

5. The Spirit and the Word: a Review

God's Spirit and God's Word go together, act together, and together effectuate the Divine purposes in the world.

We are now ready to summarize what has been presented up to this point regarding the relationship between the Spirit and the Word, as follows:

1. The Spirit and the Word acted together in the creation of the physical universe and its first life-forms.

2. The Spirit and the Word act together in sustaining the physical universe in all its "natural" processes. Spirit-power is the source of every form of energy, and of every form of life, physical, spiritual, and eternal, in God's universe. Psa. 148:6—"He hath made a decree which shall not pass away."

3. The Spirit and the Word acted together in the work of revelation. The Spirit breathed into His chosen human instrumentalities, in words, the instructions necessary to the execution of those events which made up God's revelation of His Eternal Purpose in history. And the Spirit also breathed into inspired men the necessary words by which the record of that revelation was embodied in permanent form in Scripture. Communication of thought from one person to another, and hence from the Divine Being to human persons, is necessarily in language. Scripture is God-breathed literature.

4. The Spirit and the Word acted together in the work of demonstration, that is, in the performing of miracles to attest Divine revelation. Spirit-power was exerted, in most instances, in the working of miracles, through the spoken Word.

5. The Spirit-power and Word-power of God are now embodied in the New Testament Scriptures, in the message of the Gospel. The Gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation unto everyone that believes. Hence, as we shall see later, the Holy Spirit exerts His power in the conversion and regeneration of sinners, and in the sanctification and glorification of saints, through the instrumentality of the Word of Christ.

The following additional matters are made clear in Scripture regarding the relationship between the Spirit and the Word, under the Old Covenant:

1. God's Spirit "strove" with wicked men in the age before the Flood through the Word of God as proclaimed by

Noah (Gen. 6:3). Noah's was the "preacher of righteousness" to the ungodly antediluvian world (1 Pet. 3:18-22, Heb. 11:7, 2 Pet. 2:5).

2. The Levites said in their great prayer, in the course of the restoration under Ezra and Nehemiah, "Thou gavest also thy good Spirit to instruct them" (Neh. 9:20), referring to the experiences of the children of Israel under the leadership of Moses. How, or by what means, did the Spirit thus "instruct ancient Israel? Obviously, through the laws, statutes and commandments delivered unto them through Moses, their great leader. The Decalogue is said to have been indited by the "finger of God" on "the two tables of the testimony, tables of stone" (Exo. 31:18, 32:16; Deut. 9:10). And the Finger of God is, as we have seen, a Scripture metaphor of the operation of the Spirit of God. All this adds up to the truth that the Law was communicated through Moses by inspiration of the Spirit (cf. Num. 11:24-25, 27:18-23).

3. Again said the Levites in their prayer: "Yet many years didst thou bear with them, and testifiedst against them by the Spirit . . ." How? The very next phrase answers the question: "through the prophets." The prophets were in a special sense men of the Spirit, and their testimony was Spirit-breathed or Spirit-communicated. "Yet they would not give ear: therefore gavest thou them into the hand of the peoples of the lands" (Neh. 9:30). In rejecting the testimony of the prophets, inspired by the Spirit, ancient Israel resisted the Spirit Himself.

4. Isa. 63:10, again an allusion to ancient Israel. "But they rebelled, and grieved his holy Spirit." Cf. v. 11—"Then he remembered the days of old, Moses and his people, saying, Where is he that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of his flock? where is he that put his holy Spirit in the midst of them?" How was the Holy Spirit *in the midst* of ancient Israel? He was in the midst of the people only in the sense that He associated Himself with their great leaders and conferred His powers and influences upon them. Hence, by turning their backs upon their Spirit-guided leaders, by rebelling against them, by rejecting the counsel of God delivered through them, the people grieved the Holy Spirit of God. "Ye do always resist the Holy Spirit: as your fathers did, so do ye," said Stephen to the Jewish mob in Jerusalem (Acts

7:51). How did the children of Israel resist the Holy Spirit? They resisted the Spirit when they resisted the testimony of inspired men, when they resisted the Word of God as communicated to them by inspired men. Hence, to resist the Word of God is to resist the Spirit of God. To rebel against the Word of God is to grieve the Spirit of God. Nature is utterly powerless to resist the Word of God. As a matter of fact, there is only one power in this universe that can resist the Word of God and that is *human will*.

Sinner friend, the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation today, because the Spirit revealed it, His power is in it and exercised through it, and His authority stands back of it. Every time you reject the Gospel invitation, *you resist the Spirit of God*. The Holy Spirit—He who brings order out of chaos, He who brings light to dispel darkness, who brings life where there is now only death, who speaks peace to the conflicting passions and emotions of the human heart and quells the desires of the flesh—He stands here now, waiting to enter your heart and to mould your life according to the Divine pattern, and to make you a partaker of the Divine nature, if you will but only throw open the door and bid Him enter. The choice is one that you must make yourself. Why, oh why, will you continue to resist Him?