

struction, of punishment. In view of these facts it becomes evident that those misguided religionists who would lay claim to the baptism of fire, who petition the Lord to "send down fire from heaven" upon them, simply do not comprehend the import of their prayers. I, for one, certainly have no desire to receive the baptism of fire. On the contrary, I pray God that I may escape it.

Moreover, we shall learn as we proceed with our study that not even Holy Spirit baptism is described in Scripture as having been administered for purposes of salvation or purification, or as having any necessary connection with the works of regeneration and sanctification. Holy Spirit baptism, like most outpourings of the Spirit in unusual measure, was connected primarily with the works of inspiration and demonstration.

To summarize: John was preaching to a mixed audience, which included one group of men who would later be called to the Apostleship, would nevertheless accept John's teaching and baptism and thus join the ranks of his disciples; and a third class consisting of those who would reject the counsel of God by refusing John's baptism altogether. It was this third class who were to suffer the baptism of fire, as the Divine Judgment to be inflicted upon all the unbelieving and disobedient. We shall investigate further to ascertain which group it was that was destined to receive Holy Spirit baptism.

The principal truth to be derived from John's words, however, has reference neither to the *subjects*, nor to the *design*, of Holy Spirit baptism, but to the Administrator of it. John declares explicitly that Holy Spirit baptism, no matter what it was, or what its effects were, or upon whom it was bestowed, could be administered only by the Messiah Himself. It could not be administered by any human instrumentality, but only by the Lord, the Head of the Church. It was to come directly from Heaven, as we shall see later, in fulfilment of a Divine Promise,—the Promise of the Spirit. The overall import of John's words is too clear for misinterpretation, namely, that the Messiah Himself would be the Administrator, both of Holy Spirit baptism and of the baptism of fire.

##### 5. The Promise of the Comforter

"In interpreting Scripture," writes Z. T. Sweeney, "attention should be paid not only to the speaker and his message,

but also to the parties addressed. There are passages that are universal in their application, others that are national, and still others that are addressed to individuals only. Many promises are addressed to children of God only, and do not apply to those who are not citizens of Christ's kingdom. Again, there are commands that are addressed solely to men in a state of condemnation, and have no relevancy when applied to the children of God. Christ uttered many things to His chosen Ambassadors, chosen to establish His kingdom on earth, which were never intended to be applied to others. It is a mistake for the Christian of today to make *universal*, promises that were intended by our Lord for special individuals. It confuses the whole scheme of redemption and makes a mystery out of Scriptures that are perfectly clear when proper limitations are made. Things addressed to a chosen few have been wrongly applied to all and great confusion has resulted therefrom."<sup>1</sup> To properly interpret any passage of Scripture, one must know four things about it: (1) to whom the words were originally spoken or written; (2) by whom they were spoken or written; (3) for what purpose they were spoken or written; and (4) in what Dispensation they were spoken or written. These are simply the a-b-c's of Biblical interpretation.

One of the outstanding examples of complete misinterpretation of Scripture that can be cited is the view that prevails quite generally regarding the subject-matter contained in the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth chapters of the Fourth Gospel. Here we have the discourses delivered by Jesus to the Eleven on the night of His betrayal. Here we find also a new name, a distinctive name, given to the Holy Spirit: the name "Comforter," as given in our common versions. Now the word "Comforter" is a translation, but a very inadequate one, of the Greek word *Paraklētōs*; indeed I know of no word in English that expresses adequately the meaning of this Greek word. For this reason a great many commentators and theologians have simply Anglicized (transliterated) the word, making it "Paraclete."

*The name Paraclete is used only four times in the New Testament (never in the Old), and all four times to designate the Holy Spirit; and it is used all four times by Jesus in His discourses to the Eleven as recorded in the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth chapters of John's Gospel.*

*This name Paraclete is never used to designate the work of the Holy Spirit in relation to the Church or to mankind in general. As a matter of fact, the name designates—and describes—only the relation sustained by the Holy Spirit to the Apostles of Christ. To the Apostles, and to them only, the Holy Spirit was the Paraclete; that is, Advocate, Companion, Comforter, Monitor, Guide, etc.*

Let us first get a clear picture of the setting in which the name Paraclete was used. Jesus and the Eleven are gathered together in an "upper room" somewhere in the city of Jerusalem. They have already kept the Passover, and Judas has departed on his mission of betrayal. The shadow of the Cross hangs over them. Jesus has come to the end of His incarnate ministry and has already informed them of this fact. Their hearts are saddened by thoughts of the impending separation. For three years they have been associated with Him intimately; they have sat at His feet and drunk in the sublime spiritual truths which have fallen from His lips; they have trod the storied hills of old Judea and the familiar roads of Galilee at His side; they have learned to depend on Him for instruction, guidance and comfort. Now all this is about to end! He will soon be leaving them! Simon Peter voices the question uppermost in their hearts, "Lord, whither goest thou?" (John 13:36). And Thomas exclaims, "Lord, we know not whither thou goest; how know we the way?" (John 14:5). Jesus proceeds to assure them that He will not leave them as sheep without a shepherd, leaderless, comfortless, helpless. He says: "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth: whom the world cannot receive; for it beholdeth him not, neither knoweth him: ye know him: for he abideth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you desolate: I come unto you" (John 14:16-18); that is, in the Person of the Spirit, the Comforter. Again: "These things have I spoken unto you, while yet abiding with you. But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, *he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you*" (John 14:25-26). Again: "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, he shall bear witness of me: and ye also bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning" (John

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15:26-27). Finally: "Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send him unto you. And he, when he is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye behold me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, *he shall guide you into all the truth*: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak: and *he shall declare unto you the things that are to come*. He shall glorify me; for he shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you. All things whatsoever the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he taketh of mine, and shall declare it unto you" (John 16:7-15). Here we have four passages in which the name "Comforter" is given to the Holy Spirit. *These promises were all made to the Apostles, and to them only*. The Holy Spirit, as the Paraclete, was to be their guide, their monitor, their assistant, their instructor, their helper, their comforter, their constant and unfailing companion. He would clothe them with the inspiration and infallibility which they would need to accomplish their great work of launching Christianity in the world and giving to the Church her Divine Book of Discipline, the New Testament Scriptures. And He would qualify them with power to work miracles to attest the revelation which they would communicate to mankind. In short, their authority would be the authority of Christ delegated to them by the Spirit; their infallibility, the infallibility of Christ guaranteed by the Spirit; and their Word, the Word of Christ communicated by the Spirit. Indeed it is doubtful that the Holy Spirit ever sustained such an intimate relationship with any other man or group of men as He sustained with the Apostles of our Lord.

It is interesting to note that in this series of statements regarding the advent and work of the Spirit as the Paraclete (i.e., in connection with the Apostles), Jesus marked out for Him three lines of activity and corresponding ends, all closely inter-related as follows:

1. His activity with respect to the Apostles themselves:

(1) "He abideth with you, and shall be in you." "That he may be with you for ever," that is, as long as you shall have need of Him, as long as you shall live, etc. (2) "He shall teach you all things." (3) He shall "bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you." (4) "He shall guide you into all the truth." (5) "He shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you." The ends: authority, inspiration, infallibility, demonstration, etc.

2. His activity with respect to mankind in general. (1) "*The world cannot receive*" Him. Naturally, for the unregenerated world "beholdeth him not, neither knoweth him." (2) "He shall bear witness of me," that is, to the world. (3) "He will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." The ends. conversion, regeneration, etc.

3. His all-embracing mission: (1) "He shall bear witness of me." (2) "He shall glorify me." The end: the consummation of the Eternal Purpose of God (Rom. 8:29).

Note well, too, what Jesus said here respecting the mission of the Apostles, the primary function of the apostolic office: "Ye also bear witness [of me], because ye have been with me from the beginning." Note this word *witness*, as descriptive of the apostolic function, and never forget it.

Permit me to repeat, for the sake of emphasis, *that these promises and statements were made to the Apostles, and to the Apostles only. To interpret them as applying to the Church generally, to individual Christians, or to mankind in general, is to do violence to the Scriptures.*

Leaving these Scriptures for the time being, with the intention of returning to them later, we are now ready to inquire: *When* did the Holy Spirit come upon the Apostles for the purposes specified in these statements of Jesus to the Eleven on the night of His betrayal?

## 6. The Teaching of Jesus after His Resurrection

We pass on now to the Resurrection Day,—the first Lord's Day of the Christian era. The Resurrection had already been made known to some of the Apostles, but not all of them. "When therefore it was evening, on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples