



**The
HOLY SPIRIT**

**and the
HOLY
SPIRIT
GIFTS**

GRAHAM PEARCE

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contents

"Some years ago we went carefully over every reference to the word "spirit" in the New Testament. The occasion was an agitation that the spirit was something to be now possessed. We found then as we have since that brethren were following a mirage in talking of possessing the spirit today . . . To sum up the matter. The first century believers had an endowment unique in the Christian era. Gifts of the spirit in various forms of manifestation were possessed by the brethren. The fact of the possession was obvious and the gift was under the control of the one who was thus endowed. The gift conferred no moral advantage - a man had to work out his salvation by faithful obedience to the Lord's command. The message given by the spirit had to be absorbed, understood, and acted upon just as we have to do with the revelation enshrined in the Bible."

- John Carter

e.g. Gal. 2: 11-14
 Luke 4: 1-13
 Rom 7: 14-15

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foreword

In every generation, there seems to be a revival of the claim to possession of the Spirit Gifts, both miraculous and otherwise. It is popular among certain religious bodies today to affirm that these Gifts are manifested in their assemblies; and the claim is made that such communities are growing numerically more rapidly than other groups that do not so teach.

Unfortunately this doctrine, in measure, has found its inroads into the Brotherhood justifying a re-appraisal of the Scriptural evidence.

That is attempted in this book.

The writer is not so much concerned with the claims made by other religious bodies, as those that now are being advanced within the Brotherhood itself. He perceives a very real danger in the doctrine that proclaims that the Holy Spirit Gifts in any form are today available. He reasons logically that if the Holy Spirit is an element provided by Yahweh to develop character pleasing unto Him, then this must lessen our dependence on the Word. He advances strong Scriptural reasons to show that such a claim is contrary to the revealed purpose of God, and therefore to the teaching of the Word.

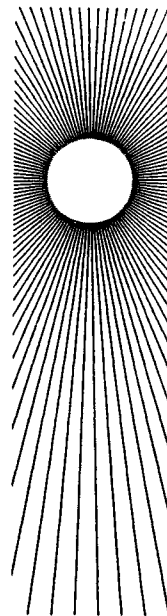
We ask on the part of the reader a careful, thoughtful, analytical consideration of the evidence in conjunction with the Bible itself. It will be revealed that the only form of the Holy Spirit presently available is the power of the Word to create the mind of the Spirit, or the mind of God, in the believer. Therefore, if we desire to be motivated by that influence, we must seek it in the meditative study of the Scriptures.

This is the traditional stand adopted since the days of Brother Thomas, and maintained to the present. Every reference to the Holy Spirit contained in the Scriptures, can be interpreted in accordance with that belief, as the exposition of this book reveals. However, should the reader desire further information upon any given text of Scripture, the author, or the publishers, will be happy to provide it. The address of the former is 15 Yelvertoft Road, Crick, Northampton, NN6 7XS, England. Enquiries to the latter should be directed to Logos Publications, West Beach Post Office, South Australia, 5024.

The first edition of this book, issued March 1975, having been exhausted, a second edition is now published. This includes an Addendum by the Author in which he discusses references to the Holy Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles, particularly in response to views expressed recently by members of The Christadelphian Magazine and Publishing Association.

H. P. Mansfield — Nov. 1976

CHAPTER ONE



The Alleged Spirit Gift Today

Over the past 25 years, there has been a growing amount of discussion on the matter of the Holy Spirit and the believer. This is immediately brought into focus with the question: Does the believer today receive the Holy Spirit Gift as expressed by Peter on the day of Pentecost? Peter's words are: "Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 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 2:28-29).

There are an increasing number who answer "Yes" to this question; much to the concern of other brethren.

In considering the matter, it is most important to do our best to have a fair understanding of the belief of those who say Yes. There are variations of belief, but it is not difficult to ascertain the general concept.

No Claim To Do Miracles First, it must be emphasised that practically all cases these brethren do not propose that they have power to work miracles or speak with tongues. That is not the issue. The issue is over whether there is a direct indwelling of the Holy Spirit by which God influences the life of the believer. The belief is that from the day of Pentecost there has been something extra for every believer, the Holy Spirit Gift, through which God will influence the life of the believer for good. Although the Gift at Pentecost did result in miracles and signs, these are regarded as a secondary and temporary part of the Gift. It is pointed out that the real quality of the Gift is clearly stated by Jesus in John 14. It is described as the *Comforter*, and the *Spirit of Truth*. *Comforter* is translated in other versions as *Advocate*, *Counsellor*, *Helper*. So while not wishing to minimise the power of the written word as teaching us God's Truth and being our counsellor and helper, they see the christian after the day of Pentecost as having an extra, more direct, influence from God operating in his life, leading and guiding him into a fuller understanding and applications of God's Truth. This is not seen as in conflict with the written word, but rather as augmenting it. While recognising that the Holy Spirit Gift – as the *Comforter*, *Counsellor* and *Spirit of Truth* – operated more fully in the apostles than in ordinary believers today; they see it as the same Spirit Gift operating in varying degree.

Various scriptures appear to these brethren to support their belief. There are the words of Jesus in John 7:38-39:

“He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this he spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Spirit was not yet given because that Jesus was not yet glorified).”

And the words of Jesus at the end of Matthew's gospel:

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.”

There are also a number of passages by Paul, of which Ephesians 3:16-17 and Romans 8:9 are typical:

“That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith”

“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”

Such references to the Spirit and the believer are all seen as the operation of the Holy Spirit Gift of Acts 2:38.

How The Gift Is Said To Operate Our next step in trying to understand those who believe they receive the Holy Spirit Gift is to note their description of the way in which this works today. The following four quotations are from *The Christadelphian* (1959), by Bro. A. D. Norris in reply to Bro. J. Carter's criticism of his booklet *Being Born Again*.

- (1) “The manifestations (i.e. miracles-G.P.) of the first century bore witness to the reality of the Spirit's working, but they were the mere advertisement for something greater and more inward, as well as vastly more important.... God still, without the outward signs, pours out the Spirit grace richly upon those who call upon him.”
- (2) Defining the Spirit as what God wishes to be done: “It can call into being the Son of God through the Virgin Birth, or it can in mysterious ways empower the chosen of God in their battle against sin.”
- (3) “To put my meaning in a nutshell, lest it should be swallowed up in a plethora of petty objections to it: God bore witness to His gift of the Spirit in the first century by miraculous signs, and by these it was recognised. But the primary purpose of the gift for believers as a whole was to help them to live lives acceptable to Him, and therefore this reality persisted even when the signs ceased, and was of the essence of the matter even when the signs were there. Therefore, Peter, while having the signs to bear witness to the truth of the promise, was offering something much more important than the signs themselves, the work of God to bring about salvation of the individual: this was what they needed at Pentecost, and what is needed still.”
- (4) “I accept the miracles at their full local value as a means of propaganda and conviction. I insist that, when those miracles are gone, the inward working of God is essential if we are to overcome our sins. It is needed for the successful living of our lives.”

In an article in *Glad Tidings* on *The Coming of the Comforter* we are told that Christ's invisible presence is available to the believer by the *Comforter* or Holy Spirit Gift. This inward presence is more powerful than his presence in Israel among the disciples.

- (5) “But even beyond this there are implications in the same chapter of John that the living – though invisible – presence of Jesus is still available to believers, linking linking their knowledge of him with their daily experience.”

"In the closing words of chapter 15 he again refers to his invisible presence under the title of the Comforter."
 "The gift of the Spirit – Of Christ's presence in the in the believer's life – is not for selfish purposes."

No. 1081: pp. 70,71

Finally an extract from a letter:

- (6) "Rather, he is developing the frequently-repeated and variously-expressed New Testament theme that the Holy Spirit – Or Spirit of God, or Spirit of Christ – or the Comforter, or the indwelling Christ, or Spirit of Truth (these terms are equated with one another) – operated in the hearts and minds of believers to strengthen, comfort, guide, counsel, etc. I would not have thought this could be a subject of controversy, or that it is new to the brotherhood."

These quotations convey the clear idea that the Holy Spirit Gift, whether we call it the invisible presence of Christ, the Comforter or simply the Holy Spirit, was promised on the day of Pentecost and is available to the believer today to guide his life, and influence his mind in godly ways. What then is the issue? As we proceed we shall find that it concerns *how* the Spirit of God is in the believer. Both sides recognise that the Spirit of God is in the believer, and that all spiritual development flows from the work of the Holy Spirit. We shall find that on the one side is the belief that the Spirit of God for the believer operates through the written word and angelic ministration in response to our seeking; the other side acknowledges this, but adds a further vital element of outpoured Spirit, received by the believer, called the Holy Spirit Gift. In this view, if one may venture an analogy, it is as if Jesus Christ has a telephone line direct to us, instead of the more indirect communication of posting a letter.

Those who say the believer does not receive the Holy Spirit Gift today, fully recognise the reality of the Holy Spirit Gift. They see it as a direct power and influence from God upon men, but something limited to certain individuals and occasions, as God saw need; as with Moses, David, the prophets, the apostles, and the 'bishops' of the early ecclesias.

Some possible consequences of believing in the Gift operating today.

The difference between the two sides may be small in its effect at the beginning, but over a generation or so, it will produce distinct changes. In the last analysis, the two views are in direct opposition. One side believes that the Holy Spirit Gift, leading into all truth and being our counsellor,

guides and helps us to a fuller understanding and appreciation of the written Word; the other side believes that by its patient study of the Word it gradually acquires the Spirit of God. The one process is the reverse of the other. The one side has the Holy Spirit Gift in order to receive more fully the power of the Word; the other side grasps more fully the Word that they may build up in themselves more of the Spirit of God, or the Holy Spirit.

If we believe that we have the Spirit Gift which will unfold to us spiritual things by yielding to it, we shall cease to exert ourselves to the same extent in the day to day unwavering attention to the Word as our daily spiritual food. One calls to mind the emphasis Bro. Roberts gave to this matter in his introduction to the Bible Companion. "This is a work of slow development, and can only be achieved by the industrious application of the individual to the means God has given for the purpose, namely, the expression of His mind in the Scriptures of truth. Spiritual-mindedness, or a state of mind in accordance with the mind of the Spirit as displayed in these writings, can only grow within a man by daily intercourse with that mind, there unfolded. Away from this, the mind will revert to its original emptiness."

Already as a community, we are less diligent in the daily reading and meditation of the Word, and perhaps those who are less constant in this matter are not dissatisfied because they are trusting in the guidance of their Holy Spirit Gift.

Those who believe in receiving the Holy Spirit Gift today have to separate the miraculous aspect of the Gift from the so-called inner working of the Gift. We believe this separation is false, as we shall show later. And because it is false, it is likely that we shall find in due course some who begin to assume they have some aspects of visible Spirit power, as in the first century; that they are led into truth, that they are qualified for leadership, or healing. This suggestion may raise a smile of scepticism, but history will undoubtedly repeat itself, if time is allowed for this.

Once we realise that the Holy Spirit *Gift* was a manifestation of power, in special circumstances, and that the references to the Spirit of God in the believer in various scripture passages does not usually mean the Holy Spirit *Gift*, much confusion and misunderstanding will be removed from this subject.

After this introductory examination of the current scene, we think it necessary to look at the working of the Holy Spirit in broad terms, before coming in detail to the conflict of view on Acts 2:38; John 7:39, etc. So our unfolding theme will now be – God, the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit Gift, and the Spirit of God in the believer.

CHAPTER TWO



God and His Spirit Operations

God Is Spirit

By our study of the Bible we have come to know that there is one God, supreme in power, wisdom, righteousness and goodness. He is a Person, for James says we are made in the image of God even the Father (James 3:9); and so not unreasonably we think of God in the form of ourselves. This real sense of God's person is supported by the words of Gabriel that he stands in the presence of God (Luke 1:19), and by the knowledge that the Lord Jesus is at the right hand of the Father. As it were, we measure the bodily form of God by these facts. He is a real Person, existing at the centre of His universe, attended by His angelic host.

Of God's being we have one simple, profound statement by Jesus: "God (is) Spirit" (John 4:24). It is a statement for us to believe, that God is essentially Spirit. We can only know something of what Spirit is by its manifestations.

AND THE HOLY SPIRIT GIFTS

Spirit Of God

Outflowing from God is Spirit power, as light from a source; this is the Spirit of God. By His Spirit all things are in His presence: "Whither shall I go from Thy presence? . . . Yea, the darkness hideth not from Thee but the night shineth as the day" (Ps. 139:7,12). By His Spirit all things exist: "And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light" (Gen. 1, 2, 3). By His Spirit all things are sustained: "If He gather unto Himself His spirit and His breath; all flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again to His dust" (Job 34: 14-15). "Thou sendest forth Thy spirit, they are created: and Thou renewest the face of the earth" (Ps. 104:30).

Holy Spirit

Distinct from the Spirit creating and sustaining the natural world, His Spirit also operates to fulfil His spiritual purpose in creation. John says this purpose was to bring life: the life of God in men, first morally, then physically. His Spirit operating to this end is called *Holy Spirit*. All divine activity advancing this purpose is by Holy Spirit: Spirit set apart, as it were, for this purpose; Spirit that is working towards sanctification.

The angels and Holy Spirit

The use and control of the Holy Spirit is in the hands of the angels. They themselves are Spirit, as the Psalmist says: "Who maketh His angels spirits; His ministers a flaming fire" (Psalm 104:4). They carry out His purpose, as the previous Psalm says: "Bless the Lord, ye His angels, that excel in strength, that do His commandments, hearkening to the voice of His word. Bless ye the Lord, all ye His hosts; ye ministers of His, that do His pleasure" (Ps. 103:20-21). The angels are now under the control of the Lord Jesus, directed by him in carrying out the Father's will in the earth. . . . "Jesus Christ; who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of the Father; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him" (1 Pet. 3:22). In the great work of bringing many sons unto glory, they are described as "sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation" (Heb. 1:14). They use the Holy Spirit in the providential control of the lives of the saints; and of the world rulers, and the nations.

The Holy Spirit Gift

Having briefly considered what the Bible says about God, the Spirit of God, and the Holy Spirit, we now come to the Holy Spirit Gift. The Greek for "gift" is sometimes

chara, the word that is akin to *charisma, grace*; but not infrequently it is *dorea* meaning simply a gift. *Dorea* is used in Acts 2:38, and in all places throughout the Acts of the Apostles for the gift of the Holy Spirit. A gift is "that which is given; something transferred to another's possession, without price or any equivalent value being received in exchange." So with the Holy Spirit Gift the sense is of a direct transfer of something from God (via the angels) to man; a distinct entity given and received as a possession. This is the idea inherent in the word "gift." God has given, *gifted*, his Holy Spirit power at certain times to selected men, a gift which God's purpose with men required at the time. In the full span of God's unfolding purpose we can discern three epochs of the Holy Spirit given to men; one at the beginning of His work with His holy nation at its founding under Moses; the second in the ministration of the New Covenant by the apostles after Christ's resurrection; and the third in the future when the holy nation is regenerated and restored and enters the New Covenant. These are epochs when the needs of the time required a more direct control by God of faithful men who he had appointed.

(1) In the time of Moses

Take the first epoch under Moses. We read in Numbers 11 how Moses, despite his possession of Holy Spirit power in large measure, felt unable to carry the burden of a nation that so readily rebelled against divine law. So God took some of His Spirit and conferred it on seventy suitable men, elders of the people: "And Moses went out, and told the people the words of the Lord and gathered seventy men of the elders of the people, and set them round about the tabernacle. And the Lord came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders: and it came to pass, that, when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease" (Num. 11:24-25).

We should note that it was quite apparent that they had received the gift of the Holy Spirit; "they prophesied and did not cease," and two others who had remained in the camp alarmed those near them by doing likewise.

When Moses passed off the scene, God transferred Holy Spirit to Joshua. "And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him" (Deut. 34:9). This is detailed in Numbers 27:18-23.

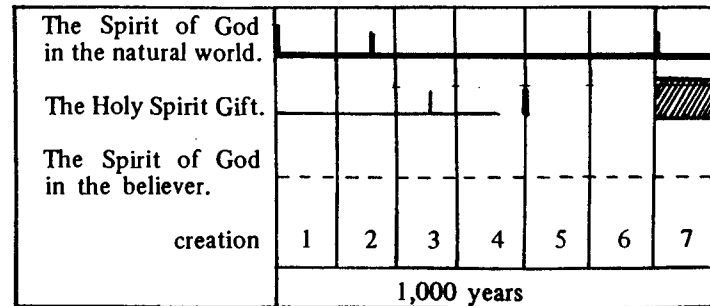
Another group of people also had the Holy Spirit Gift at this time for another special task. We read of it in Exodus 35:30-31. "The Lord hath called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; and hath filled him with

the spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship; . . . to work in gold . . . and in the cutting of stones, to set them . . . And he hath put in his heart that he may teach, both he and Aholiab." The account goes on to speak of others in whom God put wisdom. The building and furnishing of the tabernacle was an extensive and intricate task, and it all had to be done "according to the pattern," because it must be a foreshadowing of Messiah. So there was a direct inworking of the Holy Spirit that the task might be accomplished.

We should note how closely parallel these events at the beginning of a new era under the "old covenant" are with the account of the guidance provided by the Holy Spirit in the midst of the first century ecclesias at their inception. In each case there was a Holy Spirit gift to meet the needs of the case, and it was apparent that the power of God was manifest through his chosen men, in their wisdom and skill and teaching.

Outside this epoch of some two generations when the Holy Spirit was poured out on a number of people for special purposes, there was a more or less continuous gift of the Holy Spirit to a few men who gave God's communications to his people. These were the prophets, such as Enoch, Abraham, Moses, David, Isaiah and the later prophets. As Peter says: "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:21). The prophets had their credentials from God; either by working miracles, as Elijah, or by short-term prophecies fulfilling, it was apparent that they had received Holy Spirit guidance and control from God. After the return from Babylon there was a long silence of the prophets: as Micah had predicted: "The sun shall go down over the prophets, and the day shall be dark over them" (Micah 3:6).

The following diagram illustrates the manifestation of the Spirit of God.



The top line represents the Spirit of God operating in the

natural world, ever present, but with extra activity at Creation, at the Flood, and in the changes when Jesus returns; the desert blossoming as a rose, Jerusalem being lifted up, etc. The second line represents the Holy Spirit Gift to men: the thin line from the beginning representing the word of the prophets, with an increase at the time of Moses; the thin line is missing during the last 400 years B.C.

(2) In the time of Jesus and the Apostles

The second great epoch of the gift of the Holy Spirit was in the time of Jesus and the apostles: greater than in Moses' time, as befitted the appearing of the Son of God and the setting forth of the fulness of the gospel not only for Jew but also Gentile. See how the Holy Spirit was visibly given to men at this time. Jesus was begotten by the power of the Holy Spirit upon Mary; he received an inflowing of Spirit from His Father "without measure when he became the "Messenger of the Covenant" to Israel, and he began his work with the quotation from Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me . . . This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears" (Luke 4:18-21). Then the twelve received the Holy Spirit Gift for a period when sent out by their Master. Their preaching was supported by Spirit-power to heal and cast out demons. "Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick" (Luke 9:1-2). After the resurrection we come to the great outpouring of Spirit on the day of Pentecost and immediately thereafter. The character and extent of the outpouring were remarkable. It was initiated by a sudden rushing mighty wind and cloven tongues like as of fire, and all were filled with the Holy Spirit. The operation of the Holy Spirit was continually supported by signs and miracles of healing: the man lame from his mother's womb "leaping up stood and walked." "They brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. There came also a multitude out of the cities round about Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one;" "And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women" (Acts 5:14-16).

The miracles were an integral part of the Holy Spirit manifestation, but as in the time of Moses the essential work of the Spirit was to provide teaching and wisdom for the needs of the time. The Spirit was necessary for the authoritative preaching of salvation through the New Covenant, superceding the Law of

Moses; and the miracles declared the goodness of God, and established the credentials of the apostles in the eyes of men and women who were devoted to the Word of God under the Mosaic covenant.

The Holy Spirit Gift was effective in at least four directions.

(a) *The final witness against the Jewish State:* This witness had already developed at the end of Jesus' ministry, as expressed in the long indictment of Matthew 23, and Jesus commissioned the apostles to complete this witness through the Holy Spirit: "But if I depart, I will send him (the Comforter) unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the (Jewish) world of sin, and 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 (the rulership of the Jewish world) is judged" or condemned (John 16:7-11).

As one reads the early chapters of the Acts one sees the apostles carrying out this witness against the rulers, and being persecuted for it. They fulfilled the words of Jesus: "And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, . . . Take no thought what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the spirit of your Father which speaketh in you" (Matt. 10:18-20).

(b) *The establishing of the new doctrine in Jesus Christ:* The new teaching of forgiveness of sins through baptism into the name of Jesus Christ, and the recognition of Mosaic things as but shadows of good things to come, needed the authority and convincing power of the Spirit to satisfy the devout Jews. The Holy Spirit made the apostles infallible teachers: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have told you" (John 14:26).

The miracles they did gave adequate support to justify their teaching.

(c) *The preaching of the true God amongst the Gentiles:* The guidance given to Peter by the vision of the unclean beasts, and the outpouring of the Spirit on those assembled in the house of Cornelius as Peter started speaking, are well known. The preaching of Paul amongst the Gentiles is characteristically reported in Acts 14:3: "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."

When writing to the Corinthian believers Paul speaks of this

power among the Gentiles: Truly the signs of an apostle were necessary to bring the Truth of the God of Israel to the pagan world. In addition, when ecclesias were formed, the Holy Spirit Gift was granted for their guidance. A Spirit-aided eldership was formed in each ecclesia. So Paul says to the elders of the ecclesia of Ephesus: "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseer, to feed the flock of God" (Acts 20:28). We learn from 1 Cor. 12 the details of this Holy Spirit gift. Selected men had each different functions by the Spirit, for the benefit of all. We will examine this later.

(d) *An earnest of our inheritance:* So Paul describes the Holy Spirit. It was a foretaste of the future. He puts this more clearly in Hebrews 6:4-6: "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come."

So the Holy Spirit gift introduced mortal men to the "powers of the world to come;" it was *an earnest* (an expression little used now, meaning a pledge or token) of more to come in divine nature and a Spirit governed world.

In these several ways the Holy Spirit Gift accomplished a unique work in the time of the apostles, as they brought into operation the New Covenant, and declared the Old Covenant, as decaying and ready to vanish away.

The Holy Spirit was needed for the start of this new dispensation, just as the Holy Spirit had been used similarly in the beginning of the Mosaic dispensation. Moses used Holy Spirit power to witness against the Egyptian rulers; Holy Spirit power wrought miracles continually amongst Israel in the wilderness, providing them with daily meat and drink; it clothed seventy elders with wisdom and the spirit of prophecy to help Moses in the government of the ecclesia in the wilderness; it gave wisdom and skill of hand to Bezaleel and Aholiab for the construction of the tabernacle and furniture; it provided them with an earnest of the powers to come. In both cases, in the times of Moses and Joshua, and the times of Jesus and the apostles, there was a definite and limited work to be done, and after the new order was established the Spirit power was not needed, and so ceased. After the first century there is no valid record of such Holy Spirit Gift poured out upon men. The New Covenant salvation having been inaugurated; the basis of the Gentiles becoming partakers of the Promises having been established; and the Last Message spanning the period to the second coming having been given to John, there was no further need in the wisdom of God for continuing direct Spirit Gift until the third great epoch.

(3) In the future

The third epoch of Spirit outpouring among men will be the greatest, as we have shown in our illustration. Just as the second epoch was greater than the first because of the wider aspect of the developed Jewish nation and the Gentile world, so in the future the work is still greater, in the restoring of the Holy nation from their long dispersion, and in the development of spiritual and temporal rule on a global scale. The prophets speak of this pouring out of the Spirit upon Israel in the future: "upon the land of my people shall come thorns and briers . . . until the spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field . . . Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field . . . And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation . . ." (Is. 32:13-18). Likewise Ezekiel, after the saving of Israel out of the hand of the great Gogian confederacy: "Then shall they know that I am the Lord their God . . . Neither will I hide my face any more from them: for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God" (Ezek. 39:28-29). In the apostolic writings we learn how the Spirit will operate in that future time. The Spirit will fill the resurrected saints, who in every sense will become the dwelling place of the Spirit. Through them the particular gospel of that time will be proclaimed (Rev. 14:6), no doubt supported by miracle as in the past. The New Covenant will be nationally inaugurated, and Gentile nations will also be allowed to join themselves to the Lord, the God of Israel (Zech. 2:11).

This work of enlightening the world by this Spirit energised community is beautifully portrayed in the symbolism of Zechariah (Ch. 3), in his vision of the two olive trees, two olive branches and a 7 branched lightstand in the midst, and the angel's cryptic interpretation: "This is the word unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."

Our diagram shows this pouring out of the Holy Spirit Gift in the future by an appropriately greater space; indicating too that the whole millennial age will be a ministration of the Spirit.

We conclude this sketch of the Holy Spirit Gift, with the emphasis that the gift was (1) always something quite manifest; there was revealed power; (2) it was poured out to accomplish defined tasks of a limited duration; (3) it was a direct influence over the men who receive it; it was certainly not the same thing as the Spirit of God in every believer, whether before or after Christ. This we will now consider.

*The Spirit Of
God in the
Believer*

The purpose of God is to fill the earth with His glory by a generation of people who do His will and reflect His character, described by Paul when writing to the Ephesian brethren as a temple fitly framed together for a habitation of God through the Spirit, Jesus Christ being the chief corner stone. The process is one of moral perfection, followed by physical perfection in the divine nature. As Peter says: "According as his divine power has given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness . . . given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Pet. 1, 3, 4). The whole work is the work of God, with the individual's co-operation. It is all a work of the Holy Spirit, through the power of the word and ministrations of angels. The character that is formed is called "the new man of the Spirit." The Spirit of God is in such a person.

This is a most wonderful concept, that a new man can be formed, that the natural mind can be transformed into a Spirit mind, a mind attuned to God's mind and ways. The reality of this idea is expressed in several similar expressions in the scriptures, all of them having the basic idea that the 'new man' is begotten of God. Ponder these five passages of scripture:

1. *Born of God*: "As many as received him, to them he gave power to become sons of God, even them that believe on his name: which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:12-13).
2. *The Father begat us by the word of truth*: "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth . . . receive with meekness the engrafted word which is able to save your souls" (James 1:18-21).
3. *Quickened by the spirit - the word*: "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 6:63).
4. *God's seed remaineth in him*: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his (God's) seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (1 John 3:9).
5. *Born of incorruptible seed*: "Being born again (from above), not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is grass . . . but the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you" (1 Pet. 1:23-25).

All five passages declare that the spiritual life in us has come from God: He begat us, His seed is in us, He quickened us,

we are born of God. This is a wonderful happening, which we should continually ponder over.

*By the Power
Of The Word*

The placing of these passages side by side plainly shows that the new man within us, "which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4:22), was begotten by the word of God. Peter says an incorruptible seed of God has brought about the new birth, and this has come in the word of the gospel; James says plainly, He begat us with the word of truth; and Jesus says the word is spirit and quickens. The begetting power was in the word of God; and by this means the spirit of God is in us. These scriptures are written for us to believe and accept.

Not only does the spirit-word beget us, but it is the means of continuing growth; for Peter follows on where we stopped our quotation: "Wherefore laying aside all malice and all guile . . . as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby." So it is not a true idea that the Holy Spirit Gift takes over at baptism and guides the individual in righteousness; no, his devotion to the word of God and its power is the source of growth. Surely that which initiates life, which brings light where there was darkness, is capable and suitable for sustaining life and growth.

But though the transforming power resides in the word of God, it only becomes effective in the believer by his application of this word to himself. As Bro. Roberts wrote in the preface to the Bible Companion: "Salvation depends upon the assimilation of the mind to the divine ideas, principles, and affections exhibited in the Scriptures. This process commences with a belief of the gospel, but is by no means completed thereby; it takes a life-time for its scope, and untiring diligence for its accomplishment. The mind is naturally alien from God and all His ideas (Rom. 8:7; 1 Cor. 2:14), and cannot be brought at once to the Divine likeness. This is a work of slow development, and can only be achieved by the industrious application of the individual to the means which God has given for this purpose, viz., the expression of His mind in the Scriptures of Truth; Spiritual-mindedness, or the state of mind in accordance with the mind of the Spirit as displayed in these writings can only grow within a man by daily intercourse with that mind, there unfolded."

Angelic Care

A man or woman cannot by their own efforts alone, achieve this spiritual-mindedness. There is also the good hand of God

overseeing the affairs of life, so that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to his purpose." Paul clearly defines this wonderful blessing of angelic care in the words: "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation" (Heb. 1:14). The angels behind the scenes, so shape the experiences of the life of the believer that the interworking of experience and the Word in the believer produces the desired character. This grows slowly, wonderfully, we know not how, just as the tree, carefully tended by the husbandman gradually unfolds into its mature shapely form beautiful with leaves, blossom and fruit. Bro. Roberts' book, *The Ways of Providence*, is a delightful and instructive account of providence in the lives of men of God of earlier time, with the implication that, if we can receive it, the same wonderful unseen hand will operate in our lives. Abraham said to his servant: "The Lord God of heaven, which took me from my father's house . . . He shall send His angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from hence" (Gen. 24:7). And so it was, to the wonder of the servant, and Nahor's household. The angel guided his steps, and caused Rebekah to come to the well at just the right time. The angels are spirit beings linked directly with God by Spirit, and they exert their providential control by Spirit, designated Holy Spirit because it is exerted in the realm of salvation. Sometimes by the Holy Spirit they operate directly, physically, as when the record says: "For the Lord had fast closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech, because of Sarah Abraham's wife" (Gen. 20:18). Or as when Esau and Jacob were born, and Jacob's minute hand "took hold on Esau's heel." Sometimes it is no more than a prompting of the mind at the right time: Haman had caused the gallows to be made, and at that critical point, "On that night could not the king sleep, and he commanded to bring the book of records of the chronicles" from which he learnt of Mordecai's good deed (Esther 6:1-3). The all-powerful Lord Jesus, and his angelic host, see all our ways, and the pitfalls that lie ahead, and hear all our prayers. This is the powerful ministration of the Spirit, but not made known to us, other than by our looking back on experience, and feeling thankful that protection and blessing have been with us.

So the whole work of salvation is the work of the Holy Spirit, both in the power the word has to change our mind and disposition; and in the wonderful grace of God in influencing the lives of His children by the angels. As the mind of God in the believer has been created by the Holy Spirit, it may be described as the Holy Spirit in us, the Spirit of God in us, God in

us, Christ in us, Christ dwelling in the heart by faith, etc. As we have seen, this work of the Holy Spirit does not require the giving of the Holy Spirit Gift as on the day of Pentecost; nor does it support the belief of some brethren today that they have the Gift now, to mould and direct their lives.

The character formed is called the new man of the Spirit. It is a spirit in us in harmony with God's mind. Such a character is precious. It will be in God's mercy perpetuated for ever. It is not improper to call such a character spirit, for it has been developed by the Spirit. It is a reality. It is something built into a man's make-up; it is part of himself; it is not an entity which can be given or taken away, as the Holy Spirit Gift. The very conformation of the brain, and the facial reflection of this character are the physical expression of this spirit character. And this will be made permanent when this corruptible puts on incorruption.

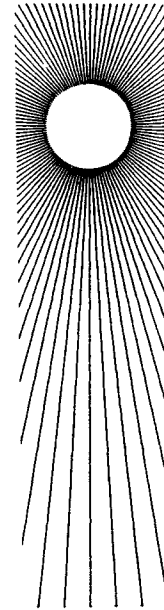
The Spirit of God in the believer is shown on the diagram as a steady line from the beginning. This makes it plain that the work of the Holy Spirit was equally effective in the believer before as after Pentecost.

Spirit Bodies We have considered the Spirit of God in the believer in its present aspect of the growth of the new man of the Spirit. This is the first stage of the making of a son of God. There awaits a perfecting of *the new man* when Christ comes, and "this corruption puts on incorruption." Instead of the life being in the blood, the body is energised directly by Spirit — it is a Spirit body. This change is described by Paul as a quickening, a start of life in a greater sense than at baptism. He says: "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Christ 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. 8:11). Seen collectively, these Spirit beings, like to the angels, are described as "a building fitly framed together;" "an holy temple in the Lord, in whom ye are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. 2:22).

The Spirit Of Man While dealing with the Spirit of God in the believer, it may be helpful to note the use of *spirit* as referring to the human spirit. Paul wrote: "Glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. 6:20). Man is body, soul and spirit, and the spirit of man distinguishes him

from the lower creation. The power of God's word can elevate his spirit into a godly spirit. It is necessary to keep in mind this use of *spirit* when studying the scriptures on the Spirit of God in us. A few quotations will sketch the way spirit is used of man. "Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile" (Ps. 32:2). The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matt. 26:41). "The Lord saveth such as be of a contrite spirit" (Ps. 34:18). In the Proverbs we read of a faithful spirit, a humble spirit, a proud spirit.

CHAPTER THREE



Sanctified by the Word

*Does this Involve
the Guidance of
the Holy Spirit Gift?*

We have already shown that it is the word of God, the Bible as we have it, that is the power to transform a man's mind. Those who believe they have the Holy Spirit Gift today do not deny this, but believe that the Holy Spirit Gift is an extra element of divine grace since Pentecost which aids the believer; it counsels and guides him in the truth and so leads him to a fuller appreciation of the word. We have said this is not true, and so far have argued that these brethren have misunderstood the nature and operation of the Holy Spirit Gift. We now pursue the line that the scriptures are against the idea of an extra influence operating in the believer since Pentecost. Our topics for this chapter are:

1. Believers before the time of Christ were perfected, without the Spirit Gift.
2. Proof that God intends the Word to be the all sufficient power to change men's minds.
3. A look at the proposition that the *Word* can be more than the written word we call the Bible.

4. A misunderstanding on "the letter and the spirit."
5. The idea of God and Christ abiding in us.

Sanctification of the believer before the time of Christ

If as some are saying, the receiving of the Holy Spirit Gift is a vital element in the process of our sanctification, there is the problem of the sanctification of those who lived before Pentecost. It would seem that not having this Holy Spirit Gift, their sanctification could not be as complete as those in New Testament times. Or, if one says their sanctification was as complete, how then is the Holy Spirit Gift an essential to the New Testament times? For if Old Testament believers could be perfected without the Holy Spirit Gift, why could not New Testament believers also be perfected without possessing the Holy Spirit Gift? This poses an unanswerable dilemma for those who believe in the present possession of the Holy Spirit Gift. Of course, for "christians" in the churches this is not felt as a problem; they will cheerfully say that the standards of righteousness attained in the times before Christ were inferior to those after. For them the christian dispensation is of a higher quality than that under the Law and the Prophets. But for the brethren and sisters believing that all the faithful from the beginning are all saved in Jesus Christ, are all partakers of the promises made to Abraham, will all inherit the earth, and possess divine nature, will all be part of the 144,000 with the Father's name written in the forehead, in whom is no guile and who are faultless before the throne - for us believing the Truth, there can be no discrimination between those living before and after Christ. In fact, the Bible emphasis is on the excellence of those early times. Certainly they were fully sanctified - and without the possession of the Holy Spirit Gift. We remind ourselves of the record of three of God's great men, Noah, Job, and Abraham "the friend of God."

"Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God" (Gen. 6:9).

"Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil" (Job 2:3).

Abraham obeyed My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My laws" (Gen. 26:5).

We know that these men are among the towering trees of the kingdom. No one dare say that they were not fully sanctified. They are held out to us by Paul in Hebrews 11 as our examples. God perfected their characters by the power of His Word and angelic supervision of their lives; and this being so, why should

there now be a further essential, the Holy Spirit Gift, to accomplish this sanctification in our lives?

The simple fact is that all the virtues spoken of by the New Testament writers were known and practised in Old Testament times. And the wise man tells us this was through the power of God's word.

"My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee, so that thou incline thy ear unto wisdom, and apply thy heart to understanding; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord giveth wisdom; out of His mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly. He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints. Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea every good path" (Proverbs 2:1-9).

"My son, forget not the law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart" (Proverbs 3:1-3).

The process of sanctification in the Old and New Testament is the same, and this destroys the theory that we need the Holy Spirit Gift today to lead us into sanctification. A consideration of the believers before the time of Christ reveals a fundamental weakness in the theory.

The Word of God is All-Sufficient

In contrast with the belief that the possession of the Holy Spirit Gift is necessary to overcome sin and attain to holiness of life, the Bible continually stresses that the Word itself is sufficient to do this. The simple

quotation of some of these passages will effectively make the point.

1. *Paul to Timothy*: "All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). So the man of God is made complete, or "perfect" in the A.V., by the working of the scripture, reproving, correcting, instructing the mind that is responsive to it. He does not say that the Holy Spirit Gift does this.

2. *Paul to the elders of the Ephesian ecclesia*: "And now brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."

exceptions are listed on pg 14-15

Previously, he remarked that they were in possession of the Holy Spirit: but he does not commend them to the working of the Holy Spirit Gift, but to the Word of God's grace.

3. *The teaching of the Master:* Addressing his Father he says: "Sanctify them (the apostles) through Thy truth: Thy word is truth" (John 17:16). Here is the fundamental plainly revealed; it is the truth of God that gradually brings about our sanctification. And this Truth has come to us through the Word. The "Word" is the teaching from God through Jesus, and those before. Jesus says so earlier in this prayer: "I have manifested Thy name unto the men which thou hast given me out of the world: Thine they were, and Thou hast given them me; and they have kept Thy word; for I have given them the words which Thou hast given me; and they have received them."

4. *The Lord's definition of his words:* Again, in the plainest terms, Jesus says that our spiritual quickening comes from his words or teaching (and of all the rest of scripture) accepted with full belief.

"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you that believe not" (John 6:63-64).

5. *The Lord's statement of the Word's influence:* Yet another statement of Jesus confirms the all sufficient power of the word to transform: "Now are ye clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" (John 15:3). Jesus did not say that the eleven were clean by the inworking of the Holy Spirit Gift: The Word spoken, understood, believed, and obeyed was the quickening and cleansing power.

6. *The teaching of the Psalms:* The Lord's doctrine concerning the quickening power of the Word, was not a new idea. The disciples would be well acquainted with what the Psalmist had said. The whole of the 119th Psalm is extolling the wonder of God's word to convert a man into holiness and godliness.

"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to Thy word. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee . . . I will never forget Thy precepts: for *with them* hast Thou quickened me" (Vv. 9,11,93).

7. *The Whole Ecclesia Cleansed by the Word:* Paul says that all believers, all the ecclesia of God, are cleansed by the word: "that Christ gave himself for the ecclesia that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word" (Eph. 5:26).

In every one of these seven scriptures, in their various contexts, from Old and New Testament, the idea is plainly expressed that the word of God is the means by which God is sanctifying his servants.

These scriptures also teach that the word can have no power without the diligent co-operation of the individual. If the word is to reprove and correct (2 Tim. 4:16), one must be consciously applying it. As David and Solomon said, there must be an 'inclining of the ear,' 'an applying of the heart,' 'a binding of the commandments about the neck,' 'a taking heed unto one's way according to the word.' David is an outstanding illustration of diligent application to the word of God, and to the power the Word can have on heart and mind. "O how love I thy law, it is my meditation all the day. Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation . . . Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way. Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path. I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments" (Ps. 119:97-106).

The process of sanctification is one of understanding the word, receiving it, and consciously acting on it. As the parable of the sower puts it: "But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience" (Luke 8:15). There is, as we have noted earlier, the unseen care of the angels, but this does not alter the normal processes of diligent application to the word of God and prayer. It is reasonable to believe that our minds and conscience were so constituted in the beginning as to respond to the word of God and be moulded by its influence. This resulted in right character formation in the days of the fathers, and no doubt is still the way of holiness today. An additional Holy Spirit Gift is not needed: nor is it apparent anywhere today.

What is the
Word of God?

Some say that sanctification by the word of God does not necessarily mean the operation of the written (or spoken word) upon our minds. Jesus Christ is seen as the living Word of God (Heb. 4:13), and he can by his Holy Spirit Gift cause the word to dwell in us by a more direct process than the conscious study and application of ourselves to the written word. This idea cannot be justified from scripture, as we shall now show.

John in the opening chapter of his gospel speaks of the Word as part of God, and as existing from the beginning, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Clearly John is here using "the Word" in a wider sense than the message spoken by the prophets. He is using 'Word' or *Logos* - to describe the whole divine

purpose conceived by God, a purpose, John says, to reveal spiritual life in the earth (John 1:14). A few verses on, he says this Word, this purpose and power to reveal spiritual life, had become flesh. The Word was manifested in the life and words of Jesus, the son of God.

Now although John in these opening verses of his gospel is speaking of the Word in this fundamental and profound way, it does not alter the fact that *our knowledge* of this Word has come through the spoken and written words of the prophets, and of Jesus and the apostles. We remind ourselves of Peter's words, that in our being begotten by the incorruptible seed, the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever, he adds: "and this is the word which *by the gospel is preached* unto you." Truly the word of God is an incorruptible seed, it is unchanging and ever living, but the believers only had it by consciously responding to what was preached (or in our case what has been written).

'Word' in 1 Peter 1:25 is not in the Greek *logos*, but *rhema*, an utterance. The word of God for us are men's utterances, by the Holy Spirit upon them. This same Greek word *rhema* is used in other important passages, as Eph. 5:26, where Paul says Christ gave himself for his ecclesia that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word (*rhema*-utterances). Likewise in Eph. 6:17: "the sword of the Spirit which is the word (*rhema*) of God." So our acquaintance with the mind of God is through His Word — His utterances — and not by more direct influence.

Jesus tells us that the word of God for us is the spoken or written word. At the end of his ministry, he says: "And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not (i.e. at that time G.P.) to judge the world, but to save the world. 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. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which hath sent me, He gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that His commandment is life everlasting" (John 12:41-45).

This is plain enough; it is the spoken or written word that will be the basis of our judgment, not any *word* that we suppose we have received by a Holy Spirit Gift. It is a matter of men listening to, and receiving, what came from God through Christ. There is no direct Spirit power putting the mind of God, the Word of God, into us. The apostles themselves illustrate this. Jesus says of them: "I have manifested Thy name unto the

men which Thou gavest me out of the world: Thine they were, and Thou gavest them me; and they have received them" (John 17:6-7). So for them it was the word spoken and received by conscious reflection and willing assent; it cannot be otherwise for us. The *Logos* of God is in us only by receiving consciously the words spoken and written by Jesus, the apostles and prophets.

So the written word, though but cold print and dead to the unresponsive mind, can be a wonderful power in the receptive mind: it does not need the added power of the Holy Spirit Gift to transform us. We may suppose that the all-wise Creator so constituted His Word and our mental and emotional powers that they react together to produce the new birth and the growth of the new man. Paul indicated this when he says "the Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow; and a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:11-12).

The Letter and the Spirit

The phrase "letter and spirit" is used of the word of God. This is not using *spirit* in the same sense as Jesus saying his words were spirit. Spirit here takes its meaning from the contrast with the letter, and has the sense of inner meaning or significance. We may merely regard the letter of the word of God, or we may grasp its meaning. The word of God is only quick and powerful where it is taken hold of by the believer in sincerity and diligence. Paul several times exhorts the brethren as to the need to imbibe the spirit of God's law, whether Old Testament or New Testament. The Jewish nation listened to the word of God every sabbath in the synagogue, but it was largely the letter of the law that interested them; their circumcision was outward in the flesh, and not inward in the heart. So Paul writes: "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter" (Rom. 2:28-29). Later in the epistle he tells them to leave behind the old formal attitude of the nation to God's word: "But now we are delivered from the law (seeking "righteousness" by "keeping commandments"—G.P.) that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of letter" (Ch. 7:6). Believing in Christ had brought a changed attitude to the word of God, a change from serving in the letter to serving in the spirit of the law.

Letter and Spirit in 2 Corinthians

Paul's words to the Corinthian brethren are widely misunderstood by orthodoxy and by some brethren. His words in the third chapter of the second letter are construed to mean that *spirit* is an essential of the New Covenant, and *letter* was an essential of the Old Covenant; *spirit* is made to mean the Spirit outpouring on the day of Pentecost.

But in this very chapter Paul indicates that under the New Covenant, people could still serve in the letter and not in the spirit. His words are: "God hath made us able ministers of the new testament, not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life" (2 Cor. 3:6). There was a "letter or spirit" of the new covenant as well as of the old. Whether in the time of the old covenant or the new covenant, it was a serving in the spirit, and not the letter, that gave life. Under the old covenant the nation had largely made the word of God, the Law and the Prophets, of no effect by their formal attitude to it, seeking justification by works according to the law. This was observing the letter of the law, and so Paul speaks of the letter of the old covenant that killeth. The law had become a ministration of death (v. 7), a ministration of condemnation (v. 9), but this was because of their attitude of serving the letter of law. There had always been some who attended to God's law in the Old Testament time, with proper understanding and appreciation, and they served in the spirit and not the letter of law; this gave them a title to life, through the promises of God. Jesus himself was pre-eminently the one who served in the spirit of the Old Covenant, and pleased God. So when a man lays hold of God's word, whether old or new covenant, in its spirit and not merely letter, it shapes his life, God and the spirit of God are in him.

In 2 Corinthians 3, the actual contrast Paul makes between old and new covenants is not letter or spirit, but "ministration of death," and "ministration of spirit," where he is using 'spirit' to mean spiritual life in contrast with death. It is a different use of the word *spirit* from that in "letter and spirit."

God and Christ Abiding in Us

God or Christ abiding in us is an expression used several times in John's gospel and epistles. "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man loves 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 14:24). "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love

that God hath for us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (1 John 4:15-16).

These and similar scriptures are quoted when brethren are trying to justify our receiving the Pentecostal gift of the Holy Spirit. But it is merely an assumption to say Christ abiding in us involves the Holy Spirit Gift; this assumption is not necessary, in order to give proper meaning to the words. God and Christ dwell in us when their mind, and thinking, and ways are in us, and this comes from the Word of God, whether written, or, as in the first century, by the Holy Spirit power in the apostles, causing them to speak the words of God. There is such diffuse thinking on the idea of God and Christ dwelling in us that it will be useful to examine the matter in an analytical way. The following facts taken together are against the idea of our receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit in order that God may dwell in us.

1. The dwelling or abiding is mutual: not only is God in the believer, but the believer is in God. Our explanation of God in us, must also fit the idea of our being in God.
2. The language is figurative not literal; obviously God does not literally dwell in us. The figure is that of the vine and the branches — so Jesus says: "I am the vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit He taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, He cleanseth it that it may bring forth more fruit. Already ye are clean because of the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; so neither can ye, except ye abide in me . . . if a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered . . . and they are burned" (John 15:1-6—R.V.).
3. From these words of Jesus we can learn much. The relationship of mutual abiding here described is something more fundamental than the receiving of the Holy Spirit Gift. It is describing a life or death relation: in Christ we have life, out of him we are dead. In the natural, the sap flowing up into the branches and back again to the roots maintains a vital organic relation between branches and the rest of the tree. Jesus is using this figure of the vine and its branches to describe the oneness of mind and disposition between the disciples and himself. The Christ mind in them, like the sap of the tree, was the bond of the branches to the tree.
4. Jesus declares how this oneness came: "Already ye are clean because of the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me." It is the quickening word received in the heart that binds us as branches to the Christ vine.

5. It is clear from the Lord's words that the disciples were already abiding in him, and the emphasis of the parable is that he exhorts them to continue in him. So it was not a question of waiting for the coming of the Holy Spirit Gift at Pentecost for this mutual abiding to exist. The abiding existed before the giving and was apart from this. And the abiding depended on the word abiding in them, as Jesus says a few verses on: "if ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done for you." Christ would abide in them by his words abiding in them.

6. Lastly from this figure of the vine, the abiding depended on the steadfastness of the disciples. "Abide in me," "If a man abide not in me," "If ye abide in me," So it is not receiving the Holy Spirit Gift that makes the abiding, as something *God* does. The abiding depends on *our* faithfulness: "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love" (verse 10). So we see that all the detail of these verses is against the Holy Spirit Gift as the basis of the abiding.

7. The Lord's words in the previous chapter of John support what we have seen in the parable of the vine. In verse 23 he turns from the apostles to the believers in general: "If a man love me he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come and make our abode with him." It is the action of the believer in "keeping my words" that brings about the abiding. In verse 25, addressing the apostles, he says: "These things have I spoken unto you, while yet abiding with you" (R.V.). "While yet abiding with you" conveys more than just his physical presence: it speaks of companionship, of a close relationship and friendship. Jesus was abiding with them, and this relationship would continue when he physically left. The souls of David and Jonathan were "knit together" (1 Sam. 18:1) — they dwelt in each other's heart — though David had to flee into the wilderness.

So Jesus' words further illustrate the nature of the abiding, and that it existed before the Holy Spirit was given at Pentecost.

8. The recognition that the mutual abiding between God and the believer existed for the apostles before the Spirit Gift was given, may be extended backward in time. God abode with the believer in Old Testament time, just as in New Testament time. "Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and lofty place, with him also that is contrite and of a humble spirit" (Isaiah 57:15). God by His word has always been in the hearts of his children. This abiding in us is not some peculiarity dependent on the giving of the Holy Spirit Gift.

9. From another figure the Lord uses later, we may add in

confirmation that the abiding and dwelling mutually between the believer on the one hand, and God and Christ on the other, is intended to describe a oneness of mind and fellowship, and not a possession of the Spirit Gift. Addressing the Laodicean eldership, he says: "Behold I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come into him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Rev. 3:19). This is a figure of friendship and oneness of mind. Though Jesus is in heaven and the believer on earth, the distance matters not. Like earthly friends, the bond is still real and strong; they dwell in each other's hearts like two lovers who may be separated. One does not have to involve the coming of the Holy Spirit Gift to bring about this relationship. The basis of the relationship is stated, and it is in harmony with all we have already found. It is: "If any man hear *my voice*." His voice came to the Laodiceans in the words of rebuke through John. The dwelling together depended on the initiative of the Laodiceans: to buy gold tried in the fire, to get white raiment, to anoint the eyes with eyesalve, that is, with the illumination of the Word of God.

10. Finally a word on the use of spirit in 1 John 3:24: "He that keepeth his commandments abideth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Holy Spirit which he gave us." First, this confirms that the abiding depends on our keeping the commandments, not on surrendering to the Holy Spirit effluence to work within us. As to the Holy Spirit, the R.V. corrects the A.V. by putting the tense in the past. This is not a continual receiving of the Holy Spirit as each new believer is baptised, but is a reference back to the precise giving of the Holy Spirit in power to the apostles. Through the power of the Holy Spirit in the apostles, they had received infallible teaching and evidence of the way of salvation, and God's grace and love towards them.

The moral issue in this discussion on the Holy Spirit Gift should be appreciated. Several times we have noted that the dwelling of God in us, and we in God depends on us. With God there is no variableness. His part is certain. His love and power cannot fail. But we must keep his commandments, let his words abide in us, 'keep his words,' 'hear his voice.' We are free to do this or not. It requires our determination, our steadfastness, our heart's desire. Here is the moral struggle and the over-coming of the world (1 John 5:3-4). And it is in this matter that the idea of the present possession of the Spirit Gift is dangerous. Assuming we received the Gift at baptism, its advocates tell us to surrender to its sweet influence, that it may lead us into the

paths of holy living. However much the advocates wish to minimise the difference between these two positions, a fundamental difference is there, and the next generation, growing up in this belief will begin to adopt the attitude of the churches in this matter: that some distinct effluence from God overshadows and guides them. They will cease to maintain their diligence in using the Word of God as the power to overcome.

CHAPTER FOUR



The Contrast

Between the Holy Spirit Gift at Pentecost and the Alleged Gift Today

*A Great Work
Of God*

As we read the Acts of the apostles and then their epistles to the ecclesias, we find that there was some change in the manifestation of the Spirit as time went on. At the first the Holy Spirit was conferred on the apostles that they might establish salvation in the name of Jesus Christ, and declare the ending of the Mosaic system of worship, and this was supported by a widespread pouring out of Spirit upon believers. Later, as ecclesias were formed, especially among the Gentile believers, the Spirit was present for the orderly functioning of ecclesial life. This is explained by Paul in 1 Cor. 12 where he explained the 'spiritual gifts.' Our concern is to decide whether any of this activity of the Spirit has continued down to our time; or has been revived in our time; or whether the case is that the Holy Spirit Gift ceased after a defined work had been accomplished.

Take the Holy Spirit Gift first poured out upon the apostles and the other disciples – probably about 120 of them (Acts 1:15; 2:1). It gave power and authority to the apostles so that they could continue the work the Lord had started; they

were to act in his stead, as he had appointed them in John 16. They had "the keys of the kingdom of heaven," so that "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. 16:13). The Holy Spirit, their "advocate," "led them into all truth" (John 16:19), so that their preaching was "by the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven" (1 Peter 1:12). Their obvious power and authority is apparent in the record of the Acts, and is illustrated by the following quotations: "And great fear came upon all the ecclesia, and upon as many as heard these things." "Of the rest durst no man join himself unto them: but the people magnified them;" "Behold ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood on us;" "and with great power gave the apostles witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all;" "and the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly: and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith" (Acts 5:13; 5:28; 4:33; 6:7).

From Jerusalem the same superhuman advocacy of God's salvation extended outwards to the ends of the earth, even as Jesus had promised: "But ye shall receive *power* after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). The record in the Acts shows it was so. The twelve were joined by Paul, and the power of the Holy Spirit in them caused the light of the Truth to shine in Pagan darkness. It guided their steps, as with Paul and his companions: "they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not;" it released Paul and Silas from the prison at the midnight hour; it caused them to speak boldly in the synagogues "disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God;" disease, evil spirits, even death itself was overcome by their power: no wonder the record says: "So mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed" (Acts 19:8; 12:20).

This was a manifest work of God by His Holy Spirit, acting directly on the men He was using. The essence of the matter was an authoritative work of *teaching*: preaching the gospel and witnessing to the Truth of God's work. Some brethren today are claiming that the real meaning of the Holy Spirit Gift was the conferring of an inner grace on the believer for the guidance of his life. The reader may be reminded of a quotation in our first chapter: "God bore witness to His gift of the Spirit in the first century by miraculous signs, and by these it was recognised. But the primary purpose of the gift for believers as a whole was

to help them live lives acceptable to Him, and therefore this reality persisted even when the signs ceased; and was of the essence of the matter even when the signs were there." This surely is not a correct presentation of what we read in the Acts of the Apostles. The picture there is of a wide-sweeping work, authorised, guided, managed by the Holy Spirit, in which certain men were the agents for the action of the Spirit. It was not a matter of an essential inner grace, and some outward signs thrown in. It was a work of preaching authoritatively revealing God's mind to Jew and then to Gentile. Nothing like the picture in the Acts exists today.

The Holy Spirit was Power: Where is the Power Today?

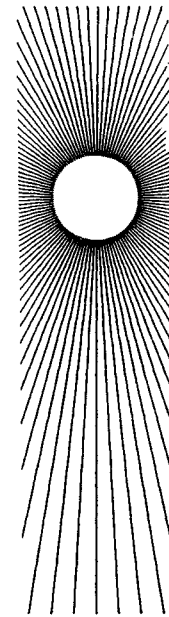
The proposition that the visible miraculous part of the Gift has ceased, and an inner grace has continued is a false idea; a false idea prevalent in the churches. As the inner grace that it is claimed has continued to our times is something not obvious, or outward, the claim can be made without having to demonstrate it really exists. This may seem to some a convenient way of avoiding proof of the existence of the Holy Spirit Gift today. But the proposition will not stand up to the light of scripture. As we look through the Bible, we find that where men had the Spirit, it was always apparent that they had it. And so it would be today. As soon as the Spirit was given to the seventy elders to help Moses in the overseeing of Israel, it was quite obvious they had it: "When the Spirit rested on them they prophesied, and did not cease" (Num. 11:26). Two who remained in the camp did likewise to the surprise of the onlookers (Vv. 26-28). It was manifest that Saul had the Spirit (1 Sam. 10:6-7); likewise David (1 Sam. 17:34-35). So with John the Baptist: "John did no miracle," but his speech, his authoritative words, had obviously more than human power, as is apparent from reading Matthew 3. Jesus said of him: "He was a burning and a shining light." Throughout the Acts of the Apostles, ignoring the miracles that were done, the speech and wisdom of the Apostles had obvious power, that was seen by friend and foe alike: "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled" (Acts 4:13). The power of the Holy Spirit was manifest in what they said, quite apart from working miracles. If brethren today had the Spirit, it would be similarly apparent.

The Spirit Gift at Pentecost was described as *power*, whatever form it took in different individuals. Jesus said: "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). Peter, on the day of Pentecost, said that believers

would share in this Holy Spirit outpouring; and brethren today are claiming that this promise comes down to us. So if we receive the Holy Spirit, it is receiving *power*. Power is something manifest. If brethren have the Holy Spirit they would reveal its power in some form. But they do not.

Paul in Corinthians also shows that the presence of the Holy Spirit was a power. He uses the word 'manifestation.' He describes all aspects of the Holy Spirit Gift as a manifestation of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:7-11). It was something manifest, not hidden. So it would be today. If these brethren have the Spirit leading them into Truth, it will be manifest that they have the Spirit; and no doubt God would, as of old, support them with "signs following." The absence of visible proof that they have the Spirit, is evidence that they have not got the Spirit.

CHAPTER FIVE



The Spirit Gifts in the First Century Ecclesias

The First Century Eldership

This chapter continues the theme of the previous chapter, examining the first century manifestation of the Gift, to see if there is anything equivalent today. As we said at the opening of the previous chapter, after the tremendous outpouring of Spirit in the early days at Jerusalem, there was later a development into a more orderly operation of the Spirit for the guidance of the newly formed ecclesias. This is dealt with in detail by Paul in the twelfth chapter of his letter to the Corinthians, and in his fourth chapter to the Ephesians. Although we have "gifts" in the plural here, it will be manifest on studying the chapters that it is the same Holy Spirit Gift starting at Pentecost. As Paul says "there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit."

The study of these two chapters will bring two important conclusions. First, that the Gift was not received by all the believers, but rather certain ones received it for the benefit of all. Once this is accepted, it is the end of the belief that we now

receive the Gift for our spiritual guidance. For if the main body of believers did not then have it, there is no need for us now to have it. The second conclusion will be that, although there were various parts of the Holy Spirit Gift, this does not justify dividing it into the *miraculous* part and the *non-miraculous* (a division desired by those who say the non-miraculous aspects have continued to our time). All the parts of *diversities of Gifts* were essential and complementary, adding up to a whole, a "ministration of the Spirit." There was a unity and fitness about this manifestation of the Spirit, as becomes all God's works. If today there is the Gift of the Holy Spirit in the ecclesia, then it will be manifest with the same completeness as then.

Before studying 1 Corinthians, chapter 12, a quotation from Bro. Thomas, *Eureka* vol. 1 (pp. 161-163) (pp. 136-137 new edition), will give some useful information:

"The assemblies of the faithful in Christ were constituted of two classes of saints – the *rulers* and the *ruled*. 'Obey them that have the rule over you,' says Paul, 'and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account (Heb. 13:17). 'The Elders which are among you,' says Peter, 'I exhort, who am also an elder . . . feed the flock of the Deity which is with you, taking the oversight, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; not as *domineering over THE HERITAGES*, but being examples of the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (1 Pet. 5:1).

"These official brethren, called *episcopoi* and *diakonoi*, 'overseers and assistants' (Phil. 1:1), constituted the *pneumatikoi*, or spirituals, of the congregations, because they were endowed with *pneumatikia*, or spiritual gifts (Gal. 6:1), while the rest of the saints, constituting the *ruled*, were styled *idiotai*, or *privates*. To the Spirituals were given nine different gifts, called *spirits*, (*pneumata* – 1 Cor. 14:12) not for their own gratification, but for the common good. These spirits are enumerated as, 'a word of knowledge,' 'faith to remove mountains,' 'gifts of healing,' 'inworking of powers,' 'prophecy,' 'discerning of spirits,' 'kinds of tongues,' and 'interpretation of tongues;' all these inworked the one and the same Spirit dividing to each one respectively as he willed' (1 Cor. 12:1-11). Being thus ordered in Corinth and elsewhere, Paul said to them, 'Ye are Christ's body, and members partively' – they were all of the body, but it was only specially endowed saints who constituted the foot, hand, ear, eye, and so forth, of the body; these special ones were members *partively* – special parts of the whole.

"The official saints collectively constituted in each congregation the presbytery or eldership (1 Tim. 4:14); and that each

brother might know his place, they were set in regular order. They were called 'Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers' (Eph. 4:11); and were ranked as, '*first*, apostles; *secondarily*, prophets; *thirdly* teachers; *after that*, powers; *then* gifts of healing; *sixth*, helps; *seventh*, directors; *eighth*, kinds of tongues' (1 Cor. 12:22). This eldership thus remarkably endowed, was the Lightstand of the Ecclesia, each member thereof being a bowl, or vessel, containing the anointing oil, or spirit, so that when they exercised their functions in the midst of the saints, they were as trimmed lamps with their lights burning (Matt. 25:4; Luke 12:35). They shone collectively as a bright STAR in the midst of the body; and as the spiritual gifts were *sent* 'for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the building of the body of the Anointed,' the PRESBYTERIAL STAR is styled the *ANGEL of the Ecclesia*, from *angelos*, 'one that is sent' (Rev. 1:20)."

The picture presented in this chapter is that special brethren had the Spirit for the good of the whole ecclesia. Paul likens the whole ecclesia to the human body, and these brethren were the special members, like the eye, the ear, the foot, the hand, etc. The purpose of the chapter is to show that these special brethren with gifts must work in harmony, with no attitude of rivalry, but devoting their gifts to the welfare of the whole ecclesia. In this arrangement, with the ecclesia as a body, it could be said that the ecclesia had the Spirit, possessing it through their special members. They shared together this manifestation of the Spirit. Once this general picture is perceived, the occasional phrase that suggests that every person had the Spirit Gift is seen in the correct light.

Giving attention now to various phrases in this chapter:

Verse 1: The opening words usually give the key to the whole chapter. They are: "Now concerning spiritual (gifts), brethren, I would not have you ignorant." The word gifts is not in the original, and the ending of the Greek word for *spiritual* can equally refer to persons having the gifts, or to the gifts themselves. It is probable Paul intended to say: "Now concerning *spirituals*, or spirit-gifted persons, I would not have you ignorant." He is addressing a special class among the brethren. The context suggests this is the correct translation; Paul immediately speaks of spirit-gifted persons: "Wherefore I give you to understand that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed." So this opening verse tells that the chapter is about a special class of people, the *spirituals* among the brethren; as if someone

should say from the platform, Now regarding speakers, brethren — speakers being a limited number of the whole ecclesia.

Verse 3: “No man can say that Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Spirit.” Paul does not mean that one must have the Holy Spirit to believe that Jesus Christ is Lord. On the day of Pentecost those who were pricked in their hearts had believed Jesus was Lord, before Peter promised the Spirit. Paul means by these words that all teaching was by the Holy Spirit, originating with the apostles. It was by the Holy Spirit that Peter declared on the day of Pentecost, that Jesus was Lord. Peter says in his first epistle that the gospel of Jesus Christ had been preached to them “with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven” (1 Pet. 1:12).

Verse 7: “But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.” The R.V. has “each man” instead of every man, allowing the idea that all did not have the gifts. The important phrase is “to profit withal.” Brother Thomas says the Greek here means *for the collective good*; and the R.S.V. agrees with this, with the translation *for the common good*. If some were privileged to possess something for the common good, it indicates that not all were actual possessors. Not everyone had the Spirit gifts.

Verses 8-11: There are various gifts — of wisdom, knowledge, faith, tongues, etc. In Acts the outpouring is simply spoken of as “the gifts.” Here in Corinthians Paul speaks of a variety of gifts. But as this chapter explains, the various gifts were the manifestation of the one Spirit; it was the one Spirit Gift in a diversity of manifestation. The word used throughout the Acts of the Apostles is *dorea*, having the simple meaning of *a gift*, something “given.” In this chapter Paul uses another word, *charisma* — a favour from God. Paul uses this same word in Romans 6:63 “the gift of God is eternal life.” A related word used frequently throughout the New Testament is *charis*, grace of God. The use of a different word in Corinthians from that used in Acts does not mean that it was a different Holy Spirit Gift. The whole emphasis in this chapter is that there is only one Spirit Gift diversely manifested (see Vv. 4,6,11).

Verse 13: “For by one Spirit are we all baptised into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles.” Again, these words do not require that every person possessed the Spirit. Salvation had come to all by the working of the Holy Spirit, as we have noted in verse 3. Paul’s emphasis is that there is only one Holy Spirit, which has enlightened all of us, and has worked out God’s plan of salvation.

Verses 14-21: Here Paul gives his detailed parallel with the human body, to teach that each of the spirit-gifted brethren must work together for the well being of the whole community.

Verse 27: “Now ye are the body of Christ and members in particular.” The English word *particular* is used here in its exact meaning, “concerning a part.” The Greek word used is *from parts*. The identical phrase is used in 1 Cor. 13:9: “For we know from parts, and we prophesy from parts.” As Brother Thomas has explained, this must be describing the way in which different brethren could contribute different parts of the Spirit power. Paul continues: “And God hath set some in the ecclesia, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, etc” (v. 28). So this phrase *from parts* again emphasises that the Spirit operated in some of the brethren, not all. Each one who possessed it had to contribute his part, for the well-being of the body. In verse 28, we might note, he says, “God hath set some in the ecclesia,” with spirit-gifts. If only some had gifts, then it was not *all* that had the gifts.

Verse 31: “But covet earnestly the best gifts; and yet show I unto you a more excellent way.” These closing words of the chapter surely show that Paul did not think the Holy Spirit Gift was an essential for attaining to godliness, as our brethren are now saying. Paul says that the more excellent way of Corinthians 13, was better than the best gifts.

The character of the whole chapter shows that the gifts, whether wisdom, faith, knowledge, teaching, administration, etc. were not possessed for individual character building, but were parts of a system of divine overseeing of the affairs of the ecclesia. The chapter is explaining the working of the Spirit in the eldership of the ecclesia, for the instruction and direction of all the members. This, we shall now see, is also the sense of Ephesians, chapter 4.

Ephesians Chapter 4

What Paul says in Ephesians 4 is closely parallel with 1 Cor. 12. He is exhorting the brethren to keep the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace (v. 3). The unity of the Spirit—the outworking power of God unto salvation—has resulted in One hope, One Lord, One faith, One baptism (Vv. 4-6); and now the one Spirit of the Father has been given to the ecclesia to help in this uniting of the body of Christ. So, he continues, Christ has given to the ecclesia specially gifted men: “and he gave some apostles, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers” (v. 11); whose task it was to perfect the saints for a work of service in building up the body of Christ (v. 12), until the ecclesia had passed from the childhood state to manhood (v. 13). He exhorts them to cease being children, and to grow up into the full stature of Christ. (Vv. 14-16). So this writing of Paul confirms our understanding

of 1 Cor. 12. Clearly Paul is not writing about every brother possessing the Holy Spirit Gift to operate within himself for his sanctification. It is the possession of the Spirit by the shepherds of the ecclesia to aid them in the general building up of the ecclesia as a family. This is the sense of verses 11-13 of this chapter.

As with 1 Cor. 12, there are a few detailed phrases which if one were ignorant of the line of thought Paul is presenting, one might think they suggest everyone had the Spirit. In verse 7 Paul says: "But unto everyone of us (R.V. *unto each one of us*) is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ. This "grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ" was the Holy Spirit. Paul speaks of "the grace" given by him by which he ministered the gospel to the Gentiles, "with mighty signs and wonders" (Rom. 15:15-19). In Ephesus, it was received by brethren according to the measure used by Christ, some being apostles, some teachers, etc.

So in this verse, taking account of the whole section of scripture, it was not every one in the ecclesia that received this gift of grace, but "each one" selected for the work. Again, the emphasis in verses 11-13 is very clear. *Some* received the gifts, so that all might come to the unity of the faith. This shows a selective possession of the Spirit. The ecclesia attaining to manhood in Christ, was to have a fulfilment at that time, because Paul adds: "that we be no more children." In a greater sense they and all the redeemed will attain to the fulness of being part of the completed body of Christ in the future.

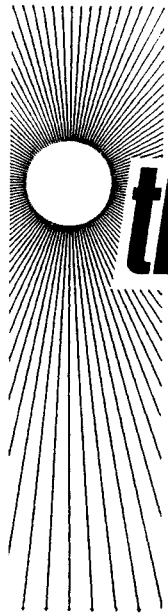
*The Early Days
of the Acts of
the Apostles*

Having looked at the working of the Spirit as described by Paul in writing to the Gentile ecclesias, we should note that the picture we have seen in the Gentile ecclesias is rather different from that at the beginning of Acts some 25 years earlier. There was then a fuller pouring out of the Spirit, appropriate to the needs of this starting of the ministration of the New Covenant. Thus on the day of Pentecost all in the house were filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4). There was a similar large outpouring of the Spirit recorded in Acts 4. We read that when the apostles had been arrested and brought before the Council, they were released, and the record continues, "Being let go, went to their own company and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit; and they spake the word of God with boldness" (Vv. 22,31). This giving of the Spirit to all, shows that some brethren previously

did not have the Spirit: they had not received it automatically at baptism, as some brethren are now saying. The Holy Spirit was not universally given, but extensively so at the beginning, as a witness at that time. There was a third occasion of a large outpouring of Spirit, when we come to Cornelius in Acts 10. Before they were baptised "the Holy Spirit fell on all of them which heard the word" (Acts 10:44). This remarkable happening had the purpose of convincing the brethren of the circumcision that God was indeed calling the Gentiles.

So we see that Christ was made available the Holy Spirit appropriately to the time and circumstance. The extensive outpouring in the early days was not necessary later on. In the Gentile ecclesia there was a pattern established of Spirit guidance: a number of brethren constituting an eldership, each possessing a different kind of gift, and contributing his part to the working of the eldership, and recognising a relation of more important to lesser gifts (1 Cor. 12:28). They were the shepherds of the flock, and carried responsibility. So Paul addressed the elders of Ephesus: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the Ecclesia of God . . ." (Acts 20:28). It is abundantly clear that the Spirit activity was limited to certain people who used it not primarily for themselves, but for the good of others. This is quite different from the idea of every believer receiving the divine effluence for their own use in their own lives.

CHAPTER SIX



Evidence for the Cessation of of the Gift

1 Corinthians
chapter 13

If it can be shown that it was God's intention to operate the Spirit Gift among men for a limited period, and it was His intention that the Gift should cease, then this fact alone will destroy the attempt to establish a Spirit Gift with believers today. If the gifts were to cease, then the proposal that the promise at Pentecost was without limit through the christian dispensation is not true.

Paul speaks of the cessation of the gifts in 1 Corinthians 13, and he does so in an unambiguous style. He plainly says in verse 8 that the gifts of knowledge, prophecy, and tongues would cease. "Love never faileth, but whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away." Although the word *gifts* is not in the text, it is to be understood; just as in verse 2 where *gifts* is included in italics. Knowledge and prophecy were two of the gifts, we know from ch. 12:7; and in ch. 14:3-5 Paul commends prophesying as the best gift. Prophesying was not *foretelling* but "speaking unto men to edification, and

AND THE HOLY SPIRIT GIFTS

comfort." But though it was the best gift, Paul says in chapter 13 it was to be done away. Surely if this best gift was to cease, there is no case for any less valuable gift continuing.

Objection to this simple assessment of what Paul is saying arises when we read on to the next verse, where Paul says that the knowing and prophesying "from parts" would be done away "when that which is perfect is come." This means, it is argued, that the ceasing has not yet occurred, because "that which is perfect" awaits the coming of Jesus.

First, we note in response to this argument, that it proves more than is wanted. If we accept the argument, it requires the existence today of the gift of tongues as well as of knowledge and prophesying; and this is more than its supporters would want to claim. The gift of tongues should be apparent today, and it is not. So there is something wrong with the argument. We shall find that Paul is speaking of a perfectness or fulness in the immediate future, and not a long way off. True, Paul does comprehend in his thought a fulness or perfection when Christ comes "For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face: now I know *from parts*; but then I shall know even as I am known" (v. 12). But he also has in mind a more immediate perfection when the ecclesia should have passed from the childhood state to maturity, as he says in Ephesians 4:1-16; "that ye henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine . . . but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ . . ." When this maturity has been reached the gifts would cease.

Attention to the last verse of the chapter will confirm what has been just said. Paul concludes the chapter, and his line of thought, with the words: "Now remaineth faith, hope, and love, these three; but the greatest of these is love." The *now* takes its meaning from the previous verse: "Now we see through a glass darkly; but *then* face to face." So the *now* defines the present time of mortality and probation. And he says that in this *now* state of things, faith hope and love are to *remain*; and therefore other things, i.e. the Spirit gifts, are to cease. This is the point: the emphasis on faith, hope and love remaining is also an emphasis on the Spirit gifts ceasing. If Paul had meant that the Spirit gifts were not to cease until Christ comes, he would have concluded with saying, "But now remain the Spirit gifts:" but he does not. The whole theme of this chapter 13 requires that it is love that is to remain, and the gifts to pass away. Love is "the more excellent way" than the best gifts, Paul says

at the end of chapter 12; and in chapter 13 he shows that love is sufficient for the needs of the ecclesia when the gifts had passed away. Seeing that Paul is speaking specifically about the future of the Spirit gifts, it is inconceivable that he would conclude "Now remaineth faith, hope and love," if he meant, Now remaineth the Spirit gifts until Christ comes.

Joel Chapter 2

We are not dependent on Paul alone for this teaching about the cessation of the gifts. Reference is made to this in the original prophecy about the gifts of the Spirit in Joel, part of which is quoted by Peter on the day of Pentecost. Peter's quotation is from the end of Joel 2: "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, etc." (Acts 2:17). A further reference to the giving of the Holy Spirit occurs a little earlier in chapter 2 of Joel. The A.V. reads for verse 23: "Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God: for He hath given you the former rain moderately (margin: *a teacher of righteousness*), and He will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain (margin: *Hebrew - according to righteousness*) and the latter rain in the first month." The marginal notes show that there is something peculiar here. A lexicon reveals that the marginal renderings are the correct ones, but the translators, not having understanding, were puzzled. This "teacher of righteousness" was the Holy Spirit. Jesus so describes the Holy Spirit, "the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things . . ." (John 14:26). The lexicon shows that the Hebrew word *mowrach* normally means teacher, but can mean rain. It is used in only one other place, Ps. 84:8, as rain. The usual word for rain or shower is *matar*, and this is the word used later in this verse. The Hebrew word translated moderately, means *in righteousness* and ought to have been so translated.

The prophet is saying that as rain comes down as God's blessing on the ground at the appointed time, so there would be a coming down of a teacher of righteousness as a blessing to the children of Zion. Moses speaks of God's word through him as the rain: "My doctrine shall drop as the rain; my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb" (Deut. 32:2). Moreover, as in nature there were two periods of rain to give the full harvest, so Joel is prophesying that there should be two "rains of the Spirit," the early and the latter rain. There was to be rain of the Spirit at the time of the apostles, and there will be another in the final day of the Lord. And if there are two rains of the Spirit, there must be a

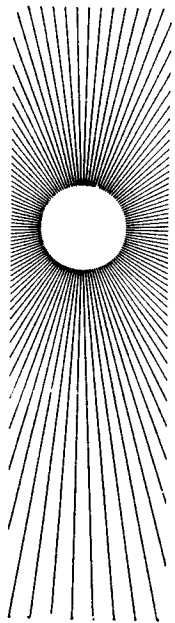
cessation of the Spirit in the time between. We are living in the dry time when there is no rain of the Spirit.

The cessation of the Miraculous Part Only is not true

As we have already noted an attempt is made to get round the Bible references to the cessation of the Spirit, by proposing that it was only the miraculous parts of the Gift that ceased. The visibly miraculous parts of the Holy Spirit Gift are regarded as an extra, belonging to the time of the Apostles, and the alleged more hidden aspects of the Gift are said to be the real promise made on the day of Pentecost to all believers; and these hidden aspects have continued. Let us see if this is a tenable position.

We have already looked at what Paul says about the cessation of the Spirit in 1 Cor. 13. Does he support the proposition now being made? Clearly, No! He puts together knowledge, prophecy and tongues and states that these shall all cease. It is not just the gift of tongues, but also the *non-miraculous* gift of knowledge. The three gifts Paul mentions are a fair sample of all the parts of the Spirit Gift, and this justifies the view that the cessation of the Spirit Gift applied to all its parts.

What Paul writes in the previous chapter (Chapter 12), is also against the idea of there being two parts to the Holy Spirit Gift, the miracle working part and the teaching, guiding, part. The emphasis of the chapter is that every different Spirit Gift was essential, just as all the members of the body, ear, eye, hand, foot etc. each have an essential part to contribute to the well-being of the body. The gift of wisdom, the gift of knowledge, the gift of faith, the gifts of healing, the working of miracles, etc. "But all these worketh the one and the same Spirit, dividing to each one severally even as he will" (1 Cor. 12:11 R.V.). This is the pattern of things in the first century, and if there is a Holy Spirit Gift today for the well being of the ecclesias, it will be after the same pattern. We have no instruction as to any other pattern of Holy Spirit Gift. To propose a semi-system of the Spirit in the hearts of believers is sheer assumption. Either the ecclesia today have the whole system described by Paul, or it does not exist.



A Study of Four Key Passages

Our final task is to seek an understanding of various scriptures additional to those already studied, where the Holy Spirit is associated with men. In this study it is important always to have clearly in mind the four differing uses of spirit which we have already considered. We have distinguished (1) God's Spirit in every believer from (2) a Holy Spirit *gift* acting directly on and through men in mortal life. Then there is (3) the operation of the Holy Spirit on men when incorruptibility and life are bestowed in the partaking of the divine nature in a material sense. And (4) we should bear in mind that *spirit* in a man may be referring to his own spirit — that part of his threefold make-up, "body, soul and spirit." Of course, Spirit has still other connotations in scripture, but it would be confusing rather than helpful to go into further detail. Sometimes in a passage of scripture and its context more than one of these four uses is involved.

We take as a first group, four passages all of which are regarded as primary proof of the present possession of the Holy Spirit.

Romans Chapter 8:8-10

"So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell 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."

This is the clearest expression of scripture that in some sense the Spirit of God is in the believer. The case presented in this book has been that the Spirit of God grows in a man according as he appreciates the mind of God revealed in His word, and brings himself into harmony therewith. We believe a study of Romans chapters 7 and 8 will confirm this.

It is important to study chapters 7 and 8 together; they are a continuing theme and the phrases in the early part of chapter 8 must be interpreted by what has gone before at the end of chapter 7. Chapter 8:1 should be read without a break from the end of chapter 7. If we do this, starting, say, at chapter 7:21, we find that "walking after the Spirit" of chapter 8:1 is "delighting in the law of God after the inward man" and "serving the law of God with the mind," while "walking after the flesh" is "being captive to the law of sin in my members," and "serving the law of sin with the flesh." So walking after the Spirit is giving attention to the law of God, walking after the flesh is giving heed to one's own fleshly desires. It is a broad concept of the things from God and things from our own hearts. The thought of a Holy Spirit Gift operating upon us is not present.

Paul confirms these ideas as he proceeds. There is a minding of the things of the flesh, and a minding of the things of the Spirit, the one leading to death, the other to life (Vv. 5-6). The carnal mind, or in the Greek *the minding of the flesh* is not subject to the law of God (v. 7); inferring that by contrast the *minding of the Spirit* is our being subject to the law of God. It is our choice, our effort; we either allow ourselves to follow the minding of the flesh, or we consciously choose to follow the mind of the Spirit, the way of God. In the one case we are *in the flesh*, in the other we are *in the Spirit*, either servants of sin or servants of God. It is a choice we make; there is nothing here of a Holy Spirit Gift influencing us to holy living. *Walking after the Spirit, in the Spirit, led by the Spirit of God*, are all phrases to be understood in harmony with Paul's unfolding theme of two basic positions *after the flesh* or *after the Spirit*. There is no dispute that *after the flesh* means serving ourselves, and so by contrast with this, *after the Spirit* means serving God; or as Paul said at the beginning of his argument, serving the law of God with the mind.

The phrases in verse 9: *Christ in us and the spirit of Christ*

in us, mean the mind of Christ in us. This is the same thing as the mind of God in us, and our thinking and doing in harmony with His revealed will. There is nothing here to infer that this is the result of a Holy Spirit Gift at baptism; rather it is the result of *serving the law of God with the mind*.

In the 10th verse of chapter 8 it should be noted Paul is making a different contrast. It is not between flesh and spirit, but between the body and the spirit. This takes us back again to chapter 7:22-23 where Paul sees himself as two parts: *my members* in which dwell sin; and *my mind* in which dwells the law of God. So in chapter 8:10 *body* and *spirit* define the two parts of the believer. In his body he is still in the grip of sin and death: but in his spirit, in his mind, he has Christ dwelling there which assures him of life through righteousness.

There are varying shades of meaning, or applications, of *spirit* in this chapter. If the reader wishes to pursue the matter, Brother John Carter's book *Paul's letter to the Romans* is well worth studying; also his series in *The Christadelphian*, (May to December 1955) entitled: *The Holy Spirit in the Church*.

Luke
Chapter 11:11

"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

Jesus is here using the gifts of a father to a son on a natural plane to illustrate God's gifts to his children on a spiritual plane. All that God does for His children is by the Holy Spirit — Whether it is the initiation of spiritual life, the growth of the new man of the spirit, or the final putting on of the divine nature in the possession of a spirit body like to that of the Lord Jesus Christ. *Giving the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him* is the briefest way to cover all that God does for His children. There is no need to assume that Jesus is referring to a bestowal of a Spirit Gift after Pentecost on all believers. This does not in fact fit the context. The disciples, conscious of their insufficiency and need, had asked Jesus to help them in prayer, and he has just given them the pattern of the *Lord's prayer*. Jesus then encourages them to have faith, to ask God for help, and believe He will respond. He is your Heavenly Father, and as a Father He cares for you. This was something that was operative for them *at this time* — Jesus was not prophesying about a future Holy Spirit Gift. The wide sense of the use of *Holy Spirit* here may be confirmed by noting the similar earlier statement in Matthew 7. The theme is the same: God giving to them that ask — and in this case Jesus uses the words *good things* instead of Holy Spirit.

"If he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil

know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good gifts to them that ask Him", (Matthew 7:11).

At this time the disciples (both the 12 and the 70) had already possessed Holy Spirit power, probably for a limited period. The previous chapter records that they returned from their independent preaching tour, in which they had worked signs and wonders, "And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject to us" (Luke 10:17). So Jesus' words about giving the Holy Spirit would, in their minds, *include* possessing the power of the Holy Spirit as they had already experienced it, and as they later received at Pentecost.

John
Chapter 7:38

"He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (This spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should

receive: for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified)." These words were cried by Jesus on the last day of the feast of tabernacles, and were probably uttered as the priest poured out water at the foot of the altar. This was a ceremony in which water was taken from the pool of Siloam and poured out with the accompaniment of trumpets and singing, based on the words of Isaiah: "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation", (Isaiah 12:3). Jesus arrests the attention of the large audience by identifying himself with this symbolic act.

Isaiah's prophecy of Israel drawing water out of the wells of salvation will have its fulfilment when they receive blessing and teaching from the immortalised saints, their rulers. In this future day of Israel's restoration and obedience, God's Spirit will be poured out upon them through the saints (cp Isaiah 32:15; Isaiah 59:20-21; Ezekiel 39:29) as it was poured out through the apostles in the first century. There is symbolic language in Revelation 22, that expresses a similar idea: a river of water of life flows from the throne of God, and there is a wood of life, watered by the river, the leaves of the trees being for the healing of the nations. This language describes the saints sustained by the spirit of God, and bestowing blessing and healing on the peoples during the millenium. The symbology in Isaiah and Revelation is similar: wells of ever fresh water in the one, and a river of water of life in the other.

In the ceremony on the last day of the feast, Jesus associates himself with what was being done, and gives it its proper meaning. Through him and him alone, this prophecy of Isaiah 12 would

be fulfilled. "Rivers of living waters" (the Spirit) flowing to Israel, out of the belly of believers, Christ's immortal brethren, could only happen through him. The pouring out of the Spirit, both in the apostles' time, and in the future through the immortalised saints depends on the death, resurrection and glorification of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Spirit was manifested through the apostles after the Lord was glorified. When John wrote his gospel this had taken place, and so he adds by way of explanation "for the Holy Spirit was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified." This Holy Spirit in the apostles was an earnest of the greater outpouring in the future when the believers themselves, made spirit beings, will teach and guide Israel and the world by the Holy Spirit power. "Living waters" will flow out from them to all men.

Acts 2:38-39 "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 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.

Those who believe in the possession of a Holy Spirit Gift by all believers today, use this quotation as their primary justification for their view. Bro. A. D. Norris says in his booklet *Being Born Again*: "The promise is unto you and unto your children." This is what Peter said to the repentant Jews at Pentecost, when they asked: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter seems to leave no gaps in the application of the promise: both in time and space it stands for everyone who receives the gospel: to you and to your children (as of time), to all that be afar off (as of place) and even as many as the Lord our God shall call' (for good measure). This message is as universal as that of John 3:5 and Titus 3:5" (p. 11).

We have in this series of articles, made an extensive study of the relation of the Holy Spirit to men, and we are now in a position to seek the meaning of these words of Peter. In particular there are two questions for answer: What is the promise? To whom is it given?

The Teaching of Acts ch. 2

It is impossible to give a proper answer to these by looking just at the verses in question. They come at the end of an extended and very important exposition by Peter of God's purpose, and before we attempt a precise answer to the questions we must see what the chapter is about. We will, however, state now the conclusions we shall arrive at. They are:

(1) the "gift of the Holy Spirit" they were to receive (v. 38), was in its immediate sense the same gift as the apostles had just received on the day of Pentecost; (2) the "promise" of v. 39 was a promise of salvation; and (3) the promise was to the Jew for a limited time, and also to the Gentiles, as those "afar off."

The teaching of Acts 2 is made up of a quotation from Joel, and Peter's explanation of the quotation in the light of Jesus' resurrection. We must therefore acquaint ourselves with the quotation first, and then Peter's interpretation. The quotation tells us (1) there was to be a pouring out of Spirit at a time when Israel's constitution was ending, when "the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon into blood;" and this would be accompanied by great distress, violence, and war: "blood, fire, and vapour of smoke" (Vv. 19-20); (2) the pouring out of the Spirit was to result in prophesying and visions (v. 12). Peter's discourse in this chapter was a "prophesying" or setting forth of God's will, and the record through the Acts is an extensive prophesying or revealing of God's will regarding the New Covenant salvation. (3) the results of (1) and (2) was that "whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (v. 21). Although the pouring out of the Spirit among men was something dramatic, this was not an end in itself; its purpose was to lead men to *salvation*. Salvation is the essence of Joel's words. The Holy Spirit Gift was "the teacher of righteousness" (Joel 2:23) bringing that salvation.

Now when we study Peter's application of Joel to the crisis of that day, we find he, too, is promising salvation to men who have become conscious of their alienation from God, and cry out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" He explains that Joel's salvation was to be found in Jesus Christ. "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." He is the Messiah, the long looked for Redeemer. He then tells them how Joel's "call on the name of the Lord" for salvation should be carried out. He says "Repent and be baptised every one of you in (or into) the name of Jesus Christ." This would bring them forgiveness of sins and salvation. With all this background it should be clear that when he continues and says "the promise is unto you and to your children, etc." he means this wonderful promise of salvation. This then is our first answer to the question, what is the promise?

Peter having instructed them to "call on the name of the Lord" in baptism in order to receive God's salvation, also tells them that they would receive the Gift of the Holy Spirit (v. 38). This must be understood in the light of the basic quotation from

Joel. Peter has already told them (v. 16), that the Holy Spirit in the apostles was the fulfilment of Joel's prophecy of the pouring out of the Spirit. The power of the Holy Spirit had amazed them, and it was something in the forefront of their minds. Therefore when Peter says they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, they would understand that this was something similar to what was then manifest. It certainly could not convey to them a hidden quality in the heart, to be received at baptism. They would understand that they would receive the same sort of power as the apostles. And it is apparent from the Acts that the Holy Spirit power was widely received at the beginning. As Bro. Thomas has suggested, the words of Peter were particularly applicable to those listening to Peter: they were devout Jews from Parthia, Media, Asia, Egypt, and many other places of the Roman world, and when they departed from Jerusalem to their own countries with this new doctrine of salvation in Jesus Christ they would use the power of the Holy Spirit to witness to the truth of their words. This was a very effective way, arranged by the providence of God, by which the Truth should have an initial spreading abroad, through a multitude of preachers, preparing the ground for the arrival of the apostles as the ambassadors of Jesus Christ.

We learn from Paul's description of the working of the Spirit gifts (1 Cor. chps. 12-14) that Spirit gifts were not personally received by every believer. Selected brethren possessed the gifts for the good of all, and they were the hands, eyes, etc. of the community. In this way the Gift of the Spirit was available to all; and so Paul can say "No man can say that Jesus is Lord but by the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. 12). This did not require a personal possession of the Gift, but a conviction derived through the teaching and witness of their companions, who did possess the Gift.

We believe, however, that the words "ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" was not limited to this immediate possession of the Spirit. As we have already shown in relation to Luke 11:13, and John 7:38, the Spirit received at this time was but an earnest of the future possession of the Spirit, in the putting on of the divine nature, and in distilling the wisdom and power of the Spirit to the mortal occupants of the kingdom. We believe Joel's words themselves extend to this final outpouring of Spirit. Peter's application of Joel's words do not make up their complete fulfilment. By looking back to Joel, one will see that Joel is speaking of a pouring out of the Spirit when Israel shall be no more ashamed. This certainly did not fit the time of the apostles; it belongs to the future. So we conclude that Peter is telling Israel of the promise of salvation,

and how to call on the name of the Lord; and that this salvation included the teaching of the Spirit at that time, with power and signs, but that the salvation in its fulness was the receiving of the Gift of the Holy Spirit in the possession of divine nature.

*To Whom Was
The Promise
Made?*

The promise was first, "to you and your children;" and secondly, "all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." There is something quite precise about these words. The first phrase refers to the call of the Jews, and the second to the call of the Gentiles. As far as the Jews were concerned, there was but a limited opportunity left: it was extended to those who were listening, and to their children. After that, the end would have come, the Jewish polity would be overthrown by the Romans, and the nation cast off for the time being as a branch broken off in unbelief (Rom. 11:20). Then, as to those "afar off," we have a scriptural definition of this phrase given by Paul in Eph. 2:13,17. "Ye being in times past Gentiles in the flesh . . . but now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were *afar off* are made nigh by the blood of Christ." "And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and came and preached peace to you which were *afar off*, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by One Spirit unto the Father . . . an holy temple of the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." These words of Paul give a full explanation of the briefer words of Peter. By the working of the Holy Spirit, Jew and Gentile have access to the Father, and will become a habitation of the Father by the power of the same Holy Spirit. This is Peter's promise on the day of Pentecost.

It will be seen therefore, that Peter in Acts 2:39 is not talking vaguely about a continuing Gift of the Spirit in the hearts of believers operating for all time and in every place, with an extra phrase thrown in "for good measure;" he is promising salvation to Jew and Gentile, a promise which involves at all stages the working of God's Holy Spirit unto salvation in them that believe.

There is interesting confirmation that Peter is referring first to Jews and then to Gentiles in this verse, by going back to the original promise in Joel 2. Peter, in his citation of it, concludes with the words: "whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." But Joel has a further sentence that Peter omits. Joel adds: "for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord has said, *and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call.*" The last phrase is clearly the call of the Gentiles.

Joel's two classes therefore, are those of Jerusalem, the Jews; and the remnant. Bro. Carter has reasonably suggested that Peter does in fact complete the quotation from Joel; and he does this in the verse under examination: verse 39 of Acts 2 being his paraphrase of the last part of Joel 2:32, compare "and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call" with "to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

Acts 2:38 is considered in still greater detail in the Addendum at the conclusion of this book.

CHAPTER EIGHT



**A further
20 Scripture Texts
on the
Holy Spirit**

We shall now look briefly at a further twenty passages, which make up the remainder of the references to the Holy Spirit in men. We shall find that the pattern of interpretation is similar to that in the three passages already studied. As the various passages are all generally similar in meaning, it will be convenient, instead of making a number of groupings, to take them in the order they appear in the Bible.

Matthew 28:19 "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them in (or into) the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." This passage has been proposed as teaching the baptism of a believer into the Holy Spirit, with the idea that he is filled with the Holy Spirit. But the grammatical construction just will not allow such an idea. If the text read: "baptism into the Father, into the Son, and into the Holy Spirit" the idea might be sustained. But this is not so; it is a baptism *into a name*; and it is a baptism into one name not three names. It does not read:

“Into the name of the Father, into the name of the Son, and into the name of the Holy Spirit.” This is doctrinally important; there is only *one name*. We have Peter on the day of Pentecost as the interpreter of these words of the Lord, and we must be guided by him as to what he meant in his final instructions to the apostles in Matthew 28. Speaking by the Holy Spirit he gave this interpretation of his Master’s words: “Repent, and be baptised every one of you in (into) the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 2:38). In Acts 4:12, Peter declares emphatically “there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” So the name of Jesus Christ must be equivalent to “the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” If we ask: Who is Jesus Christ? The answer is, in the words of Matthew 28: he is the Father, manifested in a Son, by the Holy Spirit. This is the straightforward sense of the words used by Jesus in Matthew 28:19. There is no warrant to read into them the idea that each believer was to receive a baptism of the Holy Spirit, as “the means whereby God communicates His blessings in these days of His Son’s sojourn in heaven,” as Bro. Norris puts it.

John 3:5

“Except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.”

Every man, and woman who attains to the kingdom of God will have been “born of the Spirit” in partaking of spirit nature, in the manner described by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15: “There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body” (v. 44) “And as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly” (v. 49); “For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality” (v. 53). In John 3:5 our immediate question is this: Is Jesus referring solely to the change of nature when he answers Nicodemus, or is he referring to a person being “born of the spirit” in some sense *now* as well? Is he referring to what Paul calls the *New Man*, born of God? The point has been much discussed. There is a good article by Bro. Thomas reproduced in *The Faith Of The Last Days* under the title *Jesus’ Discourse With Nicodemus*, where he blends both ideas together. He gives a translation of John 3:8 as follows: “The Spirit breathes where he pleases, and thou hearest his voice, but thou knowest not whence he comes and whither he leads, in like manner is every one begotten of the Spirit;” and Brother Thomas adds: “Thus are men begotten from above: by the voice of the Spirit breathing forth the truth when and how he pleases. In some places He will not breathe it at all; and on one occasion positively forbids its utterance (Acts 16:7).” So Brother Thomas sees the Holy Spirit word spoken by the apostles producing a begetting of the Spirit.

Bro. John Carter has a good and informative section in his book *The Gospel Of John* pp. 46-52, where he takes into account the Jewish background of Nicodemus.

We may debate whether Jesus intended Nicodemus to understand “Born of the Spirit” as applicable to the present and the future, or solely to the future, but this is not important in our present consideration. What is important is to realise that Jesus’ words do not give support to those who advocate the Gift of the Spirit to every believer at baptism. A little reflection will show this. The Lord calls Nicodemus a teacher in Israel, and says *he ought to have known these things*: “Art thou a teacher in Israel and knowest not these things?” (v. 10). Therefore he cannot be referring to some new thing, but to something that was then operative in Israel. As Brother Thomas says, a man is born of the Spirit by hearing and responding to the words of the Spirit: this was true for Nicodemus, and for all the faithful before him. It is out of context to refer the Lord’s words forward to a future pouring out of the Spirit at Pentecost.

“In whom also after that ye believed, ye *Ephesians 1:13-14* were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.”

The Ephesians were sealed after they believed. Paul ordained elders in the newly formed ecclesias, and they were given the Holy Spirit to oversee the flock, as Paul says of the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:28. The Spirit was a seal that they were His. A seal is an identifiable mark stamped on an article declaring it genuine, or giving it the approval of the owner of the seal. The Holy Spirit in the midst of the ecclesia was such a seal.

Paul says, in the next verse, that this was also a pledge, or earnest, of greater things. It was an initial manifestation of divine power, which could be seen as God’s pledge of a full giving of the Spirit in divine nature when he redeems the purchased possession — when the temple of believers becomes “an habitation of God through the Spirit” (ch. 2:22).

The phrase *the earnest of the Spirit* is also used by Paul in 2 Cor. 1:22 and 2 Cor. 5:5.

The same sense is found in Hebrews 6:4-5 “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance.” In the first century it was a *tasting* of the heavenly gift, a *tasting* of the powers of the world to come. Tasting goes

before drinking, as when Jesus was crucified: "They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: And when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink." The power and wisdom of the Holy Spirit in their midst was an earnest, a tasting, with the fulness to come in the time of the kingdom.

Another passage in the same class is Ephesians 4:30: "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye were sealed unto the day of redemption." Grieving the Holy Spirit was grieving God who gave the Spirit. This they did by misuse of the Spirit gifts, or by despising their authority. Israel were charged with doing this in the days of Moses: "In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them: in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bare them and carried them all the days of old. But they rebelled, and vexed His holy Spirit" (Isa. 63: 9-10 – see also the paragraph on 1 Thess. 4:8).

Ephesians 3:16 "That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his spirit in the inner man that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith"

The spirit of God and the spirit of Christ in the believer has been dealt with fully when considering Romans 8.

Philippians 2:1 "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels of mercies, fulfil ye my joy"

"Fellowship of the Spirit" has been the joy of believers in all ages. "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name" (Mal. 3:16). The oneness of mind of the believers binds them together. Whence comes this oneness? They all have the one faith, the one hope, the one baptism, which has come through the work of the Holy Spirit of salvation. They share these things together, as the body of Christ; they have in common the things of the Spirit. John speaks of this fellowship of the Spirit: "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full" (1 John 1:3-4). The apostles by the Holy Spirit (see John 14:26) made known all things concerning Jesus Christ, and the believers "continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). This was truly a fellowship of the Spirit.

1 Thess. 4:3,8 "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God who hath given unto us his holy Spirit."

Those who ignored Paul's teaching on holy living were despising not Paul but God. Sanctification or holiness was "the will of God." They had no excuse for refusing to accept Paul as speaking for God, because Paul spake by the Holy Spirit; what he said was supported by the power of the Holy Spirit in their midst. This is the sense in which Paul adds the phrase "who hath also given us His holy Spirit."

John also writes about the teaching that came by the Holy Spirit. "These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing (the Holy Spirit) which ye have received of him abideth in (among) you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you all things, and is the truth, and is no lie even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him" (1 John 2:26-27). Jesus had promised the apostles that the Holy Spirit would teach them all things and lead them into all truth (John 14:26; 16:13). This truth they had faithfully declared to the believers; and in addition, they had given to the ecclesia the same Holy Spirit by the laying on of the hands of the elders, for their continuing guidance.

Titus 3:5 "According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Spirit" (*Diaglott*: "by the bath of new birth and renovation of the Holy Spirit").

Some may read this in the sense that there is to be a continual renewing of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the believers. But the context and the *Emphatic Diaglott* translation will show that it is the *renewal of the individual* that is being spoken about, a renewing of the individual through the work of the Holy Spirit at the time of baptism. The whole context must be noted. "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures But after that the kindness and love of God our saviour towards man appeared, not by the 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 Spirit that, being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." The phrase here *washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit* is closely parallel with the words of Jesus to Nicodemus: "Ye must

be born of water and of the spirit." The "renewing," the "renovation," the new life, is by the Spirit of God.

1 Peter 1:2 "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus."

Peter describes here the steps by which the believer turns from darkness to light. The Spirit through the word cleanses and separates, or sanctifies, and this is followed by the obedience of baptism, described in a Mosaic figure as being sprinkled with the blood of Jesus.

That the Spirit operates through the word of God – spoken or written – is made quite clear at the end of this chapter. Peter writes: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren . . . being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible by the word of God . . . But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you" (Vv. 22-25).

Romans 5:5 "And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us."

The Revised Version corrects the tense here and reads: "the love of God hath been shed abroad . . . through the Holy Spirit which was given unto us." The tense here is *aorist*, describing something done in the past, and does not permit the sense of a continuing giving of the Holy Spirit. If this were intended the tense would be the *present imperfect*, not *aorist*. So Paul is referring here to the giving of the Holy Spirit at some time in the past; to the day of Pentecost when the outpouring upon the apostles gave them power to declare the grace of God in Jesus Christ. This indeed was shedding the love of God abroad, and was a continuing power to this effect among the believers.

Romans 15:13 "Now the God of hope fill you with joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit." The thought here is similar to that in chapter 5:5: hope, joy and love associated with the working of the Holy Spirit. In the quotation from chapter 15 there is an additional word *power* – "by the power of the Holy Spirit." In verses 18-19, Paul makes clear what he means by this power of the Holy Spirit. He says: "For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make

the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed, through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God." So "The power of the Holy Spirit" refers to the outpouring of the Spirit upon the Twelve and upon Paul, resulting in the mighty signs and wonders described in the Acts of the Apostles, leading the Gentiles to belief and obedience. The operation of the Holy Spirit was not limited to this, but continued to benefit the believers in strengthening them to endure adversity and to abound in hope, as the quotation states. They "abounded in hope" because their hope rested on strong foundations – the manifested power of God. This power of the Holy Spirit had operated through selected vessels like Paul for the benefit of all.

1 Corinthians 2:11-12 "For what man knoweth the things of man, save the spirit of man within 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."

So Paul says that the things of God are only known by the Spirit of God. How had the believer received the "things of God," and "the Spirit which is of God?" The next verse tells us: "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (v. 13).

The believer had received the things of God and the spirit which is of God, by the preaching of Paul; and Paul's preaching was by the Holy Spirit. Paul had already made this point earlier in the chapter: "My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of men's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." It was the power of the Holy Spirit through the apostles that conveyed the things of God to the believer.

There is an important phrase to note in verse 13: "comparing spiritual things with spiritual." Paul's preaching was in harmony with what the Spirit had already put on record in the Holy Oracles. By the Holy Spirit the apostles compared spiritual things with spiritual; explaining the 'mysteries' contained in the words of the earlier prophets. Paul in this chapter quotes Isaiah 64:4 that "the eye hath not seen nor the ear heard what God hath prepared for them that love him;" and then he adds "But God hath revealed them unto us (the apostles) by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (Vv. 9-10). It was through their possession of the Holy Spirit that they could search the deep things of God, and so their preaching was that "which the Holy Spirit teacheth."

1 Corinthians 3:15 “Know ye not that ye are the temple of the living God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?”

Earlier in chapter three, Paul has described the ecclesia in Corinth as a building – God’s building, built upon the foundation of Jesus Christ. So the context suggests that Paul is addressing the believers collectively. The believers at Corinth were collectively the house or temple of God (see also 1 Tim. 3:15) and the Spirit of God was in or among them through their spirit-gifted Eldership, in the manner he describes in more detail in a later chapter (Ch. 12).

The language here should be compared with similar language used by Paul in 2 Corinthians 6, where he applies the words addressed to the nation of Israel at Sinai, to the ecclesia at Corinth. He quotes from Leviticus 26: “Ye (the Corinthian believers) are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people . . .” As God desired to dwell in his nation Israel, so Paul says he was dwelling in the ecclesia at Corinth. One does not have to propose a Holy Spirit Gift to each believer starting at Pentecost; the concept belongs to previous ages.

1 Corinthians 6,13,18,19 “Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body. . . . Flee fornication: . . . What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

The context here is different from that in chapter 3. Paul is talking in detail of an individual, and the abuse of his literal body. At baptism the believer, body and spirit, belongs to the Lord. The body becomes the tabernacle, as it were of the new man of the Spirit which comes to birth at baptism. The new man of the Spirit comes to birth, and continues to grow, through the knowledge of God, through the reading of the word, through the teaching of the apostles; this is all in the ultimate the work of the Holy Spirit. As we have earlier considered in detail, God’s Spirit is in the individual, Christ is in the individual. For those who received the Holy Spirit Gift by the laying on of hands, there was an additional sense in which they were the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Galatians 3:2-3 “Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?”

The Galatian believers had received the Spirit; how had they received it? Paul gives the answer in verse 5: “He that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?” Paul and his helpers ministered to them the Spirit by their teaching, accompanied by the supporting evidence of “working miracles.” So the apostles ministered the Spirit, and the believers received the Spirit; verse 5 is a clarification of verse 3. The Galatian believers in general did not receive the Holy Spirit Gift, but they received the things of the Spirit, the things of God, through the ministration of the apostles endowed with spirit power. They had to listen attentively and thoughtfully to take in the Spirit message – they received the Spirit by “the hearing of faith.”

In verse 3 there is a contrast of spirit and flesh, similar to that which we studied in Romans 8: “Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?” is similar to “Walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit” (Rom. 8:4). The mind of the natural man, and the mind of God respectively.

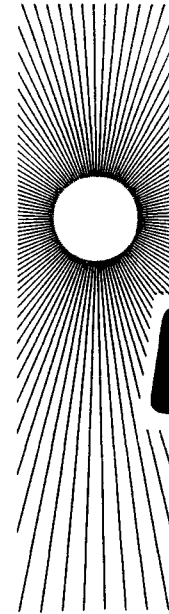
John’s First Epistle John several times refers to the Spirit which God had given them. He writes: “And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Holy Spirit which he hath given (aorist ‘gave’) us” (3:24). “Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit” (4:13). “And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth And there are three that bear witness on earth, the Spirit, the water and the blood: and these three agree in one” (5:6-8).

These passages are straightforward on the basis of the Holy Spirit given to the apostles for the benefit of the believers. The Spirit was God’s witness, John says. By its teaching and supporting signs and wonders, the brethren were confirmed in their faith and encouraged in their high privilege of being sons of God; they were assured that, in a figure, God dwelt in them and they in God. They were of one mind with their heavenly Father.

The idea in these verses is the same as that expressed by Paul in 2 Cor. 6, which we have already quoted: “Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them . . . and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”

John's references to the dwelling in God, and God in us, also reminds us of John's gospel record chapter 15 regarding the vine and its branches. God is the husbandman, Jesus is the vine, the twelve (and ourselves) are the branches. As the sap carries the vital life of the tree and nourishes the branches, so the word — the teaching of God ("Ye are clean through the word which I have spoken" v.3) — is the sap which sustains our life. But this is not everything: "My Father is the husbandman." As in the natural the husbandman cares for the tree, so God by Jesus and the angels, cares for the believer. The word of God, as the life-sustaining sap, and the angelic care, will bring forth the desired fruits of the Spirit in the branches.

CHAPTER NINE



Appendix: Consistent Christadelphian Teaching

In this chapter we quote from the writings of others to illustrate that the exposition of this book is consistent with the teaching of the Brotherhood since the revival of the Truth by Brother Thomas.

The Apostasy Unveiled

Our first extract is taken from *The Apostasy Unveiled*, being the record of a debate between Brother Thomas and Clergyman Watt.

Concerning the Holy Spirit, Brother Thomas affirmed:

"For myself, I believe that the Holy Spirit is the only Authoritative, infallible, efficient, and sufficient teacher of the Christian religion, in all its parts. If I be asked, what is the manner in which he teaches this religion, I reply in the same way that all teachers convey instruction to their pupils; *by words, either spoken or written*. Hence, it is by the sacred Scriptures that he convinces men of sin, righteousness, and judgment to come in these times, and indeed, in all the times subsequent to the apostolic age. God is simple in all His plans. He never appears to use

intricate means, when the end to be effected can be produced by simple ones. Simplicity is the characteristic of all that He performs. He rules the heavens, He regulates the seasons, and He saves men upon few, but powerful principles. If one means is able to make men wise, we need not expect to find any other institution than that one to effect the same end. Now Paul says that the *sacred Scriptures are able to make us wise to salvation, by the faith* (or gospel) *which is through Jesus Christ*. What more do we want than wisdom in relation to this matter? If the sacred Scriptures are able to make us wise, we need no other instrumentality. The Holy Spirit *by the word*, without infusing a single idea into it more than it actually and ordinarily contains, and without any collateral influence, teaches us all wisdom and knowledge that is necessary; It instructs man concerning his origin, his constitution, his sinful state, and how he may, though mortal, *absolutely and unqualifiedly mortal*, yet attain to life and incorruptibility; it informs him concerning the attributes of God, the creation, and the destiny of the earth and the race by which it is inhabited. Why, then, my friends, can we not be content with the means within the grasp of everyone who owns *the volume of inspiration*? If the ecclesiastical world were content to learn the truth from 'the Bible alone,' and it honestly desired to obey the Messiah, there would soon be an end to Presbyterian and every other ism, by which 'Christendom' as it is called, or 'anti-Christendom,' as it should be termed, has been for ages desolated. But the world loves not the truth; because, therefore, they have "not embraced the *love* of the truth that they might be saved, God has sent them strong delusion that they might believe a lie; that all might be condemned who have not obeyed the truth." The sacred Scriptures are not a dead letter, as the clergy teach you; they are 'living and powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword:' this is Paul's testimony, and ought, therefore, to be received as true by all believers."

This booklet, written by Brother Thomas records an imaginary discourse between *Clerical Theology Unscriptural* *Heresian* (an enquirer after truth) and *Boanerges* (who answers his questions). They discuss various subjects then current in religious circles, including the remission of sins, repentance, eternal life, the kingdom of God, and the renewing influence of the "Holy Spirit." Relating to the latter subject, the conversation is as follows:

HERESIAN: Do I then understand you to say, that the Baptismal Regeneration of infants grew out of the engrafting of the Nicolaitan doctrine upon the doctrine of the apostles?

BOANERGES: Even so. The Nicolaitanes, of whom were

Hymeneus and Philetus, engrafted the heathen speculation of immortal soulism upon the doctrine of Christ; and then taught the regeneration of the pagan "soul" by a physical operation of the Holy Spirit upon it. In this way was substituted by men of corrupt minds like "the Fathers," a *physical spiritual* agency for an *intellectual and moral* agency upon the heart in the regeneration of individuals.

HERESIAN: But the apostle saith, we are saved by "the renewing of the Holy Spirit" (Tit. 3:5).

BOANERGES: He also says, "we are renewed by knowledge" (Col.3:10). In this, however, he does not contradict himself, but rather makes the one phrase explanatory of the other; as if he had said, "we *are renewed by the Holy Spirit through knowledge*." The Holy Spirit renews or regenerates man intellectually and morally by the truth believed. "Sanctify them by thy truth," says Jesus, "thy *word*, O Father, is truth" (John 17:17). "Ye are clean," said he to his apostles, "*through the word* which I have spoken to you" (John 15:3). God's power is manifested through means. His Spirit is His power by which He effects intellectual, moral and physical results. When He wills to produce intellectual and moral effects, it is by knowledge revealed by His Spirit through the prophets and apostles. This knowledge becomes power when received into "good and honest hearts;" and because God is the author of it, it is styled "the Knowledge of God" (2 Pet. 1:2), or "the word of truth" (James 1:18), by which He begets sinners to Himself as His sons and daughters. "The word of the truth of the gospel," "the gospel of the kingdom," "the incorruptible seed," "the word," "the truth" "the truth as it is in Jesus," "the word of the kingdom," "the word of reconciliation," "the law and the testimony," "the word of faith," "the sword of the spirit which is the word of God," "the word of Christ," "the perfection of liberty," etc. — are all phrases richly expressive of "the power of God" by which He saves His people from their sins, and translates them into the *Hope* of the kingdom and glory to which He invites them. The truth is the power that makes men free indeed (John 8:32,36). Hence Jesus says, "My words are spirit, and they are life." The prophets, Jesus, and the apostles were the channels through which it was transmitted to mankind; and the spirit the agent by which the knowledge was conveyed to them. Hence, the knowledge or the truth being suggested to the prophets by the spirit is sometimes styled "the spirit" (Rom. 2:29). The spirit is to the truth as cause and effect; and by a very common figure of speech, the one is put for the other in speaking of them relatively to the mind and heart of man. So that the phrase "renewed by the holy spirit" is equivalent to renewed by *the belief of the truth testified* by the Holy Spirit (John 15:26; 14:13-14).

HERESIAN: In that case babes and ignorant men and women are not the subjects of a renewal by the spirit?

BOANERGES: Babes are out of the question. God's institution is not a baby-religion. It has to do with men of good and honest hearts capable of reasoning, and of examining and believing testimony: and who can be operated upon by high intellectual and moral considerations. A baby-religion is a thing for clergymen to trifle with when they play at hocus-pocus with the ignorant. Babes without sense, and a gaping multitude without knowledge of the word, are the subjects of the pranks they perform in the name of God before high heaven which make the angels grieve. Their power is maintained by keeping the people in ignorance of the truth. They profess to desire the enlightenment of mankind; but however sincere their professions may be, their own minds are so dark that they are unable to give them light, and those that are able they hinder. The clergy and their flocks are all walking in "the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts" (Eph. 4:18). The consequences of ignorance are fatal. An ignorant man cannot be saved in his ignorance of the gospel of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus; because it alienates him from God's life, which is obtainable only through a possession of that kingdom. The spirit renews an ignorant man by enlightening him. When such an one comes to understand and believe the truth his ignorance is dispelled; the blindness of his heart is cured; and a spiritual relation established between him and God. He is then in a prepared state for salvation by the grace of God through faith (Eph. 2:8).

HERESIAN: But doth the Spirit of God exert no physical energy upon man in his regeneration?

BOANERGES: Certainly it does; but not in the renewal of his character. It will operate physically upon "the new creature in Christ Jesus," when through Jesus it raises him from the dead (2 Cor. 4:14). For the apostle saith, "If Christ be in you (dwelling in your hearts by faith) (Eph. 3:17) the body is dead in respect to sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness. But (though your body be dead being under sentence of death) if the spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you (by faith) He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also make alive your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom. 3:10-11).

HERESIAN: Then if I understand you aright, regeneration is not an instantaneous mesmeric action upon an immortal soul: but a process beginning with the truth understood and believed and ending with the resurrection of the believer from the dead?

BOANERGES: Precisely so. The order of the process is to *hear* the truth, *understand* the truth, *believe* the truth, *obey* the truth in baptism, *walk* in the truth, and *inherit* the truth by obtaining possession of its promises at the resurrection. When the process is completed the believer will then have been "born of water and the spirit" (John 3:5), and be a fit and proper person to inherit the kingdom prepared for such as he from the foundation of the world (Matt. 25:34).

In *Elpis Israel* pp. 51-53, under the heading: *Elpis Israel* A Great Mystery, and expounding upon the statement: "We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones," Brother Thomas comments upon the binding influence of the Spirit-Word:

In writing to the disciples at Ephesus, the apostle illustrated the submission due from wives to their husbands by the obedience rendered to Christ by the community of the faithful in his day. "As the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing." This was an injunction of absolute submission to their Christian husbands as unto the Lord himself; because "the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Ecclesia." But, while he enjoins this unqualified obedience, he exhorts their husbands to return them due benevolence, not to treat them with bitterness, but to love them "even as Christ loved the church, and gave himself up *for it*." If unbelieving wives, however, were disobedient and perverse, and chose to depart, "let them; a brother is not under bondage, in such cases" (1 Cor. 7:15). The love which should subsist between Christian brethren and sisters in the married state, is such as Christ manifested for the church by anticipation. "While we were yet sinners Christ died for us," says the apostle (Rom. 5:6,8). This is the greatest love a man can possibly show, that he should die for his enemies; and this is the kind of love which Paul commends to the attention of the Ephesians; though always on the supposition, that the wives "adorn the hidden man of the heart with that which is incorruptible, even a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection to their own husbands: even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord: whose daughters such women are, *as long as they do well*, and are not dismayed at any threat" (1 Peter 3:3-6).

As he had introduced the subject of matrimonial love and obedience, and had adduced the love of Christ for them all as his ecclesia, by way of illustration; he proceeds to show the object for which he loved them even unto death; the relationship which was subsequently established between them; and the

sacrifice which they ought cheerfully to make for him, who had loved them so devotedly. His object in giving himself for the church before it was formed, was that those who should afterwards compose it "might be sanctified and cleansed in the laver of the water by the word, that," at the resurrection, "he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but holy and without blemish." "Ye are clean," said Jesus to his disciples, "through the word which I have spoken to you" (John 15:3). This word, which is defined to be "the law and the testimony," (Isaiah 8:20), is the great instrument of holiness and purification. It changes men's minds; loosens their attachment to earthly things; causes them to place their affection on things above; creates a new and right spirit within them; diffuses the love of God abroad in their hearts; separates them from sinners; leads them into Christ; and develops in their lives, fruit characteristic of that repentance which needs not to be repented of. The Lord Jesus styles it, "the word of the kingdom," (Matt. 13:19) and Peter, the incorruptible seed; (1 Pet. 1:23) and Paul, "the word of the truth of the gospel;" (Col. 1:5) and John, "God's seed;" (1 John 3:9) and by James it is termed, "the word of truth" (James 1:18), with which the invariable and unvacillating Father of lights begets His children, that they should be "a kind of firstfruits of his creatures." It is by this word that an individual is renewed or renovated; so as, in an intellectual and moral sense, to become a "new man," as appears from what the apostle says to the brethren at Colosse: "Ye have put on the new man, which is renewed unto knowledge (Col. 3:10) after the image of him that created him." This renewing affects the spirit of the mind (Eph. 4:23-24), which may be known to be renovated by a man having turned from his natural subserviency to "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life," to "righteousness and true holiness." When the mental disposition, called "the heart," is renewed, it becomes a mirror, as it were in which one skilled in the word of the kingdom, can discern the spirit, or behold a reflection of the Divine Nature. This image of God in a man's character can only be created by the word of the truth of the gospel of the kingdom. A man may be very "pious" according to the standard of piety set up and approved by his fellow men; but, if he be ignorant of the renewing elements, — if he neither know nor understand, and consequently, and necessarily, be faithless of the law and testimony of God, "there is no light in him." He is walking in a vain show; "in the vanity of his mind, having his understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in him, because of the blindness of his heart" (verse 18). The law and the testimony are styled by Peter, "God's knowledge;" whereby are given unto us exceeding great

and precious promises, that BY THESE," i.e., by the understanding and belief of these, "ye might be partakers of the Divine Nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Pet. 1:2-4). Now, the "testimony of God" came by the Holy Spirit, by which God testified in His prophets; (Neh. 9:30) and, in the last days, spoke through His Son (Heb. 1:1-2; John 3:34; 5:47; 6:63; 7:16; 12:48-49) and the apostles (Matt. 10:19-20). Hence, the effects of the word believed are attributed to the spirit; and because the word sets men to breathing in God's moral atmosphere, it is termed "spirit and life." These remarks will explain the saying of the apostle to Titus, "According to his mercy God saved us through the laver of regeneration, and renewal of the Holy Spirit" (Tit. 3:5). This is parallel to the saying, "Sanctified and cleansed in the laver of the water by the word;" for the reader must not suppose, that any man, woman, or child, who is ignorant of the word, can be regenerated, or born again, by being plunged into a bath. The Holy Spirit does not renew the heart of man as he renews the mortal body, when through Jesus he raises it from the dead. In this case, the power is purely physical. But, when the heart is the subject of renewal it is by the knowledge of the written testimony of God, or the word. "God," says Peter, speaking of the Gentile believers, "purified their hearts by faith;" (Acts 15:9) and Paul prays, "That Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith" (Eph. 3:17). Now, faith comes by hearing the word of God; (Rom. 10:17) in other words, it is the belief of God's testimony concerning things to come, which are not seen; (Heb. 11:1) and without which, it is impossible to please Him (verse 6). When a man is renewed by the truth, he is renewed by the spirit, and not before. There is no such thing in the scriptures as a renewed ignorant man. Ignorance of the testimony of God, and regeneration, are utterly incompatible. The truth is the purifier to those only who understand and obey it; (1 Pet. 1:22) and there is no moral purity, or sanctification of spirit before God, without it. It is only believers of the truth, then, who can be the subjects of a regeneration by being submerged "in the laver of the water." When they come out of this, they have been "washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, by the spirit of God" (1 Cor. 6:11).

The truth to be believed is the gospel of the kingdom and name of Jesus Christ (Acts 8:12). When this is understood, and heartily received, it produces a *disposition of mind*, such as was in Abraham and Jesus, and which is called repentance. Believers, so disposed, are the begotten of God, and have become as little children. They believe "the exceeding great and precious promises," together with the things testified concerning

the sufferings and resurrection of Jesus. He fell into a *deep sleep*; and, while thus unconscious and insensible, his side was opened by a spear, and forthwith rushed blood and water. Being awakened out of his sleep, he was built up a spiritual body, flesh and bones; and, by his ascension, presented to the Father as the federal representative of his church. This is the aggregate of those, who, believing these things, have been introduced into Christ through the laver of the water; according to the saying of the scriptures, "Ye are all the children of God in Christ Jesus through the faith. For as many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" . . . "Ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And *if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and HEIRS according to the promise*" (Gal. 3:26-29). A community of such individuals as these constitutes the mystical body of Christ.

Exposition
Of Acts 19

On 7th September, 1869, Brother Thomas delivered a public address in Stoke, England, based upon Acts 19. The following quotations comprise the relevant portions

of the address. His rendition of Acts 19:2 is supported by the *Revised Version* which renders the answer of the disciples as: "We did not so much as hear whether the Holy Spirit was given." Brother Thomas expressed himself as follows:

"Have ye received the Holy Spirit since ye believed?" You will observe that Paul did not say, 'Did ye receive the Holy Spirit to enable you to believe?' If Paul had been indoctrinated with popular theology about the Spirit he would have asked them, 'Did ye receive the Holy Spirit to enable you to believe?' because the theory is that we have to receive something called 'the Holy Spirit' or 'grace' in order to enable you to believe. But the apostle says, 'Have ye received the Holy Spirit *since* ye believed?' showing that they believed, and that men are capable of the belief of the truth without being endowed with something they call "Holy Spirit," apart from the Word. If we understand what John says, that "the Spirit is the truth," why then it is manifest that no one could believe the truth without the truth, and in that sense, of course, no one could believe the truth without the Spirit; but that is not what is commonly meant. The truth is contained in the Word of God — in the writings of Moses, the prophets, the Psalms, the discourses of Jesus, and the discourses and writings of the apostles, for, as Jesus said, "My words, they are Spirit and they are life." So that when we understand things right in relation to a man's intellect, that the Spirit in relation to it is the truth, of course, reason teaches us we must receive the truth before we can believe the truth. But in the days of the apostles, with the exception of the Day of Pentecost and the transaction that occurred in the house of Cornelius, the

* also
Acts 8: 14-24
Before receiving spirit
it was necessary for
Candidate to
"believe"
"knowest Name"
same "Cornelius"
+ Pentecost

Spirit was not imparted to men to enable them to believe, or before they believed.

"We are told in John 7:37, 'In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink; he that believeth on me out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.' Then John says, 'But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive, for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, besides that, Jesus was not yet glorified.' So that you see that all that believed the truth before the glorification of Jesus, believed that truth without having any abstract physical spiritual operation upon their minds or their hearts to enable them to believe. The Holy Spirit was given to those that believed, those who obeyed the gospel, and therefore Peter, when he addressed the Sanhedrim, told them they were witnesses of the truth; "and so," said he, "is the Holy Spirit that is given to all *them that obey Jesus.*" Thus the Spirit is given to the obedient, not to enable them to believe, but because they had believed and obeyed the truth; and it was not given till Jesus was glorified. So that they believed the truth because of the evidence that was submitted to their understandings, and it was that that convinced them of the truth. The Power of faith is in the evidence credibly reported. If it is not credibly reported, of course it is not reliable. But, being satisfied of the reporters, that they were honest and true, then faith rests upon the testimony of credible witnesses. And the power of faith is in the testimony. We cannot *will* to believe one thing or another. Faith is not at the disposal of the human will. If a man is arraigned for any offence at the bar of justice, the jury, if they are honest and true, cannot *will* to believe that that man is guilty or that he is innocent. They are obliged to suspend their judgment till the evidence is adduced, and then, according to the evidence, so is the conviction in their minds; and, according to the conviction wrought in their minds by the evidence, if they are honest and true, they give their judgment. It is so in relation to things religious, and it is in relation to things intellectual, in reference to any branch of human knowledge. The power of faith is in the testimony. So that where there is no testimony there is no faith. And as popular preaching does not, as a rule, submit the testimony of God — which is greater than the testimony of men — for examination, therefore the thing that is in the world called faith, is not faith; it is mere credulity. There is nothing so scarce as faith; it is much scarcer than diamonds. The faith, then, that saves a man, results from the power of testimony on his understanding and affections.

"Then the apostle says unto them, 'Have ye received the

Holy Spirit since ye believed?" And they said unto him, 'We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Spirit.' Now, that is a very incorrect rendering, because the question Paul asked them was not whether they knew of, or believed in, the existence of a Holy Spirit, but whether they had *received* the Holy Spirit since they believed. Their answer was a direct answer to Paul's question; and it ought to be rendered — 'We have not so much heard as *whether the Holy Spirit is received.*' That surprised Paul that they should be believers, and not know that the Spirit was received by believers. He says to them, 'Unto' (or into) 'what, then, were ye baptised?' This surprised him; he could not imagine what had been the subject matter of their belief; and it is manifest that he knew they were baptised on some basis; and he asks them, 'Into what then were ye baptised?' It struck him forcibly that they could not have been baptised into the Christian baptism, and yet be ignorant that the Holy Spirit was received by believers. Therefore, in astonishment, he asks them, 'Into what then were ye baptised' (or immersed)? And they said, 'Unto' (or into) 'John's baptism.' Well, this solved the whole mystery — Paul saw what was the reason of their not knowing that the Holy Spirit was received. Then said Paul, 'John verily baptised' (the word 'with' is inserted here in the common version). 'John verily baptised the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe.' — Here the word in the original is the same as that in the 3rd verse, rendered 'unto' — 'That they should believe *on* (or *into*) him that should come after him;' then Paul adds 'That is, into Christ Jesus.' 'When they heard this they were baptised.' Here the same word is used in the original, and is here rendered 'in.' 'There were baptised *into* the name of the Lord Jesus.' Now, John had said, 'I baptise you with water unto repentance' — I baptise you in water in the baptism of repentance, 'but he that cometh after me is mightier than I — he shall baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.' You will observe then that there are *three* baptisms alluded to here. First, John's baptism; secondly, the baptism of the Holy Spirit; and thirdly, the baptism of fire. The baptism of John was a baptism based upon the belief that the Messiah, the Christ, the Anointed One was about to make his appearance. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon those who believed in Jesus as the Christ that had already come. And the baptism of fire was that outpouring of the indignation of Yahweh on the Jewish State which destroyed the city of Jerusalem and the temple, and broke up the whole Jewish fabric of society; that age, in fact, which had waxed old and was caused to vanish away. It is that that Peter speaks of in 2 Peter 3, a baptism of fire which came on the whole heavens and earth and dissolved them. So that there

were these three baptisms. But in relation to us, and in relation to the name of Jesus Christ, whereby we obtain remission of sins, there is *one* baptism, and that one baptism into the name of Jesus is neither a baptism of spirit nor fire, for the spirit is not now poured out. The baptism of fire has been developed in relation to the Jewish State; but the fiery baptism which will wind up the times of the Gentiles, when they come to an end, that is yet future. But in the intermediate period between the apostolic age and the coming of Christ in power and glory there is but one baptism, and that is the immersion of a believer 'in the things of the Redemption and the name of Jesus Christ,' into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. John therefore baptised with water into the baptism of repentance, the basis of which was that, as the result of the doctrine which John preached, men were brought to change their minds. As the result of that doctrine which John preached, announcing that the Kingdom of God or the Messiah was about to appear, it separated his hearers from the traditions of the Scribes and Pharisees, created in them an expectation of the coming of Christ, not knowing what person it was that would make his appearance and put in his claim; and as the result of their belief of John's doctrine, it revived in their hearts a disposition similar to that disposition which obtained in the hearts of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob — the disposition of the fathers — the mode of thinking that was developed in those ancient worthies, when God made promise to them of things which were the most improbable and impossible ever to be accomplished, judging by things then existing in the world.

Thus John's preaching was designed to develop the mode of thinking of the fathers, and the disposition of the fathers, that the company of persons to whom John preached should be like so many *living Abrahams*, that the Messiah might come to those who were comparable to the great friend of God, the father of the faithful. John came before Christ "to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord" (Luke 1:17). Now, how could John turn the hearts of the fathers to their prosterity who were living when John preached? Luke did not say so. What he said should be rendered — "To revive the hearts or the dispositions of the fathers in the children," that is, those contemporary with John, "and to bring the disobedient to the just person's mode of thinking, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." So that there should be a people who reflected the faith or disposition of Abraham. And just the same operation is going on in these times. John worked no miracles. The proclamation of the coming of the Kingdom was all the power he had to develop a people for the Messiah. So in our day we

have no power to work miracles; all the power we have with which to operate on our contemporaries, is the Word of God. And, while this work is going on, the Lord will come as a thief to those who do not know anything about these things; but not as a thief to those who have been studying the things which I have laid before you tonight."

R. Roberts On
The Operations
Of The Spirit

In answer to a correspondent, *The Christadelphian* 1892, p. 133, Brother Roberts wrote: "The difference between the gifts of the Spirit vouchsafed in the apostolic age, and the strength and guidance that

God may now grant in response to faith and prayer, is the difference between what God may enable a man to do, and what God does Himself. A man who had the gift of healing could exercise that gift by his own volition, just as he can raise his arm or use his voice. It was not God's volition every time he exercised the gift, though it required God's volition to bestow it. This is shewn by the disorderly use of the gifts rebuked by Paul, coupled with the remark that God was not the author of this disorder, and that the gifts were subject to their possession (1 Cor. 14:32-33). But when God directs our steps or imparts strength for an emergency, the act is His own. It is outside our will or knowledge. We know not when it is put forth. Therefore we must not presume upon it. We have to commit our way to Him in modesty. Not being able to trace Him, we simply trust Him in the spirit that is prepared, like Job himself, to take even death at His hands. It is no doubt as you say, concerning Phil. 4:13; Psalm 138:3, that the assurance of the help of God to His children is as available today as much as at any time. At the same time, it would be a misleading description to call this a work of the Spirit. Truly God works by the Spirit; but the danger of confounding the mere motions of the flesh with the Spirit is so great, that it is best to limit that description to what we can undoubtedly recognise and identify as such.

C. C. Walker
On The Holy
Spirit

In answer to a correspondent in *The Christadelphian*, for 1931 (p. 358), Brother Walker wrote: "It is beyond question that we have the Spirit of God in the sense of being sustained in life by his almighty power.

This was Paul's emphatic testimony to the Greeks: "In him we live and move and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring" (Acts 17:28). See also the following testimonies (Job 33:4; Psalm 149:2-12). But when we speak of having "the Holy Spirit" we introduce quite another sense, namely that of inspiration. The prophets

were "moved by the Holy Spirit," and spoke and wrote things of God which even they themselves "understood not." We do not so, and cannot do so. Samson rent a lion as he would have rent a kid (Judges 14:6). If the Spirit of the Lord "came mightily upon us" as it did upon him, we could do the like; but who would have faith enough in his claims to try the experiment? Men have so much of the Holy Spirit in them as they have of the Word of God in their understandings and affections. To that extent they are "not in the flesh, but in the Spirit" as Paul testifies to the Romans (8:9). He is speaking here not of "the power of the Highest," as the angel Gabriel put it to Mary (Luke 1:35), but of the mind and disposition of God in Christ. For he adds, Ye are "in the Spirit, if so be that the spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his." Even bad men, like Balaam and Saul, have been "moved by the Holy Spirit." But what did that profit them? What is the use of making impossible professions? When you see people claiming the possession of the Holy Spirit, and not speaking as the oracles of God, and utterly unable to produce the slightest credentials of being "sent of God," what can you conclude but that they are labouring under a "strong delusion?"

Conclusion

Let us not be motivated by any such "strong delusion" in these closing days of the Gentiles. Soon, at the coming of the Lord, the greatest outpouring of Holy Spirit will be manifested in the resurrection and glorification of saints who have revealed "the fruits of the spirit" (Gal. 6) in developing a righteous character through the motivation of that Word which the Lord described as being "spirit and life."

summary

The Gift Of The Spirit

The gift of the spirit, could we have it in these days, as was the case with the first-century believers, it would, no doubt, be both a comfort and a help, as it was in their case. But it would not do to assume the possession of the Spirit, in the absence of the "manifestation of the Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:7), by which alone its possession can be known. Nearly every sect in Christendom claims to possess the Holy Spirit in their midst, just upon the principle of assuming things of which there is not a particle of evidence. For how is it possible there can be any evidence of such a thing as the existence of the Spirit, in a community of churches, of such chameleon-hued doctrine and practice as the Christian world. There could be little doubt on the part of any honest seeker of the truth, where the true faith was to be found, if the Spirit co-operated in gift and visible guidance as it did in the first century. In the record of the Spirit's work, in the initial century of the Christian era, we have the mind of the Spirit before us in connection with pretty nearly a whole century's operations on behalf of the truth, both within and without the house of Christ. It is not saying too much to say that these are an all-sufficient guide in respect of what constitutes a "Scriptural attitude" in our day. As a matter of fact, this has been found to be the case. The Spirit will be present again in all its immeasurable gifts and powers (Heb. 6:5; 2 Cor. 1:22), when Christ and his apostles and prophet-associates are upon the scene again (Luke 13:28-29). Meanwhile we have to be content with what guidance and help God may vouchsafe to his people in providential ways in answer to their increasing prayers that His directing hand may be with them in all they seek to do for His name.

— *Christadelphian 1888*

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addendum

THE RECORD OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

The "gift of the Holy Spirit" in present day circumstances continues to be a matter of discussion and controversy. Several writings have appeared since the first issue of this booklet, among them *The Holy Spirit and the Believer Today* by brother Alfred Norris, published by *The Christadelphian* in 1975, and a seven page Circular by brother Alfred Nicholls sent out in March 1976, headed *The Holy Spirit Discussion*. The opening sentence of the Circular reads: "The following notes have been prepared to set in perspective the attitude of *The Christadelphian* and the members of *The Christadelphian Magazine and Publishing Association* towards the question of the activity of God through His Holy Spirit." The Circular is written in support of brother Norris' booklet. In our trying to understand other viewpoints, there is a valuable paragraph on page 3 of the Circular, where Brother Nicholls makes clear his understanding of the passage in Acts 2:38. He there proposes that the words "ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" does not mean that the Holy Spirit would be the gift, but that the Holy Spirit would be the *giver*. The sense would be conveyed by using the words "receive the gift from the Holy Spirit." Quoting: "The point at issue is whether the phrase 'gift of the Holy Spirit' can refer to 'what God gives through the Holy Spirit,' making the 'of' subjective and the phrase equivalent to the parallel expression 'the gift of God;' as for example in Ephesians 2:8: 'For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of your selves: it is the gift of God.' So Brother Nicholls is saying that Peter instructs those listening to him that the baptised believer, in addition to receiving forgiveness for past sins, will receive, over the years, those things which God by the working of His Holy Spirit will give, — peace of mind, fellowship with God, and ultimately the divine nature and the inheritance with Abraham. Putting it another way, the phrase "receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" was a promise that God would work in them to will and to do of his good pleasure, Phil. 2:13. This is giving to Peter's

words a different sense from the more obvious sense derived from the context of the chapter—that Joel's prophecy: "I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, etc." had already received fulfilment in the apostles, and it would be extended to others, as some special happening, specific to that time.

Brother Nicholls has presented the same interpretation of Acts 2:38 in his extensive series on *The Spirit of God* running through the 1973, 1974 and 1975 *Christadelphian*. This series is commended to the attention of the reader, especially the last, the 20th, instalment which summarises the series. The series presents an instructive development of the working of God by his Spirit unto salvation through the ages. The following quotation from the 20th instalment under the heading *The Mercy Seat* confirms the paragraph in the Circular. "The true tabernacle, however, which the Lord pitched and not man, was founded upon the apostles and prophets, with the Word made flesh the chief corner stone, a community founded by the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, to become a living fellowship, the body of Christ, the temple of the living God, a unity of constituent parts who shared what was truly the gift of the Spirit of God through Christ—the gift of eternal life based upon repentance, forgiveness, salvation, and the redemption of the body." Acts 2:38, is listed against this statement. Under the next heading, *Exodus and Pentecost* a sentence reads: "Thus to have or receive the Spirit is to be influenced by the mind of the Lord, and as a result to enjoy the gifts which through that Spirit God has given."

Now, while not wishing to suggest that these statements of brother Nicholls are not true, we believe that they are not the correct interpretation of Acts 2:38. This we will now show. The matter is not unimportant, — for though brother Nicholls does not accept the view that all believers after Pentecost possess the Holy Spirit as an extra influence, his insistence that the words of Acts 3:38 "Be baptised.....and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" are applicable today must create confusion in the minds of many, especially those who do not study carefully all that is written.

Let us now look broadly at the work of the Holy Spirit throughout the record of the Acts of the Apostles. Throughout the whole record the character of the Holy Spirit operation is a manifestation of power, — in authoritative, bold preaching, and with supporting signs. Receiving the Holy Spirit was a distinct event of which the person was conscious. Spirit was *poured out*, people were *filled*. As

we emphasised when considering Acts 2:38, pages 56-60, we must see the operation of the Holy Spirit at this time in terms of the great prophecy by Joel. Peter leads off with this in his explanation, in Acts chapter 2, and it is the key to all that follows.

Clearly Joel 2: 28-32, and Peter's quotation of it in Acts 2:17-21 is not referring to the operation of the Holy Spirit in the sense of "God working in you to will and to do of His good pleasure." It is the language of special happening. Let us examine the phrases used in Joel's prophecy and how they echo right through the Acts of the Apostles. The phrase used in Joel's prophecy is *pour out* the Spirit, and this is the phrase used for the Apostles receiving the Spirit. Concerning the giving of the Spirit to the apostles, our A.V. reads: "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath *shed forth* this, which ye now see and hear." "Shed forth" is in the Greek identical with the words in verse 17, "pour out." Peter says Christ had "poured forth this, which ye now see and hear." Complementary to the 'pouring out' is the idea of 'filling.' Acts 2:4 tells us that when the Holy Spirit manifested itself in cloven tongues of fire and a rushing mighty wind, "they were all *filled* with the Holy Spirit" This is the starting point, and we shall find that there extends through the Acts *seven* occasions of giving the Holy Spirit in similar if not identical style. The seven occasions are:

Acts 2:4
 Acts 2:38
 Acts 4:31
 Acts 8:15-20
 Acts 9:17
 Acts 10:44 and 11:17
 Acts 19:2-8

In the record of each of these incidents the language makes it clear that the happening was part of the fulfilling of Joel chapter 2. We will omit for the moment the passage under dispute: Acts 2:38, and take the others in turn.

1. Acts 2:4:

The Holy Spirit was poured out on the apostles and all who were in the house. It is not clear whether the 'all' would be the 'about 120' of the previous chapter; it would appear so by the opening phrase of chapter 2 as a direct follow-on from chapter one: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place." The

Spirit was poured out, and they were filled. It was a distinct happening, of which each one would be conscious.

3. Acts 4:30-31

Peter and John, being let go by the Council went to their own company and made known what had happened. Then "they lifted up their voice to God with one accord" "And now Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants that with boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spake the word of God with boldness." So here was a company of baptised believers who had not received the Spirit, and now receive it in a dramatic way; they are all *filled* with the Holy Spirit, enabling them to speak the word of God with boldness. This is clearly a similar kind of receiving the Holy Spirit to that of the day of Pentecost. Is it not a fulfilment of Acts 2:38: "Ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit"?

4. Acts 8:15-20

Men and women in Samaria believed and were baptised, verse 12. Then Peter and John come to Samaria, "who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit: (for as yet he was *fallen upon* none of them: only they were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus). Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit." Again, is not this receiving of the Holy Spirit a fulfilment of Acts 2:38? Receiving the Holy Spirit is described as the Holy Spirit '*falling on them.*' This is an emphatic happening. Strong's lexicon gives the Greek word *epiipto* translated "falling on" them, as meaning to "embrace or seize." This was in line with what happened on the day of Pentecost.

5. Acts 9:17

Acts chapter 9 records the appearing of Jesus to Paul. Ananias is sent to him "and entered into his 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 Spirit." So Paul was equipped to bear the name of Jesus before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.

6. Acts 10:44,45; 11:15-17

Peter is addressing Cornelius and all his house: "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Spirit *fell on* all them which heard the word. 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 Spirit." When Peter reports the matter on his return to Jerusalem, he uses the same kind of language: "the Holy Spirit *fell on* them, as on us at the beginning; and, "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?" Surely the words "the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus" is a reference back to Acts 2:38. These words can hardly be limited to the apostles; they had believed on the Lord Jesus for years: they must include those who believed on the Lord Jesus as Peter preached to them on the day of Pentecost; and promised them the gift of the Holy Spirit.

7. Acts 19:2-8

Paul finds 'certain disciples' at Ephesus and asks: "Have ye received the Holy Spirit since ye believed?" This question is significant. It indicates that receiving the Holy Spirit was not anything unusual; surely it is a question based on the promise of Acts 2:38. We know the sequence of events on this occasion. The disciples were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ; Paul laid his hands on them, and "the Holy Spirit came upon them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied." This receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit was not of the style of God working in them for good, but a specific happening of which they were quite conscious; and it would be apparent to others.

The meaning of Acts 2:38

Such is the brief examination of the six occasions of the giving of the Holy Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles. They are all of one kind, and of the same style as the original outpourings at the beginning of Acts chapter 2, and all fit in as a fulfilment of the prophecy through Joel, "I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy ..." If six out of the seven references to the giving of the Spirit are of this character, would we expect the seventh, the foundation reference, in Acts 2:38, to be of a different order? The only reasonable assessment of Acts 2:38, both in its immediate context, and in the wider context of the whole of the Acts of the Apostles, is that the promise

was referring to the fulfilment of Joel's prophecy—an unusual, manifest, giving of Spirit appropriate to the times. This view is strengthened by the apparent references back to this basic statement of Peter on the day of Pentecost, in Acts 10 and Acts 19. The occasion of Cornelius and his house is particularly linked with the language of Acts 2:38, "God gave them *the like gift* as he did unto us who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ." 'Gift' here is the identical word for gift in Acts 2:38—*dorean*. Clearly the 'gift' in Acts 10:17 was the Holy Spirit which 'fell on' them. Yet again Peter says on this occasion: "that on the Gentiles also was *poured out* the gift of the Holy Spirit," Acts 10:45. With such clear definitions of what was meant by 'the gift of the Holy Spirit' how can one accept Bro. Nicholls proposition that the words are meant to convey a general gift of blessing from God by His Holy Spirit? Whatever differing meanings can be given to receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit in the gospels and the epistles, surely Acts 2:38 must be interpreted by its own context, both chapter 2 and the rest of the book of the Acts.

Seven references:

There may well be significance in there being seven references to the giving of the Holy Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles. Seven suggests a selection of occasions for the Bible record, so as to convey a complete picture. This view would require that all seven were matters of a similar kind: taken together they make a whole. This would require that Acts 2:38 cannot be separated out as dealing with a different class of things; they are all dealing with the fulfilment of the prophecy of Joel in the giving of the Spirit for the initiation of the way of salvation in the New Covenant. The use of a selection of seven occasions to present a complete picture is used elsewhere in the divine record. In John's gospel seven miracles are selected and presented as signs; in Numbers, seven incidents are recorded between chapters 10 and 36 to describe the character of the whole forty years wandering.

There is a passage in Acts chapter 5, that greatly strengthens the view that the gift of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:38 was something of the same kind as that given to the apostles. When the apostles are before the Council the second time, Peter answers: "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Spirit whom God hath given to them that obey him." This passage

teaches us two things. First, that the Holy Spirit was generally given—"Whom God hath given to them that obey him," which would cover those who obeyed Acts 2:38 in believing, repenting and being baptised: to them the Holy Spirit was given. Secondly, the Holy Spirit in them was a witness as it was in the apostles. So clearly they received 'a like gift' with the apostles; they had at least, a sufficiency of the Spirit that they would witness.

The Spirit of Truth

It should not be thought that the 'gift of the Holy Spirit' was essentially power to work miracles; this was a secondary aspect of the gift. The gift was primarily 'the Spirit of Truth,' enabling them to speak boldly with authority. Jesus had made clear what would be given. "And Jesus 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. For John truly baptised with water; but ye shall be baptised with the Holy Spirit not many days hence But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth," Acts 14:5,8. The 'promise from the Father' had been explained before his crucifixion: "But when the Comforter (or Advocate) is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, he shall *testify of me: and ye shall bear witness*, because ye have been with me from the beginning." John 15:26,27. And again in John 16:13: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: He shall glorify me." These words were, of course, specific to the apostles, but in the Acts it is apparent that those who believed on the apostles, in a lesser degree were able to witness by the Holy Spirit to the truth of what the apostles said. It is a worthwhile exercise to go through the Acts and note how many references there are to speaking or preaching boldly, and to the authoritative character of what was said, as for instance Stephen's defence. The gift of the Holy Spirit as primarily the "Spirit of truth" had already been indicated by Joel. He spoke of God giving the early and the latter rain, and it is defined as "a teacher of righteousness," Joel 2:23. 'Spirit of truth' and 'teacher of righteousness' are parallel.

Poured out on all flesh

Joel's words, quoted by Peter, say that God would pour

out of His Spirit 'on all flesh.' It may be commented that it does not appear that all who believed even at the beginning, received the gift of the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless all benefitted by, and were involved in, the giving of the Holy Spirit. But 'all flesh' need not mean 'everyone.' 'All' is probably used to emphasise Gentile as well as Jew. This is confirmed by the apparent repetition in verses 17 and 18: verse 17: "*your* sons and *your* daughters shall prophesy;" verse 18—"And on *my* servants and on *my* handmaidens ... and they shall prophesy." What is the intended difference between the two verses? Isaiah chapter 56 comes to mind, where God says: "Neither let the son of the stranger, that hath joined himself to the Lord, speak, saying, The Lord hath utterly separated me from His people... ..Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord to serve Him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be His servants even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer ..." "My servants and my handmaidens" in Joel's prophecy point to those whom the Jews were so slow to accept, but God would recognise as His servants. Joel's prophecy is making it clear that the Spirit would be poured out on both Jew and Gentile. And this we know came to pass.