

1. The Administration of the Spirit

The Holy Spirit's administration as the Agent of the God-head on earth, began with His descent on the Day of Pentecost, A.D. 30, and will continue to the Second Coming of Christ, the sublime event with which the present Dispensation will terminate.

This Dispensation is, in fact, the Dispensation of the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit's administration takes in, as we have learned, two general classes of works, as follows:

1. His works which were as to nature, *extraordinary*, and as to duration, *temporary*, and which were confined in point of time to the infancy of the Church His extraordinary works may be enumerated as follows: (1) He clothed the Apostles with authority and infallibility, that they might bring to completion God's revelation of His Eternal Purpose to mankind (cf. 1 Pet. 1:10-12, Eph. 3:1-12, etc.). (2) He incorporated the Body of Christ by conferring the overwhelming measure of His gifts and graces, first upon the Apostles, and later upon Cornelius and his household, thus breaking down forever the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile. (3) He endowed the Apostles and their co-laborers in the Gospel, and the primitive churches and Christians generally, with the evidential measure of His gifts and graces, for the twofold purpose of establishing them in the faith and confirming the Word by the signs which followed. (4) Through His works of inspiration and demonstration, He provided and attested a body of Scripture known as "the apostles' teaching" (Acts 2:42), which was designed to serve as a Book of Discipline—as, in fact, the exclusive Book of Discipline—for all congregations of Christians in all ages. Eph. 4:8-12: "When he [Christ] ascended on high, he led captivity captive, And gave gifts unto men. . . . And he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ." These things were all done by our Lord, as Head of the Church, through the agency of the Spirit. As the Son, during His three years' ministry in the flesh, was the Representative of God the Father upon earth, so the Spirit, throughout the

present Dispensation, is the Representative of both the Father and the Son. He executes the Last Will and Testament of our Lord through the instrumentality of the Word which He provided through the Apostles for the government of the Body of Christ. This Word, this Book of Discipline, is the canon of the New Testament Scriptures. In this Book of Discipline, the Spirit has handed down by precept and precedent the perfect pattern for all Christian congregations with respect to name, creed, terms of admission, essentials of worship and service, in fact everything pertaining to Christian faith and worship. We need no other Book of Discipline, because all things pertaining to life and godliness have been given in the one authoritatively provided for us by the Spirit. I venture the assertion that no problem could arise in a local church for which a satisfactory solution, or method of solution, cannot be found in the New Testament Scriptures. The New Testament covers the ground of Christian administration fully; no other discipline is needed.

2. His works which are as to nature, *ordinary*, in the sense that they are wrought in and through ordinary instrumentalities and in ordinary, regular ways; and which are, as to duration, *permanent*, in the sense that they shall continue throughout the present Dispensation. These ordinary works of the Spirit are of two general kinds: (1) those wrought through the organization, officinary, worship and activity of the local churches, with their evangelists, elders and deacons (cf. 1 Tim. 3:1-13, Tit. 1:5-9, etc.). Cf. Paul's charge to the elders of the church at Ephesus: "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, *in which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers*, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). (2) Those works wrought for and within the saints themselves as individuals, the works of regeneration and sanctification, including such subordinate works as the sealing of the Spirit, the communion of the Spirit, the intercession of the Spirit, the witness of the Spirit, the earnest of the Spirit, and so on. These are age-abiding works of the Spirit in His capacity as Indweller and Sanctifier of the Body of Christ. As the human body without the spirit is dead, so the Body of Christ without the Holy Spirit would be a mere shell, lifeless and powerless.

A word of caution is necessary at this point. I do not want to be misunderstood in my use of the word "ordinary" in reference to the works of the Spirit. I have chosen this term for want of a better one. I use it, moreover, only in a relative or comparative sense; that is, by way of contrast with the *extraordinary* measure and extraordinary endowments of the Spirit which characterize the infancy of the Church. I do not mean to leave the impression that any work of the Spirit is to be depreciated or minimized. No work of the Spirit is ever ordinary in its results; it may be said to be ordinary, however, in its mode of accomplishment. The works of the Spirit are all—to some degree—inscrutable, and in this respect out of the ordinary. Those connected with His permanent administration of the Body of Christ are ordinary only in the sense that they are not *miraculous*—that is, in the sense of the Bible meaning of the term "miracle" or "sign"—but are wrought through the ordinary administration ministrations of spiritual law, the Word of Truth, as this, in turn, is preached, taught and lived by ordinary human instrumentalities, namely, God's saints. Again I insist that this is not a question of *power*, because the Spirit is able to do what He will to do. It is simply a question of *fact*, that is, of how the Spirit has seen fit to exercise His powers for the accomplishment of various Divine ends; a question which can properly be studied, and concerning which conclusions can properly be arrived at, only in the light of Scripture truth. I insist again that the only proper source of knowledge regarding the Holy Spirit and His work is the Bible itself, and not the emotions or opinions of men.

2. Sanctification

The overall work of the Spirit in and through the members of the Body of Christ is what is known in Scripture as sanctification. 1 Cor. 6:11—"But ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God." Rom. 15:16—"that I should be a minister of Christ Jesus unto the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be made acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit." 1 Pet. 1:2—"according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and