

**THE POWER OF THE
HOLY SPIRIT**

VOLUME III

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A WORD TO THE READER

We could offer several rationalizations as to the plain fact that we must publish four instead of three volumes on our study of the Holy Spirit. The reason for this lies in the amount of material related to the amount of time. It has been five years since we published Volume Two. At that time we did anticipate a completion of our study in three volumes. However, in the last five years such an increased interest has been found in the study of the Holy Spirit, we have felt a need to do much more research in preparation of the material appearing in this volume and for the material in the fourth volume. At the same time, we felt a need to rename lessons ten and eleven. In stead of “How did the Holy Spirit inspire the writers of the Bible?” for lesson ten, we have substituted “The Holy Spirit in the Book of Acts”; for lesson eleven, instead of “How Can I Be Lead of the Holy Spirit?” we have substituted “The Holy Spirit in the Epistles and Revelation.” In Volume Three we close with the references to ‘the Holy Spirit in Romans. There are 261 references to the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. In this third volume we have considered 136 of the 261. The remaining 125, as well as the 82 passages in the Old Testament, will be carefully considered in Volume Four. Also in the fourth volume, we shall give a thoughtful consideration to present day manifestations of the Holy Spirit. We plan on a three-year study in the preparation of Volume Four. Please be patient with us. Yours In Him,

Don DeWelt
November, 1971

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We do not by any means recommend all these books. —We feel, however, one should be acquainted with the efforts of others in the same area of study.

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HOW DID THE HOLY SPIRIT HELP CHRIST?

Lesson Nine

HOW DID THE HOLY SPIRIT HELP CHRIST?

IS THIS AN EXAMPLE FOR ME?

Questions you should answer *before* you study the lesson.

1. What is meant by the expression, “For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: *for he giveth not the Spirit by Measure.*” John 3:34. Read some other translations for help.
2. Since Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit, would not this give Him special power?
3. Why did Jesus need the Holy Spirit?
4. Why was the Holy Spirit sent in the form of a dove at the baptism of Jesus? Had the Holy Spirit left Jesus since His birth?
5. Did Jesus have to do anything in order to be filled with the Holy Spirit? If so, what?
6. What particular help did the Holy Spirit give to the ministry of Christ? Specify. Is there any example in this for our ministry?
7. In what sense can we say that Christ and the Holy Spirit are one?
8. Is there any evidence that Jesus was conscious, i.e., through His emotional nature, of the presence of the Holy Spirit in His body? Specify. What does this fact teach us?
9. Is there an example of the Holy Spirit speaking *to* Jesus? Did He ever speak *for* Christ? Be specific.
10. What relation to temptation did the Holy Spirit sustain when Jesus was “led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.” Matthew 4:1; cf. Mark 1:12; Luke 4:1.

INTRODUCTION

There are only 56 references to the Holy Spirit in the four gospels. Twenty of these references are repetitious. Thus we have but 36 references to consider. We shall reproduce all 56 references here for a careful complete study of the Holy Spirit in the life of our Lord:

1. Matthew 1:18, “She was found of child of the Holy Spirit.”
2. Matthew 1:20, “That which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.”

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3. Matthew 3:11, "He shall baptise you with the Holy Spirit."
4. Matthew 3:16, "He saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon Him."
5. Matthew 4:1, "Jesus was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil."
6. Matthew 10:20, "It is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father."
7. Matthew 12:18, "I will put My Spirit upon him (cf. Isaiah 42:1).
8. Matthew 12:28, "If I by the Spirit of God cast out demons."
9. Matthew 12:31, "The blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven."
10. Matthew 12:32, "Whosoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit it shall not be forgiven him."
11. Matthew 22:43, "How then doth David in the Spirit call Him Lord?"
12. Matthew 28:19, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."
13. Mark 1:8, "He shall baptise you with the Holy Spirit."
14. Mark 1:10, "He saw the Spirit as a dove descending upon Him."
15. Mark 1:12, "The Spirit driveth Him forth into the wilderness."
16. Mark 3:29, "Whosoever shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit bath never forgiveness."
17. Mark 12:36, "David himself said in the Holy Spirit."
18. Mark 13:11, "It is not ye that speak, but the Holy Spirit."
19. Luke 1:15, "He shall be filled with the Holy Spirit."
20. Luke 1:35, "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee."
21. Luke 1:41, "Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit."
22. Luke 1:67, "Zachariah was filled with the Holy Spirit."
23. Luke 2:25, "The Holy Spirit was upon Him."
24. Luke 2:26, "Revealed unto him by the Holy Spirit."
25. Luke 2:27, "He came in the Spirit into the temple."
26. Luke 3:16, "He shall baptise you with the Holy Spirit."
27. Luke 3:22, "The Holy Spirit descended in a bodily form, as a dove, upon Him."
28. Luke 4:1, "Jesus full of the Holy Spirit . . . was led by the Spirit into the wilderness."
29. Luke 4:14, "Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee."
30. Luke 4:18, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me." (Isaiah 61:1).
31. Luke 10:21, "He rejoiced in the Holy Spirit."
32. Luke 11:13, "Give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him."
33. Luke 12:10, "Unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Spirit."
34. Luke 12:12, "The Holy Spirit shall teach you."
35. Luke 24:49, "Behold, I send forth the promise of My Father upon you.
36. John 1:32, "I have beheld the Spirit descending as a dove."
37. John 1:33, "Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and abiding upon Him, the same is He that baptiseth with the Holy Spirit."
38. John 3:5, "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit."
39. John 3:6, "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit."
40. John 3:8, "So is every one that is born of the Spirit."
41. John 3:34, "He giveth not the Spirit by measure."
42. John 6:63, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth."
43. John 7:39, "This spake He of the Spirit . . . for the Spirit was not yet given."
44. John 14:16, "Another Comforter."
45. John 14:17, "Even the Spirit of truth."
46. John 14:26, "The Comforter, even the Holy Spirit He shall teach you . . . and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you."
47. John 15:26, "When the Comforter is come, Whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth . . . He shall bear witness of Me."
48. John 16:7, "If I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you."
49. John 16:8, "And He, when He is come, will convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of

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- judgment.”
50. John 16:9, “Of sin, because they believe not on Me.”
 51. John 16:10, “Of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye behold me no more.”
 52. John 16:11, “Of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged.”
 53. John 16:13, “When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall guide you into all the truth: for He shall not speak from Himself; but what things soever He shall hear, these shall He speak: and He shall declare unto you the things that are to come.”
 54. John 16:14, “He shall glorify Me: for He shall take of Mine, and declare it unto you.”
 55. John 16:15, “He taketh of Mine, and shall declare it unto you.”
 56. John 20:22, “He saith, Receive ye the Holy Spirit.”

Please mark now the relation or work of the Holy Spirit and Christ. There are thirteen relationships of Christ and the Holy Spirit. They are:

1. Conceived our Lord in the womb of Mary. Matthew 1: 18-20.
2. To have filled Jesus from His birth. Luke 1:15. (This is a reference to John the Baptist. We assume this was also true of our Lord.)
3. The Holy Spirit took the form of a dove in coming upon our Lord at His baptism. Matthew 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:22; John 1:32, 33.
4. Jesus was “led” or “driven” by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of Satan—at the same time Luke says He was “full of the Holy Spirit.” Luke 4:1, cf. Matthew 4:1; Mark 1:12.
5. Our Lord returned from the temptations “in the power of the Holy Spirit.” Luke 4:14.
6. Jesus said of Himself while in the synagogue about to read from the prophet Isaiah, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.” Luke 4:18; cf. Isaiah 61:1.
7. Matthew states that Isaiah 42: 1ff was fulfilled in Jesus, i.e., “I will put my Spirit upon Him.”
8. Jesus by the power of the Spirit of God cast out demons. Matthew 12:28.
9. Jesus “rejoiced in the Holy Spirit.” Luke 10:21.
10. Of Jesus, John says, “He (God) giveth not the Spirit by measure.” John 3:34.
11. The Holy Spirit baptism as well as the reception of the Holy Spirit by believers was (and is) under the control of our Lord. Matthew 3:11; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; 7:38, 39; 15:26; 20:22.
12. Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as “another Comforter”, thus indicating He was the first Comforter. John 14:16.
13. The Holy Spirit was to: “*glorify Chris*”~ “*to bear witness of or for Him*”—“*He shall take of mine and declare it unto you.*” Jesus said of the Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit would bring to the remembrance of the apostles all that He had said unto them. John 14:26; 15:26; 16:14; 16:15.

2. *Of these relationships, what application can we make of our lives?* (Only twelve of the thirteen can be used—No. 11 does not relate to us.)

(1) Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit—we are “born of the Holy Spirit,” John 3:5-8.

(2) John, and no doubt our Lord, was filled with the Holy Spirit from His birth—we are to be filled with the Holy Spirit. (Acts 4:32; 6:3; 13:52; Ephesians 5:19.) Should such a filling begin with our new birth? Cf. Titus 3:5.

(3) The Holy Spirit made a special appearance at the baptism of Jesus. This was referred to in Acts 10:38 as the “anointing of the Holy Spirit and power.” We receive the Holy Spirit at our baptism—we are

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“a holy priesthood” (I Peter 2:5). Is our reception of the Holy Spirit at our baptism also our anointing into the priesthood of believers?

(4) Does the Holy Spirit ever *lead* or even *drive* us into a period of temptation? Who is the active agent in carrying out God’s will in the world today? Is not the Holy Spirit the agent God and Christ use to accomplish their will in our lives? Before you dismiss the action of the Holy Spirit in Jesus’ temptation as no example for us please notice the relation of temptation and the Holy Spirit in the Christian experience (we shall consider this in detail later).

(5) We can (and should) return from a period of temptation “in the power of the Holy Spirit” instead of under the bondage of Satan. (More later also about this.)

(6) Are we ever to feel and know when we speak in the assembly that the Spirit of God is upon us and scripture is finding fulfillment in the lives of those who hear? Cf. point No. 7 in this same connection.

(7) The words of Isa. 42:1 ff were fulfilled in Jesus. In what sense can we, or should we say “the Spirit of the Lord is upon me”?

(8) Jesus by and through the power of the Holy Spirit cast out demons. Are we to conclude that without such power He would not have been able to cast out such evil spirits? Are we to also believe that only in the power of the Holy Spirit can we cast Satan out of our hearts? Or the hearts of others?

(9) The emotional response to the presence of the Holy Spirit has become a very prominent point of discussion in our time. The joy and happiness of our Lord was associated directly to the Holy Spirit. Genuine joy is a result of His presence in us. (Galatians 5:22.) In this world of sadness, how we do need and seek the deep joy of the Lord in and from the Holy Spirit.

(10) Jesus had the Holy Spirit “without measure –what “*measure*” of the Holy Spirit do we possess? Perhaps this is not the meaning of the text. If Jesus had the power of the Holy Spirit in overcoming sin in a way not available to us how could He be an example to us? Consider carefully this text.

(11) We have discussed this point before (see Volume Two, page 26ff.), but it merits repetition. Please consider some synonyms for the word “Comforter” and ask yourself if the Holy Spirit produces such a reaction in your life. Obviously the apostles received in their personal relationship with our Lord all the enjoyment or meaning of the word “*Comforter*.” Where is our enjoyment or personal response to the second *Comforter*?

(12) In what very practical knowledgeable manner is the Holy Spirit glorifying Christ in our lives? How does the Holy Spirit bear witness to Christ or for Christ in us? Or is this witness *to* us? Is this witness only through the written word? Cf. Romans 8:16.

3. Let us now attempt an elaboration or penetration in these twelve areas. We shall in each instance consider as carefully as possible the meaning of the text as relating to *Christ and then ask ourselves if we can or have or should appropriate this to our experience:*

(1) Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit—we are “born of the Holy Spirit.” John 3:5-8. We shall not open the deep and wide subject of the human-divine nature of Christ. To do this we would discuss the effect each had on the other. We could be factual in listing the indications of humanity and offer an equal list of indications of divinity in the life of our Lord. But to say how and where and why His humanity is related to His divinity, and vice versa, would be but a matter of human judgement. As someone so well said: “He was man’s greatest God and God’s greatest man.” We might add that we are thoroughly persuaded that His divinity was never so prominent that it lifted Him out of the realm of the example for us. He was yet “tempted in all points like as we are tempted” (Hebrews 4:15), and was therefore all that we should be, and can be by God’s grace. It should be especially noted that our Lord in His moral life was, and is, an example only to those who like Himself have been begotten of the Father through the Holy Spirit. Whatever supernatural aid the divine birth gave our Lord we also have that aid for ourselves. We are either “born from above” “Born of the Spirit,” “renewed (regenerated) by the Holy Spirit,” (John 3:5-8, Titus 3:5) or we are not! If we are, then we should claim our birthright. Jesus came

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not only “for sin” but to “condemn sin in the flesh,” (Romans 8: 1,2) i.e. to deny and refute the thought that sinning is necessary. We are not suggesting sinless perfection, for none of us are intelligent enough to be perfect. But we are saying it is Satan’s lie that man *must* sin. There is nothing outside of God’s law we cannot find inside. Is it, or is it not true, that “greater is He that is in you (the Holy Spirit from your new birth) than He that is in the world”? (I John 4:4) “Even the Son learned obedience (and thus did not sin) *by the things which He suffered.*” (Hebrews 5:8). The potential and possibility of obedience by Christ was present, but such obedience became a reality only through prayer, fasting, love, self-sacrifice, strong crying, tears, and all we can truly read into the word “suffered.” Do we expect less or more in our battle with Satan and temptation? “Everyone who is born of God doth not (a continuing action verb) sin.” (I John 3:9).

(2) What was said of John the Baptist surely could be said of our Lord, that He was filled with the Holy Spirit from His birth—we *are* to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:15; Acts 4:31; 6:3; 13:52; Ephesians 5:19). Should such a filling begin with our new birth? Titus 3:5 Just as a child grows strong because of the environmental influences (or weak for the same reason) so we are either filled or void of the power of the Holy Spirit because of those influences we or others place about us. There are some influences that have a much more direct and meaningful effect upon the Holy Spirit within us. Such as: (a) Speaking face-to-face with a lost man about his salvation. This is the very area and activity in which He takes delight. Compare the times in the Acts account when the expression, “filled with the Holy Spirit” occurs (4:8; 4: 32; 7:55; 13:9, 10), in each of these instances He filled the persons who were witnessing on behalf of our wonderful Lord. (b) Under the stress of persecution *when* the persecuted were willing to commit themselves to Him “to whom vengeance belongs.” Read Acts 4:8; 7:5 5; 13:50-52. (c) It is encouraging to understand that after men had practiced the presence of God long enough it could be said of them as a characterization: “He was a good man, and *full of the Holy Spirit* and of faith.” Cf. Acts 6:3; 5; 11:25. We all know persons of whom we could say, “He or she is full of lust, or envy, or money-love.” Why? They have lived so long in the environmental influence of such sins, they have become their slaves. Such interests have become their *total* interest. When will we find a man who will love God and our loveable Lord like men love money? Suppose we were to follow a money-lover throughout one day of his life and parallel his pursuit of money with our pursuit of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. Better yet, suppose we were to follow a “woman-chaser” (there are other names) throughout his day and parallel his lust for the opposite sex with our love for the powerful presence of the life-changing Holy Spirit.

(3) The Holy Spirit made a special appearance at the baptism of Jesus. This was referred to in Acts 10:38 as the “anointing of the Holy Spirit and power.” Cf. Luke 4:18. We receive the Holy Spirit at our baptism (Acts 2:38). We are priests unto God (I Peter 2:5). Is our reception of the Holy Spirit at our baptism also our *anointing* into the priesthood of God? (Cf. I John 2:20.) We believe it is; hence, the symbol of oil as related to the Holy Spirit is indeed for us an appropriate figure. Cf. I John 2:20; Exodus 27:20, 21; Leviticus 14:17; 8:30; Hebrews 1:8. Our blessed Lord was God’s high-priest, but we *are* His under-priests. What was involved in the use of oil in anointing? We only want to suggest a few applications that will help us all appreciate our position as priests and the anointing we have from God: (a) The olive tree was used for so many services in the life of the Hebrew nation. Olives were used for food—the oil was used for cooking—the same oil was a medicine when used externally. The olive orchards produced a lucrative living for the man who tended them. Just so with the Holy Spirit; He is not a divine ornament, but rather enters into every area of life. Unless the Holy Spirit can help us in the kitchen, He is not of much value, for so much of life for many women is spent in the kitchen. We often consider the help of the Holy Spirit in time of physical infirmity, but we ought not to forget His presence and power and direction in our business affairs. (b) The olive oil was poured from a horn. A horn has always been a symbol of power or strength. The Holy Spirit Himself is the omnipotent strength of God. He is sent to us for the purpose of “strengthening our inward man,” Ephesians 3:16.

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(4) and (5) Jesus was “led” or “driven” by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of Satan. At the same time Luke says He was “full of the Holy Spirit.” Luke 4:1. Cf. Matthew 4:1; Mark 1:12. Does the Holy Spirit ever lead or drive us into a period of temptation? Who is the active agent in carrying out God’s will in the world today? Is not the Holy Spirit the agent God and Christ uses to accomplish their will in our lives? Before we dismiss the action of the Holy Spirit in the temptation of Jesus as of no example for us, please notice the action of the Holy Spirit in the temptation of Christians today:

James 1:2-4, “My brethren, *count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.*”

We are well aware of the more accurate translation of the word “*temptations*,” (it is better translated “*trials*”) but are there trials without temptations? If we are under the constant direction of the Holy Spirit—and we do believe we are—then some trials are sent by God, some by Satan; but in all of them the Holy Spirit of God is at work to bring something out of them for our good and God’s glory. In all such trials we are sorely vexed to yield to Satan’s offers of discouragement, escape, self-pity, etc. Here is a quotation that has helped me so much in this experience: “a spiritually-minded man is one whose will is set on God as well as his intellect and affections. In every fiber of his moral being and in all the activities of his soul, he is under the guidance and dominion of the Holy Spirit. (Please mark carefully the next sentence.)

(1) *The affections present motives, (2) the intellect estimates their worthiness, (3) and the will decides upon the course of action.* When this trinity of mental operation (necessary to normal manhood) is under the sway of the Divine Spirit, man possesses spirituality, a state in which all the faculties of the soul are voluntarily and joyfully under the dominion and guidance of Christ’s indwelling Spirit.” (Dwight M. Pratt in the INTERNATIONAL STANDARD BIBLE ENCYCLOPEDIA, page 2845.)

It is a very simple matter to demonstrate the validity of such a concept. As an example: The affections (which we equate with natural bodily desires) present an appeal to the intellect: Shall we consider the desire to view a questionable T. V. program? We realize the three areas which are so clearly separated in the quotation do not operate separately, for how could the affections make an offer without the intellect? But yet aware of the interaction, the three areas of man are *still present*. The intellect reviews the pros and cons of such a T. V. program. The conscience bears witness to and with the Holy Spirit (Romans 9:1, 2). If the will does not immediately reject Satan’s suggestion and steadfastly refuse to entertain such an idea, the result is a flip of the T. V. switch. Look at the circumstance once more: (1) Satan approaches through the bodily desire of sex (a neutral and natural desire when unrelated to a decision of right or wrong) with the thought of viewing a questionable T. V. program. (2) The mind evaluates the offer. If there is a delay detailed evaluation as to the possible scenes on the T. V. program, i.e., a curious (if not lascivious) consideration of the possibilities, and the social environment is such that no one will know of our choice, (3) the decision is inevitable, we will choose to sin. If however: (1) Satan approaches through the bodily desire of sex with the thought of viewing a questionable T. V. program, (2) the mind evaluates the offer and *immediately* rejects it (refuses it because of its questionable nature). (3) The will decides to act on the refusal. We cannot emphasize too strongly the need for *immediate* action on the part of the will. This is in perfect harmony with James 1:13-15: “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempteth no man: but each man is tempted, when he is *drawn away by his own lust, and enticed*. Then the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin: and the sin, when it is fullgrown, bringeth forth death.”

Please notice that there would be no birth of death (separation from God) if the strong desire was stopped before the enticement stage. Our natural desires (which are all *strong desires* and therefore

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properly classified as *lusts*) are approached from the side of The Way by Satan (we are drawn to the side or from The Way to consider these offers), if we immediately reject and act upon our rejection, there will be no second step of enticement. If we stay to consider, there will be the involvement of enticement. This will be followed by conception and the birth of sin. We might add that James says sin has its own child, the name of which is “death.” We might more fully say “the second death.” Now, back to the point of this study: it was the Holy Spirit who led our Lord into the wilderness of temptation. It is also the Holy Spirit who has given us through James the answer to our deepest need in the experience of temptation. There is no temptation without a way of escape. (I Corinthians 10:13). “Greater is He that is in you, than he who is in the world.” (I John 4:4). “Resist the devil (immediately) and he will flee from you.” (James 4:7). From these references and a number of others, we can believe the Holy Spirit is at work in every trial and temptation of life to lead us out triumphantly and “full of the Holy Spirit,” Cf. Luke 4:1.

(6). Are we ever to feel and know when we speak in the assembly that the Spirit of God is upon us and scripture is finding fulfillment in the lives of those who hear? Please read again (perhaps like you never read it before) II Timothy 4:1, 2 “I charge thee *in the sight of God and of Christ Jesus*, who shall judge the living and the dead, and *by his appearing and his kingdom*: preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.” We have three unseen guests in every audience: God, Christ Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. God has no other spokesman for the particular occasion but you. If you can not see the obvious application of the word you preach to the lives of those who hear—do not speak. From the divine point of view, the word of God is “the sword of the Spirit.” (Hebrews 4:12). Please do not confuse the soldier with the sword. The Holy Spirit’s task is to take the word preached as a sword in His hand to divide the thoughts and intents of the hearts of the hearers. This He will do if we preach the word, (preaching the word is equated in my mind with expository preaching). No preacher worthy of the designation man of God” will ever deliver a message until he can feel in his own heart the application to the audience. This of course pre-supposes a holy honesty in the knowledge of his own needs and a first-hand, heart-burdened knowledge of those to whom he speaks.

(7). Matthew states that Isaiah 42:1 ff was fulfilled in Jesus, (i.e., “I will put my Spirit upon Him,”) ‘O, *to be like thee blessed Redeemer, This is my constant longing and prayer; Gladly I’ll forfeit all of earth’s pleasures, Jesus thy perfect likeness to bear.*”

To be like Him in this regard is perhaps the most significant. Jesus walked through Palestine constantly conscious of the presence of the Spirit of God. We have no greater need than to be always aware of God’s Spirit in us and upon us. This amounts to practicing the presence of God.

For some years past we have appreciated a little booklet by Frank Laubach called *A Game With Minutes—whereas* we do not share all his conclusions, so much of it is so very much needed we reproduce it here in its entirety— (with permission). Additional copies from: *New Readers Press*, Box 131, Syracuse, N.Y. 13210.

THE GAME WITH MINUTES, by Frank C. Laubach: CHRIST IS THE ONLY HOPE OF THE WORLD

“Disillusioned by all our other efforts, we now see that the only hope left for the human race is to become like Christ.” That is the statement of a famous scientist, and is being repeated among even more educators, statesmen, and philosophers. Yet Christ has not saved the world from its present terrifying dilemma. The reason is obvious: Few people are getting enough of Christ to save either themselves or the world. Take the United States, for example. Only a third of the population belongs to the Christian church. Less than half of this third attend service regularly. Preachers speak about Christ in perhaps one

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service in four —thirty minutes a month! Good sermons, many of them excellent, but too infrequent in presenting Christ.

Less than ten minutes a week given to thinking about Christ by one-sixth of the people is not saving our country or our world; for selfishness, greed, and hate are getting a thousand times that much thought. What a nation thinks about, that it is. We shall not become like Christ until we give Him more time. A teachers' college requires students to attend classes for twenty-five hours a week for three years. Could it prepare competent teachers or a law school prepare competent lawyers if they studied only ten minutes a week?

Neither can Christ, and he never pretended that he could. To his disciples he said: "Come with me, walk with me, talk and listen to me, work and rest with me, eat and sleep with me, twenty-four hours a day for three years." That was their college courses—"He chose them," the Bible says, "that they might be with him," 168 hours a week!

All who have tried that kind of abiding for a month know the power of it—it is like being born again from center to circumference. It absolutely changes every person who does it. And it will change the world that does it.

How can a man or woman take this course with Christ today? The answer is so simple a child can understand it. Indeed unless we "turn and become like children" we shall not succeed.

1. We have a study hour.. We read and reread the life of Jesus recorded in the Gospels thoughtfully and prayerfully at least an hour a day. We find fresh ways and new translations, so that this reading will never be dull, but always stimulating and inspiring. Thus we walk with Jesus through Galilee by walking with Him through the pages of His earthly history.

2. We make Him our inseparable chum. We try to call Him to mind at least one second of each minute. We do not need to forget other things nor stop our work, but we invite Him to share everything we do or say or think. Hundreds of people have experimented until they have found ways to let Him share every minute that they are awake. In fact, it is no harder to learn this new habit than to learn the touch system in typing, and in time one can win a high percentage of his minutes with as little effort as an expert needs to write a letter.

'While these two practices take all our time, yet they do not take it from any good enterprise. They take Christ into that enterprise and make it more resultful. They also keep a man's religion steady. If the temperature of a sick man rises and falls daily the doctor regards him as seriously ill. This is the case with religion. Not spiritual chills and fevers, but an abiding faith which gently presses the will toward Christ all day, is a sign of a healthy religion.

Practicing the presence of God is not on trial. It has already been proven by countless thousands of people. Indeed, the spiritual giants of all ages have known it. Christians who do it today become more fervent and beautiful and are tireless witnesses. Men and women who had been slaves of vices have been set free. Catholics and Protestants find this practicing the presence of God at the heart of their faith. Conservatives and liberals agree that here is a reality they need. People who are grateful for what this booklet has done for them are ordering wholesale quantities to give to friends. Letters from all parts of the world testify that in this game multitudes are turning defeat into victory and despair into joy.

The results of this program begin to show clearly In a month. They grow rich after six months, and glorious after ten years.

Somebody may be saying, "All this is very orthodox and very ancient." It is indeed, the secret of the great saints of all ages. "Pray without ceasing," said Paul, "in everything make your wants known unto God." "As many as are led by the Spirit of God these are the sons of God."

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HOW WE WIN THE GAMES WITH MINUTES

Nobody is wholly satisfied with himself. Our lives are made up of lights and shadows, of some good days and many unsatisfactory days. We have learned that the good days and hours come when we are very close to Christ, and that the poor days come whenever we push Him out of our thoughts. Clearly, then, the way to more consistent high level is to take Him into everything we do or say or think.

Experience has told us that good resolutions aren't enough. We need to discipline our lives to an ordered regime. The "Game with Minutes" is a rather lighthearted name for such a regime in the realm of the spirit. Many of us have found it to be enormously helpful. It is a new name for something as old as Enoch, who "walked with God." It is a way of living which nearly everybody knows and nearly everybody has ignored. Students will at once recognize it as fresh approach to Brother Lawrence's "Practicing the Presence of God."

We call this a "game" because it is a delightful experience and an exhilarating spiritual exercise; but we soon discover that it is far more than a game. Perhaps a better name for it would be "an exploratory expedition," because it opens out into what seems at first like a beautiful garden; then the garden widens into a country; and at last we realize that we are exploring a new world. This may sound like poetry, but it is not overstating what experience has shown us. Some people have compared it to getting out of a dark prison and beginning to LIVE. We still see the same world, yet it is not the same, for it has a new glorious color and a far deeper meaning. Thank God, this adventure is free for everybody, rich or poor, wise or ignorant, famous or unknown, with a good past or a bad—"Whosoever will, may come." The greatest thing in the world is for everybody!

You will find this just as easy and just as hard as forming any other habit. You have hitherto thought of God for only a few seconds or minutes a week, and He was out of your mind the rest of the time. Now you are attempting, like Brother Lawrence, to have God in mind each minute you are awake. Such drastic change in habit requires a real effort at the beginning.

Many of us find it very useful to have pictures of Christ where our eyes will fall on them every time we look around. A very happy hobby is to collect the most friendly pictures of Christ, pocket size, so that we can erect our own shrine in a few seconds.

HOW TO BEGIN

Select a favorable hour; try how many minutes of the hour you can remember God at least ONCE each minute; that is to say, bring God to mind at least one second out of every sixty. It is not necessary to remember God every second, for the mind runs along like a rapid stream from one idea to another.

Your score will be low at first, but keep trying, for it constantly becomes easier, and after a while is almost automatic. It follows the well known laws of habit forming. If you try to write shorthand you are at first very awkward. This is true when you are learning to play a piano, or to ride a bicycle, or to use any new muscles. When you try this "game with minutes" you discover that spiritually you are still a very weak infant. A babe in the crib seizes upon every thing at hand to pull himself to his feet, wobbles for a few seconds and falls exhausted. Then he tries again, each time standing a little longer than before. We are like that babe when we begin to try to keep God in mind. We need something to which we can cling. Our minds wobble and fall, then rise for a new effort. Each time we try we shall do better until at last we may be able to remember God as high as ninety per cent of the whole day.

HOW TO TRY THE EXPERIMENT IN CHURCH

You have a good chance of starting well if you begin in church—provided the sermon is about God. When our congregation first tried it, we distributed slips of paper which read:

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GAME WITH MINUTES

Score Card

During this hour I thought of God at least once each minute for _____
different minutes.

Signed _____

At the opening of the service the pastor made this announcement: "Everybody will be asked to fill this score card at the end of one hour. In order to succeed, you may use any help within reach. You may look at the cross, or you may leaf through your hymn book or Bible, looking for the verses that remind you of God."

The sermon that Sunday explained how to play the game. At the end of the hour, the score cards were collected. The congregation reported scores ranging from five to sixty minutes. The average was forty-four minutes, which meant 73 percent of the hour. For beginners this was excellent. Such an experiment, by the way, will encourage the congregation to listen better than usual, and will remind the preacher to keep his sermon close to God.

If you score 75 percent in church, you can probably make a rather good score for the rest of the day. It is a question of being master of every new situation.

Never use a score card more than an hour, and not that long if it tires you. This is a new delight you are learning, and it must not be turned into a task.

WHILE GOING HOME FROM CHURCH

Can you win your game with minutes while passing people on the street? Yes! Experiments have revealed a sure way to succeed: offer a swift prayer for the people at whom you glance. It is easy to think an instantaneous prayer while looking people straight in the eye, and the way people smile back at you shows that they like it! This practice gives a surprising exhilaration, as you may prove for yourself. A half-hour spent walking and praying for all one meets, instead of tiring one, gives him a sense of ever heightening energy like a battery being charged. It is a tonic, a good way to overcome a tired feeling.

Some of us walk on the right side of the pavement, leaving room for our unseen Friend, whom we visualize walking by our side, and we engage in silent conversations with Him about the people we meet. For example, we may say: "Dear Companion, what can we do together for this man whom we are passing?" Then we whisper what we believe Christ would answer.

WHERE TO LOOK FOR CHRIST

We have a right to use any aid that proves useful. One such aid is to think of Christ as in a definite location. To be sure, He is a spirit, everywhere at once—and therefore anywhere we realize Him to be. Many of us win our game nearly all of some days by realizing His unseen presence sitting in a chair or walking beside us. Some of us have gazed at our favorite picture of Him until it floats before our memories whenever we glance at His unseen presence, and we almost see Him. Indeed, many of us do see Him in our dreams. Others, like St. Paul, like to feel Him within the breast; many, like St. Patrick, feel Him all around us, above, below, before, behind, as though we walked in His kindly halo. We may have our secret ways of helping us to realize that He is very near and very dear.

ON A TRAIN OR IN A CROWD

We whisper "God" or "Jesus" or "Christ" constantly as we glance at every person near us. We try to see double, as Christ does—we see the person as he is and the person Christ longs to make of him.

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Remarkable things happen, until those in tune look around as though you spoke— especially children. The atmosphere of a room changes when a few people keep whispering to Him about all the rest. Perhaps there is no finer ministry than just to be in meetings or crowds, whispering “Jesus,” and then helping people whenever you see an opportunity. When Dr. Chalmers answers the telephone he whispers: “A child of God will now speak to me.” We can do that when anybody speaks to us.

If everybody in America would do the things just described above, we should have a “heaven below.” This is not pious poetry. We have seen what happens. Try it during all this week, until a strange power develops within you. As messages from England are broadcast in Long Island for all America, so we can become spiritual broadcasters for Christ. Every cell in our brain is an electric battery which He can use to intensify what He longs to say to people who are spiritually too deaf to hear Him without our help.

WHILE IN CONVERSATION

Suppose when you reach home you find a group of friends engaged in ordinary conversation. Can you remember God at least once every minute? This is hard, but we have found that we can be successful if we employ some reminders. Here are aids which have proven useful:

1. Have a picture of Christ in front of you where you can glance at it frequently.
2. Have an empty chair beside you and imagine that your Unseen Master is sitting in it; if possible reach your hand and touch that chair, as though holding His hand. He is there, for He said: “Lo, I am with you always.”
3. Keep humming to yourself a favorite prayer hymn—for example, “Have Thine Own Way, Lord, Have Thine Own Way.”
4. Silently pray for each person in the circle.
5. Keep whispering inside: “Lord, put Thy thoughts in my mind. Tell me what to say.”
6. Best of all, tell your companions about the “Game with Minutes.” If they are interested, you will have no more trouble. You cannot keep God unless you give Him to others.

WHEN AT THE TABLE

All the previous suggestions are useful at mealtime. If possible, have an empty chair for your Invisible Guest, who said, “Wherever two or three are gathered together, I am in the midst.” Another useful aid is to recall what the Quakers believe about every meal. Jesus told us: “Eat this in remembrance of me.” They think that He meant, not only consecrated bread, but all food, so that every mouthful is His “body broken for you.”

You might read and discuss this booklet. It helps immediately if others at the table agree to try to win this mealtime together.

WHILE READING A BOOK

When we are reading a newspaper or magazine or book, we read it to Him! We often glance at the empty chair where we visualize Him, or at His picture and continue a running conversation with Him inwardly about the pages we are reading. Kagawa says scientific books are letters from God telling how He runs His universe.

Have you ever opened a letter and read it with Jesus, realizing that He smiles with us at the fun, rejoices with us in the successes, and weeps with us at life’s tragedies? If not, you have missed one of life’s sweetest experiences.

WHEN THINKING

If you lean back and think about some problem deeply, how can you remember God? You can do it by forming a new habit. All thought employs silent words and is really conversation with your inner self.

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Instead of talking to yourself, you will now form the habit of talking to Christ. Many of us who have tried this have found that we think so much better that we never want to try to think without Him again. We are helped if we imagine Him sitting in a chair beside us, talking with us. We say with our tongue what we think Christ might say in reply to our questions. Thus we consult Christ about everything.

No practice we have ever found has held our thinking so uniformly high and wholesome as this making all thought a conversation with God. When evil thoughts of any kind come, we say, "Lord, these thoughts are not fit to discuss with Thee. Think Thy thoughts in my mind." The result is an instantaneous purification.

WHEN WALKING ALONE

If you are strolling out of doors alone, you can recall God at least once every minute with no effort, if you remember that "beauty is the voice of God." Every flower and tree, river and lake, mountain and sunset, is God speaking. "This is my Father's world, and to my listening ears all nature sings ..." So as you look at each lovely thing, you may keep asking: "Dear Father, what are you telling me through this, and this, and this?"

If you have wandered to a place where you can talk aloud without being overheard, you may speak to the Invisible Companion inside you or beside you. Ask Him what is most on His heart and then answer back aloud with your voice what you believe God would reply to you.

Of course we are not always sure whether we have guessed God's answer right, but it is surprising how much of the time we are very certain. It really is not necessary to be sure that our answer is right, for the answer is not the great thing—He is! God is infinitely more important than His advice or His gifts; indeed, He, himself, is the great gift. The youth in love does not so much prize what his sweetheart may say or may give him, as the fact that she is his and that she is here. The most precious privilege in talking with God is this intimacy which we can have with Him. We may have a glorious succession of heavenly minutes. How foolish people are to lose life's most poignant joy, seeing it may be had while taking a walk alone!

But the most wonderful discovery of all is, to use the words of St. Paul, "Christ liveth in me." He dwells in us, walks in our minds, reaches out through our hands, speaks with our voices, if we obey his every whisper.

BE MY LAST THOUGHT

We make sure that there is a picture of Christ, or a Bible, or a cross or some other object where it will greet our closing eyes as we fall asleep. We continue to whisper any words of endearment our hearts suggest. If all day long we have been walking with Him, we shall find Him the dear companion of our dreams. Sometimes after such a day, we have fallen asleep with our pillows wet from tears of joy, feeling His tender touch on our foreheads. Usually we feel no deep emotion, but always we have a "peace that passeth all understanding." This is the end of a perfect day.

MONDAY MORNING

If on Sunday we have rated over fifty per cent in our game with minutes, we shall be eager to try the experiment during a busy Monday. As we open our eyes and see a picture of Christ on the wall, we may ask: "Now, Master, shall we get up." Some of us whisper to Him our every thought about washing and dressing in the morning, about brushing our shoes and choosing our clothes. Christ is interested in every trifle, because He loves us more intimately than a mother loves her babe, or a lover his sweetheart, and is happy only when we share every question with Him.

HOW DID THE HOLY SPIRIT HELP CHRIST?

MEN AT WORK

Countless thousands of men keep God in mind while engaged in all types of work, mental or manual, and find that they are happier and get better results. Those who endure the most intolerable ordeals gain new strength when they realize that their Unseen Comrade is by their side. To be sure, no man whose business is harmful or whose methods are dishonest, can expect God's partnership. But if an enterprise is useful, God eagerly shares in its real progress. The carpenter can do better work if he talks quietly to God about each task, as Jesus certainly did when He was a carpenter. Many of us have found that we can compose a letter or write a book better when we say: "God, think Thy thoughts in my mind What dost Thou desire written? Here is my hand; use it. Pour Thy wisdom through my hand." Our thoughts flow faster, and what we write is better. God loves to be a co-author!

MERCHANTS AND BANKERS

A merchant who waits on his customers and prays for them at the same time, wins their affection and their business. A salesman who prays for those with whom he is dealing has far more likelihood of making a sale. A bookkeeper or banker can whisper to God about every column of figures and be certain that God is even more interested in the figures than he is. The famous astronomer, Sir James Jeans, calls God the "super-mathematician of the universe, making constant use of mathematical formulae that would drive Einstein mad."

IN THE HOME

Many women cultivate Christ's companionship while cooking, washing dishes, sweeping, sewing, and caring for children. Aids which they find helpful are:

1. Whispering to God about each small matter, knowing that He loves to help.
2. Humming or singing a favorite prayer hymn.
3. Showing the children how to play the game with minutes, and asking them to share in playing it. Children love this game and develop an inner control when they play it which renders discipline almost needless.
4. Having pictures of Christ about the house, as a constant reminder.
5. Saying to God, "Think Thy thoughts in mind."

WHEN IN SCHOOL

An increasing army of students in school who are winning this game, tell us how they do it. Here is their secret:

When in study period, say: "God I have just forty precious minutes. Help my wavering thoughts to concentrate so that I may not waste a moment. Show me what is worth remembering in this first paragraph"—then read the lesson to God, instead of reading it to yourself.

When going to recitation, whisper: "Make my mind clear, so that I will be able to recall all I Have studied. Take away fear."

When rising to recite before a group say: "God speak through my lips."

When taking an examination, say all during the hour, "Father, keep my mind clear, and help me to remember all that I have learned. How shall we answer this next question?" Visualize Him looking over your shoulder every minute you are writing. God will not tell you what you have never studied but He does sharpen your memory and take away your stage fright when you ask Him. Have you not discovered that when you pray about some forgotten name it often flashes into your memory?

To be sure, this prevents us from being dishonest or cheating, for if we are not honest we cannot expect His help. But that is a good reason for playing the game with minutes. Character is a hundred times more valuable than knowledge or high grades.

To be popular with the other students, acquire the habit of breathing a momentary prayer for each student you meet, and while you are in conversation with him. Some instinct tells him you are interested

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in his welfare and he likes you for it.

PRAYING HORSESHOES

A very powerful way to pray is for a group of friends to join hands, while seated in the shape of a horseshoe. Some of us have an altar at the open end of the horseshoe, with a cross or a picture of Jesus, or a Bible, or a globe of the world. The horseshoe opens toward the cities, countries, and people most in need or prayer.

This horseshoe of prayer reminds us of the great magnets which can lift a locomotive when the electric power is turned on. We are seeking to be used by the inpouring Holy Spirit to lift the world, and to draw all men to Christ.

It also reminds us of the radio broadcast which, when the power is on, leaps around the world. We offer ourselves as God's broadcasting station.

The gentle tingle which we usually feel reminds us of the glow and soft purr in the tubes of a radio when the power is on.

Every Christian family at mealtime may form a prayer radio broadcast by joining hands. Young people's societies will love it. It will vitalize every Sunday School class to spend ten minutes in broadcasting. Defunct prayer meetings will come to life when they become horseshoe magnets of prayer. Schools and colleges, public or private, will find prayer horseshoes popular with the students. Here is something that Christians and Jews can do together. Worship can thus be made the most thrilling experience of their lives.

The group may prepare a list of the most urgent world needs and of key persons. An excellent plan at breakfast is for someone to read from the newspaper the problems and persons which are most in need of prayer that morning.

The leader may say words like these: "Lord, in this terribly critical hour we want to do everything we can. We pray Thee, use us to help the President to be hungry for Thee, to listen and hear and obey Thee. We lift the President into Thy presence."

Then all may praise with their clasped hands toward heaven. And so with the entire list.

After the prayer list is completed, the globe of the world may be lifted toward God while somebody prays the Lord's prayer.

DURING PLAY HOURS

God is interested in our fun as much as we are. Many of us talk to him during our games. Some of the famous football players long ago discovered that they played better if they prayed all during the game. Some of the famous runners pray during races. If a thing brings health and joy and friendship and a fresh mind, God is keenly interested, because he is interested in us. While on the playground, do not ask to win, but whisper: "God, get Thy will done exactly. Help us all to do our best. Give us what is far more important than defeating our opponents—make us clean sportsmen and make us good friends."

GOD AND LOVE

Sweethearts who have been wise enough to share their love with God have found it incomparably more wonderful. Since "God is Love" He is in deepest sympathy with every fond whisper and look. Husbands and wives, too, give rapturous testimony of homes transformed by praying silently when together. In some cases where they had begun to give each other "nerves," they have found, after playing this game when they are alone together by day or by night, that their love grew strangely fresh, rich, beautiful, "like a new honeymoon." God is the maker of all true marriages, and He gives His highest joy to a man and wife who share their love for each other with Him, who pray inwardly each for the other when they are together looking into one another's eyes. Married love becomes infinitely more wonderful when Christ is the bond every minute and it grows sweeter as the years go by to the very last day. Imagine, too, what this does for the children!

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TROUBLES

Troubles and pain come to those who practice God's presence, as they came to Jesus, but these seem trivial as compared to their new joyous experience. If we have spent our days with Him, we find that when earthquakes, fires, famines or other catastrophes threaten us, we are not terrified any more than Paul was in time of shipwreck. "Perfect love casteth out Fear."

This booklet on the Game with Minutes is good for people suffering from illness at home or in hospitals. Nurses remind us that the thoughts of people turn toward God when sick as at no other time. Patients who are convalescing have many idle hours when their minds reach up toward God. Playing this game produces a perfect mental state for rapid recovery.

Those who are seeking to be aware of God constantly have found that their former horror at death has vanished. We may have a new mystic intimacy with our departed loved ones, for though unseen to us, they are with Christ and since He is with us they are with us as well.

SOME PRICES WE MUST PAY TO WIN THIS GAME

The first price is pressure of our wills, gentle but constant. What game is ever won without effort and concentration?

The second price is perseverance. A low score at the outset is not the least reason for discouragement; everybody gets a low score for a long while. Each week grows better and requires less strain.

The third price is perfect surrender. We lose Christ the moment our wills rebel. If we try to keep even a remote corner of life for self or evil, and refuse to let God rule us wholly, that small worm will spoil the entire fruit. We must be utterly sincere.

The fourth price is tell others. When anybody complains that he is losing the game, we flash this question back at him: "Are you telling your friends about it?" For you cannot keep Christ unless you give Him away.

The fifth price is to be in a group. We need the stimulus of a few intimate friends who exchange their experiences with us.

THE PRIZES WE WIN

It is obvious that this is unlike other games in many respects. One difference is that we all win. We may not win all or even half of our minutes but we do win a richer life, which is all that really matters. There are no losers excepting those who quit. Let us consider some of those prizes:

1. We develop what Thomas A. Kempis calls a "familiar friendship with Jesus." Our Unseen Friend becomes dearer, closer and more wonderful every day until at last we know Him as "Jesus, lover of my soul" not only in songs, but in blissful experiences. Doubts vanish, we are more sure of Him being with us than of anybody else. This warm, ardent friendship ripens rapidly until people see its glory shining in our eyes—and it keeps on growing richer and more radiant every month.

2. All we undertake is done better and more smoothly. We have daily evidence that God helps our work, piling one proof upon another until we are sure of God, not from books or preachers, but from our own experience.

3. When we are playing this game our minds are pure as a mountain stream every moment.

4. The Bible and Christian hymns seem like different books, for they begin to sparkle with the beautiful thoughts of saints who have had glorious experiences with God. We begin to understand their bliss for we share it with them.

5. All day long we are contented, whatever our lot may be, for He is with us. "When Jesus goes with me, I'll go anywhere."

6. It becomes easy to tell others about Christ because our minds are flooded with Him. "Out of the fullness of the heart the mouth speaketh."

7. Grudges, jealousies, hatred, and prejudices melt away. Little hells turn into little heavens.

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Communities have been transformed where this game was introduced. Love rises like a kindly sea and at last drowns all the demons of malice and selfishness. Then we see that the only hope for this insane world is to persuade people to “practice the presence of God.”

8. “Genius is ninety per cent concentration.” This game, like all concentration upon one objective, eventually results in flashes of new brilliant thought which astonish us, and keep us tiptoe with expectancy for the next vision which God will give us.

INFINITE VARIETY

The notion that religion is dull, stupid and sleepy is abhorrent to God, for He has created infinite variety and He loves to surprise us. If you are weary of some sleepy form of devotion, probably God is as weary of it as you are. Shake out of it, and approach Him in one of the countless fresh directions. When our minds lose the edge of their zest, let us shift to another form of fellowship as we turn the dial of the radio.

Every tree, every cloud, every bird, every orchestra, every child, every city, every soap bubble is alive with God to those who know his language.

IT IS FOR ANYBODY

Humble folk often believe that walking with God is above their heads, or that they may “lose a good time” if they share all their joys with God. What tragic misunderstanding, to regard Him as a killer of happiness! A growing chorus of joyous voices round the world fairly sing that spending their hours with God is the most thrilling joy ever known, and that beside it a baseball game or a horse race is stupid.

RADIANT RELIGION

This game is not a grim duty. Nobody need play it unless he seeks richer life. It is a delightful privilege. If you forget to play it for minutes or hours or days, do not groan or repent, but begin anew with a smile. It is a thrilling joy—don’t turn it into a sour faced penance. With God, every minute can be a fresh beginning. Ahead of you lie limitless anticipations. Walt Whitman looked up into the starry skies and fairly shouted.

“Away, O Soul, hoist instantly the Sail!
O daring joy but safe!
Are they not all the seas of God?
O farther, farther, farther sail!”

WHAT IS MEANT BY WINNING

You win your minute if, during that minute you either:

1. Pray.
2. Recall God.
3. Sing or hum a devotional hymn.
4. Talk or write about God.
5. Seek to relieve suffering of any kind in a prayerful spirit.
6. Work with the consciousness of God’s presence.
7. Whisper to God.
8. Feel yourself encompassed by God.
9. Look at a picture or a symbol of Christ.
10. Read a scripture verse or poem about God.
11. Give somebody a helping hand for the Lord’s sake.
12. Breathe a prayer for the people you meet.
13. Follow the leading of the Inner Voice,

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14. Plan or work for the Kingdom of God.
15. Testify to others about God, the church, or this game.
16. Share suffering or sorrow with another.
17. Hear God and see Him in flowers, trees, water, hills, sky.

We never attempt to keep a minute-by-minute record (excepting perhaps occasionally for an hour), since such a record would interfere with normal life. We are practicing a new freedom, not a new bondage. We must not get so tied down to score keeping that we lose the glory of it, and its spontaneity. We fix our eyes upon Jesus, not upon a clock.

(8) Jesus by and through the power of the Holy Spirit cast out demons. Are we to conclude that without such power He would not have been able to cast out such evil spirits? Are we to also believe that only in the power of the Holy Spirit can we cast Satan out of our hearts?—or the hearts of others?

We are indebted to LeRoy Garrett in his study of *The Finger of God*, for a very penetrating explanation of the gospel records as concerns the casting out of demons: “It was a great moment in history when the Christ was at war with the demonic spirits. But the Pharisees were willing to attribute this work of Jesus to the power of Beelzebul, the prince of demons. Jesus explained that this could not be the case, for then Satan would be in opposition to Satan, and that any kingdom divided against itself could not stand. The Christ goes on to explain the means by which he cast out demons: ‘If it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you’ (Luke 11:20).

“That ‘the finger of God’ is the Holy Spirit is indicated by the parallel passage in Matthew 12:28: ‘If it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.’ The Holy Spirit began His work of building the kingdom of God on earth in connection with the Christ when our Lord was immersed by John: ‘When Jesus was baptized, he went up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on him’ (Matthew 3:14).

“From that moment on ‘the finger of God’ was upon the Christ, both directing and empowering His ministry in bringing God’s kingdom to man. It was the Spirit that led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil (Matthew 4:1), and it was the Spirit that vindicated His ministry (I Timothy 3:16). Isaiah had foretold regarding the Christ: ‘I will put my Spirit upon him, and he shall proclaim justice to the Gentiles’ (Isaiah 42:2; Matthew 12:28). The Christ not only enjoyed the nearness of the Spirit in His own ministry, but He assured the apostles that they would receive the same indwelling: ‘The Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you’ (John 15:26).

“This verse indicates that the Spirit’s presence with both Jesus and the apostles had to do with *spoken words*. John 16:13 further suggests this: ‘When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.’ Apparently the Spirit’s ministry was one of speaking the word of God—*teaching, reminding, guiding, speaking, declaring*, thus authenticating the ideas set forth regarding the coming kingdom. Thus Jesus says in John 16: 14: ‘He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.’ The context shows that the ‘what is mine’ refers to information about the kingdom that the Christ would have shared with the apostles had they been able to absorb it. It was therefore the Spirit’s function to minister *words* to the apostles as they became mature enough to utilize them.

“This is the force of the Lord’s use of ‘the finger of God’ in reference to casting Out demons. The presence of the Spirit of God in the Messiah attests to the power of God in the words uttered by Jesus.

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“The Finger of God reaches far back into the history of God’s people. When Moses and Aaron spoke the word of God before the hardened heart of Pharaoh and brought plagues upon Egypt, marvels that could not be equalled by the magicians of Pharaoh, the magicians explained to their monarch: ‘This is the finger of God’ (Exodus 8:19). The decalogue itself, the very heart of Jewish religion, was inscribed by the finger of God: ‘He gave to Moses, when he had made an end of speaking with him upon Mount Sinai, the two tables of the testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God.’ It is understandable, therefore, that in Psalm 33 :9 the universe is accounted for on the grounds that ‘He spoke and it came to be; he commanded and it stood forth,’ while in Psalm 8:3 the poet writes ‘When I look at thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast established...’”

We could perhaps over simplify the subject and say— *demons are cast out by the word of God*—as related to our own heart and its release from Satan’s power we must say we too are delivered by the word of God or the word of Christ (in reality, we know it to also be *the word of the Spirit*).

We should like to emphasize an important, but often overlooked factor, Jesus only cast out Satan when He opened His mouth and vocally—orally—gave expression to the thoughts of his heart. There was a need for the spoken word; there is a very real need for this same spoken word in our victory over Satan. The audible expression of thought is so very vital in victory. Let’s approximate a circumstance as an example of this powerful principle:

(1) You are faced with the opportunity of financial gain by agreeing to deceit; you know God is against it— you know “no deceit was found in His mouth,” i.e. the mouth of our blessed Lord. But of what value is all of this inward opposition to deceit until it is framed into words and audibly expressed? Where and when will the word of God cast out Satan’s will? *Only when we open our mouth and speak out for truth will error be defeated!* The Holy Spirit’s power is in the “spoken word” of God.

(2) You are considering the fact that someone has been offended because of a lesson you taught. You did not necessarily intend the offended person to make the application of the lesson he did. You know the scriptures say— “If your brother has aught against you, go to him.” You are not sure if you should go or not. You might say in your heart, “if the truth makes him angry, he should ask God to forgive him. I am under no obligation.” But on the other hand, if your manner of presentation was offensive, if going to him would help his understanding and your personal relationship, you are sure you should go the second mile” and speak to him. But all of these good resolves will avail nothing until they are expressed in spoken words to the person involved. *Satan’s power is broken by the spoken word of God.* The Holy Spirit’s power to cast out Satan is released through the spoken word. Examples could be multiplied. Why not produce your own examples by practice of this power?

(9) The emotional response to the presence of the Holy Spirit has become a very prominent point of discussion in our time. The joy or happiness of our Lord was associated directly with the Holy Spirit (genuine joy is a result of His presence in us. Cf. Galatians 5:22). In this world of sadness, how we do need and seek the deep joy of the Lord in and from the Holy Spirit. But how shall we obtain it? —and when can we know for certain the joy we have is from Him?

When thinking of “joy” as the fruit or result of the Holy Spirit would it be wrong to attribute to the Holy Spirit the happiness and exuberance one feels at times? On a certain day for no apparent reason, (best known to God), we are full of a sense of smile! Why? Could it be the reaction of the Holy Spirit upon our spirit? Before we answer, please remember, others have felt this same exuberance without the Holy Spirit. Many such persons are not even Christians—but do they have the same joy we have? All of this discussion is so subjective we feel at a loss to define it further; but we must believe and say the Lord is not displeased with attributing to Him shouts of joy—ecstasy or enthusiasm—for in Him “we both live and move and have our being.”

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Why must I be subject to feeling? Why cannot feeling be subject to me? Can my Heavenly Father or the Holy Spirit invade my area or arena of feeling? He *must* or all is lost! He is like a very kind and polite guest who will not enter another's privacy without an almost insistent invitation; but once He is sure He is welcome and is taken into the inner rooms of my life He has a *very real* emotional factor!

To be aware of the possession of a prize (whether true or false) is to also be aware of joy (i.e. of the emotion of joy), to express this joy is "to rejoice"—If I woke up tomorrow morning and was made aware of the fact that news has come in the night of \$10,000 deposited in my name in the local bank—along with that news would be an emotional reaction! Please notice that such news is abstract, (i.e. impersonal and it yet produces a very strong emotional reaction). It seems to me to be a rather immaterial point whether the emotion of joy is produced by the direct action of the Holy Spirit upon the human Spirit or by the reaction of the human spirit to some external circumstance or some subjective knowledge. Surely anyone can believe that the more we know of the Holy Spirit the more sharply defined will be our emotional response to this knowledge.

(10) Jesus had the Holy Spirit "without measure"—what "*measure*" of the Holy Spirit do we possess? Perhaps this is not the meaning of the text. If Jesus had the power of the Holy Spirit in overcoming sin in a way not available to us how could He be an example to us? Consider carefully this text.

We need to settle it once and for all that the term "*measure*" refers to the power of the Holy Spirit or the manifestation of the Spirit's power and *not* to the Holy Spirit Himself. There was no measurement to the Spirit's power in the life of our Lord. There *are* certain measurements to His power in the life of the early Church and in the life of each Christian. We have considered in an earlier lesson the distinctive manifestations of the Holy Spirit. (See Vol. I, pp. 39 ff.), what we want now to emphasize is the fact that we all have the same blessed Holy Spirit. It is not as if our Lord had a more powerful Holy Spirit than we do. This is an absurdity when we know of the nature of the Spirit. "There is *one Spirit*." We have the same divine Spirit in us that dwelt in our Lord. It was necessary that the Holy Spirit manifest His power in various manners in a variety of places. We have all of Him. There is no question as to how much of the Spirit we possess but there *are* two questions to settle in our "*measure*" of the Holy Spirit.

(1) Just what is our measure?

(2) How does the relationship of the Spirit with our Lord become an example for us?

We have said so very often that we have the Holy Spirit as a gift or present from God because of our repentance and baptism. He manifests Himself in us and through us by producing His virtues in our character. As to the second vital question: we must say that the limitless power of the Spirit possessed by our Lord was not exercised in overcoming sin at least in no way that is not open for our use. If He exercised the power of the Spirit in overcoming sin in some manner we cannot imitate then He was *not* tempted as we are tempted and we *cannot* obey the injunction of Peter to "follow in His steps." (I Peter 2:21.)

(11) Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as "another comforter", thus indicating He was the first comforter (John 14:16).

Jesus would not deceive us, but we surely have deceived ourselves. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to take His place, i.e. as near and dear as our Lord was to His disciples, just that dear and near would the Holy Spirit be to us. Has this purpose been fulfilled in us? We might inquire a little more closely into the relation of the disciples to the first Comforter. To many disciples Jesus was a wonderful person, a miracle worker, and a great teacher, but they didn't get close enough to Him for Him to be of very much comfort to them. Perhaps there was a recognition of His person and His deity, but no personal association. This

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we must believe of many disciples as described in the gospel accounts. This is true of so very many of His followers as they relate themselves to the Other Comforter. Because of the physical circumstances we can excuse the disciples of our Lord, but for present-day disciples we have no such excuse. He is a near friend (yea nearer) than He was to Peter, James and John. Please think with some care about the elements in the concept of “comfort” and apply them to your relationship with the Holy Spirit: (1) Comfort implies a felt need being met. Of course, we could believe the Holy Spirit has given us a great Answer Book called the Bible and to this we can go to read an answer to our problem and there is indeed “comfort in the scriptures”. We must remind ourselves that behind all these words, as the ultimate author whether penned by Matthew, Peter, Paul, or Moses, is the Other Comforter. Because of Satan, who hates the word of God, the Bible is many times the very last book we read to answer our need. It is one thing to be comforted by the writings of one we love. It is yet another to be comforted by the person Himself. Is there no subjective comfort, personal direct comfort from the Comforter? Prayer and meditation are possible for everyone. (2) Comfort implies an exchange between persons in which feeling is communicated and shared. If we do not define the word “comfort” in this context it seems to the writer to have lost almost if not all its meaning. As we try to honestly, personally relate this to the exchange we have with the Holy Spirit, we only emphasize how lonely we are. He is ready to offer His part of this exchange. Are we ready to receive? To share?

(12) The Holy Spirit was to: “glorify Christ” and “to bear witness of or for Him.” “He shall take of mine and declare it unto you.” Read John 14:26; 15:26; 16:14,15.

In times past this purpose of the Holy Spirit was most fully accomplished. In the lives and ministry of the apostles our Lord was honored. His Deity was vindicated. But we ask if the purpose of the Holy Spirit’s ministry has changed? Is it not yet His purpose to glorify our Lord? To bear witness for Him? We believe it is! Has it or is it being fulfilled through us? To answer the question we pose a test or two: (1) Think of someone who claims to be baptized in the Holy Spirit or to have some supernatural experience. Who is honored? Who is the topic of conversation? Who is discussed and rediscussed? Is it the Lord Jesus? Does the Lord Jesus ultimately get the honor and glory? (2) Consider our own study of the person and work of the Holy Spirit. If we succeed in making people “Holy Spirit conscious,” what will be the result? Will it glorify our Lord? It could, but what are the essential factors? (3) Use Peter as a test case. Study the work of the Holy Spirit in his life. Show how Jesus was glorified.

Examination over Lesson Nine

1. Isn’t it wonderful to be “born of the Spirit”? Specify as a personal expression just what it is about the new birth that is so wonderful to you.
2. Please give your exegesis of Titus 3:5 as it relates especially to “the renewal” of the Holy Spirit.
3. When we were baptized some very momentous actions (relationships took place: A. We were sealed, B. We were renewed, C. We were born anew, D. We were anointed. Please indicate the Holy Spirit’s place in each of these relationships. Is this theoretical or actual with you?
4. “The affections present motives, the intellect estimates their worthiness, and the will decides upon the course of action.” Indicate what place the Holy Spirit has in this transaction.
5. How can the Holy Spirit help us in our preaching and teaching?

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6. Give the class a personal testimony as to the value of “A Game With Minutes”.
7. Are we involved in casting out demons today? Discuss.
8. Can we definitely say our joy is produced by the Holy Spirit? Discuss.
9. Did Jesus have a different Holy Spirit than we do? What is meant by “measures of the Holy Spirit”?
10. In a very concrete, practical manner tell us how the Comforter comforts you.

Lesson Ten

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

Questions you should answer *before* you study the lesson.

1. If I did learn from the book of Acts, of what value is this to present day Christians?
2. Are there some “key verses” in Acts i.e., as related to the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives today? Discuss them.
3. If we have the same experiences today as described in this book, would we also have the same results from these experiences?
4. How does *fear* both help and hinder our appreciation of the Spirit’s work in our lives?
5. How many references to the Holy Spirit are found in the Acts account? Choose one: (1) twenty-one? (2) one hundred? (3) sixty? So what?
6. Since the book of Acts is so important to us, and since the subject of the Holy Spirit is so prominent in the book, why have we neglected Him so long?
7. It is very difficult for us to remember that the first book of the New Testament was not written until the second missionary journey. When the first deacons were spoken of as “being filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 6:3), they were thus filled before we have any scriptural record of the apostles laying their hands on them. Discuss this thought.
8. Is there any rule we can use in deciding what in Acts, concerning the Holy Spirit, relates to us and what in Acts does not relate to us? Please state it plainly.
9. Is there a rule we can learn to help us know when language is to be understood as figurative or to be understood in the literal sense? Please state it plainly.
10. Have you ever read the book of Acts with the thought of the Holy Spirit’s work? If not do so now.

INTRODUCTION

We shall consider most carefully every reference to the Holy Spirit in Luke’s second treatise, but we shall do so with but one thought in mind: *How can I relate this to my life and God’s will for me?* We shall ask and answer four questions for each of the sixty references to the Holy Spirit in Acts. They are: (1) What does it say? i.e. Is every word clear in the translation? (2) What does it mean? i.e. What does it mean in its context? When the meaning is in question admit it and offer options. (3) What does it mean to me? (4) How—Or should I share this with someone else?

For the benefit of those who need a comprehensive view of the subject, here are all the references to the Holy Spirit in the Acts account:

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1. Acts 1:2, The Lord “had given commandment through the Holy Spirit to the apostles.”
2. Acts 1:4, “Wait for the promise of the Father which ye have heard from me.” (cf. John 14:16).
3. Acts 1:5, “Ye shall be baptised with the Holy Spirit not many days hence.”
4. Acts 1:8, “Ye shall receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you.”
5. Acts 1:16, The Scripture, “which the Holy Spirit spake before by the mouth of David concerning Judas.”
6. Acts 2:4, “They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.”
7. Acts 2:17, “I will pour forth of My Spirit upon all flesh.”
8. Acts 2:18, “On My servants and on My handmaidens will I pour forth of My Spirit; and they shall prophesy.”
9. Acts 2:33, “Having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He hath poured forth this.”
10. Acts 2:38, “Ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”
11. Acts 3:19, “Seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.”
12. Acts 4:8, “Peter filled with the Holy Spirit, said.”
13. Acts 4:25, “Oh Lord . . . Who by the Holy Spirit, by the mouth of our father David, Thy servant, didst say.”
14. Acts 4:31, “They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spake the Word of God.”
15. Acts 5:3, “Why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?”
16. Acts 5:9, “Ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord.”
17. Acts 5:32, “We are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, Whom God hath given to them that obey Him.”
18. Acts 6:3, “Men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom.”
19. Acts 6:5, “A man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit.”
20. Acts 6:10, “Not able to withstand the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake.”
21. Acts 7:51, “Ye do always resist the Holy Spirit.”
22. Acts 7:55, “He, being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up.
23. 24. 25. Acts 8:15, 16, “Who . . . prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit; for as yet He was fallen upon none of them; only they had been baptised.”
26. Acts 8:17, “They laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.”
27. Acts 8:18 “Through the laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Spirit was given.”
28. Acts 8:19, “That on whomsoever I lay my hands, he may receive the Holy Spirit.”
29. Acts 8:20, “Thought to obtain the gift of God with money.~
30. Acts 8:29, “The Spirit said unto Philip.”
31. Acts 8:39, “The Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip.”
32. Acts 9:17, “That thou mightest . . . be filled with the Holy Spirit.”
33. Acts 9:31, “Walking . . . in the comfort of the Holy Spirit.”

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34. Acts 10:19, “The Spirit said unto him” (Peter).
35. Acts 10:20, “I have sent them.”
36. Acts 10:38, “God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power.”
37. Acts 10:44, “The Holy Spirit fell on all them which heard.”
38. Acts 10:45, “On the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit.”
39. Acts 10:47, “Which have received the Holy Spirit as well as **we**.”
40. Acts 11:12, “The Spirit bade me go with them.”
41. Acts 11:15, “The Holy Spirit fell on them as on us at the beginning.”
42. Acts 11:16, “Ye shall be baptised with the Holy Spirit.”
43. Acts 11:24, “He was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith.”
44. Acts 11:28, “Agabus . . . signified by the Spirit that there should be a great famine.~~
45. Acts 13:2, “The Holy Spirit said.”
46. Acts 13:4 “They, being sent forth by the Holy Spirit.”
47. Acts 13 :9, 10, “Saul . . . filled with the Holy Spirit said.”
48. Acts 13:52, “The disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.”
49. Acts 15:8, “God . . . bare them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit.”
50. Acts 15:28, “It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to **us**.”
51. Acts 16:6, “Forbidden of the Holy Spirit to speak the Word in Asia.”
52. Acts 16:7, “The Spirit of Jesus suffered them not.”
53. Acts 19:2, “Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed~ We did not so much as hear whether the Holy Spirit was given.”
54. Acts 19:6, “The Holy Spirit came on them.”
55. Acts 20:22, “I go bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem.”
56. Acts 20:23, “The Holy Spirit testifieth unto me in every city.~~
57. Acts 20:28, “The Holy Spirit hath made you bishops.”
58. Acts 21:4, “These said to Paul through the Holy Spirit.”
59. Acts 21:11, “Thus saith the Holy Spirit.”
60. Acts 28:25, “Well spake the Holy Spirit by Isaiah the prophet.”
61. “. . . after that he had given commandment *through the Holy Spirit* unto the apostles whom he had chosen.” 1:2

- A. *What Does It Say?* In answering this important question we must understand: (1) Who is speaking? In this text, our Lord is speaking. (2) To whom is he speaking or who is being addressed? In this verse the eleven apostles are addressed. (3) For what purpose? He is addressing the apostles with the great commission—He is commanding them to go into all the world and preach the good news— this is an abbreviated form of the longer expressions in Matthew 28:18-20 and Mark 16:15, 16. Cf. Luke 24:44-49, John 20:20-23. (4) Under what conditions or

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circumstances does this verse appear? No geographical place is mentioned. The thought is: Jesus was not taken up to heaven until He first, through the Holy Spirit, gave the great commission.

B. *What Does It Mean?*

We are narrowing this question to refer *only* to the mention of the Holy Spirit in the passage. We will answer the question as it relates to the rest of the verse or verses *only* if such helps our understanding of the subject of the Holy Spirit. Acts 1:2 discusses the aid of the Holy Spirit exercised by our Lord in His speaking—specifically in the giving of the great commission or commandment” to the chosen apostles. Through the help, aid, or assistance of the Holy Spirit Jesus gave these words to Peter, James, John, Andrew and the other eleven. In just what particular sense the Holy Spirit aided Him or accompanied Him, we do not know. Indeed, there is some question as to which verb relates to the phrase. Gareth Reese has well said: “exactly what we are to understand was done by the help of the Holy Spirit depends on with which verb this phrase is taken. It can be taken with “chosen” (meaning:

He chose the apostles by the help of the Holy Spirit), and is thus translated in the Syriac and Ethiopic versions. It can be taken with “received up” (meaning: Christ was taken up to heaven by the power of the Holy Spirit). It can be taken with “given commandment” (meaning: Christ acted by the special aid of the Holy Spirit when He gave the Great Commission). (*New Testament History*, p. 3). We prefer the last meaning.

C. *What Does It Mean To Me?*

Since the Holy Spirit aided our Lord in so many ways under so many circumstances (see Lesson Nine), are we then to conclude He will not also be our Helper? Of course, the ministry of the Other Comforter is distinct as relates to our Lord and His apostles but many of their needs are ours and we can expect the same One to aid us.

A very basic concept appears just here: How interested is our God in the affairs of our lives? Does our God have an interest or personal concern about the “little needs” of our lives as well as the so-called “larger concerns”? We believe with our Lord that “not a sparrow falls” without our Father’s knowledge. This being true, *how* does He indicate or express His interest? *How* does He answer our prayers? Angels are ministering spirits sent to fulfill His will in the lives of His children. What about the presence and purpose of the Holy Spirit in the body of each of His children? We cannot be cognizant of His immediate, subjective work but we believe He is at work. If it was “through the Holy Spirit” our Lord chose His apostles, it is also “through the Holy Spirit” that some of our choices have been made. If it was “through the Holy Spirit” Jesus gave the great commission, are we to conclude He is absent when we repeat or fulfill this commission today? Perhaps we can catch a glimpse of the depth of meaning in the little phrase in Him we live and move and have our being”— not only by the rights of creation but by the privileges of the new creation.

D. How Can I Share It?

If there is a greater need among His followers than the awareness of God’s work in our lives through the Holy Spirit, I do not know what it is. Share this glorious truth!

2. “. . . and, being assembled together with them, he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which said he, ye heard from me.” 1:4

What Does It Say?

The antecedent of the pronoun “them” refers to “the apostles whom he had chosen” (vs. 2). Therefore the charge concerning “the promise of the Father” is given to them. He had mentioned the same need to stay in the city of Jerusalem for the same purpose in Luke 24:49: “I send forth the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high.” Jesus had made request to the Father concerning the other Comforter: “and I will pray (or make request) of the

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Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you forever,” (John 14:16). Compare these other references to the same promise: John 15:26; 16:7; 13; Matthew 10:20; John 20:22.

What Does It Mean?

God long ago promised the first Comforter—the Old Testament contains this promise in so many prophecies and types. Jesus was the first Comforter—the fulfillment of that promise. As certain as the coming of our Lord in the flesh, so certain is the coming of the Holy Spirit.

What Does It Mean To Me?

This is both a specific and a general promise. Specific in the sense that He was speaking to the apostles about the coming day of Pentecost and their baptism in the Holy Spirit—general in the sense that He speaks of the time of the advent of the Holy Spirit as a gift. We must remark again that we see in the name *Comforter* far more than we usually associate with the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the average church member. Comfort is a personal, felt relationship—as comfort relates to a person, this presupposes some form of personal exchange and interaction on the part of the Comforter and the one being comforted. Please, please remember the Holy Spirit was promised and received twenty years before the first epistle of the New Testament was written.

D. How Can I Share It?

There is nothing more needed in our dark, sad world than the personal, warm fellowship of God’s Holy Spirit. The best way we share this truth is by a demonstration on our part. If and when we show the results of the personal indwelling Christ, we will have shared the grandest gift of God to His children.

3. “. . . for John indeed baptised with water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence.” 1:5

A. What Does It Say?

We have commented as to the meaning of this text in several places—we shall not write further. The words are clear: Jesus promised the apostles that as John immersed persons in water, Jesus would immerse their minds or spirits in the Holy Spirit—and this would happen soon.

B. *What Does It Mean?*

When we ask this question we confine ourselves to the *one text* under consideration. We have answered this question of Holy Spirit baptism in its larger connections in another lesson. This was a preparatory measure as related to the work of preaching the Gospel. The apostles were not ready to carry out the great commission until they were first baptized in the Holy Spirit. We do not minimize the source of strength and power granted by the Holy Spirit to the inner man (Ephesians 3:16), but we do want to say the largest meaning of this experience would seem to be to grant to the apostles the ability to recall all that Jesus taught them and to speak it with clarity and boldness as a consequence of this experience. Infallible recollection, information, and inspiration all came as a result of this experience.

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

It would be easy to say that since we were not included in the promise we do not at all relate to this text. However, the fact of our attempt to understand it indicates a personal relationship to it. It seems to me very impressive that we have the same Comforter as the one promised to the apostles. We can be sure that as He met their needs and equipped them for their work, He will (and does) meet our needs and prepare us for our work.

D. How Can I Share It?

If there is one large need in the heart of Mr. Church-member, it is to know something of the nearness of God. If we can teach them by word and example that God through His Spirit is in us—lives in our

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bodies—we will have indeed shared an important truth.

4. “But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” 1:8

A. What Does It Say?

Once again: our Lord speaks to His ambassadors, the apostles. This is a repeated promise looking to Pentecost. As a result of the power granted by the Holy Spirit, these men will be able to share the good news. Jesus plainly tells them the progressive nature of their witness.

What Does It Mean?

This verse is linked with the question of the apostles concerning the restoration of the kingdom to Israel; whereas, they were *not* to know the times or the seasons for the restored kingdom, they *were* to know the time and place for an equally important (or even more important) event. The *power* promised was the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Question: “Would this experience motivate them to witness or simply bring to their remembrance all the information for their witness?” This is a crucial question as it probes the deeper meaning of the contact of the divine Spirit with the human spirit. Someone has suggested that the motivation for witness was the resurrection and the baptism in the Holy Spirit gave them the information. Judging from the Acts account, the subject of the resurrection was surely dominant. However, we can hardly imagine the experience of the Holy Spirit baptism without a personal response. The sense of awe, wonder, and amazement must have filled the hearts of the apostles as they contemplated and unavoidably felt what happened to them. These men were to bear witness of what they had seen and heard (i.e. the resurrected Christ with all authority in heaven and on earth). Essentially, the power to give this witness came from their association with Him “after His passion.” The confidence to speak accurately and clearly came from the Spirit baptism.

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

We have all the evidence to establish without question the resurrection of our Lord. The foundation for our message is firmly established. Where is our witness? ‘We are not eye-witnesses of His majesty, but we do believe because of those things written for such a purpose. The example of these unlearned and ignorant men should move us out into our society with the same boldness to tell the same good news. We are not the eye-witnesses with infallible knowledge, nor is it likely we will be called upon to be martyrs for our words. But we do have the same motivations: a lost world—a wonderful Savior—a command to go and tell.

D. How Can I Share It?

We have already touched on this. It has been said so many times by so many writers and speakers. If we could convince the members of our Lord’s church it was their privilege to share the good news of Christ’s death for our sins and that He arose from the dead, the whole world would soon be saved. We can only share what we ourselves personally possess.

5. “Brethren, it was needful that the scripture should be fulfilled *which the Holy Spirit spake* before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who was guide to them that took Jesus.” 1:16

A. What Does It Say?

By reading this verse in its context, especially if this is done in two or three modern speech translations, it is almost impossible to misunderstand it. Here are the words of Peter to the 120 about Judas.

B. What Does It Mean?

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We are not enslaved to commentaries but we do believe they are worthy of your serious consideration. Commentaries are but the written lessons of men who have made a careful attempt to answer the question at the heading of this point (i.e. *What does it mean?*). We have listed twenty-one of what we consider the best commentaries on the book of Acts. There are four times this number available, but these are in our estimation the most helpful. (For the benefit of those who do not have this list, we include it here.)

1. *Standard Bible Commentary-Acts*, Edited by Orrin Root, Standard Publishing Co., Cincinnati, Ohio, 1966, 208 pages.
2. *The Acts of the Apostles*, G. Campbell Morgan, Fleming H. Revell Co., 1924, 548 pages.
3. The New International Commentary, *Commentary on the Book of Acts*, F. F. Bruce, Win. B. Eerdmans Co., 1954, 556 pages.
4. *New Commentary on Acts of Apostles*, J. W. McGarvey, Standard Publishing Co., 1892, 298 pages.
5. The Evangelical Commentary, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Charles W. Carter and Ralph Earle, Zondervan Publishing Co., 436 pages,
6. Westminster Commentaries, *The Acts of the Apostles*, R. B. Rackham, Methuen and Co., 36 Essex St., Straud, London, WC 2.
7. Restoration Reprint Library, *Studies In Acts*, W. R. Walker, 194 pages.
8. *Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, J. A. Alexander, Zondervan Publishing Co., 1956, 960 pages.
9. *Interpretation of the Acts of the Apostles*, R. C. H. Lenski, Wartburg Press, Columbus, Ohio.
10. *Pictures of the Apostolic Church—Studies in the Book of Acts*, William M. Ramsay, Baker Book House, 1959, 368 pages.
11. *The Acts of the Apostles*, Thomas Walker, Moody Press. 568 pages,
12. *New Testament History*, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Acts, Gareth L. Reese, 1966, 700 pages.
13. *Notes on the New Testament*, By Albert Barnes, Baker Book House, 1962.
14. *Acts Comments*, Edsil Dale, Moberly, Mo., 1960, 390 pages.
15. *Acts of the Apostles*, A Homiletic Commentary, David Thomas, Baker Book House, 1955, 494 pages.
16. *The Acts of the Apostles*, William Barclay, The Daily Study Bible, St. Andrew Press, Edinburgh, 214 pages.
17. Scripture Union, *Bible Study Books—Acts*, R. P. Martin, Scripture Union, 239 Fairfield Avenue, Upper Darby, Pa., 90 pages,
18. *The Living Word, Acts of Apostles*, Part I & II, R. B. Sweet Co., J. W. Roberts, 88 and 94 pages.
19. *A Study of the Books of Acts*, Standing on the Promises, Charles J. Woodridge, Baker Book House, 152 pages.
20. *The Acts of the Apostles*, William Owen Carver, Broadman Press, 280 pages.
21. *Acts Made Actual*, Don DeWelt, College Press, 418 pages,

“Here is Peter’s clear definition -of Inspiration: in the Scriptures the Holy Spirit is the speaker, and (in this case) the mouth of David is the medium for his speaking. This definition is oft repeated. The Spirit—the *causa efficiens*; the human mouth (pen) —*Causa instrumentalis*. The significant preposition is *dia*, ‘through’ a medium or an instrument. And this was done not merely ‘through David’ but through his ‘mouth,’ his very utterance. This is verbal inspiration, through which none other ever occurred according to the Scriptures themselves.” (Lenski, p. 45)

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

Since the Holy Spirit has spoken through the apostles and prophets there is nothing more important for me to do than to study and know the meaning of every word. We do not minimize the need and value of the study of other subjects, but they surely pale into insignificance as we contemplate the thought of

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God speaking to us. Not all men believe God has spoken to us in the words of the Bible—many who do somehow miss the vast importance of such a fact. We know it. We believe it. We feel its importance. Therefore we must know it! This is heaven’s incentive for Bible study.

D. How Can I Share It?

Perhaps through you many others can understand the privilege and need for a personal word-for-word study of what God through the Holy Spirit is saying to us. You could share nothing more important than the enthusiasm you have for a knowledge of His Word.

6. “And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” 2:4

A. What Does It Say?

We have treated this text quite completely in other parts of our study. We refer you to them. We must say the measure of filling with the Holy Spirit was the baptism in the Holy Spirit or “being clothed with power from on high” or “receiving power after the Holy Spirit came upon them.” There are five expressions all referring to the same experience: (1) Baptized in the Holy Spirit, (2) Clothed with power from on high, (3) Receive power after the Holy Spirit is come upon you, (4) Filled with the Holy Spirit—after the event, Peter refers to it as, (5) “Poured forth this which ye see and hear.” The antecedent of the pronoun “they” is important. To whom does it refer? It is a source of amazement to read commentary after commentary which speak of the 120 disciples as the antecedent of this pronoun. In contrast consider: (1) Jesus used the words of John the Baptist spoken by John to the multitude (Matthew 3:1-12) and referred these words to the apostles (1:5). Indeed, the eleven were so convinced of this they wanted to supply the twelfth member to their group before the promised experience occurred. Does it seem reasonable that Jesus would baptize in the Holy Spirit those to whom He gave no promise? What purpose would be served in so doing?

B. What Does It Mean?

We need to realize the proper meaning of a phrase here found by an examination of every place it occurs. As an example: “*filled with the Holy Spirit.*” Are we to conclude that every time we read this phrase, “filled with the Holy Spirit”, we have a case of Holy Spirit baptism? There are many persons who so believe. Is this fair to the context? Here are all the uses of this expression:

1. Luke 1:35, “He shall be *filled with the Holy Spirit*, even from his mother’s womb.” This is in reference to John the Baptist. This would seem to indicate the filling of the Holy Spirit is not here dependent upon the conscious cooperation of the person being filled.
2. Luke 1:41, “Elizabeth was *filled with the Holy Spirit*,” We are not here told she was baptized in the Holy Spirit. It would be presumptuous to claim such an experience for Elizabeth when it is not so described.
3. Luke 1:67, “Zachariah was *filled with the Holy Spirit.*” What we have said of Elizabeth we say of her husband.
4. Luke 4:1, “Jesus *full of the Holy Spirit* was led by the Spirit into the wilderness.” No one would think of describing this expression of the Holy Spirit as the baptism in the Holy Spirit.
5. Acts 4:8, “Peter, *filled with the Holy Spirit*,” Does this describe a condition Peter obtained at Pentecost and sustained the rest of his life? Or is the filling with the Holy Spirit dependent or contingent upon the faith, trust or reliance of the person being filled? Whatever the answer is to these questions this verse does not describe another case of Holy Spirit baptism.
6. Acts 4:31, Speaking of “their company” to which Peter and John returned after their trial before the council. Following the united prayer we read these words of “their company”: “They were all *filled with the Holy Spirit*, and they spake the word of God

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with boldness.” The first consideration would be to understand who was included in this experience. The text describes them as “their company”. Are we to believe this refers to the other ten apostles? Or a larger group of disciples? At whatever juncture we would not mistake this expression for what happened on Pentecost or in the house of Cornelius. We shall discuss this passage in detail in a later section.

We could list the rest of the places in the New Testament where the expression “filled with the Holy Spirit” occurs. They are: (7) Acts 6:3, (8) 6:5, (9) 7:5 5, (10) 9:17, (11) 11:24, (12) 13:9, 10, (13) 13:52, (14) Ephesians 5:18. In none of these references do we have mention made of speaking in tongues or any other miraculous manifestation such as those associated with the baptism in the Holy Spirit. What is the conclusion of the whole matter? The expression, “filled with the Holy Spirit”, describes a condition and or an experience different than the baptism in the Holy Spirit. It does describe the baptism in the Holy Spirit but it does also describe another condition. All who were baptized in the Holy Spirit were filled with the Holy Spirit, but not all who were filled with the Holy Spirit were/are baptized in the Holy Spirit.

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

We refer you to our thoughts on pages 45 to 52 in *Volume One*. We do believe He “gave some to be apostles” for a special purpose and the baptism in the Holy Spirit equipped them for this purpose. To be the spokesmen on behalf of Christ they must have infallible expression; this they received by the baptism in the Holy Spirit. We believe it is patently plain that the “tongues” spoken were the languages of the people present.

D. How Can I Share It?

Surely we do need to share the teaching of the importance and work of the office of the apostles. The loose application of Acts 2:4 to everyone and anyone has led to all kinds of confusion. Let’s get an in-depth understanding of the total circumstance.

7. “And it shall be in the last days, saith God, I will *pour forth of my Spirit* upon all flesh: and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.” 2:17

A. What Does It Say?

Since we have discussed this passage in both of our books, *ACTS MADE ACTUAL* p.42 and *THE CHURCH IN THE BIBLE*, pp. 26-32, as well as in *Volume One of THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT*, pp. 45-5 2, we refer the reader to these sources. Suffice it to say here: (1) Peter plainly states that what was happening on Pentecost was a fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy. What right do we have to expect such prophecy to be fulfilled over and over again? Is there some indication in the words of Peter or Joel that we could expect a repeat fulfillment? What about the reference to “all flesh”? What about the reference to “sons and daughters and handmaids prophesying”? We answer: *a*. “All flesh” refers to the whole human race (i.e. Jews and Gentiles —the only persons present on Pentecost were Jews). In a strictly literal sense, we cannot find a fulfillment on Pentecost. “All flesh” was *~not* present to receive the “pouring out” of the Holy Spirit. When did “all flesh” receive the Holy Spirit? The first Gentiles to receive the Holy Spirit were those in the house of Cornelius. We have already discussed the impossibility of using this case as a general example. We, of course, understand that Peter was enabled to speak the gospel to the house of Cornelius only because he had been baptized in the Holy Spirit on Pentecost (i.e. he had infallible guidance from the Holy Spirit as a consequence of the immersion of his spirit in the Holy Spirit). We need to remember the spirits of the apostles were immersed in the Holy Spirit on Pentecost and *stayed immersed* as long as they exercised trusting faith. *b*. Who were the *sons* and *daughters* and *handmaids* who prophesied? Please, please read the Acts account as well as all other New Testament references to the gift of prophecy. Point out an example of women praying for and receiving the gift of prophecy and we will gladly concede the point. We have no other means of impartation than the “laying

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on of the hands of the apostles". We have cases where the gift of prophecy was exercised, such as Philip's four virgin daughters, in which case, we have no reference as to how they obtained this gift. We *do* know they were associated with Peter and John and Paul and it is very possible the hands of the apostles were laid upon them. We *know* supernatural powers were granted through the hands of the apostles. We *do not know* any other means of obtaining these powers. We have *no* example of others obtaining such powers by prayer or through the hands of any others than the apostles. (There is no exception in the case of Annias and Paul in Acts 9:12 for this has a reference to the salvation of Paul and not to a subsequent experience). As we have said time and again, we believe every Christian should be "filled with the Holy Spirit", but in the absence of any reference to supernatural powers in the several examples of persons who *were* filled with the Holy Spirit (see Acts 4:31; 13:52; Ephesians 5:18), we see no reason to claim supernatural powers on the single fact that we are indwelt and/or filled with the Holy Spirit.

B. What Does It Mean?

Shall we take a phrase at a time for meaning? "*It shall be in the last days, saith God*" is a reference to the period of time in which we now live. The whole study of every reference to "the last days" is too detailed here to discuss (we refer you to one of our BIBLE STUDY TEXTBOOKS for help on this subject — see MINOR PROPHETS by Paul Butler, pp. 84-90). Suffice it to say that we have been in "the last days" since Pentecost, and will be until Jesus comes again. What is here described is to happen during the period from Pentecost to the end of time. "*I shall tour forth my Spirit upon all flesh.*" We know the Holy Spirit is not some type of fluid. Why then the expression "poured forth" or "pour forth"? There are several possible answers: (1) The suggestion of anointing seems to be a part of this. Oil was poured out upon those being initiated into an office, particularly, priests were "poured upon" as they entered their office. Are we to understand that at the beginning of God's acceptance of both Jews on Pentecost and the Gentiles at Caesarea that as they entered the priesthood of believers; and the Lord was anointing them for the office by granting them the Holy Spirit? It would seem reasonable inasmuch as the Holy Spirit is spoken of as the element of anointing at the beginning of our Lord's ministry (Acts 10:38). Perhaps such an expression as "poured forth" used to describe His coming or advent does indeed relate to the purpose of anointing in the beginning of our office as priests unto God as well as the beginning of His work among the believers. (2) "Poured forth" perhaps refers to the suddenness of His coming—a figure of speech in which the effect is described as the cause—as if a quantity of water or some other element were poured upon one. The sudden sensation resulting could well describe the feelings of those who were suddenly endowed with these supernatural powers. The effect could best be described with the words "poured upon". (3) Perhaps since the Holy Spirit came from heaven or from above and the sensation was first felt in the head, "poured out" would be an appropriate description.

We have discussed, we hope adequately, the expression "all Flesh"—meaning both Jew and Gentile.

8. "And your sons and your daughters shall prophecy, and your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams."

A. What Does It Say?

If we are to imagine all 120 disciples as being involved in the baptism in the Holy Spirit, (i.e. in the upper room), then we could also imagine some young men—some young women—even a few old men as being present among the 120. (But even if this were true, we do not believe *any* of them were Gentiles—thus *all* flesh was *not* involved.) But are we right in believing all 120 were involved in the Holy Spirit immersion? To whom did Jesus promise this experience? (Acts 1:5) *To the apostles*, (cf Luke 24:49). What purpose would be served in immersing the minds of all 120 in the Holy Spirit? See our arguments for saying *only* the 12 apostles were present for the baptism of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. (Vol. I page 50-52) If this did not happen on Pentecost when did the sons and daughters prophecy? When did the young men see visions and the old men dream dreams? We believe the power to grant these visions, prophecy, and dreams was given to the apostles by the baptism in the Holy Spirit and they in turn, or because they were thus endowed, laid their hands on certain woman, men and old men and

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granted these experiences to them through the Holy Spirit who was already present in them. Perhaps those in Samaria could be a case in point. When Peter and John came to Samaria to lay their hands upon certain of the believers it was for the “falling on power” of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 8:12-16) These believers were thus equipped to carry on the teaching and preaching in the approaching absence of Philip.

The young men we would equate with preachers of today and the old men as elders in the churches. Philip and Stephen were two young men with vision and the ability to preach and teach, not to mention the power to perform signs and wonders. (Acts 6:8) How were these two young men thus equipped? The hands of the apostles were laid upon them. (Acts 6:6) Certain older men were appointed in churches. (Acts 14:23) Could it not be that the figurative reference to “old men” in Acts 2:17 anticipates the supernaturally endowed elders of the apostolic church? The important point is the apostles were enabled because of the baptism in the Holy Spirit on Pentecost to thus equip these men.

B. What Does It Mean?

If there ever was a time in the history of the Restoration Movement when we needed an understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit, it is *now!* We have sons and daughters, young men and handmaids, not to mention older men, all claiming to qualify as those who have visions and prophecy and have other supernatural gifts. What shall we say about these things? I would say there is a great deep hunger for reality and the sense of God’s nearness in the hearts of some. This hunger is indeed in the heart of every humbly surrendered Christian; and *it shall be satisfied or it will dissipate and we will fall back into the world!* Form and declamation *will not* satisfy this hunger, only the power and presence of God Himself! Our people have no daily devotional life. I refer to a daily feeding of the heart upon God’s Word and satisfying the longings of the heart before the throne of grace. Our people have little joy in their service, public or private. Almost no personal testimony of the delivering power of our Saviour is ever mentioned. Why? Because there is no personal meditation and no personal involvement in His Service.

C. & D. What Does It Mean To Me? and How Can I Share It?

No wonder we look elsewhere for His nearness and His reality! I have but little criticism for those who seek these spiritual experiences. I do not define these experiences as those who have them do. I believe they are seeking the power and presence of our dear Lord in the wrong way, (and I have given my reasons for so believing), but they are hungry. They are thirsty. They are also satisfied that what they have found is His power and presence. What they claim goes beyond this. Has your daily devotion to the Lord produced a wondering, exhilarating, exciting sense of His nearness? *Isn’t our God this real?* If so, why shouldn’t we thus relate to Him? I would not at all define such a relationship as the gift of tongues or prophecy, etc, but rather as my human response to His overwhelming power, beauty, holiness, and nearness. Is there something wrong with tears, strong cryings and strivings as we rejoice or agonize with God in prayer? (These are not only words on paper. If they are only that, then they indeed are worse than nothing.) When we have experienced this season of prayer with Him, we do not claim some supernatural gifts, but we do come away from such a place as Moses returned from the mount.

9. Having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear.” (Acts 2:33)

A. What Does It Say?

Jesus received something from the Father. What was it? Evidently the advent of the Holy Spirit was so well known to our Lord as to be expected at a certain time. John 7:39 is a key verse in understanding this text. (Please read it.) Jesus promised “Rivers of living water” as a consequence of the Holy Spirit’s presence in the believer, but one qualifying condition is mentioned: the Spirit was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified.” When was Jesus glorified? Jesus said “. . . Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” (John 17:5) Jesus returned from the

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mount called Olivet to the “glory which He had with the Father”-and having sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high, He was glorified, and we believe, coronated or crowned king of kings and Lord of Lords. His first royal act was to send the Holy Spirit. The results of this act were the occurrences on Pentecost. We really do not know why the Son seems to be something less than the Father. (i.e., in this relationship of giving and receiving). Perhaps the word “less” is unfortunate. Could we say that here was the last act of the Son’s condescension just before He returned to being equal with the Father? (Phil. 2:5-9) Please notice that it was Jesus, not God who sent, or “poured forth”, the Holy Spirit. This is in fulfillment of the promise of John the Baptist. Speaking of Jesus, John said: “*He* shall baptise you in the Holy Spirit.” (Matt, 3:11, 12) The apostles were anointed and thus initiated into their office by the immersion of their minds in or with the Holy Spirit. This Jesus did for them.

B. What Does It Mean?

Among other things this text would mean that John 20:22, 23 is a promise not an experience. (i.e., at the time it was spoken.) Jesus said to the apostles: “..As the father sent me even so send I you”, and when He had said this, he breathed on them and saith unto them, ‘Receive ye the Holy Spirit.’ Whosoever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven; whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.”

We conclude Jesus was speaking in John 20:22, 23 of the day of Pentecost and was here preparing the apostles for the experience. This would seem to be confirmed by what would happen upon receiving the Holy Spirit. If the apostles were endowed in the upper room by Jesus with the power to forgive and retain sins what was the purpose of Pentecost? We might also add they were sent out into the world “even as the Father had sent Him” immediately after Pentecost-but *not before*. This text means to us that we understand Jesus is receiving the fulfillment of a promise made to Him by the Father. (John 14:16; 26) The Holy Spirit is Christ’s gift from the Father to the believer. He is “the other Comforter” or the One to take the place of our Lord. (i.e., in His absence) This began on Pentecost and Peter is here explaining the occurrence.

C. How Does This Relate To Me?

A number of our comments already made have a personal application. Above all we are so glad the Comforter has come! We look to this text as a historic promise of when He came and who sent Him.

D. How Can I Share It?

We do not wish to become redundant but it *is* so important that we teach men everywhere and as often as possible when and where and how the Holy Spirit was given. Most especially, should we teach the full meaning of Pentecost.

10. “And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 2:3 8)

A. What Does It Say?

We want to give this text as full a treatment as possible for these questions are a part of it: (1) Is the gift of the Holy Spirit the Holy Spirit Himself or some gift from the Holy Spirit? (2) Are we to understand that the Holy Spirit literally indwelt the 3,000 converts, or was this a figure of speech referring to some other form of indwelling? (3) Were there miraculous powers associated with this “gift of the Holy Spirit”? We shall first of all proceed with a word by word examination of the text to be sure we know as closely as possible what is said, look at it: and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

Brother Chester A. Williamson has written a splendid treatise on the subject of the indwelling Spirit. We quote extensively from him in our treatment here: “In discussing the meaning of the text from a Greek analysis Thomas B. Warren, chairman, department of Bible, Freed-Hardeman College says: “either appositional genitive, thus making the statement mean ‘the gift which is the Holy Spirit’ or the objective

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genitive, thus making the statement mean ‘the gift of the Holy Spirit himself’. In either case it is the Holy Spirit himself that is given to literally dwell in the heart of the believer.” Brother Williamson continues: “I think it is unnecessary to paraphrase the verse in order to make an objective genitive out of the phrase. In the English language, however, ‘Holy Spirit’ would be classified as in the objective case because it is in apposition with the noun ‘gift’ which is the direct object of the verb, ‘shall receive.

“Acts 2:33 contains the same Greek construction as Acts 2:38: ‘promise’ (accusative case), ‘of the Holy Spirit’ (genitive case). Yet this promise is not ‘a promise which the Holy Spirit had made’; Jesus had received it ‘*of the Father.*’

‘This, which ye see and hear’ definitely links the promise with the prophecy mentioned in Acts 2:16,17. Note that this came from God (‘saith God’), and refers to the Spirit of God (‘my Spirit’), in Greek, ‘from of the Spirit of Me’ (making the *me* very emphatic).

“Acts 2:39 is another verse in the immediate context which must be considered. Whatever the scope of the promise referred to there, the implied promise of remission of sins for all believers who repented and were baptized and the direct promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit on the same terms must be included.

“As indicated by the quotation from Robertson and the use of the same Greek construction in Acts 2:33, the use of the genitive case in ‘the gift of the Holy Spirit’ does not answer the question for us as to whether the expression means, ‘the gift consisting in the Holy Spirit’ or ‘the gift which the Holy Spirit gives.’ We must look to the Scriptures for the answer.

Prophecies in the Old Testament had dealt with God’s ‘pouring out of the Spirit’ (making Him abundantly available to all believers), Proverbs 1:23; Isaiah 32:15; Joel 2:28,29; and to His imparting the Spirit, personally, to believers, Isaiah 44:3; 63:11; Ezekiel 11:19; 36:26,27. “Jesus had spoken of the Holy Spirit as a gift, Luke 11:13; and of *receiving the Holy Spirit*, John 20:22. In John 14:16, He says, ‘And I will pray the Father, and He shall *give you another Comforter*, that He may abide with you forever.’

“His death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and glorification, referred to in John 7:39, were just about to take place, and then *the Holy Spirit would be given.*

“This time, He is speaking only to His apostles, and not to the largest assembly connected with the Feast of Tabernacles. But the *forever* of verse 16, throughout which the Holy Spirit is to ‘dwell with’ — and ‘*be in*’ disciples would seem to extend throughout the entire Christian Dispensation.

“In the Old Testament, when God gave commands which were to be in effect throughout the entire Mosaic dispensation and then to cease, the commands were said to be *~forever throughout your generations.*’

“But no such limiting term is used in connection with the word ‘forever,’ in John 14:16. According to other Scripture indications, this dispensation is not to be followed by another, and the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit is not to be withdrawn even at the end of it.

...But T. W. Brents leaves no room for doubt. Following are a few quotations from his great book, *The Gospel Plan of Salvation* (published 1874): ‘The phrase ‘the gift of the Holy Ghost’ occurs Acts 2:38 and 10:45, and in both places must be understood as equivalent to ‘the Holy Spirit as a gift,’ yet we are persuaded that the same measure of the Spirit is not alluded to in both places.’

“Regarding the promise of Jesus, recorded in John 14:16,17, Brents said: ‘That this was not a

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figurative, but a literal in-dwelling of the Holy Spirit is plain ... they were all filled with the Holy Spirit “Acts 2:4. It will scarcely be said that the disciples were only figuratively filled with the Holy Spirit . . . Nay, it was literally in them, as the Saviour promised them it should be.”

11. “Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come *seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.*” (Acts 3:19)

A. What Does It Say?

Even the casual reader would not fail to see a similarity between this reference and Acts 2:38. (i.e., in the context.) Peter is preaching in both references. He is addressing many of the same people in both references. He is calling for response and making a promise in both examples. Notice an interesting parallel:

Acts 2:38—Peter said:

1. Repent
2. and be baptized
3. for the remission of your sins
4. ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit,

Acts 3:19—Peter said:

1. Repent
2. and turn again
3. that your sins may be blotted out
4. there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.

We could equate “the seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord” with the gift of the Holy Spirit” without doing violence to the text. Indeed if the other expressions are parallel, then this one is necessarily so.

B. What Does It Mean?

If this expression has any reference to the Holy Spirit, His presence is intended to produce within the Christian a *cooling, Pleasant sense of God’s nearness*. Are we talking of an emotional sensation? We surely are! How could we experience “seasons of refreshing” without our emotions being involved? Please remember: if the Jews on Solomon’s porch were the recipients of the blotting out of sins then they would also be of this boon of happiness which the law could never give. “The old legalism of Pharisasism knew nothing about such seasons, for all work-righteousness is like the drive, heat, and sweat of slavery.” (*Lenski*)

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

Perhaps we should say—”What it *should* or *could* mean to me.” The gift of the Holy Spirit was intended to produce an exhilaration—a joy of inner-satisfaction which could be described as “seasons of refreshing”—but somehow such has never really been the experience of so many of us. Why? We do not expect it or believe it! The fruit of His presence in our lives *is* “joy” and “peace” but somehow we fail to allow this to be more than words.

D. How Can I Share It?

We can’t share what we do not personally possess. It can be much more. Pause a moment. Meditate on the thought that at this moment the wonderful living Christ abides in you! Isn’t that an exciting thought? It *is* to me. I exclaim “praise God for His infinite mercy,” and the corresponding sense or emotion of refreshment and satisfaction is mine! The Holy Spirit is only awaiting as a latent presence in our body. Our willingness to verbalize our belief is the key to the release of His expression of joy and peace. What a precious thought to share with others. I share it with you. Will you share it?

12. “Then Peter, *filled with the Holy Spirit* said unto them, ‘Ye rulers of the people, and elders,’

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(Acts 4:8)

A. What Does It Say?

We do need to read the context of this one verse. Peter and John are arrested and taken before the council for preaching the message of the resurrected Lord. This is the first expression of Peter upon being charged or questioned by the chief priest. We need to see this experience as a very literal fulfillment of Matthew 10:19, 20. (cf. Luke 21:12-17) The Holy Spirit is about to give him the words to speak.

B. What Does It Mean?

In this connection we need to understand the phrase: "*filled with the Holy Spirit*". Are we to understand Peter was always "filled with the Holy Spirit" and here is just a simple reference to that fact; or that upon this particular occasion he was "filled with the Holy Spirit" so as to enable him to give the answer he did? A third possibility suggests itself which seems to be even more plausible: The historian Luke, recounting the incident, reminds us that here is the fulfillment of the promise of Jesus. Cf. Matthew 10:19, 20 and in Luke's former treatise, Luke 21:12-17.

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

We cannot imagine the Holy Spirit exercising this power without the willing co-operation of the man being used. Peter was "filled with the Holy Spirit" but only because he wanted to be, only because he was willing to be. We do not expect the same infallible guidance from the Holy Spirit as that granted to Peter but we know unless we are willing, the Holy Spirit cannot and will not manifest His fruit in our lives. We want to add the thought: unless we put ourselves out in the stream of humanity and face the Pharisees and Sadducees of our day, we shall have no occasion in which we will need the power or the divine enablement of the Spirit.

Whatever grace and strength He can give us in our inward man (Eph. 3:16) is promised "as we go." Jesus' promise of "lo, I am with you always" was conditional: "go—and lo, I am with you."

D. How Can I Share It?

We can share this thought in two ways: (1) With the army of the Lord—no soldier can feel the presence and approval of his commander who does not get out into the hand-to-hand, person-to-person exchange. This thought we must share with every soldier. (2) We need to allow this truth to move us to its fulfillment in our own lives.

13. "O Lord ... Why *by the Holy Spirit*, by the mouth of our Father David, thy servant, didst say." (Acts 4:25)

A. What Does It Say?

Please read the context. Peter and John return to "their company" from the trial before the Sanhedrin. It is "their company" who prays this prayer. Perhaps someone present gives words to the thought of all. "They all lift up their voice with one accord and say"—What is said? Among other thoughts is the plain statement of inspiration on the part of David. It was the Holy Spirit who gave David the words in the second Psalm. It is redundant to talk about the Holy Spirit giving thoughts without words. How are thoughts expressed without words? Are not the words first formed in the mind before they are written?

B. What Does It Mean?

This prayer is an example to us in the area of faith and devotion. (See ACTS MADE ACTUAL pages 69-71) We want to emphasize here the one point of inspiration for the writings of David, indeed for the writing of all the Old Testament. (cf. II Peter 1:21) We are not at all unaware that many critics (some of them conservative) reject the phrase "by the Holy Spirit" upon which we are now commenting. Needless to say, we have been persuaded by the same evidence used by the translators of the American

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Standard New Testament. We commend to you a study of the book *THY WORD IS TRUTH* by Edward Young. We have not found a better discussion of the subject of inspiration.

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

We need to share the same unshakable confidence in the Scriptures. This is the solid foundation upon which all of our faith rests. A clear definition of inspiration is a big need in every Christian's heart. The hazy definitions of inspiration of our day only underline this need.

D. How Can I Share It?

You can organize a class in your church and teach the reasons why you believe the Bible to be the inspired Word of God. In the midst of this discussion, you need to clearly define what you believe about the Holy Spirit and the Bible. Here are some books to help you with this class:

1. *The Evidences of God in an Expanding Universe*, John Clover Monsma, Toronto: Longmans, 1958.
2. *The Bible and Modern Research*, A. Rendle Short, Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1931.
3. *Therefore Stand*, Wilbur M. Smith, Boston: Wilde, 1945.
4. *Modern Science and the Christian Faith*, A Symposium, Van Kampen Press, Wheaton, Illinois, 1950.
5. *Archaeology and Bible History*, Joseph P. Free, Wheaton, Illinois: Van Kampen Press, 1950.
6. *The Monuments and the Old Testament*, Ira M. Price, Judson Press, 1925.
7. *The Five Books of Moses*, O. T. Allis, The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1943.
8. *The Basis Of Christian Faith*, Floyd E. Hamilton, Harper and Row Co., 1963.
14. "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken wherein they were gathered together; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spake the Word of God with boldness." (Acts 4:31)

A. What Does It Say?

We need to decide to whom the pronoun "they" refers. ~*'They* were all filled with the Holy Spirit."
Who is involved here? Verse 23 of this chapter tells us Peter and John returned to "their own company" which means either the rest of the ten apostles or to a larger group—which undoubtedly included the apostles. It was this "company" who were "filled with the Holy Spirit."

B. What Does It Mean?

Here is an example of persons filled with the Holy Spirit and with no reference made to unusual miraculous manifestations. The earthquake was external and not personal. What we mean is: no one spoke in tongues, prophesied, or indicated personal supernatural powers. All who were "filled" "spoke the Word of God with boldness." Are we to understand, the urgency of the circumstance, the prayer meeting, the earthquake, all contributed to the filling of the Holy Spirit or that such persons were continually filled with the Holy Spirit and this is but a reference to that fact? We could say the ability to speak the Word of God came from the Holy Spirit, (i.e. the supernatural gift of "knowledge" was involved and such a message proceeded from the Holy Spirit); but then we remember Acts 8:4 where reference is made to all the Christians in Jerusalem, who upon being scattered by persecution, "went everywhere preaching the Word." We then would be inclined to say that "speaking the Word of God with boldness" was the personal testimony of these people. However, we have no certain conclusions to offer for there is no evidence to indicate what those conclusions should be.

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

We need to pause and consider carefully *all* the circumstances: (1) We *do not* know just who is involved in this expression. (2) We *do not* know if the speaking or preaching of the Word of God was supernaturally induced or not. (3) Such a "filling" of the Holy Spirit would be completely apart from the

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New Testament for the New Testament obviously was not yet complete. (i.e. they were filled by and with the Holy Spirit Himself). (4) Such a filling seemed to react on their emotional or sensible natures. What was this reaction? It must have been: a sense of His precious nearness, His supreme power, a reaction of courage or holy boldness. We believe from what we have studied earlier that to be filled with the Holy Spirit is to be filled with our Lord; but such in this case could not have been a psychological experience produced by reading the New Testament.

D. How Can I Share It?

Surely there is nothing more meaningful to share than the thought or truth of being filled with the Holy Spirit. Can we say we are filled with Him?; or that we are being filled with Him?; or that we shall be filled?; or were? What shall we share? Please, please, notice the lack of any dramatic supernatural manifestations. We all need and want boldness. We all have Him and want to be filled with Him. When shall it be true of us? Only when it is, can we share it. We cannot claim the persons here involved were especially or unusually prepared for this experience (or shall we call it a condition?) Perhaps we could eliminate the whole subject by convincing ourselves the apostles were the only ones here involved; but we are not so convinced and will not avoid other references in this same book that speak of persons like ourselves who were “filled with the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 6:3, 13:52)

15. “But Peter said “Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back a part of the price of the land.” (Acts 5:3)

A. What Does It Say?

There are two or three actions of the Holy Spirit in this text: (1) The Holy Spirit must have enabled Peter to know the condition of the heart of Ananias. This could have either been a part of the ability granted to Peter in the Holy Spirit baptism or “the discerning of Spirits” as in I Corinthians 12:10. We much prefer the thought that Peter was able through or because of the Holy Spirit baptism to read the heart of Ananias. (2) The Holy Spirit was in the body of Ananias and his wife Sapphira as a result of their becoming Christians. (Roman 8:9) (3) The Holy Spirit is a very real person to whom a lie can be told or upon whom deception can be attempted. Ananias could have been as responsive to the Holy Spirit as he was to Satan. His heart could have been filled with the Spirit instead of the evil, one.

B. What Does It Mean?

It means we are always susceptible to two divine beings: Satan and the Holy Spirit, both of whom can fill our hearts; both who have a power to exert in our lives. The lie or scheme for deception must have been made by Satan. It is a fearful fact that the father of lies has not ceased his work since that day. We ought to learn also that the presence of the Holy Spirit is not an automatic insurance against sin. We must cooperate with Him. In the same regard, the presence of Satan is not prima facto evidence we shall sin. We must cooperate or he is powerless. We are so glad to say again; “Greater is He who is within you, than he who is within the world.” (I John 4:4)

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

We have already indicated a number of applications in this text. We might say death suffered as a result of this lie has not ceased being the penalty. Death is separation. (James 2:26) There are three deaths to die: (1) The physical death of the body, the separation of the spirit from the body. (2) The eternal death in hell, the separation of the Spirit from God. (Revelation 21:8). (3) The death “while we yet live”, (I Timothy 5:6) the separation of the human spirit from the Holy Spirit by sin. When we willfully attempt to “continue in sin that grace might abound,” we produce a sense of separation. A very real death takes place in our heart. May we be able to sing with real clear meaning, “nothing between my soul and the Saviour.”

D. How Can I Share It?

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There is no thought any more needed by the members of our various congregations than this one. In this connection we might add here: *how* we repent of our sin in a manner to insure forsaking of it is just as important as discovering and being convinced of it. True repentance is a deep persuasion, a full involvement of mind (and emotions) resulting in a real change. We have a choice of “die daily” (I Cor 15:31) to sin’s allurements, the devil’s lies, or die to the blessed presence of the Holy Spirit. Separate yourself from sin or you will separate yourself from the Spirit of God.

16. “But Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to try the Spirit of the Lord?” (Acts 5:9)

A. What Does It Say?

We need to understand very carefully and fully the word “try” or “tempt” as it is here used. Peter exercises further power of discernment and gives us an insight into the house of Ananias and Sapphira. They had actually decided upon a test or experiment into the reality of the Holy Spirit. It is as if they said; “we will set up a circumstance in which we will find out if the Holy Spirit is all He seems to be.” What a daring, unreasonable thing to do! Did they realize the danger of such a venture? The quality of God was surely of an inferior sort in their mind. In the negative sense this test was all wrong.

B. What Does It Mean?

Have you ever wondered why God was so severe in His response to the actions of these two? Pause a moment to reflect on what is involved. It is the responsibility of man to God. Essentially we are asking: does God care what I do, either good or bad? This experiment is asking another question: “if God knows, does God care personally.” All of this could be and was psychologically involved but it did not minimize or change their lie and deception.

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

Perhaps it has occurred to you, as it has to me, that God would be just as responsive in a positive experience as He was in this negative one. Shall we put Him to the test? In what area shall it be? Let us agree together to try the Spirit of God as to: (1) a character defect such as a certain touchiness or an enlarged ego that sets off a burst of temper—This has been a problem for a very long time. Since the Holy Spirit is in the character-developing business, He could help in this. Will He? Ask Him and see! It has been my experience to find prayer for character development more immediately answered than any other BUT, since *we are to change*, God puts us in a position (in answer to our prayers) where we *can* choose and change. We have the Divine “Standby” ready to reinforce our feeble resistance of Satan. He will provide “the way of escape” (I Corinthians 10:13) but you must ask for it and take it! Try Him and see—He is the giver of life! (2) In changing an impossible set of circumstances in human relations, every local church is either in such a circumstance, or has been, or will be. Only the moving agent in God’s work of providence can handle this problem; we refer to the Holy Spirit. If we actually, in faith, involve the Spirit of God and put Him to the test, some wonderful changes will begin to take place. We ought never to forget our changed attitude toward the same circumstances is also the Spirit’s own work!

D. How Can I Share It?

Surely this is obvious in what has already been said. In this experience the rule is: “we most truly have what we most fully give away.

17. “We are witnesses to these things: and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God hath given to them that obey Him.” (Acts 5:32)

A. What Does It Say?

Peter, speaking on behalf of all the apostles, is making a defense before the Sanhedrin. The council

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has charged them “not to speak at all nor to teach in the name of Jesus.” They had “filled Jerusalem” with their teachings. Peter is now telling why they so taught and preached. “We *must* obey God rather than men.” We have personally seen Him and heard Him after His passion. It would be criminal not to tell this good news. Peter states that there was someone else who also beheld the crucifixion, burial and resurrection of Jesus. He was the Holy Spirit! This unusual witness is given by God to all who obey God. Peter started by stating the necessity of obeying God. He concludes by this marvelous benefit or gift who comes as a consequence of this obedience. The thought is generic in the realm of obedience (i.e. the promise of the Spirit’s presence and witness is consequent upon an attitude of total submission to God), but it could also be specific. Only those who accept our Lord in repentance of sin and baptism for the remission of sin can expect the Holy Spirit as a result of their obedience. (Acts 2:38) Does this text say the Holy Spirit is given to the obedient ones as a witness in them and through them? Please, please *think* before you reject this thought.

B. What Does It Mean?

If this text means anything, it means we have the Holy Spirit Himself as a gift from God as a result of our obedience. What is a witness? Only an observer? “One who testifies for another” is a witness. The apostles were arrested and imprisoned for witnessing. They “filled Jerusalem” with their teaching. The New Testament is the report of the witness of the Holy Spirit. He has borne His witness through the inspired writers and speakers. Is that all?

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

The whole idea of the Holy Spirit being an advocate or lawyer for the facts of the gospel is a new one to me. Are we to understand these two thoughts separately? That is: (1) We have the Holy Spirit through our obedience to the gospel, (2) He, the Holy Spirit, bore His witness through the apostles and other inspired men in the first century? Is there some way in which He becomes a witness in and through those who receive Him as a gift? We all freely admit He spoke through Peter and John, enabling them to witness. Did Peter and John intend to contrast only themselves and the Sanhedrin council? Were they saying: “We have obeyed God and have the Holy Spirit. You haven’t and do not. We witness because of our obedience and the Holy Spirit”? But if they meant this then the converse would also be true. If the council obeyed God and accepted Jesus as their Messiah and Saviour, then they would receive the Holy Spirit *as a witness*.

D. How Can I Share It?

What shall we share? The wonderful promise: if we obey God, initially in repentance and baptism, we shall receive the Holy Spirit. Shall we also share the thought that He will witness through us to the lost world of the salvation facts: “He died for our sins, was buried, and rose again”? (I Corinthians 15:1-4) Shall we tell others that when we went in obedience to the command of our Lord we found the assistance of the Holy Spirit in strengthening our inward man (Ephesians 3:16) and the sense of “lo, I am with you always” as we opened our mouth for Him? If you believe it, you will. If you do not, you will not.

18. “Look ye out therefore, brethren, from among you, seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.” (Acts 6:3)

A. What Does It Say?

This text says several very surprising things: (1) There were several persons in the congregation or community of believers in Jerusalem who were “filled with the Holy Spirit.” (and of wisdom and of faith) We cannot imagine such abilities of faith and wisdom were supernatural gifts such as those mentioned in I Corinthians 12:1ff. We say this because the task was serving tables and supernatural faith would hardly be required. This, of course, is only our human reasoning about the subject. If we are to say through the laying on of the hands of the apostles, these seven men were granted supernatural powers, then such laying on of hands must have preceded the ceremony of 6:6. We are always on inconclusive

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ground when we argue from silence and use such silence to serve our own purposes. (2) It seems more significant that such men could be identified as “full of the Holy Spirit and of wisdom.” This presupposes a personal association among the believers much more personal than we usually have. A recognition of the influences of the Holy Spirit upon the human personality was also well enough known as to be identified.

B. What Does It Mean?

It means being filled with the Holy Spirit was such a common experience (should we call it “condition” or “relationship”?) that many persons were involved. It also means the characteristics of the Holy Spirit were well enough known as to be recognized in the personality of the disciples of our Lord. Would it be possible today to select several persons who would be described as “full of the Holy Spirit”? If so, just what would be the identifying characteristics? The lives of Philip and Stephen as examples should be most carefully studied as those who qualify for this grand quality.

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

This has always been a somewhat elusive but extremely desirable quality. It should now be much more in the realm of definition and reality. We know much more clearly than ever before what it means to have Him. Could we condense this definition by saying: we are so in love with our wonderful Lord that He dominates and overrides our every thought? Jesus has become “all” and “in all” to us. The Holy Spirit was sent not to glorify Himself but our Saviour. This He can do when we visualize Him as “Christ in us”, as “the other Jesus” *living in us*. There are two constant needs just here: (1) constant association with our Lord through the gospel accounts, and (2) a constant, conscious effort to allow Him to shape our thinking. All of the, sometimes only sentimental gospel songs, will take on a depth and power of meaning we never before knew possible.

D. How Can I Share It?

“What I have that give I thee”—these are the words of Peter to the lame man at the Gate Beautiful (Acts 3:1 ff). They are also our words to the lame in the precincts of God’s temple today. If we feel many are indeed “lame” in the area of spiritual power we must remember only what we ourselves have can be shared with anyone else. Do we want others to be filled with the Holy Spirit? A good sample (example) is the beginning of help.

19. “. and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit,” (Acts 6:5)

A. What Does It Say?

This a mere statement of fact. We have discussed in the 17th reference all of the implications here involved. We can find nothing more to say of the expression “full of “the Holy Spirit.”

B. What Does It Mean?

Please read what we have said earlier. But we *must* add: a character study of Stephen is surely in order just here. What being “filled with the Holy Spirit” meant to Stephen is best seen in his life. Please read all of the sixth and seventh chapters of Acts once again and mark the qualities of Stephen. Here are a few qualities we observed. We might call this study “What being filled with the Holy Spirit did for Stephen”: (1) He was full of “grace and power” (Acts 6:8). We could talk about the surface fact that being filled with the Holy Spirit meant he also had the hands of the apostles laid upon him (Acts 6:6) and because of this he was enabled to perform these “signs and wonders” among the people. Just why the apostles would thus supernaturally equip these men when their task was “serving tables” we do not know. Either we do not understand all the implications of the phrase “serve tables” or the laying on of the hands of the apostles was only for the purpose of setting them into the work. We prefer the former thought. In close continual human relationships, there is a great need for God’s compassionate insight. There must have been many words, thoughts, needs, and burdens shared with Stephen as he came into the home, a

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representative of the Lord with their only means of life. Are we to understand that the qualities he possessed as a person and a Christian (i.e. *wisdom, faith, grace*) were intensified by the Holy Spirit? We do not know, but we simply cannot believe the presence of the Holy Spirit will change anyone who does not want a change or can develop any quality of character without the person's willing desire to have it so. (2) We might call Stephen "God's full man" and point out the text says of him that he was full of (a) wisdom, (b) faith, (c) grace, (d) power, and all of these because he was full of the Holy Spirit. We are tempted to enlarge upon these points but this is not a homiletical treatment.

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

The whole study of the life of Stephen can mean much to us: He was willing to serve in the lowest areas of life. He used what he had and the Holy Spirit increased it a hundred-fold. He was unashamed and unafraid to speak to those of his own synagogue. There must have been a heated exchange of scripture references as he discussed the Old Testament prophecies fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth. He faced stubborn, deceitful, lying, ignorant men, and it was said of him: "he had the face of an angel." Under these conditions we usually do not come out with that description. Wasn't it the Holy Spirit who made the difference? Isn't He the source, the power, of transformation today?

D. How Can I Share It?

God has a great desire to fill more men. He is looking for those whose hearts are turned toward Him. Perhaps we can help in the search by sharing this lesson from Stephen.

19, 20, & 22. "They were not able to withstand the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake." (Acts 6:10) "Ye do always resist the Holy Spirit." (Acts 7:51) he, being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God." (Acts 7:55)

A. What Does It Say?

We have arranged these three references together because they are all words concerning Stephen. Stephen spoke to the synagogue of the Libertines under the impulse of the Holy Spirit. We do not know that he possessed the gift of prophecy or wisdom (Cf. I Corinthians 12:1 ff) but it is quite likely and surely appropriate. As we have earlier indicated; we would assume through the laying on of the hands of the apostles (6:6) such powers were imparted, at least such powers were given by this means elsewhere (Acts 19:1-6; 8:12-15). We have no indication Stephen prayed to receive such gifts. There was some form of debate, the arguments advanced by Stephen were under the immediate guidance of the Holy Spirit. We would imagine reference to the Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah were very prominent.

B. What Does It Mean?

However well we are led by the Holy Spirit, however true our position might be, it is always possible to reject it. If some did it to Stephen, we should not expect less or different response from some people.

C. What Does It Mean to Me?

We need to recognize that even under the immediate guidance of the Holy Spirit, it is sometimes right to speak to an unfavorable, even antagonistic audience. We need also to remember there were undoubtedly some who accepted the message.

D. How Can I Share It?

Wisdom is the best use of knowledge. James tells us we should pray for it. This wisdom of James 1:5 ff is not the supernatural gift of wisdom, but it is very much a part of God's provision for every Christian. This is no substitute for study. We must have knowledge before we ask for divine assistance in the use of it. May we move more and more men to be like Stephen.

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A. What Does It Say?

The subject of resisting the Holy Spirit is one that deserves careful thought. We believe the particular resistance in this text was a refusal of the application of the Spirit's word. Stephen had just presented the Divine evidence from Hebrew history. Those listening refused it. How careful we need to be in this area. These men did not know it was the Holy Spirit they resisted. Conscious of it or not, whether you believe it or not you are doing it: resisting the Holy Spirit.

B. What Does It Mean?

We catch a real hint of help in the phrase "as your fathers did, so do ye" (Acts 7:51 b). A thoughtful rereading of chapter seven of Acts will indicate the action of "the fathers." In the immediate circumstance of "resisting the Holy Spirit", there is always a way to justify or rationalize our actions. Consider the case of Joseph and his brothers or Moses and the water from the rock.

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

Any message from the Spirit's word should be tenderly, thoughtfully considered, not to teach a lesson to someone else, not to only find out what is said, but to ask ourselves: "What wilt thou have *me* to do?" When will we become aware of the fact that God's directions for our lives can never be fulfilled when we resist?

D. How Can I Share It?

Read a passage of the Spirit's word to some one of your friends and explain the possibilities of either resisting or receiving—of being "cut to the heart" or broken of heart.

A. What Does It Say?

The thought is clear that Stephen was on the occasion "filled with the Holy Spirit", but are we to understand he was always full of the Holy Spirit and we are here only reminded of this fact?

B. What Does It Mean?

Stephen spoke the whole message of chapter seven under the direction of the Holy Spirit, but now, just before his death, God grants him, through the Spirit, a glimpse of the glory prepared for him. Are we to understand the Holy Spirit moved within Stephen in such a manner as to fill him or to so suffuse his mind and heart that this vision was granted him? If this is the thought here, what is the thought of 6:3 where Stephen was "full of the Spirit" even prior to his selection as a servant of the Lord for the church in Jerusalem? Perhaps we should say "being filled with the Holy Spirit" as used in the scriptures is reserved for those times when man was made especially aware of the Spirit's presence. But this cannot be said of 6:3 or several other references. We must therefore conclude there is a potential or latent filling of the Spirit and an actual or conscious filling of the Holy Spirit.

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

Surely there are none of us who do not wish the grand relationship of being filled with the Holy Spirit (please see our discussion of this in Volume One, p. 37ff. and Volume Two, p. 11ff.). The Holy Spirit will produce His blessed fruit in our character as we are willing to permit Him, so that, on occasions of stress and need, can we expect Him to enable us to speak with boldness and faith or humility and wisdom. There are indeed times when we are consciously aware we are dominated by some emotion such as anger or grief. If we are indwelt by Him and it has been our practice to permit Him, yea, to encourage Him; to submit to Him; to eagerly invite Him to express Himself through us, then in the time of stress, He will fill our hearts and mouths and actions with His wisdom, grace. We can hardly expect such a relationship if we have not practiced His presence in the ordinary affairs of life.

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D. How Can I Share It?

The best way to share this truth is by a personal example. It should be said of us as it was of Stephen: “he was full of faith and of the Holy Spirit.” This knowledge is gained by the observation of the very ordinary actions and attitudes of ‘the individual.

23, 24, 25, & 26.

“Now when the apostles that were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might *receive the Holy Spirit*: for as yet it was fallen upon none of them: only they had been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus then laid they their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 8:14-17)

A. What Does It Say?

Actually this passage contains three direct references and one indirect reference. Since they are all part of one narrative, we will consider them together. We rejoice in anticipation of a study of these verses for they contain the whole system of the Holy Spirit’s work: (1) The first relationship we sustain to the Holy Spirit is obtained as we hear the gospel, believe it, and are baptized into Christ. When this happens, we are given the Holy Spirit as a gift. This the Samaritans had done. The fact of their acceptance of Christ is stated in verse 12 *and* in verse 16. Please notice the contrast in verse sixteen: the Holy Spirit had not “fallen upon” *any* of them but they *all* had been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. The supernatural manifestations of the Holy Spirit, such as speaking in tongues, prophesying, etc. were not yet manifest among the Samaritans. Peter and John were sent to supply this need. But in contrast to these supernatural gifts, these Samaritans *did* have the Holy Spirit indwelling ;them, as He does all believers. This indwelling was obtained as a direct consequence of their acceptance of Christ. The praying of Peter and John that the Samaritans might “receive the Holy Spirit” *must* be understood in light of the whole teaching here given: please, please notice the punctuation and the use of the word “for”. The meaning of the phrase: that they might receive the Holy Spirit” (15 b) *must* be understood by the modifying phrase “for as yet it (he) was fallen upon none of them.” Luke is saying: the Samaritans did not have the supernatural powers of the Holy Spirit. Peter and John prayed and laid on their hands that He might thus “fall upon them.” The reason for granting such powers was to carry on the work in the soon-coming absence of Philip. If certain persons were not thus supernaturally gifted, there would have been no source of Divine direction. What the New Testament does for us, those with the gifts did for them. Perhaps this record is an example of what occurred many times in many places. When persons left heathenism to accept Jesus of Nazareth as the Saviour, how could they be instructed without the direct aid of the Holy Spirit through these gifted teachers? If those who were baptized into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit were to be taught “all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:18-20), then there *must* be some source for this teaching. Through the baptism in the Holy Spirit this information was brought to the memory of the apostles (Matthew 10:20ff), but they could not go everywhere. Indeed, they “stayed in Jerusalem” (Acts 8:3,4). Those to whom those who were scattered spoke (Acts 8:4) became Christians. They must be taught “all things.” This could not be accomplished without supernatural help; we believe the apostles went from place to place for the purpose of equipping certain persons with the supernatural aid necessary for this grand work.

(2) We want to emphasize the fact that the apostles were prepared for their work by the experience of Pentecost. Jesus told them how very needful it was that they wait in the city for this event (Acts 1:5, 8; Luke 24:49). We shall not argue the point as to whether the Holy Spirit baptism did indeed create incentive as well as information. We believe the resurrection of our Lord, His appearances unto them “after His passion by many infallible proofs” (Acts 1:3) was the supreme incentive for preaching and teaching. “Simon saw that through the laying on of the hands of the apostles the Holy Spirit was given” (Acts 8:17). We did also see clearly what happened through the hands of the apostles. *Some physical manifestation must have accompanied the laying on of the apostles’ hands or Simon could not have*

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identified the experience. What was it Simon saw as the hands of the apostles were laid upon the heads of some of these Samaritans? Did they “speak in tongues and prophesy” as the twelve disciples at Ephesus? Read Acts 19:1ff. We do not know but this seems a reasonable conclusion. Perhaps tongues were not needed here to the same extent as in Ephesus. By reading the preceeding comments you will know we believe tongues were languages and were used for evangelism and teaching. (3) Please notice: There are three manifestations of the Holy Spirit here described. Such description is given in the following words: (a) The Samaritans had been baptised for the remission of their sins (Acts 2:38,39) to receive the Holy Spirit as a gift. Such a manifestation is indicated by the following words: “only they had been baptised into the name of the Lord Jesus.” (b) The Holy Spirit’s supernatural powers could be activated by the laying on of the apostles’ hands. The two apostles, Peter and John, were sent by the ten for this purpose. The Holy Spirit was already present in the bodies of the Samaritans, but as yet, they had not been endowed with any of the supernatural powers. Such powers would soon be needed in continuing the work of evangelism and education. Peter and John came to pray and lay their hands upon some of the Samaritan converts for this purpose. Such a manifestation is described in the following words: “who when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit: for as yet it (he) was fallen upon none of them “then laid they their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Spirit.” (3) The ability to grant supernatural powers of the Holy Spirit came only through the hands of the apostles. Simon the sorcerer *did not* see that through the faith and prayer of the Samaritans, these powers were given. If this had been the case, he would have prayed and believed much earlier and would have received such powers. His former work of sorcery would have created an appetite for exercising these supernatural powers. Why didn’t Simon or someone else, anyone else, have these powers prior to the coming of Peter and John? We believe the answer is in the fact that the apostles were the only ones who could grant such powers and that the apostles received ability to impart these powers as a result of their baptism in the Holy Spirit.

B. What Does It Mean?

We have in these verses of Acts an insight into the life of the apostolic church. The church was “apostolic” in much more than a mere historical sense. These were indeed the days of the apostles, but to these men we must look for all we know about our Lord and His church. We must right at this juncture say that we believe Paul was also baptized in the Holy Spirit at some time and place best known to God. We would imagine such an experience for Paul would have occurred soon after his conversion. Perhaps we catch a hint of it in the words of Annaias to Saul: Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, who appeared unto thee in the way which thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mayest receive thy sight, and *be filled with the Holy Spirit.*” (Acts 9:17) There is such a strong desire on the part of some people to claim spiritual experience they will fasten on to almost any Bible reference for authority. There are indeed many things that happened to the apostles (including Paul) which contain examples for us, but these are experiences common to all Christians. We must use thought and caution with all of God’s word and most especially when we attempt to understand His work through His apostles. Our Lord chose these twelve men and Paul to do a job no one else could do. They were especially trained and taught, especially equipped for the task by the baptism in the Holy Spirit. They were the voice of Jesus, God’s divine information bureau, the foundation of the church (Ephesians 2:20). We must not read one passage of Scripture without a knowledge of its connection with every other passage on the same subject. Suppose we were to believe Acts 8:14-17 contained an example for our imitation. We would then be forced to the following conclusions: (1) We have received the word, believed and were baptized but do not have the Holy Spirit. What of all the references to the contrary? (i.e. that indicate we receive the Holy Spirit at the time we become Christians, such as Acts 2:38, 5:32; 19:1ff; Gal. 3:2;) (2) If the case of the Samaritans is an example for us then we could be Christians without the Holy Spirit. What of Romans 8:9? (3) If Acts 8:14-17 is today’s example who acts in the place of Peter and John? Do we have some form of apostolic succession? If so, who decides upon this? Surely those who decide who succeeds the apostles are even greater than the apostles. (4) What does the little phrase: “only they had been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus” mean? (i.e. in connection with the “falling on of the Holy Spirit?”) There is a

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connection—what is it? (5) Who will decide as to who receives the Holy Spirit? Do *all* persons receive the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands? If not, who and how many?

C. How Does It Apply To Me?

We have unavoidably developed this question in the previous two. If we accept the thought that the apostles were Christ's personal representatives and were trained and equipped for this position and work, then their action with those of Samaria is an expected expression of this relationship. We then regard the New Testament as a product of the same Spirit through their hands. Mark, Luke, Jude, James were all endowed with supernatural ability through the laying on of the apostles' hands and by this means were enabled to write. The gift of "discerning of spirits" would also be a necessary protection against spurious documents (i.e. those who had the gift of discerning of spirits could tell if a manuscript was the product of the Holy Spirit or merely the writing of the unaided human spirit). This gives us an explanation for the production of the New Testament which puts confidence and conviction in our hearts.

D. How Can I Share It?

This is such an important reference. Every Christian should have a clear understanding of Acts 8:14-17. It should be so clear that he can immediately explain it to someone else and answer whatever questions are posed.

27, 28, & 29.

"Now when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands *the Holy Spirit was given*, he offered them money, saying, Give me also *this power*, that on whomsoever I lay my hands, *he may receive the Holy Spirit*. But Peter said unto him, Thy silver perish with thee, because thou hast thought to obtain *the gift of God* with money." (Acts 8:18-20)

A. What Does It Say?

There are three references to the Holy Spirit in these three verses. We have printed them together because they are all a part of one narrative and are best considered together. Simon saw something: (i.e. some physical manifestation he associated with the Holy Spirit). This is very important. If what the Samaritans received when they became Christians was only the Holy Spirit Himself, minus any supernatural expressions, Simon would not have been able to identify this reception of the Holy Spirit. When the three thousand were baptized on Pentecost did anyone know *when* they received the Holy Spirit as a gift? (i.e. Was there some psycho-physical manifestation?) The record simply reads: "they then that received his word were baptized, and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls." There is no reference here to any outward expression of the Holy Spirit. We *do* believe the three thousand in their obedience received Him (Acts 5:32) The Holy Spirit Himself is given at the "hearing of faith" (Galatians 3:2). (i.e. at the time we become Christians). The Samaritans became Christians when they heard Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ and they were baptized, both men and women. Even Simon himself became a Christian. Could we then conclude that both Simon and the Samaritans had the Holy Spirit Himself as a gift from God upon their acceptance of Christ? We have no reason to believe otherwise. It would be helpful to list the expressions used here: (1) "the Holy Spirit"; (2) "this power"; (3) "the gift of God." The first expression we must conclude is a reference to some expression of the Holy Spirit not just the immediate or even initial reception of Him. We believe the Samaritans received the Holy Spirit at the time of their baptism. He hadn't "fallen on them" in any supernatural manner. "Only they had been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus" and had thus received Him but had not been endowed through Him with any supernatural powers. This is a common figure of speech used on several occasions in the Bible and elsewhere in which the cause is spoken of as if it were the result.

The second reference is a deeper insight into the circumstance: *Simon did not ask for the Holy Spirit*. (Was it because he already had Him as a gift, even as do all Christians?) Simon asked for "*this power*,

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that on whomsoever I lay my hands, he may receive the Holy Spirit.” Simon’s request was for the apostles’ ability to grant supernatural powers through the Holy Spirit. We believe the Holy Spirit was already present and the hands of the apostles simply released or directed the supernatural abilities of the Holy Spirit within the persons upon whom they laid their hands. This was “the power” or prerogative Simon wanted. The third reference is “the gift of God.” To what does Peter refer in this phrase? Surely the Holy Spirit is the “gift” or “promise” of God. From what we have already said, we could conclude it was not only the Holy Spirit Himself which Simon wanted. This he already obtained as a gift at his baptism. He wanted “the power” to grant supernatural expressions through the Holy Spirit. This is “the gift of God” he sought to obtain with money. The apostles were gifted by God in a way Simon could never be. Why? Was it because of the avarice of his heart or because such a gift could not be given to anyone but the apostles? Obviously both conditions were present. We believe the latter was more basic a reason (i.e. even if Simon’s motives were pure, his request was wrong).

B. What Does It Mean?

Once again, we have overlapped these two thoughts. It is almost impossible to attempt a careful understanding of every word without at the same time discussing its meaning. We, however, do have a few more thoughts on the meaning here involved. Why didn’t Philip lay his hands on the Samaritans? Simon saw many miracles or “signs and wonders” through Philip but he failed to see from him what he saw from the apostles. Why? The obvious answer is: Peter and John gave what Philip could not give. The purpose for these gifts or abilities granted by Peter and John has not yet been mentioned. Why were these Samaritans thus endowed? Philip was soon to leave these new Christians. In the absence of their inspired leader, the Samaritans must have those who could carry on the work. In “the falling on” of the Holy Spirit, can we imagine the use of the gift of prophesy or of knowledge? Did some of the Samaritans receive from Peter and John the power through the Holy Spirit to confirm their teaching with signs and wonders? This does seem to be a reasonable explanation to the purpose of the “falling on” of the Holy Spirit. What alternate explanations are there as to purpose? Are we to believe there was some deficiency in their lives or faith? We could hardly think so. We have no reason. If the Holy Spirit was not given to the Samaritans when they became Christians, why? Where is it plainly so stated? What does the phrase mean which says “only they had been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus”?

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

Why are there so many men today who are willing to lay hands on persons or accept the laying on of hands of others? Is not this presumption of the worst sort? We are *not* apostles. We *do not* have the prerogatives of apostles. Neither are we those endowed by the apostles, and if we were, we could not by our hands grant supernatural powers to others (i.e. if Philip is an example). However, there is a void, a vacuum that *must* be filled. The human heart longs after, reaches out to the living God. When we read of those in the days of the apostles who were alive and glowing with the power of the Holy Spirit (in the slang of today: “who were turned on”), we say: “This is for me” or “I *must* have it; I *will* have it.” Wait only a moment to ask yourself: “Was it the supernatural powers that ‘turned them on’ or was it their *personal encounter* with a powerful Saviour?” We have the problem today of those who never felt the joy and exhilaration of a personal surrender and commitment to a very wonderful Saviour who are now finding in what they call “the baptism of the Spirit” what they should have found in their conversion experience. If these same people would visualize or imagine their relationship with our Lord in the same manner as they do with the Holy Spirit and go after the fulfillment or realization of that imagery with the same determination we would have no problem, for they would be completed in their surrender to Him. Tersley put it this way: “We have many who do not wish to deny the validity of their conversion but who find fulfillment in what they call ‘the baptism in the Holy Spirit.’” Why not admit you were never converted and begin all over?

D. How Can I Share It?

All depends upon what you possess. As Peter said to the poor impotent beggar: “What I have *that*

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give I thee” (Acts 3:6). If you have the same power Peter and John had as a result of their baptism in the Holy Spirit, then share the results of that power *in the same manner* as did Peter and John. If you have the same powers as those manifest in the work of Philip, then let us see them! If you have the joy, delight, the bubbling happiness of the living Saviour in your life, we will know it. *Just what do you have? What you give will surely indicate what you have!*

30. “And the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.” (Acts 8:29)

A. What Does It Say?

Here again is the clear indication of the person of the Holy Spirit. We do not know if Philip heard an audible voice or if the words were formed in his mind by the divine Spirit. In whatever form here is a very real divine Person exercising the power of speech or words in direct communication to man.

B. What Does It Mean?

This verse helps us in our thinking. The Holy Spirit is a very real person, not an inanimate influence. There are no words without a mind. We are indwelt by a Person. We might observe that the Holy Spirit did not do the preaching. He gave directions to the preacher but He honored God’s ordinance that, not by angels, nor by the Spirit, but by man is the message of salvation to be given.

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

Are we to expect the Holy Spirit to give us directions today in our efforts to win the lost? There are many who feel He does. How can we determine this? The basic issue relates to *why* or *how* the Spirit spoke to Philip. Was it because Philip was supernaturally endowed through the hands of the apostles? (i.e. the voice of the Spirit was a part of His supernatural work granted only to those upon whom the apostles laid their hands). Let’s get the facts: (1) Philip *did* have supernatural powers. He performed “signs and wonders” in Samaria (Acts 8:6), (2) Philip *did* have the hands of the apostles laid upon him (i.e. along with the six other men chosen to take care of the tables [Acts 6:5 ff]), (3) We *do not* know all the reasons *why* the apostles’ hands were laid on Philip. We know it was part of the ceremony of setting him aside for the task of waiting on tables. Was he *also* granted special powers by this action? We do not know. We can assume that since others were thus supernaturally empowered on other occasions (Acts 19:1-6) that Philip was also; but, we simply do not know. (4) Neither do we have any indication that Philip obtained this power through prayer, meditation, fasting or other spiritual exercise. (5) Our problem is sharply defined when we realize there are those who claim direct Spirit-led guidance but who have often made obvious mistakes in such directions, or have contradicted others who claim similar guidance. What shall we say of these things? I believe we should leave the case of Philip alone. We have no conclusive evidence in either direction. We can have no real faith in our actions or attitudes. The word of God is silent and so we are presumptuous to speak. Could we apply Romans 14:23 and say: “Whatsoever is not of faith is sin”? We would *like* to believe the Holy Spirit will speak to us in some manner or that He has spoken to us in the conversion of some present-day Ethiopian-eunuch-encounter, but we have nothing but a personal subjective base for this claim.

D. How Can I Share It?

We must remember God is yet at work in this world. Simply because we cannot claim immediate conscious direction from the Holy Spirit does not mean God’s providence has been eliminated. We learn of God’s directions in our lives in retrospect (i.e. we look back upon the events of our days and evaluate and many times marvel at the direction of God). We are like Joseph of old who said of his forced, unhappy visit to Egypt: “God sent me to Egypt.” This kind of confidence in the intimate interest of our heavenly Father should be shared with all.

31. “the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip; and the eunuch saw him no more,” (Acts 8:39)

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A. What Does It Say?

There is a problem as to the meaning of the words: “caught away.” Does this refer to some supernatural ride? Was Philip simply snatched away bodily from the road to Gaza and dropped on one of the streets in Azotus? We think of I Kings 18:12: “And it will come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that *the Spirit of Jehovah will carry thee whither I know not...*” or II Kings 2:16 (please read this reference). Others feel this expression refers only to the directions of the Holy Spirit given to Philip which eventually led him to Azotus. Whereas we prefer the first view, we have no way of being conclusive in our arguments. We do want to say the Spirit’s direction in Philip’s life indicates God’s interest and Philip’s devotion.

B. What Does It Mean?

In a larger connection, we can consider the whole life of Philip as under the direction of the Holy Spirit. This is a pleasant thought. Was Philip or Stephen an exception? Or were there many men and women in the apostolic age who “walked by the Spirit” and did not fulfill the lust of the flesh? We believe Stephen and Philip were supernaturally empowered, but “walking by the Spirit” is a rule for the life of all Christians (Galatians 5:1 6ff).

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

I believe God is more interested and concerned with what we call the “little things” of life than we are. After all, life is life (i.e. we are as much under the care and concern of God when we eat our breakfast as when we kneel in prayer). We do not expect an angel to speak to us literally about where we should go today, nor do we listen for the Spirit to say to us: “This is the one. Speak to Him.” We cannot imagine a translation experience of miraculous movement. But in doing this, we have sometimes lost the sense of God’s nearness and this is a tragic loss. Something must be done to make it up. Would you read again Frank Laubach’s booklet on *A Game With Minutes?*

D. How Can I Share It?

Philip and Stephen were not ordained (i.e. classified by men as among the clergy) but they were two of the grandest examples of Spirit-filled, Spirit-led men we have in the New Testament. Please remember: there were numerous persons who were “filled with the Holy Spirit” before the problem arose over the serving of tables. When a choice was to be made, it was made among several who “were filled with the Holy Spirit.” We have no reason to believe the hands of the apostles were laid upon all of these believers. We should be glad to share the wonderful truth that all believers can be like Philip or Stephen, “filled with the Holy Spirit.”

32. ... Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, who appeared unto thee in the way which thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 9:17)

A. What Does It Say?

These are the words of Ananias. It is important that we understand just what Ananias gave to Saul. He came to accomplish two things: (1) to grant physical sight to Saul, and (2) to become an instrument in filling Saul with the Holy Spirit. Further than this lone reference, we have no knowledge of Paul’s personal relationship with the Holy Spirit. There are, of course, indications in several of the 98 references to the Holy Spirit in Paul’s epistles.

B. What Does It Mean?

We are on safer ground in this question. We definitely believe the sight to which Ananias has reference is physical. Verse 18 plainly indicates this: “and straightway there fell from his eyes as it were scales, and he received his sight”; (18a). The last half of verse 18 could be a hint in answering the question as to how and when Saul was “filled with the Holy Spirit” “and he arose and was baptised;”. Could we assume since Saul repented of his sins and was baptized “to wash away his sins” (in the blood

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of Jesus, not the water) that at that time and place he received the Holy Spirit not only as a gift, but as the element of his spiritual baptism? We are asking if Saul was not baptized in the Holy Spirit at the same time he was baptized in water? We do not know but we can think of no more appropriate time. We do believe the Holy Spirit was given to Saul at his baptism as He is to all others who accept our Lord; and we believe the powers of the apostles came from the Holy Spirit baptism. Saul was beginning his life not only as a Christian but as the “one sent” by Christ. Is Ananias saying in substance: “I have been sent to give you your physical sight and your credentials as a Christian and an apostle”? Perhaps this is too much to read into the little phrase “filled with the Holy Spirit”, but we are attempting a consistent explanation as related to the whole work of the Holy Spirit in Paul’s life.

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

Once again we see the use of the phrase: “filled with the Holy Spirit.” It must be understood in its context. “Filled with the Holy Spirit” as here used could be much like the same words as used to describe Pentecost (Acts 2:4), but we are not positive about this. We should be very careful to understand as God intended we do by reading all we know about the incident being described. As we have pointed out earlier, there are several times when the words: “filled with the Holy Spirit” describe persons and an experience not at all like those on Pentecost or the house of Cornelius. We should indeed be “filled with the Holy Spirit”, but will it be as the twelve or as Paul? Surely Paul is an example for us, but hardly in this regard.

D. How Can I Share It?

There is something here to share: the wonderful conversion experience of Saul of Tarsus and most especially, the work of the Holy Spirit in the whole wonderful transaction. Answer the following questions and share your answers with someone: (1) Did the Holy Spirit work with Saul as he prayed for three days in the house of Judas? Why was he without food or drink? Why pray? (2) Did the Holy Spirit give Saul the vision (9:12) of Ananias coming even before he came? We are asking if God acted directly or if the Holy Spirit was His agent? (3) Does John 16:7-10 relate to Saul’s conversion? If so, how? If we do no more than think seriously about the relationship of the Holy Spirit in conversion, we will have accomplished our purpose.

33. “So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace, being edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord and *in the comfort of the Holy Spirit*, was multiplied.” (Acts 9:31)

A. What Does It Say?

The word “comfort” as here used could well be translated “consolation or encouragement.” This is a statement related to the whole body of believers and therefore has particular interest to Christians today. The verb “walking” is a key to the meaning here. Rotherham has well translated the word: “the church *‘going on its way’*”. All Christians throughout the holy land were living and working in the fear of the Lord and *the comfort of the Holy Spirit*.

B. What Does It Mean?

How did these persons obtain *comfort* from the Holy Spirit? How was this encouragement, direction, or aid communicated from the Holy Spirit to the individual? We have two possible answers: (1) a subjective experience in which the Holy Spirit made “the Lord Himself real to the consciousness of those who went, for witness, for preaching, for insistence upon the Lordship of Christ;” ... Just how this happened is surely much better ‘felt than told’ - and (2) to quote another commentator: “This presence of the Spirit is always *mediated* through the Word by means of which He speaks to us and keeps us encouraged and strong in the faith.” In the first answer, the inward strength or satisfaction is attributed to the Holy Spirit. This is a Spirit-produced emotional aid. In the second, the encouragement is obtained from the teaching of the truth (whether it is taught orally as in the case of the early church or from the written word as in our case). We realize the Holy Spirit was the author of such teaching and thus we

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attribute our encouragement to Him. How can we decide which position is meant by the inspired writer? in no way known to the writer.

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

This verse should cause us to be very cautious about being dogmatic in our assertions or positions. Just how is the comfort of the Comforter communicated to the individual? We can boldly assert: “by the teaching of the Spirit’s word”, but we are only dogmatizing. The text does not say so, and for us to say so when the text does not, is pure presumption. One fact stands out: we should find a real source of encouragement, strength, or aid from the Holy Spirit. This must be more than a pious platitude. It must be a personal testimony!

D. How Can I Share It?

Once again, we must say: *we only share what we have*. Is the Holy Spirit a comfort to you? It is almost redundant to say: “Is the Comforter a comfort?,” but this is exactly the issue. We would become concerned if we felt God was to us something less than God or our Saviour were less than a Saviour? What shall we say when the divine Comforter gives no personal comfort? The converse can be true: if He is a Comforter to you, you can share this precious relationship with others.

34, & 35. “And while Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, *Behold, three men seek thee*. But arise, and get thee down, and go with them, nothing doubting: for *I have sent them*.” (Acts 10:19,20)

A. What Does It Say?

There are two references in the same context: two actions of the Holy Spirit. They are speaking and sending. We shall consider them together. This text is plain enough in statement to hardly need comment. Perhaps the words of Alexander would be helpful (if you are not reading at least ten commentaries along with my comments, you are the loser): “*the Spirit* (i.e. the Divine or Holy Spirit) *said to him, Behold* (or *lo*, implying something unexpected and surprising), *three men are seeking thee* (asking or inquiring for “thee”). This coincidence of time between Peter’s anxious meditation and the inquiries of the men from Caesarea brings the two parts of the providential scheme into conjunction and cooperation.” (p. 398) (*Commentary On The Acts Of The Apostles—J. A. Alexander*;))

B. What Does It Mean?

We want to ask and try to answer two questions here: (1) Why did God use the Holy Spirit as a spokesman? (2) What meaning does it have for our day? In answer to the first question, we could say: God was giving Peter information he never had before and therefore must speak to him. This is not adequate since Peter could have received all the same information from the three men if he had waited a few more minutes, but God didn’t wait. Why? The answer must be: Peter would not have been convinced with any other method of explanation. How does this relate to our day? Do we have circumstances in which God has a very, very difficult time getting us to do His will? To ask this question is to answer it. God isn’t trying to get us to preach to those to whom He has already commissioned us, is He? Or is He? Does God have as much interest in us as He had in Peter? Does God want His will fulfilled in our life as much as He did in the life of Peter? Here is a most crucial question: “*Was the Spirit’s speaking to Peter a part of the baptism of the Holy Spirit?*” (i.e. Because Peter was baptized in the Holy Spirit, did he have a nearness and a contact with the Holy Spirit not experienced by those who had not been baptized in the Holy Spirit?) This is a possibility but *how* shall we prove it? Of course, this particular example was the opening of the door of the gospel to the Gentiles; but are we to conclude that only in such cases do we have God’s immediate interest through the Holy Spirit? Aren’t some of the problems of our life just as vital and as big to us as this was to Peter? Has God’s immediate interest left the world?

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C. What Does It Mean To Me?

The above comments should sharpen our interest in answering this question. We need to fearlessly answer the basic question here and several others closely associated. The basic question: Why is the account of Peter's experience given to us? (i.e. Why did God through the Holy Spirit direct Luke to write this incident?) Was it to inform all men for all time of the special means and men God used in opening the doors of the kingdom to the Gentiles? I am sure we would all agree this is an obvious answer, but is it the *only* answer? (i.e. Are we to conclude God worked once for this one purpose and therefore will not work again like this?) There are two or three factors that point in the affirmative for an answer: (1) We have no examples in the rest of Acts or the epistles which indicate God's immediate involvement in the problems of other Christians (i.e. in the same way as indicated with Peter). God did not speak to anyone else personally through the Holy Spirit in answering their perplexities. This fact gives us reason to consider the incident with Peter as of the same exceptional nature as other one-time Biblical incidents. (2) There are no teachings in the New Testament to indicate the Holy Spirit will speak personally to you or me in solving our personal problems. If there is such a teaching, I have failed to read it and would appreciate hearing from any reader about it. (3) There are many who feel the Holy Spirit does speak to them personally in solving problems, however, such persons make mistakes and get conflicting or confusing answers from the Holy Spirit; others get contrary answers to the same questions asked by their friends. All this confusion is not from the Holy Spirit.

D. How Can I Share It?

It seems to me we should share the thought that God *is* indeed personally interested in our problems and is presently at work answering our questions, (as much as we are willing to allow Him by His providence to answer them), but we can only discover His answers in retrospect and thank Him for all the grand direction He has given us.

36. "even Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him." (Acts 10:38)

A. What Does It Say?

Remember who is being addressed by Peter: the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius. Whatever these persons knew about our Lord was gathered from their attendance at the Jewish synagogues or from the general gossip of the populace. Evidently enough was known to be able to draw some lessons: these persons had heard of the baptism of Jesus by John. Peter now adds this interesting and important word: Jesus was not only baptized by John the Baptist, but was anointed by God with the Holy Spirit and power. We would consider the word "power" to be descriptive of the consequence of the Spirit's presence (i.e. because He was anointed by the Spirit, He was also empowered—our Lord was full of the Holy Spirit and of power). We commented rather extensively on the anointing action of the Holy Spirit both as to Jesus and those of Acts the second chapter. We must add here that the "good" and the "healing" of our Lord was accomplished through this same Spirit and power. The phrase: "for God was with Him" must therefore be a summary statement. To say that "God was with Him" is the same as saying "He was full of the Holy Spirit and power."

B. What Does It Mean?

We are always faced with two areas of interest in answering this question: (1) What does it mean to those to whom it was written or in the context of the verse? and (2) What does it mean today? Our primary interest in this question has to do with the first area. Considering the audience who first heard these words, what did they mean to them? Did anyone in that house know of Isaiah 61:1 ff. or of its fulfillment in the life of Jesus as recorded in Luke 4:1 6ff. It reads: "and he entered, as his custom was, into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Isaiah. And he opened the book, and found the place where it was written, The Spirit of

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the Lord is upon me, because *he anointed me* to preach good tidings to the poor.” Perhaps not, but it does indicate the purpose of His anointing. We are sure many, if not all present knew the meaning of the words: *Messiah*, *Christ*, and *anointed*. These were used almost as synonyms. This expression meant primarily that Jesus was the long-promised Messiah, the Christ (anointed) of God.

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

This verse states the fundamental of the Christian faith (i.e. that we believe Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, or “the anointed”, of God). The presence of the Holy Spirit at His baptism in the form of a dove was a sign to John, to those present, and to us that God was with Him and was sending Him out to begin His divine mission: (1) good tidings to the poor, (2) release to the captives, (3) sight to the blind, (4) set at liberty those that are bruised, and (5) proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. This verse ought to remind us once again, very forceably, that even Jesus did not have power or the sense of God’s nearness without the Holy Spirit.

D. How Can I Share It?

Use a little imagination. What aspect seems most applicable to others? (1) The setting of the text as related to the household of Cornelius? (2) The act at the Jordan River of the Holy Spirit coming upon (was He not already within?) Jesus? (3) The consequent power and presence of God with Jesus because of the Holy Spirit?

37, & 38. “While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all them that heard the word. And they of the circumcision that believed were amazed, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.” (Acts 10:44-46)

A. What Does It Say?

We discussed this at some length in our earlier consideration of the baptism of the Holy Spirit (see Vol. I, p. 39-55) However, we shall attempt to approach these verses just as if we had never before studied them. Let us then carefully define each phrase: (1) “While Peter yet spake these words,” What words? Are we to refer this to all that Peter said from verse 34 through 43? Or to just the conclusion of his words as in verse 43? We prefer the latter explanation. Peter had just dropped his voice at the end of the sentence in verse 43 when the Holy Spirit fell. (2) “the Holy Spirit fell on them that heard the word.” Of course, this phrase is defined as “the gift of the Holy Spirit” and further described as “speaking in tongues and magnifying God.” We learn later in 11:16 that Peter called this experience “the baptism in the Holy Spirit.” The word “fell” as here used, must refer to the suddenness and unexpectedness of the coming of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit did indeed fall on them (we consider the pronoun “them” to refer to all who were listening to Peter in the house of Cornelius. “Them that heard the word” would not include the six Jewish brethren who accompanied Peter. These men, described as “they of the circumcision that believed”, Cornelius had “called together his kinsmen and his near friends”). (3) “And they of the circumcision that believed were amazed, as many as were come with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit.” We find out from 11:12 there were six Jewish men who accompanied Peter from Joppa to Caesarea. The term “gift of the Holy Spirit” *must* be understood in the context in which it is given or all types of confusion will result. This is very obviously the baptismal “gift of the Spirit” (i.e. the gift of the Holy Spirit in this case is the baptism in the Holy Spirit). It is not at all strange that the baptism in the Holy Spirit should be referred to as a gift. Indeed, *all* manifestations of the Holy Spirit are at one time or another referred to as “the gift of the Holy Spirit”. Consider: (A) The Holy Spirit Himself as an indwelling presence is called “the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38), (B) The supernatural powers exercised in and through certain persons upon whom the apostles laid their hands are referred to as “gifts” of the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 12:1), (C) The baptism of the Holy Spirit is here referred to as “the gift of the Holy Spirit. The reason behind all these expressions is that in no instance is the presence or power of the Holy Spirit earned. It is like salvation:

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“It is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8). (4) “*For* they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.” If this experience was a “like gift” as that given on Pentecost, then the “tongues” here used were foreign languages and the “magnifying of God” had to do with His “mighty works” (2:11). There is some question as to whether the “tongues of Corinthians 12 & 14 are languages, but there is no question as to Pentecost since 2:6 states ...every man heard them speaking in his own language.

B. What Does It Mean?

The meaning of this particular passage is best understood by Peter. Fortunately, he explains the meaning in 11:1-18, particularly in verses 15-18. (Please, please read this passage carefully so our comments will make sense). The conclusion is stated in verse 17: “who was I, that I could withstand God?” It is sometimes better to reason from the conclusion back to the beginning. In this procedure, the whole structure becomes plain. In what instance was Peter attempting to withstand God? He was unwilling (like all other Jews) to take the gospel to the Gentiles. The whole action from 10:1 to 11:18 is for the purpose of overcoming this Jewish prejudice. The climax of the action is in the baptism of the Gentile household in the Holy Spirit. It began for Peter on the housetop of Simon the tanner with the vision, then the voice of the Spirit and the three men, then the explanation of Cornelius. The final and overwhelming move of persuasion was the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Peter says: “I remembered the word of the Lord as He said to us (Acts 1:5) ‘John indeed baptized in water, but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit’. Peter says in effect: “I had always felt this to be the greatest experience of our life and that it was given exclusively to us, that we apostles were honored above all men by being baptized in the Holy Spirit. Wonder of wonders: A housefull of Gentiles are recipients of the same experience! How can it be? But it is. It is of and from God. I am convinced. No more action is necessary. I withstand no longer. I will accept these Gentiles. They can be recognized on an equal level with us in the family of God.”

C. What Does It Mean to Me?

There are some extremely crucial questions asked and answered in this text: (1) *Do you believe a person must be baptized in water before he is saved?* If you do, then you must see that what occurred to the house of Cornelius did not relate to salvation and happened to persons who were not Christians. We are hesitant to say this, but what else could we conclude? They were believers and they were hearing the word, but they had not been baptized and were not baptized until after their baptism in the Holy Spirit. This fact simply points up the exceptional nature of this case. The baptism in the Holy Spirit was for someone else’s benefit, not for those who received it. We say this because their biggest, deepest need was salvation, and yet God through Christ baptized them in the Holy Spirit. Why? From Peter’s point of view, nothing would be more convincing. He must have thought: “If God grants such a tremendous experience to Gentile persons who are not even Christians, who am I to hesitate in accepting them as converts to Christ?” I believe this is what he meant when he said: “Can any man forbid water that these should be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?” (10:47), (2) *Can a person have the Holy Spirit and yet not be a Christian?* This is the opposite side of the above question. Romans 8:9 states: “If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” This is in reference to the abiding presence of the Spirit. We believe that what happened to the house of Cornelius was of a temporary nature, that when its purpose of convincing Peter and the other Jewish Christians was fulfilled, then the experience was also fulfilled and the effects of it dissipated. We would conclude then that upon being baptized in water these persons received the Holy Spirit as an abiding presence within them and not before. (3) Why is this incident so often used as an example for present-day tongue speakers? Because it seems to fit their theology. We must face into it: most all who claim the baptism in the Holy Spirit today do not believe baptism is at all related to salvation. When we accept their experience as valid, it is tantamount to accepting their concept of salvation, that is, the forgiveness of sins. The example of the house of Cornelius offers *no help* to such persons, for reasons above stated, it becomes the prime example of the opposite! Because they had not been baptized and therefore were not Christians, their experience made the deep impression it did upon the minds of the prejudiced Jewish Christians.

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D. How Can I Share It?

We need to face into •the total issue here involved and at the same time be kind and full of concern. As we talk to others about the problem of present-day tongue speakers, we must admit there is a far more vital Issue also in the balance. If we admit certain persons have been baptized in the Holy Spirit and do indeed speak with tongues and at the same time we know such persons were never baptized in water for the remission of sins, we are in effect denying the fundamental issue of the purpose for Christian baptism. If not, why not? This is just as serious as a problem can become. Is baptism for the remission of sins or not? Is the Holy Spirit for persons who have never been baptized? There could hardly be a more important point of sharing. What sayest thou?

39. “Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did, can he?” (Acts 10:47)

A. What Does It Say?

Comment seems unnecessary here in face of all we have said previously. However we do not wish to overlook a single thought as related to Him. The reception of the Holy Spirit here as in 11:15, 16, 17 is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Once again we see the generic: “Holy Spirit” used to describe the specific: “baptism in the Holy Spirit.” We need to remember this for a clear view this generic-specific use of terms. The generic “gift of the Holy Spirit” is used earlier in Acts to describe the specifics of: gifts, baptism, and the Holy Spirit Himself; so here also.

B. What Does It Mean?

Upon reading some commentaries, we are strongly tempted to digress from the subject and discuss the need for and purpose of water baptism, but we shall not. Someone else has done an admirable job on that subject. We need comment on the Holy Spirit. We can add nothing here not already said.

C. *What Does It Mean To Me?* See our comments on point 36.

D. *How Can I Share It?* See our comments on point 36.

40, 41, & 42. “And the Spirit told me to go with them without misgivings. And these six brethren also went with me, and we entered the man’s house. And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, just as He did upon us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how He used to say, ‘John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit. If God therefore gave to them the same gift as He gave to us, also after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God’s way?’ (Acts 10:12; 15-17)

A. What Does It Say?

It is essential to a careful understanding that you read the tenth chapter of Acts and the first eighteen verses of chapter eleven. We will never know what these verses say until they are read in their context. We make no apology for repeating points when we feel they add to the sum total of knowledge (there are times when they do not). We refer you to points 33 & 34 which discuss the words of the Holy Spirit to Peter. Let us notice the four references to the Holy Spirit in these verses: (1) “the Spirit told me” ; (2) “the Holy Spirit fell” (3) “baptized with the Holy Spirit” , (4) “the same gift” Each of these phrases has been considered earlier in a careful discussion. We refer you to the earlier discussion for this: for (1) to references No. 33 & 34; for (2) to No. 36; for (3) & (4) to No. 36.

B, C, & D. See above comment.

43. “and they sent forth Barnabas ...for he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and faith: and

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much people were added unto the Lord.” (Acts 11:22, 24)

A. What Does It Say?

Luke says here what he said earlier of Stephen (Cf. 6:5). here seems to be no hint of supernatural power associated with being “filled with the Holy Spirit”. Perhaps the fruit of the Spirit, such as joy, peace, love, kindness were very prominent in the attitudes and actions of both Stephen and Barnabas.

B. What Does It Mean?

There are several commentators who relate the expression “full of the Holy Spirit” to the supernatural gifts of the Spirit.. accordingly, such persons who are “filled with the Holy Spirit” have several of these gifts. This hardly seems a tenable position since “faith and “wisdom” are both one of the gifts and in this reference and in 6:5, Stephen and Barnabas are also full of wisdom and faith. If they were full of the Holy Spirit in the supernatural sense, why was is necessary to add: “and faith” and wisdom? We believe it means that the direction of Christ our Lord (who lives in us by the Holy Spirit) was so prominent in demeanor of Stephen and Barnabas, people recognized Him and said, “They are full of the Holy Spirit.” We can only offer our opinion but we hope it is helpful.

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

Would the reader please refer to Volume II, pages 11 through 44 and read them carefully? There are two basic thoughts here: (1) Being filled with the Holy Spirit is a most desirable relationship which is attainable by all Christians; (2) This relationship is a matter or subject of character development and not of service. The supernatural gifts and baptism in the Holy Spirit were for the purpose of teaching, preaching, confirming, etc. in the work of establishing His kingdom in the hearts of men. Being filled with the Holy Spirit is for the purpose of preparing the man for whatever service he performs in Christ’s kingdom. The second then becomes more important than the first. If we are not prepared to serve, we cannot serve. Please remember: when the apostles wanted some men to take care of the very physical task of distributing food, the men were to be “filled with the Holy Spirit” (6:3-5).

D. How Can I Share It?

I believe it is extremely important we see Barnabas, Stephen, Philip and doubtless many others as men who were “filled with the Holy Spirit” in such a conspicuous manner that people knew it. Being filled with the Spirit was not, in ‘this case, something they did but something they were. This describes a personal relationship with the Holy Spirit sustained by these men. This relationship with the Holy Spirit affected their attitudes and actions to such an extent others knew it. When we have such a relationship, we will indeed have something to share. If we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we unconsciously will be able to share this glorious fact.

44. “Now at this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. And one of them named Agabus stood up and began to indicate by the Spirit that there would certainly be a great famine all over the world. And this took place in the reign of Claudius.” (Acts 11:27, 28)

A. What Does It Say?

The prophecy of Agabus was evidently given in the midst of some formal service or meeting. We obtain this thought from the expression stood up” (i.e. made a public statement). The prophets in the New Testament were classified along with the apostles as being a part of the foundation of Christ’s Church (Ephesians 2:20). The Holy Spirit was the source of the prophetic powers. Foretelling seems to be only a minor part of their work: forthtelling or teaching was a much larger share.

B. What Does It Mean?

We could discuss the meaning of the message of Agabus, but our purpose is to discover the Spirit’s work. The Holy Spirit became the intelligence or power by which or through which Agabus was able to

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make this prediction. Just where or how did Agabus obtain this gift? Acts 19:1-6 indicates certain persons prophesied as a result of the laying on of the hands of Paul. Agabus had been in Jerusalem with the apostles. Did they lay their hands upon him to grant this power? We do not know, but it seems quite possible.

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

We have many present-day claims to this prophetic gift. If we have inspired teachers today, then their teaching is of equal value to the New Testament. If such teachers do not add anything to the sum total of our knowledge of God's word of what value are they? Anyone with sincere faith and devotion can study and teach the New Testament. Present-day prophets contradict each other, themselves, and the word of God. The plain answer is: their claim is false! We ask again: "In what reference do we find •the gift of prophecy given through prayer? Or by the laying on of the hands of someone who was not an apostle?"

D. How Can I Share It?

We need to challenge the source and authority of present-day prophets. We do not have an answer for all the questions asked concerning this prophecy or that one. It is enough to ask: "Whence cometh this power?" If the New Testament is silent as to example or teaching concerning how the gift of prophecy was given (i.e. apart from the hands of the apostles) we are presumptuous to claim it.

45. "Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers, Barnabas, and Symeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen 'the foster-brother of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. And as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work where unto I have called them." (Acts 13:1,2)

A. What Does It Say?

re prophets and teachers the same men? "The two words are generic and specific terms applied to the same persons, one denoting their divine authority, and the other the precise way in which it was exercised." With this thought we agree. All prophets were teachers, but not all teachers were prophets. In the Antioch church, they were both prophets *and* teachers. The words of the Holy Spirit came during a period of "ministering to the Lord" and while they were fasting. The message of the Spirit came during some 'type of worship service. Perhaps it was on the Lord's day around the Lord's table. We do not know when or where or even to whom the Holy Spirit addressed these words, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for 'the work where unto I have called them." Was this message given in an audible voice to the assembled group?; or by special revelations to one of the prophets? We do not know. It is enough to know He did speak. We would like to Comment on 'the subject of fasting but this is not our purpose.

B. What Does It Mean?

This passage teaches us the Holy Spirit spoke to certain persons, called them, and gave specific instructions. Is this an example for present-day Spirit-given calling and directing? Pause a moment and consider: (1) The Holy Spirit was calling an apostle and someone who had for a long time been closely associated with the apostles, (2) The question of apostolic authority was a very live issue. By speaking directly, the position of Paul as an apostle would be strengthened. There was a task of evangelizing to be done; the Spirit's choice for this work was Barnabas and Saul. He had already called them for the task: 9:15; 22:14,15,21; 26:16. These considerations will help us to understand the previous commission of the Holy Spirit as related to Saul (whereas in these references •the Lord Jesus is the spokesman we could assume this is the call to which the Holy Spirit made reference).

Another question poses itself to us: If Saul had been engaged in evangelistic work for the past 14 years (35 'to 49 A.D.) why now call him to a work in which he was already working? The answer is either in the responsibility of the local church in Antioch or in the reconfirming of the apostleship of Paul.

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We do not know where or when the Holy Spirit had called Barnabas for the work. We are simply ‘told He did.

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

The Holy Spirit is a very real divine person with the power of thought and expression. He is vitally concerned about preaching the gospel. He will not preach it but has a great interest in those who do.

D. How Can I Share It?

If we wanted to discuss the ordination of evangelists, or the subject of fasting in the early church, we could use these verses. But what shall we share in the work of the Spirit? Perhaps an assurance of His divinity and personality.

46. “Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia and from there they sailed to Cyprus.” (Acts 13:3,4)

A. What Does It Say?

This text is the fulfillment of the one we have just studied. “Being sent out by the Holy Spirit” is the description of Luke as to action of the Antioch church. The Holy Spirit initiated the action and He is therefore logically described here as the source of the sending or the one who sent them. Whereas the hands of the elders of the church were doubtlessly laid on the heads of Paul and Barnabas and by this means the church approved and implemented the call of the Spirit, nonetheless, the Holy Spirit is indicated as ‘the one who sent them.

B, C, D. We feel we can add nothing further to what we have already said on this text.

47. “But Elymas the magician (for thus his name is translated) was opposing them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. But Saul, who was also known as Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, fixed his gaze upon him, ... (Acts 13:8,9)

A. What Does It Say?

The action of the Holy Spirit in Paul must be associated with his credentials as an apostle. He said concerning this in II Corinthians 12:12: “The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles.” Paul takes the lead in the rest of ‘the Acts account. This is the time and place for his move to leadership. Saul, who is from here on called Paul, was “filled with the Holy Spirit” from his conversion (9:17). We must conclude then that the expression used here refers to a fresh assertion or moving of the Holy Spirit within the apostle. We would assume this movement of the Holy Spirit was prompted by God, not Paul.

B. What Does It Mean?

We think of a very similar incident with Peter and Ananias. In both cases the authority of an apostle was being tested. We can appreciate the need for such a move on the part of the Holy Spirit when we think of the alternative.

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

There is little of personal application in this text. We see better the purposes of God.

D. *How Can I Share It?* See above comment.

48. “But the Jews aroused the devout women of prominence and the leading men of the city, and instigated a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district. But they

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shook off ‘the dust of their feet in protest against them and went to Iconium. And the disciples were continually filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.’ (Acts 13:50-52)

A. What Does It Say?

“The expulsion is no way injured the disciples who were left destitute of these leaders. They had the best Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, who filled their hearts and also gave them joy. The imperfect describes this condition as one that continued indefinitely.” (*Lenski*, p. 556) This text plainly states the Christians in Antioch of Pisidia were continually filled with joy and the Holy Spirit! Romans 15:13 seems to be a good companion verse: “Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may *abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*” Also Romans 14:17: “for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and *joy in the Holy Spirit.*” Alexander well says: ... the primitive disciples are repeatedly described as rejoicing in ‘the very circumstances which might seem peculiarly adapted to produce the opposite effect. That the cause of this effect was supernatural we learn from the concluding words.’ (p. 507)

B. What Does It Mean?

It means these disciples had a relationship to the Lord we have not yet found. (I speak in the generic—where there are those who are filled with joy and peace and hope, we gladly exempt you.) Perhaps a letter I wrote to the Holy Spirit would be appropriate just here. (I wrote it as a soliloquy.)

Dear Unseen Guest:

There are several questions I have wanted to ask for some time:

(1) What is your estimate or understanding of the body (my body) in which you live? *Some answers He has given:* (a.) This body is wonderfully made, (b.) It is of dust to return to it, (c.) It is full of desires; or *is* the body the source of these desires?, or only the “mod-us operandi”? These desires are (to name but a few): (1) physical hunger, (2) sexual urge, (3) need for warmth or cooling, (4) creativity. All these desires *must* be and *will* be expressed *through the body.* How such expression is carried out through the body determines if there will be joy and peace or grief and wrath.

(2) How could one (myself) be indwelt with or by ‘the Spirit of another (You) and yet not know it? The one indwelling (You) can and does see, hear, speak, feel, and yet He (You) never indicates in any way to me (to my human spirit) that He is (You are) present. This seems strange if not almost impossible. Is it true? No demon ever so indwelt a man. or did he? Were the demon-possessed aware of the indwelling or were only those who knew them aware? know I’ll need to read your word much more carefully to get answers here.

(3) Is not “self-consciousness” an intrinsic quality of being alive? (i.e. how can we know we are alive without a self-consciousness?) But then the Holy Spirit — (you) were alive long before you took up residence in me and you are aware of this whether I am or not.

(4) Are you going to help me in any direct manner? (i.e. apart from the help I get by reading your word—?)

Answer: Read *Eph. 3:16; II Cor. 13:14; Phil. 2:1* and *Rom. 8:26,27* and answer for yourself. In each instance we are left responsible for the help or lack of it. How wonderful are the ways of the Spirit!

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

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We should have waited and placed the letter to the Holy Spirit under this heading. Suffice it to say here: there is a tragic need and at the same time a wonderful opportunity. We disciples of today can be and should be “continually filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit”.

D. How Can I Share It?

What a prize to share—Who among us has written, taught, or preached on “how to be filled with the Holy Spirit”? (i.e. apart from what is poorly substituted—the present day so-called miraculous manifestations.) We do not have a larger challenge.

49. “And after there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, ‘Brethren, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He also did to us.’ Acts 15:7, 8.

A. What Does It Say?

This is yet another reference to the baptism in the Holy Spirit of the house of Cornelius. Please read 10:47 and in 11:17 and then this reference—the baptism in the Holy Spirit was a Witness by God in favor or approval of these Gentiles. In the context in which it appears. (i.e. accepting the Gentiles without circumcision.) It is a very strong point.

B. What Does It Mean?

In three references we are told the plain purpose of the happening at the house of Cornelius. (i.e. to convince the Jew of the acceptability of the Gentiles.) Are we not more than presumptuous to put some other meaning into this incident?

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

We have discussed at length the meaning of Cornelius’ experience to us; we refer the reader to that section.

D. *How Can I Share It?* See discussion above.

50. “For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these essentials! Acts. 15:28.

A. What Does It Say?

It might come as somewhat of a surprise that these men felt they were under the direction and oversight of the Holy Spirit. We need to remember John 16:13—“But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth.” This would seem to be a fulfillment of that promise. We would imagine the apostles: Peter, John, and Paul were the ones through whom the Holy Spirit especially worked. It is also worthy of note that upon writing the letter somehow James, Peter, John, Paul, Barnabas, and all others who might be the antecedents of ‘the pronoun “us” felt the Holy Spirit had given them the decision or resolution as well as the contents of the letter. Just how they came to this conclusion, we are not told.

B. What Does It Mean?

There were men who were under the direct supervision of the Holy Spirit. We do well to give heed to what they said and did.

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

There are those who claim this relationship and direction today. Besides the fact that they do not have Biblical authority for the claim they do not produce a consistent pattern of life to support such a

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claim.

D. How Can I Share It?

We should share the truth of apostolic authority. We can be always aware of God's providential direction which is vastly different than immediate guidance communicated to those being guided.

51. "And they passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the Word in Asia." Acts 16:6.

A. What Does It Say?

It is worse than useless to speculate as 'to how the Holy Spirit communicated His will to these men. Was it directly through a voice that said—"no, not in Asia"? or was it though a set of circumstances from which this conclusion was drawn and attributed to the Holy Spirit? We do not know.

B. What Does It Mean?

It is just as important to know we are led as it is to know where. Can we plan a move for our Lord and be perfectly confident we shall know whether we are forbidden or permitted? We are thoroughly persuaded God is at work in our lives but we know no way we can know His immediate will for a specific circumstance.

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

There are always so many factors involved in our moves. We are never quite confident we have made the right one. (let alone be undeniably convinced the Holy Spirit directed the move.) It might be well to ask ourselves why Paul and Barnabas knew of the Spirit's leading and we do not. Perhaps they fasted and prayed more and were preconditioned to be led. Perhaps God had a special work for them to do that was a "one time" affair—never to be repeated. Was this direction of the Holy Spirit special apostolic equipment? Another large problem is our unwillingness to accept a set of circumstances as the will of the Spirit if we are displeased. We usually rationalize the Holy Spirit out and try until we are pleased.

D. How Can I Share It?

It would be more than pleasant to tell someone else we are perfectly confident of the Spirit's leading in our lives and they can be in theirs. We wonder in the midst of this whole discussion how it could ever be the will of the Holy Spirit for the Word *Not* to be spoken anywhere at any time. But it was! Considering the responsibility of deciding *Not* to do something and making the Holy Spirit responsible we pause. What shall we say? I for one will blame myself for the mistakes and thank the Lord for the success. I do *Not* believe in any direct, infallible, immediate, personal instruction of the Holy Spirit today.

52. "And when they had come to Mysia, they were trying to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them." Acts 16:7.

A. B. C. D.

—All we have said on the 49th reference can be applied to this one. We would add one thought: we do not believe Luke is writing this as historian making objective-historical observations. We believe he is saying that *at the time* of their arrival in Mysia the Holy Spirit in some direct-personal-intelligent manner let Paul and Barnabas know He did not want them to go to Bithynia.

53. "And it came about while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper country came to Ephesus, and found certain disciples, and he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit. when you believed?" and they said to him, "no, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy

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Spirit.” (Acts 19:1, 2.)

A. What Does It Say? and What Does It Mean?

There is so very much to say on this text and the one to follow . We offer no infallible position. We try only to be close to the text and as consistent as possible. Several questions must be (will be) answered in the mind of the reader before he interprets this passage:

(1) Why did Paul ask the question? (i.e. “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?”) (Note in passing that the text does *not* say since you believed. This use of “since” instead of “when” is entirely unwarranted by the Greek text. The term “believed” refers to saving faith.) We have read three answers to this question:

(a) Paul was asking about the supernatural gifts of the Spirit when he used the term “Holy Spirit” –He wanted to know from these twelve which supernatural power was manifested in their lives.

(b) Paul asked this as a greeting—with not more than “God bless you” in his intention—he of course expected an affirmative answer.

(c) Paul saw something in the attitude or actions of these men that caused him to ask this question—perhaps a total lack of the joy, peace, or love which was so prominent in the lives of others. Observing a lack of the fruit of the Spirit, he asked about the source. We would prefer this last reason but it is only a matter of conjecture at the same time it is very important.

(2) Why did Paul inquire into their baptism? Isn’t there some essential connection between baptism and the Holy Spirit? Who were these twelve men? Were they disciples or converts of Apollos? Were they imperfectly taught by someone else?

Let’s begin with the first question: What is meant by the term “Holy Spirit” as here used? We believe Paul was asking about the Holy Spirit Himself. Because of the lack of the Spirit produced virtues in the lives of these men he asked them if they had the Holy Spirit. Perhaps Paul sensed something wrong through the discernment given him by the Holy Spirit. In order to cause these men to see their own lack he asked a leading question. When they freely admitted their lack he inquired further.

Why did he ask about their baptism? Because it is in and through baptism we receive Him as a gift. It seemed inconceivable to Paul that anyone could be properly baptized without a knowledge of the Holy Spirit. Did not our Lord command us to be baptized into the name of (or by the authority of) the Father, Son, and *Holy Spirit*. (Matt. 28:19) Since the Holy Spirit is given at baptism, their lack of the Holy Spirit reflects on their baptism.

Their answer indicates they had not been baptized by the baptism Jesus commanded. Paul acknowledged the baptism of John had a purpose but it was not related to the reception of the Holy Spirit.

(3) Who were these men? Were they disciples of Apollos? If they were, why wasn’t Apollos rebaptized? We do not know if they were disciples of Apollos and we do not know that Apollos was not re-baptized. We have no word on the subject of Apollos and his baptism; however simply because we have no account of his baptism does not at all preclude the possibility of his being baptized.

This passage—like Acts 8 :12-24 gives us the entire scope of ‘the Holy Spirit’s work.

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Notice: (1) The Holy Spirit is given to all Christians at baptism. These twelve men were improperly baptized therefore did not have Him. (2) The Spiritual gifts or supernatural powers such as speaking in other languages and prophesying were given by the hands of the apostles. This Paul gave to these men. (3) Paul was enabled to grant these powers because he was baptized in ‘the Holy Spirit. We do not know when or where. Our opinion is at the time he was baptized in water. (Acts 9:17)

Why did Paul grant these two supernatural powers to the Holy Spirit within these men? They were chosen by God to help others through these gifts. Did some of the men later become elders of the Ephesian church? We do not know.

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

What shall we say of persons today (and their name is legion) who do not know the Holy Spirit is given to Christians? There are many, many members of the church who would answer much in the same thought (if not with the same words) to the question. “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became a Christian?” Perhaps we have overstated the case. It could be that such persons do know or have heard of the Holy Spirit but He is not at all real to them. He is only a name or some mysterious power. Many members of the church are hesitant to acknowledge the Holy Spirit because of the excess practiced by others. Such persons who do know there is a Holy Spirit but do not know of His relationship to them could hardly be present-day counterparts to those twelve of Ephesus. We do indeed need more information but not a re-baptism for such people.

D. How Can I Share It?

We need to share first of all our concern for a lost world who is so very much in need of our wonderful unseen Guest. We need to so carefully understand the work of the Spirit as expressed in this passage that we can teach others also.

54. “And when Paul laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking with tongues and prophesying.” Acts 19:6.

There is hardly any point of adding to what we have already written. This is a verse description of the giving of supernatural gifts or abilities from the Holy Spirit through the apostle’s hands. The apostles were the agents God chose to grant these powers. In the absence of the only means of imparting these powers we do not today have these powers.

55, & 56. “And now, behold, bound in Spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me.” (Acts 20:23, 23)

A. What Does It Say?

There is some question as to whether the word “Spirit” in verse 22 should be capitalized. This is because it is not clear if the human spirit of Paul or the Holy Spirit of God is involved. Perhaps it would be enough to say: if only the spirit of Paul is meant—yet he is constrained because of the Holy Spirit. It was because of the intimations of the Holy Spirit Paul felt as he did. Paul knew the *must* go to Jerusalem. He felt as a bound prisoner of the Holy Spirit, led along by the Spirit to the city. Just how Paul was informed by the Spirit concerning the bonds and afflictions, we are not told. Did God use inspired men like Agabus or did the Spirit grant internal revelations to Paul? By whatever manner, these warnings were repeated in city after city until Paul reached Ephesus.

B. What Does It Mean?

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Paul was consciously under the direction of the Holy Spirit—even in this there were areas of information kept from him—but he *did* know where and when God wanted him. He already knew his work “to open their eyes in order to turn them from darkness to light and from the authority of Satan to God”. But just where and when to do this work must be given to him as he goes.

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

It is indeed marvelous to have this same message. Will we have the same Spirit-led journey? Was the direction by the Holy Spirit in the life of Paul a part of God’s interest in the life of an apostle and therefore not to be expected in the work of lesser persons? If we were as committed as Paul—as “turned on” to Christ’s will in our life as he was would we then expect His direction? Or are we hesitant because we feel there is an unfair comparison involved. (i.e. I am not an apostle and therefore will not expect such directions.”) We unavoidably struggle with this question. What is your answer?

D. How Can I Share It?

Shall we share the testimony of God’s grand direction in our preaching, teaching, living for Christ? Be careful! Do we read of any misdirections in the N.T.? Do we learn that Paul or Peter or James didn’t understand the directions of the Spirit and made several mistakes until they found what they hoped was the will of the Lord? If there is nothing more than a subjective judgment involved whose judgment is it? Open your mind to two or three possible explanations. How can we be sure the Holy Spirit led here or directed there? I am not adverse to such direction. I simply will not claim something I do not have. How is it with you?

57. “Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which He purchased with His own blood.” Acts 20:28

A. What Does It Say?

We would like very much to give a careful exegesis of the entire verse; but our purpose is to consider the Spirit’s work. We do consider the comments of J.A. Alexander of such great value we reproduce them for your edification:

“Having thus affirmed his own fidelity, he urges them to follow his example. *Take heed*, the same verb that is used above, in 5, 35, 8, 6, 10, 11, 16, 14, and there explained. It denotes not mere attention but attendance, serious and anxious care. *To yourselves*, to your own safety and salvation, as a prerequisite of usefulness to others. *The flock*, a term applied by Christ himself to his disciples (Luke 12, 32), and by Peter to the church already organized (I Pet. 5, 2, 3). It is a favorite figure with the prophets for the chosen people or the church of the Old Testament. (See Isaiah. 40, 11, 63, 11. Jer. 13, 17, 23, 2, 31, 10, 51, 23. Ezek. 34, 3. Mic. 7, 14. Zech. 10, 3, 11, 4, 7, 17.) Our Lord describes himself as the good shepherd, and believers as his sheep (John 10, 1-16.) Peter describes him as the shepherd and bishop (or overseer) of souls (I Pet. 2, 25), and as the chief shepherd (5, 4), to whom ministers are under-shepherds.

Over the which is not a correct version, as it makes the overseers entirely distinct from and superior to the flock, whereas the original makes them a part of it, although superior in office. *In which*, in the midst and as a part of which. *The Holy Ghost made*, literally, placed or set, not only by creating the office, but by choosing the incumbents, either by express designation (as in 13, 2), or by directing the choice of others 9 as in 6, 5).

You will observe from the comment here the two possibilities in the Spirit’s creating or placing elders in the flock. We must add: if the Holy Spirit also gave these men special directions in the gifts of “wisdom” and “knowledge” –not to mention “prophecy”, we would understand the expression “made you bishops” to include the body of truth granted to them by the Holy Spirit. Without these special gifts, we

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cannot see how these men would be able to teach.

B. What Does It Mean?

Once again, we are tempted to discuss the larger subject of the work of the elders. We must limit ourselves to the Holy Spirit's work as related to bishops . then and now. Is there any sense today in which the Holy Spirit makes elders? We believe there is. The Holy Spirit has given the qualifications and the work to be done. We believe He has also provided the inward moral power to meet the qualifications and to carry out the work. Surely the Holy Spirit is waiting to add all who will answer His call through His Word to do the work of the elder.

D. How Can I Share It?

There is no greater need than that of the Holy Spirit appointed elders. We refer you to our text *THE CHURCH IN THE BIBLE*, which contains much help and to our *Bible Study Textbook*, *PAUL'S LETTERS TO TIMOTHY AND TITUS*.

58, & 59. "And after looking up the disciples, we stayed there seven days, and they kept telling Paul through the Spirit not to set foot in Jerusalem." 21:4.

"And as we were staying there for some days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea— and coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands, and said, 'This is what the Holy Spirit says; 'In this way the Jews of Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'" 21:10, 11.

A. What Does It Say?

It is important here to understand just what the Holy Spirit revealed to these disciples. Did He indeed say that Paul should not go to Jerusalem? How then could the same Spirit bind Paul to go to the city at all costs? We must conclude that what the Spirit revealed to the disciples was the danger into which Paul was going. The conclusion that he should not go because of these dangers was the judgment of the disciples, not the Holy Spirit. The dramatic action of Agabus was much more definite. He clearly revealed and defined the dangers and left the decision to Paul.

B. What Does It Mean?

We would like to know *how* certain disciples at Tyre obtained this power from the Holy Spirit. If we just had one reference to their devotional life supplying this power we would be more than happy to suggest we have such gifted disciples in our present-day churches. In the absence of such an example, we must say again: the only way we know of obtaining the gift or power of prophesy was thru the hands of the apostles. We conclude then that both the Tyrian Christians and Agabus obtained their gifts from the hands of the apostles. Surely we would be presumptuous to say we know they didn't.

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

The above comment will contribute to this answer. Please know that we are not negative in our attitude toward persons who clam the powers of these disciples and Agabus for today. We are stopped in our acceptance of those who claim these powers by the following: (1) No scripture promised of such powers through answer to prayer. (2) Contradictory directions on the part of the individuals. (3) Contradictory directions among several who claim such powers and are not Christian. (at least by our definition.)

D. How Can I Share It?

Knowledge of God's immediate direction in the formation of the church is a large help.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

60. “And when they did not agree with one another, they began leaving after Paul had spoken one parting word, ‘The Holy Spirit rightly spoke through Isaiah the prophet to your father, ...’ Acts 28:25.

What Does It Say?

We have discussed earlier (point # 5) the work of the Holy Spirit in the writing of the scriptures. We can add nothing else here.

THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Examination over Lesson Ten

1. How can we know that Holy Spirit is at work in our lives, particularly in our choices?
2. What was “the promise of the Father”? How does this relate to every Christian?
3. State and discuss three phrases to describe the experience of the apostles on Pentecost.
4. Please discuss the vast importance of the office of the twelve and show how Pentecost related.
5. Why are all to be filled with the Holy Spirit? How is this to happen? Why?
6. Where, when and how were certain “sons and daughters prophesying”?
7. Where, when and how did “all flesh” receive the Holy Spirit?
8. Discuss the alternate interpretation for what happened on Pentecost i.e. of those who feel it is an example for us today.
9. The presence of the Holy Spirit is a real reason for “seasons of refreshing”. Explain.
10. Was Peter (and other apostles) permanently “filled with the Holy Spirit” or did this reoccur from time to time? How does this relate to us?
11. Give a clear definition of “inspiration” as it relates to the Scriptures.
12. There is a real lesson to learn in the sin of Ananias and Sapphira i.e. as related to the Holy Spirit. What is it?
13. There is a right and a wrong way to try the Spirit of God. Discuss.
14. Discuss carefully and personally the Holy Spirit as a witness.
15. If we were to select seven men from among one of our congregations, who we could describe as “full of the Holy Spirit”, what would be the distinguishing characteristics?
16. A character study of Stephen would prove very helpful.
17. We have said of Acts 8:14-17, “they contain the whole system of the Holy Spirit’s work”. Discuss what is meant.
18. Discuss what Simon (the sorcerer) saw when the apostles laid their hands on the Samaritans.
19. Discuss the leading of the Holy Spirit in our present-day personal evangelism.
20. When and where and how was Paul baptized in the Holy Spirit?
21. Read Acts 9:31 and answer: “How did these persons obtain comfort from the Holy Spirit?”
22. Why did God use the Holy Spirit as a spokesman? (i.e. on certain occasions)
23. Are we anointed with the Holy Spirit? Discuss.
24. Please discuss in detail the reasons for the baptism in Holy Spirit of the household of Cornelius.
25. When did the house of Cornelius become Christians? Show how important is this question.
26. Barnabus is a grand example for us. Show how.
27. There were prophets in the church in the days of Paul and Peter. Are there prophets in today’s church? Consider the high estimate Paul had of the gift of prophecy.
28. Does the Holy Spirit call, separate, and send men today? Discuss.

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29. How can we be indwelt by the Holy Spirit and yet have no emotional, internal, immediate awareness of Him? Or is this the true circumstance? Discuss.
30. Why did Paul and Barnabus know of the Spirit's leading in their moves (choices) and we do not? Discuss.
31. Why did Paul ask certain men if they received the Holy Spirit when they believed?
32. Why did Paul inquire as to the baptism of the 12 at Ephesus?
33. Discuss how the Holy Spirit makes elders.

Lesson Eleven

WHAT THE EPISTLES AND REVELATION TEACH ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT

Questions you should answer *before* you study the lesson.

1. Has the Holy Spirit shed abroad in your heart the love of God? Read Romans 5:5. Remember: When the Romans received this letter they did not have the N.T. Therefore this must have been some type of subjective experience. What was it?
2. Christians are to: “walk by the Spirit”. (Rom. 8:4) “live by the Spirit”. (Gal. 5:25) “Mortify the deeds of the body” by the Spirit. Rom. 8:13. Give a testimony to the class as to how at least one of these expressions is fulfilled in your life.
3. “The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our Spirit that we are children of God.” Rom. 8:16. Please tell us about the witness of the Holy Spirit in your life.
4. Paul expressed the earnest desire that the saints in Rome would “abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” (Romans 15:13) Please explain how he expected God to answer his desire for these saints.
5. Explain just how the Holy Spirit is transforming you into the image of Christ from glory to glory. See II Cor. 3:18.
6. “And because you are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba! Father!” Gal. 4:6. When will this become more than a Bible verse? When or how can it become the deep reality Paul intended it to be?
7. What is “praying in the Spirit” as found in Ephesians 6:18?
8. What is the “fellowship of the Spirit” in Phil. 2:1?
9. “Epaphras, our beloved bondservant, also informed us of your love in the Spirit.” Col. 1:7, 8. Just what did Epaphras say? “Love in the Spirit”? Do we have this today? Could we recognize it if we saw it?
10. What is the “renewing of the Holy Spirit” in Titus 3:5?

Whereas we know there is an unavoidable overlap, and that it is essentially only a learning device; and whereas we are well aware of the hours and hours involved in the effort, we *yet* want to approach all 127 of these references in the epistles (and Revelation) with the same four questions we asked of the 60 references (59 and one inference) in the Acts account. (i.e.), *What does it say? What does it mean? How does it relate to me? How can I share it?*

THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

There Are Twenty References To The Holy Spirit In Paul's Letter To The Romans

1. "who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh? Who was declared with power to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 1:3, 4.

A. What Does It Say?

We quote from John Murray in the *New International Commentary* p. 10ff. "According to the Spirit of holiness." Difficulties encompass every interpretation of this expression because it occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. Since it is parallel to "according to the flesh" in verse 3 and since the latter refers to the human nature of our Lord, it has been supposed the term in question must have in view the divine nature. This does not follow. There are other contrasts which are relevant to the apostle's theme in these verses, and we are not shut up to this alternative. The expression "according to the Spirit of holiness" stands in the closest relation to "by the resurrection from the dead". The latter, it must not be forgotten, concerns Christ's human nature—only in respect of his human nature was he raised from the dead. This correlation with the resurrection from the dead, moreover, provides the clearest indication of the direction in which we are to seek the meaning of the expression in question. Just as "according to the flesh" in verse 3 defines the phase which came to be through being born of the seed of David, so "according to the Spirit of holiness" characterizes the phase which came to be through the resurrection.

And when we ask what that new phase was upon which the Son of God entered by his resurrection, there is copious New Testament allusion and elucidation (cf. Acts 2:36; Eph. 1:20-23; Phil. 2:9-11; I Pet. 3:21, 22). By his resurrection and ascension the Son of God incarnate entered upon a new phase of sovereignty and was endowed with new power correspondent with and unto the exercise of the mediatorial lordship which he executes as head over all things to his body, the church. It is in this same resurrection context and with allusion to Christ's resurrection endowment that the apostle says, "The last Adam was made life-giving Spirit" (I Cor. 15:45). And it is to this that he refers elsewhere when he says, "The Lord is the Spirit" (II Cor. 3:17). "Lord" in this instance, as frequently in Paul, is the Lord Christ. The only conclusion is that Christ is now by reason of the resurrection so endowed with and in control of the Holy Spirit that, without any confusion of the distinct persons, Christ is identified with the Spirit and is called "the Lord of the Spirit" (II Cor. 3:18). Thus when we come back to the expression "according to the Spirit of holiness", our inference is that it refers to that stage of pneumatic endowment upon which Jesus entered through his resurrection. The text, furthermore, expressly relates "Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness" with "the resurrection from the dead" and the appointment can be none other than that which came to be by the resurrection. The thought of verse 4 would then be that the lordship in which he was instated by the resurrection is one all-pervasively conditioned by pneumatic powers. The relative weakness of his pre-resurrection state, reflected on in verse 3, is contrasted with the triumphant power exhibited in his post-resurrection lordship. What is contrasted is not a phase in which Jesus is not the Son of God and another in which he is. He is the incarnate Son of God in both states, humiliation and exaltation, and to regard him as the Son of God in both states belongs to the essence of Paul's gospel as the gospel of God. But the preresurrection and post-resurrection states are compared and contrasted, and the contrast hinges on the investiture with power by which the latter is characterized."

B. What Does It Mean?

We catch a glimpse of the glory of our Lord. We appreciate His power and beauty and humility more as we understand the work of the Holy Spirit. There are few if any other applications we can make of this verse to ourselves or others.

C. & D. See above.

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2. “and hope does not disappoint; because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” Romans 5:5.

A. What Does It Say?

We quote from Moses E. Lard p. 156f. “And this hope makes not ashamed; This serves here the same purpose that the article does in the Greek; and it is used, not as a translation, but because it gives a better sentence. In *Kataischunei* we have clearly a Present used for a Future, or rather the Future spoken of in a Present. The meaning is, that this hope will not, in the end, cause us shame by disappointing us. We will surely realize what we hope for, and therefore will never have reason to feel ashamed that we hoped. Makes not ashamed. Makes whom not ashamed? Clearly us who have it. But to say that this hope makes not ashamed is the same as to say we are not ashamed of it. We are not now ashamed of our hope, nor shall we ever be.

Because God’s love is poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, God’s love is not particularly the love we have for him, nor particularly the love he has for us. *Agape* denotes simply love. But the special measure of it here spoken of is from him as source, and is therefore called his. This love is not diffused through our hearts, as some have held, but is poured out *in* them—not *into* them, but *in* them. It is from God as fountain, and is poured out in us by the Holy Spirit as the agent that is given to us. To us Jews, to us Gentiles, to all who are justified. The Holy Spirit is given to us by being sent into our hearts to dwell there. This is the fact asserted by the Apostle; and no false exegesis must be allowed to negate it. Inexplicable it is, I grant; but it must not therefore be rejected. The argument on hope, then, stands thus: The Holy Spirit is given to us as an earnest of our future inheritance. Eph. 1:14, 15. By this Spirit our hearts are filled with love. In these facts we have both proof and pledge that God will invest us with what we hope for. This hope then will not disappoint us. Therefore it neither now makes us ashamed, nor will it hereafter.”

B. What Does It Mean?

The Holy Spirit has a wonderful work to do for us: “To shed abroad in our hearts the love of God”. To answer the question what does this mean?, we ask several more questions: (1) When He sheds abroad in our hearts the love of God—will we be conscious of it? If not of what value is it to us? (2) Do we understand this text in it’s context? Paul speaks for himself to the Roman saints and all other Christians. The argument for “hope” is generic. It is for us isn’t it? (3) Are we right in the following answer to these pressing questions; “how does the Holy Spirit shed abroad in our hearts the love of God?”

- (a) He inspired the apostles and others to bring the good news. “God so loved the world”— to us.
- (b) He (the Holy Spirit) moved into our bodies to re-new our nature. (i.e. at our “washing of regeneration” Titus 3:5).
- (c) He somehow impresses upon our hearts (minds) how much God loves us. This He does as we are sensitively aware of Him. We are sure this is not separate from what we can remember of His Word, or even thru the reading of His Word. But is this impression or *awareness of the Spirit-prompted love of God always associated with His Word?* I ask this because the Romans never had the N.T. This then must have been a subjective reality to them. Answer for yourself!

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

Let’s look at the text one more time: Paul is asking the Christians in Rome to review the marvels of redeeming grace. Among these marvels and perhaps the greatest of them is the fact God loves us! The agent for applying (—shall we say “diffusing” (?)) The love of God is the Holy Spirit—He who is within the body of each Christian. We do not have a specific, “*How He Does It*” formula for the Spirit’s work in this passage, but reading the following references about His work *in - on* and *through* the human heart will help.

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John 7:38, 39; Rev. 3:19, 20; Col. 2:1; II Cor. 13:14. Is it unreasonable or unscriptural (or even non-scriptural) to believe there is “fellowship” or “communion,” or “rapport” between the human spirit and the Divine Spirit?” When the human spirit so adjusts itself morally to the divine government, then the highways of this spiritual commerce will be open and free for the “communion of the Holy Spirit”. The first shipment over this highway to be enjoyed will be the “diffusing” or “pouring out” of the love of God.

D. How Can I Share It?

This is a matter of faith. (i.e. we shall share this truth if we believe it ourselves.) Please take the time, discipline, and thought, necessary to make this text, nay this blessed promise, real to you and then teach it to someone else.

3. “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.” Rom. 8: 1,2.

A. What Does It Say?

We are determined to give the serious student as much help as possible in answering these questions, for this reason, we shall quote from a different commentator each time under this question and then give a rather complete bibliography at the end of the references in Romans for further study. We quote here from Anders Nygren in his commentary on Romans. p. 312f.

“This new law or order, under which we are placed through Christ, is now defined more closely in three ways: (1) It is “the law of the *Spirit*.” He who believes in Christ has received the Spirit of God and of Christ. The Spirit dwells in him (5:5; 8:9, 11; I Cor. 3:16; Gal. 4:6) and is now the driving power in his life (8:14; Gal. 5:18). The Spirit is the sphere of his whole new life “in Christ.” The Christian “lives in the Spirit, and walks in the Spirit” (Gal. 5:25). Just as his ordinary human life is a life “in the flesh,” so his life in the inner man lives “in the Spirit.” It is the Spirit which marks his life and is his pledge of the glory that is to come (II Cor. 1:22). (2) It is the law of life. As death holds sway in the old aeon, so life rules in the new, over those who are in Christ.” The Spirit and life belong immediately together, for “it is the Spirit that gives life (John 6:36; II Cor. 3:6). (3) It is the law, or order, which is given “*in Christ Jesus*.” For the same reason that Paul ends each of these chapters, 5-8, with practically these same words, he introduces them here, when he wants to state concisely the new situation. In a characterization of this situation there must be no failure to make clear that this is not something that comes to us automatically; that it is given to us only “in Christ,” and is a reality in us only in the degree that we are “in Him.””

B. What Does It Mean?

We quote from Skevington Wood p. 23f. “He is indeed “the Spirit of life.” He has life and He conveys life. He is, as the Nicene Creed invites us to affirm, “The Lord and Giver of life.” That is His characteristic function. He was life-bringer at creation: “the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters” (Gen. 1:2). He is the life-bringer in regeneration: “Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (John 3:5). He is the life-bringer in sanctification: “that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with might through his Spirit in the inner man, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love ... “may be filled with all the fullness of God.” (Eph. 3:16, 17, 19). He is the life-bringer in resurrection: “If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit which dwells in you” (Rom. 8:11). So here it is the Holy Spirit who applies the liberating law to the believer’s soul. “He writes the law of God with living fire in our hearts,” said Luther, “and consequently the law is not doctrine but life, not word but reality, not a sign but very fullness.” This is the work of the liberator Spirit. He is the Spirit of life.”

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C. What Does It Mean To Me?

The gospel is the means the Holy Spirit uses to bring His life to mankind. We are the messengers of that good news. *What a priceless privilege it is* to be such heralds! None of the above glorious truth can be more than words on a paper without the preaching of the gospel. God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit are all counting on us to “preach the Word.”

D. How Can I Share It?

How could we restrain ourselves from sharing this “good news”? Let’s share it to all and ask them to do the same. “The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me *free* from the law of sin and of death”. God expects every Christian to be a Bible student and a soul-winner.

4. “For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.” Rom. 8:5.

A. What Does It Say?

“For they who are flesh-wise, the unchanged children of the self-life, think or mind, have moral affinity and converse with, the things of the flesh; but they who are Spirit-wise, think the things of the Spirit, His love, joy, peace, and all that holy fruit. Their liberated and Spirit-bearing life now goes that way, in its true bias.” (H.C.G. Moule p. 213).

B. What Does It Mean?

What all is involved in the phrase “*according to the flesh*”? John has a fine answer: “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes, and the vain glory of life, is not of the Father.” (I John 2:16). The strong desire for the opposite sex. The strong desire for earthly possessions. The strong desire for the approval and acceptance of others. When any one or all of these strong desires dominates the life, we are living “according to the flesh.” “How relevant all this now turns out to be in relation to our contemporary world.

“Flesh is the life of the average man today, lived outside the Divine context. In contrast to this purely material preoccupations, the Christian believer is to set his mind on the things of the Spirit. He really lives in another world. His motives and objectives are altogether different. He sits lightly to all things temporal. He is supremely concerned with the Spiritual. The things that interest the worldly man will not interest him. His sights are trained on a higher target. He sets his mind “on things that are above; not on things that are on earth.” (Col. 2:3). *It is this elevation of ambition which underlies the life of holiness.*” (*Life By The Spirit* by A. Skevington Wood—p. 36, 37).

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

Oh, indeed! What does it mean to me?” ... “The Christian life must be lived in the will, not in the emotions; God regards the decisions and choices of a man’s will as the decisions and choices of the man himself. No matter how contrary his emotions may be. Moreover, when this principle is applied, the emotions must always capitulate to the will.” (Catherine Marshall, *Beyond Ourselves* p. 58.) One of the largest problems in American culture is “compartmentalized living” i.e. relating certain thought patterns to certain times and places. We would not consider “setting our minds on the flesh” at certain times at certain places or with certain people, but when we are given the right time, place, and people, our mind turns to “the things of the flesh”. Why? Because we have a “sacred and profane” concept of living. Some things are *sacred* to us, some times, some places, but we also have our profane or common or fleshly times and places. Our blessed Saviour has not become *Lord of all*. Paul said: “for me to live is Christ”, not some of the time, with some people, under some conditions, but *all* the time, with *all* people, under *all* conditions. If we cared enough we could find the will and word of our Lord on any given circumstance, but there is the “eroding monotony of the daily routine” and “living by the flesh” seems

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much more exciting than living by the Spirit. This is because we have not related our Lord to all of life. Jesus is always, always more exciting and exhilarating than Satan. “If any man willeth to do my will he shall know.” John 17:7)

D. How Can I Share It?

This is such a crucial question in this context. If we are not “living by the Spirit” we can hardly share the experience with others. “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh”. The topic of our conversation is the barometer of our heart content or condition. We share with others the set of our minds through our mouths.

5. “For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so.” (Romans 8:6,7)

A. What Does It Say? and B. What Does It Mean?

Again we are indebted to A. Skevington Wood for a beautiful answer. (*Life By The Spirit* p. 37ff.) “Next we have the contrast of condition in V. 6. The absolute incompatibility between these two modes of living is underscored by the ‘for’ at the beginning of this sixth verse in the Authorized Version. The ambitions of the flesh arise from the condition of the flesh, just as the ambitions of the spirit arise from the condition of the spirit. Paul here depicts this difference in state or condition as one between death and life. No contrast could be greater. The subject of the sentence is “the mind of the flesh.” It is a substantive, as the New English Bible brings out, and not a verbal form as the Authorized Version would imply. As A. T. Robertson explains, moreover, it is not the mind that does the minding, nor the action of minding (there are other words for these) but the result of the action—what is minded, or the attitude produced. This outlook spells death. And Paul means a present death. He is not simply asserting, as in Chapter Five, that physical death is the entail of sin. He intends us to understand that the flesh brings death now, as well as at the end. “For the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23): not “will be death” but “is.” And in the break there is not even a verb in that verse. No word at all intervenes between sin and death, so closely are they interrelated. “The wages of sin—death!” And it is death now: “death that comprises all the miseries arising from sin, both here and hereafter” (Amplified New Testament). So then, those who make the flesh their ambition are even at this present moment entombed in death. They are not really alive at all. They are simply going through the motions. How different is the viewpoint of God’s Word from the viewpoint of the world! Those who are absorbed in the flesh imagine that they have found life. They are seeing life, they think. They are making the most of life: they are sampling the spice of life. But God pronounces them dead: “dead through trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2:1). They are sowing the seeds of final destruction. “She who is self-indulgent,” Paul tells Timothy, “is dead even while she lives” (I Timothy 5:6).

By contrast, according to this sixth verse of Romans Eight, the mind of the Spirit is life. Once again the verb is absent: “the mind of the Spirit—life!” So intimately are life and the Spirit associated that they cannot even be separated by the tiniest word. They go absolutely together, for He is the Spirit of life (Romans 8:2). Dean Alford called this “the suppressed premise” of verse six.

We must take note of the life that is alluded to here. Another dip into Greek vocabulary will help us. It was Bishop Westcott who declared that it is possible to bury one’s head in a lexicon and rise in the presence of God. Two terms for life are found in the New Testament. Each can be recognized from words in common English use. The first is *bios*. In Scripture that stands for physical life, either in animals or men. It is “biological” life. The narrative of one such human life is a “biography.” But there is another word which the New Testament employs to denote the higher life of the Spirit. It is *zoe*. Now the strange thing is that in classical Greek *zoe* is used as inferior to *bios*. *Bios* is life as lived in extent—

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the duration of days: whereas *zoe* is the life by which we live, the principle of life. The Bible reverses the order and lifts *zoe* to the pinnacle of supremacy. The reason is not far to seek. For the believer, the principle of life is something more than breath. It is the Spirit Himself. He is the breath of our new life in Christ, and so *zoe* is raised on another plane and signifies the life of God in the regenerate soul of man.

That is the word used here by Paul. It indicates that spiritual, everlasting life is the contrast to the death of sin (cf. Rom. 6:23). *zoe* is the very life of God Himself communicated by the Spirit. It is the life that has not been touched by sin and death. As Archbishop Trench has pointed out in his celebrated study of New Testament synonyms, it is essentially the life of holiness. In its distinctively Christian usage, *zoe* assumes the profoundest moral significance and becomes the fittest expression for the very highest blessedness. ‘Of that whereof I predicate absolute *zoe*, I predicate absolute holiness of the same. Christ affirming of Himself, *ego eimi he zoe* (I am the life, John 14:6 cf. I John 1:2), implicitly affirmed of Himself that He was absolutely holy; and in the creature, in like manner, that only lives, or triumphs over death, death at once physical and spiritual, which has first triumphed over sin. No wonder, then, that Scripture should know no higher word than *zoe* to set forth the blessedness of God, and the blessedness of the creature in communion with God.’

Now we pass to the contrast of relation in v. 7. Here we are given the reason why the flesh-mind is death and the Spirit-mind is life. “For: “that introduces an explanation (A.V. has “because”). The relation of the carnal mind to God is one of hostility. It is enmity against Him. This is in contrast to the relation of the spiritual mind to God. That, as we see from the last word in v. 6 (which belongs logically to v. 7), is one of peace. War and peace, then, is the distinction here.

The flesh is not only dead in itself: it is actively opposed to God. Matthew Henry thought that this was a worse state than the first. “The former speaks the carnal sinner a dead man, which is bad; but this speaks him a devil of a man.”

This rebellion against God expresses itself in disobedience to His holy law. “It does not submit to God’s law.” The verb is a military one. It describes soldiers lined up on parade, or in a battle array, united under the authority of their commander. General Gordon used to stand at attention before God at the beginning of each new day. He recognized the Divine sovereignty. That is just what the natural man refuses to do. He will have no-one telling him what to do, not even God. This is an inevitable consequence of the fleshly outlook. It develops a warped view of God. It cannot see Him as a loving Father. It only envisages a stern taskmaster from whom it recoils in arrogant defiance. “If any one loves the world,” says John, “love for the Father is not in him” (I John 2:15). That is his tragedy. It is simply not in him to love God, or to recognize God’s claim, or submit to His wise and beneficent law.

The determinism of sin lies at the root of this inability. It is in recognition of such a spiritual atrophy that Paul adds here: “indeed it cannot.” The flesh-minded life is inherently unable to fulfill the Divine requirement. Selfishness cannot submit to God. Sin cannot obey. It would be a contradiction in terms if it could, for the Bible says that sin is lawlessness. It is the ultimate anarchy. If it were able to comply with God’s demand, it would not be sin.

This appears to some as a hard saying. It even seems to smack of an unfashionable predestinarianism. It is nevertheless the uniform doctrine of God’s Word. The man who lives according to the flesh not only refuses to acknowledge the Divine authority: he can do no other. He is enslaved by stern moral and spiritual necessity. Just as God cannot deny Himself and therefore cannot do other than God, so the natural man, so to speak, cannot deny himself either, and therefore cannot do other than evil. “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then also you can do good who are accustomed to do evil” (Jer. 13:23).

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This was the clear teaching of our Lord, both in its positive and negative aspects. He said that the ungodly can do nothing other than be ungodly and that they cannot of themselves enter into His kingdom. “Are grapes gathered from thorns, or figs from this tree? So, every sound tree bears good fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit.” (Matt. 7:16-18). “Unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). “Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (John 3:5). “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him” (John 6:44). “No one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father” (John 6:65). “You cannot bear to hear my word” (John 8:43). The Spirit of truth is He “whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows him” (John 14:17).

The same insistence recurs elsewhere in the New Testament. “The unspiritual man does not receive the gifts of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned” (I Cor. 2:14). That is the consistent and unequivocal testimony of God’s Word. Man under the flesh is at enmity with his Maker. He will not obey: indeed he cannot. That is his relation to God: one of hostile resistance.

The believer, on the other hand, is no longer at war against God. He has capitulated to the Divine conqueror. He has been reconciled by the blood of Christ. His relation to the Father is one of perfect peace, and this produces peace in his own mind and soul, as the fruit of the Spirit.

This is what our modern world is seeking, with its craze for tranquillizing drugs and psychiatric treatment. It has lost its peace. It hopes to find it again in the chemist’s shop or the psycho-analyst’s consulting room. But that is a vain endeavour. Peace can be found only in God and in conformity to His will. It is a by-product of the Spirit-mind. Dr. C. H. Dodd seeks to draw out the profound psycho-logical implications of Paul’s affirmation here when he writes that such peace, is ‘the condition of inward harmony when all elements of the personality are organized about a single centre, and division and conflict are at an end.’ That is the cherished goal of man’s frantic striving in this age. He can orbit the earth and land on the moon, but the target of peace eludes him. It is attainable only in God. ‘Thou does keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusts in thee’ (Isa. 26:3).

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

This verb “to mind” is “phroneo”: to have something as the prevailing mood of mind, habit of thought, or direction of moral interest. What are you really interested in? “(Archer) Somehow the words of Socrates to his judges fit here: ‘My whole employment is to persuade the young and old against too much love for the body, for riches, and all other precarious things, of whatsoever nature they be; and against too little regard for the soul, which ought to be the object of their affection.’” (as quoted by MacKnight) If a Greek philosopher who lived long before our Lord could see the folly and futility of living for the satisfactions of the body, what should be our “prevailing mood of mind”?

D. How Can I Share It?

Somehow we must find a way to let this “Playboy world” know of the “life and peace” found in the right “set of the mind.” Teaching and living are the only answers, but perhaps some innovative methods need to be used.

6. “But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his.” (Romans 8:9)

A. What Does It Say?

“But you (there is a glad emphasis on ‘you’) are not in the flesh, but in Spirit,” surrendered to the

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indwelling Presence as your law and secret, on the assumption that (he suggests not weary misgivings but a true examination) God's Spirit dwells in you; he has His home in your hearts, humbly welcomed into continuous residence. "But if any man (one) has not Christ's Spirit, (who is the Spirit as of the Father so of the Son, sent by the Son, to reveal and to impart Him) "that man is not His." He may bear his Lord's name, he may be externally a Christian, he may enjoy the divine sacraments of union; but he has not "the thing." The Spirit, evidenced by His holy fruit, is no Indweller there; and the Spirit is our vital Bond with Christ." (Moule, p. 214)

B. What Does It Mean?

Skevington Wood has written a wonderful little book on the eighth chapter of Romans called *Life By The Spirit*. His comments on verse nine are too good to miss:

"The indwelling spirit (v. 9a) Paul has said already that the Roman believers are 'in the Spirit.' Now he assumes that, as this is indeed so, the Spirit must be in them. Just as elsewhere in his epistles the apostle uses 'in Christ' and 'Christ in you' almost as interchangeable terms, since they represent two aspects of the same spiritual experience, so here 'you in the Spirit' and 'the Spirit in you' are also intimately related. This, of course, is because He is the Spirit of Christ, as we see at the end of this ninth verse. C. H. Dodd explains that the Greek word for Spirit, when used in an ordinary context, denotes a kind of rarefied atmosphere: you can live in an atmosphere, and at the same time breathe it in. The Christian at once dwells in the Spirit's environment and yet is indwelt by the Spirit, Who is his inspiration (literally, something breathed in).

This is the first secret of the Spirit's power. As Samuel Chadwick put it: 'Our Lord promised that the indwelling presence of the Spirit of God should be in men the all-prevailing source of power.' The verb employed here for 'dwell' is a very simple one. It is derived from the Greek for a house. It means to live as in a home (I Cor. 7:12,13). The Spirit of God thus takes up his abode with us. He resides within. He moves in as an occupant, just as a man and wife might enter a new house. He makes our hearts His home. He is the Guest Divine: or, more appropriately, the Host who presides over all.

One of the great but forgotten preachers of a former generation, T. G. Selby—the friend and contemporary of Dr. W. L. Watkinson— had a memorable sermon on "The Three In-dwellings." His text was taken from I John 4:16—"He who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him"—which he called 'the primal gravitational law of the spiritual universe.' He elaborated most tellingly on the interabiding of God and man in each other. This reciprocal relationship he took to be definitive in Christian experience. That is the theme of this ninth verse in Romans Eight, viewed from the angle of the Spirit. Three in-dwellings are mentioned here also, but the first is the fatal indwelling of the unregenerate in the flesh. Its counterpart is the equally lethal indwelling of sin in the unemancipated heart (Rom. 7:17,20). But 'in the Spirit' and 'the Spirit of God . . . in you' is equivalent to John's 'in God, and God . . . in him.' And John himself in an earlier verse (I John 4:13) has linked it with the work of the Spirit. 'By this we know that we abide in him, because he has given us of his own Spirit.'

Paul tells Timothy that God 'dwells in unapproachable light' (I Tim. 6:16). What an astonishing thing it is that the selfsame word can be used of the Holy Spirit indwelling the believer! God is at home in the light, for God is light. The Holy Spirit is at home in the cleansed heart, for that is where God willed that He should reside. The wonder of it is perhaps nowhere better expressed than in Frederick Lucian Hosmer's hymn:

Go not, my soul in search of Him,
Thou wilt not find him there,
Or in the depths of shadow dim,

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Or heights of upper air.

For not in far-off realms of space
The Spirit hath His throne;
In every heart He findeth place
And waiteth to be known.

O gift of gifts! O grace of grace,
That God could condescend
To make thy heart His dwelling place
And be thy daily Friend!

‘Do you not know that you are God’s temple,’ Paul asks in I Corinthians 3 :16, ‘and that God’s Spirit dwells in you?’ And again, in I Corinthians 6:19 —‘Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? The apostle, of course, is addressing only believers, and we have to interpret ‘every heart’ in the hymn just quoted by the light of such a restriction.

‘What this expression *dwelt in you* imports,’ wrote Robert Haldane, ‘is that being united to Jesus Christ, and regenerated, the Holy Spirit dwells in His people not as inactive, but operates in them continually, and leads and governs them. In the indwelling, then, of the Holy Spirit, is included His gracious and continuing presence and His operations in the soul. The effects of •these are illumination, sanctification, supplication and consolation.’ And here is what one of the early Christian fathers said concerning the Holy Spirit: ‘He is the author of regeneration, the pledge of the promised inheritance, and, as it were, the handwriting of eternal salvation; Who makes us the temple of God, and His house; Who intercedes for us, acting as our advocate and defender, dwelling in our bodies and sanctifying them for immortality. He it is who fights against the flesh: hence the flesh fights against the Spirit.’

In a series of articles in a well-known denominational weekly, entitled ‘By This I Live a number of Christian ministers and laymen were invited to give their testimony. One Douglas Brown, a lay leader from Yorkshire, wrote about ‘The Indwelling Spirit.’ The crisis in his Christian pilgrimage came when some years ago in the course of conversation with one of his clients (he is an estate agent) he happened to mention that he was a preacher. The customer appeared greatly surprised and said, ‘Well, I would never have suspected it!’ That incident led Douglas Brown to a serious re-examination of his life and witness. It was evident that his daily testimony was ineffective and his preaching was not supported by an obviously dedicated life. Let him continue his story himself: ‘What I needed was the indwelling Spirit of Christ. If I was ‘to love my neighbor as myself,’ if I was to be what Dr. Barclay calls a ‘winsome Christian’ witnessing to my Saviour more by my bearing and deeds than by my words, then I must be able to say with St. Paul, ‘I live: and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me.’ After costly repentance and prayer I was able to make a new beginning with Him who never fails and whose promises ‘Seek and ye shall find’ and ‘Ask and it shall be given you’ are as true today as ever.~

We learn, too, that the Spirit of power is the identifying spirit (v. 9b). The indwelling Spirit is the means of •the believer’s union with Christ and also the sign of it. Just as the royal standard above Buckingham Palace indicates that the Queen is in residence, so the mark of the Spirit bears witness to the fact that the King of kings has taken up His abode within. The Spirit of God, be it noted, is also the Spirit of Christ. It is His function to make Christ real to our hearts. And unless we do possess the Spirit, we cannot belong to Christ.

There is a certain restrained delicacy in the way Paul puts it. He has said quite confidently: ‘But you are not in the flesh, you are in the Spirit’ (v. 9a). Now he moves from the actual to the hypothetical. If it should be that anyone has not the Spirit, then it is evident that he cannot be called a Christian at all. This

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is hypothetical so far as the Romans are concerned, he has reason to hope: but no doubt he has discovered from sad experience that it is not so everywhere. In Ephesus, for instance, there were some who supposed that they were Christians who had not so much as heard about the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:2). Now this is a most disturbing and challenging assertion here in the ninth verse. 'If a man does not possess the Spirit of Christ, he is no Christian' (N.E.B.). There are no half measures about such a categorical declaration. Paul is making it unambiguously clear that the indwelling Spirit is not a kind of superadded luxury or optional extra. He is absolutely necessary to any knowledge of Christ at all.

If we go to buy a new car, we know that we can have either a standard or a deluxe model. The standard model has everything that is really essential. We could ride about in safety and comfort. But such further refinements as a fog lamp, a heater, a radio or a parking light are fitted as a special supplement. There are many people who think that the Christian experience of the Holy Spirit is something that is necessary only for those who aspire to the deluxe category. They somehow imagine that the plain, ordinary Christian need not bother about such a thing.

This verse should disabuse our minds of any misapprehension. It presents the Holy Spirit, not as an unessential refinement, but as a basic 'must.' 'I never read this passage of Scripture in the presence of a Christian congregation,' confessed C. H. Fowler, 'without feeling I have in some way chopped down through every heart with a great broad axe. There is no whitewashing in this passage. 'If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.' Not: 'he will do tolerable well, but not quite so well as he might do;' not that he will get on after a fashion, and have quite a respectable entrance into the city of the great King, though he may not push quite so far towards the front as might have done if he had had the Spirit of the Lord Jesus. Not that at all: but, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, there is not the remotest shadow of a chance for him: 'he is none of His'.'

So far, then, from being the preoccupation only of those who are often regarded (however unjustifiably) as religious cranks, the Holy Spirit is the fundamental factor of all Christian life and experience. We are unable to believe as a Christian should without the Holy Spirit, for 'no one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit' (I Cor. 12:3). We are unable to live as a Christian should we be without the Holy Spirit, for as Matthew Henry has put it, we cannot tread in His steps unless we have His Spirit.'

If, then, possession by and of the Holy Spirit is the one thing needful to make us Christians, it will be true that Christians may be identified by this stamp. Writing to the Ephesians, Paul says that after they believed they were 'sealed with the promised Holy Spirit' (Eph. 1:13); and again that they were sealed by the Holy Spirit of God 'for the day of redemption' (Eph. 4:30). Now the seal in Roman use was a mark of ownership. A man would affix his personal seal to his goods when they were in transit. His clothes might bear a similar sign. Even his slaves could be branded with his seal. In each case it was an indication of proprietorship. It was, moreover, a common feature in primitive religion that the worshipper should be marked with the likeness of his pagan god. Herodotus describes a temple in Egypt at which a fugitive taking sanctuary might receive some physical incision which indicated that he now belonged to the god and was therefore not to be touched.

The Christian bears no external sign of his allegiance. His skin is not seared or tattooed. But nevertheless he carries with him an inward seal. The indwelling Spirit identifies us as belonging to Christ. When He is stamped upon our mind and heart then everybody will know whose we are and whom we serve. Unless we have the Spirit of Christ we cannot be His disciples, for the Spirit is the proof that we are His.

Here, then, is the test of Christianity. It is not membership of a church or subscription to a creed or advocacy of a cause that makes us Christians. It is not knowledge of the Scriptures or zeal in soul-

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winning or fidelity to the Gospel that makes us Christians. It is not kindness or gentleness or unselfishness or even love that makes us Christians. All these are fruits. They spring from the one basic necessity: to be Christ's we must have His Spirit. And if we are to conform to this biblical definition of a Christian, then the remedy will have to be applied within and not without. 'I pray you,' advised Dr. Campbell Morgan in one of his inspiring books, 'attempt to correct the circumference of your life from the centre; do not attempt to correct the centre from the circumference — that is, do not attempt to correct your spirit by altering your habits. Correct your habits by an alteration of the spirit. And how is the spirit to be altered? Only by the true, whole-hearted unquestioning abandonment of your whole being to the Spirit of God will it be possible for you to have the Spirit of Christ.'

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

There are several very penetrating blunt conclusions: (1) If we have the Holy Spirit within us, we will *want* to live, walk and think according or in agreement with the Spirit. What does this say about those who have little if any interest in spiritual pursuits? (2) If we do not have the Holy Spirit we are not Christians, but how shall we know we have Him? We can claim the promise of Acts 2:38, but of what value is this if we live "by the flesh"? (3) What is "the primal, gravitational law of the spiritual universe"? (you should know, you live in this universe) What a searching thought! (4) "The Holy Spirit is at home in the cleansed heart." Is this the only place where He is at home? and (5) The effects of the Spirit's indwelling are: illumination, sanctification, supplication, consolation — all of this could sound like pious, euphonious platitudes. With whom is it a reality?

D. How Can I Share It?

Once again: "What I have that give I thee."

7. "But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you." (Romans 8:11)

A. What Does It Say?

Read carefully this quote from Murray:

The Spirit referred to is none other than the Holy Spirit. He that 'raised up Jesus from the dead' is without question the Father (cf. 4:25, 26; 6:4; Gal. 1:1; Eph. 1: 17, 20). The Father is the specific agent in the resurrection of Christ. Since the Holy Spirit is called 'the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead', this means that the Holy Spirit sustains a close relationship to the Father in that specific action which belongs par excellence to the Father in the economy of redemption. Just as the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ because of the intimacy of relation he sustains to Christ in the messianic office which the name 'Christ' denotes, so he is the Spirit of the Father because of the intimacy of relation he sustains to the Father in the raising up of Jesus. This relation supplies the basis for the proposition at the close of verse 10, namely, that 'the Spirit is life' — the life he is, is resurrection life, life with resurrection power and virtue. Furthermore, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, which is the main thought of the first part of verse 11, is viewed from the aspect of the character imparted to this indwelling in virtue of the fact that it is as the Spirit of him who raised up Jesus that he dwells in believers. And this stands in close relation to the inference drawn from the fact of his indwelling, to wit, 'he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall give life also to your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you'.

'He that raised up Christ Jesus' is again the Father. He is represented, therefore, as the specific agent in the resurrection of believers. And this resurrection is defined in terms of 'making alive your mortal bodies'. Since this refers to the resurrection from the dead we might have expected the apostle to say 'dead bodies' rather than 'mortal bodies' (cf. vs 10). But the language is insignificant. The term 'mortal'

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describes the bodies of believers from the aspect of the mortality that belongs to them in this life prior to the event of death and, although it is as dead bodies they will be made alive at the resurrection, yet the identification of them as ‘mortal bodies’ shows that it is the same bodies which believers now possess that will be made alive at the resurrection. The identity and continuity are intimated in the description which the apostle here adopts, identity and continuity in no way interfering with the newness of quality by which these same bodies will be fitted for the resurrection state (cf. ICor. 15:35-54).

The text followed by the version expressly indicates that the Holy Spirit will be active in the resurrection — ‘through his Spirit that dwelleth in you’. Though the Father is the specific agent in the resurrection of believers as in that of Christ, this does not exclude the agency of the Holy Spirit. The persons of the Godhead are co-active in the acts of redemption and will be also in the consummating act. If we follow this textual variant, there is the further implication that the Holy Spirit was also active in the resurrection of Christ from the dead. The Father’s raising up of Christ is represented in this text as the guarantee that believers will be raised up, too. There is also the suggestion that the pattern provided by the resurrection of Christ is followed in the resurrection of believers (cf. Eph. 1: 17ff.). Hence if the Holy Spirit is active in the resurrection of believers, it would follow that he was also active in the resurrection of Christ. For the latter supplies the basis and the pattern for the former.

The leading thought of the whole verse may be set forth thus: (1) The Father raised up Christ. (2) The Holy Spirit was the specific power God used to raise Our Lord from the dead. (3) The Holy Spirit dwells in believers and dwells in them as the Spirit of the Father. 4) This indwelling of the Spirit, since it is an indwelling of the Spirit of him who raised up Jesus, guarantees the resurrection from the dead of those thus indwelt.

B. What Does It Mean?

We have already answered this question, but read this second answer from Moses E. Lard:

‘Moreover if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you,’ He who raised Jesus from the dead is the Father, and His Spirit is the Holy Spirit. If the Spirit dwells in you. This is the antecedent of a simple conditional syllogism. The Apostle assumes its truth; and since he assumes it we must concede it. Indeed without this, his conclusion could be denied. *The Holy Spirit then actually dwells in every child of God.* This granted, and we are ready for the consequent.

‘He that raised Christ from the dead will also make alive your mortal bodies.’ He will make them alive in the general resurrection of the just at the last day. The identical body in which we now live is to be literally restored to life. No hope touches the Christian to the quick like this. Not only so, but on being restored, the body will be peculiarly endowed. It will be a spiritual body. What this means we do not know; but we have confidence that it augurs some strange good. Into this renewed body the spirit is to return — the spirit that is a living, conscious entity, learning all the while from the moment in which it leaves the body at death, until that in which it returns. For that is a profound stupidity which holds man to have no spirit; and that a profounder still which consigns his spirit to sleep at death.

‘By his spirit that dwells in you.’ Shall we here read *dia pneumatos*, or *dia pneuma* — by his Spirit, or because of his Spirit? The question is not easily settled. The authorities on each side are about equal, the better manuscripts favoring the former rendering; the greater number, the latter; while doctrinal considerations, not less perhaps than critical, have played their part in the controversy. Most modern critics favor the Accusative, not it seems from any preponderance of authority in its favor, but because, of the two readings, it is the more likely to have been altered. The Genitive gives the clearer and sharper sense; and therefore it is thought that the motives to alter it would be fewer than those to alter the other. But in the present case, this is not certain. Upon the whole, I decide, after careful thought, to retain the

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Genitive until I have more decisive grounds than at present for rejecting it. In this decision I am influenced mainly by the better sense which the Genitive gives.

If the Holy Spirit dwells in you, God will also make alive your mortal bodies by it in the last day. This he will do by the Spirit as the immediate agent of the event. Christ himself was put to death in the flesh, but made alive by the Spirit. There is nothing novel then in ascribing the resurrection of the body to the same agent. Indeed the very reason for denominating the Spirit, v. 2, the Spirit of life is, probably, the fact that it is to make alive at last the bodies of the elect. At least I feel favorable to this opinion.”

C. What Does It Mean To Me? D. How Can I Share It?

In each of these questions (and we ask ourselves the same question over 200 times), each must answer for himself, and at different times surely the answer will be different. There are times, or shall we say *circumstances*, in our life when we would fain thrust aside the whole of it and say, “It means *nothing* to me.” But the tender voice of Jesus insists, “What then *does* mean anything to you? You know in the depths of your heart these truths contain the only reality you have found in life.” “*If the Spirit of Him raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you*” “God raised Jesus from the dead. Therefore we are here told the Spirit of God dwells in us. We can never, never hear it too often. Think of it — *indwell by the Spirit of God!* This is yet another name for the Holy Spirit. He has been called “the Spirit of Christ”. He is here called the Spirit of God. This text is saying: we shall be changed “fashioned anew” (Phil. 3:21) through or because we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. But are not all the dead to be raised? Yes, but there must be some marvelous difference in the life given to our deathable bodies. We cannot say what this difference is, but it will surely be a part of the wonder and joy of “the resurrection of the righteous” (and we are once again reminded it is not ours but *His* righteousness). We are not sure from this text if the Holy Spirit will participate in the recreation of this mortal body, but we remember He brooded over the formless deep at the first creation. Why not in the second? All of this should leave us with a deep sense of awe that we are so honored by Him.

8. “So then, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh; for if ye live after the flesh ye shall die; but if by the Spirit ye put to death the deeds of the body, ye shall live.” (Romans 8:12,13)

A. What Does It Say?

We are indebted to Floyd H. Hamilton for our answer to this question for this text:

“Our obligation is not to the flesh, but to the Spirit of God. *Sarx*, ‘flesh’, here as in Chapter 7, means the whole nature of man in its fallen state, under the dominion of sin and Satan. The statement in this verse minimizes the truth. (We are not merely debtors,) we are enemies of the flesh. *Mellete apothneskein*, ‘ye shall die,’ means not merely the death of the body which comes to all, but spiritual death, the ‘second death’, eternal punishment.

Pneumati, that is, the Holy Spirit, is the strength by which we put to death fleshly, wicked deeds. This shows that Christians are not to fight alone against sin. They must always fight with the aid of the Holy Spirit, or they cannot have victory. The Holy Spirit will not pick up the sinner and carry him to victory over sin. He will help in the fight, but the believer must trust him and cooperate with him in the fight against sin. Unless there is *complete trust* and *complete cooperation* on the believer’s part, there will be only partial victory, or a succession of defeats. It is wrong to think that the victory will be given without fighting. We must actively ‘put to death the deeds of the body’. The body is the instrument of ‘the flesh’, and if the deeds of the body are put to death, the flesh cannot control the individual. If we thus fight against the flesh and defeat the desires of the sinful nature, ‘ye shall live’. That is, we will enjoy the life of which the Spirit is the author, and have happiness and holiness now and eternal life

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reaching beyond the grave, as an extension of our present possession of eternal life.” (*The Epistle To The Romans*, pp. 130, 131.)

B. What Does It Mean?

We can turn to no better answer than the one given by H. C. G. Moule:

For if you are living flesh-wise, you are on the way to die. But if by the Spirit you are doing to death (observe the present tense, the process is a continuing one) the practices, the stratagems, the machinations of the body, you will live. Ah, the body is still there, and is still a seat and vehicle of temptation. ‘It is for the Lord, and the Lord is for it’ (I Corinthians 6:13).

It is the temple of the Spirit. Our call is (I Corinthians 6:20) to glorify God in it. But all this, *from our point of view*, passes from realization into mere theory, woefully gainsaid by experience, when we let our acceptance in Christ, and our possession in Him of the almighty Spirit, pass out of use into mere phrase. Say what some men will, we are never for an hour here below exempt from elements and conditions of evil residing not merely around us but within us. There is no stage of life when we can dispense with the power of the Holy Spirit as our victory and deliverance from ‘the machinations of the body’. And the body is no separate and as it were minor personality. If the man’s body ‘machinates’ it is the man who is the sinner.

But then thanks be to God, this fact is not the real burden of the words here. What St. Paul has to say is that the man who has the indwelling Spirit has with him, in him, a divine and all-effectual counter-agent to the subtlest of his foes. Let him do what we saw him above (7:7-25) neglecting to do. *Let him with conscious purpose, and firm recollection of his wonderful position and Possession* (so easily forgotten) *call up the Eternal Power* which is indeed not himself, though in himself. Let him do this with habitual recollection and simplicity. And he shall be ‘more than conqueror’ where he was so miserably defeated. His path shall be as of one who walks over his foes who threatened, but who fell, and who die at his feet. It shall be less a struggle than a march, over a battlefield indeed, yet a field of victory so continuous that it shall be as peace.

‘*If by the Spirit you are doing them to death.*’ Mark well the words. He says nothing here of things often thought to be of the essence of spiritual remedies; nothing of ‘will-worship,’ and humility, and unsparing treatment of the body (Col. 2:23); nothing even of fast and prayer. Sacred and precious is self-discipline, the watchful care that act and habit are true to that ‘temperance’ (or self-control) which is a vital ingredient in the Spirit’s ‘fruit’ (Galatians 5:22, 23). It is the Lord’s own voice (Matthew 26:41) which bids us always ‘watch and pray’; ‘praying in the Holy Spirit’ (Jude 20). *Yes, but these true exercises of the believing soul are after all only as the covering* (protecting) *fence around that central secret —our use by faith of the presence and power of ‘the Holy Spirit given unto us’.* The Christian who neglects to watch and pray will most surely find that he knows not how to use his great strength, for he will be losing realization of his oneness with his Lord. But then the man who actually, and in the depth of his being, is ‘doing to death the practices of the body,’ is doing so, *immediately*, not by discipline, nor by direct effort, but by the believing use of ‘the Spirit’. Filled with Him, he treads upon the power of the enemy. And that fullness is according to surrendering faith. (Moule uses “Holy Ghost” for which we have supplied “Holy Spirit” — pp. 22 1-222)

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Primarily: through the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit I can separate myself from the deeds of the body. And just what are “the deeds of the body”? Paul is very plain about this subject: “Now the works (deeds) of the flesh (body) are manifest which are these: (1) sexual immorality, (2) impurity, (3) sensuality, (4) idolatry, (5) sorcery, (6) enmity, (7) quarreling, (8) jealousy, (9) anger, (10) intrigues, (11)

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dissensions, (12) party-spirit, (13) envy, (14) drunkenness, (15) carousing, (16) and the like.” (Galatians 5:1 6ff.). The words of Godet have meant a great deal to me: “Why does the apostle say: *‘the works of the body’*, and not *‘of the flesh’*? The complement: *of the body*, is not here the genitive of *the instrument*, but that of the author.

9, 10. “For as many as are being led by God’s Spirit, these are God’s sons. For we did not receive a spirit of slavery again unto fear, but we did receive a spirit of Adoption in which we cry, Abba, Father! 8:14, 15.

A. What Does It Say?

We quote from *Lenski* for verse 14: and from Hamilton for vs. 15:

“Paul now drops the “if” and does not write: “If we are led by God’s Spirit.” He makes his new statement stronger: “As many as-these” meaning: these alone. But it is not his purpose to exclude any of the Romans as possibly not being led by God’s Spirit, for Paul at once says that they have received an adoption-spirit. From what our own spirit does and is to do the apostle advances to God’s Spirit who enables our spirit to do the Spirit’s will; for when we kill the doings of the body with our spirit, God’s Spirit is leading us. Throughout this chapter Paul writes clearly and always, as here, designates the Spirit in such a way as to distinguish him from “spirit” which is used in a different sense; the A. V. is somewhat confused.

God’s Spirit is the ‘*causa efficiens*’ in all that our spirit does. The dative is that of the agent who leads us, and is passive: “are being led,” durative, led all along. Being led involves obedience (6:16, etc.). The truth not to be overlooked is the fact that, although the Spirit dwells in us (v. 9) and thus leads us by inward prompting, he does so only by means of his outward, written Word. To be sure, that Word is also in us (It abides in us, John 5:38), and only in this way does the Spirit lead us by means of it, but it is the written Word that we hold in our hearts, none other. We can verify the fact that the Word in us is the Spirit’s own Word that is leading us by comparing it with the written Word. Only by means of the written Word do we know that the voice inwardly prompting us is, indeed, the Spirit’s own and not some hallucination that is afflicting our mind.

When Paul says, “these (alone, but all of them) are God’s sons,” no less than that, he opens a new vista, an angle he has not touched heretofore, one that is most delightful to every Christian, most rich in motivation for living, not according to flesh, but according to spirit. The point is that God’s Spirit naturally leads God’s sons, shapes their entire conduct. It could not be otherwise. If they were led by some other spirit or were going their own way they could not be God’s sons. One can tell who God’s sons are by noting who is being led by God’s Spirit and who is not thus led.

“Sons,” *huioi*, is the proper word. “While it is a close synonym to “children,” *tekna*, and is so used here, “sons” agrees with the idea of “adoption,” “children” with the idea of the new birth (regeneration), and here Paul wants both. “Sons” is opposed to “slaves” while “children” has the idea of dearness~ “Sons” also agrees with conduct, for a son should act the part expected of him in relation to his father: a king’s son must act as behooves a prince. “Children” moves in a different sphere, for a child (sometimes it is even made diminutive, “little child”) conveys the idea of dependence, even of immaturity. The differences are not immaterial; each word has its own flavor even in English, and the apostle uses them accordingly.”

“For ye received not a spirit of bondage again unto fear; but ye received a spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father.” *Pneuma* may here be interpreted, as Sanday does, as meaning “a feeling of bondage to fear,” or as Hodge does, as meaning the Holy Spirit. The context favors taking the first spirit as a spirit other than the Holy Spirit, and the spirit of adoption as meaning the Holy Spirit. We receive the Spirit, but we “have” feelings. When the Holy Spirit makes us adopted sons of God, we are not in

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bondage to fear as we were before our regeneration, but we naturally cry from our hearts the cry of little children to their beloved father, Abba, which literally means papa. Those who are unrenewed are slaves, not sons, slaves to the law and its punishments, and constantly live under the fear of the penalty for breaking the law. Christians who have been renewed know that there is no condemnation to them, because Christ has borne their condemnation, and therefore they love God as do sons a father.”

B. What Does It Mean?

A. S. Wood has some most meaningful words:

“THE SPIRIT OF ADOPTION AND THE PRIVILEGE OF SONS HIP. This is the positive assertion of the verse. It tells us what Christians have received. We have received the spirit of adoption. It is a result of the Holy Spirit’s penetration of our personality.

Adoption is one of the major terms of New Testament vocabulary. Literally it means “placing as a son” (*huionthesia*). It is common in classical Greek literature and on inscriptions to denote the legal adoption of sons, or sometimes daughters, though this was less frequent. In Scripture it is used metaphorically of God’s relation to Israel, as in Romans 9:4. But in the four other cases where this word occurs, it has to do with the status of individual Christians. In Ephesians 1:5 we are told that God has predestinated us to the adoption of children through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will. In Galatians 4:5 it is said that God’s intention in sending forth His Son was “to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.” Here in Romans 8:15 we have the reference to the spirit of adoption and in v. 23 we learn that believers enter into the full enjoyment of their adoption when the time of fulfillment releases them from the earthly body.

In order to understand Paul’s meaning we must examine the details of adoption procedure in the Roman world. It was highly complicated and regarded as a serious step. Dominating the whole conception of family life was the father’s power— *patria potestas*. That power was absolute. It gave complete control. In Rome a son never came of age. No matter how old he was, he remained under the jurisdiction of his father. This was what made adoption so difficult. In the process a child had to pass from one *patria potestas* to another. He had to be removed from the oversight of one father and placed under the supervision of another. In Roman law this was an involved transaction.

There were two stages. The first was known as *mancipatio*, or freeing. The link with the natural father was dissolved in a symbolic sale in which he twice sold his son and twice bought him back. The third time he renounced his paternal rights and refrained from redeeming him: thus the father’s power was held to be broken. The second step was called *vindicatio*. The adopting father applied to the magistrate and formally presented a petition in law for the transference of his prospective son to his *patria potestas*. Only when this long-drawn-out agreement had been signed and sealed was the adoption considered complete.

Dr. William Barclay, who explains all this most lucidly in his *Daily Study Bible*, lists four main consequences of adoption which light up what was in Paul’s mind as he penned this verse. “(i) The adopted person lost all rights in his old family, and gained all the rights of a fully legitimate son in his new family. In the most literal sense, and in the most binding legal way, he got a new father. (ii) It followed that he became heir to his new father’s estate. Even if other sons were afterwards born, who were real blood relations, it did not affect his rights. He was inalienably co-heir with them. (iii) In law, the old life of the adopted person was completely wiped out. For instance, legally all debts were cancelled; they were wiped out as if they had never been. The adopted person was regarded as a new person entering into a new life with which the past he had nothing to do. (iv) In the eyes of the law the adopted person was literally and absolutely the son of his new father.” The length to which this went is

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strikingly illustrated in the case of the notorious Emperor Nero. He was adopted by his predecessor, Claudius. They were not even remotely related. In order to cement the alliance, Nero wished to marry Claudius's daughter Octavia. They were bound by no ties of blood. Yet in the sight of the law they were brother and sister and, before they could be united in wedlock, the Senate had to approve special legislation. All this helps us to see what underlies the Scriptural teaching about adoption. As Sir William Ramsay put it, adoption was a kind of embryo will. It not only gave the adopted son all the privileges of real sonship, but it guaranteed the inheritance to him as well. Adoption, then, is the process by which we are accepted as sons of God, and this is effected as the Spirit engrafts us into the body of God's only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ. The consequence is that our spirit takes on a new tone. It is no longer servile: it reflects our recently acquired status and is thus rightly described as an adoption-spirit by contrast with the slave-spirit of sin and law.

Scripture thus preserves a clear distinction between children and sons. We are born again as children: we are adopted as sons. The one concerns our communion with God, and our partaking of the Divine nature: the other concerns our position before God, and our share of the Divine inheritance. These are complementary ideas, but the Word of God is careful to distinguish between them, although this is not always apparent in our Authorized Version and has to be corrected in more recent renderings. In John 1:12, 13 we find that those who received Christ were given the right or authority "to become children of God" (not "sons" as A. V.) "who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God." Or again, in I John 3: 1—"See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God (not "sons" as A. V.); and so we are." Now compare Luke 20:35, 36 where an emendation is made in reverse, so to speak. "Those who are accounted worthy to attain to that age and to the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are they given in marriage, for they cannot die any more, because they are equal to angels and are sons of God (not "children" as A. V.), being sons of the resurrection (not "children" as S. V.). We are children of God, then, by virtue of regeneration; we are sons of God by virtue of adoption. "The two conceptions are evidently complementary," observed Bishop Westcott; "but they must be realized separately before the full force of the whole idea which they combine to give can be felt." In both instances the Holy Spirit plays a prominent part.

The spirit of bondage, then, with its entail of slavery and fear, is unfavourably matched with the spirit of adoption and the privilege of sonship, leading to the liberty which flows from trust."

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

There is utterly no point to my pious prattle about being "led by the Holy Spirit" if I am not willing to allow the Holy Spirit to put to death the deeds of the body. It is *only* such persons who separate themselves by the help of the Spirit from the deeds of fleshly desire or intellectual pride who are "led by the Spirit of God." Please read again the context of 8:14, 15. It is good to see here the plain inference that *any* of his children can by the Spirit put to death the deeds or works of the flesh. Indeed it seems here to almost amount to the claim of birthright.

The attitude of the Christian, i.e. his general demeanor is quite plainly expressed here: not one of "groveling fear", or hesitant, wondering as detected so often in the words, "well, we never know if we will be saved or not, all we can do is the best we can, and hope it is enough". Contrast all such comments with the cry of wondering joy that should issue from every Christian's heart: "Abba, Father". You found yourselves *indescribably* near the Father's heart, became accepted, and *newly-created*, as His Own Beloved. And so you have learned the happy, confident call of the child, "Father, O Father; Our Father, Abba." (*Moule*, p. 223)

D. How Can I Share It?

Nothing, truly *nothing* can be more desirable than the heavenly glow of a personality transformed by

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the Spirit of God! What a privilege it must have been to share the company of Stephen, the man with the face of an angel, who was full of the Holy Spirit.

11. “The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God: Romans 8:16.

A. What Does It Say? B. What Does It Mean?

We offer the unexcelled comments of A. Skevington Wood on this verse:

“Although for the purposes of convenient exposition we are looking separately at each passage in Romans Eight dealing with the Holy Spirit, the whole chapter, of course, hangs together and one section moves smoothly into the next. That is so in relation to verses 14, 15 and 16. Verse 14 deals with the guidance of the Spirit, but in speaking about the sons of God it leads naturally to verse 15 which refers to the adoption of the Spirit. This in turn merges unobtrusively into verse 16 which alludes to the witness of the Spirit and really returns to verse 14, for the effect of the Spirit’s testimony is to confirm our filial relationship with our heavenly Father. Whilst, therefore, we examine these three verses one after another, we must recognize that they are really all of a piece.

Commenting on verse 15, Martin Luther wrote: “Such is the description of the Kingdom of Christ: such is the veritable work and the notable service of God: such is the operation of the Spirit in the believer.” Now in verse 16 the apostle proceeds to deal with the Spirit’s own confirmation of the Christian’s adoption into the Divine family. T. H. Green, the distinguished Oxford philosopher, once declared that the greatest verses in the Bible were the 16th and 26th of Romans Eight. Most certainly they are amongst the red-letter texts and we should do well to mark them.

We must begin by elucidating another link between verse 16 and its predecessor. What Paul says here is still in the setting of Roman legal procedure with relation to adoption. The actual ceremony whereby a person was transferred to another family had to be carried out in the presence of no less than seven witnesses. The function of these witnesses was not fulfilled when they had seen the transaction completed. They might be called upon later to uphold the claim of the adopted man to be regarded as a son. If the adopting father died and there was a dispute about the disposal of the property, then one of the witnesses might well be summoned. “I was present at the ceremony,” he would swear. “it was I who held the scales and struck them with the ingot of brass. It was a genuine adoption. I heard the words of the vindication, and I testify that this person was claimed by the deceased, not as a slave, but as a son.” So, by the word of the witness, the right of the adopted person was guaranteed and he entered into his inheritance. Now what Paul is saying here is this: that the Holy Spirit Himself is the witness to the believer’s adoption into the family of God. We shall touch upon four aspects of the Spirit’s witness, in order to bring out its fullest significance. The first is the Bearer OF THE WITNESS. It is, of course, none other than the Holy Spirit who acts as witness. “It is the Spirit himself.” Right away we must clear up the difficulty created by the Authorized Version rendering “itself.” That has puzzled many simple believers who have been rightly taught that the Holy Spirit is a person not a thing. Sometimes those who ought to know better fall, perhaps unthinkingly, into the heretical trap of speaking about “it” instead of “Him.” And, of course, there are others who have reduced the Christian doctrine of the Spirit beyond all recognition and for whom the Spirit is indeed no more than an impersonal influence, properly designated as “it.”

But we have not so learned Christ, nor have we so read God’s Word. The opening pages of René Pache’s masterly study of *The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit* set out the Scriptural evidence in quite unmistakable fashion. His summary is worth reproducing, for it supplies much-needed material when defending the faith against those who deny the truth of the Trinity.

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I. THE HOLY SPIRIT ACTS AS A PERSON.

Let us note some of the actions which are attributed to Him cannot be the expression of a power or of a thing. 1. He dwells in believers (John 14:17). 2. He teaches; He brings to remembrance (John 14:26). 3. He testifies (John 15:26). 4. He convicts of sin (John 16:8). 5. He guides into all truth; He hears, He speaks, He shows (John 16:13). 6. He inspires Scripture and speaks through it (Acts 1:16; II Pet. 1:21). 7. He spoke to Philip (Acts 8:29). 8. He calls to the ministry (Acts 13:2). 9. He sends forth His servants (Acts 13:4). 10. He forbids certain actions (Acts 16:6, 7). 11. He intercedes, etc. (Rom. 8:26).

II. HE POSSESSES THE ESSENTIAL ATTRIBUTES OF PERSONALITY.

The Spirit is endued with 1. *A will*: He bestows His gifts upon every man as He will. 2. *Thought*: God knows what is the mind of the Spirit (Rom. 8:27). 3. *Knowledge*: The Spirit knows and searches the things of God (I Cor. 2:10, 11). 4. *Language*: “We speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual” (I Cor. 2:13) 5. *Love*: Paul exhorts the Romans for the love of the Spirit to strive together with him in their prayers (Rom. 15:30). 6. *Goodness*: “Thou gavest Thy good Spirit to instruct them” (Neh. 9:20).

III. THE NAMES WHICH ARE GIVEN HIM REVEAL

BOTH HIS PERSONALITY AND HIS DIVINITY. 1. He is called: (a). My Spirit (Gen. 6:3). (b). The Spirit of God (II Chron. 15:1). (c). The Spirit of the Lord (Isa. 11:2). (d). The breath of the Almighty (Job 32:8). (e). The Spirit of the Lord God (Isa. 61:1). (f). The Spirit of your Father (Matt. 10:20). (g). The Spirit of Jesus (Acts 16:7). (h). The Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8:9). (i). The Spirit of His Son (Gal. 4:6). Since the three divine Persons are one, it is not surprising that the Holy Spirit should receive without distinction one or the other of these appellations. 2. His other names completely demonstrate His qualities. He is the Spirit: (a). Of holiness—the Holy Spirit (Psa. 51:11; Rom. 1:4). (b). Of wisdom (Isa. 11:2). (c). Of counsel (Isa. 11:2). (d). Of understanding (Isa. 11:2). (e). Of supplications (Zech. 12:10). (f). Of worship (John 4:23). (g). Of truth (John 14:17). (h). Of comfort (John 14:26—the Comforter). (i). Of Life (Rom. 8:2). (j). Of adoption (Rom. 8:15). (k). Of faith (II Cor. 4:13). (l). Of love (II Tim. 1:7). (m). Of might (II Tim. 1:7). (n). Of sound judgment (II Tim. 1:7, Weymouth). (o). Of revelation (Eph. 1:17). (p). Of power (Eph. 3:20; Rom. 15:13—the power of the Holy Ghost). (q). Of eternity—the eternal Spirit (Heb. 9:14). (r). Of grace (Heb. 10:29). (s). Of glory (I Pet. 4:14).

IV. THE SPIRIT CAN BE TREATED LIKE A PERSON.

He can be: 1. *Lied to* (Acts 5:3). 2. *Tempted* (Acts 5:9). 3. *Resisted* (Acts 7:51). 4. *Grieved* (Eph. 4:30). 5. *Outraged* (Heb. 10:29). 6. *Blasphemed against* (Matt. 12:21). 7. *Called upon* (Ezek. 37:9).

There is one further item of evidence mentioned by Dr. Pache which we shall introduce shortly, namely that of our Lord’s own use of a personal pronoun when speaking of the Spirit, but sufficient has been quoted to meet every possible objection and resolve each genuine doubt. “The witness of the New Testament is clear enough,” concludes Dr. Leon Morris (and what he says can include the Old Testament testimony so far as it goes). “The Spirit is thought of consistently as a Person, and as a Person in some sense distinct from though closely related to, the Father and the Son. Nor is He another name for one aspect of the Father or the Son. He is a Person in His own right, with His own functions.

“This being so, how does it come about that in the Authorized Version rendering of Romans 8:16 we read of the Spirit “itself?” The explanation is really quite simple. We must remember that whilst the English language has discarded the use of grammatical gender, others have retained it. In our tongue everything is delightfully simple. Sex is determinative. Males are denoted by the masculine and females by the feminine. The remainder are bound to be neuter, even though we may habitually refer to a ship as

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“she.” Now English stands alone in this respect amongst the major languages, either ancient or modern. With us the word ‘pen’ is neuter. In French it is feminine—la *plume*. But, of course, it would not be a correct translation into English to make a pen female and call it “she.” In other words, grammatical gender bears no relation to male or female, personal or impersonal, when we are dealing with a language other than English. The Greek word for head (*kephale*) is feminine, but that does not prevent the Scripture from speaking about Christ as the Head of His Body the Church.

The word for Spirit (*Pneuma*) is neuter in Greek and so, in accordance with the rules of construction, is followed by the neuter pronoun “it,” just as *kephale* would be followed by the feminine pronoun “she.” But this is purely a grammatical form. It has no theological significance whatsoever. In no way does it bear upon the nature of the Holy Spirit or for one moment suggest impersonality. The Authorized Version is being very strictly literal and we may feel more than a little pedantic in insisting upon “itself.” What we have to do is to apply all that we learn elsewhere from Scripture about the personality of the Holy Spirit: if we do this, then we shall follow the Revised Version, the Revised Standard Version and most recent translations and render “Himself” instead. The New English Bible, incidentally, neatly circumvents the problem by translating: “in that cry the Spirit of God joins with our spirit in testifying that we are God’s children.” But there is no need to take evasive action like that.

Here in Romans 8 :16 strict grammatical rectitude is observed. The apostle Paul did not feel at liberty to play about with the rules of language in order to put his meaning altogether beyond doubt. But it is significant that when our Lord referred to the Holy Spirit (and here we pick up the last item of evidence listed by Dr. Pache as substantiating His personality), He deliberately set aside the canons of construction, as He had the authority to do, and allowed a masculine pronoun to follow the neuter substantive *pneuma* (John 14:26; 16:7, 8, 13, 14). “He” in 14:26; 16:8, 13 and 14 is emphatically personal—”He Himself.”

Nevertheless, despite the irrefutable testimony both of Scripture and our Lord’s own authoritative teaching and usage as recorded in Scripture, many people—even Christian people—still find it hard to think of the Holy Spirit in terms of personality. This is largely due, no doubt, to what we may describe with all reverence as the humility of the Holy Spirit. He never attracts attention to Himself. His office is to glorify Christ. He is best seen in His effect on lives transformed by His touch into the likeness of our Lord. “We most easily recognize the Spirit,” wrote Evelyn Under-hill, “when it (*sic*) is perceived transfiguring human character.”

For those who are at all troubled because they cannot precisely identify the Holy Spirit in their experience in distinction from the Father and the Son, a story about Dr. Griffith Thomas will convey a message of encouragement. He once received a letter from a woman in which she confessed: “I have prayed, I have read the Bible, I have striven. I have done all that I can and still I am not sure whether I have the fullness of the Spirit.” And this was the wise advice of that great evangelical theologian: “Turn your thought out, not in. What is Christ to you? If He is little, you have not the fullness of the Spirit. If He is chief among ten thousand and altogether lovely, you have the fullness of the Spirit.”

The verb in this 16th verse must next concern us. It is translated “bearing witness with.” The noun witness is *martus*, from which comes martyr. That was what it cost to be a witness in New Testament times—and the price is demanded today where the fight is fiercest. To bear witness, or testify, is *martureo*. Here the prefix *sun* (with) is supplied and the resultant verb is *summartureo*, which means to confirm or testify in support of someone or something. The suggestion is that the Holy Spirit is a joint-or co-witness. As we saw in the previous verse, the Spirit of adoption enables us to cry “Abba! Father!” and that recognition of our own spirit is not only prompted but also corroborated by the Holy Spirit.

The varied witness of the Spirit is often mentioned in the New Testament. Let us look at some of the

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occurrences. In Acts 15:8 Peter declares concerning the Gentiles that “God who knows the heart bore witness to them, giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us” (*cf.* Acts 10:44, 47; 11:15). In Hebrews 10:15 the Holy Spirit is described as a witness to the new covenant in the blood of Christ. In I John 5:7 we read: “And the Spirit is the witness, because the Spirit is truth.” Two other verses in the First Epistle of John speak quite explicitly of this specific witness of the Spirit to the believer’s sonship. “All who keep his commandments abide in him, and he in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit which he has given us” (I John 3:24). The same difficulty with the neuter, “which,” arises here. N.E.B. again gets around it: we know it from the Spirit he has given us. But we could legitimately put “whom” as does the Amplified New Testament. “By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his own Spirit” (I John 4:13). These twin texts from John will serve to clinch the identity of the witness *Life By The Spirit* (pages 88ff.) For a further clarification of the meaning of this important verse, we quote from Moses E. Lard the following:

16. The Spirit itself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God; If we are led by the Spirit of God (v. 14) then are we children of God; that is, we remain his children, for the question of originally becoming children is not here in view. We are living either according to the flesh, or according to the spirit, as led by the Holy Spirit. If the latter, then are we children of God. Are we so led? This is the decisive question. Now the Holy Spirit dwells within us to strengthen us and lead us. This is indisputable. It therefore knows whether we are so led or not, and can so say. This then is its testimony—that we are led by it.

And so with our own spirits. We know within ourselves what is our spiritual state, what our wish, intent, and effort. Are these in strict accordance with the Father’s will as read in his word? Are we living closely up to this will, and holding the evil inclinations of the flesh in check? Are we keeping the body under? Over all its perverse tendencies is a spirit, enlightened and pure, dominant? All this we know within ourselves, and to it can testify. Finally, we know that we are living according to our own spirit; and the Holy Spirit knows that we are led by it. Now if led by this, and living according to that, then are we children of God. To that the Holy Spirit testifies; to this, the human. Thus the two testify together that we are children of God. *Commentary on Romans* (page 266)

C. What Does It Mean To Me? D. How Can I Share It?

J. W. McGarvey in his sermon on The Witness of The Spirit helps just here: “The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are children of God.”—Rom. viii., 16.

In order to attain our eternal happiness, we must become children of God. In order to attain our happiness in time, we must know that we are such. He who is in doubt on this subject must be not less unhappy than he who knows he is not a child of God. Indeed, the advantage is on the part of the latter; for he is likely to cast the subject out of his thoughts, and put off the evil day to the last; but the very fact of being in doubt supposes a man to be awakened upon the subject, and to have made some effort to become a child of God, but such efforts as leave him still uncertain whether his sins, which he mourns, are actually forgiven. His soul hangs in trembling suspense; now thrilled with hope, the more ecstatic from its very uncertainty, and now sunk to the very verge of despair. Such is the experience of thousands of the orthodox worshippers of to-day. They never attain to more than a “hope” that they are born again; and to often entertain serious doubts, is the best evidence that this hope is well grounded. To hear a man express himself with confidence, would be to them a ground for suspicion that he was self-deceived. Their religious enjoyment fluctuates with the phases of their hope; and there are no songs more popular than those which give expression to these fluctuations. What else has given popularity to these familiar lines:

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“How tedious and tasteless the hours,
When Jesus no longer I see;
Sweet prospects, sweet birds, and sweet flowers,
Have all lost their sweetness to me.
The midsummer sun shines, but dim,
The fields strive in vain to look gay;
But when I am happy in him,
December’s as pleasant as May.”

Or, why else should men professing to be Christians, ever sing these doleful strains:

“‘Tis a point I long to know;
Oft it causes anxious thought:
Do I love the Lord, or no;
Am I his, or am I not?”

How unutterable must be the distress, at times, of men who can sing these songs with the spirit and the understanding! And yet, so common is this experience, that men look upon it as the common heritage of those who obey Christ. I dropped in one night at a protracted meeting, and heard the preacher addressing a company of some thirty young converts. He was warning them against certain sins and temptations which they must expect to encounter, and among others, against what he called the “*sin of despair*.” He defined it about thus: “The time will often come, my young friends, when you will seriously doubt whether you have ever been born again. I suppose I can appeal to the experience of every Christian in the house tonight for proof of this. All of us experience seasons when we hang our harps on the willows all the day long, and can not sing the songs of Zion. When these seasons come over you, beware lest you give up in despair, and turn away again to the weak and beggarly elements of the world.” I could but feel pain that such a prospect should be held out before young Christians, and I wondered if this is the unhappy lot which our heavenly Father has assigned us.

Turn to the Bible, and let us see whether there is not something better within our reach than this limping and halting gait at which the people go. The experience of David is that which most of all gives shape to our modern religion, and just as you might expect, here you find the very fluctuations of hope and despair which we have described. Hear him, in the twenty-third Psalm: “The Lord is my shepherd, *I shall not want*. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will *fear no evil*; for *thou art with me*; thy rod and thy staff, *they comfort me*.” What exultation and confidence are here! Who that had listened to these strains, could, for a moment, imagine that the same heart and lips gave utterance to the following plaintive notes: “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent.” Yet these are David’s feelings as expressed in the Psalm next preceding the one just quoted. Truly, our modern experiences have at least one model in the Word of God. But David lived in a darker dispensation, when the sun of righteousness had not yet risen and thrown his bright light upon the world. When you turn from his to the experience of the apostles, you find all the difference that there is between the uncertain shadows of twilight, and the clear light of noonday. Where do you read of Paul, or Peter, or James, or John expressing any doubt as to their relations to God? Not one single note of uncertainty can be found in all their writings. On the contrary, you hear Paul declare: “We are *always confident*; knowing that while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord.

We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the

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Lord.” (2 Cor. v., 6-8.) To the Romans he says: “Being then *made free from sin*, you became the servants of righteousness.” To the Ephesians: “In whom we *have* redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.” And to the Thessalonians: “Knowing, brethren, beloved, your election of God.” Here all is the language of confidence, of certainty. And so with the other apostles. Peter does not look upon the election of his brethren as a mystery that can not be solved in life, and that never can be certainly known till the judgment; but he writes, in tones of confidence, to strangers scattered throughout the provinces, as being “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and the sprinkling of the blood of Christ.” And John exclaims: “Beloved, *we are now the sons of God*: and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”

Now, the secret of all this confidence on the part of the apostles and early Christians is found in the passage before us: “The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.” If the Spirit of God testified to the fact, how could they doubt it? No wonder, that with such testimony, they were always confident. But, then, you remind me, that our doubters of modern times are the very men with whom this passage is the greatest favorite. In the midst of all their doubts and conflicts, these words are constantly on their lips. Even the preacher, of whom I spoke as addressing some young converts, had, just before that speech, made them all believe that they had the witness of the Holy Spirit itself, bearing witness with their spirits that they were children of God. Yet he was then telling them that they would be certain, in many future days, to doubt this testimony of the Spirit. What was the trouble with the man? Could he and his young converts really doubt what the Spirit of God would testify to? I suppose not. And yet they are full of doubt while dwelling upon and relying upon the very passage of Scripture which gave the apostles their unwavering confidence. What clearer proof could we possibly have ‘that their understanding of the passage is different from that held by the apostles? And how do they understand it? Why, in the process of their conversion, they have experienced certain emotions, which they are taught to believe are the result of a direct impact of the Holy Spirit upon their spirits, and which they understand as the testimony which the Holy Spirit bears to them that they are the children of God. But the trouble is, that they can never be altogether certain that it was the Holy Spirit which they felt. Sometimes they feel •as if it certainly must have been; and sometimes they fear that it was merely the workings of their own spirit, mistaken for those of the Holy Spirit. Thus they are tossed to and fro upon the waves of doubt, while the ghostly experience, like a spectre in the distance, becomes dimmer and dimmer as time removes farther away, and the shadows of failing memory fall upon it. The Lord deliver us from such uncertainty, and lead us into the clear light that shone upon the path of the early disciples!

It is easy to see the sense in which the apostles understood this passage, or, rather, the sense in which Paul used it. He supposes an individual asking himself the question, “Am I a child of God?” and sitting down deliberately to find the answer. Now, this is a question of fact, and is to be determined, like any other question of fact, by competent evidence. Further, it depends upon two other facts: 1st. “What character constitutes a child of God? 2d. What character have I? If I can learn with certainty what a man must do and be, in order to be adopted into the family of God, and then ascertain, with equal certainty, what I have done and what I am in those particulars, the question is settled. If what I am, and what a child of God is, are the same, then I am certainly a child of God. If they are different, then I am certainly not a child of God, and there is no doubt about the matter either way.

Each of these subordinate questions is to be settled by evidence, and the witnesses are named by the apostle in the passage. The first is the Holy Spirit. He is the only competent witness whose testimony we have on the first question; for the question as to what character a man must have to be a child of God, depends entirely upon the will of God; for “the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God,” and “the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.” The apostles had heard Jesus testify; but he had not told them all the truth; nor could they, with certainty, remember all that he had said. It was left for the Spirit to bring to memory all that Jesus had spoken, and to lead them into all the truth. Upon the

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Spirit, then, they depended for all their knowledge of the will of God. If they wished to know what constitutes one a child of God, they learned it from the testimony of the Spirit. They had no other way to learn it, and no other way was needed, for this was infallible. What they learned thus, they spoke with equal infallibility to the world. “God has revealed these things to us through his Spirit,” says Paul; “which things we also speak; not in words which man’s wisdom teaches, but in words which the Holy Spirit teaches.” Others, then, heard the testimony of the Spirit through the lips of those inspired men, and in this they heard the very words of the Spirit. These words, again, were written down, so that those who had not the opportunity of hearing the living voice of the apostles might have the same words in writing, and suffer no disadvantage, as compared with those that first heard them. We stand in the position of this last class. We have no testimony of the Spirit by inspiration of our own minds, neither have we the living voice of inspired men to inform us; but we have, what is just equal to this in value, the written depositions of the Spirit of God; and these testify, in unmistakable terms, what a man must do to be a child of God.

Lest some one should doubt whether it is scriptural to represent the statements of the Scriptures as the testimony of the Spirit, listen to a few examples of Scripture usage. Nehemiah, in the prayer of the Levites, uses this language in reference to God’s dealings with the children of Israel: “Yet many years didst thou forbear them, and *testifiest* against them *by thy Spirit in thy prophets.*” Peter says the old prophets searched “what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it *testified* beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.” And, still more to the point, in the tenth of Hebrews, Paul, after stating that, “by one offering Christ has *perfected* forever them that are sanctified,” says: “Of this the *Holy Spirit is a witness* to us;” and immediately quotes a passage from the thirty-first chapter of Jeremiah as the Spirit’s testimony. These passages show that the Spirit’s communications to the inspired men themselves—those made through them to living contemporaries, and the same when written down for the instruction of future ages—are all alike regarded and treated as the testimony of the Spirit. Paul, in the passage we are discussing, had reference, no doubt, to all these forms of testimony, for his language is unrestricted, and, therefore, includes all the testimony that the Spirit has given on the subject in hand. But to us, the reference must be practically limited to the written testimony, for this is all we have.

The whole matter of the Spirit’s testimony resolves into this: that the Holy Spirit, through the Scriptures, testifies that men who pass through certain changes, and maintain, afterward, a certain character, are children of God. Whatever may be men’s theories of spiritual influence, you will find no believer in the inspiration of the Scriptures who will deny that the Spirit does thus testify, or who will affirm that he communicates ideas on this subject in any other way. And when you come to the details of the testimony itself—whatever may be men’s theories of conversion—you will find few to deny that the man who believes with all his heart in the Lord Jesus Christ, who really repents of his sins, and who is really baptized, becomes a child of God. Some will insist that baptism is no part of the process; but none will deny that the true believer, when truly penitent and truly baptized, is a child of God. Here, then, we have the unquestioned testimony of the Spirit describing a certain character, who, unquestionably, becomes a child of God.

But when a man has heard this testimony of the Spirit of God, he is not quite ready to say whether he himself is, or is not, a child of God. There is another witness yet to be examined before a conclusion can be reached, and though his testimony is given so briefly and so silently as to be sometimes overlooked, it is, on this account, none the less indispensable. This witness is your own spirit. He is the only witness that can tell you, with certainty, whether you have believed with all the heart, or whether you have really, through sorrow for sin, turned away from it. And still further, in the present distracted condition of the public mind on the subject of baptism, your own soul must testify for itself—as it will answer to God in the great day—whether you have been really baptized.

In respect to your own spirit’s testimony, especially, have our friends of the religious parties

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generally misunderstood this passage of Scripture. They understand the text as if it read: "The Spirit itself bears witness *to* our spirit that we are children of God." This would make but one witness, the Holy Spirit. But Paul has two witnesses, for he says: "The Spirit itself bears witness *with* our spirit." This is an exact translation of the Greek. Now, when I testify *to* my brother, there is but one witness; but when I testify *with* him, he and I are both witnesses, and my testimony agrees with his. This is just Paul's idea. The Holy Spirit itself bears testimony which agrees with the testimony of our own spirit, that we are children of God. The point of agreement is just this, that the character which the Holy Spirit asserts to be that of a child of God, agrees with what my own spirit asserts to be my own character.

Perhaps some one is ready to object, just here, that it is rather a strange mode of speech, for a man to represent his own spirit as being a witness to himself. But this is not the only passage in which Paul speaks in this way. When speaking of the unbelief of Israel, in the ninth of Romans, he uses this language: "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my *conscience* also *bearing me witness* in the Holy Spirit, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart." In the Greek we have here the same verb as in our text, so that, more exactly translated, it would read, "my conscience also bearing witness *with* me." Here are two witnesses, himself in the aggregate testifying to the brethren, and his conscience, which does not in every man agree with the spoken words, asserting within him the same thing.

We now have the subject sufficiently before us, to begin to feel the solid ground beneath our feet. When the Holy Spirit testified to Paul what character God would adopt as a child, he could not doubt it; and when he honestly inquired of his own spirit what his own character was, he could not doubt the answer that was given. When these two characters agree, to doubt that you are a child of God is to doubt either your own consciousness, or the words of the Holy Spirit. While you are in your senses, you can not doubt the former; and until you become a skeptic you can not doubt the latter. This is true, not only on your first becoming a child of God, but also of your continuance in the Father's family. It is this more particularly that Paul speaks; for the brethren to whom he was writing had all been in the service of God for some length of time. The Holy Spirit testifies what character a man must sustain, in order to Continue in the Father's house, and not, like the prodigal son, wander away and squander what the Father has given in riotous living. My own soul testifies at every point whether these are the traits of my own character. And here it is that I feel most called upon to glorify the favor of God; for at almost every point my own spirit testifies that I come short of the character that the Holy Spirit's testimony prescribes, and were it not for one gracious provision, the answer would always be, I have become a prodigal. That gracious provision is made through the blood of Christ; for a part of the Spirit's testimony is this, that if the children will confess their sins, they have an Advocate with the Father, who is faithful and just to forgive their sins, and to cleanse them from all iniquity. My own spirit leaps with joy at this, while it testifies that in humble penitence I daily confess to God my daily sins, and thus, from day to day, the Spirit itself still bears witness with my spirit that I am even yet a child of God. This is no airy and unsubstantial means of determining this momentous question, such as prevails in the sectarian world. It is incomparably more solid and reliable than that which modern visionaries have blindly substituted for it. It impels a man, by all the force of his desire, to know his prospects of heaven, to study closely the elements of character prescribed in the Word of God for his imitation, and then to look deeply within himself, not for some mysterious whisperings of the Spirit of God, but for those fruits of the Spirit which characterize the child of God. He who intelligently applies this test, can no more doubt his conclusions than he can his own consciousness, on the one hand, or the Word of God, on the other.

It is not unusual, in the New Testament, to find these two witnesses brought together in the strict logical connection which Paul, in our text, makes them assume. Usually the writer alludes to but one of them at a time, presuming upon the reader's acquaintance with the other. One or two, out of many instances, will suffice for illustration of this statement. Paul says to the Corinthians: "Examine yourselves, whether you are in the faith." But how could they decide, by examining themselves, without some standard by which to judge themselves? This standard is furnished in the Spirit's testimony, and the

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disciples were well acquainted with it. Again, John says: “Hereby we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit which he has given us.” But no man knows that he has the Holy Spirit, except by its fruits, as they are developed in his life; and for a knowledge of these he is dependent on the testimony of his own spirit. In every view of the subject, you find a continual necessity for the testimony of both the witnesses, and you always find their testimony sufficient to set the mind at rest, or to make the soul feel the certainty of its orphaned or its alienated estate.

And now, sinner—poor, wandering sinner— would you be a child of God, and an heir of glory? The way is before you. It is no uncertain way. I call you not to dreams and airy visions, but to the highway of the Lord, where your feet, at every step, will tread upon a rock; where the clear light of heaven will shine on your path; or, if the tempest beat upon you, you may never lose your way. You have sinned against heaven, and you are no longer worthy to be called a son of God, yet he will receive you, he will fold you to his arms like a tender, forgiving parent, and the tears of your penitence will drown all your sorrow, and melt away into eternal peace. God help you to come, and to come without delay.”

12. “And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” Romans 8:23.

A. Once again we are indebted to A. S. Wood for the beautiful background description which will help us answer the question *What Does It Say?* and B. *What Does It Mean?*

“There were three major feasts in the Old Testament dispensation, when the Jews were required to appear before God in the holy temple at Jerusalem. There was the Passover, which commemorated the exodus from Egypt and was symbolized by the eating of unleavened bread and the offering of the paschal lamb. There was the Feast of Tabernacles or Booths, which commemorated Israel’s wanderings in the wilderness and eventual entrance into the land of promise, symbolized by the erection of tents and the waving of triumphal tree-branches.

Between these two celebrations in the Jewish year lay the Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost. It was so designated because it was observed on the fiftieth day following the Passover sabbath. In Leviticus 23:15-17 the words of institution are recorded. “And you shall count from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven full weeks shall they be, counting fifty days to the morrow after the seventh sabbath; then you shall present a cereal offering of new grain to the Lord. You shall bring from your dwellings two loaves of bread to be waved, made of two-tenths of an ephah; they shall be of fine flour, they shall be baked with leaven, as first fruits to the Lord.” In the book of Exodus it is more briefly described: “And you shall observe the feast of weeks, the first fruits of wheat harvest, and the feast of ingathering at the year’s end” (Exod. 34:22). The Feast of Weeks is there associated, of course, with the Feast of Tabernacles, the one being celebrated at the beginning and the other at the end of the harvest.

Over many centuries Israel was an agricultural nation, relying for her sustenance on the produce of the land. Pentecost was the festival which marked the presentation of the first fruits of the wheat harvest, when Israel expressed her dependence upon God for daily bread. Like our Whit-suntide, the Feast of Weeks was a popular holiday. It fell in early summer when the skies of the Holy Land were innocent of clouds, the weather encouragingly warm and as yet unspoiled by the scorching desert wind, the Hamsin. From every part of the country the faithful would stream into Jerusalem to appear before their God. Many visitors from abroad amongst the Jews of the Dispersion would also make for the Holy City. The feast of the first fruits was a high festival.

Now it is of exceptional significance for us as Christians that the initial outpouring of the Spirit’s

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fullness occurred on the Day of Pentecost. Indeed, it was with the bestowal of the Comforter that this celebration of the former dispensation reached its fulfillment. As Victor Buksbazen brings out in his informative book, *The Gospel in the Feasts of Israel*, from which much of the foregoing material has been drawn, it is a feature of these festivals that each foreshadows some event in the drama of redemption recorded in the Scriptures of the New Testament which discloses the substance of what they dimly symbolized. This is nowhere more apparent than in the case Of Pentecost. The mighty, miraculous occurrences of Acts Two reveal what all along this annual feast had been forecasting. Indeed, the day was kept in the richness of its significance for the first time only when the Holy Ghost was given. Incidentally, that is why the translation of Acts 2:1 in the New English Bible is so inadequate “While the day of Pentecost was running its course”—that is a trite and mundane introduction to the epic event, suggesting that Pentecost was on a par with any other day. But the intention of the original text is much deeper than that. The Authorized Version has captured the sense of consummation “When the day of Pentecost was fully come.” The word means “to fill up completely.” It is used in Luke 8:23 to describe how, during the storm on the lake, the boat in which Jesus and the disciples were sailing began to fill up with water so that it was in danger of sinking. The only other time the verb appears in the New Testament is also in Luke, and, most significantly, has to do with the fulfillment of prophecy. “When the days *drew near* for him to be received up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem” (Luke 9:51). This is the preface to the passion narrative, in which our Lord was to complete the meaning of the Passover Feast by Himself becoming the Paschal Lamb sacrificed for the sins of the world. This verse in Acts 2:1 similarly paves the way for another fulfillment, namely, that of the Feast of Weeks in the bestowal of the first fruits of the Spirit. It was in this sense that the day of Pentecost had fully come—It never had fully come before. Only now was its meaning made plain. What had for centuries been indirectly set forth in Jewish observance became a vivid reality. The type was superseded: the Comforter Himself was come.

We cannot escape the coincidence involved in the giving of the Spirit at the feast of the first fruits. There is a most instructive congruity about it. In this meaningful association we are taught a vital truth concerning the Holy Spirit. He Himself is a kind of first fruits. For the phrase “the first fruits of the Spirit” is not intended to imply that He is in any way divided and that what we enjoy now is only some part of His fullness. The genitive is in apposition: the first fruits *are* the Spirit. He is a foretaste of future glory. God gives Him to the believer as an anticipation of heaven. That is the revelation contained in the central verse in the section from Romans 8:18-25 which lies before us at the moment. We shall be expounding the whole passage, but we must ring round verse 23 as the key text. “We ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit”—that is the aspect of the Pentecostal gift with which we are next concerned.

The immediate link in the preceding paragraph is with verse 15, where Paul talks about the Spirit of adoption. But he realizes that such adoption is incomplete. It is assured to the believer, but it is not yet apparent to the world. It is a concealed sonship. It is obscured by ‘the body of our humiliation. But at the end of the age, when the Lord returns for His own and then with His own, that sonship will be revealed. All will see that adoption is a fact. The Spirit is the first fruits of that coming disclosure. “Beloved, we are God’s children now; it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is” (I John 3:2).

There are two words used by Paul in his epistles to convey this truth. Writing to Corinth, with its mercantile interests, he alludes to the earnest or guarantee of the Spirit (II Cor. 1:22; 5:5). *Arrabon* really means part-payment on an assignment of goods, the first installment which pledges the delivery of the rest. It is also applied in modern Greek to an engagement ring, where the same idea is romantically present. The Holy Spirit, then, is our earnest of good things to come.

But writing to Rome, with its considerable Jewish colony, Paul is led to utilize another metaphor—this of the *aparche* or first fruit, with its reference to the feast of Israel. The Holy Spirit represents the

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specimen crop of glory yet to be. The grapes of Eschol, brought back by Caleb and Joshua after their reconnoiter of the Promised Land, were meant to whet the appetite for the eventual entry. So the Holy Spirit adds incentive to the life of holiness by introducing us to a taste of heaven on earth. The Christian enjoys heaven below as well as heaven above. He makes the best of both worlds.

*The men of grace have found
Glory begun below;
Celestial fruit on earthly ground
From faith and hope may grow.*

The section from v. 18-25 in Romans Eight may be subdivided into four parts, each with two contrasted keywords. (We shall only consider two of them here.)

BONDAGE AND DELIVERANCE (vv. 20, 21). The creation, mentioned in v. 19, we are now told was put under subjection by God's decree after the fall. "It was made the victim of frustration" (N.E.B.). "Vanity" in the Authorized Version is really meaninglessness, lack of purpose, dissatisfaction. It is a word which relates to that which fails to reach its end. Dake has "disappointing misery." The Gentiles walk, Paul tells the Ephesians, "in the *futility* of their minds" (Eph. 4:17). Those who have forsaken the right way, says Peter, utter "loud boasts of *folly*" (II Pet. 2:18). The word is the same in each case. What could more trenchantly epitomize the modern mood? It would seem that this sense of purposelessness and malaise which characterizes the natural world since the entry of sin, has transferred itself also to the natural man. Indeed, as this verse reminds us, the process is actually in reverse, for it is because of man's transgression that nature has been blighted. Nature and man share the same bondage. And the space age, with all the marvels that science places at our elbow, brings no relief from this fundamental dispeace. There is abroad today a sinister spirit of nihilism. "Nichavo—nothing matters" is the fashionable motto. "Let us eat, drink and be merry," decided our contemporary Epicureans, "for in the nuclear tomorrow we shall surely die."

Two contrasts between the natural world and the natural man are underlined by the apostle. Each we have already noted. Whilst the natural world longs for its redemption, the natural man is all oblivious of his only hope. He is blinded by the god of this world. He knows not the things that belong to his peace. Moreover—and we have hinted at this also—the natural world was not subjected to futility by choice, whereas the natural man deliberately seeks the way of evil. Nature was not corrupted through any fault of its own: it was involved in the fatal defection of Adam. But this curse upon nature, though arising out of man's sin, was imposed by the explicit sentence of God. Hence "him who subjected it" is not man or Adam or the devil, but God. However, nature is not shut up to despair, like the carnal man who glories in his shame. Even the word "subjected" carries with it a ray of hope unassociated with 'sinful humanity. In verse 7 of this chapter we learned that "the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, indeed it cannot." Stern moral necessity prevents the flesh-mind from ever bowing to God's command. Apart from the Gospel, the unbeliever is subjected without hope. Not so the creation. Since it was not enslaved by its own will, God reserves a hope on its behalf.

The substance of that hope is contained in v. 21. Bondage will one day be ended by deliverance. Creation will be set free from its shackles and gain an entrance into the liberty and glory shared by God's children, "The redemption of mankind is also to be the redemption of creation," comments Anders Nygren (alluding to the new humanity in Christ). "For Paul the two go hand in hand and are inseparably united. Just as God, on the day of resurrection, will give man a body which corresponds to the new aeon of glory, a "spiritual body," so He will create a corresponding new cosmos, 'new heavens and a new earth.' So the consummation will not come by any automatic process of development. God does indeed lead the whole creation on toward a goal which He has fixed definitely; but the consummation will come

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through His own mighty action; and it will concern not only individuals, but it will have cosmic meaning and cosmic dimensions. Only then, in union with this total fulfillment, will “the revealing of the sons of God’ take place.”

Glorified humanity and a glorified creation represent the end God has in view. Scientific hypotheses which deprive Him of that consummation must be tested by the Word and will be disproved in the event. As Dr. C. Ryder Smith reminds us, “the Future Kingdom glows with glory,” and the assurance of Scripture is that the world will end neither with a bang nor a whimper, but with an acclamation of Him who does all things well. The passing of the earth that now is will make possible the appearance of the new earth where righteousness dwells. The deliverance will also be a delivery in which the order of glory is brought to birth. It is significant that the passage in Isaiah 66 which prophesies the new heaven and earth is preceded by the analogy of labour-pains (Isa. 66:7-9; 22). These are anticipated even in this present age by the natural world, struggling even now to be liberated from its bondage, as we learn from the next couplet.

TRAVAIL AND REDEMPTION (vv. 22, 23). Paul is still speaking about “the whole creation” or “sentient universe” (A. S. Way). “We know” is explained by v. 23: “we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit.” This, then, is not a matter of general knowledge, as if everyone was aware of nature’s pangs. That is plainly not so. Even the scientists whose task it is to examine the phenomena of the material universe, are unable to trace the evidence, unless aided by revelation. This is something we know as Christians, because God the Creator has told us in His Word. The entire created order groans in all its parts as if it were in the throes of childbirth—and indeed it is. The verb for groan is *sustenazo*—“to sigh deeply, to wail.” Literally, it means “to contract or make narrow,” from *stenos*. A stenographer is not someone who groans at her work (though that may sometimes be the case!) but someone who takes down what is said in shorthand so that it can be “narrowly written.” There is, as Philippi has put it, a great symphony of sighs arising from all creation. “Multitudinous is the suppressed agonizing of the whole creature world,” comments Professor Lenski, “under the distress which man’s sin and death have brought upon it. A million things are wrong, and all nature, and especially animate nature, shows it.” Tennyson’s “nature red iii tooth and claw with ravin” is the reflection of this basic dislocation.

Paul adds another verb which deepens the anguish of the scene. Not only does the whole creation groan: it also travails together. But distressing as this universal agony may be, it is not in vain. Once again the element of hope is interjected with respect to the natural order. This is not fruitless pain and woe, but labour in childbirth. “When a woman is in travail she has sorrow,” said our Lord, “because her hour has come; but when she is delivered of her child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a child is born into the world” (John 16:21). The end is not death, but life.

The Old Testament is full of passages which speak both of the travail and the redemption. “The fields are laid waste, the ground *mourns*; because the grain is destroyed, the wine fails, the oil *languishes*. . . . The vine withers, the fig tree *languishes*. Pomegranate, palm and apple, all the trees of the field are withered; and gladness fails from the sons of men. . . . How the beasts *groan!* The herds of cattle are perplexed because there is no pasture for them; even the flocks of sheep are dismayed. Even the wild beasts *cry* to thee because the waterbrooks are dried up, and fire has devoured the pastures of the wilderness” (Joel 1:10, 12, 18, 20). “How long will the land *mourn*, and the grass of every field wither? For the wickedness of those who dwell in it the beasts and birds are swept away, because men said, “He will not see our latter end” (Jer. 12:4). “They have made it a desolation; desolate, it *mourns* to me. The whole land is made desolate, but no man lays it to heart” (Jer. 12:11).

“The land *mourns* and *languishes*; Lebanon is confounded and withers away; Sharon is like a desert; and Bashan and Carmel shake off their leaves” (Isa. 33:9). And here are the anticipations of rejoicing when earth shall keep her jubilee. “Make a *joyful noise* to the Lord, all the earth; break forth into *joyous*

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song and sing praises! Let the sea *roar* and all that fills it; the world and those who dwell in it! Let the floods *clap their hands*; let the hills *sing for joy* together before the Lord, for he comes to rule the earth” (Psa. 98:4, 7-9). “*Sing*, O heavens, for the Lord has done it; *shout*, O depths of the earth; break forth into *singing*, O mountains, O forest, and every tree in it! For the Lord has redeemed Jacob, and will be glorified in Israel” (Isa. 44:23). “*Sing* for joy O heavens, and *exult*, O earth; break forth, O mountains, into *singing!* For the Lord has comforted his people” (Isa. 49:13).

Paul has something further to add in v. 23. It is not simply the created world that groans to be delivered. So do Christian believers. “Not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly.” “But,” or moreover, indicates that the argument is being carried a stage further, in the statement that whilst the creation was subjected in hope (v. 20), believers actually possess the first fruits of the Spirit to encourage them. Despite our inward sighs—onward and therefore heartfelt and genuine—we are enabled to wait in patience for our coming adoption, or, rather, the open disclosure of our present adoption, of which the same Holy Spirit even now assures us (vv. 15, 16). According to Roman custom, adoption was twofold. First there was a private transaction, which actually altered the status of the person involved and made him the son of his new father: then there was a public proclamation which announced the fact to the world. The Christian is already a son of God: but his standing will be manifest only at the end when he is claimed by his Lord. The same eager expectation which the creation displays (v. 19) is found in the believer as he fixes his gaze on things to come. He turns from earthly preoccupations to await something from beyond this mortal sphere. What he sets his hope on originates in God’s eternal world of joy.

The object of the believer’s certain anticipation is the declaration of his sonship through the redemption of the body. When the body is raised from the tomb (v. 11) and joined in glorious rapture to the soul that has been resting in Christ until the resurrection of the righteous, then all that adoption includes will be made over to us and manifest to all creation (v. 19). The New English Bible is misleading when it has “while we wait for God to make us his sons and set our whole body free.” We do not have to wait for God to make us His sons: we can enjoy that relationship now. But only at the end shall we enter into the consummation and revelation of that sonship.

Redemption is one of the great Greek words of the New Testament—a *polutrosis*. It is one of three major terms associated with the atonement wrought by our Lord on the Cross. The other two are reconciliation and propitiation. *Apolutrosis* is linked to another keyword: namely, *lutron* (ransom) as used by our Lord in Mark 10:45. “For the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. Redemption is a term that has to do with the manumission of slaves. As Archbishop Trench pointed out, in his invaluable study of New Testament synonyms, it “is. not recall from captivity merely, but recall from captivity through the payment of a ransom.” Adolf Deissmann, in *Light from the Ancient East*, insisted that the conception of a price is not “a pictorial detail of no ulterior significance” but “a necessary link in the chain of thought.” A ransom has been paid at Calvary not only covering our rescue from Satan and sin, but also the final deliverance of the body from mortality. When we sing of our Redeemer and praise Him for the death He died on our behalf, we should include this ultimate redemption in our catalogue of adoring gratitude.” *Life By The Spirit* . . . (pages 102ff.)

C. How Does It Relate To Me? D. How Can I Share It With Others?

F. L. Godet has answered this with words so pregnant with meaning we must share them with all: “It would be preferable to regard the word *first-fruits* (with Chrys., Calv., Thol., Philip., Bonnet) as referring to the fact that Christians here below receive only a beginning, while there will be given to them above the entire fullness of the Spirit. In this sense the genitive would be the complement of the object: *The first-fruits of that gift which is the Spirit*. But the apostle is not here contrasting an imperfect with a more perfect spiritual state; he is contrasting an *inward* state already relatively perfect, with an *outward* state which has not yet participated in the spiritual renewal; this appears clearly from the last words: *waiting*

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for the redemption of our body. The genitive is therefore the complement of quality or apposition: “The first-fruits *which consist of* the Spirit Himself.” This meaning is proved, besides, by the attentive comparison of 2 Cor. i 22 and Eph. i 14. The apostle means: “We ourselves, who by the possession of the Spirit have already entered inwardly into the new world, still groan, because there is a part of our being, the outer man, which does not yet enjoy this privilege.”—Hofmann joins the regimen: *within ourselves*, to the participle *exov-ec*: *we who have within ourselves*. But is it not superfluous to say that the Holy Spirit is possessed inwardly? This regimen is very significant, on the contrary, if we connect it, as is grammatically natural, with the verb *we groan*: “We groan often inwardly, even when others do not suspect it, and when they hear us proclaiming salvation as a fact already accomplished.” The disharmony between *the child of God* and the child of the dust therefore still remains; and hence we wait for something.—This something St. Paul calls *adoption*, and he explains it by the apposition: *the redemption of our body*.

No doubt our adoption is in point of right an acquired fact (Gal. iv. 6). It is so in reality on its spiritual side, for we already possess the *Spirit of our Father*, as Paul has developed it, vv. 14-16. But the state of sons of God will not be fully realized in us until to the holiness of the Spirit there be added the glory and perfection of the body. It needs hardly be said that the expression: *the redemption of our body*, is not to be interpreted in the sense: that we are to be delivered *from* our body (Oltram.). For this idea, applied to the body itself, would be anti-biblical; faith waits for a new body; and if it applied to the body only as the body *of our humiliation*, as Paul says, Phil. iii. 21, this specification would require to be added, or at least Paul would require to say *of this present body*. The complement *of the body* is therefore evidently the genitive, not of the object, but of the subject: it is the body itself which is to be delivered from the miseries of its present corruption. We see from 2 Cor. v. 4 that Paul desired not to be *unclothed*, but *to be clothed upon*: that is, to receive his glorified body, by the power of which his mortal body was to be as it were swallowed up. It is by the transformation of the body only that we shall become completely *Sons of God*. Comp. the affirmation, which is not identical, but analogous, made in reference to Christ Himself, i. 3, 4. *The Epistle To The Romans* (page 318 & 319).

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

We have no better exposition of these two verses, and no better way of answering our four questions than that found in Wood’s book, *Life By The Spirit*, from which we now quote. Please, please read these words with your heart.

“But here it is the Spirit’s influence on the redeemed life that is under review and the apostle Paul deals in these two verses with the intercession of the Spirit. Nowhere else in the whole of Scripture are we told more about the Spirit’s relationship to prayer. We are given a glimpse of His most intimate dealings with the human consciousness and made indeed to feel that without His gracious aid we could never pray at all. And that, of course, is the literal truth. Apart from the cooperation of the Comforter there can be no real prayer. The determinative factor is not our will. We cannot pray of ourselves any more than we can save or sanctify ourselves. The initiative and dynamic of prayer come from God the Father, through the Holy Spirit. As the Spirit occupies our lives, prayer becomes, as Dr. C. H. Dodd has it, “the Divine in us appealing to the God above us.” Deep calls to deep: but both the depth within and the depth without is God.

These two verses tell us three things about the Holy Spirit and prayer: then those that follow (28-30) tell us one more. Together, they answer the questions When? How? Why? And What?

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I. WHEN THE SPIRIT HELPS (v. 26a). “It is in our present limitations” (Phillips). Our need is constant and so is His aid. “Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness.” Is that to be linked with the groans of creation in v. 22 and of believers in v. 23, since the Spirit also groans here in the latter part of v. 26? Or is it not more likely that the tie-up is with the hope mentioned in vv. 24 and 25, so that the sense is that just as our hope in Christ enables us to endure as seeing Him who is invisible, so the Spirit, in the same manner, supports us in our infirmities? The word translated “helps” is composite. He lays a hand on our weakness along with us and facing us. According to A. T. Robertson, it is “as if two men were carrying a log, one at each end.” So the Holy Spirit takes hold of our incapacity and shares the load.

The particular weakness which the apostle has in mind is our ineffectiveness in prayer. That is when the Spirit helps. It is when we are feeble in the life of prayer that He equips us to be strong. When we cannot cope ourselves”, He lives up to His name of Comforter and comes to cope for us. Our natural helplessness in the matter of prayer is presupposed. “We do not know how to pray as we ought” or “what is right to pray for” (N.E.B. footnote). We are but vaguely conscious of our deep need: we cannot give it definition. And because we scarcely know what we want, or ought to want, we are unable to frame our prayers as we should. We stutter and stammer and feel that God cannot possibly make sense out of what we are trying to tell Him. Left to ourselves we neither know what prayer to offer nor how to offer it.

No doubt such a frank appraisal of the prayer situation strikes a responsive chord in our hearts. The realism of Scripture here appeals to us. If this is indeed how we feel about prayer, there is nothing unusual nor should we be unduly discouraged. We shall never make headway in the pilgrimage of prayer unless we begin by recognizing our human inability in this vital matter. Despite all that has been said and written about the naturalness of prayer and man as a praying animal, the truth of Scripture remains unassailable. “We do not know”—even Christians Let alone the unbeliever—”how to pray as we ought.”

But there is hopefulness in this recognition of helplessness. It is precisely at this point that the Holy Spirit can begin His work. Only when we acknowledge that we cannot help ourselves can He come alongside to help us. He takes over where we give up. Our weakness is the best qualification we can have to receive His aid. Does not that encourage us? So often we suppose that we can be said to progress in prayer only when we are able to express ourselves with perfect clarity and in flawless phraseology. We envy those who have acquired a fluency in prayer. But unless that fluency is a gift of the Spirit, it will prove a hindrance rather than a help. And if it is a gift of the Spirit, it will have been born out of human infirmity. The first essential in prayer is a sense of incapacity and unworthiness before God.

In his penetrating book on prayer, Oscar Hallesby, the Norwegian Christian writer, says of helplessness: “This is unquestionably the first and the surest indication of a praying heart. As far as I can see, prayer has been ordained only for the helpless. It is the last resort of the helpless; indeed, the very last way out. We try everything before we finally resort to prayer. This is not only true of us before our conversion. Prayer is our last resort also throughout our whole Christian life. I know very well that we offer many and beautiful prayers, both privately and publicly, without helplessness as the impelling power. But I am not at all positive that this is prayer. Prayer and helplessness are inseparable. Only he who is helpless can truly pray.”

Read the Gospel accounts and it will be discovered that the only people whom Jesus was able to help were those who had given up all hope of ever helping themselves. They were desperate. Think of Zacchaeus: think of the woman with the issue of blood: think of blind Bartimaeus. Their prayers were answered, and yet they were scarcely coherent. They had no language but a cry. Yet their desperate need and unutterable yearning made their prayers effective.

Every mother knows what Paul meant. A little babe cannot speak to you. He cannot formulate his

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petition into words. But he can cry. And you know perfectly well what that cry conveys. It is the acknowledgement of complete dependence. It asks you to do what you know to be best. Our truest prayer is a cry for help, an S.O.S., an admission that we are nothing and God is all. That is the beginning of prayer.

At this point of our abject extremity the Holy Spirit appears as our Intercessor and Advocate. The picture conjured up here is that of a man in a state of collapse. His strength is ebbing away and he sinks to the floor. His back bends, his knees sag, his head drops. In a moment he will be flat out. Then someone comes and lifts him up and takes his weight. So the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. Our extremity is His opportunity.

HOW THE SPIRIT PLEADS (v. 26b). He Himself intercedes for us “with sighs too deep for words.” If we are so unfortunate as to be involved in a court case and have been wrongfully accused of some infringement, we feel unable ourselves to plead our own cause, for we are ignorant of legal terminology. We need a lawyer who can plead for us in language that the judge can appreciate. Scripture tells us that we have two such advocates constantly at our disposal. The Lord Jesus intercedes above at the right hand of power, and the Holy Spirit intercedes below in the sanctuary of the heart.

*Christ is our Advocate on high,
Thou art our Advocate within.*

How does the Holy Spirit thus plead for us? This verse tells us. He takes our inarticulate aspirations, our feeble faltering requests, and He so fills them with Himself that they become what we can never make them ourselves—prayers that rise up acceptable before God. The unutterable gushings of the soul are translated by the Intercessor Spirit into the language of heaven, so that the Father may hear, forgive and save. He interprets our infant prattle and ensures that it prevails with God. “The prayers of the Spirit,” said George Matheson, “a the unuttered voices of the soul.”

There is a lovely story that Bishop Winnington-Ingram often used to tell. It concerns a poor orphan boy who never learned to read and could write only the first few letters of the alphabet. After his parents had died, he was dragged up in an unfriendly world. Once he heard a minister say that if people would pray to God, no matter what for, God would send them help. That was something he never forgot. Some years later the boy went to work on a farm. One day he was sent out into a field to look after some sheep. He was having rather a hard time and reached the end of his patience. Then he recalled what the minister had said and determined that he, too, would pray to God. So down he knelt in the hedgeback. Someone going along the road heard his voice on the other side of the hedge. He stopped to see who was speaking, and found the lad on his knees saying, “A B C D E — A B C D E — A B C D E.” “My boy,” he enquired, “what are you doing?” The boy looked up and replied that he was praying. “Why, that is not praying: it is only repeating the alphabet.” Then the boy confided to him that he did not know how to pray, but he thought that if he just named over the letters he knew, God would take them and put them into a prayer and answer his request.

How right that lad was! The prayers we do not know how to utter will be heard and met by God, because the Spirit interprets them and makes them intelligible in heaven. What a privilege it is to have the Holy Spirit as our personal Intercessor! We greatly value the prayer of Christian friends: “Brethren pray for us,” we beg in times of special need. There are those who trespass beyond the permission of God’s Word and vainly seek the intervention of the saints. How much more powerful must be the never-ceasing intercession of the Holy Spirit! Already the Son is pleading His passion on the tree before the Father’s throne: “he always lives to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7:25). And now we learn that not only the second but also the third person of the blessed Trinity engages Himself on our behalf: “the Spirit

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Himself intercedes for us.” How favoured we are as believers when this twofold ‘advocacy is exercised in our support!

WHY THE SPIRIT PREVAILS (v. 27). These Spirit-inspired prayers can never fail of an answer because He “intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.” The operative clause is the last. The Intercessor only asks for us the things that are within the plan of God. The Holy Spirit prays as did the Holy Son: Thy will be done. Our Lord Himself assured us that we could have whatever we asked for in His name. So often we forget that condition. Our prayers then become selfish. They are not in the Spirit, and therefore they are not answered. “You ask and do not receive,” says James 4:3, “because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.” Prayer is not simply another means of gaining our own ends. If it does not align our will with God’s, it is of no avail. Only the Holy Spirit can help us so to pray as to be sure of an answer. He intercedes “according to the will of God.”

Here are some wise and helpful words of Samuel Chadwick, culled from his *The Path of Prayer*: “The Holy Spirit creates the conditions of prayer. We may ask amiss, not only in what we ask, but also in the reason for asking. He sanctifies desire and directs it into the will of God, so that we desire what God wills to give. That is how it comes to pass that if we delight ourselves in the Lord, we can be sure that He will give us the desires of our heart. We want what He wills. The Spirit brings to expression the unutterable things of the soul. His groanings are before our praying, and our prayers are born of His travail. In Him is the supply of life and desire, wisdom and faith, intercession and power. He quickens desire, purifies motive, inspires confidence, and assures faith.”

The Spirit is able to intercede in the line of the Divine purpose—“for God’s own people in God’s own way” as the New English Bible has it —because He knows the mind of the Father. He is permitted to share the Divine secrets. But the first part of v. 27 tells us that the reverse is also true. Not only does the Spirit know the mind of the Father: the Father knows the mind of the Spirit. “He who searches the hearts of men knows what is the mind of the Spirit.”

All three persons of the Trinity participate in this search, but it is clearly the Father who is referred to here. David reminds Solomon his son in I Chronicles 28:9 that “the Lord searches all hearts, and understands every plan and thought,” and in Jeremiah 17:10 we hear God declare: “I the Lord search the mind and try the heart, to give to every man according to ‘his ways, according to the fruit of his doings.” That is the heart-searching of the Father. But in Revelation 2:23 our glorified Saviour addresses the church at Thyatira and announces: “I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you as your works deserve.” That is the heart-searching of the Son. In I Corinthians 2:9, 10 we learn that what eye has not seen nor ear heard nor heart conceived—what God has prepared for those who love Him—has been revealed through the Spirit, “for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.” That is the heart-searching of the Spirit. He penetrates not only the heart of man but the heart of God as well. The Spirit knows what is the mind of the Father and the Father knows what is the mind of the Spirit. It is out of this deep, mutual Divine interpenetration that the prevalence of the Spirit’s intercession proceeds, and on the same profound level it is ratified and validated. *Life By The Spirit* (pages 117ff.)

15. “I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.” Romans 9:1, 2.

A. What Does It Say?

Read the comments of Floyd E. Hamilton for a possible explanation of these verses.

I. “I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience bearing witness with me in the Holy Spirit.” In this chapter Paul begins the discussion of the question as to why the Jews, the chosen people of God,

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should reject the plan of salvation if that plan is truly God's plan of salvation. Paul introduces the subject by declaring his sincerity and truthfulness as an introduction to the statement of his sorrow over the rejection of his countrymen, the Jews. *En Christo* means "in Christ," not "by Christ," used as an oath. Paul never uses these or any other words as an oath to attest his sincerity. Oaths are introduced by another preposition *pros* (Hodge). These words may be connected with the subject, "I" meaning "I, as a man who is a Christian," or it may be used as an adverb, meaning "I speak in a Christian manner." Either interpretation gives nearly the same meaning. *En Pneumati Hagio*, "in the Holy Spirit," is not an oath. These words may be connected with the subject of *Pseisdomai*, meaning, "I being in the Holy Spirit" (Meyer, as a possible meaning, Winzer and Fritzsche), or they may be connected with *summarturouses*, meaning "bearing witness in the Holy Spirit," that is, he bears his witness under the influence of the Holy Spirit (Meyer and Hodge). This gives a plausible and appropriate meaning to the phrase. Or the phrase may be connected with *suneideseos*, meaning "my conscience, enlightened by the Holy Spirit" (Grotius). This would connect the phrase with the nearest words, but it seems more likely that Paul would be using the words, "in the Holy Spirit," to attest his apostolic authority as writing under the control of the Holy Spirit, and thus connecting the words with "bearing witness." *The Epistle To The Romans—An Exegetical and Devotional Commentary*—(page 147 and 148).

B. What Does It Mean?

W. H. Griffith Thomas has some good words in answer to this question. *I Sincerity of Feeling* (ver. 1) .—His constant controversies and conflicts with Jews and Judaisers might suggest doubts of his 'assertions of sorrow, and so he solemnly affirms his sincerity. He knew that he was regarded as a traitor (Acts xxi. 33; xxii, 22; xxv. 24), and so he makes these very strong protestations. He affirms his sincerity both positively and negatively. He speaks "in Christ," that is, in union with Him, a position in which it was quite impossible to lie, since Christ is the Searcher of hearts (Eph. iv. 15; Col. iii. 9). His conscience bears witness with him (ch. ii. 15; viii. 16) in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, and on this account he is able to speak with all possible clearness and force as he stands in the presence of the God of truth. This threefold reference to Conscience, Christ, and the Holy Spirit, as indicative of his sincerity, is very striking. Although he has had to pour contempt on Jewish pride and self-sufficiency it was not because of any lack of love to his brethren." *St. Paul's Epistle To The Romans ...* (page 244 and 245).

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

It would seem the conscience is to be associated in some manner with the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit with the conscience. Just what is this connection? A half-dozen possibilities suggest themselves:

1. The conscience is made more sensitive by the presence of the Holy Spirit.
2. Surely the conscience should be educated by the Word of the Spirit—The New Testament.
3. The conscience is the communication point or the voice of the Holy Spirit in the human heart.
4. The Holy Spirit exerts a direct influence on the conscience.
5. The conscience and the Holy Spirit in the Christian are identical.
6. This experience was exclusively apostolic and has no application to us.

The last one we must reject because we have a conscience and we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. The 5th one we must likewise reject since the capacity and identity of the Holy Spirit and the human conscience are always held as separate entities in the Scriptures. We do not know if the 4th possibility is true or not. We are sure the direct influence of the Holy Spirit on the human conscience would need be by invitation on our part. The conscience is God's umpire in man's heart. This divinely given umpire simply and always and infallibly *calls* the rules with which we supply him. He does not originate the rules. He only reminds us of our keeping them or our violating them. If the Holy Spirit has a direct influence on the conscience, this could not be in violation of the free capacity of the conscience to

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approve or disapprove. If the Holy Spirit has a direct influence upon our conscience, we have no way of defining or identifying such influence. What of the 3rd possibility? This is an attractive thought. Could we say that the prompting of the Christian conscience is the voice of the Spirit of God? If the reader will review the first three thoughts here listed: (1). The conscience is made more sensitive by the presence of the Holy Spirit. (2). The human conscience should be informed or educated by the word of the Holy Spirit or the New Testament. (3). The conscience then (i.e. because of the previous two thoughts) becomes the means of communicating the approval or disapproval of the Holy Spirit in our acceptance or rejection of God's will in our conduct. We are not dogmatic about this thought but we find no reason not to consider it 'as a possibility. We can sear our conscience as with a hot iron, (I Tim. 4:12) or harden our conscience i.e. Make it incapable of functioning as it should. We need all the help we can get to give us a tender conscience. One that is void of offence.

D. *How Can I Share It?*

If our heart (conscience) condemns us, God is greater than our heart. (conscience). (I John 3:20, 21). Our first concern should be to have a clear-clear conscience in the presence of God through His personal indwelling Spirit. If we can share this joy and testimony with others, we will have shared the highest human-divine relationship possible on this earth.

16. "For the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit." Romans 14:17.

A. What Does It Say?

We simply must read the two preceding verses of the 14th chapter before we can fairly answer this question: "I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth anything unclean, to him it is unclean. But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. (or in love) Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died."

W. H. Griffith Thomas gives us a splendid exposition of these verses::

"*A Loving Entreaty* (vers. 15, 16). — The strong Christian who has come to the conclusion that nothing is unclean of itself must be careful to respect the scruples of the one who has not yet learned the lesson, for fear he should hurt the spiritual health of his brother. Our brother's weakness is the measure of our duty. For a trifling bit of food we must not grieve a brother in Christ and perhaps lead him astray (I Cor. viii. 7-13; x. 23-33). As Dr. David Brown helpfully says, "The willful violation of conscience contains within itself a seed of destruction."

Liberty is given, but it must not degenerate into license. Wrangling and differences between Christian men will cause the enemy to blaspheme. We must therefore give special care lest our good be evil spoken of. This "good" may be that Christian liberty which the strong enjoy, or it may refer to the Christian cause, which is thereby reproached through our lack of true consideration. Both ideas may be included, for we all know how definite and practical a bearing individual conduct has on the general interests of Christianity. Our stronger faith and wider liberty must be held in check and not given full play, lest we hurt and trouble others both in the Church and outside.

A True Attitude (vers. 17, 18). — That all this action is necessary is shown by the fact that the essence of Christianity is no matter of food and drink. The Kingdom of God is occupied with far greater matters than the mere questions of eating and drinking. Christianity is internal, not external, and its main principles are righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. The "righteousness" of love which is moral uprightness; the "peace" of fellowship which is union and communion among Christians; the "joy" in the Holy Spirit which involves genuine exaltation in the Christian community—those who are the essential realities of the Gospel, and when this is clearly understood it becomes utterly impossible to

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dwell on any smaller matters. This is the true attitude of the genuine man of God, and the life thus lived with constant regard to helpfulness to our fellow-Christians will have the twofold effect of being acceptable to God and approved of men (ver. 18). Such a life will stand the supreme test of Divine examination, and will be seen to be well-pleasing to the Father, and to possess the approbation of those around. *St. Paul's Epistle To The Romans...* (page 374 and 375).

B. What Does It Mean?

Moses Lard has an interesting and helpful comment here: 17. For the kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. The kingdom of God here spoken of is the present kingdom or church. Food and drink, as such, do not belong to this kingdom, or they are not a characteristic of it. They are mere accidents; and hence our rights in regard to them, as well as our prejudices against them, must not be pressed too far. On the contrary, the kingdom of God consists, 1, in righteousness, or the general righteous conduct of those who are in it; 2, in peace, or such a considerate course of action on the part of all as shall insure peace; and, 3, in joy, or that delicate regard for the feelings of one another which, under the strengthening presence in all of the Holy Spirit, shall give joy and not grief. These are the weighty matters of the kingdom, and, therefore, the matters of chief concern to us, and not the indifferent and trivial questions of eating or not eating meat. But as it was in the kingdom in those days, so is it still. There is a large class of professors who are never through with homilies and scruples of conscience on meat and drink, but who either never can know any thing, or never will care any thing about righteousness, peace, and joy. They, of course, are always righteous 'themselves, and their peace and joy must ever be consulted, but as for others, *nil*. *Commentary On Romans...* (page 425 and 426).

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

Our particular concern just here is; how does the Holy Spirit relate to the three virtues? Godet well says: "By the words: *in the Holy Spirit*, Paul indicates the source of these virtues: it is this divine guest who, by His presence, produces them in the Church; the instant He retires grieved, He carries them with Him." *The Epistle to the Romans ...* (page 462). We have discussed so often in these pages the subjective and objective aspects of the Holy Spirit work in the production of Christian character. We shall not repeat it here. We must observe that where sensuality, strife, and unhappiness are present, all pious talk of the Holy Spirit's power is a false claim. We have observed from time to time that some of those who talk most about the Holy Spirit can also comment in the most covetous or lustful manner with almost the same breath. There is no strife quite as severe as that among the wrangling "Holy Spirit Advocates". Of all the sad unhappy people, some of them are in the center of Holy Spirit movements of one kind or another.

Whatever else we could say, we must say that such conditions and persons do not characterize "the real kingdom of God" and all such lacks and imperfections are a clear testimony of the lack of the Holy Spirit's presence.

D. How Can I Share It?

Let us share in the three wonderful areas here mentioned. By the power of the Holy Spirit we can increasingly show to the world about us:

1. A closer and closer walk to the example we find in our Lord and the instructions we find in His Word. And at the same time, a deep appreciation for the imputed righteousness we enjoy. We are only finally and essentially righteous in Him.
2. When will we truly personally and emotionally experience "the peace that passeth human understanding as a garrison about our hearts"? It will be when we allow full control to Him "who is our peace" within us thru His personal representatives, the Holy Spirit.

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3. We sing so often “floods of joy o’er my soul like the sea-billows roll.”, but I fear this is never much more than a verse in a song. The real joy, the wonderful joy of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit is not what the word joy indicates. It would be most helpful for the reader to refer to volume two, pages 59-73 and read again of the beautiful joy of Jesus as He lives in us.
17. “Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, in the power of the Holy Spirit”. Romans 15:13.

A. What Does It Mean?

Lard gives a splendid exegesis of this verse:

“13. Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, God is here called the God of hope, because he is author to it, somewhat remotely, it is true, but still author. Hope has exclusive reference to the future. This conceded, and the intermediate links between hope and its author may be thus arranged: God makes a promise; this promise is believed; and on this belief rests hope, it being necessary, at the same time, to keep in mind that belief has strict reference to the promise, hope, to the thing promised. “Fill you with all joy and peace in believing”— not in believing on Christ, but in believing What the Apostle had just been saying. By believing that the disciples would be brought to desist from judging and despising one another, and instead, would be led to accept and love one another in Christ. It was by their acting thus that the Apostle expected them to realize the “joy and peace” of which he speaks.

In order that you may abound in hope by power of the Holy Spirit. By believing what the Apostle had said, the disciples were to be filled with all joy and peace; while on both believing and being filled, depended their abounding in hope by power of the Holy Spirit. These disciples, be it recollected, were Christians, and consequently the Spirit dwelt in them. By power of this Spirit they were to abound in hope. How was this? On condition of believing and being filled, the Spirit, which was in them, so energized their spirits as to augment their hope, or cause it to abound. This I presume to be the answer to the question. What the object of their hope was, we are not told, but doubtless it was the same as with us, namely, the resurrection from the dead, and eternal life. In all time since Christ, and under all circumstances, these have been the absorbing objects of Christian hope. *Commentary On Romans* (page 438).

B. What Does It Mean?

Gleason L. Archer gives us some helpful application:

- “(13) When you resolve to accept each other in fellowship despite differences of opinion, God stands ready to pour out on you a flood of blessing, which consists of:
- (1) “hope,” or confident expectation, from the Author of hope. It is the expectation of being personally saved and sanctified and accepted in the Day of Judgment.
 - (2) “joy,” stemming from the relationship of absolute surrender to the known will of God, a relationship not soured over by strife between brethren.
 - (3) “peace,” or a sound and healthy relationship between the soul and God, as well as between fellow believers. But note that this peace is altogether different from a peace achieved by surrendering basic convictions or lowering one’s doctrinal standards to the lowest common denominator (as negotiators for church mergers so often advocate).
 - (4) A “welling up and over” (*perisseuein*) of confident expectation in the power of God the Holy Spirit, who witnesses that we are children of God, and who makes Christ’s resurrection life operate through us effectually.” *The Epistle To The Romans—A Study Manual* ... (page 95 and 96)

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C. What Does It Mean To Me?

We have often been indebted to W. H. Griffith Thomas. Once again we are enriched by reading his good comment:

The Special Prayer (ver. 13) .—Now comes a prayer, summing up •and concluding the entire subject, and, indeed, the whole of the doctrinal part of the Epistle. After showing in the frankest and yet tenderest way the necessity for both parties, Jew and Gentile, weak and strong, to unite in their one Lord and Master, he lifts up his heart for them in this exquisite prayer, feeling sure that if these spiritual realities are experienced there will be no further difficulty or difference, still less division, in the Church. When problems involving possible severance of heart are brought before God in prayer, it is not difficult to see in this the guarantee of a right, complete, and lasting solution.

1. The Source of Blessing. “The God of hope.” This is a title only used here, and is literally “the God of the hope,” the pre-eminent hope of the Old Testament; the God Who gives hope, sustains hope, crowns hope. The title is no doubt suggested by the words immediately preceding, wherein the Gentiles are to “hope in the God of Israel.” When our souls are in direct fellowship with God as “the God of hope” we are most likely to realize His purpose and will.

2. The Character of Blessing. “All joy and peace.” These are the active and passive sides of Christian experience. Joy is energetic, peace is restful. Scripture speaks much of the joy of salvation, and assures us that “the joy of the Lord is our strength.” Peace is the great word of reconciliation, as we contemplate our relations to God and to our fellow-men. Still more, it is “all joy and peace,” for everything that God has to be ours in every way.

3. The Measure of Blessing. “Fill you.” The Apostle frequently used this idea of fullness, for he was not content with any poor, narrow, or strained life. He knew that God was “the God of all grace,” and he longed for himself and his friends that they might know the abundance that God was only too ready to provide.

4. The Purpose of Blessing. “That ye may abound in hope.” Jew and Gentile were to look forward to a glorious future in their Lord. Hope is always connected with the coming of the Master, and in this spirit we were to face the future, and all the problems that might arise. This is the true Christian spirit of optimism and even buoyancy, because it is concentrated on the great event which is certain ‘to happen; “the appearing of our great God and Savior.” Pessimism is altogether alien from the true Christian spirit. A pessimist has been aptly described as “a man who with two evils chooses both,” but the Christian will always be an optimist, not in a superficial, sentimental sense, but because of the great stronghold of hope which is his in Christ.

5. The Sphere of Blessing. “In the power of the Holy Ghost.” This is where the life is to be lived. Not by any energy of self, nor by any possibilities of companionship in those around us, but in the constant, surrounding, pervading presence of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, Who enables us ‘to realize our union and communion with Christ and our fellow-Christians. *St. Paul’s Epistle To The Romans . . .* (page 387 and 388).

D. How Can I Share It?

There are some thoughts by Moule which we shall condense and apply. These have been a great source of help to the writer.

It is a life overflowing with the heavenly hope; “that ye may abound *in the hope.*” Sure of the past, and of the present, it is—what out of Christ no life can be—sure of the future. The golden age, for this happy life, is in front, and is no Utopia. “Now is our salvation nearer”; “We look for that blissful (*uakapiav*) hope, the appearing of our great God and Saviour”; “Them which sleep in Him God will bring with Him”; “We shall be caught up together with them; we shall ever be with the Lord”; “They shall see His face; thine eyes shall see the King In His beauty.”

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And all this it is as a life lived “*in the power of the Holy Ghost.*” Not by enthusiasm, not by any stimulus which self applies to self; not by resources for gladness and permanence found in independent reason or affection; but by the almighty, all-tender power of the Comforter. “The Lord, the Life-Giver,” giving life by bringing us to the Son of God, and uniting us to Him, is the Giver and strong Sustainer of the faith, and so of the peace, the joy, the hope, of this blessed life.

“Now it was not written for their sakes only, but for us also,” in our circumstances of personal and of common experience. Large and pregnant is the application of this one utterance to the problems perpetually raised by the divided state of organization, and of opinion, in modern Christendom. It gives us one secret, above and below all others, as the sure panacea, if it may but be allowed to work, for this multifarious malady which all who think deplore. That secret is “the secret of the Lord, which is with them that fear Him” (Psalm xxv. 14). It is a fuller life in the individual, and so in the community, of the peace and joy of believing; a larger abundance of “that blessed hope,” given by that power for which numberless hearts are learning to thirst with a we intensity, “the power of the Holy Ghost.” *The Epistle To The Romans* . (page 405 and 406).

18. “But I write the more boldly unto you in some measure as putting you again in remembrance, because of the grace that was given me of God, that I should be a minister of Christ Jesus unto the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be made acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit.” Romans 15:15, 16.

A. What Does It Say? B. What Does It Mean?

W. H. Griffith Thomas has given us a splendid work in answering these questions:

The Apostle’s Claim (ver. 16). — It is his calling as the Apostle to the Gentiles that gives him the right to address them. “That I should be a minister of Christ Jesus unto the Gentiles, ministering the Gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be made acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit.” In these words he likens himself and his work to the priest of old. The preaching of the Gospel is his priestly function, and the believing Gentiles constitute his offering to God. As a preacher, he is doing the work of a priest, and each time he preaches he performs an act of priestly consecration. It need hardly be said that this passage is no exception to the well-known fact that the Christian ministry is never described technically in the New Testament as a priesthood. The term “priest” (*iegeuc*) in the singular number is never applied to anyone in connection with Christianity but the Lord Jesus Christ Himself—not even to the individual Christian. The only reference to Christians in regard to priesthood is either the use of the plural (Rev. i, 6), or else a word implying the Church in its collective capacity (I Pet. ii. 5, 9). The essential function of a priest is the representation of man to God (Heb. v. 1), and when this is clearly understood it is at once obvious that there is nothing in which the Christian minister, or layman, can be the representative of his fellows to God. Christianity provides for each man to enter and abide in the Divine presence for himself. In public worship the minister is often necessarily the mouthpiece of the congregation, but this is not a priestly, only a ministerial function. So the passage before us is altogether in line with the rest of the New Testament.

We should with these verses compare ch. xii.

1. In the latter the believer presents himself a living sacrifice to God. In the former the Gospel laborer is the offerer, his offering being the converts given him by God. But “the offering of the nations” is only acceptable to God as “sanctified in the Holy Spirit.” and since we know that “they that are in the flesh cannot please God,” we recall the Apostle’s words that Christians are “not in the flesh, but in the Spirit” (ch. viii. 8, 9).

As we have already noticed, this short passage is a marvelous revelation of St. Paul’s personal

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spiritual life. Let us concentrate attention on the aspects of Christian service here delineated (vers. 15, 16).

1. *The Source of Ministry.* “The grace that was given me of God.” Only by the grace of God can our service be acceptable. It is God’s work, and the power to do it must come from God. That is why the Apostle said, “Not I, but the grace of God” (1 Cor. xv. 10).

2. *The Purpose of Ministry.* “That I should be a minister of Christ Jesus.” What a privilege it is to be a Temple servant, a public functionary belonging to Jesus Christ. “Such honor have all His saints.” The word used here is that found in ch. xiii. 4 of civil rulers. Paul recognizes his work as having just as much authority and importance as the office of an Emperor or King.

3. *The Sphere of Ministry.* “Unto the Gentiles.” This was the special place in which God had set the Apostle. He was commissioned to the whole Gentile world. He has already told us that he felt indebted to the Gentiles as well as to the Jew (ch. i. 14). To St. Paul in his day, and to us in ours, the evangelization of the world is our highest obligation and most pressing duty. We have no right whatever to limit salvation to home fields, and we should resolutely face this universal sphere as the one in which God’s purposes of grace find their culmination.

4. *The Work of Ministry.* The second word used by the Apostle in this passage in connection with his service is, as we have seen, very suggestive: “Ministering the Gospel of God.” Thus there are two ideas, the ambassador and the priest. Our work is at once kingly and priestly. We are to show the boldness of the public official and the tenderness of the personal priest. The Apostle’s conception of his work is sacrificial, and while he was in no sense a mediator his labor consisted in something more than mere teaching; his entire life of service was an act of consecration as he offered himself to God on behalf of his work. This is the spirit of true service, and the more we realize the cost of our work the more effective will it be.

5. *The End of Ministry.* “That the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable.” The purpose of his efforts was to bring about such changes in the lives of the people that they should be made an offering well-pleasing to God. The work would not be done at once, but would be ever growing and deepening as he was able to proclaim the Gospel, and the people were enabled to receive it and reproduce it in their lives. This thought of converts as an acceptable offering to God should impress itself upon the heart of every Christian worker as the end and object of all service.

6. *The Crown of Ministry.* “Sanctified.” This was to be the result of the acceptable offering of the Gentiles. Their lives should be consecrated to God. Sin tends inevitably to separate man from God, and through the reconciliation of the Gospel the sinner is brought back, not merely to forgiveness, but that his life may be possessed and used by God for His service.

7. *The Guarantee of Ministry.* “In the Holy Ghost.” This is the supreme thought in connection with all work for God, the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, and this it is that makes the difference between work that is real and work that is not. Only as we labor in the energy of the Divine grace shall we find our service of any effect either to God or to man. The mighty work of the world’s evangelization must be in the power of the Holy Spirit if it is to be of any value. *St. Paul’s Epistle To The Romans . . .* (page 394-396).

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

Lard helps in this question: “Being purified by the Holy Spirit. The Gentiles here spoken of, who are to be offered up, are of course Christians. In them, therefore, the Holy Spirit dwells; and by it, while in them, ‘they are purified in mind and thought, and so rendered an acceptable offering to God. In what way,

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or by what means, the Spirit effects this purification, we are not informed. The fact is asserted, but without being explained. The Spirit may effect it by so strengthening those in whom it dwells as to enable them to live obedient lives to the divine will. So living, God will through favor and the blood of Christ, forgive them, and when they die, accept them. But it must be acknowledged dangerous to speculate on these abstruse spiritual facts. It is no doubt wisest to rest contented with them as asserted, without attempting their solution. In the latter work, we shall satisfy neither ourselves nor others. Indeed, we shall simply fail. *Commentary On Romans...* (page 440).

D. How Can I Share II?

We could catch some new or additional thought in the meaning of the term “sanctified”, “set apart”—i.e. “set apart for a holy purpose”. (This is the basic thought of the Word.) The Holy Spirit is the cause or reason for our sanctification. In the thought here then God looks upon us or accepts us as “holy” or “sanctified” because God’s Spirit dwells in this sacrifice offered to Him.

Not because we have become noteworthy by superior conduct but because we, as the sacrifice to God are also God’s special dwelling place by His Spirit. We do not here minimize the aid of Holy Spirit in overcoming sin, (indeed we have discussed this at great length in other pages of this book.) but just here the thought seems to be we are “sanctified” because we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. This is an imputed sanctification because of the Holy Spirit in the same way we have an imputed righteousness because of the death of our Lord.

19. “I have therefore my glorying in Christ Jesus in things pertaining to God. For I will not dare to speak of any things save those which Christ wrought through me, for the obedience of the Gentiles, by word and deed, in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Holy Spirit (the Spirit of God) so that from Jerusalem, and round about even unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the Gospel of Christ.” *Romans 15:17*.

A. What Does It Say?

F. L. Godet does a splendid job of answering this question:

“In the expression: *by word*, are embraced all his teachings, public and private; and in the expression: *by deed*, his labors, journeys, collections, sufferings, sacrifices of all kinds, and even miracles, though these are mentioned afterward as a category by themselves.—The expression: *the Power of signs*, is explained by Meyer in this sense: “the power (my power over men) arising from signs.” It seems to me more natural to understand: “the (divine) power breaking forth in signs.” Miraculous facts are called *signs* in relation to the meaning which God attaches to them and which men ought to see in them, and *wonders* in relation to nature and its laws, on the regular basis of which the miracle is an inroad.—The *power of the Spirit* may designate the creative virtue inherent in this divine breath; but here the complement seems to me to be the person of Paul: “the power with which the Spirit fills me.”—It is better to read, with the T. R., the *Spirit of God* than the *Holy Spirit*, for it is force that is in question rather than holiness.” *The Epistle To The Romans* (page 480).

B. What Does It Mean?

Lard has an interesting answer:

“19. By power of the Spirit, by word and deed, by the power of signs and wonders, I arrange these clauses thus for no purpose except to exhibit them in the order of their dependence on one another. What Christ effected through Paul was effected first by power, not *the* power, of or from the Spirit as the immediate agent; next by word and deed; and finally by *the* power, *the whole power*, of signs and wonders, authenticating both him and his teaching. The three clauses, therefore, cover the whole of Paul’s ability

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and work as an apostle. *Commentary On Romans* (page 441 and 442).

C. What Does It Mean To Me?

W. H. Griffith Thomas is always so helpful in the practical application of the text. Hear him again:

“As we review this brief yet pregnant section we are impressed with the simple but significant way in which the Apostle reveals some of the essentials of Christian service.

1. *Work for God should be marked by Definite Results* (ver. 18). God does not intend any of us to labor in vain, or spend our strength for nought, and, though results may vary, we are justified in expecting them if only we are faithful to the Gospel and to the true methods of proclaiming it. Of course it is essential to distinguish between “having” results and “seeing” them, and it is the former rather than the latter that should be kept in mind. God may often grant results which are invisible to the worker. And yet if a man is working for God year after year without seeing some fruit of his labor, he may well ask himself whether he is serving God where or as his Master desires.

2. *The Worker as an Instrument, not an Agent* (ver. 18). The Apostle gloried in Christ, and spoke of those things that Christ had wrought through him. This is the true attitude of the Christian worker: God is the real worker and the Christian is the tool. We are sometimes inclined to think that we are to work and to call in God as our helper. The proper attitude is that of God as the Agent and the believer as His instrument. We do not overlook the fact that instruments or tools have no wills, but even this does not make a fundamental distinction, because, as Tennyson says, “Our wills are ours to make them Thine.” As the Lord Himself always did the will of His Father, and the words that He spoke and the works that He performed were not His own but His Father’s, so it is our privilege, as it ought to be our glory, to be as ready for the Master’s use as the pen or the chisel in the hand of a workman. When Joshua went up to the stranger before Jericho he asked whether He was for Israel or for their enemies. The significant answer came that He was neither “for” one or the other. He had not come to assist, but to take charge, to supercede Joshua, and to control the affairs of Israel. At once Joshua recognized the state of the case and said, “What saith my Lord unto His servant” (Josh. v. 14). It will make all the difference to our Christian work if we realize that it is “Not I, but Christ”; “Not I, but the grace of God.”

3. *The Practical Purpose of Christian Work* (ver. 18). The one and all-embracing purpose stated by the Apostle is “the obedience of the Gentiles.” It is identical with what he describes elsewhere as “the obedience of faith” (ch. i. 5; xvi. 26). Our work is nothing less, and it can be nothing more than this, to bring men into subjection to God, and to that obedience which is the expression of faith in Him. Everything is to converge to this end. All knowledge, all privileges, all experience, all blessings, are intended to express themselves in simple, loyal, constant obedience. It would simplify our work for God if we ever kept in view our one object of bringing God to man and man to God.

4. *Variety of Methods in Christian Work* (ver. 18). The Apostle was not confined to one plan of making known the Gospel of Christ. Sometimes it was done by word, sometimes by deed. But whatever was the method the object was the same. Christian workers will be well advised to make their methods as varied as possible. God has many ways of approaching men and there are many avenues of entrance into His kingdom. Be it ours to keep a sharp look out for every method new and old whereby men may be brought face to face with Christ.

5. *The Divine Demonstration of Christian Work* (ver. 19). The Apostle was able to speak of signs and wonders in the power of the Spirit of God, and although in one sense we do not experience today what was then regarded as miraculous, the Spirit of God is still at work and sets his seal on our ministry by working miracles of grace. God still shows His power, and difficulties are a challenge to His Divine

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working. The supreme need of every worker at home and abroad is the possession and power of the Holy Spirit, and when He is manifested in heart and life the results are in demonstration of the grace and blessing of God. The mighty work here depicted is altogether beyond the power even of a mighty thinker and worker like St. Paul. It must be the work of the Holy Spirit, and only as this Divine energy possesses the worker can he expect the results to accrue.” *St. Paul’s Epistle To The Romans* (page 400, 401, 402).

D. How Can I Share It?

There is so much to share in the above comments. List ten thoughts you will use in your Bible class or with your dearest Christian friend.

20. “Now I beseech you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in your prayers to God for me;” *Romans 15:30*.

A. What Does It Say?

We like the comment of Moses E. Lard just here.

“30. But I beseech you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the love of the Spirit, Stuart thinks the *de* here continuative, and this it doubtless is, in part, but it evidently is at the same time adversative. I beseech you *by* our Lord Jesus Christ, not *for the sake of*. Christ and the love of the Spirit were the motives by which the brethren were to be moved to prayer. The love of the Spirit is that love for one another which the Spirit pours out in the hearts of those in whom it dwells.

To strive with me in prayer to God for me, *Sunagonizomai* means to carry on a combat or conflict in company with another; and from this it readily comes to denote any form of striving in which two or more take part. To strive with one in prayer means to join him in a deeply earnest effort at prayer. The solemnity with which the Apostle requests this prayer, and the high motives by which he urges it, show how profoundly he desired it to prevail.” *Commentary On Romans* (page 448).

B. What Does It Mean? C. What Does It Mean To Me?

We hesitate to quote so extensively from one author, but no other one of our knowledge has such an effective expression as W. H. Griffith Thomas in answer to the two above questions.

“I. *An Earnest Request for Prayer* (ver. 30).— The wording is particularly significant. “Now I beseech you, brethren.” Paul had often prayed for them (ch. i. 9, 10), and now he beseeches them to pray for him. His anxiety for their prayers is a mark of his confidence in them. He knew them to be a praying Church.

II. *A Definite Motive for Prayer* (ver. 30).—The Apostle dwells upon a twofold motive, or, perhaps it would be more correct to say, two distinct though connected motives. This first is “for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake,” that is, “by the feelings towards Christ that actuate you.” The cause of Christ was undoubtedly involved in the Apostle’s circumstances, and any failure in his mission would be taken to reflect upon the Master Himself. No wonder that he begs them to pray “by our Lord Jesus Christ.” The other motive is “for the love of the Spirit.” This seems to mean the love of God which the Holy Spirit sheds abroad in the hearts of all Christians (ch. v. 5). The reference would thus be to the love which Christians have one to another, and it is termed “the love of the Spirit” because it is produced in the heart by the Spirit of God. Other writers suggest that the interpretation is “the love which the Holy Spirit has to Christians,” and while this is no doubt true in itself it may be questioned whether it is the meaning of the present passage. In another Epistle St. Paul speaks of “the fellowship of the Spirit” (Phil. ii.1), which seems to mean the fellowship produced in Christian hearts by the Holy Spirit. Godet thinks that “the love of the Spirit” means “that love which is necessarily different from the love that exists between persons who know one another individually.” In either case this twofold motive for prayer is very notable. By their feeling towards our Lord and also towards His Apostle, as expressed in the Holy Spirit’s gift of love,

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they were to pray for him.

III. A Striking Description of Prayer (ver. 30).— “That ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me.” Prayer is here shown to be a struggle, for the word “strive” is used as of an athletic contest. More than once the Apostle employs this term, indicating that there are hostile powers to be faced whenever prayer is offered. He here associates the Roman Christians in his own prayers for himself. It would be well if we realized more frequently than we do the seriousness of prayer, that it is indeed “the Christian’s vital breath.” Instead of prayer being the easiest, it is the hardest work of the Christian, because principalities and powers of evil combine to oppose the progress of the soul in prayer, and thereby to hinder the Divine answers. St. Paul was anxious that his Colossian friends should know what his own prayers for them meant in the way of strife, struggle, and contest (Cot. ii. 1), and in his description of Epaphras the same thought is found: “always striving for you in prayers” (Col. iv. 12).