

to die. Most Christians whom I have known have feared death, but I have no fear of it. I can truthfully say that if certain items of my business were attended to, I should be perfectly willing to die at any time." "Well," replied Mr. Campbell, "possibly so. Possibly it is true, or at least you think it to be true, that you have no fear of death. But after all, is that the point at issue? I should like to ask you this question: Do you have any *hope* in death?" There was a solemn pause,—a long pause, "No," replied Owen, finally, "No, I must confess that I have no hope in death." "Then," rejoined Campbell, pointing to an ox grazing near by, "you are on a level with that brute. He has fed until he is satisfied. Now he is standing there in the shade, whisking off the flies, perfectly contented with the world. Like you, he has no fear of death; neither, like you, has he any hope in death." It is said that Mr. Owen never brought up the subject again. And in the debate that followed, Owen confessing his inability to answer Mr. Campbell's arguments, courteously yielded the floor to the latter, who proceeded to deliver extemporaneously, his long address on the Evidences of Christianity, one of the most exhaustive and unanswerable defenses of revealed religion that is to be found in all Christian literature. After the debate, Owen returned to Europe.

Man's faith, his prayers, his hopes, his ideals and aspirations—all stand or fall with the Resurrection of Christ. In the light of all these facts, it becomes perfectly clear what Jesus meant when He declared that the only *sign* that should be given our age was the sign of Jonah the prophet. That sign was typical; the antitypical sign is the Resurrection of our Lord. This sign is all-sufficient; nothing more is needed; nothing greater or more convincing could be asked for.

### 3. The Word-Power of God

It becomes necessary, at this point in our study, to consider again the relationship which exists between the Spirit of God and the Word of God. As will be seen, there should be no confusion here, because the teaching of the Scriptures on this subject is uniform throughout and too clear for misunderstanding.

Jehovah, for example, said through Isaiah the prophet, foretelling the spiritual character of the New Covenant: "And a Redeemer will come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob . . . And as for me, this is my covenant with them: my Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed . . . from henceforth and for ever" (Isa. 59:20-21; cf. Rom. 11:26-27). "My Spirit . . . and my words." As this text indicates, and indeed as the Bible from beginning to end corroborates: God's Spirit and God's Word go together, act together, and together effectuate the Divine purposes respecting man

The relations existing in God between Thought-power, Will-power, Spirit-power and Word-power, are inscrutable to us, of course, and it would be useless, if not actually presumptuous, to speculate regarding them. Suffice it to say that the Word of God—either as Personal, spoken, or written—is the revelation or expression of the Thought and Will, and therefore of the Spirit, of God; and conversely the Spirit realizes the decrees of the Word. Furthermore, the Scriptures make it clear that in practically all operations of the Deity, Spirit-power is exercised either *along with*, or, as in most cases, *through the instrumentality of*, the Word. I do not mean to affirm by this statement that Spirit-power is in all cases *necessarily* confined to the Word; far be it from me—a mere man—to impose limitations upon the power of the Divine Spirit or upon the extent of His operations. But the operations of the Godhead are orderly; our God is a God of order. 1 Cor. 14:33—"God is not a God of confusion, but of peace." As stated *heretofore*, and as perfectly obvious to any intelligent being, the whole framework of the physical creation is one of order, otherwise there could never have been a human science. It is perfectly reasonable to conclude, therefore, that the operations of the Deity both in the Kingdom of Grace and in the Kingdom of Glory are according to definite arrangement or order among the Three Persons; that is to say, *orderly*. This conclusion, moreover, is fully corroborated by the Scriptures. Hence, this is not a question of what the Spirit can do, in relation to the Word, but of what He actually *does*, *how* He operates in fact. Order is the effect of intelligence and pur-

positiveness. It must be characteristic, therefore, of the operations of the Spirit, because He operates toward specific ends and He adapts means to ends perfectly. Now in the very nature of the case persons communicate with one another through the media of words; hence it is perfectly natural to conclude, just as the Scriptures teach, that the Holy Spirit, a Divine Person, communicates with human persons through the same media. As a matter of fact, according to Scripture, in all operations of the Godhead, God's Spirit and His Word go together in effectuating and realizing the Divine purposes *within* and *for* the whole of creation.

1. God's Spirit and God's Word acted together in the Creation of the physical universe and its living creatures.

[Hence, we find that *God said* (ordered, decreed) something, at the beginning of each epoch of the Creation, and whatever *God said, was done* [Gen. 1:2, 3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26, 29]. [Cf. Psa. 33:6, 9]: By the word of Jehovah were the heavens made, And all the host of them by the breath of his mouth [His Spirit]. . . . For he spake, and it was done: He commanded, and it stood fast. [Heb. 11:3]: By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen hath not been made out of things which appear. [In the first chapter of the book of Genesis, of course, we have the Word in its indited or stereotyped form; in the actual Creation, however, the Word was personal, the Logos Himself, and the Spirit operated to realize His decrees.] [John 1:1-3]] In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made [Rom. 11:36]: For of him, and through him, and unto him, are all things. [1 Cor. 8:6]: one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through him. [Col. 1:16]: for in him were all things created, etc. [Heb. 1:1, 2]: God . . . hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the worlds. [In Creation, the Spirit and the Word acted together, the Word as the executor of the Father's Will, and the Spirit as the Realizer of the Word's decrees.]

2. God's Spirit and God's Word act together in sustaining the physical Creation and all commonly designated "natural" processes. The ultimate source of every form of life in the universe is the Divine Spirit: He is the Spirit of Life—natural or physical, spiritual, and eternal (Gen. 2:7; Job 27:3, 32:8, 34:14-15; Psa. 104:27-30; John 6:63; John 3:3-6; Acts 17:24-25; Rom. 8:2, etc.). Again, in general Providence as in Creation, the Spirit realizes the decrees of the Word.

[Psa. 33:9]: For he spake, and it was done; *He commanded, and it stood fast.* [Psa. 148:6, 7]: He hath also established them [created things] for ever and ever [*i.e.*, as long as time lasts]; *He hath made a decree which shall not pass away,* [that is, until He rescinds it.] [Job 38:33]: Knowest thou the ordinances of the heavens? [Jer. 31:35]: Thus saith Jehovah, who giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, who stirreth up the sea, so that the waves roar, etc. [*The Will of God as expressed by the Word is the constitution (that which constitutes) both of the physical and of the moral universe, the authority and power back of all laws of nature and all moral laws as well.*] [Col. 1:17]: He [the Logos] is before all things, and *in him all things consist* (literally, *hold together*). [Heb. 1:3—The Son]: who being the effulgence of his [the Father's] glory, and the very image of his substance, and *upholding all things by the word of his power,* etc. [Natural law is the Word decreed, that is, spoken for all time,—the Word as the source of all secondary causation in Nature. When the Word acts or is spoken, however, for a special purpose of God, for the working of a special event in space and time, an event not to be repeated in all its circumstances,—then a miracle is performed. *Natural events (secondary causes) are regular and recurring; miracles (primary causes) are particular events; but all have their constitution in the Will and Word of God.* Hence, when in the finality of temporal events, the Word shall be spoken (the “trump” shall sound), then the earth and the heavens shall be folded up as a vesture (Psa. 102:25-27, Heb. 1:10-12), and Time shall be no more.] [2 Pet. 3:5-7, 13]: For this they wilfully forget, that there were heavens from of old, and an earth compacted out of water and amidst water, *by the word of God; by which means [i.e., the word of God] the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished; but the heavens that now are, and the earth, by the same word have been stored up for fire,* being reserved against the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. . . . But, according to his promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. [Cf. Isa. 65:17, 66:22]. [1 Cor. 15:51, 52]: Behold, I tell you a mystery: We all shall not sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, *at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound,* and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. [Rev. 10:5-7]: And the angel that I saw standing upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his right hand to heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created the heaven and the things that are therein, and the earth and the things that are therein, and the sea and the things that are therein, that there shall be delay no longer [*literally, that time shall be no longer*]: but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, *when he is about to sound, then is finished the mystery of God, according to the good tidings which he declared to his servants the prophets* [Cf. Acts 3:18-21].

3. The Will of God, as expressed by the Word and realized by the Spirit, being the constitution of the universe, it follows that the Will of God, again as expressed by the Word and realized by the Spirit—or as realized by the Spirit through the instrumentality of the Word—is the Divine element that must enter into the performing of a miracle. Hence we find that

in the working of miracles, as described in Scripture, the usual procedure was that *the Word was spoken* (either vocally, of subvocally, *i.e.*, by suggestion (*and the miracle was wrought*). Sometimes, of course, a symbol of the Word, instead of the spoken Word itself, was employed to perform miracles; a symbol such as, for example, the rod of Moses, or that of Aaron, by the use of which wonders and signs were wrought by these great men of God in Egypt, at the Red Sea, and in the Wilderness (Acts 7:36). But even such a striking symbol of the Word as the rod of Moses was not to be used as a substitute for the spoken Word itself, when God ordered otherwise for His own purposes.

[Take, for instance, the well-known incident recorded in the twentieth chapter of Numbers. The children of Israel were crying out for water; they were desperately in need of it. Vv. 7-9]: And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Take the rod, and assemble the congregation, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and *speak ye unto the rock before their eyes, that it give forth its water*; and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their cattle drink. [Reading on, however, we find that Moses smote the rock with his rod, instead of speaking to it as God had commanded him to do. Vv. 10-11]: And Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; shall we bring you forth water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and *smote the rock with his rod twice*; and water came forth abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their cattle. [The rod being the symbol of the Word, God graciously allowed the miracle to be wrought because of the great need of the people and their herds for water to drink. But note carefully what God said to Moses immediately after the incident, vv. 12-13]: And Jehovah said unto Moses and Aaron, *Because ye believed not in me, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them*. These are the waters of Meribah [Strife]; because the children of Israel strove with Jehovah, and he was sanctified in them. [The sin of Moses and Aaron on this occasion was their lack of faith in the Word-power of God. They had sufficient faith to use their symbols (rods) at the command of Jehovah, because they had had too many examples of what would occur when they *stretched forth* these visible visible instruments at His direction. But they probably had not as yet experienced a miraculous manifestation of the power of the spoken Word alone, and, seemingly, in this instance they could not bring themselves to believe that the spoken Word of itself, apart from the use of the visible symbol, would be sufficient to bring forth water from the rock. Hence they were not permitted to enter the Land of Promise. Aaron died on the summit of Mount Hor (Num. 20:23-29), and Moses died and was buried in the land of Moab (Deut. 34:1-8), both deaths occurring this side of the Jordan before the crossing into Canaan under Joshua. The incident at Meribah was the only instance, as far as we know, in which Moses failed to measure up to the Divine ideal of leadership; by smiting the rock instead of speaking

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to it, he *failed to sanctify the Word of God* in the eyes of the children of Israel. Think how much more sublime this miracle would have been had Moses only done what God commanded and *spoken* to the rock! What an impression it would have made upon the minds of the spectators to see water gushing forth from a flinty rock in response to the spoken Word! Moses failed to grasp what was perhaps the most significant opportunity presented to him in his whole career to glorify the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob!]

[It will be remembered that Joshua, however, at a later time, in striking contrast to his great predecessor, actually did speak the Word of God to the heavenly bodies and thus preserve the light of day long enough for his people to win a great victory over the Amorites. [Josh. 10:12]: And he [Joshua] said *in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; And thou, Moon, in the valley of Aijalon.* Joshua's faith was such that he knew, by inspiration of the Spirit, that if he would but let the Spirit speak through him, the desired miracle would be wrought. And so it was. Hence it is written]: There was no day like that before it or after it, that Jehovah hearkened unto the voice of a man; for Jehovah fought for Israel [Josh. 10:14]. [It will have to be admitted, of course, that such an exalted faith in the Word of God is exceedingly rare in human beings; in fact, Jesus alone seems to have possessed it without measure. But He possessed the Spirit, too, without measure.]

The Spirit-power, Thought-power, Will-power and Word-power of God became one in Jesus, and that without any loss of these powers on the part either of the Father or of the Holy Spirit, *for the essential property of Divine power is its inexhaustibility; it may be distributed according to the will of God* (v Cor. 12:4-11) *without any depreciation either in quantity or in quality at its source.* Jesus was one with the Father in Heaven (John 10:30), and He possessed the Holy Spirit without measure (John 3:34). The "seven Spirits" which are before the Throne (Rev. 1:4)—that is to say, the fulness of the powers and influences of the Holy Spirit, seven being the symbol of perfection—rested upon the Suffering Servant of Jehovah, the Branch out of the roots of Jesse and David (Isa. 11:1-2, 61:1-3, 42:1-9; Matt. 3:16, 12:15-21; Luke 4:17-21, etc.). Because of this indwelling of the fulness of Divine power in Jesus, He had only to speak the Word, aloud or within Himself, and the desired miracle was wrought. In striking contrast to "faith healers" of all ages, Jesus gave no "treatments"—neither present nor "absent" treatments; nor did He assess any charge, say, of one dollar, or perhaps two dollars, per "treatment." Being the Incarnate Word Himself (John 1:14), He had but to command and all Nature obeyed His voice. This is perhaps the most striking characteristic of His "mighty works and wonders and signs" (Acts 2:22), apart of course

from the variety of miracles which He performed. But, after all, was not this precisely what was to be expected of the One who was in fact the Executive Creator of the universe? Himself being who and what He was, His miracles fit perfectly into the whole scheme of His being and activities.

Let us take a look at the miracles of Jesus for a moment. We shall discover that when He healed men and women of their diseases and infirmities, He did so, in practically all instances on record, by just speaking the Word or issuing the command; and even in the few cases in which He just *willed* the healing, perhaps at a distance, or accompanied the act of will with the touch of His hand upon the diseased organ, we may safely assume that the command was expressed (that is, *suggested*) in words *within Himself*. (By *suggestion*, I have reference, of course, to an operation of the subconscious.)

[*Standing over Peter's mother-in-law, for example*] He rebuked the fever, and it left her, and immediately she rose up and ministered unto them [Luke 4:39]. [To the man bedridden with palsy, he *said*]—Arise, and take up thy bed, and go unto thy house, and the man arose, and departed to his house [Matt. 9:6-7]. [To the impotent man at the Pool of Bethesda, who had been thirty-eight years in his infirmity, He *said*]—Arise, take up thy bed, and walk. And straightway the man was made whole, and took up his bed and walked [John 5:8-9]. [To the man with the withered hand, he *said*]—Stretch forth thy hand. And he stretched it forth, and it was restored whole as the other [Matt. 12:13]. [To the woman with the issue of blood, who pushed her way through the crowd and touched the border of His garment, He]—turning and seeing her *said*, Daughter, be of good cheer; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour [Matt. 9:22]. [To the man who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech also, He *said*, after spitting and touching the man's tongue] *Be opened*. [And the man's] "ears were opened, and the bond of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain" [Mark 7:33-35]. [To the woman who had had a "spirit of infirmity" eighteen years, He *said*]—Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity; and he laid his hands upon her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God [Luke 13:11-13]. [To the blind beggar sitting by the roadside at Jericho, He *said*]—Receive thy sight: thy faith hath made thee whole. [And immediately the man] received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God [Luke 18:42-43; cf. Mark 10:46-52]. [Even in those cases on record in which He healed by touching the diseased organ, it may be assumed that the outward act was accompanied by the inward command (cf. Matt. 9:29, Mark 8:22-26, etc.). [Similarly, He *willed at a distance*—no doubt by suggestion in words—the healing of the ten lepers [Luke 17:11-19], and that of the nobleman's son [John 4:46-54]; [in the latter case, Jesus in Cana effected the healing of the sick child in Capernaum.] [Perhaps the most significant account, however, of His healing at a distance is that of the healing of the Roman centurion's servant (Matt. 8:5-12, Luke 7:1-10). This Roman centurion, *the*

*unknown soldier* of the Gospel records, is without doubt one of the most remarkable personages appearing on the pages of the New Testament. As the story is given by Matthew—when he [Jesus] was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, and saying, Lord, my servant lieth in the house, sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And he saith unto him, I will come and heal him. [Jesus must have recognized that this centurion's request arose solely out of his affection for the sick slave, and not from any fear of financial loss.] And the centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man under authority, having under myself soldiers; and I say to this one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. [What profound humility! What insight! And what faith! That is to say, I recognize that you, Jesus, speak with authority and power in the sphere of Nature over which you have demonstrated your control, just as I have authority and power over the soldiers under my command and over the servants in my household. This matter of healing my servant is solely a *matter of authority and power*, both of which you have; therefore, all you need to do is to speak the Word—to issue the order—you need not even come to my house—and my servant will be healed. No wonder that] when Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said unto them that followed, *Verily, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.* [How true! Not one of His disciples even—those who had accompanied with Him from the beginning of His ministry—had such great faith in the Word of God, or in Jesus Himself as the Word of God, as this centurion expressed! Such faith, I repeat, is indeed rare in human beings! And the centurion's faith was fully rewarded as such exalted faith always is]: And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way: as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And the servant was healed in that hour [Matt. 8:5-13].

Again, by what power did Jesus cast out devils? By the power of the Spirit, through the instrumentality of the Word.

[Matt. 12:28]—But if I by the Spirit of God cast out demons, then is the kingdom of God come upon you. [A man with an unclean spirit met Him, on one occasion, in the synagogue at Capernaum]: and Jesus rebuked him [the evil spirit], saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And the unclean spirit, tearing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him [Mark. 1:25-26]. [At another time, there met Him in the country of the Gadarenes two men possessed with demons exceeding fierce. And Jesus said unto the devils, whose name was Legion, "Go!" And they came out, and went into a herd of swine, and] the whole herd rushed down the steep into the sea, and perished in the waters [Matt. 8:28-34, Mark 5:1-17, Luke 8:26-37]. [In Matt. 17:14-18, we are told that Jesus rebuked the demon which possessed a lunatic boy] and the demon went out of him, and the boy was cured from that hour. [Mark gives an account of an epileptic lad—probably the same boy—who was possessed of a demon]: and when Jesus saw that a multitude came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying unto him, Thou deaf and dumb spirit, I command thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him. And having cried out, and torn him much, he came out; and the boy became as one dead; insomuch that the more part said, He is



dead. But Jesus took him by the hand, and raised him up; and he arose [Mark 9:25-27]. [A similar case is reported in Luke 9:42-43: here we read that] Jesus *rebuked* the unclean spirit, and healed the boy, and gave him back to his father. And they were all astounded at the majesty of God. [Note, too, that he exorcised a devil from the Syrophenician woman's daughter at a distance [Matt. 15:21-28]. [No wonder that the spectators of these miracles of exorcism] were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What is this? a new teaching! *with authority he commandeth even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.* [Mark 1:27].

Jesus had but to *will* it—that is, command it within Himself—and water was turned into wine at the marriage feast in Cana of Galilee (John 2:1-11); Peter's net was filled with an immense draught of fish (Luke 5:1-11; cf. John 21:6-14); a fish opened its mouth and provided a coin for the payment of His temple tax (Matt. 17:24-27); a fruitless fig tree withered away, signifying the doom soon to overtake the Jewish nation for its spiritual barrenness (Matt. 21:18-21); and a great multitude were fed with a few loaves and fishes; a miracle of creation (Matt. 14:15-21; cf. Matt. 15:32-39). He had but to stand up in storm-tossed boat on the Sea of Galilee, and *rebuke* the wind, and *say* unto the sea, "Peace, Be still!"—and "the wind ceased, and there was a great calm." And we read that the disciples "feared exceedingly, and said one to another, *Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?*" (Mark: 37-41). But, after all, why should not the winds and the waves have obeyed Him?—was He not the Executive Creator of the universe?

*Consider, in the last place, His miracles of raising the dead.* Meeting the funeral procession of the widow's son at Nain, He "came nigh and touched the bier." The pallbearers stood still for a moment. "And he said, *young man, I say unto thee, Arise.* And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he gave him to his mother. And fear took hold on all: and they glorified God, saying, A great prophet is arisen among us; and God hath visited his people" (Luke 7:11-16). Entering the house of Jairus, ruler of the synagogue in a little town in Galilee, whose daughter lay dead, He took the dead child by the hand and *said* unto her, "Damsel, *I say unto thee, Arise!*" "And straightway the damsel rose up, and walked; for she was twelve years old . . . and he commanded that something should be given her to eat" (Mark 5:21-24, 35-43). See Him at the grave of Lazarus at Bethany, Martha, the dead

man's sister, says, "Lord, by this time the body decayeth; for he hath been dead four days." To this, Jesus replies: "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou believedst, thou shouldst see the glory of God?" Then, when the stone is rolled away, Jesus utters a short *public* prayer, *not* for power to work the miracle—that He had already—but that the spectators may realize that *He is performing it to prove to them that the Father has sent Him into the world.* "And when he had thus spoken, *he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.*" And "he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go. Many therefore of the Jews, who came to Mary and beheld that which he did, believed on him" (John 11:38-45).

Thus it becomes too evident for anyone even to question the fact, that *Jesus performed miracles simply by speaking the Word.* He had but to command the thing to be done, and it *was done*, and done *immediately.* Nature was absolutely powerless to resist His Will and Word. Moreover, by the variety of His miracles *as to kind,* He demonstrated His absolute power and authority over every phase of Nature. He was Himself the Logos in human flesh.

*What became of the Word-power of God, when Jesus returned to the Father? It was dispatched by the Spirit to the Apostles on the Day of Pentecost,* according to the promise of Christ Himself (John 14:16-17, 14:26, 15:26-27, 16:7-15; Acts 2:1-4); by their reception of the powers and influences of the Spirit in baptismal measure, they were invested with the *authority* of Christ (Luke 24:45-49, John 20:21-23, Acts 1:1-8), with *infallibility,* and with the *Word-power* of God. Hence, they, too, in the name of (*i.e.,* by the authority of) Christ, wrought miracles by the power of the Spirit, through the instrumentality of the Word. Jesus had said to them explicitly: "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceeded from the Father, *he shall bear witness of me;* and ye shall also bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning" (John 15:26-27). Again: "He [the Spirit] shall glorify me: for he shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you" (John 16:14). How did the Holy Spirit bear witness to Christ both *with* and *through* the Apostles?

How did he thus glorify Christ? The answer is evident: By His works of *revelation* and *demonstration*, which He wrought through the Apostles. Hence, clothed with the overwhelming measure of Spirit-power, the Apostles likewise had but to speak the Word and the miracle was wrought! In this manner "with great power gave they their witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 4:33), and in this manner "the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word by the signs that followed" (Mark 16:20), and God also "bore witness with them, both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by distributions of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will" (Heb. 2:4). On all these matters the Scriptures speak with unvarying harmony.

[Thus we see Peter and John, a few days after Pentecost, at the Gate Beautiful of the Temple at the hour of prayer. There sits a man asking alms, a man who has been lame from the hour of his birth. Peter]—fastening his eyes upon him, with John, *says*, Silver and gold have I none; but what I have, that I give thee. *In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.* And he took him by the right hand, and raised him up: and *immediately* his feet and his angle-bones received strength. And leaping up, he stood, and began to walk; and he entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God [Acts 3:1-10]. [To the hypocritical Ananias at Jerusalem, who, with his wife Sapphira, conspired to put on a show of consecration, Peter *said*]—Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back part of the price of the land? . . . How is that thou hast conceived this thing in thy heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. [what happened then?] And Ananias hearing these words fell down and gave up the ghost [a miracle of judgment.] [Note that to lie to an inspired man was to lie to the Holy Spirit, and that to lie to the Holy Spirit was to lie to God.] [Again, when this man's wife, Sapphira, put in appearance some three hours later, not knowing that her husband was dead, for the purpose of completing the attempted deception, the Apostle *said*]—How is it that ye have agreed together to try the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of them that have buried thy husband are at the door, and they shall carry thee out. [Again, what happened?] And she fell down immediately at his feet, and gave up the ghost: and the young men came in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her by her husband [Acts 5:1-11]. [Evidently this was a case in which the Divine Spirit was operating directly through the Apostle Peter to signify once for all God's judgment upon all hypocrites.] [Again, we find Peter at Lydia. There he found a man named Aeneas, who had been bed-ridden eight years with palsy.] And Peter *said* unto him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ healeth thee: arise, and make thy bed. And straightway he arose. And all that dwell at Lydda and in Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord [Acts 9:32-35]. [At Joppa, the Apostle found a female disciple named Dorcas (Tabitha, in Hebrew) dead. Putting the people out of the room in which her body lay, Peter] kneeled down, and

prayed; and turning to the body, *he said*, Tabitha, arise. And he gave her his hand, and raised her up; and calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. [The result was, from the viewpoint of the *evidential* value of the miracle, that *it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed on the Lord*, Acts 9:36-42.]

Personal sympathy, of course, on the part of Jesus or the Apostles, may have entered into the working of some of these miracles of the New Testament; but as a general rule, they were not performed except under conditions such that they would function for the purpose of attesting the ministry and message of the one who wrought the work. Certainly it was not the custom of either Jesus or the Apostles to bring back to life their brethren or sisters, merely out of sympathy on their own part, or because the latter may have been useful in their lives; otherwise Stephen and others who had been cruelly cut off in the very prime of their usefulness would have been restored to life. Paul, for example, left his companion Trophimus sick at Miletus (2 Tim. 4:20). Why? Apparently for the reason that he could not utilize Spirit-power for healing purposes alone, but only under circumstances such that the miracle would serve to attest his message.

Paul, like Peter, performed miracles by the power of the Spirit, through the instrumentality of the spoken Word.

[At Paphos, on the island of Cyprus, for example, a certain sorcerer by the name of Elymas tried to interfere with his attempt to bring about the conversion of the proconsul, Sergius Paulus. And] Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, fastened his eyes on him, and *said*, O full of all guile and all villainy, thou son of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. [And immediately there fell upon the sorcerer] a mist and a darkness, and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand. [What was the *evidential* consequence of the miracle?] Then the proconsul, when he saw what was done, believed, astonished at the teaching of the Lord [Acts 13:6-12]. [Again, at Lystra] there sat a certain man, impotent in his feet, a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked. The same heard Paul speaking: who, fastening his eyes upon him, and seeing that he had faith to be made whole, *said with a loud voice*, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped up and walked. [The miracle made such an impression upon the superstitious populace that the latter insisted at once on offering sacrifices to Barnabas and Paul on the assumption that they were the gods Jupiter and Mercury who had come down to earth in the likeness of men (Acts 14:8-13). Again, at Philippi, Paul and his companions found their footsteps dogged by a maiden having "a spirit of divination." The same following after Paul and us [Luke was an eyewitness of this incident]—cried out, saying, These men are servants of the Most

High God, who proclaimed unto you the way of salvation. [Devils themselves are compelled to witness to the Truth in the presence of the Spirit of God, And so we read]: This she did for many days. But Paul, being sore troubled, turned and *said to the spirit*, I charge thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And it came out that very hour [Acts 16:16-18]. [This miracle was fundamentally *negative* in design; that is, it was to keep the impression from getting abroad in the city, as a result of this girl's testimony, that the Christian evangelists were in league with the forces of Satan. Paul had delayed the exorcism for many days, knowing quite well that persecution would follow, once the masters of the maiden should find themselves deprived of the gains which she had been bringing them through her fortune-telling. And this was exactly what did happen. The owners of the girl-slave, with the approval of the city magistrates, seized Paul and Silas, scourged them, and threw them into prison (*vide* Acts 16:19ff.)] [Finally, in the case of the father of Publius, on the island of Melita (Malta), we read that Paul] entered in, and prayed, and laying his hands on him healed him. [And in the next verse we read that] when this was done, the rest also that had diseases in the island came, and were cured [Acts 28:7-10]. [This would seem to have been a departure from the customary apostolic method of working miracles by means of the spoken Word; however, we have every reason for thinking that even in this case the Word spoken by Paul accompanied his laying on of his hands.]

Now for the exceedingly important question: *What became of this Word-power of God with the passing of the Apostles to their eternal reward?* Of one thing we can be sure: *There is not one shred of evidence anywhere in the New Testament that they conferred it upon any human successors.* It was only the message of the Gospel—its facts, commands and promises—and not the Spirit's gifts of inspiration and demonstration, which was passed on to "faithful men" for a permanent possession (2 Tim. 2:2, 1:13). Revelation, as it has already been made clear, came to an end with the Apostles and their co-workers; and along with it, demonstration ceased also. Hence, the conclusion is unavoidable, and is supported by an abundance of Scripture evidence, that, with the termination of both revelation and demonstration, the Word-power of God was embodied in the New Testament Scriptures, that is to say, in the message of the Gospel itself. Paul states explicitly that the Gospel of Christ is "*the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth*" (Rom. 1:16). It is not just a power, nor *one of the powers*, but *the power of God* unto the salvation of the believer. Note also that it is not just opinion, theory or probability, but it is the *power of God*. *It is the power of God because it embodies the authority of Christ, the Head of the Church. And it is the power of God*

*because the power of the Holy Spirit is embodied in it and exercised through it*, in the regeneration and sanctification of the saints. The Gospel of Christ is the spiritual seed of His Kingdom; the indwelling Spirit is the life principle in that seed, even as it is the principle of life in every form; hence when this spiritual seed finds lodgment in the proper kind of soil—in an honest and good heart—regeneration, sanctification, the fruit of the Spirit, and eternal life, all these constitute the spiritual harvest (Luke 8:9-15, Gal. 5:22-25). Therefore, before an alien sinner can be converted to God through Christ, he must first come in contact with the Word-power of God, either by reading the New Testament himself, or by hearing the preaching of the Gospel. The faith which is the active principle of conversion and Christian living comes by hearing the Word of Christ, and, as far as it has been revealed, in no other way (Rom. 10:14-17). Where there is no preaching of the Gospel, no contact with the New Testament message, there is no operation of the Spirit toward conversion, hence no conversion, and hence no new life either spiritual or eternal. The fact remains that it is still “God’s good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe” (1 Cor. 1:21). In the program of our Lord, there is no substitute for faithful Gospel preaching—the preaching that “Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures” (1 Cor. 15:1-4)—for the simple reason that both the Spirit-power and Word-power of God are embodied in the Gospel of the grace of God.

When will men learn that there is no power in the universe as steadfast and sure, and as potent, as the Word of the living God? When will they learn that when God makes a statement, it can be counted on? That when God makes a promise, it will be kept? That when God makes overtures to confer certain blessings upon men, on certain conditions to be fulfilled by them in turn, if they will but meet the conditions, God will surely and gloriously fulfill His part of the covenant? When God, for example, through the Spirit, tells us that He will give us remission of sins and receive us into covenant relationship with Himself, on the conditions that we accept Christ as His Son and our Savior, repent of our sins, and yield to baptism into Christ (Rom. 10:9-10, Acts 2:38, Gal.

3:27); then we can be absolutely sure that if we ourselves have sincerely and faithfully met the conditions, our sins are remitted and we are freely forgiven of God. *There is no more certain evidence of pardon than the Word of God.* Jesus Himself tells us: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35). And Jesus Himself recognized, and certified, the power of the written Word, on the mount of temptation: He replied to every proposal put forward by the Devil on that occasion, by quoting verbatim from the scriptures of the Old Testament (Matt. 4:1-11). Thus did He set an example of trust in God's Word, and of fidelity to that Word, which we would do well to emulate under all circumstances.

Strange as it seems, however, men are prone to follow after every will-o'-the-wisp imaginable in preference to the leading of the Word of God. In so doing, they but illustrate before the world the depravity of the human heart. *Mysticism*, for example, would put human feelings above the Word, when as a matter of fact it is sheer nonsense to think that the Holy Spirit ever prompted any human being to act in a manner contrary to the Word as embodied in Scripture. Yet thousands of professing Christians follow their feelings almost exclusively, and thus render the Word "a dead letter." *Traditionalism* exalts the creeds of fallible church councils, and the isms of the fathers, above the plain teaching of the Word. *Traditionalism* keeps Christendom divided into competitive parties and sects, in direct opposition to our Lord's prayer that His people might be one, even as the Father and He are one (John 17:20-21). And *rationalism* would exalt human reason above the Word of God, substitute the guesses of human thinkers for Divinely revealed Truth, and bid men reject altogether the testimony of faith. *Mysticism*, *traditionalism*, and *rationalism*, these three, constitute the unholy triad which have spread confusion throughout the Church from the beginning and all but nullified the realization in the moral world of the Spirit-power of God through the preaching and acceptance of the simple Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Back to the Scriptures, then! Where the Scriptures speak, let us speak; where the Scriptures are silent, let us be silent. One thing is sure: the reunion of Christendom will never be possible on the "systematic" theologies devised by men. But the

reunion of Christendom can be brought about, *at any time churchmen want it to be*, on the simplicities of Christianity,—that is, upon the facts, commands and promises of the Gospel.

#### 4. The "Mystical Experience"

Both *revelation* and *demonstration* came to an end with the apostolic age, with the formation of the New Testament canon as a permanent Rule of Faith and Practice for the Spirit's administration of the Church of Christ.

Naturally, what is called the "mystical experience," on the human side, was a concomitant of inspiration and revelation on the Divine side, throughout the entire development of the Plan of Redemption in human experience and history. Theophanies and visions, as described throughout the Scriptures, were invariably attended by revelations of Truth from God; as a matter of fact, Divine revelation was the occasion for the occurrence of such phenomena. Cf. for example, the intercourse between Jehovah and the patriarchs, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; Jacob's vision at Beth-el, and his experience at Peniel; the dream-mysticism of Joseph; Moses at the burning bush, his forty days and nights of communion with God in the holy mount, and his view of the Land of Canaan from the summit of Piegah; Joshua's vision of the Prince of Jehovah's Host, before the walls of Jericho (Josh. 5:13-15); Samuel's vision and prophetic call (1 Sam. 3:1-14); the mystical experience of Elijah and Elisha (cf. 1 Ki. 19:1-18); Isaiah's vision of the Lord sitting upon His Throne (Isa. 6:1-13); the numerous visions of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Obadiah, and Zechariah: all of these are described in the Old Testament. Cf. in the New Testament: Joseph's dream-vision of the angel announcing to him the fact of the Incarnation (Matt. 1:18-25); John the Baptizer's open vision of the Holy Spirit's descent upon Jesus after the latter's baptism in the Jordan (John 1:32-34); the experience of Peter, James and John on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17:1-8); Ananias' vision at Damascus, of the Lord giving him instructions regarding Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:10-16); Peter's vision on the housetop at Joppa (Acts 10:9-16); Paul's period of seclusion and meditation in Arabia (Gal. 1:11-17); Paul's night-vision of the man from Macedonia calling for spiritual