirit, the reception of which was the fulfillment of a prophetic message, Peter proclaimed the gospel for the first time in the Christian age. "But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into

blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Acts 2:14-21.) He concluded this sermon with the promise of the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit for all those who would believe in Christ, repent of sins, and submit to Him in full and complete obedience to all gospel requirements. Peter said, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2:36-38.)

There can, therefore, be no doubt about it: the apostles received a miraculous outpouring of the Holy Spirit (called the baptism of the Holy Spirit by both John the Baptist and Jesus) on the day of Pentecost following the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, and this was received as the fulfillment of the promise made to them by Christ. Such an outpouring was not given to everyone, but only to those to whom it had been promised by the Lord. Men err gravely today when they expect to receive or promise to others that measure of the Spirit promised and given only to the apostles. It was given to them by Christ Himself to enable them to better carry out His will — to reveal and confirm the will of God to all men in all ages of the church. Paul, writing about the unique gift of the apostles, said, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual." (1 Cor. 2:12, 13.) Thus in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, the apostles received that which Christ had promised.

RESULTS OF THE PROMISE RECEIVED

The reception of the Spirit in its miraculous measure on Pentecost was the reception of the power promised by Jesus to the apostles. "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in

Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” (Acts 1:8.) The power was to aid them in carrying out the Great Commission. While we cannot say absolutely that all the results we are to mention here came directly from the promise received, all are so closely tied together that it is impossible to Scripturally separate them and without the outpouring of the Spirit the results would never have occurred as they did. We should therefore have a clear conception of the results of the promise received.

1. They were enabled to speak in tongues. Since the tower of Babel, the language barrier has complicated the process of communication (and that was the original design). But the Lord, who originally imposed it, broke this barrier for the apostles and for those to whom they imparted the power in apostolic times. “They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” (Acts 2:4.) They were thus enabled to speak in new languages, languages which they had never studied. It was not ecstatic utterances, such as characterizes the modern Pentecostal movement. Such utterances are utterly unknown in the Scriptures. The “tongues” spoken by the apostles were the languages understood by the people they were addressing. There were at Jerusalem at this time Jews from “every nation under heaven.” Yet, “every man heard them speak in his own language.” (Acts 2:6.) Since they knew all those who spoke were Galileans, they were amazed and asked, “How hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?” (Acts 2:8.) Only by the power of God could one speak in a foreign language, one he had never studied or learned. But that is precisely what the apostles did.

The apostles, therefore, spoke with new tongues, languages that were new to them. This extraordinary power was given to them so they could preach, as the Great Commission charged, and without delay, to every nation under heaven. They not only received the message by the power of the Holy Spirit, they were also enabled to preach it by the same power. This is the real purpose of speaking in tongues.

2. They were given miraculous power. While they obviously had some such power before the Holy Spirit descended on them at Pentecost (see for example Matthew 10:7, 8), there seems to have been a vast difference before and after the Spirit’s reception. We may not be able to pinpoint this precisely but perhaps before

Pentecost it was limited to certain occasions, under the immediate direction of Christ Himself. But after Pentecost they were filled with power directly — that is, they were filled with the Spirit who was the power. The power was in them, a part of their total makeup. Mark's account closes with the following words: "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following." (Mark 16:17-20.) The book of Acts records many of the miracles which the apostles did in confirming the word they received and preached.

It should be noted, however, that miracles were always performed for a divine reason or purpose. They were not a plaything given to satisfy curiosity or to alleviate human suffering as such. In Bible times they had a higher purpose — the purpose of receiving, teaching, and confirming the word of God. Take healing for example. It was never performed, as far as can be determined by the Bible, for bodily comfort alone — that is, healing *per se* was not the end in view. Paul had long been afflicted with some infirmities (2 Cor. 12:7-10); Timothy was often sick, probably with stomach trouble (1 Tim. 4:20); and Paul left Trophimus sick at Miletum (2 Tim. 4:20). None were miraculously healed. Why? Because healing (and all miracles) were for a higher purpose. And John states that purpose as follows: "Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." (John 20:30, 31.)

The miraculous power given to the apostles by the Holy Spirit proved that they were sent by the Lord and that the gospel they preached was His word. That was the reason for miraculous power, and as far as the divine record is concerned it was exercised for no other purpose.

3. The apostles had the extraordinary power of passing on to others, by the laying on of their hands, different miraculous gifts. They had laid hands on Philip (Acts 6:6) and Philip went to Samaria to preach, confirming his message with miracles (Acts

8:6). But he could not pass the power on to others. The apostles Peter and John came from Jerusalem to lay their hands on the ones Philip had baptized to impart to them the Holy Spirit (gifts of the Holy Spirit) (Acts 8:12-24). There was no apostle in Rome, so Paul wrote, "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established." (Rom. 1:11.) While many in the apostolic church thus had miraculous powers, given to them by the laying on of the hands of the apostles, only the apostles had the power to impart such gifts to others.

The widespread use of miraculous gifts (for a list of the gifts, see 1 Corinthians 12:8-10) during the early days of Christianity was to help the infant church on toward maturity (cf. Eph. 4:11-15). The New Testament had not yet been written. The revelation was still in living men rather than in the written word, as it now is. And since there were not enough apostles to go around regularly to all churches to correct and call to memory the gospel preached by them (and all other gospels were forbidden, Gal. 1:6-12), they were given the power to impart the needed gifts to enable others to carry on the work until the New Testament was completed. When the New Testament was completed, the gifts had served their purpose. Thus when the apostles died the gifts ceased of their own accord (1 Cor. 13:8-10). They had a purpose, they served their purposes, and then they passed away.

4. The apostles spoke with the authority of Christ. To show this we need to refer momentarily back to the personal ministry of Jesus while He was here on earth. He personally chose 12 disciples (later to become apostles) to train them for the world's most important and vital work, the task of revealing, preaching, and confirming the divine scheme of human redemption to all the world. He taught them in many different ways that His work would be left in their hands. He promised that the Holy Spirit would be with them (John 16:7), would guide them into all truth (John 16:13), and would speak through them (Matt. 10:20; Acts 2:4). He vested in them the right (authority) to bind and loose on earth (Matt. 16:19). He said to them, "He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me." (Matt. 10:40.)

When Jesus arose from the dead He told the apostles that He had been given all power (authority) in heaven and in earth (Matt. 28:18-20), and by that authority He commissioned them, saying,

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” (Mark 16:15, 16.) To further reveal their mission, John informs us that Jesus told them, “Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.” (John 20:23.) The mission of the apostles was to proclaim the plan whereby sinful men could receive the remission of their sins. They were to remit sins by announcing the terms of remission. Jesus sent them to set in operation God’s scheme of human redemption — the system that had been planned and promised all down through the ages. Never before had eye seen, nor ear heard, nor had it ever entered into the hear of man (1 Cor. 2:9, 10) the things which the Lord authorized His apostles to make known.

It can therefore be easily seen that when the apostles spoke, they spoke for Christ — He had vested in them the authority to speak for Him. But they were not left to their own unaided reason, conclusions, and conjectures. The Holy Spirit was given to them so they could inerrantly receive, proclaim, and confirm God’s will on all matters pertaining to life and godliness. They, like the prophets before them, spoke by the inspiration of the Spirit. “For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” (2 Pet. 1:21.) Thus the apostles spoke, whether orally or in writing, with the authority of heaven. To reject them, their word and authority would be to reject Christ Himself: for it was by His authority, delegated to them through the Holy Spirit, that they spoke. As Paul said, “For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.” (1 Cor. 2:16.)

5. The apostles were the ambassadors of Christ. The authority of the apostles derives from the fact that they were the ambassadors of Christ — the highest representatives Christ had on earth. The early church continued in the apostles’ doctrine (Acts 2:42) because it received what they said as the inspired will of God for all men — the plan whereby lost man could be saved. As long as the apostles lived, there was never a dispute among Christians over this matter. All acknowledged their word, whether oral or written, as the word of God, spoken through the apostles by the Holy Spirit. The question is often asked, “How was the canon (the books which make up the Bible) determined and who

made the choice as to which books would be included and which would be excluded?" While theologians have expended much energy and weaved many theories to answer this question, the solution is so simple that they stumble over it. The only criterion that was ever applied to a book was to ask, "Was this book written by an apostle or some other inspired man?" If the answer was positive, there was no choosing or selecting: it was a part of the inspired Scriptures and had been from the time it was written. If, however, the answer was negative, it was not, could not be, and never would be considered a part of the canon. The words of the apostles from the very beginning of the church on Pentecost were considered the revelation of God's will. They spoke, not their own words, but the words of God. The apostles were therefore the Lord's authoritative spokesmen.

Paul wrote: "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." (2 Cor. 5:19, 20.) The word for "ambassador" here comes from a Greek word (*presbeuomen*, 1st per. plur. pres. ind. of *presbeuo*) which means, according to Thayer (2nd def.), "to be an ambassador, act as an ambassador." *Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary* (2nd ed. unabr.) says an ambassador is "the highest diplomatic representative that one sovereign power or state can send officially to another." Since the apostles are the ambassadors of Christ, they are the highest-ranking representatives heaven has on earth. They speak for Christ — their words are the words of Christ. In another passage Paul says, "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord." (1 Cor. 14:37.) What Paul here says of himself can be equally said of all the apostles. They were the inspired spokesmen delivering God's will to man. What they bound on earth is bound in heaven; what they loosed on earth is loosed in heaven. There is no appeal from what they proclaimed. "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." (Gal. 1:8, 9.)

6. The apostles wrote the gospel which they preached in the

New Testament with a view of it being received as the divine standard by which all faith and practice was to be judged for all time to come. This fact has been accepted by the vast majority from the very beginning. But when liberalism, which denies the inspiration of the Scriptures, denies that the Bible is anything more than a human book, began to creep into the church, those in sympathy with its methods and views began to ask: "Did the writers of the New Testament know or understand when they wrote that they were composing Scripture or a canon of authoritative rules for all people of all time to come? Did they know that their words were to be received and accepted differently from the words of other Christians who wrote in the first century, but whose writings have not come down to us? Was it not true that the New Testament writers just wrote, somewhat haphazardly, not intending their words to be more than reasoned conclusions drawn from the facts they had in hand, but the early Christians took them, glorified and magnified them, and finally canonized them so that they were looked upon as Holy Scripture, something of which the original writers never conceived?" These questions suggest that the writers did not write authoritatively; they wrote only as other men write, but their writings were eventually exalted to the status of Scripture by the receivers. But nothing could be farther from the truth!

As far as the New Testament is concerned, there can be no question about the writers knowing that they were composing Scripture. There is no other way to explain many passages which plainly teach that the writers were aware that they were writing under the immediate direction of the Holy Spirit, that what they wrote was the word of God, inspired and infallible, originating in heaven rather than with men. For example, Paul wrote, "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." (1 Thess. 2:13.) Paul, therefore, not only recognized the words spoken by him as the words of God, words that God had spoken through him, he also commended the Thessalonians for receiving them as the words of God. The only possible way to explain this is to face the fact that Paul knew he was writing (and speaking) divine words. How else could he have commended the Thessalonians for receiving the word of God when in reality they had received the word preached

by Paul? He therefore knew that he was delivering to them the word of God.

But this fact can be further confirmed by other lines of Scriptural reasoning. I list only three:

First, the apostles were given authority to reveal, proclaim, and confirm the word of God. Their authority was derived from the fact that they were the ambassadors of Christ. The early church continued in the apostles' doctrine (Acts 2:42) because it received what they said as the inspired will of God for them . . . and for all men — they received the message preached by the apostles as God's plan to save lost men. As long as the apostles lived there was never a dispute over this matter. In fact, to try to destroy his authority, false teachers questioned Paul's apostleship (see 1 Cor. 9). His defense was to show that he was an apostle. And all acknowledged that the words of an apostle, whether oral or written, were the words of God.

Second, the apostles knew that they were the representatives of Christ and that a representative spoke for the represented. Paul wrote to Timothy, a young evangelist, "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good words." (2 Tim. 3:14-17.) The original word for "inspiration" means "God breathed or breathed out" — the Scriptures are breathed of God. Thus when the Scriptures speak it is God speaking, not God speaking directly but God speaking through His representatives. The apostles were well aware of this fact as it pertained to the Old Testament. But Peter classed the writings of Paul equally with Old Testament Scriptures, calling them both Scripture. He said, "And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction." (2 Pet. 3:15, 16.) As representatives of Christ, what they wrote was Scripture, and there can be no doubt but that they

knew this.

Third, that which was delivered by the apostles was the system of faith that all must contend for and abide in. Jude wrote, "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once [once for all, ASV] delivered unto the saints." (Jude 3.) As I have indicated in the quotation, "once delivered" of the King James Version is "once for all delivered" in the American Standard Version — a deliverance never to be repeated. But who delivered the faith? The apostles (and those chosen to assist them). This is why they were called the ambassadors of Christ. But how did they deliver it? It was first delivered orally, but ultimately it was written — the same gospel but in written form.

We must conclude, therefore, that the apostles knew that they were speaking and writing the word of God at the time they were speaking and writing it. That is the reason why they wrote! The apostles now exercise their power and authority through the written word. Jesus instructed John, "What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia." (Rev. 1:11.) "Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter." (Rev. 1:19.) While there is no direct command revealed in the New Testament for the apostles to write a completed system, the command given to John shows that the principle of the instructions recognizes the power of the written as well as the spoken word. And the whole thrust of the New Testament proves that the writers believed they were delivering the will of God to the world and that they were doing so under the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit . . . and consequently what they wrote was the revealed will of God (see for example 1 Cor. 14:37; Eph. 3:1-7; 2 Pet. 3:15, 16). Peter sums it up by saying: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Pet. 1:19-21.) What is said here of prophecy is true of the whole canon of Scripture. "Holy men of God spake [and wrote] as they were moved [or carried along] by the Holy Ghost." This is why the

Scriptures are said to be inspired. When the Scriptures speak it is God speaking.

What the apostles wrote was Scripture. Thus the apostles speak today through the written word. It is the authoritative standard by which all things pertaining to life and godliness must be judged. We must now go to the written word to determine what is right and what is wrong — what is approved and what is condemned by God. There is no other source of authority. The apostles, therefore, exercise their power and authority through the written word.

CONCLUSION

We can now see that the work of the Holy Spirit through the apostles is an integral part of the scheme of human redemption — in fact, the scheme of redemption was revealed by the Holy Spirit through the apostles. The following is a summary of the chain of revelation:

1. God speaks His will to man.
2. God speaks His will to man today through Christ.
3. Christ speaks the will of God through the Holy Spirit.
4. The Holy Spirit reveals and confirms that will through the apostles of Christ.
5. The apostles speak the confirmed will through the written word. The will of God is thus revealed today in the written word of God . . . and by no other means! Those who obey God, those who follow Jesus Christ, and those who are led by the Holy Spirit must be in subjection to the inspired Scriptures.

With these facts about the apostles of Christ before us we can now proceed to a study of the Comforter, the work the Holy Spirit was to do through the apostles of Christ.

CHAPTER 3

THE COMFORTER

To properly understand the New Testament, to be able to handle aright the word of truth, it is imperative that one understand the work of the apostles of Christ. But to understand the work of the apostles, one must understand the work of the Holy Spirit through them. And it is immensely helpful, in understanding the work of the Holy Spirit through the apostles, to see the Spirit's function as Comforter.

The word "Comforter" (Greek, *parakletos*) appears five times in the New Testament and it is used only by John. Four times (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7) it has reference to the "Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost" (John 14:26), and one time to Christ (1 John 2:1). Following are the verses in which it has reference to the Holy Spirit:

"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever." (John 14:16.)

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." (John 14:26.)

"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me." (John 15:26.)

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." (John 16:7.)

Nearly the whole scope of the work of the Holy Spirit which was done through the apostles can be seen in the context of these four verses. But before we go further it should be observed that the context limits the work of the Comforter to that done through the apostles, the men chosen by Christ through whom His will was to be revealed. No one else is under consideration in these verses.

What the Comforter was sent to do He did through the apostles. It would do violence to the Scriptures to apply His work, as set forth by these verses in the context, to all Christians. While there is undoubtedly a sense in which many of the principles could be applied to every child of God, which includes us today, the work that is assigned in the context is the work the Spirit accomplished through the special representatives of Christ. While He may be said to be the Comforter to other Christians in an indirect sense (He is Comforter to them through that which He did through the apostles), the apostles are the exclusive receivers of Him in the sense He is promised in the four verses now under consideration. He was to do His work through them.

THE COMFORTER

Two questions need to be raised and answered at this point: First, what is the meaning of the word "Comforter"? Second, what function is inherent in its meaning? When we have the Scriptural answer to both questions we will have the Scriptural meaning of the Comforter and the function He performs. The answers are now given in order:

First what does the word "Comforter" mean? In the original Greek it is a compound word made up of *para*, to the side of, and *kaleo*, to call or summon. Hence it literally means one who is called to the side of another. It is, Vine says, "A verbal adjective, and suggests the capability or adaptability for giving aid. It was used in a court of justice to denote a legal assistant, counsel for the defence, and advocate; then, generally, one who pleads another's cause, an intercessor, advocate, as in 1 John 2:1, of the Lord Jesus. In the widest sense, it signifies a succourer, comforter. . . ."

The concept in *parakletos* is expressed by a number of English words. The Revised Standard Version translates it "Counselor"; Goodspeed, "Helper"; and the New English Bible, "Advocate." Any of the four words, Comforter, Counselor, Helper, or Advocate, may be used to render the original concept, namely, the Holy Spirit's coming in beside the apostles to aid them in pleading their cause. When the apostles preached the revealed truth of the gospel, the Holy Spirit was to come to their aid as, to use Vine's expression, the Counselor for the defense.

Second, what function (in making known the scheme of human

redemption) is inherent in the meaning of Counselor for the defense? How does the Spirit come in beside the apostles to plead their cause?

Perhaps the answer can best be shown by setting up an imaginary court scene (the items of which cannot always be congruent with a civil court). In this imaginary court each individual is the judge, the devil is the prosecutor, the truth (as preached by the apostles of Christ) is the defendant, and the Holy Spirit is the defense attorney. When the trial is set, the devil tries to reduce the truth preached by the apostles to the level of wordly wisdom — to make God's truth no more than the devil's lie. But the Holy Spirit comes to the defense of truth by proving that the apostles' doctrine is divine revelation, that it is the truth of God.

But how is the truth sustained by the Comforter — how does the Defense make His case? He does so by confirming the words preached with signs, wonders, and miracles (Mark 16:17-20; Heb. 2:1-4). But before we can see the validity of His defense we must understand the Scriptural connotation of a miracle.

A miracle is God intervening directly — God acting without the laws of nature to produce an end which would ordinarily be produced by the laws of nature. A miracle is God working directly; nature is God working indirectly. A miracle is not (or at least it is not necessarily) an act contrary to or in contradiction with nature (sometimes God uses nature in the miraculous). It is simply a direct act of God. Because He is the God of nature and because He is above or beyond nature (the giver of nature) He does not necessarily have to act contrary to nature in order to intervene in or work without natural processes. Thus a miracle is God acting other than by His natural means or established laws.

The Comforter sustains the truth by confirming it with a miracle . . . and a miracle places God's stamp of approval upon it. When the devil attacks any subject of revelation, the Counselor for the defense gives (through the apostles) the evidence necessary to sustain it as the revelation of the will of God. To substantiate this, we will take three examples:

1. The virgin birth of Christ. The devil exerts all his efforts trying to convince men that Christ was naturally born, that His birth was no different than the billions of others who have been born since God made Adam. Here he stakes his case. But the Holy Spirit has presented an irrefutable case for the virgin-born Son of God (Matt. 1:18-23; Luke 1:26-38). In fact, His case is so secure

that one cannot reject the virgin birth without rejecting the whole scheme of redemption. Because Jesus is virgin born He can be called Emmanuel, which being interpreted is "God with us" — God in the flesh! The Counsel for the defense wins on this score.

2. The perfect life of Christ. Everyone is aware of his own weaknesses (unless he is deluded) and he knows that moral perfection is beyond the reach of mortal man. Thus the prosecutor of truth (the devil) exerts his energy to show that Jesus sinned. He knows that if this can be proven, then the judge (each individual) will have to render a verdict in his favor: for he will have proven that Jesus was nothing more than an ordinary sinful human being (and one sinful human being cannot make an adequate sin offering for another sinful human being). But the Holy Spirit presents Christ as sinless, thus one who is more than man and one who can be a perfect sacrifice for sins. "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." (1 Pet. 2:22, 23.) Both friend and foe are challenged to convict Him of even one sin (John 8:46). Twenty centuries have come and gone and still no man has ever successfully accused Christ of sin. Since none has, none can, and none ever will; the defense has an airtight case.

3. The resurrection of Christ from the dead. Here the devil has huffed and puffed, but he has never been able to blow loose one smattering of the evidences. The evidences for the resurrection are perhaps the most substantiated facts pertaining to the Christian faith. Besides the eye witnesses (more than 500 who all saw Him after the resurrection at one time), the Holy Spirit has given us the empty tomb (Luke 24:1-12; John 20:1-10), the efforts of the enemies of Jesus to explain the missing body (Matt. 28:11-15), and the fact that the resurrection was central to the gospel message (the focal point of its power), which was preached and believed in Jerusalem shortly after the event occurred. Had there been any possible way to successfully deny the resurrection, it would have been done by unbelievers when the gospel was first proclaimed. But it was not denied then with any more reason than it is denied now. The Counselor for the defense made sure that His case was secure — to win or lose here was to win or lose the whole case. The resurrection of Christ is certain. And the defense rests.

As the Holy Spirit has confirmed the words of the apostles in these three cases, He so sustains every truth, fact, or incident set

forth in the Scriptures.

THE COMFORTER'S WORK

There are at least eight works assigned to the Comforter in the context of John 14:16-16:15. It would be immensely helpful if each reader would turn now and read John 14, 15, and 16 (the section is much too long to transcribe here). By reading the whole section it will be easy to observe that the context shows that the works ascribed to the Comforter are, without any question, the works He was to do through the apostles and other miraculously endowed men chosen to assist them in the revelation, confirmation, and deliverance of the word of God. Both the context and the works clearly mark this limitation. And to apply them to anyone else, as is often done by those who believe that the Spirit still works in men directly today, is to do grave violence to the Scriptures — it is to ignore the context and make application as if no limitations were involved. The Comforter did His work through the apostles.

With this in view, we can now begin our study of the works assigned to the Comforter in John 14:16-16:15.

THE ABIDING COMFORTER

The Comforter was to abide with the apostles forever. Jesus said: "If you love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever." (John 14:15, 16.) This is extremely significant when we realize the facts with which the apostles were confronted:

1. The Lord had taught them that the law, which they loved and under which they had lived, was soon to pass away and be replaced by a new covenant. While Jeremiah had foretold this event, as well as all the prophets from Moses to John the Baptist (Jer. 31:31ff), the Jews had not comprehended the radical nature of the change. The law had been given for a specific purpose and for a specific period of time only. It was never meant to be a permanent arrangement. When its purpose was served, it came to an end. Jesus had already told the apostles and others, in His sermon on the mount, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For

verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." (Matt. 5:17, 18.)

The end or the purpose of the law was to bring men to Christ. Thus when Christ came, it had served its purpose. Paul wrote: "Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one. Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster [tutor, ASV] to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster." (Gal. 3:19-25.) Thus the law was to change.

2. But this was not all: Jesus had just announced that He too would be taken from them soon — that He was going back to the Father. "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John 14:1-3.) The law was going to be taken away and they were going to be deprived of His personal presence.

With the law being abolished and with Christ going away, what were they to do? It must have seemed to them that everything worthwhile was being taken away. This would leave them hopeless and unable to cope with the future. They must have been asking, "Is anything permanent?" So lest they despair, Jesus announced that the Comforter, when He came, would abide with them forever.

The Holy Spirit would, therefore, never leave the apostles, nor would the world be able to take Him from them. When Jesus promised the Comforter, He went on to say, "Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." (John 14:17.) While it is certainly true that

the world cannot receive the Spirit as the apostles did (and even as Christians do), this verse obviously has a more vital connotation. The word "receive" is from the Greek *lambano*, which means, according to Young, "to take or receive." Thayer divides his definitions up into the same two sections, the first headed "to take" and the second "to receive." His first definition under "to take" is: "to take with the hand, lay hold of." A few examples will show how the word is used in this sense. "Take away thy coat" (Matt. 5:40), Jesus took bread (Matt. 26:26), "When he had taken the five loaves" (Mark 6:41), the first of seven sons took a wife, so did the second, and the seven all had her (Mark 12:20-22), "And, lo, a spirit taketh him" (Luke 9:39) all show the use of the word in this sense. The point, in the context of John 14, is obvious: while the world could lay hold of Christ and crucify Him, thus removing Him from them, it could not take the Comforter by such means. But why could the Comforter not be taken from them? Because He dwelled with them and in them. He would abide with them permanently: for the world had no means of preventing it nor power to take Him from them.

But why emphasize this point so strongly? Because it shows that the work of the Spirit through the apostles was to be permanent — it would not change with changing society nor be driven away by opposition. Once the Spirit came, the world had only one alternative: it could accept the Spirit and His work and be saved or reject Him and the system He revealed and be lost. The world could not force Him out or ignore Him away or crucify Him or put Him in prison or destroy Him. His abiding presence was a fact the world would have to face, and all efforts to remove Him, whether terrestrial or infernal, would be futile. He was to abide with them forever!

THE TEACHING COMFORTER

The second work ascribed to the Comforter is the fact that He was to teach the apostles all things. Jesus promised, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." (John 14:26.) He was to teach them things pertaining to the will of God, even beyond the things taught by Christ during His earthly ministry — He was to teach them and they were in turn to teach the world

(Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15, 16).

To teach means to impart information in such a way that it can be implanted in another. Thus the Holy Spirit was to impart to the apostles the will of God in such a way as to make it understandable to them . . . and to others. His mission was to teach, and the content of His teaching was to be the will of God.

A question of vital interest comes up here: how did the Spirit teach the apostles, especially in the things which were not taught by Christ personally? How did they receive the message from Him? He taught them by revelation. But what is revelation? Revelation, as it is used here, is making known the mind of God to the mind of men (cf. Col. 1:25, 26; Eph. 3:1-6). Other words expressing the idea of revelation are "manifested," "revealed," "preached," "understand," "dispensation," etc. Thus the function of the Holy Spirit was to teach the apostles by revelation.

But we are also concerned here with the method of revelation. How did the Holy Spirit make known God's will to man? Did He do so by man's own power of reasoning or learning? Did He permit man to draw conclusions from His own acts in history? Did He just stamp His approval upon the conclusions developed by man? Or did He reveal God's will to man in some direct way? In short, did revelation come as a result of man's own wisdom and power or by a miraculous intervention of God? While the Holy Spirit may have used to some degree man's reason, the acts of history, and the process of development, the Bible teaches that ultimately revelation is a divine intervention, a miraculous manifestation.

The problem here is this: how was the mind of God to be made known to the mind of men? The Bible teaches that it was to be done by the Spirit (1 Cor. 2:9-14). The Spirit was to take the contents of the divine mind and by some means (the means is called revelation) convey them to the human mind. The method He used to accomplish this was to put the mind of God into words, and by the words, which were familiar to man, convey to the human mind divine thoughts.

Just how the Spirit conveyed His words to the apostles (and others through whom He spoke) is not always fully revealed, but it was obviously done in part through their preaching (there were other means also, such as visions, Acts 10:9-22; 16:9, 10; 2 Cor. 12:1-6). On the day of Pentecost Peter preached to a vast multitude, but what he said was not his own words, but the words

of the Spirit — they spoke as the Spirit gave them utterance (Acts 2:4). That Peter did not fully comprehend all that he said is seen by the fact that he concluded by saying that the promise was to you (the Jews) and your children, and to all that are afar off (the Gentiles). Yet he did not fully understand this promise until years later when he was sent to the household of Cornelius (Acts 10-11). We can conclude, then, that the words of the Spirit, spoken through him, were as much addressed to him as they were to others, and he could have understood their meaning precisely as they did, by study and application. The Spirit was therefore revealing the will of God to him through his preaching. When Paul said, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly" (1 Tim. 4:1), he, in all probability, meant that the Spirit was speaking expressly through him or some other divinely guided man. If this is the case, the Holy Spirit taught them "all things" as He made the revelation known to others through them.

Regardless of how they received the revelation, the apostles were taught it by the Spirit. He spoke through them. And what He spoke did not come from their experience, wisdom, or knowledge. Paul wrote: "For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." (Gal. 1:10-12.) While the Holy Spirit teaches all men (indirectly or by the revelation delivered through the apostles), only the apostles were taught directly. The promise that the Spirit would teach them all things applies to them and to them alone in the sense of direct revelation.

Because the Holy Spirit taught them all things, and because they wrote down the words given to them by the Spirit, the Scriptures are said to be the revealed will of God, a complete system of righteousness providing all men with every spiritual need. Not one thing is lacking that is necessary to save a lost soul from sin or to direct him through this life to his eternal home. The Scriptures are therefore complete, completely furnishing the man of God to every good work (2 Tim. 3:16, 17). Or to make it more emphatic, Peter says, "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by

these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." (2 Pet. 1:3, 4.)

Thus the things the Holy Spirit taught the apostles are now passed on to us in the written word. For us to expect Him to reveal God's will to us directly by some subjective tug or emotional experience is to miss the truth absolutely. He taught the apostles and the apostles in turn teach us. While it is still the Spirit teaching through them, He is now doing it indirectly through the word of truth. To depart, therefore, from the written word (or to practice that which is not revealed therein) is to depart from the teaching of the Comforter.

THE REMINDING COMFORTER

Closely related to the idea that the Holy Spirit would teach the apostles all things, and stated in the same verse, is the fact that He would bring all things to their remembrance. While the former refers to things the Lord had not personally and specifically taught them, the latter has reference to the many things He had said to them during His personal ministry. Thus the Spirit functioned as a reminder. Or as Jesus said, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." (John 14:26.) This promise is, by its very nature, limited to the apostles (or to those whom the Lord had chosen and taught Himself).

Christ selected certain ones (Matt. 10:1-4) to be His ambassadors (2 Cor. 5:19, 20) or representatives on earth when He ascended back to heaven. He taught them many things, both publicly (Matt. 5:1-7:27) and privately (Matt. 13:10-18). After His resurrection and just before His ascension back to the Father, He commissioned them to go teach all nations, baptizing the taught, and then continuing to teach the baptized to observe all things He had commanded them (Matt. 28:18-20). He thus left His work in their hands — they were the instruments through which His message was to be delivered to the world.

But of the hundreds of things which Jesus taught them, how were they to remember them or present them as a system designed to save sinful man from his lost state? This seemingly was an impossible task, especially for unaided humans (who had no special gifts of intellectual attainment). But where they were

inadequate in themselves, the Holy Spirit came to fill their needs. It was to be His function to bring all things to their remembrance — they were to be miraculously reminded of all that Jesus had taught them. But how was this done? If it was done differently than the teaching of all things, the method is not revealed. But that it was done is evidenced in the fact that we have the four accounts (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) of the life and teaching of Jesus (and this in itself is evidence that these accounts are inspired — the Holy Spirit Himself was responsible for bringing their contents to the memory of the writers in such a way that no error is involved). The accounts of what Jesus taught, along with the other things revealed in the New Testament, make up the new covenant and the new covenant contains “all things that pertain unto life and godliness.” (2 Pet. 1:3.) What Jesus taught is what the apostles preached and wrote.

We can glean some interesting insights on the fact that the Holy Spirit was to teach the apostles all things and bring all things to their remembrance from a study of some references made by Paul. Evidently the Corinthians had written him asking some questions concerning the marriage of virgins (daughters) and the status of certain Christians who were married to unbelievers. Paul replied that on some matters the Lord had spoken but on others he was giving his judgment. His way of expressing this has led some to the conclusion that what he quoted from the Lord is inspired but that his own judgments were to be taken only as human opinion. But to see that this is not the case, we need to take a close look at what he says.

“And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband.” (1 Cor. 7:10.) Further, “But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away.” (1 Cor. 7:12.) Again, “Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.” (1 Cor. 7:25.) Here Paul clearly distinguishes between what he says and what the Lord had said. Does this mean that he spoke without inspiration when he was not quoting the Lord — that he here laid aside his claims to speak the commandments of the Lord (1 Cor. 14:37) and was therefore giving nothing more than his own opinion? Are we to take the words he said were spoken by the Lord as divine and the words spoken by Paul as human?

Absolutely not.

Paul says in the same connection, "But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches." (1 Cor. 7:17.) This could mean nothing but that which he had ordained was bound upon them as the revealed will of God. Thus when he refers to what the Lord had said, he has reference to that which was spoken by Christ during His early and personal ministry (that which the Holy Spirit was to bring to the memory of the apostles) and when he speaks of that which had not been spoken by the Lord, but by himself, he has reference to that which the Holy Spirit had taught him. This is the distinction Paul makes, and he obviously had no intention of saying that that which he said was less the word of God than that which was spoken by Christ Himself.

We conclude, therefore, that when Paul said, "I command, yet not I, but the Lord," he has reference to the teaching of Jesus on marriage, divorce, and remarriage, as is recorded in Matthew 5:28-32; 19:3-9. But when he says, "But to the rest speak I, not the Lord," he has reference to the revelation he had received (the things he had been taught by the Holy Spirit directly) by means other than through Christ's personal teaching. These verses are concerned with the manner in which the teaching was received, and not with whether they are inspired or not.

We do not have to conjecture about the validity of this conclusion because it is stated plainly by Paul himself. He says, "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord." (1 Cor. 14:37.) The issue is thus settled by the Scriptures themselves: all that Paul wrote was the word of God, some brought to his remembrance from what Jesus had personally said and the rest revealed to him by the Holy Spirit in some other way.

What is written in the New Testament is not, therefore, dependent upon the frail memory of fallible beings. It is what the Lord both said and revealed, and this is certified by the fact that the Holy Spirit was given to bring it all to the memory of the apostles.

THE WITNESSING COMFORTER

In addition to being an abiding, teaching, and reminding Comforter, the Holy Spirit was also to testify (bear witness, ASV) of Christ. Jesus said, "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me." (John 15:26.) It is significant to note in this connection that soon after Pentecost the apostles acknowledged the fact that the Spirit was bearing witness with them. "And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him." (Acts 5:32.)

The word "witness" (Greek, *martureo*) makes an interesting study, especially in this context. Vine's first definition (under which he lists John 15:26) is "to be a *martus*." The first definition given to *martus* in *The Analytical Greek Lexicon* is "a judicial witness, deponent" (the word "deponent" means one who gives evidences). Thayer says (under *martureo*), "To be a witness, to bear witness, testify, i.e., to affirm that one has seen or heard or experienced something, or that (so in the N.T.) he knows it because taught by divine revelation or inspiration. . . ." The context of John 15:26 clearly bears out this meaning. The next verse says, "And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning." "Also" shows that their witness was of the same character as that of the Spirit. They were to bear witness because they had been with Christ from the beginning, because they could testify of what they had seen and heard. (Of course the word is used in other senses, such as having a good report, Acts 6:3; 10:22, but our contention is that the context here limits it to one who gives out evidence from a personal knowledge.) The witness of the Spirit and the witness of the apostles, through whom the Spirit worked, were not to be a second-handed testimony or merely repeating the words of another witness. The facts were to be reported from a personal knowledge.

The testimony of the Holy Spirit would prove that Jesus Christ was in truth the Son of God. This necessitated the establishment of the following facts (and many others that are confirmed in the New Testament): His preexistence, His virgin birth, His sinless life, His faultless work, His sacrificial death, His glorious resurrection, His international commission, His extraordinary ascension, His

promise to come again, and His provision for the scheme of human redemption.

But how was the Holy Spirit to bear witness to these facts and thus to testify of Christ? Ultimately He did His work through the apostles — it was done by revealing and confirming the Christian system through them. Alford, in his *Greek Testament*, makes a valid observation in his comments on John 15:27. He says, “The disciples are not, as some have supposed, here mentioned as witnesses separate from and working with the Holy Spirit. The witness is one and the same — the Spirit will witness in and by them.” The witness of both are such integral parts of each other that to speak of the one is to speak of the other also. But to expand on this briefly, I make the following observations:

1. The Holy Spirit revealed and confirmed the Sonship of Jesus through the apostles. John, near the end of his book, stated his conclusion by saying, “And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.” (John 20:30, 31.) When the New Testament was completed, man had in his possession the revelation of God’s will — he was armed with the witness the Holy Spirit had borne of Christ.

2. The Spirit bore witness through the Scriptures. “Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.” (Heb. 10:15-17.) Since the Holy Spirit is the author of the Old Testament and what He says there is called His witness, and since He has (in bearing witness to Christ) revealed and confirmed the New Testament, we can safely conclude that He uses the whole Bible (all Scriptures which are inspired of God) to bear witness of Christ. We now have the witness of the Spirit in that which is written.

3. The Holy Spirit utilized the witness of others (which is ultimately the witness given through the Scriptures). In addition to the Scriptures (which we have already seen that He uses) John gives four other witnesses of Christ. John the Baptist was one (John 5:32-35). But even more powerful than the witness of John is the works that Christ Himself did (John 5:36), the works the Holy Spirit has recorded in the gospel. The Father himself is also a

witness (John 5:37). This in all probability refers to the time when God spoke from heaven at Christ's baptism and on the mount of transfiguration (Matt. 3:17; 17:5) to publicly acknowledge Christ as His beloved Son. The fourth witness given by John is Moses (John 5:45-47). The Spirit utilized all of these in His testimony concerning Christ.

4. The Holy Spirit confirmed His testimony with miracles, thus giving us assurance from God that His testimony is true. Luke records an incident that occurred during Paul's first missionary journey at Iconium: "Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands." (Acts 14:3.) Miracles had a far greater purpose than to alleviate human suffering or to satisfy curiosity. They were performed to confirm the word of God, to prove that what was being done had God's stamp of approval upon it. Or as Nicodemus said, "We know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." (John 3:2.) After recording the Great Commission, Mark closes his account by saying, "And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following." (Mark 16:20.) And the Hebrew writer settles the matter once and for all: "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?" (Heb. 2:3, 4.) Those who miss this concept miss the whole purpose of miracles.

To sum up then, our total knowledge of Christ rests on the testimony of the Holy Spirit (which He bore through the men who became His spokesmen). "This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth." (1 John 5:6.) "Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." (1 Cor. 12:3.) The Spirit gave witness of Christ through the apostles, using their knowledge, vocabulary, and experience — using what they had seen and heard. No one today can be a witness in this sense of the term. Our mission now is not to reveal

God's will to the world or to be witnesses of the facts of revelation, but to proclaim the revelation made known through the apostles, to preach the testimony of the original witnesses. There is a vast difference in preaching the word (that which we are commanded to do, 2 Tim. 4:2) and in serving as a witness to the facts contained in the word. The apostles were witnesses. Our commission is not to witness as they did but to preach the word as it was confirmed and delivered by them.

THE CONVINCING COMFORTER

Up to this point we have seen that the work of the Comforter is that of abiding, teaching, reminding, and witnessing. All of these functions have a vital role in the revealing and the delivering of the scheme of human redemption. Each shows some particular aspect of the work of the Holy Spirit as He works through the apostles to make known the will of God. But in addition to all of these, the Holy Spirit, as Comforter, has the function of reprove (or convicting) the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. Concerning this aspect of the Spirit's work, Jesus said, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." (John 16:7-11.) The function of the Spirit, as is set forth in these verses, is to reprove.

But before we can grasp the significance of the work here assigned to the Comforter we must understand what is involved in the word "reprove." The word is translated from a Greek word (*elegcho*) which, according to Vine, means "to convict, rebuke, reprove." Thayer's extended definition is: "1. to convict, refute, confute . . . contextually, by conviction to bring to light, to expose. 2. to find fault with, correct; a. by word; to reprehend severely, chide, admonish, reprove . . . Contextually, to call to account, show one has faults . . . b. by deed; to chasten, punish." Vincent, in his *Word Studies in the New Testament*, adds: "In the New Testament it is found in the sense of reprove (Luke 3:19; 1 Tim. 5:20, etc.). Convince of crime or fault (1 Cor. 14:24; Jas. 2:9). To bring to light or expose by conviction (Jas. 3:20; Eph.

5:11, 13; John 8:46; . . .). To test and expose with a view to correction, and so, nearly equivalent to chasten (Heb. 12:5). The different meanings unite in the word convict. Conviction is the result of examination, testing, argument. The test exposes and demonstrates the error, and refutes it, thus convincing, convicting, and rebuking the subject of it. This conviction issues in chastening, by which the error is corrected and the erring one purified. If the conviction is rejected, it carries with it condemnation and punishment. The man is thus convicted of sin, of right, and of judgment (John 16:8)."

While all this shows that the word has many but related meanings, it obviously has but one meaning in this context. And it will be extremely rewarding to find the word that best expresses that meaning in the verses under consideration. The King James Version translates it "reprove." This makes good sense when applied to sin, but not so much when applied to righteousness and judgment. One would hardly expect the Holy Spirit to reprove (rebuke) the world of righteousness (in the sense the word is usually used), since His mission was to reveal God's plan of making men righteous. The word "convict" is the favorite of translators, and it is the one used by the American Standard Version. But it has the same objection as "reprove" when applied to righteousness and judgment. Was it the function of the Holy Spirit to convict the world of righteousness? That seems highly unlikely unless one is thinking in terms of being brought under conviction subjectively, and even then there is a better word to express the concept. The word "convict" has the tendency to create in the mind (or at least this is true with me) the conclusion that the Counselor for the defense has switched sides and is now the prosecuting attorney — He is seeking a conviction rather than presenting convincing evidence. This seems incongruent with what we have already learned about the work of the Comforter. The Revised Standard Version comes to our rescue here by translating the word "convince." And that, in my judgment, is the precise word we are searching for. It can convey the correct concept when applied to either sin, righteousness, or judgment.

Note in particular the distinction in the words "convict" and "Convince." Webster says of convict, "1: to find or prove to be guilty 2: to convince of error or sinfulness." The same source says of convince: "3. to bring by argument to assent or belief." (Note: the first two definitions given by Webster are said to be obsolete.)

While the second definition of “convict” is basically the same as the present use of the term “convince,” the latter is less confusing and is therefore a better word to describe the Comforter’s work. His work was to convince the world of three things, namely, sin, righteousness, and judgment to come.

But how would He convince the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment? He did so through the revelation of truth, by abiding with the apostles, by His teaching through them, by bringing all things to their memory, and by bearing witness to the facts of the gospel. His method can be observed in every case of conversion recorded in the book of Acts. In each case the gospel was preached — it was heard by many and accepted by some. Those who believed it, repented of their sins, and were baptized in water for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38) were added to the family of God (Acts 2:47), which is the church (1 Tim. 3:15). They thus became new creatures in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). They were convinced of their sins, the need for righteousness, and the fact of the judgment through the teaching of the Spirit, and upon their conviction they rendered full and complete obedience to Christ as Lord.

Those, therefore, who became Christians did so because they had been convinced by the teaching of the Holy Spirit through the apostles that they were sinners, that the Lord had provided the means to make them righteous, and that all would be judged in that final day by the way they respond to the gospel. When Paul preached to governor Felix and his wife, Drusilla, concerning faith in Christ, the inspired account says, “And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.” (Acts 24:25.) Felix had obviously been convinced but he refused to act on his conviction. And as far as we know, he never had a convenient season — he turned his back on heaven’s offer of salvation.

The Comforter’s work of convincing involves three things: first, convincing the world of sin; second, convincing the world of righteousness; and third, convincing the world of the judgment to come. Let us now study each of these in a little more detail.

CONVINCING OF SIN

From the Scriptural standpoint, sin is the ultimate root of all the ills of man — his anguish, his sorrow, his suffering, his

weakness, his death are all, either directly or indirectly, the results of sin. Yet man continues to love sin, to hug it to his breast, to fill his heart with it, and to make it the philosophy of his life. Why? Because he has not been convinced of sin — convinced of its degradation, destruction, and death. Man still deceives himself into thinking that he can sin without ultimately paying the consequences, that he can sin without paying sin's price. Thus man must be convinced that the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23), and that there are no exceptions to this rule. The Bible warns, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." (Gal. 6:7.)

Before we go further we need to answer the question "What is sin?" *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia* says that the idea of sin is expressed in the Bible by Hebrew words meaning "a missing, rebellion, transgression, perversion, evil in disposition, impiety" and by Greek words meaning "a missing the mark, transgression, unrighteousness, impiety, contempt and violation of law, depravity, desire for what is forbidden, lust." It adds further, "Sin is an attitude of indifference, unbelief, or disobedience to the will of God revealed in conscience, law, or gospel — whether this attitude expresses itself in thought, word, deed, or settled disposition and conduct."

But to make our definition more practical we need to see some of the elements of sin as set forth in the Scriptures. Among the elements are: First, a missing the mark — not abiding in the teaching of Christ (2 John 9). Second, all unrighteousness or ungodly conduct. "All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death." (1 John 5:17.) Third, transgression or disobedience is sin. "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." (1 John 3:4; see also Gen. 2:16, 17; 3:1-6.) Fourth, sin is omission or a failure to do right. "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." (James 4:17.) Fifth, to act without faith or instructions from God is sin. This was undoubtedly the sin of Cain, which led to the rejection of his sacrifice (Gen. 4:3-5). Sixth, substitution or rendering other than that which is commanded by the Lord is sinful (Lev. 10:1-3; Num. 20:8-12). Seventh, it is sin to add to or go beyond or do more than that which is revealed (Rev. 22:18; Gal. 1:8; 3:15). Eighth, subtraction or coming short of that which the Lord requires is sin (Deut. 4:2; Rev. 22:19). Ninth, partial obedience is another element of sin. King Saul is an

example of one who sinned by doing only a part of what the Lord commanded (1 Sam. 15:1-23). Tenth, one sins when he fails to accept God's word as final, complete, and authoritative. This seems to have been the sin of Balaam in Numbers 22-24 (see also Gal. 1:6-9).

Sin, as a study of the elements shown, cannot be measured by what is generally considered evil (all sin is evil, but it is evil because it is in opposition to the will of God and not because it is in the form of overt wickedness). Sin is an attitude of the heart in which God and His law are dethroned while the ideas, opinions, ways, and laws of man are enthroned. The rules and laws of man cannot be enthroned (in matters pertaining to religion) without dethroning the law of God. Sin is dethroning God — dethroning Him by despising, rejecting, or replacing His law.

Actually sin is the opposite of righteousness. And righteousness is doing the will of God, submitting to Him as the ruler of the universe by obeying all His laws. Sin, as the opposite of righteousness, is a failure to do God's will or submit to Him as the rightful ruler of all creation or to obey His established law. Since God is the beginning, the originator, of all things, He is the absolute standard by which everything must be judged. Everything must ultimately be measured by Him (by His revelation — by His will revealed by the Spirit). Man is God's creation. He belongs to God absolutely, and all that he possesses is a matter of stewardship. It is therefore the Creator's prerogative to rule the creature, to impose His will upon him and to expect from him both implicit and explicit obedience. Any deviation from the will of the Creator by the creature is, by the very nature of the Creator-creature relationship, sinful. Or to state it another way, righteousness is the creature saying in total submission to the Creator, "Thy will be done." In doing so he is properly recognizing the Creator-creature relationship. He is acknowledging that God is the ruler and man is the ruled. Opposite this is the creature saying, in his refusal to submit to the Creator's rule "My will be done." The creature thus dethrones God and dethrones himself — he makes himself the ruler rather than the ruled! This is sin, the very nature of sin — the creature refusing to be ruled by the Creator.

"Thy will be done" is righteousness.

"My will be done" is sin.

It is the function of the Holy Spirit in the scheme of human redemption to convince man that his allegiance belongs to God,

not to himself — to convince man that sin is sin, that it is contrary both to God and to his own nature, that man was made for righteousness, not for wickedness, that those who sin must pay the penalty. “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Rom. 6:23.)

But how does the Comforter bring about this conviction? He does it today through the written word of God. He has shown what sin is, what it does to an individual, and the ultimate end to which it leads. Paul said he knew sin by the law. “What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.” (Rom. 7:7.) We know sin by the gospel. The New Testament reveals the righteousness of God (Rom. 1:16, 17), that which is the will of God, and all that is not revealed, all that is contrary to the revelation, all that leads men to exalt themselves above God, to destroy and disrespect the Creator-creature relationship, is sin. When one sees sin (sees what it does and understands what it is) he will surely cry out from the depths of his soul, “What must I do to be saved from this terrible curse?” Or, in the words of Paul, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Rom. 7:24.) When he reaches this attitude and displays this disposition, he has been convinced of sin. This state of mind is brought about by hearing, believing, and being willing to obey the word of God.

CONVINCING OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

We turn our attention now to righteousness, the righteousness of God, the righteousness which is attained by faith. In the final analysis, righteousness is being (or doing) right, right according to the will of God. And part of the mission of the Holy Spirit, as the convincing Comforter, is to convince men to be righteous.

Three kinds of righteousness are discussed in the New Testament, two of which are condemned, the other approved. First, there is the righteousness of the law — righteousness that resulted from the keeping of the law of Moses. Paul speaks of the righteousness which is in the law (Phil. 3:6) and concludes that this righteousness is fulfilled in Christ (Rom. 8:4; 3:31). He makes a sharp distinction between the righteousness of the law and salvation (Rom. 3:20; Gal. 2:21). Second, there is the righteousness of men, meritorious righteousness (even by law). This is a

righteousness, ordinarily devised by man, for which credit is due — a righteousness performed for reward. Such is totally unacceptable to God in the Christian age. “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.” (Eph. 2:8, 9.) “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.” (Titus 3:5.) Finally, there is the righteousness of God — the state or condition that is attained by doing the will of God. “But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference.” (Rom. 3:21, 22.)

The whole New Testament is given to reveal God’s plan for making man righteous (the righteousness of God in this context is not an attribute of God but has reference to the manner in or system by which God makes man righteous), but perhaps this is best stated in the book of Romans — Romans is Paul’s book on the salvation of the soul from sin. While it goes without saying that space prohibits a discussion of the whole book of Romans, we can give enough to sum up its fundamental teaching on righteousness. To start with, observe Paul’s statement concerning the Jews: “Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.” (Rom. 10:1-3.) The Jews were righteous by their own standards, which probably means the righteousness of the law, but they were ignorant of God’s righteousness, the righteousness which is by faith in Jesus Christ. They were therefore lost, and Paul was longing for their salvation. God had given a plan of righteousness in the gospel but they had rejected it. This plan had been fully explained by Paul in the previous chapters of Romans.

The theme of Romans is the gospel, God’s power to save (Rom. 1:16). The purpose of the gospel, the very reason it was given, is to save man from his sins. This is stated in Romans 1:18-3:19, where it is seen that all have sinned and all, therefore, need salvation. But how does the gospel save? This question is answered in great detail in Romans 3:20-11:39. The problem as Paul saw it,

the problem in sin that God had to deal with, was "How can God be just and still justify the sinner?" (Cf. Rom. 3:26.)

God had said to Adam and Eve, when He placed them in the garden of Eden, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (Gen. 2:16, 17.) Sin produces death in all men, not just in Adam alone. The day we sin is the day we die. But all have sinned (Rom. 3:23; 5:12). Therefore the penalty of death has passed upon all. God has said so, and the word of God cannot be broken. Thus the problem in salvation is to find some means or solution whereby the penalty can be lifted and God still be true to His word, be just and still justify the sinner. As Paul points out, the solution could not be found in the law. It was found only in Jesus Christ. Christ came into the world and died for man's sins — He died in man's stead. And by His death He provided an acceptable substitute for man's death penalty. Romans 4 shows how the blessing of salvation is appropriated through faith, faith in contrast to law. Faith here does not mean "faith only," as it is often understood. It means the system of faith, the gospel, in contrast with the law. Paul twice calls it the obedience of faith (Rom. 1:5; 16:26). In Romans 6 it is pointed out that the believer must be baptized into the death of Christ in order to receive the blessing — in order to have the death of Christ pay the sinner's penalty. Thus it is in Christ (not by works of law or merit) that one is counted righteous — he is counted righteous because his sin penalty has been paid by the death of Christ.

By this arrangement God accepts the death of Christ as the sinner's death, and the sinner is therefore freed from the penalty. Death is paid for sin (God is just) but the sinner does not have to remain eternally dead. God remains just and the sinner is free! The death of Christ meets the cry for mercy and satisfies the demands of justice. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" (Rom. 11:33.)

This concept can be further illustrated by an understanding of what Paul meant by "imputed righteousness" (Rom. 4). Paul does not teach that God imputes actual righteousness to believers — that is, makes them righteous when they are not right with God. To do this He would be forced to disregard man's free will (a thing God never does). Thus actual righteousness cannot be imputed to

man. The Bible says, "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous." (1 John 3:7.) Thus before one can be actually righteous he must practice righteousness. God does not make man something he is not.

When Paul speaks of "imputed righteousness" he means that one can, by faith in Christ (which involves complete submission to His will), reap the benefits of Christ's righteousness. When one believes in Christ (and meets all the conditions implied in that term), when he is in Christ, the righteousness of Christ is applied to his account — he is judged as a man in Christ, not by his own righteousness, but by the righteousness of Christ. Thus the man in Christ is counted righteous because he is in Christ, because his sins have been forgiven, because he is in covenant relationship with Christ. He is therefore justified by what Christ has done for him or made righteous by the death of Christ. Or to say the same thing another way, when one puts his trust in Christ the death of Christ counts for his death and the righteousness of Christ counts for his righteousness. In Christ one does not have to stand on his own merit. Righteousness therefore has two aspects: being right and doing right (being right by being in Christ and doing right by doing the will of Christ). One cannot be right without being in Christ and he cannot do right without doing the will of Christ. Righteousness, as Paul presents it, is having one's sins forgiven, living under the blood of Christ — the blood of Christ covers the sin penalty — and doing the will of God as it is revealed by the Holy Spirit in the word of God. "Imputed righteousness" is, therefore, the righteousness which is counted to one who has escaped the penalty of sin through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is the function of the Holy Spirit, acting as the convincing Comforter, to convince men that righteousness is in Christ, that salvation is possible only through Him. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12.)

CONVINCING OF JUDGMENT

The third function of the convincing Comforter is to convince the world of judgment. The judgment is a fact that all men should face, although very few actually do so. When Paul preached to

Felix of righteousness, temperance, and the judgment, Felix trembled (Acts 24:25). He had cause to tremble . . . and so have all men: for all must give an account for the things done in the body. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Cor. 5:10.) In view of the judgment, then, what manner of person ought we to be? How ought we to live? Surely if the Holy Spirit can convince us of the judgment there will be no question about us committing ourselves to God and preparing for the world to come.

The fact of judgment is based on man's accountability — the fact that man is only a steward of what he possesses and what he is. He owns nothing absolutely. The Bible teaches that all things belong to God — they are His by right of creation. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein." (Ps. 24:1.) "For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof." (Ps. 50:10-12.) "The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts." (Hag. 2:8.) "Behold, all souls are mine: as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die." (Ez. 18:4.) On this concept Paul based an argument to show that it is wrong for Christians to honor or recognize idols in any manner or fashion. He says, "But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that shewed it, and for conscience sake: for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." (1 Cor. 10:28.)

Since all things belong to God, nothing, not even his own soul, belongs to man in the absolute sense. All man's possessions are simply a trust committed to him by God, and in the final day he must give an account to God as to how he has made use of all that which has been placed in his hands.

Seemingly it is easier to see this principle when it is applied to the whole than when it is applied to each individual part. In an open-air Bible class several years ago I pointed to a huge mountain and asked the class, "Who owns that mountain?" They replied almost in unison, "God!" I then asked, "Suppose gold was discovered in the mountain: whose would it be?" This time the answer came more reluctantly, but it was the consensus of the class that it would belong to the one who found it. But not so. If

the mountain is the Lord's, so is the gold, or the silver, or the oil that is under it. Also the trees, the fruit, the herbs, and all that grow on it are His. Even the herds that graze thereon and the fowls that fly over it belong to Him. Ultimately everything is God's. Man is only a steward, one who has been placed in charge of another's possessions. This is the basis of judgment.

The assurance of judgment is based on the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Paul said, in his profound sermon to the Athenians, "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." (Acts 17:30, 31.) The following pertinent facts should be noted from this statement:

1. A day of judgment has been appointed. The appointment was made by God. It must come. There is no escape from it.

2. The whole world will be judged. There are no exceptions (as far as accountable people are concerned). John says, "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God." (Rev. 20:12.) Every person will be called to give an account of his life, and each one, as a steward, must be justified or condemned.

3. The judgment will be in righteousness. This is just another way of saying that the God of all the earth will do right. There will be no favors given or partiality shown. There is no respect of persons with God (Rom. 2:11). Those who are in Christ, those who are covered by the blood of Christ, will be saved; those who have rejected the mercy and grace of God must depart into everlasting destruction, prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt. 24:41; 2 Thess. 1:7-9).

4. The judgment will be by Jesus Christ — that is, Christ will be the judge. "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." (John 5:22.) In the judgment scene, as given by Matthew, all nations are gathered before Him and divided as a shepherd divides sheep from goats (Matt. 25:31-46). Christ is now the Savior, seeking the lost, pleading with them to come unto Him for salvation and rest, but then He shall be the judge, laying bare the righteousness of the righteous and the wickedness of the wicked. "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." (Heb. 4:13.)

When I was in Milligan College I took ancient history under Dr.

Orvel Crowder. The time for mid-term examinations came around and nearly all the students were extremely anxious about the outcome. The day before the test Dr. Crowder told the class to pray to God for help in the forthcoming examination. But he added, "Do not pray that you may pass the exam. You would not want to do that unless you have learned enough to do so. But pray rather that you may be able to demonstrate on the test the work that you have done. Pray that you will be able to show the professor what you have really accomplished in your studies." The judgment is a time when true character will be brought to light. The judge is one who loved us enough to die for us (John 3:16). But He is also the one who said, "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." (John 8:24.) And if you die in your sins, "Whither I go, ye cannot come." (John 8:21.)

5. The assurance of the judgment is the fact that God has raised Christ from the dead. The judgment is therefore as sure as the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

The standard of judgment will be the word of God (the very words selected by the Holy Spirit and delivered through the apostles and other chosen men). Jesus said, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." (John 12:48.) John saw the dead, small and great, standing before God in judgment, "and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of these things which were written in the books, according to their works." (Rev. 20:12.) In view of what Jesus said, the books that John saw were obviously the books of the Bible. But the Scriptures are the revelation of the Spirit. Therefore the revelation is the standard by which all men are to be judged.

The Holy Spirit thus convinces the world of sin, righteousness, and the judgment to come through the revealed will of God. Or as stated by Jesus, "Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." (John 16:9-11.) The function of the Comforter was to convince; His method was through the revelation of the will of God.

THE GUIDING COMFORTER

Another vital work of the Comforter, as stated by Jesus, was to guide the apostles into all truth. "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come." (John 16:13.) What is promised here is that the Spirit would guide, by revelation, the apostles into all the truth pertaining to God's scheme of human redemption. This function can be verified by studying the Holy Spirit and His work, the apostles of Christ, and the New Testament Scriptures, the revelation when it was completed.

1. It was the function of the Holy Spirit to reveal and confirm the truth. He was not to speak of Himself, but what He heard of the Father He was to declare unto them — He was to speak only the will of God. He was to guide the apostles into all truth. This involves revelation. And to guarantee that revelation would be free from all error, that it would be the truth as given by the Father, the Spirit delivered it by inspiration. The apostles were inspired to deliver divine revelation.

What man must know, both then and now, to appropriate salvation is the truth. Jesus said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32.) But before it was revealed, truth was locked inside the mind of God: it was a mystery, an unrevealed thing. The function of the Holy Spirit was to take the mind of God, put it into words, and thereby convey the will of God (the truth) to the mind of man. "For what man knoweth the things of man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." (1 Cor. 2:11.) This simply teaches that man cannot know the mind of God except as it is revealed to him by the Spirit. Paul then adds: "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual." (1 Cor. 1:12, 13.) The Emphasized New Testament translates verse 13 as follows: "Which we also speak — Not in words taught of human wisdom, But in such as are taught of [the] Spirit, By spiritual words spiritual things explaining." The Spirit thus delivered the message (or made known the truth) by inspired revelation — He

revealed and confirmed the truth.

2. The apostles of Christ were the instruments through whom the truth was delivered. Jesus vested in them the authority to teach in His name. When they spoke, they were not speaking their own words, but the words chosen by the Spirit of God. In sending the apostles on the limited commission, Jesus said unto them, "But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." (Matt. 10:19, 20.) Further on He added, "He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me." (Matt. 10:40.) Whatever they bound on earth was to be bound in heaven (Matt. 16:19). This principle was magnified under the Great Commission. The Holy Spirit was to present the truth through them, through their experience, personality, and vocabulary. On the day of Pentecost the apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit, and this miraculous outpouring of the Spirit enabled them to speak as the Spirit gave them utterance (Acts 2:1-4). Thus when the apostles spoke, they spoke by inspiration — they spoke words chosen by the Holy Spirit.

But how did the Holy Spirit choose the words and present the revelation through the personality, experience, and vocabulary of the men through whom it was delivered without verbally dictating the words to them, thus making them only secretaries writing down (or speaking) the words of another? While it is conceded that there is a difficulty here (a difficulty on man's part, not on God's), there is a simple solution to it. The Holy Spirit made known the will of God through the apostles by choosing only what they had. On one end was the mind of God. On the other end was the mind of man. It was the function of the Holy Spirit to convey the will of God (the contents of the divine mind) to the mind of man. To do so, He could have used the total dictionary for His selection of words. But rather than do that, He selected the words from the vocabulary of the men chosen. The chosen men thus spoke in their own vocabulary (using their own experiences and personality), but the words spoken were chosen by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit thus used the methods, knowledge, experience, action, and words of the apostles to teach men the will of God and to guide the apostles into all truth.

The very fact that the Holy Spirit selected only words from each man's own vocabulary abundantly accounts for the differ-

ences in each writer's style and method of writing. The Spirit of truth, rather than selecting from the total number of words available (and this is true also of personality and experience), selected only from the vocabulary of the writer — He used only what the writer had, including his personality and experience. But regardless of what words were chosen or whether the writer was limited in learning or a profound logician, they were selected by the Spirit and not by the men themselves. The words became the vehicles to convey the mind of God to the mind of man. The writers (and speakers) were carried along by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:21), saying only what the Holy Spirit selected for them to say.

Thus all that was delivered by the apostles was truth, that into which the Holy Spirit had guided them. This accounts for the fact that the early church continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine (Acts 2:42). The Holy Spirit was delivering the truth, but the apostles were the spokesmen through which the truth was delivered.

3. The revelation was committed, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, to written form, thus forming the New Testament Scriptures. Jude, writing toward the end of the apostolic age, says, "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." (Jude 3.) This teaches that the faith, the revelation, the truth, had been once and for all delivered to the saints. The expression "once delivered" means that it had been delivered once for all time, an event never to be repeated. Thus when the New Testament was completed, all truth pertaining to life and godliness had been revealed. Nothing new would ever be added. The Holy Spirit had delivered the revelation and had committed it to the written word.

All truth pertaining to life and godliness is now found in the inspired Scriptures — they contain the revelation made known by the Spirit. Today when men wish to know the truth, they must turn to the Bible. Jesus prayed, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." (John 17:17.) Paul and other inspired writers often spoke of the word of truth (Ps. 119:43; 2 Cor. 6:7; Eph. 1:13; Col. 1:5; 2 Tim. 2:15; James 1:18). We must conclude, therefore, that all truth, into which the Holy Spirit was to guide the apostles, is revealed in the New Testament.

In His function as Comforter, the Holy Spirit is not seen as the

source of truth. All truth originates with God. Rather He is seen as the revealer of truth, guiding the apostles in such a manner as to make it known to and through them. Truth was in the mind of God (commonly referred to as the will of God). The Holy Spirit directed the apostles in such a way as to reveal the contents of the divine mind to the mind of man. This was His work. The will of God was put into words by the Spirit, and by means of the words chosen by Him the thoughts of God were expressed to the human mind. The words, when chosen and completed, contained all truth — all revealed truth. Eventually the words were, by inspiration, written down. We thus have the words chosen by the Comforter in the New Testament. Hence the New Testament is the truth into which the Comforter guided the apostles.

THE REVEALING COMFORTER

In addition to the six areas of work already discussed, the Comforter was to show the apostles things to come. “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.” (John 16:13.) The American Standard Version renders the latter part of this verse as follows: “And he shall declare unto you the things that are to come.” Obviously “things to come” were yet future at the time Jesus spoke, and probably has reference to things which are yet in the future (for the most part) even today. While it is undoubtedly truth that the things which make up the Christian system are included in this statement, yet I do not think that they exhaust the subject. “Things to come,” in my judgment, means things yet in the future from the perspective of the early Christians. If this is the case (and certainly it is true even if it is not under consideration here), then at least three things need to be connected with the subject: (1) prophecy; (2) the future of the church, its triumphs, its failures, its steadfastness, and its departures; (3) the second coming of Christ, the end of the world, the resurrection from the dead, the judgment, and man’s eternal destiny, all of which are yet future, regardless of when or where one lives. Let us take a brief look at each of the three areas:

1. Prophecy. Prophecy is that which is spoken by a prophet, and a prophet is one who speaks for God — he delivers God’s message to man. In the final analysis, he is one who speaks by

inspiration. This can be seen by the fact that he often, though not always, foretells future events. But only God knows the future. Thus any man who meets the true test of a prophet (cf. Deut. 18:20-22) is a spokesman for God — he often speaks things only God can know. A prophet is therefore an instrument in the revelation of God's will.

The Scriptural meaning of a prophet can be derived from the Bible itself. God told Moses, when he tried to excuse himself from delivering the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage on the grounds that he was not eloquent and was slow of speech, that Aaron would be his prophet (Ex. 7:1). Aaron would speak for him, or to be more specific, Moses would speak through Aaron. The Bible says, "And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do. And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God." (Ex. 4:15, 16.) Just as Moses (who stood in the place of God) put words in the mouth of Aaron (who stood as Moses' prophet), God put words in the mouth of His prophets. And when God spoke through one that made him a prophet, a spokesman of God. Scripturally, then, a prophet is one who speaks for God, or one who speaks by inspiration.

The apostles were the Lord's spokesmen (2 Cor. 5:19, 20). They were therefore prophets, and through them God spoke of some future events, events that were yet to come. The Holy Spirit enabled them to look into the future and warn of the things that are yet to be. They were shown things to come. This is further confirmed by what follows.

2. The apostles foresaw a departure of the church from its original pattern of faith and practice. Paul warned, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron." (1 Tim. 4:1, 2.)

But the first such warning had come from Jesus Himself. He had said, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." (Matt. 7:15.) Before the end of the apostolic age the wolves in sheep's clothing had already appeared and inspired men constantly cautioned of the pending danger their presence presented to the cause of Christ.

Paul, with a heavy heart, prophetically forewarned the elders at Ephesus that there would arise in the eldership itself the seed that would produce the departure. He said: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." (Acts 20:28-30.) Those who are informed in church history know that the departure from the original pattern had its beginning in the eldership. Some men grew power hungry and assumed roles and titles unknown in New Testament times, such as Bishop (the term bishop is a Bible word, but the connotation it took on after the second century is totally unknown to the simplicity of the original order of things), Archbishop, Cardinal, and finally Pope. A whole new organization developed as the departure spread. The churches adopted so many heathen practices that it became little more than modified paganism. By the beginning of the seventh century the falling away was complete, both in faith and in practice. The New Testament writers had accurately foretold what would come to pass.

But the apostasy did not come as one great catastrophic event. It was a gradual process that occurred over a period of five or six centuries. However, it came, just as the apostles had foretold, thus proving to all that they were true prophets of God. (For those who wish to pursue this study further, the characteristics of the departure are depicted in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12.)

3. Eschatology or the revelation of last things. All statements pertaining to the second coming of Christ, the end of the world, the resurrection, the judgment, and man's eternal destiny are prophecies. While space prohibits the discussion of each of these at length, we can be assured the Bible abundantly teaches that every single one of them will come to pass. I will list each subject, along with a few Scriptures, to show what the future holds:

First, the second coming of Christ (Acts 1:10, 11; 1 Thess. 4:16-18; 2 Thess. 1:7-9).

Second, the end of the world (1 Cor. 15:24-26; 2 Pet. 3:10-13; Rev. 21:1).

Third, the resurrection of the dead (John 5:28, 29; Acts 17:31; 1 Cor. 15:12-20).

Fourth, the judgment (Heb. 9:27; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 20:12).

Fifth, man's eternal destiny (Matt. 25:31-46).

While all of these are yet future, and taken alone could not be used to prove that the apostles had power to reveal "things to come," they are such an integral part of the whole New Testament that either we must accept them as true, as things that are surely yet to come, or else reject the whole scheme. The prophecies that are yet future are just as certain as the ones which have been fulfilled in the past — both stand or fall together. With this in view, there can be no question but that the apostles were shown, and in turn revealed to all through the word of truth, things to come.

THE GLORIFYING COMFORTER

The final work ascribed to the Comforter, in the context where the word is used in the gospel according to John, is the function of glorifying Christ. Jesus said, "He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you." (John 16:14, 15.) The Spirit would glorify Christ by showing the things of Christ to the apostles. Since all things that pertain to the Father pertain also to Christ, this promise, in its totality, covers the whole Christian system. It is therefore impractical to try to discuss all things that glorify Christ (even if they could be summed up), but I will select a few for the purpose of illustrating the principle.

1. The Holy Spirit glorified Christ by revealing His perfect life. He lived among men, in a sinful world, but committed no sin (1 Pet. 2:22, 23; John 8:45). He did nothing but good (Acts 10:38). His perfection proves His deity and exalts Him far above common humanity. And when one honestly reads Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the accounts of His life and work, he is forced to one of two conclusions: either the writers did not tell the truth about Jesus or else Jesus was more than a man. Nicodemus correctly observed, "We know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." (John 3:2.) Never man lived as this Man lived!

2. The Spirit glorified Christ by giving to the world His teaching. Christ was preeminently a teacher, but He did not teach as other men taught. He was the Master teacher. He spoke as one

having authority, as one who knew personally of eternal things (Matt. 7:28, 29; Mark 1:22). The Pharisees once sent officers to take Him, but they returned without Him, saying, "Never man spake like this man." (John 7:45, 46.) He spoke only as God can speak. He spoke of forgiving man's sins (Matt. 9:6) and of being the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). He offered redemption through the gospel (Rom. 1:16). His system of teaching furnishes the man of God unto all good work (2 Tim. 3:16, 17), provides all things that pertain unto life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3, 4), is so complete that nothing can be added to or diminished from it (Rev. 22:18, 19), and all are commanded to abide in it (2 John 9). His teaching was not just words spoken into the wind, words that died with the passing of time. It was delivered for all in living, powerful words (Heb. 4:12), and whenever or wherever the Bible is heard, read, or studied, the Holy Spirit continues to glorify Christ through His teaching. Never man taught like this Man taught!

3. The Comforter glorified Christ by revealing His humiliation. He left the riches of heaven to take upon Himself the poverty of earth, to take the likeness of man, and in the likeness of man be subjected to the humiliating death on the cross. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." (2 Cor. 8:9.) In one of the most beautiful passages in the New Testament Paul wrote: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in the fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Phil. 2:5-11.) Admittedly this passage is broad in application and profound in depth, yet it clearly teaches that Christ left the glories of heaven in order to come to this earth so that He could become a man, and as a man He could die for man — He suffered the humiliating death of crucifixion so that sinful man might have the more abundant life. "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher

of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Heb. 12:1.) Never man died like this Man died!

4. The Spirit glorified Christ by revealing His exaltation. In Philippians 2:5-11, quoted above, the inspired writer outlines step by step the actions leading to the exaltation of Christ. Step one: He emptied Himself (made Himself of no reputation, KJV) of the equality He shared with God (He did not become less God but He took upon Himself a new relationship with man) and was made in the likeness of man. Step two: As a man He humbled Himself to die on the cross — to bear in His body the penalty of sin (cf. 1 Cor. 1:18). Step three: Because of His humiliation, His death on the cross, God has highly exalted Him above both man and angels — His name is exalted above every name in heaven and in earth. Step four: Because of His exaltation every knee shall bow to Him and every tongue must confess Him as Lord to the glory of God.

Daniel saw and described the exaltation of Christ when he saw Him in a night vision brought to the Ancient of Days. The record says: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." (Dan. 7:13, 14.) Just as Daniel foresaw it, Christ was received up into heaven where He now sits on the right hand of God (Heb. 1:1-4), exalted to the eternal throne, where He must reign until all enemies are destroyed (1 Cor. 15:24-26) and from which His glory covers the whole earth. Never was man exalted as this Man is exalted!

This brings us to the end of the work assigned to the Comforter in the context of the verses where He is so mentioned by name, and there is but one logical and Scriptural conclusion to reach: the work of the Comforter, the counselor for the defense, was accomplished through the apostles of Christ, the chosen men through whom the truth was to be revealed, confirmed, and delivered. The Comforter came to abide with them, to teach them, to bring all things to their remembrance, to testify (bear witness) of Christ through them, to convince the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment through them, to guide them into all truth, to reveal to them the will of God, and to glorify Christ through them.

When the full gospel had been proclaimed, when the New Testament had been delivered to a waiting world, the miraculous work of the Comforter was completed. He had done what He was sent to do, namely, to reveal, confirm, and deliver the will of God. To apply these passages to men today would be to ignore completely the true function of the Holy Spirit. While there is no doubt about the fact that He continues to work, His work is now done through the message given in the New Testament — the message He delivered through the apostles of Christ.

One of the reasons this basic work of the Holy Spirit is so often misunderstood and misapplied is because of a misconception of what the Spirit was given to accomplish — things are ascribed to Him which He was never given to do. Perhaps we can best see this by a study of a selected number of things for which the Holy Spirit was not given.

CHAPTER 4

WHAT THE SPIRIT DOES NOT DO

The Holy Spirit and His work are often looked upon as most difficult subjects to understand (and of course they are in some respects), but I am fully convinced that the difficulty, for the most part, lies not so much in the subjects themselves as in the erroneous presuppositions as to what the Spirit's function and work actually is in the Christian age, especially that part of the Spirit's work pertaining to miraculous manifestations. This is simply to say that the one thing which contributes most to a misunderstanding of the Holy Spirit and His work is to ascribe to the Spirit functions, influences, and positions He was never given to fill. In short, things are called the work of the Holy Spirit which are not the work of the Holy Spirit. Religious teachers in general have tried to locate His purpose and work in emotional or physical experiences rather than in the Scriptures. In fact, most seem to resent and reject what the Scriptures teach and as a consequence they ascribe things to the Spirit for which He was not given — ascribe things to the Spirit which He never did, does not do now, and never will do. For this reason it should be profitable to enumerate and discuss some of the things for which the Holy Spirit was not given.

1. The Holy Spirit was not given, as far as the Scriptures reveal, to directly make one happy or to make him feel good. His work involved a much higher purpose. When we study each case of conversion in the New Testament where miraculous gifts were involved, such as Acts 2, 8, 19, etc., we can plainly see that the Spirit's work was not directly on the emotions. Take the eunuch for example. Philip was in Samaria preaching when an angel of the Lord spoke unto him, saying, "Arise, go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza." He arose and went, and there he met a man of Ethiopia, "an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians." The

eunuch had been to Jerusalem to worship and was returning to Ethiopia. As he rode along, he was reading the Scriptures, a passage from Isaiah 53. Philip asked him, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" He then invited Philip to sit with him in the chariot and explain the Scripture. "And Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing." (Acts 8:25-39.) When the eunuch had obeyed the gospel, he went on his way rejoicing, rejoicing not because he had received a miraculous gift of the Spirit (the Spirit worked all the miracles in this case through Philip), but because he had learned the truth through the Spirit-led Philip, had submitted himself to Christ in complete obedience, and had thus become a child of the living God.

As far as the inspired Scriptures are concerned, the Holy Spirit affected the emotions of the eunuch only in an indirect manner. The Spirit's purpose was to reveal the truth, the duty of man, and when one heard and obeyed the truth He revealed, as did the eunuch, his emotions were touched, but only mediately. If one is in covenant relationship with God and his feelings are in proper perspective, he feels good, and is happy, not because the Spirit is in him creating this feeling, but because he knows he has done the will of God revealed to him by the Spirit. One can obey falsehood, thinking it is the truth, and it will produce precisely the same emotional experience as will obedience to the truth itself. Thus the way one feels has absolutely nothing to do with the Spirit working in him directly. As Dr. T.W. Brents well said, "We do not know that we are pardoned because we feel good, but we feel good because we know we are pardoned."

It is therefore a grave error, one that leads to all kinds of false conclusions and unscriptural practices, to equate one's emotional feelings with the reception, guidance, or presence of the Holy Spirit. And those who set up situations to fire the emotions, such

as mass meetings, sitting in circles, holding hands, dimming lights, touching one another lightly, etc., to start a response or create certain dynamic feelings and then ascribe the results of their own highly charged actions to the Holy Spirit, have not a smattering of Biblical teaching for their practices. To produce such results is simply not the purpose or the work of the Holy Spirit. And those who think so only deceive themselves — they ascribe to the Spirit that which He was never given to do.

2. The Holy Spirit was not given to benefit personally (that is, only the person involved) the one receiving it. What the Holy Spirit was given to do He did for all — He revealed to all the truth of the gospel. Yet in Neo-Pentecostalism the Spirit is sought, not for what He can aid one in doing for others, but for what He can do for the receiver. This misses the Scriptural purpose absolutely. There is no question but that the one who received a miraculous gift benefitted from it to some extent, but that benefit was not the primary purpose for which it was given. Except by serendipity, the gifts did not change one's free will; they did not change his attitude; they did not remove desires or temptations to sin; they did not make one stronger in the faith (faith is an exercise of the human will, not the exercise of the Holy Spirit upon the human spirit); they did not make one less forgetful; they did not make one successful and happy. The gifts were always under the control of the receiver, and not the other way around. Paul said, "And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets." (1 Cor. 14:32.) One could even neglect a miraculous gift — not use it for its intended purpose. Paul warned Timothy, "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery." (1 Tim. 4:14.)

Cornelius and his household (Acts 10 and 11) were no better prepared in mind and heart to receive and obey the words of Peter after the Holy Spirit fell on them than they were before. The outpouring of the Spirit on them had for its purpose something other than to help them personally to receive the gospel. They were still the same persons, free moral agents, after the Spirit fell on them. Thus the Spirit was not given to them to prepare their hearts, change their minds, aid their understanding, to benefit them in any personal way, or to give them advantage over others, except indirectly. Such was not the purpose of the outpouring of the Spirit on Cornelius and his household or anyone else in apostolic times. Yet these are the very reasons modern seekers of

the Spirit give for needing miraculous gifts. Every testimony we hear or read is about what the Holy Spirit has done for or in the one who is testifying, and they usually have reference to some emotional experience, subjective feeling, or mental intuition.

For example of the personal benefit derived from the supposed reception of the Spirit, consider physical healing. There can be no question but that many people were healed in apostolic times. But why were they healed? It was always, either directly or indirectly, for the purpose of confirming the truth of God — to prove to man that God was at work in the revelation of His will. But why do people seek to be healed today? Is it for the purpose of teaching, revealing, or confirming the truth (as was the purpose of all miracles in the New Testament)? No! That work has already been accomplished and we have the truth both revealed and confirmed in the Scriptures. Thus all healing today is sought for personal comfort or benefit, to alleviate the pain and the suffering of the one seeking to be healed. In short, it is sought for health reasons alone. But it is interesting to note that healings in Bible times were never performed for this reason. Healing *per se* was not the end in view. It was only a means to an end. Paul had long been afflicted with some infirmities. He sought the Lord three times to remove them. But the Lord said, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." Paul then adds, "Most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." (2 Cor. 12:9.) Also Timothy was often sick, probably with stomach trouble (1 Tim. 4:20). And Paul left Trophimus sick in Miletum (2 Tim. 4:20). Neither was miraculously healed. It therefore seems obvious that the Holy Spirit was not given to heal just for healing's sake. And those who seek miraculous gifts for personal aid grossly misunderstand His work. He was not given to benefit personally the one receiving Him.

3. The Holy Spirit was not given to illuminate the understanding. And yet this is one of the works ascribed to Him by almost the whole religious world. After stating the fact that the Scriptures are to be accepted as the authoritative, infallible revelation of the will of God, Ellen G. White, the real founder of the Seventh Day Adventist movement, says, "Yet the fact that God has revealed His will to men through His word, has not rendered needless the continued presence and guiding of the Holy Spirit. On the contrary, the Spirit was promised by our Saviour, to open the word to His servants, to illuminate and apply its

teachings. And since it was the Spirit of God that inspired the Bible, it is impossible that the teaching of the Spirit should ever be contrary to that of the word."¹ According to this theory, the Holy Spirit gave the words of the Scripture, but one cannot understand or apply the words until the Spirit directly illuminates the mind (or illuminates the Scriptures to the mind). But this is far from what is revealed in the New Testament.

The revelation of the gospel was given through those who received the miraculous gifts of the Spirit in apostolic times, but the receivers of the gifts had to exercise their own intellectual faculties to comprehend the revelation once it was given just as did those who received no miraculous gifts. The truth was revealed through them, but the Spirit seemingly did not aid their understanding of the truth revealed. As an example to illustrate this principle, consider Peter. On the day of Pentecost he told those who cried out, "What must we do?" to "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." (Acts 2:38, 39.) Undoubtedly the promise to those who were afar off meant the Gentiles. But, while he had made this promise, Peter did not understand it until years later, and even then God had to work in a special way to convince him that the saving message of truth was for all, that the Gentiles as well as the Jews were acceptable subjects of the gospel. Even though he had preached it in Acts 2 under the direction of the Holy Spirit, Peter did not fully grasp the fact that the gospel was for all until Acts 10. And even then that knowledge did not come by the Spirit directly illuminating his mind; he was taught by a revelation which enlarged on the principle involved. Thus Peter arrived at his personal understanding of the truth by means other than the fact that he was baptized in the Holy Spirit — means other than the Spirit illuminating his mind.

But Peter made a statement that is even more convincing that the Spirit was not given to illuminate the Scriptures to one's mind. Concerning the prophets (the writers of the Old Testament) and their message, he says: "Receiving the end of your faith, even the

¹ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan* (Nashville: Southern Publishing Assn.), pp. vii, viii.

salvation of your souls. Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into." (1 Pet. 1:9-12.) The prophets had prophesied of the grace of God which Peter and those to whom he was writing had received, that is, the salvation of their souls. But the prophets had not understood all that they had foretold. Rather than seeking for illumination, they searched diligently to ascertain "what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify." The whole thrust of Peter's statement is that the prophets earnestly searched their own writing in an effort to discover their meaning, to discover the things which God had promised through them.

The Spirit had spoken through the prophets concerning God's scheme of human redemption, which was yet in the future at the time of their writing, but He had not enlightened their understanding of the full meaning of the prophecy. But contrary to this fact, people are still seeking for an easy way to understand the Scriptures and are expecting the Holy Spirit to illuminate their minds without the necessity of study. But this is a serious error in regard to the work of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit revealed the will of God to man in apostolic times, and that revelation was recorded in the New Testament, and man must now exercise his own power of mind to understand it. Thus the Spirit was given to reveal the truth, not to illuminate the understanding of truth when it was revealed.

4. The Holy Spirit was not given to prove (by some subjective feelings or intuition) that one is a Christian, that he is in Christ. Of course I am not saying that in no sense was the Holy Spirit given to prove that one is a child of God. What I am saying is that in no sense was He given to anyone in a miraculous way to reveal directly to him, through the physical senses, experiences, or impulses, that he is personally acceptable to God. The Spirit did not and does not now work in that way. One can know that he is a Christian, but this knowledge comes by the revelation of the Spirit

through the truth, that which the Spirit teaches in the inspired word of God. One thus proves that he is a child of God by the truth, not by the physical senses or by emotional experiences. John summed this up when he said, "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him." (1 John 2:3-5.)

We know that we are children of God when we do the will of God, and the will of God is revealed by the Spirit in the word of God. Paul states this principle as follows: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." (Rom. 8:16.) Here the writer seems to be deliberately answering the question, "Am I a child of God?" He answers by saying we can know this when two spirits, the Spirit and our spirit, bear witness together. But to appreciate this answer, two other questions must be considered: What kind of character constitutes a Christian? And what kind of character am I? If my character does not coincide with the kind of character that constitutes a Christian, I know that I am not a child of God. But if my character corresponds exactly with the kind of character that constitutes a child of God, then I know that I am a Christian. I know it, not because of some spiritual or mysterious impressions, but because the Spirit has defined (in the truth revealed) the kind of character a Christian is and my spirit confirms the fact that I am that kind of character.

From this we can easily see that it is the function of the Holy Spirit to give the revelation by which the Christian character is determined. He answers the question, "Who is a Christian?" This is done through the truth, the Spirit-filled word of God. On the other hand, it is the function of the human spirit to receive (or reject) the revelation of the Spirit. When the Spirit reveals the plan of salvation and the human spirit says that one has received and obeyed the plan delivered by the Spirit, both spirits are testifying together that he is a child of God. This is the way the Scriptures teach that the Spirit works in proving that one is a Christian, not by some better-felt-than-told impressions or impulse.

5. The Holy Spirit was not given to make trivial decisions for man. While it is true that the Spirit did reveal to those possessing Him in a miraculous manner some of the places to go and some of

the things to do and some of the people to teach (Acts 8), in no way could this be compared with making the unimportant and trifling decisions ascribed to Him by many today. It should be noted that when Paul was warned of the danger involved in his decision to go up to Jerusalem to the feast, the Spirit gave the warning but left Paul to make his own decision. Agabus, a prophet, met Paul, "And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles." (Acts 21:11.) Thus He warned Paul, but the Spirit did not work in him subjectively to influence his decision. The Spirit worked through Agabus and the spoken word.

In the present Pentecostal movement, one of the major reasons for seeking the experience is to escape from decision making. According to its proponents, when one receives what is termed "the baptism of the Holy Spirit" and is enabled to speak in "tongues," little or nothing is left for the individual to do in making decisions. Every feeling, every impulse, every intuition, and every thought (as to religious movement) is ascribed to the Spirit working directly in the heart. He tells them when to go to bed, when to get up, whether to wear socks or not, where to go, whether to engage in certain business deals, who to talk with, what to preach on, what to say, how long to preach, when to make certain moves, etc. Thus all kinds of insignificant decisions are ascribed to the direct working of the Spirit. In fact, in matters pertaining to religion (and often in business, marriage, child discipline, etc.) man has no decisions to make whatsoever. The Holy Spirit makes them for him.

John P. Kildahl reached the same conclusion in his psychological studies of tongue-speakers. He says, "All tongue-speakers entertained a certain magical notion of what glossolalia meant. The term magical was defined by the belief that God or the Holy Spirit controlled and directed believers' lives in a mechanistic way. For instance, one person in the glossalalia group prayed, 'God, make me a puppet.' He believed literally that God would pull the strings and he as a puppet would respond." He goes on to say, "One woman told us that when she could not find her scissors, she would pray in tongues, close her eyes while standing in the middle of a room, and turn around rapidly several times until she felt like stopping. Whatever way that she faced when she stopped was the

direction in which the Lord wanted her to walk in order to find her scissors. When asked if this method ever failed, she replied that if she did not find the scissors in the direction she walked, it meant that 'the Lord was telling me to do something else where He did direct me.'²

This kind of concept makes the work of the Holy Spirit nothing more than a magical formula for decision making. And in the final analysis, everything one does is done by the immediate direction of the Spirit. This removes all individual responsibility for decisions or their outcome. If one follows an impulse ascribed to the Spirit and the impulse leads to doing the wrong thing, he can simply say, "The Holy Spirit led me to do it. I do not understand why it came out wrong. God knows, and I am sure that the final outcome was His will. I did it by the leadings of the Holy Spirit; that was all I could do. I have no responsibility for the outcome."

But, as we have seen, the Holy Spirit was not given to deal with such individual and trifling matters. His purpose was to reveal and confirm the truth. When the truth was made known, men were left as free moral agents to either follow it and receive the blessings or to ignore it and bring upon themselves destruction. Man's actions are always by man's choice — the Holy Spirit reveals what is right but man must choose for himself whether he will do the right or not. In Bible times the receiver was always in control of his gift (1 Cor. 14:32; 2 Tim. 1:6), not the gift in control of the receiver. He made his own decision in view of the gift, not by the gift.

6. The Holy Spirit was not given to aid directly one's understanding of the Scriptures. To understand them, the Scriptures must be searched and studied. Jesus said, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me." (John 5:39.) The Bereans were commended because they "were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." (Acts 17:11.) Study is necessary before the word can be rightly divided or handled aright (2 Tim. 2:15). Actually one must exert the same work and apply basically the same rules of study in learning the word of God as in any other subject. I am not saying, by any means, that God does not in any way bless a man and give

² John P. Kildahl, *The Psychology of Speaking in Tongues* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1972), pp. 60, 61. Quoted by permission.

him wisdom in the study of His will; I am simply saying that the Spirit was never given for the purpose of aiding one's understanding of the Scriptures as is so often advocated today. The Spirit gives the revelation, but man must use his own intellect to study, apply, and enjoy it.

In this connection chapters 1 and 2 of 1 Corinthians should be closely studied. In these two chapters Paul draws a sharp contrast between the wisdom (revelation) of God and the wisdom (learning and philosophy) of men. He asks, "Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" (1 Cor. 1:20.) He goes on to show that by what the world calls foolishness (the foolishness of preaching) God saves the lost (1 Cor. 1:25). As he continues the contrast, he states, "And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." (1 Cor. 2:4.) Of course Paul is not opposed to man's wisdom or learning *per se*; he is simply pointing out that regardless of how much man may learn he can never know the will of God except by divine revelation. And the revelation is made known by the Spirit through the word of truth. "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." (1 Cor. 2:9.) This is a prophecy, quoted from Isaiah 64:4, which points forward to the coming of Christ and the Christian system, and in context it has no hint of heaven or anything else beyond the revelation of human redemption. As Paul goes on to say, the things which eye had not seen, ear heard, nor had entered into the heart of man was made known through the apostles by the Spirit. "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." (1 Cor. 2:10-12.) Notice that last expression in particular: "That we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." But how can we know them? The next verse answers: "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual." (1 Cor. 2:13.) Thus the will of God is revealed by the Spirit

of God through the word of God. And those who wish to know God's will must study the word, the word which was given for man's understanding of the things of God. We must conclude, therefore, that the function of the Spirit is to reveal the things God wants man to know; it is not His work to aid the understanding once the revelation has been made known. When the revelation has been delivered (and it is now delivered in the Scriptures) the work of the Holy Spirit on the understanding is completed. And if man is to understand the revelation of the Spirit, he must exercise his own mental faculties.

It is the function of the Holy Spirit to reveal the will of God; it is the function of man to study, learn, understand, and appropriate the revelation as delivered by the Spirit.

7. The Holy Spirit was not given to directly instill love into the human heart. Love is an exercise of the will — a command to be obeyed, not a promise to be received. Jesus said, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." (John 13:34.) New Testament love is not limited to emotional involvement; nor is it limited to those we know or to the loveable. In fact, it is of such nature so that Jesus commanded us to love even our enemies (Matt. 5:44). Those who think they can escape the responsibility of exercising their will to love by expecting the Holy Spirit to directly put love into their hearts are destined to be sadly disappointed. They misunderstand either Biblical love or the work of the Holy Spirit or both.

Of course Paul said, "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." (Rom. 5:5.) But he does not mean that the love is given directly, without any effort on the part of the individual involved. The Spirit has given us the truth, and through that truth He teaches us to love — love God, love others, and love ourselves. Thus the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts through the truth.

But with those who conceive of the Holy Spirit as directly instilling love, it is not enough for the Scriptures to enjoin love for all; it must be put there miraculously by the Spirit, making love a passive work done by the Spirit rather than an active work of the human will. So conceived, man's responsibility in loving the unlovely is removed — one loves only as the Holy Spirit leads him to love. Nor is it enough with them for the Spirit to fill their heart with love (through the truth) — a love that continuously abides.

The Spirit must do His work over and over on particular occasions for particular people in particular circumstances. As an example of how the Spirit must continue to nudge one into loving certain people, take Irene Hanley. Mrs. Hanley is a remarkable Jewish woman who was converted to denominational Christianity with all its false notions of the Holy Spirit and His work. In 1961, many years after her conversion, she went to Israel on a missionary trip to try to reach other Jews with her message. She was in Jerusalem as the trial of Adolph Eichmann, who had been Hitler's chief henchman in the destruction of 6,000,000 Jews during World War II, was reaching its final climax. She was fortunate enough to obtain permission to attend the final days of the trial. Telling of her reaction when she first saw Eichmann, she says, "When Eichmann walked in, my first reaction was one of horror and repulsion. The word *beast* came to my mind to describe this man. Quickly the Holy Spirit rebuked me and reminded me that he was a living soul and that the Lord loved him. It was for those like him that His Son had given His life. Immediately a miracle happened in my heart. The Holy Spirit changed my attitude from one of horror and repulsion to one of pity and compassion."³

While I do not question Mrs. Hanley's sincerity in this matter, she obviously overlooked one very vital fact: the Holy Spirit had already taught her to love all men through the living word of God. Why, then, does she think that it is necessary for the Spirit to do it directly on each occasion? If this is the way the Spirit works then He would teach a "spot" love — a love that just occurred here and there, now and then. But the Spirit teaches us to love all the time and everywhere.

But the truth about the matter is that the Spirit was not given to instill love in the heart (that is, to do so directly) or to change the attitude. These are acts of the human will, not something the Holy Spirit miraculously does for one. The Spirit teaches man through revelation to love, but when the message is given (and it is given in the Scriptures) the act of loving is left to the individual — it is something that he himself must willingly cultivate. Thus if one loves he must exercise his will to love. It is not the work of the Holy Spirit to do the loving for one or to change the heart (except through the truth) and pour love in.

³ Irene Hanley, *Israel, O My People* (Decatur, Ga.: Vineyard Publishers of Atlanta, 1974), pp. 155, 156. Quoted by permission.

8. The Holy Spirit was not given to make dynamic personalities. Yet this is the fundamental aspect of Neo-Pentecostalism. The Pentecostals emphasize "the gift" as a means of changing one's whole being, physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. If one is introverted, he becomes an extrovert by the Spirit's immediate indwelling. If one is a failure (especially in business and soul winning) he suddenly becomes extraordinarily successful. If one lacks confidence, he is given great boldness. If one has but few friends, vast numbers flock around him. If one has doubts about his work or what his mission in life is, all doubts are removed. If one is anxious, his worries subside. If there are family problems, they suddenly disappear and the family is knit together into one harmonious trouble-free unit, and that without human effort. If one has bad habits (such as smoking, drinking, gambling, dancing, swearing, etc.), all desire for them is removed. Where there is sadness, joy fills the heart — even the countenance glows and the physical flesh takes on a heavenly splendor. These and a thousand other wonderful changes in the personality and environment are ascribed to "the gift," usually meaning the gift of tongues.

One might, according to Pentecostals, be a Christian, be in Christ, for many years and still live a miserable, dull, dreary life, but with the coming of the Holy Spirit all that is changed instantly. The dull, dreary person blooms out into a dynamic personality. What the grand blessing of being in Christ, being an heir of eternal salvation, cannot do, according to them, the miraculous reception of the Holy Spirit does. Thus to them the Holy Spirit is the Christian dynamic. And it would come as a severe shock to them to learn that the Scriptures do not teach that the Holy Spirit was given for the purpose of directly changing the personality or filling one with dynamic power.

I am not denying that the Holy Spirit works a change in those who obey the truth: for He does. But He works through divine revelation to bring about the change. It is in obedience to the gospel that one becomes a child of God, not by a personal direct work of the Spirit. The Bible says, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Cor. 5:17.) One enters into Christ, becomes a new creature, by obeying the gospel (Gal. 3:26, 27; Rom. 6:3, 4; Heb. 5:8, 9), by following the instruction of the Spirit. Paul possessed the Spirit in a miraculous measure and spoke with tongues more than others (1 Cor. 14:18), yet he had defects

in his life and personality. He wrote, "For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible." (2 Cor. 12:9.) The Holy Spirit did not miraculously remove the undesirable traits (whatever they were) from his life and personality. The Spirit works through the truth, not directly, to change character; it was not His function to give dynamic personalities to those who received Him.

9. The Holy Spirit was not given to make the receiver more spiritual, that is, in a direct way. Just as the Spirit does not directly affect the emotions, He does not immediately instill spirituality. Of course the Spirit, through His divine instrument, the truth, does affect the mind and does, therefore, lead to spirituality. But this is not done immediately, not done through some subjective nudging or impulse. It is done through His teaching. One becomes spiritual by obeying the Spirit's instruction.

While Pentecostals are becoming more cautious of saying so (they have learned by experience that their attitude of superior spirituality turns others away from them), there can be no question but that they conclude that their experience makes them more spiritual (if they did not there would be little use for them to work toward persuading others to receive it). Before the experience (which they call the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the chief proof of which is the speaking in tongues) Christianity is a cold, formal, legalistic system that gives no joy, peace, or power. Or as Pat Boone expresses it, it is living in the Father's house but never personally meeting or knowing the Landlord.⁴ But all this is radically changed with the experience. Life becomes meaningful, the personality dynamic, and one receives power over self, sin, environment, and even over other people. Before the experience Christianity is nothing more than law keeping, system following, establishment building; after the experience it becomes a spiritual high, personal confrontation, direct guidance, joy, peace, and power from the throne of God. This, by the very nature of the case, makes all those without the experience second-rate Christians — Christians without pleasure, profit, or power, Christians who have the form of Christianity but not the power thereof.

In a booklet called *Hang In There* by Robert C. Whitaker (giving counsel to charismatics on how to stay in the main line

⁴ Pat Boone, *A New Song*: Creation House, fifth paperback edition, p. 6.

churches after they have received the experience, even when it seems that their spiritual diet is absolutely insufficient for their new spiritual insights) this problem is acknowledged and the author gives instructions on how to deal with it. He states: "How often I hear it said, 'We just cannot stay in that church anymore because we're not being fed.' When the adults are reminded that they can be fed in a home prayer group, private Bible study, and through the tremendous number of available Spirit-filled books, tapes, and magazines, then they say, 'Well, if we had just ourselves to consider that might be all right, but our children aren't getting anything.'"⁵ The author goes on to give instructions as to how one should stay in the church he happens to be a member of when he has the experience and little by little impart the rich treasures to others. The whole concept shows that they consider the miraculous reception of the Spirit the means by which a higher spirituality is instilled. While it is certainly conceded that the Holy Spirit makes people spiritual (He does so through the truth, the inspired word of God), there is not a shadow of a hint in the Scriptures that He does so directly — that He makes men spiritual by a miraculous reception. In fact, this concept leads to a total misunderstanding of what spirituality is — it replaces true spirituality with emotional and existential experience.

This being the case, it now becomes imperative that we know what true spirituality is — what the Scriptures mean by being spiritual. We can arrive at a Scriptural conclusion by making four observations:

First, spirituality is opposite carnality, and carnality involves the carnal appetites, illegitimate desires, and fleshly lusts. It is the attitude that makes the gratification of the flesh the whole purpose of living. One is carnal when he makes the lusts of the flesh the whole of life. God and the things of the Spirit are replaced by the works of the flesh (cf. Gal. 5:19-21). The opposite of this is to let the Spirit, through His instructions, rule the life.

Second, when the Spirit rules the life one is said to be spiritually minded (Rom. 8:6) — that is, he has the mind of the Spirit, and he lets the Spirit rule his thoughts. He thinks as the Spirit thinks. But the only way to have the mind of the Spirit is to know His mind through the revelation which He has given —

⁵ Robert C. Whitaker, *Hang In There* (Plainfield, N.J.: Logos International, 1974), p. 18. Quoted by permission of Logos International.

through the written word of God.

Third, when one has the mind of the Spirit he must live by the things of the Spirit (Rom. 8:5). Paul commanded, "Walk in the Spirit." (Gal. 5:16.) He then adds, "But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law." (Gal. 5:18.) To live by the Spirit, to walk in the Spirit, and to be led by the Spirit all embrace the same concept. They all mean to be directed in life and conduct by the Spirit — that is, to live as the Spirit directs through His word.

Fourth, the things of the Spirit (the things that enable us to live by the Spirit, walk by the Spirit, and be led by the Spirit) are found only in the word of God, the revelation of God's will to man (1 Cor. 2:9-14). David Lipscomb correctly observed many years ago: "The Spirit of God dwells in the law, speaks through the law; and to hear and obey the words of the Spirit is to be led by the Spirit. To refuse to hear and follow the teaching of the Spirit is to reject the Spirit and to refuse his guidance. . . . There is not a true spiritual thought or idea in the world that is not found in the teaching of the Spirit of God in the Bible."⁶

Spirituality, then, is more than a single characteristic of a man; it is the total being, what he is and how he lives, the totality of living by the things of the Spirit. Spirituality has two integral aspects: (1) it is to have the mind of the Spirit — to think as the Spirit thinks; (2) it is to live by the directions of the Spirit — to do as the Spirit instructs through His word. We must conclude, therefore, that to be spiritual is to know and live by the revelation of the Spirit as it is given in the inspired Scriptures. To live by the instructions is more than some mechanical process: it is to make the will of God one's own will, to let the will of God completely control one's life. This control, however, is not exerted by the direct working of the Spirit, but rather indirectly through the word of truth. Thus the more one is absorbed into the will of God, as that will is revealed through His word, the more spiritual he becomes. Spirituality has little or nothing to do with how one feels; it is more what one is and what he does. Spirituality is character, and character is built, not by miraculous impartation, but by applying principles of divine truth.

That this conclusion is true is proven by the fact that the church at Corinth, while it seemingly desired and probably had as

⁶ David Lipscomb, *Salvation From Sin* (Nashville, Tenn.: Gospel Advocate Co., 1950), pp. 88, 90.

many spiritual gifts, especially the gift of speaking in tongues, as any apostolic church, was the lowest church in spirituality of any to which Paul wrote. They had received numerous gifts (1 Cor. 12-14), but the gifts had not increased their spirituality. They were still very human and they had the same problems that everyone else had or has in Christian growth. They were divided (1 Cor. 1:10-17) and tolerated a shameful fornicator (1 Cor. 5:1-11). They had problems of going to law one with another (1 Cor. 6), marriage (1 Cor. 7), idolatry (1 Cor. 8), apostles' rights and authority (1 Cor. 9), women's covering (1 Cor. 11), spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12), and some had even denied the resurrection (1 Cor. 15). For these and other reasons Paul rebuked them by saying, "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as babes in Christ. . . . For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?" (1 Cor. 3:1, 4.) Yet they had received the miraculous power given by the Spirit in apostolic times. What, then, was wrong? They had received the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, or at least many of them had, yet they were carnal. So what we have here is a church that had miraculous gifts, that spoke in tongues, that had all the advantages the modern Pentecostals claim, but which was plagued with more problems and less spirituality than any other church mentioned in the New Testament. This speaks loud and clear of two facts: (1) the Holy Spirit was not given to make the receiver more spiritual; (2) the ability to speak in tongues (even in apostolic times when some were actually capable of speaking in languages they had never learned) is no sign of superior spirituality.

The conclusion is inevitable: if one wishes to be spiritual he must follow the revelation given by the Spirit in the word of God rather than seek for the Spirit to enter into his heart and take control of his life. Obeying the Spirit's message, the truth of the gospel, not the Spirit Himself working directly in one, is that which makes him spiritual. This is a vital point in understanding the work of the Spirit and everyone should have a firm grasp of it in the very outset of his study of the Bible. The Spirit was simply not given to directly make the receiver more spiritual.

10. The Holy Spirit was not given to miraculously aid one in his financial fortunes. His function was not to personally guide men into the right business transactions. He had a more vital work. Yet a powerful thrust behind the present Pentecostal movement is the

supposition that the experience will lead to successful financial decisions. Kildahl found in his psychological studies that escape from crises is one of the basic reasons people are carried away with glossolalia. He says, "Dr. Paul Qualben learned through careful interviewing that more than 85% of the tongue-speakers had experienced a clearly defined anxiety crisis preceding their speaking in tongues. Their anxiety was caused by marital difficulties, financial concerns, ill health, and general depression. Sometimes the crisis was of an ethical or religious nature and involved concern about spiritual values, guilt, and ultimate meaning and purpose of life."⁷

One needs to read but casually Pat Boone's book, *A New Song*, to see the crises in his life. His departure from the truth, as he had learned it from childhood, led to a moral crisis, a family crisis, and a financial crisis. But instead of returning to the practice of pure New Testament Christianity, he began to seek something different, something that would free him from the narrow bounds of truth while extricating him from the financial mess his unchristian principles had led him into. He came to believe that the Holy Spirit was leading him into the right decisions for financial success. The Spirit became his new business manager and the financial crisis was no longer his, but God's. If he would but trust God and follow the leadings of the Spirit (that is, his own impulses which he ascribed to the Spirit) the crisis would soon pass. When his new adventures were partially successful he gave credit, not to following the principles of truth and sound business, but to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit was his senior business partner and He was making all the decisions. Success was inevitable.

But, with all due respect to those who so hold, this was simply not the work of the Holy Spirit in apostolic times. True, He does guide people, even today. And when one follows His directions he is more likely to succeed in an honest effort. But the Holy Spirit guides through the truth, the word of God, and in no other way. The instructions for successful living are given in the Scriptures. (This is not meant to discount the providence and blessings of our heavenly Father, who cares for us through His laws of nature.) The Bible says, "Not slothful in business." (Rom. 12:11.) This is a sound business principle for everyone. And in this way the Spirit

⁷ John P. Kildahl, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

gives instructions to all alike. When the instructions are given, as they are through the word of God, each one must then make use of them as best he can. The Spirit gives the same instructions to all.

11. The Holy Spirit was not given to directly fill the heart with joy, gladness, and tranquility. Do not misunderstand me here: the Spirit does give these, but He does so through the revealed truth by giving the plan which, when followed, produces joy, gladness, and tranquility. But in the present Pentecostal movement (and in most denominational groups to one extent or another) every impulse of joy or gladness is attributed to the direct operation of the Spirit within. Even some members of the Lord's church, those who ought to be the first to recognize this error, have ascribed these emotional responses to the personal indwelling of the Spirit. (We should be reminded again of the fact that once the idea of the personal indwelling is accepted, the work or works ascribed to the Spirit are a matter of degree, not of basic difference.)

Stanley E. Sayers in his *Reflecting on the Spirit*, a highly readable book with many admirable qualities, falls into the error of ascribing certain emotional responses to the direct indwelling of the Spirit. Although he often says or implies that the Scriptures do not reveal the method of the Spirit's indwelling, his subtle conclusion (even though one gets the feeling that he is unsure of himself) is that this means that He dwells in the Christian personally (that is directly in contrast with indirectly). And so he sets forth his views, though not dogmatically, that the indwelling Spirit is the direct cause of Christian joy, gladness and tranquility. He says: "Galatians 5:22-23 makes it distinctively clear that the fruits borne by the Spirit in the faithful Christian's life are altogether those of which we have spoken. The proof of the indwelling of the Spirit is (1) first, obedience of the inspired word; and (2) second, the possession of such peace as spoken by Jesus, in joy and gladness, yet not produced by the effects of the world. Hereupon is irrefutable proof of the living Source in our lives — the Holy Spirit producing within us joy and gladness and tranquility, while the world itself stands in bold relief anchored by the limits of its own physical concerns."⁸ Now add to this the following and you have a clear statement of what he is saying:

⁸ Stanley E. Sayers, *Reflecting on the Spirit* (Delight, Ark.: Gospel Light Publishing Co.), p. 171. Quoted by permission.

“Faith and the Word are not the Holy Spirit. The Word by the instrumentality of the Spirit Who inspired it produces faith; but this faith produced does not accomplish the work within us ascribed to the Spirit, which work alone can be accounted for by One who dwells in us in a very near and personal way.”⁹ Thus the product of the word is not that which is accomplished by the Spirit, namely, joy, gladness, and tranquility.

But why would the Holy Spirit do directly what His revealed plan was designed to do? If He gives joy and gladness directly, why should He not in the same manner give truth, thus eliminating the need for studying the Scriptures and the possibility of misunderstanding the will of God? If the Spirit gives joy and gladness apart from revelation, why should He not so give all blessings, even salvation? No sound reason can be given: for if He works directly in one thing there is no reason for Him not working directly in all things. The issue is, then, the Spirit’s method of work: does He work directly or indirectly? The truth about the matter is that He works today indirectly. He gives the plan by which joy, gladness, and tranquility can be attained. Thus His work or function is to reveal the plan (which He has done in the word of God); our function is to follow the plan revealed. When one reads the list of the fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22, 23, he may readily observe that every one of them is a product of following revealed truth. The Spirit, therefore, works through the truth to produce His fruits.

12. The Holy Spirit was not given to reveal personal facts and insignificant items to the receiver. Here is perhaps one of the most outstanding distinctions between the true work of the Holy Spirit and the counterfeit operations often ascribed to Him. In making known the will of God the Holy Spirit revealed principles for the benefit of all. But how different this is among false prophets and present-day Pentecostals. They conceive of the Spirit as being given to them as a personal guide — a revealer of specific truth for specific persons in specific situations. For example, Joseph Smith, the prophet of Mormonism, often received pseudorevelations to help him overcome problems, difficulties, and family squabbles. Some were addressed directly to his wife, Emma — personal revelations to her telling her how to conduct herself toward her husband! Pentecostal literature is literally filled with testimonies

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

wherein it is claimed that the Spirit revealed personal facts and items to them — facts pertaining to the individual alone. But one would search in vain to find a Biblical example of the Spirit revealing private truths to anyone. In fact, the work of the Spirit, as set forth in the Scriptures, is the exact opposite of this.

Peter wrote, “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” (2 Pet. 1:20, 21.) This passage has often been abused. It has been twisted to make it teach something at which it does not even hint. It does not teach that the Scriptures cannot be understood by individual Christians. Such a thought never entered the mind of Peter. In fact, he was writing to be understood. “Private interpretation” does not refer to the person who reads the Bible but rather to the inspired men who write it. Prophecy did not originate with the prophets, nor was it given for their private use — it was not a private message to the prophets. It did not come just to fill their own needs and desires. Neither was it for their benefit alone. The Lord was revealing His will to all men through them and the revealed will applied to the prophets in precisely the same sense it applied to all others. The apostles and prophets were only the instruments through which the Holy Spirit revealed the will of God for all men. He did not concern Himself with their private and individual matters. Albert Barnes says the word “interpretation” here means solution or disclosure. Thus prophecy (the revelation of God’s will to man) was not given by private interpretation (by disclosing the mind of the prophet) nor for the private solution to the prophet’s problems. “For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved [or carried along] by the Holy Ghost.” We must conclude, therefore, that the Spirit was given to reveal the will of God to all men, not to reveal private and personal facts to the receiver.

13. The Holy Spirit was not given to purify the soul in a second work of grace (sometimes called sanctification) or by a baptism of the sin-stained human spirit in the Holy Spirit. According to certain theories (and because they vary I will have to state them in a very general way) forgiveness of sins (salvation or pardon) is a work of grace that removes the guilt of sin. But the total job is not yet done because the love of and desire to sin, along with its stains, are still there. It is possible to remove them, but it takes a

second working of grace, a working so great that it separates one from the power and temptation to sin to the extent that he can live above it and without committing it. The Holy Spirit, in a miraculous way (usually called the baptism of the Holy Spirit), comes in and performs directly a second work, overwhelming the human spirit, taking charge of the individual, and removing the love of and desire for evil, thus freeing the soul from all stains of sin — the stains that remain after pardon! Adam Clarke, the well-known commentator, presents this view from the Methodist perspective in a very powerful way in *Clarke's Theology*, pages 182-209. Making a sharp distinction between pardon and purification, he says: "What then is this complete sanctification? It is the cleansing of the blood that has not been cleansed; it is washing the soul of a true believer from the remains of sin; it is making one who is already a child of God more holy, that he may be more happy, more useful in the world, and bring more glory to his heavenly Father. . . . Arise, then, and be baptized with a greater effusion of the Holy Ghost, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."¹⁰

Surprisingly enough, Moses E. Lard, one of the most powerful and influential leaders in the Restoration Movement, was tinted a little with this theory, or perhaps a similar one. He reluctantly and somewhat doubtful of his conclusions (an unusual stance for Lard) set forth his views in the first volume of *Lard's Quarterly* that all Christians are baptized in the Holy Spirit. His conclusions were based on 1 Corinthians 12:13. One of the reasons given for believing this was, as he states it, "Though sins be remitted, their stain may still cleave to the soul. Immersion in the Holy Spirit would free it from all these and render it pure and holy. Let it now be true that this is the object for which the soul is immersed in the Spirit, and we should then have a most expressive reason for denominating the Spirit Holy, namely, because it renders the human spirit holy."¹¹ While Lard did not deny that his views were speculative, he did feel that they offered the best explanation of 1 Corinthians 12:13.

The present-day Pentecostalism grew out of this concept. While they have a different twist in their manner of expressing it, they

¹⁰ Adam Clarke, *Clarke's Theology* (New York: G. Lane & C.B. Tippet, 1845), p. 206.

¹¹ Moses E. Lard, *Lard's Quarterly*, Vol. 1, Old Path Book Club, p. 280.

still hold to the basic idea that one must possess more than Christ offers in the forgiveness of sins and in following the instructions given in the Scriptures for Christian living. They seldom refer to their experience as sanctification. With them it is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. And they make this experience the dynamics for the new life, a life in which sin has little or no power over them because of the leadership of the Holy Spirit. In the final analysis, it is just the second working of grace with a new twist. According to them, following Christ in simple, trusting obedience may take one to heaven, but it takes the more abundant working of the Spirit to give meaning and dynamics to life. Pat Boone expresses this clearly in his book, *A New Song*. Describing the difference between himself before the experience (when he was just a Christian) and after (when he had received something not given him when he became a Christian and something he had never had as a follower of Christ), he says: "Up to this time I had been a churchman, paying my dues. I'd been investing regularly in the institutional bank: church attendance, contributions, and all the rest. The 'treasure' was accumulating in my heavenly account all right, but I was afraid to write checks on it. In other words, I didn't know how to claim the promises that Jesus makes in the Bible to those who'll believe Him. The trouble was, I'd lived in God's house 21 years without meeting my landlord! I knew a lot about Him — but now I've met Him."¹² As can be seen from this quotation, just being a Christian, enjoying the forgiveness of sins and having a hope of heaven were not enough: it was a cold, dry, dreary, legalistic, and burdensome way to live. But then came the "experience" which changed all of that. The Holy Spirit directly purified his soul, solved all his problems, and gave a new glow to living — what being a Christian alone could not do the experience did; what the Christian system lacked, the experience gave.

While all this may be meaningful to modern Pentecostals, it is simply not Scriptural — it is not the purpose for which the Holy Spirit was given. The miraculous gifts of the Spirit were not given to remove the final stains of sin from the soul or to directly make life more dynamic for the receiver. The household of Cornelius clearly demonstrates this.

When Peter preached to the house of Cornelius, he tell us: "And

¹² Pat Boone, *A New Song* (Carol Stream, Ill.: Creation House, 1973), p. 6. Copyrighted 1970 by Creation House. Used by permission.

as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.” (Acts 11:15, 16.) “And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. . . .” (Acts 10:45-48.) Had the Holy Spirit been given to them to sanctify them, cleanse their souls from every stain of sin, both original and acquired, then they and Peter could have at that moment proclaimed their salvation as a present reality. But instead he commanded them to be baptized (in water) in the name of Jesus Christ. While they had already received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, they had not received the forgiveness of their sins or sanctification, unless, of course, one should make the ridiculous claim that their souls were cleansed but their bodies had to be baptized in water for the remission of sins. The fact of the matter is that the Holy Spirit was not given then, now, or at any time for the purpose of personally and directly removing sins from the soul. His purpose was to reveal and confirm the revelation of God’s will, the scheme of human redemption. When one accepts and obeys God’s plan of salvation, the Lord saves him, not in part but the whole. The Holy Spirit saves and sanctifies through the truth, the word of God.

14. The Holy Spirit was not given to reveal the will of God on a given subject repeatedly — to reveal the same truth over and over again, instantaneously and on all occasions. The Spirit was given to guide the apostles into all truth (John 16:13), but this function was not designed (even for the apostles) to replace the intellect or to set one free from the necessity of study. While revelation of truth was His fundamental mission, once truth was revealed and made available to man, each one was then responsible for learning it from the divine and original source. This fact will become clear as we proceed.

But Pentecostals (and others, even some in the Lord’s church, who believe in the direct operation of the Holy Spirit) think that the Spirit continues to reveal to them truths already revealed in the New Testament. Their speech and their literature are literally

filled with statements to the effect that the Holy Spirit directly revealed to them things which are already taught in the Scriptures, the inspired revelation of God's will to man. For example, David J. Du Plessis, telling how the Spirit works, says, "The first truth that dawns on a person upon whom the Holy Spirit moves is the fact and the guilt of sin. Then He reveals the resurrected living Christ as Saviour and again as the mighty Baptizer in the Spirit."¹³ There are two thoughts here to which I wish to call your attention: first, the Spirit reveals the resurrected Christ; second, He reveals the resurrected Christ as Savior. Both of these are vital to New Testament teaching — they are two of the fundamentals the New Testament was written to reveal. Why would the Spirit reveal these truths directly when they are already both at the heart and core of the New Testament Scriptures? The whole concept of the Spirit revealing the will of God repeatedly is based on a total misapprehension of the work of the Spirit. It assumes that the Spirit continues to reveal over and over the same truths, even though they are plainly and forcefully taught in the New Testament.

While Pentecostalism has gone to the extreme here, there are forms of this folly surfacing all around us. For instance, I was informed by a reliable source that a gospel preacher recently said, "When I am studying with people the Holy Spirit reveals to my mind just the right passage of Scripture to use." While this would be rather convenient (especially for those of us plagued with a poor memory), it is simply not the truth — it is Pentecostalism in its earliest stages. But if it were the case, then why have the Scriptures at all? If He reveals the proper verse, why not just reveal the contents of the verse? What would be the difference in principle? Would one be more miraculous than the other? Thus we must conclude that if the Spirit continues to reveal truth directly to and through men today, the fundamental need for the Bible is lost — there is no necessity for a revelation in a book when the same revelation is being given directly to living men.

But the fact is, the function of the Spirit was not to reveal the same truth directly and repeatedly to each individual. This fact can be established from many Scriptural considerations, three of which follow:

¹³ David J. Du Plessis, *The Spirit Bade Me Go* (Plainfield, N.J.: Logos International, 1970), p. 39. Quoted by permission of Logos International.

First, the faith (the gospel system) was once and for all delivered to the saints — that is, it was delivered once and once delivered it would not be repeated. Jude wrote, “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” (Jude 3.) The word “once” is translated from the Greek *hapax*, meaning, according to Vine, “Once for all, of what is of perpetual validity, not requiring repetition.” One of the verses he gives for the establishment of this definition is Hebrews 9:28, where it says, “So Christ was once offered to bear his sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” Christ was offered once and that once was for all and for all time — it is unnecessary for Him to repeat His death. And so it is with faith. The American Standard Version renders it, “. . . the faith which was once for all delivered. . . .” The Holy Spirit thus revealed, confirmed, and delivered the truth, and when it was committed to the written word it was final. It then became the responsibility of each one to learn the truth, not by a direct revelation, but from the written word of God.

Second, an inspired man rebuked Peter, another inspired man, for separating himself from Gentile Christians. Peter was guilty of returning to the racial discrimination of the old Jewish dispensation after the truth that God was no respecter of persons had been revealed to him. Paul said, “But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?” (Gal. 2:11-14.)

The question here that concerns us is, why did Paul have to rebuke Peter? Why did the Holy Spirit not reveal to Peter on this occasion the fact that he was departing from the truth? Why did the Holy Spirit not rebuke him directly? (Of course the Spirit did rebuke him, but he did it through Paul: we are speaking here of a

personal and instantaneous revelation, such as present-day Pentecostals claim.) The fact is, He had already revealed the truth on this matter to Peter (see Acts 10 and 11), and Peter had fully understood that all men were equally acceptable to God upon their obedience to Him. If Peter had momentarily forgotten this, he could have easily been reminded of it by reviewing the revelation given through him. In fact, this is precisely what was required of him, just as it was required of all other Christians. There was, therefore, no need for a repeated revelation of that truth.

Third, the apostles and elders met at Jerusalem to consider the claims of those who taught that it was necessary for the Gentiles to be circumcised and keep the law of Moses before they could be saved. This is recorded in Acts 15. The question had come up in Antioch when certain Jews came to that city trying to bind the law of Moses on Christians. When Paul and Barnabas clashed with them over the issue, the church determined that some of them, including Paul and Barnabas, should go to Jerusalem and confer with the apostles and elders. This they did. And when the apostles and elders were assembled the question was warmly discussed at great length. But to settle the matter, both Peter and James referred to the incident recorded in Acts 10 and 11, where God had clearly revealed that the Gentiles were to be accepted on the basis of gospel obedience, not on obedience to the law. This settled the matter.

Again I ask, why did the Holy Spirit not reveal to each one the answer and save the time and trouble of their coming together and having "much disputing"? Simply because He had already revealed the truth on this subject and they could study it and know it without additional help. The Holy Spirit did not reveal the same thing over and over again for them . . . or for anyone else in apostolic times. Once revelation was given, those with spiritual gifts could study it as everyone else could and did to learn the truth. The conclusion is therefore inevitable: the Holy Spirit was not given, even in men who were miraculously endowed, to repeatedly reveal the will of God directly and on all occasions.

15. The Holy Spirit was not given to remove directly all temptation to sin. Yet this is one of the cardinal works ascribed to Him by the Pentecostal movement. When I preached for the Pentecostal Holiness Church I heard scores of testimonies to the effect that the Spirit had completely and absolutely removed all

desire for what was considered by them to be sinful habits. Thus those who drank had no more thirst for alcohol. Those who smoked had the desire miraculously removed. Those who had been promiscuous had a desire instilled in them only for their mates (and if they did not have a mate, it was totally removed until they found the right one). Those who had danced, gone to the movies, been entertained by ball games, radio, television, etc. (for with them nearly all forms of recreation were sinful) had all desire for such taken away — the Holy Spirit personally removed all desire to engage in such things. The love of sin was replaced by a deep hatred for evil. All this was supposedly done, not by the individual following the Holy Spirit's revealed plan, but by a direct operation of the Spirit. The individual himself had no responsibility in the matter; it was not something he did by himself, but something done for him. The Holy Spirit, without any effort on the part of the person involved, removed the taste for and the temptation to all sinful habits.

Another twist to this is to say that the Spirit controls the whole being, even the bodily appetites. Francis Clare (a Catholic nun who professes the Pentecostal experience) gives an example of how this works. She says, "Along with the regular Ephesian armor for the battle [notice that a new weapon, not mentioned by Paul, was added to her armor — HW] I found myself for the first time in my life led to a week of complete fast except for liquids. Amazing grace! I suffered not one hunger pang or weakness; I had only growing, deepening joy, power, and victory."¹⁴

While it might be a great convenience for the Spirit to remove from our lives all desire to sin, such was never His function in New Testament times. He was simply not given to take possession of one or to control one's appetites. He made it possible for us to overcome evil, but we must do it through obedience to the gospel. He gave the revelation of the will of God and that revelation contains the remedy for sin, but neither it nor the Holy Spirit takes away the drawing power of sin to the physical nature. One can overcome the enticing power of sin, but he must exercise his own free will to do so. The Holy Spirit gives the means of escape (in the word of God) but man himself must apply the means.

This is not a harmless concept. There are grave dangers in

¹⁴ Sister Francis Clare, *Wow God* (Harrison, Arkansas: New Leaf Press, Inc., 1977), p. 130. Quoted by permission of New Leaf Press.

believing that the Holy Spirit removes all the desire to sin. I will list only two:

1. It weakens one's sense of right and wrong. If one believes that the Spirit removes all desire for evil he must then conclude, if he is consistent, that all remaining desires, regardless of what they may be, are pure and holy. For example, if one, after he has been convinced that the Spirit has removed all desire for evil, desires his neighbor's wife (which of course is sinful), he must conclude that the desire is pure and right because the Holy Spirit has removed all desires that are wrong. And, believe it or not, I have heard men use this or a similar reason to justify their sins.

2. It leads one to ignore the power of temptation. Paul said, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." (1 Cor. 10:12.) Thus a man who does not recognize the power of sin over him is in great danger of falling into sin. This is perhaps the most serious indictment that can be brought against the whole theory: for if the Spirit directly removes all desire to sin, temptation loses its power and the devil might as well go out of business. A man is tempted when he is drawn away from God by his worldly desires (cf. James 1:13-15). But if sin has no enticing power over one, if the desire for that which would otherwise entice has been removed, there can be no temptation. One cannot be tempted with that for which he has no desire. Thus to say that the Spirit has removed all desire to sin from one's life is to say that temptation has no power over him. He cannot be led astray. And that would make useless all Scriptural warnings against sin, exhortations to flee it, and the admonitions concerning temptations.

But since temptation does have force, and since sin does have appealing power, even to the best Christian, we must conclude that it was never the function of the Spirit to personally remove the desires of the flesh. It takes effort on the part of the individual to overcome the world. But the Holy Spirit, in the written word, has provided the plan by which Christians can overcome. The function of the Holy Spirit was to give the plan; it is the function of the individual to follow the plan. "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." (1 John 5:4.)

There are many other things ascribed to the Spirit today which He was not given to do, but I have discussed enough to abundantly illustrate the principle and show the manner of the misconcep-

tions. We are now ready to turn our attention to the work of the Holy Spirit — the work He was given to do.

CHAPTER 5

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The actual and fundamental work of the Holy Spirit, that which is ascribed to Him in the Scriptures (and since the Scriptures were inspired by the Spirit, this is simply to say the work which the Holy Spirit ascribes to Himself), can be summed up in four brief propositions: (1) to reveal the truth; (2) to confirm the truth revealed; (3) to deliver the truth confirmed; and (4) to impregnate the truth delivered. Each of these propositions will now be discussed in turn.

TRUTH REVEALED

To reveal the truth was and is the Holy Spirit's basic and fundamental work. Man, in his lost condition, needed salvation. But before he could be saved he would have to know and do the will of God. But the will of God, until it was revealed, was concealed in the mind of God. And without revelation, man had no access to it. Somehow the contents of the divine mind had to be made known to the mind of man if man was to be saved. But how could this be accomplished? It was done through revelation.

God could have made His will known, I suppose, through innumerable means, but He chose revelation. He could have spoken to man face to face, as He did to Moses (Ex. 33:11; Deut. 5:4). He could have revealed His will to the head of the family, as He did in the patriarchal age. He might have chosen the leader of a community or nation and spoken through him. But He has chosen another method. He sent the Holy Spirit to reveal His will through chosen men. And regardless of how many ways God might have revealed His will, He did so through the Spirit. Thus the revelation of truth is the fundamental work of the Holy Spirit. Everything He does is related to this. And to miss this point is to utterly misunderstand both the Holy Spirit and His work.

Without revelation man is unable to know (that is, know His will), honor, or serve God. This makes the work of the Holy Spirit absolutely indispensable.

God has always disclosed Himself and His will to man by some form of revelation. But during the Old Testament period the revelation was always incomplete (that is, there was always an undercurrent that looked forward to that which was yet to be revealed). There is a line running straight through the Old Testament from Adam to Christ, and every aspect of that line says, in essence, completeness will be in Him who is to come. Thus the Old Testament points to the complete, the perfect, the final revelation of God's will. It points to that which is the end or purpose of everything written in the old covenant — a time when revelation would be completed, a time when no more would be either needed or given.

This is why Christ is said to be the end of the law. "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." (Rom. 10:4.) "The end of the law" here does not have reference to the fact that the law would come to an end (even though it did in the death of Christ, Eph. 2:14-16; Col. 2:13-17) but rather to the fact that Christ was the end toward which it pointed, the end in view, the purpose for which it was given. When Christ came, the law had served its purpose. "But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster." (Gal. 3:23-25.)

While the Old Testament always made room for additional revelation, the New Testament claims to be final — it is that absolutely perfect system promised throughout the Old Testament (cf. Jer. 31:31ff; Heb. 8:6-13; 1 Cor. 2:1-14; Jude 3). It is the consummation of all revelation. Nothing was ever to be added to it, subtracted from it, or substituted for it (Rev. 22:18, 19; Gal. 1:6-11). It was final.

But not only was it final, it was also complete. It revealed all that man needs to know in order to be saved, to live the Christian life, and to enter heaven when this life is over. It was God's complete system — God's complete revelation. Notice carefully what Paul said about the gospel. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For

therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, the just shall live by faith." (Rom. 1:16, 17.) The righteousness of God here is not an attribute of God but rather the righteousness revealed by God for His people. But if the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel, nothing unrevealed can be the righteousness of God. Righteousness is revealed. Furthermore, Paul adds, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Rom. 10:17.) Faith, that is, true Biblical faith, is the belief of testimony and that testimony is in the word of God. No man can, therefore, have an acceptable faith in something not found in the Scriptures. All faith, in both theory and practice, must be based upon what God reveals. This simply means that man cannot practice unrevealed things by faith. Man must, therefore, have revelation to please God.

It is the function of the Holy Spirit to reveal the things of God, the things that man must know in order to please God. Jesus said, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you." (John 16:13-15.) This promise was made to the apostles only, not to all Christians, for it was through them the revelation would be given. The truth would be made known to all, indirectly, but the Spirit was to reveal it to and through the apostles in a direct and miraculous way. Paul adds, "But God hath revealed them unto us [inspired men] by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God [and he to whom the Spirit reveals them]. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God [know them because the Spirit has revealed them to us]." (1 Cor. 2:10-12.) Peter, in his remarks on how revelation was received and delivered by holy men of old, said, "For prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Pet. 1:21.) All these verses, and many more in all parts of the Bible, clearly affirm that the work of the Holy Spirit was to reveal truth — to take the mind of God and

make it known to the human mind.

But revelation necessitates a method. What method, therefore, did the Spirit use in revealing God's will to man? Did He reveal the truth directly to each individual? Or did He reveal God's plan and thus impose upon each individual to study that plan? The answer is obvious to all those who accept the Scriptures as the revelation of God's will to man. The Spirit gave the revelation; now man must study the Scriptures to learn it. It was never the Spirit's function to reveal to each individual directly the will of God.

Man does not think as God thinks. And for this reason he can never know God's will until it is revealed unto him. Isaiah, speaking for God, said, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isa. 55:8, 9.) But if man is to know the will of God he must know His thoughts — man must know the thoughts (or will) of God to be pleasing to Him. God, in order to reveal His thoughts to man, sent the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit in turn took the contents of the divine mind and put them into words, and through the words chosen, now contained in the Scriptures, conveyed the will of God to the mind of man. That is the method of revelation taught by the Spirit Himself in the Bible. And as far as the Scriptures are concerned, the Spirit uses no other method to reveal the things of God to man. He clothed the will of God in human words, words understandable to man, in order to reveal God's will. The thoughts of God are conveyed through words to the mind of man. The words, the vehicles which carry the thoughts of God, words chosen by the Holy Spirit, now make up the Scriptures.

We cannot but conclude, therefore, that the Spirit does not work directly on the mind of man today. (He may have done so on some occasions to those originally used as instruments through which He expressed the will of God, the men He inspired to write the New Testament, but He does not do so today: because such an act would constitute a miracle, and the Spirit no longer works through man miraculously — He does so only through means.) He reveals the truth, His basic and fundamental work, through the living word of God. He originally revealed the truth through chosen men; He reveals it today through the words delivered by the chosen men. The chosen men, using the words supplied to

them by the Spirit, wrote under His immediate direction. What they wrote was the word of God. When their work was completed, the end product was an inspired Book.

Thus the work of the Holy Spirit was to reveal the truth; He revealed the truth in chosen words; the words which He revealed now constitute the Scriptures. It is therefore a grave misconception of the Holy Spirit and His work to seek or expect God's will to be revealed now apart from the written word. And it is a serious error to ascribe works to the Spirit that are not related to His primary function of revealing the truth. The work of the Holy Spirit was to reveal the will of God to man, and all that He does is related to this primary function.

TRUTH CONFIRMED

Since God's thoughts were far above man's thoughts, and since the gospel of Christ, the saving message of Christ, was a completely new doctrine presented to the world in apostolic times, when the apostles went forth preaching the will of God under the Great Commission, many of the facts revealed were necessarily strange and incredible to an unbelieving world. It was therefore imperative that the word be confirmed by God, confirmed to such a degree that man could be fully convinced that the gospel was from God and not from man. The vital question both then and now is, how could people in apostolic times, and how can they today, distinguish between the will of God and the false claims of men? How could they, and how can we, distinguish between truth and error, between right and wrong, between the real and the counterfeit? Of all the books in the world which claim to be divine, which is in reality the word of God? In answering this question we come face to face with the work of the Holy Spirit. When the Spirit revealed the word, He did not leave it to claims alone: He confirmed it with miracles. He provided the necessary credentials to enable the original proclaimers of the gospel to confirm their words as the word of God. This was the fundamental purpose of miracles, and they were never performed for lesser or trifling causes.

Perhaps it would be wise to clarify what the word "miracle" means in the New Testament Scriptures. It is a translation of two Greek words, *dunamis* and *semeion*. Thayer defines *dunamis*: "a. univ. inherent power, power residing in a thing by virtue of its

nature, or which a person or thing exerts and puts forth . . . b. specifically, the power of performing miracles." According to Vincent in his *Word Studies* the word *semeion* means a sign "pointing to something beyond itself, a mark of the power of grace of the doer or of his connection with the supernatural." There are at least four other words related to or describing the wonderful action in a miracle, but they are translated by some other word. The word *teras*, wonder, often used with signs, is one; the word *endoxos*, glorious, is another; *paradoxos*, strange things, is a third; and the fourth, *thaumasios*, is a wonderful thing. Thus in the New Testament a miracle is pictured as a power, a sign, a wonder, a glorious, strange, and wonderful thing. It is a supernatural rather than a natural event.

We must then conclude that a miracle, in the Biblical sense, is an observable occurrence effected by the direct power of God — an act or an event performed in nature (and by nature I mean the natural system or laws established by God) which is above or beyond nature. A miracle is not (or at least it is not necessarily so) an act contrary to or in contradiction with nature, as it is sometimes thought. A miracle is simply a direct act of God. Because He is the God of nature, and because He is above or beyond nature (the giver and maker of nature), He does not necessarily have to act contrary to nature in order to intervene in or work without natural processes. A miracle is thus God acting other than by His natural means or established laws.

God works through both natural systems and without natural systems. When He works through nature we call it natural; when He works without natural laws, we call it a miracle. In the natural process, for example, food must be grown and prepared. In the miraculous the growth process is dispensed with. In the feeding of the 5,000 Jesus provided the food without engaging the natural processes (Matt. 14:15-21). Bread and meat were provided apart from God's regular means of providing them. In the case of the bread, there was no sowing, no reaping, no grinding the grain, no baking. It was produced by a direct act of God. And so it was with the fish: there was no process of reproduction, no catching, no cleaning, no preparing for the table. Jesus produced both apart from the natural processes. This is a miracle — producing without the natural means of production. (Of course I am aware of the fact that God often uses means in the miraculous. He probably used clouds to produce the rain during the flood. But when one gets

back to the miraculous aspect, he will find God working directly. Thus when God uses means in a miracle, He works directly on the means. A miracle is therefore always the direct act of God.)

Unfortunately, the word "miracle" is used today to describe any kind of unusual or extraordinary event occurring in nature. While this is a present use of the word, and it is so defined in most dictionaries, such usage should not be confused with Bible miracles. But overlooking this distinction, many people move from the concept of an extraordinary happening in their own experience to Biblical miracles and conceive of the miracles in the Bible as being nothing more than marvelous or unusual events, something that happened within the framework of nature. When this kind of thinking occurs, the direct act of God is eliminated and the whole Biblical concept of miracles is lost. The Bible miracles eventually come to be looked upon as nothing more than the ordinary experiences of the people who lived during the time it was written. The miracles (the direct intervention of God) are therefore reduced, in the thinking of people, to extraordinary natural events. But a Biblical miracle is more, much more, than an extraordinary natural event; it is an event in which God is working directly.

In the New Testament, miracles were performed to confirm the word of God — they served as credentials for the messengers of truth. This can be established in numerous ways, both by plain statements from the Scriptures and by deduction, but for our present study I will select only three passages. First, John said, in closing his book, "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." (John 20:30, 31.) Unless one assumes that the miracles were performed for a different reason than they are recorded, this verse settles the issue: they were performed to make believers. Second, when the Lord gave the apostles the Great Commission, He concluded by saying, "And these signs will follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the

Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen." (Mark 16:17-20.) This verse leaves no doubt about the purpose of the signs: they were used to confirm the word preached. Third, the Hebrew writer makes a similar statement: "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?" (Heb. 2:3, 4.) Again the purpose of miracles is clear: they were used to confirm the word of God.

As far as I am able to ascertain, all miracles in New Testament times were worked, either directly or indirectly, to confirm the word preached, to convince all who were concerned that both the messenger and his message were from God. When a miracle was performed to confirm the revelation, God stamped His approval upon it — it was of God! And since all truth was revealed and confirmed in apostolic times, and since a confirmed truth does not need to be reconfirmed over and over again, the work of the Holy Spirit in confirming the truth has been completed. The complete will of God for man has been made known. No miracles are now necessary because there are no new truths to confirm.

TRUTH DELIVERED

But in addition to revealing and confirming the truth, the work of the Holy Spirit involved delivering the truth. By "deliver" I mean no more than to put the revealed truth which He confirmed into permanent form, to deliver the word of God as Scripture. The Spirit did not just reveal and confirm the word orally and leave it to be preserved by tradition. A part of His work was to deliver it in completed or written form. Thus those who have the Scriptures today have the revealed and confirmed word delivered to them. The Holy Spirit has delivered the will of God into their hands, and by this means He has put it within reach of every responsible and accountable person. The confirmed revelation has been delivered.

Jude says, "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once [once for all, ASV] delivered unto the saints." (Jude 3.) The faith once delivered is the completed revelation, the

Scriptures as they were delivered by the Holy Spirit. This simply means that the Scriptures are inspired. And so the delivering of the revelation involves the process of inspiration — the Spirit directing the deliverance in such a way as to certify that every word is the word of God. But this concept necessitates verbal and plenary inspiration (the two words taken together mean that the Scriptures are inspired through and through and word for word). It means that in the original autographs every word of the Bible was chosen by the Holy Spirit (inspiration would extend to translations only insofar as the original words are correctly translated).

The Scriptures claim to be from God. Following are just a few of the many passages which make this claim: David said, "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue." (2 Sam. 32:2.) Again, "For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven." (Ps. 119:89.) Paul said, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God. . . ." (2 Tim. 3:16.) Peter adds, "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Pet. 1:21.)

Hundreds of times the writers of the Bible claim to be speaking for God. Take for example: "The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord." (Jer. 7:1.) "The word of the Lord that came unto Hosea." (Hosea 1:1.) "Now the word of the Lord came unto Jonah." (Jonah 1:1.) "In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of the Lord by Haggai." (Haggai 1:1.) "In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the Lord unto Zechariah." (Zech. 1:1.) This claim not only runs throughout the Old Testament, it also frequently occurs in the New. Paul wrote, "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or a spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord." (1 Cor. 14:37.) Again, "For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ." (2 Cor. 2:17.) Further, "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God." (1 Thess. 2:13.) This gives a sufficient concept of the claim made by the Bible for itself. The claim is either true or false. If false, then there is no reason to believe any of the Bible; if true, then the claim itself is inspired, and we therefore have an inspired affirmation of inspiration.

inspired, and we therefore have an inspired affirmation of inspiration.

But does all this prove verbal inspiration? Indeed it does. While most of the passages quoted have reference to the particular message of the context or the Scriptures as a whole, it is incredible to think of the whole being inspired while the parts are not. There is a well-known axiom which states, "The whole is equal to the sum of all its parts." One could not take the parts of a lemon pie and put them together into a whole and the whole be an apple pie. The whole must be the same kind as its parts. And so it is with inspiration. We cannot take human words and put them together and come out with the divine word of God. The whole cannot be different from its parts. We must conclude, therefore, that if the Bible is the word of God as a whole, it must be the word of God in all its parts. For the whole is equal to the sum of all its parts. And since the parts of the Bible are made up of words, we can reach no conclusion but that each word in the Scripture, as it was originally given, is a word from God.

But to further establish this, the author of Proverbs says, "Every word of God is pure: he is shield unto them that put their trust in him." (Prov. 30:5.) Here it is said that *every word* of God is pure — not just the word but every word. The American Standard Version renders it, "Every word of God is tried." But in a footnote it says "purified." It seems to me that the whole thrust of the statement is that every word of God has been tried as by a refiner's fire and is therefore pure. Or as the Psalmist puts it, "Thy word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it." (Ps. 119:140.) Thus the author of Proverbs sees all impurities removed from every word that comes from the mouth of God. "Every word of God is pure."

Now in light of this, and in this connection, consider the next verse: "Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." (Prov. 30:6.) Why not add to the words (the plural form here calls attention to each individual word) of God? Simply because every word of God is pure. This cannot be said of the word of man. Any word man added to the word of God would be an impure word. Only the words of God are pure words — only the words of God belong in the Bible. When one has the word of God he has pure words; when he has the word of men he has impure words (words out of their proper place). But if *every word* of God is pure, this can mean nothing but verbal inspiration.

Jesus said, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word the proceedeth out of the mouth of God." (Matt. 4:4.) Since Jesus quotes this from the Old Testament (Deut. 8:3) with His approval, the principle would be true regardless of when or where the word of God was spoken. Jesus does not say or imply that man shall live by some concept or thought of God expressed in general by the fallible words of men, but by *every* word of God. The word "every" modifies "word," signifying not just the words of God collectively, but every single word that goes into making up the whole. Thus every word in the Scriptures is the word of God — every word is spoken by God.

Jesus is here emphasizing the fact that man shall live by *every* word of God. The word "live" is from the Greek root *zao*, which usually has the meaning of having life or to live in contrast with nonliving, that is, physical life. But it is also used to denote the manner in which one lives — the way in which he conducts his life. Paul said, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." (Titus 2:11, 12.) Again, "Yea, and all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (2 Tim. 3:12.) See also Col. 3:7; 1 Tim. 5:6; Gal. 2:14.

When Jesus said that man should live by every word of God, He could have meant one of three things: (1) that one has physical life by every word of God; (2) that the Christian has spiritual life by every word of God; (3) that a Christian's conduct is directed by every word of God. (Of course we understand that Jesus meant every word that is applicable to one.)

The first is no doubt true in some sense. All things were made and are sustained by the word of God (Heb. 1:3). But it is highly unlikely that Jesus had this in mind in Matthew 4:4. However, even though one might sustain physical life (for a brief time at least) by bread (food) alone, there is more to life than the physical. Man needs more than bread to truly live.

The second alternative is also unquestionably true. The word of God is that by which Christians grow spiritually. Peter says, "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, desiring the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." (1 Pet. 2:1, 2. See also Heb. 5:12-14.) Thus Jesus could have meant that the spiritual life of God's children is by every word of God: for this is

certainly true.

However, it is my considered conclusion that Jesus had the third alternative in mind. The Christian life is to be directed by *every* word of God. To neglect one word would be to neglect a part of God's plan to save and a part of His plan for our lives. Every word of God is vital to the manner of our conduct.

Inspiration, then, is our guarantee that the Holy Spirit delivered unto us the word of God — that *every* word delivered in the Scriptures is a word from God. To deliver the Scriptures to the world was basic or fundamental to the work of the Spirit.

We conclude, then, that when the Scriptures were completed, when they were delivered by inspiration, they contained all that man needed to know in order to become a Christian, to live pleasing to God in this life, and to go to heaven when life is over. Paul wrote to Timothy saying, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good work." (2 Tim. 3:16, 17.) The point that is emphatically made here is that the Scriptures furnish (or equip, Moffatt) the man of God, the Christian, unto all that is necessary to perfect him in the service of God, his Maker. Nothing else is needed; nothing unrevealed is admissible. There is therefore nothing that pertains to faith and practice that has not been revealed, confirmed, and delivered — delivered by the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures.

TRUTH IMPREGNATED

The Holy Spirit impregnated the truth which He revealed, confirmed, and delivered. By "impregnate" I mean nothing more than "empower" — the delivered truth is empowered with spiritual life!

The word of God is living and active. The Hebrews writer says, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful (living and active, ASV), and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Heb. 4:12.) Sometimes we hear someone refer to the Scriptures as mere words, meaning words without power. But the words of the Bible are more than mere words — they are words impregnated with power, truth, and life; they are living words, active words,

discerning words. No word of God is a dead word. Thus the word of God has certain powers that no other writings have. What are some of the powers of the word of God? Following are a few:

1. The word of God has power to accomplish that for which it has been given. "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." (Isa. 55:10, 11.) Thus like the rain and the snow, which are not sent on the earth in vain but water the soil so that the seed can germinate and produce, the word of God, when it is sent forth, does not return void, but accomplishes the purposes for which the Lord sends it. Whatever God has designed for the word to do, it has power to accomplish it. It will not return unto Him void; that is, it will not return until it has accomplished its purposes.

2. The word of God has the power of light. The Psalmist sang, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." (Ps. 119:105.) The power of light is to dispel darkness. Wherever light is, darkness must flee. The word of God has power to dispel religious darkness, ignorance, superstition, fear, etc. "The entrance of thy word giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple." (Ps. 119:130.) The light it gives is heavenly light — light to enlighten the soul. It is the revelation of God's will.

3. The word of God has the power of seed. Peter said, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." (1 Pet. 1:22, 23.) Paul adds, "For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel." (1 Cor. 4:15.) Jesus said, in explaining the parable of the sower, "The seed is the word of God." (Luke 8:11.) The word of God is the seed of the kingdom. It is a seed that is sown in the human heart, and when a heart is good soil, a heart properly prepared to receive it, it germinates and produces children of the kingdom, Christians. All animated seeds have power to produce after their kind, but no seed has the power to produce a variety of

kinds. The word of God has the same power. It produces after its kind — it produces Christians, but it cannot produce anything other than Christians. If there is a product that is more or less than a Christian, one can know what some seed other than the word of God has been sown. The word of God produces Christians, but it cannot produce different kinds of Christians. Thus the word of God has the power of seed.

4. The word of God has power to make one wise unto salvation. Paul wrote to Timothy saying, “And from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” (2 Tim. 3:15.) The Scriptures reveal the plan by which lost men can be saved. No other source has this power; only the word of God can make one wise unto salvation; only the word of God can reveal what one must do to be saved.

5. The word of God has power to save. James says, “Wherefore lay apart all filthiness, and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the ingrafted word, which is able to save your souls.” (James 1:21.) Paul adds, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also the the Greek.” (Rom. 1:16.) When the word of God is planted or received into the heart, when it makes one wise unto salvation, when it germinates and produces, when it leads one into complete obedience to every command of God, salvation is the result. The word of God has power to save all who will follow its divine instructions.

6. The word of God has power to keep the saved from sin. The Psalmist sang, “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.” (Ps. 119:11.) The human heart is not constructed in such a manner so as to be able to serve two masters. When God’s word becomes the rule of life, evil must move out. This is not to say that a Christian never sins. He does. But it is to say that both sin and the Bible cannot rule the same life.

On the flyleaf of an ancient copy of the Bible was found the following words, written by an unknown hand:

*This Book unfolds Jehovah’s mind;
This Book salutes in accent kind;
This Friend our needs will amply meet;
This Fountain sends forth joys sweet.*

*This Mine affords us boundless wealth;
This Good Physician gives us health;
This Sun renews and warms the soul;
This Sword both wounds and makes us whole.
This Letter shows our sins forgiven;
This Guide conducts us safe to heaven;
This Charter has been sealed with blood;
This Volume is the Word of God.*

Now we come to a very vital question: what makes the word of God powerful, living, active — what makes it different from other words? The answer: the Holy Spirit has impregnated it with spiritual life. This is why Jesus said, “The seed is the word of God.” (Luke 8:11.) When the living Spirit-filled seed is planted in proper soil, a human heart receptive to truth, it has power to germinate and produce a child of God. The power originates with God, but God sent the Holy Spirit to reveal, confirm, deliver, and impregnate truth, the word of God, with the life-giving principle. Thus when the word of God is received into a properly prepared heart, the life-giving power enters. The Spirit gives life through the word. The word thus becomes the instrument through which the Spirit gives life. The word of God is therefore impregnated with spiritual life, and this impregnation is the work of the Holy Spirit. It is this fact that marks the vital difference between the word of God and the words of men.

Since the Holy Spirit has impregnated the truth with the germ of spiritual life, and since that truth, the word, the gospel of Christ, is the power of God to save (Rom. 1:16), there is no need for the Spirit to personally accompany and energize the word each time it is preached. The Spirit has put all the power that is needed to save a soul from sin in the word of God. And just as it is unnecessary for God to perform a miracle each time a seed is planted, it is unnecessary for the Holy Spirit to miraculously apply the word each time it is preached. The life is in the seed. And it needs only to be planted under the proper conditions to produce. So it is with the word of God; the Spirit put life in the word; when the word is planted in the proper kind of heart, it is impregnated with all the power that is necessary to produce a Christian.

We conclude, therefore, that every function or work of the Holy Spirit can be classed under one of these four headings, namely, to reveal the truth, to confirm the truth revealed, to deliver the truth confirmed, or to impregnate the truth delivered.

This is the fundamental work of the Holy Spirit in the Christian Age. A failure to grasp this has led to innumerable errors concerning the Holy Spirit and His work.

For us living today, the truth is given in the written word of God, the holy Scriptures. That truth was first revealed to the apostles. It was confirmed by miracles in apostolic times. The confirmed word was then written (delivered) for all time to come. The written word, as well as the spoken word, was empowered or impregnated with spiritual life. The Scriptures now contain all that is necessary to produce spiritual life in a lost soul and to nourish the instilled spiritual life to maturity. "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." (2 Pet. 1:3, 4.)

The remainder of this book will discuss subjects that are related to the fundamental work of the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER 6

THE SPIRIT'S INDWELLING

There are many aspects to the study of the Holy Spirit, but perhaps the most vital one confronting Christians in this century is that of His indwelling. The views of indwelling are so vast and varied that there is a grave danger not only of reaching false conclusions, but that the Holy Spirit and His work will be completely lost in the minds of men while they seek to prove their conjectures and theories. In short, man's view of indwelling may become more important to him than the indwelling itself. But further, to have an improper or unscriptural concept of the Spirit's indwelling is to build on false premises — to build on the sinking sand rather than upon the solid rock of truth. This makes the subject far more important than most brethren have yet conceived.

While there is little difference among professed Christians concerning the fact of indwelling, there is a great difference as to the method or medium. I concede, however, that some great and good men have had a misunderstanding concerning the method without doing a great deal of harm to their views of the Christian system, but this is due, for the most part, to their having held a view in theory that they did not carry out in practice. And this in no way proves that there is no harm in holding a false view. For while a few may remain true to God's word while misconceiving the method of indwelling, many have gone astray. In fact, a misunderstanding of the Spirit's indwelling has led to innumerable errors, not the least of which is to ascribe to Him things which He was never given to do. This in turn leads to a misconception of the total work of the Spirit. The danger in this lies in the fact that there can be no clear understanding of the scheme of human redemption without a clear understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit, which includes His indwelling. Thus a misconception of any phase of the work of the Holy Spirit is likely to lead one to

misconstrue, in one way or another, the whole plan of salvation.

I therefore consider it imperative that Christians have a clear concept of the indwelling of the Spirit, both the fact and the method. I now propose to enter into a study of both. But before I start either, it might be well to state our options and observe the extremes.

When the subject of indwelling is considered, there are only three alternatives to choose from: either the Holy Spirit dwells in Christians *directly*, or He dwells in them *indirectly*, or else He does not dwell in them at all. There is no other alternative. It is my deep conviction, reached after many years of study, that the second alternative is the Scriptural one, and that the first and third represent extremes. I now invite you to study the extremes in a little more detail.

IMMEDIATE INDWELLING

By immediate I mean to act directly or without the intervention of another object, to work without means. Thus the immediate indwelling of the Spirit means that He dwells in one apart from any means (such as the word of God) — no medium stands between the person and the Spirit; or as Alexander Campbell expressed it, naked Spirit dwells in naked flesh. If this is the method of indwelling, then it means that the Holy Spirit dwells in the children of God personally, literally, and actually. The Lord's Spirit literally lives in the human body.

Perhaps the concept of the immediate indwelling can best be seen by comparing it with the immediate work of the Spirit in the conviction, conversion, and sanctification of sinners. Denominationalism, and especially that branch of it strongly influenced by the theology of John Calvin, believes that the sinner is so depraved in heart, mind, and body that nothing spiritual (not even a single word of the Scriptures) can reach him until the Holy Spirit operates directly upon him to remove the old heart of sin and put in a new heart of righteousness. And that operation must be immediate because the heart is too hardened, too depraved, to be penetrated through means.

In his *Institutes* Calvin quotes 2 Thessalonians 2:13 and says, "By this passage briefly reminding us, that faith itself is produced only by the Spirit."¹ By this he meant that faith must be directly

¹ John Calvin, *Calvin's Institutes*, Book 3, Chapter 1.

given by the Spirit. There can be no means, such as the word of God (Rom. 10:17), between the Spirit and the human heart.

John Owen states the principle as follows: "For though the letter of the Scripture and the sense of the propositions, are equally exposed to the reason of all mankind; yet the real spiritual knowledge of the things themselves is not communicated to any, but by the special operation of the Holy Spirit."²

The Synods of South Carolina and Georgia (of the Presbyterian Church) met in 1838 and passed a number of rules, one of which reads as follows: "The inability of the sinner to comply with the demands of the Divine law, to believe the Gospel, or to exercise any holy affections, is absolute and entire; so that regeneration is effected alone by the direct and immediate agency and power of God the Spirit; the subject of this work of grace being passive, in respect to the vital operation of renewing the heart."³

Anyone can easily observe that the concept of a necessary direct operation of the Spirit cancels out the sufficiency of the Scriptures. The Scriptures are dead and powerless without a direct operation of the Holy Spirit. But the fallacy of this kind of reason can be shown from Calvinists themselves. In the *Lime Street Lectures* (conducted in London in 1730-1731) Abraham Taylor spoke on "The Insufficiency of Natural Religion." But in showing the insufficiency of natural religion he inadvertently proves either the insufficiency of the Bible or else the insufficiency of Calvin's theory of direct operation. He says, "Now, if reason, of itself, is a sufficient guide to virtue and happiness, can men need any thing more sufficient than a sufficient guide? Certainly not."⁴

Now substitute the Scriptures for reason in this quotation and it proves one of two things: either the Scriptures are a sufficient guide in all things pertaining to life and godliness or else the Scriptures are an insufficient guide. "Now, if the Scriptures, of themselves, are a sufficient guide to virtue and happiness, can men need any thing more sufficient than a sufficient guide? Certainly not."

² John Owen, *Owen On the Holy Spirit* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publications), p. 10.

³ Quoted by B.M. Palmer, *Thornwell's Life and Letters* (Richmond: Whittet & Shepperson, 1875), p. 215.

⁴ Abraham Taylor, *Lime Street Lectures* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publications, 1844), p. 35.

But the best reply I have seen to the inability of a sinner understanding and obeying the gospel without a direct operation of the Spirit was given by R.L. Whiteside. He says: "Some years ago I had a discussion with Mr. Ben M. Bogard. On the Spirit question, he made the usual argument on the depravity deadness of the sinner. In my first reply I made the statement: 'I object to Mr. Bogard's theory because it limits the power of God. He has the sinner so dead that God could not make a gospel that would reach him. I object to a theory that makes God so helpless.' Mr. Bogard, with more than usual bluster, replied: 'It is not a question of God's power. God can do anything he wants to do. He could have made a gospel that would reach the dead sinner's heart, if he had wanted to do so.' I replied: 'The sinner is not so dead, then, as we have been hearing he was. Even this personal contact for which he contends would not have been necessary if God had made the right kind of gospel. So the trouble is not in the deadness of the sinner, but in the inefficiency of the gospel. But God could have made a better gospel, if he had wanted to. My contention is that he made the very gospel that Mr. Bogard says he could have made. Why waste further time discussing the deadness of the sinner?'"⁵

It was this aspect of the work of the Holy Spirit, His work in conviction, conversion, and sanctification, that the early leaders in the Restoration Movement had to deal with. The direct work of the Spirit was the point of conflict in the Campbell-Rice Debate in the early 1840's and it was still so in the Hardeman-Bogard Debate in 1939. Both Campbell and Hardeman, separated by nearly a century, contended that the Holy Spirit most assuredly works to convict, convert, and sanctify sinners, but that He does so through, and only through, the word of God. He always works mediately, never immediately. And the medium is always the word of truth. They hammered this point home so logically and so forcefully that, as far as it can be determined, there has never been a dissenting voice raised to their conclusion by any leading proponent of New Testament Christianity. They all believed that the Scriptures were sufficient to convict, convert, and sanctify.

But some pleading for restoration, who agree that the Spirit works indirectly in conviction, conversion, and sanctification of sinners, both now and in the past, say that He indwells Christians

⁵ R.L. Whiteside, *The Kingdom of Promise and Prophecy* (Denton, Texas, Miss Inys Whiteside), pp. 16, 17. Quoted by permission.

immediately, that is, personally, literally, and actually, without means. However, it was not until after the middle of the twentieth century that this concept received much emphasis. Of course it had been considered and taught before then but it had never become a pressing issue — leading men differed without making their difference a vital issue between them. They were more concerned with the work of the Spirit on sinners. Thus the question with them was, how does the Holy Spirit work in conversion? But the emphasis has now shifted to another question, namely, how does the Holy Spirit indwell Christians? This is the question that faces us now, and it is vital that we search the Scriptures to find the answer.

The new emphasis gained rapid momentum because some were fascinated with the possibilities of what a direct indwelling could mean in awakening the brotherhood to a more meaningful work, worship, and mission for the church. The fascination was caused partly by a growing existential philosophy in the church, partly because it seemed to make the practice of Christianity more spiritual, and partly because of the Pentecostal movement which was sweeping through all segments of Christianity. As the emphasis continued and the arguments grew more heated from each side, more and more functions were naturally ascribed to the Spirit working directly in the individual. Once the concept of a personal, literal indwelling was accepted and certain emotional experiences and impulses were ascribed to it, it was found that there were no logical limits to what could be accredited to the Spirit working directly within. What He did in or through one, whether simply illuminating the understanding, filling the heart with peace, joy, and love, personally leading from one street corner to another for more effective teaching, putting words in one's mouth when preaching (I heard one preacher say that the Holy Spirit determined the length of his sermon), or speaking in tongues or performing other miracles, was a matter of degree and not of a fundamental difference in the nature of the Spirit's work. There was nowhere to draw the line and say, "The Spirit is working in me to do this but you are mistaken about the Spirit working in you to do that," for both would have the same evidences of the Spirit's working.

There are varying degrees among believers as to what the Spirit actually does, if anything, for one in whom He dwells personally. While some claim He literally dwells in them but does all His work

through the truth, others have gone so far as to teach that He actually influences the heart and mind by directly guiding, guarding, and influencing. But again the difference is a matter of degree, not of a fundamental nature. When we establish from Scriptural principles that the Spirit indwells Christians indirectly, we will have shown that the concept of a personal, literal, immediate indwelling is an extreme. And the same Scriptures which prove an indirect indwelling also prove that the direct concept is unscriptural and therefore false.

NO INDWELLING

But the opposite extreme to the direct indwelling is that the Holy Spirit does not indwell Christians at all today. This view concludes that the only manner in which the Scriptures teach that the Holy Spirit ever indwelled anyone was miraculous. Thus when the miraculous ceased, the indwelling ceased. Perhaps the most powerful proponent of this view is Franklin Camp, a man for whom I have the highest possible regard. And, in my conception, his book (quoted below) has made the most tremendous contribution to the study of the Holy Spirit and His work of any book since apostolic days. Nevertheless, while it pains me exceedingly to differ with him, I believe he swings to the opposite extreme in opposing the direct indwelling.

Camp says, "I believe that the Scriptures teach that the gift of the Holy Spirit refers to miraculous endowments that belonged to the period when these miraculous gifts were for the purpose of confirming the apostles of Christ as His apostles and providing the church with inspiration through these gifts that came through the laying on of the hands of an apostle."⁶ This simply says that there is no indwelling of the Spirit for Christians today — that all verses which teach an indwelling of the Spirit refer to a miraculous endowment. But I sincerely believe, and it shall be my purpose in this study to give the Scriptural reasons upon which this belief is based, that this is an extreme view. And when I establish from the Scriptures that the Spirit *does* indwell Christians in a nonmiraculous manner (through the means of truth), I will have shown the fallacy of saying that He does not indwell them in any manner

⁶ Franklin Camp, *The Work of the Holy Spirit in Redemption* (Birmingham, Ala.: Roberts & Son Publication, 1974), p. 131.

other than the miraculous. The very same Scriptures that teach an indirect indwelling prove erroneous the concept that there is no indwelling apart from the miraculous.

Thus the two extremes are: (1) a direct, miraculous indwelling, an indwelling apart from means; and (2) no indwelling other than the miraculous (and since the miraculous ceased at the close of the apostolic age, there is now no indwelling for Christians). It is my contention, however, that the truth lies between these two extremes, that the Spirit indwells Christians in precisely the same sense that He works in convicting, converting, and sanctifying a sinner. To say that He indwells Christians indirectly is not to say that He does not indwell them at all any more than to say that He works in convicting, converting, and sanctifying indirectly (through the word of truth) is to say that He does not work at all in the salvation of sinners. The truth is, He saves sinners and indwells Christians in precisely the same way, indirectly or through the medium of God's word. Anyone who understands that the Spirit works indirectly in conversion should have no trouble understanding that He indwells Christians in the same manner.

The extremes come about (or at least this is true in some measure) by failing to observe the distinction between the *fact* and the *method* of the Spirit's work, whether it be in the conversion of sinners or His indwelling of Christians. The fact of indwelling is so plainly stated that it seems incredible that anyone would attempt to deny it, and quite frankly I was staggered when I first realized that some were saying that the only way the Scriptures teach an indwelling is by the miraculous. While the method is not as plainly stated as the fact, I believe that it is necessarily implied — taught clearly enough so that any responsible person can comprehend it. It should therefore be kept in mind at all times that there is a distinction between the fact and the method of indwelling and that the fact does not necessarily establish the method.

THE FACT

I believe that the Scriptures teach, as we shall now see, that the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is a vital part of every Christian life — the indwelling Spirit marks the difference between the children of God and the children of this world. Paul wrote: "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your

hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." (Gal. 4:6, 7.) It should be observed that God had sent the Galatians the Spirit because they were sons, and because they were sons they were heirs of God through Christ — no Spirit, no sonship; no sonship, no inheritance. The reception of the Spirit and sonship go hand in hand; neither is without the other.

But there is even a stronger passage than this: Paul leaves no question about the Spirit's indwelling when he says to the Romans: "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." (Rom. 8:9-11.) There are a number of important and vital things taught in these verses but I can take space to name only four. First, those who have the Spirit of God are not of the flesh — they are dead to sin but alive to righteousness. But if those who have the Spirit indwelling them are not of the flesh, the inevitable implication is that those who do not have the Spirit dwelling in them are of the flesh. Thus those who have the Spirit are of God: those who do not have the Spirit are of the flesh. Second, if one does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not of Christ — those who belong to Christ possess His Spirit. Third, the same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead dwells in Christians. Fourth, the same Spirit that dwells in Christians will quicken their mortal bodies. This does not say nor does it in any way imply that the body will be raised (if indeed the resurrection from the dead at the last day is under consideration) because the Spirit will be in it at the time of the resurrection; what it does say is that the same Spirit that indwells the Christian is the Spirit by which the mortal body will be quickened. The same Spirit that dwells in Christians (now) will be the quickening power in the resurrection. But if the Spirit does not indwell Christians, all Christians, Paul's argument is meaningless — he is only blowing against the wind, and one would have reason to question whether there is any Spirit by which he will be raised.

This leaves no doubt about the fact of indwelling: to be a Christian one must have the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. This

conclusion can be put into syllogistic form:

1. If any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.
2. John Doe does not have the Spirit of Christ.
3. Therefore John Doe is none of His (Christ's).

Or to state the same thing from a positive angle:

1. If any man has the Spirit of Christ, he belongs to Christ.
2. John Doe has the Spirit of Christ.
3. Therefore John Doe belongs to Christ.

There is simply no way to escape this conclusion without doing a terrible violence to the Scripture. The conclusion is thus inevitable: to be a Christian (belong to Christ) one must have the Spirit of Christ dwelling in him. However, it should be carefully observed that these verses are emphasizing the fact, not the method or manner of indwelling. The fact and the method are two entirely different things. They should not be confused. The method may be either direct or indirect, but the fact remains the same — the method does not change the fact.

But in addition to the passages already cited, there are a number of other verses which need to be brought into focus in a study of the indwelling Spirit, verses too plain to explain away. I will call your attention to only a few. Paul emphatically asked, "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" (1 Cor. 6:19.) This simply states that the body of a Christian is the temple in which the Holy Spirit dwells. The body could not be the dwelling place of the Spirit if the Spirit did not dwell in it. Another passage says, "This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" (Gal. 3:2.) The answer is obvious: the Spirit was received by the hearing of faith — by obedience to the gospel of Christ. This concept permeates the New Testament.

When we consider what is taught in the verses already discussed, we have good reason to conclude that Peter promised the Holy Spirit as a gift to every penitent believer who is baptized for the remission of sins. He said, in concluding his sermon on Pentecost, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2:38.) While it is impossible to prove from this verse alone (either from the Greek or the English) whether Peter meant to say that they would receive the Holy Spirit as a gift (objective genitive) or that they would receive the gift given by the

Holy Spirit (subjective genitive), in my opinion the weight of New Testament evidence is in favor of the former. This was also the conclusion of J.W. McGarvey, one of the most respected and admired scholars the Restoration Movement has produced. He said: "The *gift* of the Holy Spirit should not be confounded with the Holy Spirit's *gifts*, nor with the fruits of the Spirit. The *fruits* of the Holy Spirit are religious traits of character, and they result from the *gift* of the Holy Spirit. The latter expression means, *the Holy Spirit as a gift*. It is analogous to the expression, 'promise of the Holy Spirit,' in verse 33, above, where Peter says, 'having received from the Father the *promise of the Holy Spirit*, he has shed forth this which you now see and hear.' The *gifts* of the Holy Spirit were various miraculous powers, intellectual and physical. These were conferred only upon a few individuals, while the *gift* of the Spirit is promised to all who repent and are immersed."⁷ (Emphasis his, HW.)

In my conception Acts 2:38 contains two commands and two promises — the two promises are made to all who obey the two commands. The commands are *repent* and *be baptized*. The promises are *the remission of sins* and *the gift of the Holy Spirit*. It seems to me that it would be as Scriptural to separate the commands and say that only one of them must be obeyed as to separate the promises and say that only one of them can be received. Both promises are made to those who obey both commands.

But to add force to this conclusion Acts 3:19, an exact parallel, can be placed beside Acts 2:38. "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." This verse also contains two commands and two promises. The two com-

⁷J.W. McGarvey, *Commentary on Acts* (original) (Nashville: B.C. Goodpasture, 1958), p. 44. McGarvey wrote this commentary when he was 30 years old. Later in life he revised it, but he had not changed his conclusion on this verse. He says, in the *New Commentary on Acts*: "The second blessing promised on condition of repentance and baptism, is the 'gift of the Holy Spirit.' By this is not meant that miraculous gift which had just been bestowed upon the apostles; for we know from the subsequent history that this gift was not bestowed on all who repented and were baptized, but on only a few brethren of prominence in several congregations. The expression means the Holy Spirit as a gift; and the reference is to that indwelling of the Holy Spirit by which we bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, and without which we are not of Christ. Of this promise Peter speaks more fully in the next sentence of his sermon."

mands are *repent* and *be converted*. This is parallel with repent and be baptized of Acts 2:38. The two promises are *blotting out of sins* and *the times of refreshing*. This parallels with the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. If all those who repent and are converted receive the blotting out of sins and the times of refreshing from the Lord, then there is no conclusion to reach but that all who repent and are baptized receive the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. To conclude otherwise would be to separate the commands from the promises, a thing which cannot be Scripturally done.

But there is still another approach from which one may prove the fact of indwelling. The Bible teaches that the church is the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22, 23). Furthermore, the body of Christ is made up of all Christians (1 Cor. 12:12-27). The Spirit of God indwells Christians who make up the body of Christ, the church (1 Cor. 6:19). Collectively the Spirit-filled Christians are called the body of Christ and the temple of God. Paul asks, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor. 3:16.) Since Paul is here addressing Christians collectively ("ye" is plural), and since it is in the context of dividing the church, it is obvious that he means the Spirit dwells in the church or body collectively. But this is not all. He wrote to the Ephesians: "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." (Eph. 2:19-22.)

The church is the temple and the temple is the habitation (dwelling place) of God through the Spirit. The Spirit must, therefore, dwell in the church. This simply states the fact; it does not give the method. But it seems conclusive from all known facts that the Spirit indwells the church indirectly, that is, through Christians. Christians have the Spirit dwelling in them individually. Collectively they make up the body. The Spirit is in the body (the temple). The conclusion seems to inevitably follow that the Spirit dwells in the temple through the Spirit-filled Christians. To deny that the Holy Spirit indwells the church would have some far-reaching consequences. For example, if the Spirit indwells neither the church nor Christians, the church is a Spiritless

institution made up of Spiritless beings. But James says that a body without the spirit is dead (James 2:26). While James is speaking of the human body and the human spirit, I am certain that the same could be said of the church. Thus to say that the Spirit does not indwell the body of Christ (Christians collectively) or Christians (individually) would be to say that dead Christians make up a dead church. this simply cannot be.

From all these Scriptures (and more which could be given) we must conclude that the Bible plainly teaches that the Spirit of God dwells in His children. This is a fact — a fact that cannot be denied without doing a grave injustice to the Scriptures.

THE METHOD

As I have already stated, the *fact* and the *method* of indwelling are two different things entirely. The method may be direct or indirect, but the fact remains the same. It is my firm conviction that the method is mediate or indirect. The following reasons have led me to this conviction.

First, a direct indwelling would mean a miraculous indwelling.

Second, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is directly connected to other indwellings which are also indirect.

To establish the first of these reasons I offer three principles which, when taken together, form an irrefutable argument.

1. The Holy Spirit may do His work (including His indwelling) either directly or indirectly. The method by which the work is done does not change the fact that it is the Spirit doing the work.

It is generally conceded that the work of the Holy Spirit is that of organizing, arranging, and guiding. God is the originator; Christ is the operator; the Holy Spirit is the organizer. Of course one is not without the other, but still the Scriptures make this distinction in their functions. The Spirit was in creation, moving upon the face of the waters, bringing order out of confusion (Gen. 1:2). Creation was not finished until the Spirit acted; the church was not fully established until the Spirit came; the scheme of human redemption was not revealed without Him. In each of these, the creation, the beginning of the church, and the revelation of the plan of salvation, the Spirit worked either directly or else worked directly upon the individuals involved — He worked directly to set the systems in order. But as He worked directly He also worked to establish laws by which His work would be

appreciated. And once the systems were established, He worked through them. Although He changed His method, from direct to indirect, it was still His work. It is therefore imperative that we understand the principle that the Holy Spirit may function either directly (without means) or indirectly (by the use of means). He has worked in both ways. But regardless of whether He works directly or indirectly, the work done is His work.

2. When the Holy Spirit works directly (without means) the results must be considered a miracle — a miracle because there is no law or process involved. When He works indirectly He does so through His established systems, laws, or processes, and the results are nonmiraculous (a process which is often thought of as natural, but it is natural only in the sense that it is nonmiraculous, and not in the sense that it is done by law apart from God). The very nature of miracles, as they are seen in the Scriptures, proves that they are a direct work of God.

A miracle is the direct intervention of God — it is God producing without a natural means of production. The nonmiraculous is God producing through His established means. For example, God originally made fruit trees by a direct act (a miracle), but He now makes them through seed (the law of reproduction). A fruit tree is the handiwork of God, regardless of whether it was made directly or indirectly. The method does not change the fact that it is God's work. The only difference is that those made mediately were made by natural or nonmiraculous means and those made immediately were made by a miracle. The direct is the miraculous; the indirect is the natural — that which is done through means. One is no less the work of the Spirit than the other; one is simply done without means (a miracle) and the other is done through means (nonmiraculous).

I submitted this argument to the *Firm Foundation* (and the editor was kind enough to publish it) for the purpose of having its strength and weaknesses tested, and all the response I have received (on the whole argument here presented as well as the thoughts on miracles) concerned itself with my definition of a miracle. It seems that some understood this definition to rule out all miracles that involve natural systems. One writer asked, "Does the use of means *always* rule out the miraculous?" Certainly not. But when means are used the miraculous must be located in the direct work of God on the means. The same writer goes on to say, "If so, how could the supply of quails be classified as a miracle if

the miraculous and the natural are mutually exclusive phenomena? Is there a difference between *ordinary* and *extra-ordinary* means? How broad is the line between the natural and the super-natural; for example, did the drought and rain (1 Kings 17 and 18) constitute miracles, or were they just God's affirmative response to the prayers of Elijah? (See James 5:17, 18.) Was this not God working through means (the *cloud*, 1 Kings 18:44)? Consider also Jesus' use of clay spittle to heal blindness (John 9)."⁸ (All emphasis his, HW.)

In considering the cases presented, it should be observed that the miraculous was not in the quails but in God working directly to bring the quails to the children of Israel; the miracles were not in the drought and rain, but in God working directly on the means to produce them; the miracle was not in the clay spittle but in the fact that Jesus worked directly through the clay to heal the blindness (there is certainly nothing natural about healing blindness with clay spittle). And so it is in every case: where there is a miracle, God is at work directly — He may work directly on the means or without the means, but He is working directly to produce an effect that natural means (or no means) would not produce without His direct intervention.

After writing the above, and after receiving the objections to my definition of a miracle (some have been oral and some written), I came across the following statement as to what a miracle is. I submit it to you as expressing my views exactly:

"Now, my notion is, that from no properties and laws of the existing order of things, could the miracle ever result. It is an order of events of a different character; it belongs to a distinct sphere, though bearing upon the same ultimate moral end. In nature, the power of God is always *mediately* exerted; in the miracle, *immediately*. In nature, the agents — that is, the direct agents — are the properties and powers of substances, or the creatures that God has made; in the miracle, He is the sole agent Himself."⁹ (Emphasis his, HW.)

From all objections I have thus far encountered, there is absolutely no sound reason to question our second principle.

⁸ A. Hugh Graham, letter to Reuel Lemmons, editor *Firm Foundation*, dated 9-27-77. A copy was sent to me by the author.

⁹ James Henley Thornwell, *Thornwell's Life and Letters* (Richmond: Whittet & Shepperson, 1875), p. 402.

When the Holy Spirit works directly the results (or the effects) must be considered a miracle.

3. The Holy Spirit must indwell Christians either directly or indirectly. There is no alternative conclusion — there is no other way revealed for Him to do so. But if He does so immediately (that is, without means) His indwelling, or the effect of it, must be considered a miracle. This would have far-reaching consequences, some of which very few would be willing to accept. For if the Holy Spirit dwells in us miraculously, the period of miracles has not passed and we can obviously expect other miracles besides this one. If the Spirit works directly on the human mind to influence, direct, guide, impress, nudge, etc., then a miracle is performed: for He is working without means (and direct intervention is the very nature of a miracle). But if we concede that the Scriptures teach (and they do) that miracles were wrought only to establish the Christian system, and when it was established they ceased, then we must also concede that the Holy Spirit dwells in Christians now indirectly. Here is what we have:

The Scriptures teach that the Holy Spirit dwells in Christians.

But He cannot dwell directly in them without the effects being a miracle.

But the Scriptures also teach that miracles have ceased.

Therefore the Scriptures must teach that the Holy Spirit dwells in Christians indirectly. And I maintain that the indirect means through which the Holy Spirit indwells Christians is the word of truth.

As I see it, there is only one escape from this conclusion and that is to say that the Holy Spirit personally, literally, and directly indwells Christians but that He in no way influences, directs, guides, impresses, or nudges them apart from means. Many good men believe that the Spirit indwells Christians personally but that He works in them only through the means of the written word. In my judgment, this is an impossible position to defend — a compromise between error and truth, a compromise that opens the door to all kinds of Pentecostal practices. But be that as it may, the argument here presented does not deal with this view.

The three principles just discussed point out the fact that the method of indwelling is a vital matter, and it cannot be lightly set aside without far-reaching consequences. Either the Spirit dwells in Christians directly or else He does so indirectly — there is no middle ground, and we cannot have it both ways at the same time.

We must therefore choose between the two methods. But it is not enough just to choose: our choice must be made in the light of what the Scriptures teach rather than upon some human conjecture or preconceived idea of how it must be. Also the choice must be made in view of the consequences of the choice. We cannot choose the direct method and expect to reap the consequences of the indirect; nor can we choose the indirect and expect the consequences of the direct. The consequences of each method go with the method.

I now turn to the second line of argument that has convinced me that the indwelling of the Spirit is indirect, viz., the Spirit's indwelling is Scripturally connected to other indwellings that are also indirect. It shall also be my purpose to show that He indwells Christians by means of truth, the Spirit-filled word of God. The word of truth is not just mere words, words alone; it is Spirit-filled words, words impregnated with spiritual life. Or as Jesus puts it, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." (John 6:68.)

To help us better understand this concept, let us see how the Spirit works through the word (indirectly) in the conversion of sinners to Christ. If He can instill spiritual life through the word, there is no reason to think that He cannot, or does not, continue that life by the same means. The life-giving principle dwells in the truth, and by the truth the process of conversion is both begun and consummated. Take Philip and the eunuch for example (Acts 8:26-39) and see what each person did in the inspired account of this conversion.

The actors in this conversion include an angel, the Holy Spirit, the preacher (Philip), and the Sinner (the eunuch). Observe the part each played: first, the angel appeared to the preacher, not to the sinner (Acts 8:26). Angels may have a part, in some way or other, in the conversion of men (cf. Heb. 1:14) but their part is not to work directly on the one being converted. Second, the Holy Spirit had a part. But what did He do? He aided Philip, in a miraculous way, to speak the truth (John 14:26; 16:13; Matt. 10:19, 20; 1 Cor. 2), and through that truth He reached the sinner's heart. The truth was the only means used by the Spirit to reach the unconverted sinner. His work was wholly through means or indirect. Third, the preacher was carrying out the Great Commission (Mark 16:15, 16). He preached the word (Acts 8:35)

and baptized the eunuch when he believed in Christ as Lord (Acts 8:38). Finally, what did the sinner do? He heard the truth preached (Rom. 10:17; Acts 8:35). He believed in Christ as God's Son (Acts 8:37). While repentance is not specifically mentioned, it is, from other passages (e.g., Luke 13:5; Acts 17:30), necessarily implied. He confessed with his mouth that which he believed in his heart (Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:9, 10). He was then baptized into Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 8:38). When he had done the Lord's will, he went on his way rejoicing (Acts 8:39). That the Holy Spirit worked in this conversion, as He does in all conversions, will admit of no doubt, but He worked indirectly, not directly. And this is the way He worked in every conversion recorded in the New Testament. The Spirit thus works in conversion through means. But by what reason could we say that He works through means to convert a sinner, give him spiritual life, but must dwell in him directly to continue his spiritual life? None whatsoever. And the fact is, He converts sinners and dwells in Christians in precisely the same way, viz., through the truth. This is the method of His indwelling.

As I have already pointed out, basically and fundamentally there are only two ways by which the Spirit can indwell the children of God. The first is a direct indwelling. Those who believe this believe in a personal, literal, actual indwelling apart from or in addition to the word of God. There are no means involved. His indwelling is as literal as a man dwelling in a house. But when the logical consequences of this are accepted, there is no stopping place short of Pentecostalism. But more serious, it disregards the Bible as the sole source of authority in religious matters and thus becomes the father of all kinds of religious error. The second view holds that the Holy Spirit dwells in Christians through the truth, the inspired, Spirit-filled word of God. The truth is therefore the instrument by which He lives in God's people. I believe that I have already shown, beyond any reasonable doubt, that the second view is the one taught in the Scriptures, but to substantiate this further, I now call to your attention some other things that indwell Christians.

THE INDWELLING LAW

In former days God gave a law through Moses to the Israelites when He led them out of Egyptian bondage. The hub or center of

that law was the Ten Commandments, written on two tables of stone (Ex. 20; 2 Cor. 3:7). Fleshly Israel was guided by the principles contained in that law. It was a "handwriting of ordinances," mostly regulating from the outside in, an effort to regulate the heart by regulating the actions. But the law pointed forward to its own end — it was never designed to be permanent. Moses, speaking for God, said, "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not harken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him." (Deut. 18:18, 19.) This is a prophecy of the coming of Christ and the end of the law (Rom. 10:4). All the prophets promised a new and different law, one that would be engraved, not on tables of stone, but on the heart. Jeremiah summed up the message of the Old Testament by saying, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt." (Jer. 31:31, 32.) Thus a new system was promised from the very beginning of the law. The old was a temporary law pointing forward to a permanent one — a law pointing forward to its own replacement by the gospel of Christ.

The Hebrew writer quotes Jeremiah and applies his words to the New Testament. He says: "But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord: I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from

the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." (Heb. 8:6-12.) The new covenant was not the same as the old; it was to be different. It was to be engraved on the heart instead of upon stones. This is just another way of saying that the law would indwell those who established covenant relationship with God. The New Testament was to be written in the heart and in the mind; that is, it was a law that would regulate from the inside out — regulate the actions by regulating the heart.

The New Testament system is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:2). Now how does this law, which is the law of the Spirit, dwell in Christians? How is it written in their hearts? Obviously, by or through the truth, the only means by which the Spirit imparts that law. But if the law of the Spirit dwells in the heart by the word of God, why would it seem incredible to say that the Spirit Himself dwells there through His law? It is not only not incredible, it is in fact the only logical conclusion to reach when all the facts are known. To say that the law dwells there through the truth but not the Spirit would be to separate the law of the Spirit from the Spirit Himself, a separation which cannot be Scripturally sustained. While it is conceded that the law of the Spirit of life in Christ is an abstract concept, yet the fact is not changed: the law indwells Christians through the truth. Hence I conclude that the Spirit indwells Christians through His law, the eternal word of God.

THE INDWELLING GOD

God dwells in Christians. This is a profound concept, one that we probably can never fully comprehend as long as we are confined to the limitations of the flesh. But our failure to comprehend it does not change the fact: God dwells in His people. John clearly states this fact: "No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit." (1 John 4:12, 13.) Again, "And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us." (1 John 3:24.) Paul states this concept succinctly by saying, "In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." (Eph.

2:22.) There are numerous other verses which state this fact, such as 2 Cor. 6:16; 1 John 4:4, 15, 16.

No one, as far as I know, contends that God actually, literally, and personally dwells in Christians. Yet His indwelling is just as clearly stated as is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Obviously everyone understands that God dwells in the heart indirectly, and that His mediate indwelling does not change the fact: God dwells there regardless of whether it is directly or indirectly. Why, then, do some think that the indirect indwelling of the Spirit means that He does not dwell there at all? Why not conclude that both God and His Spirit dwell in Christians in precisely the same way?

THE INDWELLING CHRIST

Christ also indwells Christians. Paul says, "To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." (Col. 1:27.) Jesus Himself said: "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Judah saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." (John 14:21-23.) While it is not my purpose to quote and discuss them all, there are more than a dozen passages that state plainly and unequivocally that Christ indwells believers. (See John 6:56; 15:4, 5; 17:23, 26; Rom. 8:10; 2 Cor. 4:10, 11; 13:5; Gal. 2:20; 4:19; Phil. 1:20; Col. 3:11; 1 Pet. 3:15.) They are all summed up by Paul when he says, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height." (Eph. 3:17, 18.) "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith" is just another way of saying that He dwells there indirectly — He dwells there by faith and faith comes by hearing the word of God (Rom. 10:17). While Christ is not literally, actually, and personally in the Christian, He dwells there just the same. His mediate indwelling does not change the fact.

THE INDWELLING TRUTH

Freedom in Christ comes by the Spirit through the truth. Jesus said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32.) Yet Paul plainly states, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." (Rom. 8:2.) Thus I conclude that the Spirit frees through His law, the truth. Truth is the instrument of the Spirit. John says, "And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth." (1 John 5:6.) The Spirit is called the Spirit of truth (John 16:13). But truth indwells all Christians. John states it, "For the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever." (2 John 2.) Now since the Spirit works through the truth, and since the truth dwells in Christians, it is logical to conclude that the Spirit dwells in Christians through the truth. In fact, it would be illogical to reach any other conclusion from the evidence presented in the Scripture.

THE INDWELLING SPIRIT

I believe that we have now established beyond any question that the Holy Spirit indwells the children of God indirectly — He indwells them through the truth. There are those who object to this conclusion by saying that if this is the case then the Spirit does not indwell one at all. But not so. The method does not change the fact. It is generally admitted that both God and Christ indwell Christians indirectly. Does this mean that they do not dwell in them at all? Indeed not. But my conclusion is that the Spirit indwells Christians in precisely the same sense in which God and Christ do. If one can dwell there indirectly and still be there then all can dwell there indirectly and still be there. I conclude therefore that the method of indwelling is indirect, that the means is the word of God.

RESULTS OF INDWELLING

That my conclusion is true, that the Holy Spirit indwells Christians indirectly through the word of God, can be substantiated by a study of the many things the Scriptures ascribe to the Spirit in the life of a Christian. By taking a look at these things, and by determining how He performs them, our understanding of

the indirect work of the Spirit can be greatly enhanced. While it is not my purpose here to deal with all the passages in which effects are ascribed to the Spirit, I will discuss enough to illustrate the principle involved.

1. *Christians are led by the Spirit.* The Scriptures say, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." (Rom. 8:14.) "But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law." (Gal. 5:18.) Since this is a fact that cannot be questioned, we need to ask: Does the Spirit lead directly or indirectly? I conclude that the context of the whole Bible demands that we say He leads indirectly, leads by the means of truth. There are few errors that are productive of more evil than that of thinking the Spirit leads directly. When one is totally convinced that the Spirit is leading him directly by some subjective manner, such as by experience, feelings, intuition, nudges, etc., he has little use for the Bible. He depends upon what he calls "the leadership of the Spirit" to reveal to him the will of God. In theory he may hold to the Bible, but in belief and practice he abandons it — he accepts his "leadings" as God's will for him.

But when Paul spoke of the Spirit leading one, he was not speaking of some subjective impression but objective directions; he was speaking of following the standard the Holy Spirit had revealed, the revelation given by the Spirit through inspired men (the revelation was first delivered through living men but it is now found in the New Testament Scriptures). Thus when one follows the word of God he is being led by the Spirit. The Spirit, therefore, leads indirectly — He leads through His divine instructions. But whether He leads directly or indirectly, it is still no less the Spirit leading. The method does not change the fact.

2. *The Spirit puts to death the deeds of the body.* Paul wrote, "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if you through (by, ASV) the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." (Rom. 8:13.) I think Moses E. Lard is correct in paraphrasing the latter part of the verse as follows: "But if by the aid of the Holy Spirit which dwells in you, you put an end to the deeds of the body, you shall live."¹⁰ The deeds of the body are sinful deeds, but the destruction of the deeds (sin) is by the aid of the Spirit. The Spirit puts to death the deeds of the body. This is a fact, but

¹⁰ Moses E. Lard, *Commentary on Romans* (Delight, Arkansas: Gospel Light Publishing Company), p. 263.

again the fact does not within itself tell us the method by which He mortifies the deeds. Does He do so directly or indirectly? Does the Spirit do it apart from any effort on the part of the individual? Of course not. Christians, even with the indwelling Spirit, continue to be faced with temptation and they often fall into sin. But their failure is not because the means of escape are not available (cf. 1 Cor. 10:13). The Spirit has provided through the word of truth (called the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus just 11 verses previous to this). He therefore mortifies the deeds of the body through means — that is, indirectly. Sin is put to death in one's body when he obeys the word of God, when he follows the Spirit's instructions as given in truth.

3. *The Spirit bears witness with our spirit.* Paul says, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." (Rom. 8:16.) There are two spirits here, "the Spirit" and "our spirit." To know that one is a child of God, he must have the witness of both spirits. "The Spirit" is the Holy Spirit and "our spirit" is the human spirit. Each spirit has a particular function in the soul's redemption, and they bear witness together when their witness agrees one with the other.

Paul seems to be deliberately answering the question, "Am I a child of God?" And if so, "How can I know it?" His answer is that we can know that we are children of God when the Spirit bears witness with our spirit. To see how this is a sufficient and clear answer, two other questions need to be considered. First, what kind of character constitutes a child of God? And second, what kind of character have I? It is the function of the Holy Spirit to answer the first question and it is the function of the human spirit to answer the second. When the Holy Spirit tells us (through the word of God) the kind of character that constitutes a Christian and our spirit tells us, by its personal knowledge, the kind of character we are, we can then determine whether we are the children of God — whether we are the kind of character the Spirit defines as a Christian. When the human spirit can say his character is identical with the character revealed by the Spirit as a child of God, both spirits are bearing witness together. Or to say the same thing another way, when one's character corresponds exactly with the kind of character that constitutes a child of God, then he can know that he is a Christian. He knows this, not because of some spiritual or mysterious impression, but because the Spirit has defined (in the truth revealed) the kind of character that

constitutes a Christian and his spirit tells him that he is that kind of character.

But how does the Spirit bear witness as to the kind of character which constitutes a Christian? Does he do so directly or indirectly? He does so indirectly, through the truth, the inspired word of God. But this does not change the fact. The Spirit still bears witness with our spirit.

4. *Christians walk in the Spirit.* "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." (Gal. 5:16.) To walk in the Spirit can hardly bear any meaning here but to walk in the sphere of the Spirit, that is, to walk in relationship with the Spirit. The Christian and the Spirit are traveling companions — they walk together. But there is nothing mysterious about this. It simply means that one walks with the Spirit, walks where the Spirit leads. His walk (as a Christian) is spiritual. And spirituality simply means to follow the Spirit's instructions as given in the word of God. Thus when one walks in the Spirit, the Spirit is leading him indirectly, leading him by the word of truth to walk in the sphere of the Spirit — to walk spiritually. The Spirit, therefore, leads not by some direct influence, illumination, or impression, but indirectly through His divine instructions.

Perhaps here would be the best place to make some vital observations:

First, Christians dwell in God (1 John 3:4; 4:13) and God dwells in Christians (1 John 4:12, 16). This in no way denotes mysticism (and I use the word "mysticism" here to mean the direct and intuitive acquisition of knowledge and power). Rather it is the indication of an established relationship.

Second, Christians are in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17) and Christ is in Christians (Eph. 3:17; Col. 1:27). But nothing mysterious is intended by this. It, too, is an indication of an established relationship.

Third, Christians dwell in (walk in) the Spirit (Gal. 5:16) and the Spirit dwells in Christians (Rom. 8:9-11). But why assume that mysticism is meant here — why assume that the Spirit literally and directly dwells in and works on the mind and heart? Why not conclude (as I believe the Scriptures clearly teach and that I have abundantly proven), as in the case with God and Christ, that this also indicates an established relationship — a relationship that is regulated by the Spirit?

5. *The Spirit sanctifies.* "That I should be the minister of Jesus

Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.” (Rom. 15:16.) “But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.” (2 Thess. 2:13.) In the first verse cited it is plainly stated that one is sanctified by the Spirit, and in the second one it is seen that salvation is by means of sanctification by the Spirit through belief of the truth.

The word “sanctify” means to set apart for a special use, especially for the service to God. One is set apart, sanctified, when he is converted to Christ (other uses of the word, however, include a present process and a future hope or goal, cf. 1 Thess. 4:3; 5:23; Rom. 13:11). And as a Christian one is duty-bound to devote himself to the service for which he has been set apart — he is a holy vessel, meet for the Master’s use. But sanctification, whether past, present, or future, is not accomplished by the Spirit directly, but indirectly through belief of the truth, the word of God. Or as Jesus states it, “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” (John 17:17.) Thus one can reach no Scriptural conclusion but that sanctification is the result of the Spirit working through means, not something He does directly in the Christian by His personal indwelling.

6. *The Spirit produces fruit in Christians.* In contrast to the works of the flesh, Paul said, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.” (Gal. 5:22, 23.) Unlike the works of the flesh, which are gross and sensual and lead to a life of dissipation and destruction, the fruit of the Spirit is manifested in a life of purity, holiness, and excellence. The fruit of the Spirit is the product of the Christian life.

Take a look at each of them: love is from the Greek *agape*. It is an *act* of the will, not something the Spirit directly instills. Joy is a human emotion, delight *expressing* itself. Peace is *made* by individuals. “Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.” (Matt. 5:9.) While the Holy Spirit gives peace, He does so by giving the gospel plan which, when followed, produces peace. Longsuffering is patience — *bearing* long with the difficult, whether it be with people or problems. Gentleness is the *disposition* to handle with kindness and care. Goodness is the

characteristic of one who *does* good — goodness flowing out of a heart of benevolence. Faith, as it is here used, is the quality of *being* faithful or dependable. Meekness is *forbearance*. And temperance is *self-control*. Thus in every case the fruit of the Spirit is something produced by an act of the individual himself, something the individual chooses and controls. It is called the fruit of the Spirit because it is produced by the individual when he follows the instructions of the Spirit — it is the fruit of the spiritual life. The Spirit, therefore, produces His fruit indirectly. And the means used to produce the effects is the powerful, eternal, immutable word of the living God.

CONCLUSION

From all that has now been said, two Scriptural conclusions are inevitable:

1. The Holy Spirit does indwell Christians. This is the fact.
2. The Holy Spirit indwells Christians through the word of God. This is the method.

CHAPTER 7

THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST

In speaking of the Spirit (or spirit) of Christ we may mean one of two things: first, we may mean the spiritual disposition, pervading principle, essential characteristic, or prevailing attitude of Christ — the spirit that pervaded His life, work, words, and action. Second, we may mean the Holy Spirit. Both are Scriptural concepts (cf. Rom. 8:9; 1 Pet. 1:11; 1 Cor. 6:17; Phil. 2:5). But they are not the same, and we need to be able to distinguish between them. The former is a characteristic while the latter is a personality. It is my considered judgment that the spirit of Christ (disposition), as it relates to the children of God, is the result of the work of the Spirit of Christ (the Holy Spirit, the personality). While it is often difficult to make the distinction clear in spoken English without a good deal of explanation, in written construction the distinction is made by the use of upper and lowercase letters — the Holy Spirit is spelled with a capital “S” while dispositional spirit is spelled with a small letter. But unfortunately for the student of the Bible, this method of distinction was not practiced in the Greek New Testament. How the word is used must be determined in each case by the context, and in some verses the context is as favorable to one as to the other. But to help keep the distinction clear, and to help determine in each context which is meant, it is helpful to think of one as the cause and the other the effect: the Holy Spirit is the cause and the disposition is the effect. The work of the Spirit, through the word of God, results in a Christlike character. And a Christlike character is said to have the spirit (disposition) of Christ.

But if the Holy Spirit is the cause and the disposition is the effect, we should then understand that the work of the Spirit in the life of a Christian results in the Christian developing the characteristics of Christ. There is no spirit of Christ without the work of the Spirit. But the characteristics of Christ are not

directly instilled by the Spirit; they are taught by Him (through the word of truth) and developed by the Christian (as he follows the instruction of the Spirit). The Holy Spirit thus gives the instructions by which the spirit of Christ is developed in the child of God. The only source of information available from the Spirit, since He does not work directly on the individual to produce a Christlike character, is the written word of God. We must therefore look to the Spirit's instructions to discover the nature of the spirit of Christ, what it is, and who possesses it.

The spirit of Christ is abysmally misunderstood — it is thought of as the spirit of seeing everybody and everything as right and nobody or nothing as deserving a rebuke for wrong. It is the spirit, so some conceive, of accepting every man as he is without trying to correct him or any of his ways. It is considered the spirit that says, "You go your way and I will go mine, but we will both end up at the right place." But all of this overlooks the fact that the Lord of glory said, "I am way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14:6.) That may sound narrow and exclusive, but it embodies the real spirit of Christ. It is the spirit of truth and right.

But the period of time in which we live is characterized by the spirit of compromise — the spirit that makes truth irrelevant and an exclusive way inhumane. If one believes a doctrine to be true, if he firmly stands by and defends his convictions, he is branded by such undesirable epithets as "narrow-minded," "bigot," "intolerant" and looked upon as one who has no interest in or sympathy for those who may sincerely differ with him. Actually the only thing one is supposed to believe, according to the modern standard, is the absurd idea that everyone is right in his own way, regardless of what he may believe and practice — if a man is right in his own eyes then he must be right! But to make matters worse, this unreasonable and unscriptural idea is paraded before the innocent and unsuspecting as the "spirit of Christ." But in reality nothing could be farther from the truth, and nothing could more degrade the spirit of Christ. The real spirit of Christ is thus lost under the potent influence of an erroneous idea.

The spirit of Christ is not, as many people seem to think, the spirit of indifference, the spirit of apathy, the spirit of compromise, the spirit that must agree with and offer fellowship to everyone and everything, regardless of what it is or what one may say, do, or believe. The spirit of Christ is the exact opposite of

this. It is the spirit of love, the spirit of being concerned with every man and the condition of his soul, the spirit of truth, the spirit that opposes error, apostasy, and sin — the spirit that reproves, rebukes, exhorts, and corrects, the spirit that leads others to safety, truth, and right by showing them the evil and power of sin. The spirit of Christ is the spirit of love, a love that is opposed to all hate; the spirit of Christ is the spirit of truth, truth which is opposed to all falsehood; the spirit of Christ is the spirit of peace, peace that stands in contrast with all strife, turmoil, and division. In short, the spirit of Christ is the spirit that makes men like Christ.

The spirit of Christ is the spirit of separation from the things of the world, the lusts of the flesh. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Rom. 8:1.) "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." (Rom. 8:5, 6.) Anyone who lives after the flesh does not have the spirit of Christ, regardless of how sweet spirited or loving he may appear.

The spirit of Christ is the spirit that does what must be done to save man's soul. Sometimes love demands unwanted surgery. In 1974 my precious 10-year-old-son, Jimmy, was hit by a speeding car as he rode his bicycle home from a morning worship service. He had to spend about 40 days in the hospital and undergo surgery four times before his injuries were finally corrected. Three of the four times my wife and I marveled at his bravery. But the final time when they came to take him to the operating room he broke down and began to cry, "Daddy, don't let them take me!" How it hurt us to go against this painful cry. We could have said to the doctor: "Doctor, he's just not ready for this yet. Let's speak soothing words to him and wait until he's better prepared." But there was more at stake than whether he was ready for the surgery or not. We did not ask what he wanted or what he was ready for (we were not ready for it either). We asked only what he needed and what was the best for him. He needed the surgery. And so it is with truth and the salvation of souls. We must learn to ask what people need rather than what they want. They need the truth, all the truth, nothing but the truth. And it would be a grave error to say that one is acting by the spirit of Christ when he withholds

from another the truth on any subject. Love demands that we teach one what he needs to know to be saved.

R.L. Whiteside put his finger on a vital principle when he wrote: "Much is said about preaching the truth in love, and so it should be preached. But in love of what? The preacher should so love the truth that he will not sacrifice any of it nor pervert it, and he should so love people that he will not withhold from them even an unpleasant truth. He that does either of these things loves neither the truth nor the people. We frequently fool ourselves; we think we do thus and so to spare the feelings of others, when it is our own feelings that prompt us. 'Preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.'"¹ Thus if we love men we must teach them the truth.

But how can one know when he has the spirit of Christ? In the final analysis there is but one way to know — namely, one must study the life of Christ as it is revealed in the Scriptures and see what His disposition was. And when one knows the characteristics of Christ, he must develop them in his own life — he must follow Christ as his example. Peter said, "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps." (1 Pet. 2:21.) In short, we must study the life and teaching of Jesus to see if the spirit that dominated His life is the same spirit that dominates ours. To illustrate the principle, I will call to your attention a few areas of the life of Christ.

1. *The spirit of Christ in obedience.* The Bible says, "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered: And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." (Heb. 5:8, 9.) Christ was obedient to His Father's will in all things. There is no exception to this rule. But since we must limit our study, let us take for an example His obedience in baptism. Matthew gives us the following account: "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and cometh thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water." (Matt.

¹ R.L. Whiteside, *Kingdom of Promise and Prophecy* (Denton, Texas: Miss Inys Whiteside, 1956), p. 61. Quoted by permission.

3:13-16.) Christ came all the way from Galilee to Jordan, a distance of probably 60 miles, to be baptized. This shows the importance He placed on doing God's will. Yet many people today would not walk around the block to obey God's command to be baptized; in fact, they would not be baptized even if they were carried to the water's edge. Instead they would gripe and argue as to whether it is essential or not and most likely conclude that something else, such as sprinkling or pouring, will do just as well.

The spirit of Christ led Him to do all that God desired Him to do. And if we follow His example, if we possess His spirit, we must have the same attitude toward God's will. Those who follow in the steps of Christ (those who have the disposition of Christ) will, therefore, never refuse to be baptized for the remission of sins, as the Bible teaches (Acts 2:38). They will never argue that it is nonessential, nor will they ever try to replace it with a more desirable substitute. Their only desire will be to obey God in all things — to do what God says in the way He says to do it just because He said it!

2. *The spirit of Christ in temptation.* After baptism — the point in the scheme of redemption where one becomes a Christian — comes temptation. After He was baptized, Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. After 40 days of fasting by Jesus, the devil came to Him and said, "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." Jesus replied, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." "Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down." But again Jesus answered, "It is written . . . , Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Once more the devil tempted Jesus by taking Him up into a high mountain and showing Him all the kingdoms of the world and promising Him, "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." But again Jesus resisted him by saying, "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." (Matt. 4:1-11.) Jesus thus gave us an example of how to meet and overcome temptations — He used the word of God to put Satan to flight.

With Jesus as our example and the word of God as our guide, we have all that is necessary to successfully resist the power of temptation. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is

common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." (1 Cor. 10:13.) The spirit of Christ is the spirit that meets and overcomes the devil and all his temptations with the written word of God.

3. *The spirit of Christ in preaching.* The sermon on the mount, recorded in Matthew 5, 6, and 7, will serve as a splendid illustration of the spirit of Christ in preaching. We do not have space to present a complete analysis of this amazing sermon, but if you will turn now and read it, you can readily see that the preaching of Jesus went straight to the heart of each subject — He said that which needed to be said without regard or thought concerning either His own popularity or the popularity of the doctrine He taught. He was more concerned about the needs of the people than He was with what it would take to please them. As you read the sermon you will notice that He starts out with the beatitudes, picturing for us the blessed or happy state of the children of God — the rewards of those who have the right attitudes in life; He moves from these to strike at sin, murder, hate, adultery, divorce and remarriage, false oaths, the doctrine of retaliation, hypocrisy in giving, praying, fasting, and in judging; He goes on to warn against false prophets or teachers and gives their fate as well as the fate of all those who are deceived by them; He closes the sermon by telling the story of the wise man who built his house on a rock and the foolish man who built his house on the sand.

To practice the sermon on the mount is one of the greatest challenges of this or any other generation. It is plain and to the point. The spirit of Christ in preaching is the spirit that hits fast, hard, and in the right place with the right instrument, the word of God — the kind of preaching that brings man face to face with his own sins and then points him to the Lamb of God, who offers him a way of escape.

4. *The spirit of Christ with respect to false doctrine.* Many religious people have the erroneous idea that to oppose false doctrines is not compatible with the spirit of Christ, but in reality the very opposite of this is true: a failure or a refusal to oppose and condemn false doctrines is not compatible with either the Holy Spirit and His work or the spirit of Christ. The spirit of Christ is opposed to everything that is contrary to truth. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees, who were putting more emphasis on the

traditions of men than on the commandments of God, by saying, "Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." (Matt. 15:7-9.)

One of the most scathing sermons ever preached was delivered by Jesus to the scribes and Pharisees of His day. In part He said: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. Woe unto you . . . for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves. Woe unto you, ye blind guides! which say, Whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is debtor. Ye fools, and blind! for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold? . . . Woe unto you . . . for ye pay tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith. . . . Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel. Woe unto you . . . for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. Woe unto you . . . for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. Woe unto you . . . Because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous. And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Therefore be ye witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" (Matt. 23:13-33.)

These words show the contempt the spirit of Christ holds for all forms of sin, error, and hypocrisy, as well as for all other forms of departure from the divine will of God. It furthermore shows that Jesus' method of dealing with false doctrines was not to pet them — not to say, "You go your way and I will go mine and we will all

go to the same place" — but to condemn them with lashing strokes and to rebuke all those holding them. In the final analysis, this is the only successful way to deal with false doctrines. Yet probably not one church in a hundred today would permit Jesus to preach such a sermon to its members. They would say, "Such preaching will drive people away from the church." But if so, such churches and church members have no affinity with the doctrine of Christ. Wherever the spirit of Christ is found, sin, apostasy, digression, and all forms of false doctrines will be condemned. The spirit of Christ cannot and will not pacify and ignore that which is wrong. It will seek to lead all men into the full light of truth and right.

5. *The spirit of Christ in judgment.* The spirit of Christ does not permit man to ignore his accountability; it is the spirit that urges him to prepare for the judgment to come. Jesus Himself said: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works; And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (Matt. 7:21-23.) This calls to mind the judgment scene as it is recorded in Matthew 25:31-46. Jesus depicts the Son of man sitting on the judgment seat, the whole world gathered before Him, and Him separating the righteous from the wicked, placing the righteous on His right hand and the wicked on His left. "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." But to those on His left He says, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." When we contemplate this scene, when we realize that men are lost without Christ, "Being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world," we are in better position to understand the urgency of Jesus when He said in the Great Commission, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:15, 16.) Without Christ, men are lost; the gospel of Christ is God's power to save from sin (Rom. 1:16). When the gospel is preached to the

world, some will accept it and be saved; others will reject it and be lost; but the spirit of Christ is the spirit that proclaims the truth of men, that points out the danger of sin, that tells of a Savior who has come, and warns of the judgment before which all must stand. One who ignores the reality of sin and the fact of the judgment cannot display the spirit of Christ. The spirit of Christ is the spirit that tries to prepare men for the judgment bar of God.

From all that we have said, we must conclude that the spirit of Christ is the spirit that believes, practices, and propagates the truth, the truth as it is revealed in the inspired, infallible, immutable word of God, the only source of all true righteousness. Jesus said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32.) Solomon said, "Buy the truth, and sell it not." Anything that comes short of the truth, in either belief, practice, or propagation, is short of the spirit of Christ; anything that goes beyond the truth, in either belief, practice, or propagation, goes beyond the spirit of Christ. The spirit of Christ is the spirit that believes, practices, and propagates the truth of God's word.

CHAPTER 8

THE SPIRIT'S INTERCESSION

“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.” (Rom. 8:26, 27.)

That this is a difficult passage, one from which brethren have reached a number of different conclusions, none will deny. In fact, Moses E. Lard, one of the most powerful writers associated with those who plead for a return to the ancient order of things, concluded his comments on it by saying: “The foregoing is submitted as the best solution at command of a passage which, by general consent of commentators, is difficult. I wish I felt sure that the solution in every part is correct, but I do not. It is however the best discoverable by me. When the reader has given the passage the thought which I have; then, but not before, he will be in a condition to be distrustful as I am.”¹ While no easy solution should be sought . . . or expected, this would be a poor excuse for not studying the passage. Thus I propose to set forth my views on it as clearly as possible while trying to avoid arrogance or dogmatism. While I feel more confident in the correctness of my exegesis than Lard did in his (and I grant that this may be caused by the fact that I have not given it as much thought as had he), where great and good men falter I tread with fear and extreme caution.

The difficulty, especially among leaders in the Restoration Movement, seems to be in determining the meaning of the spirit and its work. Is it the Holy Spirit or the human spirit? Is the work

¹Moses E. Lard, *Commentary on Paul's Letter to Romans* (Delight, Ark.: Gospel Light Publishing Co.), p. 278.

the work of divinity or humanity? While I believe the work is of a divine nature (and thus done by divinity), admittedly these questions have no easy answers. Regardless of which spirit is chosen, one runs into difficulties in assigning to it all the works mentioned. In short, it appears that some of the things can only be properly ascribed to the Holy Spirit (such as helping our infirmities and making intercession) while others could be more easily explained if the human spirit is meant (such as the groanings which cannot be uttered). Thus we must know who the spirit is before we can understand whether the work is human or divine, and we must know whether the work is human or divine before we can understand the passage.

It is my conviction, and it has been from the time I first read the two verses involved, that the Holy Spirit is meant and that the work is that of divinity. This has always appeared to me to be the natural meaning; to make it the human spirit is, consequently, a case of forcing a meaning into the passage. The reason for this conclusion should become clear as we divide and study the passage under five headings.

1. The fact stated — “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities.”

The word “likewise” connects what is here said to the preceding verses on hope. Just as hope helps us bear the trials that are necessary to win the crown, though its unseen end must be reached through patient endurance, so (likewise or in like manner) the Spirit helps our infirmities when we know not how to pray as we should. The “likewise” compares the help given by the Spirit with the power of hope — both are helpers in time of need.

“The Spirit helps our infirmities.” It seems incredible to me that Paul would be saying that our spirit helps our infirmities. That would be equivalent to saying that we help ourselves. This is totally unnatural. Thus the more natural conclusion is that the Holy Spirit, in His power and strength, helps us in our weaknesses. But if the Spirit here means the Holy Spirit, then there is no logical conclusion to reach but that the same Spirit is meant throughout the two verses. Thus the Holy Spirit helps our infirmities. This is the fact that is stated. How He helps is stated later.

The “infirmities” are our weaknesses, one of which is now named.

2. The help needed — “For we know not what we should pray

for as we ought.”

Obviously this does not mean that we do not know how to pray for anything as we ought, but only when prayer involves inability of expressing our needs. To conclude that it means all prayer would practically annul all the commands and exhortations to pray given throughout the Scriptures. We can know how to pray for food, health, wisdom, for rulers, and for many other things (1 Thess. 5:17; 1 Tim. 2:1-8; James 1:5; 5:13-17), and we can approach the throne of God boldly (Heb. 4:16) — boldly because we are His children and we have a high priest who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities (Heb. 4:15).

But this is not the whole of prayer. There are longings, gratitudes, and needs in the human heart that cannot be adequately expressed in words. Yet we strongly desire to express them to God — we want Him to know our deepest yearnings and devotions. Then there are situations in which one wants to pray, knows he needs to pray, but he does not know whether to ask for the one thing or the other — he does not know what would be the answer to his needs. There are also times when he knows he needs God’s help, but he does not know what would be the will of God for him to do (if one needed water, should he pray for rain, search for a stream, dig a well, etc.?). It is when these inexpressible needs arise that the Holy Spirit is here said to help. He takes our inadequate groanings and translates them into meaningful petitions before God. When one goes as far as he can go in prayer, when he pours out his heart and yet knows there is something vital lacking, the Holy Spirit steps in and lends a helping hand by interceding for him. It is not said that He aids him in praying, so that he can pray as he ought, but rather that He intercedes by taking one’s inexpressible needs to the loving heavenly Father.

The need, the inability to pray as we ought, is filled by the Holy Spirit. But the work He does is not something done in us (He does not aid us in putting our prayers into words) because He dwells there, but something He does for us — He fills our needs by transmitting our unutterable prayers to God. His work is that of interceding, not that of helping frame prayers into proper words.

3. The method followed — “But the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us. . . .”

The method used by the Holy Spirit to help our needs, to help our weaknesses in prayer, is to make intercession for us with groanings which cannot be vocalized. The Greek word from which

“intercession” is translated in verse 26 is *huperentugchano* and it appears only here in the New Testament. It is made up of the Greek *huper* (“on behalf of” — Vine) and *entugchano*, the usual word for intercession and the one used in verse 27. Thayer says that it means “to intercede for one.” Young gives it as, “To meet with in behalf of one.” A.T. Robertson says, “It is a picturesque word of rescue by one who ‘happens on’ (*entugchanei*) one who is in trouble and ‘in his behalf’ (*huper*) pleads. . . .”²

The word “intercession” (*entugchano*, as used in verse 27) means, according to Thayer: “1. to light upon a person or a thing, fall in with, hit upon, a person or a thing; so often in Attic. 2. to go to or meet a person, esp. for the purpose of conversation, consultation, or supplication . . . to pray, entreat . . . to make intercession for anyone.” Now add to this definition the Greek *huper*, which according to Vine means “in behalf of,” and you have the method followed by the Holy Spirit to help our weakness in prayer. He goes to God on our behalf and intercedes with the unutterable yearnings of our heart. Actually the Spirit is said to both *huperentugehano* (verse 26) and *entugchano* (verse 27) for the saints, both having practically the same connotation. This, however, should make it obvious that the Holy Spirit is meant — the work is that of interceding (with God) on behalf of the saints. But again note that the work is what He does for us (in the presence of God) and not what He does in us because of a personal indwelling.

But one of the arguments to prove that the Spirit of these verses must be the human spirit rather than the Holy Spirit is that it is not the function of the Holy Spirit to intercede on behalf of Christians. Foy E. Wallace, Jr., says: “The infirmity mentioned has reference to the inability of the mind to put yearnings into words. But He who searches the heart knows the mind of the spirit — the yearnings and the desires which it is unable to express — and in this way the spirit, our own spirit, helpeth our infirmity when He who searches the heart knows what is the mind of the spirit. There is but one divine Intercessor — Jesus Christ, not the Holy Spirit — and the ‘exegesis’ of this verse, which has the personal Holy Spirit operating within us, has God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit mixed up

² A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (New York: Richard R. Smith, Inc., 1931), Vol. IV, p. 377.

and confused with the human spirit.”³ With all due respect to brother Wallace (who has one of the grandest intellects, honed to a sharp edge by many years’ study of the Scriptures, ever to grace the Restoration Movement, and whose writings on the Holy Spirit have made a tremendous contribution to the subject), he simply must have nodded here. That the Spirit makes intercession is a fact that cannot be denied. It is affirmed in both verses. And the fact is not changed regardless of what spirit is meant. If it is the human spirit, then the human spirit makes intercession — it is interceding for itself; if it is the Holy Spirit, then the Holy Spirit is interceding for man. Thus the intercession is a fact. And it seems more consistent with all the facts, and with reason itself, to say that the Holy Spirit intercedes for man than to say that the human spirit intercedes for itself. And so I conclude that the intercession is the work of the Holy Spirit — it is something He does for us in the presence of God and not something He does in us.

The Bible says, “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” (1 Tim. 2:5.) But the Scriptures do not say there is only one intercessor. It is true that Christ intercedes for His people. “Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession [*entugchanein* — the same word that is used in Rom. 8:27].” But the same function is ascribed to the Spirit (Rom. 8:27). Thus while there is only one Mediator, the function of intercession is ascribed to both Christ and the Holy Spirit. There is therefore a difference in the function of a mediator and an intercessor — a mediator stands between two parties while an intercessor pleads to one party in behalf of another.

We conclude, then, that the method of helping is intercession — the Holy Spirit interceding with God in our behalf. The help received (or given) is not that of helping us put the unutterable groanings into words, as it is often thought, but that of using the groanings as the means (or material) of interceding.

4. The material used — “. . . with groanings which cannot be uttered.”

This statement, that the Spirit intercedes for us with sign too deep for words, does not necessarily mean that the groanings are those of the interceding Spirit. Rather the groanings are human

³Foy E. Wallace, Jr., *The Gospel for Today* (Nashville, Tenn.: Foy E. Wallace, Jr., Publications), p. 670. Quoted by permission.

groanings, groanings that cannot be expressed, not those of the interceding Spirit. What is here said is that the Holy Spirit takes the human groanings, which cannot be verbalized, and with them He makes the intercession. Thus the material used in the intercession is human groanings. If there is a difficulty in understanding the statement in this sense I must confess my inability to see it. But when it is so understood, all that it says is that the Holy Spirit takes the longings and signs of the human heart and translates them to God as meaningful expressions — He uses them as the material with which to intercede.

5. The reason specified — “And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”

The “he” must refer to God, for it is He who searches the heart and knows what is in man (Acts 15:8; Ps. 94:11; Heb. 4:13). The hearts belong to the redeemed. While each is involved, the Biblical heart is more than the mind, the will, and the emotions — it is the inner man, the real being, the character. God knows the hearts of His people. He also knows “the mind of the Spirit.” While we may have difficulty comprehending the exact concept here expressed, there is no real reason known to me that should prevent us from accepting it at face value.

Whiteside (whose commentary I consider to be the best ever written on Romans) sees the difficulty and comments: “But what is meant by *the mind of the Spirit*? *Mind* may refer to the intellectual faculty or to the mental disposition, or mood. It is foreign to Paul’s line of reasoning to make *mind of the Spirit* refer to the intellectual faculty of the Spirit or to the mental disposition of the Spirit. Verse 6 may help us out: ‘For the mind of the flesh is death; but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace.’ ‘Mind of the flesh’ is evidently the mental disposition, or mood, of the person dominated by the flesh — the disposition of mind produced by the flesh. And so the ‘mind of the Spirit’ is the mental disposition, or mood, produced by the Spirit. All that the gospel contains stirs up in the heart of the honest believer feelings and aspirations that he cannot express in words. But God, the heart searcher, knows the mental disposition, the feelings, and aspirations thus produced by the Spirit. It is easy to understand Paul, if we understand him to mean that God, who searches the hearts, knows the mental disposition produced by the Spirit. It is probable that God searches the heart through the agency of the Holy Spirit; ‘for

the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God' (1 Cor. 2:10)."⁴

While Whiteside gives us a beautiful explanation, it is done at the expense of what the text itself says. Rather than God knowing the mind of the Spirit, as is affirmed, He knows the mind that is produced in man by (the teaching of) the Spirit. While there is no doubt about Whiteside's conclusions being true (that it is taught in other places in the Scriptures), it does not seem to me that this text even remotely sustains it. And while I do not know how to deal with the difficulty of God knowing the mind of the Spirit, it seems to me that Paul is simply giving the reason for the statement made in verse 26, namely, the Spirit makes intercession for the saints with their groanings because God (who also knows the hearts of men) knows what is in that mind. Thus the human groanings are conveyed by the Spirit to God. In the final analysis, this verse just specifies the reason why the Spirit makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

A brief summary of the passage just studied can be given as follows:

1. The fact stated — "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities."

2. The help needed — "For we know not what we should pray for as we ought."

3. The method followed — "But the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us. . . ."

4. The material used — ". . . with groanings which cannot be uttered."

5. The reason specified — "And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."

In this presentation I have tried to set forth what I believe the verses under consideration actually teach. I have not tried to deal with some of the problems raised when the passage is so understood, such as the following: Why does man need help in his inability to pray when God knows his needs even before he asks? Why should the Holy Spirit need to intercede for man when God knows what is in man's heart? Why would the Holy

⁴R.L. Whiteside, *A New Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Saints at Rome* (Denton, Texas; Miss Inys Whiteside, 1945), pp. 186, 187. Quoted by permission.

Spirit need to transmit the unutterable groanings to God? Why would God not respond to the groanings without the Spirit's intercession? These are questions we cannot answer with our present knowledge. But problems that are beyond our understanding should not prevent us from accepting something that is plainly taught. Or in short, we should not explain away a passage because what it clearly teaches raises problems that are beyond our power to comprehend. Who rejects the doctrine of the Godhead simply because it raises questions about the Trinity that we cannot answer? Who rejects the divine-human nature of Christ only on the grounds that he cannot explain how He could be both at once? And so it is with Romans 8:26, 27. I believe we can understand and accept what the verses say without fully comprehending the difficulties that are raised about the interworkings of God and His Spirit.

CHAPTER 9

THE SPIRIT AND BAPTISM INTO ONE BODY

“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.” (1 Cor. 12:13.)

Needless to say, this verse has been a fertile field for those who consider the work of the Holy Spirit as some kind of mysterious influence, especially those who have used it as a proof text pertaining to the baptism of the Holy Spirit. With little or no consideration for the contextual impact, those who believe that the baptism of the Spirit is a perpetual blessing given (or at least potentially so) to all Christians use it in total disregard to the internal difficulties it presents to them. For example, they believe that Christians, those already in the body, should seek Holy Spirit baptism. Some receive it; some do not. Yet they quote this passage to prove that it is for all. But in so doing, they overlook an obvious fact: the baptism of this verse is the means of entrance — it puts the one baptized into the one body. It is not something that is sought or received by those already in the one body. Thus if this verse actually teaches Holy Spirit baptism, then no one is in the body who has not been so baptized. “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.” Obviously, then, Holy Spirit baptism is not meant. What the verse actually says is that one is baptized into the one body where he is made to drink into the Spirit — the baptism puts one into the body and after he is in the body by baptism he drinks of the Spirit. Only the baptized are in the body, and only those in the body drink into the Spirit.

But to further emphasize the teaching of the verse we need to divide it up into its component parts, discussing each as it relates to the others, to the context of the chapter, and to the whole verse. The most natural division seems to be as follows:

1. The authority — “For by one Spirit. . . .”

The Spirit here means the Holy Spirit. Of this fact there can be

no serious question, even though a few have conceived of it as being the spirit of oneness, the spirit of the body of believers (such as the spirit of a school, the spirit of a community, the spirit of a team, etc.). When the verse is properly understood, the one Spirit is the authority by which we are all baptized into the one body.

But the meaning of the preposition “by” (KJV) or “in” (ASV) is not so easily determined. Although this is a favorite text of those who teach that Holy Spirit baptism is for everyone, a close study of the context, as well as the verse itself, will reveal that the Holy Spirit is the instructor, not the administrator (as “by” might suggest) or the element (as could be implied by “in”). Thus the Holy Spirit is the director or authority for the action rather than being either the actor or the element in which the act is performed.

But we must take a closer look at “by.” It is translated from the Greek *en*, and its meaning must usually be determined by the context. In some passages it means in the element (e.g., Matt. 3:11), but this is not always the case. John baptized in (*en*) the wilderness (Mark 1:4) and in (*en*) Aenon (John 3:23). In both passages the place, not the element, is meant. Peter commanded baptism in (*en*) the name of Christ (Acts 10:48), which must be understood to mean by the authority of or in obedience to Christ. In the context of 1 Corinthians 12:13 Paul says, “No man can say that Jesus is Lord, but by [*en*] the Spirit.” (1 Cor. 12:3.) This simply means that the only way we can know of Jesus, and thus be able to call Him Lord, is by the revelation of the Spirit (or as the Spirit directs through the revealed will of God). In short, we can call Jesus Lord only by the authority or directions of the Holy Spirit. A few verses later Paul adds, “To another faith by [*en*] the same Spirit.” (1 Cor. 12:9.) This can mean nothing more than the faith which was given by the power or authority of the Spirit. And so it is in verse 13. “By the Spirit” means by the authority of or under the directions of the Spirit. Thus when one is led by the Spirit (through the Spirit-inspired Scriptures) to be baptized, he is baptized by the Spirit, not in the sense that the Spirit is the administrator or the element, but as the one who has revealed (authorized or directed) the plan.

But in addition to all of this, the overriding evidence lies in the fact that Holy Spirit baptism could not be meant here because of its purpose. The baptism of this verse puts one into the body of Christ, something the baptism of the Holy Spirit was never

designed to do. While there are cases of baptism in the Holy Spirit recorded in the New Testament, nowhere is it said that that baptism put the receiver into Christ (which means the same as being baptized into the body). The baptism that puts one into the body is water baptism (Gal. 3:26, 27; Rom. 6:3, 4; Acts 8:35-39; 10:47, 48), the Holy Spirit being neither the administrator nor the element. The purpose of water baptism and the purpose of Holy Spirit baptism are two entirely different things. We therefore need to take note of some of the things the Bible reveals about Holy Spirit baptism:

First, it was a promise to be received, not a command to be obeyed. "And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me." What promise are they commanded to wait for? The answer is given in the next verse. "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." (Acts 1:4, 5.) On the day of Pentecost they received the promise (Acts 2:1-4), that is, they were baptized in the Spirit. The Spirit then, through them, commanded others to be baptized in water for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Later, Cornelius and his household received the Spirit's baptism (Acts 10:44-46; 11:15, 16) and were then commanded to be baptized in water — the former being an action they received and the latter being an action they were commanded to do.

Second, it was administered only by Christ. John the Baptist said, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." (Matt. 3:11.) Notice in particular the difference used with reference to baptism in water and Holy Spirit baptism. In water baptism, the action is always with man. "Go . . . teach all nations, baptizing them. . . ." (Matt. 28:19.) "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Mark 16:16.) "Repent, and be baptized every one of you. . . ." (Acts 2:38.) "Arise, and be baptized. . . ." (Acts 22:16.) But in Holy Spirit baptism the action is always with the Lord. "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost." (Matt. 3:11.) "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. . . ." (Acts 1:5.) ". . . the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning." (Acts 11:15.) Water baptism is an action of man commanded by the Lord; Holy Spirit baptism is a promise to

man, the action of which belongs to the Lord.

Third, it was limited to the apostles of Christ and to the household of Cornelius. The apostles, and the apostles only, received the baptism of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:5; 2:1-4). This was in fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:16-21) and a promise made to them by the Lord while He was with them in the flesh (John 16:7-14). It should be observed, however, that the apostolic commission and the baptism in the Holy Spirit are two distinct things. This fact is usually overlooked. While it is conceded that the household of Cornelius was baptized in the Spirit, as were the apostles, they were never given apostolic authority (the baptism *per se* did not make apostles). The apostles were chosen and commissioned by the Lord Himself to do a special work — the work of revealing and confirming (by the power of the Holy Spirit) the word of God. The baptism in the Spirit was given to aid them in carrying out their work — to guarantee that the will of God would be delivered to the world free from human errors. Their commission was given before the Spirit came, but they were to wait for Him before they started the proclamation of the gospel to the whole world (Luke 24:47-49). Thus the appointment to the apostleship and the commission given to them is one thing and the baptism of the Holy Spirit is another. The latter was given to aid with the former. When this distinction is made the next point will cause no trouble; but confuse them and it will cause one to run into all kinds of problems, such as may cause him to deny that Cornelius was baptized in the Spirit at all.

Fourth, the purpose of the baptism to the household of Cornelius was to convince the apostles that the Gentiles were acceptable gospel subjects. It cannot be successfully denied that Cornelius and his household were baptized in the Holy Spirit (some honest and sincere brethren have tried to do so, but, it seems to me, they have done so by engaging in some exegetical acrobatics). Peter said: "And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?" (Acts 11:15-17.) Thus when Peter saw what happened to Cornelius and his household his mind went back to Pentecost, to "the beginning,"

not to other cases where the Holy Spirit had been given by the laying on of apostolic hands. What happened on Pentecost and what happened at the household of Cornelius was peculiar to these two occasions. If this is not the case, then why did what happened to Cornelius remind Peter of the Lord's promise to baptize them with the Holy Spirit?

But furthermore, the Greek text says that what happened on both occasions was equal or the same. The word translated "like" in verse 17 is the Greek *isos*, which Young says means equal. Thayer says, "Equal, in quality or quantity . . . the same gift." And he gives Acts 11:17 as the source of this definition. The word *isos* is translated equal elsewhere (e.g., Matt. 20:12; Phil. 2:6; Rev. 21:16). The word *homoios* is the Greek word for like in the sense of resembling, while *isos* is like in the sense of quality. Thus Peter did not say that they had received a similar (*homoios*) gift, but the same (*isos*) gift, that is, the baptismal gift of the Spirit. It should not be concluded, however, that they received apostolic power and authority. The Scriptures do not reveal that the Spirit worked through them to either reveal or confirm the truth, as He did through the apostles. It was therefore the same gift or measure of the Spirit, but was obviously for a different purpose.

What, then, was the purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit to the apostles? It was to reveal to them the will of God and aid them in carrying out their apostolic commission of delivering and confirming the word of God. What was the purpose on the household of Cornelius? It was to convince the apostles that the Gentiles had become gospel subjects. As far as can be determined from the Scriptures, it served no other purpose . . . nor was it intended to serve any other purpose. It is therefore reasonable to assume that, while they received the baptismal measure of the Spirit along with the apostles, they did not receive apostolic power or authority, and their reception of the baptismal measure was for the benefit of the apostles, not for their own benefit. Thus for all practical purposes, in the reception, deliverance, and confirmation of the revelation of God's will, only the apostles received the baptismal measure of the Spirit — Cornelius and his household received the same measure but not to aid them in carrying out an apostolic mission.

For these and other reasons we must conclude that the Spirit of 1 Corinthians 12:13 is the authority by which the baptism into the one body is administered — He is neither the administrator nor

the element, but the authoritative voice giving the directions or the plan.

2. The action — “. . . are we all baptized. . . .”

As we have seen, baptism is not something done by the Holy Spirit — not the Holy Spirit baptizing people. The action here is on the part of the one being baptized in obedience to the Spirit’s teaching. The Spirit is the authority, not the actor. But what is baptism, the baptism authorized by the Spirit in His revelation of God’s will? It is the baptism of the Great Commission. And the baptism of the Great Commission may be defined as a command of Jesus Christ (Mark 16:16; Acts 10:48) in which a penitent believer in Christ as God’s Son (Acts 16:31; 2:38) is buried with Him (Rom. 6:3, 4) in water (Acts 8:35-38) in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:18-20) for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), which puts him into Christ (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:26, 27) in whom he arises to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4, 5). This definition, which pertains only to the baptism of the Great Commission, contains nine necessary components, all of which I shall now list and discuss briefly:

First, baptism is a *command* given by Jesus Christ to sinners who are seeking salvation through Him (Mark 16:16; Acts 10:47, 48). Since it is a command, and since the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a promise, not a command, the baptism of the Great Commission cannot be Holy Spirit baptism.

Second, baptism is a command *to believers* in Jesus Christ as God’s Son (Mark 16:16; Acts 8:35-38). None but believers in Christ can be Scripturally baptized by the instructions of the Spirit.

Third, baptism is a command *to penitent* believers (Acts 2:38; 17:30). Thus only those who have sinned and have repented of their *sins are proper* subjects of the baptism of the Great Commission.

Fourth, baptism is a *burial* with Christ, a burial into His death (Rom. 6:3, 4; Col. 2:12). The action of sprinkling or pouring water on a person is a substitute for what the Lord commanded.

Fifth, baptism is a burial *in water* (John 3:23; Acts 8:35-39; 10:47, 48). Water is therefore the element in which baptism is performed. Baptism in any other element, even in the Holy Spirit, is not the baptism commanded by Christ in the Great Commission.

Sixth, baptism is a command to a penitent believer to be obeyed *in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit* (Matt.

28:18-20). In being Scripturally baptized, one is acknowledging the authority of God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit — he is baptized in obedience to a command from the Godhead. It is, therefore, not a baptism in the Spirit but a baptism by the Spirit's authority.

Seventh, baptism is for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Yet those who seek the baptism of the Holy Spirit in modern times admit that their sins are already remitted. But furthermore, when one is baptized for the remission of sins he is promised the gift of the Holy Spirit — he is not baptized in the Spirit but baptized to receive the Spirit.

Eighth, baptism puts the penitent believer into Christ (Gal. 3:26, 27; Rom. 6:3) where salvation is (2 Tim. 2:10). To be in Christ is the same as to be in His body, the one body. Thus the baptism that puts one into Christ, the one body, is the baptism of the Great Commission, not the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Ninth, when one is baptized into Christ, he arises to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4, 5; 2 Cor. 5:17). This new life is what Paul meant when he said, "And have been all made to drink into one Spirit." The baptism is in water by the authority of the one Spirit; the blessing that comes by being so baptized is to drink into the Spirit.

There can be no question about it then: the baptism of the Great Commission is water baptism, and since it is an integral part of the Commission, it must continue as long as the Commission continues. There are other baptisms in the New Testament, given for a limited time or for a special purpose. Such was the baptism of John. It was effective in John's day, but after the Great Commission was given, the baptism of John was no longer in effect (Acts 19:1-7). So also was the baptism in the Holy Spirit. It was given, as I have shown, only to the apostles and to the household of Cornelius. It was never promised to nor was it ever received by all Christians. By the time the New Testament was nearly completed, Paul wrote, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." (Eph. 4:5.) Since there was only one then, and since the baptism of the Great Commission was to continue as long as the Commission itself, we must conclude that the one baptism — the baptism into the one body — is the baptism of the Great Commission.

There are, however, many baptisms known to the religious world, even today. There is the baptism (sprinkling) of infants, the baptism that puts one into sectarian churches, baptism for the

dead, baptism because one considers himself already saved, baptisms of new or supposed revelations, etc. When Paul said that there is one baptism, he did not mean to say that anything that is called baptism is acceptable or Scriptural. The one baptism of Paul is the Scriptural, the right, baptism. All others are wrong.

There is, therefore, only one Scriptural baptism — one baptism taught by the Spirit and revealed in the word of God, one baptism for all men of every nation who love and obey the Lord's will. Those who are Scripturally baptized are born again, born of water and the Spirit (John 3:5), regenerated (Titus 3:5), washed with pure water (Heb. 10:22; Eph. 5:26), in Christ (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27), saved (1 Pet. 3:21), and added to the Lord's church (Acts 2:41-47). Those who have not been Scripturally baptized are rejecting the counsel of God (Luke 7:29, 30). Those who have received some other baptism should, as did the 12 men in Ephesus (Acts 19:1-7), be rebaptized "in the name of the Lord Jesus." That is, they should be baptized as the Spirit has taught, authorized, and directed.

Scriptural baptism for people today is not Holy Spirit baptism, but the baptism taught by the Holy Spirit — the baptism of the Great Commission. Thus what the verse under study has said so far is that by the authority of one Spirit we are all baptized.

3. The object — " . . . into one body. . . ." Thus by the authority of one Spirit are we all baptized into one body. This is the end result, the object in view as to why the Spirit teaches us to be baptized.

But what is the one body into which all who follow the directions of the Spirit are baptized? The very next verse (1 Cor. 12:14) says, "For the body is not one member, but many." Just six verses later the apostle says, "But now are they many members, yet but one body." (1 Cor. 12:20.) Seven verses later he adds, "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." (1 Cor. 12:27.) Thus the one body is the body of Christ. But the body of Christ is the church. Paul wrote, "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." (Eph. 1:22, 23.) Again, "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence." (Col. 1:18.) To remove any possibility of misunderstanding Paul states it both ways: the church is the body and the body is the church.

Therefore to be baptized into the one body is equivalent to being baptized into the church. Or as the Scriptures say, those who were baptized were added to the church (Acts 2:41, 47).

But before we go further, we need the answer to another question, namely, what is the church? Jesus said, "Upon this rock [the fact that He was the Son of God] I will build my church." (Matt. 16:18.) This was a promise made to His disciples. I believe that He kept that promise, that He did build His church. But what did He build? The New Testament answer is the heart of simplicity, but religious division and denominational nomenclature have made it so complex that the average person goes through life without knowing the answer . . . and perhaps most without seeing any need for the answer. But the New Testament definition of the church can be summed up in a very simple statement: the church is the body of Christ composed of the people of Christ led by the Spirit of Christ doing the work of Christ. While this is not a technical definition, I believe that by taking a closer look at its four basic components we can clearly grasp what the New Testament church is (and by "New Testament church" I mean nothing more than the church one can read about in the New Testament). Let us notice each component in a little more detail:

First, the church is the body of Christ. This I have already established from Ephesians 1:22, 23 and Colossians 1:18. But to call further attention to this, notice in particular the words of Paul: ". . . the church, which is *his* body. . . ." (Eph. 1:23.) "His" is a personal pronoun taking the place of the noun "Christ." Hence the church is the body of Christ. It is not a human body nor a human organization — nor is it a denomination with a human name, creed, doctrine, organization, or practice. It is the body of Christ! A divine body with Christ as its builder and head. It is the body into which one is baptized (in water) by the direction of the Holy Spirit. It is the called out, the blood purchased (Acts 20:28, the sanctified and cleansed (Eph. 5:26, 27), the one new man (Eph. 2:13-17), and the habitation of God through the Spirit (Eph. 2:22). This is the body, the body of Christ, into which one is baptized. The object, therefore, of baptism is to put one into this body — the body, or church, of Christ.

Second, the church is composed of the people of Christ. It takes

every Christian to make up the church and the church is made up of every Christian. Peter said, "Ye [Christians] also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. 2:5.) Paul also emphasizes this fact further in the verse under study and the one just prior to it. He says: "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ: For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." (1 Cor. 12:12, 13.) Taking both verses together it can be clearly seen that we are members of the body because we have been baptized (in water by the authority of the Spirit) into it. Verse 13 tells us how we became members of the body of verse 12, and the body of verse 12 is the body of which every Christian is a member. There are no members (that is, living, active members) apart from the body and no body (in the functioning sense) apart from the members. The body is composed of its members and its members are Christians — all Christians are in the body and the body is made up of all Christians. "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. . . . But now are they many members, yet but one body. . . . Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." (1 Cor. 12:18, 20, 27.)

Third, the church is led by the Spirit of Christ. There are many things we may never know about the Holy Spirit in this life, but there is one thing we can know: the body of Christ is led by the Spirit of Christ. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." (Rom. 8:14.) The function of the Spirit in the Christian age is to reveal and confirm the will of God. He was sent to the apostles of Christ to guide them into all truth (John 16:13). He made the truth known to them through revelation and then inspired them to write that revelation in the inspired Scriptures. All truth, as revealed by the Spirit, is now contained in the word of God. Thus the Spirit of God makes known the will of God for those of us living today through the written word of God (1 Cor. 2:9-13; 2 Tim. 3:14-17). When the people of Christ (who make up the church) follow the divine revelation (made known in the Bible) they are being led by the Spirit. Thus when the church follows the Scriptures, it is being led by the Spirit. There is nothing mysterious about this: it is simply the church following

the Spirit-given instructions. For by one Spirit (the directions of the Spirit) the church lives, and serves, and grows, and hopes.

Fourth, the church does the work of Christ. This concept is forcefully shown by Paul in 1 Corinthians 12:12-30, where he uses the human body as an analogy to teach some vital lessons concerning the body of Christ. He points out that each member was baptized into the body and as a member of the body he has a particular function to perform. But as it is with the human body, no member works apart from the body. If one is not in the body he cannot function for Christ. He may work, and he may do the same work he would do were he a member of the body, but the work is not directed by the Head, which is Christ, and is therefore not the work of the body of Christ. The body of Christ, through the function of each member, does the work of Christ. It is an all-sufficient body to do all that God had commissioned it to do — it does not function through those outside the body nor does it need to work through some other body or organization. The church is the body of Christ . . . to do the work of Christ.

We can now see that the object of baptism is to put one into the one body, which is the church. But we need to go a step further. To be baptized into the one body is to be baptized into Christ. Paul says: "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." (Gal. 3:26, 27; see also Rom. 6:3.) The sphere of salvation by faith is "in Christ." How do we enter that sphere? Paul says that we were baptized into Christ. This means precisely the same as being baptized into one body. If one is in Christ, he is a child of God; but all children of God have been baptized into Christ — there are no children outside of Christ and there are none in Christ but those who have been baptized into Him. Thus any baptism that does not put one into Christ, that is, not into the body of Christ — any baptism that is not essential to salvation — is not the baptism of 1 Corinthians 12:13.

We have now progressed in our study to the point where we can say with the full assurance of Scriptural authority that what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12:13 is that by the authority of one Spirit we are all baptized in water into the one body which is the church. In short, the Holy Spirit has revealed the baptism (the baptism of the Great Commission) that puts the penitent believer into Christ (which means the same as being put into the body or the church) Paul was therefore not speaking of the baptism of the Holy Spirit:

for that does not put us into the one body (even those who claim to have the baptism in the Holy Spirit admit that they were already in the body before they received it). He was speaking of the baptism of the Great Commission, the baptism taught or authorized by the Spirit.

4. The extent — “. . . whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free.” The extent is universal — no race or class of people are exempted from it. Jesus said: “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” Mark 16:15, 16.) Baptism here is limited only to believers, regardless of who they are or where they are. But as we have seen, the baptism in the Holy Spirit was limited to the apostles and to the household of Cornelius. The two are therefore different in both purposes and scope. The baptism of the Great Commission, the baptism authorized by the Spirit, is a universal command to be obeyed by all penitent believers; the baptism in the Holy Spirit was a limited promise to a selected number to aid in revealing, delivering, and confirming the word of God. The extent, therefore, of those who by the authority of one Spirit can be baptized in water into the body of Christ is universal — there are no national, racial, or class limitations. The gospel is for all!

5. The blessing — “And have been all made to drink into one Spirit.” This states the blessing received by those who by the authority of the Spirit are baptized into the one body. To drink into the Spirit is to drink from the fountain of blessings provided by the Spirit in the Christian system. This is just another way of saying that when one is in the body of Christ he has access to all the spiritual benefits provided by the Spirit in the scheme of human redemption.

It was the function of the Holy Spirit to reveal the Christian system. That is the purpose for which He was sent unto the apostles (John 16:7-14). It was under His guidance, and by His direction, that the New Testament was brought to perfection. The plan contained therein is the means by which the Holy Spirit now bestows His blessings. When one sincerely obeys the precepts and commands of the gospel he is drinking into the Spirit — drinking into the things the Spirit has revealed and provided for man’s salvation and eternal happiness. Peter states the same thought in another way. He says, “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the

knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." (2 Pet. 1:3, 4.) Undoubtedly "partaking of the divine nature" and "drinking into one Spirit" mean the same thing. "Partaking of the divine nature" means a partaking of the nature that pertains to God. But Christians partake of the divine nature through the knowledge of Him (Christ) who has called us to glory and virtue. And that knowledge comes by the revelation given through the Spirit (1 Cor. 2:9-14). Thus drinking into one Spirit means the partaking of that which is divine, partaking of the things delivered by the Spirit to make and keep one a child of God. All spiritual blessings (all that one partakes of when he drinks into the Spirit) are in Christ, and one enters Christ, establishes a covenant relationship with Him, by obeying the instructions given by the Spirit in the gospel of Christ. When one receives the blessings provided by the gospel he is drinking into the one Spirit.

CONCLUSION

We have now by the process followed shown what is actually taught by Paul in 1 Corinthians 12:13. The outline will show this at a glance:

1. The authority — "For by one Spirit. . . ."
2. The action — ". . . are we all baptized. . . ."
3. The object — ". . . into one body. . . ."
4. The extent — ". . . whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free. . . ."
5. The blessing — ". . . and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

In the process of this study we have established the following propositions:

1. The Spirit is the Holy Spirit.
2. The baptism is the baptism authorized or directed by the Spirit, not the baptism by (as administrator) or in (as the element) the Holy Spirit.
3. The baptism authorized or directed by the Spirit is the baptism of the Great Commission.
4. The baptism of the Great Commission is the baptism of a penitent believer in water for the remission of sins.

5. Baptism puts one into the one body, and the one body is the church.

6. To be in the body (or the church) and to be in Christ is one and the same — both describe the same relationship. Thus the baptism in the verse under study is the baptism that puts one into Christ.

7. But it is the baptism of the Great Commission that puts a penitent believer into Christ (Rom. 6:3, 4; Gal. 3:26, 27).

8. There is now but one baptism in effect (Eph. 4:5). Since the baptism of the Great Commission was to continue to the end of the world, and since the baptism in the Holy Spirit was for a limited time and for a specific purpose, we must conclude that the baptism of the Great Commission is the baptism of 1 Corinthians 12:13.

9. The baptism of 1 Corinthians 12:13 is universal — it is for all penitent believers in Christ.

10. One drinks into the Spirit (derives the benefits provided by the Spirit through the revelation) after he has been baptized into the one body.

From all this we must conclude (if the Scriptures are to be taken for what they teach rather than to have meanings twisted into them — if language has any meaning at all and if logic has any force) that the following sums up what Paul actually taught: “For by [the authority of] one Spirit are we all baptized [in water, as commanded in the Great Commission] into one body [the church], whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free [worldwide, universal]; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit [the baptism by the authority of the Spirit puts all into Christ where they have access to all spiritual blessings].”

I am so certain of this conclusion that I can close with the words of a poet, Sir William S. Gilbert:

*“Of that there is no manner of doubt —
No probable, possible shadow of doubt —
No possible doubt whatever.”*

CHAPTER 10

THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRITS

Paul says, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." (Rom. 8:16.)

Embodied in this versè is a great principle of truth concerning the Holy Spirit and His function in the scheme of human redemption, a principle that can give us full assurance that we are pleasing to God in all our relationships with Him. In short, we can learn from this principle whether or not we are children of God, whether we have been born again and continue in His favor, or whether we are still lost in the wicked world of sin. Paul here tells us how we can know that we are children of God. And when we come to make application of the principle to each of our lives, we can all answer with the knowledge of God's word whether or not we are children of His. If we are children of God we ought to know it so we can praise Him for it; if we are not His children we ought to know it so we can change our lives and thus change our eternal destiny. If we are, we can rejoice in hope; if we are not, we ought to prepare now to meet God.

But before we make application of this principle to our own lives, we need to study some things pertaining to it — we need to see the real function of the Holy Spirit in the Christian age, see how a knowledge of His function can answer for us the question, "Am I a child of God?" Paul answers the question by saying, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." While this answer may not seem conclusive now, it will be as we progress. We shall see how the Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirit to give us full assurance that we are God's children.

ASSURANCE

It is generally conceded that in order to go to heaven when this life is over, we must be children of God. But if we are going to live meaningfully, joyfully, radiantly, and dynamically in this world we are going to have to *know* that we are children of God; we are going to have to have full assurance that we are acceptable to Him, that we know and are doing His will. A knowledge of the new birth is as necessary as a knowledge of the physical birth. We need to be as certain of our relationship with God as we are with our parents.

Perhaps the word “know” needs some clarification. It is used here in the sense of knowledge by faith. It is not a knowledge that comes through the physical senses, and thus it is not absolute knowledge in the usual sense of the term. It is a knowledge by faith — a knowledge that is as certain as its source. When the word of God speaks of a thing, we can *know* that is true to the extent that the word of God is true. In this case our knowledge is as certain as the Scripture itself. When we come to the point where the word of God says of each of us, “You are a child of God,” then we can know (the knowledge being as certain as the word) we are children of God. There is no guesswork about it. We know because God says so. Such a knowledge makes life more livable, salvation more meaningful, and hope more certain. It removes doubts and makes us “Stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.” (1 Cor. 15:58.)

Salvation and eternal life are too serious to take for granted — they are too important to trust to flimsy feelings and physical experiences. We need a sure foundation upon which to build. How miserable and fearful life would be without a certain knowledge of one’s covenant relationship with God. To be forced to speculate and conjecture about one’s salvation would bring the worst kind of depression and anguish of heart and mind. This is illustrated by some statements by James H. Thornwell, a nineteenth-century Presbyterian preacher and college president, a brilliant student and world-renowned scholar. He wrote in his journal: “I see in my own heart so much selfishness, and pride, and vanity; so much hardness and insensibility; so little affection for the Saviour, or devotedness to the glory of God, that I am often seriously led to doubt whether I am a child of God. It is my sincere and constant desire

to make the Lord my portion, to live to Him, and for Him, and on Him. Oh! for a single eye and a simple heart! I enjoy the comforts of religion by fits and starts. They come in occasional flashes; they are not my constant and habitual atmosphere. . . . This day, thus far, has been a day of terrible gloom to me. My soul has been in thick darkness. I have had no enjoyment of God. My heart has been cold and cheerless, and seems utterly incapable of realizing eternal things. . . . I have had no clear views of any spiritual object. My understanding assents, but my feelings are dead. My religion seems to be all in the head. Would to God it were otherwise!"¹ This utter lack of assurance stands in stark contrast with believers in Bible times.

There are many fascinating things about the Bible, but one of the most amazing is that when it is read from Genesis to Revelation there will never be found a person who is proven to be a spokesman of God, or one who is going about to do the will of God as it is revealed through one of His spokesmen, who expresses a syllable of doubt. (There is doubt expressed but not about the reception and knowing the will of God.) Unlike Mister Thornwell, they *knew* they were in covenant relationship with God, and they knew that this did not depend upon their feelings but upon their doing the will of God. Doubt did not plague them. They believed with their whole heart that they knew God's will and that their services were acceptable to Him. They knew that God had revealed His will to them. They knew that they understood His will. And they knew that when they obeyed the will of God He would keep His promises — the promises made in His revealed will. Their confidence was in the fact that they *knew* the will of God and they knew that they knew it.

Take Abraham, for example, when God commanded him to take his son, his only son, and offer him as a sacrifice upon the altar. The record says:

"And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and

¹ B.M. Palmer, *The Life and Letters of James Henley Thornwell* (Whittet & Shepperson, 1875), pp. 140, 141.

saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you. And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together. And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together. And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me." (Gen. 22:1-12.)

In order to see the full implication of this incident, we need to go back to Genesis 12. Here God makes two promises (or three, depending on how you count them) to Abraham, promises upon which the remainder of the Bible is built. "Now the Lord had said unto Abraham, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all my families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 12:1-3.)

The first promise is twofold. God promised to make Abraham a great nation and to give that nation a land in which to dwell. This is usually referred to as the land promise. It was fulfilled when Joshua led the children of Israel across the Jordan and conquered the land of Canaan. The Bible says: "And the Lord gave unto Israel all the land which he sware to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. And the Lord gave them rest round about, according to all that he sware unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the Lord delivered all their enemies

into their hand. There failed not aught of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass.” (Joshua 21:43-45.) There can, therefore, be no doubt about the nation and land promise being fulfilled in ancient Israel.

The second promise was, “And in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.” As the Hebrew writer argues (Heb. 11:17-19), the promise was made not to just any seed, but through Isaac, the son of promise. Thus it was through Isaac that God had promised to bless all families of the world. It was through him that God was going to bring about the salvation of all nations through Jesus Christ. (This promise to Abraham is fulfilled in Christianity.) Isaac was therefore the hope of the promise.

Now when we come to Genesis 22, God commands Abraham to offer Isaac, the son upon whom the promises depended, as a burnt offering. But if the son is offered, how are the promises to be fulfilled? That is the problem that strongly confronted Abraham. (Abraham did have a solution worked out in his own mind, but it was not one that God had revealed to him. He believed that God would raise him from the dead, Heb. 11:17-19. Paul says, “Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.” (Rom. 8:18.) His hope was so strong that he hoped even against all the evidence.)

When God gave this command, if any man in the history of the world ever had reason to doubt that God had spoken or that he had correctly understood the will of God, it was Abraham. He could have justly reasoned: “Lord, I must have misunderstood you. Surely you are not frustrating your own promises by such a command.” He could have also objected, “Never before has anyone ever been commanded by God to offer a human sacrifice.” And if he could have seen the future he could have added, “Never before has God given such a command and never will He again — never in the past, no other in the present, and never another in the future.” But no such words passed from Abraham’s lips. He went to make the sacrifice in full assurance that God had revealed His will and that he knew what that will was. He never once expressed a doubt — he never doubted that he knew God’s will.

This is characteristic of all men of faith in the Bible. We could look at Joshua. He knew what the will of the Lord was and so expressed his assurance in his farewell address (Joshua 24). David, in Psalm 23, is another good illustration. Though he should walk through the

valley of the shadow of death he would fear no evil. He had total confidence that the Lord would be with him. In the New Testament Peter confessed, "We believe and are sure that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." (John 6:69.) Paul had many occasions to doubt that his message was from God or that he properly understood it (cf. Acts 15), but in his whole life and writings there is not a single doubt expressed. In fact, the very opposite is true. He says, "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." (Gal. 1:11, 12.)

We must conclude, therefore, that when God reveals His will man can know that will and he can know that he knows it. He can be so fully assured that he has no fear of trusting his eternal soul upon his understanding of that revelation — he has no doubt about the revelation or his understanding thereof. This was true of Abraham, Joshua, and David; it was true of Peter, Paul, and the early Christians; and it is true today. Man is not left to human conjecture where his salvation is concerned.

THE SPIRITS

Let us now return to Paul's words, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." There are *two* witnesses here, the Spirit and our spirit. Both must bear witness together — their witness must coincide. Thus when we have the Spirit testifying that we are the children of God and we have our spirit making the same testimony, then we can *know* that we are children of God. Furthermore, the witness is "with" our spirit, not "to" our spirit — the Spirit bears witness *with* our spirit. Both spirits must testify to the same fact.

At this point we need to raise and answer some questions.

What (or who) is the Spirit? It is obvious from the context of Romans 8 that "the Spirit" is the Holy Spirit. But in addition to the context, the capitalization of "the Spirit" shows this to be true.² Both show that this is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the living God. Thus to know that we are the children of God, to know that we are

²I have checked at least 20 different translations and all of them except one, *The New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*, published by Jehovah's Witnesses, who do not believe in the divine personality of the Holy Spirit, give the same capitalization. Thus all, except this one, agree that "The Spirit" is the Holy Spirit.

pleasing to God, to have the full assurance that God's will is being done, the Holy Spirit must bear witness with our spirit that we are God's children — the two spirits must bear testimony to the same fact.

It is now vital that we understand the function of the Holy Spirit in the scheme of human redemption. In the present day there seems to be more misunderstanding about the work of the Holy Spirit than about any other fundamental subject in the Scriptures. The misunderstanding is not because the subject is so complex that it cannot be understood, but because of the fact that men have ascribed to the Spirit works He was never given to do. It is not what the Bible teaches that leads to the misunderstanding, but rather the creations of man's own mind as to what he expects of the Spirit. What the Spirit does and what is ascribed to Him are two entirely different things. A basic error that we must deal with, then, is that of assigning to the Spirit works that do not belong to Him. This is why it is imperative that we establish the Scriptural work of the Spirit.

What is the function of the Holy Spirit? His work can be summed up in two words, *revelation* and *confirmation*. He was given to reveal the will of God and to confirm that will once it was revealed (cf. Mark 16:15-20; Heb. 2:1-4). When one gets away from these two concepts, as far as the Spirit's work is concerned, he has gone beyond the word of God into human speculation.

But what is involved in revelation? The problem here is that man needs to know the will of God. But the will of God is in the mind of God and man, unaided, has no access to God's mind. The contents of the divine mind must be, in some way, conveyed to the mind of man. Revelation is the manifestation of the divine mind. And that is the function of the Holy Spirit. He takes the mind of God and reveals it to the mind of man. In 1 Corinthians, chapters 1 and 2, Paul shows that man by his own power of reason and learning cannot know the things of God. His contrast is between the wisdom of man and the revelation of God. He is not discouraging learning *per se* (in fact, wherever the Bible has gone, advancement in learning has followed). His point is that one may learn all he can, he may know all there is to know as far as human wisdom is concerned, but if he wishes to know the will of God he must come to the revelation delivered by the Spirit. "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for

them that love him. [This is a prophecy quoted from Isaiah 64:4 which foretells the blessing of Christ and the Christian religion. It is not a prophecy of that which is yet to come, but of that which did come in Christianity.] But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the Spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." (1 Cor. 2:9-12.) Thus one cannot know what is in the mind of God until the Spirit of God reveals it.

How does the Holy Spirit reveal the mind of God to the mind of man? He does so by means of words. He takes the mind of God and puts it into words so that through the words the will of God can be transmitted to the mind of man. And as far as the Scriptures are concerned, words are the only means by which the contents of the divine mind are conveyed to the human mind. The function of the Holy Spirit is to transmit God's will from Mind to mind through words. Thus what the word of God says is what the Spirit says. He bears witness through the word.

The second work mentioned previously was that of confirmation. The Holy Spirit confirms the word of God. He took the mind of God and put it into words so that it could be conveyed to the mind of man. But how can we know that the words express the contents of the divine mind? The Holy Spirit confirmed the words by miracles. When the mind of God was put into words, God stamped His approval upon them with a miracle (and only God can perform a true miracle). A miracle is the direct intervention of God — a product without the natural means of production. So wherever there is a miracle, you can know that God is stamping His approval upon that thing or event. "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." (John 20:30, 31.)

We conclude, then, that the function of the Spirit is to make known the will of God to the mind of man. This He does through the word of God. It is His function to reveal to us the kind of character that constitutes a child of God.

We are now ready for our next question: what is "our spirit"?

“Our spirit” is the human spirit. It is the part of man that thinks, reasons, and arrives at conclusions — that part of man that receives or rejects the revelation of “the Spirit.” When the Spirit makes known the will of God it is the function of our spirit to determine whether or not we have accepted and obeyed the revelation of the Spirit. When the Spirit reveals the will of God and our spirit submits to that revelation, then both spirits are bearing witness together that we are children of God — that our life and service are acceptable to Him. In short, it is the function of our spirit to determine the kind of character we are when placed over beside the kind of character the Spirit says constitutes a Christian.

When Paul says, “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God,” he seems to be deliberately answering the question, “Am I a child of God?” But in order to see how his statement clearly and concisely answers the question, we need to raise two other questions:

First, what kind of character constitutes a child of God? We must understand that it is not the prerogative of man to answer this question. The kind of character that constitutes a Christian is defined in the mind of God — God alone makes that determination. And the only way we can know the mind of God is for the Holy Spirit to reveal it to us. Thus it is the function of the Spirit, through the word of God, to answer the question, “What kind of character constitutes a child of God?”

Second, what kind of character am I? It is the function of the human spirit to answer this question. It is the function of the Holy Spirit to tell us the kind of character that constitutes a child of God and it is the function of our spirit to tell us what kind of character we are. When the Spirit reveals (through the word of truth) the kind of character that constitutes a child of God, we can then turn to our spirit and determine the kind of character we are. If the kind of character we are coincides exactly with that which the Spirit defines as a child of God, then we can *know* we are Christians — know that we are acceptable to God — know it because both spirits are bearing witness together. But if our spirit says that we are one kind of character and the Holy Spirit says that another kind of character constitutes a child of God then the spirits are not bearing witness together and we can thereby know that we are not children of God. (Quite frequently we meet someone who will pat himself on the chest and say, “I know I am a child of God because I feel it right here!” Suppose we granted

that this is his spirit bearing witness [it is not the kind of witness Paul speaks of]; the one spirit would not be sufficient to establish his claim. The Holy Spirit would have to say [through the word] that one is a Christian because he feels a certain emotion in his chest. It is the function of the Holy Spirit, not the spirit of man nor the feelings of man, to reveal the kind of character that constitutes a child of God.)

What kind of character does the Holy Spirit say constitutes a child of God? The Spirit says, through the word of truth, the only way He reveals the will of God, that in order for one to be a child of God he must be born again (John 3:5), be converted (Acts 3:19), die to the world and to sin (Rom. 6:1-4), and become a new creature (2 Cor. 5:17). All this simply means that he must become a new man in Christ (Eph. 4:24) — a new man with a new heart, a new life, and a new relationship.

But how is this new heart, life, and relationship attained? Jesus expressed it in terms of doing God's will. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 7:21.) Paul, in speaking of the same principle, called it obedience. "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness. But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." (Rom. 6:16-18.) The Holy Spirit reveals God's will to man and man, when he submits himself to that revealed will, obeys God and in that obedience he is changed. But to bring about this change, the Holy Spirit has specified the things which man must do. What are they?

1. The Holy Spirit has revealed that in order for one to be a child of God he must believe in Christ as the Son of God. This is established by many passages, two of which are here cited. Jesus Himself said, "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." (John 8:24.) Paul adds, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. 5:1.) Thus the Holy Spirit says that the kind of character that constitutes a child of God is one who believes in Jesus Christ. There cannot be a child of God today without faith in Christ as the Son of God. But is this all that is necessary — has the Holy

Spirit revealed that faith is the only necessary qualification in being a child of God? Or in other words, has He said that all believers are Christians? No!

2. The Holy Spirit says that in order for one to be a child of God he must be a penitent believer — not a believer only, but a believer who has repented. Jesus said, “I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.” (Luke 13:5.) Paul, true to the Lord’s words, told the Athenians, “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent.” (Acts 17:30.) All men have sinned (Rom. 3:23). Thus *all men everywhere* are commanded to repent. All must turn from their sins in order to be saved. The Holy Spirit, therefore, reveals that a child of God is a penitent believer in Jesus Christ. But He does not stop here: No!

3. The Spirit further states that a Christian is a penitent believer who has confessed Jesus as Lord. “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” (Rom. 10:9, 10.) Jesus Himself promised to confess those who confess Him and deny those who deny Him (Matt. 10:32, 33.)

4. But even that is not all. The Holy Spirit has put still another qualification upon those whom He calls Christians. The Holy Spirit has said, through the revealed word of God, that a Christian is a baptized penitent believer. This is emphasized in many different ways in the new covenant. For example, Paul says: “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” (Gal. 3:26, 27.) It should be observed that salvation is in Christ (2 Tim. 2:10); but believers are baptized into Christ — baptized into the place where salvation is obtained. Therefore to obtain salvation one must be baptized into Christ. Or to say the same thing another way: one cannot be a Christian outside of Christ, and the only way to get into Christ, where the Holy Spirit says he is a Christian, is to be baptized into Him.

Jesus said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” (Mark 16:16.) This verse seems simple enough for anyone to understand. Jesus answers two questions: (1) Who shall be saved? The answer, “He that believeth and is baptized.” (2) Who shall be damned? “He that believeth

not." Thus Jesus promises to save the baptized believer. He does not promise to save anyone else in this verse.

But in their quest to remove baptism from God's scheme of human redemption, many religious leaders, both in their belief and practice, have twisted this verse into every conceivable interpretation. It, however, remains unchanged. But let us notice how different groups try to change it — how they try to understand it:

1. The Universalists say, "All will be saved regardless of whether they believe and are baptized or not." While I grant that this may be their sincere opinion, it is not what Jesus said . . . and there is simply no way to put this concept into the words of Jesus.

2. The Calvinists say, "One who is saved will believe and be baptized." With them, belief and baptism are signs of a salvation already wrought by the eternal decrees of God. The number of the saved is already fixed and certain — the number cannot be changed. The individual has no choice in the matter. What he does is just a sign of what God has already done.

3. The denominationalists (other than the Calvinists) say, "He that believes is saved and may be baptized." Unlike the Universalists and the Calvinists, the denominationalists say that one must believe in order to be saved — that salvation is given at the point of faith before and without any further acts of obedience. According to them, baptism is unnecessary because one is saved by faith alone, faith before it expresses itself in obedience. While many have been carried away with this false process of reasoning, it is not what Jesus said.

4. Catholicism says, "He that is baptized is saved and may believe." Because of this belief they baptize newborn babies (so young that they are hardly capable of any action, much less that of believing in Christ as the Son of God). They do so in order to save their souls (in case of death) from the fires of eternal hell. With the denominationalist, belief is the only essential; with a Catholic, baptism is all that is necessary. They leave no doubt about what they believe, but what they believe is not what Jesus said.

5. The Bible still says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." All the opinions of religious people, and all their efforts to twist their opinions into this verse, have not changed it. It stands unchanged. And those who accept Jesus as Lord must accept this as the expression of His will — as stipulated conditions that one must meet in order to be a child of God. Those who are

sincerely seeking the way to heaven cannot profess to know anything beyond this . . . nor can they promise anything short of it. This is what the Lord said and it ends the matter for all who love Him.

The Holy Spirit has now revealed to us the kind of character He says is a child of God. He says a Christian is a penitent believer who has confessed Christ and has been baptized into Him. The witness of the Spirit is established — He tells us plainly who is a Christian.

This then brings us to the next question, namely, what kind of character have I? Keep in mind that it is the function of our spirit to answer this question — the Spirit tells us the kind of character that constitutes a child of God and our spirit tells us the kind of character we are. When our character is precisely the same as that described by the Spirit as a Christian, we can then know that we are the children of God — know it because both spirits are bearing witness to the same facts.

Can we say, then, that we are a believer in Christ? If we cannot, there is no need to go further. We know that we are not a child of God because the Spirit has already told us that one *must* believe. If, on the other hand, we can honestly say that we believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God the spirits are bearing witness together — the one revealing that one must believe and the other stating that he does believe. Up to this point they are bearing witness together; their testimonies coincide.

But can the believer now say that he has repented of his sins? There are those who can say that they are believers, but they cannot go on to say that they are penitent believers. If one has not turned away from his sins he is not the kind of character that the Spirit says constitutes a child of God. But when one can say, "I am a believer in Jesus Christ who has repented of his sins," his spirit is bearing witness with the Spirit that, up to this point, his character coincides with the character of a child of God.

The same is true of confession. When the Spirit says confess Christ and our spirit says we have confessed Him, they are bearing witness together.

We come now to a controversial question (controversial because so many try to remove it from God's scheme of redemption), namely, are we baptized penitent believers? When this question is raised, some counter by saying that baptism is nonessential. Well, who says so, our spirit or the Spirit? It is not the function of our

spirit to make such decisions. It is the function of the Spirit to reveal to us the kind of character that constitutes a child of God. Our spirit then is to determine whether or not we are that kind of character. And the Spirit has revealed that a Christian is a baptized penitent believer. Still others object by saying, "But I do not understand why the Lord would require baptism in order to be saved." The Lord does not demand that you understand why; He demands that you accept, believe, and obey His word. It is the Spirit's function to reveal what we must do to be saved; it is our function to do what the Spirit reveals, not to decide what is and what is not essential to our salvation.

If one can in truth say, "I am a baptized penitent believer who has confessed Jesus as Lord," the spirits are bearing witness together that he is a child of God. And by this he can know that he is God's child — know it because of what the Spirit says through the word of God. To doubt this would be to doubt the words of the Lord Himself. Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." If one believes and is baptized he must believe that the Lord will save him. To believe otherwise would be to disbelieve the Lord's words . . . and certainly one could not be considered a believer if he disbelieved the words of Christ.

I remember preaching in a meeting many years ago in the mountains of North Carolina. A large family, who were visiting from out of state, came to services every night. Every night the husband and father would ask me the same question, and every night I would give him the same answer. As he would go out the door he would ask, "If that is true [referring to the plan of salvation as set forth in the Scriptures] how can one be saved?" I would reply kindly but firmly, "You can be saved by doing what the Lord says to do." There is no other way to be saved . . . and there is no other way to know that one is a child of God. This man, like many others, was thinking that to be saved one must have some kind of strange, unexplainable religious experience. But the Holy Spirit has not said that a Christian is a character who has had a mysterious religious experience. But He has told us that the kind of character which constitutes a child of God is a baptized penitent believer in Christ. To make that decision is the Spirit's function, not ours. When we are the kind of character He reveals we know that we are children of God. There is nothing mysterious about it. It is simply a matter of knowing and doing the will of God . . . and knowing that we know and have done His will. But

when the Holy Spirit reveals to us the kind of character that constitutes a Christian and we fall short of that character in one respect, we can know that we are not children of God — we can know because we do not measure up to the standard given by the Holy Spirit.

The divine principle is now established: it is the function of the Holy Spirit to reveal the will of God and it is the function of our spirit to determine whether or not we are in complete conformity with that revealed will. We have thus far made application only to the plan of salvation — the plan one obeys in order to have his sins forgiven and be adopted into the family of God. But the principle can be applied to any subject pertaining to the Christian system simply by raising two questions and permitting the Spirit to answer the first and our spirit to answer the second. It is always the function of the Holy Spirit to reveal to us that which is pleasing to God and it is always the function of our spirit to determine whether we are doing precisely that which the Holy Spirit reveals. I will mention only three or four subjects to demonstrate how the principle works:

What kind of character constitutes a faithful child of God? The Holy Spirit answers this question through the word of truth (cf. 2 Pet. 1:5-11; Gal. 5:22, 23). Now what kind of character are we? Are we the kind of character the Spirit says is a faithful child of the King? If yes, then we can know that we are faithful in His service; if no, then we know that we are not. It is simply a matter of knowing His will and continuing to do it.

The Holy Spirit has revealed to us that there is a divine institution known as the church. Jesus promised to build it (Matt. 16:18), He purchased it with His own blood (Acts 20:28), and all the saved are added to it (Acts 2:47). What kind of character, then, constitutes the church Jesus built, in name, doctrine, organization, and practice? All this is revealed by the Holy Spirit in the word of God. That is His function. What kind of character has the church of which we are a member? It is the function of our spirit to make this determination. If the church we are members of coincides exactly, in every respect, with the church revealed by the Spirit, we can then know that we are members of the church that Jesus built; if there is a difference in name, organization, or practice, the spirits are not bearing witness together.

But take worship for another example. Here again we must ask

our two questions: first, what constitutes acceptable worship? How do we determine this? It is the function of the Spirit to reveal to us that which constitutes true worship — He reveals the fact, the attitude, and the method (John 4:24), and in so doing He tells us how to express our devotion by singing, praying, teaching, giving, and taking the Lord's supper (Acts 2:42; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16, 17). Here the second question comes into focus: what kind of worship have we? It is the function of our spirit to make this determination. When the Spirit reveals to us the fact, the attitude, and the method of worship and our spirit confirms the fact that our worship coincides with it in every respect, we know that our worship is acceptable to God. We can know this because the spirits are bearing witness together.

When the Spirit says to sing and we can say, "We have sung or we are singing," the spirits are testifying together. But suppose when the Spirit has said to sing we add instrumental music to our singing. We have added a new element to our worship, one the Holy Spirit has not revealed as an act of divine service. The Spirit has said to sing, but He has not said a word about playing as an act of Christian worship. There are those who object, saying, "We just know that instrumental music is right in worship because it is so lovely and so meaningful." That may be accepted as a testimony of the human spirit, but it is not the function of the human spirit to say what is right in worship. That is the function of the Holy Spirit. Thus before we can know a thing is right we must have the testimony (revelation) of the Spirit, and it is precisely here that the testimony is missing. The Spirit gives no revelation concerning its use in the Christian age — He gives no testimony that its use in Christian worship is acceptable. We must conclude, therefore, that the spirits cannot bear witness together as to the use of instrumental music in Christian worship — the Spirit has not revealed it and what the Spirit has not revealed our spirit cannot receive as a revelation from God.

Other examples could be given, but enough has been said to abundantly illustrate the principle. Until we have two witnesses, the Spirit and our spirit, bearing the same testimony we cannot know that we are children of God or that any of our services to Him are acceptable. All this simply means that we must go to the word of God to learn the will of God and that when we learn His will we must do it, and nothing more, to be pleasing to Him. Our actions must coincide exactly with that which is revealed. When

they do we can know that we are children of God and what we do is pleasing to Him; when they do not, we know that we are not His children and that our actions are not acceptable to Him.

CHAPTER 11

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT OR THE WORKS OF THE FLESH

When it comes to the purpose of life, the way one should live, there are only two basic philosophies in this world. One is fleshly and the other is spiritual. The former is of the world, looking to this life only; the latter is of heaven, looking to the best of both worlds, here and in eternity. The first is outward, pertaining to the body; the second is inward, pertaining to the spirit, the soul, the vital part of man.

Should one live for the body or should he live for the soul? This is a question each one must face . . . and each one's answer will show in his manner of life. To live for the body is the philosophy of the world; to live for the soul is the philosophy of Christianity. While there are many varieties in the philosophy of the flesh, and many degrees in spiritual growth, in the final analysis the one great question concerning life boils down to "The fruit of the Spirit or the works of the flesh?"

These two philosophies are absolutely incompatible, and there is no possible way to embrace both or to let both be guiding principles in one's life. Paul forcefully sets forth their contrasting natures in the following words: "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and they are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such

there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and the lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." (Gal. 5:16-25.)

THERE IS A DIFFERENCE

Paul thus draws a sharp contrast between the flesh and the Spirit — between the two philosophies of life. As we study these, we need first to see exactly wherein that difference lies. In order to do so, we need to bring verses 16-18 into focus. From these verses, three things need to be observed:

First, we need to see the contrast in the two ways. Paul says, "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." To walk in the Spirit is one thing; to fulfill the lust of the flesh is another. They are two entirely different things. In fact, they are the exact opposite of each other, and by the very nature of each they are totally opposed to each other. Harmony between them is impossible. Each one is a basic guiding principle or attitude of life. One or the other must dominate the heart. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." (Gal. 5:17.) No man can serve two masters (Matt. 6:24). We must therefore choose between the flesh and the Spirit, between the carnal and the spiritual.

Next, we need to know the meaning of "flesh." The word here, while it cannot be totally separated from the body, means the carnal appetites, illegitimate desires, fleshly lusts. It is the attitude that makes the gratification of the flesh the whole of life. While the literal flesh is involved, it is the heart that is the director and source of all bodily actions. Thus the lust of the flesh means that carnal attitude that enslaves the vital part of man to the service of the carnal appetites. The lusts of the flesh, carnal things, become the purpose of life, the reason for living. God and the higher things are forgotten, and one lives for himself alone. The works of the flesh are the overt expressions of this carnal philosophy — a philosophy that makes fleshly appetites the whole purpose of life.

Finally, we need a proper concept of what is meant by being spiritual. Paul commands, "Walk in the Spirit." And then adds, "But if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law." To walk in the Spirit and to be led by the Spirit embrace the same concept. They both mean to be directed by the Spirit (and the Spirit's

directions today come through the word of God, divine revelation) or to live for spiritual things. Spirituality is not just a single characteristic; it is the total outlook of life — what one is and how he lives, the totality of living by the things of the Spirit. It is to have the mind of the Spirit, to let the Spirit rule the thoughts, to think as the Spirit thinks (cf. Rom. 8:6). But in addition to this, it is to live by the things of the Spirit. To live by the Spirit is to live by the directions given by or through the Spirit, to make the things of the Spirit the motives for life's conduct. Spirituality thus has two integral aspects: (1) it is to have the mind of the Spirit — to think as the Spirit thinks; and (2) it is to live by the directions of the Spirit — to do as the Spirit instructs. But both the mind of the Spirit and the instructions of the Spirit are revealed in the word of God. We conclude, therefore, that to be spiritual is to know and live by the revelation of the Spirit given in the inspired Scriptures. Thus to be spiritual is to make the things of the Spirit the purpose of living, the central philosophy of life.

From these three observations we can see that the difference in the two philosophies, the fleshly and the spiritual, is the difference in what controls one's life, whether he is directed by the flesh or by the Spirit. To follow the flesh results in the works of the flesh; to follow the spirit results in the fruit of the Spirit. The former is to live for the gratification of fleshly appetites; the latter is to live for the higher things of the Spirit.

THE WORKS OF THE FLESH

This brings us, then, to a study of the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21), that which is the product of following the carnal philosophy. In the King James Version 17 sins are listed, covering a large range of evil things, some of the mind alone and some the overt acts resulting from the heart's attitude. As they are listed, it is difficult to place them into any kind of classification (Paul meant this list to be selective and suggestive, not exhaustive). Although several schemes have been set forth and most of them are useful for study purposes, we purpose to study them under five headings, namely, sexual sins, religious sins, sins of the heart, sins of division, and public sins.

First, the sexual sins, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, and lasciviousness.

Adultery (Greek, *moixeia*, omitted in Nestle's text), according

to Vine, "Denotes one who has unlawful intercourse with the spouse of another." Thayer says, "To have unlawful intercourse with another's wife." It is the violation of the marriage vows and in the Old Testament it drew the death penalty (Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22). Its prohibition is designed to protect marriage and the home. It is often euphemized today as extramarital affairs. But it is still adultery!

Fornication (Greek, *porneia*) is a general term covering all forms of illicit sexual impurities, but when used in conjunction with adultery it probably has the connotation of illicit union between the unmarried. While the Old Testament did not look upon fornication (as defined in English) with the same degree of severity as adultery (Ex. 22:16; 19:20-22), it is still condemned and carries its own penalties. Today this is the sin of youth, those who practice free love, living together without marriage, life in communes, or the climax of a petting spree in a parked car. Fornication is more prevalent now than ever before in our history.

Uncleanness (Greek, *akatharsia*) is used elsewhere to mean both moral and sexual impurity and sordidness, but here it is probably limited to the sexual. It is the same word as used in Romans 1:24, where Paul says, "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves." This, without any serious doubt, refers to homosexuality, and that is, in all probability, what he had in mind in listing it among the works of the flesh. While it may not be that unthinkable sin exclusively, it is most certainly included. Homosexuality is repulsive to all right-thinking people. As Paul said, "Let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints." (Eph. 5:3.)

Lasciviousness (Greek, *aselgeia*) is a shameful wantonness. G. Abbott-Smith defines it as "licentiousness, wantonness, excess." Thayer adds the words "unbridled lust, outrageousness, shamelessness, insolence" and then comments: "Wanton (acts or) manners, as filthy words, indecent bodily movement, unchaste handling of males and females, etc." As an example he gives Romans 13:13. Webster defines the English word "lascivious": "1. Characterized by or expressing lust or lewdness; wanton. 2. tending to excite lustful desire." Thus lasciviousness in both Greek and English has two aspects: (1) the arousing by or through wantonness stimulation; (2) the expression in or by overt shameful actions. It is aroused today by such things as sexy or unchaste words and jokes,

lustful bodily movements as in many modern dances, reading pornographic books and watching obscene movies or television programs, necking and petting, and by indecent and immodest dress. It should be noted that those who never arouse lasciviousness in the heart (those who do not embrace the carnal philosophy of fleshly satisfaction) are not likely to express it in overt actions.

These words not only cover and prohibit the illicit sexual acts involved, but also the things that stimulate a desire for them.

Second, the religious sins, idolatry and witchcraft.

Idolatry (Greek, *eidololatreia*) means "the worship of idols." (Young.) Originally it was the worship of gods made by man, that is, the image itself (e.g., the second command in the decalogue), but it came to denote anything that stood between a man and God. Thus Paul wrote, "For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." (Eph. 5:5.) Covetousness is idolatry because it replaces the love of God with the love of money — money is given the place of God in the heart.

Witchcraft (Greek, *pharmakeia*, used only here and in Revelation 18:23) is usually identified with the occult, sorcery, Satan worship, and all the mysteries of the world of evil spirits. But here the word primarily means the use of drugs (it is the word from which we get "pharmacy") and probably carries the idea of drug-induced spells for the purpose of communicating with the unknown, especially relating to idols. Robertson (*Word Pictures in the New Testament*) says, "The Sorcerers monopolized the word for a while in their magical arts and used it in connection with idolatry." The American Standard Version uses the word "sorcery," which is probably a more accurate translation.

Idolatry and witchcraft are the gods of the flesh, the carnal philosophy's substitute for God.

Third, the sins of the heart, hatred, variance, emulation, and wrath.

Hatred (Greek, *echthra*) is the opposite of friendship and love. The American Standard Version renders it "enmities." The word is plural, indicating all kinds of hatred toward both man and God.

Variance (Greek, *eris*) is rivalry, discord, wrangling, hostile-mindedness. "The word designates a series of disturbances of peace and concord that grows out of the spirit and practice of competition." (*The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. 10, p. 562.) While reasonable competition is not wrong (rather it is often healthy),

the word here denotes a hostile attitude that produces discord, a rivalry beyond reason.

Emulations (Greek, *zelos*) is zeal degenerated into jealousy (used here in its bad sense), a suspicious, selfish hostility toward one who is believed to have an advantage. Jealousy is caused by the fear of losing that which one considers his own. Emulation is thus ambitious and selfish rivalry.

Wrath, (Greek, *thumoi* — plural) is a raging anger that is ready to erupt in abusive language, furious gestures, or bodily harm.

The sins of the heart permit the flesh, rather than the Spirit, to control the mind and thus to control the actions.

Fourth, the religious sins, strife, seditions, and heresies.

Strife (Greek, *eritheiai*) means contentions or quarrels (the American Standard Version has “factions”). Vincent observes, “Primarily, labor for hire . . . , and is applied to those who serve in official positions for hire or for other selfish purposes, and, in order to gain their ends, promote party spirit or faction.” (*Word Studies in the New Testament*.) It is the same word used by James when he said, “For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.” (James 3:16.)

Seditions (Greek, *dichostasia*) are internal divisions or a “standing apart” (Young) or a “splitting in two” (Robertson). The American Standard Version renders it “divisions.” This takes place when sides are chosen or when people line up one against another.

Heresies (Greek, *haireisies*) here, according to Vincent, are parties or according to G. Abbott-Smith: “1. capture. 2. choosing, choice. . . . 3. that which is chosen, hence opinion; esp. a peculiar opinion, heresy.”

There is a succession to be seen in these sins. Start with strife or contention and it will lead to faction or internal division and the internal division will in turn lead to heresies or the formation of sects and parties. Division starts with strife, ruptures in sedition, and crystallizes in heresies.

Finally, the public sins, envyings, murders, drunkenness, and revellings.

Envyings (Greek, *phthonoi*) spring from a deep-seated ill will, the hurt that is felt when another succeeds. Envyings could connect with the preceding class and result from the division.

Murders (Greek, *phonois*) involve the malicious taking of human life. This word is omitted by most texts. And while there is no doubt but that murder is a work of the flesh, the evidence is such

as to convince most scholars that it does not belong in this list.

Drunkeness (Greek, *phonoï*) is the result of drinking strong or intoxicating drink. While some argue that the Bible condemns drunkenness but not drinking, the Scriptures do not make that distinction. To take into the body strong drink in any amount in order to satisfy the fleshly philosophy is here contemplated — one cannot take one drink without becoming one drink drunk. There is absolutely no Scriptural justification for drinking any amount, not even a single drop, when the end in view is intoxication. (When alcohol is used for medical purposes the aim is entirely different and that puts the matter into another category.)

Revellings (Greek, *komoi*) are excessive carousals and boisterous festivities. Thayer says, "A revel carousal . . . of feasts and drinking-parties that are protracted till late at night and indulge in revelry." He further comments, "In Grk. writ. prop. a nocturnal and riotous procession of half-drunken and frolicsome fellows who after supper parade through the streets with torches and music in honor of Bacchus or some other deity, and sing and play before the houses of their male and female friends." Revellings would likely be found today where there is group drinking, dancing, or demonstrations.

To show that this list is not exhaustive, Paul adds, "and such like." This simply means "and all other such works" — all things that result from the philosophy of the flesh. Those who practice such works cannot and shall not inherit the kingdom of God. The philosophy behind them is opposed to the kingdom of heaven and all it stands for.

But there is another philosophy of life, the philosophy of the Spirit, and it is the very heart and core of the Christian system. It is to let the Spirit rule the life. And it is the attitude of heart that produces the fruit of the Spirit.

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

When one is led by the Spirit, when he lets the Spirit control his life through the revelation of God's will, as given in the Scriptures, he will produce the fruit of the Spirit (the fruit of the Spirit is the works resulting from the philosophy of the Spirit just as the works of the flesh are the works resulting from the carnal philosophy). Unlike the works of the flesh, which are gross and sensual and lead to a life of degeneration and destruction, the fruit of the Spirit

leads to a life of purity and holiness and excellence. The fruit is the produce of the spiritual life. There are here listed nine lovely virtues, but the list is suggestive, not exhaustive.

Love is the cardinal virtue, coming at the top of any list where priorities are considered. Paul said, "And above all these things put on charity [love], which is the bond of perfectness." (Col. 3:14.) *Joy* is an emotion of delight, usually evoked by well-being, success, or by the sense of having done right. The joy of a Christian surpasses all means of expression. Or as Peter put it, we "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." (1 Pet. 1:8.) *Peace* is tranquility — peace with self, with others, and with God. Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you." (John 14:27.)

Longsuffering or patience must characterize the Spirit-led man. He must bear long with those who are the most difficult to bear with. This requires *gentleness*, the disposition to handle with kindness and care, and *goodness*, a trait uncoerced by any pressure other than the benevolence of the heart.

Faith or faithfulness is the quality of dependability. *Meekness* is an attitude of forbearance in an unyielding firmness for right (there is no hint of weakness or compromise in meekness). *Temperance* is self-control, mastery of your own desires.

These are the fruit of the Spirit, and "against such there is no law" — no law of God or man to pronounce condemnation on one who produces them. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Rom. 8:1.) "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." (Gal. 5:24, 25.)

WHICH WILL YOU CHOOSE?

The contrast has now been drawn between the flesh and the Spirit. They offer two entirely different courses for life. One is to live for the flesh, fulfilling the lusts thereof; the other is to live for the Spirit, following His directions as given in the word of God. Those who choose the former cannot inherit the kingdom of God — cannot be what their Maker made them to be; those who choose the latter are free from the condemnation of sin — free to function in the manner in which God intended for them to function. "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but

they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." (Rom. 8:5, 6.)

The philosophy of flesh is sin and leads to eternal loss; the philosophy of the Spirit is salvation and gives eternal life. God has, in recognition of our free will, set both ways before us. He did the same for Israel. He said, "See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; In that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it. But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." (Deut. 30:15-19.) Thus it is choose the flesh and die or choose the Spirit and live. But make no mistake about it: the choice, with all its eternal consequences, is yours.

"Choose you this day whom ye will serve. . . ." (Joshua 24:15.)

CHAPTER 12

BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE SPIRIT

“Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.” (Matt. 12:31.)

Perhaps the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit has occasioned more questions in the minds of more people than any other subject in the Bible. It has been the cause of many anxious hours, many sleepless nights, many horrible visions of damnation by sin-troubled souls. Almost every religious teacher who has had any experience at all in teaching the Christian system has been faced with numerous questions concerning it. Many whose restless souls have no one beyond themselves in which to trust for salvation are horrified, and well they might be, with the thought that they may have committed a sin that will damn them for all eternity. But why they are so fearful of a sin that cannot be forgiven while their lives are scourged with sins for which they will seek no forgiveness is a puzzle I can only partly solve. Would it not be just as fearful to stand before the judgment bar of God with an unforgiven sin as it would be to stand there with an unforgivable one? The consequence would be the same. Yet millions go on in unforgiven sins and are terrified at the thought of an unforgivable offense against the Spirit. The fact is, all men ought to be fearful of all sin. Any unforgiven sin can cause a soul to be eternally lost.

Admittedly this is a difficult subject, one that offers no easy solution. Seemingly there are questions that cannot be answered to the satisfaction of everyone, and if there are, this must be one of them. I am not suggesting, however, that the subject cannot be understood: for I believe that it can. I am only trying to prepare our hearts and minds to accept the fact that there are no easy solutions, that more than surface gleanings is needed, and that we must be willing to digest some of the meat of God's word before we can either grasp or appreciate the Scriptural significance of this

extraordinary subject. It is not one that lends itself to human sentiments or weak emotions.

A number of worthwhile approaches to the study could be adopted, but I have found that the best course in aiding my own understanding of it is to make a number of Scriptural observations and then draw from them a logical conclusion. This is the approach I will follow here.

1. All that we can know about the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, or any other religious matter as far as that goes, is what the Bible says about it. More we cannot know; less we need not know. Only three New Testament writers, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, mention this sin by name, and all three quote a brief statement made by Jesus. These three passages contain all the information we have on the subject, except what we may be able to learn by the processes of induction and deduction from other statements that may be related to it. Thus before we go further we need to have before us all three accounts:

Matthew says: "Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sins and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come. Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit." (Matt. 12:31-33.)

Mark adds: "Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation: Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit." (Mark 3:28-30.)

Luke's account is very brief: "And whosoever shall speak against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven." (Luke 12:10.)

Matthew and Luke use the terms "speaking against" and "blasphemy" as parallel. Both expressions mean the same thing. Mark adds the thought that the person who has blasphemed the Holy Spirit is in danger of eternal damnation, or as the American Standard Version renders it, "is guilty of an eternal sin." He further

states that Jesus spoke these words "Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit." Other than this, I see no significant difference in the three accounts. Thus we now have before us all that the Bible has to say on the subject directly.

2. A working definition of the term "blasphemy" is imperative. The Greek word is *blasphemia* and means, according to Young, "injurious speaking." Thayer defines it as "Railing, reviling . . . a. univ. slander, detraction, speech injurious to another's good name . . . b. specifically, impious and reproachful speech injurious to the divine majesty." Vine says, "Probably, from *blapto*, to injure, and *pheme*, speech, Eng. 'blasphemy,' is so translated thirteen times in the R.V., but 'railing' in Matt. 15:19; Mark 7:22; Eph. 4:31; Col. 3:8; I Tim. 6:4; Jude 9. The word 'blasphemy' is practically confined to speech defamatory of the Divine Majesty." *Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary* (unabr. 2nd. ed.) defines the verb "blaspheme" as "1. to speak of (sacred things) in terms of irreverence; to revile or speak reproachfully of (God or anything sacred). 2. to speak evil of; to utter abuse or calumny against; to curse or revile (another)." The same source has some interesting observations under the noun blasphemy: "1. profane or mocking speech, writing, or action concerning God or anything regarded as sacred. In law, blasphemy is an indictable offense defined as a wanton and malicious revilement of God and the Christian religion. In English law, according to Blackstone, blasphemy is an offense against God and religion, by impiously denying the existence or providence of God, by contumelious reproaches of Jesus Christ, or by profanely scoffing at Holy Scripture or exposing it to contempt and ridicule. 2. contempt for God. 3. vilification; malicious detraction; abuse; used figuratively in regard to things held in high esteem; as, blasphemy against the theory of equality."

All this is a little technical for a working definition, but out of it all emerges the concept that to blaspheme is to speak injuriously, reproachfully, disrespectfully — to speak of in such a manner and to display the attitude of mockery, ridicule, rejection, and denial. In the final analysis it is disdainful speech against the divine, a speech that results from an attitude of refusing to accept divinity as divine — making divinity a contemptuous joke. The blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is therefore to speak evil of, to reject, or to refuse to accept Him or His work as divine and then to hold Him up as an object of ridicule. As Blackstone said, in English law blasphemy is impiously denying the existence or provi-

dence of God. When this is applied to the Holy Spirit, it comes out basically as to impiously deny Him and reject His function in the scheme of human redemption. Blasphemy thus reduces (in both attitude and action) the Holy Spirit to an evil spirit; it ascribes His work to sources other than God; it reduces His words, words now contained in the Scriptures, and especially the New Testament, to nothing more than human words, actually either evil human words or words of demons. But the sin against the Spirit is not just a word or phrase spoken without thought or intent. It must be committed with malice aforethought — the Holy Spirit and His work are maliciously and spitefully held up as an object of ridicule. In short, it is evil speaking against the Holy Spirit that shows the attitude of the heart — words that show the heart has totally and maliciously rejected the Spirit and His work. It is therefore more of an attitude and settled disposition than a word — an attitude and disposition of heart that produce injurious, impious scoffing words.

3. Even with a working definition such as the foregoing, good men, scholarly men, have reached different conclusions as to what the sin against the Holy Spirit is. There are many different opinions, and many variations within each opinion, but I will take the space here to notice only two, the ones that seem the most plausible to me.

First, some have concluded that Mark tells us precisely what the sin against the Holy Spirit is when he says that certain scribes came down from Jerusalem and said of Jesus, “He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils.” (Mark 3:22.) Those who hold this view conclude that Jesus stated plainly that those who ascribed His work to Beelzebub had committed the sin against the Holy Spirit. And certainly no one could deny that such words display the attitude that results in the sin. But is this what Mark says? I think not. It seems to me that all Mark is saying in the statement “Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit” is that because they said these things Jesus in turn said to them what He did about the eternal sin — because they had opened up the subject, Jesus took this occasion to teach them the danger of their course of action — the danger of what they were doing and saying.

Second, and closely related to the first, some have concluded that since the sin against the Holy Spirit is ascribing the work of Christ to Beelzebub or to an evil spirit, and since Christ is no longer on earth to do such work, it is now impossible to commit

this sin. But is not the work of Christ today just as much His work as the work He did while He lived in the flesh? If one ascribed the work of Christ that is being done now to an evil spirit, would that not be the identical sin committed by the scribes?

While I grant the plausibility of both these concepts, I do not think that either takes into account all that is said. Jesus said that those committing the sin against the Holy Spirit would be forgiven "neither in this world, neither in the world to come." (Matt. 12:32.) Undoubtedly by "the world to come" Jesus did not mean the eternal world: for no sins will be forgiven there. Death stamps upon everyone: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still." (Rev. 22:11.) This is simply to say that man's eternal character is sealed in death — he is beyond the vale of change. So the word "world" here must mean, as it often does in the New Testament, age or dispensation. Jesus is therefore simply saying that the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit would not be forgiven in the age or dispensation in which He was speaking (the Mosaic age) nor in the age or dispensation which was to follow (the Christian age). It follows, then, that the sin against the Spirit could be committed both then and in the period which was to come.

I therefore believe that the Bible teaches that there is a sin which any responsible person can commit, even today, called the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, for which there is no forgiveness, and that once the sin is committed, the person who commits it has sealed his eternal destiny.

4. There are three other passages which deal with similar sins — sins that will not be forgiven. I do not believe that they are identical with the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit because they are committed only by the children of God while, in my estimation, the sin against the Holy Spirit can be committed by anyone, whether saint or sinner. But a study of the principles involved should throw some light on the blasphemy against the Spirit.

First, there is a sin from which it is impossible to call one to repentance. The Hebrew writer warns of this terrifying state by saying, "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the

Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.” (Heb. 6:4-6.) It is not my purpose to go into details here as to why the person is unable to repent (it is not necessary to our study and I am not certain that I know). All that lies within our scope is to point out that here is a person who is guilty of an unforgivable sin, and that the sin is unforgivable only because he will not or cannot repent. He has crucified to himself the Son of God afresh. He has turned away from the only means of forgiveness. God cannot forgive him until he repents, and that is the one thing he either cannot or will not do. His sin is therefore unforgivable, not because God is unwilling to forgive it, but because he is not willing to repent of it.

Second in this category is the wilful sin. “For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.” (Heb. 10:26.) There is more involved here than sinning wilfully or even wilfully falling into sin; it is wilfully turning away from Christ as the sacrifice for sin. The Revised Standard Version says, “For if we sin deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sin.” *The Living Bible* paraphrases it: “If anyone sins deliberately by rejecting the Savior after knowing the truth of forgiveness, this sin is not covered by Christ’s death; there is no way to get rid of it.” Thus the wilful sin is a sin for which there remains no sacrifice. But why is there no sacrifice? Because the guilty one has wilfully rejected or turned away from Christ as the sacrifice for his sins and has “trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace.” (Heb. 10:29.) The wilful sin is unforgivable, then, because the one committing it has rejected Christ’s sacrifice, the only means God has provided for the salvation of the soul from sin. It is unforgivable, not because God is unwilling to forgive it, but because the means of forgiveness has been “trodden under foot.”

Third, the Bible teaches that there is a sin unto death. John says: “If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he should pray for it. All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.” (1 John 5:16, 17.) What is the sin unto death? I am convinced from a study of the whole context of 1 John that it is a sin that one will not turn away from, a sin one is not willing to repent of, a sin that one is so involved with, loves so, that he is

unwilling to meet God's conditions of forgiveness until death removes all possibility of change. In short, it is a sin in which one lives and dies without repentance. Let me illustrate this from my own personal acquaintance. I once knew a young man who was married to a lovely Christian lady, but he became infatuated with the charms of another man's wife. He therefore left his wife and began, for all practical purposes, living with the other woman. He knew that such a relationship was sinful, that he was committing adultery. But all efforts to persuade him to repent, to turn from this sinful practice, were to no avail. He was living in open sin. The Lord knew it, the brethren knew it, he knew it, and the world knew it. But he would not repent. He loved the pleasures of sin more than he loved the salvation of his soul. Now as long as this attitude and relationship continued God could not save him and Christians could not pray for his forgiveness. He was, in my estimation, committing the sin unto death. God can and will save us from our sins but He has made no provisions to save us in our sins — there are no provisions to save us while we are still living in sin. Thus the sin unto death is a sin in which one continues until death, a sin one will not turn away from as long as he lives. And so again the sin is unforgivable, not because God is unwilling to forgive it, but because the person involved will not meet the conditions of forgiveness.

5. The Bible teaches that there is *no* sin which God will not forgive when the conditions of forgiveness are met. John makes this clear when he says, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1:7.) There can therefore be no question about it: the blood of Christ can cleanse from *all* sin. There are no exceptions to this rule. Since there is no sin that the blood of Christ cannot cover, and since God forgives all sins covered by the blood of Christ, it must follow that there is no sin that God will not forgive. And in this sense there is no such thing as an unforgivable sin. Sins are unforgivable only in the sense that the conditions of forgiveness are not met.

For most people this seems to be the most difficult point in the whole question to grasp. Why this should be, I do not know. But I know it should not be because it is imbedded in the whole scheme of human redemption. God is willing to forgive, and has made provisions to forgive, all sins man is willing to turn away from and apply His remedy to. And from this fact we can learn that the sin

against the Holy Spirit, regardless of what it may be, is unforgivable, not because God is not willing to forgive it, but because the terms of forgiveness have been refused and rejected.

It would be in order here to ask: How does one meet the terms of forgiveness? Or in other words, how does one apply the blood of Christ to his sins? The Scriptures teach that this is done through obedience to the revealed will of God. Jesus said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 7:21.) Thus if one rejects that which the Holy Spirit has revealed, there is no way by which the blood of Christ can be applied — there is no other plan by which one can be saved. "And without the shedding of blood is no remission." (Heb. 9:22.) God's revealed will, the conditions of salvation, is given through the Holy Spirit. The Spirit has shown that an alien sinner must hear the word of truth as it was proclaimed by the apostles (Rom. 10:14-17), believe in Jesus Christ as God's Son (John 20:30, 31), repent or turn away from all sins (Luke 13:5), confess Jesus as Lord before men (Rom. 10:9, 10), and be buried with Christ in baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). After one becomes a Christian, a child of God, he must be faithful unto death (Rev. 2:10). These are the conditions of salvation given by God through the Holy Spirit; when one rejects these, he rejects the message delivered by the Spirit; and when he rejects the Holy Spirit, he rejects the message given by the Spirit, his only means of being saved. Thus when one rejects the Holy Spirit, and blasphemy shows that the heart has rejected the Spirit, he has rejected his only means and hope of salvation.

6. The function of the Holy Spirit in the scheme of human redemption is to reveal the will of God to the mind of man. A failure to properly grasp this has led to most of the religious confusion and division that is in the world today, and it contributes greatly to our lack of understanding of the sin against the Holy Spirit. The Bible teaches that in order to be saved one must do the will of God (Matt. 7:21; Heb. 5:8, 9; Rom. 6:16-18). But before one can do the will of God, he must know that will. And the only way God reveals His will in the Christian age is through the Holy Spirit. The function of the Holy Spirit is, therefore, to take the mind of God (the will of God), put it into words understandable to man, and thereby make known the contents of the divine mind to the human mind. There are many passages in the

New Testament which teach this fact, but Paul briefly and beautifully sums it up by saying: "But, as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of man save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." (1 Cor. 2:9-11.) The Holy Spirit, then, takes the mind of God and reveals it, through words, to the mind of man. The revelation of the Holy Spirit is given to us in the written word of God, the Bible. And it contains man's only hope of salvation.

But what condition will man be in if he rejects or refuses to acknowledge the revelation given by the Spirit? He has simply rejected the only means God has provided for him to be saved. Since one cannot be saved without knowing and doing the will of God, there is therefore no hope of salvation for one who openly and contemptuously rejects and holds up to shame the Holy Spirit and the revelation He has given. Since one cannot know the will of God without accepting the revelation of the Spirit, and since one cannot be saved without knowing the will of God, it follows with all the force that logic can have that if one rejects the revelation of the Holy Spirit he has rejected the only means by which he can be saved. Hence, when one blasphemes the Holy Spirit he is speaking against or rejecting his only means of knowing the will of God. But keep in mind that the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is more, much more, than just rejecting the message of truth revealed by Him; it is rejecting with a high hand, a haughty attitude, and holding both Him and His message up with contempt and with malice aforethought. Thus blasphemy reveals the condition of a heart that has totally and absolutely rejected the Holy Spirit and His work.

7. The conclusion that I draw from the foregoing is that the Scriptures teach that there is a sin, even today, called the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, for which there is no forgiveness. To blaspheme is to speak of deity in an injurious, reproachful, disrespectful manner — a manner that shows rejection with a high hand. The blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is overt acts of ridicule and malicious scoffing that shows the rejection of the heart. In the final analysis, it is rejecting the Spirit and the system of salvation which He revealed. The function of the Holy Spirit in the

scheme of human redemption is to reveal the will of God to man. This He has done through the inspired word of God. If one rejects the Holy Spirit in the sense of blasphemy, he has therefore rejected his only means of knowing the will of God; and if one does not know the will of God he cannot be saved. But again it should be remembered that to reject as we have set it forth here means far more than just a failure to accept: it means to reject presumptuously, to show the attitude of blasphemy.

All unforgivable sins are sins which one will not repent of, but the sin against the Holy Spirit is a special kind of refusal to accept God's offer and means of salvation. It is a rejection of the whole system with an arrogant ridicule — boastfully and contemptuously mocking God's plan to save lost man. As far as we are concerned today, it is the rejecting (in the manner of blasphemy) of the Christian system as it is revealed by the Holy Spirit in the gospel of Christ. The gospel is the power of God to save (Rom. 1:16). But the Holy Spirit is the means through which God revealed the gospel. Thus to reject the gospel, or any condition of salvation contained in the gospel, in a high-handed way (in the manner of blasphemy) is to reject or sin against the Holy Spirit. When this is done in the manner of blasphemy, it is a sin for which there is no forgiveness — no forgiveness because the means of forgiveness has been rejected. It is not that God will not forgive the sin. He would if the person so sinning would accept the means of forgiveness. But that is the very thing he has rejected and made fun of. And there is no other remedy for sin. There is, therefore, no forgiveness for the sin against the Holy Spirit.

8. In conclusion I will give an example of how one may reject forgiveness as stipulated by the Holy Spirit in the gospel of Christ. Jesus said (and this is a part of the revelation of the Holy Spirit), "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:16.) In this verse Jesus tells us who shall be saved and who shall be lost. Who shall be saved? "He that believeth and is baptized." Who shall be lost? "He that believeth not." Jesus here gives two conditions of salvation: belief and baptism. Now when one presumes to know that he can be saved without these conditions, for example, without baptisms, he has replaced the revelation of the Holy Spirit with his own opinion or conjecture. He presumes to know more about the subject than the Holy Spirit, who gave the revelation. He has in essence rejected the revelation of the Holy Spirit for his own op-

inion. When this is done in the manner of blasphemy, all hope of salvation is abandoned. There is no other plan of salvation, no other scheme of redemption, no other terms of pardon, no other source of forgiveness revealed. One must either accept the gospel of Christ which was revealed by the Holy Spirit, or else he has no hope of salvation. To reject the Spirit and His plan in the manner of blasphemy is to totally and irrevocably reject them — to reject them in such a way so that one will never return to them.

But how may one know whether he has committed the sin against the Holy Spirit? He may know by his attitude toward the Scriptures. If he has ever rejected the Holy Spirit and His work with a high hand (holding Him up for derision and contempt), if he is unwilling to accept the revelation of God's will as delivered by the Holy Spirit in the gospel, and if he is not willing to do all God has commanded in His word, he is on dangerous grounds. But on the other hand, if he has never derided the Holy Spirit and His work, if he is still willing to accept the gospel as the revelation of the will of God as given through the Holy Spirit, and if he is willing to follow God's will in all things — to obey every command, to follow every divinely approved example, and to accept every necessary inference — he can be assured that he has not sinned against the Holy Spirit, that he has not passed beyond the vale of hope. As long as one is willing to accept God's terms of forgiveness as stipulated by the Holy Spirit in the gospel of Christ, there is hope of salvation.

CHAPTER 13

QUESTIONS PERTAINING TO SPIRITUAL GIFTS¹

QUESTIONS ABOUT SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Harold Simmons, who now lives in west Tennessee, submitted the following questions (we are adding the numbers for easy reference in our replies):

“1. The church at Corinth had spiritual gifts. Yet the apostle Paul had to write two letters rebuking (and teaching — HW) them.

“2. Could the church at Corinth know these truths by the spiritual gifts they had without the letter from Paul? If so, why could they not have corrected themselves without the letters?

“3. What is the purpose of the letters from the apostle when they had spiritual gifts?

“4. What about today and the claims of some to have the spiritual gifts? Do they still need correction from the apostles?

“5. Is that needed correction from the apostles administered through the written word today?”

Admittedly brother Simmons has placed before us some very difficult questions, some of which are iconoclastic in nature. We know how to use them to answer some arguments we have heard, but we are not certain that we can give a useful and practical answer. For example, it is sometimes argued (and by some of the best minds among us) that if the household of Cornelius had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit (which we believe they did) then there would have been no point in sending for Peter to teach them. Cornelius and his household, it is reasoned, could have taught themselves. However, an examination of these questions will show the fallacy of this reasoning.

We shall now take up the questions in the order listed:

1. The church at Corinth seemingly had within it all the spiritual gifts listed by Paul in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28-30. Of course not all had gifts and probably no one had all the gifts. They were

¹ *Lifted from my Questions and Answers column in *Carolina Christian*.

spread out among the members. The gifts were obviously given to confirm the word of truth and to help maintain the purity of the church until the New Testament was completed. They were not given for the benefit of the individual *per se* but for the church as a whole. The gifts were given by the laying on of the hands of an apostle (Acts 8:14-18; 2 Tim. 1:6; Rom. 8:11). They possessed not only the power to impart the gifts, but also all the gifts themselves. And as far as we know, no one else possessed all the gifts, nor was anyone else given the power to impart them.

2. This is without doubt the most difficult question we have ever received when its full implications are seen. It needs far more attention than we are able to give it here. But following are a few observations that may offer some help:

First, the Corinthian church did have spiritual gifts in it and the implication is strong that some of them received revelation (see 1 Cor. 14:29-32). There were prophets in the church and a prophet is one who speaks for God, one who receives his message directly from God and speaks it by inspiration. Furthermore, Paul called upon those who had spiritual gifts to acknowledge his writings as the revelation of God's will. He said, "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord." (1 Cor. 14:37.)

Second, gifts (even inspiration) did not cover everything. They had their limitations. This is perhaps something we have failed in general to observe. After Paul's conversion he returned to Jerusalem and tried to join himself to the disciples. But they, including the apostles, still feared him because of his past — they had to be persuaded that he was now a follower of Christ. "But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus." (Acts 9:27.) Why did the Holy Spirit not reveal to the apostles that Saul (Paul) was now a Christian? The answer lies in the fact that He only revealed to them what they could not otherwise find out. Later Paul and Barnabas had a strong and heated dispute over Mark. The record reveals: "And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do. And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark. But Paul thought not good

to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus; And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.” (Acts 15:36-40.) Why did the Holy Spirit not make the decision? It was simply not His function to make all their decisions for them. We believe that they could have, had they so desired, sought help from some other inspired person, and if the Holy Spirit had thought it proper to do so, as we believe He did in the case of the Corinthians, he could have provided them with a divine solution by an inspired letter. In such cases, there is nothing incongruent in one inspired man giving instructions to another inspired man. But further, the apostles and elders came together in Jerusalem to consider the claims of those who taught that it was necessary for the Gentiles to be circumcised and keep the law of Moses before they could be saved. To settle this matter both Peter and James addressed the group by referring to previous incidents in which the truth had already been revealed (Acts 15:1-31). Why did the Holy Spirit not reveal to each of them the answer without their coming together and having “much disputing”? Simply because He had already revealed the truth on this subject and they could study it and know it without additional help. The Holy Spirit did not reveal things over and over again for them . . . or for anybody else. Once revelation was given, those with spiritual gifts could study it, just as everyone else, in order to arrive at truth.

Third, while the Corinthians had spiritual gifts (and as we have seen, it is not incongruent for one inspired man to teach another inspired man), probably the gift of prophecy, which should have enabled them to deal with such problems as Paul dealt with, was not being exercised properly. They had become careless with the gifts and seemingly had completely forgotten their purpose. They were seeking to speak in tongues rather than prophecy. Paul instructed them on spiritual gifts and their use (1 Cor. 12) and rebuked them for concluding that tongues were more vital than prophecy (Cor. 14). Prophecy (the gift that could have enabled them to do for themselves what Paul’s letter did) was being neglected for a less practical gift, the speaking in tongues. It must be remembered that a gift can be neglected. Paul instructed Timothy, “Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by

prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.” (1 Tim. 4:14.)

Fourth, there might have been many other reasons why Paul wrote the Corinthians to correct them while they had spiritual gifts. There were obviously false teachers among them, even some claiming to be apostles (2 Cor. 11:13-15). It is conceivable, therefore, that those who had spiritual gifts wanted Paul to write and thus confirm their teaching of the truth. He was an apostle, he had seen the Lord, and none could successfully deny his word — they carried great weight among all the churches. While there might be some question about others who had received the gifts only by apostolic approval (the laying on of the apostles’ hands), there could be no question about Paul or any other apostle. Thus Paul’s epistle would confirm the truth (vindicate God’s true servants) while at the same time refute and expose the false teachers.

3. The purpose was the same as in all other inspired epistles, namely, to reveal the will of God on the subjects covered. We think we have sufficiently answered the remainder of the question in what we have said on number 2. There is nothing incongruent in one inspired man correcting another inspired man. Paul corrected Peter (Gal. 2:11-13), and both were apostles and both were equally inspired.

4. Those who claim to have spiritual gifts today are making a false claim. The purpose of miraculous gifts was to reveal and confirm the truth. When the revelation was completed, they ceased. (Those who wish to study this further are referred to my little book called *The Holy Spirit — His Indwelling and Work*, published by Win-More Publications, P.O. Box 117, W. Jefferson, NC 28694.) The correction they stand most in need of from the apostles is their misunderstanding (or else their total disregard) of the Holy Spirit and His work. They need to learn that the Bible is the only means used by the Spirit to reach and change the human heart. But this they have rejected and turned to a distorted view of miracles and their purpose.

5. All correction by the apostles is administered through the written word today . . . and *all* are subject to that correction. Jesus commissioned the apostles to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15, 16). They were to preach in His name or by His authority (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 4:12, 18; 5:28; Col. 3:17). And what they taught was to be bound in heaven — was to be the will of God for all men in all time to come (Matt.

16:18, 19). The apostles were baptized in the Holy Spirit to enable them to reveal and confirm the word preached (John 16:13; Acts 2; Heb. 2:1-4). Thus when they spoke, they spoke for Christ — they were His ambassadors (2 Cor. 5:19, 20). At first the word was in the chosen men. They had the power to teach and bind, to rebuke and correct, in all things pertaining to life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3, 4). Eventually the message, with the same power and authority, was written in numerous epistles. What they wrote became the New Testament Scriptures. The chain of revelation can be linked together as follows:

1. God speaks His will to man.
2. God speaks His will to man today through Christ.
3. Christ speaks the will of God through the Holy Spirit.
4. The Holy Spirit reveals and confirms that will through the apostles.
5. The apostles speak the confirmed will through the written word.

The will of God is therefore revealed today in the written word of God . . . and by no other means! Those who obey God must be in subjection to the Scriptures. This is the way, and the only way, the Spirit works to convict, convert, and sanctify sinners and to lead, guide, and direct the children of God. And this is why everyone, even those who falsely claim to have miraculous powers, must determine his faith and practice by the written word of God. The written word is now the will of God revealed. It is the authority by which everyone and everything must be corrected in all matters pertaining to religion.

THE IMPARTATION OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

The following from A.L. Stonestreet of Concord, N.C., was not sent as questions for this department but as an article to stand on its own merit, but because of its contents (and because we could not feel justified in running it without making some kind of reply) we think it can best be handled here. We are giving the item in its entirety with our comments following:

“The belief that only the apostles could lay on hands and impart spiritual gifts seems to be prevalent among Christians and is so taught from the pulpit. I believe we can learn that any of God’s endowed ministers could lay on hands and impart spiritual gifts.

“Is it not a fact of Scripture that there was a certain disciple at

Damascus named Ananias? And the Lord said to him, Inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth. And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. Ananias was not an apostle. We do not know what spiritual gifts he possessed. But we do find from the Scripture he was able to fill Saul with the Holy Ghost. And then we find Saul preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.

“Then in the thirteenth chapter of Acts that even prophets and teachers could lay on hands and impart spiritual gifts. For we read, ‘Now there were in the church at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, Simeon, Lucius and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.’ That laying on of hands at Antioch gave Saul his apostolic title, Paul. He was not an apostle before then.

“Again we find in 1 Tim. 4:14 that the elders could lay on hands and impart spiritual gifts. For we read, ‘Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery (elders.) Paul here was instructing young Timothy to be ever mindful of the spiritual gifts that were in him.

“Can we not from the above Scriptures remove forever from our minds that only the apostles could impart spiritual gifts? The writer believes that any of God’s ministers could impart spiritual gifts, even Philip’s four daughters because they were prophetesses.”

This brief item raises far more questions than it answers. In fact, if we understand it, it answers no questions at all, but is filled with errors, opinions, and assumptions and winds up with no point at all for 20th-century Christians.

However, we are not certain that we understand what brother Stonestreet is saying. Does he mean to say that the spiritual gifts were imparted by any of “God’s endowed ministers” only in apostolic times and therefore ceased when all the first-century

Christians were dead? Or is he saying that any of "God's endowed ministers" can now impart spiritual gifts precisely as in the apostolic age? If the former, there is really no point to his article because it would make little or no difference to him today (spiritual gifts have been done away with and none can impart them now). What advantage would it be to Christians in the 20th century if he proved his theory? None whatsoever! But it would make it difficult (if not impossible) to establish from the Scriptures the time of cessation of the miraculous gifts. If the latter (which we get the feeling he meant), he must either show that the spiritual gifts were not miraculous or else admit that the miraculous continues — that God's endowed ministers can still impart the power to work miracles. But if the spiritual gifts were miraculous, where are these today who possess miraculous power?

The fact is, brother Stonestreet is wrong in his basic assumption: as far as the Scriptures are concerned, *only* the apostles had the power to impart spiritual gifts. No amount of reasoning or twisting of Scriptures or false claims can change this fact. That this power was ascribed to no one but the apostles can be shown by a number of things, but we must limit our observations here to the context of brother Stonestreet's arguments.

1. The purpose of spiritual gifts. While we do not know precisely what he would call a spiritual gift, we do know that such gifts in Bible times were miraculous. Paul mentions nine of these in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, every one of which is miraculous. And all miraculous gifts were given for the purpose of revealing and confirming the word of God. They were never given for the benefit *per se* of the ones receiving them. They were given by the Spirit to aid in the revelation of God's will (cf. 1 Cor. 12:7-11). While the Spirit worked through some who were not apostles, He did so in a secondary sense. This is why the Spirit's reception has often been divided into the primary (that given to the apostles directly by Christ), the secondary (that given by the laying on of apostolic hands), and the ordinary (that given to every obedient believer at baptism) measures (the Spirit Himself is not measured out, but the power He gives is). Spiritual gifts pertain to the secondary measure of the Spirit.

There are sound reasons for this: by confining the power to impart the gifts to the apostles, the Lord added a strong safeguard against their misuse. The apostles had complete control over who

would receive the gifts. This prevented them from falling into unscrupulous hands. And it is my conviction that they did not impart them lightly. Only a chosen few received them and those who did receive them received only a minimal number. Probably no one but the apostles had all the gifts. While it is certain that the apostles could impart the gifts, it seems obvious that they could not impart the power to others to impart them. While they could impart other gifts, this one belonged to them exclusively.

2. "God's endowed ministers" were none but the apostles. Again we have no idea what brother Stonestreet meant by "God's endowed ministers"; the whole thrust of his argument seems to be anyone who is properly commissioned and sent to preach. If this is the case, then it must mean all Christians, both then and now. But this indicates a total misapprehension of Scriptural ministers. The Scriptures know nothing, absolutely nothing, of a specially endowed ministry (other than the apostles of Christ and those on whom they laid their hands and imparted some special gift). All Christians are working under the same commission and all have the same power and authority. Thus if "God's endowed ministers" can impart spiritual gifts, then all Christians can impart them. It is my contention that only the apostles (and those upon whom they laid their hands) had special endowment, and part of that endowment was the power to impart (to those upon whom they laid hands) spiritual gifts. They were the only specially endowed ministers of God and consequently were the only ones who could impart spiritual gifts.

3. The Scriptures cited by brother Stonestreet do not teach, in any shape, form, or fashion, that all "God's endowed ministers" (if by that is meant more than the apostles) had (or have) power to impart spiritual gifts. Notice how farfetched his prooftexts are from the subject at hand:

The first passage cited is Acts 9:10-19, where the record tells of Ananias going, by direct instructions from the Lord, to Damascus to speak with Saul of Tarsus, who had been fasting and praying for three days. Brother Stonestreet says, "We find from the Scripture he was able to fill Saul with the Holy Ghost." But not quite so. While it is true that Ananias was sent to him, laid hands on him, and baptized him it cannot be certainly established that Saul at this time received the Spirit in the baptismal measure (and it certainly could not have been the ordinary measure because that comes in baptism). Rather Ananias was told to go to him, lay

hands on him, teach him, baptize him that he might receive the Spirit (the time when the Spirit was received is not stated — the things were done that he might receive Him). That Saul at some time received the baptismal measure of the Spirit (and the ordinary measure at his baptism) cannot be questioned, even though it is not specifically stated in the Scriptures. There is absolutely nothing in the text that indicates it happened at the laying on of Ananias' hands.

Paul received the same measure of the Spirit that all Christians receive when he was baptized. He was obviously baptized in the Holy Spirit at some point between the Damascus road and his proclaiming Christ as Lord. But the baptism of the Spirit is something administered by Christ alone. It was not in the power of any man, not even an apostle of Christ, to baptize someone in the Spirit. This passage, therefore, lends absolutely no support to brother Stonestreet's theory.

It is when we reach Acts 13 that we see brother Stonestreet put on his best assumer. He says that the laying on of hands by the church in Antioch made Paul an apostle ("gave Saul his apostolic title, Paul"). But he is absolutely off course here. There is not a single word in the whole context that even hints at such a thing. Barnabas had earlier left Jerusalem, gone through Tarsus to get Saul, and the two of them went to Antioch and preached for a whole year (there could be little doubt but that Saul was already preaching under his apostolic commission). The church determined to send relief to the needy saints in Judea and did so by the hands of Barnabas and Saul (Acts 11:22-30). Upon their return from Jerusalem the Holy Spirit said, by some means, probably through one of the prophets in the church, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereof I have called them." Following the Spirit's instructions, the church laid hands on them and sent them forth (Acts 12:25; 13:1-3). It should be noted however that the Lord, not the church, had called them to the work. Furthermore, it is specifically stated that they were sent by the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:4).

If the laying on of hands by the church had made Saul and Barnabas apostles, they would have been apostles of the church rather than apostles of Christ. The apostles of Christ were chosen by Christ Himself. (Incidentally, "Paul" is not an apostolic title. It was his Roman name while "Saul" was his Hebrew name.) This incident therefore has absolutely nothing to do with the imparta-

tion of spiritual gifts.

Brother Stonestreet next cites 1 Timothy 4:14 to prove that spiritual gifts were imparted by means other than by the laying on of the apostles' hands. But again he misses the mark, entirely and absolutely. This verse states the fact that a gift had been given to Timothy by (Greek *dia*, by or through) prophecy. It also states that it was given with (Greek *meta*, meaning, according to Hickie, with, together with, in confederacy with) the laying on of the hands of presbytery. This verse says that the gift was received by prophecy and with (not by) the laying on of the hands of the elders. The gift was received at the time of or in association with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, not by or through the laying on of the presbytery, not by or through the laying on of the presbytery's hands. In 2 Timothy 1:6 Paul tells us that the gift came by (Greek *dia*, meaning by or through) the laying on of his hands. Thus taking both passages together we can easily see that Timothy received the gift by the hands of an apostle but in association with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. This verse, therefore, proves the opposite of what it was cited to prove.

We conclude from the evidence here presented (and more that could be) that the Scriptures clearly teach that the impartation of spiritual gifts came *only* by the laying on of apostolic hands.

HOW DOES ONE RECEIVE THE SPIRIT?²

A letter from Everette Morefield (a very fine and faithful young preacher of the gospel), who lives at Laurel Bloomery, Tennessee, asked us to explain Acts 8:12-17. The specific question to be dealt with is as follows: Does one receive the Holy Spirit when he is baptized into Christ or does it come by the laying on of hands? To conserve space, we ask that you turn in your own Bible and read Acts 8:12-17.

The answer we give to this question will be basically the same one given by leaders in the movement to restore New Testament Christianity ever since its inception, the only answer we believe that can be harmonized with all the Bible says on this subject. We therefore call attention to the fact that the Holy Spirit was

²Two paragraphs and part of a third have been omitted from the original answer because they are not relevant at this point. Also a few minor changes have been made.

given in apostolic times in different measures to different people.

1. Christ received the Spirit without measure (John 3:34). Since Christ received the Spirit without measure (and obvious exception to the rule), it seems to us that this strongly infers that others received it by measure.

2. The apostles (and other chosen ones) received a baptismal measure (Matt. 3:11; Acts 1:5; 2:1-4; 10:44-48; 11:15, 16). This enabled them to reveal and write the truth of God (John 16:13; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; 2 Pet. 3:15, 16) and to impart to the early church certain spiritual gifts (Acts 8:17; Rom. 1:11). As far as the Bible reveals, no one ever received this measure of the Spirit but the apostles and the household of Cornelius (and Cornelius is a special case for a special reason). Thus the baptismal measure of the Holy Spirit belonged exclusively to the apostles of Christ, either for their personal possession or for their benefit.

3. Others, by the laying on of the apostles' hands (as in the passage under consideration), received what might be termed an extraordinary measure of the Holy Spirit. This was given for the benefit of the early church. At that time, the church did not have a completed copy of the New Testament and certainly the inspired apostles could not be with all the churches all the time to settle their problems. Thus certain chosen ones were given what Paul calls "spiritual gifts for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." (Eph. 4:12-14.) This is simply to say that certain gifts were given the early church to aid her until (up to the time of) she reached the unity of the faith (the completion of the body of truth). Once the system of faith was completed, the gifts were no longer needed — they were no longer given. (Since these gifts came only by the laying on of the apostles' hands, when the apostles died, no one else could receive the gifts.)

Now it is easily seen that those on whom Peter and John laid their hands in Acts 8 received some (or all) of the extraordinary

gifts which were given by the apostles to certain ones in the early church. The gifts are enumerated by Paul in 1 Cor. 12:6-11. "But," you may say, "Acts 8:17 says nothing about spiritual gifts; it says that they received the Holy Spirit." True, indeed, but it is our conception that we have a figure of speech used here — the figure of speech called metonymy. *Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary* (unabridged, 2nd ed.) defines the noun "metonym" as "a word used in metonymy, as a substitute for another." Of "metonymy" the same source says, "Use of the name of one thing for that of another associated with or suggested by it (e.g., 'the White House has decided' for 'the President has decided.')" In our verse a specific kind of metonymy is used, known as metonymy of the cause. In this particular figure, the cause is stated when the effect is intended, the Holy Spirit (the cause) is named but the effects (spiritual gifts) are meant. If this is true, then Peter and John imparted, not the Holy Spirit Himself, but spiritual gifts — the effects of the Holy Spirit. All the passage teaches, then, is that Peter and John imparted to the Christians at Samaria the same gifts we know that the apostles gave to other Christians in the apostolic age. In addition to receiving that measure of the Spirit which was given to all who obeyed the gospel, they received the spiritual gifts — a miraculous measure of the Spirit — when the apostles laid hands on them.

4. All who became Christians received the common (sometimes called the ordinary) measure of the Spirit. "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2:38.) "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." (Rom. 8:9b.) Since the people of Samaria (and even Simon himself) had believed and had been baptized (Acts 8:12, 13), it follows that they had received the gift of the Holy Spirit just as had those who had done the same on the day of Pentecost. Thus that which Peter and John had given to them by the laying on of hands was something in addition to that which is common to all Christians — it was extraordinary or miraculous. (Frankly, I think this alone shows that a figure of speech, metonymy of the cause, is used in Acts 8:17. But even if it were not, even if both passages (Acts 2:38 and 8:17) were dealing with the Holy Spirit personally, it would still not affect our conclusion: one is still

the common measure given to all Christians and the other an extraordinary measure given only to the early church by the laying on of apostolic hands.)

We must learn not to claim that which God has not given to us. He has given us the common measure of the Holy Spirit, but the baptismal and extraordinary measures belonged exclusively to the apostles and the early church. These are fundamental principles in the proper understanding of what the Bible teaches about the Holy Spirit and His work.

