

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

sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." 2 Thess. 2:13—"for that God chose you from the beginning unto salvation in sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." Sanctification, like regeneration, is distinctively a work of the Holy Spirit.

Sanctification is not a work wrought instantaneously by the Spirit of God in the human heart. It is, rather, the result of continuous activity of the Spirit, and is equivalent, on the human side, to Christian growth or growth in holiness. All life is growth; the essential property of life is growth, and the new spiritual life begotten in the human heart in regeneration is no exception to this rule; that life indeed is a continuous growth in "the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 3:18). Sanctification is properly defined, therefore, as that process by which the work of the Holy Spirit begun in the human heart in regeneration, is continued therein—in the nurturing and developng of the new spiritual life thus begotten—as *the saint grows in Divine grace and knowledge through the active co-operation and communion of his own spirit with the Spirit of God. The life of sanctification is the life lived personally with the Holy Spirit, which becomes, little by little, as the saint is transformed from glory unto glory (2 Cor. 3:18), the life of the Spirit Himself in man.* On the human side this requires *abiding*, that is *perseverance, stedfastness*.

Sanctification, then, is accomplished by the co-operation of the human spirit with the Divine Spirit. The Holy Spirit, through the Word of Truth, instructs, guides and leads the Christian; and the latter responds to this Divine instruction, guidance and leadership, by feeding upon, digesting and assimilating the Word. The result is *growth in holiness*, without which no man shall see the Lord (Heb. 12:14). 1 Pet. 1:16—"It is written, Ye shall be holy; for I am holy" (cf. Lev. 11:44, 19:2, 20:7). The saints can become holy only by becoming like God, Godlike, and they become Godlike only by becoming Christlike (John 14:6-9).

This necessary cooperation of the human spirit with the Divine Spirit in sanctification is clearly set forth in Scripture. Jude 21—"Keep yourselves in the love of God": in this Scripture we have the human side. Jude 24 "Now unto him that is able to guard you from stumbling, and to set you before the

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presence of his glory without blemish," etc.: here we have the Divine side. Phil. 2:12—"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling"—the human side. Phil. 2:13—"for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure." There are many other Scriptures of like import. Now this co-operation between the Spirit of God and the human spirit is achieved through the medium of the Word, that Word which, says Paul, "is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart" (Rom. 10:8). Cf. again the words of the Promise of the New Covenant: "I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know Jehovah: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith Jehovah: for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more" (Jer. 31:33-34). Both regeneration and sanctification are mediated to men through the instrumentality of the Divine Word.

The influence exerted by the Spirit of God in regenerating *human* nature and in nurturing therein a *divine* nature is exerted through the living Word of truth. The Holy Spirit does not indwell the Christian for the purpose of providing him with other motives and incentives to godliness than those found in the Word. Nor does the Spirit dwell in God's saints to communicate to them new revelation, for revelation ended with the Apostles. Nor does He dwell in them to illumine their minds with supernatural knowledge or with superhuman ability to interpret the Scriptures. On the contrary, in the conviction and conversion of sinners, and in the sanctification of the saints, the Spirit operates through the Word, written or spoken, addressed to the rational faculties of man. God deals with His people *after they have become His saints* through the same psychological means that He employed in dealing with them *to make them His saints*. The active Agent of the Godhead in the sanctification of the saints is the Holy Spirit who dwells in them, and the means through which the Spirit operates to their sanctification is the Word.

Two kingdoms exist side by side on this earth in moral conflict, namely, the Kingdom of God and the "kingdom of darkness." The subjects of the former are called "children

of God" (1 John 3:1); the subjects of the latter are called "the sons of the evil one" (Matt. 13:38), "the sons of this world" (Luke 16:8), etc., and are all included in the term "world" which, says Jesus, cannot receive the Holy Spirit (John 14:17). Nor is there anything strange about this fact. How could any man expect to receive the Spirit as long as he continues to dwell in the "kingdom of darkness," working for and serving, his father, the Devil? *They who would receive the Spirit of God must first become son of God and members of His family. Not until then do they receive adoption as sons, and with that adoption also "the Spirit of adoption"—the Spirit of the Divine Family—entitling them to the privilege of calling God their Father.* Children of the world, those who have never accepted and obeyed the Gospel, who have never been adopted into the Household of the Faith, who have never become citizens of the Kingdom of Christ, have not the right to call God their Father, because their father is the Devil. Jesus Himself said, John 8:44—"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do." On the other hand, all those who have been Scripturally adopted, by union with Christ, do have the right to say, "Abba, Father" (Rom. 8:14-17). From the viewpoint of the Church as the Household of God (Eph. 2:19), all true Christians are children of God by adoption.

The Church is God's Family. We enter it as "babes in Christ." 1 Cor. 3:1—"And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, as unto babes in Christ." (Cf. Eph. 4:14). As newborn babes in Christ, we are nourished upon the sincere milk of the Word. 1 Pet. 2:2—"As new-born babes, long for the spiritual milk which is without guile." As we continue to grow spiritually, the time comes when we can endure meat or sound doctrine. Heb. 5:12-14: "For when by reason the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need again that some one teach you the rudiments of the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of solid food. For every one that partaketh of milk is without experience of the word of righteousness; for he is a babe. But solid food is for fullgrown men, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil." By thus eating the Bread of Life, by feeding on the Word as their spiritual food,

contrary it is a long, gradual process of development and the children of God are, little by little, filled with the Spirit.

This, I repeat, is not an instantaneous change. On the growth—as someone has said, figuratively of course, it is the process of “growing a soul.” The conflict between the flesh and the spirit does not end with conversion: it goes on unceasingly. Matt. 26:41—“The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Gal. 5:17—“For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary the one to the other; that ye may not do the things that ye would.” Rom. 7:22-23: “For I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members.” This was Paul’s experience. In fact he expected the battle to go on throughout the rest of his life, until death should release him from the propensities of the flesh. He exclaims: “Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 7:24-25). *Faith takes away the love of sin; repentance eradicates the disposition to commit sin; baptism transfers the alien sinner out of his old sinful relationship; pardon removes the guilt of sin; but only resurrection and glorification can take us out of the presence of sin.* It is only by feeding on the Word of Life inspired by the Spirit, by keeping the appointments of the Spirit as laid down in the Word, and by following the precepts and precedents of the Word revealed by the Spirit, that men become partakers of the divine nature, grow in the grace and knowledge of their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and thus escape the corruption which is in the world through lust. By feeding on, following, and living by, the Word, they drink deeply of the Spirit who, little by little, transforms them from glory to glory—as they acquire, more and more, the Mind of Christ—and finally presents them before the Throne of Eternal Grace redeemed in body and soul and spirit.

“If we take a child of Indian parentage,” writes Dr. T. W. Brents, “and adopt it into a family of civilization and refinement, it ceases to imbibe the spirit of the family from which it is adopted. It henceforth manifests a different disposition and speaks a different language. Its manners, habits, occupa-

tion, every thing, save its personality, undergoes a corresponding change. So, when a person is taken from 'the world' and adopted into the family of God, he or she ceases to imbibe the spirit of the world, and hence to 'conform to the world,' and imbibes, 'drinks into' that measure of the Spirit which the Father promised to His children by living in the Father's family, receiving His instruction, and being governed by His laws."¹ Rom. 8:15-17: "For ye received not the spirit of bondage again unto fear; but ye received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God; and if children, then heirs: heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him."

3. Drinking of the Spirit

Paul writes: "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). How do God's people drink of the Spirit, i.e., of the gifts and graces of the sanctifying measure of the Spirit? In different ways, and by different means, as follows:

1. *By studying and meditating upon the Word.* The amazing ignorance of the Bible which prevails everywhere today, not only among the unsaved but among Christians as well, is tragic. In this shallow, superficial age, the vast majority of people seem to be utterly indifferent to the Word of God. Even with the great majority of "church-members," the Bible is merely a trade-mark of respectability, fit to grace the library table when the "pastor" makes a social call, but otherwise as much of a dead letter as it was in the Dark Ages when it was buried inside the walls of convents and monasteries. I venture the statement that ninety per cent of all professing Christians of our day could not, if their lives depended on it, name the books of the Bible, much less tell when, by whom and for what the purpose they were written. And there are literally thousands of people, even in the United States, which is supposed to be a "Christian" nation, have never looked inside the Bible. This condition, I repeat, is

1. T. W. Brents, *The Gospel Plan of Salvation*, 647.