

escape, if we neglect so great a salvation? which having at the first been spoken through the Lord, was confirmed unto us by them that heard; God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will. [5. *They revealed the Will of God for the redemption of men, by inspiration of the Spirit.*] [1 Cor. 2:10-13]: But unto us God revealed them [the things of God] through the Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man, which is in him? even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God. But we received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God; that we might know the things that were freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; combining spiritual things with spiritual words. [1 Pet. 1:12]: To whom [the ancient prophets] it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto you, did they minister these things, which now have been announced unto you through them that preached the gospel unto you by the Holy Spirit sent forth from heaven. [Gal. 1:11-12, Paul says]: For I make known unto you, as touching the gospel which was preached by me, that it was not after man. For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ [cf. Eph. 1:3-14, 3:1-13]. [Rev. 2:7]: He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches [cf. Rev. 2:17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22].

The Bible is the record of God's progressive revelation of His Eternal Purpose, a record begun through holy men of old, inspired by the Spirit; continued through the Hebrew Prophets, inspired by the Spirit; and concluded by Jesus and the Apostles, inspired by the Spirit. The inspirational, revelatory and demonstrative work of the Spirit all came to an end with the Apostles of Christ.

3. The Incorporation of the Body of Christ

Again, the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles in baptismal measure, on the Day of Pentecost, for the purpose of *creating* the Body of Christ and of incorporating the Jews as such into that Body. This was the beginning of the second phase of the Creative Process, the institution of the Reign of the Messiah—the Reign of Grace—upon earth.

The events of that great Day of Pentecost—all interconnected—were four in number, namely, (1) the advent (descent) of the Spirit upon the Apostles in baptismal measure; (2) the preaching of the first Gospel sermon (*i.e.*, the first proclamation of the facts of the Gospel) and the first public announcement of the terms of admission into the New Cov-

enant; (3) the first conversions to Christ; and (4) the creation or incorporation of the Church of Christ.

The Church is the Body of Christ.

[Eph. 1:22, 23]: And he [God the Father] put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him [Christ] to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. [Col. 1:18]: He is the head of the body, the church. [1 Cor. 12:12]: For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. [1 Cor. 12:27]: Now ye are the body of Christ, and severally members thereof. [As the body of Christ, the Church is indwelt, vitalized and unified by the Holy Spirit.] [Eph. 2:21, 22]: in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit. [*The Church is an organism, a living, spiritually living, entity, and not an organization. As in the human organism, the power of direction is in the head, the mind, and is mediated throughout the organism by the spirit as the rational life principle; so in the Divine Organism also, the power of direction is in the Head, Christ Himself, and is mediated throughout the Body, the Church, by the Divine Spirit.*] [Eph. 4:15, 16]: But speaking truth in love, may grow up in all things into him, who is the head, even Christ; from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love. [1 Pet. 2:5]: ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. [Hence, the Church is said to be the "communion" (*i.e.*, the sharing together by its members) of the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 13:14).] [Cf. Pahl. 2:1]: If there is therefore any exhortation in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any *fellowship of the Spirit*, etc. [John says, 1 John 1:3]: our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ; [this fellowship is realized, however, by the presence of the Spirit in the members of the Body.] [Christ as the Head, and the Church as the Body vitalized by the Spirit, together constitute the Mystic Personality.] [Eph. 4:4-6]: There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all. [As the human body without the spirit is dead and consequently disintegrates: so the Body of Christ, without the Spirit, would be lifeless and would soon disappear from the face of the earth.]

Now the Church of Christ was *incorporated*, that is, *the Body was formed*, on the Day of Pentecost. At the conclusion of the first proclamation of the facts of the Gospel on that Day, some three thousand people, we are told, "were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do?" And Peter answered, "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall

receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:37-38). In v. 41, we read: "They then that received his word were baptized: and there were *added together* in that day about three thousand souls." And in v. 47, we are told that "the Lord *added together* day by day those that were being saved." These persons—some three thousand of them—asked what to do to be saved, were told what to do in a single sentence, and did what they were told to do, all within a few hours, at the most; whereupon the Lord Himself *added* them or *formed* them together into His Body. This was the incorporation of the Church of Christ. Undoubtedly the *forming* of the Body was the result of the diffusion of the *regenerative* measure of the Spirit throughout the minds and hearts of all those who obeyed the Gospel on that occasion. As A. J. Gordon has written:

[Believers had been saved, and the influences of the Spirit had been manifested to men in all previous dispensations from Adam to Christ. But now an *ecclesia*, an outgathering, was to be made to constitute the mystical body of Christ, incorporated into Him the Head, and indwelt by Him through the Holy Ghost. The definition which we sometimes hear, that the church is a 'voluntary association of believers, united together for the purposes of worship and edification' is most inadequate, not to say incorrect. It is no more true than that hands and feet and eyes and ears are voluntarily united in the human body for the purposes of locomotion and work. The church is formed from within, Christ present by the Holy Ghost, regenerating men by the sovereign action of the Spirit, and organizing them into himself as the living center. The Head and the body are therefore one, and predestined to the same history of humiliation and glory.¹]

To use modern business terms, this *incorporation* known as the Body of Christ was formed by Christ, through the Holy Spirit, on the Day of Pentecost; the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles, on that occasion was its *charter*; the Apostles themselves became its permanent *board of directors*; and its *constitution* was the Apostles' teaching (Acts 2:42) as communicated to them by the Spirit. This teaching was at first oral, but is now embodied in the New Testament canon in permanent form. The Apostles were the executors, guided into all the truth by the Spirit, of the Last Will and Testament of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; and this Testament was probated on the day of the first proclamation of the facts of the Gospel, the Day of Pentecost.

This was the beginning of the *embodying* of the Spirit upon earth, and it necessitated as great a Condescension and

1. A. J. Gordon, *The Ministry of the Spirit*, 53.

Humiliation on the Spirit's part as the work of Atonement had necessitated on the part of the Logos. "We can see," writes H. W. Robinson, "that the indwelling of the divine Spirit in humanity, whether by the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, or by the continuance of His presence through the Holy Spirit in the hearts of believers, must always involve a 'kenosis,' a humiliation and an acceptance of the lower as the medium of the higher, though this principle of limitation need not imply the duality of mind and matter. We have here, indeed, a true parallel, in the reverse direction, to the transforming activity of spirit. As there we saw spirit constantly taking up the lower into itself, and thereby giving it a new meaning, and consequently a new reality, so here we see spirit necessarily embodying itself in the lower, in order to express and realize itself. This is the great systole and diastole of Spirit (reflected in spirit), the heart-beats of God, the interplay of transcendence and immanence, never adequately stated in any intellectualistic categories, but recognizable in activities at least adumbrated in the activities of our own spirits, in their whole and concrete personality. If this be true, the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation like the Christian doctrine of Atonement, finds its confirmation in the doctrine of the Spirit, and the general trend of our argument points to the ultimate unity of mind (Spirit) and matter. 'Matter' must be ultimately spiritual, however much lower its level of reality than 'Mind'."¹ Cf. 2 Cor. 3:17, 18—"Now the Lord is the Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit."

I reason as follows: In the economy of God, the beginning of a new order of things, a new and higher level of created being, involves of *necessity*, an immediate Divine operation, and is therefore best designated "miraculous," that is, from our human point of view. But once this new order is created, by the impartation to the Life Process of a new increment of power from the Divine Being, the perpetuation proceeds according to established (Divinely decreed) laws and processes. Thus the physical universe had its beginning as the

1. H. Wheeler Robinson, *The Christian Experience of the Holy Spirit*, 83-84.

result of an immediate Divine act (or perhaps a series of such acts); however, it has perpetuated itself throughout the centuries by the operation of "natural" laws. The beginning of the life process, too, was undoubtedly the result of an immediate act of God; the various forms of life have perpetuated themselves, however, by the ordinary or "natural" processes of reproduction. Again, in the realm of the spiritual, the Jewish Theocracy—the Old Covenant—had its inception in a series of immediate Divine acts or miracles, starting in Egypt and not ceasing until the children of Israel were established in the Land of Promise. But the nation was permitted to work out its own destiny thereafter by following, or not following, the Law of Jehovah as handed down through Moses. The same fundamental truths hold good with reference to the Church. The Church of Christ had its beginning in two immediate Divine acts or miracles, namely, (1) the Divine conferring of Holy Spirit baptism upon the Apostles, as representative of the Jews, on the Day of Pentecost, and (2) the Divine conferring of Holy Spirit baptism upon Cornelius and his household, as representative of the Gentiles, some years later. The Church has been perpetuated, however, and constantly enlarged, throughout the centuries, by the proclamation of the New Covenant law of pardon for the obedience of faith on the part of all those who choose to become God's saints. Sainthood is the next level of being above that of the purely natural or rational man. The purely natural ("moral") man is one who uses his reason to keep his passions in subjection and to direct his will. *But the saint or spiritual man is one who, in addition to all this, conforms his reason also to the Mind of Christ as mediated to him by the Spirit through the instrumentality of the Word. Hence he is, in the strictest sense of the term, a "new creature, a "creation."*

[2 Cor. 5:17]: Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new. [Eph. 2:10] For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them. [Col. 3:9-11]: Seeing that ye have put off the old man, with his doings, and have put on the new man, that is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of him that created him: where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bondman, freeman: but Christ is all, and in all. [Rom. 6:4]: We are buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life. [Rom.

6:10, 11]: For the death that he died, and he died unto sin once; but the life that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Even so reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus.

When the Holy Spirit descended on the Day of Pentecost, amid displays of supernatural power and significance, and overwhelmed the Apostles with His presence and accompanying gifts and graces, *they—the Apostles—were then and there constituted the charter members of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ*. The Body was formed in the miracles of Holy Spirit baptism as conferred upon the Apostles; the Jews, in the persons of the Apostles, were then and there incorporated into the Body. But from that time onward believers were added to the Body, hence added to the Lord, the Head of the Body, by the process of accepting the facts of the Gospel and obeying its commands and conforming their lives to its requirements. Those people to whom Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost and who asked what they must do to be saved, were told what to do in very plain terms, and did what they were told to do. They were told to repent, and to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of their sins. And in a subsequent verse we read: "They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added together in that day about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41). Those first converts were not added together (nor added to the Lord either, for that matter) as a result of receiving Holy Spirit baptism themselves, but as a result of their ready compliance with the New Covenant law of pardon. The terms of pardon, of admission into the New Covenant, had just been stated by Peter, and seemingly by the rest of the Apostles as well (Acts 2:37). Those persons—some three thousand in all—who "were pricked in their heart," that is, convicted "of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John 16:8), accepted the terms: they received the Apostles' Word and were baptized into Christ without delay. And this process of preaching the Gospel for the obedience of faith went on from day to day, for we are told that the Lord kept on adding together day by day those that were being saved (Acts 2:47). Cf. Acts 4:4—"But many of them that heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand." Also Acts 6:7—"And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem ex-

ceedingly; and a great company of the priests *were obedient to the faith.*" Nothing is made more clear in the New Testament Scriptures than the fact that all those who came into the Church in the Apostolic age came in precisely the same way and on the same terms. Those terms were: (1) faith in Christ, *i.e.*, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God; (2) repentance from sin; (3) confession of Christ; and baptism into Christ (John 20:30-31; Acts 16:30-34; Matt. 10:32-33; Acts 2:38; Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 8:35-40; Rom. 6:1-4; Rom. 10:9-10; Gal. 3:27).

That this day, Pentecost, A.D. 30, was the day on which the Church of Christ actually came into existence on earth is evident from a comparison of the matters related in the second chapter of Acts with the account of the creation of man as given in Gen. 2:7. In the passage in Genesis we read that "Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground." That is, He formed man's body of the same chemical elements of which all matter is constituted. But *as such* the things thus *formed* was lifeless and powerless: it was a mere thing, and nothing more. It was then that God completed His work: He "breathed into" the lifeless thing a particle, so to speak, of His own Being; He implanted in the lifeless form the principle of rational life. "Jehovah God . . . breathed into his nostrils the breath [spirit] of life." As a consequence of this Divine inbreathing, the man became "a living soul." The same kind of Divine operation took place on the Day of Pentecost with respect to the new creation, the mystical Body of Jesus Christ, the Church. The physical aspect of the Divine Body [the *form*, in other words] was in Jerusalem waiting, in the person of the Apostles who had been commanded to tarry there until they should be "clothed with power from on high"; waiting, that is, for the Divine inbreathing; waiting for the Spirit to come and to enter and to take possession of their spirits. And this is precisely what the Holy Spirit did. He came down from Heaven and entered into the Body, in the persons of the Apostles, giving to the Body life and power and, in fact, actual existence as a mystical living organism or entity. The Church simply could not have existed in fact prior to this event. *If there was such an institution as the Church prior to the advent of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, it was a Church without the presence and power of the Spirit; more than this,*

it was a Body without a Head, for the Scriptures clearly teach that our Lord was made Head of the Body when He was raised from the dead and made both Lord and Christ (cf. Acts 2:36; Acts 4:8-12; Eph. 1:19-23; Col. 1:18; 1 Pet. 3:21-22, etc.).

Considerable confusion has prevailed throughout the Christian world in times past regarding the actual time and place of the beginning of the Church of Christ. Some have said that the Church had its beginning in the Garden of Eden with our first parents; others, that it came into existence when Abram was called out of Ur of the Chaldees and made the father of a chosen people; still others, that it was established in the time of Moses with the organization of the Hebrew Theocracy; and a great many have contended that the Church had its inception in the days of John the Baptizer. But we can readily see that all these theories are erroneous. This was made evident by Jesus' own statement, in Matt. 16:18—"Upon this rock I will build my church." Jesus said here, not "I have built," but "I will build"; that is to say, the Church was yet a thing of the future. Now in Acts 5:11, we read that "great fear came upon the whole church"; obviously at this time, the Church was actually in existence. We must conclude, therefore, that the Church came into existence on earth at some time between the dates represented by these two Scriptures, namely, Matt. 16:18 and Acts 5:11. A few other considerations should settle the matter, namely: As the Kingdom of Heaven, it could not have existed until the King ascended and was crowned; as the New Covenant, it could not have been in operation prior to Christ's ratification of it by the shedding of His blood; as the New Testament, it could not have been in force until the Testator died, for "where a testament is, there must of necessity be the death of him that made it" (Heb. 9:16); and as the Great Salvation, its history shows it was only begun to be spoken by the Lord and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him (Heb. 2:3). As a matter of fact, the exact time of the birthday of the Church was this memorable Day of Pentecost when the Spirit entered the Body for the first time, to make it His dwelling-place henceforth throughout the Gospel Dispensation. Practically the whole of Christendom recognizes the fact today that Pentecost, A.D. 30, was the birthday of the Church of Christ; indeed St. Augustine has designated this Day the *dies natalis* of the Holy Spirit.

In the paragraphs immediately following, we shall see that the Gentiles, as represented by Cornelius and his household at Caesarea, were later incorporated into the same Divine Body by the same miracle of Holy Spirit baptism. Thus the prophecy of God through Joel was fulfilled: "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh," meaning of course that the time would come when there should no longer be any distinction between Jews and Gentiles, but the peoples of all nations should receive the Spirit on the same terms. Thus Paul could write in later years: "For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, *whether Jews or Greeks*, whether bond or free: and were all made to drink of one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:13). For example, the human race received its standing in the Hierarchy of Being in Adam and Eve, its first representatives; so all redeemed Jews received their standing in the Body of Christ, in their original representatives, the Apostles, who were baptized in the Spirit at the beginning of the Christian era; and all redeemed Gentiles likewise received their standing in the Body of Christ, in their first representatives, Cornelius and his household, who were baptized in the Holy Spirit several years after Pentecost. The outpouring of the Spirit in overwhelming measure upon both Jews and Gentiles indicated that the middle wall of partition which had existed between them from time immemorial was broken down for ever. For Christ "is our peace, who made both one, and brake down the middle wall of partition, having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances: that he might create in himself of the two, *one new man*, so making peace; and might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby . . . for through him we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father" (Eph. 2:14-18).

4. The Calling of the Gentiles

The Holy Spirit made it perfectly clear through the Hebrew Prophets that the blessings of the New Covenant should be for Gentiles as well as Jews.

[Isa. 2:2, 3] And it shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and *all nations* shall