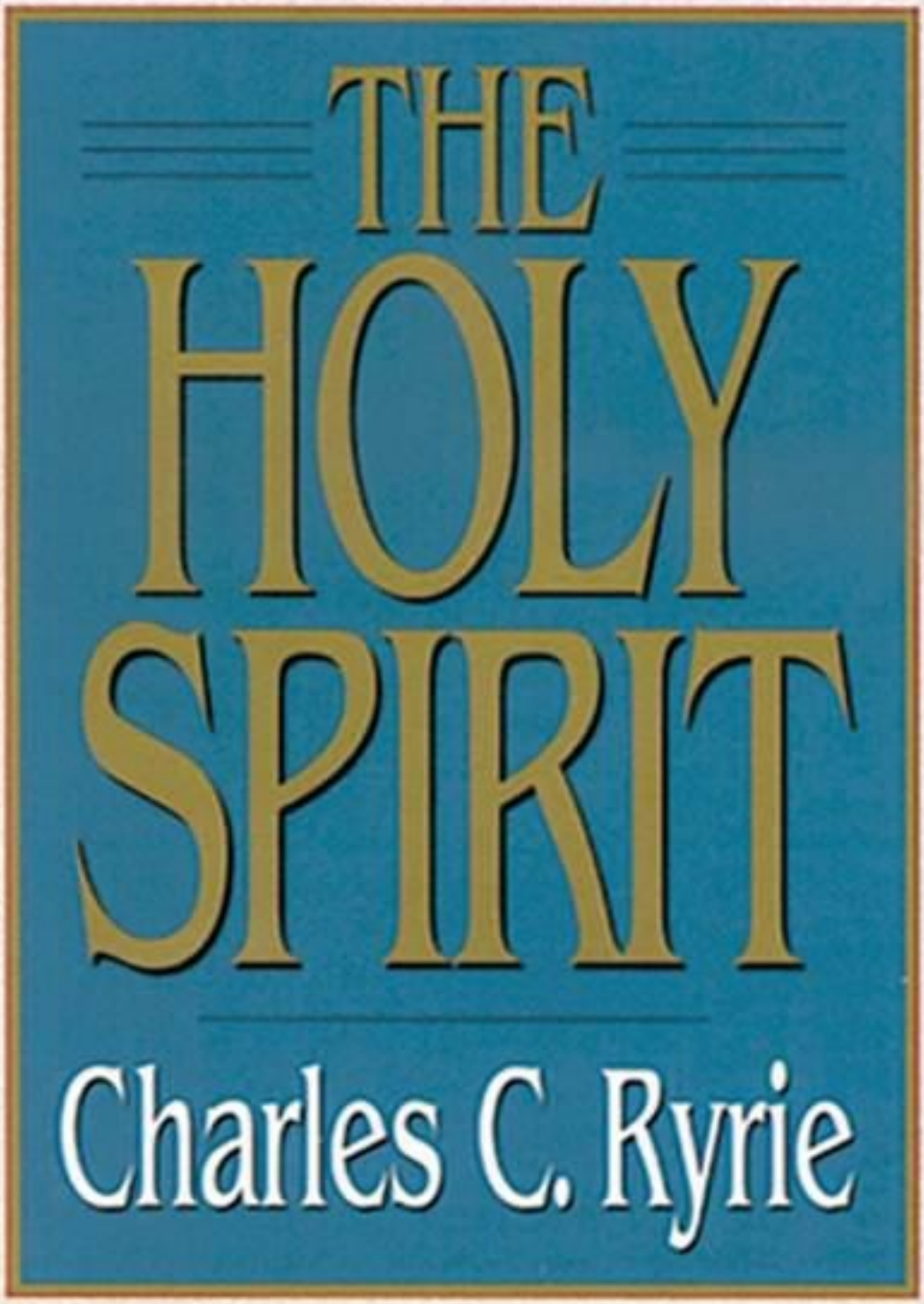
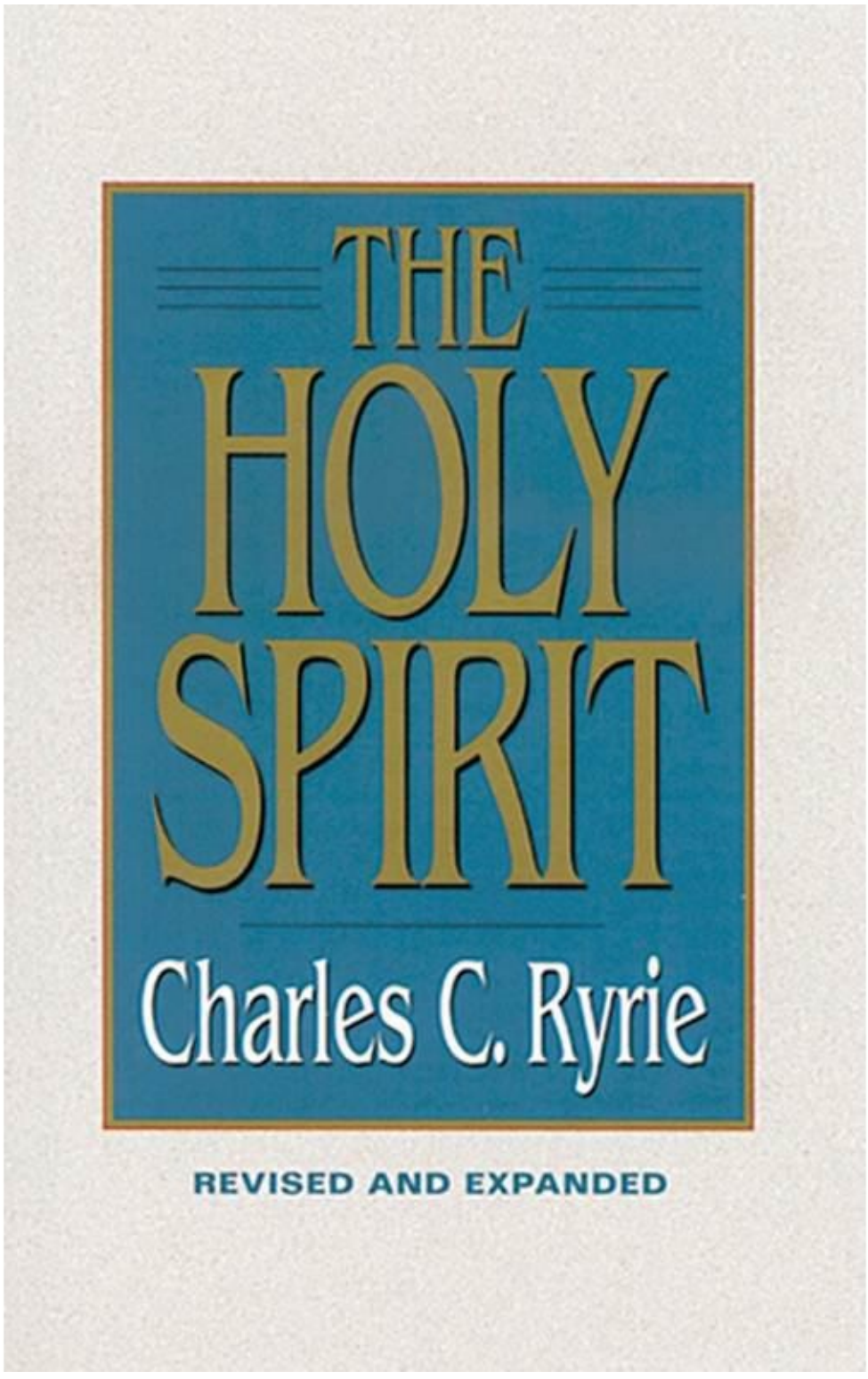
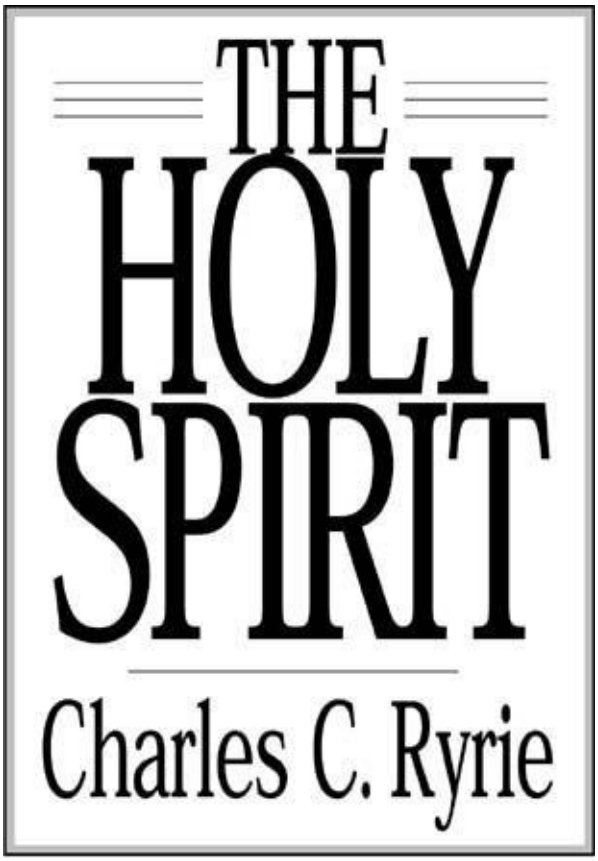


REVISED AND EXPANDED


THE
HOLY
SPIRIT
Charles C. Ryrie
REVISED AND EXPANDED



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MOODY PRESS
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1
SPIRITUAL POWER

Spiritual power! What images and hopes that brings before the believer's mind! And rightly it should, for spiritual power is a proper longing for God's people to have.

However Christians may differ on the means to spiritual power, all agree that it relates to the work of the Holy Spirit. Understanding the ministry of the Holy Spirit, therefore, should be important to the believer. A Christian is one who has received Jesus Christ; a spiritual Christian is one who displays Christ living through his life, and this is accomplished by the work of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Spirituality, then, is Christlikeness that is produced by the fruit of the Spirit. What better portrait of Jesus Christ is there than "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Galatians 5:22–23)? These characteristics describe the fruit of the Spirit, and they picture our Lord. Spiritual power is not necessarily or usually the miraculous or spectacular, but rather the consistent exhibition of the characteristics of the Lord Jesus in the believer's life. And this is the activity of the Holy Spirit, of whom the Lord Jesus said, "He shall glorify Me."

An understanding of the ministry of the Holy Spirit is basic to Christian living. But one cannot fully comprehend the work of a person without also knowing something about that person. Likewise it is necessary to know something about the person of the Holy Spirit in order to fully appreciate His work. It may seem dull to the reader to pursue the study of the Spirit's personality and deity; but who He *is* is foundational to what He *does*, and a knowledge of both His person and work is basic to Christian devotion and living.

No other group among the totality of the people of God has ever been the beneficiary of so many of the ministries of the Spirit as has the body of Christ which began on the day of Pentecost. For example, the permanent indwelling of

every believer by the Holy Spirit was not experienced before that day. His work of joining believers to the risen Christ was impossible before the resurrection of Christ and the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost. His teaching ministry, His comfort, and His intercession are benefits that all Christians may experience without restriction or limitation today. This is truly the age of the Spirit, and none of the people of God have been so greatly privileged as are Christians in this age.

Paul wrote only one circular letter to a group of churches, and that was Ephesians, which was sent to all the churches in Asia Minor. It is interesting to notice how frequently he mentions various ministries of the Holy Spirit in this letter. It is as if the Spirit were a wide-spectrum antibiotic for the ills of people in those churches. Paul reminded those who might lack assurance of their salvation that the Spirit had sealed them and that His presence in their lives was the earnest, or guarantee, of the everlasting character of their redemption (Ephesians 1:13–14). If God has put His own seal of ownership upon us in the person of His Spirit, then nothing can make our redemption more secure. The seemingly impossible work of uniting Jews and Gentiles in one body was accomplished by the Spirit, and this union brings with it an access or introduction into the very presence of the Father (Ephesians 2:18). Paul assures those who need the strength to let Christ reign in their lives that the Holy Spirit will provide that ability (Ephesians 3:16), and when He does, they can begin to understand the dimensions of the love of Christ.

The practical and important problem of relationships to other believers is to be guided and guarded by the principle of “being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3). One body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God are the bases for this unity. Sin causes disunity and discord, and one of the gravest sins is the misuse of the tongue; so Paul reminded his readers that useless speech (to say nothing of sinful speech) grieves the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:29–31). The Spirit’s presence in our lives should set a guard over our tongues.

The offensive weapons in the believer’s armor are the sword of the Spirit and prayer in the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17–18). The way to spiritual power is to be filled with the Spirit, which simply means to be controlled by the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18). The Holy Spirit in the individual life and in the corporate life of the church is obviously a principal theme of this circular letter we call *Ephesians*.

The solution to the problems of the church today lies in solving the problems of individual Christians, and the remedy is a person—the Holy Spirit. He is the antidote for every error, the power for every weakness, the victory for every

defeat, the supply for every need, and the answer for every question. And He is available to every believer, for He lives in each believer's heart and life. The answers and the power have already been given to us in the person of the Spirit who lives in each of us.

A few summers ago I was about to leave home for three consecutive weeks of camps and conferences when I came down with laryngitis. In desperation I went to the doctor, seeking some miracle cure that would enable me to keep all the speaking commitments involved in those three weeks. My doctor simply told me to go home, go to bed, and drink large quantities of liquid. But this did not satisfy me. I thought he really wasn't doing his job well because he had not prescribed some wonder drug. At my insistence he at last did give me some very expensive and (in my mind) supposedly miraculously powerful pills. Nevertheless, he insisted that rest and forcing of fluids would do more than the medicine.

But I really did not believe him. At least I did not act like it, for I faithfully took the pills every four hours to the minute. But the only extra water I drank was that which was required to help swallow the pills. So every four hours I had two extra swallows of water. And I kept to my regular schedule instead of taking any extra rest. Somehow I did recover, but it was in spite of my conduct, not because of it.

If this were a book that offered you some new, miraculous, or secret formula for spiritual power, I am sure the sales of it would be phenomenal. You would probably devour its contents at one sitting. This is not that kind of book, however, for there is no new and startling formula for spiritual power. There can be nothing new or more to be added to that which God has already provided in the person of His Holy Spirit who lives in us. He is as available as water; there is no need for additional expensive pills, formulas, "secrets," or programs.

But the pity is that most Christians act as I did when I had laryngitis. We look for the new, the "miraculous," the guaranteed formula, the latest seminar, and we completely overlook the water that is freely available. We flock to the preacher or seminar leader who has some new secret for victory, and we ignore the Holy Spirit who has been freely given to us and who wants to overflow our lives. We do not need to *have* more of Him, but we do desperately need to *know* more of Him, and with the increased knowledge will come added faith, power, and control in our lives. To learn takes time. Not only, then, is there no secret formula; there is no instant spiritual maturity and power.

I hope this study of the Spirit will help you to learn more of Him and result in complete and constant yieldedness to His control, and full experience of His many ministries, to the end that the living Lord Jesus Christ will be exhibited in

your life. When this is done, then we can know that we have learned well the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

2
HE OR IT? THE PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The truth of the personality (He, not it) of the Holy Spirit is of fundamental importance. To deny it is to deny His real existence, the existence of the Trinity, and the teaching of the Scriptures on the subject. Nevertheless, His personality has been denied throughout the ages, first by the Monarchians, the Arians (Arius called Him the "exerted energy of God"), and the Socinians in the days of the Reformation.

In more recent times His personality has been denied by Schleiermacher, Ritschl, the Unitarians, liberals, and by almost all neoorthodox theologians (see chapter 22 on history). Often those who deny His distinct personality substitute the word *personification* for *personality*, but that term does not have the same meaning in their teaching as *personality* does in orthodox doctrine.

THE REASONS FOR THE TRUTH OF PERSONALITY

The Holy Spirit Has the Attributes of Personality

If personality may be simply described as possessing intellect, emotions (or sensibility), and will, then it is easily demonstrated that the Holy Spirit has personality because He has intelligence, emotions, and a will.

Intellect. The Holy Spirit knows and searches the things of God (1 Corinthians 2:10–11; compare Isaiah 11:2; Ephesians 1:17). He is said to possess a mind (Romans 8:27) and to be able to teach people (1 Corinthians 2:13). All these activities stem from and involve intelligence.

Emotions, or sensibility. The fact that the Scriptures show that the Holy Spirit has feelings is a further proof of His personality. For instance, it is said that the Spirit can be grieved by the sinful actions of believers (Ephesians 4:30: "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption"), a fact that would be meaningless if He were not a person (for an influence cannot be grieved). In another place Paul bases an exhortation to the believers in Rome to pray with and for him on the "love of the Spirit" (Romans 15:30).

Will. The important ministry of distributing spiritual gifts to individual believers is said to be according to the will of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:11). Too, His will is seen in His ability to direct the activities of God's servants. This is well illustrated by the Spirit's leading Paul at Mysia and Troas. He forbade Paul to preach in Asia and Bithynia, and then He led him and his party to Europe through the vision of the man of Macedonia (Acts 16:6–12).

In addition to these particulars, the entire doctrine of the deity of the Spirit is further proof of His personality (as explained in chapter 3).

The Holy Spirit Performs the Actions of Personality

Actions are attributed to the Holy Spirit that cannot be attributed to a mere thing or influence or personification or power or emanation. Such actions, then, must be those of a person, thus proving personality of the Spirit.

The Spirit teaches. "But the Helper, 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 said to you" (John 14:26).

The Spirit testifies or witnesses. "When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me" (John 15:26). "The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God" (Romans 8:16).

The Spirit guides. "For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God" (Romans 8:14).

The Spirit convicts or convinces. "But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment" (John 16:7–8).

The Spirit restrains. "Then the Lord said, 'My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years'" (Genesis 6:3).

The Spirit commands and directs people. "Then the Spirit said to Philip, 'Go up and join this chariot'" (Acts 8:29).

The Spirit performs miracles. "When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; and the eunuch saw him no more, but went on his way rejoicing" (Acts 8:39).

The Spirit calls for special service. "While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them'" (Acts 13:2).

The Spirit sends forth into Christian service. "So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia and from there they sailed to Cyprus" (Acts 13:4).

The Spirit intercedes. "In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words" (Romans 8:26).

Granted, some of these actions can be performed by inanimate or impersonal objects. For example, a book can teach. A plaque can testify. A map can guide. But behind such impersonal objects are the persons who were involved in creating the impersonal or inanimate objects. These examples are, therefore, legitimate evidences for the personality of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit Receives the Ascriptions of Personality

Certain acts are performed toward the Holy Spirit that would be most

incongruous if He did not possess true personality.

The Spirit can be obeyed. "While Peter was reflecting on the vision, the Spirit said to him, 'Behold, three men are looking for you. But get up, go downstairs and accompany them without misgivings; for I have sent them Myself.' Peter went down to the men" (Acts 10:19–21a).

The Spirit can be lied to. "But Peter said, 'Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the price of the land?'" (Acts 5:3).

The Spirit can be resisted. "You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did" (Acts 7:51).

The Spirit can be grieved. "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption" (Ephesians 4:30).

The Spirit can be reverenced. "Do not cast me away from Your presence and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me" (Psalm 51:11).

The Spirit can be blasphemed. "Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven people, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven" (Matthew 12:31).

The Spirit can be outraged. "How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?" (Hebrews 10:29).

As stated, to act in these various ways toward an influence would be unheard of. These acts therefore ascribe personality to the One toward whom they are performed—the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit Contradicts the Accidence of Personality

Here *accidence* refers to the rudiments of grammar. The Greek word for "spirit" is *pneuma* (from which we derive English words that have to do with air, such as *pneumatic* and *pneumonia*) and is a neuter gender word. According to every normal rule of grammar, any pronoun that would be substituted for this neuter noun would itself have to be neuter. However, in several places the biblical writers did not follow this normal rule of grammar, and instead of using a neuter pronoun when referring to the neuter noun *pneuma*, they deliberately contradicted the grammatical rule and used masculine pronouns. Indeed, they used two different kinds of pronouns, all in the masculine gender. This shows that they considered the Spirit to be a person and not merely a thing.

John 16:13–14. In this passage the masculine demonstrative pronoun is used for *pneuma*. (Demonstrative pronouns are the words *this* and *that*.) The same demonstrative pronoun is found twice in these verses: once in verse 13 (“But when He”) and once in verse 14 (“He will glorify Me”). In these last two instances, instead of the translation “He,” the better translation would be “that one.”

John 15:26. Here the masculine demonstrative pronoun occurs referring to the Spirit. Some explain the gender of the pronoun as referring back to the masculine word *Helper*. However, this is less likely, since *Spirit* is the nearer antecedent.

Ephesians 1:14. In this passage the masculine relative pronoun is used for the neuter noun *pneuma*, “Spirit.” (Relative pronouns are translated “who” if masculine or feminine, and “which” if neuter.) The masculine pronoun (in the Greek) is the first word in the verse: “Who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God’s own possession, to the praise of His glory.” It refers back to the Holy Spirit in verse 13.

These departures from the normal rules of grammar in connection with the use of several kinds of pronouns are evidences that for John and Paul the Holy Spirit was more than a mere influence—He was a person.

THE RAMIFICATIONS OF THE TRUTH OF PERSONALITY

In Relation to the Idea of Personality

Those who argue against the personality of the Holy Spirit often err in their basic definition of personality. They define it by what is known of human personality, but all human personality is imperfect. God alone has perfect personality, so any definition of true personality must start from a study of God's characteristics.

Usually those who deny the personality of the Holy Spirit do not deny the personality of God the Father and sometimes do not deny that of the Son either. Therefore, if the Holy Spirit is shown to be God, then it has also been demonstrated that the Holy Spirit has personality according to the God-oriented definition of personality. It is a false assumption to suppose that perfect personality exists in any human being. Of course, it goes without saying that true personality need not necessarily involve corporeality (possessing a physical body). For example, when people die they do not cease to be persons even though they no longer possess physical bodies.

In Relation to Other Persons

If the Holy Spirit has personality, then one would expect to find Him related to other persons as a separate and identifiable personality. Such is the case in the following examples.

The apostles. He is related to the apostles as if He has personality (though divine) just as they did (though human). At the same time He is distinguished from them as a separate person. "For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these essentials" (Acts 15:28). It would seem quite unnatural thus to associate Him with the apostles if He were a mere influence or force.

The Lord Jesus Christ. He is related to Christ in such a way that if the Lord has personality it must be concluded that the Spirit does too. At the same time the Spirit is distinguished from Christ, so that we know that they are not the same person. "He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to

you” (John 16:14).

The other persons of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit is also related to both of the other persons of the Trinity in such a way as to indicate personality. In the passages where this occurs it would be completely unnatural to regard the Spirit as a thing while understanding the Father and the Son as persons. The baptismal formula is in the “name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19). Not only does the association of the Spirit with the Father and the Son argue for the Spirit’s personality, but the use of the word *name* in the singular also indicates that He is a person just as the others are. The apostolic benediction leads to the same conclusion: “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all” (2 Corinthians 13:14).

His own power. Further, the Holy Spirit is related to His own power and yet distinguished from it, so that one may not conclude that the Spirit is only power. “And Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit” (Luke 4:14). A verse like this leads one to understand that the Spirit is a person who has power, and not that the Spirit is simply a powerful force or thing. Other examples of this distinction between the Spirit as a person and that person’s power are found in Luke 1:35; Acts 10:38; Romans 15:13; 1 Corinthians 2:4. The phraseology of these verses would be useless and inexplicable repetition if the Holy Spirit were thought of as merely a power or influence and not as a distinct personality with power of His own.

In Relation to Deity

The personality of the Holy Spirit argues for the deity of the Holy Spirit for two reasons.

Definition of personality. A proper definition of personality supports the fact of the deity of the Spirit (as explained above).

Conjunction with the other persons of the Trinity. The passages that prove personality name the other persons of the Trinity in such a close connection that they can be explained properly and fully only by understanding that the Holy Spirit is a divine person just as the Father and the Son are. These passages are the baptismal formula of Matthew 28:19 and the apostolic benediction of 2 Corinthians 13:14.

In Relation to Us

Since He is a person, then my dealings with Him are on a person-to-person basis. By contrast, one writer has tried to describe (or define) the Spirit as “the

mysterious power of God … as the mode of God's activity … a force … as the mode of God's operation in the church ….”[1] But the Spirit is not merely a mysterious power or a mode of operation or a force. He is a person. If He is mysterious, then probably I cannot know and understand Him. If He is a mode of operation, then He may be on the same (lower) level as other modes God uses in the world. If He is a force, then He is impersonal, however powerful, and perhaps in some instances at least I could be a greater force and control Him. But since He is a person, and since He is God, and since He has been revealed to us in the Bible, then my dealings with the Spirit are with a divine person whose activities and expectations for me are clear.

David asked, “Where can I go from Your Spirit?” His answer: nowhere (Psalm 139:7–12).

NOTE

1. G. W. H. Lampe, “Holy Spirit,” *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible* (New York: Abingdon, 1962), 1:626.

3
GOD OR GHOST? THE DEITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Not only is the Spirit a person, He is a unique person, for He is God. Proofs of His personhood are not necessarily proofs of deity (though there is some overlap), but proofs of deity show that He is a person, as long as one accepts the truth that God is a person. If the deity of the Holy Spirit is denied, then He is considered to be merely an impersonal influence or a created being. The latter was the teaching of Arius (in the fourth century), who said that the Spirit was the first created being of the Son.

PROOFS

Appellations (Names)

The fact that the Holy Spirit bears divine names is a proof of His deity. Sixteen times He is related by name to the other two persons of the Trinity. For example, He is called “the Spirit of our God” by Paul in 1 Corinthians 6:11. Again, in Greek texts of Acts 16:7 He is called “the Spirit of Jesus.” In addition to aspects of His ministry are the works of Deity. For instance, He is called “a spirit of adoption” in Romans 8:15, which indicates that He plays a part in the adoption of the believer (compare Galatians 4:1–5). The Lord Jesus Christ called the Holy Spirit “another Helper” (John 14:16). The word *another* means “of the same kind.” Therefore, if our Lord is Deity (as He is), then the Holy Spirit is also. Such appellations of the Spirit reveal Him as equal in name, power, and nature with the Father and with the Son—a fact that is possible only if He too is divine.

Attributes

An attribute is a quality or characteristic inherent in a being. The attributes of God are those qualities or characteristics that belong to Him. The Bible, of course, ascribes many attributes to the Holy Spirit. If these are the attributes of Deity, then one can only conclude that the Spirit is divine. What attributes characterize the Holy Spirit?

The Spirit is said to possess omniscience. “For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we might know the things freely given to us by God” (1 Corinthians 2:11–12).

The Spirit is said to possess omnipresence. “Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?” (Psalm 139:7). The equating of the omnipresence of the Spirit and the omnipresence of God affirms the deity of the Spirit and asserts that both God and the Spirit are equally comforting to the psalmist. Also, our Lord promised that the Spirit would be in all believers in this church age (John 14:17).

The Spirit is said to possess omnipotence. This is seen by the act of creating

—"The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life" (Job 33:4)—and by contrast with man's limited power (Zechariah 4:6). If the Spirit has omnipotence, and if omnipotence is an attribute possessed only by God, then the Spirit must be God.

The Spirit is said to be truth. "It is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is the truth" (1 John 5:6b). The Lord Jesus made the same claim in John 14:6, and if the second person is divine, the Spirit is also.

The Spirit is called the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13). Although man may possess holiness in a relative sense, absolute holiness belongs to God alone; and since this holiness is ascribed to the Spirit in His very name, this is an indication of His deity.

The Spirit is said to be a giver of resurrection life. He is called the "Spirit of life" who will give life to our mortal bodies at the resurrection (Romans 8:2; compare v. 11). Only Deity can impart this kind of life.

The Spirit is said to possess creative wisdom. "Who has directed the Spirit of the Lord, or as His counselor has informed Him?" (Isaiah 40:13).

Thus the Holy Spirit is said to possess attributes that belong to God, something possible only if He is Deity.

Actions

Many of the works of the Holy Spirit are those that can be performed only by God Himself. Such actions would, therefore, demonstrate the deity of the Spirit.

The act of creation of the world. "And the earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters" (Genesis 1:2). As with many other references to the "Spirit of God" in the Old Testament, one may rightly ask whether the reference is clearly to the third person of the Trinity or to the power of God who is spirit. Herbert Carl Leupold has given a balanced answer:

> Absolutely none other than the Holy Spirit is here under consideration …. It may require the full light of New Testament revelation to enable us to discern that the Spirit of God here is the same as He who in the New Testament is seen to be the Holy Spirit; but having that light, we need not hesitate to believe that it sheds clear light back on the Old Testament usage of the expression …. Does it not seem reasonable that the Spirit of inspiration should have so worded the words that bear upon His activity that, when the full New Testament revelation has come, all statements concerning the Spirit are in perfect harmony with this later revelation?[1]

This, then, may be understood as a reference to the Holy Spirit's part in the work of creating the world.

A few of the other passages that link the Spirit to the formative cause of all life are Job 26:13; 27:3; Psalms 33:6; 104:30. The creation of the universe is not the work of man. It was the work of God and of the Holy Spirit; therefore, the Spirit is God.

The act of inspiration. "For no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" (2 Peter 1:21). The inspiration of Scripture is described in another passage by the word *inspired* or *God-breathed* (2 Timothy 3:16). What is meant by inspiration need not detain us at this juncture. The point is that the Scriptures are from God, according to 2 Timothy 3:16; and specifically they are from the Holy Spirit, according to 2 Peter 1:21. This work of inspiration of Scripture is never ascribed to man. Indeed, the first part of the latter verse clearly states that man's will did not originate the Scriptures. God and the Spirit accomplished this, again demonstrating that the Spirit is divine.

The act of begetting Christ. "The angel answered and said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God'" (Luke 1:35). In this single verse the power of the Spirit and the power of God ("the Most High") are equal causes of the virgin birth of Christ. Other occurrences of "Most High" clearly indicate this is a title for God (Luke 1:32, 76; Acts 7:48). Thus the Holy Spirit is divine, as the Most High God is.

These three works are distinctively works of God that man cannot perform and which, therefore, indicate the deity of the Holy Spirit. There are other activities of the Spirit, and man can perform works similar to them, though not in the same manner or with the same results. Whereas man can convince, generate, comfort, and intercede, these works of the Spirit are further proofs of His deity, for in the last analysis God alone can perform them absolutely.

The work of convincing. "And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment" (John 16:8).

The work of regenerating. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6).

The work of comforting. "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever" (John 14:16). The everlasting presence of the Comforter is not a human work.

The work of interceding. "In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes

for us with groanings too deep for words” (Romans 8:26).

The work of sanctifying (or setting apart). “But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth” (2 Thessalonians 2:13).

Associations

With Yahweh. One of the strongest proofs of the deity of the Holy Spirit is the scriptural identification of the Spirit with Yahweh of the Old Testament (compare Acts 28:25–27 and Isaiah 6:1–13; compare Hebrews 10:15–17 and Jeremiah 31:31–34).

With God. Blasphemy of and lying to the Holy Spirit are the same as doing these things to God (Matthew 12:31–32; Acts 5:3–4).

With the Father and the Son. Full association on equal terms further indicates the deity of the Spirit (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14).

PROCESSION

Its Meaning

How the persons of the Trinity are related to each other is difficult to express. The relation of the Spirit to the other persons of the Trinity is usually expressed by the term procession. Therefore, the procession of the Holy Spirit means that in His being and eternality. He is related to the Father and to the Son in that He proceeded from them.

Another definition states that procession (or *spiration*, as it is sometimes called) is "that eternal and necessary act of the first and second persons of the Trinity whereby they, within the divine Being, become the ground of the personal subsistence of the Holy Spirit, and put the third person in possession of the whole divine essence, without any division, alienation or change."[2] The concept was formulated in the Constantinopolitan Creed (A.D. 381) with the addition of the *filioque* ("and Son") clause at the Synod of Toledo (A.D. 589). Throughout history the Western church has affirmed the procession from the Father *and Son*, whereas the Eastern church has not.

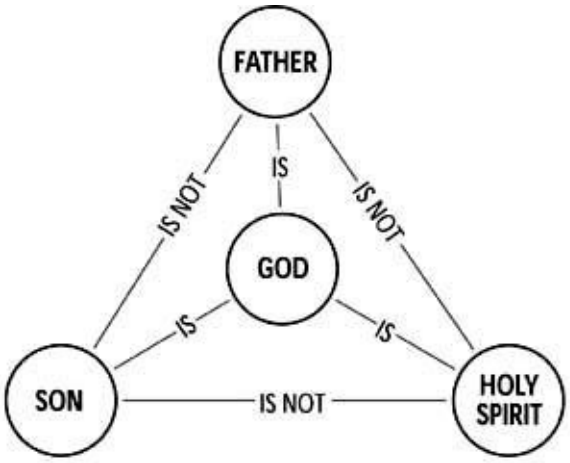
Its Proof

The major text used to affirm the eternal procession of the Spirit is John 15:26. However, to support the idea of *eternal* procession from this verse, one has to lean too hard on use of the present tense in the verse ("proceeds"). In my judgment this verse does not really convey anything about the eternal relationships within the Trinity, but rather it explains what the Spirit would do in continuing the work of the Lord after His ascension. That He proceeds from the Son as well is supported by such texts as Galatians 4:6; Romans 8:9; John 16:7.

Its Distinction from Generation

The eternal relationship of the Son to the Father is termed *generation*. It is the work of the Father only, whereas procession of the Spirit involves both Father and Son. Logically (but in no way chronologically), generation of the Son precedes procession of the Spirit. It is fully recognized that both terms are inadequate, but no one has been able to improve on them. What single words

could ever express the eternal relationships of the Trinity? Certainly the terms imply no inferiority of one person to any of the others. Nor do the words *first* and *second* and *third* when used of the persons of the Godhead imply any chronological order. Generation and procession are attempts, however inadequate, to denote *eternal* relationships involving distinction between equal persons.



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Figure 3.1

PROBLEMS

1. Is there a difference between the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Jesus?

Some texts of Acts 16:7 read “Spirit of Jesus.” This refers to the Holy Spirit whom Jesus sent, and could be used as a support for the *filioque* clause. In Romans 8:9 the title “Spirit of Christ” is likewise simply another designation for the Holy Spirit. There is only one Spirit (Ephesians 4:4; 1 Corinthians 12:11, 13). These references no more refer to different spirits than the grace of God (Galatians 2:21) and the grace of Christ (Galatians 1:6) refer to two different graces.

2. What is the meaning of “seven spirits”?

Four times in the Revelation (1:4; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6) reference is made to seven spirits. Since there is only one Spirit, this may refer to the Holy Spirit in His perfect fullness. However, some understand this as a reference to seven angels (who are spirit beings) who are before the throne of God.

PERPLEXITY

People are often perplexed when they try to think about the Holy Spirit both as a person and as God. Since it is difficult to concretize the idea of the Spirit, He sometimes is slighted in relation to the other persons of the Godhead.

When we contemplate persons of the Trinity, the Father is not a difficult concept to grasp, since we know about and relate to earthly fathers. Even if our experience with earthly fathers was not the best, still the concept of God as our Father is used just because of the existence of earthly fathers.

The incarnation greatly helps us understand the second person of the Trinity, our Lord Jesus Christ. Since He took on humanity (i.e., perfect humanity) we can more easily conceive of who He is, even though He is also God. But we generally have more difficulty thinking about the Holy Spirit. Our thinking about the idea of spirits often relates to ghosts or angels or what people are after they die. Because spirits are not corporeal, it is hard to get a handle on the idea in any concrete way. Little wonder, then, that people conceive of the Holy Spirit as something impersonal, like a mode or force, and therefore less than fully divine. But such concepts are false.

To summarize: Even though in our thinking the Spirit is not like a father figure, as the first person of the Trinity is, nor did He become incarnate, as the second person did, nevertheless, He is a real person and He is an equal person in the Godhead. And this is the person whose ministries are so prominent, especially to us, who live in this church age. We should be grateful, then, that the Spirit is who He is, and that He does what He does in the world and for us.

NOTE

1. Herbert Carl Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1942), 49–50.
2. Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1946), 97.

4
REPRESENTATIONS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

ARE THEY LEGITIMATE?

That there are types, illustrations, symbols, and emblems in the Bible is undebatable. Events (1 Corinthians 10:6, 11; Hebrews 4:11), institutions (Acts 7:44; Hebrews 8:5), and persons (Romans 5:14; James 5:10) are some examples. But for several reasons this whole area of illustrations is often played down or overlooked in biblical studies. Sometimes it is not clear what exactly is meant, for example, by a type, which may result in avoiding studying or mentioning types at all.

Another reason is the abuse typological or illustrative interpretation has suffered at the hands of interpreters, even those friendly to the idea. Imagination is stretched, discernment thrown to the wind, and an “anything goes” approach has been taken. But we should not be put off by such; rather, we ought all the more to be careful and correct in this area of Bible study. Types, illustrations, and symbols require, in order to understand them properly, a knowledge of the realities they picture.

SOME DEFINITIONS

A Type

A type is a divinely purposed illustration that prefigures its corresponding reality. This definition has three important elements.

Divinely purposed. A type must be divinely purposed. This distinguishes it from events or circumstances that are normal or, so to speak, accidental. Some things are specifically called types. Examples are the pattern or type for the tabernacle (Acts 7:44; Hebrews 8:5), Israel's experiences in the wilderness wanderings (1 Corinthians 10:6, 11), and Adam as a type of Christ (Romans 5:14).

Some of the events in the life of Joseph were apparently divinely purposed and may be labeled typical, whereas many others were perfectly normal to his life and were not typical. Joseph is nowhere specifically called a type of Christ, but it is not difficult to see in his experiences with his brothers that which prefigured the experiences of Christ in His life. The conspiracy of Joseph's brothers to kill him, his taking a Gentile bride, his subsequent reconciliation with his brothers, and their exaltation were certainly not ordinary events, but were evidently divinely purposed (compare Genesis 37:18 and Matthew 26:3–4; compare Genesis 41:1–45 and Acts 15:14; compare Genesis 45:1–15 and Romans 11:26).

No complete correspondence of type and antitype. The word *illustration* is used in the definition as a reminder that there need not be an exact one-to-one correspondence between a type and its corresponding reality or antitype. In other words, some latitude is allowable between the type and its antitype. For instance, there have to be normal historical and geographical elements in an event that may be a type to provide the necessary background for the particular divinely purposed part of that event which is the type. Types are given in normal historical situations, but all the aspects of those situations are not necessarily typical. Israel's experiences exemplify this idea.

Type and antitype must be separate and distinct. The verb *prefigure* indicates that there must be a separate and distinct entity that is the type and a separate and distinct entity that is the antitype. Oil, therefore, is a type of the Holy Spirit, for the use of oil in the Old Testament as a distinct substance prefigured in several

divinely purposed ways the subsequent work of the Spirit.

An Illustration

To illustrate is to make clear by elucidation, adornment, or pictures. In an illustration it is not necessary to have the concept of prefiguring as in a type. In other words, an illustration is suggested by the reality (or antitype) itself. Obviously more may come under the concept of an illustration than under a type. The servant story of Genesis 24 serves as an illustration of the Holy Spirit although I would not call it a type.

It seems best to use *type* rather carefully and guardedly. If something is not clearly a type, then call it an *illustration*. Other words, such as *emblem* and *symbol*, may also be legitimate labels for certain of the biblical representations of the Holy Spirit, but the distinction between these concepts is not always clear-cut. Therefore, it is simpler and quite legitimate to use the broad category of illustration to include all those representations that cannot be understood specifically as types.

SOME SPECIFIC REPRESENTATIONS

All the biblical descriptions of the person and work of the Holy Spirit, whether in type, by emblem, with symbol, or by illustration, help us to better understand Him. Therefore, each one has its own contribution to the doctrine. They are listed here alphabetically, rather than by categories.

Breath (see *Wind* below)

Clothing (Luke 24:49)

Christ was clearly predicting the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost and described it as being "clothed with power from on high." This emblem has four features.

1. Power (because it is clothing that God puts on us, not that with which we clothe ourselves).
2. Protection. Just as clothing is a covering, so the Holy Spirit protects those whom He covers.
3. Holiness (again because it is from God; compare Ephesians 4:24).
4. Pictorial emblem of our relationship as belonging to God and representing Him (see Luke 15:22). Today, the commencement gown and hood represent the university from which the wearer received the honor; the regalia itself is an emblem.

Dove (Matthew 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:22; John 1:32)

All four Gospels mention that at Christ's baptism the Holy Spirit descended on Him like a dove. The emblem speaks of two aspects of the Spirit.

1. The purity of the Spirit (compare Matthew 10:16, where "innocent as doves" literally means "unmixed" or "pure" as doves).
2. The heavenly origin of the Spirit (the dove descended from the opened heavens).

Earnest (2 Corinthians 1:22; 5:5; Ephesians 1:14)

The principal idea in the concept of an earnest is that of a *pledge*, the term used in the *New American Standard Bible* and some other translations. The presence of the Holy Spirit in the believer's heart is the pledged guarantee on the part of God that the believer will receive all the promised future blessings of his salvation. The fact that God gives the earnest of the Spirit binds Him to fully complete the salvation He has begun in the believer. Even in human affairs, once earnest money has been given, the purchaser is pledged to go through with a transaction. What a sure guarantee is the presence of the Spirit, God's earnest, that He will never fail any of His promises connected with our salvation!

Fire (Acts 2:3)

It was not actually fire that appeared on the day of Pentecost but cloven tongues "as of fire." Because they were cloven they appeared as fire, which shoots forth like tongues or fingers of flame; but it was tongues that sat on each of the disciples, not fire. However, this manifestation which is described like fire and which appeared when they were filled with the Holy Spirit would have had significant meaning to the people so familiar with the Old Testament use of fire. It conveyed:

1. The presence of the Lord (compare Exodus 3:2).
2. The approval of the Lord (compare Leviticus 9:24).
3. The protection of the Lord (Exodus 13:21).
4. The judging, sanctifying, and cleansing power of the Lord (Leviticus 10:2; Isaiah 6:1–8).

What is the meaning of the announcement of John the Baptist that Christ would baptize "with the Holy Spirit and fire" (Matthew 3:11)? One interpretation says that this prophecy was completely fulfilled at Pentecost. Another suggests that the baptism with the Spirit was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost but that the fire is a general reference to the purifying work of sanctification of the Spirit throughout this present age. A third interpretation says that John as the last of the Old Testament prophets was speaking of Pentecost in his reference to the baptism with the Spirit, and of judgments associated with the second coming of Christ in the reference to fire. That seems to be supported by verse 12.

Oil (Luke 4:18; Acts 10:38; 2 Corinthians 1:21; 1

John 2:20)

Oil is a type of the Holy Spirit because of its divinely purposed use in the Old Testament. In relation to the ministry of the Holy Spirit it prefigures three things.

1. The necessity of the work of the Spirit in preparation for ministry was typified in the Old Testament by the anointing with oil at the induction of priests (Exodus 40:9–16; Leviticus 8:30; Isaiah 61:1–2; compare Luke 4:18). The ministry of the Spirit is indispensable for a fruitful ministry for the believer today (Acts 1:8).
2. The sole light in the tabernacle was provided by the holy oil in the lampstand that lighted the place where God was worshiped, the place that in every particular foreshadowed the work of Christ (Exodus 27:20–21). Likewise, today it is the Holy Spirit who throws the spotlight upon Christ who is the truth and who glorifies Christ before the eyes of the Christian (John 16:13–15; 1 John 2:20).
3. Oil was also used in the cleansing and sanctifying of the priests and lepers (Leviticus 8:30; 14:17). Similarly, the Spirit sanctifies believers in this day.

Seal (2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:13; 4:30)

When a person believes in Christ he is sealed immediately and permanently with the Holy Spirit. Apparently, the Holy Spirit is both the seal and the One who does the sealing. The seal as the token of the completion of a transaction was known in the Old Testament (Jeremiah 32:9–10). The Holy Spirit seal on the believer indicates:

1. Ownership by God.
2. Security that is permanently guaranteed (for only God can break the seal, and He has promised never to do so).
3. God’s authority over what He owns.
4. The realization of all promised blessings at the day of redemption (Ephesians 4:30).

Servant (Genesis 24)

The story of Abraham’s servant seeking a wife for Isaac illustrates in a number of ways the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

1. Just as the purpose of the servant was to serve and to speak only of his master, so the Holy Spirit does not speak “on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak” (John 16:13).
2. The mission of the servant was to seek a bride for Isaac. Today the Holy Spirit adds to the body of Christ those who believe and who altogether form His bride.
3. The servant gave gifts to the bride, just as spiritual gifts are given today through the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:11).

Water (John 4:14; 7:38–39)

The Lord Jesus compared the future ministry of the Spirit to water springing up and flowing out of the believer’s life. Therefore this emblem signifies:

1. The eternal life that springs up from that which was entirely barren before.
2. The abundance of the “life more abundant” that Christ promises (John 10:10).
3. Service, for out of the believer shall flow rivers of living water to others.

Wind (John 3:8)

The Lord illustrated the work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration by using wind. This indicates the work of the Holy Spirit in the new birth as having several characteristics.

1. His work is invisible. No one can see the wind, although one can see the results and effects of the wind. Likewise, the new birth is in itself invisible, although the results of it in a changed life are visible.
2. The Spirit’s work is sovereign; He touches whom He wills to touch, just as the wind blows where it pleases (John 3:8). He works according to the sovereign purposes of God in His elective grace.
3. The work of the Spirit in the new birth is heavenly. The Lord sharply contrasted the earthly birth with the new, heavenly birth. The latter is “from above” (compare John 3:31; 19:11). The wind, too, is from the heavens and blows upon the earth.
4. Wind is powerful, as anyone who has seen a tornado or hurricane well knows. The Spirit’s work in the new creation is also powerful, although not destructive as wind often is.

TWO CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

First, in our study of the Holy Spirit we should not neglect or ignore these illustrations of the Spirit and His ministries. Without them we would be impoverished, for they help enrich the truth to our own hearts and they provide excellent teaching and preaching material for presenting the truth to others.

Second, the specific representations of the Spirit are related to common, everyday things: clothing, fire, seal, water, wind. Perhaps this is God's deliberate way of urging us to be thinking of the Spirit more than we usually do. In other words, when we put on our clothing in the morning we should be alerted to remember that we are clothed with the protection of the Spirit. When we seal a letter or package we should remember that we as believers are sealed until that future day of redemption. When we take a drink of water we can be reminded to thank God for the water of eternal life and be alerted to look for opportunities of service as that living water of life flows out of us. Instead of downplaying these illustrations (as is often done), we should highlight them to help remind ourselves of the ministries of the indwelling Spirit as we move through the activities of each day.

5
THE HOLY SPIRIT'S PART IN CREATION

EVIDENCE OF THE SPIRIT'S PART IN CREATION

The work of creation is generally ascribed to God without distinguishing what particular aspects of creation each person of the Trinity might have been involved in. Clearly, however, all were involved: God (Genesis 1–2), Christ (John 1:3), and the Holy Spirit.

From the Scriptures

Genesis 1:2. The work of the Spirit in creation is not expressly mentioned until after the original creation (assuming that v. 1 records the fact of the original "stuff" God used in creation and v. 2 begins the account of the fashioning of the world). Of course as a member of the Trinity He participated in the act of original creation in 1:1. But specifically in verse 2 the Spirit "was moving over the surface of the waters." The Hebrew word for "was moving" is used elsewhere in the Old Testament only in Deuteronomy 32:11, where it is translated "hovers," and in Jeremiah 23:9, where it is translated "tremble" or "shake." Apparently the Spirit hovered over and cared for the original but as yet unfashioned earth.

Psalm 33:6. Here the word translated "breath" is, of course, the Hebrew word "spirit." Whether this is a reference to the Holy Spirit, however, is very debatable, for the "spirit of his mouth" cannot be said to refer clearly to a person, to say nothing of clearly referring to the third person of the Trinity. Some, nevertheless, do understand it as a reference to the Holy Spirit.

Psalm 104:30. This seems to be a clearer reference to the Holy Spirit, although it cannot be positively related to the creative work recorded in Genesis 1–2. The reference to sea animals in verse 26 and the use in the Hebrew of the term *bara'* (sometimes translated "created") in verse 30 may link this to the Genesis creation.

Isaiah 40:12–14. In these verses the Spirit is directly connected with the planning and management of the universe.

Job 27:3; 33:4. These verses refer to the Spirit's work in creating man.

From the Use of *Elohim*

Although the form *Elohim* is a genuine plural, it is undoubtedly a plural of majesty rather than a numerical plural; that is, it speaks of God as the supreme One, not of the Trinity. It signifies God's plenitude of power and majesty. When referring to the true God, it is generally used with other parts of speech in the singular. Although the word *Elohim* does not teach the Triunity of the Godhead, it does allow for the full and clear revelation of the Triunity of God in the New Testament. Therefore, in the light of New Testament truth concerning the Trinity, the many references in Genesis 1 that refer to *Elohim* as the creator include the work of the Son and of the Spirit along with that of the Father. Thus *Elohim* in the light of New Testament revelation is a further proof of the fact that the Holy Spirit shared the work of creation.

SOME PARTICULARS OF THE SPIRIT'S PART IN CREATION

He Gave Life to the Creation

This is the basic work of the Spirit in many areas, including that of creation (compare John 6:63; 2 Corinthians 3:6). He gives life to the creation (Job 27:3; 33:4; Psalm 104:30).

He Gave Order to the Creation

The creation is one of order. This is seen in the waters, the heavens, and the earth (Isaiah 40:12), and particularly in the orderly process in the heavens (Job 26:13).

He Adorned the Creation

It was the Spirit's particular work to adorn the creation to the glory of God (Job 26:13; Psalm 33:6). The heavens do declare the glory of God, and it seems as if this was one of the special ministries of the Holy Spirit in relation to the work of creation.

He Preserves the Creation

Although Christ is usually associated with the preservation of the universe (Hebrews 1:3), there is at least one reference to the Holy Spirit's part in this work. Psalm 104:29–30 indicates not only the Spirit's part in creating but also His work of renewing, so that it is preserved.

To sum up: Although not a great deal is said specifically about the Spirit's activity in creation, He was involved. Therefore, as we contemplate all the wonders of creation we bow in the presence of the One (Father, Son, and Spirit) who accomplished this mighty feat.

Yet we also think of an even greater feat—the new creation which the Holy Spirit accomplishes through the new birth.

6
THE HOLY SPIRIT'S PART IN REVELATION AND INSPIRATION

THE MEANING OF THOSE TERMS

Revelation basically means the disclosure of that which was previously unknown. In relation to the material recorded in the Bible, it means the disclosure of God's message to mankind that would not have been known apart from His revealing it. Revelation concerns the content or material which is made known, not the manner or means of its disclosure or the form of the product that results from that disclosure.

On the other hand, *inspiration*, when used in a theological sense, concerns the resultant product of revelation, the Bible. The common meaning of the word, however, is simply to fill or breathe into. Usually the idea of some influence from outside is involved. The Greek word *theopneustos*, used in 2 Timothy 3:16, simply means God-breathed, that is, breathed out from God; it does not necessarily indicate being breathed into anything. *Spiration* (breathing out) rather than *inspiration* (breathing into) would be a better word to use in that reference. The verse simply says that the Scripture is God-produced without mentioning any of the means God may have used in producing it or the result of its production.

Biblical inspiration may be defined as God's superintending human authors so that, using their own individual personalities, they composed and recorded without error His message to man in the words of their original writings in the Bible. God superintended but did not dictate. His superintendence was sometimes very direct and sometimes less direct but always active, so that He guarded the writers from writing inaccurately. He used human authors including their own individual styles. They were not stenographers receiving dictation. The result of this combination of human and divine authorship was a record that in the original manuscripts was without error.

Such a concept of inspiration incorporates several resultant ideas.

1. If the Bible is thus inspired, it therefore has complete accuracy. Infallibility and a high concept of inspiration are inseparable. And the Bible claims such for itself (Matthew 5:17; Galatians 3:16).
2. The Bible then would have authority, for infallibility brings with it absolute authority.
3. Such an inspired record could only have been given in words and not

> merely thoughts, for there is not any genuine or accurate thought communication without its being conveyed in words. Thoughts without words are unexpressed, and accurate expression of thoughts can be accomplished only in accurate words.

The entirety of God's revelation is, of course, not contained in the Bible. He was revealed through the oral messages of the prophets, not all of which were preserved; He has also revealed Himself to some extent in nature; and He revealed Himself in Christ, who did many things not recorded in the Bible (John 20:30). But revelation always concerns the material God has used to reveal Himself, whereas inspiration concerns the method by which the material was recorded in the Bible. An additional comparison: illumination concerns the understanding of the meaning of God's revelation.

THE AUTHOR OF REVELATION

Human Instruments

The principal human instrument of revelation in the Old Testament was the prophet. Although the giving of revelation was not limited to the prophet (for example, it also came through such people as Eve, Cain, and Hagar), no one could qualify as a true prophet unless he had received revelation from God. In New Testament times prophets, apostles, and those closely associated with them were the chief human agents of receiving and communicating revelation (1 Corinthians 14:1–6; Ephesians 2:20).

The Divine Instrument

However, behind the human writers was the divine author of revelation, the Holy Spirit. Peter, referring to Old Testament prophecy, declared that "men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" (2 Peter 1:21). The agents were men; the source was God; and the single author moving the human instruments was the Holy Spirit. The word *moved* indicates that the Spirit bore the human writers along as He directed their writings. The same word appears in Acts 27:15 of the strong wind that irresistibly carried and directed the ship on which Paul was being taken to Rome.

Second Peter 1:21 also makes a second important statement. Not only were the writers borne by the Spirit; they were *not* borne along by their own wills. The same verb appears in both parts of the verse, thus declaring that man's will (including his will to make mistakes) did not bring us the Scriptures; rather, the Holy Spirit, who cannot err, did.

This inclusive statement of Peter is supported by many examples elsewhere in Scripture. The Old Testament prophets declare that they spoke by means of the Spirit (2 Samuel 23:2; Ezekiel 2:2; Micah 3:8). Furthermore, the New Testament attributes many Old Testament Scriptures to the Spirit as their ultimate source (Matthew 22:43; Acts 1:16; 4:25). On the basis of such references it is quite scriptural to conclude that the Holy Spirit had a large place in the giving of God's revelation.

THE MEANS OF REVELATION

The means of revelation were varied.

The Spoken Word

Revelation came through the spoken word. On many occasions this word was spoken audibly and directly from God (Exodus 19:9; 1 Samuel 3:1–14), although in other instances it was given to the heart and mind of the prophet, who then spoke it to the people. The direct voice of God speaking on these occasions is a vivid reminder that revelation is specific, clear, and in words. That the Holy Spirit is the particular person of the Trinity who functioned in the giving of God's revelation in words is evident from such passages as Acts 28:25–27 in comparison with Isaiah 6:9–10.

Dreams

Dreams were used many times in early days (Genesis 20, 31, 37, 40–41) and will be used again in the future (Joel 2:28–29). Generally dreams were not the method used in giving revelation to the prophets, but they were often used in relation to heathen men (Genesis 41; Daniel 2, 4).

Visions

In a vision the human agent was a more active participant than in a dream. The state of sleep did not seem to be as necessary in receiving a vision as it was in a dream (Genesis 15:1; 46:2; Isaiah 1:1; 6:1; Ezekiel 1:1–3). And yet the recipient was not merely awake as at other times, but his soul and senses seemed to be elevated to some higher state.

THE MINISTRY OF THE SPIRIT TO NEW TESTAMENT WRITERS

Before the Lord Jesus left the earth He promised that the Spirit would minister to the disciples in recalling to their minds the things He had taught them (John 14:26).

The Person and Ministry of Christ

This avenue of revelation was not connected with the work of the Spirit except as He was involved in the life and ministry of Christ (see, for example, Matthew 3:16–17).

THE DIVINE AUTHOR IN INSPIRATION

Although the Scriptures were breathed out from God (2 Timothy 3:16), the particular person of the Godhead who carried the human authors along was the Holy Spirit. The result of this divine-human effort was the inspired text of the Bible. That the Spirit is the particular Agent involved in this work of inspiration is demonstrated in the following ways.

1. The Old Testament witnesses to the fact that the Spirit spoke through its writers (2 Samuel 23:2–3). This specific reference to the Spirit is reinforced by the many references to the fact that the Lord spoke through men. “Thus says the Lord” resounds everywhere in the pages of the Old Testament.
2. The New Testament assigns Old Testament quotations to the Holy Spirit as their author. Christ, in His encounter with the Pharisees, quoted from Psalm 110, written by David and attributed to the Holy Spirit as the divine author of that psalm of David. Christ declared: “David himself said in the Holy Spirit, ‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, Until I put Your enemies beneath Your feet”’” (Mark 12:36).

   In connection with the replacement for Judas, Peter, quoting from Psalm 41:9, attributed the passage to the Spirit (Acts 1:16–20). The same was done with Psalm 2 when Peter led the group in the prayer recorded in Acts 4:24–25. Paul also quoted from the Old Testament and assigned its authorship to the Holy Spirit (Acts 28:25–26; compare Isaiah 6:9–10). The writer to the Hebrews did the same in at least two places in his letter (3:7–11; 10:15–17).
3. The promise of Christ indicated that it would be the work of the Spirit to provide accurate recounting of the events of His life (John 14:26).

THE SCOPE OF THE INSPIRED MATERIAL IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The word *plenary* when used in relation to the inspiration of the Bible means that the entire Bible is inspired. However, there were different kinds of material included in it.

Records of the Unknown Past

In guaranteeing the truthfulness and accuracy of the records of the unknown past, inspiration guided the writing of that which was made known by revelation to the authors. Even if existing documents were used in the compiling of the books, inspiration was still operative in superintending what was used from those existing documents. However, the revealing of these matters concerning the unknown past was probably largely accomplished through direct revelation.

Records of History

Much of the Old Testament and of the Gospels falls into this category. Inspiration again guarantees the accuracy of what is recorded and guided the choice of material as well. Also, if documents were used, this did not obviate the need for the work of the Holy Spirit (compare Luke 1:1–4).

Dictated Material

The Ten Commandments, for instance, were dictated by God and merely transcribed by Moses. In dictated portions, of course, the writers' distinctive traits are nil. Note, however, that only a relatively small proportion of the Bible falls into this category of dictated material. The doctrine of verbal, plenary inspiration is not the dictation theory of inspiration (which makes the human authors little more than secretaries to whom God dictated His words).

Prophetic Messages

This material included both the contemporary prophetic messages and the forecasting of future events. In relation to the latter, even though the prophet did not always understand what he wrote, its accuracy was nevertheless guarded by

the work of the Holy Spirit in inspiration (compare 1 Peter 1:10–11; 2 Peter 1:21). The accuracy of many of the prophecies concerning the future—particularly Old Testament ones—can easily be confirmed by their subsequent fulfillment.

Devotional Literature

Some of the devotional literature included in the Bible poses a problem in relation to the doctrine of inspiration. Does inspiration guarantee only the accurate record of these thoughts, or are they to be understood as a true revelation of the mind and will of God? Can one be sure that the human experiences and reactions being recorded are proper ones? Inspiration, of course, does assure the accuracy of the records, and in most instances it is apparent that it also guided the authors so that those experiences that would give us a true picture of God and of valued experiences with God were the ones which were recorded.

THE INSPIRATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

The proof of the inspiration of the New Testament must be approached in a slightly different manner from that of the Old. A verse like 2 Timothy 3:16 certainly includes all the Old Testament but not all of the New. Nevertheless, the inspiration of the New Testament can be affirmed in the following ways.

It Was Authenticated by Christ

The Lord placed the oral prophetic ministry of those who proclaimed the message in His name on a plane of equal authority with Himself. The message of both the seventy and the Twelve (at their first commissioning) was so authenticated (Luke 10:16; Matthew 10:14). Also, the disciples were assured of this authority in the Upper Room just before His death (John 13:20).

Furthermore, on the same occasion they were promised the aid of the Holy Spirit in bringing to their remembrance after His death the things that Christ had taught them (John 14:26). This great promise is an incontrovertible preauthentication of what was later recorded by these disciples in the books of the New Testament. This promise was broadened to include not only those things Christ had personally taught them while on earth but also those things He would subsequently reveal to them after His resurrection and the descent of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost (John 16:14). These two verses together (John 14:26 and 16:14) incorporate all the subsequently written record of the New Testament in and under His authentication and authority.

It Was Asserted by the New Testament Writers

The writers of the New Testament were conscious of the authority of their writings. They seemed to realize that they were adding to the body of Scriptures and that the content of their writings had equal authority.

For instance, after Paul wrote correcting some of the difficulties in the Corinthian church he declared: “If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord’s commandment” (1 Corinthians 14:37). In correcting laziness among the Thessalonians he concluded: “If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special

note of that person and do not associate with him, so that he will be put to shame" (2 Thessalonians 3:14). (See also Galatians 1:7–8 and 1 Thessalonians 4:2, 15.)

It Was Attested to by the Apostles of Each Other's Writings

Not only were the writers of the New Testament conscious of the operation of the Spirit's work of inspiration in the case of their own writings, but they also attested to it in the case of each other's writings. Paul, in proving a point about elders, quoted from Deuteronomy 25:4 and Luke 10:7 in 1 Timothy 5:18. He called both quotations "Scripture." Peter bore his testimony to the inspired character of Paul's writings, calling all of them "Scripture" (2 Peter 3:16). This he did in spite of the fact that he had to confess his own inability to understand fully these inspired writings of Paul. In addition, it is significant that not more than half a dozen years elapsed between the writing of Luke and the writing of 1 Timothy.

It Was Assumed in the Manner of the Holy Spirit's Quotation of the Old Testament

What is usually considered a problem is in reality a proof of the inspiration of the New Testament. For one thing, the formulas by which the New Testament writers introduced their quotations commonly refer to God as the author. This is the case even when the quotation is not a saying of God so recorded in the Old Testament but the word of Scripture (compare Matthew 19:4–5; Acts 4:25–26; 13:35; Hebrews 1:5–8; 3:7–11; 4:4). Such could be the case only if the writer was treating all Scripture as a declaration of God.

For another thing, Old Testament quotations are sometimes personified so that the actions of God are ascribed to the Scripture (compare Romans 9:17; Galatians 3:8). This could only be done if the writer in his own mind was habitually identifying the text of Scripture with God speaking. Furthermore, the use of the terms *law* or *prophets* in references that belong to parts of the Hebrew canon other than the law or the prophets shows that the whole Old Testament was considered equally binding and authoritative.

Finally, it can be demonstrated that the New Testament writers quoted the Old Testament in a manner consistent only with the highest regard for the texts quoted. This involved their assuming the right to translate quotations from the Hebrew text into Greek. When they used the Greek Septuagint they often did it

because the point they were making was clearer in the Septuagint. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls opens the possibility that occasionally the Septuagint may have represented a better Hebrew original. In such instances, then, it would have been more accurate to quote from the Septuagint than from the Masoretic text.

The fact that Old Testament passages were often paraphrased is no problem. The minds of the writers were full of Scripture and they did not have quotation marks to employ in their writing. Verbal inspiration assures in such cases that the words of their paraphrases were also exactly what God wanted to use in conveying His message. Sometimes paraphrases or summaries were preferable to long quotations. But in all these methods it is the Holy Spirit, the ultimate author, using human beings by superintending their writing so that God's complete message was recorded without error. And the fact that the Spirit did use free quotations or even quotations from a translation like the Septuagint could only be done if they understood the Spirit to be the acknowledged author of both Testaments.

It Was Accepted by the Early Church

The fact that the canon of the New Testament was accepted by the church because the apostolic authority of the individual books was recognized is further attestation to the inspiration of those books. While this acceptance was not universally agreed upon immediately, it was agreed on by A.D. 397, and universally so. Indeed, the question of New Testament canonicity has not been a problem in the church since then.

To be sure, these general principles do not deal with specific examples and may not solve every problem (though they probably will provide *a* solution to every problem cited). The believer need not give up his investigative mind in order to hold verbal, plenary inspiration. But in his investigations the words of B. B. Warfield are worth keeping in mind:

> Every unharmonized passage remains a case of difficult harmony and does not pass into the category of objections to plenary inspiration. It can pass into the category of objections only if we are prepared to affirm that we clearly see that it is, on any conceivable hypothesis of its meaning, clearly inconsistent with the Biblical doctrine of inspiration. In that case we would no doubt need to give up the Biblical doctrine of inspiration; but with it we must also give up our confidence in the Biblical writers as teachers of doctrine.[1]

Thanks be to our God, who breathed out the Scriptures. Thanks be to our Lord, who is revealed so clearly in them. Thanks be to the Holy Spirit, who superintended the writers. And thanks be to those human beings who were used to write the message down.

Although the Bible is a completed project, our understanding of it is an ongoing process. Just as the Spirit was involved in giving us the Bible, He is also involved in teaching us its meaning (John 16:12–15; 1 Corinthians 2:10–16). We owe much, then, to the ministry of the Holy Spirit that we might have, know, and understand God’s truth.

NOTE

1. B. B. Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* (Nutley, N.J.: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1948), 220.

7
WHAT THE HOLY SPIRIT DID FOR PEOPLE IN OLD TESTAMENT TIMES

A DISTINCTIVE MINISTRY

The ministries of the Spirit in relation to people in Old Testament times were not always the same as that which He does today for people. Pentecost marked the beginning of certain distinctive and significant differences, although we should not conclude that His ministries were rare or sparse in Old Testament times. When we speak of the Spirit “coming” at Pentecost we do not mean that He was absent from the earth before then. We mean that He took up His residence in believers at Pentecost although He was present always before (obviously, since He is God).

THE NATURE OF HIS WORKS

Selective Indwelling

By the word *selective* we mean that the indwelling of the Spirit in Old Testament times was not necessarily *universally* experienced among God's people. His relationship to people can be expressed in three words.

First, it is said that the Spirit was *in* certain ones. Pharaoh recognized the indwelling of the Spirit in Joseph (Genesis 41:38). Whether Pharaoh understood this as a reference to the Holy Spirit may well be questioned, but that it was the ministry of the Spirit in Joseph seems clear from later revelation. The Spirit was clearly said to be in Joshua, and this is the reason for God's choosing him (Numbers 27:18). Further, the Spirit was said to be in Daniel (Daniel 4:8; 5:11–14; 6:3). The preposition *in* in all these verses is *beth* in Hebrew.

Second, the Spirit is said to have *come upon* many. The preposition used to describe this relationship is *al*, and this relationship was experienced by many people in Old Testament times (Judges 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 1 Samuel 10:9–10; 16:13). Is there any difference between the Spirit's *being in* and the Spirit's *coming upon* men? We are probably not to understand any significant difference except that the idea of "coming upon" seems to imply the temporary and transitory character of the Spirit's relationship to Old Testament saints.

Third, the Spirit is said to have *filled* some. This is recorded of Bezalel in relation to his leadership of the craftsmen working on the tabernacle (Exodus 31:3; 35:31). One may assume that this special filling for service presupposed the Spirit's indwelling or at least His having come upon him.

What do these examples indicate? Simply that, although the Spirit did indwell men in Old Testament times, it was a selective ministry, both in regard to whom He indwelt and for how long. Can this relationship be summarized in any simple way? Yes, for the Lord summarized it by telling His disciples that up to that time the Spirit had been abiding with *(para)* them, though on and after the day of Pentecost He would be in *(en)* them (John 14:17).[1] From this statement two things are clear concerning the Old Testament work of the Spirit.

1. It was not sporadic, even though it may have been limited as to persons included and the length of time they experienced His ministry. The word

abides, in any case, does not indicate a sporadic ministry.

2. Nevertheless, His ministry was different from that which began on Pentecost, for the Lord carefully characterized the ministry as *with* in contrast to *in*, which began at Pentecost. Although in the Old Testament there were clear instances when the Spirit indwelt people, His ministry could not be described generally as a ministry of being in them but with them. This is a significant contrast.[2]

Restraint of Sin

One of the clear ministries of the Spirit in the Old Testament was that of restraining sin. This He did from the dawn of human history (Genesis 6:3). His very names and titles, too, must have had a restraining effect on men as they considered Him (Nehemiah 9:20; Psalm 51:11).

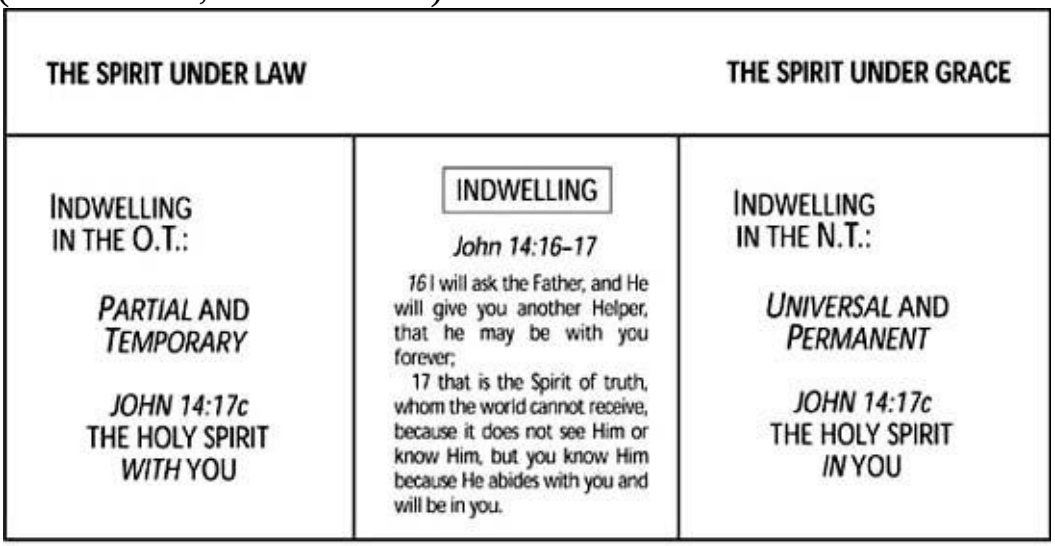
Enablement for Service

Mention has already been made of Bezalel's special endowment for service in the construction of the tabernacle (Exodus 31:3). This supernatural ability did not exclude or replace his native ability but was in addition to it. Some of the judges were given Holy Spirit enablement (Judges 3:10; 6:34; 11:29). Samson's strength was produced by the Spirit's coming on him (Judges 14:6). When David was anointed king by Samuel "the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward" (1 Samuel 16:13). The New Testament reveals that the Spirit in the prophets gave them discernment and wisdom (1 Peter 1:11).

LIMITATIONS ON HIS WORKS

Limited in Their Extent

References already cited show that not all people enjoyed the enabling ministry of the Spirit. Even in Israel His enablement was not given universally, and those outside the commonwealth of Israel knew little if anything of His work on behalf of the individual. The fact that the new covenant promised for Israel a ministry of the Spirit in a greater way than they knew under the old covenant is further proof that His ministry under the old was limited even to Israel (Isaiah 59:21; Ezekiel 39:29).



SOURCE: *Professor Manfred E. Kober, Faith Baptist College and Theological Seminary, Ankeny, Iowa 50021. Used by Permission.*

Figure 7.1

Limited in Their Duration

In Old Testament times the Holy Spirit could be withdrawn from men. Samson was enabled by the Spirit from the time of Judges 13:25 until God withdrew the Spirit as recorded in Judges 16:20. The Spirit came upon Saul mightily (1 Samuel 10:10), although afterward the Spirit departed from him (1 Samuel 16:14). After his great sin, David pleaded with God not to withdraw His Spirit from him (Psalm 51:11)—a prayer never found in the New Testament.

In contrast to this temporary nature of the Spirit's relation to people in the Old

Testament, the Lord promised that in this age the Spirit would be given eternally to His followers: “I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever” (John 14:16). The universal (among believers) and permanent indwelling of the Spirit is distinctive to this age and was not experienced in Old Testament times.

Limited in Their Effect

Although there was no ministry of the Spirit guaranteed universally to all individual Israelites, all Israel benefited from the Spirit’s ministry. It was a general ministry to the nation which other peoples did not enjoy, but indwelling of all individuals within that one nation was not a part of that ministry. Such verses as Nehemiah 9:20 and Isaiah 63:10–11, 14 indicate such a general ministry to the nation.

But at the same time the effect of this ministry was not, for example, to baptize them into the body of Christ as He does today. The very fact that the Lord indicated before His ascension that the baptism by the Spirit was still future (Acts 1:5) shows that Old Testament saints did not experience it. Further, the power of a Spirit-overflowing life for service was also predicted by the Lord during His earthly lifetime as something that would be experienced only after His glorification (John 7:37–39), thus indicating that this too was unknown, at least universally, in Old Testament times. (See Figure 7.1, “Dispensational Distinctions,” for a chart of some of the differences in the Holy Spirit’s ministry in the different dispensations.)

To sum up: The Holy Spirit did have a ministry to people in Old Testament times. Indeed, it was a bountiful ministry in many cases. However, it was limited to certain Israelites (except for the general ministry of restraining evil, which affected all people); and although He did dwell in, come upon, and sometimes fill people, He did not do these things universally or permanently, even in Israel. Also, He did not perform certain other ministries until the day of Pentecost.

NOTE

1. Some textual divergence exists concerning whether the last verb in the verse is in the present tense (“is in you”) or in the future (“will be in you”). Nearly all manuscripts have the future. The present tense may have been used to harmonize this verb with the two preceding presents, “know” and “abides.”
2. See F. Godet, *Commentary on the Gospel of St. John* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1881): “The whole meaning of the phrase consists in the antithesis of the present dwelleth … and the future shall be. The contrast of the two regimens *with you* … and *in you* corresponds exactly with that of the tenses” (3:141).

8
THE HOLY SPIRIT'S MINISTRY TO OUR LORD

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

It might seem surprising to realize how much the Holy Spirit was involved in the earthly ministry of our Lord. But when all the relevant Scriptures are examined, it becomes obvious that the Spirit had important ministries during our Lord's first coming.

Agent of the Virgin Birth

The Agent of the Virgin Birth was the Holy Spirit. It was announced to Mary by the angel Gabriel that the baby to be born to her would be conceived by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35). The same fact was made known to Joseph (Matthew 1:20). Elsewhere we are told that the Father prepared Christ a body (Hebrews 10:5) and that the Son took upon Himself flesh and blood (as if it were an act of His own will; Hebrews 2:14). But the Agent of the Virgin Birth was the Spirit. Even though it is correct to say then that Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit, God is the One who is always called His Father.

Result of the Virgin Birth

The result of the Virgin Birth was the Incarnation. A *human nature* was conceived, not a person, for the second person of the Trinity existed always. With the conception of the human nature the God-man came into existence, although His humanity was a perfect one. This means that although the components of humanity were present (except a sin nature), it was a sinless human nature, not merely a sanctified human nature. Our Lord in His humanity possessed a body (Luke 2:52), a soul (Matthew 26:38), and a spirit (Mark 2:8). But the Incarnation also brought limitation—not any limitation of a moral nature but only those amoral limitations of humanity, such as the need to sleep and eat. In other words, nothing was missing from His humanity that is essential to perfect humanity and nothing was added that was nonhuman.

THE LIFE OF CHRIST

Anointed by the Spirit

In the New Testament, anointing is mentioned in relation to Christ in the following passages: Luke 4:18; Acts 4:27; 10:38; Hebrews 1:9. This probably occurred at His baptism, although anointing is not synonymous with baptism. It was not the same as the filling of the Spirit, which Christ likely experienced from the moment of birth, but anointing did mark off a new phase of His ministry during which the power of the Spirit was manifest publicly through Him. It distinguished the true Christ from all false ones. Anointing, then, had these characteristics in relation to Christ's life and ministry.

It marked Him off as Messiah. The anointing of Jesus of Nazareth marked Him off as the Messiah. Peter referred to this in the prayer which he led after the first persecution of the disciples: "For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel" (Acts 4:27). The writer to the Hebrews makes the same point about anointing as marking Jesus off: "You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness, therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness above Your companions" (Hebrews 1:9).

It empowered Him for preaching. The act of anointing empowered Jesus for His preaching ministry. In the synagogue at Nazareth He said: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor" (Luke 4:18).

It was connected with His work of healing and doing good. Peter connected Jesus' anointing with His ministry of doing good and healing people: "How God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him" (Acts 10:38).

Filled with the Spirit

There are two specific references to the filling in relation to the Lord Jesus Christ. They are (1) Luke 4:1, which says that He was filled with the Spirit after His baptism; and (2) John 3:34, which declares that God "gives the Spirit

without measure” to him. Although neither of these references specifically states that Christ was filled from the time of His conception or birth, this may be inferred from Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah. For instance, Isaiah spoke of the relation between the Holy Spirit and the Messiah in this way: “The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord” (Isaiah 11:2). In another place Isaiah prophesied concerning God’s servant: “Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him” (Isaiah 42:1). Verses like these imply that the filling of the Holy Spirit was always the experience of Messiah, and that would imply from the time of His birth.

Sealed with the Spirit

The Father set His seal of approval on the Son (John 6:27). Although the text does not say that the seal was the Holy Spirit, the aorist (“set”) may point to a particular act and time of setting the seal on Christ. If so, that time would probably be at His baptism when the Spirit descended on Him.[1]

Led by the Spirit

After His baptism Christ was led by the Spirit into the wilderness for the temptation by Satan (Luke 4:1). His continuous obedience to the guidance of the Spirit enabled Him to do always the things that pleased the Father (John 8:29).

Rejoiced in the Spirit

In Luke 10:21 it is recorded that Christ rejoiced in the Holy Spirit. This was part of the fruit of the Spirit, which abounded in Him.

Empowered by the Spirit

In the controversy with the Pharisees that led to their committing the unpardonable sin, Christ made it clear that He was casting out demons by the power of the Spirit (Matthew 12:28). The question arises: Were all of His miracles performed in the power of the Spirit? Or stated another way: Was Christ dependent on the power of the Spirit to perform His miracles during His earthly ministry? In addition to the instance in Matthew 12, the record in Luke 4:14–15, 18 also shows that His power to give sight to the blind and deliverance to the downtrodden was that of the Spirit. This passage shows that He performed numerous miracles in the power of the Spirit.

On the other hand, some of His miracles were apparently performed in His own power. The healing of the woman with the issue of blood was the result of His own power (Mark 5:30). The miracle of the healing of the paralytic who was let down through the tiling of the roof by his friends is attributed to the "power of the Lord" (Luke 5:17–26). The mass healing of the multitude after the choosing of the disciples was the result of His own power (Luke 6:19). When our Lord was accosted in the garden of Gethsemane, He replied in answer to the question of the crowd as to His identity, "I am" (John 18:6). At this they fell to the ground, evidently as a result of a momentary flash of His own power.

Thus we have clear statements that certain of His miracles were done in the power of the Spirit and certain in His own power. Therefore, a correct statement of this matter would be as follows: Christ did not always have to perform miracles in the power of the Spirit, but He did so on certain occasions, although in some instances He clearly used His own power.

What is the significance of these ways the Spirit worked in the life and ministry of our Lord?

1. In the first place, the ministries of the Spirit in anointing, filling, empowering, and leading were related to the development of Christ's human nature. Although His divine nature was immutable, His human nature was subject to development. For example, He grew physically and intellectually (Luke 2:52), and He learned obedience in the process of maturing (Hebrews 5:8). This development was in no way connected with overcoming sin, for He knew no sin, nor was it the development of a body that had been contaminated by sin. But there was genuine growth, and this was interrelated with various ministries of the Spirit.
2. The fact that Christ depended on the power of the Spirit emphasizes the depth of His condescension. That the God-man should have to be dependent on the ministry of the Spirit to Him shows something of the limitations of humanity.
3. All this is a vivid reminder of the believer's need of depending on the Holy Spirit in his life. If the Lord of glory did not do without the ministry of the Spirit, how can sinners, though redeemed, live independently of His power? Although our Lord possessed a sinless humanity, He relied on the Holy Spirit. We are far from sinless. So how much more do we need to depend on the ministries of the Holy Spirit in our lives? He depended; so must we.

THE DEATH OF CHRIST

The only direct Scripture reference that might teach that the Holy Spirit played a part in the death of Christ is Hebrews 9:14: “How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” Of course, one may infer that if the Holy Spirit sustained Him in life, He also sustained Him in the sufferings of death. But Hebrews 9:14 is the only direct reference.

The question is this: Does *eternal Spirit* refer to the Holy Spirit or to Christ’s own spirit (which also is eternal)?

Evidence That “Eternal Spirit” Is a Reference to the Holy Spirit

The evidence that “eternal spirit” is a reference to the Holy Spirit is as follows.

1. The lack of the article (literally, “through eternal spirit”) points to the Holy Spirit, just as the lack of the article in Hebrews 1:1 (literally, “in a son”) is a unique way of pointing to Christ.
2. If this is not a reference to the Holy Spirit, then the picture is of the divine nature offering up the human nature, whereas the truth is that the whole person of Christ offered Himself.
3. Theologically, it is reasonable to expect that the Spirit had a part in Christ’s death as He had in His life.[2]

Evidence That “Eternal Spirit” Is Not a Reference to the Holy Spirit

The evidence that “eternal spirit” is not a reference to the Holy Spirit but rather to Christ’s eternal spirit within Himself is as follows.

1. The lack of the article would more naturally point to other than the Holy Spirit, since the designation *Holy Spirit* usually includes the article.

2. If this is a reference to Christ's eternal spirit, then it is not a reference to the divine nature offering up the human nature, but to the entire person voluntarily offering up Himself by the action of the highest power within Himself. This is Christ's own divine spirit (proved by the adjective "eternal"), which makes the offering of the whole person of Christ.[3]

Thus the evidence is fairly equally balanced, making a definite conclusion difficult. Whether it is a reference to the Holy Spirit or Christ's spirit, what is involved in this substitutionary offering of Christ will remain an inscrutable mystery.

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

Three passages bear upon the subject of the Spirit's relation to the resurrection of Christ.

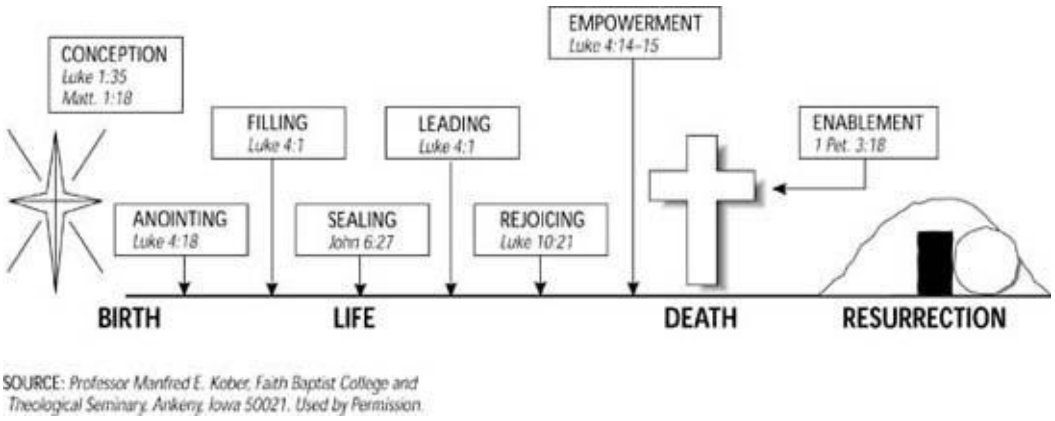
Roman 8:11

Romans 8:11 reads: "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 dwells in you." However, a close examination of the verse shows that the "He" who raised Jesus from the dead is God, not the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit's indwelling of the believer is a guarantee of the believer's future resurrection, but actually the verse does not teach that the Spirit had a part in the resurrection of Christ.

Romans 1:4

Romans 1:4 reads: "Who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord." But, again, this is a debatable piece of evidence, since it is not clear that "Spirit of holiness" is a reference to the Holy Spirit. The parallelism in the passage—"according to the flesh" (v. 3) and "according to the Spirit of holiness" (v. 4)—seems to indicate that this is *not* a reference to the Holy Spirit but to Christ's own human or divine spirit. The problem may be further studied in good commentaries, but at best it is a questionable reference to the Holy Spirit.[4]

Further, even if this is a reference to the Holy Spirit, verse 4 is not a clear reference to the resurrection of Christ but more probably to the resurrection of dead persons (i.e., those whom Christ raised from the dead during His earthly ministry and whose resurrection proved His deity). The form is plural and would seem to point to this interpretation. (However, some, such as Sanday and Headlam in the *International Critical Commentary*, say that the plural "dead ones" in connection with "resurrection" means a "dead-rising," and therefore could refer to Christ's rising from the dead.)



SOURCE: Professor Manfred E. Kober, Faith Baptist College and Theological Seminary, Ankeny, Iowa 50021. Used by Permission.

Figure 8.1

First Peter 3:18

First Peter 3:18 reads: "For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit." Although conceivably "in the spirit" *(pneumati)* could be locative and thus mean that He was made alive in His own spirit, it very likely is instrumental and means that Christ was made alive *by* the Spirit. Thus it would be a reference to the Holy Spirit.

But the problem in the verse is not so much whether this is a *clear* reference to the Holy Spirit, as it is whether it is a reference to the Spirit's work in relation to Christ's *resurrection* or to His *crucifixion*. If it is a reference to the Resurrection, then the aorist participle ("made alive") expresses action subsequent to that of the main verb ("died"). "Died," of course, the time of His death; therefore, if "made alive" refers to the Resurrection, that is action subsequent to His death. Now the problem with this is simply that unless this verse is an exception, the aorist participle never expresses action subsequent to that of the main verb.[5] If, therefore, the aorist participle were to maintain its normal meaning, it would express contemporaneous action, and thus the quickening refers to something that occurred at the same time as His death; that is, a being "made alive" on the cross. What this may have involved of the Spirit's working at the time of Christ's death is difficult to ascertain exactly, but that the Spirit did have a part in an exaltation at the time of the Crucifixion seems evident from this verse.

Actually, then, 1 Peter 3:18 is a text related to the death of Christ, and we will have to conclude that there is no specific proof for the Spirit's working in relation to the resurrection of Christ.

To sum up: The Holy Spirit is definitely declared to be the Agent of the Virgin Birth of Christ; there are many references to the Spirit's working in the life of

Christ during His ministry; there is one reference to a quickening by the Spirit at the time of Christ's death (1 Peter 3:18); but there are no clear references to indicate that the Spirit had a part in the resurrection of Christ (see Figure 8.1, "The Savior and the Spirit"). Of course, insofar as the Trinity is involved, the Holy Spirit is included in all such activities as a member of the Trinity.

NOTE

1. This suggestion is made by Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 359n.
2. C. J. Vaughan, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (London: Macmillan, 1891), 172.
3. B. F. Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (London: Macmillan, 1892), 261.
4. William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, *The Epistle to the Romans* (New York: Scribner, 1895), 9.
5. A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (New York: Harper, 1923), 861–64.

9
BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT

A TROUBLING AND CONTROVERSIAL TEACHING

One does not have to be in the ministry very long to realize how often people are troubled by the possibility that they have blasphemed the Holy Spirit and therefore can never be forgiven. For some, their supposed blasphemy of the Spirit is so genuinely and devastatingly upsetting to them that they cannot function normally. For others, it seems to be used as an excuse for not facing the claims of Christ. They think that because they allegedly committed this sin they can never be saved, and so they ignore any gospel appeal. By some it is defined as refusing to let the Spirit cause you to speak in tongues. What is the truth about blaspheming the Spirit?

On several occasions the Lord Jesus was accused of casting out demons through the power of Satan, the prince of the demons. It happened near Capernaum (Matthew 9:34); it happened in Judea or Perea (Luke 11:14–23); but the classic instance was in Galilee as recorded in Matthew 12:22–32 and Mark 3:22–30.

THE CONTROVERSY CONCERNING THE SIN

The Cause (Matthew 12:22–23)

The controversy arose because the Lord healed a man. The man was a very difficult case, for he was blind and dumb (which likely included deafness). Actually these were only symptoms of the real cause of his afflictions, which was demon possession. Jewish exorcists plied their trade in those days, casting out demons from such people. But this case seemed impossible, for how could an exorcist communicate with a man who was blind, dumb, and probably deaf (compare Acts 19:13)? Thus the healing of the man was the more astounding, and all of his maladies were cured at once. As a result, the people were amazed and began to suggest that Jesus was the Son of David, which, in effect, meant that He might be their long-promised Messiah. This riled the Pharisees and evoked their violent accusation.

The Charge (Matthew 12:24–29)

So the Pharisees hurled their accusation at Jesus. It was simply this: Satan is obliging his friend Jesus by withdrawing demons from men; who then would want to follow a person who is a friend of Satan as Jesus obviously was? Beelzebul means "Baal the prince," a guardian deity of the Ekronites (see 2 Kings 1:2; *Baal-zebub,* "Lord of the flies"), but was used by the Jews as an epithet for Satan. For the Pharisees to allege that Jesus was possessed by Beelzebul was the worst kind of blasphemy (Mark 3:22).

The Lord's reply consisted of three statements (vv. 25–29).

1. A kingdom or house that is divided against itself cannot stand (vv. 25–26). In other words, if the Lord were casting out demons by Satan's power, then Satan would be working against himself, since he would be allowing Jesus to free someone who was already under Satan's control. Satan would not destroy his own kingdom, although conceivably he might allow demons to be cast out by Jewish exorcists to confuse people, but this would not be the same kind of basic rift which Jesus' casting out of demons would be making

if He were doing it by the power of Satan.

2. The charge of diabolic power in Jesus' case was absurd since the Pharisees recognized that the Jewish exorcists did not cast out demons by the power of Satan (v. 27). Not all such exorcists were pretenders, and apparently some exorcists had success in some instances, but that they were not always successful is evident from the number of people who came to Jesus to be freed of demons.
3. The only logical conclusion to be reached from these facts is that the kingdom of God had come, and the very fact that Christ had begun to bind Satan by taking his prey from him shows that the kingdom had come (vv. 28–29). And the power by which Christ was doing this was the power of the Spirit of God.

THE CHARACTER OF THE SIN

This sin has three characteristics.

It was directed against the Holy Spirit (Matthew 12:31–32). The Pharisees had put themselves on the side of Satan by accusing Jesus of being in league with Satan. Their accusation was not simply against Christ, but against the Holy Spirit by whose power Christ was casting out demons. What did the Lord mean, then, when He declared that a sin against the Son of Man is forgivable but not one against the Spirit? He meant that men might have misunderstood His ministry and, while this was deplorable, it was forgivable. But they had no excuse for misunderstanding the power of the Spirit, for His power was well known from Old Testament times (for example, Isaiah 61:1–2; Micah 3:8). They could not misunderstand the power of the Spirit and keep on preferring darkness to light and the works of Satan to those of God and expect to be forgiven. Alfred Plummer says:

> But there is such a thing as opposition to divine influence, so persistent and deliberate, because of constant preference of darkness to light, that repentance, and therefore forgiveness, becomes impossible. The efficacy of divine grace remains undiminished, but the sinner has brought himself to such a condition that its operation on himself is excluded. Grace, like bodily food, may be rejected until the power to receive it is lost. Christ warns the Pharisees that they are perilously near to this condition. Against the dictates of reason and justice, they had deliberately treated as diabolical a work of the most surprising mercy and goodness."[1]

It was determined by a special situation. Speaking against the Holy Spirit is not merely a sin of the tongue. The sin of the Pharisees was not merely in their words. It was a sin of the heart, expressed in words. Their words revealed the wickedness of their hearts. Further, their extreme wickedness was exposed all the more by the holiness of Christ's personal presence. Theirs was a sin committed to His face. To commit this particular sin required a special situation —the personal presence of Christ on earth performing miracles. Thus to duplicate this situation today would be impossible; therefore, to commit *this* unpardonable sin today would also be impossible. Nevertheless, to show the same wickedness of heart by rejection of the power of God is not only possible

but actually happens every day. Attributing the works of the Spirit of God to Satan was the unpardonable sin in Jesus' day, and rejecting the evidences of His power in any day is also an unpardonable sin.

It was eternally damning to the soul (Matthew 12:32). Such rejection—evidence of a hardened heart—can never be forgiven, not because God withdraws His grace but because people withdraw themselves from all possible contact with God's grace. Forgiveness under such circumstances will never come in this age and therefore will never come in any age (including the one to come), since man's eternal destiny is determined in this present life.

THE CURE OF THE SIN

As long as a man has breath he can be forgiven for any sin. The Lord urged His hearers to take their stand with Him rather than against Him (v. 30), to show repentance of heart (vv. 33–35), and to speak words that would demonstrate their righteousness, rather than words that would result in their condemnation (vv. 36–37). His gracious invitation was extended to His accusers. It is still offered today to all who will believe. No sin is unforgivable as long as one has breath to call on the Lord for forgiveness (compare 1 Timothy 1:13). So if anyone thinks he or she has committed the unpardonable sin, be assured that if that one will turn to the Lord and receive Him as Savior, every sin, including the so-called unpardonable one, will be pardoned—forgiven forever.

NOTE

1. Alfred Plummer, *An Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to S. Matthew* (London: Scott, 1909), 179.

10
GENERAL GRACE

DEFINITION

General, or common, grace is the unmerited favor of God toward mankind displayed in His general concern for them. Usually this is called common grace, but the word *common* may suggest that it is plain or ordinary, which it is not. It is special and important because it includes extraordinary works of God. The word *general* indicates the focus of so-called common grace more accurately as being widespread. General grace is displayed in four circles of God's activity.

The creation. God's creation reveals His "eternal power and divine nature" (Romans 1:20). These aspects of God can be "clearly seen" by all people who will not "suppress the truth in unrighteousness" (v. 18). The glory of God can also be seen and felt by all who live under the heavens (which is everybody; Psalm 19:1–6). This revelation of God continues day and night and touches all mankind. This is the largest, all-encompassing circle of God's general grace.

Gifts given to people. There is the general providential work of God in the world in giving certain gifts to people. His work of sustaining the world is an example of this (Colossians 1:17). The sending of rain and fruitful seasons is another example (Acts 14:17). This general providential ministry is not specifically related to the Holy Spirit, but as God He would be involved in all the activities of the Godhead.

The restraint of sin. Common grace is displayed in another circle in the restraint of sin. This is a somewhat narrower circle since God sometimes allows people to live unrestrained (Romans 1:24, 26, 28). This restraint of sin is particularly the work of the Spirit (Genesis 6:3; 2 Thessalonians 2:6–7), although other persons of the Godhead are involved, and they use various intermediate means.

Conviction. There is another ministry of the Spirit recorded in John 16:7–11, where Jesus says that when the Holy Spirit comes He will "convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment." This is the narrowest circle of common grace because it is not experienced by everyone. However, it may be classed as an example of common grace simply because it is not something that is done only for the redeemed. (See Figure 10.1, "Common Grace," for a chart of the elements of general grace.)

DESCRIPTION

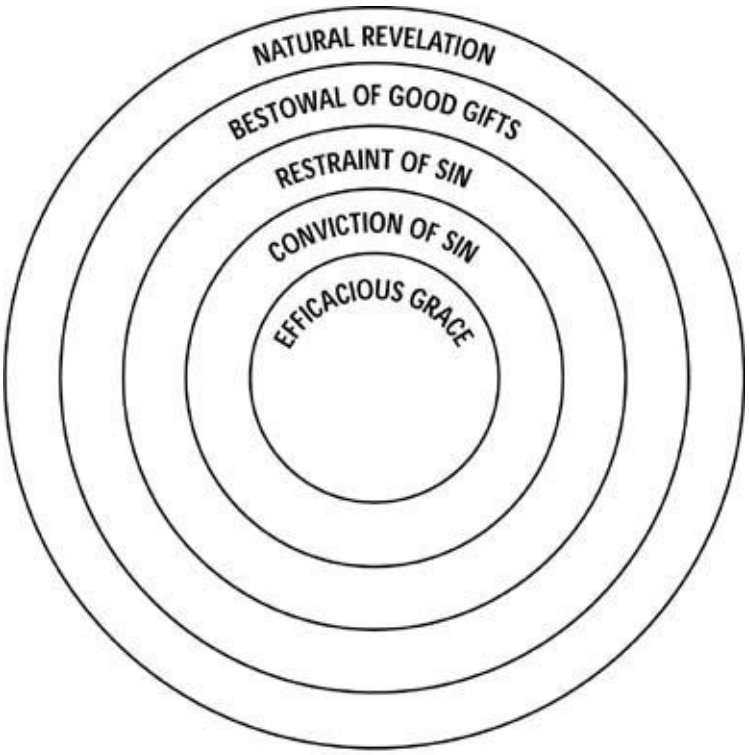
General Revelation of God

In general revelation God communicates certain truths about Himself. This is not to say that all people will understand all these facts, but they are available to be understood.

1. His glory (Psalm 19:1).
2. His power in creating the universe (Psalm 19:1; Romans 1:20).
3. His divine nature (Romans 1:20).
4. His providential control of nature (Acts 14:17).
5. His goodness (Matthew 5:45).
6. His living existence (Acts 17:28).

Good Gifts

Common grace consists also in God’s general provision of good gifts to people in this world. Total depravity means the unmeritoriousness of man in the sight of God, but it does not mean that man is incapable of performing good deeds or of receiving and appreciating good things. It simply means that whatever man does he cannot gain merit before God. In the meantime, God continues to give man evidences of His compassion and benignity. Many of these are natural blessings that God showers upon all men. Some of these blessings that are freely given to all people are as follows.



SOURCE: *Professor Manfred E. Kober, Faith Baptist College and Theological Seminary, Ankeny, Iowa 50021. Used by Permission.*

Figure 10.1

The goodness of God. "The Lord is good to all, and His mercies are over all His works" (Psalm 145:9).

Sunshine and rain. "For He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous" (Matthew 5:45).

The kindness of God. "For He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men" (Luke 6:35).

Food from the earth. "And yet He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness" (Acts 14:17).

The provision of a Savior. "We have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers" (1 Timothy 4:10).

All men, not just believers, benefit from these universally bestowed blessings, and God gives them graciously to try to lead the unbeliever to repentance. "Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?" (Romans 2:4).

Restraint of Sin

God uses many means to restrain sin. Such restraint is the work of the Holy

Spirit (Genesis 6:3), although sometimes intermediate means are used, such as the prophets (“shepherds of His flock;” Isaiah 63:10–11) or governments (Romans 13:1–4).

The most detailed passage concerning the restraint of sin is 2 Thessalonians 2:6–7: “And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way.” The central problem in these verses is the identification of the restrainer. The fact of restraining is clear, but who or what does that is not clearly specified. In verse 6 “what restrains” is a neuter participle with the neuter article. In verse 7 “he who now restrains” is a masculine participle with the masculine article. Further, Paul states that the Thessalonians were acquainted with what it is that restrains (v. 6). Also, it is apparent that the restrainer must be more powerful than Satan, who empowers the lawless one—otherwise the restrainer could not hold back such evil (v. 9). The facts from the text are these: The restrainer is a principle, the restrainer is a person, the identification was well known to the Thessalonians, and the power of the restrainer is greater than Satan’s power.

Most commentators identify the restrainer with the Roman Empire of Paul’s day.[1] It is admitted, however, by those who hold this view that the restrainer is not merely the Roman Empire but government in general, since it is quite evident that the lawless one did not make his appearance before the demise of the Roman Empire. This government view is supported from Paul’s own statement that governments are ordained of God for the purpose of restraining evil (Romans 13:1–7). However, one should recognize that governments do not always fulfill their ordained purpose and that no government nor all governments put together would be stronger than Satan himself.

Other suggestions for the identity of the restrainer include Satan (but 2 Thessalonians 2:7 seems to preclude this interpretation), some powerful angel (but Jude 9 shows the impotence of the archangel Michael in the face of Satanic opposition), or no positive identification at all. It is sometimes asserted that Paul himself was unsure. But how did the Thessalonians know if Paul did not know (2 Thessalonians 2:5–6)? It is more often stated that even though Paul and his readers knew, we who read the letter today cannot know with certainty.

Ultimately a decision as to the identity of the restrainer will be made on the basis of answering the question: Who is powerful enough to hold back Satan? The obvious and only answer to that question is that God alone has such power. Therefore, the restrainer must be God.

In this view, the neuter in verse 6 would remind us of the power of God in general, and the masculine in verse 7 would point to the person of God. If the

restrainer may be more distinctly identified as the third person of the Godhead (in line with Genesis 6:3), then the neuter may have been used simply because the word for Spirit is neuter in Greek. The masculine, then, would indicate the personality of the Spirit (as in John 16:13–14; Ephesians 1:14). Robert L. Thomas says:

> To one familiar with the Lord Jesus' Upper Room Discourse, as Paul undoubtedly was, fluctuation between neuter and masculine recalls how the Holy Spirit is spoken of. Either gender is appropriate, depending on whether the speaker (or writer) thinks of natural agreement (masc because of the Spirit's personality) or grammatical (neuter because of the noun pneuma; see John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13–14).[2]

It is really impossible to identify the restrainer as other than God. Undoubtedly He uses governments, elect angels, the Bible, the church, and other means to restrain evil; but the ultimate power behind such forceful restraint must be the power of God and the person of God. Whether Paul is specifically referring to the Holy Spirit may be more difficult to pin down, although the Spirit's restraining is clear from other Scriptures, such as Genesis 6:3; John 16:7–11; and 1 John 4:4. The Thessalonians were well acquainted with ministries of the Spirit (1 Thessalonians 1:6; 4:8; 5:19; 2 Thessalonians 2:13), so that they might well have considered "what restrains" (as well as "he who now restrains") as a reference to the

Holy Spirit.[3]

Proof of the Truth of the Gospel

Another work of the Spirit that may be classed under the heading of common grace is that of the conviction of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8–11). Some might call this an example of efficacious grace, but it probably belongs under common grace since His work of conviction does not affect all people and is not always efficacious unto salvation. Some who are "convicted" reject the gospel; others accept it. Conviction is, however, the smallest circle of common grace, since it does not affect all people.

Who are convicted? The world. This does not mean only the elect, for some who are convicted do not accept the Savior. Neither does it seem to include everybody, since this conviction specifically is of sin, righteousness, and judgment and is not just general conviction that comes from general revelation (Romans 1:18–23). *World* does not necessarily mean everybody on the planet.

(See John 12:19.) Who are convicted? A large number of people, more than the elect, but not everybody.

What does *conviction* mean? B. F. Westcott says:

> The idea of "conviction" is complex. It involved the conceptions of authoritative examination, of unquestionable proof, of decisive judgment, of punitive power. Whatever the final issue may be, he who "convicts" another places the truth of the case in dispute in a clear light before him, so that it must be seen and acknowledged as truth. He who then rejects the conclusion which the exposition involves, rejects it with his eyes open and at his peril. Truth seen as truth carries with it condemnation to all who refuse to welcome it.[4]

To give evidence or proof of the truth of the gospel is the idea of conviction.

This proving the truth of the gospel message is in the specific areas of sin, righteousness, and judgment. The proof that men are in a state of sin is because "they do not believe in Me." The *hoti* ("because") is causal and tells why men are in sin. "Man is condemned before God not because he is a sinner but because, being in a state of sin, he has refused to believe in the Savior and accept His pardon."[5]

Further, the Spirit proves to man the righteousness of Christ, and this is provable simply because (again causal) Christ rose from the dead and returned to the Father. The righteousness is the righteousness of God exhibited in the person and life of Christ and is contrasted with all the false concepts of righteousness that the world has. Christ's righteous claims were not fully vindicated until He was raised and had ascended to a place of glory and honor. Now the Spirit is able to convince men that Jesus is the righteous Savior who will justify those who put their trust in Him.

Finally, the Spirit gives demonstrable proof of judgment. This refers to the judgment to come upon all unbelievers, and the proof of a coming judgment is the already accomplished judgment of Satan (John 12:31; 16:11). The Holy Spirit persuades men that the same judgment that overtook Satan will come upon them if they persist in rejecting Christ.

The order of *sin, righteousness,* and *judgment* is a logical one. Man needs to see his state of sin, then he needs to have proof of the righteousness of the Savior who can save him from sin, and finally he needs to be reminded that if he refuses to receive the Savior he will face a certain judgment without hope of anything but condemnation.

How does the Spirit convict? Several means may be involved. The Spirit may

speak directly to people's consciences. He may use the Bible, or someone's testimony, or the Word preached. But even though people and things may be involved in conviction, it is ultimately the Holy Spirit who convicts.

When this proving work of the Holy Spirit accompanies the preaching of the gospel, all who hear the message will be enlightened to the point of understanding that the message is true. Whether each individual who hears will go on to accept the truth is not guaranteed by this ministry of the Spirit. Acceptance would involve the work of regeneration; enlightenment involves the giving of demonstrable proof of the truth of the message. But even that proving is a supernatural work of the Spirit.

Two important practical points: If conviction is the work of the Spirit, then we must never let ourselves think that our clever or even convincing presentations can convict. They may be used of the Spirit, but He does the conviction or proving. Also, when we pray before a church service or an evangelistic meeting that God will convict those in the audience, we must remember that we are asking that the truth of the gospel will be clear to those who hear it, and not that everyone will be saved. That is certainly a legitimate and necessary prayer, but conviction does not guarantee that everyone who is convicted will be saved.

DEFICIENCIES

Common grace is, of course, deficient in comparison to efficacious grace. Whereas common grace provides good gifts from God to all men, it does not include the gifts of indwelling and filling of the Spirit, for instance. Although common grace includes the restraint of sin, it does not provide regeneration and the grace of sanctification. Common grace shows the validity of the Christian gospel to men, but it does not guarantee that all who hear will accept Christ as Savior.

Nevertheless, we should be thankful that God provides evidences of His common grace to mankind. That makes it more pleasant to live in this present evil world. It shows us something of the love, patience, and long-suffering of God to all people. Because He proves the truth of our message, it makes it possible for the message to bring conviction. All in all, common grace ought to make us thankful for His general blessings and dependent on the Spirit's ministry to undergird our witness.

NOTE

1. Compare George G. Findlay, *Thessalonians*, Cambridge Greek Testament (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1904), 177–79.
2. Robert L. Thomas, "Second Thessalonians," *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 11:324.
3. Just as God ended His restraint of sin during the time of Noah, so also He will terminate His present restraint when the church is removed from earth and the Antichrist is revealed.
4. B. F. Westcott, *The Gospel According to St. John* (London: J. Murray, 1908), 2:219.
5. René Pache, *The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit* (Chicago: Moody, 1954), 57.

11
SPECIAL GRACE

DEFINITION OF THE DOCTRINE

Special grace is the work of the Holy Spirit that effectively moves men to believe in Jesus Christ as Savior. I am suggesting the word *special* instead of the word *efficacious*, which is usually used for this doctrine, since it may be clearer. It is a suitable word, for efficacious "suggests possession of a special quality or virtue that gives effective power." Also it contrasts well with *general grace*. It involves election, calling, and our salvation, and it has a practical consideration, since rightly understood it brings proper perspective on evangelism and conversion.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DOCTRINE

Special grace is effective. This is in contrast to aspects of general grace, which can be resisted or at least not acknowledged as from God. Obviously efficacious grace does not override or exclude the human act of believing as the requirement for salvation. It is the work of the Spirit that moves men to believe. It is not something accomplished apart from the human will, but it guarantees effective action upon that will, which action moves it without forcing it.

Strictly speaking, efficacious grace is an act and not a process. It may be preceded by any number of processes that lead a person to that point of decision, but the act of making the decision is the work of efficacious grace. General grace precedes and includes many acts and processes, but when and if special grace follows, it is the climactic act at the moment of believing.

DEFENSE OF THE DOCTRINE

The biblical support of the doctrine begins with the use of the word *call*. In only a very few instances does the word convey a general invitation to elect and nonelect alike (compare Matthew 22:14 and probably Matthew 9:13). The vast majority of occurrences concern the effective call that leads to salvation. From such verses as Romans 1:1; 8:28; 1 Timothy 6:12; and 2 Peter 1:3, 10 it is clear that the calling is not merely a general invitation but is that mysterious yet effective work of God through the Holy Spirit which brings man to saving faith in Jesus Christ. To those who are not called in this effectual sense, the gospel remains foolishness (1 Corinthians 1:21–25).

The theological support of the doctrine is vitally connected with the doctrine of sin. If man is incapable of coming to God, then he must have effective and supernatural aid to do so. If sin has affected people so that they are slaves to sin and unable to do that which is pleasing to God for eternal salvation (Romans 6:20–23), then salvation requires the intervention of the work of the Spirit in the effectual calling of sinners. People cannot respond to the point of being saved without it, and the proof of that is the abundant evidence of the downward path people take when they refuse even the benefits of general grace (Romans 1:24–32).

DIFFICULTIES IN THE DOCTRINE

It Is Contrary to Human Effort

It seems as if grace that is effective would involve no human effort; indeed, it would be contrary to human effort. However, God has preserved the necessity of believing, and while this is more a human responsibility than a human effort, it nevertheless is man's responsibility in making efficacious grace effective. Inscrutable as it may be, it is still true that our salvation depends on our trusting God to save us (compare John 6:37; Romans 4:5—note that it is "*his* faith," that is, the individual's faith, that counts for righteousness).

It Is Contrary to Human Responsibility

If efficacious grace is necessary to salvation, and if God alone can supply such grace, then how can God hold us responsible if we reject the Savior? There are two fallacies in such reasoning. The first is that no person has a claim on God's grace in the first place, and therefore no person can question why He gives it to some and not to others. To contemplate why anyone is saved, not why anyone is lost, is the only proper approach.

Second, such reasoning forgets that in every case where efficacious grace is not experienced, some aspects, at least, of general grace have been experienced. Although common grace is not sufficient to save, it is sufficient to reveal truths about the living and true God that, if not accepted, are sufficient to condemn. For instance, if you offered to give ten dollars to a man whom you knew needed one hundred dollars and if he rejected your ten-dollar gift, you would doubtless consider his refusal sufficient grounds for declining to give him further assistance. If, on the other hand, the needy man accepted the ten-dollar gift gratefully, you would be much inclined to give him more. The ten dollars would be insufficient to meet his need, but if refused it would be sufficient to condemn him. Those ten dollars are like common grace, which is not able to save but which, if rejected, justifiably condemns.

It Is Contrary to Fair Play

Again, as in the other two charges above, the viewpoint is wrong. Any who would charge God with lack of fairness has forgotten that no person has any

claim on God and His grace. He has also forgotten that the rejection of the many evidences of common grace bring a verdict of “Condemned!” and free God from any obligation (even though He had none at all in the first place!) to give further grace.

THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE SPIRIT TO SPECIAL GRACE

In talking to Nicodemus, our Lord made it plain that to be born again was to be born by the Holy Spirit (John 3:5–6). Paul also said that the Holy Spirit's ministry of initial or positional sanctification was necessary for salvation (2 Thessalonians 2:13). Sanctification in this verse focuses on that initial setting apart to God at the moment of regeneration. The Spirit is involved in our receiving the special grace of salvation. Notice, too, that our faith is also involved. Peter states this same truth in 1 Peter 1:2. Putting this together, one might say that special grace comes from God and is mediated through the Holy Spirit.

DEMANDS OF THE DOCTRINE

God does not bestow His special grace whimsically and without purpose. His purpose is not only to enlighten, regenerate, and bring a sinner into fellowship with Himself but also to bring glory to Himself. His purpose is that sinners who have been the recipients of special grace also “may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called [them] out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9–10). God is glorified through the display of His grace in the lives of those He has redeemed. The great doxology for the inscrutable ways of God in Romans 11:33–36 is followed immediately by the earnest appeal to the dedicated life. Grace ought always to motivate us to serve our God, who has so fully and freely bestowed that grace on undeserving and completely helpless sinners. The grace of God ought to result in the wholehearted dedication of the lives of His children.

12
REGENERATION: BORN OF THE SPIRIT

THE MEANING OF REGENERATION

Biblically, the word *regeneration (paliggenesia)* is used only twice in the New Testament—Matthew 19:28 and Titus 3:5. In the former reference, it is used as a designation for the future millennium when the Lord Jesus will reign on the throne of David over a renewed world. In the latter instance, it is connected with the accomplishing of our salvation by the "washing of regeneration" that brings new life to the one who believes. In the one instance, the word refers to the earth being made new; in the other, to people being made new. However, the doctrine of the regeneration of people is not limited to Titus 3:5. Since the term literally means to be born again, other verses that speak of the new birth are germane to the doctrine.

Theologically, regeneration of individuals precisely means that act of God which imparts eternal life to them. Sometimes it is imprecisely equated and used interchangeably with conversion, sanctification, and justification. Although these are related ideas, they are not synonyms. Regeneration is that which begins the new life; it is the new birth. Those who hold that an infant is regenerated when the water of baptism is placed upon him or her make regeneration a work preparatory to conversion.

THE MEANS OF REGENERATION

The Scriptures clearly teach that regeneration is the act of God. Direct statements show this (John 1:13) as well as statements that link regeneration to spiritual resurrection—an act which God alone can accomplish (John 5:21–24; Romans 6:14; 2 Corinthians 5:17). Also, the fact that the new birth is said to be "from above"—the literal reading of John 3:3 and the expression in 3:31; 19:11—shows it is a divine achievement. In particular, it is the work of the Holy Spirit of God (John 3:3–7; Titus 3:5). A proper concept of sin and its ravages reinforces the conclusion that regeneration must be of God and cannot be accomplished by man. Thus the means of regeneration is the Spirit's effecting the new birth in those who believe in Christ.

Faith is not strictly the means of regeneration, although it is the human requirement which when met enables the Spirit to bring about the new birth. Though faith is closely associated with the new birth, the two ideas are distinct, the one being the human responsibility and channel, and the other, the work of Spirit.

The two occur simultaneously. However, in the Reformed concept of the order of salvation, regeneration is said to precede faith. This is based on the logic that a sinner, dead in his trespasses and sins, must be given new life (i.e., regenerated) so that he or she is then able to believe (subsequently). Although this may be seen as a logical order, it is undebatably not a chronological one. Regeneration does not precede faith chronologically. In my judgment, it is unwise to state this idea even in only a logical sense, for it is well nigh impossible to eliminate chronological implications from the concept even when it is only logically presented. One might turn the logic around and argue that if a sinner has the new life and then believes, why does he or she need to believe, for that one already has been regenerated. If there is any chronological sequence in regeneration followed by faith, then there must be an interval, however brief, during which the person is regenerated without having believed. Such a monstrous idea is completely unbiblical. Regeneration and faith occur simultaneously.

The Word of God is also closely tied to regeneration in 1 Peter 1:23 and James 1:18. This is understandable, since the Word of God plays a necessary role so that a person may know what to believe and have proper content to his faith. Peter and James, by including the reference to the Word of God in connection

with regeneration, show that the Word of God (like faith) is involved in the whole process whereby God gives men the new birth.

One may put it all together this way. God regenerates (John 1:13) according to His will (James 1:18) through the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit (John 3:5) when a person believes (John 1:12) the gospel as revealed in the Word of God (1 Peter 1:23).

SOME FEATURES OF REGENERATION

It Is Instantaneous

Regeneration is not a process, although there may be events, circumstances, witness, influences, and other things that precede it. In other words, there may be many factors and circumstances that lead to a person's conversion, but the actual event of being born again happens instantaneously. This is proved by the aorist tenses used in regeneration passages such as John 1:13 and John 3:3, 5, 7. The aorist tense expresses what happens as an *event*, rather than a process, and, since it is used for regeneration, we conclude that regeneration is not a process. In addition, these aorists are in the passive voice, which means that people do not birth themselves, but that they are birthed by Someone else, the Holy Spirit. In other passages concerning regeneration, the Greek perfect tense is used (as in 1 John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18). The perfect tense also has the idea of a single, decisive, initial act (like the aorist) but adds the idea of continuing results from that instantaneous act of regeneration.

It Is Nonexperiential

The dictionary defines experiential as "derived from, based on, or pertinent to experience." With respect to regeneration, *nonexperiential* simply means it happens when one believes whether or not the person realizes it. It is not derived from a human experience; it comes from God. A believer will have experiences related to regeneration. The act of believing is one such experience, without which regeneration will never happen. In addition, there will be fruit that follows regeneration. In those aspects (believing and fruit) regeneration relates to experience. But in the matter of the source from which regeneration is derived—the Holy Spirit—it is nonexperiential.

THE FRUITS OF REGENERATION

A New Nature

The new birth brings a new nature (2 Corinthians 5:17). It does not eradicate the old (better texts do not say “all things are become new,” but “new things have come”), nor does it split the personality. Natures are capacities, and whereas the unregenerate person has only the capacity to serve sin (Romans 6:20), the regenerate person has a new nature with its capacity to serve righteousness (Romans 6:18). The Holy Spirit is also involved in the life and activity of the new creation, controlling and filling (Romans 8:4, 14; Galatians 5:16; Ephesians 5:18). The believer is not made perfect, but he does have the new capacity to please God and to grow into the image of Christ because of the new birth and the subsequent ministries of the Spirit in his life.

A New Life

The new nature will bear fruit in a new life. In passages such as 1 John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18 the abiding results of regeneration are doing righteousness, not committing sin, loving one another, believing that Jesus is the Christ, and overcoming the world. These fruits of the new birth are a vivid reminder that although a person cannot of himself effect the new birth, the results of that new birth involve considerable activity on the part of the believer. He must walk in newness of life, showing the likeness of the family of God into which he has been born and in which he is nurtured.

A CONCLUDING EXHORTATION

If you have ever had a baby, think back on the similarities between that joyous experience of physical birth and the new spiritual birth. The baby does not conceive itself; that is accomplished by the parents. The baby does not birth itself; that is done through the mother's labor. Though there is a process that leads up to the time of birth, that exact time to the minute is recorded by medical personnel. *Before* that time, the baby was unborn. *At* that time he or she was born. So also the new birth is at some precise moment. The Christian may not know that exact time, but God has recorded it.

The new baby is expected to grow. Assuming no defects, that growth will be according to well-established expectations. If some sickness comes, then we do everything to cure it. So also the new life that follows the new birth should develop in accord with the expectations of Scripture. When sin comes into the life, we should do everything we can and as quickly as possible to confess and become spiritually healthy again.

Regeneration is a wonderful truth. We cannot do it, but we certainly can glory in this incredible work of the Holy Spirit.

13
THE SPIRIT LIVES WITHIN

A DISTINCTIVE AND FOUNDATIONAL MINISTRY

The permanent and universal-among-all-believers indwelling ministry of the Spirit is at the heart of the distinctiveness of the Spirit's work in this church age. Although He did live within some people in the Old Testament, that indwelling was neither permanently guaranteed nor universally experienced even by all believers. It was also the focus of our Lord's promise to His disciples concerning the ministry of the Spirit after His (Christ's) departure from earth (John 14:17). Also, the doctrine of the indwelling is foundational to the other ministries the Spirit performs today.

THE PEOPLE WHO ARE INDWELT

Today the Holy Spirit lives in the beings of Christians only, and He does so in all Christians. This was apparently not always well known by the church, for Paul had to remind believers in the early days that this was a fact (1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19), just as it is necessary to instruct believers today of its truth. Too often, some of God's people seem to think that the Spirit comes and goes and that this erratic and usually unpredictable behavior of the Spirit is often based on the individual's feelings. Nevertheless, the truth of the Spirit's indwelling does not depend on our feeling or knowing that it is true. Its certainty is proved in four ways.

Sinning Christians Are Said to Possess the Holy Spirit

This is perhaps the most convincing evidence that the Spirit lives within all believers. If anything could drive Him out, surely it would be sin in the life. However, this is not the case. Paul's well-known statement on indwelling in 1 Corinthians 6:19 was addressed to a very mixed multitude of believers in Corinth. Many were carnal (1 Corinthians 3:1, 3). One brother was living in gross sin. (That he was a brother is implied from Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 5:5b, "That his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.") Many were at legal swords' points with each other, and these, too, were believers (1 Corinthians 6). But without exception the Spirit was living in all of them, whether they were carnal or spiritual. Indeed, their being indwelt by Him was the basis for Paul's exhortation to them to behave as Christians should.

The Holy Spirit Is a Gift

Here is a second reason we know the Spirit lives in all of us who have believed in Christ. He is a gift to us, not a reward we earn for good behavior. Many passages teach this: "Through the Holy Spirit who was given to us" (Romans 5:5; see also John 7:37–39; Acts 11:17); "God … gave to us the Spirit as a pledge" (2 Corinthians 5:5; see also 1 Corinthians 2:12). In none of them is the gift said to be given discriminately only to some believers, but rather to all believers. Nor is there any hint in any of those verses that God takes His gift back for any reason.

The Absence of the Holy Spirit

Is Evidence of an Unsaved Condition

Paul very emphatically declares: “But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him” (Romans 8:9b). In giving his own judgment as to the spiritual condition of the apostates in the churches, Jude says in no uncertain terms: “These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit” (Jude 19). The word translated “worldly-minded” in this verse is the same word translated “natural” in 1 Corinthians 2:14, another verse describing the unsaved person in terms of his lack of comprehension of any of the ministries of the Spirit. Thus it is clear from these three verses that since the absence of the Spirit is an evidence of an unsaved state, His presence is evidence of being saved. Now if His presence is given only selectively to certain believers and not to all believers, then you would have some believers who are indwelt and others who are just as surely saved but who are not indwelt. The New Testament knows of no such two different kinds of believers.

Knowledge of Universal Indwelling Is by Universal Indwelling

Knowledge of the universal indwelling of Christ is by the universal indwelling of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the One who reveals to the Christian the indwelling of our Lord Jesus in him. “The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us” (1 John 3:24). Thus the knowledge of the indwelling of Christ is dependent on the ministry of the Spirit, which is not restricted but which operates in all believers. If only some believers are indwelt by the Spirit, then only that privileged group could know that Christ dwells in them.

Our Lord predicted this link between the knowledge of Christ’s being in us and the coming of the Spirit after His ascension. It is the Spirit who would make known Christ’s presence (John 14:17–20) and who would glorify and teach of Christ (John 16:13–15). Christ is definitely said to indwell all believers (Colossians 3:11); therefore, it has to follow that the Spirit also indwells all believers so that the indwelling of Christ may be known by all. Otherwise there would be two groups of Christians—those who know of the indwelling of Christ and those who do not because they are not indwelt by the Spirit.

THE PERMANENCE OF THE SPIRIT'S INDWELLING

Does the Spirit abide permanently within the believer or is there some sin that would cause Him to depart? Some Christians sincerely believe that although the Spirit is given as a gift at conversion, He will withdraw Himself when certain sins are committed. However, the Lord said that He would abide forever (John 14:16). Furthermore, if sin could cause His removal, then that same sin must also cause the person who committed it to lose his or her salvation and become unsaved again, for the absence of the Spirit is evidence of an unsaved condition (Romans 8:9). Thus the security of the believer and the permanent indwelling of the Spirit are truths that are inseparably linked together.

It is true, nevertheless, that sin affects the ministry of the Spirit to the believer, not His presence within the believer. Sin grieves the Spirit (Ephesians 4:30) and causes the *ramifications* of His indwelling, but not the *fact* of it, to be diminished. It is the *filling* of the Spirit (to be discussed later), not the *indwelling* of the Spirit that is affected by sin.

THE PERCEPTION OF THE SPIRIT'S INDWELLING

Even though the indwelling of the Spirit is nonexperiential in the sense that it is not dependent on our experience, it is important that the Christian perceives that it is a fact in order to bring into his life certain experiences related to his fellowship and performance.

The Lord promised that His followers would know (John 14:17, 20) that the Spirit indwells. How, then, can we know?

There are two lines of evidence—the Word and our experiences. Of the two, there is no question that the Word is the better, for experiences can be missing or misleading. Indeed, we may say that the only sure proof of the indwelling of the Spirit in the lives of believers is that the Word of God declares that it is so (1 Corinthians 6:19). "May we, therefore, learn to believe that the Spirit is in us, children of God, simply because the Bible tells us so. Then, when we have believed (and not before), we shall see this Spirit bring forth in our hearts that love, joy and peace which we had hitherto sought in vain (Galatians 5:22–23)."[1]

Experience may or may not help confirm the fact of indwelling. If there is sin in the life, then there will be few if any experiences of fellowship and power, for sin hinders the working of the Spirit and may lead some Christian to the erroneous conclusion that the Spirit does not even live in him or her. Also, in the normal process of Christian growth there may be periods of slow yet steady and unspectacular growth during which there will be no unusual demonstrations of the Spirit's power. This should never be diagnosed as absence of indwelling, for experience is never an infallible test.

SOME PROBLEMS CONNECTED WITH THE SPIRIT'S INDWELLING

1. Is not obedience a condition for indwelling (Acts 5:32)?

Acts 5:32 seems to indicate that obedience is a condition for receiving the Spirit: "And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him." Is the Spirit then given only to certain believers? Before coming to such a conclusion, let us see what the required obedience was in that context.

The setting of Peter's message on this occasion leaves no doubt that he was referring to obedience of faith in Christ. He was not addressing Christians and offering to some of them who would obey a special gift of the Spirit. He was addressing the unbelieving Sanhedrin and stipulating the condition for becoming a Christian in terms of obeying by believing in Jesus as Messiah. In the very next chapter the same expression is used to describe the conversion of a number of the priests who were said to have been "obedient to the faith" (Acts 6:7).

The requirement of salvation is stated similarly in Hebrews 5:9: "And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation." Likewise, Paul stated the purpose of his apostleship and mission as "to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for His name's sake" (Romans 1:5). Thus obedience is a condition for receiving the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, but it is the obedience of faith in Christ as one's Savior, not the obedience to the many commands, that is expected of those who have already believed.

2. Are there not illustrations of the temporary nature of indwelling?

Although we have discussed the matter of the permanence of the indwelling of the Spirit, certain verses are alleged to teach that He may be withdrawn. It is recorded of Saul that the Spirit departed from him (1 Samuel 16:14), and David prayed that the Spirit be not taken from him, which would have meant an end of

his service as king of Israel (Psalm 51:11). In addition, a verse in the Gospels might seem to indicate that the Spirit may be given and taken away repeatedly (Luke 11:13). In an earlier, similar (though not parallel) message the Lord said our heavenly Father would give what is good to His children (Matthew 7:11). In the statement recorded by Luke, the Lord replaces "what is good" with "the Holy Spirit." The Spirit was given on the day of Pentecost, and He is the epitome of "that which is good." That these references are pre-Pentecostal is very important to recognize, for only after the day of Pentecost can we expect to have a normal and unvarying way in which the Spirit works in this age.

The Lord recognized the pre- and post-Pentecostal differences as late as His last conversation with His disciples in the Upper Room, where the majority of the promises concerning the coming and ministry of the Spirit were given (e.g., John 14:16, 17, 20). Therefore, even if the Spirit was removed from the lives of some people before Pentecost, the fact that this happened before Pentecost does not show that such experiences necessarily carry over into the post-Pentecost era. And we know for certain that they do not.

3. Does not the delay in the giving of the Spirit to the Samaritans prove that it is subsequent to salvation (Acts 8:14–17)?

That there was a delay in the giving of the Spirit to the Samaritans who had believed is beyond question. And this was something that occurred after Pentecost. What was the reason for this delay? Does it mean that the indwelling of the Spirit comes subsequent to salvation?

Some say that this was a filling of the Spirit, but it clearly was not, and such an answer really avoids the problem. Note the words *receive*, *fallen*, and *bestowed* in Acts 8:15–18, which bespeak of indwelling, not filling. Others say that this sequence was different because the Samaritans were the first non-Jewish group to be taken into the church. However, when the Spirit was given to Gentiles, it happened at the moment of believing (Acts 10:44), making that, if anything, the norm for non-Jewish believers.

It seems to me that the best explanation of this delay in giving the Spirit to the Samaritans lies in the schismatic nature of the Samaritan religion. Because the Samaritans had their own worship, which was a rival to the Jewish worship in Jerusalem, it was necessary to prove to them that their new faith was not to be set up as a rival to the new faith that had taken root in Jerusalem. And the best way for God to show the Samaritan believers that they belonged to the same

faith and group as Jerusalem believers (and contrariwise, the best way to show the Jerusalem leaders that the Samaritans were genuinely saved) was to delay the giving of the Spirit until Peter and John came from Jerusalem to Samaria. There could be no doubt then that this was one and the same faith and that they all belonged together in the body of Christ. This delay in the giving of the Spirit saved the early church from having two mother churches—one in Jerusalem and one in Samaria—early in her history. It preserved the unity of the church in this early stage.

4. Does not Acts 19:1–6 show that the indwelling is subsequent to salvation?

When Paul arrived in Ephesus on the third missionary journey he discovered a group of twelve disciples of John the Baptist. He asked them if they had received the Holy Spirit when they believed John's message. When they confessed complete ignorance of the Spirit, Paul explained to them the preparatory ministry of John in relation to Christ. When they heard and understood the difference, they believed and were baptized in the name of Christ, at which time they did receive the Spirit.

Whatever problem might seem to be raised by the fact that these men did not receive the Spirit under the preaching of John is resolved by remembering that they did not become believers in Christ until Paul preached to them at Ephesus. They were not believers in Jesus by believing John's message, for they obviously did not even understand the meaning of John's message and baptism (vv. 3–4), to say nothing of the Christian message. But when they did understand and believe in Jesus, then they received the Spirit immediately.

The only exception to the normal procedure of giving the Spirit at the time of conversion was the experience of the Samaritans, whose case was peculiar and unique. The pattern—and particularly the Gentile pattern—was established and followed from the time of Cornelius on, so that every Christian is indwelt permanently when he believes.

5. What is the relationship of the anointing of the Spirit to indwelling?

Anointing with the holy oil was a solemn matter in the Old Testament (Exodus 30:32–33). When a person or thing was anointed, he (or it) became holy and sacrosanct (Exodus 30:22–33). Anointing was associated with the Holy Spirit and connected with equipping for service (1 Samuel 10:1, 6; Zechariah 4). In the

New Testament a spiritual anointing is referred to only in Luke 4:18; Acts 4:27; 10:38; 2 Corinthians 1:21; Hebrews 1:9; and 1 John 2:20, 27. All these references except those in 2 Corinthians and 1 John relate to Christ being anointed in His ministry. As far as the believer is concerned, the remaining three references teach the following.

1. That God does the anointing.
2. That it is not a repeated act on His part (both 2 Corinthians 1:21 and 1 John 2:27 use the aorist tense).
3. That the anointing, though not repeated, abides (note the present tense of *abide* in 1 John 2:27).

Thus the anointing seems to be very closely related to the indwelling in that it occurs once and upon all believers without respect to their spiritual condition, and that it remains. In these characteristics it is similar to the indwelling of the Spirit.

The difference between anointing and indwelling seems to lie in their distinct purposes. The indwelling brings the presence of God into the life of the believer. The anointing, as far as the believer is concerned, is that he might be taught (1 John 2:20, 27). Actually, this seems to be the only purpose specified in the anointing of Christ and of Old Testament priests, then another purpose emerges —that of service. Anointing in these cases was to set apart for service. But teaching is the only ministry specified in relation to the anointing of the believer. Of course, as in the case of other ministries of the Spirit, the full experience of the anointing depends on being filled with the Spirit. More of the contemporary misuse of anointing in chapter 20.

Some will recall Daniel W. Whittle's hymn "Christ Liveth in Me." Because three of the four verses plus the chorus emphasize the truth that Christ does live in us, we tend to pass over the third verse, which goes like this:

> As lives the flow'r within the seed,
> As in the cone the tree,
> So, praise the God of truth and grace,
> His Spirit liveth in me.

How we do praise God that He—the Father, and Christ, and the Holy Spirit live in me.

NOTE

1. René Pache, *The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit* (Chicago: Moody, 1954), 104.

14
BAPTIZED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT: A SECURE POSITION IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

CONFUSION CONCERNING THE BAPTIZING MINISTRY

This (and perhaps the temporary character of certain spiritual gifts) is confusing to many people as they seek to understand the ministries of the Spirit. Confusion of this sort is most difficult to dispel since it is often connected with experiences some have, and it is always difficult, if not impossible, to persuade people that their experiences may not be in line with Scripture. Also, we must recognize that many believers have a sincere hunger to know and experience all that God has for them, and in seeking such, they may not always keep on track with the teaching of Scripture.

Some Reasons for the Confusion

Here are some suggestions as to why there is confusion over what the baptism of the Spirit is.

Failure to distinguish among baptisms. For many Christians, the only kind of baptism they know anything about is baptism in water. They fail to realize that there are several baptisms mentioned in Scripture. Some involve water and some do not. The Pharisees washed (literally, *baptized*) cups and utensils and vessels (Mark 7:4). John the Baptizer's baptism (different from Christian baptism) did involve water and signified association of his followers with John's message of repentance and righteousness. Baptism for the dead (1 Corinthians 15:29) apparently referred to those who by their baptism in water signified their joining the Christian group and taking the place of those who had died.

Christian baptism in water means identification with the gospel, the Savior, and a group of believers. For James and John to be baptized with Christ's baptism meant to be associated with His suffering (Mark 10:38–39). No water was involved. To be baptized in Moses involved following his leadership in bringing the Israelites out of Egypt (1 Corinthians 10:2). Spirit baptism joins one to the body of Christ and involves no water (1 Corinthians 12:13).

Failure to distinguish these various baptisms, especially water baptism in relation to the local church and Spirit baptism in relation to the body of Christ, fosters confusion and misunderstanding. For example, E. Y. Mullins, a Baptist theologian of a previous generation, understood the baptism of the Spirit as

baptism into the local church.[1]

Failure to recognize the distinctives of the church age. An unclear understanding of the distinctiveness of the church to this age leads to confusion about the baptizing work of the Spirit that forms the church. If one believes that the church began with Adam, Abraham, or John the Baptist, it will be difficult to understand the distinctive-ness of the baptism of the Spirit to this age and what that baptism accomplishes.

Failure to distinguish baptism from the gift of tongues. The association of baptism with the gift of tongues often compounds the confusion. Of course, if speaking with tongues is the evidence of the baptism of the Spirit, then the baptism may not happen at the time of salvation nor would it be experienced by all Christians. Some, to justify the association of baptism and tongues, attempt to make a distinction between the baptism by the Spirit of 1 Corinthians 12:13, which places one into the body of Christ, and the baptism *with* the Spirit of Acts 1:5, which is accompanied by tongues. However, in both verses the baptism is described as *en pneumati*, and it would seem risky at best to build two separate baptisms on exactly the same phrase.

Failure to distinguish baptism from the indwelling of the Spirit. Baptism is sometimes confused with the indwelling of the Spirit. White notes that "the initial experience of the Spirit's indwelling and enduement came to be called a 'baptism in' or 'with' the Holy Spirit."[2] This equation obscures the special and distinctive results of the Spirit's baptism.

Failure to distinguish baptism from the filling of the Spirit. Baptism is frequently confused or equated with the filling of the Spirit. Confusion is compounded by the fact that great men like Torrey and Moody were unclear. Torrey taught that a person might or might not be baptized with the Spirit at the moment of regeneration.[3] Baptism as a work of grace subsequent to salvation in Moody's life is recounted in his biography.[4] After concluding the account of Mr. Moody's baptism, Torrey comments as follows: "Once he had some teachers at Northfield—fine men, all of them, but they did not believe in a definite baptism with the Holy Ghost for the individual. They believed that every child of God was baptized with the Holy Ghost, and they did not believe in any special baptism with the Holy Ghost for the individual."[5] His point is that Moody did believe in a special baptism with the Spirit for the individual.

Results of the Confusion

Such confusion results in misunderstanding and divisions among Christians. Additionally, a lack of understanding of this doctrine obscures the important and

wonderful truth of our union with Christ and consequently wrecks the foundation of Christian living. If one does not understand the baptizing work of the Spirit, then he cannot understand the only sure basis for holy living. The baptism joins us to Christ, and this is the basis for a holy walk with the Lord.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BAPTIZING WORK

Limited to This Age

The baptizing work of the Spirit is the one work of the Spirit that is not found in any other dispensation. This is proved theologically and biblically. Theologically, the proof is based on 1 Corinthians 12:13: “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.” If it is the baptizing work of the Spirit that places a person in the body of Christ, and if the body of Christ—because it depends on the resurrection and ascension of Christ—is distinctive to this age, then so is the baptism.

Biblically, the baptizing work is never mentioned as being experienced in the Old Testament or in the days of Christ’s earthly ministry. Indeed, after His resurrection and just before His ascension He declared that it was yet future (Acts 1:5). That it first occurred on the day of Pentecost is proved by the fact that the Lord said it would occur “not many days from now,” and by the fact that Peter said it happened when he referred to the Pentecost experience as “the beginning” of the Spirit baptism in Acts 11:15–17. Although the Spirit will be active in the millennial age, no specific mention of His baptizing work then appears in the Bible. Therefore, we conclude that it is a ministry limited to this age.

Universal Among All Believers in This Age

This is proved by the three facts. The first is the wording of 1 Corinthians 12:13 viewed in its context. Paul did not say that only the spiritual element at Corinth had been baptized. Neither did he exhort them to be baptized in order to become spiritual (and certainly this would have been an easy solution to the problems in that church *if* the baptism of the Spirit means filling and enduing with power). He simply stated that *all* had been baptized with the Spirit.

The second is the wording of Ephesians 4:5: “One Lord, one faith, one baptism.” “One baptism” evidently belongs to the same group as “one Lord” and “one faith;” i.e., all Christians.

The third fact that shows this baptizing work is universal among believers is the lack of exhortations or commands to be baptized anywhere in the New Testament. One would rightly expect such exhortations if the baptism were not experienced by all Christians, but the fact that such exhortations are missing confirms the universal experience of baptism by all believers.

Occurs at Conversion Only

The baptizing work of the Spirit occurs each time a person is converted but is experienced *only once* by each believer. Some teach that the baptizing work of the Spirit was performed only at Pentecost and never again and that when a person is saved he merely partakes of what was done at Pentecost.[6] However, when people believed Peter's message delivered in the house of Cornelius, they were baptized by the Spirit just as others had been on the day of Pentecost (Acts 11:15–17). Nevertheless, a believer is baptized only once, and that at the time of his conversion. There is no scriptural reference which would indicate that the same person (or persons) was baptized a second time. Indeed, the aorist indicative used in 1 Corinthians 12:13 indicates that the event simply happened to all the Corinthians.

By contrast, the filling of the Spirit is said to be experienced by the same group on more than one occasion (Acts 2:4; 4:31), and the command to be filled is expressed by a present tense indicating that it can be repeated (Ephesians 5:18). The event of being baptized by the Spirit places one into the body of Christ; therefore, if it could be repeated, it would mean that a person would have to be removed from that body in order to be reinstated into it again by a second baptism. Such an idea is completely foreign to the Scriptures.

Is a Nonexperiential Work of the Spirit

By this is meant, as in the case of some of the other ministries of God in behalf of the believer, that the baptizing work of the Spirit is not based upon or derived from experience. It happens whether or not the believer is conscious of it. This does not mean, however, that no resultant experiences flow from this ministry. Many experiences in the believer's life are the result of being placed in the body of Christ through the baptizing work of the Spirit, but the baptism itself is nonexperiential.

Is the Work of the Holy Spirit

Mention has already been made of the fact that some consider there are two

baptisms that concern the Holy Spirit. This view is based on different translations for the same preposition used in the Greek text. That preposition is *en*. It can be translated *in* or *with* (this is the dative use of it, indicating the Spirit is the sphere into which we are baptized), and that is the way those who see two baptisms translate it in the Gospels and Acts 1:5: "But you will be baptized with [or in] the Holy Spirit not many days from now." The preposition can also be translated *by* (this is the instrumental use of it, indicating that the Spirit is the Agent of the baptism), and that is the way it is translated in 1 Corinthians 12:13: "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body …."

There is no question that the preposition can be translated both *in* and *by*. The "by" translation, or instrumental, use is clearly seen in such passages as Luke 22:49 ("with the sword") and Matthew 12:24 ("by Beelzebul"). Those who wish to see two baptisms do not quarrel over the translation "by" in 1 Corinthians 12:13, but they do insist that the translation be "in" in the Gospels and Acts 1:5.

In other words, the baptism of the Gospels and Acts 1:5 is done by Christ as the Agent into the sphere of the Holy Spirit. The baptism of 1 Corinthians 12:13 is done by the Spirit as the Agent and results in being joined to the body of Christ. The Gospels/Acts baptism is for power, tongues ideally being the evidence of it, whereas the baptism of 1 Corinthians is for position in the body, but tongues not necessarily accompanying it. The Gospels/Acts baptism is for some and may be a repeated experience, whereas the Corinthians baptism is for all believers at conversion and is not repeated.

The phrase *baptizein en pneumati* (to baptize in, with, or by the Spirit) occurs in the New Testament seven times (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5; 11:15–16; 1 Corinthians 12:13). These seven occurrences can be placed into three categories: the predictions in the Gospels, the prediction and fulfillment at Pentecost in the two Acts references, and the doctrinal explanation in 1 Corinthians.

In the Gospels it appears more natural to understand Christ as the Baptizer and the Spirit as the sphere into which people are baptized. The Acts references may also be viewed this way as well. In 1 Corinthians it seems to be clear that the Spirit is the Agent of baptism and the body of Christ is the sphere into which people are baptized. The Acts references may be understood this way also. Thus the references in the Gospels seem to say that Christ baptizes us into the Spirit, whereas the passage in 1 Corinthians says the Spirit baptizes us into the body. The Acts references might be understood either way.

Actually the interpretations need not be either/or. Both Christ and the Spirit are Agents, and both the Spirit and the body of Christ are spheres. Christ is the ultimate Agent, for He is the one who sent the Spirit on the day of Pentecost; and

the Spirit, then, is, so to speak, the intermediate Agent (Acts 2:33). The body and the Spirit are both spheres into which believers are placed. This is similar to the Spirit's ministry of sealing believers—He is both the Agent who seals and the sphere in which we are sealed.

Older Pentecostalism taught that there is only one Spirit baptism, which was an enduement for power, tongues being the necessary evidence for it. Newer Pentecostalism teaches that there are these two different baptisms—one for position for all believers, and the other for power for some believers.

Ultradispensationalism (the view that there are two churches within the Acts period, one a Jewish church and the other the body church) uses this same argument for two baptisms to support their teaching. The Jewish or Petrine church began at Pentecost and continued until Paul. The body church began with Paul (either at his conversion, Acts 9; or at his first missionary journey, Acts 13; or during his confinement in Rome, Acts 28) and continues on throughout this dispensation. The Jewish church was baptized in the Spirit for *power* and *special miracles* including tongues, whereas the body of Christ was baptized by the Spirit for *position*.[7]

It would seem that such an infrequently used and seemingly technical phrase *(baptizein en pneumati)* would more likely refer to the same activity in all of its occurrences. The phrase occurs only seven times in the New Testament, four of which refer to the same event in the Gospels, two more of Pentecost in Acts, and the one in 1 Corinthians. Therefore, it is used in connection with three events only. To try to distinguish two different baptisms is tenuous at best. To see two Agents is biblical because of Acts 2:33 and not unusual since different persons of the Trinity are often involved in the same work (like creation). If Ephesians 4:5 refers to the baptism of the Spirit, there is clearly only one baptism, not two. It is Christ's work through the agency of the Spirit in joining those who believe to the church, the body of Christ. (Figure 14.1, "The Baptism in or by the Holy Spirit," summarizes some of the teaching concerning the baptizing ministry of the Holy Spirit.)

CONSEQUENCES OF THE BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT

Makes Us Members of the Body of Christ

This is the clear teaching of 1 Corinthians 12:13. To be placed as members of the body of Christ means a resurrection position in Him. In this context, this position as members of His body issues in using the spiritual gifts in the church, which is His body, under the direction of Christ, the Head of the body.

Unites All Believers in That One Body

This truth is emphasized in connection with the mention of the one baptism in Ephesians 4:5, for the context (vv. 3, 6) speaks of the need for unity among members of that body. There are not two or two thousand bodies of Christ, only one. Likewise, in Galatians 3:27, where being baptized into Christ is mentioned by Paul, unity in diversity is described in verse 28. The Spirit forms this unity; we must be “diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3).

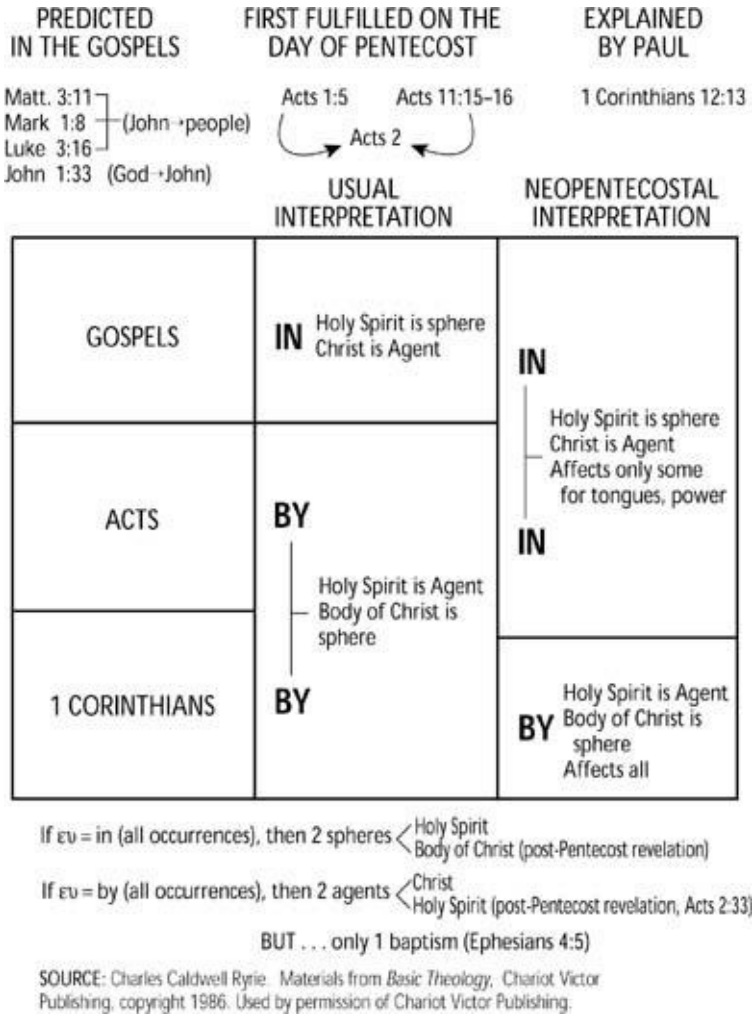


Figure 14.1

Brings About Our Union with Christ in His Death unto Sin

The baptizing work of the Spirit is the means of associating us with the crucifixion of Christ (Colossians 2:12 and especially Romans 6:1–10) in our dying to the old life. Being associated by baptism unto His death, burial, and resurrection is the basis for the crucifixion of the believer's sin nature and his victory over sin.

Crucifixion involves death, but death is not extinction; rather it is separation. So our co-crucifixion with Christ does not mean that our old nature becomes extinct; rather, we are separated from its domain and dominion so that we can live in a new way of life.

Obviously water baptism cannot accomplish this union and its results, but

equally obvious is the fact that there must be some connection between the baptism by the Spirit and baptism by water. The connection is simply that water baptism vividly pictures outwardly what the Spirit does for the believer inwardly.

Does Not Guarantee a Special Enduement with Power

The baptism by the Spirit does not necessarily mean a special endowment with power. It places us in a position in Christ that enables us to receive power, but the act of baptizing does not in itself guarantee that power will be experienced or displayed in the life. The Corinthians, who were all baptized by the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13), fell far short of being sterling displays of God's power in their lives. They were baptized but carnal. No pastor would want to stay long in a church like that at Corinth, even though all his members had received the baptism of the Spirit. The Galatians, too, had been baptized and had put on Christ (Galatians 3:27), but they were actually turning away from the true gospel (1:6) and returning to worthless and elemental things (4:9).

When some well-meaning Christian tries to pressure you to have some kind of experience that will prove you have been baptized with the Spirit, do not succumb to such pressure. You were baptized when you believed, and that joined you to the body of Christ, never to be amputated from that body. Sin in the believer's life is serious, but it does not cut us off from our secure position in Christ.

NOTE

1. “Baptism of the Holy Spirit,” *International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1943), 1:399–401.
2. R. E. O. White, “Baptism of the Spirit,” *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), 121.
3. Reuben Archer Torrey, *The Baptism with the Holy Spirit* (1910; reprint, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1968), 13–14.
4. Reuben Archer Torrey, *Why God Used D. L. Moody* (New York: Revell, 1923), 51–55.
5. Ibid., 55.
6. For example, James M. Gray in D. H. Dolman, *Simple Talks on the Holy Spirit* (New York: Revell, 1927), 6.
7. Charles F. Baker, *A Dispensational Theology* (Grand Rapids: Grace Bible College Publications, 1971), 503.

15
SEALED BY AND IN THE SPIRIT: SECURE ETERNALLY

WHERE THE TEACHING IS FOUND

The sealing ministry of the Holy Spirit is mentioned in the following passages: 2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:13; 4:30. According to 2 Corinthians 1:22 it is God who seals the believer and gives the earnest or pledge of the Spirit. Ephesians 1:13 adds that we were sealed with the Spirit when we believed. Ephesians 4:30 states that we were sealed by or with the Spirit until the day of redemption.

WHO ARE SEALED?

As with indwelling and baptizing, sealing is the experience of all believers and only of believers. In 2 Corinthians 1:22 Paul makes no exceptions in writing to a group among whom exceptions could easily have been justified. All are sealed; otherwise we could have redeemed but unsealed Christians. Also, sealing is nowhere mentioned in the Old Testament; thus only those who believed since the day of Pentecost are sealed.

THE AGENT(S) OF SEALING

Clearly God does the sealing of believers (2 Corinthians 1:21–22). Not so clear is whether or nor the Holy Spirit is also an Agent. In Ephesians 1:13 there is no preposition expressed; rather, the phrase “with that Holy Spirit of promise” (KJV) translates the simple phrase *to pneumati* without a preposition. This is probably to be understood as a locative of sphere. In Ephesians 4:30 the preposition *en* is expressed. This could be understood as meaning “by whom” (that is, instrumental), or it could be understood as a locative, “in whom,” just as in 1:13. There is no reason why we may not understand that both God and the Spirit are Agents of sealing. God does it by means of the Spirit to seal in the sphere of the Spirit.

An illustration might help. If I say, “I came in my car,” you could understand me to mean that I came by *means* of a car—the car was the means or instrument by which I traveled. But the statement could also be understood to mean that when I came, I was *sitting within* (the sphere of) my car, viewing the car as the enclosure in which I was located while I came. Similarly, the Spirit did the sealing as the Agent and is also the sphere in which we are sealed.

THE TIME OF SEALING

The believer is sealed the moment he receives Christ as Savior. Ephesians 1:13 is misleading in the King James translation, which reads: “In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.” Literally, the verse reads: “In whom [Christ] having believed [aorist participle] *you were sealed* [aorist passive indicative] with that Holy Spirit of promise.” The participle that accompanies the verb “you were sealed” can express an action that precedes that of the verb. If so, then the believing occurred before being sealed; that is, there was an interval of time between believing and being sealed (as the King James Version translates it).

Or the participle can indicate action that occurred at the same time as that of the verb. If so, then the believing and the sealing happened at the same time. Exegetically, either translation is possible, but theologically, if believing and sealing do not occur at the same time, then there would be some believers who were not sealed, and that sealing would take place sometime after conversion. There is no indication in the Scriptures that such could be the case for any believer.

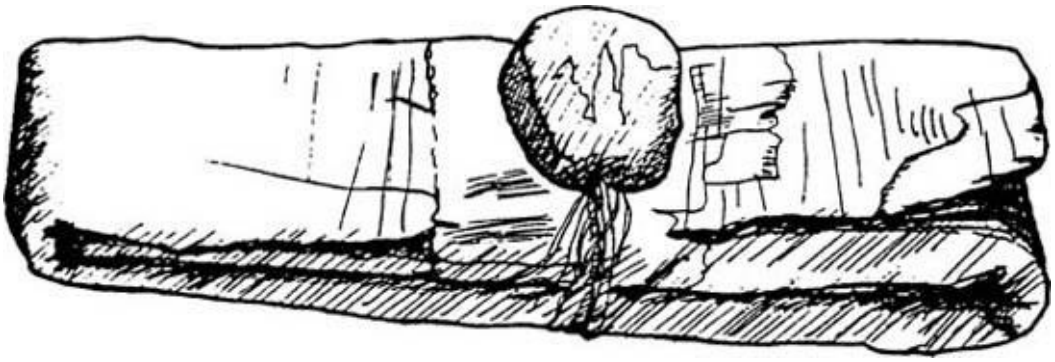


Figure 15.1. ***An acientpapyrus andseal.***

THE DURATION OF SEALING

Sealing lasts until the day of our redemption (Ephesians 4:30). This refers to that future day when our redemption will be fully accomplished, which includes receiving our resurrection bodies (compare Romans 8:23). Thus sealing guarantees the complete fulfillment of God's promises to us. And no believer can become unsealed on his or her way to heaven.

THE INTENT OF THE SEALING

Security

In the concept of sealing are the ideas of ownership, authority, and responsibility, but above all and including the other ideas is that of security. The primary meaning of sealing is security, and therefore the intent of God's sealing the Christian is to guarantee to him his security. This includes:

1. The certainty of possession by God.
2. The certainty of the promise of His salvation, for there is no power greater than God who could break the seal, and God Himself has promised never to break it.
3. The certainty of His purpose to keep us until the day of redemption.

Something that is sealed is secure. Something that is sealed by God is as secure as God's promise, and in the case of the believer His promise is to keep that believer until the day of redemption, when he shall be fully and forever God's. So sealing is a promise and guarantee of eternal security.

Both 2 Corinthians 1:22 and Ephesians 1:13–14 mention the gift of the Spirit as an earnest or pledge along with His sealing. The association of earnest and sealing is quite logical. Sealing guarantees that we shall receive all that God has promised us, and the gift of the Spirit as an earnest or pledge assures us that all will be fulfilled. In human affairs, once earnest money has been given and received, both the purchaser and the seller are pledged to complete the transaction. Similarly, the gift of the Spirit is God's pledge that He will never go back on any of His promises to us.

Purity

Notice that the fact of sealing in Ephesians 4:30 is made the basis for the exhortation not to grieve the Spirit by sins of the tongue. In both verses 29 and 31 those sins are listed as sins that grieve the Spirit. Remember, too, that what comes from our mouths is indicative of what is in our hearts. He is the *Holy* Spirit, so the blessing of being sealed by and in Him should guard our lips.

An Illustration

One of the best earthly illustrations of sealing is a piece of registered mail. When something is registered at the post office, it is sealed until delivered. Actually only two persons can open registered mail—the sender (if it is delivered back to him) and the recipient. In the case of the believer, God is the one who sends him on the way to heaven, and God in heaven is the recipient on his arrival there. Therefore, only God can break the seal of our redemption, and He has promised not to do so; and the guarantee of that promise is the presence of the Holy Spirit, who is the One by and in whom we have been sealed by God.

16
THE SPIRIT GIVES GIFTS

SCRIPTURES DEALING WITH THIS TEACHING

The doctrine of spiritual gifts is almost exclusively a Pauline teaching, the only use of the word *charisma* outside of Paul being 1 Peter 4:10. The major passage in Ephesians 4 attributes the giving of spiritual gifts to the risen and ascended Christ (vv. 7–11). The major passage in 1 Corinthians 12 emphasizes the Spirit's activity in giving gifts (vv. 7–11). The third principal passage, Romans 12, leaves the agent unspecified.

DEFINITION OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

What Is Meant

The Greek word for spiritual gift *(charisma)* is related to grace, for *charis* means “grace;” thus a spiritual gift is due to grace. The use of the word in the New Testament ranges from referring to the gift of salvation (Romans 6:23) to the gift of God’s providential care (2 Corinthians 1:11). But most frequently it is used of the special grace gifts or abilities given to men by the risen Lord and the Holy Spirit.

When referring to a gift for service to the body of Christ, a spiritual gift may be defined as a God-given ability for service. *God-given* reminds us that Christ and the Spirit are the Ones who give gifts; *ability* is a synonym for the concept of a spiritual gift; and *for service* captures the emphasis in the principal passages that gifts are to be used in serving the body of Christ.

What Is Not Meant

It is not a place of service. A spiritual gift is not primarily a place of service. The gift is the ability, not where that ability is exercised. Teaching can be done in or outside a formal classroom situation, and in any country of the world. Helping can be done almost anywhere.

It is not an office. A spiritual gift should not be confused with an office. The gift is the ability exercised, whether or not one holds an office in a local church. In this regard confusion exists over the gift of pastor. The gift is the ability to shepherd people. This can be done by one who occupies what we call today the pastorate, which is an official position in the church. But, of course, the gift of pastor could be exercised by a dean of men in a school. And for that matter a dean of women could and hopefully would have the gift of pastor. Or a father or mother in a home could have the gift of pastor and serve his or her family and neighborhood.

It seems to me that only the gift of apostleship was given to men only. God apparently can give other gifts to men and women alike. This does not mean, however, that there are no restrictions on where or to whom such gifts are ministered. Men and women alike are given the gift of teaching, but restrictions are placed on how women should use it (1 Timothy 2:12; Titus 2:3–5).

It is not a particular age-group ministry. A spiritual gift is not primarily a particular age-group ministry. There is no spiritual gift of young people's work or children's work. If there were, then there would be a gift of old people's work—a gift I have never heard anyone claim to have! Children, young people, and young and older adults all need to benefit from the exercise of the gifts of pastor, teaching, helping, administering, and so on.

It is not a specialty or technique. A spiritual gift is not primarily a particular specialty or technique. There is no gift of writing or Christian education or music listed in Scripture. The gift of teaching, which is named, for instance, may be exercised through writing or through the educational program of the church or through music. Techniques are channels through which gifts can be exercised.

It is not a talent or learned skill. A spiritual gift is not the same as a natural talent or a learned skill (see Figure 16.1, "Talents, Skills, and Spiritual Gifts"). Many are born with talents. Many have opportunity to learn skills. Although it is true that all we have is from God (1 Corinthians 4:7), in a special way spiritual gifts are bestowed by the risen Christ and the Holy Spirit. I am frank to acknowledge that I do not always know what differences would be seen, for instance, between a naturally talented teacher, a teacher who has been well trained, and one who has been given the spiritual gift of teaching.

A spiritual gift is the ability, not the place or office of ministry, nor the persons upon whom it is ministered, nor the specialty of ministry.

TALENTS, SKILLS AND SPIRITUAL GIFTS

NATURAL TALENTS	LEARNED SKILLS	SPIRITUAL GIFTS
Given by God through parents	Learned by us	Given by the Spirit independant of parents
Given at birth	Learned throughout life	Given at conversion
To benefit people in general	To benefit people generally	To benefit the church

Figure 16.1

THE DISTRIBUTION OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

The distribution of gifts is under the sovereign direction of the risen Christ and the Holy Spirit. “But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills” (1 Corinthians 12:11; see also Ephesians 4:11). The Scriptures reveal certain characteristics about the distribution of gifts.

Limited by the Will of the Agents

As stated, Christ and the Spirit are the Agents who give gifts. People can and do have a part in developing them, but the ultimate source of all spiritual gifts is God. He knows best what is needed by the body of Christ and what best fits each believer for service. Understanding that would keep us from complaining that we are not like someone else and would motivate us to use to the fullest the gifts God has given each of us.

Limited as to Extent

Although every believer has at least one spiritual gift (1 Peter 4:10), no one believer has all of them. Every believer is either single or married, both states being spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 7:7), and likely many believers also have the gifts of helps or serving and showing mercy. But because no single believer has all the gifts, we need the ministry each can give to others. Neither should we assume that each local church necessarily has all the spiritual gifts represented in that congregation. God knows what each church needs and gifts it accordingly.

Limited as to Time

If every Christian does not have all the gifts, then it is likely that every generation does not necessarily have all the gifts. Indeed, the Scriptures teach that the Spirit has not given all the gifts to each generation in the history of the church. The foundation gifts of apostles and prophets (Ephesians 2:20) belonged to the founding era of the church, and do not appear in the periods of building the superstructure of the church.

Yet all who live after the founding era of the church benefit from those gifts.

To say that we should expect apostles and prophets today whenever a new local church is planted is to ignore the context of Ephesians 2:11–22, which speaks of the "new man" (v. 15), "one body" (v. 16), "God's household" (v. 19), "whole building" (v. 21), and "holy temple" (v. 21)—all descriptions of the universal church.

The Scripture also teaches that those who were contemporaries of Christ experienced certain miraculous gifts of the Spirit that were not experienced by the generation which followed Him (Hebrews 2:3–4). Actually, it is no argument to say that every gift must appear in every generation of the history of the church so that no generation will be slighted. If a gift is given once, it is given to the entire church. For instance, the gift of apostleship given to Saul of Tarsus is a gift to the entire church in all generations. We still profit today from that gift given once in the first century.

The Spirit endows the church as He wills, and He knows exactly what each believer, each congregation, and each generation needs.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Although the Spirit is the source of spiritual gifts, the believer may have a part in the development of his gifts. He may be ambitious in relation to his own gifts to see that they are properly developed and that he is doing all he can for the Lord (1 Corinthians 12:31). To covet the better gifts is not a matter of sitting down and conjuring up enough faith to be able to receive them out of the blue. It is a matter of diligent self-preparation. For instance, if one covets the gift of teaching, he will undoubtedly have to spend many years developing that gift. The Holy Spirit is sovereign in the giving of gifts, but in the development of them He works through human beings with their desires, limitations, ambitions, ability to discipline themselves, and the like.

THE DISCOVERY OF YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS

The “peril of the pendulum” operates in teachings concerning spiritual gifts. On one extreme of the pendulum is the idea that spiritual gifts were given to the early church only and are irrelevant to the church today. According to this view the important concern for today is spiritual maturity, not gifts. But if gifts were given to the early church only, then why do they appear in the books of the New Testament that were clearly written to the second generation of believers and to believers scattered throughout the Roman empire (Ephesians and 1 Peter, even Romans and 1 Corinthians, would have had second-generation readers)? In Ephesians 4:11–13 Paul states that the purposes for giving spiritual gifts are “for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ.” If gifts were necessary for those essential purposes in the second generation, how can anyone say we can achieve those purposes today without any spiritual gifts? Or if elders, for instance, are required to be “able to teach” (1 Timothy 3:2), and if the gift of teaching is no longer given, would they be able to mature enough to meet this requirement by their own efforts and without the help of others who have the gift of teaching?

At the opposite swing of the pendulum is the teaching that you must know your spiritual gift(s) before you can do anything for the Lord. When the apostles listed the qualifications for choosing their first helpers (usually called deacons; Acts 6:1–4) no spiritual gifts were included. The qualifications were (1) male, (2) good reputation, (3) Spirit-filled, and (4) wise. Often in the very process of serving, spiritual gifts come to light.

Nevertheless, here are some suggestions for discovering your spiritual gifts.

Take Inventory

Every once in a while take inventory of what abilities you have. Remind yourself of the natural abilities God gave you. Think about the acquired abilities you had the opportunity to learn. Check the list of spiritual gifts in the biblical passages. Just taking inventory periodically may help you to consider what areas of service you should be active in.

Prepare Yourself

This suggestion works well in all three areas of abilities a person has. Sharpen your natural talents. Continue to take opportunities to learn skills. And work on some of the more obvious spiritual abilities. For instance, being a good steward in all areas of life may bring to the surface the gift of giving. And however little or much one may have to give, he or she must be disciplined in finances in order to be able to give at all. If you suspect you may have the gift of exhortation (too often exercised as the gift of criticism!), then you need to know the Scriptures well in order to exhort correctly, both in the content and spirit of the exhortation.

Be Active in the Lord's Work

Gifts are discovered and developed by active service. If a person is active in doing what he or she can, then other doors of opportunity may open that may bring to light additional spiritual gifts. We remember Philip as Philip the evangelist (Acts 21:8). But he was first the one who ministered to needy and bickering widows (Acts 6:5). Later the Lord gave him evangelistic opportunities (Acts 8:5 and 35). The same was true of Stephen. He first served the widows, then served as an evangelist.

In studying this subject one time I noticed that certain spiritual gifts given only to some believers have similar commands that *are* given to all believers. Figure 16.2, "Distribution of Gifts," gives a sampling.

If I may be facetious for a moment, let me say this. If you do not know your spiritual gift, then just obey some of these commands. If you spend your entire Christian life obeying these seven, I believe I can assure you that our Lord will not upbraid you when you stand before Him at the judgment seat for not knowing what your spiritual gifts were!

A DESCRIPTION OF THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Apostleship (1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11)

The word *apostle* can have both a general and a limited or technical meaning. In a general sense the word means "one who is sent," or "a messenger." The Latin equivalent is the word *missionary*. In a general sense every Christian is a missionary or an apostle, because he has been sent into this world for a testimony. Epaphroditus serves as an illustration, for the word *apostle* is used to describe him ("also your messenger;" Philippians 2:25). However, in the specialized sense of having the gift of apostleship Epaphroditus was not an apostle.

The same is true of the unnamed brothers involved in the collection Paul was taking for the saints in Jerusalem (2 Corinthians 8:23). In that technical sense the word is used of the Twelve and a few others like Paul (Romans 1:1), Barnabas (Acts 14:14), and James (Galatians 1:19). They were required to have seen the risen Christ, and they had special authority in the church. They were gifted to lay the foundation of the church (Ephesians 2:20), and they were accredited by special signs. Since this gift belonged to the earliest period of the history of the church when her foundation was being laid, the need for the gift has ceased and apparently the giving of it has too. "Having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone" (Ephesians 2:20). Paul lists this gift as first in importance (1 Corinthians 12:28).

GIFTS GIVEN TO SOME	COMMANDS GIVEN TO ALL
1. Serving (Romans 12:7)	1. Serve one another (Galatians 5:13)
2. Exhortation (Romans 12:8)	2. Exhort one another (Hebrews 10:25)
3. Giving (Romans 12:8)	3. All give (2 Corinthians 9:7)
4. Teaching (Romans 12:7)	4. Teaching (Matthew 28:19–20)
5. Showing mercy (Romans 12:8)	5. Be kind (Ephesians 4:32)
6. Faith (1 Corinthians 12:9)	6. Walk by faith (2 Corinthians 5:7)
7. Evangelism (Ephesians 4:11)	7. All witness (Acts 1:8)

Figure 16.2.

Prophecy (Romans 12:6;1 Corinthians 12:10; 14:1–40; Ephesians 4:11)

This word also is used in both a general and a limited sense. In a general sense it means to preach; thus, generally speaking, preaching is prophesying, and the preacher is a prophet in that he proclaims the message from God. But the gift of prophecy included receiving a message directly from God through special revelation, being guided in declaring it to the people, and having it authenticated in some way by God Himself. The content of that message may have included telling the future (which is what we normally think of as prophesying), but it also included proclaiming God's message for that time before the Bible was completed. First Corinthians 14:3 is not a definition of a prophet ("speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation") but a description of the characteristics of a prophetic message. In other words, we cannot reverse the statement and conclude that everyone who speaks (or preaches) messages with those characteristics is a prophet.

This too was a gift limited in its need and use (second in importance in Paul's list), for it was needed during the writing of the New Testament and its usefulness ceased when the books were completed. God's message was then contained in written form, and no new revelation was given in addition to that written record.

The gift of prophecy may have been rather widely given in New Testament times, although the record mentions only a few prophets specifically. Prophets foretelling a famine came from Jerusalem to Antioch. One of these was named Agabus (Acts 11:27–28). Mention is made also of prophets in the church at Antioch (Acts 13:1), and Philip had four daughters who had the gift of prophecy (Acts 21:9). Prophets were also prominent in the Corinthian church (1 Corinthians 14:29).

In the coming Tribulation period, God will raise up two men and give them the gift of prophecy. And, as with other prophets, miracles of judgment will authenticate their message (Revelation 11:4–6).

Once when speaking at a prophecy conference, I received this telegram from one who thought he had the gift of prophecy today. It said that the conference could not "be meaningful without the Holy Spirit–inspired testimony of God's only living prophet. Invite me and I will authenticate many true miracles… !" Somehow the conference was blessed anyway.

Miracles (1 Corinthians 12:28) and Healing (1 Corinthians 12:9, 28, 30)

This is the ability to perform special signs. Paul exercised this gift at Ephesus when he performed miraculous healings (Acts 19:11–12). And yet, even though he had the gift of miracles, he did not consider it usable in the cases of Epaphroditus (Philippians 2:25–27); Timothy (1 Timothy 5:23); and Trophimus, whom he left sick at Miletus (2 Timothy 4:20). The gifts of healing (note the plural) seem to be a specific category that included various kinds of healings (i.e., physical, emotional, spiritual) within the larger category of miracles. An example of the gift of miracles which was not a case of physical healing (indeed, just the opposite) was the blindness called down on Elymas the sorcerer in Paphos, Cyprus, by Paul on the first missionary journey (Acts 13:8–11).

Distinction should be made between miracles and healings and the gifts of miracles and healing. The spiritual gift is the God-given ability to perform miracles and healings for the purpose of serving Him. However, a miracle or a healing may be done apart from the exercise of those gifts. The miracle of the physical sign (the place shaken) that accompanied the filling with the Spirit recorded in Acts 4:31 was completely apart from the exercise of a gift on the part of any person. The miracle of Aeneas's healing at Lydda was apparently a result of Peter's exercising the gift of healing (Acts 9:34), whereas the raising of Dorcas at Joppa by Peter might not have been the result of exercising a gift but the result of God's answering Peter's prayer (Acts 9:40). Thus every miracle or every healing is not the result of that particular gift being exercised.

Consequently, then, it does not follow that if one considers the gifts of miracles and healings temporary, he also is saying that God does not perform miracles or heal today. He is simply saying that the gifts are no longer given because the particular purpose for which they were originally given (i.e., to authenticate the oral message) has ceased to exist. The historical proof for the cessation of the gift of miracles and the gift of healing with the accreditation of the message has been ably stated by B. B. Warfield in his book *Counterfeit Miracles*. The miracle of living epistles, he concludes, is the proper accreditation of the message of the gospel today (2 Corinthians 3:1–3).

If the giving of these particular gifts was limited to the early church, how shall we evaluate the question of healing today? Here are some issues to consider in finding the answer to that question.

1. As has been stated, God can and does heal apart from the exercise of the

gift of healing. He does answer prayer, and He answers it with respect to physical problems; but such answers to prayer are not the exercise of someone exercising the gift of healing.

2. It is obviously not the will of God to heal everybody. For example, it was not God's will to heal Paul of his thorn in the flesh (2 Corinthians 12:7–9).
3. Miracles and healing must not be equated with supernaturalism in general. It is a favorite pressure approach of faith healers to say that if you believe in the supernatural power of God, then you must also believe in His power to heal in the case at hand. This is simply not true, for it is a non sequitur. God does not have to use His supernatural power to prove that He possesses it. Furthermore, any gift given once has been given to the whole church.
4. To disregard human means in the matter of healing and simply pray for a miraculous cure is like praying for a harvest and then sitting in a rocking chair without planting or cultivating. God more often than not uses human means in the accomplishing of His purposes. This is true in matters of health too.
5. Those who claim that the gift of healing is exercised today have to admit that the gift is limited in its effectiveness, for they do not claim to heal decayed teeth or suddenly mend broken bones or grow hair on bald heads.
6. Reports of miraculous healings (within the limitations already stated) may be true (though not necessarily related to the gift), may be false, or may be the cure of something that was psychosomatic.

Naturally all of these six considerations do not apply to every case, but they are germane to the whole question of healing today.

Tongues and Their Interpretation (1 Corinthians 12:10)

Tongues are the God-given ability to speak in another earthly language. *Interpretation* is the ability to interpret messages given in tongues in a language the audience present can understand. In the recorded instances in the book of Acts the languages of tongues were clearly foreign languages. There is no doubt that this was true at Pentecost, for the people heard in their native tongues; and it seemed to be the same kind of foreign languages that were spoken in the house of Cornelius (for Peter says that this was the same thing that occurred at Pentecost; Acts 10:45–47; 11:15).

The addition in some translations of the word "unknown" in 1 Corinthians 14 has led many to suppose that the tongues displayed in the church at Corinth were

an unknown, heavenly language. If the word is omitted (and it is in the Greek text), then one would normally think of the tongues in Corinthians as the same as those in Acts; i.e., foreign languages. This is the natural conclusion. Against this view stand 1 Corinthians 14:2 and 14, which might seem to indicate that the Corinthian tongues were an unknown language.

However, both verses refer to uninterpreted tongues, which would be unknown to the audience and the speaker. In any case, the gift of tongues was being abused by the Corinthians, and Paul was required to lay down certain restrictions on its use. It was to be used only for edifying, only by two or three in a single meeting and then only if an interpreter were present, and never in preference to prophecy. The gift of tongues was given as a sign to unbelievers (1 Corinthians 14:22) and especially to unbelieving Jews (v. 21). If the need for the sign ceased, then of course the gift would no longer need to be given.

What about tongues today? More on this in the next chapter. Clearly, however, the teaching that tongues are the necessary accompaniment and proof of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is not valid (as has been discussed in Chapter 14). Too, the emphasis of Scripture is not on the use of this gift. The longest passage about tongues (1 Corinthians 14) concerns the misuse of the gift. Also, one should remember that the fruit of the Spirit does not include tongues, and Christlikeness does not require speaking in tongues, for Christ never did.

Evangelism (Ephesians 4:11)

The meaning of the gift of *evangelism* involves two ideas—the kind of message preached (i.e., the good news of salvation) and the places where it is preached (i.e., in various places). The message is the gospel and the evangelist's ministry is an itinerant one, done both publicly and privately. In Paul's ministry, the length of stay in one instance lasted two years or more (Acts 19:10) and in another only a few days (Acts 17:10–14). Those examples were public ministries. Onesimus is an example of a private witness. Apparently a person may do the work of an evangelist even though he may not possess the gift, for Paul exhorts Timothy, who was a pastor, to "do the work of an evangelist" (2 Timothy 4:5).

Pastor (Ephesians 4:11)

The word *pastor* means to shepherd; therefore, the gift of pastor involves leading, providing and caring for, and protecting the portion of the flock of God committed to one's care. In Ephesians 4:11 the work of teaching is linked with that of pastoring, and in Acts 20:28 the duty of ruling the flock is added. The

words *elder, overseer,* and *shepherd* are all used of the same leaders of the Ephesian church (Acts 20:17 and 28).

Serving (Romans 12:7; 1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:12)

The gift of *serving* is the gift of helping or ministering in the broadest sense of the word. In the Romans passage it is called the gift of serving; in 1 Corinthians, the gift of helps; in Ephesians we are told that other gifts are given for the purpose of helping believers to be able to serve. This is a very basic gift that all Christians well assume they have and then use it for the Lord's glory.

Teaching (Romans 12:7; 1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11)

Teaching is the God-given ability to explain the harmony and the detail of God's revelation. Apparently the gift is sometimes given alone (Romans 12:7), and sometimes it is given along with the gift of pastor (Ephesians 4:11). Clearly the gift of teaching needs to be developed by study and discipline. If we may assume that Peter had the gift, then it is clear that he had to do some studying of Paul's epistles before he could explain them to others (2 Peter 3:16).

Faith (1 Corinthians 12:8–10)

Faith is the God-given ability to believe God's power to supply needs in the many circumstances of life. Every person has been given a measure of faith (Romans 12:3) and all believers are expected to walk by faith (2 Corinthians 5:7), but not everyone has been given the gift of faith. Everyone may believe God, but this cannot be the same as possessing the gift of faith—otherwise there would be no significance to its being listed as a separate spiritual gift.

Exhortation (Romans 12:8)

Exhorting involves encouraging, comforting, and admonishing people. Note that this is a separate and distinct gift from the gift of teaching. In other words, someone may have the gift of teaching but not of exhortation and vice versa. What a great blessing a person who has both gifts can be to the church.

Discerning of Spirits (1 Corinthians 12:10)

Discerning spirits is the ability to distinguish between true and false sources

of supernatural revelation when it was being given in oral form. It was a very necessary gift, for there were those who claimed to bring revelation from God who were not true prophets. When the Bible was completed, false prophets could be tested against that written standard.

Showing Mercy (Romans 12:8)

This is akin to the gift of ministering, for it involves succoring those who are sick and afflicted.

Giving (Romans 12:8)

The gift of *giving* concerns distributing one's own money to others. It is to be with generosity and with no thought of return or gain for self in any way.

Administration (Romans 12:8; 1 Corinthians 12:28)

This is the ability to rule in the church. Although it is true that all believers have equal standing before God as priests, there is a hierarchical rule in the church (Hebrews 13:7, 17).

AN IMPORTANT REMINDER

Amid all the discussion and debate about various aspects of the doctrine of spiritual gifts, we must not lose sight of our responsibility to be good stewards of whatever abilities and skills the Holy Spirit has given us. If you do not believe that God is giving spiritual gifts today, then by all means use your natural talents and acquired skills to the fullest. If you believe all the gifts are being given today and you are tempted to seek the spectacular ones, don't neglect the basic ones like helping and giving. If you think some gifts were temporary, then by all means use the ones that clearly are not.

Remember: "It is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy" and "What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?" (1 Corinthians 4:2, 7).

17
THE GIFT OF TONGUES

TONGUES AND INTERPRETATION INTERRELATED

Because of the difference of opinion among believers as to whether or not the Spirit is giving the scriptural gift of tongues today, it may be helpful to devote a chapter to this question. The gifts of tongues and interpretation are interrelated. No one can exercise the gift of interpretation unless the gift of tongues has been used. But the reverse is not so—the gift of tongues can be used without interpretation under certain circumstances. But because they are interrelated, we shall consider both gifts in this chapter.

THE GENUINENESS OF THE GIFT OF TONGUES

Unquestionably God has given the gift of tongues to the church. It is mentioned in Mark 16:17; Acts 2:4; 10:46; 19:6; 1 Corinthians 12:10, 28, 30; 13:1, 8; and 14:2–39. Although the Mark reference is in a section the authenticity of which is debated, it is interesting to notice that the adjective *new* in the phrase "they will speak with new tongues" means "not previously present." The Old Testament records no reference to the gift of tongues. This is not surprising, since tongues are a spiritual gift, and spiritual gifts were given to the church after the ascension of Christ (Ephesians 4:8).

Although tongues have appeared throughout the history of the church,[1] the contemporary phenomenon had its beginning in 1901 with Miss Agnes Ozman in Topeka, Kansas. Tongues were considered to be the evidence of having been baptized with the Holy Spirit. This teaching and experience spread rapidly but was largely confined to the thousands of Pentecostal churches that came into being with their millions of members.

Beginning in 1960 with an Episcopal rector, Dennis Bennett, tongues began to break out in some mainline denominations, some parachurch organizations, and among Roman Catholics.

That speaking in tongues is a genuine scriptural gift is undebatable. The question is this: Is what is called tongues today this genuine scriptural gift? That which people say they experience as tongues is a genuine experience. Indeed, all the experiences we have are genuine simply because we have them. A nightmare is a genuine experience, even though the events in it did not actually occur. Wishful thinking is a genuine experience, even though nothing comes of it. Imagining something is a genuine experience. Likewise, what people call tongues and say they have experienced is a genuine experience. But the question is still whether or not that experience is the experience of the genuine scriptural gift.

To take another example, there is certainly a true, genuine, scriptural experience of being led by the Lord or the Spirit. But have not most of us heard someone say he or she was led of the Lord to do this or go there—and yet we know full well that the Lord was not leading at all? Sometimes such statements are nothing more than a rationalization for doing what the person wants to do. So

the question with leading is the same as with tongues: Is this experience (and are all our spiritual experiences) genuinely biblical ones or not?

If this genuine biblical gift is being given today, it would be restricted to members of the body of Christ. What, then, is the explanation for similar tongues experiences appearing among non-Christians in our day? Cases have been documented among the Hudson Bay Eskimos, in Borneo, China, East Africa, Greenland, and Turkey.[2] Reliable missionaries have also reported the same among non-Christian tribes in the Philippines. No one would conclude that these instances of so-called tongues among unbelievers represent the genuine scriptural gift. Perhaps they are Satanic or demonic counterfeits. Or perhaps none of these examples, whether occurring among unbelievers or believers, is the scriptural gift.

SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GENUINE GIFT OF TONGUES

Tongues Were Foreign Languages

Biblical tongues were foreign languages known somewhere in the world rather than ecstatic utterances or heavenly languages.

The record of Acts 2 clearly supports this. In verses 4 and 11 the word *glossa* (tongue) is used, whereas in verses 6 and 8 the word *dialektos* ("dialect," the known language of a nation or region) appears for the same phenomenon. "Dialect," meaning language, also appears in Acts 1:19; 21:40; 22:2; 26:14. Furthermore, Acts 2:4 says that the disciples spoke in "other tongues [*heterais glossais*]," which is to say tongues other than their own languages. So the "other" has to be languages as well. Also, those who heard said they heard "in our own tongues" (v. 11), which again could only mean languages.

Some English translations confuse the issue of the nature of tongues. The venerable King James inserts "unknown" before "tongues" in several verses in 1 Corinthians 14, thereby giving the impression that tongues in the church at Corinth were some kind of non-earthly language. Interestingly, the first English Bible, that of Wycliffe, used only "language."

Modern translations vary. Some use "tongue" without "unknown" (ASV, NASB, RSV, and NIV), with the last placing "another language" in the footnote. One uses "language of ecstasy" or "ecstatic utterance" in these verses (NEB, although the revision reverts to "tongues"). The translation by Charles B. Williams uses "speak [or pray] in ecstasy." The *Amplified Bible* inserts "strange" and "unknown" before "tongue." Little wonder some think tongues in Corinthians were ecstatic utterances and not earthly languages. Yet every other use in the Bible of the Greek term *glossa* refers to a foreign language, so why should 1 Corinthians be an exception (see Revelation 5:9; 7:9; 10:11; 11:9)?

Tongues Were Not Experienced by All Believers

One can be baptized with the Spirit and not speak in tongues. Although earlier Pentecostalism taught that tongues were the necessary evidence of the baptism of the Spirit, and although many people still associate the two, this is not the

case. Paul wrote of the Corinthians (many of whom were carnal) that they were all baptized by the Spirit just as they were all indwelt by the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13). He made no exceptions. But at the conclusion of the same chapter (v. 30) he asks whether all spoke in tongues. And the form of the question expects a negative answer. Literally, he asked, “All do not speak in tongues, do they?” The answer: No. So there were at Corinth believers who were baptized by the Spirit who did not nor could be expected to speak in tongues. If Paul wished that they all did speak in tongues (1 Corinthians 14:5) that also clearly means they all did not.

ARE SOME GIFTS, INCLUDING TONGUES AND INTERPRETATION, TEMPORARY?

We have already noticed that all gifts are not given to all believers, or to all local churches, or at all times. Yet there exists confusion and debate over whether or not any gifts were given only temporarily to the church.

The Confusion over Temporary Gifts

Sometimes confusion exists because we misunderstand the purposes of God. We assume that His purposes are unchanging. To be correct, one should say that He is unchanging, but His purposes and plans may differ at different times. But those who deny the possibility of temporary gifts will insist that since Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and since He performed miracles while on earth and through others after His ascension, we should expect that such miracles continue today. But the truth that He is the same in His being does not mean He has or will always act the same. Why, for instance, did He select only one man to heal at the pool of Bethesda (John 5:1–9), while on another occasion He healed "every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people" (Matthew 4:23; compare John 6:2)? Of course, His power was more than sufficient to heal all who gathered at the pool of Bethesda, but that was not His purpose.

Sometimes a misunderstanding of the nature of a spiritual gift creates misunderstanding of the meaning of *temporary*. The actual giving of a gift may be temporary, but the results may go on and on. Any single gift given at any time to the church is a gift given to the entire church throughout its history. This is easy to see in the case of outstanding people whose gifts contributed much to the church: the apostle Paul and the other apostles; the greats of church history—Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Wesley, and many more. Paul's gift of apostleship benefits (present tense) the whole church. Wesley's gift of evangelism continues to benefit the church. But this is equally true with gifts given to not-so-famous believers. When we use our gifts the church is benefited not only in our own day and sphere of influence but also beyond.

Also, our experiences can cause confusion. As I have said, all experiences are

genuine, but not all are scriptural. Sometimes it is difficult to discern between an experience that is not unscriptural but neither is scriptural.

The Case for Temporary Gifts

The case for temporary gifts can be made on the basis of Scripture.

Ephesians 2:20. This verse reads: “Having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone.” The prophets are New Testament prophets, as also in Ephesians 3:5 and 4:11, and they, along with the apostles, constitute the foundation of the church. Christ is the corner stone; apostles and prophets are the foundation; and believers, then and now, make up the building. Paul is not writing of local churches, for in the context (Ephesians 2:15–21) he speaks of the “one new man,” “God’s household,” “the whole building,” and “a holy temple.” Revelation 22:18 reinforces the concept that the true gift of prophecy was not to be expected after the writing of Revelation. Also, 1 Corinthians 15:8 may well be saying that Paul was the last of the apostles.[3]

Evidence from Paul’s own ministry. While Paul was at Ephesus on his third missionary trip he was able to perform extraordinary miracles of healings and exorcisms at long distance; i.e., handkerchiefs and aprons were carried from his body to those who were ill and they were healed. Yet he could not heal himself though he prayed earnestly about his problem (2 Corinthians 12:7–9). Nor did he heal Epaphroditus (Philippians 2:25–28) or Timothy (1 Timothy 5:23), and he actually left Trophimus sick at Miletus (2 Timothy 4:20).

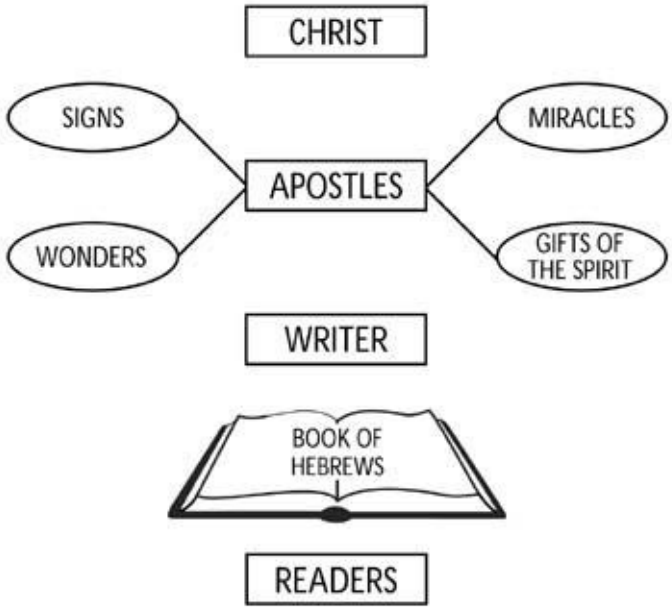
Hebrews 2:3–4. This passage reads: “[Salvation was] first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.” To help clarify these verses, try overlaying concentric circles on them. At the very center is the Lord. The next larger circle is composed of those who heard Him. The next larger circle includes the readers of Hebrews, who were second-generation believers and who had not been eyewitnesses of the Lord’s ministry. Whose witness was confirmed by signs and wonders? Those who heard the Lord, not the readers of Hebrews. These readers knew of the miracles their predecessors had done, but they did not themselves do them. (See Figure 17.1, “Signs of an Apostle.”)

The writer’s point is simply this: You know the message of salvation is true because you know of the miracles God gave to those who were contemporaries of Christ. So remember that the truth of the message was validated by those miracles even though they were not performed in your lifetime but in the

generation that preceded yours. This is similar to the way the Lord reminded His people in Old Testament times. He did not perform miracles in every generation, but He did call the people to remember His mighty acts in previous generations. The knowledge of these, though not necessarily repeated in and experienced by each generation, was sufficient to encourage the people and to validate God's truth. (See, for example, Deuteronomy 5:15; 7:18; 24:9; 32:7; Psalm 77:11; 78.) Remembering God's marvelous and miraculous works should be sufficient encouragement and verification for those generations in which He did not do those works.

3 How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard,	4 God also testifying with them, by both signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.

Hebrews 2:3–4



SOURCE: *Professor Manfred E. Kober, Faith Baptist College and Theological Seminary, Ankeny, Iowa 50021. Used by Permission.*

Figure 17.1.

First Corinthians 13:8–10. This passage reads: "Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part; but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away." (See Figure 17.2, "First Corinthians 13:8," for a chart of the verbs.) Two interpretative questions are germane to the understanding of this passage: (1)

What is the "perfect"? (2) When Paul says that prophecy, tongues, and knowledge will pass away, what exactly does he mean?

The "perfect." Three answers are usually proposed to the first question. Some say the "perfect" refers to the time when the Canon was completed, i.e., just before A.D. 100. Undoubtedly the completion of the Canon marked a significant time in church history, but that the "perfect" refers to that time appears doubtful. If it did, then the passage would teach that we who are living in the time after the Canon was closed would see more clearly than Paul did (v. 12), and the stages of growth of verse 11 would have little meaning.

It can also be argued that the "perfect" refers to the Second Coming. Many prefer this meaning, which is supported by the phrase "face to face" in verse 12 of 1 Corinthians 13. That seems to refer to the time of the Second Coming rather than any time during this age before our Lord returns. A weakness is the inconsistent comparison in verse 10 between "in part," which is a quantitative concept, and "perfect" which is a qualitative concept.

Others say that the "perfect" refers to maturing in the body of Christ. This views the church as growing up as one body, beginning at its birth on the Day of Pentecost, progressing through various stages of growth, and reaching full maturity at the Second Coming. This encompasses both the stages of verse 11 and the completion of verse 12. Some of the stages would include the completion of the Canon, the settling of key doctrinal issues by various church councils, the Reformation, etc.

GIFT	GREEK VERB	TENSE	VOICE	MEANING
PROPHECY	καταργέω KATARGEO	FUTURE	PASSIVE	To Render Inoperative
TONGUES	παύω PAUO	FUTURE	MIDDLE	To Cease (of their own accord)
KNOWLEDGE	καταργέω KATARGEO	FUTURE	PASSIVE	To Render Inoperative

SOURCE: *Professor Manfred E. Kober, Faith Baptist College and Theological Seminary, Ankeny, Iowa 50021. Used by Permission.*

Figure 17.2.

In a sense, this third suggestion links the first two, except that the first focuses only on the completion of the Canon and does not include other stages in the development of the church.[4] That early and crucial state before the completion of the New Testament was the time when spectacular gifts were needed for growth and authentication.

The passing away of prophecy, tongues, and knowledge. What about the second question: When Paul says that prophecy, tongues, and knowledge will pass away, what exactly does he mean? Paul's point in 1 Corinthians 13:8–10 is that love never fails even though the gifts of prophecy, tongues, and knowledge do pass away. These three gifts are singled out probably because they are revelational: They conveyed God's truth to the church before the revelation in the Bible was completed.

One could see the passage as meaning that these gifts ceased sometime before the Second Coming or one could see the passage as meaning that the gifts will continue until the Second Coming, in which case tongues would still be given today. Indeed, the former idea seems to prove Paul's main point better: Paul is saying that (1) when tongues cease, love abides; and (2) when that which is perfect comes, love still abides, even though tongues ceased long before.

The verse may indicate that tongues will cease before the gifts of prophecy and knowledge do. The Greek verb used with those two gifts is *katargeo* ("to render inoperative"). Prophecy and knowledge will be made inoperative (passive voice, meaning that someone [God] will cause them to cease). Tongues, however, will stop (*pauo*, "to stop"). This verb appears in the middle voice, which means "they [tongues] shall make themselves cease or automatically cease of themselves."[5] Normally the verb is considered to be a deponent one; i.e., the form is middle voice but is translated as an active voice, in which case there would be no idea of tongues ceasing of themselves (actual middle voice) but that they ceased (middle voice translated as active because the verb is deponent).

However, 1 Peter 3:10 uses *pauo* in an aorist active imperative. The aorist middle would be a different form, so this cannot be deponent and lends support to the fact that the form in 1 Corinthians 13:8 is from *pauo* (which is not deponent and therefore has a true middle voice meaning), not *pauomai* (deponent). Putting this together, the verse may be saying that tongues would not have to be *made* inoperative simply because they would stop of *themselves*. In addition, is it not significant that tongues are not mentioned in verse 9, perhaps indicating that they will have ceased before prophecy and knowledge? Since prophecy is a foundational gift (Ephesians 2:20), then tongues ceased before the foundation of the body was finished.

Others believe there is no significance to the different verbs and voices, therefore offering no indication when these gifts would cease.[6]

THE PURPOSES OF TONGUES

A Sign

In the book of Acts the primary if not exclusive purpose of tongues was to give evidence of the truth of the gospel and of judgment if the gospel were not believed. In Corinthians they also served to give proof of the truth of the gospel message to unbelievers, especially Jewish ones (1 Corinthians 14:20–22). The quotation in verse 21 is from Isaiah 28:11–12 warning that just as the Assyrian foreign language (not an ecstatic utterance) was a sign to unbelieving Jews of their coming judgment, so also tongues (languages) were a sign of the truth of Christianity and a warning to those who rejected its message.

For Edification

Both the gifts of prophecy and tongues when interpreted edified the church. If there is no interpretation, then there is no edification, except the self-edification that comes as a personal by-product of using any gift (1 Corinthians 14:4). If I have the gift of teaching, I can teach myself, but the church is not edified unless and until I communicate what I taught myself. Prophecy needed no interpretation, for it was given directly to the church in a language clearly understood. Tongues did the same when interpreted. This is Paul's point in 1 Corinthians 14:1–13, 23–25.

In 1 Corinthians 14:14 Paul writes of praying in an uninterpreted tongue. Some take this to mean some kind of prayer language done in private. But the entire context relates to the church, so it likely refers to praying (and singing) in a tongue. To do so engages the spirit but not the mind, simply because the speaker or singer can never know what he or she said. If, for example, this is some private prayer language which I use, I cannot be certain what I am praying. Therefore, I could not know if I was praising or petitioning God or mouthing meaningless phrases. If petitioning, I would not know if God answered because I do not know what I asked. So how to escape this dilemma? Pray with the mind, which means in a language that both God and I understand.

REGULATIONS FOR THE USE OF TONGUES

1. Only two or three should speak in turn in one service and never all at the same time (1 Corinthians 14:27).
2. If there is no interpreter present then there should be no use of audible tongues (v. 28). I have often thought that there is a simple test for the genuineness of what purports to be tongues today. It is this. Have someone who claims the scriptural gift of tongues give a message. Then have three people who claim to have the gift of interpretation write out their interpretation of that message. If there is agreement, then the scriptural gifts are operating. If not …
3. Women should not speak in tongues in the church (v. 34). Whatever restrictions are placed on women, they are not to speak in tongues or prophesy in the church, even if they have those scriptural gifts.
4. Never forbid the use of the scriptural gift (unless, of course, no interpreter is present, v. 39).
5. Let everything be done properly and orderly. The term *properly* means “becomingly,” “with decorum.”

THE CONTEMPORARY PHENOMENON CALLED TONGUES

What is the present-day experience that is called tongues? There are three possible answers to that question. (1) It is the biblical gift that God is still giving today, though not to everybody. (2) It is a counterfeit of the biblical gift which Satan promotes (in some instances at least) to confuse believers. (3) It is a self-induced experience. (4) It is a mixture of (2) and (3), i.e., self-induced and used as a counterfeit.

If God is still giving the biblical gift, then it must meet the criteria for the gift as described in the Scriptures. It must be an actual earthly language used by men with interpretation to edify the church and as a sign of verification and judgment to unbelieving Jews and regulated by the guidelines of 1 Corinthians 14:26–40. But even if the gift ceased in the early days of the church, does not the Scripture say it will appear again at the end of the age? Those who hold this cite Joel 2:28–32 as evidence that it will and that we today are living in that time. But neither Joel 2 nor its quotation in Acts 2:16–21 mentions the gift of tongues.

We know that Satan is the master counterfeiter, beginning in the garden of Eden and continuing into the last days. His desired goal in counterfeiting is to promote a form of godliness, not ungodliness (2 Timothy 3:5). Therefore, if someone seems to be helped in their Christian life by having a so-called tongues experience, this could be used by Satan to deceive others into thinking that tongues today are not only the true biblical gift but one that is to be coveted.

But it is also true that Satan and his demons can be involved in something that God can override and use for the good of a believer. Paul’s thorn in the flesh, which came from a messenger of Satan, was used by God to make Paul dependent on His strength (2 Corinthians 12:7–10). We should not forget in considering Satan’s possible involvement in tongues today the many documented occurrences of tongues in non-Christian religions. Who initiates those experiences?

How could a so-called tongues experience be self-induced? Several answers have been suggested. One is simply that in a highly emotional state someone may pour out impassioned utterances that sound like tongues. Another is that someone may have heard or learned some words or phrases from an actual language, which are then stored in the memory, bits and pieces of which appear

sprinkled throughout a tongues message. But in reported such experiences there are no fluent sentences in any actual language.

Sincere Christians want to experience all that the Lord has for them. Tongues have an aura about them as being some kind of acme of Christian experience. People then begin to seek the experience and urged on by others they hypnotize themselves into saying some tongues-like words that are affirmed as genuine tongues by those observing the person. This, then, tends to confirm to the individual that he or she has really had the biblical tongues experience.

William J. Samarin, a competent linguist, spent decades carefully analyzing hundreds of cases of tongues speaking worldwide. Here are some significant excerpts from his book *Tongues of Men and Angels*.

> There is no mystery about glossolalia. Tape-recorded samples are easy to obtain and to analyze. They always turn out to be the same thing: *strings of syllables, made up of sounds taken from among all those that the speaker knows, put together more or less haphazardly but which nevertheless emerge as word-like and sentence-like units because of realistic, language-like rhythm and melody* [italics added]. Glossolalia is indeed like language in some ways, but this is only because the speaker (unconsciously) wants it to be like language. Yet in spite of superficial similarities, glossolalia is fundamentally not language. All specimens of glossolalia that have ever been studied have produced no features that would even suggest that they reflect some kind of communicative system ….
>
> Glossolalia is not a supernatural phenomenon. It is, in fact, a very natural phenomenon …. In fact, anybody can produce glossolalia if he is uninhibited and if he discovers what the "trick" is …. When the full apparatus of linguistic science comes to bear on glossolalia, this turns out to be only a facade of language—although at times a very good one indeed. For when we comprehend what language is, we must conclude that no glossa, no matter how well constructed, is a specimen of human language.[7]

If this linguistic analysis is true, and if biblical tongues were uniformly actual languages, then one has to conclude that biblical tongues are not being experienced today.

SOME CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

First, glossolalists who claim to speak in a “heavenly language” cannot produce any objective criteria against which this supposed heavenly language can be measured and thus authenticated.

Second, there is no reason to be dazzled or stand in awe of those who claim to have spoken in tongues. Whatever they are doing, they are not, in my understanding of the Scripture, exercising the genuine supernatural gift.

Third, we need to realize that those who seek this experience may be trying to meet some deep need in their lives that we might help them meet in a more lasting way. It is much more demanding to pursue careful and deep study of the Bible than to have a tongues experience. But it is through the written Word that we know more and more about the living Word. We need to help others to know the Bible well and then share its truths to other believers and to unbelievers alike in a language they can understand.

Fourth, when Paul lists some of the spiritual gifts in an order of priority tongues are last in that list (1 Corinthians 12:28). Then he exhorts the Corinthians to seek the greater gifts (v. 31).

Fifth, the goal of Christian living for every believer is to be like Christ. And our Lord never spoke in tongues. So we can press toward the goal of Christlikeness and never have to speak in tongues.

NOTES

1. See Anthony A. Hoekema, *What About Tongue Speaking?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966), 9–33, for a survey of speaking in tongues throughout church history.
2. Donald W. Burdick, *Tongues: To Speak or Not to Speak* (Chicago: Moody, 1969), 66–67; Joseph Dillow, *Speaking in Tongues* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), 172–73; and William J. Samarin, *Tongues of Men and Angels* (New York: Macmillan, 1972), 53, 222, 254.
3. Thomas Edgar, *Miraculous Gifts* (Neptune, N.J.: Loizeaux, 1983), 60–62.
4. See Robert L. Thomas, "Tongues … Will Cease," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 17, no. 2 (spring 1974), 85–89. This third view is essentially my own preference as stated in the notes on 1 Corinthians 13:10–11 in the *Ryrie Study Bible*, where I understand the *perfect* of v. 10 to be the Second Coming and v. 11 to speak of the "stages of growth within the present imperfect time before Christ's return" (Chicago: Moody, 1995).
5. A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (New York: Harper, 1931), 4:179.
6. Gordon D. Fee [a Pentecostal scholar], *God's Empowering Presence* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994), 14. See a full discussion in Myron J. Houghton, "A Re-examination of 1 Corinthians 13:8–13," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 153: 348–49.
7. Samarin, *Tongues of Men and Angels*, 227–28.

18
THE FILLING OF THE SPIRIT

THE RELATIONSHIP OF SPIRIT-FILLING TO SPIRITUALITY

From the viewpoint of Christian living, the filling with the spirit is probably the most important aspect of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. It is the filling ministry that brings the teaching about the Spirit into all facets of life and service. Filling is the channel by which His ministries are worked in and through the believer. But, like many other aspects of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, filling is not always clearly understood.

The Concept of Spirituality

First Corinthians 2:15 characterizes a spiritual believer as being able to examine or discern all things while he at the same time will not be understood by others. It may help to clarify this verse if I quote two other translations. “The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man’s judgment” (NIV). Or “But the spiritual man has insight into everything, and that bothers and baffles the man of the world, who can’t understand him at all” (TLB). At the very least *spirituality* means a mature and maturing relation to the Spirit. *Maturity* involves both time and control by the Spirit.

The Role of the Spirit in Producing Spirituality

To be able to discern, judge, and appraise all things requires a standard by which they may be appraised. And that standard is the Word of God. Therefore, to be spiritual one must know the Word, and the Spirit plays an important part in teaching us the Word (John 16:13). The spiritual Christian will also be a separated, godly person. And the Spirit plays a necessary role in our being victorious over the flesh (Romans 8:13; Galatians 5:16–17). Being taught and being dependent are ongoing needs, so maturity and spirituality are not achieved instantaneously.

Some Ramifications

If spirituality and maturity are interrelated, then there must be degrees of

spirituality since there are stages of maturity in our Christian lives. Paul apparently expected the believers at Corinth to have reached a level of maturity whereby they could be called spiritual in five or six years' time.

Apparently, too, a person can backslide in one area of his spiritual life without losing all that had been gained through the years of maturing.

If *Spirit-filling* means the control of the Spirit in one's life, then a new convert can be filled with the Spirit in whatever areas he knows about. But that does not mean he or she is spiritual until there has been time for growth and maturing. As that maturing process progresses, more areas that need to be brought under the control of the Spirit will come to light, and as we respond openly and willingly the Spirit expands His control and we mature. Thus a person may be immature either because he or she has not been a Christian very long or, even though he has been a believer for some time, he has not been filled by the Spirit and therefore has not made much growth in the Lord. Also, we will never arrive at perfection in this life, for as life progresses there will always be new challenges for growth.

THE NATURE OF BEING FILLED

A Definition of Filling

The clue as to the proper definition of being filled with the Spirit is found in Ephesians 5:18: “And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit.” Although there is undoubtedly a sharp contrast in the verse between drunkenness and Spirit-filling, there is also comparison, and this furnishes the clue. The comparison is in the matter of control. A drunken person is controlled by the alcohol he has consumed. Because of this he thinks and acts in ways that are not usual or natural to him. Likewise, the man who is Spirit-filled is controlled, and he too acts in ways that are unnatural to him. This is not to imply that these ways are erratic or abnormal, but to say that they are not ways that belong to his old life. Thus, being filled with the Spirit is simply being controlled by the Spirit.

Aspects of Filling

The Scriptures depict two aspects of the filling of the Spirit. The first may be described as a sovereign act of God whereby He takes control of someone for special activity. The Greek phrase *pimplemi pneumatos agiou* (using the verb *pimplemi*, “to fill”) emphasizes the event of being filled in contrast to the state that results from being filled. It occurs in Luke 1:15 (of John the Baptist), Luke 1:41 (of Elizabeth), Luke 1:67 (of Zacharias), Acts 2:4 (of the group on the day of Pentecost), Acts 4:8 (of Peter), Acts 4:31 (of the believers), Acts 9:17 (of Paul), and Acts 13:9 (of Paul again).

In these instances God simply overpowered these people, sovereignly filling and thus controlling them by the Spirit for some special activity. God did not impose any conditions for experiencing this aspect of filling. Also, some of the same people had this experience more than once, the repetition being due to a new need for special service and not due to any intervening sin on the part of those people that would necessitate another filling (Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31).

The second aspect of Spirit-filling may be described as the pervasive influence and control of the Spirit in a believer’s life. The Greek phrase used in these instances is *plere* or *pleroo pneumatos agiou* (the root being the verb *pleroo*). It indicates an abiding state of fullness of the Spirit rather than a specific

event and which produces a character of life that may be equated with spirituality. The references are Luke 4:1 (of Christ), Acts 6:3, 5 (of the first helpers of the apostles), Acts 7:55 (of Stephen), Acts 11:24 (of Barnabas), Acts 13:52 (of the disciples), and Ephesians 5:18 (concerning believers).

This aspect of Spirit-filling seems to be something every believer can experience (Acts 13:52) but not something every believer does experience (Acts 6:3). It denotes a believer's character as being spiritual. Though no specific conditions are mentioned in these contexts, the normal requirements for Christian growth and godliness would be implied conditions for this kind of Christian character due to Spirit-filling.

The only time Paul wrote of Spirit-filling, in Ephesians 5:18, he emphasized this character aspect of being filled. Since he wrote it as a command he obviously did not think that all his readers had experienced it.

Two questions arise in the interpretation of Ephesians 5:18. The first is: What is the meaning of *spirit* in this text? Does the term refer to the Holy Spirit or to the human spirit? If the human spirit, then the verse says that we should use our human spirit when we worship. However, there is no other New Testament reference to filling with the human spirit. Indeed, the other occurrences of "with the Spirit" in Ephesians (2:22; 3:5; 6:18) and Colossians (1:8) all clearly refer to the Holy Spirit. The presumption then is that Paul meant the Holy Spirit in Ephesians 5:18 also. In addition, the verb *pleroo* occurs in relation to God in 3:19 and to the Son in 4:10. Why would Paul switch to the human spirit in 5:18?

The second question concerns the use of *en*. Does it mean *with* or *by?* In other words, is the Spirit the *content* of our filling (with) or the *Agent* (by). Or why do we have to make a choice? Could not Paul have meant us to understand both ideas? The Holy Spirit is the One *by whom* we are filled, and He fills us *with Himself*. Sealing is similar—the Spirit is the Agent, and He Himself is also the seal. Or a nonbiblical analogy: When we say of someone that "he is full of himself" we mean that he himself is the substance or content of his life, and he does this by himself.

To sum up: Spirit-filling is both the Spirit's sovereignly controlling someone for special service and the Spirit's filling the believer with His own character. (Figure 18.1, "Baptism and Filling by the Holy Spirit," near the end of this chapter, outlines differences between these two aspects of the Holy Spirit's ministry.)

THE COMMAND TO BE FILLED

The Spirit-filled character of life (the second aspect) is commanded in the Word. The verb in Ephesians 5:18 is an imperative. Christians are expected to be continually filled with the Spirit, for the command is in the present tense indicating a continuing requirement. We can disobey and take back control of areas of our lives, and when we do we need to yield again to the Spirit control of those areas.

THE CONDITIONS FOR BEING SPIRIT-FILLED

Before leaving this earth the Lord commanded the disciples to tarry in Jerusalem for the fulfillment of the promise concerning the baptism of the Spirit. It is true that they were filled on the day of Pentecost, but this was not that for which they were tarrying. One searches in vain to find some example in the New Testament where believers are told to tarry or where they do tarry for the filling of the Spirit. Indeed, one searches, without success, to find an instance when believers ever prayed for the filling of the Spirit since the day of Pentecost.

The nearest example of such a prayer is that of Paul's for the believers in Ephesus: "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him" (Ephesians 1:17). Yet this is really not a prayer for the filling of the Spirit. There is no such prayer. So praying, however earnest and sincere, is apparently not the way to be Spirit-filled. But undoubtedly many people think this is the case.

God does not ask believers either to tarry or to pray for the filling. This does not mean, however, that the filling comes automatically without first meeting certain conditions. If *filling* means the control of the Spirit in one's life (whether in the sense of God's sovereign seizing of a person or of a sustained control that results in a spiritual character), then it means yieldedness and obedience. Prayer may be involved in meeting the demands of obedience, but prayer (particularly seeking and tarrying prayer) will not of itself bring the filling. Obedience is the condition, and the Scripture explains what is meant by obedience in specific terms as it relates to the filling of the Spirit.

A Dedicated Life

In order to be Spirit-filled there must be dedication of life. Such dedication concerns the basic relationship to the will of God in toto and not especially to specifics within the will of God. A dedicated life involves two things—beginning it and continuing it.

Dedication has a beginning that is often experienced as a decisive event in one's Christian experience. According to the central passage, Romans 12:1–2, this dedication involves three things.

First, there must be a presentation of the years of one's life. Paul addresses

these saints in Rome as brothers. But he assumed that some of them were undedicated brothers; otherwise, there would be no need for his exhortation to be dedicated. Here he asks for a complete dedication, as he does as well in Romans 6:13 (“present yourselves”). Although initially dedication may be brought about by some particular problem or decision, the dedication in Romans 12:1–2 is not a dedication to do a specific thing, but a dedication of the entire life—which, of course, involves everything: the known and the unknown, and the good and the bad. This is not snipping off one sin at a time until we get rid of most of them. Basically the question is: Who will run my life—Christ or myself?

Second, there must be a separation (v. 2). The tense is present and the mood imperative, which means “stop being conformed to this world.” The word *conformed* is vivid. It means: Do not appear veneered with the world when you are a Christian underneath. It is the picture of a cheap worldly finish on top of an expensive Christian base.

Third, it must be characterized by a continual transformation. This transformation centers in the mind, for there is the control center for all the thought patterns of life, and such transformation will result in a knowledge of the will of God.

The dedicated life also needs continued direction, for dedication does not automatically guarantee the solution to all life’s problems. It does guarantee (or should) that when faced with a problem the Christian will need only to discern the will of God, not to debate whether or not he will do it. But in order to know what God’s will is in particular circumstances, it is necessary to have direction from the Holy Spirit, and then to follow that direction in order to be Spirit-filled. It is the Spirit who leads (Romans 8:14), and He does so basically through fellowship with Himself, which presupposes the yieldedness of initial dedication. Thus dedication is kept active and relevant by daily direction of the Spirit as the believer walks in fellowship with Him.

Suggestions as to how to discern the leading of the Spirit are legion. Fellowship so intimate that there can be no doubt as to His leading is the key to the matter. However, some additional suggestions may be in order.

1. Substitutes should not be sought for fellowship with God. Placing a “fleece” before God *in order* to determine the Lord’s leading limits God generally to the two possibilities you are choosing between. Placing a fleece before God *after* a decision has been made in order to confirm the Lord’s leading is quite a different thing. Casting of the lot likewise limits God to as many ways as can be thought of. But, of course, He may have a different way in mind which the person using the lot has not thought of.

2. A knowledge of the Word of God is essential. God never leads contrary to the Word; indeed, He leads on the basis of the Word. The Word tells one both how God will not lead and how He will lead.
3. Friends are valuable in giving information and counsel. The wisdom of older Christians may be quite helpful. However, choose advisors who knew the Word well and who know you well. I have often had people phone me with questions about knowing God's will for their lives. I always respond by urging them to counsel with their pastor, family, or close friends who know them well. But, ultimately, the leading is up to the individual believer, not to or through his friends.
4. Be careful about trying to have the same prescription about leading filled twice. The way the Lord may lead in one instance does not mean He will do it similarly in another. Neither should a friend's prescription be used for your leading. It might be good for one person and poison to another.
5. The whole matter should be talked over with the Lord. He will not only show the answer but also the way to recognize that it is His answer. Tell all your doubts and problems and fears to Him; then wait until He makes the way clear. Knowing when to wait is just as important as knowing when to move.

A directed life manifests itself in a life of inner peace, for it is a life lived in the will of God. A directed life is not a sinless life, but it is a life lived in the right path and one that grows and matures day by day. Dedication of life, starting at the beginning time of dedication and continuing with a life of direction by the Spirit, is the first prerequisite for the Spirit-filled life.

An Undefeated Life

The day-to-day problem of sin in the life must be recognized and be dealt with if the Spirit is to control that life. Dedication and direction are necessary, but so also is dealing with sin in our daily experience.

Admittedly we all sin. None of us meets God's standard of holiness, for sin is ultimately measured against God Himself (Romans 3:23; 1 Peter 1:15–16; 1 John 1:5). He never lowers or compromises that standard, even though we can never fully attain to it in this life. But He tailors His requirements to wherever we are in our walk with Him. To focus on 1 John, the *standard* is God, who is Light (v. 5), but the *tailored requirement* is for each believer to walk in the light (v. 7). And each person at each stage of his or her spiritual growth has a particular amount of light he must respond to. As we obey and grow we see

more light, which we must then respond to in obedience. And so on and on throughout our Christian lives.

When we learn of areas of darkness we might not have even been conscious of before, or when we fail to respond in obedience, then we are to confess those sins and know that our heavenly Father forgives us. To *confess* means to agree, and in this verse it means to agree with God concerning the particular sin; that is, we must have God's viewpoint on the sin. It is not merely reciting the sin before God but admitting that what He thinks about the sin is actually how bad it is. When this is done, then He faithfully and righteously forgives us and restores us to enjoying our fellowship in the family of God.

When we walk in whatever amount of light we have, God will give us additional light in new areas of our Christian responsibility. The blood of Christ cleanses us of those previously darkened areas. Then as we walk in the light, which now includes these additional areas, more areas will be revealed. Walking (by us), enlightening (by the Word), cleansing (by the blood and our confessing) —this is how we deal with sin in our ongoing pilgrimage.

Involved, too, in the matter of dealing with sins in our lives is the important doctrine of the crucifixion of our sin nature by the death of Christ and our responsibilities to reckon that to be so and then presenting ourselves to God and yielding our members as instruments of righteousness (Romans 6:1–13).

Certain sins in particular grieve the Holy Spirit. They include useless speech, bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking (Ephesians 4:29–31). In the following verses other forms of unbecoming speech are also listed (5:4).

Additionally, our Father sometimes has to discipline us in order to move us along in the paths of righteousness. Such discipline can be of help in our dealing with the matter of sin in our lives. When He does this, He does it "for our good, so that we may share His holiness" (Hebrews 12:10).

A Dependent Life

Finally, the Spirit-filled life is a dependent life. "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16).

By its very nature, walking is a succession of dependent acts. When one foot is lifted in order to place it in front of the other one, it is done so in faith that the foot remaining on the ground will support the full weight of the body. Each foot in turn acts as a support while the other foot is being moved forward. One can only make progress in walking by stepping out on one foot and depending on the other to hold him up. In this verse in Galatians the Christian is reminded that in order to walk and make progress in the Christian life he must walk by faith,

which means to live in dependence on the Holy Spirit. “Walk *by* the Spirit” is the correct translation.[1]

This continual walk of dependence is needed, as the following considerations imply.

1. The standards are high. The requirements of grace are the highest of standards. The love demanded is the love of Christ (John 13:34). It can be shed abroad in a life only by the full, unhindered ministry of the Spirit (Romans 5:5). Every thought is required to be brought into obedience (2 Corinthians 10:5). “In everything give thanks” (1 Thessalonians 5:18). “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17). These are all standards that require dependence on the Spirit if we are to meet them.
2. The enemies are powerful. The dependent life is necessary because the enemies are strong. The devil stalks like a roaring lion, seeking to utterly devour the believer’s testimony (1 Peter 5:8). Even friendship with the world sets one at enmity with God (James 4:4). In the flesh dwells no good thing (Romans 7:18), and this very weakness enhances the power of the sin nature.

Only by walking in dependence on the Spirit—that is, by letting the Spirit have full control—can the Christian ever hope to make the progress that is consistent with his profession.

Thus to be Spirit-filled is to be Spirit-controlled. And to be so controlled requires dedication of life, victory over the reigning power of sin, and constant dependence on the Spirit. These are the conditions, and when they are in place, the Spirit’s control automatically follows. One’s attention ought not to be on praying to be filled; rather, it ought to be on being sensitive to these conditions; for when they are being met, the filling will be experienced.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF BEING FILLED

Being Spirit-filled results in the experiential realization of all the ministries of the Spirit. For instance, although a believer is sealed, regenerated, baptized, and indwelt whether he realizes these happened or not, he will come to understand the importance of these ministries and enjoy the benefits of them as he is filled with the Spirit. In addition to this, however, certain other ministries of the Spirit are linked in the Scriptures with filling. These may properly be classed as direct consequences of being filled or controlled by the Spirit.

A Christlike Character (Galatians 5:22–23)

The fruit of the Spirit is inseparably linked with the filling of the Spirit in Galatians 5. Paul contrasts in this chapter the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit. He declares that the means of not fulfilling the lusts of the flesh is to walk in dependence on the Spirit—a condition for the filling (v. 16). Then he pictures in vivid detail the lusts of the flesh (vv. 19–21) and sets in contrast to them the fruit of the Spirit (vv. 22–23). It has often been pointed out that this fruit produced by being filled by the Spirit is a perfect picture of Christlikeness. And so it is. Therefore, it may be said that one of the consequences of being Spirit-filled is the producing of Christlike-ness.

This involves, as far as this passage is concerned, nine features. The first is *love*, which is seeking the glory of God in the object loved. There may be acts that on the surface appear to be unkind but which are in reality an expression of love, if the goal is the glory of God. Love and knowledge are vitally related, for the deepest kind of love is based on the fullest knowledge. *Joy* is primarily derived from seeing other Christians advance in the knowledge of the truth (3 John 4). *Peace* is that tranquillity which comes because one is rightly related to God. *Longsuffering* is the evenness of character and action that never displays a desire for revenge. *Gentleness* is beneficent thoughts, while *goodness* is kind actions. *Faithfulness* means serving with regularity and buying up all the opportunities with every faculty given to us by God. *Meekness* is gentlemanliness and in no way includes the concept of weakness. *Self-control* is discipline of the whole life, including especially areas of morality.

This is the fruit of the Spirit, and this Christlike character is produced only by the Spirit completely controlling or filling the life.

Worship and Praise (Ephesians 5:18–20)

The classic verse on the filling of the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18) is followed immediately in its context by at least four consequences of being filled. The first is the outward expression of praise through “speaking to one another [note correct translation] in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.” The second is the inner expression of praise by “singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.” The third consequence of being controlled by the Spirit is a thankful heart.

Submissiveness (Ephesians 5:21)

The fourth consequence of being Spirit-filled in this passage is submitting to one another in various relationships of life, so that peace and harmony will reign between husbands and wives, parents and children, employers and employees. Control by self will mean an expression of self that disrupts the harmony that ought to exist in all relationships of life.

Service (John 7:37–39)

It was the eighth day of the Feast of Tabernacles when Christ’s words in John 7:37–39 were spoken. B. F. Westcott says this of the passage:

BAPTISM	FILLING
OCCURS ONLY ONCE IN EACH BELIEVER'S LIFE	IS A REPEATED EXPERIENCE
NEVER HAPPENED BEFORE DAY OF PENTECOST	OCCURED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT
TRUE OF ALL BELIEVERS	NOT NECESSARILY EXPERIENCED BY ALL
CANNOT BE UNDONE	CAN BE LOST
RESULTS IN A *POSITION*	RESULTS IN *POWER*
OCCURS WHEN WE BELIEVE IN CHRIST	OCCURS THROUGHOUT THE CHRISTIAN LIFE
NO PREREQUISITE (EXCEPT FAITH IN CHRIST)	DEPENDS ON YIELDEDNESS

SOURCE: Charles Caldwell Ryrie. Materials from *Basic Theology*. Chariot Victor Publishing, copyright 1986. Used by permission of Chariot Victor Publishing.

Figure 18.1.

> The image appears to have been occasioned by the libations of water brought in a golden vessel from Siloam which were made at the time of the morning sacrifice on each of the seven days of the feast while Isa. xii. 3 was sung. It is uncertain whether the libations were made on the eighth day. If they were not made, the significant cessation of the striking rite on this one day of the feast would give a still more fitting occasion for the words.[2]

When Christ is received, not only is the soul's own thirst satisfied but the blessing received becomes the blessing distributed. The believer not only satisfies himself but he overflows in service to others. This overflowing is the ministry of the Spirit through a controlled life, and it is a ministry distinctive to

this age according to the Lord's words.

The full realization and enjoyment of other ministries of the Spirit depends on being filled with the Spirit. Filling means control of all known matters and areas of the Christian's life at every stage of our walk. Such control is prerequisite to Christlikeness, praise, submissiveness, and service. In addition, other ministries of the Spirit, such as teaching and guiding, will never be fully enjoyed by the believer unless he is controlled by the Spirit, though they might be to some partial extent. Let's not ever be satisfied with partial control, but seek to obey all that our heavenly Father wants for us.

NOTE

1. “*Pneumati*, the *normal* dative, of the rule, or manner, after or in which: …—by the Spirit. But *pn*. is not man’s ‘*spiritual part,*’ … nor is *pneumati* ‘*after a spiritual manner,*’ … It is (as in v. 5) the Holy Spirit of God: this will be clear on comparing with our vv. 16–18, the more expanded parallel passage, Rom. vii.22–viii.11. The history of the verbal usage is, that *pneuma*, as *christos* and *theos*, came to be used as a proper name: so that the supposed distinction between to *pn*. as the objective (the Holy Ghost), and *pn*. as the subjective (man’s spirit), does not hold.” Henry Alford, *The Greek Testament* (London: Rivingtons, 1871), 3:57.
2. B. F. Westcott, *The Gospel According to St. John* (London: J. Murray, 1908), 1:277.

19
SOME OTHER ACTIVITIES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

HE TEACHES US

One of the last promises the Savior made to His disciples before His crucifixion concerned the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. In the Upper Room He said:

> I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said that He takes of Mine and will disclose it to you. (John 16:12–15)

Paul also wrote about this ministry in 1 Corinthians 2:10–16: “For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths [deep things] of God” (v. 10).

The Time

This particular ministry of the Spirit was yet future when our Lord spoke these words. It began on the day of Pentecost and continues throughout this age. Peter’s clear comprehension of truth in his Pentecostal sermon shows that this ministry had begun.

Paul’s statement that the Spirit has revealed truths indicates (by his use of the aorist indicative, “revealed”) that this ministry was in effect when he wrote 1 Corinthians.

The Content

In general, the content of the Spirit’s ministry encompasses “all the truth” (John 16:13; the definite article appears in the Greek text). This, of course, means revelation concerning Christ Himself, but on the basis of the written Word (for we have no other reliable information about Him except in the Bible). Therefore, He teaches the believer the content of the Scripture including an understanding of prophecy (“what is to come;” v. 13). This particularizing of the

general promise concerning teaching ought to encourage every believer to study prophecy. Notice, too, that the Spirit does not originate His message—it comes from the Lord. Paul focuses on the Spirit's teaching us the deep things about the crucifixion of Christ and His salvation in 1 Corinthians 2:8–9.

The Results

The results of the teaching ministry of the Spirit are (1) Christ is glorified and (2) we are edified. If He is not glorified, then the Spirit has not been ministering. Note also that it is not the Spirit who is glorified or who is supposed to be glorified in a service where teaching goes on, but Christ. Further, if Christ is known only through the written Word, then He will be glorified when the Word of God is expounded in the power of the Spirit to the edification of those who hear.

The Procedure

How does the Spirit teach the believer? The anointing of the Spirit enables the believer to be taught (1 John 2:20, 27). In the context, this emphasizes that no one really had to tell them about the falsity of the teaching of antichrists—the Holy Spirit would confirm to believers what John had written about them. In other words, the anointing verifies what John as a human teacher taught them.

Human teachers are involved in the Spirit's ministry of teaching. They study and explain what the biblical text says. They do not teach by "direct revelation" or "words of knowledge," for the Canon is closed and no additional inerrant revelation is being given today. They use all the proper tools for ascertaining the meaning of the Bible; they presumably apply what they have learned to their own lives; then they minister to others to bring spiritual health and growth. Spirit-directed teaching is not simply giving cold facts to others, but the truth of the living and working Word of God for our growth in grace and knowledge of our Lord.

Hindrances

1. An unsaved person does not experience the teaching of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:14). He may understand many things about the Bible, but he will not accept them. How can that be? It is just like a person who understands that some things are bad for his health, yet does not accept that truth and refuses to eliminate them.
2. Carnality and immaturity in the believer hinder this ministry of the Spirit (1

Corinthians 2:6, 13).

HE GUIDES US

“For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God” (Romans 8:14). Leading in this passage confirms our son-ship and the benefits that flow from it. Sons are led. Something has already been said in chapter 18 about guidance in connection with dedication. This work of guidance is particularly the work of the Spirit. Romans 8:14 states it, and the book of Acts amply illustrates it (Acts 8:29; 10:19–20; 13:2, 4; 16:6–7; 20:22–23). This ministry of the Spirit is one of the most assuring ones for the Christian. The child of God need never walk in the dark; he is always free to ask and receive directions from the Spirit Himself through the various means He uses.

HE ASSURES US

The Spirit is also the one who assures the Christian that he is a child of God. “The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God” (Romans 8:16). The Greek word for children here is *tekna* (in contrast to *huioi*, “sons,” in v. 14) and emphasizes the fact that the believer shares in the life of the Father as a member of His family. Because of this, he also becomes an heir of God (v. 17). Assurance of our inheritance is the work of the Spirit in the heart of each Christian.

Undoubtedly, assurance is also brought to the heart of the believer by an increased understanding of some of the things the Spirit has done for him. For instance, assurance will deepen when one understands what it means to be sealed with the Spirit and to have been given the earnest of the Spirit as a guarantee of the completion of redemption (Ephesians 1:13–14; 4:30). The comprehension of what is involved in the Spirit’s joining the believer to the risen, undying body of Christ will also nurture assurance. Of course, the comprehension of these great accomplishments is part of the teaching ministry of the Spirit, so in more than one way the Holy Spirit is connected with and concerned about the assurance of the child of God.

HE PRAYS FOR US

The Promise

Although we may not fully understand the ramifications of the Spirit's praying in the believer, the fact that He does is perfectly clear: "In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words" (Romans 8:26).

The Need

We need this help because of our weakness (the word is singular). He helps our entire weakness but especially as it manifests itself in relation to our prayer life, and particularly in relation to knowing what to pray for at any given moment. Often we really do not know our own needs, only our wants (and a believer should not be reluctant to express his or her wants as long as they are always subordinated to wanting above all the will of God). But the Spirit knows our needs and those of others and will pray according to the will of God. While we wait for our full redemption we need guidance in the specifics of prayer.

The Method

The way the Spirit helps meet our need is described in general by the word *helps* in Romans 8:26, which literally means "to come to the aid of someone." The Greek word occurs in the New Testament in only one other place, Luke 10:40, where Martha asked the Lord to tell Mary to help her with the meal preparations. In Romans 8:26, the help comes in the form of "groanings too deep for words." The Greek word, *alaletois*, literally means "wordless" or "inexpressible." They are not tongues or even some kind of formulated expression, but they are according to the will of God.

In another passage we are told that the Spirit guides and directs our prayers (Ephesians 6:18). Praying in the Spirit means praying in His power and wisdom. This is more the guidance of the believer's heart and mind as he expresses his prayers, and is not the same as the unutterable groanings of the Spirit.

The Results

The Spirit's praying for us helps make us content in this present fallen world, even though we groan in ourselves while we wait for the completion of our redemption (Romans 8:23). We groan, and the Spirit groans. His presence in us is the first fruits that guarantees that some day we will be relieved of the trials life brings. Such a satisfying prayer life brings contentment. In addition, this ministry of the Spirit will result in prayers that are answered according to the will of God.

Teaching, guiding, assuring, and praying are significant ministries of the Spirit so needed by all of us regularly throughout our walk with our Lord. Thanks be to God for His gift of the Spirit and all the benefits that gift brings to our lives.

20
WHAT IS THE ANOINTING OF THE SPIRIT?

MANY REFERENCES

One can scarcely watch some television services without hearing a repeated emphasis on *the* anointing. Often, too, in church services (even traditional ones) a prayer is offered for the anointing of the pastor and his message. More recently, some rather bizarre things are being associated with the anointing of the Spirit.

Just what does the Bible teach about anointing? This activity is found in both Old and New Testaments both in a secular and religious sense. It is done by God and by humans on both things and people (living and dead), usually by someone else though also performed by oneself.

THE MEANING OF ANOINTING

To *anoint* means to pour or rub oil on the object being anointed. The more common Old Testament word comes from the noun *Messiah*, the “anointed One.” One of the three Greek words used is related to the title *Christ*, the counterpart of Messiah.

THE BIBLICAL USES OF ANOINTING

Cosmetic

Anointing the body was common among Egyptians, Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans. This was done to keep the skin soft in hot, drying climates. It was also part of one's toilette (Ruth 3:3; Amos 6:6). Furthermore, not to anoint the skin was a sign of sadness (2 Samuel 12:20; Daniel 10:3). Recall that our Lord said that when we fast we should anoint our faces so that it does not appear as if we were fasting and to keep us from making a show of it (Matthew 6:16–18). Dead bodies were anointed with perfumes (Mark 14:8; Luke 23:56).

Consecration

In the times of the patriarchs stone pillars were anointed (Genesis 28:18; 35:14). Later the tabernacle, its furnishings, and Aaron and his sons were anointed, setting them apart for their special and sacred use (Exodus 30:23–25, 30–33). Still later, prophets were also anointed (1 Kings 19:16).

This meaning of being specially commissioned by God and set apart for His service is likely the meaning of anointing in 2 Corinthians 1:21. Although it is true that all believers are anointed (1 John 2:20, 27), this reference may be referring to Paul only or to Paul and the other apostles. If restricted, then it is a consecration use of anointing; if applicable to all believers, then it refers to the indwelling and sealing of the Spirit.

Although shields also were anointed (2 Samuel 1:21; Isaiah 21:5), it is not clear whether this was done simply to preserve the leather or iron or whether this was done to sanctify their use in a (holy) war.

Not long ago when a popular television ministry dedicated a new facility, the leader had everyone, including himself and his staff, anoint everyone and everything in sight. When they came to the service the audience had been given little bottles of oil with which they anointed each other and the seats they were sitting on. The leader and others ran up and down the halls anointing doors, furniture, pianos. Perhaps they considered their facility the twentieth-century replacement for the tabernacle!

Coronation

Kings were regularly anointed in the Old Testament by pouring oil on their heads. This rite formally inducted them into their office and marked them off as a representative of God (1 Samuel 10:1; 1 Kings 19:16). Kings, thus, were designated as “the Lord’s anointed” (1 Samuel 12:3, 5).

Designation for Jesus as Messiah

Isaiah predicted that the Spirit would anoint the Messiah for His ministry (Isaiah 61:1). That Jesus of Nazareth fulfilled this prophecy is affirmed in Acts 4:27; 10:38; Hebrews 1:9 (compare also John 1:41; 4:25).

Medicinal

Oil was used for massages, baths, and on wounds to help heal them (Isaiah 1:6; Luke 10:34). Also, it was involved in healings, perhaps more as a symbol of a miraculous cure than a medicine (Mark 6:13; James 5:14).

For Discernment

First John 2:20 and 27 make clear that all believers are anointed. Thus anointing refers to the Spirit’s indwelling all Christians, but the purpose stated relates to being able to discern the false teachings of the antichrists present in those days. Verse 27 states that the anointing has been received by all (aorist tense) and abides (present tense), so this cannot be something that comes and goes. The phrase at the end of verse 20 is correctly translated “you all know,” not “you know all.” The presence of the Spirit is the basis for teaching believers to distinguish truth from error, even though the Spirit may also use human teachers to help accomplish this.

Two things stand out from this survey of the purposes of anointing. In this age, all believers have been anointed, and there are no biblical examples in this age of the powerful experiences some are attributing to the anointing of the Spirit. If one prays for anointing on a pastor or his message, this is really an Old Testament concept that at least in the pastor’s case is unnecessary today simply because all pastors who are believers as well as all believers in general have been anointed. In relation to messages, perhaps it would be more biblical to pray that Spirit would use those messages to convict of sin, righteousness, and judgment.

SPURIOUS ANOINTINGS

We have seen that anointing in the Bible had a number of different uses. This is probably the reason why people use the term to include phenomena and experiences which are not ever mentioned in the Scriptures in relation to anointing.

The Toronto Blessing

Starting on January 20, 1994, the Toronto Blessing had its roots in the ministry of a South African evangelist, Rodney Howard-Brown, who influenced Randy Clark, a Minnesota minister who in turn preached for John Arnott, pastor of the Airport Vineyard Church in Toronto, Canada, where the movement was born. The movement, which has spread to a number of cities and churches internationally, has been labeled a renewal, a revival, a filling of the Spirit, and an anointing of the Spirit. Arnott claims that as of August 1995, 660,000 people have attended services of his church.[1] Spin-off conferences in various cities attract thousands of people.

Characteristics of this movement include uncontrollable laughter (called holy laughter), falling backward, and actions and noises like animals, the two most common being barking like a dog and roaring like a lion. The lion roar allegedly announces God's intention to take back territory Satan has occupied in the church. The anointing is equated with prophesying. Speaking in tongues and healings are sometimes a part of these gatherings.

Here is a description of one such convention. It began with singing,

> with many people raising their arms overhead and others dancing in the aisles …. Mr. Arnott preached for an hour, occasionally interrupted by spurts of uproarious "holy laughter" that didn't seem to be directly related to what he was saying ….
>
> [People were instructed] to form parallel rows at the front of the ballroom. About 145 members of the "ministry team" positioned themselves among the crowd, many laying hands on people. As the band played softly, people started falling backward into the arms of others. Some shook violently, laughed loudly or spoke in tongues …. The opening day of the event didn't wind down until 2 A.M. Tuesday. People remained

> sprawled on the floor—"doing carpet time," as they called it—for long periods. Hugs, prayer and tears abounded.[2]

A report from another city is similar. "Worshipers are overcome by the Holy Spirit, and often begin shaking and trembling before falling to the ground. Some laugh uncontrollably; others make animal noises, such as barking. In many cases, believers mumble in an indecipherable language, known as 'speaking in tongues.'" One attendee testified that "the Holy Spirit came to her at the meeting, and she found herself laughing uncontrollably with joy. Now she's a member of Prayer Palace and receives the Holy Spirit as often as she can."[3]

Such doctrinal confusion (as exemplified by that quote) reigns in this movement, and most of it relates to the Holy Spirit. The baptism of the Spirit, the filling of the Spirit, being slain in the Spirit, speaking in tongues, healings, holy laughter, anointing by the Spirit, and prophesying in the Spirit serve as examples of this confusion. Conclusion: To say that the Holy Spirit is the source of this kind of activity is unbiblical, because it is not characteristic of His ministry, which is to do things decently and in order.

The baptism of the Spirit is received by every believer at conversion and is not repeated. Filling is a repeated experience, but we are not ever exhorted to pray for it, and its characteristics are a Christlike character (Galatians 5:22–23), singing, thankfulness, and submission (Ephesians 5:19–21).

So-called holy laughter and animal noises are not evidences of the filling of the Spirit according to the Bible. To liken being slain in the Spirit to the experiences of Moses, Isaiah, John, or Paul is incongruous. They fell to the ground awestruck by the presence of God. In contrast, when I see people being slain in the Spirit they always fall backward, having been hit in the forehead by the evangelist and there always being two strong men behind them to catch them so they do not hurt themselves.

The soldiers who came to arrest Jesus in Gethsemane fell to the ground backward because of Jesus' momentary revelation of Himself, not because they were slain in the Spirit. The biblical use of *slain* means to die or be killed (Hebrews 11:37 KJV; compare the NASB and NIV of this verse, where "put to death" is used). The gifts of tongues, interpretation, and healing were given to the early church. Reports of speaking in tongues today usually do not include reports of their interpretation. In such cases the Scripture clearly says that no tongues should be spoken audibly where there is no interpretation (1 Corinthians 14:28).

Laughter in the Scriptures is not always or necessarily a synonym for *joy*. The word occurs thirty-four times in the Old Testament, twenty-two of which refer to

scornful laughter. Though sometimes sorrow is better than laughter (Ecclesiastes 2:2; 7:3–4), there is a proper time to laugh (Ecclesiastes 3:4). For example, those who returned from Babylon justifiably laughed and sang (Psalm 126:2). In the New Testament laughing appears five times as scornful or judgmental, and once where double-minded believers are commanded to let their "laughter be turned into mourning" (James 4:9). Anointing is something every believer has and does not need to be repeated (2 Corinthians 1:22; 1 John 2:20, 27). And that the gift of prophecy is being given today is impossible to prove.

If all things in the meetings of the church are to be done decently and orderly (which means with propriety, decorum, and becomingly), judge for yourself whether the Toronto Blessing meets these criteria, and whether, therefore, it is of the Spirit or of the flesh.

Anointed Prophets and Their Prophecies

People often use the words *prophet* and *prophecy* in a general sense without specifying exactly what the biblical gift of prophecy is. We hear the label prophet applied to a preacher whose message is especially strong and laced with threatening judgments. Little thought is given to whether or not prophecy includes predicting the future, and if it does, how many of those predictions have come true.

What is the New Testament gift of prophecy? Some say it is the gift of revelation. Most emphasize two aspects of the gift: foretelling (predicting) and forthtelling (proclaiming or preaching). With Old Testament prophets foretelling was dominant, whereas forthtelling is the emphasis (though not exclusively) in New Testament prophecy.

If the gift of prophecy includes any foretelling or predicting, then how can we account for the fact that no one other than biblical prophets predicted with 100 percent accuracy? One contemporary answer is that New Testament prophecy consists of impressions God gives the prophet, which impressions can be misunderstood and therefore open to error.

Another suggestion claims that in 1 Corinthians 13:9 Paul says that "our prophesying is imperfect."[4] But the verse does not say that. It says that the New Testament prophets who were exercising the genuine gift of prophesy were prophesying *in part*, not imperfectly, meaning that even with the revelations that came through prophets, those revelations were only partial in comparison to what we will know when that which is perfect is come at the Second Coming of Christ. Partial revelation in the time before maturity or perfection does not mean that the revelation is imperfect, only that it is partial. *Part* is contrasted with

whole (compare vv. 10–12).

That prophecy equates with preaching (and therefore was not a temporary gift) is sometimes alleged from 1 Corinthians 14:3: “One who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation.” But the verse is not reversible; it does not say that anyone who speaks for edification, exhortation, and consolation is prophesying. All spiritual gifts are to edify the church (v. 12), prophecy and interpreted tongues included.

The Old Testament gives three tests for a true prophet (Deuteronomy 18:9–22). First, a true prophet does not use omens, divination, or anything pagan fortune-tellers used. Second, a true prophet never spoke in the name of other gods or taught that which contradicted the Word of God. Third, what a true prophet predicted always came to pass. The New Testament adds a specific purpose for New Testament prophets: they were founders of the body of Christ (Ephesians 2:20).

The present-day concept of prophecy seems to include the following characteristics.

1. It is related to an anointing of the Spirit.
2. It is in the nature of impressions.
3. It seems, therefore, to be practically equivalent to “words of knowledge.”
4. It does sometimes include prediction.
5. Predictions do not have to come true 100 percent of the time simply because these anointed, prophetic impressions may be misunderstood by the prophet.
6. Prophecies must conform to the Scripture. But it seems that a genuine exercise of prophecy or the content of a word of knowledge would in effect be adding to Scripture or at least have the same authority as Scripture does.
7. In one church, prophecies were filtered through a special group of prophetic singers who “are recognized as having the prophetic gift, mature character, and a special anointing for presenting prophecy in spontaneous song.”[5]

We know that false prophets will prophesy in the coming Tribulation days (Matthew 24:11). Are there false prophets and prophecies today? Of course, just as there were in apostolic days when the genuine, true gift of prophecy was being given. We do not need so-called anointed prophets today to tell us God’s truth or to predict what’s coming in days and years ahead. God’s truth is inscripturated in the Bible, never to be added to or taken from.

Predictions about the future are also found there as well, and we do not need anyone to add to or subtract from them. We do need to study the completed

revelation of God more diligently, and we do have an anointing of the Spirit to help us discern between truth and falsity (1 John 2:20, 27). We do not need those who claim to be anointed prophets. All Christians have the anointing, and this will keep us abiding in Him who is the truth (1 John 2:27).

Why do the spectacular things always attract so many people? Here are some probable reasons.

1. They provide a way for people to have religious experiences that give a "boost" without demanding too much. Lying on the floor in a big meeting laughing is certainly more exciting than changing diapers in the church nursery!
2. They make the participants feel that they are "special" to God because they have had experiences others have not.
3. They do not require doctrinal scrutiny and conformity. "I've had the experience, so it must be true. Don't confuse me with doctrine."
4. They relieve people from doing diligent and regular study of the Bible.

Instead of holy laughter, we need holy living. Pep is no substitute for purity. Words of knowledge don't hold a candle to the words of the Bible. Rather than being slain in the Spirit, we need to be filled with the Spirit. Rather than dancing in the Spirit, we are commanded to walk in the Spirit. Instead of speaking in other tongues, we need to speak more boldly the wonderful works of God in our native tongue. The prophecies of the Bible do not need to be augmented by so-called prophets today. God's revelation is complete and sufficient. Let's devote ourselves to knowing, loving, and obeying it, and thereby to know, love, and obey our Savior more and more each day.

NOTE

1. On December 13, 1995, it was announced that the Toronto church was no longer associated with the association of Vineyard Churches.
2. “Making a Joyful Noise,” *Dallas Morning News*, 30 August 1995, 32A.
3. ”Faithful Blessed with ‘Holy Laughter,’” *Tampa Tribune*, 12 March 1996, 1, 10.
4. John Blattner, “Pitfalls of Prophecy,” *Equipping* (Anaheim, Calif.: Vineyard Ministries, 1989), 14–15. See also Wayne Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today* (Westchester, Ill.: Crossway, 1988).
5. Mike Bickle, “Administering Prophecy in the Church,” *Equipping* (Anaheim, Calif.: Vineyard Ministries, 1989), 25. In the same issue ten guidelines are given to those who want to get started in trying to prophesy.

21
THE SPIRIT'S MINISTRY IN THE FUTURE

HIS MINISTRY IN THE TRIBULATION PERIOD

In the opinion of the writer, the Bible teaches that the church will be removed from the earth before the Tribulation begins. Involved in this pretribulational Rapture teaching is the removal of the restrainer at the same time (2 Thessalonians 2:6–8). The identification of the restrainer in these verses is debated. In verse 6 "what restrains" is a neuter participle with the neuter article. In verse 7 "he who now restrains" is a masculine participle with the masculine article.

Many identify the restrainer as government. But (as discussed in detail in chapter 10) the restrainer must be stronger than the coming man of sin (Antichrist) and ultimately Satan, who empowers him. So God must be the ultimate restrainer, although He may use various means including governments. And since the Holy Spirit restrains (see chapters 7 and 10), then it is reasonable to believe He is involved in this restraining, which will be removed when the church is removed. That is, the guaranteed indwelling presence of the Spirit in believers will include the removal of the Spirit when believers are removed from this earth.

However, such removal does not mean or even imply that the work of the Spirit comes to an end. Just as the omnipresent Spirit worked in behalf of people in Old Testament times, so He will continue to work after the Rapture of the church, even though His work of building the body of Christ will be finished. (See Figure 21.1, "The Eschatology of the Holy Spirit," near the end of this chapter, for an outline of the Spirit's work in the latter days.)

In Relation to Unbelievers

During the Tribulation period multitudes of people will be converted.

1. At the beginning of the period God will seal 144,000 Jews, and this sealing must involve their salvation, for they are God's servants who are eventually taken to heaven (Revelation 7:3; 14:1–5).
2. During the tribulation a multitude so large it cannot be numbered will turn to the Lord from "every nation and all tribes and people and tongues"

(Revelation 7:9). This group is said specifically to come out of the Great Tribulation (Revelation 7:14).

3. At the end of the time those Israelites who are living and who pass successfully through the judgment will be converted (Ezekiel 20:33–44; Zechariah 13:1; Romans 11:25). In this latter passage the work of the Spirit is connected with the salvation of unsaved people in the Tribulation period (Zechariah 12:10). In the other instances there is no specific reference to the part the Spirit may have in conversion, though it would seem logical to conclude that He will have a part.

In Relation to Believers

Apparently the Spirit's work in believers during the Tribulation period will follow the pattern of His work in the Old Testament. He will be present and active in the world; He will indwell and empower His people; He will use believers in witnessing. Specific proof texts are scarce, for the Bible says very little about the Spirit's ministry during that time. One text that can be used is the quotation of Joel 2:28–32 in Acts 2:17–21, because for whatever purpose it was quoted on the day of Pentecost, it obviously did not have a complete fulfillment on that day. Full fulfillment awaits the Tribulation days, since the passage expressly links the pouring out of the Spirit with the time when the sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood (compare Revelation 6:12–17). Another text is Revelation 11:3–4, which links the ministry of the two witnesses during the Tribulation to the power of the Spirit (Zechariah 4:2–6).

In Relation to Other Ministries of the Spirit

While it seems that there will be a widespread ministry of the Spirit during this time, His ministry of baptizing believers into the body of Christ will not occur then. The reason is simple: There will be no purpose for the baptism, for the body of Christ will be complete before the period begins. In addition, His work of restraining by indwelling believers as the temple of God will not carry over into the Tribulation, for the church will be raptured before the Tribulation begins. However, this does not mean that He may not restrain to some extent during that time, for He did restrain in days before the body of Christ came into existence (Genesis 6:3).

THE SPIRIT IN THE MILLENNIUM

In Relation to Unbelievers

When the Millennium begins, it appears that at that moment all who enter it will be redeemed. Jews who survive the Tribulation will have been judged and the rebels from among them purged out (Ezekiel 20:33–44; Zechariah 13:8–9). Surviving Gentiles, too, will come under the judgment of God (Matthew 25:31–46). As a result of these two judgments, all who enter the Millennium at its beginning will be redeemed. However, children will be born throughout the Millennium, with the result that during that time many will be in need of salvation, and many will receive it. This work of salvation is related to the Spirit in the case of Israel and the fulfillment of her new covenant (Isaiah 59:21; Ezekiel 36:25–28; Zechariah 12:10; 14:16).

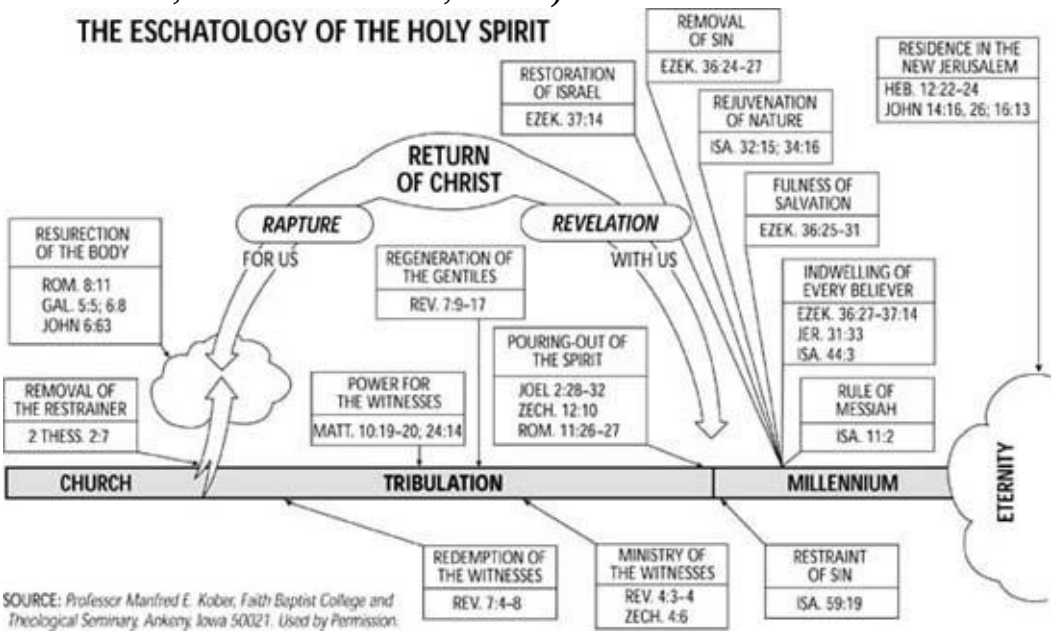


Figure 21.1.

In Relation to Believers

The new covenant also provides for the indwelling of the Spirit in believing Israel during the millennial age (Isaiah 59:21; Ezekiel 36:27). This relationship of the Spirit apparently also includes His filling as well as indwelling (Joel 2:28–

29).

In Relation to Christ

During the Millennium the fullness of the Spirit on Christ will be evident (Isaiah 11:2–3). The period will be the fullest display of the presence and power of God that the earth has ever seen since the days of Adam and, although little is said specifically concerning the Spirit’s work, His ministry along with the other persons of the Trinity will be abundantly manifest. Yet, in spite of all that God will do for man in those years, Satan will find a ready response in the hearts of many who will side with him in his final and futile revolt against Messiah (Revelation 20:7–9). This proves that a thousand years of peace, righteousness, and renovation of the environment cannot change people’s hearts—only Christ and His salvation can.

22
HISTORY OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

TO THE COUNCIL OF NICEA (A.D. 325)

Orthodox Witness

Doctrinal formulation of the Christian faith did not occur all at once at some time in the history of the church. Nor did a definition of all Christian doctrines take place at an equal rate. Sometimes one doctrine came in for attention, while at other times the spotlight would be focused on a different doctrine.

The doctrine of the Holy Spirit did not receive much attention in the early centuries as far as formal definition was concerned. What we have come to know as the orthodox expression of the doctrine of the Spirit was witnessed to by the early church in the baptismal formula, in the Apostles' Creed, and in the castigating of error when it did appear. The use of the threefold name of Father, Son, and Spirit shows that implicitly and in practice the deity and personality of the Spirit were acknowledged by the early church.

As far as thinking about the Spirit was concerned, the principal emphasis in the post-apostolic age was on the experience of the Spirit rather than the doctrine. This emphasis is particularly notable in *The Shepherd of Hermas* (90–140). In the era of the apologists the Spirit receives little prominence in the literature, since the emphasis was on the Logos (a designation for God, translated "the Word" in John 1:1). At the same time, there seemed to be no erroneous experience of the Spirit in spite of the lack of doctrinal definition.

Montanism (150)

It was in Montanism that the subject of the Holy Spirit came into more prominence. The original impetus for this movement grew out of a reaction against the increasing rigidity and frigidity of the organized church. Montanism (also called the Phrygian heresy) appeared in Phrygia at about 150 through the ministry of Montanus and two women, Prisca and Maximilla. They announced themselves as prophets and announced the period as the age of the Paraclete in which new revelations from God were to be given. They emphasized the nearness of the end of the world and insisted on very high and strict moral standards in their followers. It was this high morality that attracted Tertullian and

others to the movement.

It should be remembered that Montanism was a more orthodox movement, in contrast to Gnosticism. It was also a reaction against Gnosticism, with its intellectualism that seemingly raised a barrier against the soul's personal communication with God. For many, Montanism stood for the active presence and ministry of the Spirit in the church and for a more spiritual type of church life. However, Montanism was officially rejected because of its insistence on additional revelation. In so doing, the church affirmed the belief that the Spirit does not give new revelations apart from the Scriptures. Still, with all this emphasis on the experience of the Spirit, the doctrine remained for the most part without formulation.

Sabellianism (215)

Monarchianism was the predecessor of Sabellianism. In its modalistic form, Monarchianism taught that the Son was merely a mode of expression of the Father. Noetus and Praxeas were leaders in this movement, and they also taught patripassianism (i.e., the Father was crucified). Since the Monarchians taught that the Son was a mode of expression of God, it was inevitable that the church was forced to consider the relation of the Spirit to the Son and to the Father. Sabellius taught that there is one God who revealed Himself in three different modes or forms. These three modes were not three hypostases (substances) but three roles or parts played by the one God. The error is also known as Modalism and Monarchianism (denoting the monarchy or primacy of the Father). Sabellianism was the first major error concerning the Trinity that gained a large following in the church.

Arianism (325)

The Arian controversy is thus called because it was occasioned by the anti-Trinitarian views of Arius, a presbyter of Alexandria. The monotheistic principle of Monarchianism was a dominant concept in his view. However, he distinguished the one eternal God from the Son, who was generated by the Father and who had a beginning. He also believed that the Holy Spirit was the first thing created by the Son, for all things were made by the Son. Arius was opposed by Athanasius, and the Council of Nicea was called to discuss the dispute.

The principal statement of the council concerned the deity of the second person of the Trinity, and the conclusion was that Christ was "of the same substance" as the Father. The attention of the council was focused on the Son

rather than the Spirit, and the Nicene Creed merely mentions the Spirit: “I believe in the Holy Spirit.” The statement can be said only to infer the deity and personality of the Holy Spirit because of its connection with the specific declaration concerning the Son. Why the council was not equally specific concerning the Spirit is only a matter of conjecture. Possibly the church was content not to anticipate heresy or to go beyond what the occasion demanded. Athanasius, however, was much more definite in his own teaching, vigorously maintaining that the Spirit, like the Son, was of the same essence as the Father.

FROM NICEA (325) TO THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION (1517)

The Council of Constantinople (381)

All was not settled by the Nicene Council. Although Athanasius's own teaching was clearly orthodox and detailed, the Nicene Creed had been indefinite concerning the Spirit. A new controversy soon arose and people began to assert their unbelief in the deity of the Spirit. As a result, there arose the Macedonians, whose founder, Macedonius, bishop of Constantinople, maintained that the Spirit was a creature subordinate to the Son. His party was nicknamed Pneumatomachians ("evil speakers against the Spirit"). The main stream of orthodox teaching was that the Holy Spirit was divine or else the Son was not divine. Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa were leaders in propagating the orthodox view and preparing the way for the Council of Constantinople.

The controversy grew to such proportions that Emperor Theodosius had to call a council at Constantinople consisting of 150 orthodox bishops representing the Eastern church only. In 381 the council met and under the guidance of Gregory of Nazianzus formulated the following statement concerning the Holy Spirit: "And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Life-giving, who proceeds from the Father, who is to be glorified with the Father and the Son, and who speaks through the prophets."

It has been pointed out that the creed used remarkable moderation in avoiding the term "of the same substance" (which was used of Christ in the Nicene Creed) to express the Spirit's oneness with the Father and the Son. Actually the Spirit is not even called God in the creed, though the terms in which His work is described cannot possibly be predicated of any created being. Nevertheless, the statement did counter the Macedonians, even though it did not assert the consubstantiality of the Spirit with the Father or define the relation of the Spirit to the Father and the Son; and it settled the question of the deity of the Spirit, just as the Nicene Council had settled the question of the deity of Christ.

Augustine (354–430)

1. *De Trinitate*. The concept of the Trinity in the Western church reached a final formulation in this work by Augustine. His interest in the doctrine of grace would naturally lead to a consideration of the Spirit, for his own experiences taught him how necessary the power of the Spirit was to the believer. In this treatise he stated that each of the three persons of the Trinity possesses the entire essence and that all are interdependent on the others. He declared that he was not satisfied with the word *persons* to express the three hypostases, but he used it "in order not to be silent." In his conception of the Trinity, the Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son.
2. The Pelagian controversy (431). Augustine also laid great stress on efficacious grace as the work of the Spirit. This profoundly influenced not only his doctrine of man and of sin but also his doctrine of the Spirit. Pelagius, his opponent in the controversy, diluted the doctrine of original sin and emphasized the ability of man to do good apart from the enablement of the Spirit. The Council of Ephesus dealt with the controversy in 431 and condemned Pelagius and his views and upheld Augustine and his. Although Pelagianism was condemned officially, it was not eradicated from the church, for Pelagianism and semi-Pelagianism (as well as Augustinianism) have come down to this present day.

The Council of Chalcedon (451)

In 451 the Council of Chalcedon, representing the sees of Rome, Constantinople, Antioch, and Jerusalem, confirmed the decisions of Nicea and Constantinople. The council explicitly stated that the Nicene Creed was sufficient as a proper statement of the doctrine of the Trinity and that the clauses added by the Council of Constantinople in 381 were only intended to clarify, not change the Nicene Creed. This firmly established the doctrine of the deity of the Holy Spirit.

The Synod of Toledo (589)

Although the question of the deity of the Spirit had been settled at Constantinople and Chalcedon, there still remained the important and mysterious question of the Spirit's precise relation to the Father and the Son. This was a problem that developed in the West (the matter of the deity of the Spirit was Eastern). The term *generation* was used to describe the relation of the Son to the Father, whereas the term *procession* was employed to denote the relation of the

Spirit. The question was: Did the Spirit proceed from the Father only, or from the Father and the Son? Although the Council of Constantinople did not declare that the Spirit proceeded from the Son as well as from the Father, this was the belief of many church leaders. It was regarded as necessary to believe that, lest procession from the Father only look like a denial of the essential oneness of the Son with the Father. However, there was not unanimity on this point, for others felt that to say that the Spirit proceeded from the Father and the Son would mean that the Spirit was dependent on the Son and would thus infringe on His deity.

The Western theologians held to the procession from the Father and the Son, and they added the famous *filioque* ("and Son") clause to the Constantinopolitan Creed at the Synod of Toledo. The clause stated that the Spirit "proceedeth from the Father and the Son." How the *filioque* clause came into the creed is a matter of discussion. Some think it was the "blunder" of a copyist. In any case, the clause never caused suspicion but was repeated in synod after synod as orthodox doctrine. Leaders in the Eastern church believed that the Western church was tampering with the creed formulated at Constantinople and never adopted the *filioque* addition. This became the confessional ground for the split between the Eastern and Western churches that continues to this day.

Thus three things concerning the Trinity were settled beyond all question, at least in the Western church. The deity of the Son was settled at the Council of Nicea; the deity of the Spirit at Constantinople; and the procession of the Spirit from the Father and the Son at the Synod of Toledo. The presence of heresy had forced the church to settle these great doctrinal matters.

Abelard (1079–1142)

Abelard spoke of the Trinity in ways that caused him to be charged with Sabellianism. The name of the Father, he said, stands for power; the Son, for wisdom; and the Spirit, for goodness. Sometimes he seemed to indicate genuine personal distinctions in the Godhead, but his illustrations and expressions at other times were modalistic.

Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274)

In Aquinas there was the usual orthodox understanding of the Trinity. Generally speaking, however, the centuries preceding the Protestant Reformation added little to the doctrine of the Spirit beyond what was systematized by Augustine. In the West, although the influence of Augustine was still at work, the church became semi-Pelagian (de-emphasizing original sin and emphasizing the freedom of man's will). This, together with the increasing sacerdotalism and

its consequences (which promoted special powers of the clergy), tended to keep the minds of many away from any further study of the Holy Spirit. Although there were tendencies toward mysticism on the part of some, no truly fresh study of the doctrine of the Spirit was made until the time of the Reformation.

FROM THE REFORMATION TO THE PRESENT

The Protestant Reformation (1517)

Up to the time of the Reformation the church's attention had been directed only toward the person of the Spirit. In the Reformation, attention was given to His work. As far as the Spirit's person was concerned, all the Reformed confessions express the orthodox doctrine of the Spirit in relation to the other persons of the Trinity. As far as His work is concerned, there was renewed emphasis on the necessity of His work in regenerating man because there had been a return to the Augustinian emphasis on the total depravity of man.

Another important contribution of the Reformers was their emphasis on the need of illumination by the Spirit. The Roman church taught that only church tradition could guarantee correct interpretation of the Word of God, whereas the Reformers advocated the study of the Bible, asserting that all believers could be taught its truths by the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Luther's emphasis on justification by faith caused him to say much about the Spirit's work in this connection. Without the work of the Spirit man is incapable of making himself acceptable to God or of having saving faith. However, Luther's emphasis was on the Word, and the Spirit does not operate independent of the Word. Calvin emphasized those aspects of the work of the Spirit that are associated with the Trinity and the ministry of the Spirit in the hearts and lives of believers. The Spirit works in regeneration and in attesting to the divine origin of Scripture.

The various documents and creeds growing out of the Reformation are uniform in their orthodoxy. The Augsburg Confession, the Anglican Articles, the Formula Concordiae, the Helvetic Confession, and the Westminister Confession all asserted the deity of the Spirit, following the Council of Chalcedon, including the *filioque* clause as well as the particular emphases brought to light by the Reformation itself. Indeed, it may be said that it was not until the time of the Reformation that there was a developed doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

The Socinians and Arminians

Almost every religious movement is followed by excesses and reactions. The Reformation was no exception. Some went to an extreme of unbalanced enthusiasm and mysticism. Others tended toward a rationalism that almost completely ignored the work of the Spirit in the life. In the sixteenth century the Socinians declared that it was erroneous to believe that the persons of the Trinity possessed a single essence. In this teaching they echoed the Arians, but they were beyond them in denying the pre-existence of the Son and defining the Holy Spirit as "a virtue or energy flowing from God to man."

From the Reformed church itself there arose the serious trouble in connection with what is known as Arminian theology (Jacobus Arminius, 1560–1609). The entire tendency of this teaching was to emphasize human effort and freedom of the will and to make salvation a work of man rather than a work of God, with the human will replacing the work of the Spirit in regeneration. The Synod of Dort (1618–19) met to deal with the matter, and it condemned Arminian theology, emphasizing in the strongest possible way the need of the working and power of the Holy Spirit. However, the synod did not eliminate Arminian theology, which flourishes to this day. The Puritan movement in England did much to counter Arminianism by its emphasis on the doctrine of grace.

John Owen (1616–1683)

One of the most important contributions of the Puritans was Owen's book *Discourse Concerning the Holy Spirit*. Many think his work has never been superseded. It is a development of the great Reformation principles in relation to the Holy Spirit and the Christian life, and its value cannot be estimated.

Abraham Kuyper (1837–1920)

The work of Kuyper is also a classic in its field, particularly in view of the rationalism that had swept over Europe. Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772) denied the Trinity. Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834), though he countered the prevalent rationalism by emphasizing the need and reality of personal religion, denied the objective realities of the Incarnation, the Cross, and the coming of the Spirit. His doctrine of the Trinity was Sabellian—the persons of the Godhead were only modes of manifestation. The distinct personality of the Spirit was denied, and the Spirit's work was defined as "the collective Spirit of the new corporate life that was initiated by Christ." Albrecht Ritschl (1822–1889) revived the Monarchianism of Paul of Samosata, who taught that the Spirit was not a personal entity but simply a manifestation of the grace of the Father.

The Plymouth Brethren (1831–)

It is to the Plymouth Brethren that we owe a proper understanding of the baptizing work of the Spirit and the distinct nature of the New Testament church. The church owes much to this group's emphasis on the importance of the Word of God, the illumination of the Spirit, and the position the believer has in Christ by the work of the Spirit. There have been deplorable schisms within this group, but it has been a strong witness to the presence, power, and guidance of the Spirit in the church.

Neoorthodoxy

Neoorthodoxy is a twentieth-century movement arising out of the theology of Karl Barth (1886–1968). It was a reaction to the liberalism that held sway until the horrors of the First World War forced people to think more seriously about sin and their own lack of competency to solve their own problems. The neoorthodox movement claimed to be a new Reformation that called men back to the Bible. It did this, but not to the Bible of the Reformers, for neoorthodox theologians have willingly embraced the teachings of liberalism concerning the accuracy and truth of the Bible while at the same time trying to preach the message of the Bible.

Although neoorthodoxy has about as many exponents as there are neoorthodox theologians, it may be said that in general its view of the Holy Spirit leaves much to be desired. Most neoorthodox writers deny the distinct personality of the Spirit and affirm His deity only in that He is represented as a divine manifestation of God. The Holy Spirit is regarded as more of an activity of God than a person of the Godhead.

Barth's own view of the Trinity has been called modalistic, although he would reject the term. He rejected what is commonly conceived of as modalism of divine manifestation of God in three ways as saying too little in rightly expressing the doctrine of the Trinity. On the other hand, he rejected the term *person* in regard to the Trinity as teaching too much; i.e., tritheism, or three Gods. His view seems to be that the Trinity is a threefold mode of manifestation and not three persons. Barth, in contrast to most neoorthodox teachers, did believe in the deity of the Spirit.

Neoliberalism

The rise and wide acceptance of neoorthodox theology has caused liberalism

to examine its own tenets. The result has been the new liberalism, which is the old liberalism with a tendency to take sin more seriously and to be less optimistic. Its approach to world problems may be different, but its teachings differ little from the older liberalism. The new liberal dispenses quickly and completely with the orthodox doctrine of the Spirit simply because he does not believe in the deity of the second person of the Trinity. Hence there is in reality no Trinity, and of course no divine third person. The Spirit is merely a function of God without possessing any distinct quality of personality.

Pentecostalism

Undoubtedly modern Pentecostalism is a reaction to the sterility that began to characterize the established churches in the modern era. It emphasizes the baptism of the Spirit as a second work of grace for endowment with power, and it promotes a return to experiencing all the gifts given and used in New Testament times. The orthodox doctrine concerning the person of the Spirit is assumed; it is the reality of the work of the Spirit in the lives of Christians that is promoted.

Signs and Wonders

The contemporary Signs and Wonders movement began largely through the ministry of John Wimber in the 1980s. Since the kingdom of God is now present in power, and since Christians must do what Jesus did when He was here on earth, we must expect the signs and wonders of the kingdom. Thus all the gifts of the Holy Spirit are present and active in the church today. The movement emphasizes the exercise of healings, words of knowledge, and exorcisms. Prophecy and tongues have a place in some cases, but these gifts of the Spirit are not so prominent as others.

Sometimes this movement is labeled *The Third Wave*. The first wave was the inauguration of the Pentecostal movement in the first part of the twentieth century, with its emphasis on receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit as evidenced by speaking in tongues. The second wave is labeled the Charismatic Movement, beginning in 1960, which emphasizes the fullness of the Spirit as evidenced in an openness to all the spiritual gifts. The Charismatic movement also penetrated mainline denominations and was not confined to Pentecostal churches. The third wave emphasizes power and deliverance through kingdom authority.

Thus in the sweep of church history one sees first the formulation of what has come to be known as the orthodox doctrine of the Spirit, then the definition of it

in the early councils, and the development of it during the Reformation. With every surge toward defining or developing the truth, there have been movements away from it, either in the form of rationalistic coldness or in the form of unbalanced enthusiasm and mysticism. History should teach us that orthodox doctrine is not only important to faith but equally vital to life. Perhaps in no doctrine is the wedding of truth and life more important than in a proper understanding and application of the doctrine concerning the Holy Spirit.

HELPFUL BOOKS ON THE HOLY SPIRIT

There are many books on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Each fulfills a different purpose. Anybody's list will be selective and influenced by what he himself has found particularly helpful (whether agreed with or not), and this list is no exception. Some books are out of print, but still worth searching for.

Barclay, William. *The Promise of the Spirit*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960. Combines devotional emphasis with exegesis.

Barth, Karl. *The Holy Ghost and the Christian Life*. London: Muller, 1938.

Baxter, Ronald E. *The Charismatic Gift of Tongues and Gifts of the Spirit*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1981 and 1983. Cessationist.

Biederwolf, William Edward. *A Help to the Study of the Holy Spirit*, 4th ed. New York: Revell, 1904. Contains an excellent bibliography.

Brunner, Frederick Dale. *A Theology of the Holy Spirit*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970. Explanation of Pentecostalism compared with good exegesis of the relevant New Testament passages.

Burdick, Donald W. *Tongues: To Speak or Not to Speak*. Chicago:

Moody, 1969. Brief but packed.

Candlish, J. S. *The Work of the Holy Spirit*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1883. Brief and lucid handbook.

Chafer, Lewis Sperry. *He That Is Spiritual*. Chicago: Moody, 1943. Careful distinctions, and exceedingly helpful on the spiritual life.

Cumming, James Elder. *Through the Eternal Spirit*. London: S. W. Partridge, 1891. One of the standard works on pneumatology. Well-organized.

Dillow, Joseph. *Speaking in Tongues*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975. Strong case for the cessation of tongues based on solid exegesis.

Dixon, A. C., ed. *The Holy Spirit in Life and Service*. New York: Revell, 1895. Contains addresses by various men, including W. J. Erdman, A. J. Gordon, and A. T. Pierson.

Downer, Arthur Cleveland. *The Mission and Ministration of the Holy Spirit*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1909. Comprehensive, well organized, and comparable to Kuyper.

Edgar, Thomas R. *Miraculous Gifts: Are They for Today?* Neptune, N.J.: Loizeaux, 1983.

Evans, Tony. *The Promise: Experiencing God's Greatest Gift*. Chicago: Moody, 1996. This practical study of the Holy Spirit is accompanied by a videotape series.

Fee, Gordon. *God's Empowering Presence*. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994. The author is a Pentecostal clergyman and scholar.

Grudem, Wayne A. *The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today*. Westchester, Ill.: Crossway, 1988. Suggests two gifts of prophecy: authoritative apostolic prophecy and nonauthoritative local-church prophecy.

Hendry, George S. *The Holy Spirit in Christian Theology*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1956. Neo-orthodox.

Hoekema, Anthony A. *What About Tongue Speaking?* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966. A strong case for the cessation of tongues by a respected Reformed theologian.

Kuyper, Abraham. *The Work of the Holy Spirit*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1900. A classic.

MacArthur, John F., Jr. *The Charismatics and Charismatic Chaos*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978 and 1992. A strong case against charismatic teaching.

Marsh, F. E. *Emblems of the Holy Spirit*. New York: Alliance, 1911. Study of the typology of the Holy Spirit.

Morgan, G. Campbell. *The Spirit of God*. New York: Revell, 1900. One of his best.

Moule, H. C. G. *Veni Creator: Thoughts on the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit of Promise*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1890. Excellent.

Murray, Andrew. *The Spirit of Christ*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan; reprint of 1888 edition. Meditations by this well-known writer and Dutch Reformed pastor.

Ockenga, Harold J. *The Spirit of the Living God*. New York: Revell, 1947. High quality sermons.

Owen, John. *The Holy Spirit, His Gifts and Powers*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1954. Kuyper regarded this as an unsurpassed classic.

Pache, René. *The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit*. Chicago: Moody, 1954. Lucid, well-outlined, and particularly suited for personal study.

Pierson, Arthur T. *The Acts of the Holy Spirit, Being an Examination of the Active Mission and Ministry of the Spirit of God, the Divine Paraclete, As Set Forth in the Acts of the Apostles*. New York: Revell, 1895.

Ramm, Bernard. *The Witness of the Spirit; an Essay on the Contemporary Relevance of the Internal Witness of the Holy Spirit*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959.

Samarin, William J. *Tongues of Men and Angels*. New York: Macmillan, 1972. An excellent study of religious pseudolanguage by a linguist.

Sanders, J. Oswald. *The Holy Spirit of Promise: the Mission and Ministry of the Comforter*. Fort Washington, Pa.: Christian Literature Crusade, 1959.

Smeaton, George. *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1889. Another classic in the field. Includes a historical survey of the doctrine.

Swete, Henry Barclay. *The Holy Spirit in the New Testament*. London: Macmillan, 1909.

Thomas, W. H. Griffith. *The Holy Spirit of God*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955. Treats the doctrine biblically, historically, systematically, and practically. Very comprehensive.

Torrey, R. A. *The Holy Spirit: Who He Is and What He Does*. New York: Revell, 1927.

Unger, Merrill F. *The Baptizing Work of the Holy Spirit*. Wheaton: Scripture Press, 1953. Excellent treatment of this debated aspect of the doctrine.

Walvoord, John F. *The Holy Spirit*. Grand Rapids: Dunham Publishing Company, 1958. A comprehensive textbook.

Wood, Leon J. *The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976.

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